

Joseph E Simmons, SJ

Objective

To pursue a tenure-track teaching/research position in a Theology or Religious Studies department, with special interests in literature, secularity, atheism, and religious phenomenology. My future scholarship will continue a theological engagement through literature, even consciously non-religious literature.

Areas of Expertise

Theology and literature, Virginia Woolf, Marilynne Robinson, the theological turn in phenomenology, atheism, secularity.

Educational Background

2018-2022

University of Oxford, Campion Hall

Oxford, UK

- **DPhil Candidate** in the Faculty of Theology & Religion (awaiting defense)
Title of Dissertation: “Attunements to Grace in the Writings of Virginia Woolf and Marilynne Robinson” directed by Graham Ward

2014-2017

Boston College

Boston, MA

- **Master of Divinity**, 2014-2016
- **Licentiate in Sacred Theology**, 2015-2017
Title of Thesis: “*Via Literaria*: Marilynne Robinson’s Theology Through a Literary Imagination”

2008-2011

Loyola University Chicago

Chicago, IL

- **Master of Philosophy**, thesis passed with distinction.
Title of Thesis: “Personifying Evidence for God and the Life of Ignatius Loyola”

2000-2004

Marquette University

Milwaukee, WI

- ***Magna cum laude* Bachelor of Arts**, Classical Languages and Spanish Language & Literature; minor in Theology

University Service

2022-Present

Georgetown University

Washington, DC

- Research/postdoctoral fellow in the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs
- Co-organizer of international “Christian Literary Imagination” conference in Oxford: www.global.georgetown.edu/events/the-christian-literary-imagination-symposium-and-conference (December 12-13, 2022)
- Panelist on the biweekly “A Bent but Beautiful World” series on art, literature, and the environment, through Global Engagement at Georgetown

2019-2022

University of Oxford, Campion Hall

Oxford, UK

- Tutor of undergraduate student in Theo & Literature Oxford, UK
- Directing a student’s successful undergraduate thesis, “‘Moments of Being’: Religious Experience in the Novels of Virginia Woolf”
- Co-convenor of the Christian Literary Imagination Series for Georgetown University’s Global Engagement, Campion Hall and Blackfriars, Oxford

- Convenor of the Faculty of Theology & Religion's bi-weekly Modern Theology Research Seminar
- Convenor/moderator of Campion Hall's bi-weekly seminar on theology and philosophy

Teaching Experience during Jesuit Formation

Pedagogical Training for Jesuit Refugee Service Teachers

2015-2016 Jesuit Refugee Services International Jordan & Lebanon

- Visiting classrooms in refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, and the Syrian border (Beqaa Valley)
- Adapting pedagogical principles and tools for teachers working in refugee camps throughout the Middle East; training interfaith teachers through week-long sessions.

Adjunct Instructor of Philosophy

2013-2014 Creighton University Omaha, NE

- Teaching multiple sections of Critical and Historical Introduction to Philosophy in the Department of Philosophy
- Overseeing various projects for implementing Jesuit Mission & Identity across colleges at Creighton University

Instructor of Theology and English

2011-2013 Cristo Rey Jesuit High School Minneapolis, MN

- Teaching Theology (Biblical Literature, Church History) as well as English Literature
- Collaborating on student retreats and faculty spiritual formation

Instructor of World Languages

2004-2006 Marquette University High School Milwaukee, WI

- Teaching Spanish and Latin
- Leading students on language immersion trips to Cuernavaca, Mexico

Academic Conference Papers

- **“Nicholas of Cusa and Doxological Intentionality in Community”**
Campion Seminar in Theology, hosted at Campion Hall, Oxford – 12/2021
- **“Mediating Verticality in Community – the Phenomenological Vision of Nicholas of Cusa**
The Phenomenology of Religion as Philosophical Anthropology Conference, Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies (OCHS) – 10/2021, *invited for journal publication*
- **“The Unvoiced Fundamental Note: Atheistic Literature and Divine Resonances”**
Power of the Word VI Conference hosted by the Loyola Institute, Trinity College Dublin – 7/2021, *invited for book chapter publication*
- **Response Paper to “Mystery and Nothingness: The Christian Conception of Call in the Perspective of Jean Paul Sartre”**
Modern Theology Research Seminar hosted by Faculty of Theology & Religion, Oxford – 5/2021
- **“Adieu à Dieu?: Death and Atheism in Virginia Woolf and Julian Barnes”**
Death and the Humanities Conference hosted at Balliol College, Oxford – 11/2020 (via Zoom)
- **“Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Virginia Woolf Navigating the Religious and the Rational”**
Campion Seminar in Theology, hosted at Campion Hall, Oxford – 10/2020

- **“Identifying the Christian Literary Imagination”**
Opening paper to introduce the Christian Literary Imagination Series, a multi-year symposium that co-convened for Georgetown University’s Global Engagement – 10/2020. Available online at <https://global.georgetown.edu/events/identifying-the-christian-imagination>
- **“Bothered by God: The Catholic Imagination and Atheistic Literature”**
Catholic Imagination Conference hosted by the Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage, Loyola University Chicago – 9/2019
- **“Bothered by God: A Look at Julian Barnes & Graham Greene”**
Catholicism, Literature, and the Arts Conference hosted by the Center for Catholic Studies, Durham University, Durham, England – 7/2019
- **“Marilynne Robinson and Richard Kearney’s *Anatheism*”**
God After God Symposium, hosted at Queen’s University in Belfast, N. Ireland – 4/2019

Published Academic Work

- Book chapter, “The Unvoiced Fundamental Note: Atheistic Literature and Divine Resonances” in *The Power of the Word Series, Vol. 6*. Edited by David Lonsdale, Dr Emilia Di Rocco, Dr Brett Speakman, Routledge (forthcoming 2023).
- Journal article, “Intentionality & Intersubjectivity in Cusa’s *De Visione Dei*” in *Heythrop Journal* (forthcoming April 2023).
- Review of *Spiritual Exercises for a Secular Age* (Ryan Duns) in *The Heythrop Journal* (forthcoming)
- Review of *Phenomenology to the Letter: Husserl and Literature* (editors: Philippe P. Haensler, Kristina Mendicino and Rochelle Tobias) in *The Heythrop Journal* (forthcoming)
- Review of Paul J. Griffiths’s *Regret: A Theology in The Way* (April 2022)
- Review of *Jack* (“Marilynne Robinson returns to Gilead”) in *America Magazine* December 2020.

Other Services & Distinctions

- **Boston College Board of Trustees committee member** (2014-2018): (Buildings & Grounds and Advancement)
- **Boston College School of Theology and Ministry Committee Member**, revision of the M.Div. curriculum (2017-2018)
- **Marquette University**
 - Honors Program
 - *Phi Beta Kappa* member
 - Marquette University Faculty Excellence Award Selection Committee
 - Classical Languages Honors Society
 - Rhodes Scholarship Finalist for Wisconsin, 2003
 - MU Ignatius Scholarship for Academic Distinction

Select Non-academic Publications

- Book chapter, “A Dirty Little Secret,” in *The Jesuit Post: #Faith #God #Frontiers #Culture #Mystery #Love*, ed. Patrick Gilger and Timothy O’Brien. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2014. Awarded first place by the Catholic Press Association for popular presentation of the Catholic Faith
- Journal article, “The Privilege of Unbelief & the Enduring Question of God” online for *Jesuit Post*, April 2016.
- Journal article, “Welcoming Atheists into Heaven” online for *Jesuit Post*, April 2013.

Other Invited Presentations

- “*But Few Things Are Needed: From Distraction to Dedication*”
Address to Ignatian Volunteer Corps (Chicago, IL – July 28, 2022)
- “*Jesuits and the Liberal Arts: Purpose and Method*”
Keynote Address at Creighton University College of Arts and Sciences Student Conference (Omaha, NE - January 18, 2018)
- “*Jesus as Model of Servant Leadership*”
Keynote Address at Catholic Connections Conference, John Carroll University (Cleveland, OH - October 6, 2017)
- “*Ignatius Loyola and the Art of Spiritual Conversation*”
Address to Ignatian Volunteer Corps (Chicago, IL – July 27, 2017)
- “*Ever Ancient, Ever New: New Media for the New Evangelization*”
Presentation at Religious Education Conference (Anaheim, CA - February 27, 2016)
- “*Talking Faith in the Digital Age*”
Presentation at Marquette University Social Media Summit (Milwaukee, WI – 10/2015)

Languages

- Spanish (fluent spoken/written) - Marquette in Madrid (semester immersion), Spring 2003
- Latin (fluent spoken/written) - *Aestiva Latinitatis Romae* (Latin Summer in Rome), Summer 2003
- French (written/moderate spoken fluency) - *Cours de Langue* and *Université Stendhal* (in Paris and Grenoble, B2 proficiency), Summer 2016
- Ancient Greek (moderate written proficiency)
- Italian (moderate written/spoken proficiency)
- German (moderate written/moderate spoken proficiency)