

WILLIAM ALDEN ROBERT

Syracuse University
Department of Religion
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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Syracuse University

Professor, Department of Religion, 2022–present

Affiliated faculty, Department of Women’s and Gender Studies

Affiliated faculty, Program in LGBTQ Studies

Affiliated faculty, Program in Medieval and Renaissance Studies

Associate Professor, Department of Religion, 2016–22

Assistant Professor, Department of Religion, 2011–16

Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Religion, 2010–11

Humanities Postdoctoral Faculty Fellow, Department of Religion, 2006–10

Louisiana State University

Instructor, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, 2005–06

University of California, Santa Barbara

Instructor, Department of Religious Studies, 2002–05

EDUCATION

PhD Religious Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2005

Dissertation: “Crossing: Simone Weil, Mystics, Politics”

MA Religion, University of Chicago Divinity School, 1999

MA Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities, University of Chicago, 1997

BA Philosophy and Literature (high honors, *cum laude*), Davidson College, 1996

ALL THAT FOLLOWS DOCUMENTS WORK DONE 2010–23.

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Unbridled: Studying Religion in Performance (University of Chicago Press, 2022)

Revivals: Of Antigone (State University of New York Press, 2015)

Trials: Of Antigone and Jesus (Fordham University Press, 2010)

Edited Journal Issue

“Performing Religion,” *Religions* 10, no. 4 (2019)

Journal Articles

- “Pedagogical Cliff-Jumping,” *Teaching Theology and Religion* 24, no. 1 (2021): 55–64
- “Signs and Presents,” *Nabokov Studies* 15 (2017) doi 10.1353/nab.2017.0006
- “Nude, Glorious, Living,” *Political Theology* 14, no. 1 (2013): 115–30
- “Performing Religiously Between Passion and Resistance,” *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* 12, no. 2 (2012): 69–84
- “A Mystic Impulse: From Apophatics to Decreation in Pseudo-Dionysius, Meister Eckhart, and Simone Weil,” *Medieval Mystical Theology* 21, no. 1 (2012): 113–32
- “Antigone’s Nature,” *Hypatia* 25, no. 2 (2010): 412–36

Book Chapters

- “Angela of Foligno, In Love, With Animals,” *Animals on the Edge*, ed. Katja Falt (Trivent, forthcoming)
- “To Live, By Grace,” *Living Together: Jacques Derrida’s Communities of Violence and Peace*, ed. Elisabeth Weber (Fordham University Press, 2013), 153–67

Invited Essays

- “Vibrating,” *Machines in Between*, ed. John Lardas Modern, 2022 (<https://www.machinesinbetween.com/episodes/saturation>)
- “Queer,” *Critical Theory for Political Theology*, ed. Alex Dubilet and Vincent Lloyd, 2022 (<https://politicaltheology.com/queer>)
- “Performance,” *The Immanent Frame: A Universe of Terms*, ed. Mona Oraby and Daniel Vaca, 2019 (<https://tif.ssrc.org/2019/12/20/performance-robert>); reprinted in Mona Oraby and Emilie Flamme, *A Universe of Terms: Religion in Visual Metaphor* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2022), 78–83
- “Quite a Table,” *Exeter Exchange*, 2018 (<https://www.exeter.edu/news/quite-table-student-reflects>)
- “Concerning Method: Of Narratives and Names,” *Syndicate*, 2015 (<https://syndicate.network/symposia/literature/minding-the-modern/#william-robert>)
- “All About Glory,” *Political Theology*, 2012 (<http://www.politicaltheology.com/blog/?p=2390>)
- “Nike Free,” *The Immanent Frame: Frequencies, A Genealogy of Spirituality*, ed. Kathryn Lofton and John Lardas Modern, 2011 (<http://frequencies.ssrc.org/2011/11/10/nike-free>)

Reference Articles

- “Medieval Drama: Western European Religious Contexts,” *Folgerpedia*, 2017 (https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/Medieval_Drama:_Western_European_Religious_Contexts)
- “Augustine,” “Michel Foucault,” and “Søren Kierkegaard,” *Encyclopedia of Global Religion*, ed. Mark Juergensmeyer and Wade Clark Roof (Sage Publications, 2011), 83, 408–10, 663–64

Book Reviews

- Review of Mark C. Taylor, Mary-Jane Rubenstein, and Thomas A. Carlson, *Image: Three Inquiries in Technology and Imagination* (University of Chicago Press, 2021), *Journal of Religion* 103, no. 3 (2023)

- Review of A.W. Strouse, *Form and Foreskin: Medieval Narratives of Circumcision* (Fordham University Press, 2021), *Arthuriana* 32, no. 2 (2022): 111–12
- Review of Rachel J.D. Smith, *Excessive Saints: Gender, Narrative, and Theological Invention in Thomas of Cantimpré's Mystical Hagiographies* (Columbia University Press, 2019), *The Medieval Review* (2019) (<https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/tmr/article/view/27772/33006>)
- Review of Louis Betty, *Without God: Michel Houellebecq and Materialist Horror* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016), *Journal of Religion* 98, no. 3 (2018): 399–401
- Review of Colin Jager, *Unquiet Things: Secularism in the Romantic Age* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), *Journal of Religion* 97, no. 2 (2017): 281–82
- Review of Noëlle Vahanian, *The Rebellious No: Variations on a Secular Theology of Language* (Fordham University Press, 2014), *Journal of Religion* 96, no. 4 (2016): 583–84
- Review of Martin Hägglund, *Radical Atheism: Derrida and the Time of Life* (Stanford University Press, 2008), *Sophia* 49, no. 1 (2010): 173–75

CONFERENCE PAPERS

- “Transgendered Questioning,” American Academy of Religion, November 2023
- “My Neuromatic Cut-Up,” American Academy of Religion, November 2022
- “Mystéréthiques,” Luce Irigaray Circle, May 2022
- “How Angela of Foligno Loved Francis of Assisi,” International Congress on Medieval Studies, May 2020 (cancelled due to COVID-19)
- “Angela of Foligno With Animals,” International Medieval Congress, July 2019
- “Angela of Foligno’s Poly-Performativity,” International Congress on Medieval Studies, May 2019
- “The Truth of Angela of Foligno’s Confession,” Confession, Truth, and Power, Syracuse University, May 2019
- “Mothers and Sons, or When Angela of Foligno Misquoted Jesus,” Reusing Religious Sites and Reactivating Normative Texts, Syracuse University, March 2019
- “Introduction Done Differently,” Future Professoriate Program, Syracuse University, May 2018
- “Ways and Means, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Introduction to the Study of Religion,” American Academy of Religion, November 2017
- “Engendering Vulnerability,” American Academy of Religion, November 2017
- “Signs and Presents,” South Atlantic Modern Language Association, November 2017
- “Michel Foucault’s True Love,” American Academy of Religion, November 2016
- “Seeing Nudity Anew,” Religious Studies symposium, University of Oxford, England, December 2014
- “Mystifying Queer Genealogies,” American Academy of Religion, November 2014
- “Writing Monks, Rewriting Humans; or, Reading William of Saint Thierry to the Letter,” International Medieval Congress, July 2014
- “Reviving Antigone,” Luce Irigaray Circle, June 2013
- “Singular Plural Sacrality,” American Academy of Religion, November 2011

- “Namely, Mystical Desire,” Eastern International Regional American Academy of Religion, May 2011
- “Future Blindness,” Postmodernism, Culture, and Religion: The Future of Continental Philosophy of Religion, Syracuse University, April 2011
- “Queerly Mystical,” Medieval Voices and Postmodern Theory, University of California, Santa Barbara, March 2011
- “The Sense of Passion,” American Academy of Religion, November 2010
- “Passion, in the Feminine: Angela of Foligno’s Mystical Erotics,” Passions and Transgressions from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance, Syracuse University, April 2010

INVITED TALKS

- “Everybody’s Medieval Christianities?,” Program in Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Syracuse University, November 2022
- “& Fragments,” Religion and Literature workshop, Indiana University, October 2021
- “How We Value: G.W.F. Hegel and Karl Marx,” Davidson College, September 2019
- “Recounting Animals,” Tolley professorship retreat, Syracuse University, May 2018
- “Showing and Telling Incongruities,” Department of Religion, Syracuse University, March 2018
- “Angela of Foligno’s Mystical Passions,” Le Moyne College, November 2017
- “Performing, Transforming,” Center for Religious Studies, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Germany, June 2017
- “Humanities In Extremis,” Le Moyne College, May 2017
- “How About Religion,” Theta Alpha Kappa induction ceremony, Syracuse University, April 2016
- “Attending to Sappho,” Le Moyne College, February 2016
- “How Do You Solve a Problem like Angela of Foligno?,” Program in Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Syracuse University, April 2015
- “Porosity and Sensuality,” Humanities Center, Syracuse University, February 2015
- “Extreme Humanities,” Le Moyne College, February 2015
- “Genre Questioning Songs of Songs,” University of Oxford, England, November 2014
- “Une Question de Rappports: L’anthropologie d’Irénee de Lyon,” Institut Catholique de Paris, France, November 2014
- “Mystical Lips and Other Sexual Differences,” University of Chicago Divinity School, May 2014
- “Denuding Angela of Foligno,” Harvard Divinity School, April 2013
- “Remnants: Of Giorgio Agamben,” Harvard Divinity School, April 2013
- “Why Graduate School?” McNair Scholars program, Syracuse University, July 2012
- “A Commencement, A Moment, A Question,” Phi Beta Kappa induction ceremony, Syracuse University, May 2012
- “The Journey of Research,” McNair Scholars program, Syracuse University, October 2011

INVITED DISCUSSIONS AND RESPONSES

- Discussant of the pilot episode of *Pose*, Newhouse School of Public Communications, Syracuse University, November 2021
- Discussant of Richard Blanco's poetry collection *How To Love A Country*, Forum on Education Abroad, March 2021
- Discussant of Ensemble Parallax's multimedia performance "On the Edge of Silence: Ecstatic Utterances and Inspired Breath," Syracuse Symposium, September 2019
- Discussant of Geoffrey Nauffts's play *Next Fall*, Department of Drama, Syracuse University, November 2018
- Respondent to "(En)gendering Bodies" panel, Flourish and Decay: Exploring Religion in Process, Syracuse University, April 2018
- Respondent to Aaron Vlasak's paper "Plato's Cosmopolitan Ideal: Philosophical Exile," Humanities Center, Syracuse University, March 2012

COURSES TAUGHT

Syracuse University

- Introduction to the Study of Religion
- God Sex Death
- Religion and Its Critics
- Ecstasy, Transgression, Religion
- What Is Belief?
- Belief and the Body
- Medieval Christianities
- Performing Religion
- Questioning Religion
- Queerly Religious
- Queer Theories
- Queer Histories, Politics, and Communities
- Sexualities, Genders, Bodies
- We Animals
- Living With Others
- Self Dis-Closure
- Love, Death, and Other Passions
- Self, Sacrifice, and the Meaning of Life
- Continental Philosophy of Religion
- Religious Corporealities
- Sensuality, Sexuality, Religion
- Textual Bodies in the Study of Religion: Foucault's Sexuality
- Textual Bodies in the Study of Religion: Extraordinary, Exposed Bodies
- Textual Scripts in the Study of Religion: Reading Performances of Religion
- Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion

BA THESIS COMMITTEES

Department of Religion

First reader, "Isis in Ancient Magic Spells," 2022

Director, "Counterculture Dystopia," 2020

Director, "Speaking Reliquaries: Relics and Devotional Cultures in Medieval European Christianity," 2012

Honors Program

First reader, "The Trend of Veganism and Vegetarianism in the United States," 2023

MA THESIS COMMITTEES

Department of Religion

Director, "Closets, Cloisters, and Medieval Magic," 2022

Director, "Little Messiah: Relational Religion in Hélène Cixous's *Messie*," 2019

First reader, "Category Is ... Religious 'Realness,'" 2019

Departmental reader, "Moving with Pandi: Relations of Flux and Gender Ambiguity in South Indian Deity Possession," 2017

First reader, "The Once and Future God: On Time and the Last God in Martin Heidegger's *Contributions to Philosophy*," 2014

First reader, "It'll Be Zion to Me': Mormon Masculinity in *Legacy*," 2013

Departmental reader, "Pushing the Pictorial Turn: W.J.T. Mitchell, Walter Benjamin, and Religion Online," 2013

Department of Communication and Rhetorical Studies

External chair and reader, "Touring Extinction: The Rhetorics of Biodiversity Loss on Display," 2016

PHD DISSERTATION COMMITTEES

Department of Religion

First reader, "Iconic Books, Design, and Gender," 2021

First reader, "Immanent Technologies: Posthuman Digital Religion in America," 2021

First reader, "Desiring Devastated Landscapes: Love After Ecological Collapse," 2019

Departmental reader, "Same-Sex Marriage and the Moral Arguments of American Christianities," 2018

First reader, "Visionary Architecture: Monastic Magic and Cognition in John of Morigny's *Liber Florum*," 2016

Departmental reader, "The Deconstruction of Hell: A History of the *Resignatio ad Infernum* Tradition," 2013

Examiner, "Irreconcilable Mourning: Inheritance, Redemption, and the Critique of History," 2013

Examiner, "Beauty as/and Theology: The Theological Aesthetics of Hans Urs von Balthasar," 2010

Department of Anthropology

External chair, “Amphibious Subjects: *Sassoi* and the Contested Politics of Queer Self-Making in Neoliberal Ghana,” 2016

External chair, “*Khmaja Sira*: Culture, Identity, Politics, and ‘Transgender’ Activism in Pakistan,” 2014

Department of English

External chair, “Romantic Legalism,” 2019

Department of History

External chair, “Lorenzo Giustiniani and the Politics of Obedience: Church and State in Fifteenth-Century Venice,” 2016

Department of Philosophy

External chair, “At the Margins of Gender Norms,” 2022

External chair, “Moral Luck,” 2012

Department of Sociology

External chair, “The Experience and Meaning of Same-Sex Marriage: A Life Course Perspective,” 2018

Department of Writing Studies, Rhetoric, and Composition

External chair, “Receiving a Queen: A Queer and Trans Classical Reception History of Elagabalus,” 2022

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Syracuse University

Department of Religion

Chair, 2022–25

Chair, Executive committee, 2020, 2022–25

Member, Graduate committee, 2012–14, 2015–16, 2020–21, 2022–25

Member, Undergraduate committee, 2011–12, 2017–19, 2022–25

Member, Hinduism search committee, 2022–23

Member, Undergraduate program review committee, 2022

Director, Future professoriate program, 2012–14, 2015–16, 2020–21

Scholarship reviewer, Third-year personnel case, 2020

Member, Ancient Christianities search committee, 2012–13

Speaker, Future professoriate program workshops, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2020, 2021

College of Arts and Sciences

Co-chair, Strategic planning committee, 2022–23

Member, Humanities Council, 2021–present

Member, Grade appeal panel, 2018–present

Member, Coronat Scholars selection committee, 2012–present

Co-director, Coronat Scholars, 2019–22

Director, LGBTQ Studies, 2020–22

Co-investigator, Engaged Humanities research project, 2020
 Member, IDEA course review committee, 2019–20
 Member, LGBTQ Studies minor review committee, 2018–19
 Member, Strategic planning committee, 2016–17
 Chair, Strategic planning working group on research and discovery, 2017
 Faculty speaker, Tolley dinner for new humanities faculty, 2016
 Faculty discussion leader, Board of Visitors meeting, 2016
 Faculty panelist, Board of Visitors meeting, 2015
 Faculty speaker, On-campus receptions for prospective student recruitment,
 Fall 2011, Summer 2013, Fall 2013, Fall 2015
 Faculty speaker, On-campus receptions for admitted student recruitment,
 Spring 2012, Spring 2013, Spring 2014
 Undergraduate advisor, 2006–08, 2011–13
 Instructor, Transfer Forum, 2012, 2013
 Member, Veteran’s roundtable, First-Year Forum workshop, 2011, 2012
 Faculty member, Academic integrity hearing panel, 2012
 Instructor, First-Year Forum, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011
 Faculty speaker, Los Angeles reception for prospective student recruitment,
 2011

University

Member, Social Differences, Social Justice research cluster, 2021–present
 Member, University Senate committee on LGBTQA justice and advocacy,
 2021–22
 Member, Humanities Center faculty advisory board, 2013–14, 2016–22
 Member, Humanities Center director review committee, 2022
 Member, Humanities Center faculty fellows selection committee, 2017, 2020
 Faculty leader, Certificate of University Teaching seminar on lesson planning,
 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021
 Member, Outstanding TA selection committee, 2019
 Instructor, Honors Orientation seminar, 2015, 2016, 2018
 Organizer, Porosity, Sensuality, Relation: Rethinking Religion’s Terms,
 Humanities Center faculty fellow symposium, 2015
 Member, Syracuse Symposium speaker selection committee, 2014
 Member, Judith Seinfeld Student Fellowship selection committee, 2014
 Faculty evaluator, Fulbright Fellowship applications, 2012, 2013
 Faculty speaker, Washington, DC reception for admitted student recruitment,
 2013
 Faculty speaker, Baltimore reception for admitted student recruitment, 2012,
 2013
 Faculty mentor, McNair Scholars program, 2011–12

Additional

- Member, Performance Pedagogy working group, Central New York Humanities Corridor, 2019–present
- Reviewer, Tenure and promotion case, Department of Religious Studies, Indiana University, 2022
- President, Theta Chi Beta chapter of Theta Alpha Kappa, 2015–22
- Mentor (through Committee on the Status of LGBTQI+ Persons), American Academy of Religion, 2016–17, 2019–20, 2021–22
- Mentor, Political Theology Network, 2020–21
- Co-organizer, Critical LGBTQ+ /Sexuality Studies working group, Central New York Humanities Corridor, 2020–21
- Reviewer, Tenure and promotion case, Department of Religious Studies, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2018
- Reviewer, Tenure and promotion case, Department of Theology, Fordham University, 2017
- Reviewer, Promotion case, Department of Religious Studies, Skidmore College, 2017
- Co-director, Sacred Literature, Secular Religion: A Conference on Cultural Practices, 2015
- Co-director, The Return of the Text: A Conference on the Cultural Value of Close Reading, 2013

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Dramaturg, *I Have Loved Strangers*, Syracuse University Black Box Players, 2018

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Exeter Humanities Institute, 2018, 2022

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- American Academy of Religion
- Luce Irigaray Circle
- Performance Philosophy
- Performance Studies International

AWARDS

- Syracuse University
 - Folger Institute colloquium grant (Teaching Medieval Drama and Performance)
 - Syracuse University Humanities Center faculty fellowship
 - National Endowment for the Humanities Enduring Questions course grant (What Is Belief?)
 - Theta Alpha Kappa
- University of California, Santa Barbara
 - Gerald Larson Prize for best dissertation in religious studies

Ninian Smart Prize for excellence in the study of comparative religion
Dissertation fellow, Interdisciplinary Humanities Center
Research fellow, Walter Capps Center for Ethics, Religion, and Public Life
J.F. Rowny fellowship

University of Chicago

Divinity School fellowship

Davidson College

Phi Beta Kappa

Omicron Delta Kappa

Frontis Withers Johnston Prize for best honors thesis

Charles Lloyd Prize for nonfiction writing

REFEREE

Presses

Bloomsbury, Columbia University Press, Fordham University Press, Oxford
University Press, Palgrave Macmillan, Routledge, Rowman and Littlefield, State
University of New York Press, University of Chicago Press

Journals

*American Ethnologist, American Religion, Arthuriana, Hypatia, Journal of Religion, InVisible
Culture, Law, Culture, and the Humanities, Literature and Theology, Mosaic, Nabokov Studies,
philoSOPHIA, Political Theology, Polity, Practical Matters, Religions, Toronto Journal of
Theology*

May 2023