

Linda C. Ceriello, Ph.D.

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AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Comparative Mysticism, Asian Religions in America,
American Metaphysical Religions, Religion and Popular Culture, Contemplative Studies,
Contemporary Secular Spiritualities, Interdisciplinarity, Metamodernism

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Department of Religion, Rice University, Spring 2018

Dissertation title: *Metamodern Mysticisms: Narrative Encounters with Contemporary Western Secular Spiritualities*

Dissertation readers: Professor Jeffrey Kripal (chair), Professor William Parsons, Professor Deborah Harter

Abstract: My dissertation addresses the question of how to understand the distinct character of the secular-spiritual mystic subject in a Western contemporary cultural context. Examining narratives of secular-spiritual experience, I engage the historical connections from current religious manifestations such as the Spiritual-But-Not-Religious to specific tenets from Asian religious traditions via their conjoint instantiations in popular culture. I then construct theoretical models to frame the productive destabilizations available through encounters with mysticism/the non-ordinary, positing their cultural significance as a kind of secondhand mysticism. I examine these phenomena via theorization of a post-postmodern or metamodern epistemic cultural context. A comparativist, interdisciplinary methodological framework grounds my analysis.

M.A. Education, Antioch University Seattle, 1994

Thesis title: *Living and Learning: A Case Study in Community-Based Education*, June 1994

A.B. Advanced Bachelor of Arts, Occidental College, 1988

Major: Self-designed, interdisciplinary Humanities major (Independent Pattern of Study):
The Mechanisms of Meaning Formation

Minor: German

Senior thesis title, "Creativity as an Existential Mechanism of Meaning Formation in the Life and Works of Rainer Maria Rilke," Awarded Distinction

Study abroad: Eberhardt-Karls Universität Tübingen, Germany, 1987-88

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Semester courses:

Instructor, Religion and Popular Culture: Spectacular Realms and Misunderstood Monsters, Kennesaw State University, Spring semester 2023 (online course)

Instructor, Introduction to Religion, Kennesaw State University, Spring and Fall semesters 2022 (online courses)

Instructor, Holy Horribles: Religion and the Sacred Monstrous, University of North Carolina Greensboro, Spring 2020 (F2F course with final four weeks online due to pandemic)

Instructor, Religion in America, University of North Carolina Greensboro, Summer intensive and Fall semester 2019 (both taught as online courses)

Instructor, Asian Religions in America, Rice University, Spring 2015 (F2F course)

Co-Instructor with Dr. Duncan Holloman, Ways of Knowing, Antioch University Seattle, Graduate Program in Psychology and Spirituality, Fall 2009 (F2F course)

Short courses, guest and public lectures:

Workshop, "Connection and Moral Expansiveness Through Awe and Wonder" (with Ji Song, PhD Candidate), The Jung Center, Houston, TX, Spring 2021

Guest lecture, University of Florida, "Metamodernism, Pop Culture and New Spiritualities" April 2019, Instructor: Erin Prophet

Public lecture, "Metamodern Mysticism: Narrative Encounters with Contemporary Western Secular Spiritualities" in Evolution and Secular Spirituality from the Modern to the Metamodern, with Dr. Erin Prophet, The Jung Center, Houston, TX, Spring 2018

Guest lecture, The Evergreen State College "Why We Love Monsters: Monster Theory and the Sacred-Monstrous in Popular Media" May 2017, Instructor: Steve Blakeslee

Public Lecture, "The Rise of the Spiritual but Not Religious" The Jung Center, Houston, TX, Spring 2016

Instructor, "Awe and Wonder: The Secular Engagement of the Sacred" The Jung Center, Houston, TX, Spring 2016

Guest Lecture, "Exploring Awe and Wonder" Institute of Noetic Sciences, Houston, TX, Spring 2016

Public Lecture, "The History of Yoga: From Ancient Indian Philosophy to Power Yoga" Island Yoga Center, Vashon, Washington, Spring 2016

Guest Lecture in RELI 101: Introduction to Religious Studies, Rice University, Instructor: Jeffrey Kripal Fall 2015

Instructor, "Qualities of Mystical Experience" The Jung Center, Houston, Fall 2015

Public Lecture, "A Map of the Indian Philosophic Systems and the Place of Yoga Philosophy"
Houston Iyengar Yoga Studio, Spring 2015

Guest Lecture in American Metaphysical Religions, Rice University, Instructor: Matthew
Dillon, Fall 2013

Public lecture, "Why We Love Monsters: Monster Theory and the Sacred-Monstrous in Pop
Culture" Rice University, Fall 2013

Teaching Assistantship:

Rice University, RELI 101: Introduction to Religious Studies, Instructor: Jeffrey Kripal, Fall
2010

Other Instruction, Community Service, Pedagogical Training and Skills:

Facilitator, Metta meditation weekly sessions on Zoom, Fall 2020-present

Workshop Co-organizer and Assistant to Michelle Jissan Nicolle, "Inner Work of Racial
Justice", Summer 2020 (online)

Guest teacher, Asha for Education Tsunami Relief Project, Tamil Nadu, India, Spring 2005

Program designer/Consultant/Teacher, StudentLink (Young Adult Student-Centered
Learning Program) Vashon Island, WA, 1999-2003

Teacher, Educational Consultant, Alternatives in Education, Seattle and Vashon Island, WA,
1994-1999

PUBLICATIONS

Book chapters:

"The Right to a Narrative: Metamodernism, Paranormal Horror and Agency in The Cabin in
the Woods" in *The Paranormal and Popular Culture: A Postmodern Religious Landscape*,
Routledge Press, 2019

"The Big Bad and the Big Aha! Metamodern Monsters as Transformational Figures of
Instability" in *Holy Monsters, Sacred Grotesques: Monstrosity and Religion in Europe and
the U.S.*, Lexington Books, 2018

"Toward a Metamodern Reading of Spiritual but Not Religious Mysticism" in *Being
Spiritual but Not Religious: Past, Present, Future(s)*, Routledge Press, 2018

Peer-reviewed essays:

"Descent from the Peak: Mystical Navigations of Paradox and Trauma on the Down-Climb"
in *Journal of Culture and Religion*, V21 Issue 1, December 2020

"Encoded Ambiguities, Embodied Ontologies: The Transformative Speech of Transgressive Female Figures in Gnosticism and Tantra" in *La Rosa di Paracelso*, Issue 1, 2017

Book reviews/Review essays:

Review essay: "The Metamodern Bend: Theorizations for Religious Studies and a Review of *Metamodernism: Historicity, Affect, and Depth After Postmodernism*" in *Religious Studies Review*, volume 48, no. 4 December, 2022

Review of Mark Fox, *The Fifth Love*, De Numine, Summer 2015

Blog/General readership essays/Interviews:

"Metamodernism, Russell Brand and Spiritual-But-not-Religious Soteriology" Medium.com October 24, 2020

What Is Metamodern? (www.whatismetamodern.com) Co-Editor, author of 30+ short essays, 2013-present

Interview on Both/And podcast, September 25, 2019

Interview on The Sacred Speaks podcast, March 29, 2019

"What Popular TV Shows Reveal About Contemporary Views of Religion in Society: The Walking Dead" HuffPost Religion, June 7, 2016

OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Online Learning, Level 1 (8-week Online Course-Building Program), University of North Carolina Greensboro, 2019

Gnosticism, Esotericism and Mysticism (GEM) Program Certificate, Rice University Religion Department, 2016

Graduate coursework and participation in colloquia on gender theory and interdisciplinarity at Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality, Rice University, 2011-2015

Graduate coursework in Psychology Department, Antioch University Seattle, 2008-2009

Graduate coursework in East/West Studies Department, School of Consciousness and Transformation, California Institute of Integral Studies, Spring 2008

Graduate coursework in Religious Studies Department, Naropa University, Fall 2007

Interspiritual Counseling program (year one) at One Spirit Learning Alliance, New York 2006-2007

Brief Expressive Therapy for Tsunami-Affected Children, Counseling/Psychology Department, University of Bangalore, India, Spring 2005

Graduate Seminar: History of Pedagogy, Instructor: James Clowes, Comparative History of Ideas Department, University of Washington, Fall 1996

Washington State Teacher Training and Certification, Antioch University Seattle, 1994

CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

“William Shatner’s Ride to Space and the Commodification of Awe and Wonder” Celebrity and Popular Culture Unit, Popular Culture Association Annual Conference, April 2022

“An Overview of the Academic Research on Metamodernism” roundtable panel, Comparative Studies in Religion Unit, AAR Annual Meeting, November 2021

“Gruesome, Funny, Hopeful: Metamodern Horror in Goddard and Whedon’s *The Cabin in the Woods*” (with Greg Dember) Film Unit, Popular Culture Association Annual Conference, June 2021

“Descent from the Peak: Mystical Navigations of Paradox and Trauma on the Down-Climb” Contemplative Studies Unit, AAR Annual Meeting, November 2019

“Toward a Metamodern Reading of *Spiritual But Not Religious* Mysticisms: Cultures of Irony and Sincerity” Being Spiritual but Not Religious Past, Present, Future(s) invited conference at Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School, April 2018

“The Big Bad and the Big AHA: Metamodern Monsters as Transformational Figures of Instability,” exploratory session, Monsters, Monster Theory, and Religion, AAR Annual Meeting, November 2017

Spiritual but Not Religious: A Roundtable Discussion on the Past, Present, and Future(s) of Research, Panel participant, Exploratory session, AAR Annual Meeting, November 2017

“Russell Brand’s Dialectic of Comedy, Spirituality and Political Activism as Metamodern Soteriology,” New Religions Group, AAR Annual Meeting, November 2016

“Contemporary Narratives of the SBNR and Nones: Toward a Metamodern Reading of Millennial Mysticisms,” Mysticism Group, AAR Annual Meeting, November 2015

“Exploding the Serenity of the Moment: Russell Brand’s Comedy as a Contemporary Metaphysics of Transgression” International Society for Humor Studies, Utrecht University, Netherlands, July 2014

“A Promise of Unsettling Subversion: The SBNR, Metamodernism, Pop Culture and the Rescripting of the Mystical” Remixing Religions, University of Texas, April 2014

“Demons and the Big AHA: The Transformational Role of Polymorphic Figures of Instability from the Buddha to Buffy” Holy Monsters, Sacred Grotesques, Rice University Religious Studies Symposium, October 2013

“Symbolic Multivalence of the Transgressive Female Figure in Gnosticism and Tantra” Pacific Northwest American Academy of Religions Annual Meeting, May 2013

"Her Transformative Ambiguity: Speech as Gnosis in the Transgressive Female Figure in Gnosticism and Tantra" Center for Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality 20th Anniversary Colloquium, November 2012

"Inner Experience, Community, and Bataille's Dialectic of Undoing" Pacific Northwest American Academy of Religions Annual Meeting, May 2012

"Surrender as a Creative Performativity: The Psychophysicality of Prostration Practices" Southwest Commission on Religious Studies Annual Meeting, March 2012

"Bridging Educational Communities Through Service Learning" and "Models of Student-generated Portfolios" Washington Association for Learning Alternatives (WALA), April 2001

"Holistic Education in an Intentional Community" Antioch University Seattle, Research Symposium, June 1994

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS AND HONORARIA

Fellow, *Being Spiritual but Not Religious* (two invited conferences), Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, April 2018 and Rice University, March 2016

Tuition award, Department of Religious Studies, Rice University, 2010-2015

Research Award, Marilyn Marris Gillet endowment and Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awards provided through Rice Humanities Research Center, 2014

Writing Workshop Grant, Mellon Foundation and Rice Humanities Research Center, 2013-14

Summer Research and Writing Award, Rice Humanities Research Center, 2013

Graduate Seminar Fellowship, Andrew W. Mellon Graduate Seminar, "Frames of the Beautiful, the Criminal, and the Mad: The Art and Science of Excess," Rice University, Mellon Foundation and Rice Humanities Research Center, Instructor: Deborah Harter, 2012-2013

ACADEMIC SERVICE

"Metamodernism: Emerging Theorizations for Studying Culture and Religion Beyond Postmodernism" Roundtable organizer and panelist, AAR Annual Meeting, November 2021

Member, Executive Advisory Committee, *The Journal of Gods and Monsters*, 2020-present

Steering committee member, Religion and Popular Culture Unit, American Academy of Religions, 2015-2021; Panel Moderator at AAR Annual Meetings 2016, 2017, 2019, 2021

Panel Moderator, Contemplative Studies Unit, American Academy of Religions Annual Mtg, 2021

Assistant Editor, *Religious Studies Review*, Rice University, Spring 2014

Religious Studies Department representative, Humanities Graduate Student Association, Rice University, 2013-14

Conference organizer, Panel Moderator, Holy Monsters, Sacred Grotesques -- Interdisciplinary conference sponsored by the Department of Religion, Rice University, Fall 2013

Coordinator, Pedagogy training, faculty speaker series, Department of Religion, Rice University, 2012-13

Student Proofreader, Mutants and Mystics, Jeffrey J. Kripal, University of Chicago Press, 2011

RESEARCH LANGUAGES

German (proficiency); Sanskrit, French, Dutch (training)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Association for Interdisciplinary Studies (AISORG) 2019-present

Popular Culture/American Culture Association (PCA/ACA) 2019-present

Institute for Noetic Sciences (IONS) 2016-present

American Academy of Religions (AAR) 2010-present

Alister Hardy Society for the Study of Spiritual Experience 2014-2018

International Society for the Study of Humor 2014-2016