

CODY MUSSELMAN

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Employment

2022-present Postdoctoral Fellow
John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics
Washington University in St. Louis

Education

2022 Yale University
Ph.D., Religious Studies
Field: American Religious History
Areas of Examination: American Religious History; Capitalism and Religion; Embodiment and Religion; Experimental Ethnography

2019-2020 Visiting Graduate Research Fellow, Center for the Study of Religion
Princeton University, Princeton, NJ

2018 Yale University
M.A. and M.Phil., Religious Studies

2015 Harvard Divinity School
M.T.S, Religions of the Americas

2011 Kalamazoo College
B.A., Religious Studies (major), Anthropology-Sociology (minor)
Magna cum laude
Honors Thesis: "Gettysburg as a Shrine in American Civil Religion"
Study Abroad: Thailand

Publications

Books

American Examples: Volume 3. Volume of essays co-edited with Erik Kline, Dana Logan, and Michael Altman (University of Alabama Press, 2024).

Spiritual Exercises: Fitness and Religion in Modern America (in preparation)

Refereed Articles

"The Right to Shrine": Global Celebrity, Colonial Logics, and Local Knowledge in Aspen's Mountainside Memorials," *Material Religion* 15, no. 3 (Summer 2019), pp. 322-246

Reported in [The Aspen Times](#), [The Snowmass Sun](#) & [The REI Co-Op Journal](#)

“Training for the “Unknown and Unknowable”: CrossFit and Evangelical Temporality” *Religions* 2019 10(11), 624; <https://doi.org/10.3390/re110110624>

“‘These Honored Dead’: Civil Religion, Nature Religion, and the Gettysburg Address Witness Tree” (*forthcoming in Religion & American Culture*)

“Let Me Show You CrossFit: Christian Nationalism and Social Performance at the CrossFit Games” (*in preparation*)

Book Chapters

“‘Be More Human’: CrossFit, Reebok, and Sporting Consumerism,” *Religion and Sport in North America: Critical Essays for the Twenty-First Century*, Jeffrey Scholes and Randall Balmer, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2022).

“The Politics of Charisma and the Cohesion of SoulCycle’s #SoulFam Tribe,” in *American Examples: Vol. 2* Michael Altman, Samah Choudhury, and Prea Persaud, eds. (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2022).

“Introduction,” in *American Examples Vol. 3*, Cody Musselman, Erik Kline, Dana Logan, and Michael Altman, eds. (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press) *forthcoming January 2024*.

“Drinking the CrossFit Kool-Aid: Cult Marketing and the Cult of CrossFit,” in *Selling the Sacred: Religion and Marketing in the Digital Age*, Mara Einstein and Sarah McFarland Taylor (New York: Routledge) *forthcoming January 2024*.

“CrossFit as a Spiritual-But-Not-Religious Fitness Culture,” in *CrossFit: Commodity, Community, Contested Terrain*, Marcelle Dawson and Steve Jackson, eds. (SpringerNature) *forthcoming 2024*.

Book Reviews

Alison Robertson, *Play, Pain, and Religion: Creating Gestalt through Kink Encounter*. United Kingdom: Equinox Publishing, 2021. in *Body and Religion* vol. 6 (1) 2022. Pp. 123-125.

David Morgan, *The Thing About Religion: An Introduction to the Material Study of Religions*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2021. in *Journal of Religion* vol. 102, no. 4, Oct. 2022.

Andrew Ventimiglia, *Copyrighting God: Ownership of the Sacred in American Religion*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2018. in *Reading Religion*, posted October 22, 2019: <http://readingreligion.org/books/copyrighting-god>

Annie Blazer, *Playing For God: Evangelical Women and the Unintended Consequences of Sports Ministry*. New York, NY: NY Press, 2015. in *Reading Religion*, posted November 30, 2018: <http://readingreligion.org/books/playing-god>

Gillian McCann and Gitte Bechsgaard, *The Sacred in Exile: What it Really Means to Lose Our Religion*. London, England: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017. in *Reading Religion*, posted June 16, 2018: <http://readingreligion.org/books/sacred-exile>

Randall Balmer, *Passion Plays: How Religion Shaped Sports in North America*. University of North Carolina Press, 2022. *Forthcoming in CrossCurrents*.

Catherine L. Albanese, *The Delight Makers: Anglo-American Metaphysical Religion and the Pursuit of Happiness*. The University of Chicago Press, 2023. 384 pp. \$30.00 (paper). *Forthcoming in the Journal of Religion*.

Jeffrey Scholes, *Christianity, Race and Sport*. Routledge, 2023. *Forthcoming in the International Journal of Sport and Religion*.

Malcolm Harris, *Palo Alto: A History of California, Capitalism, and the World*, Review Roundtable co-written with Suzanne van Geuns and Judith Brunton. Public-facing journal supplement commissioned by *American Religion*. *Forthcoming*.

Rebekka King, *The New Heretics: Skepticism, Secularism, and Progressive Christianity*. New York University Press, 2023. *Forthcoming in American Religion*.

Essays

“The Interview: CrossFit, SoulCycle, and Evangelical Christianity with Cody Musselman,” with Michael J. Altman, *Bulletin for the Study of Religion*. 2023, vol. 51 (3-4). Pp. 75-82.

“Current Issues: Sports and Religion in the Supreme Court, *Kennedy vs. Bremerton School District*,” with Eric Bain-Selbo, Eric Stephen, and Frank Klose. *International Journal of Sport and Religion* 1(1), 2023. Pp. 49-65.

“The Currency of Religion in America in Three Acts: Market Logics, Emissaries of Kinship, and Technologies of Feeling,” with Kambiz GahneaBassiri and Roxanne Korpan, *Conversations in MAVCOR Journal*, vol. 6 (3) January 2023.

“Let. It. Burn. SoulCycle’s Jonathan Adler Grapefruit Scented Candle,” *Object Narratives in MAVCOR Journal*, vol. 6 (3) January 2023.

“Making sweat feel spiritual didn’t start with SoulCycle—a religion scholar explains,” *The Conversation*, January 4, 2023. <https://theconversation.com/making-sweat-feel-spiritual-didnt-start-with-soulcycle-a-religion-scholar-explains-190413>

Reported in the [Colin McEnroe Show](#) on Jan. 30, 2023 and [The Star Tribune](#) on March 6, 2023

“‘You Can’t Storm a Capitol Using the Stairs’: Fitness and Religion in the Capitol Insurrection,” *The Religion of 1/6 Project*, a collaboration between the University of Alabama and the Smithsonian, <https://uncivilreligion.org/home/you-dont-storm-the-capitol-using-the-stairs>

“Survival of the CrossFittest: After a Schism over Racism Can the Fitness Empire Shed Its Culture of Whiteness?” *Religion Dispatches*, October 22, 2020, <https://religiondispatches.org/survival-of-the-crossfittest-after-a-schism-over-racism-can-the-fitness-empire-shed-its-culture-of-whiteness/>

“An Impostor Amidst Ivory Towers: The Possibility of Reparative Design,” *Column 5: Journal of the Department of Architecture at the University of Washington*, December 2018.

“Confronting Immortality at Gettysburg: The United States Christian Commission and Civil Religion,” *Harvard Divinity School Graduate Journal*, Summer 2015.

Teaching Experience

Courses Taught as Primary Instructor

Fall 2023 The Politics of Play and Protest: Religion and Sports in America
(Washington University in St. Louis)

Featured in [Washington Magazine](#) Winter 2023

Fall 2022 Religion, Health, and Wellness in Contemporary America
(Washington University in St. Louis)

Spring 2021 Health, Science, and Religion (Yale University)

Courses Taught as Teaching Fellow at Yale University

Spring 2022 History of Modern Christianity (Erika Helgen, instructor)

Fall 2021 Black Religions in Slavery and Freedom (Nicole Meyers Turner, instructor)

Spring 2019 History of Modern Christianity (Tisa Wenger and Erika Helgen, instructors)

Fall 2018 The Corporation (Douglas Rogers, instructor)

Spring 2018 Spiritual But Not Religious (Zareena Grewal, instructor)

Fall 2017 Introduction to Theology (Mark Heim, instructor)

Invited Lectures

December 2023 “SoulCycle and New Religious Movements” in Prof. Matt Sheedy’s *Grifters, Geniuses, and Saviours: Decoding Modern Day Gurus*, Universität Bonn, Germany

November 2023 “SoulCycle and Popular Spirituality” in Prof. Liz Bucar’s *Selling Spirituality*, Northeastern University, Boston, MA

October 2022 “CrossFit Health and Citizen Science” in Prof. Lucia Hulsether’s *Science and Religion*, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY

October 2022 “Training for the Unknown and Unknowable” author Q&A in Prof. Madeleine Ware’s *Contested Bodies: Histories of Health, Sex, and Sports*, Yale University, New Haven, CT

- October 2022** “Does Your Doctor Even Lift?” CrossFit and CrossFit Health, guest lecture in Lucia Hulsether’s Science and Religion, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY
- October 2022** CrossFit and the Military, author Q&A in Madeline Ware’s Contested Bodies Histories of Health, Sex, and Sport, Yale University, New Haven, CT
- April 2022** “Spiritual Exercises: Finding Religion in Unexpected Places,” presentation at Miss Porter’s School, Farmington, CT
- April 2022** “Training for the Unknown and Unknowable: CrossFit and Evangelical Temporality,” author Q&A in Prof. Zachary Smith’s History of Sport in American Society, Penn State Harrisburg, Harrisburg, PA
- February 2022** 2021-2022 Day Lecturer, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL
- November 2021** “CrossFit and the Modes and Methods of Religious Studies,” author Q&A in Prof. George González’s Religion of Everyday Life, CUNY-Baruch, New York, NY
- November 2020** “Therapeutic Consumption,” guest lecture in Prof. George González’s Religion of Everyday Life, CUNY-Baruch, New York, NY
- March 2019** “Health and Religion,” guest lecture in Prof. Lewis West’s Science and Religion, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT.
- April 2019** “Searching for the Soul of SoulCycle,” guest lecture in Prof. Zareena Grewal’s Spiritual But Not Religious, Yale University, New Haven CT.
- April 2018** “SoulCycle and the Spirituality of Boutique Fitness,” guest lecture in Prof. Zareena Grewal’s Spiritual But Not Religious, Yale University, New Haven, CT

Conference Papers and Presentations

- November 2023** “The Silicone Wedding Band: Where Functional Fitness meets Functional Faith,” Men, Masculinities, and Religions Unit, Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, San Antonio, TX
- November 2023** “The New Heretics: Skepticism, Secularism, and Progressive Christianity by Rebekka King: Author Meets Respondents Session,” Anthropology of Religion Unit, Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, San Antonio, TX
- November 2022** “Cult Marketing and the New Wave of Cult-talk: A Response to Amanda Montell’s *Cultish: The Language of Fanaticism*,” New Religious Movements Unit, Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Denver, CO
- November 2022** “The ‘Sport of Fitness’ becomes the Sport of Health: CrossFit Health in the COVID era,” Religion, Sport, and Play Unit, Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Denver, CO

- March 2022** “Spiritual Exercises: Fitness and Religion in Modern America,” Heidelberg Center for American Studies, Spring Academy, Heidelberg University.
- November 2021** “The Primitive Pursuit of Perfection: CrossFit and the Paleo Diet” Religion, Sport, and Play Unit, Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, San Antonio, TX
- April 2021** “Being a Bit ‘Extra’: SoulCycle’s Economy of Excess and Confinement,” Conference on Religion and American Excess at Yale University, online.
- March 2021** “Locating Escape in SoulCycle’s ‘Breakthrough’ Moment: For-Profit Fitness and the Conscious Embrace of Spirituality as the Opiate of the Masses,” Roundtable on Class, Identity, and Religion, AAR/SBL Southeastern Regional Conference (SECSOR), online.
- December 2020** “Autoethnography in the Study of Religion,” Roundtable on ‘Field Notes: Making and Unmaking the Ethnography of Religion,’ Critical Theory and Discourses of Religion Unit, Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, online.
- November 2020** “Manifesting Class: A SoulCycle Case Study,” North American Association for the Study of Religion, online.
- March 2020** “Embodying the Brand: Fitness and Colloquial Religion in the United States,” HCA Spring Academy, Ruprecht-Karls Universität, Heidelberg, Germany (Cancelled, COVID-19)
- November 2018** “The Good Life in the Study of Religion,” Religion and Economy Unit roundtable, Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Denver, CO.
- September 2018** “‘Tap it Back’ at SoulCycle: When Religious Experience Meets the Experience Economy,” Graduate Conference on Religion and Technology, Boston University, Boston, MA.
- May 2018** Conference Moderator, Religious Nationalism and Populism in the Age of Trump in Religion, Populism, and Pluralism Conference, MacMillan Initiative on Religion, Politics, and Society at Yale, New Haven, CT.
- November 2017** “In Tune with the Intimate: The Imperial Bodies of New Thought,” Food and Religion Unit, Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Boston, MA.
- September 2017** “On Being More Human: Reebok, CrossFit, and the Posthumanist Debate,” New Subjectivities of Global Capitalism: Spirituality, Personal Development and the World of Work, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.
- March 2017** “An Impostor Amidst Ivory Towers,” Breaking Through: Textures and Aesthetics of Rupture, The Graduate Center CUNY, New York, NY.
- May 2017** “Religion as a Conjunctive Analytic,” Religion and Politics Roundtable, MacMillan Center Initiative on Religion, Politics and Society at Yale, New Haven, CT.
- November 2016** “Kitsch as an Aesthetic Form of Ritual,” I Love Pop: An Interdisciplinary Conference, The Graduate Center CUNY, New York, NY.

- October 2016** “The Shrines of Aspen as Assemblages of “the local,”” Ways of Knowing Conference, Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, MA.
- October 2015** “NONES and American Democracy,” Ways of Knowing Conference, Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, MA.
- August 2014** Young Adult Scholar Panelist, North American Interfaith Network (NAIN) Connect Conference, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.
- April 2014** “So You Don’t Know Much About Mennonites,” Center for the Study of World Religions lecture series, Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, MA.
- April 2011** “Gettysburg as a Shrine in American Civil Religion,” Michigan State University Department of Religious Studies Undergraduate Scholars Conference, (Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.
- April 2011** “Gettysburg’s Role in American Civil Religion,” American Religious History II, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo, MI.

Workshops and Colloquia Presentations

- September 2023** “Broken Bodies: Strife and Schism in CrossFit,” Danforth Center in Religion and Politics Colloquium, Washington University in St. Louis, Saint Louis, MO
- September 2022** “Our Product is our People: The Economy of Charisma at SoulCycle,” Danforth Center in Religion and Politics Colloquium, Washington University in St. Louis, Saint Louis, MO
- December 2021** “COVID and Schism in CrossFit,” American Religious History Workshop, American Religious History Working Group, Yale University, New Haven, CT.
- October 2020** “The Witness Tree: Memory, Nation, and Religion among American Trees,” Sensory Cultures of Religion Research Group, Yale University, New Haven, CT.
- October 2020** “‘Fitness is a Religion’: Justifying our terms in Religious Studies,” American Religious History Workshop, American Religious History Working Group, Yale University, New Haven, CT.
- April 2020** “SoulCycle and Charisma Reconsidered” American Religious History Workshop, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.
- March 2020** “The Politics of Charisma and the Cohesion of SoulCycle’s #SoulFam Tribe,” American Examples Workshop, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL.
- February 2020** Invited Respondent, Princeton Seminar in American Religious History, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.
- February 2020** “Our Product is People: Charismatic Leadership at SoulCycle” Workshop at the Princeton Center for the Study of Religion, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.

November 2019	“CrossFit and Evangelical Temporality” Religion and Culture Workshop at the Princeton Center for the Study of Religion, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.
October 2019	Invited Respondent, Religion and Culture Workshop at the Princeton Center for the Study of Religion, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.
October 2019	Invited Respondent, Princeton Seminar in American Religious History, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.
May 2019	“CrossFit and Conversion: An Autoethnographic Exploration,” American Religious History Working Group, Yale University, New Haven, CT.
April 2018	Invited Respondent, Yale Seminar in Religious Studies, Yale University, New Haven, CT.
December 2017	“Willful Suffering,” American Religious History Working Group, Yale University, New Haven, CT.
February 2011	“Gettysburg as a Shrine in American Civil Religion” Senior Individualized Project Colloquium, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo, MI.

Professional Experience

2020-2022	Communications Fellow Yale GSAS Office of Communications
2021	Editorial Board Member Ministry of Ideas Podcast
2017-2022	Culture Draw Coordinator Jonathan Edwards College, Yale University
2013-2015	Research Associate Harvard University Pluralism Project -Producer of Pluralism Podcast: http://pluralism.org/podcast/

Fellowships and Awards

2022	Dissertation approved with Distinction, Yale Graduate School of Arts & Sciences
2020-2022	Franke Program in Science and Humanities Fellowship
2020	MacMillan International Dissertation Fellowship Award
2019	Mellon Dissertation Writing-in-Residence Fellowship
2015-2016	Arthur S. Estey Fellowship
2011	Magna Cum Laude, Kalamazoo College
2011	Honors in undergraduate major
2011	High honors for thesis: <i>Gettysburg As a Shrine in American Civil Religion</i> , Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo, MI.

- 2010 Alden and Vada Dow Family Foundation Grant
- 2009 Phi Beta Kappa
- 2008 Alpha Lambda Delta
- 2008 Marion H. Dunsmore Memorial Prize for excellence in religion, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo, MI.
- 2008 Voynovitch Prize for paper, *Dispelling the Stereotype that Creationists are Uneducated*, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo, MI.

Professional Service

- 2022-** Board member, *International Journal of Sport and Religion*
-“Current Issues” editor
- 2019-present** Religion and Conversion Steering Committee, American Academy of Religion
- 2021** Yale Humanities Doctoral Reform Committee, Religious Studies, Yale University
- 2018-2022** Graduate Fellow for Jonathan Edwards College, Yale University
- 2017-2022** Religious Studies Graduate Student Committee, Yale University
- 2018** Religious Studies Graduate Admissions Committee, Yale University
- 2016-2019** Religious Studies Graduate Student Life Coordinator, Yale University
- 2016-2019** Organizer, American Religious History Workshop, Yale University
- 2013-2015** Editorial Board Member, *Culture: The Graduate Journal of Harvard Divinity School*
- 2014-2015** Contributing Scholar, *State of Formation* by the Journal of Inter-Religious Studies
- 2013-2015** Staff Writer, Harvard Divinity Office of Communications

Yale Conferences *organized*

Religion and American Excess (spring 2021)
 Religion, Pluralism, and Populism (spring 2018)
 Religion, Politics, and Society (spring 2017)

Washington University in St. Louis Conferences *organized*

Religion and Parody lecture series (spring 2024)

Special Project Participation

- 2022-2023** Project Fellow
 Special Podcast series
 Sacred Writes + Straight White American Jesus Podcast
 Northeastern University
 Liz Bucar, director and Bradley Onishi, host
- 2022** Project Participant
 Heidelberg Center for American Studies Spring Academy
 Heidelberg University, Germany
 Wilfried Mausbach, director

- 2021** Contributor
The Religion of 1/6 Project
University of Alabama and the Smithsonian National Museum of American History
Jerome Copulsky and Michael Altman, directors
- 2017-2022** Junior Fellow
Material Economies of Religion in America
Luce Foundation
Sally Promey and Sarah Rivett, directors
- 2016-2019** Junior Fellow
Initiative on Religion, Politics, and Society
The MacMillan Center at Yale

Professional Memberships

American Academy of Religion
American Studies Association
American Anthropological Association
American Society of Church History

Languages

French (reading, writing, conversational)
German (reading with dictionary)
Spanish (reading with dictionary)
Thai (conversational)

Other

- 2023** Sacred Writes Public Scholarship Training, Saint Louis University
- 2022** Antiracist Pedagogy Teacher Training, Yale Divinity School
- 2021-2022** Antiracist Pedagogy Learning Community, Yale Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning, Yale University
- 2021-2022** Digital Humanities @ Yale Working Group, Yale University
- 2021** Colloquium on Public Writing and Scholarship, Yale University
- 2019-2021** University Administrator Mentorship Program, Yale University
- 2018** Mental Health First Aid Certification