

# David Walker

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## EMPLOYMENT

2019– Associate Professor of Religious Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara

2013–19 Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara

## EDUCATION

2013 Ph.D., Religious Studies, Yale University  
*Dissertation: “Third Corinnethians: Railroads and Religion in the American West”*  
with distinction

2010 M.A., M.Phil., Religious Studies, Yale University  
with distinction

2003 B.A., Religious Studies, Wesleyan University  
summa cum laude

## PUBLICATIONS

### Books

*Railroading Religion: Mormons, Tourists, and the Corporate Spirit of the West* (University of North Carolina Press, 2019)

- 2020 Best Book Award, Mormon History Association
- Published reviews in: *Association for Mormon Letters*, *Choice*, *Church History and Religious Culture*, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, *Journal of Arizona History*, *Religion*, *Western Historical Quarterly*

### Articles and Chapters

“Mormon Melodrama and the Syndication of Satire, from *Brigham Young* (1940) to *South Park* (2003),” *Journal of American Culture* 40, no. 3 (September 2017): 259-275.

“Railroading Independence: Pulpit Rock and the Work of Mormon Observation,” *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 37, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2017): 29-50.

“Transporting Mormonism: Railroads and Religious Sensation in the American West,” in *Sensational Religion: Sensory Cultures in Material Practice*, ed. Sally Promey (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2014): 581-604.

- 2015 LeRoy S. Axland Best Utah History Award, Utah Department of Heritage & Arts
- 2015 Article Award of Excellence, Mormon History Association

“The Humbug in American Religion: Ritual Theories of Nineteenth-Century Spiritualism,” *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 23, no. 1 (Winter 2013): 30-74.

## Essays

“‘There Shall Be a Record Kept Among You’: On the Archives of Mormon History,” *Religions of America* (Gale Primary Sources), Fall 2019, found at [https://callisto.ggsrv.com/imgsrv/FastFetch/UBER2/ROAM\\_Essay\\_Walker](https://callisto.ggsrv.com/imgsrv/FastFetch/UBER2/ROAM_Essay_Walker)

“The Discipline of *Radio Mind*,” *Modernity’s Resonances: New Inquiries into the Secular*, eds. Courtney Bender and Mona Oraby, March 8 2019, found at <https://tif.ssrc.org/2019/03/08/the-discipline-of-radio-mind/>

“The End of the Circus,” *Is This All There Is*, eds. Courtney Bender and Nancy Levene, entry 23, Nov 24 2017, found at <https://tif.ssrc.org/2017/11/24/the-end-of-the-circus/>

“Moonlighting in Magic: The Real (and More Interesting) World Behind *Magic in the Moonlight*,” *Religion Dispatches*, Sep 16 2014, found at <http://religiondispatches.org/we-were-willing-fools-the-world-of-woody-allens-magic-in-the-moonlight-was-more-interesting-than-the-movie/>

“James Strang’s Letter of Appointment,” *Frequencies: A Genealogy of Spirituality*, eds. Kathryn Lofton and John Lardas Modern, entry 58/100, Nov 21 2011, found at <http://frequencies.ssrc.org/2011/11/21/james-strang’s-letter-of-appointment/>

## Reviews

Review of *Unpopular Sovereignty: Mormons and the Federal Management of Utah Territory* by Brent M. Rogers, *American Historical Review*, 123, no. 3 (June 2018): 953-54.

Review of *Walking Where Jesus Walked: American Christians and Holy Land Pilgrimage* by Hillary Kaell, *History of Religions* 57, no. 1 (August 2017): 100-103.

Review of *The Mormon People: The Making of an American Faith* by Matthew Bowman, *Mormon Studies Review* 1, no. 1 (Fall 2014): 166-174.

## TEACHING

Graduate courses (UCSB): *Historiography of the Nineteenth Century*; *Religion in the Gilded Age*; *Incorporating Religion*; *Writing U.S. Religious History*; *Revivals & Awakenings: Discipline & Desire in American Religious History*; *Proseminar in Theory & Method in Religious Studies: Critical Theory*

Undergraduate courses (UCSB): *Introduction to the Study of Religion in America*; *Religion in Early America*; *Religion in Modern America*; *Religion & Tourism*; *Theory in Magic*; *Problems in the Study of Religion*; *Religion in the American West* (co-taught with Rudy Busto); *Religion & Popular Culture* (co-taught with Joseph Blankholm); *Mormonism & Identity in the Pacific World* (co-taught with J. Spencer Fluhman)

## FELLOWSHIPS AND HONORS

2020, Best Book Award, Mormon History Association (for *Railroading Religion*)

2020, Nominee, Best Book Award, John Whitmer Historical Association (for *Railroading Religion*)

2019– , National Research Fellow, Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis

2016– , Core Fellow, Project Cycle II, “Material Economies of Religion in the Americas: Objects, Spaces, Mediations,” Center for the Study of Material & Visual Cultures of Religion. Sally M. Promey, director

2016, Hellman Family Faculty Fellowship, University of California, Santa Barbara

2016, Regents Junior Faculty Fellowship, University of California, Santa Barbara

2015, Article Award of Excellence, Mormon History Association (for “Transporting Mormonism: Railroads and Religious Sensation in the American West”)

2015, LeRoy S. Axland Best Utah History Award, Utah Division of State History, Utah Department of Heritage & Arts (for “Transporting Mormonism: Railroads and Religious Sensation in the American West.”)

2014–2016, Young Scholar, Young Scholars in American Religion Program, Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture, Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis

2014, Charles Redd Fellowship, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Brigham Young University

2011–2012, Howard R. Lamar Scholarship, Howard R. Lamar Center for the Study of Frontiers and Borders, Yale University

2011, Visiting Scholar Fellowship, Autry Institute for the Study of the American West, Los Angeles, CA

2011, Research Fellowship, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University

2008–2011, Initiative Fellowship, Initiative for the Study of Material and Visual Cultures of Religion. Sally M. Promey, director

2003, Giffin Prize for Excellence in Religious Studies, Wesleyan University Department of Religious Studies

2003, Phi Beta Kappa, Wesleyan University

## CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

June 2020, “Author Conversation: David Walker on *Railroading Religion*,” at the Mormon History Association annual meetings ([link](#))

February 2020, “New Direction and Different Stations” (opening remarks), at the New Directions in American Religious Studies Symposium, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA

February 2020, “Mormons, and Other Western Wonders: Tourist Interests in the Railroad Age” (invited lecture), at Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, CA

January 2020, “Religion and Capitalism: or, Religion and (the Incorporation of) Critique” (invited commentary), American Religious Studies and Histories of Capitalism Conference, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA

December 2019, “Mormons, Sanitariums, and Humbug,” at the UCLA Workshop on Materiality, Religion, and Healing, University of California, Los Angeles, CA

November 2019, “Infrastructuring Religion: A Response” (session respondent), at the American Academy of Religion annual meetings (North American Religions Unit and Religion, Media, and Culture Unit), San Diego, CA

November 2019, “Captioning Mormonism,” at the American Academy of Religion annual meetings (North American Religions Unit and Religion & Economy Unit), San Diego, CA

November 2019, “Resonance by Incorporation,” at the American Academy of Religion annual meetings (Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Unit), San Diego, CA

November 2019, “Religion in Translation” (moderator), at the Study of Religion as an Analytical Discipline annual pre-AAR workshop, San Diego, CA

October 2019, “Mormons, and Other Western Wonders: Tourist Interests in the Railroad Age” (invited lecture), at University of Colorado, Boulder, CO

October 2019, “On *Railroading Religion*” (invited talk), at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT

October 2019, “Saints, and Other Western Wonders: Tourist Interests in the Railroad Age” (invited lecture), at Brigham Young University, Provo, UT

September 2019, “Max Weber and the Corporate Spirit of the West,” at the New Directions in American Religious History Conference, Harvey Cedars, NJ

June 2019, “Mormons, and Other Western Wonders: Tourist Interests in the Railroad Age” (Opening Plenary Address), at the Mormon History Association annual meetings, Salt Lake City, UT

June 2019, “The Proclamation on Pinterest” (a response to Colleen McDannell’s *Sister Saints*), at the Mormon History Association annual meetings, Salt Lake City, UT

March 2019, “Wrestling with Mormonism in American History” (invited lecture), University of Richmond, VA

November 2018, “Racialization and Religion” (moderator), at the Study of Religion as an Analytical Discipline annual pre-AAR workshop, Denver, CO

September 2019, “The Spirit Bank: Security and Sanity in 1850s America,” at the New Directions in American Religious History Conference, Deer Isle, ME

June 2018, “Supernatural Borderlands: Encounters between Spiritualists and Mormons” (session respondent), at the Mormon History Association annual meetings, Boise, ID

November 2017, “Railroading Secularism,” at the American Academy of Religion annual meetings (Cultural History of the Study of Religion Program Unit), Boston, MA

November 2017, “Plural Marriage and the Study of Religion” (a response to Laurel Thatcher Ulrich’s *A House Full of Females*), at the American Academy of Religion annual meetings (Mormon Studies Program Unit), Boston, MA

November 2017, “Analytical Frames: Appropriation, Taking, and Territoriality” (moderator), at the Study of Religion as an Analytical Discipline annual pre-AAR workshop, Boston, MA

November 2016, “Method and Theory in the Aesthetics of Religion” (chair and discussant), at the Study of Religion as an Analytical Discipline annual pre-AAR workshop, San Antonio, TX

September 2016, “Railroading Independence: Trains and the Mainlines of Mormon Observation” (Howard Lecture keynote address), at the John Whitmer Historical Association annual meetings, Kirtland, OH

November 2015, “The Silent Missionary: Stereoscopic Tourism in the Mormon Imaginary,” at the American Academy of Religion annual meetings (Religion, Memory, and History Group), Atlanta, GA

November 2015, "Canon and/in Science Fiction" (chair and discussant), at the Study of Religion as an Analytical Discipline annual pre-AAR workshop, Atlanta, GA

September 2015, "Rout(e)s of Religion: Wrestling Rings, World's Fairs, and the Makings of Modern Mormonism" (invited lecture), Lafayette College, Easton, PA

June 2015, "Mormon Missionaries, Mormon Maulers: Performing World Religions in the Wrestling Ring," at the Mormon History Association annual meetings (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Special Session), Provo, UT

June 2015, "Legacies of Leonard Arrington" (session chair), at the Mormon History Association annual meetings (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Special Session), Provo, UT

May 2015, "Railroad Time and Technologies of Nostalgia," Religious Studies Colloquium, University of California at Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA

November 2014, "Key Concepts in the Study of Religion" (session chair), at the American Academy of Religion annual meetings (Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Group), San Diego, CA

November 2014, "Comparison and the Analysis of Religion and Ritual" (discussant), at the Study of Religion as an Analytical Discipline annual pre-AAR workshop, San Diego, CA

November 2014, "An Incitement to Excitement: The Touristic Imperative in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Utah," at the American Studies Association annual meetings, Los Angeles, CA

June 2014, "Teaching Religion in California," at the California Pluralism Project Conference, University of California at Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA

May 2014, "American Catholic Cultural Engagement from Orestes Brownson to Rick Santorum" (respondent), at the annual Catholic Studies Conference, University of California at Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA

November 2013, "Contested Representations in Religion and Politics" (session chair), at the American Academy of Religion annual meetings (Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Group), Baltimore, MD

November 2012, "Railroading Rituals: Mormons and Tourists in the American West," at the American Academy of Religion annual meetings (Religion and Popular Culture Group), Chicago, IL

November 2012, "Territorial Rewriting of Religious-Political Violence" (session chair), at the American Academy of Religion annual meetings (Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Group), Chicago, IL

November 2012, "Tourism, Scrapbooking, and Bricolage in the American West," at the Sensory Cultures of Religion Research Group symposium, Yale University, New Haven, CT

October 2012, “Humbug: A Theory of Religion,” at the Columbia University Religion in America Seminar, New York, NY

November 2011, “The Humbug in American Religion: Spiritualist Ritual and Religious Theory in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century” at the American Academy of Religion annual meetings (Religion, Media, and Culture Group), San Francisco, CA

November 2011, “Training the Eye: Railroads and Comparative Religious Imagination in the American West,” at Sensational Religions: Sense and Controversy in Material Religious Practice, a conference sponsored by the Initiative for the Study of Material and Visual Cultures of Religion, New Haven, CT

October 2011, “The Transportation of Mormonism: Railroads and Religious Encounters in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Utah” at the American Studies Association annual meetings, Baltimore, MD

October 2011, “On Comparison,” at the Wesleyan University Religion Colloquium, Middletown, CT

## **PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

2019– , Steering Committee Member, Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Unit, American Academy of Religion

2018– , Editorial Board, *Reading Religion*

2018– , Editorial Director, The Study of Religion as an Analytical Discipline Workshop

2017– , Steering Committee Member, Mormon Studies Unit, American Academy of Religion

2016– , Leadership Team Member for Project Cycle II, “Material Economies of Religion in the Americas: Objects, Spaces, Mediations,” Center for the Study of Material & Visual Cultures of Religion.

2015– , Advisory Network Member, Center for the Study of Material & Visual Cultures of Religion

2013– , Steering Committee Member, The Study of Religion as an Analytical Discipline Workshop

2018–2020, Editorial Board, “Religions in America” digital archive, Gale Group

2013–2019, Chair, Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Unit, American Academy of Religion

2014–2016, Editorial Board Member, “Religion, Spirituality, Reform, and Society” digital archive, Gale Cengage’s *Nineteenth Century Collections Online* Project

2013–2016, Chair, Social Theory and Religion Cluster, American Academy of Religion

2014–2015, Steering Committee Member, Mormon History Association (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary meetings)

2011–2013, Steering Committee Member, Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Group,  
American Academy of Religion

2009, Graduate Associate, Cultures of American Religious Liberalism Project, New Haven, CT and  
Princeton, NJ. Sally M. Promey and Leigh Eric Schmidt, Directors

### **Departmental Service (UCSB Religious Studies)**

- 2019-2020     Executive Committee  
Director of Undergraduate Studies  
Chair, Mormon Studies Initiative Committee  
Walter H. Capps Center Advisory Committee  
Robert S. Michaelsen Lecture Series Committee  
Alumni and Development Committee  
Faculty Advisor to Lead TA and Graduate Student Liaison  
Departmental Mentor for Summer Instructors
- 2018-2019     Executive Committee  
Director of Undergraduate Studies  
Chair, Mormon Studies Initiative Committee  
Walter H. Capps Center Advisory Committee and Search Committee  
Robert S. Michaelsen Lecture Series Committee  
Faculty Advisor to Lead TA and Graduate Student Liaison  
Departmental Mentor for Summer Instructors
- 2017-2018     Executive Committee  
Director of Undergraduate Studies  
Walter H. Capps Center Advisory Committee and Search Committee  
Robert S. Michaelsen Lecture Series Committee  
Faculty Advisor to Lead TA and Graduate Student Liaison  
Departmental Mentor for Summer Instructors
- 2016-2017     Executive Committee  
Director of Undergraduate Studies  
Curriculum Committee (Theory & Method series)  
Walter H. Capps Center Advisory Committee  
Robert S. Michaelsen Lecture Series Committee  
Faculty Advisor to Lead TA and Graduate Student Liaison  
Departmental Mentor for Summer Instructors
- 2015-2016     Personnel Committee  
Ad-Hoc Curriculum Committee (Theory & Method series)  
Faculty Advisor to Lead TA and Graduate Student Liaison  
Departmental Mentor for Summer Instructors
- 2014-2015     Search Committee



Personnel Committee  
American Cultural Studies Steering Committee

2013-2014 Graduate Committee  
Academic Senate Representative

## **Reviewer**

*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*

*Journal of Arizona History*

*Material Religion*

*MAVCOR Journal*

*Religion & American Culture*

*Theory & Society*

*Western Historical Quarterly*

## **Professional Memberships**

American Academy of Religion

American Culture Association

American Historical Association

American Society of Church History

American Studies Association

John Whitmer Historical Association

Mormon History Association