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## Religion or Magic?: Scholar to Speak on Ancient Greek Philosopher Apollonius

January 6, 2010

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Roshan Abraham, assistant professor of classics and religious studies at Washington University in St. Louis, will speak at Illinois Wesleyan University as part of the Ides Lecture and Performance Series on Friday, January 15 at 4 p.m. in the Beckman Auditorium of The Ames Library (1 Ames Plaza, Bloomington).

Abraham specializes in the study of Greco-Roman and early Christian religions. His talk, “Apollonius of Tyana: Between Magic and Religion,” will explore perceptions of the Greek philosopher Apollonius from the town of Tyana, who was a contemporary of Jesus of Nazareth in the first century.

Receiving a bachelor’s degree in English and classical languages from the University of Kansas in 2000, Abraham earned a doctorate in classical studies from the University of Pennsylvania in 2009. One of his areas of graduate research focused on the perception of ascetic practices as religious ritual or magic.

Abraham’s work looks to the time of the Roman occupation of Greece, when philosophers such as Apollonius who studied asceticism – characterized by abstinence and a rejection of worldly pleasures – were often considered magicians, and a threat to the traditional political and religious authority living in Greece.

For his scholarly endeavors, Abraham has been awarded the Mellon Fellowship for Humanistic Studies and the Benjamin Franklin Fellowship. He is currently writing articles on several other philosophers; as well as creating a historical and literary commentary on Philostratus’ *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, which is being drafted in collaboration with Jaap-Jan Flinterman of the University of Amsterdam and Graeme Miles of the University of Tasmania.

The Ides is a lecture and performance series that is presented each month by the Greek and Roman Studies Department. For additional information, contact the Director of Greek and Roman Studies Nancy Sultan at (309) 556-3173

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