

Jonathan Sozek

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EDUCATION

2010-2016	PhD, Religious Studies. Brown University, Providence, RI, USA
2008-2010	BA & MA, Philosophy. Both <i>summa cum laude</i> . Catholic Univ. Leuven, Belgium
2003-2006	MA, Religious Studies. Honours. McGill University, Montreal, QC, Canada
1999-2003	BA, Liberal Arts. Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, NY, USA Concentrations in Religious Studies, International Studies, and Literature Full year (2001-02) at Wadham College, Oxford University, UK

TEACHING

Positions

2019-present	Assistant Professor, Dept. of Philosophy and Religion, Albertus Magnus College
2014-present	Summer Instructor, Brown University, School of Professional Studies
2017-2019	Lecturer, Dept. of Religious Studies, Fairfield University
2015-2019	Lecturer, Dept. of Philosophy and Religion, Albertus Magnus College
2016-2017	Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow, Theology Dept., Fordham University
2010-2016	Teaching Assistant, Dept. of Religious Studies, Brown University
2007-2008	Theology Faculty, Notre Dame - Bishop Gibbons High School
2004-2005	Teaching Assistant, Faculty of Religious Studies, McGill University

Courses

- "Invitation to Insight." Albertus Magnus College, Fall 2019.
- "The Variety of Christian Experience." Albertus Magnus College, Fall 2019.
- "Christianity and the Cosmos." Albertus Magnus College, Fall 2019.
- "Senior Humanities Seminar." Albertus Magnus College, Fall 2019.
- "Catholic Intellectual Tradition." Fairfield University, Spring 2019.
- "Ethics." Albertus Magnus College, Fall 2018, Mod 2. Online.
- "Religion and the Critical Mind." Fairfield University, Fall 2017 through Fall 2018.
- "Writing the College Admissions Essay." Brown University, SPS, Summers 2017-present.
- "Debating Democracy." Brown University, SPS, Summers 2014-present.
- "Peace, Justice, and Global Issues." Albertus Magnus College, Fall 2017, Mod 2. Hybrid.
- "Evil: The History of a Concept." Co-instructor. Brown University, SPS, Summer 2016.

- “Faith and Critical Reason.” Fordham University, Fall 2016 and Spring 2017.
- “Church in Controversy.” Fordham University, Fall 2016 and Spring 2017.
- “The Question of God in the Modern World.” Albertus Magnus College, Summer 2016, Mod 5.
- “Modern Philosophy.” Albertus Magnus College, Fall 2015, Mod 2.

Assistantships

- *School of Professional Studies (SPS), Brown University (2015-18)*. Humanities Seminar; Writing the College Admissions Essay
- *Department of Religious Studies, Brown University (2010-16)*. Spiritual But Not Religious: Making Spirituality in America; Introduction to Buddhism (twice); Modern Problems of Belief; Islam and Modernity; Reason, Religion, and Ethics from Kant to Nietzsche; Islam: From Mohamed to 9/11 and Beyond; On Being Human.
- *Faculty of Religious Studies, McGill University (2004-05)*. Sexual Ethics; Religions of East Asia

Awards and certifications

- Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching, Brown University (2015)
 - One of two graduate students selected in University-wide competition.
 - Criteria include: teaching that motivates and inspires students’ learning; the promotion of students’ development as individual learners.
- Teaching Certificate I: Reflective Teaching. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning, Brown University (2013-14)
 - Year-long survey of contemporary pedagogical techniques
 - Wrote responses to ten lectures, participated in ten seminar discussions with students from throughout the university.
- ESL Specialist Certification, Brown University Writing Center (2013)
- Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA). St. Giles San Francisco (2008)

Training and development

- ‘Taboo Topics: Discussing Religion and Politics in the Classroom’. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning, Brown University, February 2015.
- ‘Leading effective discussions’ Brown University Dept. of Religious Studies Pedagogy Series, February 2014.
- ‘Active Learning Strategies’. Brown University Dept. of Religious Studies Pedagogy Series, November 2013.
- ‘Responding to student writing in the humanities and social sciences’. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning, Brown University, February 2011.
- ‘Leading discussions in the humanities and social sciences’. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning, Brown University, September 2010.

PROFESSIONAL WORK

Positions

- 2017-present Director of Faith Formation, Saints Isidore and Maria Parish, Glastonbury, CT
- Direct a religious education program for 600 students. Oversee work of three staff members. Designed and maintain the parish website. Produce a weekly podcast of pastor's homilies. Offer regular training and support to 52 catechists. Offer a weekly Bible study with 25 participants.
- 2012-2018 Founder and Director, Good Letters, LLC, in Providence, RI and New Haven, CT
- Copyedited book manuscripts, articles, and dissertations for academic authors in Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, and India. Developed a team of five copyeditors to carry out this work.
- 2012-2016 Fellowship Advisor, Office of the Dean of the College, Brown Univ., Providence, RI
- Worked with Dean to support applicants. Facilitated workshops and informational sessions. Served on mock interview committees. Head Advisor for Rhodes and Marshall Scholarships, 2014-2016.
- 2011-2016 Staff Associate, Writing Center, Brown University, Providence, RI
- Met with students in one-hour sessions to discuss written work, 3-9 hours weekly. Mentored new Staff Associates.
- 2005-2008 Director of Faith Formation, St. Francis de Sales Parish, Loudonville, NY
- Designed and directed religious education program for 200 students. Served as youth minister. Planned and directed activities and retreats.

Training and development

- Brown Executive Scholar Training (BEST) Program. Brown University, Spring 2015.
- Certified to facilitate "Protecting God's Children for Adults," a VIRTUS Program, 2006.

SERVICE

University administration

- Member, "Work Group on Dominican Heritage and Mission." Albertus Magnus College. (2019)
- Member, University Seminar on Mission, Fordham University (2016)
 - Met monthly throughout the year with other members of faculty and administrators to devise strategies to better realize the University's mission as a Jesuit institution.
- Member, Constructive Diversity Pedagogy PAR Project, Fordham University (2016)
 - Met with nine other members of faculty throughout Fall 2016 to conduct a Participatory Action Research (PAR) Project to address diversity concerns in the Fordham community.

- Member, LGBT Ally Network of Support, Fordham University (2016)
 - Completed a two-session training with other faculty, students, and staff designed to raise awareness about the needs and experience of the LGBT community on campus.
- Member, Search Committee for Director of Writing Support, Brown University (2014-2016)
 - Selected to represent the Writing Center's Staff Associates on the search committee.
- Member, Standing Educational Committee (POC) of the International Program at the Higher Institute of Philosophy, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (2008-09)

Departmental organizations

- Financial coordinator, Brown Religious Studies Graduate Student Conference, "Beasts, Monsters, and the Fantastic in the Religious Imagination," February 2014.
- Moderator for panel, "Textualizing Authorities" at Brown Religious Studies Grad. Student Conference, "Authenticity, Origins & Authority in the Practice & Study of Religion," March 2012.
- Moderator for panel, "Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger" at Higher Institute of Philosophy Graduate Student Conference, KU Leuven, May 2010.
- Co-organizer, Higher Institute of Philosophy Graduate Student Conference, "The Emergence of the Idea of God in the History of Phenomenology," KU Leuven, May 2010.
- Moderator for symposium, "An Evening with Mr. Heidegger," sponsored by the International Philosophy Students' Association, November 2009.
- Co-president, Religious Studies Graduate Society, McGill University, 2004-05.

Campus and community groups

- Member, Pastoral Council, Saints Isidore and Maria Parish, Glastonbury, CT (2017-present)
- Organizer and resident, Ecoloco Environmental Theme House, KU Leuven (2008-10)
 - Organized regular activities to raise awareness about environmental issues on campus, including film screenings and an open-mic night.
- English-language Tutor, Open Therapeuticum Leuven (2008-09)
 - Tutored five students who had suffered traumatic brain injuries, weekly.
- Interfaith Coordinator, Newman Catholic Students' Society, McGill University (2004-05)
 - Maintained contact with the Muslim Students Association, Chabad House, and other campus groups; organized events, including a film screening and dinners.
- Volunteer coordinator, The Benedict Labre House, Montreal, QC (2004-05)
 - Coordinated weekly trips to the soup kitchen to help prepare and serve meals.
- Vice President for Social Justice, Newman Catholic Students' Society, McGill Univ. (2003-04)
 - Organized social justice events; established volunteer projects at several sites.

RESEARCH

Profile

My research focuses on the Catholic intellectual tradition, broadly conceived, including Catholic social thought, activist movements (such as the Catholic Worker), and interactions with trends in modern philosophy, such as existentialism and phenomenology. I have long had a special interest in the work of Charles Taylor, the writings of Thomas Merton, and debates in political theology.

Areas of specialization

Catholic Intellectual Tradition, Catholic Social Thought, Personalism, Philosophical Anthropology, Political Theology.

Dissertation and theses

- “The Politics of Personalism” [\[PDF\]](#)
Dissertation. Brown University, 2016, 274pp.
Advisors: Thomas A. Lewis (primary), Mark Cladis, Stephen Bush
Précis: A study of personalism, a movement in both secular and religious thought that has shaped Catholic conceptions of the human person. Based on a survey of the history of the movement, I consider how personalist ideas developed by author Emmanuel Mounier in the 1930s and '40s were received by the Catholic Worker movement as well as by Charles Taylor and Paul Ricoeur. Personalism, I argue, is not exclusively a Christian perspective, but a broad movement cutting across distinctions between religion and the secular.
- “Secularization and Political Myth: The Schmitt-Blumenberg Debate” [\[PDF\]](#)
MA Thesis. Catholic University of Leuven, 2010, 113pp.
Advisors: André Cloots (promoter), Antoon Braeckman
Précis: Analysis of a debate between Carl Schmitt (1888-1985) and Hans Blumenberg (1920-1996) over what it means for political concepts to be “secularized.” Includes a working translation from the German of Schmitt’s and Blumenberg’s published correspondence.
- “Openness and Orthodoxy: Charles Taylor’s Therapeutic Ambitions in *A Secular Age*” [\[PDF\]](#)
BA Thesis. Catholic University of Leuven, 2009, 37pp.
Advisors: Guido Vanheeswijk (promoter), André Cloots
Précis: Presents a close reading of *A Secular Age* in its entirety to show how it may be read as a self-contained therapeutic project in Wittgenstein’s sense designed, in two stages, (1) to liberate the reader from the standard story of secularization and offer ‘the immanent frame’ as a new ‘best account’ of our lived experience, then (2) to offer a redescription of the immanent frame to lead the reader into an ‘open space’ where the possibility of a relation to ‘spiritual sources’ may again appear as a ‘live option’.

- “After rationalism: Taylor and Rorty on epistemology, morality, and religion” [\[PDF\]](#)
MA Thesis. McGill University, 2006, 122pp.
Advisor: Lisa Sideris
Précis: Examines and compares Charles Taylor’s and Richard Rorty’s critiques of modern epistemology, then considers how their critiques inform their respective understandings of morality and of the role of religious belief in modern secular societies. The paper defends Taylor’s position, arguing against reductively naturalist accounts of the moral and religious life in favor of a (weak ontological) picture of the human person as necessarily oriented in relation to transcendent goods.

Presentations

- “Youth, Faith, and Vocation: On Pope Francis’s New Post-Synodal Exhortation.” Talk at the Community of Ss. Isidore and Maria, Glastonbury, CT, April 2018 [forthcoming].
- “The ‘Three Advents’ of Christ: A Seasonal Meditation on Thomas Merton and St. Bernard of Clairvaux.” Talk at the Comm. of Ss. Isidore and Maria, Glastonbury, CT, December 2018.
- “Two New Saints: Pope St. Paul VI and St. Oscar Romero.” Talk at the Community of Ss. Isidore and Maria, Glastonbury, CT, November 2018.
- “Pope Francis and the Call to Holiness: *Gaudete et Exsultate*.” Talk at the Community of Ss. Isidore and Maria, Glastonbury, CT, June 2018. [\[VIDEO\]](#)
- “Thomas Merton on Justice and Mercy.” Meeting of the International Thomas Merton Society, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY, June 2017.
- “The Memories of Paul Ricoeur.” Yale Graduate Student Working Group on Memory Studies in Modern Europe, Yale University, New Haven, CT, April 2017. [\[AUDIO\]](#)
- “Peter Maurin and Personalism.” Friday Night Meeting at the Catholic Worker, Maryhouse, New York, NY, February 2017. [\[VIDEO\]](#)
- Respondent for panel, “Responding to *Laudato Si*.” St. Nicholas of Myra Conference on Catholic Social Thought, Providence College, Providence, RI, December 2015.
- “Thomas Merton on being a person.” General Meeting of the International Thomas Merton Society, Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY, June 2015.
- “The personalist roots of Charles Taylor’s *A Secular Age*.” Symposium “Towards a Critique of Secular Reason?” Higher Institute of Philosophy, KU Leuven, December 2014.
- “Bridging eschatology and history: Blumenberg and Schmitt on the *katechon*.” Conference “Radical Secularization?” University of Antwerp, September 2012.
- Respondent for panel, “Mythmaking = Community-Making?” German Studies Graduate Student Conference, “(Re)Making Myths: The Creation, Use, and Abuse of Myths in German Literature, History, and Culture,” Brown University, April 2011.
- “Merton in conversation with Charles Taylor’s *A Secular Age*.” General Meeting of the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Rutland, UK, April 2010.

- “Openness and orthodoxy: Charles Taylor’s *A Secular Age*.” Conference “A Secular Age: Tracing the Contours of Religion and Belief,” Mater Dei Institute, Dublin, June 2009.
- “Charles Taylor on modern secularity.” Symposium “Pluralism, Politics, and God?” McGill University, September 2007.

Publications

2006. “Osama bin Laden’s Global Islamism and Wahhabi Islam.” *McGill Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. VIII, pp. 33-54. [\[PDF\]](#)

LANGUAGES

- Native English. Facility in French and Spanish. Coursework in Dutch, German, and Arabic.

AFFILIATIONS

- American Academy of Religion
- International Thomas Merton Society

REFERENCES

Prof. Matthew Waggoner
Chair, Department Philosophy and Religion, Albertus Magnus College
Email: mwaggoner@albertus.edu

Rev. Mark S. Suslenko
Pastor, Saints Isidore and Maria Parish, Glastonbury, CT
Email: fr.suslenko@AOHCT.org

Prof. Thomas A. Lewis
Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Professor of Religious Studies, Brown University
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