

# EMMA RIFAI

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## EDUCATION

- 2021 **Ph.D., Religious Studies, The University of Iowa**  
*Title:* Secular Embodiments: Body Management, Protestant Culture, and American Secularism in the Twenty-First Century  
*Directors:* Kristy Nabhan-Warren and Jenna Supp-Montgomerie  
*Committee Members:* Natalie Fixmer-Oraiz, Naomi Greyser, and Raymond Mentzer
- 2017 **The Graduate Certificate in Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies**  
2017 **The Graduate Certificate in College Teaching**
- 2018 **M.A., Religious Studies, The University of Iowa**  
*Comprehensive Exam Areas:* American Religions; Critical Theory and Religion; and Religion, Food, and the Body
- 2011 **M.A., Middle East Studies, The University of Washington**  
*Thesis:* Fashioning Identities: New Relationships with Fashion and Modesty in Turkey
- 2009 **B.A., Sociology of Religion, Minnesota State University Moorhead**  
*Thesis:* Unveiling New Orientalism: An Exploration in Images
- 2008 **B.M., Instrumental Music and Religious Studies, Concordia College**  
*Thesis:* The Body's Iron Cage and Its Relationship to the Protestant Ethic

## PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

- 2023 **St. Catherine University**, Department of Core Curriculum. Lecturer.
- 2021-2022 **Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University**, Department of Religion and Culture. Instructor.

## PUBLICATIONS

### Refereed Journal Articles

"Whose Techno-Utopia? Power, Privilege, and the Religio-Secular Frameworks of the Contemporary Biohacking Movement." *Religion Compass* 16:11-12 (November 2022): 1-10.

"Digital Waistlands: Pro-Ana Communities, Religion, and Embodiment." *Journal of Religion, Media, and Digital Culture* 9 (2020): 207-227.

“Weighty Matter(s): Religion, Secularism, and American Weight Loss Culture.” *Religion Compass* 14:2 (February 2020): 1-10.

“Spreading the Religion of Thinness from California to Calcutta: A Critical Feminist Postcolonial Analysis” with Michelle Lelwica and Jenna McNallie. *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 24:1 (Spring 2009): 20-41. (Published under Emma Hoglund.)

### **Textbook Entries**

“Evangelical Christianities in North America.” *Bloomsbury Religion in North America*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021.

“Women and Christianity.” *Bloomsbury Religion in North America*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021.

### **Book Reviews**

Review of *The Story of Radio Mind: A Missionary’s Journey on Indigenous Land*, by Pamela E. Klassen. *Material Religion* 15:5 (July 2019): 644-645.

Review of *Religious Affects: Animality, Evolution, and Power*, by Donovan O. Schaefer. *Material Religion* 12:4 (December 2016): 515-516.

## **CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION**

### **Conferences Organized**

2022	Religion and Media Workshop, Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Denver, Colorado
2021	Religion and Media Workshop, Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, San Antonio, Texas
2020	Religion and Media Workshop, Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Virtual
2019	Annual Upper Midwest Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, St. Paul, Minnesota
2018	Graduate Student Council Student Roundtable Series, Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Denver, Colorado
2018	Annual Upper Midwest Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, St. Paul, Minnesota
2017	Graduate Student Council Programming, Annual Meeting of the American

Academy of Religion, Boston, Massachusetts

**Conference Presentations**

- 2021 “Whose Techno-Utopia? Biohacking, Silicon Valley, and Protestant Privilege,” Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, San Antonio, Texas
- 2020 “DNA Dieting: Genetic Testing, Nutrigenetics, and American Secularism,” Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Virtual
- 2018 “Uploading the Body; Embodying the Online: Bodies, Digital Space, and the Pro-Ana Movement,” Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Denver, Colorado
- 2018 “Networked Anorexia: Pro-Ana Communities, Network Logic, and the Internet,” Conference of the International Society for Media, Religion, and Culture, University of Colorado Boulder, Boulder, Colorado
- 2018 “Pro-Ana: An Internet-Mediated ‘New Religious Movement’?” Craft Critique Culture Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa
- 2017 “Disrupting Secular Space: Veiled Female Bodies in Turkish Shopping Malls,” Jakobsen Memorial Graduate Conference, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa
- 2016 “Fashioning Identities: New Relationships with Fashion and Modesty in Turkey,” Doing the Body in the 21st Century Conference, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- 2008 “The Body’s Iron Cage and Its Relationship to the Protestant Ethic,” Annual Upper Midwest Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, St. Paul, Minnesota
- 2007 “From California to Calcutta: Spreading the White-Western Devotion to Female Thinness—A Feminist Post-Colonial Analysis,” Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, San Diego, California

**PRESENTATIONS AND LECTURES**

**Colloquia**

- 2021 “Body Hacks: Biohacking, Silicon Valley, and Protestant Privilege,” Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia

2019 "Biohacking the Body: Fasting, Silicon Valley, and Protestant Privilege,"  
The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa

### **Guest Class Lectures**

2022 "Divine Dieting: Pro-Ana, Religion, and the Body," in *Introduction to American Studies* (RLCL:2504), Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia

2019 "Digital Waistlands: Pro-Ana Communities, Religion, and Embodiment," in *Food, Body, and Belief: A Global Perspective* (RELS:2674), The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa

2014 "Spreading the Religion of Thinness from California to Calcutta: A Critical Feminist Postcolonial Analysis," in *Women's Religious History* (REL 374), Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota

2014 "Fashioning Identities: New Relationships with Fashion and Modesty in Turkey," in *Social Theory* (SOC 302), Minnesota State University Moorhead, Moorhead, Minnesota

### **AWARDS AND HONORS**

2021 Barbara W. and Rex E. Montgomery Award, The University of Iowa

2019 President and Mrs. Eugene Gilmore Scholarship, The University of Iowa

2018 Rev. Louis Penningroth Award, The University of Iowa

2017 Alice Marguerite Blough Award, The University of Iowa

### **GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS**

2019 College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Dissertation Writing Fellowship, The University of Iowa

2019 Graduate College Post-Comprehensive Research Fellowship, The University of Iowa

2016, 2018 Graduate Student Senate Travel Grant, The University of Iowa

2010-2011 Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship, The University of Washington

2009-2010 Schwartz Fellowship, The University of Washington

2006-2007                      Centennial Scholars Grant, Concordia College

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

### **St. Catherine University, *Lecturer***

The Reflective Woman (CORE-1000W), Fall 2023

### **Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, *Instructor***

Religion and the Modern World (RLCL: 1034), Spring 2022

World Religions (RLCL: 1014), Fall 2021, Spring 2022

Religion in American Life (RLCL: 2124), Fall 2021

### **The University of Iowa, *Instructor***

Harry Potter: Mystery and Magic of Life (RELS:1997), Fall 2020

Women and Religion in America Today (RELS: 2986), Spring 2020

Digital Media and Religion (RELS: 2930/COMM:2079), Spring 2018

### **The University of Iowa, *Teaching Assistant***

Modern Religion and Culture (RELS:1250/HIST:1050), Spring 2017, Spring 2021

Medieval Religion and Culture (RELS:1225/HIST:1025), Fall 2018

Harry Potter: Mystery & Magic of Life (RELS:1997), Fall 2017

Digital Media and Religion (RELS:2930/COMM:2079), Spring 2017

Religion in America Today (RELS:1702), Fall 2015, Fall 2016

Religion and Sport in America (RELS:2877), Spring 2015, Spring 2016

### **The University of Iowa, *Teaching Practicum Participant***

Magic Machines: Technology and Social Change (COMM:4153), Fall 2015

Women and Power in U.S. History Through the Civil War (GWSS:3280/HIST:3280),  
Fall 2016

### **Concordia College, *Teaching Assistant***

Introduction to Religion (REL 100), Fall 2013

Catholicism (REL 328), Spring 2013

Religion and the Body (REL 382), Spring 2013

Women's Religious History (REL 374), Fall 2012

## **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

### **The University of Iowa, *Research Assistant***

Jenna Supp-Montgomerie, Department of Religious Studies, 2015-2016

### **Concordia College, *Research Assistant***

Michelle Lelwica, Department of Religion, 2006-2008

## **ACADEMIC SERVICE**

## **Service to Profession**

2022-Present	Assistant Editor, <i>Journal of Religious Ethics</i>
2018-2022	Chair and Steering Committee Member, Religion and Media Workshop of the American Academy of Religion
2019	Peer Reviewer, <i>Communication, Culture and Critique</i>
2017-2019	Student Director, Upper Midwest Region of the American Academy of Religion
2018	Peer Reviewer, <i>Contemporary Women's Writing</i>

## **Departmental and University Service**

2021-2022	The Department of Religion and Culture's Brown Bag Series Coordinator, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
2015-2018	Graduate Student Critical Theory Reading Group Coordinator, The University of Iowa
2015-2018	Religion Graduate Student Organization (RGSO), The University of Iowa Co-Coordinator, 2017-2018 Faculty Committee Representative, 2016-2018 Graduate Student Mentor, 2016-2017 Secretary/Treasurer, 2016 Social Event Chair, 2015-2016
2016-2017	UI Council on the Status of Women Member, The University of Iowa
2015	Advanced Graduate Student Workshop Leader, The University of Iowa

## **Community Outreach**

2022	"Religion and Secularism" <i>The Religious Other Inclusion Workshop</i> , Tri-Faith Initiative, Omaha, Nebraska
2022	"Christian Nationalism" Workshop, Luther Memorial Lutheran Church, Blacksburg, Virginia
2021-2022	New River Abortion Access Fund Grant Writing Committee Member, Blacksburg, Virginia
2021	"The Protestant Roots of Secular American Values." Religion @ Work

(Podcast).

- 2019 “Islam and Veiling Practices” Workshop, Lutheran Campus Ministries, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa
- 2018 “Women and Islam” Workshop, JustChurch, Iowa City, Iowa
- 2018 “Women and Islam” Workshop, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Iowa City, Iowa
- 2017 “Islam” Three-Part Workshop, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Iowa City, Iowa
- 2015 “Islam” Guest Discussion Leader, Lutheran Campus Ministries, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa

## **PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- 2023 Future Humans, Human Futures: Religion, Technology and Ethics Workshop, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
- 2019-2021 Secularity and Sanctity in the Modern Era Working Group, Obermann Center, The University of Iowa
- 2015-2020 Graduate Student Critical Theory Reading Group, The University of Iowa
- 2020 Humanities for the Public Good Networking Workshop, Obermann Center, The University of Iowa
- 2020 Bridging the Gap: What I Said vs. What They Heard Workshop, The University of Iowa
- 2019 Social Justice and Vulnerability in the Classroom Workshop, The University of Iowa
- 2019 Managing the Market Summer Professional Development Series, The University of Iowa
- 2018 Summer Doctoral Seminar, Wayne State University
- 2018 Dissertation Writing Summer Camp, The University of Iowa
- 2018 Grant and Fellowship Writing Seminar, The University of Iowa
- 2016 Iowa N.E.W. Leadership Institute, The University of Iowa

## **COURSES PREPARED TO TEACH**

Evangelical Christianities in America: Gender, Women, and Sexuality  
Harry Potter: Mystery and Magic of Life  
Methods and Theories in Religious Studies: Genealogy, Discipline, and Power  
Religion and the Modern World: Key Questions and Debates  
Women and Religion in America Today: From Protestantism to Paganism  
“World(?)” “Religion(s)(?)”(?): Theory, Methodology, and Gender

## **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

American Academy of Religion  
International Society for Media, Religion, and Culture  
Theta Alpha Kappa  
Alpha Kappa Delta

## **LANGUAGE**

Arabic, Reading Proficient

## **REFERENCES**

### **Naomi Greyser**

Associate Professor  
Departments of American Studies, English, and Gender, Women’s and Sexuality Studies  
The University of Iowa  
Iowa City, Iowa 52242  
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### **Raymond Mentzer**

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Departments of Religious Studies and History  
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### **Kristy Nabhan-Warren**

Professor and V.O. and Elizabeth Kahl Figge Chair, Catholic Studies  
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**Jenna Supp-Montgomerie**

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