Assistant Professor Brian Connolly of the University of South Florida Department of History has been named a Visitor in the School of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study for the next academic year (2014-2015). This year-long position will provide Connolly with the time and resources to make substantial progress on his second book project, which explores the interconnections between religion, kinship, and modernity in the nineteenth-century United States.

Connolly’s book project, *Sacred Kin: Religion, Kinship, Modernity*, explores various instances in the long nineteenth-century United States where kinship and religion were intertwined and thus force a reconsideration of modernity itself: representations of “hindoo” kinship; representations of Islamic kinship; slave maroons; Mormonism; early ethnography of Native Americans; and spiritualism. All of this is located within the context of emerging international family law. This is an interdisciplinary project that draws on the history of family, history of sexuality, legal studies, especially law and literature, anthropology, psychoanalysis, and contemporary critiques of secularism. In following this method, Connolly aims to recast our understanding of modernity, arguing that kinship and religion are at the center of modernity.

The Institute for Advanced Study is one of the world’s leading centers for theoretical research and intellectual inquiry. The Institute exists to encourage and support curiosity-driven research in the sciences and humanities – the original, often speculative thinking that produces advances in knowledge that change the way we understand the world. It provides for the mentoring of scholars by Faculty, and it offers all who work there the freedom to undertake research that will make significant contributions in any of the broad range of fields in the sciences and humanities studied at the Institute. The Institute is a private, independent academic institution located in Princeton, New Jersey. It was founded in 1930 by philanthropists Louis Bamberger and his sister Caroline Bamberger Fuld, and established through the vision of founding Director Abraham Flexner. Past Faculty have included Albert Einstein, who remained at the Institute until his death in 1955, and distinguished scientists and scholars such as Kurt Gödel, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Erwin Panofsky, Hetty Goldman, Homer A. Thompson, John von Neumann, George Kennan, Hermann Weyl, and Clifford Geertz. Residency at the IAS is one of a small number of awards that the Association of American Universities (AAU) counts among the most prestigious faculty honors. USF aspires to join the AAU, an association of 62 leading public and private research universities.

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