

Dr. Rachel Wagner

Curriculum Vitae

Assistant Professor of Religion
Department of Philosophy and Religion
237 Roy Park Hall
Ithaca College
Ithaca, NY 14850
(607) 274-3249
email: rwagner@ithaca.edu

Home Address:
156 Poole Rd.
Ithaca, NY 14850

EDUCATION:

2003 Ph. D. in Religious Studies, University of Iowa
1993 M.A. in Theology and Literature, Wake Forest University
1992 B.A. in Humanities, Cum Laude, Hendrix College

TEACHING AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE:

- **Assistant Professor of Religion**, Ithaca College, 2006-present
Courses: *Religion and Culture*; *Christianity*; *New Testament*; *World Religions: Western and Modern*; *Religion and Film*; *Women and Religion*; *Spiritual Journeys*; *Religion, Ritual, and Virtual Reality*; *Ithaca Seminar: Religious Myths of Good and Evil*
- **Hundere Teaching Fellow of Religion & Culture**, Oregon State University, 2004 –06.
Courses: *Religion and Film*; *Quests for Wisdom [World Religions]*; *Spiritual Journeys*; *Worldviews and Values in the Bible*; *Islam and the Media*; *The Problem of Evil*.
- **Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion**, Southwestern University, 2002- 2004
Courses: *Introduction to Islam*; *Women and Religion*; *Islam and the Media*; *Religion and Film*; *Spiritual Journeys*; *The Problem of Evil*.
- **Instructor**, Hendrix College, 2001-02.
Courses: *Religion in a Global Context*; *Western Intellectual Traditions*; *Senior Colloquium*
- **Instructor**, Arkansas Governor's School, Conway, Arkansas. Summers 2000-03.
- **Visiting Instructor**, Cornell College, 2000.
Courses: *The Problem of Evil*; *Paul and His Letters*.
- **Teaching Assistant**, Religious Studies Department, University of Iowa, 1995-2000.
- **T. Anne Cleary Research Fellow**, British Library, London, United Kingdom, 1998-99.

DISSERTATION:

“Words of Eternity in Human Forms’: A Study of William Blake’s Transformation of Biblical Styles, Forms and Structures in *Jerusalem*.” Co-directors: Dr. George W. E. Nickelsburg and Dr. Mary Lynn Grant. A comprehensive study of Blake’s epic poem, analyzing the nature and function of Blake’s interaction with the Bible through the use of biblical literary forms, quotations, literary genres, and theological transformations.

HONORS AND AWARDS:

- Fellow, Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, 2008-09.
- Ithaca College Experiential Learning Curriculum Enhancement Grant, 2008.
- Ithaca College Emerson Humanities Educational Grant Initiative Award 2007.
- Hundere Fellow in Religion and Culture, Oregon State University 2004-06.
- ACS Technology Fellow, Mellon Foundation, 2002.
- Louis Penningroth Award for Counseling and Academic Excellence, 2000.
- President and Mrs. Gilmore Scholarship for Art & Religion, 1999.
- T. Anne Cleary Overseas Research Fellowship in London, 1998-99.
- Stanley Graduate Fellowship for Research Abroad, 1997.
- University of Iowa Four-Year Graduate Fellowship, 1994-98.
- Wake Forest University Research Grant, Library of Congress, 1993.
- United States Presidential Scholar, 1988.

PUBLICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, AND INTERVIEWS:

- **Single Author Book.** *Godwired: Religion, Ritual and Virtual Reality*. Routledge Press. Media, Religion and Culture Series. [under contract; expected publication 2011]
- **Book Chapter [on video games and religion].** Textbook on religion and popular culture. Routledge Press. Ed. by Terry Clark and Dan Clanton. [under contract; expected publication 2011].
- **Invited Panelist/Speaker [with Honorarium].** Digital Religion Conference. Center for Religion and Media. New York University [upcoming: March 25-26, 2010]
- **Invited Speaker [with Honorarium].** "Religion and Virtual Reality." Champlain College [upcoming: March 15-16, 2010]
- **Conference Panelist (national).** "The Stories We Play: Video Games in the Religious Studies Classroom" Panel Theme: "Teaching Conversations." Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning and Teaching Religion Section. *American Academy of Religion National Meeting*. Montreal, Canada. November 2009.
- **Conference Panelist (national).** "What Is This Ritual-Game-Story Thing?" Panel Theme: "Exploring Ritual in Contemporary Media and Culture." Religion, Media and Culture Group and Ritual Studies Group. *American Academy of Religion National Meeting*. Montreal, Canada. November 2009.
- **NPR Interview (national).** New Hampshire Public Radio. "Digital Religion," Interview by Virginia Prescott. June 18, 2009.
- **CBC Interview (international).** "Rachel Wagner on Digital Culture and Religion" for the national Canadian radio show "Spark," with Nora Young. April 14, 2009. Also available is a longer podcast version online.
- **Book Chapter.** "The Play Is the Thing: From *Bible Fights* to *Passions of the Christ*." In *Halos and Avatars: Playing Games with God*, ed. Craig Detweiler, Westminster John Knox Press, 2010.
- **Book Chapter.** "Our Lady of Persistent Liminality: Virtual Church, Cyberspace, and *Second Life*." In *God in the Details*, ed. Michael Mazur and Kate McCarthy, second edition, Routledge Press, 2010.

- **Encyclopedia Entry.** “Women, Religion and Film.” Encyclopedia entry for *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Film*, ed. Eric Michael Mazur, Greenwood Publishing, 2010.
- **Encyclopedia Entry.** “Islam and Film.” Encyclopedia entry for *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Film*, ed. Eric Michael Mazur, Greenwood Publishing, 2010.
- **Back Cover Endorsement.** *Continuum Companion to Religion and Film*, edited by Bill Blizek. Continuum Press, 2009.
- **Back Cover Endorsement.** *The Religion and Film Companion*, by John Lyden. Routledge, 2009.
- **Conference Session Presider and Faculty Advisor (Regional).** “Religion and Virtual Reality.” Six Ithaca College students presented papers relating to religion and virtual reality, composed in my courses and in independent studies with me. American Academy of Religion. Eastern International Region. May 2009.
- **Conference Panelist (national).** “Xbox Apocalypse: Video Games, Interactivity, and Revelatory Literature.” Panel Theme: “Evil and Theodicy in the Bible and Popular Culture.” *Society of Biblical Literature National Meeting*. Boston, Massachusetts. November 2008. Invited for submission to *The Society of Biblical Literature Forum*.
- **Conference Panelist (national).** “Getting a Second Religion: Ritual as Belief in a Virtual World.” Panel Theme: “Just Gaming? Virtual Worlds and Religious Studies.” Religion and Popular Culture Group. *American Academy of Religion National Meeting*. Chicago, Illinois. November 2008.
- **Academic News Article.** “Dreaming Cyborg Dreams: Virtual Identity and Religious Experience.” *Religion Dispatches*. February 13, 2009.
- **Conference Presentation (international).** “The Play Is the Thing: Interactivity in Retellings of the Passion Story.” 14th Conference of the *International Society for Religion, Literature and Culture*. Aarhus, Denmark. October 2008.
- **Conference Session Presider (national).** “Constructing Religious Identities through Popular Culture.” Religion and Popular Culture Group. *American Academy of Religion National Meeting*. November 2008.
- **Manuscript Reviewer.** *Practical Matters*. “Imagination.” November 2008.
- **Academic News Article.** “Sacred Texting: When Religious Writ Gets Wired.” *Religion Dispatches*. October 23, 2008.
- **Conference Presentation (regional).** “God and the Gun: Religion, Virtual Reality, and Violence.” Mid-Atlantic Region Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature. New Brunswick, New Jersey. March 2008.
- **Book Chapter.** “The Scholar’s Code: Postmodernism, Biblical Interpretation, and *The Da Vinci Code*,” chapter in *The Da Vinci Code in the Academy*, ed. Bradley Bowers. Cambridge Scholar’s Publishing, 2007.
- **Conference Session Presider (national).** Showing and Discussion of *Jesus Camp*, American Academy of Religion, National Meeting, San Diego. November 2007.
- **Scholarship of Teaching Article (national).** ““Ways of Truth-Telling:” Reporting on Religion in the Wired World.” *Spotlight on Teaching. Religious Studies News*, American Academy of Religion Newsletter, May 2007.
- **Conference Presentation (national).** “*SecondLife*, Afterlife: Virtual Reality, Ritual, and Religious Experience Online.” With Kim Gregson and Austra Zubkovs. *Popular Culture Association Annual National Conference*. Boston, MA, April, 2007.

- **Conference Presentation (national).** “Sacred Spaces in Virtual Reality: The Role of Religion in Building Community in *SecondLife*.” With Kim Gregson and Austra Zubkovs. *Popular Culture Association Annual National Conference*. Boston, MA, April, 2007.
- **Public Lecture Series, presenter.** “The Spitting Image: Islam, Popular Media, and Stereotypes.” Marshall T. Steel Center Lectures Series 2006-07. Hendrix College. Honorarium \$1000.
- **Public Lecture.** “The Scholar’s Code: Postmodernism, Biblical Interpretation, and *The Da Vinci Code*.” Hendrix College. February 9, 2007.
- **Book Chapter.** “Hokey Religions and Ancient Weapons: The Force of Spirituality in *Star Wars*,” co-authored with OSU student Jonathan Bowen, in *Finding the Force of the Star Wars Franchise*, ed. Matthew Kapell and John Shelton Lawrence. Peter Lang Press, 2006.
- **Conference Session Presider (national).** Showing and Discussion of *Dawn of the Dead*, American Academy of Religion, National Meeting, Washington D.C., November 2006.
- **Conference Presentation (international).** “Digital War: Violence, Video Games, and Sacred Space,” 13th Conference of the *International Society for Religion, Literature and Culture*. Stirling, Scotland, UK. October 20-22, 2006.
- **Conference Session Presider (national).** Showing and Discussion of *Dogma*. American Academy of Religion, National Meeting, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 2005.
- **Journal Submission Review.** Review of “Reshaping the Middle East and Its Discontents” for *Hypatia*. 2005.
- **Podcast Interview.** “*The Da Vinci Code* and the Confusion in American Spirituality Today.” Podcast for *Engage* Podcast Series, Philosophy Department, November 15, 2005. [<http://oregonstate.edu/cla/philosophy/engage>]
- **Book Chapter.** “Wake Up! Worlds of Illusion in Gnosticism, Buddhism, and the Matrix Project.” Co-authored with Frances Flannery-Dailey; in *Philosophers Explore the Matrix*, ed. Christopher Grau. Oxford University Press. August 2005.
- **Book Proposal Review.** Review of *Anthology of Readings in World Scripture*. For McGraw-Hill, July 2005.
- **Book Proposal Review.** Review of *The Religion and Film Reader*. For Routledge Press, May 2005.
- **Conference Presentation (international).** “Digital War: Islam, Violence, and Video Games,” presentation of paper, International Society for Phenomenology and Media Annual Meeting, Cannon Beach, Oregon, May 2005.
- **Book Proposal Review.** Review for Textbook on Religion and Film. Prentice Hall. April 2005.
- **Film Interview.** Featured academic speaker in “Return to the Source,” DVD documentary for *The Roots of The Matrix*, on *The Ultimate Matrix DVD Collection*. Warner Brothers, 2004.
- **Public Lecture.** “Islam and Popular Media: Iconic Power and Injustice.” Society for Ethics across the Curriculum Conference, Corvallis, Oregon, October 15, 2004.
- **Book Chapter.** “Stopping Bullets: Constructions of Bliss and Problems of Violence,” co-authored with Frances Flannery-Dailey, in *Jacking-in to The Matrix Franchise: Cultural Reception and Interpretation*; ed. William Doty and Matthew Kapell, Continuum Press, 2004.
- **Book Review.** Review of *Cinema, Religion, and the Romantic Legacy*, by Paul Coates. *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture*, Fall 2003.
- **Journal Article.** “Bewitching the Box Office: *Harry Potter* and Religious Controversy” [revised], *Journal of Religion and Film*, Vol. 7, No. 2, October 2003.

- **Conference Presentation (regional).** “Mahound, the Imam, and the Butterfly Witch: Salman Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses* and Spiritual Journey as Social Critique,” American Academy of Religion, Southwest Commission for the Study of Religion, March 2003.
- **Public Radio Interview (international).** Religion and *The Matrix*, “The Dave Rutherford Show,” Corus Broadcast Company, Canada, June 2003.
- **Magazine Interview (international).** Discussion about religion in *The Matrix*. *Super Interessante*, [Brazilian magazine]. Edition 188, May 2003.
- **Newspaper Interview (international).** Religion in the *The Matrix*. *La Poste* [French-Canadian newspaper]. March 2003.
- **Public Interview.** *Tech TV*, discussion of *The Matrix*. March 2003.
- **Movie Website Academic Article.** “Wake Up! Gnosticism and Buddhism in *The Matrix*,” Philosophy Section, official Warner Brothers website, www.whatisthematrix.com. 2003.
- **Featured Lecture (regional).** “Community, Justice, and Compassion in World Religions,” invited speaker at the “Start Seeing Diversity” Conference for educational professionals, San Antonio, Texas. April 2004.
- **Conference Presentation (national).** “Form Criticism and the Romantic Poet: Reading William Blake’s Apocalypse,” American Academy of Religion, National Meeting, Toronto, November 2002.
- **Conference Presentation (national).** “Bewitching the Box Office: Harry Potter and Religious Controversy,” American Academy of Religion National Meeting, Toronto, November 2002.
- **Public Lecture.** “An Introduction to Islam.” Arkansas Governor’s School, Conway, Arkansas, June 2002.
- **Journal Article.** “Wake Up! Gnosticism and Buddhism in *The Matrix*,” *Journal of Religion and Film*. Vol. 5, No. 2, October 2002. Co-authored with Frances Flannery-Dailey.
- **Conference Presentation (regional).** “The Divine Vision: *Jerusalem* and the Genre of Apocalypse,” American Academy of Religion, Southwest Commission for the Study of Religion, Irving, Texas, March 2002.
- **Conference Presentation (regional).** “William Blake’s *Song of the Lamb* as Covenant-Treaty Lawsuit,” American Academy of Religion Regional Meeting, Rocky Mountains/Great Plains Region, Denver, Colorado, March 2001.
- **Conference Presentation (regional).** “Textuality, Authority, and the Bible: An Examination of Deist, Unitarian, and Swedenborgian Hermeneutics in Relation to William Blake’s Poetry.” American Academy of Religion Regional Meeting, Southeast Region, Atlanta, Georgia, March 2000.
- **Master’s Thesis.** “Apocalyptic Ends: A Structural Examination of the Genre of Apocalypse in the *Similitudes of I Enoch* and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* by William Blake.” M. A. Thesis, Wake Forest University, 1993.

ACADEMIC SERVICE, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION:

- **Ithaca College Faculty Justice.** 2007-present.
- **Committee Member.** Ithaca College Student Affairs and Campus Life Committee, 2008-09.
- **Advisory Committee Member.** Ithaca Seminar Advisory Committee 2008-09.
- **Committee Chair.** Philosophy and Religion Space Committee, 2008-09.

- **Committee Member.** Philosophy and Religion Assessment Committee, 2008-09.
- **Committee Member.** Religion Search Committee, 2007-09.
- **First Person Program.** Ithaca College. 2007-09.
- **Collaborative Research Project** with IC student Elise Steintal: “Storytelling and Religion in Film and Virtual Media.” Spring 2009.
- **Independent Study** with IC student Lindsey Nadolski: “Religion and Technology.” Spring 2009.
- **Independent Study** with IC student Rebecca Zaremba: “Religion and Virtual Sacred Space.” Spring 2009.
- **Interview.** For *The Fuse*. “Finding (Virtual) Religion” by Allison Musante. Winter 2009.
- **Faculty Affiliate.** *Project Look Sharp*. Ithaca College. 2008-present.
- **First Year Reading Initiative.** Ithaca College. 2006, 2007, 2008.
- **Interview.** For *Buzzsaw Haircut*. “Regaining National Pride: Resurging Nationalism in U.S. Culture” by Julissa Treviño. December 2008.
- **Faculty Participant.** *Ithaca Today*, April 2008.
- **Interview.** For *H & S Knowledges*. “Junior Faculty Focus.” Vol. 8 Number 1. Summer 2007.
- **Interview.** For *H & S Knowledges*. “Cool Courses: Religion, Ritual and Virtual Reality.” Vol. 9 Number 1. Summer 2008.
- **Interviews** with various Ithaca College students for individual papers and projects, 2006-present.
- **Letters of recommendation** for various Ithaca College students for awards and honors.
- **Faculty Sponsor.** Emerson Humanities Collaboration Award with Rebecca Zaremba. Summer 2008.
- **Major and Minor Advising.** Ithaca Seminar Exploratory student advising; regular departmental major and minor advising.
- **Faculty Presenter.** “Wikis and Blogs.” Ithaca College Fall Faculty Workshop, 2008.
- **Photo Shoot.** For Ithaca College’s web pages, requested by Bonny Griffith, Associate Director for Recruitment Marketing. With Rebecca Zaremba, as highlighted Ithaca College student. Fall 2008.
- **Faculty Sponsor.** “The Last Temptation of Christ” by Christa Petruzzi. 2008 Whalen Academic Symposium.
- **Committee Co-Chair.** Philosophy and Religion Whalen Student Competition Committee, 2008.
- **Instructor.** Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival (FLEFF) Short Course, 2008.
- **Photo Shoot.** With Lisa Maresca. Ithaca College Office of Marketing Communications. “Religion, Ritual, and Virtual Reality Course.” Spring, 2008.
- **Participant.** Tenure Seminar Workshop, Ithaca College, 2007-08.
- **Faculty Editor.** *Ithaca College Journal for Race, Culture, Gender, and Ethnicity*, 2007-08.
- **Participant.** “Publish and Flourish,” Workshop with Tara Gray, sponsored by *The Center for Faculty Excellence* and *Office of the Provost*, Ithaca College. Saturday September 8, 2007.
- **Committee Member.** Diversity Awareness Committee, Ithaca College, 2007-08.
- **Participant.** Look Sharp Project Summer Workshop. Ithaca College. Summer 2007.
- **Interview.** For *Buzzsaw Haircut*. “Juice for Jesus: *The Mate Factor* Proprietors and Their Unique Lifestyle” by Erika Spaet. March 2007.
- **Invited Speaker.** Presentation at Ithaca Longview Residential Facility. “The Spitting Image: Islam, Media, and Stereotypes.” February 22, 2007.

- **Graduate Committee Member.** Graduate Committee Representative for Laurie Erickson, Women's Studies and Ethnic Studies M.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies program, Oregon State University, 2004-06.
- **Invited Speaker.** "The Da Vinci Code and the Problem of Postmodernism," Oregon State University History Club. May 19, 2006.
- **Invited Speaker.** "Googling God: Religion and Religious Dialogue in a Mass-Mediated World." Women's Center, Oregon State University. May 17, 2006.
- **Interview.** For *The Ithacan*. "Living a *Second Life*: Online World Takes Virtual Reality to a Whole New Level" by Vanessa Schneider. December 7, 2006.
- **Invited Speaker.** "Islam and the Media." Oregon State University Academy of Lifelong Learning. Fall 2006.
- **Invited Speaker.** Association for Lifelong Learning, Corvallis, Oregon, Fall 2005.
- **Committee Member.** *Ideas Matter* Lecture Series Committee, Oregon State University Philosophy Department, 2005.
- **Invited Lecturer.** "What is Religion?" START Orientation Program, Oregon State University. June 24, July 11, July 15, July 22, 2005.
- **Radio Interview and Podcast.** "Islam, Violence, and Video Games," Oregon State University Education Department, Radio Station, and Grassroots Learning Project. June 1, 2005.
- **Invited Speaker.** "The Matrix and Religion," Oregon State University Philosophy Club, May 2005.
- **Invited Speaker.** "Free Will and the Afterlife: Augustine, Aquinas and Luther," invited guest lecture, Seminar on Free Will, Oregon State University, April 2005.
- **Invited Speaker.** "World Religions and Dialogue," presentation at the West International House, Oregon State University. April 2005.
- **Invited Speaker.** "Islam in American Media." Presentation at the West International House, Oregon State University. March 2005.
- **Teaching Assistant Supervisor.** Oregon State University Philosophy Department, 2004-05.
- **Committee Member.** Curriculum Committee, Department of Philosophy, Oregon State University, 2004-05.
- **Participant.** Oregon State University Teaching Workshops, Philosophy Department, 2004-05.
- **Manuscript Submission Review.** *Literature and Theology*. "Identity as a Religious Principle in Northrop Frye's Visionary Poetics." October 2003.
- **Section Chair.** Arts, Literature and Religion Section. *American Academy of Religion*, Southwest Commission for the Study of Religion, 2003-04.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE APPOINTMENTS:

- **Steering Committee Co-Chair.** *Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Group*, American Academy of Religion. 2008-present
- **Steering Committee Member.** *Religion and Popular Culture Group*, American Academy of Religion, 2007-present.
- **Manuscript Reviewer.** *Literature and Theology*, 2006-present
- **Member, Editorial Board.** *Journal of Religion and Film*, 2005-present
- **Member, Editorial Board.** *Journal of Religion and Monsters*, 2005-present.
- **Manuscript Reviewer.** *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture*, 2005-present.

- **Manuscript Reviewer.** Routledge University Press, 2005-present.
- **Manuscript Reviewer.** Prentice Hall Press, 2005-present.
- **Steering Committee Member.** *Religion, Film, Visual Culture* Group, American Academy of Religion, 2005-present.
- **Film Review Editor.** *Journal of Religion and Film*, 2004-07.

FIELDS OF SPECIALIZATION:

- ***Religion and Culture.*** Special interest in religion and culture; religion and film; intertextuality; pluralism; transformations of religious themes in literature, poetry, and film; technology, and religion.
- ***Christianity.*** History of Christianity; New Testament literature and history; women in early Christianity; representations of the Bible in film and culture.
- ***Abrahamic Traditions.*** History of and relationship between Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Special interest in intertextual analysis of Western religious themes in modern film and literature.
- ***Religion and Virtual Reality.*** Ritual and experience in virtual reality; representation of religious experience; problems of embodiment and religion; violence in virtual reality; liminality; identity.
- ***Women and Religion.*** Portraits of women and femininity in sacred literature throughout history; feminist and womanist theology; transformation of patriarchy in new religious practices; embodiment and the feminine; representations of women in popular culture.

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES:

Member, American Academy of Religion

Member, Society of Biblical Literature

Member, International Society for the Study of Religion, Literature, and Culture

Member, Popular Culture Association