The CSRS has hosted a number of meetings with University of Notre Dame students and faculty from a variety of disciplines including sociology, history, and political science, to discuss topics of intersection within the study of religion.

Last year’s IWAR speakers include Korie Edwards of Ohio State University, Michael Lindsay of Rice University, and Mark Ottoni Wilhelm of Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis.

2008 IWAR speakers:
- August 27th: Curtis Evans of the University of Chicago, G20 Flanner Hall
- October 10th: John Green of The University of Akron in Ohio, Grace Hall lower level.

FALL COURSES

Religion & Schooling in American Society: CSRS faculty David Sikkink will conduct a graduate course in the fall to investigate the relationship between religion and elementary and secondary education in the U.S.

Critical Realism & Sociology: CSRS faculty Christian Smith will conduct a graduate course exploring the philosophy of social science known as critical realism and how it might influence sociological research and scholarship.

Religion and Social Life: CSRS faculty Kevin Christiano will conduct an undergraduate course that examines the social bases of churches, sects, and cults in contemporary U.S. religion.

Researchers from the University of Notre Dame’s CSRS and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill are nearing completion of the third wave of data collection for the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR). Wave three of this project is supported by $1.2 million in grant awards from Lilly Endowment Inc. and The John Templeton Foundation. It consists of a phone survey with 2,532 nationally representative “emerging adults,” age 18 to 23, as well as in-person interviews with a sub-sample of 225 of the respondents who completed the phone survey.

The phone survey was completed with a retention rate of 97 percent from wave two to wave three, and an overall retention rate of 77 percent since the start of the project.

Researchers conducted all 225 of the interviews with a stratified quota sample of respondents representing a range of demographic and religious characteristics, such as age, gender, race and ethnicity geographic and urban/suburban/rural location, annual household income, educational background, and religious orientation.

The results of both the survey and interview data collection efforts will be reported in a forthcoming book by Principal Investigator Dr. Christian Smith, tentatively entitled The Religious and Spiritual Lives of America’s Emerging Adults.
Mary Ellen Konieczny joins the CSRS and the Notre Dame Sociology Department after three years as Assistant Professor of Sociology at Concordia University Chicago. She received her PhD from the University of Chicago in 2005, an M.Div. from Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Mass. in 1995, and her B.S. from the University of Notre Dame in 1981.

Her current work includes transforming her dissertation study, an ethnography of liberal and conservative Catholic parishes, into a book entitled, The Spirit’s Tether: Family, Work and Religion among American Catholics. Her second book project is an historical and ethnographic study of religion at the US Air Force Academy in which she explores religion in the military, and the historical changes in and tensions between the disestablishment of religion and its free exercise at the Academy.

Stephen Armet presented a paper entitled “The Neo-Paranoid: Willow Creek’s Middle Ground between Small Groups and Mega Worship” at the 2008 American Sociological Association meeting in Boston.

Patricia Smell presented a paper written with Carlos Tavares, Kari Christoffersen and Christian Smith entitled “Where doesn’t Socioeconomic Status Matter?: A Community Based study on the Social Inequality of Religious-Based Youth Ministry Programming” at the 2008 American Sociological Association meeting in Boston.

Bob Brenneman received a Graduate Research Grant for $1,500 from the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and a Research Assistance Grant for $967 from the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts.

Two new staff members joined the CSRS this year. Rae Hoffman is a part-time Staff Assistant who joined in January. Rae grew up in the area and lives in Granger with her husband and 3 children.

Katie Spencer began working full time as a Research Assistant in June. She recently finished undergrad-uate work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she also worked with Christian Smith.