

# Seth Perry

[perrysa@uchicago.edu](mailto:perrysa@uchicago.edu)

## EDUCATION

---

### **University of Chicago Divinity School; Chicago, IL**

Ph.D. in the History of Christianity, August 2012 (expected)

A.M. in Religious Studies, June 2004

### **Georgetown University; Washington, DC**

B.A. in theology and English, May 2001

### **Details of Doctoral Study**

Qualifying exams:

History of Christianity, Ancient; with Margaret Mitchell

History of Christianity, Reformation; with Susan Schreiner

History of Christianity, Modern; with Catherine Brekus

Religion and the Political Order; with Jean Elshtain

Dissertation:

“‘A Valuable Book’: Bibles and Religious Authority in Early-National America”

Committee: Catherine Brekus, W. Clark Gilpin, and Richard Rosengarten.

## FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

---

### **The McNeil Center for Early American Studies, University of Pennsylvania**

Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in Early American Literature and Material Texts, 2011-12

This thirteen-month fellowship allows me to make use of the vast holdings of the Library Company of Philadelphia and other area archives and complete my dissertation while participating in the seminars, conferences, and other work of the McNeil Center.

### **The Martin Marty Center for the Advanced Study of Religion, University of Chicago**

Dissertation Fellow, 2010-2011

Participated in colloquium discussions and presented my work to academic peers and interested non-specialists.

### **The American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts**

Reese Fellow, in residency October 2009

This fellowship, supporting projects in the history of the book in America, enabled me to examine a wide swath of materials related to early-national bible publishing in the Society's expansive collections.

### **University of Chicago**

Provost's Summer Research Grant, Summer 2008

**Chicago Forum on Pedagogy and the Study of Religion, University of Chicago Divinity School**  
Fellow, 2004-2005  
Participated in yearlong workshop on undergraduate teaching in religious studies.

## TEACHING

---

*Instructor, University of Chicago:*

**“American Scriptures,” Spring 2011**

This course, of my own design, covered sacred texts of American origin, from the *Book of Mormon* to *Message to the Blackman in America* to *Dianetics*, pursuing questions about the form, use, and authority of texts thought of as “scripture.”

*Teaching Assistant, University of Chicago:*

**“Evangelicalism in America,” Winter 2009**

Assisted Professor Catherine Brekus with grading and discussion; lectured and led discussion on readings in eighteenth-century American evangelicalism.

*Instructor, North Central College, Naperville, Ill.:*

**“World Religions,” Spring 2008**

Designed and led 100-level course covering Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Placed special emphasis on evaluating and understanding religious arguments from a variety of perspectives.

*Teaching Assistant, University of Chicago:*

**“Tolkien: Medieval and Modern,” Spring 2005**

Assisted with grading, including evaluation of both standard-format essays and “creative” final papers submitted by students. Monitored a class discussion board online through the Chalk course management system.

## TEACHING COMPETENCIES

---

American religious history, sixteenth through twenty-first centuries

New religious movements

Historiographical methods in the study of religion

Comparative religious authority

Religious print and publishing in America

History of Christianity, from the New Testament era to the contemporary

## RELATED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

---

### **The University of Chicago Divinity School**

Web Manager (June 2004 – Present)

Format and maintain content for all parts of <http://divinity.uchicago.edu>.

### **Council on Graduate Study in Religion**

Survey Coordinator (September 2006 – 2011)

Compile information from over two-hundred institutions for CGSR's annual job placement survey.

### ***The Chronicle of Higher Education, Washington, DC***

Fact-checker (June 2003 – June 2008)

Confirmed details and edited pieces on a range of topics for *The Chronicle Review*.

### ***The Religion and Culture Web Forum; The Martin Marty Center, University of Chicago Divinity School***

Editor (July 2003 – August 2005)

Solicited, edited, and posted essays for this online forum, now found at <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/martycenter/publications/webforum/>.

### ***Public Culture, The University of Chicago***

Editorial Assistant (April 2003 – August 2004)

### ***The Chronicle of Higher Education***

News Clerk (July 2001 – September 2002)

Assisted senior editors with special projects, such as the *Chronicle Almanac*.

## PUBLICATIONS

---

### **Articles and Essays:**

“Go Down into Jordan: No, Mississippi’: Mormon Nauvoo and the Rhetoric of Landscape,” in *Gods of the River: Religion and Culture along the Mississippi*, Michael Pasquier, ed. (Indiana University Press, forthcoming 2012).

“Scientology and its Discontents,” *The Chronicle Review*, forthcoming October 2011.

“Frodo and Mormon Share Stage in South Park Mormon Musical,” *Religion Dispatches*, March 25, 2011 (<http://goo.gl/Hyabc>).

“Days of Disappointment.” *Sightings*, October 21, 2010 (<http://goo.gl/pPhgi>).

“A World Religion (Eventually).” *Patheos.com*, August 9, 2010 (<http://goo.gl/6OKDn>).

“Here be Nephites.” *Sightings*, April 29, 2010 (<http://goo.gl/nqW38>).

“Look at this Tangle of Thorns.” *Sightings*, April 17, 2008 (<http://goo.gl/8E0JR>).

“Romney’s Religious Dilemma.” *The Chronicle Review*, February 15, 2008.

<http://chronicle.com/weekly/v54/i24/24b00101.htm> (login required).

“September Dud.” *Sightings*, September 13, 2007 (<http://goo.gl/G12Sv>).

“Lives in the Balance.” *The Chronicle Review*, January 26, 2007.  
<http://chronicle.com/weekly/v53/i21/21b01401.htm> (login required).

“Lords of Kobol, Hear My Prayer: Religion and Faith on *Battlestar Galactica*.” *Sightings*, June 8, 2006  
<http://goo.gl/Diz5D>.

“An Outsider Looks in at Mormonism.” *The Chronicle Review*, February 3, 2006.  
<http://chronicle.com/weekly/v52/i22/22b00901.htm> (login required).

“Why is it So Hard to Talk About Mormons?” *Sightings*, January 26, 2006 (<http://goo.gl/2neyb>).  
 Reprinted in *Sunstone* (December 2005).

“I See Dead People.” *Sightings*, May 19, 2005 (<http://goo.gl/4nt7i>).

### **Book Reviews:**

Skousen, Royal, ed. *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text*. (Yale University Press, 2009). *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*.

Neilson, Reid L. and Terryl L. Givens, eds. *Joseph Smith Jr.: Reappraisals after Two Centuries*. (Oxford University Press, 2009). *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 61: July 2010, 652-654.

Roberts, David. *Devil's Gate: Brigham Young and the Great Mormon Handcart Tragedy* (Simon & Schuster, 2008). *Journal of Religion* (January 2009).

Givens, Terryl L. *People of paradox: a history of Mormon culture* (Oxford University Press, 2007). H-Amstdy (June 2008); <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=14576>.

Reeve, W. Paul. *Making Space on the Western Frontier: Mormons, Miners, and Southern Paiutes* (University of Illinois Press, 2006). H-Amstdy (October 2007); (<http://goo.gl/Pc3Pq>).

### **Selected short reviews:**

Sack, Daniel. *Moral Re-Armament: The Reinventions of an American Religious Movement* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, forthcoming.

Millet, Robert L. *The vision of Mormonism: pressing the boundaries of Christianity* (Paragon House, 2007). *Choice* (May 2008).

Jonas, W. Glenn, Jr., ed. *The Baptist River: Essays on Many Tributaries of a Diverse Tradition* (Mercer University, 2006). *Choice* (June 2007).

May, Dean L. and Reid L. Neilson, ed. *The Mormon History Association's Tanner Lectures: The First Twenty Years* (Illinois University Press, 2006). *Choice* (December 2006).

Bushman, Claudia L. *Contemporary Mormonism: Latter-day Saints in Modern America* (Praeger, 2006). *Choice* (October 2006).

## PRESENTATIONS

---

- “Go down into Jordan: No, Mississippi’: Mormon Nauvoo and the Rhetoric of Place”  
American Society of Church History annual meeting, Chicago, Ill. (upcoming – January, 2012).
- “How to Sell a Bible: Advertising and Authority in America, 1770-1850”  
“Before Madison Avenue: Advertising in Early America,” conference sponsored by the Center for Historic American Visual Culture and the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture at the American Antiquarian Society (upcoming – November 4, 2011).
- “Kick Against the ~~Pricks~~ Goads: Thomas M. Allen’s King James Bible”  
Annual meeting of the Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion, Louisville, KY (March 5, 2011).
- “Indices of Imagination: Antebellum American Bibles and the Mechanics of Bible Usage”  
“Imagining: A New Century,” conference of C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists, Pennsylvania State University (May 22, 2010).
- “Authority, Pedagogy, and Mediating the Bible in Nineteenth-Century American Publishing”  
“Divining the Message, Mediating the Divine,” Columbia University (April 2, 2010).
- “In Some Considerable Degree, Resigned to the Will of God’: Peggy Dow as Apostle’s Wife”  
American Academy of Religion annual meeting, Chicago, IL (November 3, 2008).
- “I myself serve the law of God ~~but with the flesh the law of sin~~”: Joseph Smith edits Paul’s Letter to the Romans, 1832-33”  
Sunstone Symposium, Salt Lake City, UT. (August 2007).
- “An Outsider Looks in at Mormonism”  
Sunstone West Symposium, Claremont, CA. (April 2006).

## INVITED TALKS AND LECTURES

---

- “A Brief History of Protestant Groups”  
Young-Adults Lecture Series, Holy Name Cathedral, Chicago, IL (February 11, 2009).
- “An Introduction to Mormonism: An Outsider’s Look In”  
Four-week adult-education lecture series. Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago (Spring 2008).
- “Introduction to *September Dawn*”  
“Doc Films” Mormon cinema series special event, University of Chicago (November 29, 2007).

## CONFERENCES CO-ORGANIZED

---

“The Power of Stories: Authority and Narrative in Early America,” McNeil Center for Early American Studies, University of Pennsylvania (September 29 - October 1, 2011).

“Women and American Religion: Reimagining the Past,” University of Chicago Divinity School (October 8-10, 2003).

## PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

---

American Academy of Religion  
American Historical Association  
C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists

## REFERENCES

---

Catherine Brekus  
Associate Professor of the History of Christianity in the Divinity School  
Swift Hall 306 A  
1025 E. 58th St.  
Chicago, IL 60637  
773/702-4272  
[cbrekus@uchicago.edu](mailto:cbrekus@uchicago.edu)

Richard Rosengarten  
Associate Professor of Religion and Literature in the Divinity School  
Swift Hall 401  
1025 E. 58th St.  
Chicago, IL 60637  
773/702-8277  
[raroseng@uchicago.edu](mailto:raroseng@uchicago.edu)

Lucy K. Pick  
Director of Undergraduate Studies,  
Senior Lecturer in the History of Christianity in the Divinity School  
Swift Hall 400 C  
1025 E. 58th St.  
Chicago, IL 60637  
773/702-8278  
[lucypick@uchicago.edu](mailto:lucypick@uchicago.edu)