

welcome-back-nerds

 Tue, 1/5 7:48PM  37:51

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

religion, nerds, scholar, spaces, thinking, class, season, genius, talk, people, hrc, shaping, megan, goodwin, books, hunt, nietzsche, episode, line, chat

SPEAKERS

Johnny Rose, Megan Goodwin, Moira, Krusty the Clown, David Rose, Alexis, Simpsons, Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst



Johnny Rose 00:17

This is Keeping it 101: a killjoy's introduction to religion podcast. This season, our work is made possible in part through a generous grant from the New England Humanities Consortium and with additional support from the University of Vermont's Humanities Center. We are grateful to live, teach, and record on the ancestral and unseeded lands of the Abenaki, Wabenaki, and Aucocisco peoples.



Megan Goodwin 00:38

What's up nerds? Hi, hello, I'm Megan Goodwin, a scholar of American religions, race, and gender.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 00:44

Hi, hello, I'm Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst a scholar of religion, Islam, race and racialization, and history.



Megan Goodwin 00:52

IRMF, it feels like we've taken a little break. We're, well, no one has rested in the first weeks

of 2021 after the Florida-man of a year we just had. It was a Florida-man. I hate you 2020. Die, die in a fire. But I feel like a break was necessary even if it was not perfect.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 01:12

I- I am bad at breaks. But-



Megan Goodwin 01:16

You are.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 01:16

But yes. Yes, indeed. We needed some time off to regroup, script, plan, coach my kids through a school break with no friends or family. And I think, eat my weight in carbs as someone's Lord clearly intended.



Megan Goodwin 01:30

Respect. Jesus does love a carb.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 01:34

I wouldn't know.



Megan Goodwin 01:35

He is, I guess, technically a carb. Now that I think about it. Sorry, residual Catholicism. Anyway. Um, what- what- what are we up to today? How- how do we kick off Season Three?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 01:51

Breaking my soul because Jesus as a cookie! I know but- Okay, okay, I'm better, I'm better.



Megan Goodwin 01:56

He is though! Sorry I-



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 02:05

Let's just- let's just jump in. Let's jump into Season Three with a kick off like that, how can we go wrong?



Megan Goodwin 02:11

Excellent! Okay, crack those books open, kids. It's time for the LESSON PLAN.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 02:19

Let's do a little bit of a review today, Megan. Not a- not a lot, because we can't summarize, you know, two seasons of podcasts. But I would love to make sure that our nerds know how we got here so that they all can see where we think we're going.



Megan Goodwin 02:35

Yeah, dope, I like that. Um, but I also want to make some space to talk about the format for Season Three, which is new and different and experimental and I'm excited about it. There are reasons for experimenting with a new format and for bringing in new voices and we want to make sure you know what's up. So I guess our thesis is: only together, are we a genius, to riff on Mary Hunt. And after two seasons of us, Season Three is opening our digital doors to other folks so that we can all be better.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 03:03

I love that.



Megan Goodwin 03:04

I love it, too.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 03:06

So let's jump into the 101 ON TODAY. The segment where we do Professor-work.



Megan Goodwin 03:13

Yes, let's. This is our 23rd episode, so if you're new, maybe we better recap some of the big

themes.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 03:20

Cool. So, uh, Megan, what are- what are our big themes?



Megan Goodwin 03:24

Rude, rude. So rude. Fine, fine. Okay, uh, Season One, which was a year ago, but in COVID math, that's like 45 years and three months ago, we just kept saying that religion is what people do. And we- we still mean that. That means, basically, that religion isn't just belief, and in fact, it's way more likely to be practices and norms and mores and ideas. And that religion is always bigger than the individual. It's about communities and how people decide who's part of their community and who isn't. What communities delineate as appropriate versus what's not appropriate. How folks make meaning of the world through texts or divinities or each other, or places, or actions, how they make all of that meaning together.



Johnny Rose 04:09

Yeah. And we also kept prattling on about how religion isn't done with us, which is related to this idea of religion is what people do, because as individuals, we may say, we're post-religion, or over it, or that it isn't important, but-



Megan Goodwin 04:26

I mean, we would never say that, but we know some of you might say that,



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 04:29

I was- I was thinking in that 'royal we,' I was thinking that proverbial we. The inclusive third-person plural. Anyway, THEY might say,



Megan Goodwin 04:41

Out there.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 04:42

Out there. But, like, listen, y'all. Religion exists, and especially within the United States within systems and that means law, education, medicine and calendars. You didn't think for a minute nerds that calendar would escape my mention or would cause so much room for contemplation, anger, resentment and general mishegoss. But then, you hadn't met me a year ago. When you've harped on the idea that YOU might not be religious, and that's fine. But that doesn't mean that religion as a system and a set of ideas within major societal systems isn't acting on you or your communities.



Megan Goodwin 05:21

Yeah, sure is. And there's- there's laws about it. Not just in the US, though. Like I keep telling you, I am an Americanist, which basically makes me a monster to Ilyse. It's fine, I'm comfortable with it. I am-I am a monstrous Americanist. And we keep talking about the US because I keep making us talk about the US. But laws about religious practice, about who can be a real, protected, proper citizen, these exists all over the world. Like in a rough little tally, we've talked about France, the UK, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, India, China, Pakistan- Pakistan (I can speak) China, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, specifically. To show y'all that religion is both what people do, and your personal religiosity, frankly, doesn't mean crap to the laws of nation states.



Johnny Rose 06:12

Yeah. 100%. So if Season One was all about religion, being what people do, and being tied up in systems of power, like law, like medicine, like motherfucking calendars, Season Two was a deeper dive into race and gender, to other ideas, like religion that are real and have real effects in the world, but that our social constructs change over time and vary by region.



Megan Goodwin 06:38

Yeah. We just spent a whole season with you all outlining how race and gender and sexuality are everywhere, for individuals and for communities. And so if you want to think about religion, also always there, you really cannot, you just CANNOT think about religion without also thinking about race and gender and sexuality. If religion is what people do, and people have race, and gender, and sexuality (which they do, even if their gender or sexuality is no thank you, please), then you have to assume that you need those frameworks to make any sense of people and what they're doing.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 07:16

Yeah, and again, we talked about all of that across a whole variety of places, nerds, you'll remember that Megan, the Americanist, got a couple of episodes to outline the history of one place and I got a couple of episodes to do literally the rest of the world, right? You remember? You remember that, nerds?



Megan Goodwin 07:32

Yeah, we get it. We get it. You're mad. You're mad at the way that American-centric histories and ideas allow PhDs to know something so particular and you always have to be both a specialist and a generalist because you're stuck defining "India." You can open your damn mouth, move on girl, but actually don't because you're cranky and right and I cherish you.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 07:51

Alright, fine, fine. Anyway, gender and race and religion all play together, act on each other, shape how we do, well, each of those things.



Megan Goodwin 08:02

Yeah. I think that about covers where we've been. Ilyse is mad at America, and frankly, if you're not mad at America, what are you even doing with your life? Please. Ilyse, also mad at calendars, and hopefully has showed you why you should be mad at calendars. I appreciate you. And I, personally will not rest until y'all stop saying cults to describe literally anything you don't like, or start paying attention to how religious groups are shaping our healthcare. Truly, literally, infecting the rest of us with your gross COVID spittle is framed as religious freedom. Like you- you can't be done with religion if it's coughing on you at the grocery store.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 08:41

Definitely not, definitely can't be.



Megan Goodwin 08:43

Yeah, no, no. Gross. Wear a mask. The end. Bleugh. Okay, so that's where we've been. Here is where we are headed. We are headed toward applied learning, nerd friends. We are

setting up some cool conversations about how religion shows up in spaces you might not expect (unless, you know, you're listening to the show and you know better. But I bet your mom is still surprised, actually), so spaces like ghost stories or political rhetoric or children's books. We're also going to find out if Jesus was a literal wizard so you stay tuned for that.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 09:14

Oh, yeah, I'm definitely excited.



Megan Goodwin 09:16

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Shaily's gonna tell us. I can't wait.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 09:18

I mean, we already know that Jesus is a carb. So if he's a carb, AND a wizard?



Megan Goodwin 09:22

Oh my God, Jesus is a biscuit. I let him sop me up! Latrice Royale, blessed.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 09:34

This is the most compelling Christianity has ever been to me, I just want to say that. Wizards and carbs? Like, that's the sell. If you're- so if you're wondering missionaries: that's the sell. But also don't do that. That's imperialism. Next!



Megan Goodwin 09:48

Hey, Jesus is a biscuit, I let him sop me up. I would prefer not to have to sop up Christianity while I do that, but whatever. The point of this is not just to have weird interesting conversations with smart folks that we admire. The point is also that, but not just, we want to think with y'all about how religion is shaping our world, and about how invested many folks are in claiming that religion isn't important or active anymore. Like in Ilyse's oft-lamented school calendars. Love a runner. So, what's at stake in understanding religion as more than just texts, or in acknowledging that religion and specifically white mainstream Christianity has uniquely shaped racism and racist violence, especially in what's now the

United States? What's at stake in thinking about religion, and not like, cults or magic, as a political force?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 10:39

All of that, and more this season, nerds.



Megan Goodwin 10:42

So delighted.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 10:42

And, we've also got a new format. So starting next time, we've paired episodes off with the first of each pair being the two of us setting up a problem in religion, you've heard us chat about before, even more deeply. The second episode of each pair will be us chatting with a leading expert on that very issue. We're rocking the season in that way, because no two people can know everything. And let's be honest, we know a lot. But sometimes it's also informative to hear things from new perspectives, with nuanced sets of experience, and with experiences we just don't- we just don't have. Also, we're talking to cool, smart, folks about their work, which is frankly, a good time. So join us, won't you?



Megan Goodwin 10:43

Please. Next time, IRMF and I are talking about public scholarship, especially on religion, we'll be thinking about why projects like this here pod, which is supported, as you probably remember, by a research grant, specifically because it is research and scholarship. So why are projects like this pod important? Why public scholarship is not an option for some people and why it is mandatory for others, and why your work is not in fact, too complicated to talk about in public. I'm going to do that again. And why your work is NOT, in fact, too complicated to talk about in public.



Johnny Rose 12:01

Yes, yes. And we're doing this all because in this season's third episode, Dr. Simran Jeet Singh will be here to chat with us all about that, and more, at a more granular and personal level. So see, we're up to setting you all up to get the most out of these rockstar experts joining us all throughout Season Three. We're hoping that giving you background in the first half of a pair will make our conversations all the more riveting and useful in the

second half.



Megan Goodwin 12:33

Applied Learning, nerds! And teacher friends, we're also hoping these paired sets help you teach within a theme, which is a recurring request we get. Shall we entice the nerds with a few more details about what's in store for the season?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 12:47

Uh, yes. If we're talking public scholarship, there's perhaps no one as present in American religions in the public eye than Anthea Butler. We'll set up her visit with an episode diving more deeply into evangelicalism, white Christianity, race and religion, in the US. Then she'll come on and- what?



Megan Goodwin 13:06

No, just yes, I'm really excited!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 13:07

Oh, I thought you said stop.



Megan Goodwin 13:09

No, it's like yes, I need it. I need it. Pump it directly into my veins.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 13:14

Then she'll come on and we'll chat about her brand new book almost out pre-order now available on iTunes, etc. White Evangelical Racism. It's not really available on iTunes, that's a deep track RuPaul joke, it's available through UNC Press.



Megan Goodwin 13:28

And you should get it. Then we've got two episodes where we're talking text, magic religion, and what we think we know. The first pair is about the Bible, Christianity and magic with Dr. Shaily Patel as our resident Biblicist badass. We'd use any excuse to chat

with her, but these two episodes are specifically for you, Bible nerds, who keep asking us to do Christianity things that aren't imperialism and like, you know, we can't-we- we can't do that, but Shaily can (well, she's gonna talk about imperialism anyway) BUT Shaily is going to rock your worlds. And then the second pair of episodes on religion and magic is more Ilyse's jam, with a deep dive into Islam, jinn, and texts, followed by Dr. Ali Olami joining us. You probably know him from his weekly Wednesday threads on medieval Islamic magic, astrology, and jinn and if you don't know, now you know, nerds.



Johnny Rose 14:16

So again religion is what people do, religion isn't done with us, you cannot think about religion without also thinking about race, gender, and sexuality, and we are about to go topically next-level with professors Singh, Butler, Patel, and Olami to build up and out on all this.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 14:41

Whoo. That's a lot. What do you say, Megan? Is it time?



Megan Goodwin 14:45

Oh, it's time. Settle in class. It's STORY TIME.



Krusty the Clown 14:50

Hey, kids, it's story time!



Johnny Rose 14:53

Alright, this is a really short one today Goodwin. And I picked it because this lil phrase is, I guess, I mean, like, I want to call it yours. You borrow it, you've made it the little pennant of our Foody Goodwin MOFU gang, from Mary E. Hunt, who herself borrows it from The Grail, a Catholic-rooted women's organization. I have to say she said it so frequently, that finding just one place she said it was actually kind of complicated. So instead, I just yanked this particular set of lines from an interview with her, Keica Ali, and Monique Moultrie about their version of the Guide For Women in Religion.



Megan Goodwin 15:28

Which y'all should read, if you haven't already it's real good.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 15:29

Absolutely. So in this little quote, it's super tiny, but let me set it up. Mary Hunt, a lesbian feminist theologian talks with the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER), a group she co-founded and still co-runs. She's talking here about collaboration, being a scholar, and what's expected in the academy. Ahem, The Grail [a Catholic-rooted women's organization] always says "Together, we're a genius.".. so even though individual work is prioritized by scholars, tenure committees, institution, and etc, Dr. Hunt continues, "But collaborative work takes the best of what each person has to offer and melds it into a new product is really exciting." she said. Alright, Goodwin, what can you make of this tiny little interview segment that I pulled out? Why is this line in particular your jam?



Megan Goodwin 16:19

I love this so much. This, yes, again, rewired my brain. So I first heard Mary say this as part of her discussions with the Human Rights Campaign [HRC], uh, and their religion and faith Scholarship Program (rest in peace), which brought together junior scholars working on religion and sexuality for about a week at Vanderbilt for, I think, two or three years running. The HRC brought in senior luminaries in religion like Mary Hunt, and Emilie Townes, and Laurel Schneider, and Jenna Jacobson, and Tracy West, like you're getting a sense of just how amazing this experience was. And all of these amazing scholars came in to talk to us about their work, while we also workshopped our own writing together. And it's- it's awesome to have a week to focus on your dissertation with other smart folks who care about your specific sub-field. But the bigger takeaway for me was the relationships, honestly, that I built with those folks. I'm still in conversation with many of them. I'm still learning from them, I'm still challenged by the smart questions they're asking both specifically about my work and just generally in the field of religion and sexuality. So like, selfishly, my work is better and smarter and more useful because of their contributions and challenges. But more than that, it's been awesome to see spaces in the Academy where groups like this, formally organized like HRC, or Mark Jordan did an amazing religion and sexuality writing seminar for a bunch of years. And participating in both of those changed my life, no joke. But also just, I have loved and do love seeing the way nerds find one another. Where groups, lift one another up, ask difficult and productive questions of one another, just generally build an academy worth saving, in my opinion. And here I'm thinking about, like, our very first episode lo, one year ago, where you and I defined religious studies and theology in specific ways. And we had a bunch of really smart folks pop up and say, you know, I'm not sure if I would define it in those ways and

how else can we think about this, so like, Jorge popped in, Jorge Rodriguez, Jake Erickson, who I actually know through HRC, all of them helped us kind of nuance our thinking, and just push the conversation forward, which is awesome. I'm also thinking specifically of an experience I had this summer where I was writing something for the website for feminist studies and religion. And Yohana Junker was the person assigned to peer review my piece and originally, it was supposed to be kind of blind, peer reviewed, but she had brought in so many really interesting questions and provocations, that what was supposed to be a sole-authored piece wound up being, like, I asked, and she agreed, to be listed as co-author because frankly, the- the piece was more, and better, and more useful, specifically because of the collaborative piece, which felt like a small, but I don't know, at the- at the time and looking back at it, it felt significant and like a tiny way that we can start decolonizing scholarship where like, it doesn't have to be about me and I found this stuff and look at what I think. It's about just like making us smarter and more thoughtful and more considerate and just... yeah, I don't know. There's something, I think, profoundly humbling about knowing that you can't know everything, especially when the academy makes admitting that you don't know everything feel profoundly unsafe. But once- once I got past that ego-space, it was also a giant relief. Like, I cannot know everything as one person. Cool. But you can know a hell of a lot if you don't have to know it alone. So yeah, together, we're a genius.



Johnny Rose 20:08

I love that you brought that line into my life because I don't exist in the same scholarly spaces as you. I mean, now we do more and more, because of this podcast, because of your book, because of both of our... I think coming into our own, in a post-grad way where you can just kind of like slough off the things you're supposed to talk about, and really just talk about the stuff you care about. But, this- this, like, Mary Hunt's not a scholar that- that I've read, or that I've worked with, or that writes about things that I naturally care about, right? Like, I don't do Christian or Catholic theology, I don't really study, like, queer formations in the US, like, I don't do any of that.



Megan Goodwin 20:56

Right.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 20:56

So when you brought together, we are a genius to us. I was like, 'Who is this Mary Hunt? That's a great line.' But I think this question of, like- I think the second part of that quote- I

liked this quote, so when I was hunting for where she said it originally, and it's all over the place, and there's, like, a deep dive of the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual, like all of their newsletters are online and so I got a little bit distracted, because I do this stuff in the middle of the night, but like, the one that I really liked was this interview, because this question of like, individual work is prioritized by all of the material realities in the jobs that most of us work. So whether or not you get the plum job of a tenure track job, or you just exist in a committee, solo-authorship, solo-taught classes, solo-grants, everything is are "you the singular author here?"



Megan Goodwin 21:53

Yeah.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 21:53

And so what I love about this line is, like, it is inherently, um, maybe this is gonna sound like an overreaction, but the idea that together, we are a genius, not singularly. So no, no shade to all the rad people that won the MacArthur Genius awards this year.



Megan Goodwin 22:14

Yeah.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 22:16

But when that is a goal in the academy, to be named a literal genius, to say that "together, we're a genius" is actually profoundly radical. It is profoundly radical to say, you might know a hell of a lot, Megan. But actually the thing that you do with others, the- the ways that your work is built upon and shared, and not in this Academy way where you, like, you like ping-pong it out, right? Like I write something and I hit it with my racket, and then you write something and you hit it back, and then we keep that conversation going. But in order to see it as a conversation, you'd have to get like, nine different journals, and like three different books, and, like, line them up. Like, that's not collaborative. That's- maybe it's like building blocks, where we're together building some sort of structure, but each brick is its own entity. This "together we're a genius," I think, named for me, what has been a real, like, impulse in my work, which is, you build teams.



Megan Goodwin 23:15

Right.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 23:15

Like I can't win a game on my own, I need a team. And so I just- I just love how radical that is. That every single thing in the job that I have currently, tells me you should be doing this on your own. But every impulse I have to be a better thinker, a better scholar, a better teacher, a better colleague, a better mentor, says the opposite. And so I love having a pithy little phrase that you- that you actually put on a picture of us so that I can like have it in my office and say, "okay, that's the goal." The goal is collaboration and forging ahead in networks rather than competitiveness and the lie, the misogynistic white supremacist lie, that any one person could be excellent on their own without support, without community, without networks.



Megan Goodwin 24:08

Yes, yes to all of that. So, thank you, Mary Hunt, and thank you The Grail, and just thank-thank all y'all who help make this work worth doing.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 24:23

Yup. Together, we're a genius.



Megan Goodwin 24:26

Pandemic made us soft, y'all. Anyway, enough about that. What about me? What about Tyra? It's PRIMARY SOURCES. [singing] Primary Sources!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 24:39

I almost thought you were gonna forget to sing it and I was super mad.



Megan Goodwin 24:44

So primary sources is a segment where we talk about how all of this affects us as human people and not brains on sticks.



Johnny Rose 24:51

Goodwin, why don't- why don't- why don't we keep riffing on this idea of- from storytime. I was kind of thinking that this primary sources could be even more about how we learned to do this work, but not, like, the important books like how do we learn how to use an archive, but the little things you pick up and then looking back, where it is IT- it is the thing.



Megan Goodwin 25:11

Yeah, yes. Let's do that. Tell me about the thing. No, you go first.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 25:16

Okay.



Megan Goodwin 25:18

Please and thank you.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 25:20

Cool. I want to talk about genealogy. So on this here pod, I've talked a lot about where I come from and how where I come from is adoption. And I'd also-



Megan Goodwin 25:31

Wait, you're adopted?!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 25:32

I know? SHOCKING! And I've talked a lot about, like, the work that that has done as a scholar, but I- I want to name that the possibility of that, the deep thinking that I've done around that is- is not just therapy and years of living in my body with my experiences, but it's actually because of the late great Dr. Ruel Tyson, a faculty member at UNC who was a legend and had like, Megan correct me if I'm wrong, he had like a Foghorn Leghorn, North Carolina accent It was-



Megan Goodwin 26:09

No straight up, Ruel Willoughby Tyson, who came to the University of North Carolina to become a gentleman.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 26:15

Yes. No, like, y'all he was that old.



Megan Goodwin 26:18

No picture the- I need you to see the suspenders.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 26:21

Yeah. No, like...



Megan Goodwin 26:22

It was that level.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 26:23

Yes. There was something like dandy-ish about him.



Megan Goodwin 26:27

Mhm, mhm, mhm.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 26:28

Anyway, I took one of the Ruel's last seminars that he was teaching at UNC. And it was one of these, um, you know what Goodwin? I don't even remember what it was called. It was like a gateway, I think, to theory, to the culture- to theory? What the hell was it?



Megan Goodwin 26:44

It was- you needed like a religion and culture class?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 26:46

Yes. Yes.



Megan Goodwin 26:47

And that was the one that was available.



Johnny Rose 26:48

No, I wanted to take it because it wasn't- whatever. I wanted to take that class. It was where we were going to do a lot of like Foucault. But instead, we read like a buttload of Nietzsche, and we read it so slow. And I want you to know, dear nerds, that I like that kid in "Little Miss Sunshine," I had an actual Nietzsche poster, like, as a college student who smoked too much weed because I thought I was fucking cool. I was not. A) I was not but B) I thought I was like, down with Nietzsche. I was not- I was not down with Nietzsche, and by the end of that class I was done. But the final project of that class was, I want you to write a genealogy. The rule was, it could not just be an intellectual genealogy. You had to weave your personal genealogy into your intellectual genealogy because Ruel had not gotten the memo either of objectivity, nor of like postmodern critique. So he just had this assignment, that had like, clearly been kicking around since like, 1958, where, like, you were just gonna write your own personal history as an intellectual history and your intellectual history as a personal history. And this is such a silly assignment, and I guarantee you if you asked anyone else in that class, they would not remember it. Because this was literally, like, truly like, this man's last year teach- or second-to-last year teaching, everyone kind of thought it was a blow off class. But that assignment broke my brain open. It did, it broke my brain open. Because the idea that it became the first place I actually, out loud, like, as a scholar theorized what it meant to have this wacky birth certificate, which- which marked when I wasn't me. Right, because like, my birth certificate has a double thing. And it's clear that if someone else had adopted me my name would be different, my parents would be differ- everything on that sheet would be wrong, even if the date and time were different. So that class really broke open for me the possibility of thinking, right like, you know, that class was a class where everyone said "conditions of possibility" too fucking much because we were just reading Foucault and no one really did the reading so it's like, "conditions of possibility" like I- it was, I was-



Megan Goodwin 28:59

Grad school.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 28:59

Dreadful. Yeah, yeah. That class too, like, well we could talk to Kathy Foody about it later, but that class was... Um, sorry, to those friends who are listening now and don't remember being that much of a slacker, you were, it was a bad class. However, that assignment, that one word- of like thinking about your intellectual genealogy as personal and your personal genealogy as intellectual, really changed how I thought about my work, it changed how I thought about community of scholarship, it changed about how I thought about the idea of like forebears and resonances. And I- I think about it often when I think about grad school, so even in this like kind of miss of a class with a professor who, quite frankly, because of ageism was being written off left, right and in between, both by students in the class and by his colleagues.



Megan Goodwin 29:35

And the university frankly.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 29:53

Oh, yeah.



Megan Goodwin 29:54

The religion department.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 29:56

It was- It-



Megan Goodwin 29:57

I have many notes.





Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 29:58


Yeah, but I think even in all those spaces, it was such a gift to have an old school class, so we didn't read a book a week. We read like three books in a semester, but you read them line by line in that, like, old school slow scholarship, you should memorize this passage, what do you mean you can't memorize the whole passage-way?


 Megan Goodwin 30:22
Yeah.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 30:23
And just broke up in my brain. And- and I'm really grateful. Man, good teaching sometimes comes in strange places. Anyway.


 Megan Goodwin 30:31
Sure. Sure does. I- I'm like very touched that you brought Ruel up. I had forgotten about that class until you mentioned it. I did not take that class. But I was Ruel's last research assistant.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 30:40
Yup.

 Megan Goodwin 30:41
And my research assistantship was, like, organizing his papers and his books so that they could move him out of the department and into the center that he helped found. And then out of the center, and just like back home. He definitely thought my name was Ginger, despite working for him for like, three years.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 30:59
I mean, you are a very tall ginger lady. So I feel like-

 Megan Goodwin 31:02
100%

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 31:03
maybe it's just a- a sweet, inappropriate nickname.



Megan Goodwin 31:07

It was not a nickname. Definitely, introduced me to people as Ginger, including his son. But-



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 31:12

Oh no...



Megan Goodwin 31:12

I mean, like, Ruel was a kind of scholar that we just- there's not space for in the academy anymore. Like he- he came to the University of North Carolina to become a gentleman. He went on to found the Department of Religion at the- (religious studies now) at the University of North Carolina, he would just have chats about what it was like to hang out in the basement with several neighbors. And, yeah, and you read the Nietzsche line by line. Like that's, anyway, I miss him. And yeah, I think like, I think my primary source is similarly, just being grateful for- for all of its many problems, and shortcomings, and- and they are many, they are legion, our grad program at UNC was a space that really helped me learn to appreciate collaboration has happened in a lot of spaces. But I'm thinking specifically about the dissertation writing group that you created, lady.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 32:07

Oh, get out.



Megan Goodwin 32:08

Good job, there. Yeah for real. I am, I am given to understand that many, many grad programs are not the sort of space where students would feel comfortable sharing works in progress, much less the truly shitty first million drafts of a dissertation proposal, as I did. And yeah, like that- the work in the writing group is about making our writing better. And that's great. But we also learned- we learned about what everybody else was working on. And we did that, like, not just to make their writing better, but so that we could promote each other in conference spaces or social media. And it, like- it felt awesome to be able to say to you know, somebody that I'm meeting at a conference, whatever, because I talked to everyone, "Oh, hey, like you're working on Second Temple, or like Post-Second Temple Judaism. Do you know about Carrie Duncan's work on female synagogue leaders? Cuz you should." Or, like, "Oh, you're doing religion-media stuff, Jenna Supp-Montgomerie has this awesome project, about the transatlantic telegraph that would like rock your world."

Jenna's book, by the way, is out now. It is called *When the Medium Was the Mission* it came out through NYU, you should check it out. She's a smart lady. And so like, obviously, that collaboration is most intense with you and Foody. And it feels- it really feels like- that working with you all is what makes it possible for me to do pretty much anything at this point. Like, knowing that I don't have to get it right the first time, that I can send you, again, a truly shitty draft, and you won't think I'm stupid, you'll just- you'll just help me make it better. And like knowing that I'll read your stuff, and I will be smarter about religion despite still having to look up when the Great Rebellion was, (1857 I had to double check). Like that- that is priceless to me. So again, yeah, we're just like- together we're a genius and- and #blessed the end. [singing] Primary sources. But don't pack up your stuff yet, nerds. You've got HOMEWORK!



Simpsons 34:12

Homework, what homework?



Megan Goodwin 34:14

Remember, you can find everything we're assigning here and a whole lot more in the show notes for this episode, links, citations, non-paywalled options for stuff you need a university login to get to, occasionally silly pictures of us, all of that and transcripts because accessibility isn't just good pedagogy, it's mandatory.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 34:30

I'm honestly going to treat this like I would treat my opener in the first week of classes, y'all. So here's my homework: you need to read the syllabus, which will be posted up now in a couple places on our website, so you can tell what's coming, where we're going, and you might want to think about what to assign. You want to probably look through our past show notes if you're new, or if you want a refresher, or, again, if you are teaching this term and want to figure out what to assign, what's open, what's open-access. We've done A lot of work in the shownotes, and I urge you to go use them. And, just like I tell my students if you're totally new to religion, hi, hello, welcome. I always like to recommend Malory Nye's *Religion, the Basics*. It's a really good sim- simple primer but it's not, um, it's not short on theory. So it's not- it's simple but not simplistic. And then I guess I'll say go follow our Season Three guests [on Twitter] so you can find Dr. Anthea Butler @AntheaButler as one word. You can find Shaily Patel @vox_magica. You can find Simran Jeet Singh at @sikhprof. And you can find Ali Olami @aaolomi and I'll link- I'll put links to all of their profiles in our shownotes.

M Megan Goodwin 35:54
Awesome. I will also pull out some cool threads that our guest stars have written so you can get a sense of what they do, but also it's still pandemic so like that's plenty. Go take a nap. Oh, and speaking of folks to follow highly recommend the NAP ministry that's @thenapministry on Twitter as well. Thanks for coming back for Season Three nerds. We appreciate you. We also appreciate transcription Queen Katherine Brennan, whose work makes this pod accessible. Can't get enough of us? We are always, truly always, on Twitter.

J Johnny Rose 36:26
You can find Megan on twitter @mpgPhD, and Ilyse, that's me @profirnf or the show @keepingit_101 find the website at keepingit101.com. Please do drop us a rating or review in your podcaster of choice, it helps. And with that, peace out, nerds!

M Megan Goodwin 36:49
And do your homework! It's on the syllabus.

M Moira 37:09
Now we have been given the essential task of sending our preceptors-

A Alexis 37:15
Our teachers.

M Moira 37:17
That's what I said thank you. Sending our scholastic skippers some panegyric words-

A Alexis 37:22
Okay, no one's gonna understand what you're talking about.

J Johnny Rose 37:24
Okay, wh-why don't I start? Okay, we just wanted to express from the bottom of our hearts just how necessary you all are in shaping young minds.

M Moira 37:34
Sculpting, John.

D David Rose 37:35
So thank you. And may you continue to brighten-

M Moira 37:39
Illuminate.

D David Rose 37:40
And, God, illuminate the paths for many more to come.

A Alexis 37:45
So in celebration of all you precipitators, prep-

M Moira 37:49
Teachers.