

DR. NAAMLEELA FREE JONES

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Scholar-practitioner and educator specializing in religious studies, comparative esotericism, and consciousness studies. Experienced faculty member at multiple institutions with a strong commitment to academic excellence and a certification in online teaching and curriculum design. Research centers on nonduality, Gnostic spirituality, modern yoga and Tantra, and the intersection of Eastern and Western esotericism within contemporary post-traditional contexts.

EDUCATION

- 2016–2023 Ph.D. Religion, Rice University, Houston, Texas
Field: History of Religions; Contemporary Esotericism; Asian Religions in America; Modern Yoga and Tantra
Advisor: Dr. Jeffrey J. Kripal
- 2016–2020 M.A., Gnosticism, Esotericism, and Mysticism
Department of Religion, Rice University, Houston, Texas
- 2013–2015 B.A., Religious Studies, *Phi Beta Kappa*, University of California at Berkeley
Advisor: Dr. Robert P. Goldman, South and Southeast Asian Studies

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2025– present Adjunct Faculty, Pacifica Graduate Institute
PRC 712 Foundations of Consciousness Winter 2026
PRC 834 Yogic Psychologies of Consciousness, upcoming
- 2024–present Adjunct Faculty, Naropa University
REL-190E-A/REL-590E-A Western Esotericism. Spring 2026
REL-645E-A Methods/Issues in Religious Studies. Spring 2025/26
TRA-133E-A Yoga I. Spring 2024
- 2023–2025 Dissertation Committee Member, California Institute of Integral Studies
Responsible for guiding and encouraging dissertation candidate to design and execution of a high quality, doctoral-level dissertation project.
- 2023–2025 Faculty, Holmes Institute of Consciousness Studies
REL 621: World Religions, PSY 622: The Psychology of Meaning, WRS 620: Graduate Research and Writing. Fall 2024.

REL 620: Sacred Wisdom of the World. Spring 2024; PHI 621: Consciousness, REL 622: Religion and Society. Winter '24; REL 621: World Religions. Fall '23. Online Teaching Certification. Summer 2023.

- 2020–2023 Adjunct Faculty, Comparative Cultural Studies, University of Houston
RELS 3355: History and Philosophy of Yoga. Spring 2021, '22, '23.
RELS 3381: Global Hinduism. Fall 2022.
RELS 1301: Introduction to Religious Studies. Summer 2021.
RELS 2340: Introduction to Hinduism. Fall 2020, '21.
- 2019–present Faculty Fellow, Mind Body Spirit Institute, Jung Center of Houston:
“Revisiting the Garden of Eden: Esoteric Perspectives.” March 2024.
“Gnostic Spirituality: Then and Now.” November 2019, October 2021.
“Oneness in Theory and Practice.” November 2020.
- 2019 Lecturer, Boniuk Institute for Religious Tolerance, Spring 2019.
“Introduction to Hinduism,” “The Concept of the Avatar”
- 2019 Lecturer, SMU Perkins School of Theology, Spring 2019.
“Reading and Writing Scripture in New Religious Movements.”
- 2017 Teaching Assistant and Lecturer, Rice University, Fall 2017.
RELI 101: Introduction to the Study of Religion, with Professor Jeffrey J. Kripal.
- 2015–2016 Instructor, Summer youth programs, Vision of Mulund Institute:
“The Tradition of the *Aśvamedha* Horse-Sacrifice.” Maria Hoop, Holland 2016.
“The History and Mythology of the *Avatāra*.” Middletown, CA 2015.

ACADEMIC HONORS AND AWARDS

- 2019 Gnosticism, Esotericism, and Mysticism Certificate Award Recipient –
Department of Religion, Rice University
- 2017 Andrew W. Mellon Graduate Research Seminar Participant and Grant Recipient –
Humanities Research Center, Rice University, 2017-2019
- 2015 Most Distinguished Graduate in Religious Studies – *Phi Beta Kappa*, University
of California at Berkeley

CONFERENCE PAPERS

- 2025 “The Spiritual Gospel of Saint Jesus of Galilee: Revelation and the Reimagining
of Scripture” The Gnostic Imagination Initiative, Rice University, Houston,
Texas, March 2025.

- 2019 “Yogic Gnosticism In the Work of Adi Da Samraj.” Andrew J. Mellon Graduate Research Seminar Conference, Rice University, Houston, Texas, April 2019.
- 2017 “Towards an Emergent Understanding of Charisma.” Emerging Religions Conference, Rice University, Houston, Texas, April 2017.

PUBLICATIONS

- 2026 “Ancient Wisdom: Modern Thought: Yogic Philosophy and the Mind-Body Problem,” *Indian Journal of Knowledge Systems* (Forthcoming, 2026)
- 2024 “The Whole Body Gospel: Yogic Gnosticism in the Work of Adi Da Samraj,” *Gnosis: Journal of Gnostic Studies* (Vol. 9, No. 1, Spring 2024)
- 2017 “The Avatar and its ‘Incarnation’ in a Postmodern World,” *Journal of Vaishnava Studies* (Vol. 26, No. 1, Fall 2017)
- 2015 “From Gods to Gamers: The Manifestation of the Avatar in Religious History and Postmodern Culture,” *Berkeley Undergraduate Journal* (Spring 2016)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2025 Contributing Researcher – Transformation and Transcendence Database; Harvard University, Center for the Study of World Religions
- 2025–present Associate Editor – Correspondences: Journal for the Study of Esotericism
- 2021–2025 Book Review Editor – Correspondences: Journal for the Study of Esotericism
- 2019–2023 Senior Managing Copyeditor – Gnosis: Journal of Gnostic Studies
- 2017–2019 Copyeditor – Gnosis: Journal of Gnostic Studies

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Academy of Religion
 Association for the Study of Esotericism
 National Society of Collegiate Scholars
 The Society for Collegiate Leadership & Achievement
 Phi Beta Kappa

LANGUAGES

American English: Native
Sanskrit: Elementary
Italian: Elementary
French: Reading Proficiency
German: Reading Proficiency

REFERENCES

Dr. Jeffrey J. Kripal
J. Newton Rayzor Chair in Philosophy and Religious Thought
Rice University, Houston, TX
jjkripal@rice.edu

Dr. April D. DeConick
Isla Carroll and Percy E. Turner Professor of New Testament, Early Christianity
Rice University, Houston, Texas
adeconick@rice.edu

Dr. Erin Prophet
Assistant Professor in Philosophy and Religious Studies
East Carolina University, Greenville, NC
prophete24@ecu.edu

Dr. Aren Roukema
Chief Editor of *Correspondences: Journal for the Study of Esotericism*
University of British Columbia, BC, Canada
aren.roukema@ubc.ca