

# Brandi Denison

b.denison@unf.edu

## Teaching and Research Profile

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American Religious History, specializing in the American West with particular attention to Native American Religions, race, religion & the environment, gender, violence, memory, and theories of religion

## Education

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**Ph.D. in Religious Studies**, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, (August 2011)

**Dissertation:** “Remove, Return, Remember: Making Ute Land Religion in the American West”

**Committee:** Laurie Maffly-Kipp, Tim Marr, Theda Perdue, Randall Styers, Grant Wacker

**M.A. in Religious Studies**, University of Colorado at Boulder, (August 2003)

**Masters Thesis:** “Towards a Responsible Apocalypse: The Cryptoapocalyptic Discourse of George W. Bush and the American Nonviolence Movement”

**Committee:** Ira Chernus, Michelene Pesantubbee, Lynn Ross-Bryant

**B.A. in Religion**, University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, Washington (May 2000)

## Teaching Experience

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*University of North Florida (2011 – Present)*

**Assistant Professor**, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

- American Judaism
- Religion and Film
- Introduction to the Study of Religion
- Religion, Literature, and the Arts in the United States
- Native American Religions
- Religion and Nature
- Comparative Religions
- Race and Religion in the United States

*University of North Carolina (2006 - 2011)*

**Instructor**, Religious Studies (2008 - 2011)

- African American Religious History
- Introduction to Philosophical Approaches to Religion
- Nature, Religion, and the Environment
- Race, Ethnicity, and Religion in the United States
- American Religious History
- Religion, Literature, and the Arts in the United States
- History of Christianity

**Teaching Assistant**, Religious Studies (2006 - 2007)

- Philosophical Approaches to Religion
- Religions in the United States
- Seminar in Religious Studies

**Tutor**, Writing Center, (2010 - 2011)

*University of Colorado, Religious Studies, (2002 - 2003)*

**Teaching Assistant**

- Religions in Contemporary Society
- Religions in the United States
- Christian Traditions

## **Research Positions**

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*University of North Carolina*

**Research Assistant**, *Difficult Dialogues Initiative*, 2006-2007

- Funded through the Ford Foundation, this project aimed to increase effective dialogue about faith on campus
- Participated in committee discussions about involving the campus community in productive conversations about faith and religion

- Applied training on leading effective conversations about controversial topics and led undergraduate conversations about faith-based issues

**Research Assistant**, *Religious Studies*, Laurie Maffly-Kipp, 2005

- Served on an organizational committee for “Teaching Religion in the South,” a UNC Religious Studies conference, May 15, 2006

### *University of Puget Sound*

**Research Assistant**, *Religion*, Doug Edwards, 1998-2000

- Digitized archaeological records for a dig in Israel to be used as part of an internet-based educational program
- Invited to traveled to Israel to participate in dig and to continue digital projects during the summer

## **Publications**

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*Remove, Return, Remember: Ute Land Religion and Reconciliation in the American West* (book proposal under review with University of Nebraska Press)

Review of *The Catholic Calumet: Colonial Conversions in French and Indian North America* (Tracy Neal Leavelle), *Western Historical Quarterly*, Fall 2013

Review of *Native Americans, Christianity, and the Reshaping of the American Religious Landscape*, (edited by Joel W. Martin and Mark A. Nicholas), *Ethnohistory*, Fall 2012

“The Meeker Massacre: Religious Identity as Cultural Exchange,” in *Native American Adoption, Captivity, and Slavery in Changing Contexts*, edited by Max Cacori and Stephanie Pratt (London: Palgrave Press, 2012)

Review of *We Have a Religion: The 1920s Pueblo Indian Dance Controversy and American Religious Freedom* (Tisa Wenger), *Ethnohistory*, Spring 2010

“Art Blakey” in *Encyclopedia of Muslim-American History*, edited by Edward E. Curtis IV (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2010).

## **Teaching Awards**

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### *University of North Florida*

**Teaching Fellowship**, 2013

Selected out of a university-wide pool of applicants, this fellowship supported the development of an African American religions course employing oral history methods, so that students could work with a local religious community to produce an oral history.

## **Research Awards**

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*Lily Endowment, Inc.*

**Research Fellow, 2013**

Selected out of a national pool of religious studies scholars, this fellowship supported writing and researching a chapter of my book manuscript.

*University of North Florida*

**Research Fellow, 2012**

Selected out of a university-wide pool of applicants, this fellowship supported archival research in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming.

**Academic Honors**

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*University of North Carolina*

**Thomas Ferdinand Summer Research Fellowship, 2010**

Selected out of a university-wide pool of applicants, this fellowship supported dissertation research.

**Penny Aldrich Interdisciplinary Fellowship, 2008**

One of 16 graduate students selected out of a university-wide pool of applicants. Supported the development of an interdisciplinary dissertation proposal.

**Perry Summer Travel Grant, 2008**

Competitive departmental award used to support research travel to Colorado.

**Scholars of Tomorrow Fellowship, 2005-2006**

Granted to first year graduate students who demonstrated academic potential and a commitment to interdisciplinary scholarship.

*University of Colorado*

**The Beverly Seals Grant for Graduate Study, 2001-2002**

Granted to first year graduate students who demonstrated academic potential.

*University of Puget Sound*

**Music Scholarship, 1996-2000**

Competitive scholarship awarded to promising musicians.

**Presidential Scholarship, 1996-2000**

Competitive scholarship granted to the most promising students.

**Conference Papers**

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“Reconciliation and the Perils of Religion: Remembering the Meeker Massacre and Ute Removal,” presented at the Western Historical Association (WHA) Annual Meeting, Tucson, AZ, October 9, 2013.

“Playing Indian: Eastern Utah Religious Borderlands,” presented at the WHA Annual Meeting, Denver, CO, October 5, 2012.

““Playing Indian”: Defining American Religion Through Ute Land Religion, 1910-1940,” presented at the American Academy of Religion (AAR) National Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, November 20, 2011.

“Plowing for Progress: American Christianity and the Advancement of Agricultural Science,” presented at the AAR National Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, November 1, 2010.

“Redemption in the American West: Confounding Colonialism through Powwows,” presented at the AAR National Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, October 30, 2010.

“Whose West? Religious Claims to Dirt: Ute Ethnic Cleansing and a Christian Nation,” presented at the WHA, Lake Tahoe, NV, October 15, 2010.

“Christian or Farmer?: Missionaries for Christ and the Plow in Nineteenth-Century American West,” Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, Tucson, AZ, May 21, 2010.

“Ponies, Plows, and Possibilities: Land and Religion in the American Frontier,” AAR National Annual Meeting, Montreal, Canada, November 8, 2009.

“The Meeker Massacre: Religious Identity as Cultural Exchange,” presented at the “Adoption, Captivity, and Slavery: Changing Meanings in Early Colonial America” conference, sponsored by the British Museum and the University of Plymouth, London, England, February 18, 2008.

“Beyond the Blackboard: Teaching with the American Religions Timeline” presented at the American Society of Church History National Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, January 3, 2008.

“A Hard Pill To Swallow: Manifest Destiny and the Mormon Battalion on the California Frontier” presented at the AAR-SBL National Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA, November 18, 2007.

“Josephine and the Utes: Religion, Violence, and Identity on the Western Frontier,” presented at the Florida State University Religion Symposium, Tallahassee, FL, March 15, 2007.

“Towards a Responsible Apocalypse: The Cryptoapocalyptic Discourse of the Nonviolence Movement,” presented at the AAR-SBL National Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, November 22, 2003.

“Commandment Wars: Public Discourse on the Decalogue in Grand Junction, CO,” presented at the AAR-SBL Rocky Mountain-Great Plains Regional Annual Meeting, Boulder, CO, April 8, 2003.

## **Teaching Development**

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*Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning Teaching Fellow, 2012-2013*

Selected out of a national pool of applicants, this highly selective workshop brought together teacher-scholars to develop and hone teaching skills. Sessions included:

- Syllabus development
- Teaching reading skills
- Leading effective discussions
- Use of technology in the classroom
- Developing pedagogical narratives
- Using evaluations effectively
- Assessment
- Embodiment in the classroom
- Classroom conflicts

### *University of North Carolina*

**Writing Center Training**, August 16-27, 2010

- Spent 30 hours in training to learn best practices in writing pedagogy

**Future Faculty Fellowship Program**, May 15-22, 2008

- One of 20 students selected from a university-wide pool of applicants
- Attended weeklong training program to learn innovative undergraduate teaching techniques
- Participated in interdisciplinary conversations about undergraduate pedagogy

### *University of Colorado*

**Graduate Teacher Program**, 2002-2003

- Attended workshops over the course of two years to learn and discuss teaching techniques

## **Service**

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### *University of North Florida*

**Committee Chair**, Religious Studies Paper Prize (2012-Present)

**Faculty Advisor**, Religious Studies Club (2013-Present)

**Member**, Religious Studies Steering Committee (2011-Present)

- Developed program assessment plan, raising university scoring of assessment from “unsatisfactory” to “excellent”
- Developed capstone and theories and methods course
- Advised the launch of the student-run Religious Studies Club
- Wrote grant to bring external advisor to assist in program development

### *Wiley-Blackwell Press*

**Co-editor**, American Religions division of *Religion Compass* (2013-Present)

**Manuscript Reviewer** (2013)

*Religion in the American West Seminar, American Academy of Religion*

**Co-Chair** (2014-Present)

- Created new group within the national American Academy of Religion
- Developed proposal that included an intellectual justification for the group
- Wrote group's mission statement
- Wrote call for paper proposals

**Blog editor**, relwest.blogspot.edu, (2010-2013)

- Solicit blog postings from scholars interested in the study of religion in the American West
- Write blog posts about current events, applying theory to the history of religion in the American West, and book reviews
- Building readership of the blog to create online academic community

*University of North Carolina, Religious Studies Department*

**Center for Faculty Excellence**, 2009-2010

- Invited to lead university-wide pedagogy workshops for incoming graduate students
- Topics included: "Leading Effective Discussions" and "Preparing for your First Day of Class"

**Graduate Student Committee Representative**, 2007-2009

- Established annual departmental incoming graduate student teacher training
- Established the "Reli Roundtable Series," a series of monthly meetings bringing together graduate students, faculty members, and other university resources to support graduate student professionalization, research, and teaching
- Provided feedback on revisions to the department's Policy Handbook

**Graduate Student and Professional Federation Religious Studies Senator**, 2007-2008

**Carolina Summer Reading Program**, 2007

- Invited to lead a small group discussion to incoming freshman about the summer reading program book

## **Languages**

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German and Spanish (reading fluency)

## **Professional Experience**

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**Domestic Violence Victim's Advocate**, Crossroads Safehouse, Fort Collins, CO, 2004-2005

Denison

- Led a three-person writing team for the Transitional Housing Federal Grant, awarded \$175,000 in 2005

**Substitute Teacher**, Mesa County School District, Grand Junction, CO, Summers 2003 and 2004

- Developed world religions unit for the Youth Detention Center

### **Professional Membership**

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American Academy of Religion  
American Society of Church History  
Oral History Association  
Native American and Indigenous Studies Association  
Western Historical Association