

Laura Ammon

Curriculum vitae

Appalachian State University
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EDUCATION

Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, CA
Ph.D. Religion, 2006

The University of Chicago, Chicago, IL
Master of Arts, Religious Studies

Webster University, St. Louis, MO
Bachelor of Liberal Arts, cum laude graduate

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

2015-Present: Associate Professor of Religion, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC

2010-2014: Assistant Professor of Religion and Faculty Fellow, Appalachian State University

2007-2010: Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, University of North Florida, Jacksonville, FL

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS

2021-Present: Director, Watauga Residential College Program, Appalachian State University

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Forthcoming: *Religion in Sixteenth-Century Mexico: A Guide to Aztec and Catholic Beliefs and Practices*. Co-author Cheryl Claassen. Cambridge University Press.

Work Useful to Religion and the Humanities: A History of the Development of the Comparative Method in Religion from Bartolomé de Las Casas to Edward Burnett Tylor. Pickwick Studies in the History of Religion, 1. Eugene: Pickwick Publications (Fall 2012).

Articles and Book Chapters

'No Greater nor More Arduous Step': Lactantius, Las Casas and Continuity in Christian Rhetoric about Conversion in Rady Roldán-Figueroa, Th.D. and David Thomas, Orique, O.P., Ph.D., Eds., *The Transatlantic Bartolomé de las Casas: Lascasian Heritage, Indigenous Cultures, Scholastic Thought, and Historical Reception*, Brill. 2022.

The Classroom is a Public Space: Occupying Learning Outcomes to Foster Public-Facing Pedagogy with co-authors Sandie Gravett, Ann Burlein, Amanda Mbuvi, and Joseph Witt. *The Wabash Center Journal on Teaching*. Spring 2022.

Is Alexa My Neighbor: Religious Future of Home Artificial Intelligence Devices. Co-author Randall Reed. *Journal of Posthuman Studies: Philosophy, Technology, Media*. Vol. 3, No. 2, (2019).

“Futurism and the Study of Religion.” In Anthony B. Pinn, ed. Religion: Just Religion. Macmillan Interdisciplinary Handbooks: Religion series. Farmington Hills, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, (2016).

Living the Star Trek Future: Nichelle Nichols and the Implicit Religion of Star Trek: The Original Series. Time Lords & Tribbles, Winchesters & Muggles: The DePaul Pop Culture Conference a Five Year Retrospective. Paul Booth and Isabella Menichiello, eds. DePaul Pop Culture series No. 1. (2017).

Where We Have Gone Before: Star Trek Into and Out of Darkness. *Implicit Religion*, Vol. 17, No. 4, (2014).

The Examined Life: Religious Studies and the Cultivation of Self-Reflection. *Religious Studies News Spotlight on Teaching*, Eds. Stephanie Gray, Ellen Posman, and Reid B. Locklin. Distinctive and not Disposable: Religious Studies and American Higher Education in the 21st Century, edited by Joanne Robinson. American Academy of Religion: Atlanta, GA. (May 2012). (http://rsnonline.org/index753e.html?option=com_content&view=article&id=1132&Itemid=1263)

Jose de Acosta and Bernardino de Sahagún and the Sixteenth-Century Theology of Sacrifice in New Spain. *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Vol. 12. No. 2 (2011).

“Graduate Women’s Studies: An Assessment After Two Decades” (with Jean Schroedel, Karen Torjesen, Pamela Zeiser, and Charles Turner). *Women’s Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 28, (1999).

Encyclopedia Articles

Huckersterism and Religious Scandals; The Sanctuary Movement; Sister Helen Prejean; Native American Religious Freedom; Liberation Theology [co-authored with Randall Reed]. Battlegrounds: Religion, Daniel Smith-Christopher, ed. Greenwood Publishing Group, Westport, CT., (2009).

Media

Published web resource. “The Reckoning of Religious Studies and Colonialism.” *Canopy Forum*, March 19, 2021. <https://canopyforum.org/2021/03/19/the-reckoning-of-religious-studies-and-colonialism/>

Published Panel Discussion. *Climate Change and the Election*. Appalachian State University Podcast: Across the Disciplines. Karl Campbell, Jacqui Ignatova, Susan Mills, Brian McHarg, Season 1, Episode 4. “The Environment.” <https://open.spotify.com/episode/1TVb13XHQF5vDIUCDt0rTC> (October 2020).

Published Panel Discussion. Appalachian State University Television: Religion in Life. Brown, Carole, Rupp, Richard, & Ostwalt, Conrad. Season 2, Episode 2. “Pope Francis’ Visit to the United States.” <http://www.watchapptv.com/religion-in-life-season-2/>

Published Panel Discussion. Appalachian State University Television: Religion in Life. Ellis, Tom & Ostwalt, Conrad. Season 1, Episode 5. "Religion and Violence." <http://www.watchapptv.com/religion-in-life-season-1/>

Book Reviews

Joseph D. Witt, Religion and Resistance in Appalachia: Faith and the Fight Against Mountaintop Removal Coal Mining. Journal of Religion, Nature and Culture. Vol. 13 No. 2 (2019).

Florence C. Hsia, Sojourners in a Strange Land: Jesuits and Their Scientific Missions in Late Imperial China. Terrae Incognitae. Dr. Marguerite Ragnow, ed. Vol. 43. No 2 (September 2011).

Clare Pettitt, Dr Livingstone, I presume ? Missionaries, journalists, explorers and empire. Terrae Incognitae. Dr. Marguerite Ragnow, ed. Vol. 41 (2009).

Christopher Black and Pamela Gravestock eds., Early Modern Confraternities in Europe and the Americas: International and Interdisciplinary Perspectives. Itinerario. Frans Paul van der Putten, ed. Vol. 32:1 (2008).

Jorge-Magasich Airola and Jean Marc de Beer, America Magica: When Renaissance Europe Thought it had Conquered Paradise. Itinerario. Hendrik E. Niemeijer, ed. Vol. 31:1 (2007).

Amy E. Den Ouden, Beyond Conquest: Native Peoples and the Struggle for History in New England and Jenny Hale Pulsipher, Subjects unto the Same King: Indians, English, and the Contest for Authority in Colonial New England. Itinerario. Hendrik E. Niemeijer, ed. Vol. 30:3 (2006).

Manuscripts Under Review

Book chapter: Theory and Method in Religion in Latin America ; Editor: Bloomsbury...

Article: *Comparative Religion, Colonialism, and the Modern World-System* – Revise and Resubmit.

Manuscripts in Preparation

Article: *These are the ways the world ends: Comparing the Apocalypses of Christopher Columbus and Bartolomé de Las Casas*

Article: *Mary in Spain and Across the Atlantic: The Transmigration of Devotion*

HONORS

2021 Nominee, Richard N. Henson Outstanding Advising Award

2020 Nominee, App State Transfer Champion Award

2019 Nominee, App State Transfer Champion Award

2018-2019 Service-Learning Faculty Fellow

2017 Nominee, NC Board of Governors Outstanding Teaching Award

2017 Nominee, ASU College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Undergraduate Adviser

2016 Nominee, ASU College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Undergraduate Adviser

2014 Nominee, ASU College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Undergraduate Adviser

2013 ASU College of Arts and Sciences Academy of Outstanding Teachers

2012 Nominee, Appalachian Global Leadership Award

2012 Nominee, ASU College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Undergraduate Teacher
2012 Nominee, ASU College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Undergraduate Adviser
2011 Cultures and Languages Across the Curriculum, Faculty Fellow
2011-12 Wabash Center Teaching and Learning Workshop for Pre-Tenure Religion Faculty in Colleges and Universities
2009 Nominee, UNF College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Undergraduate Teacher Award
2005 Wabash Study of Outstanding Teachers of Introductory Theology and Religion Participant
1999-2001 Facilitator, Lilly-Luce Teaching Workshop Western Region

GRANTS

2020-21 Invited member of Luce Public Facing Pedagogy Grant
2019 Blue Ridge National Heritage Foundation grant with Nancy Love and Cary Fraser (unfunded)
2018-2019 Service-Learning Faculty Fellow
-2013 External Scholars Grant award for Karen Jo Torjesen
2013 General Education Senior Assessment Focus Group
2012 Wabash Center Summer Research Fellowship
2012 Shared Learning Outcomes Development Grant
2012 External Scholars Grant award for Ann Taves
2011 Culture and Language Across the Curriculum
2010 University of North Florida Summer Faculty Research Grant
2008 University of North Florida Transformative Learning Opportunity International Faculty Grant
2002 Graduate Student Participant, Engaging Islam, an NEH Focus Grant
2000-01 Technology Manager, Phillips Foundation Technology Grant at Whittier College

PRESENTATIONS

Papers Presented

'The Plagues God Sends Them': Race, Religion, and Disease in the New World. Panel presentation, "Are We All in This Together? What the History of Plagues Can Teach Us about Pandemics." October 2020.

From Different Heights: The Religious Function of Landscapes in the Spanish Conquest of Mexico. Sixteenth Century Studies Conference. St. Louis MO October 2019.

Pagans and Apocalypse: Las Casas uses of Lactantius in understanding Indigenous Religious Practices. "Las Casas and Amerindian Cultures / Las Casas y las Culturas Amerindias" II International Conference on Bartolomé de las Casas, Providence College, RI July 2019.

Divine Peaks: Mountains in Mexico and Spain. International Mountain Studies Symposium, Boone, NC. March 2019.

On the Road with Odin and Eliade: Teaching Religious Studies with Neil Gaiman's *American Gods*. American Academy of Religion, Denver CO, November 2018.

These are the ways the world ends: Comparing the Apocalypses of Christopher Columbus and Bartolomé de Las Casas. Sixteenth Century Studies Conference, Albuquerque, NM, November 2018.

Three Scenes from the Conquest of Mexico. Philosophy and Religion Department Colloquium. September 2018.

Mary in Spain and Across the Atlantic: The Transmigration of Devotion. Sixteenth Century Studies Conference, Milwaukee, WI. October, 2017.

Star Trek and the Soteriological Promise of Modernity. American Academy of Religion. San Antonio, November 2016.

Antiquity, Sacrifice, and Comparative Theology in Acosta and Sahagun. Sixteenth Century Studies Conference, Bruges, Belgium, August 2016.

From Spain to New Spain: Moors, Conversos, Catholics, and Indian. High Country LifeLong Learners Group. With co-author Cheryl Claassen. Boone, NC, September 2016.

Nichelle Nichols and the Implicit Religion of Star Trek: The Original Series, DePaul 50th Anniversary Celebration of Star Trek. Chicago, May 2016.

Robots, Cyborgs, and Gods: Religion and the Future. Appalachian State Philosophy and Religion Lecture Series. April 2016.

Mythology and the 'Modern' World: Star Trek and Star Wars. Appalachian State University Pop Culture Mini-Conference. March 2016.

Canon, Science Fiction, and the Challenge of 'Writing Genre'. Study of Religion as an Analytic Discipline. Atlanta, GA. November 2015.

Women, Transhumanism and the History of the Future. Secular Appalachian Students Society. Boone, NC. November 2015.

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si* & Public Education. Religion and Public Life Conference. Appalachian State University, September 2015.

Invited presentation: *Appalachia and The South in the National Imaginary: An Exploration of Essays from Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies* at UNC Charlotte's 30th Annual Loy H. Witherspoon Lecture in Religious Studies, March 2014.

Past to Present seminar at University of North Florida: "The Comparison of Religious Sacrifice in Joseph Lafitau's *Moeurs Des Sauvages Ameriquians*." April 2010.

Re-thinking the Enlightenment: Comparisons of Religious Sacrifice in the Context of Early Modern Coloniality. Southeastern Regional Council for the Study of Religion. March 2010.

Jose de Acosta and Bernardino de Sahagún and the Sixteenth-century Theology of Sacrifice in New Spain. Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies, Santa Fe, NM. March 2009.

Savage religion can frequently explain doctrines and rites of civilized religion: Edward B. Tylor's Comparative Study of Religion. Western Region American Academy of Religion, March 2007.

Paper presentation: Surfacing Submerged Texts in the Study of Religion: Exploring E. B. Tylor's Use of Missionary Documents. American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2004.

Paper presentation: *Take account of persons, places, times and other circumstances: An Examination of the work of Joseph Lafitau, Jesuit Chronicler in the New World.* Western Region American Academy of Religion, March 2001.

Paper presentation: *An Essentially Bad Woman: Marie Laveau and Representations of Race, Religion and Gender.* Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association, August 1997.

Discussant

Building A "Public-Focused" Future for Non-Sectarian Undergraduate Religious Studies Programs. Virtual American Academy of Religion December 2020.

Exploratory Session: A Public-Focused Religious Studies. Virtual American Academy of Religion December 2020.

Global Studies: Reformation(s) 1517-2017: A Roundtable Discussion. November 2017.

Shadows of Diverse Disciplines: Reflections on Solar Eclipses – Interdisciplinary Panel Discussion. Appalachian State University Solar Eclipse Events. Boone, NC. July 2017.

Global Studies Panel Discussion Global Trumpism: What is it and how do we talk about it? "The failed promises of modernity: Trump, Social Mistrust, and the Refugee Crisis." Boone, NC. November 2016.

"Call of Rudolf Otto: A Response to Cthulhu's Many Tentacles" at the American Academy of Religion, Atlanta GA. November 2015.

"Seen and Unseen: Revelation through Science Fiction" at the American Academy of Religion, Baltimore, MD. November 2013.

Prisons, Plates, and the Constitution. Southeast Commission for the Study of Religion. Greenville, SC. March 2013.

Panel discussion of Ann Taves' Religious Experience Reconsidered. Southeast Commission for the Study of Religion. March 2012.

The Future of the New Method and Theory Section: A Roundtable Discussion, Southeast Region American Academy of Religion Panel, Greensboro, NC. March 2009.

Cross-disciplinary collaborative teaching: challenges and successes in co-teaching courses in "Religion and _____." AAR Special Topics Forum on Teaching and Learning. American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2004.

Ritual and Community, Claremont Early Modern Studies Symposium, March 2000.

The Burden of the Flesh: Fasting and Sexuality in Early Christianity by Teresa Shaw. Borders Series on Spirituality and Feminism, October 1998.

Panels Organized

“Confronting Anxious Possibilities in Science Fiction,” American Academy of Religion, San Antonio TX, November 2021.

“Alternative Ontologies and Queering Religion,” American Academy of Religion, Virtual Meeting, December 2020.

“Mythos, Morality and Made up Worlds: Science Fiction and Religion,” American Academy of Religion, Denver CO, November 2018.

Religious Minorities in (New) Appalachia: The Challenges of Diversity, Appalachian Studies Conference, Huntington, WV. March 2014.

Method and Theory in the Study of Religion Joint Session with Religion and America, Southeast Commission for the Study of Religion, Atlanta, GA. March 2014.

Religious Diversity in Appalachia. Appalachian Studies Conference. Boone, NC. March 2013.

Theorizing the Culture Wars. Southeast Commission for the Study of Religion. Greenville, SC. March 2013.

Liberation Theology in Latin America. Twelfth Annual Northeast Florida Student Philosophy Conference, Jacksonville, FL. February 2009.

Coal, Copper, and Culture: Companies and Museums in Appalachia. Appalachian Studies Conference. Boone, NC. March 2013.

Religion, Science and Theory, Southeast Commission for the Study of Religion Panel, Louisville, KY. March 2011.

DEPARTMENTAL, UNIVERSITY AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- Affiliate Faculty, Center for Judaic, Holocaust and Peace Studies, Fall 2021-present
- General Education Historical Studies Committee, 2020-present
- President, Appalachian State University Chapter of American Association of University Professors, 2019-present
- Las Americas Gen Ed Theme Coordinator, 2019-present
- Co-Chair AAR Science Fiction and Religion Group, 2017-present
- ACCESS Scholars Program Selection Committee, January 2017-2019
- Gen Ed Council Historical Designation FCC, Fall 2016-present
- CAS Scholarship Selection Committee, January 2016-2018
- Consultation Co-Chair: Southeast Commission for the Study of Religion, Method and Theory in Religion, 2008-2015
- TransACTION Faculty Advisor, Fall 2014-present
- Honors Coordinator, Fall 2014-present

- Humanities Council, Fall 2014-present
- Office of Student Research Advisory Board, Fall 2014-2017
- Wilson Scholars Selection Committee, January 2015-January 2016
- Philosophy and Religion Biblical Studies Search Committee, Spring 2015
- Steering Committee, AAR Science Fiction and Religion Group, 2014-2016
- Philosophy and Religion Asian Studies Search Committee, Fall 2014
- Philosophy and Religion Department Chair Search Committee, Fall 2013
- Dean's Advisory Council, Fall 2013-Spring 2016
- Member, Exploratory Committee for Philosophy and Religion Department Option to Separate, Fall 2012
- Internship Advisory Board, Fall 2011-Spring 2014
- LGBTQ Taskforce, Spring 2011-Spring 2015
- Multicultural Student Center Advisory Board, Spring 2011-Spring 2013
- AAR-Southeast At Large Constituency Representative to the Southeast Commission for the Study of Religion Executive Committee, 2010-2014

SERVICE TO PROFESSION

Guest Editor: "This and Other Worlds: Religion and Science Fiction" A special issue of [Religions](https://www.mdpi.com/journal/religions/special_issues/rsf) (ISSN 2077-1444). https://www.mdpi.com/journal/religions/special_issues/rsf

LANGUAGES

French, German, Spanish

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Academy of Religion (AAR)

Sixteenth Century Studies Society (SCSS)

Association of American University Professors (AAUP)