

**Sierra L. Lawson**  
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**Department of Religious Studies**  
**University of Alabama**  
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**548 Clark Street**  
**P.O. Box 6842**  
**Jackson, WY 83002**

## **EDUCATION**

*The University of Alabama*

M.A. in Religion in Culture, expected May 2019

Thesis: "Pre-forming Piety: Reconsidering the Material Conditions of Belief and Social Membership in Guadalupan Devotion in Postcolonial Mexico"

Supervisor: Russell T. McCutcheon

Graduate Certifications:

Digital Humanities (Alabama Digital Humanities Center)

Online Pedagogy (College of Continuing Studies)

B.A. (*summa cum laude*), May 2017

Majors: Religious Studies, Anthropology

Minor: Spanish

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

*The University of Alabama*

Appointments as an online grader / instructor of record:

REL100: Introduction to Religious Studies (Summer 2018)

-Section 910

-Section 920

Mentor: Dr. Mary-Rebecca Read-Wahidi

Appointments as a Graduate Teaching Assistant for large enrollment (150 students) courses:

REL100: Introduction to Religious Studies (Fall 2018)

Supervisor: Dr. K. Merinda Simmons

REL102: Religions of the World (Spring 2018)

Supervisor: Dr. Steven Ramey

REL100: Introduction to Religious Studies (Fall 2017)

Supervisor: Dr. Russell T. McCutcheon

Duties: Grading assignments; managing the online gradebook, planning and running review sessions, meeting one-on-one with students

Guest Lectures:

“Marian Apparitions and Mexican Identity” in Religions of the World course (March 2018)

“The Invention of the Buddha” in Religions of the World course (March 2018)

“The Politics of Memorial Making and the Holocaust” in Religions of the World course (January 2018)

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### *Articles*

- “Paved with Good Intentions”, a coauthored paper evaluating public disavowal of essentialism in nursing texts on cultural groups in contradistinction to acceptance of essentialism in texts on religious groups with Dr. Steven Ramey (in progress, submitted to *Culture and Religion*)

### *Book Reviews*

- Kristin Bloomer, *Possessed by the Virgin: Hinduism, Roman Catholicism, and Marian Possession in South India* (Oxford University Press, 2018), *Religion* (forthcoming)
- Aaron T. Wolf, *The Spirit of Dialogue* (Island Press, 2017), *Reading Religion* (online publication of the American Academy of Religion; February 2018)

### *Scholarly Blog Posts*

Religious Studies Department Blog ([www.religion.ua.edu/blog/](http://www.religion.ua.edu/blog/)):

- Marian Apparitions: religious ephemera and politics of classification (Spring 2018)
- The REL Journal Group: Health or Perceived Health Benefits (Fall 2017)
- Road Trip (Fall 2017)
- Structure and Agency in Starbucks (Spring 2017)
- Barometers in the Field (Spring 2017)

Social Theory & Religious Studies Blog (<https://blogs.religion.ua.edu/rel501/>):

- Recordings from My Closet (Fall 2017)
- Choking Down the Red Pill (Fall 2017)
- Viewing and Dividing The World Through Eclipse Glasses (Fall 2017)

More blog posts available at [sierralynnlawson.com](http://sierralynnlawson.com)

## **PRESENTATIONS**

### *Regional*

- Panel Digital Humanities and Religious Studies, Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion (Atlanta, GA May 2018)

### *University of Alabama*

- Monthly Journal Group, Department of Religious Studies (April 2018)
  - Lead discussion among graduate students and faculty regarding “The American Academy of Religion Exploratory Session on Marian Apparitions and Theoretical Problems in Religious Studies” (Religious Studies Review, September 2017)
- Monthly Journal Group, Department of Religious Studies (October 2017)
  - Lead discussion among graduate students and faculty regarding “Guadalupe Devotion as a Moderator of Psychosocial Stress among Mexican Immigrants in the Rural Southern United States” by Dr. Mary Rebecca Read-Wahidi, (Medical Anthropology Quarterly, 2017)
- “The Old South as Myth”
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> place, Oral Presentations, Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Conference, University of Alabama (Spring 2017)
  - Presented at Religious Studies Undergraduate Research Symposium, University of Alabama (Spring 2017)
- “Cultural Values and Gravestone Engravings in Tuscaloosa County”
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> place, Oral Presentations at Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Conference, University of Alabama (Spring 2017)

## **LANGUAGES**

Spanish: conversation, reading, and writing proficiency

Specializations: economic theory, literary theory, history of Iberian Peninsula

## **PUBLIC AND DIGITAL HUMANITIES**

Proficiencies:

Omeka  
Wordpress  
TAGs  
NVivo

Digital Projects...  
*The University of Alabama*

AARtifacts: online collaboration among graduate students in Religious Studies department, curation and documentation of material culture from annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion.

## **PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

*Regional*

### **Webmaster**

The Southeastern Commission for the Academic Study of Religion (Spring 2018 – present)

*The University of Alabama*

### **Production Assistant**

- Study Religion Podcast (Spring 2018 – present)  
Supervisor: Dr. Michael J. Altman, Department of Religious Studies

### **Editorial Assistant**

- “*Religion*” in *Theory and Practice: Demystifying the Field for Burgeoning Academics* (book contracted by Equinox Publishing, United States)  
Supervisor: Dr. Russell T. McCutcheon, Department of Religious Studies
- *Current Approaches to the Study of Religion* (anthology contracted by Walter de Gruyter, Berlin)  
Supervisor: Dr. Russell T. McCutcheon, Department of Religious Studies

### **Organizational Aid**

Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium  
Supervisor: Dr. Russell T. McCutcheon, Department of Religious Studies  
(Spring 2018)

Southeastern Evolutional Perspectives Conference  
Supervisor: Dr. Christopher Lynn, Department of Anthropology

(Spring 2017)

**Recruitment Aid / Graduate Liaison**

Recruitment of graduate and undergraduate students for department of Religious Studies as well as Religious Studies Student Association.  
(Fall 2015 – Present)

**FUNDING / AWARDS**

*The University of Alabama*

*Department of Religious Studies*

- Graduate Teaching Assistantship (Fall 2017-Spring 2018)
- Amy Lynn Memorial Scholarship, (Fall 2017)
- Outstanding Student in Study of Religion (Spring 2017)
- Sliverstein Scholar (Spring 2016)

*College or University*

- President’s List (Spring 2016-Spring 2017)
- Dean’s List (Fall 2014-Fall 2015)
- Capstone Scholar (Fall 2014-Spring 2017)

**PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Religious Studies Student Association (Fall 2015 – present)  
Association for Gravestone Studies (Fall 2015 – Fall 2017)

**UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS**

**Human Behavioral Ecology Research Group**

Undergraduate researcher (Fall 2016-Spring 2017)  
Supervisor: Dr. Christopher Lynn, Department of Anthropology at the University of Alabama

**Head Start (Funded by Administration for Children and Families)**

Undergraduate researcher (Fall 2015)  
Supervisor: Dr. Jason DeCaro, Department of Anthropology at the University of Alabama

**REFERENCES**

Russell T. McCutcheon  
Professor and Department Chair of Religious Studies  
University of Alabama  
(205) 348-8412  
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K. Merinda Simmons  
Associate Professor and Graduate Director of Religious Studies  
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Steven Ramey  
Professor of Religious Studies  
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(205) 348-4218  
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