

EnGender

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SPEAKERS

Jessica Albrecht, Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst, Megan Goodwin, Leandro Wallace

M Megan Goodwin 00:17

This is keeping it one a one a killjoys introduction to religion podcast for 2020 to 2023. Our work is made possible through grants from the University of Vermont's REACH program, and the Henry Luce Foundation's advancing public scholarship collaboration with the American Academy of Religion. We are grateful to live teach and record on the current ancestral and unseeded lands of the Abenaki Wabanaki and ocho Cisco peoples. As always, you can find material ways to support indigenous communities on our website. What's up nerds? i Hello, I'm Meghan Goodwin, a scholar of American religions race, gender and politics. Hi, hello, I am not at least morgenstein First, nor am I a historian of religion, Islam race and racialization or South Asia. What you're about to hear is us being absolutely Menounos with at Leandra Wallace and Jessica Albrecht, the host of engender conversations. And gender conversations is a podcast that highlights scholars, research areas and projects related to you guessed it gender. They invited us to join them for their first season, which is about feel good academia and we were delighted to accept here is our silly smart chat about podcasting, public scholarship, and friendship.

L Leandro Wallace 01:34

Hello, everybody, and welcome to another engender Conversations. I'm here, as always, Leandra

J Jessica Albrecht 01:41

and, Jessica. And today we have our first walk out of session, because we have two guests joining us who are making an announcement, first, to speak with us about their podcasts keeping 21 I could just introduction to religion. And I have to say I'm quite a fan. And I've also already used your podcast for many my teaching commitments. So I also have some students who are quite jealous that I'm able to speak to you today. So but first, do you like to introduce yourself?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 02:17

Sure, I'm Elise morgenstein. First, I am an associate professor of religion at the University of Vermont, in Vermont in the United States. And I research on the history of religion, South Asia, South Asian Muslims and race and racialization. And I guess I'm one half of the keeping it one on one podcast.



Megan Goodwin 02:43

It's a big half though, for all your tiny person. Hi, I am Professor Megan Goodwin, I am a scholar of religion, race, gender, and American minority religions. And I am the other half of the podcast when I am not spending most and my best obviously time with Dr. Morgenstein Fuerst. I am the program director for sacred rights, WRI T S, which is a Henry Luce Foundation funded program hosted by Northeastern University that promotes public scholarship on religion. So we love what you all do. And we're delighted to be here. Thanks so much for having us.



03:20

So, what is your podcast all about? Tell us?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 03:25

Well, we like to think that we're the college class and religion you didn't get to take. Or if you are taking it, we're like, the salt that makes the dish more feta or full is the way I would put it in as I both do better. Because I'm better. It's better.



Megan Goodwin 03:49

And with swearing. I'm saying my formal college courses also have swearing in. But that's because no one supervises me, so it's fine. So the thing I think that we have to offer because for all that, I am being snarky there are actually quite a number of amazing religious studies, podcasts and a special shout outs to folks like feminist studies and religion and straightway American cheese us and our bestie. Greg at classical ideas. There's a lot of really great podcasting happening in religion. So hashtag lost on that one. But the space that we're living in is I think, more theory, based in most of the programs, we see a lot of interview based programs that talk in fairly sophisticated ways about folks research and I'm so grateful for those kinds of windows into things that frankly, I just don't have time to read right now. I wish I wish it did. But the place that I think we're we're contributing is giving folks a sense of what the building blocks are for the study of religion. So what are the basic pieces that help us not just go okay, well, Islam has five pillars and Sikhi has five K's Still less trivia and more. How do we recognize religion at work in the world? Even if we ourselves are not religious? And like, truly religious, we're on the podcast. Cool. Also, why should you give us yet so? I did. I must say it again, brace yourselves.



05:22

Well, I we have when we were talking about inviting you. We must admit, we called you that cheat code to religious studies. So yeah, we we are behind that. So how did the first idea appear when, who came up with the idea was a conversation? How did it develop into being a podcast?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 05:55

Well, Megan and I have been having snarky conversations about what's wrong with everyone since 2007. So this is a long standing friendship. This is a long standing complaint factory in the best possible way, like in the Sarah Achmed way, right. And you're one of our intellectual, one of the intellectuals that has the most fingerprints, I think all over how we think and how we talk is there. So she often talks about complaint as a method and as a strategy for world building and for Worlds demolishing. So it is both a build up and a destroy. So we've been having these kinds of conversations from 2007 on and the way it became a podcast was really a lot of angst and onwy. Because we want more joy in our work, and we want more fun. And at the time, I was pre tenure, and really in the slog of what it looked like to earn tenure at an institution that I was only the fourth woman hired in my department, period. And so what joy looked like in that space was not the tenure track with two children having been born in that process. So when we sat down to chat, it was sort of like, we think we're funny. And we get a good response when we give conference papers, or when we're out for drinks, right? Like we end up being the center of yelling. So So could we make a project that then happens, but we and I'll let you talk next week, and but like, we really thought this would be something that we monkeyed around with, did a couple of episodes, maybe our friends would listen. And then we would be done. Because who would want to listen to our crazy ranting if you're not also drunk, or if you're not. So like, at a conference, we kind of have to be there or one of our students, right, like a captive so that my audience has to be there upgrading them to something more, which has, I mean, truly still stuns me in every capacity. So Megan, I'll stop there. What do you have to say about our complaint driven organization here? Well,



Megan Goodwin 08:33

I will I will say in addition to everything that Elise said, which is correct, and I did the math, which means that we've been playing together for 15 years, Jesus, Harold Christ. I think the other luminary that we often hold up as having fingerprints all over our work has had a McGregor, who is a professor of publishing at Simon Fraser. And who I think learned us both in siren like, through ridiculous Harry Potter, excuse me. Yeah, except it is 20 literal degrees here in a Fahrenheit way. So no, Dr. McGregor lured us into this Harry Potter podcast called a witch please, which is funny and fun and a little bit sticky, but also really smart with doing critical analysis of stories that honestly have meant a lot to me over the years, but also are really problematic in and of themselves. And then the author just who just dived into problematic cloaks. She's close. Anyway. It's nice because I was visiting a pool. We're just like, hit her head on the turkey bottom and it's just oozing everywhere now. Anyway, Hannah, not only I think, with her with her collaborator, Marcel Cosman, made it look both really exciting and like possible to do so. More Fun podcasting, but also was really emphatic that more women need to be involved in this because overwhelmingly the folks who are doing the podcasting are white dudes, I think podcast is the collective noun for three or more white men 25 to 45. So there was a space where we're doing this already. So we might as well get it down, there was absolutely a

space of what if we record I don't know, like six episodes. And we can just plug them in particular at the beginning of the semester, because we do the same stick every at the beginning of every semester. So like, let's just do this and like, hey, yeah, maybe like Dr. Amit Safi, who is Elise's I think longest standing fan will listen and perhaps use them in his classes. But otherwise, like, for me and my ADHD brain, it was an excuse to learn a new platform and like new technology, so like, that was fun. And I'll learn that and then I'll know that and then we'll get bored with it. And we'll do something else. And instead, what happened is that we launched a podcast that clearly landed with folks, which is a delight. And we did that accidentally at the beginning about I don't know if you all heard about this, but there's kind of a big health thing going on for the last two years. Only, it only happened to America. So you probably didn't hear, but COVID really messed us up. And so we had a lot of folks who had to do distance learning in very short order, and in some pretty dire circumstances. So I think the fact that we were both hitting notes that were useful in people's classes and also injected, I hope a little bit of light into those conversations made us more appealing than I think we anticipated being so now we're closing in on 80,000 downloads, which is bonkers. That's bonkers. Like I if 15 people, right, read a thing that I wrote, I feel like that's a good day. So the fact that like, even indifferent, or captive ears have have spent so much time with us is just, I mean, what what I what a gift what an amazing opportunity. And like what a joy to get to do it with one of my my favorite and smartest people. So



12:15

yeah, it's it's actually like the the thing that you just mentioned the health thing. I think it's happened in Europe as well. So yeah, yeah, did it.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 12:27

It doesn't show up on our news.



Megan Goodwin 12:29

It doesn't it's not really



12:31

something that was



12:38

that was the reason why I Yeah, why I started teaching you a podcast in my my classes, because we also had to do remote teaching. And it's much easier giving much different media's than just letting them Yeah, up and read and having.



Megan Goodwin 12:58



Megan Goodwin 12:50

Very much so. Yeah, well, and that's, that's lovely to hear, and really kind and thank you. And it's also the absolute best part of doing this work is knowing that, like we're helping out other teachers, that is the best thing. But I also think even even when Distance Learning isn't necessary, the accessibility of podcast is one of the things that I really love about them, and that we've heard really good things about So some folks process better if they are only listening and not watching something. We do transcripts, again, very much inspired by disability activists, and Hannah McGregor was another really strong voice for this. So that even if you don't process well, without words in front of you that you can still consume it. But it just, it is a different way to get an information. And I think it is imperative that we provide folks as many ways to get into this conversation as we can thank



13:49

you for doing this and doing it so well. Can you go back a little bit and tell us more about how it like, like, from the idea go into the practice, that it worked out quite well. What are some problems that you came up? I was



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 14:07

we initially thought we could just sit down and chat. And that was a terrible idea.



Megan Goodwin 14:15

No defense, we sit down and chat all the time. And it works out quite well. But it turns out that like having a conversation with your bestie is not teaching



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 14:23

and I would do even better. I think I think I think you have come at this is like what is the lesson like what is the goal? What is the lesson plan? How is this teach? And I think I've been like Yeah, but we just we can only say a couple of things. No one's a good listener. Like we don't have a culture of listening anywhere. And yet podcasts are huge. So what does that what does that tell us? And so for us when we sat down the first time to record first we never any of the right equipment. Yeah, we thought we did but we didn't. We did and we really true to it like to God it was like if all these bros can do it shortly We can too. Why would we read it? Before doing it? We just know stuff. We're smarter toys that we teach. So, Mike drop will do it. We had none of the right equipment. We had planned nothing. And we sat down and we recorded like an hour and a half, and zero minutes were worth it. Because it was insane. It was like, it was like a fever dream had by someone who dropped. It was all over the place. We said no, no about that. I don't need points. It was bad. And then we were like, alright, we need to scripting. But at first, the scripts were just little five bullet point, outlines. But then when we started transcribing, it was horrible. Megan and I, as you can tell already come from the Northeast of the United States. We come from Jews and Irish people, all of whom speak in an American dialect known as collaborative overlapping. We're emphatically interrupting each other to build new sentences is the way we show love and that we're paying attention. Famously fun, bad for

podcasting. Because when you're transcribing, you live out, figure out where the speakers in, you can't hear all the clear words, it's a nightmare. And since I was doing all the transcribing myself at the beginning, I kind of said to Megan, we can't do this outlining stuff anymore. Like, we actually have to write out what we're going to say because it needs to be clear, both of us have no control. So we need to know when we are supposed to stop talking. And that's kind of how we learned how to script for ourselves. So where we started, our early scripts are like half a page, they're just bullet points. And by now, sometimes our scripts are 1213 pages long. And it is even the jokes are written out. Even the interruptions, I often write out just for the ease of trends of transcription, I think we could probably go back to outlining now that we understand what all of the dynamics are that, like, we have to have a clear start and a clear end so that the the automated system can pick up on who's talking, and then whoever's at actually doing the transcribing, and like fixing it, making sure it's edited properly. Can hear all the words, I think we've learned enough now to know how to do that without a word for word transcription. But transcription services can't pick up on non English words, nor do they pick up on accents, nor do they pick up on quite a lot of what we say in religious studies, because we have all these theory words. So having some of it scripted, I think will always be imperative for us like methodologically, just because we care so much about the accessibility piece. And no one has the 12 hours absolutely to transcribe a 30 minute episode.



Megan Goodwin 17:52

Yeah, yeah. Well, and this is a space where we're also grateful for the labor of Alex Castellano and Catherine Brennan, who were our transcription mavens, because at least got us grant funding so that we could get a little bit more help. But it is also a thing. It is a different undertaking to transcribe a conversation between Elise and me, if I am me, or Elise and I know our shorthands. And I know the sort of things that you tried to say, versus, you know, being someone who does not talk to us for 1218 hours a day, every day for the last 15 years. Wow. So if memory serves Catherine when she cycled off because she graduated left, Alex Yeah, Alexa, like glossary? Yeah. If our food interactions, so that



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 18:42

shows and references that they might need to brush up on. Because as the US didn't know, the jokes we were playing on, so they couldn't, like, we'll throw in a Simpsons joke every so often because we're that old. And



Megan Goodwin 18:59

sure, but it's like season five.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 19:01

They were these shorts were pre embryonic by like, 12 years, and they had no idea what was going on. And so with this one, Katherine Brennan, who's amazing, like, watch out, she's going to international law look out universe. She really wrote a dictionary of like, and you might want

to brush up on Arrested Development. And when they talk like this, here's what Elise says this word this way, but it just cuz she's from New York. This is this terrible accent thing. It was great. It was amazing. I felt so good. And so completely ready to feel just just demolished.

M

Megan Goodwin 19:38

Mm hmm. So that's fantastic. Obviously, I will say to if, if this is a question about folks who might want to do podcasting themselves, I was really nervous about scripting, because I think so much of what works about Elisa and I is improvisational. And so I was worried that if we scripted too much that we would lose some of the spontaneity. But instead what has happened is at least as almost all of our writing, and I will like go back and maybe punch a couple places up, or I'll add, like, whatever my homework is for the week. But I don't read terribly closely because I trust her. And then I will just be surprised by the jokes that she has written for me. So then I am like laughing at the jokes I am telling. It isn't it's a different level of spontaneity. And it is also like, there is still space for us to surprise ourselves like, Jesus is a carb is still one of my favorite moments. And that just happened. So that's that part was delightful. The other the other thing that I will say, well, first is that if you are thinking about starting podcasts, we actually have webinars that we put together for the New England humanities consortium as part of our fulfillment of their funding of us. So we have like a nitty gritty how to get into it on our website. But the short version is that if you learn audio editing software in college, and you went to college 20 years ago, again, perhaps revisit, look at a direction anything, rather than assuming I can do this, because I could, but the reality was, it used to take me somewhere between five and 10 hours to edit an hour long podcast, and it is nowhere near that. Now, because I have familiarized myself with how audacity works. So yeah, it is okay to ask for help. And even if you are a teacher of anything, you can still learn. So it is helpful to build on the knowledge of others, which is the thing that I know, but don't do often enough.



21:47

So basically, we have youth scream in the middle. And yeah. So you talked about this captive audience you planned at the beginning, did you when you started, actually, during the recording and not being just a usual conversation? Did you think about anybody in particular, that would say, okay, friends, well, listen, I, anybody else



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 22:18

at the job? I don't know that we knew who our audience was? Or would be. I truly think that Megan and I thought we would make this for ourselves. And we could imagine a couple of friends who find us kind of silly, who might listen also. My dad, totally, and Lloyd Wright, like your dad, I told my dad all the time on the podcast, in part because I love my dad, we're pretty tight. But also because my dad is someone who struggles to read my academic work. And he does struggle. Like when I sent him my dissertation, dude printed the whole thing out, like on like, paper, one sided, because they only have that kind of printer at home. And then like, use little sticky notes, to ask questions about what words meant. Not what's the argument, like you use the word imbricated. And I've never heard that word before, because I graduated a community college to avoid the draft in 1967. Right, like, so my dad is a smart guy who has never taken a religion class. And certainly, like he doesn't understand why put diacritical marks

in my academic work, really basic, basic, basic stuff, but a podcast he can listen to. And he does. So I think that we had hoped that there would be these kinds of people, but all in the family, no one beyond us. Right after the first episode, when we started getting feedback that people were listening because you know, we have an active social media presence, individually and then less so the podcast itself, but but but it's there. And when we started hearing a meet, like truly immediate feedback that people were listening, we did like a home. We might want to think about an audience instead of just a hey, in the tradition of podcasts being a bro and white dominated space, talking to hear ourselves talk. So that has developed over time, I think we've incorporated more things that look like our classrooms. As we learned that university professors K 12. Teachers were using these with their students. I think that we've also added more cursing and more jokes as we've learned that the thing we're providing is comic relief, usually amidst a sea of readings, so we've kind of leaned into both of those podcasting tropes. But, but not ever really knowing exactly who our audience is because we've got weird listeners, like people that you'd never think are listening, listening

M

Megan Goodwin 25:00

Yeah, fair, unexpected. They're not weird, weird, weird, but actually the ones that are coming through my face not mutually unexpected. That's, that's fair. Also that yes, very much. Well, it's funny to me too, because we kind of kicked this idea around for a while. And then we decided, and by we, I mean, at least was like the ARS coming. So let's get our shit together, we decided that we were going to record a teaser in a trailer. And just release them while we were at AR. That's the American Academy of religions national meeting for folks who are not familiar with that acronym. And so we recorded them and I went to like Northeastern super fancy recording studio and truly, truly blessed the tech that they have like this is you can tell them in an r1, right, because they've got a graduate student whose entire world is sound. And then it's Elise and I on the mic, just like fucking around a job was ridiculous. So he was the one who very kindly said, Hey, you don't need me like, I will do this. You don't. You don't need me, you could do this on your own. So we recorded that. And then I truly was like, mixing the teaser at the airport, flying out to Denver in 2019. and wound up on the same flight as Dave from the religious studies pod, a religious studies project. So he was the one that told me about Zen caster, which is what we now used to record. And like, I hadn't done this in so long, and I was still learning Max, because you know, what you should do when you're starting new projects is also learn a new hybrid system, I recommend. This is my brain. Yeah, this is my brain. Welcome to my world. So like I can't get the speakers to only play through my headphones. So I'm blasting what is now our theme music in a like lounge and logon. And Dave is laughing at me like kindly but whatever. So I truly uploaded that to Zen caster and then got on the plane. And then we did our AR stick, which is talking to everyone. And also we had printed stickers. So we're talking this up and like promoting it, but not because we're expecting anyone to listen to him. We have recorded



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 27:07

your podcast at this point, I want everyone to hear that we did a thing that you should never do, which is sell a product you do not have. I mean, we are literally selling the Brooklyn Bridge here, in part, and I think this was part of our strategy again, so that we would be too embarrassed not to follow through. Shame, shame in spite if that had no powers.



Megan Goodwin 27:35

Catholicism, Judaism, these are where we intersect. But yeah, we recorded it. We were delighted, but also very surprised to find out how many people listen to right away like we had a first day conversation about, particularly folks feeling that our my slapdash first day definition of theology did not represent the full, institutional and practical complexities of the study of theology, which they're right, they were definitely right. I both stand by my first day definition as a first day definition and was so delighted to realize that we were in conversation with so many smart folks from really around the world immediately. And if we were sensible people, we would have been intimidated, maybe, but instead, we just kept doing it. And it seems like it worked. So



28:26

did absolutely. So yeah. I mean, I can understand the overlapping thing over here is, I think, too, have the ability to actually talk and listen to the other person at the same. You can continue, sir at the same time and don't have to pause at all.



Megan Goodwin 28:47

And it's a sign of love and enthusiasm and engagement. Here's the thing, though, is that I am learning in my 44th year on the planet, that if you do not grow up with your speech patterns, and you're accustomed to listening, and then waiting, your turn to speak, you might experience collaborative overlapping is rude, and abrupt and very confusing. So we are living in our truth but also trying to be mindful of our audiences



29:21

thinking of the question in my mind, but



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 29:27

we have that effect on people just empty out your brain.



Megan Goodwin 29:31

Yeah, where are disorienting you should make a note.



29:36

Yeah, it's a captivating that's




 Megan Goodwin 29:42


much nicer

 29:45

to work. Yeah. Oh, yeah. I had the question. Concerning like, where, like, just in general, where do you see yourself in regards to like, public scholarship and what do you think about I know that you have I've made an episode of public scholarship. I listen to that one. But just for the person here, like, what? Where do you see the importance of public scholarship? And where do you see your podcast in it?

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 30:12

Like, and why don't you take this one first, since this is a majority of your job and quite a lot of your intellectual work these days, and then I'll supplement where possible?

 Megan Goodwin 30:21

It? It sure is, I think the shortest way to think about it is the academy that I am interested in participating in and building is one that is mindful of and responsible to both our conversation partners within the university, but well beyond the university. Again, 15 years ago, Professor Morgenstein Fuerst, and I were both graduate students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which makes us products of a public school system. And I, we took very seriously the fact that the people of North Carolina subsidized our education that there is a responsibility to share the work that they made possible with them. Yeah, and I mean, again, I can't tell anybody else what to do. But I think if you have the incredible privilege to dedicate a giant chunk of your life, to becoming a specialist in something, your responsibility to the rest of the world who doesn't have that privileges to make sure that they can access it if they want to. It's also particularly since I want to say 2015 or so, we had an election in 2016. I don't know if you all heard about that, either. It was a space in so I know. I know. They don't like us. And they're right. But no so So teaching race, religion and politics at Syracuse University during the election cycle that yielded our 45th President, sorry about that, by the way, disrupted some of my assumptions about how I could be teaching and or researching and what that should do. Because I had come in with training that suggested that teaching is about sowing seeds, and long games and patience, and 2015 2016 and 2017 did not make me feel like we had that kind of time. And it was disturbing and invigorating is the wrong word but enervating perhaps, to see how much work religion was doing in what's now the United States and how eager non religious people were to just discard that is not worth thinking about. So I was lucky enough to meet Liz Bukhara, who was in the process of applying for funding around public scholarship on religion. And together, we formed an organization that is dedicated to teaching folks how to communicate their research with the public. And again, giving them a sense of why that matters. Why even if you're working on something, you know, second century see why and how can you bring that to folks in ways that make them more aware of what religion is doing in the world and the consequences of it, even if you are not personally invested in belonging to a religious community. And one of the great privileges of my life, frankly, is the fact that now at

least I have had an opportunity to share that work with so many people that we would never, never have imagined would care what we had to say. So that's that's a big responsibility, but it's also a



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 33:45

public scholarship a little bit differently as a scholar of Islam, whose training was in North Carolina, which I said with a tone which I realized neither of you are based in the United States, you might not know what that tone means the tone means racism. The tone just means yes, random old South super Dixie. Racism.



Megan Goodwin 34:08

Yeah, like Confederate statue on the



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 34:11

campus, like our building that we did our doctoral work with, named after a Klansmen Raisa, it's an it's not stealth racism, it's no longer but at the time, we were there, and for the entire time we were there. That's what it was. I also was a college freshman in my third week of school when 911 happened. So as a student of Islam since 2001, I have never lived in a world where my work isn't already political. And as a Jew who descends from Holocaust survivors, my body has always been politicized also. So these things made a lot of sense to me in the like, Well, why are you studying this? And besides, you know, the jokes your mom would do with like, are you going to be a rabbi eighth and like, Please, God, don't convert which is also probably thematic. For me, it was well, it's a social justice issue. Like I need to know more because I need to be better, better, better educated citizen. And then that was before I really even understood what the professor it was or that I wanted to be in it. So once I did all of that all the things Megan said were true. I was trained by a public school for my PhD. And we were living in an area where leftist churches and some not leftist churches, some pretty conservative Bible churches would ask Islamic studies scholars to come into their church and teach the moment Muslims, sometimes that was a really productive conversation. But a lot of times, it was a really racist conversation. And so I learned before I even had my degree in hand, that talking about Islam was both necessary and it was dangerous. And as a non Muslim white woman, that danger was less dangerous to me and my person than it was to my brown, Muslim hijabi colleagues. And so I've talked a lot and often on the podcast about that responsibility, but that is one that I have felt deeply both as who I am as a Jewish person whose life literally depends on people having not been murdered. And as a scholar of Islam in a moment in the US, where we have never seen hate crimes be so high, or the danger of wearing a hijab in public, be so pronounced. So for me, public scholarship really is a space where I don't see that I have a choice. Like that was never an I never thought, oh, I shouldn't do this, it was I better publish really, really well. And really, really highly so that I can do this other thing, and no one will sneeze at it, or say I'm not doing enough on the traditional scholarship route. So having the podcast felt like a natural extension from a lot of these church, synagogue, public speaking gigs that I had been doing, really, for 10 years, by the time we started the pod. Now, I just had to swear more because you can't swear in someone else's house of God, it's really not a good look. I've done it, it's not good. It's not. It's not a great outcome. I do want



Megan Goodwin 37:11

to know, I like when you don't help. I just want to lift up the the non optional piece because for me public scholarship has been an option. And I also want to name that as a position of privilege, right? I've learned a lot from colleagues like Dr. simranjit saying or Dr. Nation Jr, where they have been very candid about the fact that they weren't given an option about whether or not they wanted to talk about their work in public. They're called on to talk about their work in public, whether they like it or not. So yeah, if there, if there's any space where we can do a little bit of that labor for folks who don't get an option about whether or not they want to. That's, that's nice as well. It's my scholarly opinion. It's nice.



38:01

It's yeah, I mean, that's a product of different public programs, but it's something that I have to agree with Megan is something you you feel like you have to give back because there's so many people that cannot access it. I painted are paying and you you have one i We have the privilege to be able to do this. So yeah, I completely agree and kudos for this whole project. I have I have a question that emerge from Elise explaining what Chapel Hill and the whole thing because you're you're both US based and of course many of what you recover comes from US education systems and everything. When you learn you had an international audience did that change some explanations you had to do that encouraged you to look abroad or further to explain things that are poorly like religion? So how



Megan Goodwin 39:08

you're gonna get me in trouble now because Elise has always been pushing for global focus for the show and I being the wretched Americanist that I'm am. I'm like, like, I know about this part of the US. I want to talk about that. So it was never our intention to present a US based or centric or what have you podcast? I am just loud



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 39:37

No, that's not fair. I think we knew Yes, I actually that is completely fair. But um, it's a great question. I think my work has never been based in the US. I am a United States citizen. i This is the only place I've ever you know, I have citizenship I have a passport. You know, English is I studied 10 languages, but I claim fluency in English only and embarrass and English, English on top of that. So like, I think that I think that one of the things I tease Meghan, because no matter what we do, Megan brings it back to you.



Megan Goodwin 40:10

What about me? What about my needs?



.. .. . 40:10



Ilyse Morgenstern Fuerst 40:12

But I think that, but I think that what, what, what our expertise does is actually balanced out in the wash, right. So like I do have to do most of the rest of the world. And Megan, to say, Chicago, this one city,



Megan Goodwin 40:31

about Canada and or Mexico, not many, but like,



Ilyse Morgenstern Fuerst 40:35

it's true, sometimes North America, three nation. But, but, but I think that, I think that when we learned we were more international, we actually started doing a lot more definitional work than we had been doing from the jump. Like when I listened to the early episodes. I'm surprised by how much we don't explain, actually, when I listen to more recent episodes, and sometimes I'll call me like in a complete tizzy. Like I'm writing this episode about Buddhism. And I can't even say the word Buddha without explaining why I pronounced it that way. And I'm getting into grammar, and I don't know what to do, because I'm stuck in a sense. And Meghan will be like, No one, no one cares about that. What if you say this, and then she will realize halfway through recording, oh, shit, no one knows where China is? Because a lot of our listeners are Americans. Yeah. And America done on geography, and other things, but geography. But we've realized that we define a lot more things. And I think Megan has actually been really mindful of making sure that what American is to get to do a shorthand in the US remember the Civil War, moving on. When I talk about India, I have to literally be like, Delhi is a city in northern India. In this state, like I've every word has to be defined, and Meghan's done a really good job as the podcast has gone on, of really, D naturalizing. All the facts about America that don't get defined. So I think where we've expanded our definitions for an international audience, is in explaining American stuff with the the kind of nuance that we also bring to when I talk about South Asia or when we talk about, like other places in the world. But we are, you know, we have an international audience, but it's 20% of our audience. So we are still drawing predominantly from American locations and American listeners. So So yeah, that's been interesting. I will say we've also leaned into having quite a lot of listeners from the UK because I consume a tremendous amount of British media, which means our our media jokes, we have allowed ourselves to dabble in like UK based jokes, because we know at least feel like we got a Father Ted, it's not just like this is this is perhaps also a space where we are cruising on American imperialism, right? Like we I know, you know, I want them to know that



Megan Goodwin 43:09

is that unlike many other nation states in the world, we can operate with some degree of certainty that folks from outside what's known as the United States are going to recognize at least some of these cultural touchstones in a way that will allow them to giggle along so



Ilyse Morgenstern Fuerst 43:31

well, we can make fast and furious jokes and have zero compunction that no one will not, no, that's a global phenomena even if Vin Diesel is uniquely our property. And I think we can't do

that's a global phenomena, even if Vin Diesel is uniquely our property. And I think we can't do that with we always at the end of our credits, Megan stashes secret audio so if you listen all the way through our our podcast episode after the final theme song, Megan stashes some random audio, and it's been random like videos I sent with my children will find the audio on there because they said something silly. Or it'll be like, a Bollywood movie. But but we can't bank we couldn't put that Bollywood stuff in the main part of our episode without explaining it to death. Whereas we can put a fast and furious joke in and even if you've never seen the movie, you probably know what that title is.



Megan Goodwin 44:23

Or there's only nine so far so your role unless we're counting Hobson Shaw, which is art. There's a whole anyway.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 44:32

Not getting into it. Just saying.



44:34

I'm sorry. From I've always



Megan Goodwin 44:36

just counting Hobson Shaw. I think it's very important but if we're gonna count to Hobson Shaw, then do we also have to count like the cartoon that happens in the middle of two and three and it's just there's a whole conversation to be had there. Anyway, it's all about family and American imperialism. Just to be here. This is all like no



44:59

Yeah, Yeah, no, no be invited



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 45:07

what? You know, you don't have to get to the house. Like sleep over accidentally. You invited me sorry.



45:22

Well, that's an unfairness of



Megan Goodwin 45:27

North America. Yep. Anyway, more questions.



45:32

Yeah, I do. So you know that this this season, every recording is on field academia. So we wanted to know which were your, your? Yeah, most memorable things that happened at the podcast, the things you Yeah, what are your best moments?



Megan Goodwin 45:51

Oh, no, I'm gonna tell you this, I know it's gonna make me cry again, because it makes me cry every time.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 45:58

Just cry. It's just the Pisces season, okay, like this is whatever. So at the that



Megan Goodwin 46:07

in December of 2020, our public set public scholarship and religion goals, hero, Christian Peterson, who was also obviously a friend and we adore him, contacted a bunch of folks who had been teaching with the podcast, and asked them to do horse evaluations of keeping a one on one. And so a number of folks who we deeply respect to scholars who we value as colleagues and friends and who also had just finished their first full semester of COVID teaching took time to record kind things about keeping it one on one and how much it had meant to them and how they had used it. And it was just, yeah, I just I just like straight up bald in my kitchen, because it was unexpected. And, and so kind at a time where I I was exhausted, and we collectively were exhausted. And it was hard to feel good at a job that I had been doing for more than a decade and thought I was good at and I was working the hardest I've ever worked. And I felt maybe a third as good as I usually feel about that work. So hearing that anything that we had done, made folks lives easier, and maybe a little bit brighter was overwhelmingly amazing, and I really I can't even think about it without getting weepy. So. Yeah.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 47:41

That was definitely a highlight. That was definitely a highlight. But that because it was a surprise to us. Like we did not know this was happening. And again, it's less like what people I mean, people said some like truly amazing things. But it was less what people said that that they had taken the time to say it because no one has time, generally as a modern condition, but certainly at the end of the semester, and it just Yeah, it was ridiculous. And then Christian to put it all together, just over the top beyond the call of duty one might say, um, I think if I were going to add a first of all, I love this question. Yeah, feel good. I love the season premise. I think so often in academia, everything is tear it down. It's terrible. It's harassing. It's bleak. And

all that's true. But it's also what you make it right. And I think I think Meghan and I take really seriously that you can build community, and you do not need to participate in communities that do not want you in them to the best of your ability, right. And that's a privilege to be able to say, I'm out, or I don't talk to you, or I don't cite your work. Like that's a crazy privilege. And I appreciate that. But I think that what's been really heartwarming and just overwhelming to me, is the fact that people thank us for making their teaching easier. I have two children. They were two and six when the pandemic started. I miss has been a dyer almost the entirety of that podcast has been that door behind me that y'all can see. I recorded our first 12 episodes with both of my kids literally right outside that door, sometimes interrupting because because no one was watching them right now because mom and dad are at work and we are nowhere because there is nowhere for us to be because the universe has closed. So so the fact that we have made anyone's life easier in a moment where our lives have felt impossible has been just the icing on the top of the cake of okay, I'm doing this for a reason. Because, you know, I don't I don't need to teach my kids One stuff in a public format like that doesn't do anything for me for my career, really. I mean, it makes me feel good egotistically because like, Oh, look at all those downloads, whoo. I'm a big shot, like whatever I feel in the moment. But I know that that's not true. This doesn't give me a raise. This doesn't contribute to my tenure portfolio, like none of that. But that some teacher who's having a hard time could play this and put this on their syllabus and not have to think about it. That I bought you a little bit of time. Yeah. Whoa, yeah. That's an incredible feeling. And that's an incredible service. But also, it's an incredible set of knowledge, like, Thank you for sharing that with me, because I wouldn't have known that. Otherwise, I just talked to Meghan on a screen. And we put go in the Buzzsprout. And I just go, it was like, I don't know who's listening. So I think all of those sharing moments have felt really just bullying. And and yeah,



Megan Goodwin 50:59

yeah, I think the only thing I want to add there is how grateful we are that so many smart folks want to do this with us. We have had some just absolutely amazingly brilliant and kind colleagues and friends join us on the pod. And that has felt amazing, because again, we have done all of our interviewing during a damn pandemic. And the fact



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 51:23

that we can't we can't buy any beer, we can't take him for dinner. We can't none of the stuff that comes with sociality. There's you



Megan Goodwin 51:30

can't and folks have showed up and shown out and I yeah, I just feel really, really lucky that we got to chat with so many smart folks and that they wanted to like come and play with us. That feels really fun. I was just re listening to a conversation that we had with Dr. Judith wise and felt on my commute last week, and the generosity of that conversation and the willingness to kind of wrestle with her own theories. While also like making Simpsons jokes, I forgot that she can compare yourself to Mr. Burns, like sucking the life out of BART. Just last. And she also really pushed us to think about, like, what work we're doing that we're proud of, which gave us the

prompt for the rest of our interviews for the next season. I was like, what are our guests proud of having done? What do they want to hold up as something that they've accomplished? And that just that is an academy that feels good to be part of?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 52:23

And how can we amplify exactly, that's the best part too, is like, what are you proud of? What can we do? How can we use the tiniest sliver of influence that we have on Twitter, which like, what am I? But how can we use that so that someone else feels the love of the like, or the love of the retweet? Or just has someone else put their eyeballs on something they've written that they're proud of? I think all of those spaces feel like the academy we want to be a part of. Yes. And so we have a responsibility to build it.



52:53

Thank you so much. Yeah. The only thing left is another feel good. But outside of academia, what do you do to turn off that voice in your head if this work is needed to work you need to do something? What do



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 53:15

we enjoy? Do you turn does that voice turn off for you? Because it does not turn off?



53:23

I'm just saying. Just wondering



53:29

how do you try them teasing



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 53:31

I know that I got it I was just It doesn't shut off for me. So I tend so I watch a lot of TV. I love TV. I have always loved TV. It is my favorite. That is my number one hobbies I watch a lot of TV I am currently in a Korean drama. K hole I am I will never leave it. I am started to consider learning Korean because I'm frustrated by the subtitling because I know I'm missing something. My partner very desperately wants me to not learn Korean because I'm not fun when I learn a language has been around for 20 years. So he knows I'm not fun when I learn a language. But, but right now I'm in the thick of Korean drama, but I also I parent, two children under the age of eight. So I don't know what free time is I just drink a lot of wine. What do you do to take your brain off thing



Megan Goodwin 54:28

I mean, again, doesn't actually shut off but if I add different sensory inputs, sometimes I can focus on those two. So I have dogs and they are ridiculous. So the dog walking and particularly the getting of a dog who does not understand no I can't do this right now we can go for a walk in three hours during the pandemic has forced me to break up my day so that's really good. I was back into martial arts for a hot minute but then I had to stop going to the gym because COVID got bad again. So I am hoping to go back Next month, but the real answer honestly is television. It's it's, it's so much TV at least got me into love Island UK. And I have watched the delight, like disgusting. It's so gross and I love it so much. And it's also like, I suspect I'm not alone in the academy but like I didn't hang out with popular beautiful people like I I think all people are beautiful, but conventionally attractive folks whose maintenance of their conventional attractiveness is a central concern are foreign to me. And so I feel like I'm watching David Attenborough. It's fascinating, and so gross. And I feel like I'm learning while also muffling a lot of ambient anxiety.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 55:42

We also read a lot of fiction, like we pass fiction mass shooting. I mean, we've got the normal stuff too. But yeah, crappy reality TV. Check it. Give it to me. Yeah. Love it. I want something that's not about



55:55

we have another good guilty pleasure like this before? Yeah.



56:03

Yeah, the two of them actually. So it's, it's it's kind of a tribe like people saying, trashy TV mine and going yeah, for both of the docks that



Megan Goodwin 56:13

I live in. I live in Maine and recreational marijuana is legal here. So that has featured heavily in the last several months of the pandemic highly recommended, no pun intended. Also, no one should be in jail for marijuana related crimes. And also we shouldn't have jails.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 56:32

Change of opinion.



Megan Goodwin 56:36

I will tell you all of it. No, I couldn't. Next. Very private.



56:51

All right. I think I'm done with all my questions. I think you and



57:00

I guess what we usually do at this point is just what our listeners can take away from all this. Yeah, it's it's gonna be difficult. It was so much.



Megan Goodwin 57:15

Start with prison abolition.



57:18

Okay, no, wait, I need another note. I guess I'll go back to the beginning. When you said how it started. It was complaining, right? But to bring joy to make it fun, to make it joyful, and with this world building more than or destroying, and well, some were destroying reason again. And always, we heard it. We have talked about this in other episodes, but here to the sense of community and going back to communities and building that community. So I guess that's what I got for this time.



58:01

Like it's, yeah, it's renting fun and community. I like all of those.



58:10

So big, big thank you for this wonderful episode.



58:17

Yeah, thanks for being here with us. Thanks for replying in an instant, whenever, would you? I actually didn't expect it to reply. Because, yeah, you know, you could just take people on Twitter. You never know. actually read it or not.



Megan Goodwin 58:36

We read our Twitter a lot. Well, thank



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 58:37

you for having us. And thank you for doing a whole season on like kindness and uplift. I think that's awesome. Yeah. And we can't wait to see what comes from you all. So so excited.



Megan Goodwin 58:50

Thank you for having us. Yeah, keep doing the good work.