

## DR. NAAMLEELA FREE JONES

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### Education

- 2023 Ph.D. Religion, Rice University, Houston, Texas  
Field: History of Religions; New Religious Movements; Asian Religions in America; Hinduism; Yoga and Tantra in America  
Advisor: Dr. Jeffrey J. Kripal  
  
Dissertation Title: *The Zero-Point Paradigm: “Radical” Hermeneutics of Nonduality in the Work of Adi Da Samraj*
- 2020 M.A., Gnosticism, Esotericism, and Mysticism  
Department of Religion, Rice University, Houston, Texas
- 2015 B.A., Religious Studies, *Phi Beta Kappa*, University of California at Berkeley  
Advisor: Dr. Robert P. Goldman, South and Southeast Asian Studies  
  
Thesis Title: *From Gods to Gamers: The Manifestation of the Avatar Throughout Religious History and Postmodern Culture*

### 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

### Publications

- 2024 “The Gospel of the Whole Body: Yogic Gnosticism in the Work of Adi Da Samraj,”  
Forthcoming *Gnosis: Journal of Gnostic Studies* (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)

## Teaching Experience

Faculty, Holmes Institute of Consciousness Studies:

Certificate of Completion: Holmes Online Teaching Certification. Summer 2023.  
REL 621: World Religions. Fall 2023

Adjunct Professor, Department of Religion, University of Houston, 2020-2023.

RELS 2340: Introduction to Hinduism. Fall 2020, ‘21.

RELS 3355: History and Philosophy of Yoga. Spring 2021, ‘22, ‘23.

RELS 1301: Introduction to Religious Studies. Summer 2021.

RELS 3381: Global Hinduism. Fall 2022.

Instructor and Faculty Fellow, Jung Center of Houston (Mind Body Spirit Institute):

“Oneness in Theory and Practice.” November 2020.

“Gnostic Spirituality: Then and Now.” November 2019, October 2021.

Lecturer, “Intro to Hinduism: The Avatar in a Postmodern World.” Educator Professional Development Initiative, Boniuk Institute for Religious Tolerance, February 2019.

Lecturer, “Reading and Writing Scripture in New Religious Movements.” SMU Perkins School of Theology, Spring 2019.

Teaching Assistant and Lecturer, RELI 101: Introduction to the Study of Religion.  
Professor Jeffrey J. Kripal, Undergraduate Course, Rice University, 2017.

Instructor, Summer youth programs, Vision of Mulund Institute:

“The History and Mythology of the *Avatāra*.” Middletown, CA 2015.

“The Tradition of the *Aśvamedha* Horse-Sacrifice.” Maria Hoop, Holland 2016.

## Conference Papers

“Yogic Gnosticism In the Work of Adi Da Samraj.” Andrew J. Mellon Graduate Research Seminar Conference, Rice University, Houston, Texas, April 2019.

“Towards an Emergent Understanding of Charisma.” Emerging Religions Conference, Rice University, Houston, Texas, April 2017.

“John the Baptist as Ritual Innovator.” Gnosticism Conference, Rice University, Houston, Texas, April 2017.

## **Guest Lectures**

- 2019 “Western Psychology and the Politics of Spirituality.” (RELI 558), Rice U.
- 2018 “Introduction to Psychology and Religion.” (RELI 501), Rice University.
- 2018 “Adi Da and the Religious Movement of Adidam.” (RELI 501), Rice University.
- 2018 “Rudolf Steiner and Anthroposophy.” (RELI 501), Rice University.
- 2017 “Joseph Smith and Mormon Origins.” (RELI 501), Rice University.
- 2017 “The First Christian Gnostics: The Gospel of John.” (RELI 581), Rice University.
- 2017 “The Avatar: From Gods to Gamers.” (RELI 101), Rice University.

## **Professional Experience**

- 2021-present Correspondences: Journal of Esotericism – Book Review Editor
- 2019-2023 Gnosis: Journal of Gnostic Studies – Senior Copyeditor
- 2017-2019 Gnosis: Journal of Gnostic Studies – Copyeditor and Team Manager

## **Languages**

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

## **Professional Affiliations**

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

## References

Dr. Jeffrey J. Kripal  
J. Newton Rayzor Chair in Philosophy and Religious Thought  
Rice University, Houston, Texas  
[jjkripal@rice.edu](mailto:jjkripal@rice.edu)

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

Dr. Christian Eberhart  
Religious Studies Director, Department of Comparative Cultural Studies  
University of Houston, Houston, Texas  
[ceberhart@uh.edu](mailto:ceberhart@uh.edu)

Dr. Mark Ryan  
Former Professor and Dean of Jonathan Edwards College at Yale University  
Coordinator – Jung Center Faculty Fellowship, Houston, Texas  
[Mark.ryan@aya.yale.edu](mailto:Mark.ryan@aya.yale.edu)