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APPOINTMENTS

- 2019– Assistant Professor, Department of Religion, Florida State University.
2017–2019 Postdoctoral Fellow, Society of Fellows, Dartmouth College.

EDUCATION

- 2017 Ph.D., Religion, Columbia University.
2014 M.Phil., with Distinction, Religion, Columbia University.
2013 M.A., with Distinction, Religion, Columbia University.
2008 M.T.S., Islamic Studies, Harvard Divinity School.
2000 B.A., *magna cum laude*, Religion, High Honors, Haverford College.

PUBLICATIONS

Books

- In Preparation. *Fire Dreams*. (expected manuscript completion date August 2020)
In Preparation. *Refusing to Vanish: Muslim Women in a Time of AIDS – from Philadelphia to Cape Town*. (co-authored with Farid Esack, University of Johannesburg)

Edited Collections

- In press. “‘Religio-Racial Identity’ as Challenge and Critique.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. Roundtable Editor. (to be published June 2020)
2019. “An Otherwise Anthropology.” Theorizing the Contemporary, *Cultural Anthropology (Fieldsites)*. Series Co-Editor with Megan Raschig.

Journal Articles

- In preparation. “Moral Medicine: Treatment and Punishment in the Race to Incarcerate Women.”
In press. “Theory on the Ground: Ethnography, Religio-Racial Study, and the Spiritual Work of Building Otherwise.” Contribution to “‘Religio-Racial Identity’ as Challenge and Critique” roundtable, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. (to be published June 2020)
2019. “Insurgent Cartography.” Contribution to “An Otherwise Anthropology” series, Theorizing the Contemporary, *Cultural Anthropology (Fieldsites)*.
2019 “‘To Instill Love for My People’: Reassembling the Social in a Time of Mass Criminalization.” *CrossCurrents* 68, no. 1, Special Issue on “Religion, Political Democracy, and the Specters of Race,” edited by James Logan (2019): 179-200.

- 2018 “Front Porch Revolution: Resilience Space, Demonic Grounds, and the Horizons of a Black Feminist Otherwise.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 44, no. 1 (2018): 25-52.
- 2017 “‘There is NO Justice in Louisiana’: Crimes Against Nature and the Spirit of Black Feminist Resistance.” *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Culture, Politics and Society* 19, no. 3 (2017): 261-285.
- 2011 “Education, Empowerment and Community Based Structural Reinforcement: An HIV prevention response to mass incarceration and removal.” *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry* 34, no. 4 (2011): 295-302. (co-authored with Jeffrey Draine and Philippe Bourgois)

Chapters

- Accepted. “‘You have to Build a Relationship:’ Reflections on a CHW’s Career of Outreach in Communities of Color.” In *Promoting the Health of the Community: Community Health Workers Describing their Roles, Competencies and Practice*, edited by St. John J, et al. Springer, forthcoming. (co-authored with Ashley Wennerstrom and Catherine Haywood)
- 2018 “‘And Still We Rise’: Moral Panics, Dark Sousveillance, and Politics Otherwise in the new New Orleans.” In *Panic, Transnational Cultural Studies, and the Affective Contours of Power*, edited by Micol Seigel. Routledge.
- 2012 “The War on Drugs is a War on Relationships: Crossing the Borders of Fear, Silence and HIV Vulnerability in the Prison-Created Diaspora.” In *Beyond Walls and Cages: Bridging Prison Abolition and Immigrant Justice Movements*, edited by Jenna Loyd, et al. University of Georgia Press.
- 2009 “HIV, Addiction, and Justice: Toward a Qur’anic Theology of Liberation.” In *Islam and AIDS: Between Scorn, Pity, and Justice*, edited by Farid Esack and Sarah Chiddy. Oneworld Publications.

Book Reviews

2020. Review of *Five Dollars and a Pork Chop Sandwich: Vote Buying and the Corruption of Democracy* by Mary Frances Berry. *Journal of African American History*.
- 2017 “On Moments, Movements, and Women’s Work.” Symposium on *The New Abolition* by Gary Dorrien. *Syndicate*.

Encyclopedia Entries

- 2010 “HIV/AIDS.” In *Encyclopedia of Muslim-American History*, edited by Edward E. Curtis IV. Facts on File.
- 2010 “Contraception.” In *Encyclopedia of Muslim-American History*, edited by Edward E. Curtis IV. Facts on File.

Occasional Contributor

- The Immanent Frame*.
- The Revealer: a review of religion and media*.
- Religion in American History*.

AWARDS AND HONORS

- 2020 First Year Assistant Professor (FYAP) Grant, Florida State University.
- 2019 “Making Abolition: The John Horace Bell Memorial Archive,” Robert B. Bradley Library Research Grant. Florida State University.
- 2019 Provost Travel Grant. Florida State University.
- 2019 Emerging Scholar, Center for the Study of the American South and the Department of American Studies at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
- 2018-2019 “Method-Making in Concert: Toward an Enchanted Method of Flourishing,” Venture Funding, Dartmouth College.
- 2017-2020 Society of Fellows postdoctoral fellowship, Dartmouth College.
- 2016–2017 Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship, Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation.
- 2016–2017 Fellow, Religion and the Global Framing of Gender Violence, Columbia University.
- 2016 Annual Meeting Travel Grant, American Academy of Religion.
- 2015–2016 Dissertation Fieldwork Grant, Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research.
- 2015 Conference Travel Grant, Columbia University.
- 2014–2015 Teaching Scholar, Columbia University.
- 2014 Conference Travel Grant, Columbia University.
- 2013–2014 Klingstein Fellow, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Columbia University.
- 2013 Graduate Research Fellowship, Institute for Religion, Culture, & Public Life.
- 2012–2016 Summer Research Fellowship, Columbia University.
- 2011–2015 Dean’s Fellowship, Columbia University.
- 2006–2008 Presidential Scholarship, Harvard Divinity School, Harvard University.
- 2000 Religion Department Prize for the senior major who presented the best thesis.
- 2000 Martin Foss Award for the Haverford student whose life speaks directly to the lives of others by the powerful harmony of intellect, compassion, and courage.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Leon County Detention Facility, Tallahassee, FL

- Spring 2020 *What is Justice?* (pilot) Co-Founder and Co-Professor
An independent, collaborative educational venture to bring Liberal Arts Education to people awaiting trial in the Leon Country Detention Facility.

Florida State University, Department of Religion, Tallahassee, FL

- Spring 2021 *From Civil Rights to Black Lives Matter* (graduate), Co-Taught with Jamil Drake
- Spring 2021 *Gender and Religion* (undergraduate)
- Fall 2020 *Collaborative Ethnography* (graduate)
- Fall 2020 *Religion, Prisons, & Abolition* (undergraduate)
- Spring 2020 *Abolition & Criminalization* (graduate)
- Spring 2020 *Religion, Prisons, & Abolition* (undergraduate)
- Fall 2019 *Religion, Prisons, & Abolition* (undergraduate)

New York University (NYU), Religious Studies Program, New York, NY

- Spring 2017 *Religion, Gender, & Punishment in the USA* (undergraduate)

Columbia University, Department of Religion, New York, NY

- Fall 2014 *Religion on the Move: People, Passages, & Possibilities in America* (undergraduate)
- 2012-2014 Teaching Assistant
 - Muslims in Diaspora* (with Katherine Ewing, Spring 2014)
 - Religions in America* (with Gale Kenny, Fall 2013)
 - Religions of Harlem* (with Josef Sorett and Obery Hendricks, Spring 2013)
 - Religion in the City* (with Courtney Bender, Fall 2012).

Project TEACH (Treatment Education Activists Combatting HIV), Philadelphia, PA

- 2008-2010 *TEACH Inside / TEACH Outside* Co-Founder
 - Expansion of TEACH Outside model to inside/outside education on the Intake Housing Units of the Philadelphia jails, reaching 100 students annually.
- 2001-2006 *TEACH Outside* Co-Founder
 - An independent educational venture to address the barriers to information, support, and activism in communities most impacted by HIV and mass incarceration. As Co-Instructor and Program Director, designed curriculum, developed infrastructure, and raised funds to graduate more than 400 students.

PRESENTATIONS

Invited Talks and Symposia

- 2020 “What is the Public in Public Scholarship?” Workshop participant, University of California, Berkeley, May 2020.
- 2020 “Theory on the Ground.” University lecture, Yale Divinity School, March 2020.
- 2020 “Religious Studies and Mass Incarceration: Tips for Sharing Scholarship with the Public.” Webinar, Public Scholars Project, American Academy of Religion and Freedom Forum Institute, February 2020.
- 2020 “African American Religious Studies.” Workshop participant, Princeton University, February 2020.

- 2019 “The Struggle Continues: Prisons, Religion, and Abolition.” University lecture, MultiCultural Center, University of California, Santa Barbara, November 2019.
- 2016 “‘The System was Designed to Fail Me’: Religion, Incarceration, and the Erasure of Black Women.” University lecture, Religion Department, Bates College, April 2016.
- 2014 “Beyond the Walls: A Conversation on Gender, Race, Religion and Incarceration.” University lecture, Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, Lehigh University, September 2014.

Panels Organized

- 2019 “Theory and Method 2.0: Decolonizing the Field.” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2019. Co-organized with Alexis S. Wells-Oghoghmehe.
- 2019 “Emergent Expertise: dialogue, radical acts of listening, and co-authorship with(in) grassroots activist and organizing communities.” Society for Applied Anthropology Annual Meeting, March 2019. Co-organized with Keahnan Washington.
- 2018 “Governing Health: Race, Religion, Secularism, and the Healing State.” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2018. Co-organized with Jamil Drake.
- 2018 “Indigenous, Race-radical & Trans Feminist Responses to Mass Criminalization & the Transcarceral Continuum.” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, November 2018. Co-organized with Lena Palacios.
- 2018 “Polyphonies of Repair.” Canadian Anthropology Society CASCA-CUBA, May 2018. Co-organized with Megan Raschig.
- 2018 “Gulf South Geographies of Freedom: Rethinking the Politics and Practices of New Orleans Research in the Geographic Imagination.” American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting, April 2018. Co-organized with Lydia Pelot-Hobbs.
- 2017 “Racialized Terror, Persistence and the Otherwise: Histories and Horizons of Struggle and Surveillance.” American Anthropological Association Meeting, December 2017. Co-organized with Megan Raschig.
- 2017 “‘Religio-Racial Identity’ as Challenge and Critique.” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2017.
- 2017 “ASA Critical Prison Studies Caucus: Abolitionist Feminisms.” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, November 2017. Co-organized with Sarah Haley and Stefanie Jones.
- 2016 “Horizons of an Otherwise: Engaging and ‘Evidencing’ the Politics of the Re*.” American Anthropological Association Meeting, November 2016. Co-organized with Megan Raschig.
- 2016 “Front Porch Strategy: Organizing for Black Women’s Lives at the Intersections of Service, Activism, and Research.” Know Her Truths Conference, Wake Forest University, April 2016. Co-organized with Women With A Vision (WWAV), New Orleans.
- 2015 “‘My Existence is Political’: Black Feminist Freedom Dreams in the Prison Capital of the World.” Re-Visioning Justice Conference, Vanderbilt University, April 2015. Co-organized with WWAV.

- 2014 “Pushing Public Health to the Margins: Aggressive Policing, Aging in Prison, & Gender-Based Criminalization.” American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, November 2014. Co-organized with Jenna Loyd.
- 2014 “Freedom’s Movements, or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Rock the Prison Empire.” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, November 2014. Co-organized with Jenna Loyd.
- 2014 “Community Organizing is a Reentry Program.” Rethinking Mass Incarceration in the South Conference, University of Mississippi, April 2014. Co-organized with WWAV.
- 2013 “Break Every Yoke: Religion, Power and the Ends of Mass Incarceration.” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2013. Co-organized with Vincent Lloyd and Joshua Dubler.

Papers Presented

- 2019 “Theory on the Ground.” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2019.
- 2019 “Where’s the Religion?: Decolonizing the Field, Becoming Subjects (Again).” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2019.
- 2018 “Moral Medicine: Treatment and Punishment in the Race to Incarcerate Women.” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2018.
- 2018 “Front Porch Strategy: Sacred Space and Demonic Grounds.” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2018.
- 2018 “Fire Dreams: Toward an Accomplice Anthropology.” American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, November 2018.
- 2017 “‘There is NO Justice’: Dark Sousveillance and Politics Otherwise.” American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, December 2017.
- 2017 “Surveillance and Sabotage: Religio-Racial Identity in the Women’s Carceral Sphere.” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2017.
- 2016 “Resurrecting the Dead: Religion, Incarceration, and Revolutionary Love.” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2016.
- 2016 “‘Have Faith in Reproductive Justice’: Race, Reproduction, and American Religion.” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2016.
- 2016 “‘New Orleans is a Prison. OPP is a Time Out.’: Refusing Innocence.” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, November 2016.
- 2016 “Front Porch Strategy: Repairing and Resurrecting a Post-Katrina Otherwise, a Love Song for New Orleans.” American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, November 2016.
- 2015 “‘In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens’: The Spiritual Work of History-Making in Post-Katrina New Orleans.” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2015.
- 2015 “‘My Existence Is Political’: Black Feminist Freedom Dreams and the Brutal Magic of the State.” American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, November 2015.

- 2015 “When Treatment is Punishment: The Medicalization of Morality in the New War on Sex Workers.” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, October 2015.
- 2014 “Black Gods of the Gulag: Diasporic Religious Imaginaries in the Prison Capital of the World.” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2014.
- 2014 “Like a Phoenix, We Rise: Relations of Resistance in the Prison Capital of the World.” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, November 2014.
- 2014 “Are the Gods Afraid?: Crimes Against Nature & the Spirit of Organized Resistance in New Orleans.” Symposium on Global Moral Panics, Indiana University, September 2014.
- 2014 “Born in Flames: Religion, Incarceration, and the Spirit of Grassroots Resistance in New Orleans.” Beyond the Culture Wars, Washington University in St. Louis, March 2014.
- 2013 “‘To Instill Love for Our People’: Recovering Religion in Formerly Incarcerated People’s Movements.” Rethinking Prisons, Vanderbilt University, May 2013.
- 2012 “Chicago’s Transcendent Third: Lived Religion in a Time of Mass Incarceration.” Religion and the Trans..., Northwestern University, October 2012.
- 2010 “Women, Incarceration, and Islam: Towards a Theology of Resilience and Resistance.” Women, Incarceration and Human Rights Conference, Emory University, February 2009.

Roundtables

- 2019 “Medicine, Health, and the Carceral State.” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, November 2019.
- 2017 “Disrupting Narratives: Myths of the drug policy reform movement.” The International Drug Policy Reform Conference, October 2017.
- 2016 “Legal versus Just: Employers’ Consideration of Criminal History in the Hiring Process.” Law and Society Association Annual Meeting, June 2016.
- 2014 “Theorizing Drugs: What Can Theory & Philosophy Teach Us About Drug Policy Reform?” The International Drug Policy Reform Conference, October 2013.

EVENTS ORGANIZED

- 2019 Organizer of *30 Years at the Intersections: Justice, Action, and Black Feminist Struggle* with WWAV’s Deon Haywood, hosted by the Society of Fellows at Dartmouth College, in partnership with eight academic departments and five student organizations.
- 2018 Organizer of *Religious Freedom and US Empire* with Tisa Wenger, hosted by the Society of Fellows and the Religion Department at Dartmouth College.
- 2018 Organizer of *Wounds and Worlds: Spiritual Healing as Politics Otherwise in California* with Megan Raschig, hosted by the Society of Fellows and the Departments of Religion and Anthropology at Dartmouth College.
- 2018 Organizer of *Medicalizing the Souls of Black Folk: Public Health and the Governance of Black Religion in the American South* with Jamil Drake, hosted by the Society of Fellows, the Department of Religion, and the Program in African and African American Studies at Dartmouth College.

- 2015 Co-organizer and moderator of *Theory on the Ground*, a panel hosted by the Center for Religion and Media at New York University.
- 2015 Co-organizer and moderator of *Making Time: Discipline and Religion in America's Prisons*, a panel hosted by the Center for Religion and Media at New York University.
- 2014 Graduate Coordinator of *Are the Gods Afraid of Black Sexuality?: Religion and the Burdens of Black Sexual Politics*, the Institute for Research in African-American Studies (IRAAS) annual conference at Columbia University.
- 2014 Co-organizer of the *Graduate Student Workshop on Religion and Incarceration*, hosted by the Central New York Working Group on Religion and Mass Incarceration.
- 2013 Co-organizer of *Religion on the Move: Movement, Migration, Missions and new Media across Religious*, the Columbia University Religion Graduate Students Association's annual conference.
- 2013 Co-organizer of *Migrant Imaginaries: Religion on the Move in the African Diaspora*, hosted in partnership with the Religions of Harlem project at Columbia University.
- 2013 Co-organizer of *Fencing in God*, a three-part series on religion, incarceration, and immigration hosted by the Institute for Religion, Culture, & Public Life (IRCPL).

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

- 2019– Steering Committee Member, *Afro-American Religious History Section*, American Academy of Religion.
- 2018– Editorial Board Member, *Reading Religion*, American Academy of Religion.
- 2018– Member, *Catholicism Colonialism, and Race in America* working group.
- 2017–2022 Steering Committee Member, *Religions and Families in North America Seminar*, American Academy of Religion.
- 2014– Co-founder of *Religion and Incarceration*, a collaborative forum for activists and academics to explore religion, power, and the ends of mass criminalization.

SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY

- 2019– Member, Interdisciplinary Faculty Human Rights Seminar, Florida State University.
- 2019–2020 Member, Executive Committee, Department of Religion, Florida State University.
- 2019–2020 Advisor, Graduate Symposium, “Policing Identity, Surveilling Religion,” Department of Religion, Florida State University.
- 2011–2017 Member, University Seminar on Religion in America, Columbia University.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE/WORK HISTORY

- 2018– Project Development Consultant and Evaluator, Photography in Collaboration: Migration and Religion, Magnum Foundation in New York, NY.
- 2016– Co-Founder and Associate Director, Front Porch Research Strategy in New Orleans, LA.
- 2015– Advisor, ‘Prisoner to Patient’ Project in New Orleans (a project of the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute).
- 2010– Board Member, Men and Women In Prison Ministries in Chicago, IL.
- 2010– Board Member, Reconstruction, Inc. in Philadelphia, PA.
- 2010– Board Member, Women With A Vision, Inc. in New Orleans, LA.
- 2009–2014 Co-Investigator of the NIH-funded research study, “Empowerment-Based Education for HIV Prevention In / Out of Jail,” with Jeffrey Drain (Temple University) and Philippe Bourgois (University of Pennsylvania).
- 2009–2011 Co-Founder and Co-Director, Institute for Community Justice in Philadelphia, PA.
- 2008–2009 Director of Project UNSHACKLE, Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project in New York, NY.
- 2006–2007 Coordinator, Harvard Prison Education Project in Cambridge, MA.
- 2001–2006 Founding Director of Prison Services, Philadelphia FIGHT in Philadelphia, PA.
 - Co-Founder and Co-Instructor, TEACH Outside;
 - Co-Founder and Editor, Prison Health News; and
 - Co-Founder and Coordinator, Beyond the Walls: Prison Health Care Summit.
- 2000–2001 Student Organizer, Pennsylvania Abolitionists United Against the Death Penalty in Philadelphia, PA.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

- American Academy of Religion. (*Afro-American Religious History, North American Religions*)
- American Anthropological Association.
- American Historical Association.
- American Studies Association.
- Phi Beta Kappa.

LANGUAGES

- Spanish (Advanced Reading, Writing, Speaking)

REFERENCES

Courtney Bender

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