

Curriculum Vitae
Stephen S. Bush
Professor of Religious Studies
Chair, Department of Religious Studies

Department of Religious Studies
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Brown University
Providence, RI 02912
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Education

Ph.D. in religion (religion, ethics, and politics), Princeton University, 2008
M.A. in religion, Princeton University, 2006
B.A. in philosophy, Rice University, 1998

Professional appointments

Professor of Religious Studies, Brown University, 2022 to present
 Associated Faculty Status: Philosophy
Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Brown University, 2016 to 2022
Manning Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Brown University, 2014 to 2016
Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Brown University, 2010 to 2016
Lecturer in Religion, Princeton University, 2008-2009

Editorships

Co-editor (with Keri Day and Molly Farneth), New Cambridge Series in Religion and Critical Thought, 2020-present
Guest editor, special issue on civil discourse and intellectual virtue, *Political Theology* 18.2 (March 2017)

Publications

Books

William James on Democratic Individuality (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2017)
Visions of Religion: Experience, Meaning, and Power (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014)
 Winner of the Council of Graduate Schools' Gustave O. Arlt Award in the Humanities (2015)

Essays

“The Lived Religion of Andy Warhol” (forthcoming in Ronald Bernier and Rachel Hostetter Smith, eds., *Religion and Contemporary Art: A Curious Accord*, Routledge)

“Making Lovers: Emmanuel Levinas and Iris Murdoch on Moral Formation,” in Troy DuJardin and M. David Eckel, eds., *Faith, Hope, and Love: The Theological Virtues and their Opposites* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2022), 159-176

“William James’s Democratic Aesthetics,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 49.1 (March 2021), 90-110

“Richard Rorty on Religion,” in David Rondel, ed., *Cambridge Companion to Rorty* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 243-260

“Religion in William James,” in Alexander Klein, ed., *Oxford Handbook of William James* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), online at <https://www-oxfordhandbooks-com.revproxy.brown.edu/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199395699.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199395699-e-31>; print version forthcoming

“The Sovereignty of the Living Individual: Emerson and James on Politics and Religion,” *Religions* 8.9 (2017), 1-16

“Ecstasy,” *Political Concepts* 3.5 (fall 2016), <http://www.politicalconcepts.org/ecstasy-stephen-bush/>

“Religion against Domination: William James’s Individualism,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 83.3 (September 2015), 750-779

“Sharing in What Death Reveals: *Breaking the Waves* with Bataille,” *Theory & Event* 18.2 (2015), http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory_and_event/v018/18.2.bush.html

Reprinted in Bonnie Honig and Lori Marso, eds., *Politics, Theory, and Film: Critical Encounters with Lars von Trier* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 131-147

“Sovereignty and Cruelty: Self-Affirmation, Self-Dissolution, and the Bataillean Subject,” in Jeremy Biles and Kent Brintnall, eds., *Negative Ecstasies: Georges Bataille and the Study of Religion* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 38-50

“Torture and the Politics of the Sacred,” *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 97.1 (2014), 75-99

“Horribly Wrong: Moral Disgust and Killing,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 41.4 (December 2013), 585-600

“Are Meanings the Name of the Game? Religion as Symbolic Meaning and Religion as Power” with “Response to Jason Springs,” *Religion Compass* 6.12 (December 2012), 525-533

“Are Religious Experiences Too Private to Study?” *Journal of Religion* 92.2 (April 2012), 199-223

Translated into Portuguese

“Concepts and Religious Experiences: Wayne Proudfoot on the Cultural Construction of Experiences,” *Religious Studies* 48.1 (March 2012), 101-117

“The Ethics of Ecstasy: Georges Bataille and Amy Hollywood on Mysticism, Morality, and Violence,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 39.2 (June 2011), 299-320

“Nothing Outside the Text: Derrida and Brandom on Language and World,” *Contemporary Pragmatism* 6.2 (December 2009), 45-69

“Divine and Human Happiness in *Nicomachean Ethics*,” *The Philosophical Review* 117.1 (January 2008), 49-75

Short essays, replies, and popular writing

“James, William,” in Stewart Goetz and Charles Taliaferro, eds., *Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Religion* (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119009924.eopr0188>

“The Beauty of Disobedience,” *Canopy Forum on the Interactions of Law & Religion* (September 30, 2020), <https://canopyforum.org/2020/09/30/the-beauty-of-disobedience/> (co-author with Sarah Stewart-Kroeker) “Beauty in the Slaughterhouse: Francis Bacon’s *Books and Painting*,” *Riot Material* (January 15, 2020), <https://www.riotmaterial.com/francis-bacon-books-and-painting/>

“Religion and Belief After the Turn to Power: A Response to Craig Martin,” in *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 29.4-5 (November 2017), 334-339

“Is There Racism in Heaven?: Nick Cave’s *Until* at MASS MoCA,” *Marginalia Review of Books* (August 2, 2017), <http://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/is-there-racism-in-heaven/>

“Entries into the Circular Self: Philosophical Perspectives on Emerson and Ashwini Bhat,” *Riot Material* (July 27, 2017), <http://www.riotmaterial.com/entries-into-circular-self>

“Intellectual Virtue and Civil Discourse,” *Political Theology* 18.2 (March 2017), 91-94

“Double Take: Rembrandt van Rijn’s *A Scholar in His Study* (‘Faust’),” *Manual: A Journal about Art and Its Making* 7 (fall 2016), 23

“Reply: Reasons and Objectivity in the Study of Religion,” *Culture on the Edge*, July 19, 2016, <http://edge.ua.edu/claims/reply-reasons-and-objectivity-in-the-study-of-religion/>

“The Voice of the Tortured,” *Political Theology Today*, March 18, 2015, <http://www.politicaltheology.com/blog/the-voice-of-the-tortured-stephen-s-bush>

“The Philosophy of Religious Experience and the Nag Hammadi Texts: A Response to Kaler and Tite,” *Bulletin for the Study of Religion* 42.1 (February 2013), 18-22

“Georges Bataille’s Mystical Cruelty: A Reply to Kent Brintnall,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 40.3 (September 2012), 551-555

“Radical Orthodoxy” in George Thomas Kurian, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Christian Civilization* (West Sussex, U.K.: Blackwell, 2011), vol. 3, 1919

Book reviews

Vincent Lloyd, *Black Natural Law*, in *Politics, Religion, and Ideology* 20.2 (2019), 258-260

John Bowlin, *Tolerance Among the Virtues*, in *Political Theory* 47.3 (June 2019), 439-444

Deborah Whitehead, *William James, Pragmatism, and American Culture*, in *Reading Religion* (2016), <http://readingreligion.org/books/william-james-pragmatism-and-american-culture>

Kevin Schilbrack, *Philosophy and the Study of Religions: A Manifesto*, in *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 77.1 (February 2015), 79-83

G. Scott Davis, *Believing and Acting: The Pragmatic Turn in Comparative Religion and Ethics*, in *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 72.3 (December 2012), 243-247

Ann Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered*, in *Journal of Religion* 10.4 (October 2010), 601-603

Michael R. Slater, *William James on Ethics and Faith*, in *Journal of Religion* 10.4 (October 2010), 597-599

Matthew C. Bagger, *The Uses of Paradox: Religion, Self-Transformation, and the Absurd*, in *Faith and Philosophy* 27.2 (April 2010)

John G. Stackhouse, *Making the Best of It: Following Christ in the Real World*, in *Theology Today* 66.4 (January 2010), 511-514

Presentations

“On the Limits of Philosophical Justifications for the Legitimation of Religious Studies,” American Academy of Religion Annual Conference, November 2022

“Reimagining Solidarity,” University of Chicago Divinity School, November 2022

“Portraiture and Anthropocentrism: Alice Neel’s Humanistic Subversion of ‘the Human,’” Societas Ethica Annual Conference, August 2022

“Ecology and Gender in the works of Georgia O’Keeffe” (co-presented with Sarah Stewart-Kroeker), European Academy of Religion Annual Conference, June 2022

“Contemplation and the Art of the Apocalypse: Bruce Conner, Nancy Spero, and Georges Bataille,” American Academy of Religion Annual Conference, November 2021

“Beauty, Politics, and Agency,” European Academy of Religion Annual Conference, August 2021

“Contemplation, Art, and the Racial Gaze,” American Academy of Religion Annual Conference, November 2019

“Empathy in Ethics and Art,” Beauty and Goodness: Exploring the Intersection Conference, University of Southampton, United Kingdom, September 2019

“The Beauty of the Citizenry: Attachments, Democratic and Non-,” American Political Science Association Annual Conference, August 2019

“Iris Murdoch, Beauty, and Politics,” Iris Murdoch Centenary Conference, Oxford University, July 2019.

“Empathy in an Age of Digital Media,” Societas Ethica Annual Conference, June 2019

“Sacrifice, Identity, Agency: Georges Bataille and Ecological Crisis” European Academy of Religion Annual Conference, March 2019

“Perception and Politics in James and Murdoch,” Association of Political Theory Annual Conference, October 2018

“Democracy and Vision: Self-Cultivation in Jeffrey Stout and Iris Murdoch,” Princeton University, September 2018.

“William James on Democratic Individuality,” Massachusetts Historical Society, June 2018

“Politics and Philosophy in Doris Salcedo’s Art,” American Academy of Religion Annual Conference, November 2017

“Making Lovers: Emmanuel Levinas and Iris Murdoch on Moral Formation,” Boston University Institute for Philosophy and Religion, November 2017

“William James’s Democratic Theory of Value,” Association of Political Theory Annual Conference, October 2017

“Suffering Humanity in Doris Salcedo’s Sculpture,” Experience Project Collaborative Workshop, Chicago, May 2017

“Religion and Politics in the Art of Doris Salcedo,” Amherst College, April 2017

“Visions of Religion,” Theories of Religion undergraduate seminar, Department of Religion, Amherst College, April 2017

“Religion and the Art of State Violence: Doris Salcedo’s *Neither*,” Association of Scholars of Christianity in the History of Art Symposium, February 2017

“Is William James a Utilitarian?” Eastern Division Conference of the American Philosophical Association, January 2017

“William James and the Study of Religion,” American Academy of Religion Annual Conference, November 2016

“Instrumentalism and Mysticism in Aurobindo: Response to Pratap Mehta,” OP Jindal Distinguished Lecture Series, October 2016

“Democratic Individuality in William James,” American Academy of Religion Annual Conference, November 2015

“Ecstasy,” Political Concepts Conference, Brown University, April 2015

“Visions of Religion,” Theories of Religion undergraduate seminar, Department of Religion, Amherst College, April 2015

“Visions of Religion,” Theories of Religion undergraduate seminar, Department of Religion, University of Rochester, December 2014

“Heroes and Citizens: William James on Social Change,” American Academy of Religion Annual Conference, November 2014

“Sharing in What Death Reveals: *Breaking the Waves* with Bataille and von Trier,” Breaking the Rules: Gender, Power, and Politics in the Films of Lars von Trier Conference, Brown University, November 2014

“Politics of *Varieties*: The Religious and the Political in William James,” Western Division Conference of the American Philosophical Association, April 2014

“Politics of *Varieties*: The Religious and the Political in William James,” Cogut Center for the Humanities Fellows Seminar, Brown University, November 2013

“Love or Predation? Georges Bataille on Mystical Union,” American Academy of Religion Annual Conference, November 2012

“Horror, Disgust, and Wrongness,” Liberation and Theology graduate seminar, Department of Religion, Syracuse University, March 2012

Respondent to panel on Redescribing Religious Experience in Gnosticism, Society of Biblical Literature Annual Conference, November 2011

“Religion and the Evidence of Experience,” Columbia University Society of Fellows Lecture Series, March 2011

“The Demands of William James,” Religion and Critical Thought Colloquium, Brown University, November 2010

“Are Meanings the Name of the Game? Religion as Symbolic Meaning and Religion as Power,” American Academy of Religion Annual Conference, November 2010

“The Politics of the *Varieties*: William James on Individuality, Pluralism, and Religion,” American Academy of Religion Annual Conference, November 2010

“Mysticism and Politics,” Brown University, February 2010

“The Ethics of Viewing Victims: Amy Hollywood, Georges Bataille, and Compassion for Suffering Humanity,” 2008 Religion and Literature Forum, Le Moyne College, April 2008

“Religion and Social Explanation,” Fellowship of Woodrow Wilson Scholars Seminar, Princeton University, March 2008

“Religious Experience and Sociopolitical Power,” American Academy of Religion Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting, March 2008

“Immediacy and Religious Experience: Wayne Proudfoot on Concepts and Experience,” Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference, Brown University, February 2008

“Experience and Power in Lived Religion,” Religion and Culture Workshop, Center for the Study of Religion, Princeton University, October 2007

“Perennialists and Constructivists,” Religion and Critical Thought Workshop, Department of Religion, Princeton University, September 2007

“Religious Experience after the Phenomenology of Religion: The Semantics of Religious Experience Reports,” American Academy of Religion Annual Conference, November 2006

“Religious Experience after the Phenomenology of Religion: The Semantics of Religious Experience Reports,” Graduate Prize Fellowship Seminar, University Center for Human Values, Princeton University, September 2006

Work in progress

Book manuscript: “Regarding Humans Otherwise: The Aesthetic Transformation of Anthropocentric Politics” (four out of five chapters completed)

Article: “Politics and Ethics in Doris Salcedo’s Sculpture” (under revision)

Service

To Brown University

Chair, Department of Religious Studies, 2022 to present

Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Religious Studies, 2018 to 2022

Executive Committee, Department of Religious Studies, 2019 to 2022

Coordinator, Religion and Critical Thought program, Department of Religious Studies, Brown University, 2015-16, 2018 to present

Graduate Committee, Department of Religious Studies, Brown University, 2018 to present

Committee for Faculty Retirement, Brown University, 2017 to present

Religious Studies Departmental Self-Study Committee, fall 2019-spring 2020

McVickar Senior Thesis Prize Committee, spring 2016, spring 2012, spring 2013, spring 2015, spring 2018

Selection Committee for Post-doctoral fellows, Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women, spring 2018

Planning Committee, Torture, Abuse, and Desecration in the Name of God Conference, fall 2014 to fall 2016

Organizer for guest scholar, Vincent Lloyd (Villanova), public lecture and class visit, November 2016

Organizer and convener, Religion and Critical Thought Colloquium, Brown University, 2015-16

Organizer for guest scholar, Joshua Dubler (U. Rochester), public lecture and class visit, October 2015

Selection Committee, Wriston Fellowship, spring 2015

Sub-committee on departmental self-assessment, RS department, spring 2015

Invited presenter, Taboo Topics forum, Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning, Brown University, February 2015

Commenter at Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World film event, Brown University, October 2014

“William James’s Individualism,” invited talk at Office of Chaplains and Religious Life’s Interfaith Supper, Brown University, March 2014

“Torture and Media,” invited to talk to Brown University undergraduates, sponsored by Department of Religious Studies, October 2013

Selection Committee, Sheridan Center Graduate Student Mentorship Skills Program, fall 2013

First Readings Seminar leader, August 2010, September 2011, September 2013

Invited presenter, Janus Forum’s *Zero Dark Thirty* screening and discussion, Brown University, April 2013

Undergraduate Adviser for Seniors, Department of Religious Studies, 2011 to 2013

Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning Faculty Liaison, 2011 to 2013

Master’s Degree Exploratory Committee, Department of Religious Studies, spring 2011

Invited presenter, Office of the Chaplains and Religious Life’s Meeting for Religious Life Affiliates, April 2011

Invited presenter, Religious Studies Faculty Brown Bag Lunch, Brown University, March 2011

“Three Approaches to Religion,” invited talk at Office of Chaplains and Religious Life’s Interfaith Supper, Brown University, October 2010

To Princeton University

Religion Department Graduate Student Committee, Princeton University, 2006-2008

Committee for Sister Helen Prejean Lecture, Princeton University, fall 2006

Undergraduate Senior Thesis Mentor, Princeton University, spring 2006

To the profession

Co-chair, Philosophy of Religion unit, American Academy of Religion, 2022-present

Liaison to American Academy of Religion, William James Society, 2018-present

Secretary, William James Society, 2018-2020

Referee for Oxford University Press (2022; 2015); *American Political Thought* (2021); *Routledge* (2021; 2020); *Journal of Religious Ethics* (2021; 2019; 2018; 2015; 2012); *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (2021); Cambridge University Press (2020; 2018); Harvard University Press (2018); *Religion Compass* (2017); *Contemporary Anthropology* (2017); Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States (2016); *Political Theology* (2016; 2014); John Templeton Foundation (2015; 2014);

Wiley-Blackwell Press (2013); *Journal of Religion* (2012; 2008); *American Political Science Review* (2012); and Baylor University Press (2008)

Awards, honors, fellowships, honorary societies

Faculty Research Fellowship, Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women, Brown University, 2021-2022

John Rowe Workman Award for Excellence in Teaching in the Humanities, 2018

Religious Experience Fellowship, The Experience Project, spring 2017

Undergraduate Teaching and Research Assistantship (UTRA), summer 2016, 2012

Council of Graduate Schools' Gustave O. Arlt Award in the Humanities, 2015

Named chair (for junior faculty): Manning Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, 2014-2016

Henry Merritt Wriston Fellowship, Brown University, 2014-2015

Faculty Fellowship, Cogut Center for the Humanities, Brown University, fall 2013

Junior Faculty Teaching Fellow, Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning, Brown University, 2011-2012

Faculty Research Fellowship, Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women, Brown University, 2011-2012

Mrs. Giles Whiting Foundation Fellowship in the Humanities, Princeton University, 2007-2008

Woodrow Wilson Scholars Fellowship, Princeton University, 2007-2008

Graduate Research Award, Center for the Study of Religion, Princeton University, 2007-2008

Graduate Prize Fellowship, University Center for Human Values, Princeton University, 2006-2007

Merit Prize, University Center for Human Values, Princeton University, 2003-2004

Hanszen College Fellow, Hanszen College, Rice University, 1998

Tsanoff Essay Prize, 3rd Place, Rice University, 1998

Teaching

RELS 2600T Religion, Ethics, and Community (fall 22)

RELS 1600B Ethics of Community (spring 22)

RELS 1000 Methods in Religious Studies (fall 22; fall 21; fall 20; spring 20; fall 12; fall 11)

RELS 2460 Professionalization Seminar (fall 21; fall 20)

RELS 2110D Religion, Pragmatism, and Social Change (spring 21)

RELS 2600R Religion, Aesthetics, and Politics (spring 20)

RELS 0258 Art, Morality, and Religion (fall 19)

RELS 2610 Ethics of Particularity (spring 19)

RELS 0068 Religion and Torture (spring 19; spring 18; spring 16; spring 15; spring 13; spring 12; fall 10)

RELS 1370B Philosophy of Mysticism (fall 18; spring 16, spring 15; spring 13; spring 11)

RELS 2600D Pragmatism and Religion (spring 18; fall 12)

RELS 1825 Cruelty in Philosophy and Literature (fall 16)

RELS 2600P Readings in Christian Ethics and Thought (fall 16)

RELS 1830A Pragmatism, Religion, and Politics (fall 15; fall 13)

RELS 2000 Theory of Religion (fall 15)

RELS 2600D Pragmatism and Religion (fall 12)

RELS 2600K Religion and Interpretation (fall 11)

RELS 2600J Religion, Power, and Practice (spring 11)

Independent studies: Negative Theology (2020); Pragmatism (2020); Religion and Subjectivity (2019); Religion and Violence (2016; 2012); Virtue Ethics (2015); Religion and Symbols (2013); Torture (2012); Religious Pluralism (2012); American Civil Religion and Monumentality (2011); Vulnerability in Feminist Theology and Ethics (2011); Philosophy of Mysticism (2010)

Group independent studies: Magick, Mysticism and Esoterica (spring 15)

Dissertations supervised:

“Religion and Violence: ISIS and the Study of Terrorism,” 2017 (Fellow, Division of Policy Translation and Leadership Development, Harvard University; Research Analyst, CAN; Visiting Assistant Professor, Boston University)

“Halakhic Woman: Gender, Practice, and Obligation in American Orthodox Judaism,” 2021 (Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Carleton College)

Dissertation committee member: 9

Senior theses supervised: 2021-22; 2020-21; 2018; 2013-14; 2012-13 (2); 2011-12; 2010-11