

RYAN T. O'LEARY, PH.D.

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I specialize in philosophical theology, questions of religion and culture, and religion and nature. My research is focused at the intersection of modern religion, civil religion, social discourse, and ecological thought.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Religious Studies, University of Iowa, 2012
M.A. in Religion, Syracuse University, 2005
B.A. in Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point, 2003

CURRENT POSITIONS

Lecturer in Religious Studies, University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point at Marshfield
Academic Success Associate, University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point at Marshfield

TEACHING & RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Lecturer in Religious Studies, University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point, 2012 - Present

- Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
- Religious Diversity in Modern America
- Introduction to the Study of Religion
- Critical Thinking
- Religion and Nature
- Religion and Popular Culture
- First Year Seminar: Religion, Literature, and the Quest

Continuing Education Instructor, University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point, 2013 - Present

- Cults and New Religious Movements
- Satan in Myth, History, and Culture
- Thinking the Death of God
- Quest and Creation
- Religion in American Politics
- Christianity and the Environment
- Existential Theology and the Courage to Be

Teaching Assistant, University of Iowa Religious Studies Department, 2007 - 2011

Research Assistant, Collaborative Initiative for Research Ethics in Environmental Health, 2004

PUBLICATIONS

“Could Wisconsin's State Parks Really be User Supported?” *Silent Sports Magazine* (December 2017)

“Reading Muir from Kayak and Trail,” *Silent Sports Magazine* (September 2016)

“From Anglo-Saxon Nativism to Executive Order: Civil Religion and Anti-Immigration Rhetoric,” *Politics and Religion* Volume 9, Issue 3 (Summer 2016)

“The genesis of kinship: A review of William Greenway and Amanda Beckenstein Mbuvi,” *The Christian Century* Volume 133, No. 11 (May 25, 2016)

“Being and Gaia: Seeking Resources toward a Vocabulary for Naturalistic Theology,” *Bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich Society* Volume 38, Issue 1 (Winter 2012)

“The Irony of the Secular: Violent Communication at the Limits of Tolerance,” *Journal of Religion, Conflict, and Peace* Volume 2, Issue 2 (Spring 2010)

INVITED LECTURES

- “Cows are People, Too: Religion & the Question of Animal Rights,” First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau, (Wausau, Wisconsin, July 3, 2022)
- “Religion, Conflict, & the Other,” First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau, (Wausau, Wisconsin, August 1, 2021)
- “The Religious Dimensions of Secularism,” First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau, (Wausau, Wisconsin, July 19, 2020)
- “Nature and the Prophetic Spirit,” First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau, (Wausau, Wisconsin, July 28, 2019)
- “Civil Religion in Conflicted Times,” First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau, (Wausau, Wisconsin, November 26, 2017)
- “Ecological Apocalypse: From Traditional Symbols to Contemporary Concerns,” University of Wisconsin - Marathon College of Emeriti “Soap Box Lecture” (May 2, 2017)
- “Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric and Civil Religion,” University of Wisconsin - Marathon Lecture and Fine Arts Series “Lunch Hour Lecture” (February 23, 2017)

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

- “Nature and the Prophetic Spirit,” accepted to the Upper Midwest Regional AAR Meeting (Luther Seminary, St. Paul, April 2021)
- “From Anglo-Saxon Nativism to Executive Order,” Upper Midwest Regional AAR Meeting (Luther Seminary, St. Paul, April 2016)
- “The Liberation of Gaia: Ecological Sin as Institutionalized Sin,” Upper Midwest Regional AAR Meeting (Luther Seminary, St. Paul, March 2013)
- “Ecological Crisis, Green Religion, and Utopian Vision,” Religion, Literature, and the Arts: Futures and Illusions (University of Iowa, August 25, 2012)
- “Returning To Gaia: Coming Home to the Earth Mother on the Other Side of Estrangement,” Religion, Literature, and the Arts: Uncanny Homecomings (University of Iowa, August 27, 2011)
- “Being and Gaia: Seeking Resources toward a Vocabulary for Naturalistic Theology,” Annual National Meeting of the American Academy of Religion (Atlanta, Georgia, November 1, 2010)
- “Displacement, Justification, and Ultimate Concern: Christian Identity and the Theology of Hate,” Religion, Literature, and the Arts: Confronting Evil in Thought and Practice (University of Iowa, April 10, 2010)
- “Religion, Secularism, and Global Conflict,” Peace and Justice Studies Association Annual National Conference (Marquette University, Milwaukee, October 10, 2009)
- “Meaning and Existence, Nature and Naturalism: Resisting Reductionism in Reading the Book of Nature,” Religion, Literature, and the Arts: Reading the Book of Nature (University of Iowa, April 4, 2009)
- “Violent Communication and the Limits of Tolerance,” Upper Midwest Regional AAR Meeting (Luther Seminary, St. Paul, March 28, 2009)
- “Zarathustra the Atheist, Zarathustra the Poet: The Creative Tension of Symbolic Disclosure,” Religion, Literature, and the Arts: Theology and Critique (University of Iowa, March 29, 2008)
- “Demonization, Compassion, and Ultimate Claims: Confronting Threads of War and Peace in Biblical Thought,” AAR / SBL Upper Midwest Regional Conference (Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, April 6, 2002)

SERVICE & VOLUNTEER WORK

Faculty Council member, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, 2021.

Staffing Volunteer, The Pantry food bank at UW-SP at Wausau, 2020 - 2021.

Peer Reviewer, the journal of *Politics and Religion*, 2020 - 2022.

Retention Subcommittee member, University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point at Wausau branch campus, 2018 - 2022.

Assessment Subcommittee member, University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, 2019

Clerical Volunteer, Heartland Farm Sanctuary, 2011 - 2014

Organizing Volunteer, Sierra Club John Muir Chapter, 2011 - 2012

Social Committee chair, University of Iowa Religious Studies Graduate Student Organization, 2009 - 2011

Planning Committee Volunteer, Take Back the Night, 2002

Chapter President, Amnesty International, Stevens Point Chapter, 1999 - 2002