

Savannah H. Finver

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Dept. of Religious Studies
University of Alabama
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Education

The University of Alabama

M.A.: Religion in Culture, expected May 2020

Thesis: "The Politics of Classification: Religious Freedom and New Religions in the Contemporary United States"

Supervisor: Dr. Vaia Touna

Graduate Certifications:

Digital Humanities (Alabama Digital Humanities Center)

Online Pedagogy (College of Continuing Studies)

St. Thomas Aquinas College

B.A. (*summa cum laude*), May 2016

Majors: Philosophy/Religious Studies, English

Minor: Childhood/Special Education, Grades 1-6

GPA: 3.93

Undergraduate Seminar Thesis: "The Problem of the Self: Individualism and Identity Crisis in Modern Literature" (English)

Supervisors: Dr. Robert Murray, Dr. Craig Martin

Areas of Academic Research and Interest

New Religious Movements, Contemporary Religions, American Religious History, American Politics and Political Theory, Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, Legal Theory, Sociology of Religions, Philosophy of Religions, Religion and Literature, Discourse and Rhetorical Analysis

Publications

Book Chapters:

"On Conceptual Anachronism" with Dr. Craig Martin in Gerhard van den Heever (ed.), *Special Selections on Religion in Antiquity* (Accepted) (Forthcoming with Equinox Publishing).

Blog Posts:

“On Modern Retellings.” *Religious Studies and Social Theory: Foundations*. [November 15, 2018]

(<https://blogs.religion.ua.edu/rel501/2018/11/15/on-modern-retellings/#more-223>)

“Selective Storytelling.” *Religious Studies and Social Theory: Foundations*. [November 14, 2015]

(<https://blogs.religion.ua.edu/rel501/2018/11/14/selective-storytelling/>)

“A Glimpse into Academia: My Conference Experience in Atlanta, Georgia.” *Studying Religion in Culture*. [December 11, 2015]

(<https://religion.ua.edu/blog/2015/12/11/a-glimpse-into-academia-my-conference-experience-in-atlanta-georgia/>)

“In the Currents of Change.” *Studying Religion in Culture*. [January 23, 2014]

(<https://religion.ua.edu/blog/2014/01/23/in-the-currents-of-change/>)

Newspaper Articles

“To Warn or Not to Warn: On the Importance of Trigger Warnings.” Printed in the Thoma Student Newspaper, St. Thomas Aquinas College. [September 6, 2015]

“Put Your Best Foot Forward.” Printed in the Thoma Student Newspaper, St. Thomas Aquinas College. [November 6, 2014]

“Celebrating the Arts: Tom Chapin and Others Come to STAC.” Printed in the Thoma Student Newspaper, St. Thomas Aquinas College. [October 15, 2014]

“Remember to Remember: September 11, 2001.” Printed in the Thoma Student Newspaper, St. Thomas Aquinas College. [October 15, 2014]

Conference Presentations

International

“On Conceptual Anachronism.” With Dr. Craig Martin at AAR (American Academy of Religion) conference in San Antonio. Presented (November 19, 2016)

Regional

“If They Get One, We Want One, Too: An Analysis of the Installation of a Ten Commandments Monument in Oklahoma.” Undergraduate Conference on Religion and Culture at Syracuse University. (March 28, 2014)

Local

“Of Scholars and Metatheory: An Examination of the Role of Method and Theory in the Study of Religion.” (Poster Presentation). STAC Ignite: 1st Annual Art, Design, & Scholarship Exhibition. (April 25, 2016)

Teaching Experience

Summer 2019 – Online Grader/Instructor of Record
REL100: Introduction to Religious Studies
Mentor: Dr. Mary-Rebecca Read-Wahidi

Spring 2019 – Graduate Teaching Assistant
REL 105: Introduction to Religious Studies (Honors)
Supervising Instructor: Emily Crews
*Duties Included: Guest lecture, grading, hold office hour

Fall 2018 – Graduate Teaching Assistant
REL100: Introduction to Religious Studies
Supervising Instructor: Dr. Russell T. McCutcheon
*Duties Included: Guest lecture, grading, hold office hour, answer student emails

Guest Lectures

The University of Alabama

“The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion.” Course Lecture in REL105: Introduction to Religious Studies (Honors). Supervising Instructor: Emily Crews. (March 19, 2019)

“A Review of Essentialism.” Course Lecture in REL105: Introduction to Religious Studies (Honors). Supervising Instructor: Emily Crews. (February 19, 2019)

“Is a Cult a Religion?” Course Lecture in REL105: Introduction to Religious Studies (Honors). Supervising Instructor: Emily Crews. (February 7, 2019)

“Classification Matters.” Course Lecture in REL100: Introduction to Religious Studies. Supervising Instructor: Dr. Russell T. McCutcheon. (October 9, 2018)

“Is It Really About Religion?: *Church of Lukumi Bablu Aye v. The City of Hialeah* (1993).” Course Lecture in REL 100: Introduction to Religious Studies. Supervising Instructor: Dr. Russell T. McCutcheon. (December 4, 2018)

Awards and Achievements

The University of Alabama

Teaching Assistantship: Fall 2019 – Spring 2020

- Full tuition scholarship and stipend

Graduate Fellowship Award: Fall 2018 – Spring 2019

- Full tuition scholarship and stipend in the amount of \$15,000 for the year

Partial Teaching Assistantship: Fall 2018 – Spring 2019

- Partial stipend

St. Thomas Aquinas College

STAC Presidential Scholarship Fall 2012 – Spring 2016

- Full tuition scholarship for all four years of attendance

Invited Member of Sigma Tau Delta (English Honor Society)

Invited Member of Alpha Chi (National College Honor Society)

Academic Experience / Professional Service

The University of Alabama

Summer 2019 – eTech Student Worker

Assist eTech Department in the Faculty Resource Center with assorted Digital Projects.

Spring 2019 – American Examples Volunteer

Assisted Dr. Michael J. Altman with airport pickup of participants as well as hosting participants throughout the conference.

Fall 2018-Present – Participant in Social Theory Journal Group

Engage in discussion regarding relevant research in the field with other MA students and faculty twice per semester.

Fall 2018-Present – Member of the Religious Studies Student Association

Assist when available with undergraduate and graduate recruitment to the Department of Religious Studies.

St. Thomas Aquinas College

Fall 2014-May 2016 – Copy Editor of the Thoma (Student Newspaper)

Read and edited for print all articles submitted for publication. Reviewed all articles for proper formatting, grammar, and citations. Provided any required assistance to the Editor-in-Chief in preparing and distributing all issues.

Fall 2015-Spring 2016 – President, Alpha Phi Omega

Prepared, hosted, and organized weekly meetings for members and bi-weekly meetings for all staff. Supervised all staff in the execution of their duties. Prepared, hosted, and organized Section 97 Annual Sectional Conference (including preparing locations for relevant presentations, courses, and meetings) under the supervision of the Section Chair. [March 28, 2015]

Fall 2014-Spring 2015 – New Member Educator, Alpha Phi Omega

Prepared a comprehensive curriculum regarding the history and principles of the Organization for incoming members to master. Prepared 1.5-hour weekly lectures. Prepared and graded basic assessments. Acted as mentor to all incoming members of the Organization to ensure all requirements for membership were met.

Digital Skills and Proficiencies

WordPress
Omeka
Garage Band: Podcasting
iMovie: Video Editing

Additional Work Experience

June 2017-June 2018: Legal Assistant for RAS Citron

Worked for the Service Department in editing, writing, and compiling all relevant paperwork to be submitted to the local court as Proofs of Service. Answered phone calls to the department as necessary.

December 2013-January 2017: Teaching Assistant for JCC Rockland

Assisted Lead Teachers in preparing and effectuating curriculum for children aged 6-weeks through 5-years. Attended the basic needs of young children. Maintained positive communication with parents in regards to learning goals and outcomes.

Relevant Coursework & Projects

The University of Alabama

REL501: Religious Studies and Social Theories: Foundations (Fall 2018)

Instructor: Dr. Steven Ramey

Project: "The Trouble with Cults;" Research Paper

REL502: Digital Humanities (Fall 2018)

Instructors: Dr. Michael Altman, Dr. Nathan Loewen

Projects: "Religious Texts" (Explainer Video); "Blessed are the Cheesemakers" (Podcast); "Confronting the Bizarre" (Digital Archive)

REL504-001: Religious Studies: History, Field, Discipline (Spring 2019)

Instructor: Dr. Richard Newton

Project: "'Freedom' of 'Religion': The Study of Religious Freedom Rhetoric in the Field of Religious Studies;" Research Paper

REL504-002: Religion and Politics in America

Instructor: Dr. Michael Altman

Project: "The Legacy of the American Experiment: Toward a Theory of the Connection Between Protestantism and American Nationalism;" Research Paper

REL 560: Independent Study in New Religious Movements

Instructor: Vaia Touna

Project: "Framing Otherness: On the Classification and Construction of the New Religious Other;" Research Paper

St. Thomas Aquinas College

RELS

- 103: Hebrew Bible | 215: Religion and Capitalism | 221: Religions of the East | 300: Politics, Religion, and Political Philosophy (Honors) | 309: Religion, Gender, and Social Justice | 312: Evolution of Jesus | 400: Theories of Religion | 400: Independent Study – Derrida

SOC

- 300: Community and Identity (Honors)

PHIL

- 101: Intro to Philosophy | 107: Philosophy of the Modern Era | PHIL109: History of Ethics

Language Competencies

Basic reading proficiency in Spanish.

Minor reading proficiency in German.

Some conversational knowledge of Hebrew.

Professional Organizations:

American Academy of Religion (AAR)

Society of Biblical Literature (SBL)

North American Association for the Study of Religion (NAASR)

References:

Vaia Touna

Assistant Professor of Religious Studies

The University of Alabama

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(205) 348-4617

Michael Altman

Associate Professor of Religious Studies

The University of Alabama

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Emily Crews

Instructor of Religious Studies

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ecrews1@ua.edu

(205) 348-8685

Russell T. McCutcheon
University Research Professor & Department Chair
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