JOSEPH P. LAYCOCK

Department of Philosophy
Texas State University
601 University Dr. Comal 102
San Marcos, Texas 78666

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EDUCATION

- PhD, Boston University, January 2012, Religion and Society.
- MTS, Harvard Divinity School, 2005 (Program in Religion and Secondary Education).
- BA, Hampshire College, 2002.

EMPLOYMENT

- Texas State University
  - Assistant Professor, 2014 - 2020
  - Associate Professor, 2020 - 2026
  - Full Professor, 2026 – Present

AREAS OF CONCENTRATION

- Religion in the Americas, American Catholicism, Sociology of Religion

- Courses Taught**:** What is Religion?; World Religion; Religion and Film; Prophets, Founders, and Saints; American Religious Controversies; New Religious Movements; Demonology, Possession, and Exorcism; Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

SCHOLARLY AWARDS AND GRANTS

- University Humanities Research Excellence Award, 2025
- The Etchings Press Whirling Prize, University of Indianapolis, 2020
- Texas State University College of Liberal Arts Presidential Distinction Award for Excellence in Scholarly/Creative Activities (Philosophy), 2015
- Texas State University Golden Apple Award for Scholarly/Creative Activity 2015
- Tenth Annual Thomas Robbins Award for Excellence in the Study of New Religious Movements (second place), 2012
- National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Scholar for the Study of Religion, 2011
- Angela J. and James J. Rallis Memorial Award/Alice M. Brennan Humanities Award for research in the Humanities, Boston University Humanities Foundation 2011
- Boston University Department of Religion and Theological Studies, Travel Grant 2009, 2010
- The Pluralism Project, Student Research Grant, 2003

PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

- *The Penguin Book of Cults*. Penguin. 2025
- *Satanism*. Cambridge University Press. 2023
- *The Exorcist Effect*: *Religion, Horror, and Demonic Belief.* Oxford University Press 2023
    - with Eric Harrelson
- *New Religious Movements: The Basics*. Routledge. 2022, 2026
- *Religion, Culture and the Monstrous: Of Gods and Monsters.* Lexington Books 2021
    - co-edited with Natasha Mikles
- *The Religion Matters Reader*. Norton 2021
    - *Co*-edited with Natasha Mikles
- *The Penguin Book of Exorcisms*. Penguin. 2020
- *Speak of the Devil: How the Satanic Temple is Changing the Way We Talk About Religion.* Oxford University Press. 2020
- *Dangerous Games: What the Moral Panic over Role-Playing Games Says about Play, Religion, and Imagined Worlds*. University of California Press. 2015
- *The Seer of Bayside: Veronica Lueken and the Struggle to Define Catholicism.* Oxford University Press. 2014
- *Vampires Today: The Truth About Modern Vampirism*. Westport: Praeger. 2009

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

- "'A Compensatory Upthrust of Irrational Forces': The Secularization Narrative the Medicalization of The Exorcist," *The Journal of Gods and Monsters* 5:1 (2025): 6-13. 2025
- "A Cult by Any Other Name: Is 'High Demand Group' a Useful Category?" *Nova Religio* 28:1 (2024): 90-104. 2024
- "Field Notes: The Branch Davidian Press Conference and Thirtieth Anniversary Memorial, 19 April 2023," *Nova Religio* 27:1 (2023): 99-108. 2023
- "A 'Proper' Black Mass': The Rhetorical Struggle over a Deviant Ritual," *Contemporary Religion* 36:1 (2021): 37-55. 2021
- "Religious Aspects of Pseudoarcheology: The How and the Why," *Nova Religio* 22:4 (May 2019): 89-95. 2019
- "Name it and Disclaim it: A Tool for Better Discussion in Religious Studies," *Bulletin for the Study of Religion* 47:3-4 (2018): 18-23. 2018
    - With Natasha Mikles
- "Who Says a Headscarf Emoji is Religious? (And Why?)" *Bulletin for the Study of Religion* 46:3-4 (September-December 2017): 61-63. 2017
- "'Time Is a Flat Circle': *True Detective* and the Specter of Moral Panic in American Pop Culture," *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* 27:3 2015

(Fall 2015): 220-235.

- "Who Believed There Was A Bomb and When Did They Believe It? What Ahmed Mohamed's Clock Says About Belief and Moral Panic," *Bulletin for the Study of Religion* 44:4 (December 2015): 39-44. 2015
- "The Controversial History of the Crystal Skulls: A Case Study in Interpretive Drift," *Material Religion* 11:2 (2015): 164-188. 2015
- "Research Note: Tracking the *Tulpa*: Exploring the 'Tibetan' Origins of a Contemporary Paranormal Idea," *Nova Religio* 19:1 (2015): 87-97. 2015
    - with Natasha L. Mikles
- "Is Nessie a Naga? Buddhism in the West and Emerging Strategies of Importation." *Bulletin for the Study of Religion* 43:4 (November 2014): 35-40. 2014
    - With Natasha L. Mikles
- "Approaching the Paranormal," *Nova Religio* 18:1 (August 2014): 5-15. 2014
- "Zen Meets New Thought: The Erhard Seminars Training and Changing Ideas About Zen," *Contemporary Buddhism* 15:2 (July 2014): 1-24. 2014
- "'Our Secret in Plain Sight:' Recent Scholarly Approaches to Paranormal Belief," *Religious Studies Review* 40:2 (June 2014) 69-75. 2014
    - Co-authored with Daniel Wise.
- "Yoga for the New Woman and the New Man: The Role of Pierre Bernard and Blanche DeVries in the Creation of Modern Postural Yoga," *Religion and American Culture* 23:1 (Winter 2013): 101-136. 2013
- "Laughing Matters: 'Parody Religions' and the Command to Compare," *Bulletin of the Study of Religion* 42:3 (September 2013): 19-26. 2013
- "Where Do They Get These Ideas? Changing Ideas of Cults in the Mirror of Popular Culture," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 18:1 (March 2013): 80-106. 2013
- "'We Are Spirits of Another Sort': Ontological Rebellion and Religious Dimensions of the Otherkin Community," *Nova Religio* 15:3 (2012): 65-90. 2012
- "Carnal Knowledge: The Epistemology of Sexual Trauma in Witches' Sabbath, Satanic Ritual Abuse, and Alien Abduction Narratives," *Preternature* 1:1 (2012): 100-129. 2012
- "Levitating the Pentagon: Exorcism as Politics, Politics as Exorcism," *Implicit Religion* 14:3 (2011): 295-318. 2011
- "Review Essay: Paranormal Belief: A New Frontier?," *Nova Religio* 15:1 (2011): 92-97. 2011
- "Conversion by Infection: The Sociophobic of Cults in *The Omega Man*," *International Journal for the Study of New Religions* 1:2 (2010): 261-278. 2010
- "'Reducing the Ornaments of Fable to the Standard of Truth:' Tylor, Vampires, and the Anthropology of Religion." *Arc, The Journal of the Faculty of Religious Studies, McGill University* 28 (2010): 115-139. 2010

- "Myth Sells: Mattel's Commission of the Masters of the Universe Bible," *The Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* 22:2 (Summer 2010): 1-24. 2010
- "Real Vampires as an Identity Group: Analyzing Cause and Effects of an Introspective Survey by the Vampire Community," *Nova Religio* 14.1 (2010): 4-23. 2010
    - Reprinted as: "Vampires as an Ascriptive Identity Group: Analyzing Causes and Effects of an Introspective Survey by the Vampire Community," in Adam Possamai, ed., *Handbook of Hyper-Real Religions*. Boston: Brill, 2012: pp. 141-163.
- "From Parasite to Symbiote: The Genealogy of the Psychic Vampire," *Proteus: A Journal of Ideas* 26:2 (2009): 25-31. 2009
- "God's Last, Best Gift of Mankind: Gnostic Science and the Eschaton in the Vision Of John Murray Spear," *Aires: Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism* 10.1 (2009): 63-83. 2009
- "The Folk Piety of William Peter Blatty: 'The Exorcist' in the Context of Secularization," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* 5 (2009): 2-27. 2009
- "Mothman: Monster, Disaster, and Community," *Fieldwork in Religion* 3:1 (2008): 70-86. 2008

BOOK CHAPTERS

- "Biblical Demons In Contemporary Culture," in Brandon R. Grafius and John W. Morehead, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Monsters*. New York, Oxford University Press, 2025: 385-401. 2025
- "'Do Not be Overcome by Evil': Dungeons, Dragons, and Satanic Panic in *Stranger Things*, Season Four," in Andrew J. Byers and Adam J. Powell, eds., *Religion, Theology, and Stranger Things*. New York: Lexington, 2025: 97-114. 2025
- "The Battle of Bayside: Contesting Religious Topographies in an Urban Apparition Site," in Katherine Dugan and Karen E. Park, eds., *American Patroness: Marian Shrines and the Making of US Catholicism*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2023: 92-116. 2023
- "New Religious Movements and the First Amendment," in *Bloomsbury History: Theory and Method Articles.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022: 2022
- "Unmasking the Alien Deception: Why Evangelicals are Studying Ufology," in Benjamin Zeller, ed., *The Brill Handbook of UFO Religions.* Brill, 2021: 103-115. 2021
- "The Pentagon Exorcism: 1960s Counter-Culture and the Occult Revival," in Benjamin E. Park, ed., *A Companion to American Religious History*. John Wiley & Sons, 2021: 317-328. 2021
- "The Secret History of the 1928 Exorcism in Earling, Iowa," in Adam Possamai and Giuseppe Giordan, eds., *The Social Scientific Study of Exorcism*. Springer Press, 2020: 17-32. 2020
- "How the Necronomicon Became Real: The Ecology of a Legend," in John Morehead and Daryl Caterine, eds., *The Paranormal and Popular Culture: A* 2019

Postmodern Religious Landscape. New York Routledge, 2019: 184-197.

- "Vampirism: Modern Vampires and Embattled Identity Claims," in Dennis Waskul and Marc Eaton, eds., *The Supernatural in Society, History, and Culture*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2018: 177-189. 2018
- "Space Brothers and Mayan Calendars: Making Sense of 'Doomsday Cults'," in Kelly Jean Murphy and Justin Schedtler, eds. *Apocalypses in Context*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2016: 441-468. 2016
- "Forward" in Jack Hunter, ed., *Strange Dimensions: A Paranthropology Anthology* Psychoid Books 2015: 19-30. 2015
- (with Thomas Fabisiak) "Outlaw Christ: Transgression as Transcendence in the Work of GG Allin," in Scott Wilson, ed., *Music at the Extremes: Essays on Sounds Outside the Mainstream*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland Press, 2015: 245-266. 2015
- "The Trial of the West Memphis Three: Rival Visions of Evil," in Sharon Packer and Jody Pennington, eds., *A History of Evil in American Pop Culture: What Hannibal Lecter, Stephen King, and Vampires Reveal about America*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2014: 327-338. 2014
- "Crossing the Spiritual Wasteland in 'Priest,'" in John W. Morehead and Kim Paffenroth, eds., *The Undead and Theology*. Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2012: 19-33. 2012

REFERENCE MATERIALS

- "Marian Apparitions." In Adam Possamai, ed., *The Sage Encyclopedia of Sociology of Religion.* Thousand Oaks, CA: 2020: 466-467. 2020
- "Paranormal." In Adam Possamai, ed., *The Sage Encyclopedia of Sociology of Religion.* Sage. Thousand Oaks, CA: 2020: 565-565. 2020
- "Catholicism." In Frank J. Smith, ed., *Religion and Politics in America: An Encyclopedia of Church and State in American Life.* Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2016: 117-125. 2016
- "Cults." In Frank J. Smith, ed., *Religion and Politics in America: An Encyclopedia of Church and State in American Life.* Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2016: 219-221. 2016
- *Spirit Possession around the World: Possession, Communion, and Demon Expulsion across Cultures.* Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2015. Edited volume. 2015
- "Exorcism" In Matt Cardin, ed., *Ghosts, Spirits, and Psychics: The Paranormal from Alchemy to Zombies*. Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2015: 79-81. 2015
- "Keel, John A." In Matt Cardin, ed., *Ghosts, Spirits, and Psychics: The Paranormal from Alchemy to Zombies*. Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2015: 137-139. 2015
- "Religion and the Paranormal." In Matt Cardin, ed., *Ghosts, Spirits, and Psychics: The Paranormal from Alchemy to Zombies*. Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2015: 260-264. 2015

- "Demons, Demonology: Christianity, Modern Europe and America," *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*. Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013: 566-570. 2013
- "Religion in Schools." In Ruth Chadwick, ed., *Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics* Volume 3. San Diego: Academic Press, 2012: 757-765. 2012

SELECTED INVITED BOOK AND MEDIA REVIEWS

- Douglas E. Cowan, *The Forbidden Body: Sex, Horror, and the Religious Imagination* (New York University Press, 2022). In *Nova Religio* 26:4 (May 2023): 118-119. 2023
- Brian McCuskey, *How Sherlock Pulled the Trick: Spiritualism and the Pseudoscientific Method* (Penn State University Press, 2021). In *Nova Religio* 26:1 (August 2022): 106-107. 2022
- Markus Altena Davidson, ed., *Narrative and Belief: The Religious Affordance of Supernatural Fiction* (Routledge, 2018). In *Nova Religio* 23:3 (February 2020):125-128. 2020
- Nick Groom, *The Vampire: A New History* (Yale University Press, 2018). In *Nova Religio* 23:3 (February 2020): 119-120. 2020
- Douglas E. Cowan, *Magic, Monsters, and Make-Believe Heroes: How Myth and Religion Shape Fantasy Culture* (University of California Press, 2019). In *Nova Religio* 23:2 (November 2019): 121-122. 2019
- Melissa M. Wilcox. *Queer Nuns: Religion, Activism, and Serious Parody* (New York University Press, 2018). In *Nova Religio* 22:4 (May 2019): 112-115. 2019
- Doug Cowan. *America's Dark Theologian: The Religious Imagination of Stephen King.* (New York University Press, 2018). In *Nova Religio* 22:4 (May 2019): 129-131. 2018
- Will Allen, director, Holy Hell. In *Nova Religio* 22:3 (February 2019): 139-139. 2019
- A&E Television Networks, Cults and Extreme Beliefs. In *Nova Religio* 22:3 (February 2019): 137-138. 2019
- Eric Kurlander, *Hitler's Monsters: A Supernatural History of the Third Reich* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2017). In *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 86:12 (June 2018): 566-568. 2018
- Plane`te Bleue Te´le´vision, prod., *Occult Crimes*. 2015. Television series, ten episodes. In *Nova Religio* 21:4 (May 2018): 133-135. 2018
- Christopher D. Bader, Joseph O Baker, and F. Carson Mencken, *Paranormal America: Ghost Encounters, UFO Sightings, Bigfoot Hunts, and other Curiosities in Religion and Culture* (New York University Press, 2017). In *Nova Religio* 21:3 (2018): 118-119. 2018
- Aaron John Gulyas, *Conspiracy Theories: The Roots, Themes and Propagation of Paranoid Political and Cultural Narratives* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2016). In *Nova Religio* 21:1 (August 2017): 116-117. 2017
- *The Stanford Prison Experiment* directed by Kyle Patrick Alvarez. In *Nova Religio* 20:4 (2017): 145-146. 2017

- Jill M. Krebs, *Our Lady of Emmitsburg, Visionary Culture, and Catholic Identity: Seeing and Believing* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015). In *American Catholic Studies* 127:3 (Fall 2015): 80-81. 2015
- Lisa M. Bitel, *Our Lady of the Rock: Vision and Pilgrimage in the Mojave Desert.* (Cornell University Press, 2015). In *Nova Religio* 20:2 (May 2016): 113-114. 2015
- Paula M. Kane, *Sister Thorn And Catholic Mysticism in Modern America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013). In *Journal of Religion* 94:4 (October 2015): 566-567. 2015
- Olu Jenzen and Sally R. Munt, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Paranormal Cultures* (Farnham, Vt,: Ashgate Publishing, 2013). In *Nova Religio* 18:4 (May 2015): 110-111. 2015
- Russell Sandberg, *Religion, Law, and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). In *Journal of Church and State* 57:3 (2015): 555-556. 2015
- Michael Kinsella, *Legend Tripping Online: Supernatural Folklore and the Search for Ong's Hat* (MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2011). In *Religious Studies Review* 40:3 (September 2014): 136-137. 2014
- Isaac Weiner, *Religion Out Loud: Religious Sound, Public Space and American Pluralism* (New York University Press, 2014). In *Contemporary Religion* 29:3 (2014): 537-539. 2014
- Danielle Kirby, *Fantasy and Belief: Alternative Religions, Popular Narratives and Digital Cultures* (Bristol, Conn.: Equinox, 2013). In *Numen* 61:2-3 (2014): 311-312. 2014
- Darryl V. Caterine, *Haunted Ground: Journeys Through Paranormal America* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2011). In *Preternature* 2:2 (2013): 276-278. 2013
- W. Scott Poole, *Monsters in America: Our Historical Obsession with the Hideous* And the Haunting (Waco, Tx: Baylor University Press, 2011). In *Monsters and the Monstrous* 2:1 (May 2012). 2011
- Robert Love, *The Great Oom: The Improbable Birth of Yoga in America* (New York: Viking, 2010). In *Nova Religio* 15:3 (2012): 122-123. 2012
- Terry Eagleton, *On Evil* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2010). In *Symposia* 3 (2011). 2011
- Peter Sloterdijk, *God's Zeal: The Battle of the Three Monotheisms* (Malden: Polity Press, 2009). In *Symposia*, 2 (2010). 2010
- Douglas Cowan, *Sacred Terror* (Waco, Tx.: Baylor University Press, 2008). In *Journal of Religion and Film* 13:2 (2009). 2009
- Christine Wicker, *Not in Kansas Anymore: Dark Arts, Sex Spells, Money Magic, and Other Things Your Neighbors Aren't Telling You* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005). In *Pomegranate: The International Journal of Pagan Studies* 10:2 (2008): 279-281. 2008

SELECTED INTERNET PUBLICATIONS

- "Response to "Ethnopsychiatry of the Devil: Demonic Possession as a Cultural 2024

Language for Subjective Suffering in Contemporary Italy" by Tiago Pires," *Cultural Analysis* 21.2 (2024): 90-91.

- "Paranormal Vodka, Exorcists and a Demonic Doll: Welcome to Paracon, Based on the Work of the Demon-Hunters Who Inspired the 'Conjuring' Series," *Religion Dispatches* (November 7, 2022). 2022
    - (with Eric Harrelson)
- "What the Study of New Religious Movements Can Tell Us About QAnon," *Church Life Journal* (July 18, 2022). 2022
- "What's behind the enduring popularity of crystals?" *The Conversation* (July 6, 2022). 2022
- "How dehumanizing language fueled the Satanic Temple arson attack," *OnlySky* (June 20, 2022). 2022
- "The Catholic Church's views on exorcism have changed – a religious studies scholar explains why," *The Conversation* (May 24, 2022). 2022
- "Black Satanist Candidate Faces LA Sheriff Shakedown," *Religion Dispatches* (May 2, 2022). 2022
- "Why are people calling Bitcoin a religion?" *The Conversation* (February 3, 2022). 2022
- "Satanist Religious Freedom Rally Successful Despite Neo-Nazis and Christian Heckler," *Religion Dispatches* (August 20, 2018). 2018
- "A Search for Mysteries and Monsters in Small Town America: How Monster Festivals became American Pilgrimage Sites," *Smithsonian.com* (July, 11 2018) 2018
- "Name it and Disclaim it: A Tool for Better Discussion in Religious Studies," *Bulletin for the Study of Religion Blog* (May 24, 2018). 2018
- **"**Reply to 'Do we Always Practice what we Preach? Real Vampires' Fears of Coming out of the Coffin to Social Workers and Helping Professionals." *Critical Social Work* 17.2 2016
- "Aliens in the 21st century: More and more people are starting to believe in UFOs again," *Salon* (July 11, 2016) 2016
- "Is the Satanic Temple for real?," *Houston Chronicle* (May 10, 2016).
- "Purging daily demons: what's behind the popularity of exorcisms?," *The New Republic* (December 28, 2015). 2015
- "If we don't teach religion in schools, Americans will never understand the rest of world," *Quartz* (April 15, 2015). 2015
- "Slenderman' murder wasn't media or madness," *Religion Dispatches*, June 4, 2014
- "Harvard's black mass fiasco: a squandered opportunity for debate," *Salon*, May 25, 2014. 2014
- "'True Detective' vs. H.P. Lovecraft's 'cosmic horror,'" *Salon*, March 16, 2015. 2015
- "We Must Teach About Religion in High Schools," *Religion & Politics*, January 7, 2014
- "Claiming the Land for Azathoth: Lovecraftian Pranks and the Post-Modern 2013

Sacred," *The Bulletin for the Study of Religion Blog*, September 4, 2013.

- "The Curious Case of John Errol Ferguson," *The Bulletin for the Study of Religion Blog*, October 25-26, 2012. 2012
- "Vampires, Gay Rights, and the Political Underpinnings of HBO's True Blood," *Religion & Politics*, August 27, 2012. 2012
- "Webs of Significance: The Real Life Superhero Movement as a Model for Reality," *Nomos Journal*, January 1, 2012. 2012
- "Austrian Court Okays Head-Colander in Driver's License: Is Pastafarianism Becoming a Religion?," *Religion Dispatches*, July 18, 2011. 2011
- "Mary's Late Arrival to the United States," *Sightings*, March 31, 2011. 2011
- "Controversial Mary Statue Weeps Because 'We're Killing This World'" *Religion Dispatches*, November 14, 2010. 2010
- "Modern Exorcism: Trading Autonomy for Demonology," *Sightings*, July 8, 2010. 2010

SELECTED INVITED TALKS

- Harvard Law School, 2027
- University of Niagara, 2026
- St. Lawrence College, 2026
- University of Arkansas, 2025
- Skidmore College, 2025
- Lake Forest College 2025
- DePaul University, 2024
- King's College, 2024
- Texas A&M, 2023
- Rice University, 2022
- Denison University, 2021
- Claremont Graduate University, 2021
- Middlebury, 2021
- Princeton University, 2018
- North Texas Central College, 2015
- Emory University, 2015
- Boston University, 2010, 2015
- Hampshire College, 2011

SELECTED PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

- "Rethinking Church and State with The Satanic Temple," Current Issues in North American and Cultural Studies Lecture Series, University of Bonn, Bonn Germany, May 4, 2021. 2021
- "The Secret History of the Earling Exorcism," American Academy of Religion National Conference, Denver, Colorado, November 19, 2018. 2018
- "The Only True Vampire Religion": The Temple of the Vampire, the Free Market, 2018

and the Cultic Milieu," Association for the Study of Esotericism Biannual Conference, Rice University, May 26, 2018.

- "A 'Proper' Black Mass: The Rhetorical Struggle over a Deviant Ritual," Religion and the American Normal Conference, Princeton University, February 9, 2018. 2018
- Discussant, "Archaeology and New or Alternative Religious Movements," Society of American Archaeology Annual Meeting, Vancouver, March 30, 2017. 2017
- "Is the Satanic Temple a Religion, or a Campaign of Trolls, and Who Gets to Decide?," The International Society for Heresy Studies Annual Meeting, New York University, June 3, 2016. 2016
- "How the Necronomicon Became 'Real': Strategies of Re-Enchantment," The LeMoyne College Religion and Literature Forum, Syracuse, New York, October 2, 2015. 2015
- "Time is a Flat Circle: True Detective and the Reciprocal Relationship Between Horror Fiction and Moral Panic." American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, San Diego, California, November 23, 2014. 2014
- "Heaven on Earth: Apparitional Movements, Space, and Power." American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, San Diego, California, November 23, 2014. 2014
- "Yoga for the New Woman and the New Man: The Role of Pierre Bernard and Blanche DeVries in the Creation of Modern Postural Yoga." American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, November 18, 2012. 2012
- "The Other Kind of 'Apocalypse:' The Christian Worldview of 'They Live,'" Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion Annual Meeting, Atlanta, Georgia, March 3, 2012. 2012
- "The Pope is an Imposter!: Marian Devotion in the Wake of Vatican II," American Catholic Historical Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, January 5, 2012. 2012
- "The Case of the Vampires: New Religious Movements, The Sacralization of Pop Culture, and Practical Strategies for Chaplaincy," Didactic seminar, University of Virginia Chaplaincy Services and Pastoral Education, November 28, 2011. 2011
- "Vampires are Real," Flash Seminar, University of Virginia, October 25, 2011. 2011
- "Where Do They Get These Ideas?: Changing Ideas of "Cults" in Popular Culture," American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Atlanta, Georgia, October 31, 2010. 2010
- "From Esoteric to Exoteric: Pierre Bernard and the Arrival of Tantra to the West," American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Atlanta, Georgia, October 31, 2010. 2010
- "Out Demons Out: A Durkheimian Reading of the 1967 Exorcism of the Pentagon," Association for the Sociology of Religion Annual Meeting, Atlanta, Georgia, August 12, 2010. 2010
- "Carnal Knowledge: The Epistemology of Sexual Trauma in Witch's Sabbath, Satanic Ritual Abuse, and Alien Abduction Narratives," The Poetics of Pain: Aesthetics, Ideology, and Representation, CUNY, February 26, 2010. 2010

- "God's Last, Best Gift to Mankind: Gnostic Science and the Eschaton in the Vision of John Murray Spear," "Lunch and Learn" lecture, University of Michigan, December 22, 2009. 2009
- "Conversion by Infection: The Sociophobic of Cults in Omega Man," Mid-Atlantic Popular/American Culture Association annual meeting, Boston, Massachusetts, November 7, 2009. 2009
- "Ontological Rebellion: The Otherkin Community and the Struggle for Reality," Association for the Sociology of Religion annual meeting, San Francisco, California, August 8, 2009. 2009
- "Myth Sells: Mattel's Commission of the He-Man Bible," National Popular Culture Association annual meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana, April 7, 2009. 2009
- Panel Respondent, Ethics, Religion and Teaching: From Teaching to Practice, Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion annual meeting, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, March 13, 2009. 2009
- "The Gospel According to Biff: Pedagogical Uses of Satire," Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion annual meeting, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, March 15, 2009. 2009
- "Psychic Vampirism: a Genealogy of an American Metaphysical System," Association for the Study of Esotericism annual meeting, Charleston, North Carolina, May 30, 2008. 2008
- "Teaching Islam in Georgia Public Schools in Theory and Practice," Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion annual meeting, Atlanta, Georgia, March 8, 2008. 2008
- "Gathering Data with the Vampire: Analyzing Causes and Effects of an Introspective Survey by the Vampire Community," American Academy of Religion annual meeting, San Diego, California, November 19, 2007. 2007
- "World Religion in Secondary Schools: Contending Schools of Thought," Religious Studies in Secondary Schools annual meeting, San Antonio, Texas, November 2004. 2004

SELECTED MEDIA APPEARANCES

History Channel, Geraldo at Large, New Books in Religion, Armchair Expert with Dax Shepard, Somewhere Beneath, MonsterTalk, The Horrorable Podcast, Genetically-Modified Skeptic

TEACHING AWARDS

- Alpha Chi National College Honor Society, Alfred H. Nolle Chapter, Favorite Professor, Spring 2016
- Outstanding Teaching Fellow in Religious and Theological Studies, Boston University, 2011

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

TEACHING

Fall 2014-present: Full Professor, Texas State University.
Courses: World Religion; What is Religion?; Religion and Film; Prophets, Founders, and Saints; Demonology, Possession, and Exorcism; American Religious Controversies; Cults and New Religious Movements; Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

Spring 2013 Instructor, University of Virginia, Semester at Sea.
Courses: World Religion; Religions of Asia

2011-2012 Adjunct Instructor, Piedmont Virginia Community College
Courses: World Religion; Old Testament; New Testament; Religion in America

2009-2011 Teaching Fellow, Boston University
Assisted with courses in: Religion and Culture; Death and Immortality; Buddhism; Introduction to Religion

Fall 2010 Instructor, Tufts University,
Courses: Vampires in Civilization

2006-2008 Teacher, Open Campus High School, Atlanta, GA
Courses: US History; World History

2005-2006 Teacher, Indianapolis Metropolitan Career Academy, Indianapolis, IN.
Courses: Full curriculum for the state of Indiana

WRITING/BLOGGING

Contributor, *Religion Dispatches*, June 2009-present. Author of dozens of articles on contemporary religious issues and controversies. Writing has also appeared in such places as *Salon*, *The New Republic*, *Religion and Politics*, *The Conversation*, *Smithsonian* magazine, *The Religious Studies Bulletin* blog, and *Sightings*.

EDITORIAL

- Co-General Editor: *Nova Religio* 2016-present
- Editorial consultant: *Nova Religio,* 2014-present

- Peer review service for *University of California Press, University of New Mexico Press, Routledge, Palgrave MacMillan, Lexington, Brill, Nova Religio, The Journal of Religion and Popular Culture, The Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion, Pomegranate: The International Journal of Pagan Studies, Claremont Journal of Religion, Critical Social Work,* and *Material Religion, Critical Historical Studies, New Zealand Medical Journal, Journal of Research on Religion and Gender, The Journal of*

Forensic Sciences, *The South African Journal of Education*, *Journal of Religious History,* and *Contemporary Japan*

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

- Member, Programming Committee, American Academy of Religion, 2024-present
- Program Coordinator, Religious Studies Major at Texas State University, 2021-present
- Vice President, World Religion and Spirituality Project, 2017-present
- Steering Committee, New Directions in the Study of Religion, Monsters, and the Monstrous Seminar, American Academy of Religion, 2018-2023
- Co-Chair, New Religious Movements Section, American Academy of Religion, 2020-2022
- Steering Committee, New Religious Movements Section, American Academy of Religion, 2016-2022
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