

DR. NAAMLEELA FREE JONES

1050 Larrabee Ave, Suite 104 PMB 533
Bellingham, WA
naamleelafreejones@gmail.com

Scholar-practitioner and educator specializing in religious studies, contemporary 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 focuses on nonduality, modern yoga and Tantra, and the intersection of Eastern and Western esotericism with contemporary thought, particularly within the American context.

EDUCATION

2016–2023 Ph.D. Religion, Rice University, Houston, Texas
Field: History of Religions; Hinduism; Asian Religions in America; Modern Yoga and Tantra; Contemporary Esotericism
Advisor: Dr. Jeffrey J. Kripal

Dissertation Title: *The Zero-Point Paradigm: “Radical” Hermeneutics of Nonduality in the Work of Adi Da Samraj*

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

Thesis Title: *From Gods to Gamers: The Manifestation of the Avatar Throughout Religious History and Postmodern Culture*

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2024–present Adjunct Faculty, Naropa University
REL-645E-A Methods/Issues in Religious Studies. Spring 2025
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 2024.
REL 621: World Religions. Fall 2023.
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.
Educator Professional Development Initiative.
“Introduction of Hinduism”
- 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

- Upcoming “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

- Upcoming “Ancient Wisdom: Modern Minds: Indian Yogic Traditions and the Study of Consciousness” *Indian Journal of Knowledge Systems*, 2025
- 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

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

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, Texas
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

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