

# M. Cooper Harriss

Associate Professor  
Department of Religious Studies  
Indiana University

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## UNIVERSITY EMPLOYMENT

Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana (2014-present):

Department of Religious Studies: Associate Professor (2020-present)  
Assistant Professor (2014-2020)

Department of Comparative Literature: Adjunct Professor

Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology: Adjunct Professor

Program in Islamic Studies: Faculty Affiliate

University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (2012-14):

Department of Religious Studies: Postdoctoral Associate

Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia (2010-12):

Department of Religion and Culture: Visiting Assistant Professor and Instructor

University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois (2008, 2009)

The Divinity School: Instructor

The College: Instructor

## EDUCATION

University of Chicago Divinity School (Ph.D., 2011) Dissertation: *Race and the Religious*

*Unconscious: Ralph Ellison's Invisible Theology*

Yale University Divinity School and Institute of Sacred Music (M.A.R., 2003)

University of Chicago, Division of Social Sciences (A.M., 1998)

Washington & Lee University, English (B.A., 1997)

## PUBLICATIONS

### BOOKS

*Ralph Ellison's Invisible Theology* (NYU Press 2017)

*Muhammad Ali's Preposterous Religion* (manuscript in progress)

### CO-AUTHORED BOOK

*The Abyss or Life Is Simple: Reading Knausgaard, Writing Religion* (with Courtney Bender, Jeremy Biles, Liane Carlson, Joshua Dubler, Hannah Garvey, Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, and Erik Thorstensen) (University of Chicago Press, 2022)

### ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS

"Nathan Scott," *Ralph Ellison Biographical Companion*, Marc C. Conner, ed. (Forthcoming, University of Georgia Press)

"All the Years Combine: Digital Media, the Grateful Dead Archive, and the Wheel of Time," in Adrian Grafe and Andrew McKeown, eds., *Ink on the Tracks: Rock and Roll Writing* (Bloomsbury, 2024)

- "From Revelation back to Genessee: Biblical Reception in African-American Verbal Folklore," in Eric J. Ziolkowski, ed., *Handbook of Biblical Reception in the World's Folklores*, vol. 2 (De Gruyter, 2023)
- "On the Cinematic Secularization of Muhammad Ali," in Kristian Peterson, ed., *Muslims at the Movies: A Global Anthology* (Mizan/Harvard UP, 2021)
- "On the Abroad of a Different Home: Muhammad Ali in Micro-scope," in Elizabeth Shakman Hurd and Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, eds., *The Politics of Religion at Home and Abroad* (Columbia University Press, 2021)
- "The Last Outback at World's End: Dylan's Sense of an (Album's) Ending," Laurence Estranove, Adrian Graf, Claire Helie, and Andrew McKeown, eds., *Twenty-First Century Dylan: Late and Timely* (Bloomsbury, 2020)
- "The Bible in American Literature," in Claudia Setzer and David Shefferman, eds., *The Bible in America* (SBL Press, 2020)
- "The Great American Novel as Theology of Exceptionalism," Elizabeth Shakman Hurd and Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, eds., *Theological Perspectives on U.S. Exceptionalism* (Indiana University Press, 2020)
- "Time, Narrative, and All that Jazz: Ellison, Ricoeur, and Invisibility's Hermeneutic Circle," *Literature and Theology* 32:4 (December 2018): 423-33
- "Preacherly Texts: Zora Neale Hurston and the Homiletics of Literature," *The Journal of Africana Religions* 4:2 (2016): 278-90
- "Two Ways of Looking at an Invisible Man: Race, the Secular, and Ralph Ellison's Invisible Theology" in Jonathon Kahn and Vincent Lloyd, eds., *Race and Secularism in America* (Columbia University Press, 2016): 153-77.
- "One Blues Invisible: Civil Rights and Civil Religion in Ralph Ellison's Second Novel," *African American Review* 47:2-3 (Summer/Fall 2014 [2015]): 247-66
- "On the Eirobiblical: Critical Mimesis and Ironic Resistance in the *Confessions of Nat Turner*," *Biblical Interpretation* 21:4-5 (Autumn 2013): 469-93
- "From Harlem Renaissance to Harlem Apocalypse: Just Representations and the Epistemology of Race in the 'Negro Novel,'" *The Journal of Religion* 93:3 (July 2013): 259-90
- "Let Us Not Falter Before Our Complexity: Barack Obama and the Legacy of Ralph Ellison," in Heather Harris, Kimberly Moffitt, and Catherine Squires, eds., *The Obama Effect: Multidisciplinary Renderings of the 2008 Presidential Campaign* (SUNY, 2010): 116-30.
- "Where Is the Voice Coming From?: Rhetoric, Religion, and Violence in the *Confessions of Nat Turner*," *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 89:1-2 (Spring/Summer 2006 [2007]): 135-70

## REVIEWS

- Patti Hartigan, *August Wilson: A Life*, *Religious Studies Review* (forthcoming)
- Eric Ziolkowski, *Religion and Literature: History and Method*, *Religious Studies Review* (forthcoming)
- One Night in Miami*, directed by Regina King, *Religious Studies Review* 47:3 (September 2021)
- Christopher Tomlins, *In the Matter of Nat Turner: A Speculative History*, *Religious Studies Review* 46:3 (September 2020)
- Allen Dwight Callahan, *The Talking Book: African Americans and the Bible*, *Callaloo* 31:2 (Spring 2008): 636-40
- Roger Lundin, *From Nature to Experience: The American Search for Cultural Authority*, *The Journal of Religion* 88:2 (April 2008): 253-55

Clarence Hardy, III, *James Baldwin's God: Sex, Hope, and Crisis in Black Holiness Culture*, *Journal of the American Studies Association of Texas* 37 (November 2006)

#### ENCYCLOPEDIA ARTICLES

"Douglass, Frederick," "Freedom: Literature," "Harlem Renaissance: Literature," Hughes, Langston," "Johnson, James Weldon," "Malcolm X," "Nation of Islam," and "Turner, Nat," in Dale C. Allison, Jr., Christine Helmer, Thomas Römer, Hans Joseph Klauk, Bernard McGinn, Choon Leong-Seow, Hermann Spieckermann, Barry Dov Walfish, and Eric J. Ziolkowski, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* (DeGruyter)

#### ONLINE PUBLICATIONS

*Craft of Teaching in the Academic Study of Religion* (Univ. of Chicago Divinity School)

Guest Blogger: <https://craftofteachingreligion.wordpress.com/>

"Do-Be-Do-Be-Do: On the Phenomenology of Teaching" (May 9, 2022)

"[Silence]" (March 8, 2022)

#### *The Religious Studies Project*

Response to Richard Newton's *Identifying Roots: Alex Haley and the Anthropology of Scriptures* (November 2020)

#### *Jerry Jazz Musician*

"A Roundtable Conversation—'Religion "around" Langston Hughes, Billie Holiday, and Ralph Ellison,'" (January 7, 2019)

#### *Salo University—Online Kurt Vonnegut Project (IU Arts and Humanities Council)*

"Dresden Calling (The Gang's All Here)": Harriss on *Slaughterhouse-Five* (October 2017)

"Rave On, Eliot Rosewater: Harriss on *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*" (September 2017)

"I, John, Saw, or MAKE RELIGION LIVE: Harriss on *Cat's Cradle*" (August 2017)

"The Banality of Irony: Harriss on *Mother Night*" (July 2017)

"Shaping Our Ends: Harriss on *The Sirens of Titan*" (June 2017)

"What Is the Soul of a Man?: Harriss on *Player Piano*" (May 2017)

#### *The Immanent Frame (Social Science Research Council)*

"*The Abyss or Life is Simple*," Forum on Experimental Books (July 2024)

"The Shapeless Things to Come" *Is This All There Is* tenth anniversary series (January 2018)

"Don't Play That Song, Nathan Scott" Forum on Josef Sorett's *Spirit in the Dark* (July 2017)

"The Great American Novel as Theology of Exceptionalism," *Theologies of American Exceptionalism* (February 2017)

#### *Sightings: Religion in Public Life (Martin Marty Center, University of Chicago)*

"Styron's Nat Turner turns 50, Gets Religion" (October 12, 2017)

"Taking Exception: How Muhammad Ali Transformed American Religion" (June 9, 2016)

"Death Gospel and the Heart of Saturday Night," *Sightings* (February 9, 2012)

"American Idolatry: The King James Version" (July 15, 2010)

"Updike's Motions of Grace" (February 5, 2009)

"E Pluribus Obama" (November 13, 2008) Reprinted in *Circa: News from the University of Chicago Divinity School* 31 (Winter 2009): 10-11, 15 and in Brett Colasacco, ed., *Sightings: Reflections on Religion and Public Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2019), 90-92.

"Race, Myth, and Ritual in Jena" (October 4, 2007)

"Religion in *Modern Times*," (August 10, 2006). Reprinted in the *Criterion* Special Issue: "Celebrating Sightings" (2008): 33-34.

**Religion and Culture Forum (Martin Marty Center, University of Chicago)**

Response to Jacqueline Bussie, "Flowers in the Dark: African American Consciousness, Laughter, and Resistance in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*," *Religion and Culture Web Forum* of the Martin Marty Center (July 2009)

**CONFERENCES, SYMPOSIA, AND WORKSHOPS COORDINATED**

"Harry Smith's American Religion," Workshop, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, April 2025

"R & L III: A Third Workshop on Religion and Literature," Workshop, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, April 2023

"American Religion in Latin America," Special Issue Workshop, Mexico City, Mexico, October 2022 Co-Coordinator with Sarah Imhoff)

"Re-centering American Religion," IU American Religion Initiative Workshop, IU Gateway Center, Berlin, Germany, May 2022 (Co-Coordinator with Sarah Imhoff)

"R & L II: A Second Workshop on Religion and Literature," Workshop, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, October 2021

"Re-centering American Religion," IU American Religion Initiative Workshop, IU Gateway Center, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City, Mexico, March 2019 (Co-Coordinator with Sarah Imhoff)

"The Religion of Things: A Series of Public Talks," IU American Religion Public Humanities Initiative, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, AY 2018-19 (Co-Coordinator with Sarah Imhoff)

"R & L: A Workshop on Religion and Literature," Workshop, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, October 2018

"Taking Exception: Queering American Religion II," Workshop, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, April 2018 (Co-Coordinator with Sarah Imhoff)

"Taking Exception: Queering American Religion," Workshop, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, March-April 2017 (Co-Coordinator with Sarah Imhoff)

**INVITED LECTURES, SYMPOSIA, AND WORKSHOPS**

"The Preposterous Religion of Muhammad Ali," University of Chicago Divinity School, Chicago, IL, April 2025

"The Craft of Teaching," Graduate Student Workshop, University of Chicago Divinity School, Chicago, IL, April 2025

"The Religion of Karl Ove Knausgaard, Final Research Group Gathering," University of Rochester, Rochester, NY, September 2020 (moved online due to COVID)

"Muhammad Ali's Exceptionalist Double-Cross," Religion and Culture in America Seminar, Newberry Library, Chicago, IL, March 2020

"The Religion of Karl Ove Knausgaard, Norwegian Workshop and Public Conference," University of Bergen, Columbia University, Indiana University, Bergen, Norway, August 2019.

"The Politics of Religion at Home and Abroad," Capstone Symposium, Northwestern University and Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, May 2019

"The Religion of Karl Ove Knausgaard, Part Four," Workshop, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, January 2019

- “Remembering Slavery in American Literature,” Summer Seminar, Institute for Foreign Literature Studies, Beijing Normal University (China), June 2018
- “The Politics of Religion at Home and Abroad, Part II” Workshop, Northwestern University and Indiana University, Geneva, IL, May, 2018.
- “The Religion of Karl Ove Knausgaard, Part Three,” Workshop, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, January 2018
- “The Politics of Religion at Home and Abroad,” Workshop, Northwestern University and Indiana University, Geneva, IL, May, 2017.
- “The Religion of Karl Ove Knausgaard, Part Two,” Workshop, Columbia University Institute for Religion, Culture, and Public Life, New York City, January 2017
- “Theological Perspectives on U.S. Exceptionalism,” Workshop, The Politics of Religion at Home and Abroad Project, Northwestern University and Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, October 2016
- “The Religion of Karl Ove Knausgaard,” Workshop, Columbia University Institute for Religion, Culture, and Public Life, New York City, January 2016
- Symposium on Religion and Literature, Department of Religion and Culture, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA, April 2014
- “Three Ways of Looking at an Invisible Man: Race, Religion, and Ralph Ellison’s Invisible Theology,” Department of Religious Studies, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, January 2014
- “Three Ways of Looking at an Invisible Man,” Colloquium on American Literature and Culture, New York University, NYC, May 2013
- “*Ali Akbar*, or, The Fighter Who Wouldn’t Fight: Religion, Violence, and the Usable Black Body in Muhammad Ali’s Nation of Islam,” Department of Religious Studies, Franklin & Marshall College, Lancaster, PA, April 2013
- “Five Ways of Looking at an Invisible Man, or Race: The Religious Dimensions of a Secular Concept,” Race and Secularism in America Symposium, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, October 2012
- “Canonicity and the Widening Gyre,” Research Seminar, Department of Religious Studies, Manhattan College, Riverdale, NY, February 2012
- “*Ali Akbar*: Religion, Violence, and Form in Muhammad Ali’s Nation of Islam,” Plenary Address, Southern Humanities Council Annual Meeting, Louisville, KY, February 2012
- “The Craft of Teaching,” Inaugural Seminar, University of Chicago Divinity School, Chicago, IL, January 2012
- “Divining Irony in African-American Religion and Culture,” Department of Religious Studies, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, September 2011
- “One Blues Invisible: *E Pluribus Unum* and Civil Religion in Ralph Ellison’s Second Novel,” Department of Religious Studies, Millsaps College, Jackson, MS, March 2010

#### CONFERENCE PAPERS

- “Karl Ove’s Blues: Floods, Canons, and the Left-Hand Sacred of Genesis” (Biennial Meeting of the Society for Religion, Literature, and Culture, University of Aarhus, Skørping, Denmark, September, 2024)
- “Muhammad Ali, Worth Bingham, and the New Religious Ubiquity” (Annual Meeting of the Southern Humanities Council, Savannah, GA, February 2024)
- “Ralph Ellison and Nathan Scott in Chicago,” Ralph Ellison Society, (Annual Meeting of the American Literature Association, Chicago, IL, May 2022)

- “Irony,” Keywords in Religion and American Literature Panel, (Annual Meeting of the American Literature Association, Boston, MA, July 2021)
- Panelist, “From Sun Ra to Grace Jones: A Roundtable on African-American Performers and Religious Identity,” (Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Boston, MA, November 2020 – moved online)
- “Karl Ove’s Blues: Profanity and the Study of Literature,” (Biennial Meeting of the International Society for Religion, Literature, and Culture, University of Chester, Chester, UK, September 2020 – postponed due to COVID – paper withdrawn)
- Panelist, “Irony, Play, and the (Serious [?]) Study of Religion,” (Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, San Diego, CA, November 2019)
- “That Shakespeherian Rag: Eliot, Ellison, and the Cultural Divide,” (Midwest Modern Language Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, November 2019)
- “The Last Outback at the World’s End: Dylan’s Sense of an (Album’s) Ending,” (Things Have Changed: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Dylan, Artois University, Arras, France, December 2018)
- Panelist, “Reimagining the Archive,” (Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Denver, CO, November, 2018)
- “John Brown’s Weird Body and the *Truth* of Religious Historical Fiction,” (Biennial Meeting of the International Society of Religion, Literature, and Culture, University of Uppsala, Uppsala, Sweden, September 2018)
- “From I to You: Ellison, Nelson, and the ‘Argos’ of Identity,” (Co-authored with Constance Furey; Political Theology and Literature Seminar, Annual Meeting of the American Comparative Literature Association, Los Angeles, CA, March 2018)
- “I Am America: Muhammad Ali’s Conversion to the State,” (Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Boston, MA, November 2017)
- Panelist, “Ralph Ellison’s Intertextuality,” (Roundtable, The International Ralph Ellison Symposium, Rothmere American Institute, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK, September 2017)
- “I Am America: Muhammad Ali’s Late Style and Conversion’s Problematic Afterlives,” (“The Politics of Conversion,” Newberry Library, Chicago, IL, September 2017)
- Respondent, “Mass Media, Public Literacy in the Lutheran Reformation,” (Annual Meeting, Indiana Association of Historians, Lafayette, IN, February 2017)
- “Muhammad Ali and the Irony of American Exceptionalism,” (Annual Meeting of the Southern Humanities Council, Louisville, KY, January 2017)
- Panelist, “Such You Are Called to See: Nate Parker’s *The Birth of a Nation* among the Religionists,” (Roundtable session co-sponsored by the Afro-American Religious History Group and the Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Group, Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, San Antonio, TX, November 2016)
- “That Shakespeherian Rag: Eliot, Ellison, and the Cultural Divide,” (Biennial Meeting of the International Society of Religion, Literature, and Culture, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK, September 2016)
- Panelist, “Ralph Ellison’s Flying Home Stories,” (Sponsored by the Ralph Ellison Society, Annual Meeting of the American Literature Association, San Francisco, CA, May 2016)
- “Above the Veil: Nathan A. Scott, Jr. and the Theological Apprenticeship of Ralph Ellison,” (Annual Meeting of the American Literature Association, San Francisco, CA, May 2016)
- “Fear and Trembling in St. Paul: Irony and Hipster Culture in the Religious Turn,” (Annual Meeting of the Southern Humanities Council, Louisville, KY, January 2016)

- “Resurrecting Nat Turner: History, Fiction, and Changing Discourses of Race and Religion after the Styron Affair,” (Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Atlanta, GA, November 2015)
- “Fear and Trembling in St. Paul: Irony and Hipster Culture in the Religious Turn” (Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association, Portland, OR, November 2015)
- “Is Muhammad Ali a Sacred or Secular Text?” (Sacred Literature, Secular Religion, LeMoyne College/Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, October 2015)
- “Time (the Narrator): Memory and Eschatology in Gillian Welch’s *Old, Old Story*,” (Ethics of Storytelling: Historical Imagination in Contemporary Literature, Media, and Visual Arts, University of Turku, Turku, Finland, June 2015)
- “That’s the Way the Whole Thing Ends: Theorizing the Album,” (Annual Meeting of the Popular Culture Association / American Culture Association, New Orleans, LA, April 2015)
- “I Sense More than I Can Say: Nathan A. Scott, Jr. and the Theological Apprenticeship of Ralph Ellison,” (God and the American Writer: A Symposium Sponsored by the American Literature Association, San Antonio, TX, February 2015)
- “You Have Overcome: The Myth of Yakub, the Mothership, and the Postcolonial Future,” (Biennial Meeting of the International Society of Religion, Literature, and Culture, University of Leuven, Leuven, Belgium, September 2014)
- “That Shakespeherian Rag: Eliot, Ellison, and the Cultural Divide,” (Other Eliots, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK, April 2014)
- “*Ali Akbar*, or, The Fighter Who Wouldn’t Fight: Religion, Violence, and the Body in Muhammad Ali’s Nation of Islam” (Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Baltimore, MD, November 2013)
- “You Slip into the Breaks and Look Around: *Time and Narrative* in Ralph Ellison’s Fiction” (Annual Meeting of the Southern Humanities Council, Savannah, GA, February 2013)
- Panelist and Session Organizer, “What Is Religious About African-American Literature?: Engaging and Reframing Kenneth Warren’s *What Was African American Literature*” (Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Chicago, IL, November 2012)
- Panelist and Session Co-Organizer, “Theory and Method in Religion and Literature” (Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Chicago, IL, November 2012)
- “On the Eirobiblical: The Rhetoric of Biblical Rhetoric in *The Confessions of Nat Turner*” (Spiritual Matters/Matters of Spirit, Annual Conference of the Nineteenth-Century Studies Association, Asheville, NC, March 2012)
- “On the Eirobiblical: The Rhetoric of Biblical Rhetoric and the Construction of African-American Identity” (Performing Identities in American Literature, Durham University, Durham, UK, September 2011)
- Discussant and Moderator, Brian Bertoti Innovative Perspectives in History Graduate Conference, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA, March 2011.
- “To Move Without Moving: *Invisible Man* and the Irony of American History” (Jesters and Gestures: Irony at a Crossroads, City University of New York, New York City, February 2011)
- “A Sense of Ending: The Album, Narrative, and Eschatology in *Time (the Revelator)*” (Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Atlanta, GA, November 2010)

- "On the Pseudobiblical: Biblical Rhetoric and Mimesis in the Narratives of American Slavery" (Re-Writing the Bible: Devotion, Diatribe and Dialogue, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland, UK, June 2010)
- "A Genealogy of Sin: Theology, Race, and Nation in Ralph Ellison's Nineteenth Century" (Annual Meeting of the Southern Humanities Council, Asheville, NC, February 2010)
- "'Black Is an' Black A'int': Ralph Ellison's Cosmology of Race" (North American Religions Workshop, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, January 2009)
- "'Brave Words for a Startling Occasion': Barak Obama's 'More Perfect Union' and the Legacy of Ralph Ellison" (The Obama Effect, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, October 2008)
- "Ralph Ellison, Reinhold Niebuhr, and the Irony of the Common Good" (The Common Good in Transition and Translation, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, IN, October 2008)
- "Exile Blues: Ralph Ellison's 'Territory' and the Inventions of Home" (Annual Meeting of the Southern Humanities Council, Knoxville, TN, February 2008)
- "Preacherly Antecedents of the Speakerly Text: Sermons in the Anthropological Writing of Zora Neale Hurston" (Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, San Diego, CA, November 2007)
- "The Book of Nat: Biblical Rhetoric, Conversion Narratives, and the Textual Quagmire of Nat Turner's 'Confessions'" (Annual Meeting of the Midwest American Academy of Religion, River Forest, IL, March / April 2006) \*Winner of Graduate Student Prize
- "The Sermon in the Anthropological Writings of Zora Neale Hurston" (Annual Meeting of the Southern Humanities Council, Asheville, NC, February 2006)
- "Defender of the Faith: Religion in the Chicago *Defender*, 1935-53" (Annual Meeting of the Midwest American Academy of Religion, Chicago, IL, April 2005)
- "Everything is Broken: American Vernacular Music and the Theology of Culture" (Session Chair and Organizer, Annual Meeting of the Southern Humanities Council, Athens, GA, February 2003)

#### **COLLOQUIA, CONFERENCES, AND WORKSHOPS (HOME INSTITUTION)**

- "Beyond Sincerity: Muhammad Ali and Religious Bullshit," Faculty Colloquium, Department of Religious Studies, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, November 2023.
- "Double Cross: Muhammad Ali's Gold Medal," The Champ Returns to IU, IU Arts and Humanities Council and Islamic Studies Program (February 2022)
- Respondent, "Heresies," Indiana University Religious Studies Graduate Student Conference, Bloomington, IN, March 2019
- "Irony in the Academy: A Conversation with Cooper Harriss and Katrin Pahl (Johns Hopkins), moderated by Hannah Garvey," Indiana University Graduate Conference, "Irony and the Study of Religion," February 2018.
- "Professors and Publications: A Panel on Writing, Scholarship, and Inquiry," organized by Indiana University's Undergraduate Religious Studies Association (URSA), Bloomington, IN, November 2017.
- "R & L: A Symposium on Religion and Literature," organized and presented by Indiana University Religion Textuality and Cultural Imagination faculty in conversation with graduate students, Bloomington, IN, November 2017.
- Respondent, Panel on Death Narratives, Indiana University Religious Studies Graduate Student Conference, Bloomington, IN, April 2016.



- "Trope-a-Dope: Muhammad Ali and the Irony of American Religion," Faculty Colloquium, Department of Religious Studies, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, March 2016.
- "Zora Neale Hurston and the Homiletics of Literature," Dinner Discussion with Indiana University's Undergraduate Religious Studies Association (URSA), Bloomington, IN, November 2015.
- Respondent, Panel on Religion in the Americas, Indiana University Religious Studies Graduate Student Conference, Bloomington, IN, April 2015.
- "Ali Akbar: or, The Fighter Who Wouldn't Fight: Ironies of Race, Religion, and Violence in Muhammad Ali's Nation of Islam," Religious Studies Colloquium, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA, November 2013.
- "Four Ways of Looking at an Invisible Man," Center for the Study of Race and Social Problems, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA, September 2013.
- "The Blackness of Blackness': Ralph Ellison's Invisible Theology," Religion and Culture Seminar Series, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA, December 2010.

### **MEDIA, COMMUNITY, AND PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS**

- "Machines in Between" project (episode forthcoming)
- "Interactions" podcast guest (June 2023)
- "Muhammad Ali's Gold Medal," IU Arts and Humanities Council's Thursdays@Home (August 2020)
- "Dylan's Gospel?," Faith Forum, First Presbyterian Church, Bloomington, IN (February 2020)
- "Malcom X's Black God," Adult Forum, Trinity Episcopal Church, Bloomington, IN (October 2019)
- "Muhammad Ali's Religion," Faith Forum, First Presbyterian Church, Bloomington, IN (November 2018)
- "Ralph Ellison's Invisible Theology," and interview with Kristian Petersen, *New Books Network* (September 2018)
- "One Blues Invisible: Ralph Ellison's Pledge" interview with Jason Fickel about *Ralph Ellison's Invisible Theology*, episode of Interchange on WFHB-FM, Bloomington, IN (May 2018)
- "Ralph Ellison's Invisible Theology," interview with Brad Stoddard, *The Religious Studies Project* (June 2017)
- Author appearance for *Ralph Ellison's Invisible Theology* at Seminary Co-op Bookstore, Chicago, IL (May 2017)
- Discussant, "Six Scholars Discuss the Dissertation to First Book Process," *The Religious Studies Project*, (March 2017)
- Guest Discussant of Bob Dylan and the blues, "Blue Monday with Jason Fickel," WFHB-FM radio, Bloomington, IN (October 2016)
- "The Faith of Muhammad Ali," Religion and Ethics Report, Australian Broadcasting Company Radio (June 8, 2016)
- Segment on Religion and Sports, "The Gray Area of Religion," American Student Radio (January 2016)
- "Zora Neale Hurston and the Blues" episode of Interchange on WFHB-FM, Bloomington, IN (November 24, 2015)
- Guest Discussant of Zora Neale Hurston, blues, and gospel music, "Blue Monday with Jason Fickel," WFHB-FM radio, Bloomington, IN, November 2015

- “God’s Trombones: James Weldon Johnson’s Sermonic Poetry,” Adult Forum at Trinity Episcopal Church, Bloomington, IN, February 2015
- “Muhammad Ali,” Creek/Love classroom (grades 1-2), Rogers Elementary School, Bloomington, IN, January 2015
- “James Weldon Johnson’s *God’s Trombones*,” Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, Pittsburgh, PA, February 2014.
- “Barack Obama, Ellisonian: What Ralph Ellison Can Teach Us about President Obama.” Panel participant with Dwight Hopkins and Margaret Mitchell on the religious dimensions of Obama’s candidacy and presidency, Visiting Committee of the University of Chicago Divinity School, Chicago, IL, February 2009.
- “Twentieth Century American Preachers and Their Contexts.” Lecture series at Western Springs Congregational Church, Western Springs, IL, March/April 2008. Topics: Harry Emerson Fosdick, Aimee Semple McPherson, Reinhold Niebuhr, Martin Luther King, Jr., and William Sloane Coffin, Jr.

### **HONORS AND AWARDS**

- National Research Fellow, Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture, Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis, since August 2019
- Trustees Teaching Award, Indiana University Bloomington, April 2019 and April 2024
- Young Scholars in American Religion Program, Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, 2016-17
- Favorite Faculty Award, Virginia Tech, April 2012
- Future Faculty Program Honoree, Virginia Tech, January 2012
- Future Faculty Program Honoree, University of Tennessee at Knoxville, September 2011
- Graduate Paper Prize: 2006 Midwest AAR Annual Meeting: “The Book of Nat: Biblical Rhetoric, Conversion Narratives, and the Textual Quagmire of Nat Turner’s ‘Confessions’”
- NEH Summer Institute for High School Teachers, Chapel Hill, NC, July 1999

### **VISITORSHIPS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND GRANTS**

- Henry Luce Foundation (co-PI) (\$750,000), Center for Religion and the Human, Indiana University (Awarded June 2024)
- IU Presidential Arts and Humanities Conference Hosting Fellowship (\$19,816), Indiana University, for “R&L II” workshop (awarded June 2020)
- IU Gateway Funding (with Sarah Imhoff), Office of the Vice President of International Affairs, Indiana University, for Workshop “Recentering American Religion,” Mexico City (Spring 2019)
- Faculty International Conference Grant, Office of the Vice President of International Affairs, Indiana University (Fall 2018)
- Public Humanities Project Grant (with Sarah Imhoff) (\$25,000), Arts and Humanities Council, Indiana University, “American Religion,” 2018-19 (extended 2019-20)
- Visiting Scholar, Foreign Languages Institute, Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China (June 2018)
- CAHI Research Fellowship, College Arts and Humanities Institute, Indiana University, Two-course release for book preparation *Muhammad Ali and the Irony of American Religion*, Fall 2017
- CAHI Grant (with Sarah Imhoff) (\$9,500), College Arts and Humanities Institute, Indiana University, for Research Workshop “Taking Exception: Queering American Religion,” 2016-17

Ostrom Grant (with Sarah Imhoff) (\$8,000), Indiana University College of Arts and Sciences, for Research Workshop “Taking Exception: Queering American Religion,” 2016-17  
 Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences Postdoctoral Fellowship in Arts and Sciences, University of Pittsburgh, 2012-2014  
 Diversity Grant (\$5,000), Virginia Tech College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences Department Diversity Funding Award to fund “Christianities of the Global South” seminar, March 2012  
 Harrison-Doolittle Fellowship, University of Chicago, Summer 2010  
 Divinity School Association Travel Grant, Archival Research in the Ralph Ellison Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC (2009)  
 Junior (Dissertation) Fellowship, Martin E. Marty Center for the Advanced Study of Religion, University of Chicago Divinity School (2008-09)  
 Nathan A. and Charlotte Scott Dissertation Fellowship, University of Chicago Divinity School 2007-08  
 Fellow, The Jerald Brauer Seminar, Martin E. Marty Center for the Advanced Study of Religion, University of Chicago Divinity School, Spring, 2006 (Topic: Religion and Violence in America)  
 Perrin Fund Travel Grant, University of Chicago Divinity School, 2004-06, 2010  
 Doctoral Fellowship, University of Chicago Divinity School, 2003-2007  
 Institute Fellowship, Yale Divinity School & Institute of Sacred Music, 2000-03

#### **TEACHING DEVELOPMENT**

Transformative Learning Collegium (Invited), Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN (2019-20)

#### **COURSES TAUGHT**

Introduction to Religion in America (IU) (UG)  
 Religion and Sports (IU) (UG)  
 Beat Religion (IU) (UG) (G)  
 Muhammad Ali (IU) (UG)  
 Religion and Detective Fiction (IU) (UG)  
 The Old, Weird America in Religion and Culture (IU) (UG)  
 American Preaching: Word, Performance, and Media (IU) (UG/G)  
 Taking Exception: American Counternarratives and the Study of Religion (IU) (G seminar)  
 Critical Approaches to Religion, Textuality, and Cultural Imagination (IU) (G seminar)  
 Disaster in American Religion and Culture (IU) (UG)  
 New Religious Movements in the Americas (IU) (UG)  
 American Religious Historical Fiction (IU) (UG/G)  
 Zora Neale Hurston (IU) (UG/G)  
 Martin Luther King and Malcolm X in American Religion (IU) (UG)  
 Race, Religion, and American Literature (IU) (G-reading course)  
 Jewish American Literature in the Age of the Crisis of Man (IU) (G-reading course)  
 Readings in American Religious History (IU) (G-reading course)  
 Gadamer and Ricoeur (IU) (G-reading course)  
 Religious Themes in American Literature (PITT)  
 Race and Religion in America: Mormonism and the Nation of Islam (PITT)  
 The Black Church (PITT)  
 Religion and the Modern World (VT)  
 Religion in American Life (VT)

Religion and Literature (VT)  
The Black Church in America (VT)  
The Holocaust: Religion, History, Representation, and Memory (UG tutorial) (VT)  
Irony in Religion and Literature (Chicago and IU) (UG/G)  
Preachers and Preaching in American Literature (Chicago) (G)

### **GUEST TEACHING**

*Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison and *The Argonauts* by Maggie Nelson in Constance Furey's "Religion and Social Criticism" (REL-R 661), Indiana University Department of Religious Studies, September 2016  
*Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison in Richard Rosengarten's "Religion, Modernity, and the Novel II" (RLIT 43902), University of Chicago Divinity School, January 2012

### **GRADUATE ADVISING AND RESEARCH**

#### **Dissertation Committee Chair**

Dissertation Chair, Hannah Garvey (Indiana University Department of Religious Studies):  
*Opacity & the Strange Meaning of being Black* (Defended June 2024)  
Dissertation Chair, Matthew Graham (Indiana University, Department of Religious Studies):  
*Silent Partners: Dickinson, Kierkegaard, and the Problem of Secularized Theological Anthropology* (Defended December 2024)  
Dissertation Chair, Amber Lowe (Indiana University Department of Religious Studies): *Time: Blackness, Scripturalization, and Religion in American Textuality* (in progress)

#### **Dissertation Committee Member**

Andrew Monteith, Dissertation Committee, Indiana University, Department of Religious Studies, *Threatening the Very Foundations of Civilization: Religion and the American Drug War, 1875-1937* (Defended June 2018)  
Joe Bartzel, Dissertation Committee, Indiana University Department of Religious Studies, *Between Riot and Reconciliation: History, Narrative, and the Ferguson Commission on the Path to Freedom, Justice, and Equality* (Defended December 2019)  
Nick Pearce, Dissertation Committee, Indiana University School of Education, *Muscular Christianity within College Football Coaching: The Creation of a Safe Space for Religion in the Academy* (Defended May 2020)  
Sean Sidky, Dissertation Committee, Indiana University, Departments of Religious Studies and Comparative Literature, *"No Letters Arrive Anymore": American Yiddish Holocaust Literature, 1937-47* (Defended April 2022)  
\*\*\*Winner of the University Distinguished Dissertation Award in the Humanities (2023)\*\*\*  
Mihee Kim-Kort, Dissertation Committee, Indiana University, Department of Religious Studies, *Koreanity: Citizenship, Transpacific Entanglements, and the Racializing Assemblages of American Christianity* (in progress)  
Sabina Ali, Dissertation Committee, Indiana University, Department of Religious Studies, *Weaponizing Indigeneity: Zionist and Evangelical Public Discourses on Possessing Palestine* (in progress)

#### **MA advising**

Josie Wenig, Master's File Paper ("Thesis") Advisor, Indiana University, Department of Religious Studies, "Toward a Theology of Weaving and the Craft of Religion and Literature" (Spring 2019)

Nick Boyd, Master's File Paper ("Thesis") Advisor, Indiana University, Department of Religious Studies, "Disrupting the Unconscious: Ralph Ellison's Psychological Approach to Unconscious Perceptions of Race" (Spring 2018)

Hannah Garvey, Master's File Paper ("Thesis") Advisor, Indiana University, Department of Religious Studies, "Twin Pools of Accusation and Guilt: Derrida's Cat and the Complexity of Bigger Thomas" (Spring 2017)

\*\*\*Winner of IU Religious Studies Graduate Essay Contest\*\*\*

#### **UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SUPERVISION**

"Milton and the Twentieth Century 'Crisis of Man,'" Honors Thesis (Advisor), Department of Religious Studies, Indiana University, AY 2022-23

\*\*\*Winner of IU Religious Studies Senior Honors Thesis Award\*\*\*

"Deaf God: Deaf Perspectives in Christianity," Honors Thesis (Advisor), Department of Religious Studies, Indiana University, AY 2021-22

\*\*\*Winner of IU Religious Studies Senior Honors Thesis Award\*\*\*

"Step by Step: Contradance and American Revival Christianity," Honors Thesis (Advisor), Department of Religious Studies, Indiana University, AY 2020-21

\*\*\*Winner of IU Religious Studies Senior Honors Thesis Award\*\*\*

"A Witchcult Today": Subgenre, Stylistic Language, and Sincerity in Underground Doom Music," Honors Thesis (Reader), Department of Religious Studies, Indiana University, Spring 2019

"Poetic Architecture, Communal Space," Honors Thesis (Reader), Religious Studies, Indiana University, Spring 2017

"The Art of Losing: Finding Devotion in Artistic Expressions of Loss," Honors Thesis (Reader), Religious Studies, Indiana University, Spring 2016

"The Religious Authority of Black Preachers in African-American Literature," Senior Capstone Project, Religious Studies, University of Pittsburgh, Fall 2013

"Religious Authority in African American Film, 1930s-1950s," Senior Capstone Project, Religious Studies, University of Pittsburgh, Fall 2013

"Integration at Camp Bethel: The Dessie Miller Story," Honors Research Project, Virginia Tech, Fall 2011

#### **EDITORSHIPS AND OTHER EDITORIAL EXPERIENCE**

Founding Editor (with Sarah Imhoff), *American Religion* (Indiana University Press), 2019-present

Editorial Board, *Literature and Theology* (Oxford University Press), 2019-present

Editor, *The Religion and Culture Web Forum*, Martin Marty Center, University of Chicago, 2009-2010

Managing Editor, *Ethics: An International Journal of Social, Political, and Legal Philosophy* (University of Chicago Press), 2007-08

Editorial Assistant, *Ethics: An International Journal of Social, Political, and Legal Philosophy* (University of Chicago Press), 2004-07

#### **SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION**

External Faculty Review Assessment, Valparaiso University

Book Manuscript Reviewer for Bloomsbury, Routledge, Clemson UP, Oxford UP, and Peter Lang Oxford

Journal Manuscript Reviewer for *Church History*, *The Journal of Africana Religions*, *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, *The Journal of Religion, Literature and Theology*, *Political Theology*, *Public Culture*, *Religions*

Steering Committee Member, Arts, Literature, and Religion Unit, American Academy of Religion (2021-present)

Project Consultant (Muhammad Ali), America Abroad Media (2019-21)

Executive Board, Southern Humanities Council (2010-18)

Advisory Board, Conference on Christianity and Literature (Midwest) (2017-present)

Advisory Board, Center for Sermon Studies at Marshall University (2014-present)

#### **SERVICE TO INDIANA UNIVERSITY**

Religious Studies Undergraduate Studies Committee, 2014-16

Religious Studies Salary and Review Committee, 2016-17, 2018-19

Religious Studies Teaching Excellence Committee, 2017-18

Funding Committee, IU College Arts and Humanities Institute, 2018-19

Religious Studies Colloquium Organizer, 2019-20

Religious Studies Community Outreach Committee, Chair, 2020-21, 2022-23

Promotion Evaluator, English Department, 2021

Enduring Questions Subcommittee, College of Arts and Sciences, 2021-22

Religious Studies Graduate Studies Committee, 2021-22

Religious Studies Tenure and Promotion Committee, 2022

Religious Studies Diversity Liaison, 2022-23

Co-Organizer, Religion, Textuality, and Cultural Imagination PhD Track, Religious Studies

#### **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

American Academy of Religion

American Literature Association

American Comparative Literature Association

International Society for Religion, Literature, and Culture

Ralph Ellison Society

Southern Humanities Council

#### **REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**