

Dr. Joseph Simmons, SJ, DPhil (Oxon)

Assistant Professor of Theology, Marquette University

Current Work

August 2023-Present Marquette University Milwaukee, WI

- Courses Taught:
 - Fall 2023: THEO 1001: Foundations in Theology (two sections)
 - Spring 2024: THEO 1001 (one section)
 THEO 3230: Theology in the Writings of C.S. Lewis (one)
- Planning committee member, *Theotokos* Lecture (October 26, 2023)
- Faculty supervisor, Alpha Sigma Nu (Jesuit Honor Society)
- Sacramental activities (Masses, confessions, Advent and Lent talks) periodically on campus

Areas of Expertise

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

Educational Background

2018-2023 University of Oxford, Campion Hall Oxford, UK

- **Doctor of Philosophy** in the Faculty of Theology & Religion - Title of Dissertation: “Attunements to Grace in the Writings of Virginia Woolf and Marilynne Robinson” (directed by the Rev. Dr. Graham Ward, Regius Professor of Divinity, Christ Church). Archived electronically at: <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:aad9c794-42f8-4751-8b55-121775674c27>

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” (directed by Dr. Matthew Potts, Harvard Divinity School and Dr. Dominic Doyle, Boston College)

2008-2011 Loyola University Chicago Chicago, IL

- **Master of Philosophy** with distinction
Title of Thesis: “Personifying Evidence for God and the Life of Ignatius Loyola” (directed by Dr. Paul Moser, Loyola University Chicago)

2000-2004 Marquette University Milwaukee, WI

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

University Service

July 2022-June 2023 Georgetown University Washington, DC

- Research fellow in English, 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)
- Co-organizer/panelist on the biweekly “A Bent but Beautiful World” series on art, literature, and the environment, for Global Engagement at Georgetown <https://global.georgetown.edu/series/a-bent-but-beautiful-world-literature-art-and-the-environment>
- Co-organizer for the Global Aesthetics of the Catholic Imagination conference in Rome, co-hosted by Georgetown, Fordham, Loyola Chicago, and *La Civiltà Cattolica* <https://missionandministry.georgetown.edu/gaci/> (May 25-27, 2023)
 - Collecting and editing presenters’ writing samples, not for publication

2019-2022 University of Oxford, Campion Hall Oxford, UK

- Tutor of undergraduate student in Theo & Literature
- Director 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 Papers/Presentations

- **Forthcoming: “*I Promessi Sposi*: The Theology of Pope Francis’s Favorite Italian Novel”**
Invited 2024 Jesuit Heritage Lecture, Spring Hill College, Spring Hill, AL – March 7, 2024
- **“Spiritual Formation and Focusing Attention Through Literature” – September 1, 2023**
Paper given at “Jesuit Scholarship in a Secular Age” conference, Loyola University Chicago
- **“Nature Abhors a Vacuum: Overcoming Domesticity in *Housekeeping*”**
Georgetown University’s *Bent but Beautiful World* series – May 16, 2023
- **“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* (see below)
- **“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 book chapter for publication* (see below)
- **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-convoked 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

- Invited book chapter, “Spiritual Formation and Focusing Attention Through Literature” from 2023 Jesuit Scholarship in a Secular Age conference. Edited by Patrick Gilger and Matthew Dunch, (under contract review by Georgetown University Press)
- Invited book chapter, “Nature Abhors a Vacuum: Overcoming Domesticity in Marilynne Robinson’s *Housekeeping*” in *The Christian Literary Imagination*. Edited by Michael Collins and Michael Scott, Vernon Press (forthcoming 2024).

- Invited 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 2024).
- Peer-reviewed journal article, “Intentionality & Intersubjectivity in Cusa’s *De Visione Dei*” in *Heythrop Journal* 64:2 (March 2023). DOI:10.1111/heyj.14190.
- 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)