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## Society for the Anthropology of Religion Election 2009

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### BOARD MEMBER 2-year term

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Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer 

Paul Christopher Johnson 

Roger Ivar Lohmann 



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# Society for the Anthropology of Religion Election 2009

View details for: BOARD MEMBER 2-year term

## Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer



**MARJORIE MANDELSTAM BALZER** (PhD, Bryn Mawr College, 1979) **Positions Held:** Research Professor (1996-Present, Anthropology and Center for Eurasian, Russian a...

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## Paul Christopher Johnson



**Paul Christopher Johnson** (PhD, University of Chicago, 1997). **Positions Held:** Director, Doctoral Program in Anthropology and History (Jan. 1, 2008-present) Univer...

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## Roger Ivar Lohmann



**ROGER IVAR LOHMANN** (PhD, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2000) **Positions Held:** Associate Professor (2007-Pres) Trent University; Asst Professor (2003-2007) Tren...

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### Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer



**MARJORIE MANDELSTAM BALZER** (PhD, Bryn Mawr College, 1979) **Positions Held:** Research Professor (1996-Present, Anthropology and Center for Eurasian, Russian and East European Studies, Georgetown University; Adjunct 1988-95); Editor, *Anthropology and Archeology of Eurasia* (1989-Present, M. E. Sharpe journal); Visiting Assistant Professor (Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania, 1987-1988); Post-Doctoral Research Fellow (Harriman Institute, Columbia University 1984-6; Harvard Russian Research Center, 1979-84). **Interests and/or Activities:** shamanic and other indigenous cosmologies; Convenor of Soyuz AAA interest group for scholars of Central Europe and former Soviet Union, 1990s; facilitated exchanges for Native

American and Native Siberian leaders. **Significant Publications:** (editor) *Religion and Politics in Russia*. M. E. Sharpe, forthcoming; *The Tenacity of Ethnicity: A Siberian Saga in Global Perspective*. Princeton, 1999; (editor) *Shamanic Worlds*. M. E. Sharpe, 1997.

We live in an interconnected world where clichés of anthropology have become common in shifting, globalizing popular cultures. Yet our nuanced scholarship on religion needs to be better understood and disseminated, especially given the use and abuse of religious discourse and imagery in political violence. Politics, religions, and identities (situational yet sometimes perceived to be indelible) are intertwined in ways that make communication among academics, leaders and popularizers increasingly urgent. As we argue about definitions and theory, including whether 'religion' and 'culture' are categories, we should also be mindful of the crucial ways religious behavior, thought, symbols and sociality are (dis-) integrated into widening communities of need. Why and when have religious messages revitalized indigenous movements, resonated in post-Soviet societies, or exacerbated ethnonational conflicts? What emboldens religious entrepreneurs of all sorts? Our best multi-layered ethnographies, whether based on fieldwork at home, abroad or at multiple sites, continue to ask contextual "Why" questions, as they become more compelling and complex.

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### Paul Christopher Johnson



**Paul Christopher Johnson** (PhD, University of Chicago, 1997). **Positions Held:** Director, Doctoral Program in Anthropology and History (Jan. 1, 2008-present) University of Michigan-Ann Arbor; Associate Professor (2005-present) Department of History, Center for Afroamerican and African Studies, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor; Research Fellow (2003-4) Princeton Center for the Study of Religion; Assistant Professor (1997-2002) Department of Religious Studies, University of Missouri-Columbia. **Interests and/or Activities:** theories of religion; ritual practice and memory; history of the study of religion; Brazil and the Caribbean; diasporic situations. **Significant Publications:** *Secrets, Gossip and Gods: The Transformation of Brazilian Candomblé*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002; *Diaspora Conversions: Black Carib Religion and the Recovery of Africa*. Berkeley: University of

California Press, 2007.

"Religion" can be thought of both emically and etically as those techniques and situations in which humans are spoken-through by extraordinary agents, as a kind of ventriloquy. As is well known, this has presented manifold possibilities of regulation through the occupation or colonization of subject bodies. But being spoken-through has also posed the radical threat of bodies possessed of and by forces beyond the control of sovereigns, systems or states. I would hope to see the anthropology of religion further explore this dialectic of extraordinary presence. Alongside this issue, I am interested in the question of whether, how, and to what degree, the dangerous powers quickened in ritual scenarios are translatable, and transferable, to other domains of life, in order to give greater substance and precision to discussions about religion as "resistance" and "empowerment." How do ritual situations generate particular claims about power, and what kinds of transfers occur between "religious" and other domains of power? Finally, I am interested in recuperating the so-called "left-hand" lineage of religion--irruption, horror, transgression, scandal, ecstasy—even in the most prosaic sites.

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### Roger Ivar Lohmann



**ROGER IVAR LOHMANN** (PhD, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2000) **Positions Held:** Associate Professor (2007-Pres) Trent University; Asst Professor (2003-2007) Trent University; Instructor, (2002-2003) University of Toronto, Visiting Assistant Professor (2001-2002) The College of Wooster, Adjunct Assistant Professor (2000-2001) Western Oregon University; **Interests and/or Activities:** causes of religious belief, cultural dynamics, dreaming; **Significant Publications:** "Sound of a Woman: Drums, Gender, and Myth among the Asabano of Papua New Guinea" *Material Religion*, 2007, "The Supernatural Is Everywhere: Defining Qualities of Religion in Melanesia and Beyond" *Anthropological Forum*, 2003; "The Role of Dreams in Religious Enculturation among the Asabano of Papua New Guinea" *Ethos*, 2000.

The anthropology of religion includes archaeological, linguistic, cultural, and biological branches of enquiry that, when brought together and combined with the insights of other disciplines, allow us to attain a holistic understanding of religion. As an executive committee member of SAR, I would promote an inclusive, general anthropology of religion by directing Society activities toward fostering connections with colleagues and approaches beyond sociocultural anthropology in syllabus development, conferences, and publications. The SAR is also in a position to take a more public role, highlighting conference sessions and new publications that accessibly inform decision-makers how human religious tendencies work, and how they are implicated in ecological, economic, and political agency and evolving traditions. My organizational experience includes past terms as vice president and editor of NASA and my current work as editor-in-chief of *Reviews in Anthropology*.

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