

You will need the active support of your colleagues on campus to navigate potentially hostile environments of the town and county in which you are located. Make sure to ask about safe neighborhoods, Klan and white supremacist militia activities in the area, whether to list your telephone number, whether to get a post office box. Your social life may depend almost entirely on contacts with your colleagues. You may have to weather a very lonely and isolating period (see **Isolation, cultural and religious**) until you find your people.

Xenophobia may also color your interactions on campus with colleagues, staff, and students. Cultural, religious, and racial stereotypes may influence how people perceive you. Such biases can easily find their way into student teaching evaluations, merit reviews, and fuzzy evaluation categories like “collegiality.” Try to become aware of these stereotypes and learn to anticipate and manipulate them in your favor. It is a challenge for which the onus is really on those who occupy the privileged place (see **Privilege**).

Yes and no

The difference between these simple words is something that takes many women a lifetime to learn. We need to help each other say “no” to the myriad invitations we receive that may distract us from our dissertations, books, recreation, or study. We need to be equally helpful in saying “yes” to one another in those instances where a collaborative effort is proposed, a little extra is asked of us, or an opportunity too good to pass up is in the balance. Knowing when to say “yes” and when to say “no” can be the difference between a stressful, unsuccessful career in religious studies and a fruitful, enjoyable one.

Zeitgeist

The Zeitgeist, that is, the spirit or attitude of a particular time, is changing in religious studies. Women, people of color, people