

# Zachary Simpson

**Website:** <https://usao.academia.edu/ZacharySimpson>

## Education & Research Experience

*Harvard University*, Post-Doctoral Fellow, 2007–2008; Evolution and Theology of Cooperation Project; Supervisors: Sarah Coakley and Martin Nowak  
*Claremont Graduate University*, PhD, Religious Studies; Concentration: Philosophy of Religion and Theology, 2009; Advisor: Philip Clayton  
*The Colorado College*, Bachelor of Arts, 2001, *cum laude*; **Major:** Biology **Minor:** Philosophy

## Areas of Specialization

History of Western Philosophy and Theology  
19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century European Philosophy  
Philosophy of Religion

## Areas of Competence

Indigenous Thought of the American Southwest  
Science and Religion  
Meta-Ethics

## Teaching & Relevant Work Experience

*Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Bradford Ableson Chair in Religious Studies, University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma (USAO)*, 2009–Present  
*Visiting Instructor, Colorado College*, Fall 2007  
*Adjunct Instructor, The University of La Verne*, Spring 2007  
*Teaching Assistant, Claremont School of Theology*, 2005–2006

## Courses Taught

### Philosophy Courses

Environmental Ethics  
Stoicism  
Aesthetics  
19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophy  
The Wisdom of Living  
Critical Theory, Feminism, and Post-Colonialism  
Social and Political Philosophy  
Advanced Seminar in Contemporary European Philosophy  
Medieval and Modern Philosophical and Religious Thought  
Philosophy of Religion  
Greco-Roman Moral Philosophy

### Religious Studies Courses

Cults  
Comparative Religions  
The Bible  
Religion and Violence  
Belief  
Ideas of God from an Interreligious Perspective  
Field Study of World Religions

Religion and Modern Media  
Conversations Between Science, Philosophy, and Religion  
Theologies of Emergence  
Ecology and Religion  
Systematic Theology  
The Christian Tradition  
Introduction to Philosophy and Religious Studies

### General Educational and Interdisciplinary Courses

Rhetoric and Critical Thinking  
Senior Seminar  
World Thought and Culture from 5000 BCE to 150 CE  
World Thought and Culture from 150 CE to 1650 CE  
World Thought and Culture from 1650 CE to the Present  
Political and Economic Systems and Theories  
Honors Research  
Service Learning: The Special Olympics

**Books & Edited  
Volumes**

- Author, *The Paradoxes of Modernity: Creating Belief through Art, Community and Ritual* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2022)
- Author, *Life as Art: Aesthetics and the Creation of Self* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2012; Korean translation published by Galmuri Press in 2016)
- Assistant Editor (with Sarah Coakley and Martin Nowak), *Evolution, Games and God: The Principle of Cooperation* (Harvard University Press, 2013)
- Assistant Editor (with Sarah Coakley), *Spiritual Healing: Science, Meaning and Discernment* (Eerdmans, 2020)
- Editor, *Adventures in the Spirit: New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, by Philip Clayton (Fortress Press, 2008)
- Assistant Editor (with Philip Clayton), *All That is: A Naturalistic Faith for the 21st Century*, by Arthur Peacocke and ten respondents (Fortress Press, 2007)
- Associate Editor (with Philip Clayton), *Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science*, (Oxford University Press, 2006)
- Assistant Editor (with Philip Clayton and Paul Davies), *The Re-Emergence of Emergence*, (Oxford University Press, 2006)
- Assistant Editor (with Philip Clayton and Jim Schaal), *Practicing Science, Living Faith*, (Columbia University Press, 2007)
- Chief Author, *Environmental Contaminants in Aquatic Plants, Invertebrates, and Fishes of the San Juan River Mainstem, 1990–1996*, 1999, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Co–Author, *Follow-up Investigation of Human Health Risk Concerns at Mescalero National Fish Hatchery*, 1998, USFWS
- Chief Author, *Contaminant Investigation of New Mexico Fish Hatcheries, 1998*, USFWS

**Peer-Reviewed  
Articles and Invited  
Essays**

- “How the As-If Becomes True: Fictions from Vaihinger to Appiah and Beyond,” *Southwest Philosophical Studies*, 202, Volume 43, Forthcoming
- “Food and Interrelation in Continental Thought: A Deconstruction and Topology,” *Comparative and Continental Philosophy*, 2018, 10 (2): 151-168
- “Emergence and Non–Personal Theology,” *Zygon*, June 2013, 48 (2): 405-427
- “The Interdisciplinary Arts and Ideas Performance Model: Philosophical, Psychological, and Practical Perspectives,” (with Steven Weber) Proceedings of the Fine and Performing Arts Conference of the Athens Institute for Education and Research, 2012
- “Evolution and Religion,” *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion*, Vol. 3, 2012
- “The Truths we Tell Ourselves: Foucault on parrhesia,” *Foucault Studies*, May 2012, 13: 99–115; re-printed in Italian in *Contro-Parola: Foucault e la Parrhesia*, ed., Viviana Segreto (Milan: Mimesis, 2018), 53-73
- “Merleau–Ponty and Emergent Perception,” *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, October 2011, 42 (3): 290–304
- “Desire and Subcritical Life: An Attempted Rapprochement Between Renaud Barbaras and Contemporary Systems Science,” *Research in Phenomenology*, 2011, 41: 90–108
- “Emergence: Complexity and Organization,” (with Philip Clayton) in *Vision, Science, and the Future of Science and the Big Questions*, ed., Charles Harper (Oxford University Press, 2010)
- “Philip Clayton: Adventures in Dialogue,” in *Adventures in the Spirit: New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, Philip Clayton, ed., Zachary Simpson (Fortress Press, 2008)
- “Friendship, the Kiss of Death, and God: H. Richard Niebuhr and Jacques Derrida on the Other,” *Heythrop Journal*, 2008, 49 (1): 62–78

**Presentations**

- Co–Author, with N. Bower, S. Getty, M. Hoffman, and C. Smith, “Lead Isotope Analysis of Intra–skeletal Variation in a 19th century Mental Asylum Cemetery: Diagenesis Versus Migration,” in *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology*, 2005, 15 (5): 360–370
- “NHL Pride Nights, Religious Belief, and the Rhetoric of Fideism,” American Academy of Religion National Meeting, San Diego, CA, 2024
- “Individuality as Seen in Western Island Narratives,” Institute for American Religious and Philosophical Thought Meeting, Berlin, Germany, 2023
- “Islands and the Emergence of the Modern Individual,” AAR Regional Meeting, Denver, CO, 2023
- “The ‘Wager’ as Prudential Belief and Practice in Pascal, William James, and Contemporary Theology,” AAR Regional Meeting, Denver, CO, 2022
- “How the ‘As If’ Becomes True: Fictions from Vaihinger to Appiah and Beyond,” New Mexico Texas Philosophical Society Annual Meeting, Waco, TX, 2021
- “Nietzsche and the Problem of Self-Deception,” SPEP Annual Meeting, Pittsburgh, PA, 2019
- “Inversions of Sacrifice in Popular Culture,” AAR Regional Meeting, Omaha, NE, 2019
- “Kant and the Problem of Self-Deception,” Northwest Philosophy Conference, Pullman, WA, 2017
- “Fictive Rituals for Climate Change?,” AAR Regional Meeting, Boulder, CO, 2017
- “Naturalist and Materialist Theology,” Presentation delivered to “New Frontiers in Theology” Conference, Claremont, CA, February 2017
- “Life as Art and Beyond: Living Artfully for Oneself and Others,” Presentation delivered to Galmuri Publishing in Korea, July 2016
- Chair and Organizer, “Telling the Story,” Panel on the Need for Storytelling in Systems Theory, Seizing an Alternative Conference, Claremont, CA, June 2015
- “Fantasy and Metaphysics: The Post-Critical Need for Ritual,” AAR Regional Meeting, Omaha, NE, 2015
- “On the Nature of Nature,” Invited Talk, Claremont School of Theology, 2013
- “Evolutionary Theories of Belief,” AAR Regional Meeting, Denver, CO, 2013
- “Life as Art,” Invited Book Talk at USAO, 2013
- “In Defense of Ugliness,” USAO Arts and Ideas Festival, 2012
- “Marcuse and the Exception,” the Fourth Biennial Conference of the International Herbert Marcuse Society, Philadelphia, PA, 2011
- “Fantasy and the Future of Continental Philosophy of Religion,” Syracuse Conference on the Future of Continental Philosophy of Religion (sponsored by John Caputo), Syracuse, NY, 2011
- “On the Use of Game Theory in Religion,” AAR Regional Meeting, Denver, CO, 2011
- “The Truths we tell Ourselves: Foucault on parrhesia,” Foucault Circle Annual Meeting, Banff, Alberta, Canada, 2011
- “Emergence: From Science to (non–personal) Religion,” American Academy of Religion Regional Meeting, Omaha, NE, 2010
- “The Interdisciplinary Arts and Ideas Performance Model: Philosophical, Psychological, and Practical Perspectives,” (with Steven Weber) The Fine and Performing Arts Conference of the Athens Institute for Education

	<p>and Research, Athens, Greece, 2010; also accepted for the Conference on Multidisciplinary Research in Music Pedagogy, Ontario, Canada, 2010</p> <p>“Emergence as a Model for the Science and Religion Dialogue,” Colorado College, December 2007</p> <p>“Inexplicability and Revelation in Music,” 2007 American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, San Diego, California</p> <p>“Friendship, the Kiss of Death, and God: H. Richard Niebuhr and Jacques Derrida on the Other,” 2006 AAR Regional Meeting, Claremont, CA</p> <p>“Native American ‘Religion’: A Reassessment and a Constructive Proposal,” 2005 AAR Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA</p> <p>“Heidegger and the Numbing of the American Mind,” 2005 AAR Regional Meeting, Tempe, AZ</p> <p>“Diel Horizontal Migration (DHM) of <i>Simocephalus</i> and <i>Daphnia galeata mendotae</i> in Response to Multiple Predator Cues,” Kansas State University, August 2000</p>
<b>Administrative Experience</b>	<p>USAO Vice-Presidential Search Committee, 2024</p> <p>USAO Presidential Search Committee, 2023</p> <p>Chair, USAO Tenure and Promotion Committee, 2023-2024</p> <p>Chair, USAO Handbook Committee, 2017-2019</p> <p>Co-Chair, USAO Interdisciplinary Studies Committee, 2018-2019</p> <p>Chair, ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee, 2017</p> <p>President and Vice-President, USAO Faculty Association, 2014-2016</p> <p>Coordinator, USAO Philosophy and Religious Studies Minor, 2011-Present</p> <p>Coordinator, USAO Cultural Studies Minor, 2017-Present</p> <p>Chair, USAO Faculty Resources Committee, 2014-2017</p> <p>Chair, USAO Superior Teaching and Scholarship Committee, 2012 and 2014</p> <p>Secured Funding for Undergraduate Research Director, USAO, 2015</p> <p>Co-Chair, USAO Ten-Year Planning Committee, 2014-2016</p> <p>Co-Wrote USAO Academic Dishonesty Policy, 2014</p> <p>Member, USAO Curriculum Committee, 2012-2014</p> <p>Member, General Educational Curriculum Review Committee, 2010-2019</p> <p>Member, Search Committee for Biology Positions, 2012 and 2014</p> <p>Biologist and Field Supervisor, US Fish and Wildlife Service, 2002-2004</p>
<b>Work in Preparation or Under Review</b>	<p>“From the Confessional to the Autobiography: How Modernity Re-Coded Religious Penitence,” presentation in preparation</p> <p>Religious Ethnography of Shumei International, field research currently being conducted</p>
<b>Book Reviews</b>	<p><i>Heraclitus and Derrida: Presocratic Deconstruction</i>, by Erin O’Connell, <i>Heythrop Journal</i>, 2009, <b>50</b> (4): 742–3</p>
<b>Academic Service</b>	<p>Board of Directors and Treasurer, Rocky-Mountain Great Plains Society for the Study of Religion, 2023-Present</p> <p>Referee, Palgrave-Macmillan, 2022</p> <p>Referee, <i>Foucault Studies</i>, 2014-2017</p> <p>Referee, Oxford University Press, 2013-2015</p> <p>Referee, <i>Interface Focus</i> (published by the Royal Society), 2011–2013</p> <p>Editorial Advisory Board Member in Science and Religion, Oxford University Press, 2011–2015</p> <p>Referee, <i>Worldviews Journal</i>, 2009</p>

**Student Service**

Faculty Sponsor, USAO Hiking Club, 2016-Present  
Faculty Sponsor, USAO Campus Garden, 2012–2015  
Faculty Sponsor, USAO Philosophy Club, 2010–Present

**Awards**

USAO Scholarly Research Award, 2013 and 2022  
USAO Superior Teaching Award, 2011  
Gladys Anderson Emerson Research Grant, 2011  
CGU Dissertation Grant, 2008–2009

**Undergraduate Thesis Supervision**

Serena Green (USAO Honors Research: Parallels Between Existentialist and Ergodic Literature, 2024)  
Korbyn Peebles (USAO Honors Research: Moral Conflict over Climate Change Among Contemporary Southern Baptists, 2021)  
Bridget Byers (USAO Research Endorsement: Phenomenology of Speech Acts, 2018)  
Maite Miller (USAO Research Endorsement: Rituals for Reducing Intergroup Conflict, 2017)  
Beth Powell (USAO Research Endorsement: The Effects of Domestic Food Policy on National Security, 2016)  
Maggie Wilson (USAO Research Endorsement: Feminine Beauty in the Hebrew Bible, 2014)  
Megan Harris (USAO Senior Thesis: The History of Tarot, 2014)  
Sara Rowe (USAO Senior Thesis: Camus and Religion, 2013)  
Jacky Tideman (USAO Senior Thesis: Anti-Heroes in Modern Film, 2013)  
Jordan Wiggins (USAO Honors Senior Thesis: Heidegger and Food, 2011)  
Katie Arnold (USAO Honors Senior Thesis: US Foreign Policy, 2011)  
Chelsea Davis (USAO Honors Senior Thesis: Merleau-Ponty and the Body Feminine, 2011)

**Independent Studies with Students**

Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* (Allyson McMahon, Spring 2014)  
Jacques Derrida's *On Grammatology* (Keith Townley, Spring 2013)  
Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (Chelsea Davis, Spring 2011)

**Professional Memberships**

Foucault Circle (2010–Present)  
Merleau-Ponty Circle (2009–Present)  
Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (2009–Present)  
American Academy of Religion (2005–2016)