

Curriculum Vitae

BRENDAN JAMAL THORNTON, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

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EDUCATION

- 2011 University of California, San Diego, Ph.D., Anthropology
- 2005 University of California, San Diego, M.A., Anthropology
- 2002 Michigan State University, B.A., Interdisciplinary Studies in Social Science:
International Studies (additional major in Anthropology)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2019 – Present Associate Professor, Department of Religious Studies, UNC
- 2013 – 2019 Assistant Professor, Department of Religious Studies, UNC
- 2011 – 2013 Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Religious Studies, UNC
- 2009 – 2010 Instructor of Record, Department of Anthropology, UCSD
- ongoing Faculty Affiliate *Institute of African American Research*, UNC
- ongoing Faculty Affiliate *Institute for the Study of the Americas*, UNC
- 2008 – 2009 Research Affiliate *Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO)*, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
- 2008 Doctoral Summer School on Cultural Diversity, *Scuola Superiore di Studi Umanistici*, June 23-28, 2008, University of Bologna, Italy

FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS, and HONORS

- 2024 Schwab Academic Excellence Award (Research Grant Award)
- 2022 Institute for the Arts and Humanities Faculty Fellowship / Fall 2022
- 2021 Pogue Senior Faculty Research and Scholarly Leave Award / Spring 2022
- 2019 Schwab Academic Excellence Award (Research Grant Award)
- 2017 Junior Faculty Development Award (Research Grant Award)
- 2017 Barbara T. Christian Literary Award (Book Award)
- 2015 King's College London Fund (Conference Grant Award)
- 2015 University Research Council Publication Award (Publication Grant Award)
- 2011 – 2013 Carolina Postdoctoral Program for Faculty Diversity (Postdoc Fellowship)
- 2011 National Edward A. Bouchet Graduate Honor Society (Honor Society)
- 2009 Summer Graduate Teaching Fellows Program (Teaching Fellowship)
- 2007 F.G. Bailey Fellowship (Dissertation Research Fellowship)
- 2003 – 2007 San Diego Fellows Program (Graduate Studies Fellowship)

PUBLICATIONS

Books

In progress *Rethinking Christianity and Black Atlantic Religion: Identity, Cosmology, and Christian Variation in the Southern Caribbean*. Under contract with Duke University Press for inclusion in the book series *Religious Cultures of African and African Diaspora People*.

2016 *Negotiating Respect: Pentecostalism, Masculinity, and the Politics of Spiritual Authority in the Dominican Republic*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
[Paperback edition, 2020]

*Winner of the 2017 *Barbara T. Christian Literary Award* presented by the Caribbean Studies Association for the Best Book in the Humanities*

Reviewed in: *Anthropological Quarterly*; *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*; *Anthropos*; *New West Indian Guide*; *Marginalia*, *LA Review of Books*; *Reading Religion*; *Religion and Society*; *Journal of Anthropological Research*; *New Directions in the Anthropology of Christianity* (formerly, *AnthroCyBib*).

Special Issues

2022 “Critical Terms for the Ethnography of Religion,” with Eric Hoenes del Pinal, *Fieldwork in Religion* 17(1): 5-12 [Open Access].

2018 “New Directions in the Anthropology of Religion and Gender: Faith and Emergent Masculinities,” with William Dawley, *Anthropological Quarterly* 91(1): 5-24.

Articles

2022 “Fieldwork: Time, Fidelity and the Ethnographic Method in Religious Studies,” *Fieldwork in Religion* 17(1): 13-25 [Open Access].

2021 “Refiguring Christianity and Black Atlantic Religion: Representation, Essentialism, and Christian Variation in the Southern Caribbean,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 89(1): 41-71.

2019 “Caribbean Exceptions: The Problem of Race and Nation in Dominican Studies,” with Diego Ubiera, *Latin American Research Review* 54(2): 413-428 [Open Access].

Reprint forthcoming in *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in the 21st Century Caribbean*, edited by Scott Timcke and Shelene Gomes, Athens: University of Georgia Press.

- 2018 “Victims of Illicit Desire: Pentecostal Men of God and the Specter of Sexual Temptation,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 91(1): 133-172.
- 2018 “Ties that Bind: Pentecostal Churches, Youth Gangs, and the Management of Everyday Life in the Urban Barrio,” *Religion* 48(4): 616-641.
- 2018 “Changing Landscapes of Faith: Latin American Religions in the Twenty-First Century,” *Latin American Research Review* 53(4): 857-862 [Open Access].

Chapters

- 2022 “Mapping the Spiritual Baptist Universe: Black Atlantic Cosmography and the Spatiality of Spirit in Trinidad and Tobago,” in *Oxford Handbook of Religious Space*, edited by Jeanne Halgren Kilde, pp. 308-324. New York: Oxford University Press [Online edition, Oxford Academic, 2022].
- 2021 “Conjugal Conundrums: Conversion and Marriage Delay in the Contemporary Caribbean,” in *Waithood: Gender, Education, and Global Delays in Marriage and Childbearing*, edited by Marcia Inhorn and Nancy Smith-Hefner, pp. 285-317. New York: Berghahn Books.
- 2013 “Residual Masculinity and the Cultivation of Negative-Charisma in a Caribbean Pentecostal Community,” in *The Anthropology of Religious Charisma: Ecstasies and Institutions*, edited by Charles Lindholm, pp. 117-143. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- 2012 “Fostering Communities of Critical Pedagogy,” with Joseph Hankins, Esin Duzel, and Raquel Pacheco, in *Teaching Diversity Conference Proceedings*, edited by James Lin and Carrie Wastal, pp. 61-65. San Diego, CA: University Readers.

Book Reviews

- 2023 Review of *Obeah, Orisa & Religious Identity in Trinidad, Vols I and II*, by Tracey E. Hucks and Dianne M. Stewart, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 91(1): 237-239, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfad062>.
- 2023 “Black Christianity in the Americas.” Review of *Afro-Atlantic Catholics: America’s First Black Christians*, by Jeroen Dewulf, *The Americas: A Quarterly Review of Latin American History* 80(3): 506-507.
- 2019 Review of *Biblical Porn: Affect, Labor, and Pastor Mark Driscoll’s Evangelical Empire*, by Jessica Johnson, in *New Directions in the Anthropology of Christianity*, The University of Edinburgh, July 11, 2019 (formerly *AnthroCyBib*) <https://www.new-directions.sps.ed.ac.uk/biblical-porn-book-review/>.
- 2015 Review of *God’s Gangs: Barrio Ministry, Masculinity, and Gang Recovery*, by Edward Orozco Flores, *Religion and Society: Advances in Research* 6(1): 187-188.

KEYNOTES, COLLOQUIA, and INVITED TALKS

- 2024 *Keynote Lecture* *14th Conference of the European Research Network on Global Pentecostalism (GloPent)*, University of Heidelberg, February 10th 2024, Heidelberg, Germany
- 2022 University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, *Roetzjel Family Lecture*, Institute for Advanced Study, October 27th 2022, Minneapolis, MN
- 2019 *Keynote Lecture* *The Inaugural William Peace University Interdisciplinary Conference*, October 17th 2019, William Peace University, Raleigh, NC
- 2019 Duke University, *Duke on Gender Colloquium*, Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies, January 25th 2019, Durham, NC
- 2017 Yale University, *MacMillan Center and the Council for Latin American and Iberian Studies Speaker Series*, April 13th 2017, New Haven, CT
- 2017 University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, *Lunchtime Seminar*, Institute for Gender and Development Studies, April 5th 2017, Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies
- 2016 *Keynote Lecture* *North Central Council of Latin Americanists Annual Conference*, November 4th 2016, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse, WI
- 2016 University of Wisconsin, Madison, *Latin American, Caribbean and Iberian Studies Program*, November 1st 2016, Madison, WI
- 2016 University of California, San Diego, *Department of Anthropology Colloquium Series*, October 24th 2016, La Jolla, CA
- 2015 Duke University, “Gender and Religion in Latin America and the Caribbean,” (three lectures) *Global Men and Masculinities*, Department of Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies, September 21st-25th, Durham, NC
- 2015 University of North Carolina, Charlotte, *Department of Religious Studies Colloquium Series*, February 2nd 2015, Charlotte, NC
- 2014 University of North Carolina, *Faculty Forum Colloquium Series*, Department of African, African American, and Diaspora Studies, Chapel Hill, NC
- 2012 University of North Carolina, *Institute for the Study of the Americas Speaker Series*, Chapel Hill, NC

INVITED WORKSHOPS and CONFERENCES

- 2023 *Second Annual Conference of the Black Sacred Arts Series: Ritual Transformations of Consciousness*, Yale University, Institute of Sacred Music, May 15th-17th 2023, New Haven, CT
- 2018 *New Directions in the Study of Black Atlantic Religions*, University of California, Los Angeles, Conference-Workshop, October 27th 2018, Los Angeles, CA
- 2018 *Waithood: Gender, Education, and Global Delays in Marriage*, Yale University, MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies, Conference-Workshop, September 27th-30th 2018, New Haven, CT
- 2016 *Christianity, Politics, and Social Activism in the African Diaspora*, UNC-CH, Department of African, African American, and Diaspora Studies, Annual Global Africana Conference-Workshop, March 4th-5th 2016, Chapel Hill, NC

CONFERENCES ORGANIZED

- 2016 *Habits and Spirits: Sound, Place, Technology*, May 3rd 2016, Kings College London, London, United Kingdom

CONFERENCE PAPERS, SESSIONS, and LECTURES

- 2023 Panel chair for “Critical Positionality and (Potential) Failure in Ethnographic Research,” American Academy of Religion Annual Meetings, November 20th 2023, San Antonio, TX
- 2021 Roundtable chair/discussant/organizer “Critical Terms for the Ethnography of Religion,” American Academy of Religion Annual Meetings, November 21st 2021, San Antonio, TX
- 2020 Book panel discussant for *Author Meets Critic: Experiments with Power: Obeah and the Remaking of Religion*, American Academy of Religion Annual Meetings, December 2nd 2020, Online
- 2020 Guest Speaker, *Religion & Masculinity*, Kalamazoo College, March 6th 2020, Kalamazoo, MI
- 2020 Guest Speaker, *Anthropology of Christianity*, UNC Charlotte, March 17th 2020, Charlotte, NC
- 2019 Panel chair for “Black Evangelical Studies: Reframing the Evangelical Movement in Latin America and the United States,” American Academy of Religion Annual Meetings, November 23rd 2019, San Diego, CA

- 2019 Panel chair for “Moving Forward, Looking Back: Promising New Directions in Hispaniola Studies,” 37th Annual International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, May 24th 2019, Boston, MA
- 2018 Book panel discussant for *Author Meets Critic: Masculinity and the Making of American Judaism*, American Academy of Religion Annual Meetings, November 18th 2018, Denver, CO
- 2018 Roundtable discussant for “Re-Thinking the Teaching of Theories and Methods,” American Academy of Religion Annual Meetings, November 17th 2018, Denver, CO
- 2018 Panel discussant for “Negotiating Authority: Women and Men in Christianity,” 117th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, November 14th-18th 2018, San Jose, CA
- 2018 “What is a Christian? Race, Essentialism, and Christian Variation in the Southern Caribbean,” presented at the 43rd Caribbean Studies Association Conference, June 8th, Havana, Cuba
- 2016 *Trends in Contemporary Scholarship on the Dominican Republic*, Roundtable organized for the 41st Caribbean Studies Association Conference, June 10th 2016, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
- 2016 “The Pentecostal Factor: Evangelical Christianity and the Study of Religion in the Contemporary Caribbean,” presented at the 41st Caribbean Studies Association Conference, June 9th 2016, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
- 2016 “Searching for Respect: Christian Identity Politics in the Hispanic Caribbean,” presented at the 63rd Annual Conference of the Southeastern Council of Latin American Studies, March 12th 2016, Cartagena, Colombia
- 2015 “Pentecostal Men of God and the Specter of Illicit Desire,” presented at the 114th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, November 21st 2015, Denver, CO
- 2015 “Searching for Respect: the Cultural Politics of Evangelical Christianity in the Dominican Republic,” *Faculty Micro Talks*, Institute for the Arts and Humanities, UNC, Chapel Hill, NC
- 2015 “Anthropological Method and Research Design in Religious Studies,” Office of Undergraduate Research, *Modes of Inquiry*, January 20th 2015, UNC-CH
- 2013 “Male Testimonies of Fantastic Sin and Miraculous Redemption: Cultivating Charisma in a Caribbean Pentecostal Community” presented at the 112th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, November 20th 2013, Chicago, IL

- 2013 “Residual Masculinity and the Cultivation of Negative-Charisma in a Caribbean Pentecostal Community,” public lecture, Department of Religious Studies, UNC, Chapel Hill, NC
- 2012 “Evangelical Masculinity? Respect, Seriousness, and Fidelity Among Pentecostal Christians in the Dominican Republic” presented at the 111th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, November 14th 2012, San Francisco, CA
- 2012 *Religion and Masculinity: Cultural Transformations and Gendered Realities*, panel organized for the 111th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, November 14th 2012, San Francisco, CA
- 2012 “Public Participation in an Urban Barrio: Collective Social Action from the Streets to the Pulpit” presented at the 37th Annual Caribbean Studies Association Conference, May 28th 2012, Le Gosier, Guadeloupe
- 2012 “Reading Pentecostal Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean,” guest lecture, Department of Religious Studies, UNC, Chapel Hill, NC
- 2012 Department of Anthropology, *Brown Bag Series*, UNC, Chapel Hill, NC
- 2011 *Fostering Communities of Critical Pedagogy*, panel organized for the Teaching Diversity Conference, UC San Diego, La Jolla, CA
- 2010 “Talking Data: Strategies for Qualitative Data Analysis,” guest lecture, Department of Human Development, UC San Diego, La Jolla, CA

RESEARCH LANGUAGES

English
Spanish

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Academy of Religion
American Anthropological Association
Caribbean Studies Association
Latin American Studies Association

COURSES DEVELOPED and TAUGHT

Teaching Awards

2021 Finalist for *Board of Governors’ Award for Excellence in Teaching*, UNC System

2016 Finalist for *Manekin Family Teaching Award for Teaching Excellence*, Honors Carolina, UNC

Graduate Seminars

Theory and Method in the Study of Religion RELI 700

Christianity and Cultural Change RELI 721

Undergraduate Lectures and Seminars

Introduction to Culture ANTH 1

Debating Multiculturalism: Race, Ethnicity, Class in American Societies ANTH 23

Religion in America RELI 140

African American Religions RELI 141

Christian Cultures RELI 225

Supernatural Encounters: Zombies, Vampires, Demons, and the Occult in the Americas RELI 246

Uncertain Truths: Conspiracy Theories, Aliens, and Secret Societies in America RELI 247

Theories of Religion RELI 322

Anthropology of Christianity RELI 352

Spirit Possession and Mediumship RELI 427

Dimensions of Evil RELI 526

GRADUATE ADVISING and THESIS COMMITTEES

Doctoral Advising

Vinna Chintaram, 3rd-year PhD student, Religious Studies, UNC-CH

Ph.D. Thesis Committees

Corintha Elliott, "These Hands: An Investigation into the Plural Articulations of Space in the Act of Healing in Spiritual Baptist Christianity." MPhil, Cultural Studies, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago, 2020

Lenny Lowe, "After God is Music: Affliction, Healing, and Warfare in Haitian Pentecostalism." PhD, Religious Studies, UNC-CH, 2017

Christina Davidson, "Converting Spanish Hispaniola: Race, Nation, and the A.M.E. Church in Santo Domingo, 1872-1904." PhD, History, Duke University, Durham, NC, 2017

Vieann Ragoonanan, "Ritual Power: An Examination of the Relationship Between the Sacred and the Profane, as seen in Trinidad's Kali Mai Puja and Orisha Religion." MPhil, Cultural Studies, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago, 2017

Undergraduate Honors Thesis Committees

Megan Pallante, "Secure, Contain, Protect: Building a Digital Folklore Mythos through Collaborative Legend Creation." Folklore Studies, UNC-CH, 2017

Derek Pace, "Raising Evil Spirits Outside the Walls of the Church: Conjure and the Invisible Institution of Slave Religion." Religious Studies, UNC-CH, 2016

Evan Lumbra, "A New Mission: Marketing Jesuit Vocation in the Modern Age." Religious Studies, UNC-CH, 2016

Emma Rich, "Variance in Stress and Stressors of Interracial Versus Intraracial

Relationships.” Psychology, UNC-CH, 2015

PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENTS, OUTREACH, and SERVICE

Editorial Boards

- ongoing* *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Oxford Academic Press
- ongoing* *New Directions in the Anthropology of Christianity*, Bloomsbury Academic Press

Service to the Discipline

- 2018 – Present* Steering Committee, *Anthropology of Religion Unit*, American Academy of Religion
- 2023* Geertz Prize Book Award Committee, *Society for the Anthropology of Religion*, American Anthropological Association
- 2018* Geertz Prize Book Award Committee, *Society for the Anthropology of Religion*, American Anthropological Association
- 2016 – 2018* Board Member (elected), *Society for the Anthropology of Religion*, American Anthropological Association
- 2017* Program Committee, *Society for the Anthropology of Religion 2017 Biennial Conference*, New Orleans, LA

Peer Review

- 2024* *Transforming Anthropology*; *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*; *Religion & Gender*, Routledge; *SUNY Press*; *Psychology of Women Quarterly*; *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*; *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology*; *University of Virginia Press*; *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*; *Lexington Books: Roman & Littlefield*; *Social Science and Missions*; *Anthropological Quarterly*; *Bloomsbury Academic Press*; *Religion and Literature*

Service to the University

- 2023 – Present* Co-Chair, *Faculty Hearings Committee* (elected), UNC Faculty Governance, Term July 1st 2023 through June 30th 2024
- 2023 – Present* Faculty Advisory Board, *Institute for the Arts & Humanities*, UNC-CH, Term July 1st 2023 through June 30th 2026
- 2021 – Present* *Faculty Hearings Committee* (elected), UNC Faculty Governance, Term July 1st 2021 through June 30th 2024
- 2019 – Present* Faculty Advisor, *Pagans and Witches of UNC-CH Student Group*

- 2023 Panelist for “Your Promotion on the Tenure Track,” Institute for Arts and Humanities New Faculty Program, UNC-CH
- 2021 Review Committee for the *Faculty Award for Excellence in Graduate Student and Academic Program Support*, the Graduate School, UNC-CH
- 2016 Faculty Advisory Board, *Internationalist*, undergraduate research journal
- 2013 – 2014 Advisory Board, *Institute of African American Research*, UNC-CH

Service to the Department

- 2023 – Present Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Religious Studies, UNC-CH, Term July 1st 2023 through June 30th 2024
- 2015 – Present Graduate Studies Committee, Department of Religious Studies, UNC-CH
- 2020 – 2022 Co-convener, *UNC Anthropology of Religion Reading Group*
- 2015 – 2017 Co-convener, *Duke/UNC Anthropology of Religion Reading Group*
- 2013 – 2014 Undergraduate Studies Committee, Department of Religious Studies

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- 2020 – Present Chair’s Advisory Committee, Department of Religious Studies, UNC-CH
- 2020 – 2023 Diversity and Equity Committee, Department of Religious Studies, UNC-CH
- 2020 – 2022 Chair (inaugural), Diversity and Equity Committee, Dept of Religious Studies
- 2019 – 2022 Diversity Liaison, Department of Religious Studies, UNC-CH
- 2014 – 2015 Faculty Advisor, *Minority Male Engagement and Mentoring Strategic Planning Group*, Center for Student Success and Academic Counseling, UNC-CH
- 2014 Royster Society of Fellows, *Career Development Roundtable*, February 5th 2014
- 2012 Convener, *Critical Pedagogy Reading Group*, Department of Religious Studies
- 2012 Graduate School Preparation Workshop for McNair Scholars, *Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program (TRiO)*, July 25th 2012
- 2012 “Engaged Scholars: Teaching, Research and Public Engagement,” Graduate and Professional Development Workshop, *Moore Undergraduate Research Apprentice Program (MURAP)*, July 11th 2012

- 2011 “Fostering Communities of Critical Pedagogy” (Panelist and Organizer)
Teaching Diversity Conference, UC San Diego, January 27th 2011, La Jolla, CA
- 2010 – 2011 *Diversity Curriculum Requirement Advisory Committee*, UC San Diego, Appointed
by the UC San Diego Office of the Chancellor, La Jolla, CA
- 2010 – 2011 Co-Organizer, *Pedagogy Task Force on Race and Racism*, Department of
Anthropology, UC San Diego, La Jolla, CA

Outreach

- 2021 Faculty Consultant, *Lazos Al Futuro*, an international NGO partnering with
local schools and institutions in the Dominican Republic to address
education and poverty
- 2018 Guest Speaker for Black History Month, Carrboro Elementary School,
February 16th 2018, Carrboro, NC
- 2018 Faculty Consultant, “Voodoo and Fauna” exhibit, NC Museum of Natural
Sciences, Raleigh, NC
- 2017 Guest Speaker for Black History Month, Treadwell Elementary School,
February 17th 2017, Memphis, TN
- 2016 Panel Discussant “The Story of God with Morgan Freeman” episode
premiere, Friday Center, March 23rd 2016, Chapel Hill, NC
- 2012 Guest Speaker for Black History Month, Carrboro Elementary School,
February 8th 2012, Carrboro, NC

REFERENCES

Upon Request