Sierra L. Lawson, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of World Christianities
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EMPLOYMENT

Saint Mary's College, Department of Religious Studies and Theology
Assistant Professor of World Christianities (Fall 2026-current)

University of Wyoming, Philosophy and Religious Studies Department
Assistant Professor of World Christianity (Fall 2025-Summer 2026)

EDUCATION

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Ph.D. in Religion and Culture, May 2025
Dissertation: "Spilled Milk, Spilled Blood: Breastmilk, Race, and Religion in Transatlantic Spanish Empire"
Advisors: Brandon Bayne and Jes Boon

The University of Alabama
M.A. in Religion in Culture, May 2019
Thesis: "Theorizing Origins: An Analysis of Descriptions of Hybridity in Marian Devotional Cultures"
Advisor: Russell T. McCutcheon

Graduate Certifications:
Digital Humanities (Alabama Digital Humanities Center)
Online Pedagogy (College of Continuing Studies)

B.A. (summa cum laude), May 2017
Majors: Religious Studies, Anthropology
Minor: Spanish

FUNDING / AWARDS

- Charlotte W. Newcombe doctoral dissertation fellow with joint support from E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, from Institute for Citizens and Scholars (2024)
- Graduate Student Conference Travel Award from Institute for the Study of the Americas at UNC Chapel Hill (2024)
- Presidential Travel Grant from American Catholic Historical Association (2024)
- Travel Grant from Robert Miller Fund for Graduate Student Excellence in Department of Religious Studies at UNC Chapel Hill (2024)
- Donald Gilman Research and Travel Grant from Medieval and Early Modern Studies at UNC (2024)

    - Additional funding provided for excellence of project based on vote from MEMS board and nomination by advisor.
- Participant in American Examples collaborative working group, funded by Henry Luce foundation in Department of Religious Studies at University of Alabama (2024)
- Foremothers fellow, Society for Medieval Feminist Scholarship (2023)
- Boyd Fellowship / Summer Research Grant from Department of Religious Studies at UNC Chapel Hill (Summer 2023)
- Center for Cities and Religion Lifeways fellow, funded by Henry Luce foundation (2023)
- Maynard Adams fellow, funded by Carolina Public Humanities (2022-2023)
- Hispanic Studies Summer Program fellow, unable to attend (2022)
- Lead organizer on Digital Humanities Team development at Center for Religion and Cities, funded by Henry Luce Foundation (2022)
- Digital Humanities fellow on Good Life Project at Center for Religion and Cities, funded by Henry Luce Foundation (2021-2022)
- Humanities Professional Pathways fellow, funded by Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (2021)
- Research fellow and coordinator for education team on Good Life Project at Center for Religion and Cities, funded by Henry Luce foundation (2021)
- Research fellow and coordinator for archive and digital humanities teams at Center for Religion and Cities, funded by Henry Luce foundation (2020)
- Travel grant for City and Philosophy and HBCUs conference "5 Years After the Baltimore Uprising" (2020—canceled due to COVID-19)
- Peer Teaching Award recipient, Department of Religious Studies, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2020)
- Dean's Fellow, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2019-2020)
- Weiss Urban Livability Fellow, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2019-2020)
- Amy Lynn Memorial Scholarship, Department of Religious Studies at The University of Alabama (2017)
- Outstanding Student in Study of Religion, Department of Religious Studies, The University of Alabama (2017)
- Sliverstein Scholar, Department of Religious Studies, The University of Alabama (2016)

PUBLICATIONS

Peer Reviewed Articles

- "Sourcing Stereotypes: Constructing and Challenging Simplified Knowledge," cowritten with Steven Ramey (*Culture and Religion*, 2018).

Chapters in Edited Volumes

- "Eucharistic Thinking: Indigenous Andeans, Afro-Peruvians, and the Beginnings of Religion in America" in *American Examples: New Conversations about Religion* volume 6, eds. Sarah Riccardi-Swartz and Judith Brunton with University of Alabama Press (forthcoming 2026).
- "Satisfaction Not Guaranteed: COVID-19, Higher Ed, and the Politics of 'Experience'" in *Fabricating Authenticity*, eds. Andie Alexander and Jason W.M.

Ellsworth; part of the Working with Culture on the Edge series contracted with Equinox Publishers (2024).
- "How might we talk about Indigeneity and Catholicism in the Andes?" in *Indigenous Religious Traditions in Five Minutes*, eds. Molly Bassett and Natalie Avalos; part of the *Religion in Five Minutes* series with Equinox Publishers (2022).

Book Reviews

- Andrés I. Prieto, *The Theologian and the Empire: A Biography of José de Acosta (1540-1600*) (Brill, 2024), *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* (March 2026).
- Jennifer Scheper-Hughes, *Church of the Dead: The Epidemic of 1576 and the Birth of Christianity in the Americas* (NYU Press, 2021), *Religion* (May 2022).
- Solimar Otero, *Archives of Conjure: Stories of the Dead in Afrolatinx Cultures* (Columbia University Press, 2020), online at Reading Religion (July 2021).
- Brett Hendrickson, *The Healing Power of the Santuario de Chimayó* (New York University Press, 2018), Religious Studies Review (December 2019).
- Harold D. Morales, *Latino and Muslim in America: Race, Religion, and the Making of a New Minority* (Oxford University Press, 2018), *Religion* (December 2019).
- Maria Del Socorro Castañeda-Liles, *Our Lady of Everyday Life: La Virgen de Guadalupe and the Catholic Imagination of Mexican Women in America* (Oxford University Press, 2018), *Religion* (June 2019).
- Kristin Bloomer, *Possessed by the Virgin: Hinduism, Roman Catholicism, and Marian Possession in South India* (Oxford University Press, 2018), *Religion* (August 2018).
- Amy S. Adams and Vera Shevzov, *Framing Mary: The Mother of God in Modern, Revolutionary, and Post-Soviet Russian Culture* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2018), online at Reading Religion (September 2018).
- Aaron T. Wolf, *The Spirit of Dialogue* (Island Press, 2017), online at Reading Religion (February 2018).

PRESENTATIONS

- Panelist and Organizer at American Catholic Historical Association (ACHA) for panel titled "Afro-Latinx and Indigenous Responses to and Transformations of Catholicism in Colonial Latin America," paper titled *Afro-Peruvian Catholicism(s): Envisioning World Christianity in the Black Andean Atlantic* (Chicago, January 2026)
- Chair for "Memorializing Christian Heroism in the Americas" panel at American Society of Church History (Chicago, January 2026)
- Chair for "Political Imaginaries" panel at North American Association for the Study of Religion (Boston, November 2025)
- Panelist at American Academy of Religion (AAR) for "Professionalization and the Job Market: Contract Negotiation" roundtable organized by AAR's Graduate Student Committee (Boston, November 2025)
- Panelist and Organizer at American Academy of Religion (AAR) for Motherhood and Religions unit panel titled "Motherhood Encountered/in Times of Encounter: Religious Transmission, Preservation, and Adaptation," paper titled *Mother Tongues: Language and Caring Labor in Colonial Peru* (Boston, November 2025)

- Panelist at American Catholic Historical Association (ACHA) for panel titled "Intervention, Reform, Removal: Catholic Approaches to Indigenous Children from Early Missions to Vatican II," paper titled *A Tale of Two Brotherhoods: Jesuit Arrival, Corporeal Being, and the Exclusion of* Mestizos (New York, January 2025)
- Organizer of "Art History in Peru" presentation by junior scholars from Peru in Abelardo de la Cruz's class "Space, Place, and Religion," funded by the Institute for the Study of the Americas (Chapel Hill, November 2024)
- Panelist at American Academy of Religion (AAR) for African Diaspora Religions unit panel titled "The Power of Our Archives," paper titled *Beyond Textual Literacies: Envisioning Religion Through Afro-Peruvian Archives* (San Diego, November 2024)
- Panelist at Medieval and Early Modern Studies (MEMS) Graduate Symposium (UNC Chapel Hill, March 2024)
- Panelist at 57th International Congress on Medieval Studies for "Discourses on Wet Nurses: Beyond Breastfeeding," paper titled *Spilled Milk, Spilled Blood: An Analysis of Religio-Racial Economies of Care in Medieval and Early Modern Castile* (Online hosted by the Medieval Institute at Western Michigan University, May 2022)
- Chair for "Religion as a Socio-Rhetorical Tool," AAR Southeast (Online hosted by Florida State University, March 2022)
- Panelist at meeting of American Society of Ethnohistory for "Ethnohistorical Research on Colonial South American Borderlands in the Time of Pandemic: Archival Creativity and Methodological Explorations," paper titled *Labor, Language, and Literature: Situating Sources Beyond the Lettered City* (Online hosted by Duke University, November 2021)
- Panelist for McLester panel on embodiment in Department of Religious Studies at UNC Chapel Hill, *Wet Nursing and Colonial Anxieties* (Chapel Hill, NC March 2021)
- Chair for "Religion in the Americas," AAR Southeast (Online hosted by Florida State University, March 2021)
- Panelist for "Digital Humanities in the South," Digitorium (Tuscaloosa, October 2020)
- Panelist for "NAASR Working Papers: Review Panel," Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion (Athens, March 2020)
- Chair for "International Perspectives on the Field," North American Association for the Study of Religion (San Diego, November 2019)
- Panelist for "Digital Humanities and Religious Studies: Building Archives of Ephemera with Omeka," Digitorium hosted by the Alabama Digital Humanities Center and Summersell Center for the Study of the South (Tuscaloosa, October 2018)
- Panelist for "Digital Humanities and Religious Studies", Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion (Atlanta, March 2018)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Saint Mary's College
RELI220: World Christianities
RELI101: Introduction to Religious Studies

University of Wyoming
RELI3275: World Christianities
RELI3051: Religion in Latin America

RELI2225: History of Christianity

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Appointments as Instructor of Record (Teaching Fellow in Department of Religious Studies)
RELI101: Introduction to the Study of Religion (Spring 2023, Spring 2024)
RELI151: Religion in Latin America (Fall 2023)
RELI121: Introduction to Religion and Culture (Summer 2024)
RELI161: History of Christianity (Summer 2023)

Appointments as a Graduate Teaching Assistant:
RELI151: Religion in Latin America, Prof. Brandon Bayne (Fall 2022)
RELI123: Introduction to Jewish Studies, Prof. Andrea Cooper (Spring 2022)
RELI266: Medieval and Renaissance and Christian Cultures, Prof. Jes Boon (Fall 2021)
RELI121: Introduction to Religion and Culture, Prof Todd Ramón-Ochoa (Fall 2020)
RELI246: Supernatural Encounters, Prof. Brendan Thornton (Spring 2020, Spring 2021)
RELI103: Introduction to Hebrew Bible, Prof. David Lambert (Fall 2019)

Other Teaching Appointments:

- Instructional Assistant for RELI140: Religion in America, (Maymester 2024), Prof. Brandon Bayne
- Graduate Research Consultant for RELI533: Women, Gender, and Judaism (Fall 2022), Prof. Andrea Cooper
- Summer Course Teaching Assistant for RELI283/ASIA 300: The Buddhist Tradition: India, Nepal, Tibet (Summer II Session 2021), Prof. Lauren Leve
- Graduate Research Consultant for RELI067: Nature, Culture, and Self-Identity: Religion in the Construction of Social Life (Fall 2020), Prof. Lauren Leve
- Graduate Research Consultant for RELI246: Supernatural Encounters (Maymester 2020), Prof. Brendan Thornton

Duties: Directing students in terms of their final projects by helping them synthesize a thesis, draft bibliographies and further consulting with them for each stage of development in project.

The University of Alabama
Appointments as an instructor of record:
REL104: Religion and Pop Culture (Summer 2019)
REL100: Introduction to Religious Studies (Summer 2018)

Guest Lectures:

- "Afro-Peruvian Religion and Literacies" in Religion in Latin America (September 2024, Prof. Brandon Bayne at UNC Chapel Hill)
- "Sex and the Church in Colonial Peru" in Visualizing Latin America (September 2023, Prof. Cassie Osei at Bucknell University)
- "The Huarochirí Manuscript, Guaman Poma, and Andean non-Alphabetic Literacies" in Religion in Latin America (September 2022, Prof. Brandon Bayne at UNC Chapel Hill)

- "Medieval Conceptions of Race" in Medieval and Renaissance Christian Cultures (November 2021, Prof. Jes Boon at UNC Chapel Hill)
- "Stereotypes and Systems of Classification" in Muslim Bodies: Islam, Gender, Health (September 2020, Dr. Candace Mixon at Occidental College)
- "Introducing the Study of Religion: Why Classification Matters" in Introduction to the Study of Religion (January 2019, Prof. Russell McCutcheon at University of Alabama)
- "Marian Apparitions and Mexican Identity" in Religions of the World course (March 2018, Prof. Steven Ramey at University of Alabama)

LANGUAGES
Spanish: conversation, reading, and writing proficiency
Quechua: reading novice
French: reading novice

PUBLIC FACING SCHOLARSHIP AND DIGITAL HUMANITIES
The Center for Religion and Cities
Planned public facing archive open for submissions by communities using Omeka as part of the Good Life Project (2021- 2022). Created written and video materials for Camino de Santiago (Route of St. James) high school study abroad trip (2024).

Religion for Breakfast
Freelance writer for episodes featured in forthcoming Theories of Religion series for this popular, educational YouTube channel hosted by Andrew Mark Henry. (2022)

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Passion of Christ in Spanish Altarpieces Database built using Tropy: an index of artistic themes and portrayals of Mary's compassion at various points in the life of Christ using photographs of Spanish cathedrals provided by Dr. Jes Boon. (2020-2022)

The University of Alabama
AARtifacts: a curation and documentation of material culture from annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion using Omeka. (2017)

International
Guest on podcast episodes for the Religious Studies Project, produced by scholars of religion Chris Cotter and David Robertson as well as on the Contagion, Religion, and Cities podcast produced by the Center for Religion and Cities. (ongoing)

Overall Proficiencies
Tropy, Omeka, Wordpress, TAGs, NVivo

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE
• Member of Motherhood and Religion unit steering committee at American Academy of Religion (2025-ongoing)
• Peer reviewer for manuscripts submitted to *American Religion* (2026-ongoing)

• Peer reviewer for manuscripts submitted to *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* (2025-ongoing)
• Peer reviewer for manuscripts submitted to *Franciscan Studies* (2025-ongoing)
• Graduate student organizer for Religion and Theory reading group cohosted by UNC-Chapel Hill and Duke (2022-2024)
• Board Member at Large, American Academy of Religion / Society of Biblical Literature, Southeastern Region (2021—2022)
• Director of Marketing and Publicity, American Academy of Religion / Society of Biblical Literature, Southeastern Region (2021—2022)
• Co-Chair for Religion in Americas Section of American Academy of Religion Southeastern Region (2020–2023)
-Organizer for featured panel at 2022 meeting on the Omar ibn Said manuscripts joint hosted with Islamic Studies co-chairs.
•Abstract Reviewer for Queer MiniCon hosted by UNC Chapel Hill's LGBTQ Center and Sexuality Studies (2022)
• Webmaster for The Southeastern Commission for the Academic Study of Religion (2018–2021)
•Editor for Digitorium Crossroads hosted by H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online (2020)
• Editorial Assistant for *Jesus and Addiction to Origins: Towards an Anthropocentric Study of Religion* by Willi Braun (Equinox Publishing, 2020)
• Editorial Assistant "*Religion" in Theory and Practice: Demystifying the Field for Burgeoning Academics* (Published by Equinox Publishing, 2020)
• Production Assistant for Study Religion Podcast at University of Alabama (2018 –2019)
• Organizational Aid for Digitorium Conference, University of Alabama
Supervisor: Dr. Tom Wilson, Associate Dean of Library and Digital Student Services (2018, 2020)
• Organizational Aid for Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium, University of Alabama Department of Religious Studies (2018)
• Organizational Aid for Southeastern Evolutional Perspectives Conference, University of Alabama Department of Anthropology (2017)
•Volunteer tutor and academic consultant for Spanish-speaking youth with an interest in pursuing higher ed from Baltimore and surrounding areas (2020-present)

OTHER RESEARCH
Human Behavioral Ecology Research Group (2016-2017)
Supervisor: Dr. Christopher Lynn, Department of Anthropology at the University of Alabama

Head Start (Funded by Administration for Children and Families, 2015)
Supervisor: Dr. Jason DeCaro, Department of Anthropology at the University of Alabama