

MATTHEW J. SMITH

Department of Religious Studies
College of the Holy Cross
Smith Hall, Room 432, 1 College Street, Worcester, MA 01610
msmith@holycross.edu | 616-901-1692

EDUCATION

- Ph.D.** Religious Studies, Northwestern University, 2021
❖ *Dissertation*: “The Age of Plastic(s): Race, Religion, Ecology, and the Biopolitics of Conversion,” *successfully defended June 2021*.
❖ *Committee*: Sylvester A. Johnson (Chair), Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, John D. Márquez, Michelle Huang, Brannon Ingram
- M.A.** Religious Studies, Northwestern University, 2018
- M.Div.** Princeton Theological Seminary, 2014
- B.A.** Religious Studies, Anderson University, 2010

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

College of the Holy Cross, Visiting Assistant Professor – Worcester, MA

- 2022 Race & Religion (2 sections) - *scheduled*
2022 Blood - *scheduled*
2021 Race & Religion (2 sections)
2021 Religion & Abolition

Northwestern University, Teaching Assistant – Evanston, IL

- 2020 Introduction to Islam, Brannon Ingram
2019 Introduction to Islam, Brannon Ingram
2018 American Religious History I: Civil War to WWII, Robert Orsi
2018 American Religious History II: WWII to the Present, Robert Orsi
2017 Introduction to Religion, Mira Balberg
2017 Introduction to Native American Religions, Sarah Dees
2016 Introduction to Buddhism, Charles Preston

Saint Joseph’s University, Adjunct Professor – Philadelphia, PA

- 2015 Faith, Justice, and the Catholic Tradition

The Pennington School, Teaching Assistant – Pennington, NJ

- 2014 U.S. World Religions, Aaron Twitchell
2014 Religion and Politics, Aaron Twitchell

Reformed Church of Highland Park, Director of Adult Education – New Brunswick, NJ

- 2013 Bible 101: Content, History, and Interpretation

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2019 - 2020 Research Assistant, Cristina Traina, Northwestern University
- 2019 Co-organizer, “The James Cone Gathering: Black Theology and Black Power, Northwestern University.”
- 2018 Co-organizer, Graduate Student Conference, “The Politics of Movement: Racialization, Religion, Migration,” Northwestern University, Buffett Institute for Global Studies.
- 2016 - 2018 Coordinator, North American Religions Colloquium, Northwestern University
- 2016 - 2018 Treasurer, Religious Studies Graduate Student Association
- 2015 Research Assistant, Sylvester Johnson, Northwestern University

PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

- 2021 “On the Racialization of (White) Religions: Accounting for Catholic, Jewish, and Mormon Whiteness in American Religion.” *Religion Compass*, for special edition publication on Religion and Whiteness, *under revisions*.
- 2021 “The Age of Plastic(s): Race, Bakelite, and the Ecological Entanglements of Protestant Missions Science,” *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture*. *Under review*.
- 2018 “Settler Colonialism and U.S. Home Missions.” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*. Published February 26, 2018.

OTHER WRITING

- 2021 “The everyday ecology of antiblack religion,” Contribution to *The Immanent Frame* forum, “Antiblackness as religion: Black living, Black dying, and Covid-19.” Published online Feb 4, 2021, <https://tif.ssrc.org/2021/02/04/the-everyday-ecology-of-antiblack-religion/>.
- 2020 “Skokie Lagoons/Kitchi-Wap Choco.” *American Religion Journal*. Published online May 2020, <https://www.american-religion.org/empty-places/skokie>.
- 2016 “Islamophobia has a long history: A Review of Karine Walther’s *Sacred Interests*.” *Religion in American History*. Published online February 2016, <http://usreligion.blogspot.com/2016/02/islamophobia-has-long-history-review-of.html>.

PRESENTATIONS AND SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- 2021 “The White (or Black?) Protestant Possessive: U.S. & Liberian Settler Colonialism in the Aftermath of Slavery,” Paper Presentation, American Academy of Religion, Religion, Colonialism, and Postcolonialism Unit, *scheduled for November*.
- 2020 “The Story of Bakelite: Modern Magicians, Polymer Capitalism and the Origin Myths of the Anthropocene,” Paper Presentation, American Academy of Religion, North American Religions Unit, *cancelled for Covid-19*.
- 2020 “Eco-Religious Entanglements in the Age of Plastic(s); or, Probing the Christian

- Coloniality of the Anthropocene,” Paper Presentation, Religious Studies Colloquium, Northwestern University.
- 2019 “Eco-Religious Entanglements in the Age of Plastic(s); or, Probing the Christian Coloniality of the Anthropocene,” Paper Presentation, American Academy of Religion Conference, North American Religions Unit.
- 2019 “The Problem of Resistant Form and the (Dis)integration of Islam: Race, Religion, and Plastic Modernity,” Paper Presentation, American Studies Association Conference
- 2018 “Islam, Mormonism, and the Rising Tide of Color (Against White World Supremacy),” North American Religions Workshop, Northwestern University
- 2018 “From the Old Frontier to the New: Unsettling the Settler Common Sense of U.S. Migrant Racialization Narratives,” Roundtable Presentation, American Academy of Religion, Catholicism and Colonialism Panel.
- 2018 “Accounting for Catholic, Jewish, and Mormon Whiteness—an argument; or, studying (white) U.S. religions in the colonial present.” Sovereignty & Strangeness Conference, Professionalization Workshop, Northwestern University.
- 2018 “Settler Homemaking, Imperial Domesticity, and the Transcolonial in US Home Missions,” Paper Presentation, 2018 Buffett Graduate Student Conference: *The Politics of Movement: Racialization, Religion, Migration*, Northwestern University.
- 2018 “Studying Race and Religion in the Age of Plastic(s),” Paper Presentation, Graduate Student Conference: *Flourish and Decay*, Syracuse University.
- 2018 “Plastic, Plastics, Plasticity.” Paper Presentation, Midwest American Academy of Religion Conference, *Winner of Marion McFarland Award for Best Research Paper in the Area of Religion, Ecology, and Sustainability.
- 2017 “The Study of Religion and Race,” Guest Lecture, Northwestern University, Intro to Religion.
- 2017 “White Women in Home Missions to Native Americans: Gender/Sexuality, Religion, and Settler Colonialism,” Guest Lecture, Intro to Native American Religions.
- 2016 “Religion, Race, Empire and the Urgency of Student Foreign Missions,” Presentation and Pre-Circulated Paper, American Academy of Religion, Religion and U.S. Empire Unit.
- 2016 “John Mott and the World’s Student Christian Federation: Race, Religion, and Empire,” Paper, North American Religions Colloquium.
- 2016 “Transimperial Whiteness: Anglo-Protestants and the Global Linkages of Race,” Paper, Northwestern University Ethnic Studies Colloquium.

- 2014 “Peripheral Religious Movements in America: Marcus “Black Moses” Garvey and Father Divine’s Peace Mission,” Two-part Lecture Series, The Pennington School.
- 2013 “Jewishness as Race: Jewish Immigrants in early 20th-century America,” and “Judaism, religious or ethnic group?: Analyzing the 2013 Pew Report,” Two-part Lecture Series, The Pennington School.

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

- 2020-21 Being Human Summer Institute Early Career Scholars, Center for Religion & the Human, Indiana University.
- 2019-20 Louisville Institute Dissertation Fellowship, \$25,000.
- 2019-20 Franke Graduate Fellowship, Kaplan Institute for the Humanities, Northwestern University, two quarters of full stipend (~\$22,000 value) + \$2000 research grant, (declined offer).
- 2015-20 Mellon Cluster Fellowship in Comparative Race and Diaspora, The Graduate School, Northwestern University, \$5000.
- 2018 Global Politics and Religion Summer Graduate Research Fellowship, The Buffett Institute for Global Studies, Northwestern University, \$5000.
- 2018 Marion McFarland Award for Best Research Paper in the Area of Religion, Ecology, and Sustainability for the paper, “Plastic, Plastics, Plasticity,” Midwest American Academy of Religion Conference, \$250.
- 2018 Buffett Institute for Global Studies Graduate Student Conference Award, “The Politics of Movement: Racialization, Religion, Migration,” \$30,000.
- 2017 Lucille Wendel Fellowship in Global Missions, The Buffett Institute for Global Studies, Northwestern University, \$5000.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- 2020-2023 Chair, Ecology and Science in the Study of Religion, Midwest Region, American Academy of Religion
- 2015-2021 Member, Religion and Global Politics Working Group, Northwestern University
- 2015-2021 Member, North American Religions Working Group, Northwestern University
- 2015-2021 Fellow & Member, Comparative Race & Diaspora Interdisciplinary Cluster
- 2017-2018 Co-Organizer, Buffett Institute for Global Studies Graduate Student Conference, “The Politics of Movement: Racialization, Religion, Migration,” April 5-6, 2018.
- 2015-2016 Committee Member, “Specters, Hauntings, Presences,” NU Religious Studies Graduate Student Conference, Oct. 7-9, 2016, Northwestern University

Affiliations: American Studies Association (ASA)
 American Academy of Religion (AAR)
 Midwest American Academy of Religion (MAAR)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

U.S. colonialism/imperialism and racialization; religion in the Americas; mid-19th-early 20th century; history of Christianity; settler colonialism and anti-blackness; scientific theories of religion, race, sexuality; secularism and the politics of freedom; religion and global politics; Protestant missions; science, technology, materiality; environmental humanities; theory of history/temporality; plastic(s)/plasticity; movement/migration/mobility; racial geographies and racial ecologies.

TEACHING COMPETENCIES

By Area/Department: Religious Studies, American Studies, Critical Race/Ethnic Studies, International Studies, Gender & Sexuality, History, Environmental Humanities

By Topic: Religion & Race in the U.S. Empire; The late 19th and early 20th Century; Theory & Method in the Study of Religion; Global Politics of Religion; Christianity; Christian Missions; Critical Race/Ethnic Studies; De-/anti-colonial Theory and Methodologies; Secularism Studies; The “Anthropocene”; Indigenous Studies; Black Studies; Hemispheric/Transnational American Studies; Diasporic Religions; Plastic(s)/Plasticity; Biopolitics; Hermeneutics

LANGUAGES

English, native.
Spanish, speaking beginner, reading beginner.
Biblical Greek, reading moderate.
German, reading beginner.

REFERENCES

Sylvester A. Johnson
Assistant Vice Provost for the Humanities
Director, Center for Humanities
Professor of Religion and Culture
Virginia Tech
saj240@vt.edu
(540) 231-9120

Elizabeth Shakman Hurd
Professor of Political Science and Crown Chair in Middle East Studies
Northwestern University
eshurd@northwestern.edu
(847) 467-5412

John D. Márquez
Associate Professor of African American and Latino/a Studies
Northwestern University
j-marquez@northwestern.edu

(847) 467-0503

Brannon Ingram
Associate Professor of Religious Studies
Northwestern University
brannon.ingram@northwestern.edu
(847) 467-4170

Michelle N. Huang
Assistant Professor of English and Asian American Studies
Northwestern University
michelle.n.huang@northwestern.edu
(847) 491-5837