

# First Annual Religious Studies Lecture and Workshop

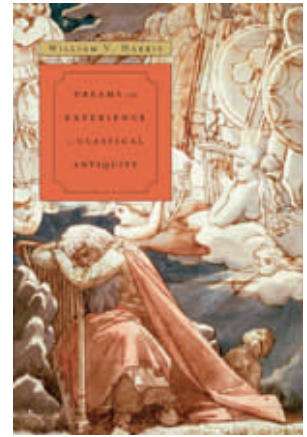
By **Mardi McCabe**

Erin Roberts, along with Katja Vehlow, began organizing a new lecture this year. The first annual Religious Studies Lecture and Workshop was inaugurated as a forum for presenting the many aspects of this diverse discipline. This year Erin arranged for William V. Harris, the William R. Shepherd Professor of History at Columbia University to be the guest speaker. Author of such books as: *Dreams and Experience in Classical Antiquity* (2009) and *The Spread of Christianity in the First Four Centuries* (2005), Dr. Harris will be speaking on the topic of "Greek and Roman Hallucinations Between Religion and Literature."

The lecture, which will be held February 9, 2012, will be followed the next day with a workshop intended to provide a second opportunity for dialogue in a seminar-style discussion with the guest speaker. This session aims to provide students with the opportunity for discussion of other topics related to the previous evening's lecture. The topic of the workshop will be: "Madness in Greco-Roman Antiquity."

Information on the lecture and workshop can be found on our website at:

<http://www.cas.sc.edu/relg/departments/specialevents/rslecture.html>



## Working in the Trenches at the Department of Religious Studies

By **Catherine Snyder**

I entered into the realm of the Department of Religious Studies in a most fortuitous fashion. As a non-traditional student coming back to school to finish my PhD, I had little knowledge of how to secure financial support through a University assistantship. So, I started in what I thought was the most obvious place, the Graduate School. I contacted staff at the Graduate School to inquire about how to secure an assistantship since the degree program I was pursuing did not have any support opportunities available. Fate or "Karma" presented itself in response to this inquiry. As I began jotting down a list of assistantship application procedures, the staff member on the other end of the phone started with an aside. "Well you know, I just received a call from the Department of Religious Studies today. They are looking for a graduate assistant for this spring semester. Why don't you contact them to find out more?"

Well that was over a year ago, and oh what I have learned! Coming into the Department as a PhD candidate in Educational Research and Measurement

(i.e., statistics) definitely presented some challenges. Thankfully, the staff and faculty were very understanding and eager to teach me everything I would possibly need to know in order to serve as an indispensable aide. I learned how to scan documents to create PDF files and make copies on a high tech machine that baffled even seasoned staff members. I proctored classes for tests and helped with audio-visual equipment and presentations on numerous occasions. I've served as a substitute lecturer when the need arose, graded a number of homework assignments, and spent countless hours shredding documents and running errands all over campus. Odds are if you ask me where any building is, I will be able to tell you by the end of this semester! I have also had the distinct pleasure of meeting staff and faculty from all different colleges, centers, and departments. I have really enjoyed these opportunities!



Then I guess it was that I found my niche. I became the resident "guru" with Blackboard. I took all the training I could find so I could learn how to do just about everything through this online learning/classroom management system. I posted course documents and readings, and managed the grade book and discussion board postings. I created quizzes and exams for numerous classes and posted them for on-line administration. Then I served as the eternal troubleshooter both for students and for faculty. It would get pretty heated when students were thrown off-line in the middle of an exam, but I was quickly able to assist and get them through to the bitter end.

As I look forward, I can only wonder at the vast diversity of experiences awaiting me in the Department of Religious Studies. Being the only graduate assistant for this department is always full of exciting adventures. But I don't have time to sit and ponder about what each new day might bring; someone needs me somewhere doing something right now!