

Russell P. Johnson

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[Accurate as of July 2021. Please email for an updated CV]

Academic Appointments

Assistant Director, Undergraduate Religious Studies Program and Core Sequence, University of Chicago (2021–present)

Divinity Teaching Fellow, University of Chicago (2019–2021)

Education

PhD, Philosophy of Religions, University of Chicago, 2019

—Dissertation: “Communication Ethics in Social Conflict: Nonviolent and Christian Perspectives”

M.A., Philosophy, University of Chicago, 2015

M.T.S., Duke University, 2012, *Magna cum Laude*

B.A., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2009, with Highest Honors, with Distinction

—Triple major in Religious Studies, Political Science, and Communication Studies

Publications

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

“Building Peace in a Culture War: Christian Witness in a Polarized Society” in *Political Theology* 22.3 (April, 2021)

“Doing Justice to Difference: Stanley Hauerwas and Public Theology” in *Modern Theology* 36.3 (July, 2020)

“The Ministering Critic: Kierkegaard’s Theology of Communication” in *Religions* 11.1 (January, 2020)

“Pragmatism without the –Ism: Cavell, Rhetoric, and the Role of Doctrines in Philosophy,” in *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 40.2 (Fall 2019)

“Won’t Get Fooled Again: Wittgensteinian Philosophy and the Rhetoric of Empiricism,” in *Sophia* 59 (June, 2019)

“The Gospel and the Prosperity Gospel: Joel Osteen’s *Your Best Life Now* Reconsidered” in *Theology* 121.1 (January, 2018)

Book Chapters

- “National Amnesia: The Competing Legacies of Martin Luther King Jr.,” co-written with Matthew Vega, in *Saints in Divided Societies*, ed. Aaron T. Hollander (forthcoming, 2022)
- “‘Not Gonna Turn Invisible’: *Into the Spider-Verse* and Black Theology,” co-written with Matthew Vega, in *Theology and Spider-Man*, ed. George Tsakridis (Fortress, 2021)
- “Lifting Rocks: Camus, Sainthood, and the Anti-heroic in *The Last Jedi*” in *Theology and the Star Wars Universe*, ed. Benjamin Espinoza (Rowman and Littlefield, 2021)
- “‘I Wanted to Do Something Outrageous’: On the Limits of Parody in *True Lies*,” co-written with Naaman Wood, in *A Critical Companion to James Cameron*, eds. Adam Barkman and Antonio Sanna (Lexington, 2018)
- “Abraham Joshua Heschel,” “George Lindbeck,” “Mohandas Gandhi,” “Peace,” “Reconciliation,” “Rhetoric,” in *The Dictionary of Philosophy of Religion*, eds. Charles Taliaferro and Elsa Marty (Bloomsbury, 2018)
- “Stanley Hauerwas,” in *An Encyclopedia of Communication Ethics: Goods in Contention*, eds. Ronald Arnett, Annette M. Holba, and Susan Mancino (Peter Lang, 2018)
- “Nicholas of Cusa,” in *Words and Witnesses: Communication Studies in Christian Thought from Athanasius to Desmond Tutu* eds. Robert H. Woods and Naaman Wood (Hendrickson, 2018)

Book Reviews

- Navigating Post-Truth and Alternative Facts: Religion and Science as Political Theology* ed. Jennifer Baldwin (Lexington, 2018) for *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* (forthcoming, 2022)
- Introducing Prophetic Pragmatism: A Dialogue on Hope, the Philosophy of Race, and the Spiritual Blues* by Jacob Goodson and Brad Elliot Stone (Lexington, 2019) for *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 42.2 (May, 2021)
- Evangelism After Pluralism* by Brian Stone (Baker, 2018), for *Anabaptist Witness* 7.2 (November, 2020)
- Kierkegaard and the Legitimacy of the Comic: Understanding the Role of Irony, Humor, and the Comic for Ethics and Religion* by Will Williams (Lexington, 2018) for *Christianity and Communication Studies Network* (September, 2020)
- Healthy Conflict in Contemporary American Society: From Enemy to Adversary* by Jason A. Springs (Cambridge, 2018) for *The Journal of Religion* 100.3 (July, 2020)
- The Perilous Sayings: Interpreting Christ’s Call to Obedience in the Sermon on the Mount* by Amos Winarto Oei (Langham, 2017) for the *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 40.1 (Spring/Summer, 2020)

The Myth Awakens: Canon, Conservatism, and Fan Reception of Star Wars ed. Ken Derry and John C. Lyden (Cascade Books, 2018) for *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* (March, 2020)

Humanity in God's Image by Claudia Welz (Oxford, 2016) for *The Journal of Religion* 98.3 (April, 2018)

Public Scholarship

Monthly columnist, *Sightings* (2019–present)

“How War Bypasses Morality” in *Religion News Service* (January, 2020)

“Waiting with Simone Weil: Atheist-Christian Dialogue as Spiritual Practice” in *Ecumenical Trends* 48.8 (September, 2019)

“Public Theology—It’s Not for Everybody” in *Political Theology Network* (September, 2018), co-written with Brandy Daniels

“My Lai after Fifty Years” in *Political Theology Network* (March, 2018)

“The Struggle Is Real: Understanding the American ‘Culture War’” in *Religion and Culture Forum* (July, 2017)

“Behind Blue Eyes: Consubstantiality and the Unthinkable” in *The Other Journal* 27 (February, 2017)

“A Religion of Losers: Dissenting Voices in Church History” in *The Other Journal*, 23.5 (May, 2014)

Teaching

University of Chicago

“Villains: Evil in Philosophy, Religion, and Film,” undergraduate course, spring 2020

“Truth, Half-Truth, and Post-Truth,” undergraduate course, winter 2020

“Human Being and Citizen,” undergraduate course, fall–winter 2019–2020, fall 2020

“Religion and the Nobel Peace Prize,” undergraduate course, fall 2019 (course offered)

“*Star Wars* and Religion,” undergraduate course, spring 2019, spring 2021

“Reasons of the Heart: Philosophy, Rhetoric, and the Passions,” undergraduate course, Chicago Academic Achievement Program, summer 2018

Dominican University

“Introduction to Theology,” undergraduate course, Dominican University, fall 2016

Teaching Assistant

“Human Being and Citizen,” undergraduate course taught by Samantha Fenno, University of Chicago, fall-winter-spring 2017–2018

“Philosophical Perspectives,” undergraduate course taught by Matthew Boyle, University of Chicago, fall 2016

“History of Christian Thought V: Kant to Barth,” graduate course taught by Kevin Hector, University of Chicago, fall 2014

Teaching Awards

Chicago Center for Teaching Excellence in Course Design, Honorable Mention (2019), University of Chicago

Susan Colver-Rosenberger Educational Prize (2019), University of Chicago

Divinity School Prize for Excellence in Teaching (2018), University of Chicago Divinity School

Alma Wilson Teaching Lectureship, University of Chicago Divinity School (2018)

Pedagogy Training

Mentoring Graduate Students Workshop Series at the University of Chicago (2021– present)

Inclusive Pedagogy Workshop Series at the University of Chicago (2019–2020)

Chicago Center for Teaching Certificate (completed 2019)

Mental Health First Aid Certificate Program (2018)

Wabash Center Teaching Seminars (2016–2017)

Certificate in the Craft of Teaching in the Academic Study of Religion, University of Chicago (2015)

Invited Lectures and Public Lectures

(In 2020, I lectured remotely at Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, the University of Chicago, Duke University, and the University of Scranton)

“*Star Wars* and Religion” at the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago (December 2019)

“The Psychology of Myth” at DePaul University (November 2019)

“Unrest: The Implacability of Cornel West” at the University of Chicago, panel discussion with Dr. Cornel West (February 2018)

“Self-Betraying Education: Freire and Kierkegaard on Telling It Slant” at the University of Illinois Philosophy of Education Workshop (January 2016)

Conference Papers

- “Like and Unlike: Mimesis, Social Identity Theory, and the Barriers to Online Dialogue” at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting (San Antonio, 2021)
- “Reconciling the Divided Self: *Ubuntu* Theology and Self-Plurality Psychology” at the Society of Christian Ethics Annual Meeting (remote, 2021)
- “Transcendental Empiricism: Martin Luther King and the World Behind the World” at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting (remote, 2020)
- “Beyond Either/Or: Cornel West’s Kierkegaardian Style” at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting (Denver, 2018)
- “We Find Ourselves in Disagreement” at the Department for the Study of Religion Graduate Symposium, University of Toronto (Toronto, 2018)
- “The Psychology of Reconciliation: Internal Conflicts and Conflict Resolution” at the John D. Stratton Conference on Nonviolence in Theory and Practice (Ashland, Ohio, 2018)
- “‘An Enemy I Couldn’t See’: Dehumanization as a Guide to Humanity” at the University of Chicago/ Notre Dame Conference on Theology and Religious Ethics (South Bend, 2018)
- “Un-American Activities: McCarthyism, Nazism, and Islamophobia” at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting (Boston, 2017)
- “A Scene in a Danish Graveyard: History, Hermeneutics, and Domestication” at the Duke Graduate Conference in Theology (Durham, North Carolina, 2017)
- “Trust, *Ubuntu*, and a Sustainable Peace” at the Enhancing Life Project Capstone Conference (Chicago, 2017)
- “Rewording the Gospel: The Tradition of Rhetorical Theology” at the Constructive Studies Conference at the University of Chicago Divinity School (Chicago, 2017)
- “Self-Betraying Education: Freire and Kierkegaard on Telling It Slant” at the Society for the Philosophical Study of Education Annual Conference (Chicago, 2016)
- “Self-Multiplicity in Hume, James, Hume, and James” at the Harvard Divinity School “Ways of Knowing” Graduate Conference (Cambridge, 2016)
- “Unsettling Theology: Desmond Tutu’s Case for Incompleteness” at the McCormick Ethics Colloquium at Loyola University (Chicago, 2016)
- “Godwin’s Law: John Wisdom on Why Every Argument Ends with Hitler” at the University of Chicago/ Notre Dame Conference on Theology and Religious Ethics (South Bend, 2015)
- “Pascal, Kierkegaard, Osteen” at the University of Virginia Graduate Colloquium on Theology, Ethics, and Culture (Charlottesville, 2014)

Service

Refereed papers for *Political Theology*, *The Journal of Religion*, and the National Communication Association

Panelist, “Introduction to Syllabus Design,” Craft of Teaching, University of Chicago (2020)

Moderated panels at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting and the Society of Christian Ethics Annual Meeting

Facilitator, Hearing One Another, University of Chicago (2018–present)

Coordinator, 2016 University of Chicago/ Notre Dame Conference on Theology and Religious Ethics, topic: “Theology, Ethics, and the Death of God”

Founder and Coordinator, UChicago 101s (2012–2019)

Relevant Work

Mellon/PATHS Summer Internship, Writing Program, University of Chicago (2020)

Scholar-in-Residence, Better Angels (renamed Braver Angels) (2018)

Editorial Assistant, *The Journal of Religion* (2017–2019)

Project Assistant, Enhancing Life Project, for the Templeton Foundation (2017)

Administrative Assistant, University of Chicago Divinity School (2012–2016)

Awards and Honors

William Rainey Harper Dissertation-Year Fellowship (2018–2019), University of Chicago

Featured in *The Mennonite* magazine “20 under 40” (2016)

Ray C. Petry Scholarship (full tuition) from Duke Divinity School (2009)

Phi Beta Kappa (2009)

Bernard Boyd Memorial Fellowship for Excellence in Religious Studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2009)

Academic Seminars

Accountability as a Virtue, Summer Workshop, Baylor University (2021)

Religion and its Publics Emerging Scholars Workshop, University of Virginia (2018)

Lumen Christi Summer Seminar on John Henry Newman, Oxford University (2014)

Professional Societies

Religious Communication Association (2020–present)

Society of Christian Ethics (2015–present)

American Academy of Religion (2011–present)