

Brandi Denison

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Teaching and Research Profile

American Religious History, specializing in the American West with particular attention to Native American Religions, race, religion & the environment, gender, violence, memory, and theories of religion

Education

Ph.D. in Religious Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, (August 2011)

Dissertation: “Remove, Return, Remember: Making Ute Land Religion in the American West”

Committee: Laurie Maffly-Kipp, Tim Marr, Theda Perdue, Randall Styers, Grant Wacker

M.A. in Religious Studies, University of Colorado at Boulder, (August 2003)

Masters Thesis: “Towards a Responsible Apocalypse: The Cryptoapocalyptic Discourse of George W. Bush and the American Nonviolence Movement”

Committee: Ira Chernus, Michelene Pesantubbee, Lynn Ross-Bryant

B.A. in Religion, University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, Washington (May 2000)

Teaching Experience

University of North Florida (2011 – Present)

Assistant Professor, **Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies**

- Religion and Monsters
- American Judaism (face-to- face and online course)
- Religion and Film (online course)
- Religion: Theory and Method
- Religion, Literature, and the Arts in the United States
- American Indian Religions
- Religion and Nature
- Comparative Religions
- Race and Religion in the United States

University of North Carolina (2006 - 2011)

Instructor, Religious Studies (2008 - 2011)

- African American Religious History
- Introduction to Philosophical Approaches to Religion
- Nature, Religion, and the Environment
- Race, Ethnicity, and Religion in the United States
- American Religious History
- Religion, Literature, and the Arts in the United States
- History of Christianity

Teaching Assistant, Religious Studies (2006 - 2007)

- Philosophical Approaches to Religion
- Religions in the United States
- Seminar in Religious Studies

Tutor, Writing Center, (2010 - 2011)

University of Colorado, Religious Studies, (2002 - 2003)

Teaching Assistant

- Religions in Contemporary Society
- Religions in the United States
- Christian Traditions

Research Positions

University of North Carolina

Research Assistant, *Difficult Dialogues Initiative*, 2006-2007

- Funded through the Ford Foundation, this project aimed to increase effective dialogue about faith on campus
- Participated in committee discussions about involving the campus community in productive conversations about faith and religion

- Applied training on leading effective conversations about controversial topics and led undergraduate conversations about faith-based issues

Research Assistant, *Religious Studies*, Laurie Maffly-Kipp, 2005

- Served on an organizational committee for “Teaching Religion in the South,” a UNC Religious Studies conference, May 15, 2006

University of Puget Sound

Research Assistant, *Religion*, Doug Edwards, 1998-2000

- Digitized archaeological records for a dig in Israel to be used as part of an internet-based educational program
- Invited to traveled to Israel to participate in dig and to continue digital projects during the summer

Publications

“Dirt and Morality in the American West” (forthcoming, *Pacific Historical Review*)

Ute Land Religion in the American West, 2017, University of Nebraska Press

Review of *The Catholic Calumet: Colonial Conversions in French and Indian North America* (Tracy Neal Leavelle), *Western Historical Quarterly*, Fall 2013

Review of *Native Americans, Christianity, and the reshaping of the American Religious Landscape*, (edited by Joel W. Martin and Mark A. Nicholas), *Ethnohistory*, Fall 2012

“The Meeker Massacre: Religious Identity as Cultural Exchange,” in *Native American Adoption, Captivity, and Slavery in Changing Contexts*, edited by Max Cacori and Stephanie Pratt (London: Palgrave Press, 2012)

Review of *We Have a Religion: The 1920s Pueblo Indian Dance Controversy and American Religious Freedom* (Tisa Wenger), *Ethnohistory*, Spring 2010

“Art Blakey” in *Encyclopedia of Muslim-American History*, edited by Edward E. Curtis IV (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2010).

Teaching Grants

Lily Endowment, Inc.

Building Bridges, 2015-2017

Selected out of a national pool of applicants, this \$30,000 grant was awarded to support an inter-institutional workshop between new religious studies departments at Clemson, Middle Tennessee State University, and University of North Florida. The workshops will draw on resources at the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in order to build institutional bridges among multidisciplinary faculty in order to construct a coherent religious studies pedagogy and bridges between faculty and student expectations for a religious studies major.

Teaching Awards

University of North Florida

Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, 2017

Teaching Fellowship, 2013

Selected out of a university-wide pool of applicants, this fellowship supported the development of an African American religions course employing oral history methods, so that students could work with a local religious community to produce an oral history.

Research Awards

Lily Endowment, Inc.

Research Fellow, 2013

Selected out of a national pool of religious studies scholars, this fellowship supported writing and researching a chapter of my book manuscript.

University of North Florida

Research Fellow, 2012

Selected out of a university-wide pool of applicants, this fellowship supported archival research in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming.

Academic Honors

University of North Carolina

Thomas Ferdinand Summer Research Fellowship, 2010

Selected out of a university-wide pool of applicants, this fellowship supported dissertation research.

Penny Aldrich Interdisciplinary Fellowship, 2008

One of 16 graduate students selected out of a university-wide pool of applicants. Supported the development of an interdisciplinary dissertation proposal.

Perry Summer Travel Grant, 2008

Competitive departmental award used to support research travel to Colorado.

Scholars of Tomorrow Fellowship, 2005-2006

Granted to first year graduate students who demonstrated academic potential and a commitment to interdisciplinary scholarship.

University of Colorado

The Beverly Seals Grant for Graduate Study, 2001-2002

Granted to first year graduate students who demonstrated academic potential.

University of Puget Sound

Music Scholarship, 1996-2000

Competitive scholarship awarded to promising musicians.

Presidential Scholarship, 1996-2000

Competitive scholarship granted to the most promising students.

Conference Papers

“Dancing Around Walls: Ute Bear Dance and “Real” Religion, 1891-1941,” presented at the Western Historical Association (WHA) Annual Meeting, Portland, OR, October 23, 2015.

“The Ritual of Memory and the Memories of Ritual: The Politics of Sacred Space in the American West,” presented at the Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAISA) Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., June 6, 2014.

“Reconciliation and the Perils of Religion: Remembering the Meeker Massacre and Ute Removal,” presented at the WHA Annual Meeting, Tucson, AZ, October 9, 2013.

“Playing Indian: Eastern Utah Religious Borderlands,” presented at the WHA Annual Meeting, Denver, CO, October 5, 2012.

““Playing Indian”: Defining American Religion Through Ute Land Religion, 1910-1940,” presented at the American Academy of Religion (AAR) National Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, November 20, 2011.

“Plowing for Progress: American Christianity and the Advancement of Agricultural Science,” presented at the AAR National Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, November 1, 2010.

“Redemption in the American West: Confounding Colonialism through Powwows,” presented at the AAR National Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, October 30, 2010.

“Whose West? Religious Claims to Dirt: Ute Ethnic Cleansing and a Christian Nation,” presented at the WHA, Lake Tahoe, NV, October 15, 2010.

“Christian or Farmer?: Missionaries for Christ and the Plow in Nineteenth-Century American West,” NAISA, Tucson, AZ, May 21, 2010.

“Ponies, Plows, and Possibilities: Land and Religion in the American Frontier,” AAR National Annual Meeting, Montreal, Canada, November 8, 2009.

“The Meeker Massacre: Religious Identity as Cultural Exchange,” presented at the “Adoption, Captivity, and Slavery: Changing Meanings in Early Colonial America” conference, sponsored by the British Museum and the University of Plymouth, London, England, February 18, 2008.

“Beyond the Blackboard: Teaching with the American Religions Timeline” presented at the American Society of Church History National Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, January 3, 2008.

“A Hard Pill To Swallow: Manifest Destiny and the Mormon Battalion on the California Frontier” presented at the AAR-SBL National Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA, November 18, 2007.

“Josephine and the Utes: Religion, Violence, and Identity on the Western Frontier,” presented at the Florida State University Religion Symposium, Tallahassee, FL, March 15, 2007.

“Towards a Responsible Apocalypse: The Cryptoapocalyptic Discourse of the Nonviolence Movement,” presented at the AAR-SBL National Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, November 22, 2003.

“Commandment Wars: Public Discourse on the Decalogue in Grand Junction, CO,” presented at the AAR-SBL Rocky Mountain-Great Plains Regional Annual Meeting, Boulder, CO, April 8, 2003.

Teaching Development

Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning Teaching Fellow, 2012-2013

Selected out of a national pool of applicants, this highly selective workshop brought together teacher-scholars to develop and hone teaching skills. Sessions included:

- Syllabus development
- Teaching reading skills
- Leading effective discussions
- Use of technology in the classroom
- Developing pedagogical narratives
- Using evaluations effectively
- Assessment
- Embodiment in the classroom
- Classroom conflicts

University of North Carolina

Writing Center Training, August 16-27, 2010

- Spent 30 hours in training to learn best practices in writing pedagogy

Future Faculty Fellowship Program, May 15-22, 2008

- One of 20 students selected from a university-wide pool of applicants
- Attended weeklong training program to learn innovative undergraduate teaching techniques
- Participated in interdisciplinary conversations about undergraduate pedagogy

University of Colorado

Graduate Teacher Program, 2002-2003

- Attended workshops over the course of two years to learn and discuss teaching techniques

Service

University of North Florida

Member, Internal Review Board (2016-Present)

Member, Task Force, General Education Curriculum (2014-Present)

Committee Chair, Religious Studies Paper Prize (2012-Present)

Faculty Advisor, Religious Studies Club (2013-Present)

Member, Religious Studies Steering Committee (2011-Present)

- Developed program assessment plan, raising university scoring of assessment from “unsatisfactory” to “excellent”
- Developed capstone and theories and methods course
- Advised the launch of the student-run Religious Studies Club
- Wrote grant to bring external advisor to assist in program development

Oxford Press

Manuscript Reviewer (2015)

Wiley-Blackwell Press

Co-editor, American Religions division of *Religion Compass* (2013-Present)

Manuscript Reviewer (2013)

Religion in the American West Seminar, American Academy of Religion

Co-Chair (2014-Present)

- Created new group within the national American Academy of Religion
- Developed proposal that included an intellectual justification for the group
- Wrote group’s mission statement
- Wrote call for paper proposals

Blog editor, relwest.blogspot.edu, (2010-2013)

- Solicit blog postings from scholars interested in the study of religion in the American West
- Write blog posts about current events, applying theory to the history of religion in the American West, and book reviews
- Building readership of the blog to create online academic community

University of North Carolina, Religious Studies Department

Center for Faculty Excellence, 2009-2010

- Invited to lead university-wide pedagogy workshops for incoming graduate students
- Topics included: “Leading Effective Discussions” and “Preparing for your First Day of Class”

Graduate Student Committee Representative, 2007-2009

- Established annual departmental incoming graduate student teacher training
- Established the “Reli Roundtable Series,” a series of monthly meetings bringing together graduate students, faculty members, and other university resources to support graduate student professionalization, research, and teaching
- Provided feedback on revisions to the department’s Policy Handbook

Graduate Student and Professional Federation Religious Studies Senator, 2007-2008

Carolina Summer Reading Program, 2007

- Invited to lead a small group discussion to incoming freshman about the summer reading program book

Professional Experience

Domestic Violence Victim’s Advocate, Crossroads Safehouse, Fort Collins, CO, 2004-2005

- Led a three-person writing team for the Transitional Housing Federal Grant, awarded \$175,000 in 2005

Substitute Teacher, Mesa County School District, Grand Junction, CO, Summers 2003 and 2004

- Developed world religions unit for the Youth Detention Center

Professional Membership

American Academy of Religion
American Society of Church History
Native American and Indigenous Studies Association
Western Historical Association