

Ted Vial, Iliff School of Theology



Ted Vial teaches at the Iliff School of Theology, and is director of the University of Denver/Iliff School of Theology Joint PhD Program in religious and theological studies. This is his fifth year as editor of the Reflection and Theory in the Study of Religion Series.

When I was in graduate school I saw myself as a historian of religions whose expertise would be in the tradition of Protestantism. The faculty told me flat out I couldn't do that — if you studied Protestantism you were doing theology; if you were a historian of religions you studied "other religions." I still think they were wrong, and the Reflection and Theory in the Study of Religion book series exemplifies why that is. There are important differences between theology and religious studies to be sure. But it has become clear that the study of religions and theology have deeply influenced one another. We seem to be at a genealogical moment in our discipline, focusing on the roots of our own categories, and it is possible and necessary for reflection and theory in the study of religion to take seriously how we have been shaped by the context of the history of our discipline. This context includes theology, nationalism, gender, colonialism, economics, and race among others.

The main focus of the Reflection and Theory in the Study of Religion Series at present is on works that help in this task of self-consciousness about the study of religions. This means that historical analyses of religious studies are likely to find a fit in this series, as are studies that cross traditional disciplinary lines. This is also the most likely home — of the five AAR/OUP book series — for straight-up theology. Recent titles appearing in the series include *Plato's Ghost: Spiritualism in the American Renaissance* and *Toward a Generous Orthodoxy: Prospects for Hans Frei's Postliberal Theology*. Soon to be appearing are *Secularism and Religion-Making*, a collection of essays that test and criticize recent work on secularism (especially Charles Taylor) from case studies in different traditions;

Method and Metaphysics in Maimonides' Guide

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Fortunate Fallibility: Kierkegaard and the Power of Sin

; and

Theology, Comparison, and the Political. □ *The New Comparative Theology and the Problem of the Ineluctability of Religious Rivalry*

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What interests me as an editor is the broad variety of manuscripts I get to look at, so many of which are pushing the theoretical boundaries of our discipline. I sometimes feel like I am the first one in line to get into the amusement park. Some of the books end up on the syllabi for my PhD seminars. Equally rewarding is the chance to work closely with such impressive authors, learn from them, give them feedback, and shepherd the manuscripts through the review process. Books published in the AAR/OUP series get the same attention, production, and marketing from Oxford University Press as all their other books. They have the additional advantage of a fairly intense engagement with the series' editors, who are academics working in the field. I encourage anyone working on a project that seems like it might fit this series to [This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it](mailto:) .

For more information on the Reflection and Theory in the Study of Religion Series, please consult the [AAR website](#) .