

Courtney Fitzsimmons, Ph.D.

Whitman College
Department of Religion
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Education

Ph.D. University of Chicago, Theology, 2010

A.M. University of Chicago, Divinity, 2003

B.A. Boston University, Philosophy, 2000

Dissertation

“Loving God: Images of Love in Iris Murdoch and Franz Rosenzweig”

Committee: William Schweiker and Paul Mendes-Flohr (co-advisors)
Maria Antonaccio (reader, Bucknell University)

Grants, Awards and Honors

- Abshire Research Scholar Award, Whitman College, Fall 2011
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of America Grant for Advanced Theological Studies, 2005- 2007
- Wabash Fellowship in Pedagogy and the Study of Religion, University of Chicago, 2006
- Jerald C. Brauer Seminar Fellowship, University of Chicago, 2004

Current Position

Whitman College: Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion, 2010-2012

Courses***Religion***

REL-127: The Problem of Evil and Suffering

REL-209: Introduction to Judaism

REL-229: Modern Western Religious Thought II: 20th Century

REL-240: Modern Jewish Thought

REL-388: Jewish Mysticism

General Studies

GEN-145&146: Encounters: Ancient and Modern: A two-semester introductory humanities course for first year students.

Independent Study

Fall 2011

Rel-401: “Apocalyptic Literature” (4 credits)

Senior Theses*Spring 2011*

- “Your Kingdom Come, Your Will be Done, on Earth as it is in Heaven: Locating Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Luther King, Jr. in Twentieth Century Liberal Protestantism” (Advisor)
- “What is in a Child’s Best Interest: The Conflict between Parents’ Religious Beliefs and the State” (Reader)
- “The Man in Mr. Jones: Exorcising Understandings of Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple” (Reader)

Presentations

- “The Sea is like the Flesh: Correlations of Augustine’s reading of Genesis and Iris Murdoch’s *The Sea, The Sea*”, Regional meeting of the American Academy of Religion, May 2011.
- “Shared Love: Franz Rosenzweig on Judaism and Christianity,” American Academy of Religion, Chicago, IL, November 2008.
- “Hollywood and Christianity,” Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Glenview, IL, September 2006.
- “Why Iris Murdoch is Important for Theology,” Divinity School Theology Workgroup, University of Chicago, February 2004.

Research: Work in Progress

- “Ivan’s Rebellion: Divine Power and the Problem of Evil” – *This project is being funded by the Abshire Research Scholar Award at Whitman College.* A book length study of the reconsideration of divine power in current theology as a response to evil. Part one provides an overview of the current theories of divine power, and part two engages in a constructive analysis of divine power and the problem of evil.
- “Yearning for God: Images of Love in Iris Murdoch and Franz Rosenzweig” – A revision of my dissertation for publication.

Teaching Experience**University of Chicago: Lecturer, 2009 – 2010**

Taught an introductory humanities course, “Human Being and Citizen”, in the Humanities Core Curriculum in The College. Held full responsibility for syllabus design, instruction and grading. Class limit of nineteen students. Texts taught: *The Iliad*, *Genesis*, *Plato's Apology* and *Symposium* (Autumn); *Shakespeare's Measure for Measure*, *Kant's Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals* and *Hardy's Return of the Native* (Spring).

University of Chicago: Writing Intern, 2006-2010

Writing intern for “Human Being and Citizen” (2006-2007) and “Philosophical Perspectives” (2007-2010) courses in the Humanities Core Curriculum in The College. Responsibilities included: designing and conducting writing seminars, conducting one-on-one sessions with students, giving written feedback to students

on their papers, assisting the professor in grading, attending all classes and completing all reading assignments.

Taught two weeks of “Philosophical Perspectives” on Nietzsche’s *Genealogy of Morals* and Kierkegaard’s *Philosophical Fragments* (Spring 2008).

St. Xavier University: Adjunct Faculty, 2004 – 2005; Spring 2007 – 2009

Taught two sections a semester of an introductory philosophy course entitled “The Examined Life.” Held full responsibility for syllabus design, all instruction and grading. Class limit of twenty-five students. Texts taught: Plato: *Symposium*, *Republic*, *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito* and Iris Murdoch’s *The Bell*.

Teaching Interests

I am interested in teaching interdisciplinary courses (within religion and in philosophy or literature) as well as traditional theology courses (historical, thematic and problem-oriented courses). I can also teach introductory courses in Christianity and Judaism.

Primary

- Christian Theology (18th – 20th century)
- Modern Jewish Thought
- History of Christian Thought
- Philosophical and Systematic Theology

Secondary

- Philosophy of Religion
- Philosophy (18th- 20th century)
- Religion and Literature
- Theology of Martin Luther

Research Interests

- Constructive and Philosophical Theology. Specific interests include:
 - The concept of love in theology, focusing on the divine-human and human-human relationships as expressed in the double-love command.
 - The language of love, specifically the divine/human relationship as exemplified in Scripture and accounts of the experience of God.
 - Theodicy and the reality of evil, as related to both concepts of love and language.
 - The nature of God determined by the concept of love.
- Theological Method, specifically taking an interdisciplinary approach to theology by using resources outside Christian theology, particularly Jewish thought and literature, for developing theological concepts.

Related Professional Experience

Office of the Inspector General, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services: Ethics Consultant and Researcher, March – June 2010

Advised the Inspector General and her staff on ethics issues pertaining to the use of

polygraph testing in evaluating parents suspected of child abuse. Conducted research into the ethics of polygraphs testing, and its use in regards to child abuse and sex offenders.

Office of the Inspector General, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services: Ethics Coordinator, June 2005 – June 2007

Advised the Inspector General and her investigators on ethics issues. Conducted investigations into ethical misconduct by child welfare professionals. Designed and implemented ethics trainings for child welfare professionals. Provided ethics consultation for the child welfare field and the Department.

Office of the Inspector General, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services: Ethics Research Assistant, July 2002 – October 2003

Conducted research on ethics issues at the request of the Ethics Coordinator. Wrote and edited “Handbook on Pastoral Care for Child Welfare Professionals.” Edited ethics training materials designed and distributed by the office. Assisted Ethics Coordinator in conducting investigations.

Languages

Reading knowledge of German and French

Professional Affiliations

American Academy of Religion

References

William Schweiker, Professor, University of Chicago Divinity School
Paul Mendes-Flohr, Professor, University of Chicago Divinity School
Melissa Wilcox, Chair, Department of Religion, Whitman College
Maria Antonaccio, Professor, Bucknell University

Teaching Portfolio available upon request