Dear members of the ISA section on “Religion and International Relations” (REL),

I am pleased to share the following updates regarding our section:

1. Section Membership and Funding: We have reached new heights!
2. The upcoming Annual Convention in New Orleans: Nineteen panels on religion!
4. Reception: Including the best student paper award.
5. Communication: We have a listserv and a facebook page.
6. Business Meeting

1. Section Membership and Funding

As of October 2014, our section boasts 216 members. This is a 55% growth in membership compared to last year, making REL the fourth fastest growing section of the ISA. REL is currently the 23rd ISA section in size (out of 31).

Our goal, as before, is a section membership of 250 by the time the annual convention takes place in New Orleans, and a membership of 300 by 2016. As you sign up for the annual convention and renew your ISA membership, please remember to select REL as one of your membership choices.

Our current account balance is $2271.26. The executive committee has yet to draw funds from the section budget. All receptions, past and future, are funded by outside donors. We intend to continue and grow these funds until we have accumulated a significant reserve that we can utilize to sponsor substantial events or awards.

2. The upcoming Annual Convention in New Orleans

Last year, at the ISA convention in Toronto, we hosted eight panels. At the upcoming conference, thanks to the stellar efforts of our program chair, Nukhet Sandal, we will be sponsoring and co-sponsoring seventeen panels on religion and IR. These include panels on religion and foreign policy, human rights, secularism, violence, the Middle East, and many more.
I would like to encourage you to attend as many of these panels as you can, not only to support your REL colleagues and learn something new about religion and IR but also because attendance at panels influences our panel allotment in the following year.

3. Distinguished Scholar Panel

At ISA 2015, our section is honored to recognize its first distinguished scholar, Dr. Douglas Johnson. Dr. Johnston was selected in a consensus vote by the executive committee. He will be honored at a panel organized by our treasurer, Sara Silvestri, that includes Nukhet Sandal (Ohio University), R. Scott Appleby (University of Notre Dame), Philip Seib (University of Southern California), Peter Mandaville (George Mason University), Timothy M. Shaw (University of Massachusetts), and Daniel Philpott (University of Notre Dame).

The distinguished scholar panel will take place on Friday, February 20, at 4 PM.

4. Reception

Following the distinguished scholar panel, we will hold our third reception as a section. This year, our reception has received support from two particularly generous donors, the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs (Georgetown University), which also supported our reception last year, and the journal *Review of Faith & International Affair*.

A highlight of the reception will be the presentation of our first ever “Best Student Paper” award to Jason Klocek (U.C. Berkeley). The paper was selected by a committee headed by Jocelyne Cesari, our awards chair.

The reception is scheduled for 6:45-8:30 PM on Friday, June 20, in room Chart A of the Hilton. Please join fellow REL members for an hour of food, drink, networking and merriment.

5. Communications

With the assistance of ISA staff, our communications officer, Turan Kayaoglu, has expanded our web site to include information about awards, reports and news. Turan has also established a section listserv, which already has 100 subscribers. If you would like to join, please email turan@uw.edu.

If you would like to post job ads, syllabi, research requests, new books or articles, or conference and panel announcements related to religion and IR to the listserv, please email reilandir@uw.edu.
Our new facebook page “Religion and IR (ISA Section)” is up. Please join at https://www.facebook.com/groups/336226026577855/.

4. 2015 Business Meeting

Our business meeting is scheduled for 12:30-1:30 on Friday, February 20, in the Bridge Room of the Hilton. We invite you to submit items for discussion at the meeting. Please email suggestions to our section secretary, Larry Rubin (lawrence.rubin@inta.gatech.edu).

Four items are already on our agenda:

(a) Jocelyne Cesari, our awards chair, is stepping down after providing great service to the section for the last two years. We wish to elect a new awards chair and are soliciting nominations. Please email your suggestions (including self-nominations) to Larry.

(b) How should we use our new listserv and facebook page? We would like to increase our presence on-line and facilitate communications between members but we do not wish our communications to become a nuisance or a burden. How can we encourage members to share ideas and what limits should we place on the kind of information that gets posted?

(c) Last year, we voted the first four members of our advisory council into office. We would like to continue to grow our advisory council but we would like to do so gradually. We would like to seek the members’ approval to invite each year’s “distinguished scholar” to join our advisory council.

(d) We would like to clarify several issues relating to our charter. For example, we are under the impression that members of the executive committee should not be eligible to compete for section awards but we would like to solicit the members’ opinion on this issue. If there are other procedural matters that you would like to see discussed, please let us know so that we can place these on the business meeting agenda.

We thank you all for your support and look forward to seeing you in New Orleans!

On behalf of the entire executive committee,

Ron Hassner
(hassner@berkeley.edu)