

Aaron J. French

University of California, Davis
Department of Religious Studies

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. The Study of Religion with a Designated Emphasis in Science and Technology Studies (STS), University of California, Davis, expected June 2021

Major Fields of Study: History of Esotericism, New Religious Movements, History of Science, Late 19th/Early 20th Century German Philosophy, Science and Technology Studies

Dissertation

Title: “Disenchanting and Re-Enchanting Modernity with Max Weber and Rudolf Steiner.” The dissertation examines the boundaries between religion, esotericism, and science during the transition to modernity in Germany by comparing sociologist Max Weber and alternative religious thinker Rudolf Steiner. Dissertation Committee: Dr. Allison Coudert (Chair), Dr. Chunjie Zhang, Dr. Timothy Lenoir, Dr. Frederick Amrine

M.A. Study of Religion with a Designated Emphasis in Science and Technology Studies (STS), University of California, Davis, June 2018

B.A. Religious Studies, *summa cum laude*, University of Arizona, May 2015

DISTINCTIONS

Graduate research focusing on the “Mandela Effect” showcased on the UC Davis College of Letters and Science webpage (Winter 2020)

TEACHING AND RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Areas of specialization include History of Science, History of Esotericism, Magic as Theoretical Concept, Science Fiction Literature, Posthumanism, Affect, Religion and Science
- Teaching interests include Theory and Methods of Religious Studies, Religion and Science, Magic and Science, Science Fiction and Religion, History of Esoteric and Hermetic Currents

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Associate Instructor: *Religion and Science Fiction*, *Death and the Afterlife*, and *Religion, Magic, and Science* (cross-listed with Science and Technology Studies or STS)

Department of Religious Studies, UC Davis, 2017-2019

Independently developed course syllabi and lectures. Wrote and evaluated examinations and assignments. Coordinated group activities and student presentations. Held weekly office hours

Cooperative Instruction: *A Female Perspective on Religion? Gender and the History of Religious Studies*, co-taught and co-developed with another professor for the Department of Religious Studies, Universität Erfurt, 2020

Teaching Assistant, Department of Religious Studies, Department of Sociology, and Department of Comparative Literature, UC Davis
Responsible for section lectures (*Tutorien*) and exam evaluations. Held weekly office hours.
Courses included:

Sociology of Religion (Winter 2019)

Myths and Legends (Winter 2019)

Abrahamic Religions (Winter 2017)

History of Christianity (Fall 2016)

Teaching Assistant, Department of Religious Studies, University of Arizona
Responsible for section lectures (*Tutorien*) and exam evaluations. Held weekly office hours.
Courses included:

Science and Religion (Spring 2015)

Psychology of Religion (Fall 2014)

ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Graduate Student Representative for the Association for the Study of Esotericism, helped organize large academic conference at UC Davis (2016) on the theme of “Cartographies of the Soul.” Responsibilities included conference organizing, evaluation of abstracts during submissions process, and promotional activities

INVITED LECTURES

“**History of Esotericism**,” Science Fiction, Department of English, UC Davis, Spring 2018

“**The Eleusinian Mysteries**,” Myths and Legends, Department of Comparative Literature, UC Davis, Spring 2019

“**Transhumanism and Posthumanism**,” Healthcare and Religious Belief, Department of Religious Studies, UC Davis, Spring 2017

RELATED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Editor-in-Chief, Dark Discoveries Magazine, San Bruno, CA, 2014-2018

Editor-in-Chief of nationwide professional speculative fiction magazine published by JournalStone Publishing

Book Editor, JournalStone Publishing, San Bruno, CA, 2014-2018

Editor on four full-length novel projects per year

PUBLICATIONS

“**Mythos as Modern Rationality**”

Published in *New Approaches to Disenchantment* (University of Indiana Press, forthcoming)

“**Esoteric Nationalism and Conspiracism in WWI**”

Published in *Religious Dimensions of Conspiracy Theory* (University of Amsterdam Press, forthcoming)

“**‘The Mandela Effect’ is the Perfect Film for our Age of Distrust and Doubt**”

Published online in *The Conversation* (December 4, 2019)

Book Review Róbert Péter, Jan A.M. Snoek and Cécile Révauger (eds.), *British Freemasonry, 1717–1813, 5 Vols.* (Routledge, 2016)

Review published in *Aries: Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism* 19, No. 2 (Brill, 2019)

“Voyage to India with Sir William Jones: The Asiatick Society Remakes the West”

Presented at the 14th International Symposium on Medieval and Early Modern Studies
Published in *Travel, Time, and Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Time* (De Gruyter, 2018)

“The Mandela Effect and Future Memory”

Presented at the 6th International ESSWE Conference: Western Esotericism and Deviance
Published in *Correspondences: Journal for the Academic Study of Western Esotericism* 6, No. 2 (2018)

SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

6. Deutsch-Asiatischer Studientag Literatur- und Geisteswissenschaften, “‘Light from the East’: How Max Weber and Rudolf Steiner Understood the Disenchanted Modern West,” Berlin, 2020

7th Biannual Conference of the European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism (ESSWE), “Max Weber and Monte Verità: Experiments with Altered States,” Amsterdam, 2019

40th Annual Conference Southwest Popular / American Culture Association (SWPACA), “Conceptual Parallels in Theosophy and Transhumanism,” Albuquerque, New Mexico, 2019

8th International Conference on Religion & Spirituality in Society, “The Fabulations of Theory,” UC Berkeley, CA 2018

Graduate Conference: Specters, Hauntings, Presences, “China, Esotericism, and the Disenchantment of Weber,” Northwestern University, Illinois, 2016

AWARDS

Provost Dissertation Year Fellowship, 2020-2021

Humanities Program Fellowship, 2019

Study of Religion Dissertation Writing Summer Fellowship, 2018

Study of Religion Second-Year Fellowship, UC Davis, 2016-17

Study of Religion First-Year Fellowship, UC Davis, 2015-16

Ora Bretall Scholarship in Humanities, 2014-14

“Spirit of Inquiry” Honors College Scholarship, 2014-14

“Why Humanities Matter” Scholarship, 2013-13

LANGUAGES

English
French
German

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society
American Academy of Religion
European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism
Association for the Study of Esotericism (grad student rep)
History of Science Society
Goethe Society of North America