



Inter-Religious Studies Program, Vancouver School of Theology

Update: Spring 2016



Rabbi Dr. Laura Duhan Kaplan,
Director, VST Inter-Religious Program

Through our **Inter-Religious Studies Program**, VST seeks to make Inter-Religious knowledge an integral part of the education of Christian clergy, and to make Inter-Religious understanding a part of community education. Here's how we worked this year to meet those goals.

Academics: for our students. We offered three popular courses, taught by **Rabbi Laura Duhan Kaplan**, VST's Director of Inter-Religious Studies, and featuring guest lectures by **Dr. Ray Aldred**, VST's Director of Indigenous Studies. ***Religious Pluralism***, an introduction to world religions and the process of Inter-Religious dialogue, attended by students in VST's **Native Ministries Program** as well as general VST students. ***Sacred Texts and Oral Traditions***, an introduction to sacred narrative in Judaism, Christianity, Islam and local Indigenous traditions. ***Encountering the Other***, an introduction to multi-cultural politics; philosophical, psychological, and spiritual perspectives on empathy; and practical communication techniques.

Learning Opportunities: for our VST community. We organized three field trips, attended by thirty students, staff and faculty. In October, we visited the **Laxmi Narayan Hindu Temple** for the annual **Durga Puja** celebration. After the celebration, the officiating priest spoke with us about issues common to religious traditions in Canada: cultural vs. spiritual religious identity, and young adult engagement. In February, we visited **Or Shalom Synagogue** for a Shabbat celebration. After the service, synagogue members and guests gathered for an interfaith discussion of Biblical texts about Moses and Jesus. One day in April, we participated Surrey's **Interfaith Feed the Hungry**, where we learned how simple it can be to organize across faith traditions to meet community needs.



Table discussion after 'Noah's Pudding' event



Panel Discussion: Our Home and Native Land?
A Multi-faith Symposium on Refugee Settlement

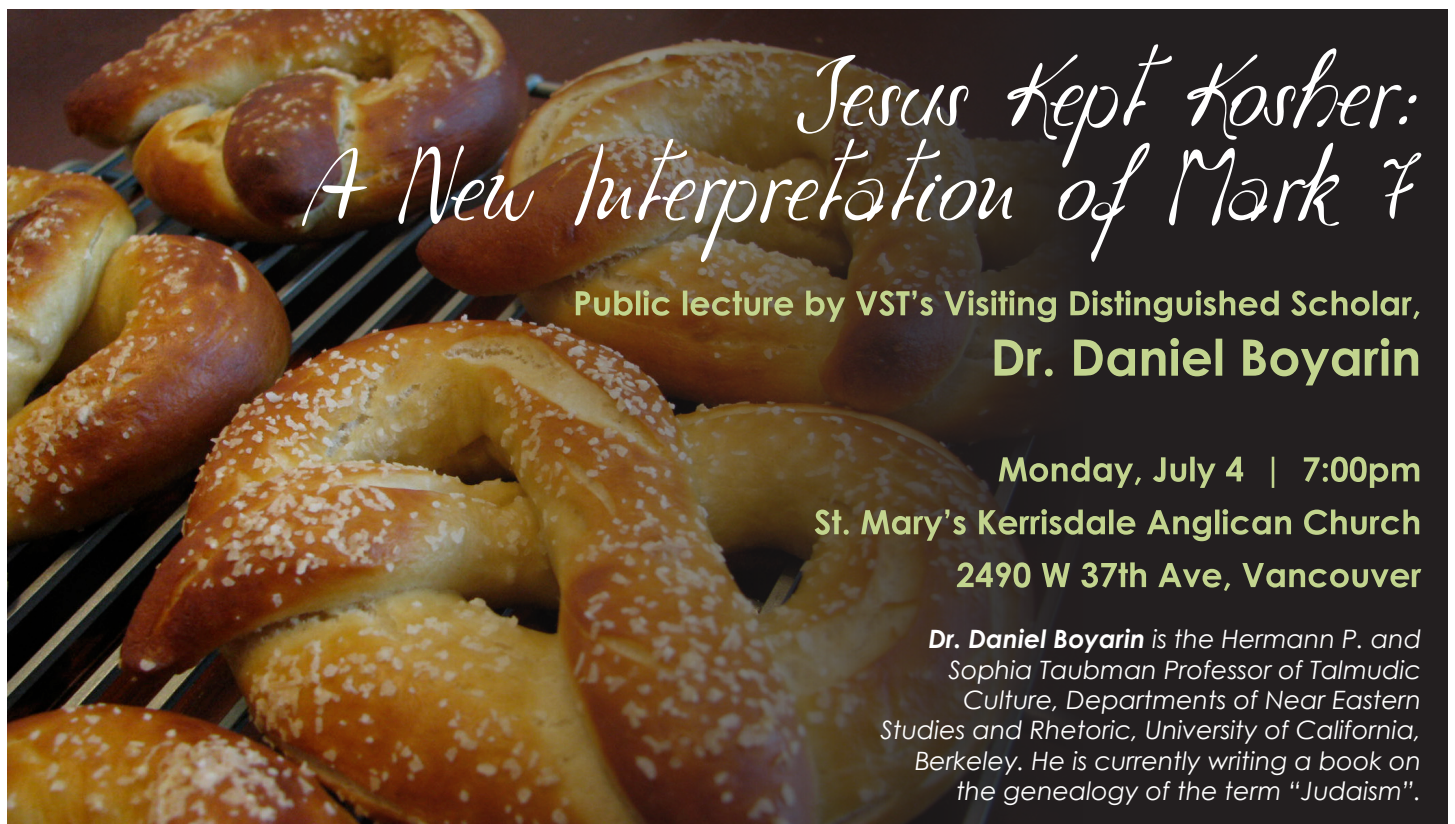
Special Events: for the Vancouver community. In October, in celebration of Thanksgiving, ten VST students joined **Rabbi Laura** in creating and leading a musical and artistic multifaith prayer service for our planet. In November, we worked with the **Intercultural Dialogue Institute** to host **Noah's Pudding**, a multi-faith panel discussion about the contemporary relevance of the story of **Noah's Ark**, featuring **Imam Shujaath Ali**, VST's **Rev. Dr. Jason Byassee**, and **Rabbi Dr. Laura Duhan Kaplan**, followed by small group table discussion by forty participants.

In April, we hosted **Our Home and Native Land? A Multifaith Symposium on Refugee Settlement**, featuring keynote speaker **Dr. Harold Troper**, co-author of *None Is Too Many*, and commentators **Rabbi Dan Moskovitz**, VST's Principal **Rev. Dr. Richard Topping**, **Imam Balal Khokhar**, and VST's Indigenous Studies Coordinator **Catalina Parra**. Our group of thirty-five participants included founders of local human rights organizations, as well as members of the VST Community.

New Events Coming up Soon: *Encountering the Other: An Inter-Religious Conference*, Sunday through Tuesday May 15-17, featuring thirty scholars and artists. Monday's keynote address by **Dr. Marc Gopin** and Tuesday's youth panel/world music concert are free and open to the public (both in Epiphany Chapel, 7 pm). Summer School courses on Islam and on Judaism, taught by **Dr. Syed Nasir Zaidi**, visiting distinguished scholar **Dr. Daniel Boyarin**, and **Rabbi Laura Duhan Kaplan**, July 4-15.



Sacred Texts and Oral Traditions class visits UBC Museum of Anthropology



*Jesus Kept Kosher:
A New Interpretation of Mark 7*

Public lecture by VST's Visiting Distinguished Scholar,
Dr. Daniel Boyarin

Monday, July 4 | 7:00pm
St. Mary's Kerrisdale Anglican Church
2490 W 37th Ave, Vancouver

Dr. Daniel Boyarin is the Hermann P. and Sophia Taubman Professor of Talmudic Culture, Departments of Near Eastern Studies and Rhetoric, University of California, Berkeley. He is currently writing a book on the genealogy of the term "Judaism".