

### **Old Religions in New Lands**

CHALLENGES IN IMMIGRATION AND RELIGION

#### **Pleasure to Meet You**

Get to know Craig, Kelly, and Eric

## Religious Diversity—What's the Problem?

Renowned Scholar Dr. Rita Gross

## WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE?

**NEXUS INTERFAITH DIALOGUE SERIES** 

THEN AND NOW: A Center Summary A LOOK AT WHERE IT'S BEEN AND THE PLACES IT'S GOING

## SFASON IN REVIEW

DURNG FALL 2014, CENTER PROGRAMMING AND INITIATIVES FOCUSED ON THREE MAIN EMPHASES;

### partnerships, student involvement &contemporary relevance.

Partnerships with the World Affairs Council of Greater Hampton Roads, the College's Black Student Union, specific VWC courses, and more, strengthened campus and community relationships.

Student involvement that included student-created artwork, leadership roles in a variety of programs, discussions, and an event-related contest, were all high-impact learning experiences designed to help students understand why religious freedom is a basic human right of daily significance.

The third area of emphasis—contemporary relevance—looked at the Hobby Lobby Supreme Court case, persecution of Christians around the globe, marriage equality, and a host of other issues that were in the news and in our programs.

"It is our intention to go beyond informing to transforming and equipping individuals to be engaged leaders and citizens," says CSRF Director Craig Wansink.























We envision the Center as a hub for the campus and broader community. We want to be the place where everyone, through difficult discussions, learns the skills they need to be active in their own communities.

CSRF ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR KELLY JACKSON

#### **SEPTEMBER**

Why Hobby Lobby Matters: Religious Freedom, Contraception, Corporations, and the Constitution

Constitution Day with Dr. Eric Mazur, Dr. Taryn Myers, and Dr. Timothy O'Rourke

#### One Love Festival

Kathy Kelly, Tim Seibles, and Narissa Bond

**The Middle East After the Arab Spring**Dr. Marc Lynch

#### **OCTOBER**

Christianity in Crisis?: A Discussion of the Great and Holy War
Dr. Sara Sewell and Dr. Craig Wansink

**Illegal Love**: Dr. Tim Bostic on Politics, Religion, and Marriage Equality

I Am Not Just My Religion VWC Black Student Union and Dr. Craig Wansink

Open House & Soup
Reformation Day Celebration

#### **NOVEMBER**

#### Nica Esperanza

Filmmaker John Davis '15, Dr. Kathy Merlock Jackson, Dr. Alison Marganski, and Rev. Greg West

Your Head on a Platter: Christian Persecution from the First through the 21st Century

Rev. Greg West and Dr. Craig Wansink

Ethics and Environmental Discourse: What the Media Doesn't Tell You About Cancer and Why

Dr. Kristine Mattis

#### **DECEMBER**

*Joyeux Noel*: A Film and Discussion Dr. Sara Sewell and Dr. Craig Wansink

Brunswick Stew, Digital Art, Photography, and Religious Freedom

Professor Sharon Swift and VWC Art Students

THE CENTER HAS BEEN AN INTEGRAL PART OF VIRGINIA WESLEYAN FOR NEARLY TWO DECADES; HERE'S A LOOK AT WHERE IT'S BEEN AND THE PLACES IT'S GOING

# Then and Now A CENTER SUMMARY

Most of this year's incoming students were born in 1996. Eighteen years ago, Virginia Wesleyan did not have voicemail, or even answering machines. The Internet had not made its way to the College. Clarke Hall, Godwin Hall, and the Batten Student Center did not exist.

On September 5, 1996, VWC President Billy Greer announced the creation of a Center to promote religious freedom and understanding of different faiths. "We have come here today as Jew and Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist, to find common ground," he said during a press conference. "We've come here to celebrate the yearning of the human spirit to live in understanding, acceptance, and peace."

#### VIRGINIA: The Center makes sense in Virginia.

Since the late 1700s, the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom has shaped Hampton Roads. It even attracted Moses and Eliza Myers, the region's first permanent Jewish residents. In recent years, the religious diversity of the region has become increasingly striking. Virginia is a very appropriate place to think about religious freedom.

WESLEYAN: Religious freedom has long been part of the Wesleyan tradition. In 2004, the United Methodist Church passed a specific resolution noting that "The United Methodist Church declares religious liberty, the freedom of belief, to be a basic human right. Religious liberty includes the freedom to doubt or to deny the existence of God, and to refrain from observing religious practices...Our members have an obligation to speak out on behalf of those for whom such freedoms are denied."

The goal of the CSRF is to equip individuals to be leaders and citizens who understand how the reconciliation of religious differences creates the most meaningful opportunities for civil solutions to difficult and urgent problems.

DR. CRAIG WANSINK



**COLLEGE:** The Center makes sense because we are a college. Although there are institutes like Baylor University's J. M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies and Washington University's Danforth Center on Religion and Politics, VWC—as a liberal arts community—is able to leverage the entire college experience in bringing students to recognize the importance of religious freedom.

Dr. Catharine Cookson, the first full-time director of the Center, brought together campus and community in engaging and meaningful partnerships, addressing communal controversies and challenges head on. Her successor, Dr. Paul Rasor, focused on building resources for the Center—specifically through a collection of books focusing on religious freedom—and developing funds for lectureships.

As we look into the future, Dr. Craig Wansink notes that the greatest challenges that face the world are trans-religious. The goal of the CSRF is to equip individuals to be leaders and citizens who understand how the reconciliation of religious differences creates the most meaningful opportunities for civil solutions to difficult and urgent problems.

How will we do this? Through distinctive collaborations and partnerships; unique programs and initiatives; increased outreach into Hampton Roads; increased campus, regional, and national presence; and through creation of a model at Virginia Wesleyan that inspires individuals and movements far beyond Virginia.

As President Greer said in 1996, "We've come here to celebrate the yearning of the human spirit to live in understanding, acceptance, and peace."

Thank you for joining us in that celebration.

## SPRING 2015

Each semester, the Center sponsors educational initiatives that both engage the campus community and reach beyond the College to invite the larger public into its ongoing exploration of religious freedom. Many programs are arranged in partnership with local organizations or faith communities, among them interfaith discussions: semester-long symposia; and student, faculty, and quest presentations. Here's a detailed look at the activities planned for

#### 2015 COOKSON LECTURE: Renowned Scholar Dr. Rita Gross

The 2015 Cookson Scholar is Acharya Rita M. Gross, Ph.D., Professor Emerita, Comparative Studies in Religion, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire.

The Cookson Religious Freedom Lecture is named for the Center's founding director, Dr. Catharine Cookson. Following Dr. Cookson's death in 2004, a fund was established for the purpose of bringing scholars in religious freedom and related areas to the Virginia Wesleyan campus.



Thursday, January 29 | 7-8:15PM BLOCKER AUDITORIUM

Based on her book, Religious Diversity-What's the Problem? Buddhist Suggestions for Flourishing with Religious Diversity, Dr. Gross will explore why, throughout history, especially in the Western world, people have regarded religious diversity as a problem, or as something to overcome. This talk will discuss the spiritual and intellectual training that can help us become more comfortable with religious diversity.

#### Introduction to Buddhist Mindfulness Practice

JANE P. BATTEN STUDENT CENTER, PEARCE HOSPITALITY SUITE

Mindfulness is a very simple but profound practice that many have found life-altering and helpful. This workshop is an opportunity to learn the practice from Acharya Rita Gross, an internationally respected teacher. Please wear comfortable clothes and bring a

> will also be available and are perfectly acceptable for the mindfulness practice.



## SYMPOSIUM: Old Religions in New Lands

Focuses on challenges in immigration and changes in religion—both good and bad—that occur in the process of adapting to a new country and culture. All presentations will begin at 7 p.m. in the Blocker Auditorium. The schedule of speakers and topics can be found in the Calendar of Events on page 10 and on the Center's website.

Thursday, March 26



If You Don't Contribute You're A Dead Piece: Religious Ruminations and Civic Engagement of the Filipino-American Hampton Roads Community

**Dr. Aprilfaye Manalang,** Assistant Professor Dept. of History and Interdisciplinary Studies

Norfolk State University

Dr. Manalang's ground-breaking research examines the interplay between military service and religion, and the nuanced ways in which together they shape Filipino-American veterans' understandings of American citizenship.

Thursday, April 9

The Long War: The Andragogy of Teaching the "Long War" and Islam's Fight to Reclaim its Destiny



**Dr. David T. Fautua,** Chief of Individual Training and Learning at the Joint Staff, J7-Joint Training

Dr. Fautua will share his perspectives on the andragogy of teaching the "Long War," a course he developed and has taught for more than a decade to senior officers at

the Joint Forces Staff College in Norfolk as well as many other locations across the U.S. The course examines the strategic features of what appears to be a "Long War," which is defined as a struggle between liberal democracy and militant Islam played out on a global scale.



Thursday, April 23

Motorcycles, Buses, and Turbans: Sikhs and Religious Freedom in Postwar Britain

**Dr. Brett Bebber**, Assistant Professor, Dept. of History, Old Dominion University When the British Empire declined after the

Second World War, many Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus came to Britain to seek out opportunities for employment and to avoid persecution at home. In Britain, Sikhs and others faced numerous challenges to exercise their religious freedom. This talk will discuss how civil liberties activists in Britain both helped and harmed Sikhs as they established themselves in a new society.

#### **NEXUS Interfaith Dialogue Series**

This hallmark CSRF program is co-sponsored with the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities with support from the Peace Making Committee of the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia. A nexus is a point of connection, and that's just what this program is about: connecting people of all faiths through open and respectful dialogue. These personal encounters are vital in our struggle to overcome religious intolerance in our society. The series' spring 2015 theme is "Universal Themes in a Jewish Key: Why do bad things happen to good people? What does salvation mean?" Those questions are universal, but this series uses Jewish examples to get us to discuss the broader questions more deeply.

Monday, March 9 | 7-9PM | BLOCKER AUDITORIUM

#### "The Quarrel"(film)

Discussion moderated by **Dr. Eric Mazur**Professor of Religious Studies and CSRF Fellow

The movie *The Quarrel* focuses on two former friends who encounter each other after years of being separated. The film centers on how each understands the power of evil in the world, and how friends continue reflecting together, even when they have profound clashes of beliefs. Our open discussion afterwards will focus on the same.

Monday, April 13 | 7-8:45PM | BOYD DINING HALL, SHAFER ROOM

Two Routes to Redemption: Jewish and Christian Perspectives on the Seder



#### ETHICS BOWL

The Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges (VFIC) Ethics Bowl competition brings together student teams from each of the 15 VFIC member institutions to discuss the importance of applied ethics to a specific topic, ranging from war to sports, and from education to social media.

## Ethics and the Family: Same-sex Marriage & Adoption, Blood Transfusions, and Abortion: What is the Family's Role?

Thursday, February 5 | 7:30-9pm MONUMENTAL CHAPEL

As the VWC Ethics Bowl team prepares to compete, this program initially will highlight some of the issues that they may debate (specifically issues relating to ethics, the family, and religious freedom). Then the team will respond to a specific case, with the audience having the opportunity to interact, critique, and discuss.

#### FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Soup on Friday Celebrations

Opportunities for VWC faculty, staff, students and members of the broader community to come together for food and fellowship. All celebrations are held in the CSRF Office Suite in Clarke Hall from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

#### Love is in the Air

Friday, February 13

Love has been at the heart of many religious freedom issues—and not just polygamy.

#### National Siblings Day: Honoring the Sibling Rivalry and Differences Between John and Charles Wesley

Friday, April 10

The differences between two remarkable and influential brothers.

#### The Secularization of May Day

Friday, May 1

The wild religious origins of what has become a pretty calm day.



#### CENTER AFTER DARK

Oriented to students, these late-night events stimulate informal discussions with meaningful themes—and popcorn with M&Ms. All events are held in the CSRF Office Suite in Clarke Hall from 9 p.m. to midnight.

#### For the Bible Tells Me So (film)

Thursday, February 12

I Know What I Saw (film)

Thursday, March 5

TED TALKS: Why People Believe Weird Things and The Doubt Essential to Faith (films)

Thursday, April 2

MILLIA

#### READINGS WITH WESLEYAN

Launched in July 2014, this VWC neighborhood program brings free college-level teaching to residents of Virginia Beach's Lake Edward area. Participants study literature, art history, moral philosophy, American history and more. The spring 2015 theme is "World Religions 101: A Quick Look at Religions around the World and in Hampton Roads."

All discussions are open to the public and take place from 6:30-7:30 p.m. at Heritage United Methodist Church.

### Torah, Torah: Judaism through Exodus and the Ten Commandments

Thursday, February 19 | Dr. Craig Wansink

A Story of Displacement: The Iraqi Christian Thursday, February 26 | Mindy Bertram '15

Five Pillars and Submission: Islam through Suras 1, 3, and 112

Thursday, March 5 | Dr. Craig Wansink

Children of India: Hinduism, Buddhism, The Bhagavad Gita, and Koans

Thursday, March 12 | Dr. Craig Wansink

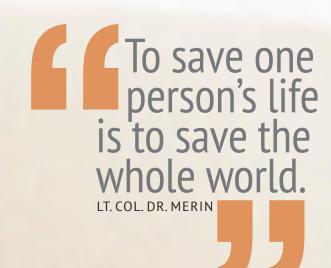
## Compassion in Action: Israel's Disaster Response Team Saves Lives

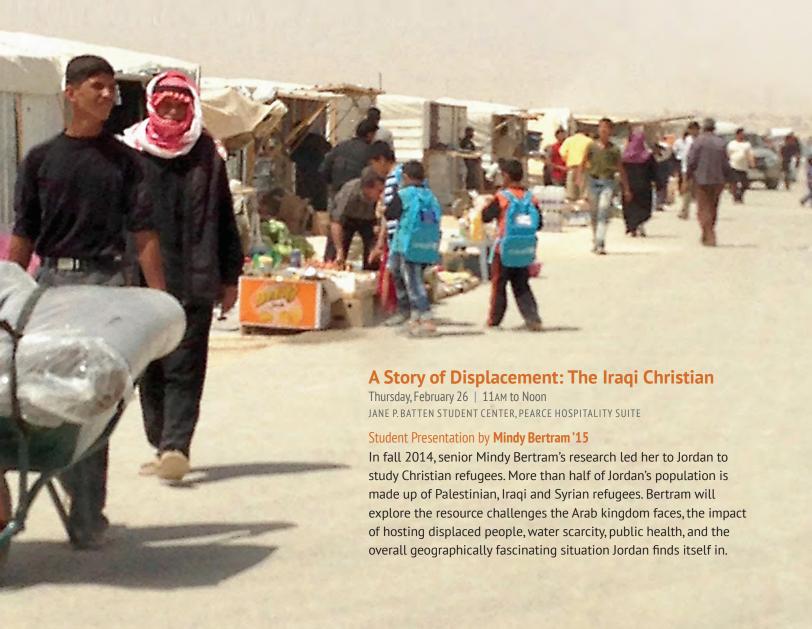
Coming in March 2015!

Date and time TBA. Sponsored in partnership with the United Jewish Federation of Tidewater

#### Ofer Merin, Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Chief of Field Hospitals

Lt. Col. Dr. Merin will discuss his team's ability to mobilize quickly in the wake of natural disasters and share how their mission to extend lifesaving medical help to as many people as possible has enabled them to treat terrorists and terror victims in the same room. Dr. Merin uses a familiar saying in Judaism to explain his philosophy, "To save one person's life is to save the whole world."







At the start of the fall 2014 semester, the CSRF welcomed Dr. Craig Wansink (Joan P. and Macon F. Brock Jr. Director), Ms. Kelly Jackson (Associate Director) and Dr. Eric Mazur (Center Fellow for Religion, Law, and Politics).

## Pleasure to Meet You

If you've visited VWC's Clarke Hall in the last few months, you may have seen moving boxes, smelled fresh paint and noticed considerable reorganization around the Center for the Study of Religious Freedom. We're looking forward to getting to know you and together making a difference in how individuals communicate about and respect basic American human rights.

Here are a few ways to consider getting involved:

**Come to our programs!** We are experimenting with many different genres and types of initiatives. If you have ideas of how we might schedule different kinds of events, at additional locations and hours, or with different themes, individuals, or partners, please send us your thoughts at kjackson@vwc.edu or 757.455.3129.

**Share your email and phone number** with us so that we may contact you, particularly when we schedule spontaneous and timely programs that are not in the newsletter. Email kjackson@vwc.edu or call 757.455.3129 to update your information.

**Support the Center.** If you are looking for a vision of how you could make a difference, we encourage you to give to the Center. Financial gifts enable us to help students study abroad, bring in quality speakers and to create safe spaces for community conversation and dialogue. Any size gift helps: \$35 sponsors student prizes for their engagement in the Center; \$50 funds one late night "Center After Dark" program for students or the purchase of a book for our collection.

More than anything, we hope to inform, transform, and equip individuals to be engaged leaders and citizens. We so desperately need that in our society, and we appreciate you standing beside us and the values we hold dear.

With gratitude, Craig, Kelly, and Eric

#### PROPER INTRODUCTIONS

#### **Dr. Craig Wansink**

Joan P. and Macon F. Brock Jr. Director After completing his undergraduate degree in economics from Morningside College, Craig studied at universities in Japan, Jordan, Germany, and Israel, and completed his Ph.D. in New Testament from Yale University. His primary research interests have focused on Biblical studies and world religions. Craig has been an ordained Presbyterian minister since 1987, has served as a Fellow for the Harvard University Pluralism Project, and served for 13 years on the Board of Trustees at his alma mater, Morningside College. Craig has been a professor in the Department of Religious Studies since 1993. He will continue to teach part time in addition to his new CSRF role.

#### Ms. Kelly Jackson

Associate Director

Kelly is a 1984 graduate of VWC and worked at the College from 1988 to 1998 in Admissions and then from 1998 to 2005 in the CSRF. From 2005-2014 Kelly served as the first Director of Community Engagement at WHRO, in which she created community partnerships, served as the executive producer on three documentaries, wrote grants, and extended the reach of public media to be more effective and relevant in addressing important community issues.



#### **Dr. Eric Mazur**

Center Fellow for Religion, Law, and Politics

Eric, the College's Gloria and David Furman Professor of Judaic Studies, received his B.A. and M.A. in religious studies from the University of Virginia, and then completed his Ph.D. at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His research has focused on religion and law—in both his *The Americanization of Religious Minorities* and his *Religion on Trial*—as well as on religion and popular culture.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

#### **JANUARY**

2015 Cookson Religious Freedom Lecture: How to Flourish with Religious Diversity

Acharya Rita M. Gross, Ph.D., *Professor Emerita*, *Comparative Studies in Religion*, *University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire* Thursday, 7-8:15PM
Blocker Auditorium

Introduction to Buddhist Mindfulness Practice

2015 Cookson Scholar Acharya Rita M. Gross, Ph.D. Friday, Noon-1PM Jane P. Batten Student Center Pearce Hospitality Suite

#### **FEBRUARY**

- 5 Ethics and the Family: Same-sex Marriage & Adoption, Blood Transfusions, and Abortion: What is the Family's Role? VWC Ethics Bowl Students Thursday, 7:30-9PM Monumental Chapel
- 12 For the Bible Tells Me So (film)
  CENTER AFTER DARK movie and discussion oriented to students
  Thursday, 9PM-Midnight
  Clarke Hall, CSRF Office Suite
- Love is in the Air
  FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Soup on Friday
  Celebration
  Friday, 11:30AM -1:30PM
  Clarke Hall, CSRF Office Suite
- Torah, Torah; Judaism through
  Exodus and the Ten Commandments
  Readings with Wesleyan
  Dr. Craig Wansink
  Thursday, 6:30-7:30PM
  Heritage United Methodist Church
  815 Baker Rd., Virginia Beach
- 26 A Story of Displacement: The Iraqi Christian

Student Presentation, Mindy Bertram '15 Thursday, 11AM -Noon, Jane P. Batten Student Center, Pearce Hospitality Suite and again, 6:30-7:30PM Heritage United Methodist Church

#### **MARCH**

Date/Time/Location TBA

Compassion in Action: Israel's Disaster
Response Team Saves Lives

Lt. Col. Dr. Ofer Merin, Israel Defense
Forces Chief of Field Heapitals

Forces Chief of Field Hospitals
Sponsored in partnership with the
United Jewish Federation of Tidewater

- Five Pillars and Submission: Islam through Suras 1, 3, and 112
  Readings with Wesleyan
  Dr. Craig Wansink
  Thursday, 6:30-7:30PM
  Heritage United Methodist Church
  815 Baker Rd., Virginia Beach
- J Know What I Saw (film) CENTER AFTER DARK movie and discussion oriented to students Thursday, 9PM-Midnight Clarke Hall, CSRF Office Suite
- The Quarrel (film) NEXUS Interfaith Dialogue: Universal Themes in a Jewish Key Dr. Eric Mazur to moderate discussion Monday, 7-9PM. Blocker Auditorium
- Children of India: Hinduism, Buddhism,
  The Bhagavad Gita, and Koans
  Readings with Wesleyan, Dr. Craig
  Wansink
  Thursday, 6:30-7:30PM
  Heritage United Methodist Church
  815 Baker Rd., Virginia Beach
- Religious Freedom and the Reformation: Germany and Switzerland, Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin with Dr. Terry Lindvall and Dr. Craig Wansink Note: This study trip is open to students only; future trips will be open to alumni and members of both the VWC and the Hampton Roads community
- 26 If You Don't Contribute You're A Dead Piece: Religious Ruminations and Civic Engagement of the Filipino-American Hampton Roads Community

Old Religions in New Worlds Symposium Session Dr. Aprilfaye Manalang, Assistant Professor of History and Interdisciplinary Studies, Norfolk State University Thursday, 7-8:30PM, Blocker Auditorium

#### **APRIL**

TED TALKS: Why People Believe Weird Things and The Doubt Essential to Faith (films)

CENTER AFTER DARK movie and discussion oriented to students Thursday, 9PM -Midnight Clarke Hall, CSRF Office Suite

The Long War: The Andragogy of Teaching the "Long War" and Islam's Fight to Reclaim its Destiny

Old Religions in New Worlds Symposium Session Dr. David T. Fautua, *Chief of Individual Training & Learning at the Joint Staff, J7-Joint Training* Thursday, 7-8:30PM, Blocker Auditorium

- National Siblings Day: Honoring the Sibling Rivalry and Differences Between John and Charles Wesley FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Soup on Friday Celebration Friday, 11:30AM -1:30PM Clarke Hall, CSRF Office Suite
- Two Routes to Redemption: Jewish and Christian Perspectives on the Seder
  NEXUS Interfaith Dialogue: Universal Themes in Jewish Key
  Rabbi Michael Panitz and Rev. Fred McCall Monday, 7-8:45PM
  Boyd Dining Center Shafer Room
- Motorcycles, Buses, and Turbans: Sikhs and Religious Freedom in Postwar Britain Old Religions in New Worlds Symposium Session Dr. Brett Bebber, Assistant Professor of History, Old Dominion University Thursday, 7-8:30PM, Blocker Auditorium

#### MAY

The Secularization of May Day
FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Soup on Friday Celebration
Friday, 11:30AM -1:30PM
Clarke Hall, CSRF Office Suite

#### **Understanding Religious Freedom**

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at Virginia Wesleyan College

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#### **Artistic Reflections**

VWC students create art for the Center using graphic design and photography to represent religious freedom concepts.

St. Nicholas' Eve and St. Nicholas' Day occur each year on December 5 and 6, respectively. On these days, Christian rituals around the world celebrate Nicholas' historic reputation for secret gift-giving: food and clothing for the poor and small gifts for children, often left in their shoes.

On December 5, 2014, a special reception was held at the Center to celebrate this kind of generosity. And in the spirit of giving, VWC students in Professor Sharon Swift's "Digital Art" and "Photography" courses graciously contributed artwork for the Center, creating graphic depictions of American religious freedom concepts. Students also created postcards for use in future CSRF mailings as well as abstract representations of religious freedom.

Visitors enjoyed a hot cup of Brunswick Stew as they viewed students' artistic reflections on legal, philosophical and religious concepts. Thank you, Professor Swift and VWC students!

#### STUDENTS:

Front Cover - Devon Burke '17

2. Sandra Liedl '16, 3. Ashlei Gates '18

4. Cierra Eldridge '15, 5. Zachary Hyman '16

6. Samantha Jackson '16

