**JACOB A. RENNAKER**

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**EDUCATION**

* Claremont Graduate University: Ph.D., Religious Studies
* University of Washington: MA, Comparative Religion
* Brigham Young University: BA, Ancient Near Eastern Studies

**DISSERTATION**

* “‘No Voice Exempt’: A Comparative Approach to Temple Imagery in Genesis 1-3, the *Enūma Eliš*, and *Paradise Lost*”

**AREAS OF SPECIALTY**

* Sacred Space in Religious Texts**,** Cosmology and Creation Accounts**,** Comparative Religion, Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Religions

**AREAS OF COMPETENCY**

* Western Religions, Popular Culture and Religion, New Testament and Early Christianity, Theology in Fiction, Interfaith Dialogue

**PUBLICATIONS**

* “Dressed to Impress: Adam as a Priestly Figure in Eden,” in *Sacred Space, Sacred Thread: Perspectives Across Time and Traditions* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2019).
* “Divine Dream Time: The Hope and Hazard of Revelation,” in *Christ and Antichrist: Reading Jacob 7* (Salt Lake City, UT: Neal A Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2018).
* “Paul and Covenant” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), co-authored with John W. Welch.
* “‘Mutant Hellspawn’ or ‘More Human than You?’: The X-Men Respond to Televangelism” in *The Ages of the X-Men: Essays on the Children of the Atom in Changing Times* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland Books, 2014), pp. 77-90.
* “Approaching Holiness: Understanding Sacred Space in Ezekiel’s Temple Vision” in *Ascending the Mountain of the Lord: Temple, Praise, and Worship in the Old Testament* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2013), pp. 202-217.
* “Revisiting the Forgotten Voices of Weeping in Moses 7: A Comparison with Ancient Texts,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture*, Vol. 2 (2012), pp. 41-71.
* “*Out of the Whirlwind: Creation Theology in the Book of Job* (Review),” *Religious Studies Review* 36:2 (2010), p. 144.
* “Inhabiting Eternity: Finding the Tabernacle and Temple in Isaiah 57:15” *Studia Antiqua* 5:1 (2007), pp. 115-121.

**SELECTED CONFERENCE PAPERS**

* “Enchanting the Vineyard: A Tolkienian Reading of Jacob 5” at the Mormon Scholars in the Humanities’ Annual Conference, Spring 2019
* “The Garden, the Globe, and the Glory of God: Finding the Temple in Genesis 2-3” at Brigham Young University’s Creation Theology, Temple, and the Environment event, Fall 2018
* “Latter-day Saint and Jewish Interfaith Relations” at the Seminario Sudamaricano in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Fall 2018
* “The Wisdom of Weeping Gods in Middle Earth and Moses 7” at the Mormon Scholars in the Humanities’ Annual Conference, Spring 2017
* “All in the [Heavenly] Family: A Mormon Covenantal Theology” at the Jewish – Latter-day Saint Academic Dialogue Project, Fall 2016
* “Created in the Image of a Creator: Toward a Mormon Theology of World-Making” at the Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology’s Annual Conference, Fall 2016
* “The High Priest’s New Clothes: Adam as Priest in Genesis 2–3” at the Society for Biblical Literature’s National Conference, Fall 2015
* “Temple Voices in Conflict and Chorus: A Comparative Approach to Temple Imagery in Genesis 1-3 and the *Enuma Elish*” at the Society for Biblical Literature’s National Conference, Fall 2014
* “Building Eve: Temple-Oriented Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the First Woman” at the Society for Biblical Literature’s National Conference, Fall 2014
* “A Community of ‘Adams’ returning to Eden: The Puzzling Final Song of Sabbath Sacrifice” at the Society for Biblical Literature’s National Conference, Fall 2013
* “Pedagogical Pop Culture: Using Comic Books to Teach Religion” at the Popular Culture Association / American Culture Association National Conference, Spring 2012
* “Up, Up, or Away? Exploring Vertical and Horizontal Conceptualizations of Sacred Space in Ezekiel’s Temple” at the Society for Biblical Literature’s National Conference, Fall 2011
* “Manifold Greatness: The King James Bible According to Claremont (In Honor of the 400th Anniversary of the KJV)” at the Claremont Public Library, Fall 2011

**COURSES TAUGHT**

* Interfaith Understanding, Engagement, and Leadership, Fall 2019 (Chapman)
	+ This course taught students how to self-educate on religious traditions and matters where religion intersected with the public sphere. Students gave presentations on the beliefs, practices, and worship services of different traditions. They also led discussions on case studies where religious life created some sort of tension in the United States and proposed solutions for alleviating that tension.
* New Testament: Acts – Revelation, Fall 2015 (BYU)
	+ After establishing the general historical, political, cultural, and religious backgrounds that lay behind early Christian writings, this course proceeds through each of the canonical Christian texts from Acts through Revelation. By the end of the semester, students must provide an annotated paraphrase of selected passages to demonstrate their comprehension of the authors, the audiences, and contexts of these writings.
* Western Humanities (Guest Lecturer), Summer 2015 (BYU)
	+ I was invited to teach separate, full-length class lectures on David Narratives (especially 2 Samuel), the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), and Dante’s *Inferno* (a two-part lecture covering two class periods). For these lectures, I provided historical, cultural, religious, and literary background information in order to situate these works in their own time, and in order to provide points of comparison with previous works of Western literature.
* New Testament: The Gospels, Spring-Fall 2014, Winter 2015 (BYU)
	+ This course began with an extensive survey of the historical, political, cultural, and religious background of the world that produced the gospels. Each gospel was examined individually for unique themes and literary techniques, and students were required to write an essay highlighting these differences and how these differences inform their own understanding of early Christianity.
* Religion in a World Setting: Christianity and Mormonism in Great Britain, Winter 2013 (BYU London Centre)
	+ This course surveyed the religious history of Great Britain from its first inhabitants, through the introduction and development of Christianity, and up to the religious reformations in the early 19th century. The introduction of Mormonism was situated within this context, following which the contributions of British missionaries and converts to Mormonism as a whole were identified and discussed.

**TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS**

* Introduction to the New Testament, Spring 2009 (UW)
	+ During this course, I consulted closely with Professor Michael Williams. However, I was largely responsible for the organization of my lesson plans. I was responsible for grading a number of essay assignments, as well as administering and grading the examinations for each of my three classes (about 80 students total). I also met regularly with students outside of class to answer questions, review essays, and prepare them for examinations.
* Introduction to Western Religions, Autumn 2008 (UW)
	+ Given the large amount of material covered by this course, I met frequently with Professor Jim Wellman and the other Teaching Assistants to coordinate lesson plans. I was responsible for updating the course website, posting frequent course-related announcements and additional study materials. In addition, I was responsible for teaching weekly, administering and grading regular quizzes, reading response assignments and examinations for each of my three classes (about 90 students total), and performing a review session outside of class to prepare students for exams.
* Introduction to the Hebrew Bible, Autumn 2007 (UW)
	+ For the duration of this course, I had a great deal of freedom in creating lesson plans and determining which subjects I would focus on in my teaching. As a result, I often spent a great deal of time gathering information and resources for my classes that were not included in the general course materials. I was responsible for generating and grading bi-weekly quizzes for both of my classes (about 50 students total), as well as administering and grading examinations.

**LANGUAGES**

* Biblical Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, Ugaritic, Akkadian, Classical Greek, Coptic, German, French

**HONORS & FELLOWSHIPS**

* John A. Widtsoe Fellow (Chapman University), 2018 - present
* BYU Studies Editorial Fellow (BYU), 2013 - 2018
* Religious Education Dissertation Grant (BYU), 2012, 2013
* Hugh W. Nibley Fellowship (Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship), 2007 -2012
* Howard W. Hunter Fellowship (CGU), 2010-2011
* Platt Fellowship for Archaeological Excavation (American Schools of Oriental Research), 2010
* Maurice and Lois Schwartz Fellowship for International Study (Department of Near Eastern Language and Civilization, UW), 2008
* Valedictorian, David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies (BYU), 2007
* Graduated Magna cum Laude (BYU), 2007

**ORGANIZATION & ADMINISTRATION**

* Director, John A. Widtsoe Foundation, 2017 - present
* Scholar in Residence, John A. Widtsoe Foundation, 2016 - present
* Member, Latter-day Saint-Jewish Academic Dialogue Project, 2016 - present
* Editorial Board, *Journal for Book of Mormon Studies* (University of Indiana and Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship), 2017 - present
* Co-Curator, “Manifold Greatness: The King James Bible According to Claremont,” Honnold / Mudd Library, the Claremont College Consortium, Fall 2011- Winter 2012
* Society of Biblical Literature On-Campus Student Representative (CGU) 2010-2011
* Student Director, Comparative Religion Colloquium (UW) 2008 - 2009
	+ Helped develop the course structure and outline of student responsibilities
	+ Arranged for speakers to present and reviewed expectations for presentations
	+ Supervised those who had responsibilities related to the execution of the colloquium
	+ Facilitated communication between students and the department chair
* Student Director, Special Olympics (BYU-Idaho) 2003 – 200
	+ Attended weekly meetings to coordinate service efforts between the various service organizations on campu
	+ Facilitated communication between the Special Olympics program and the Office of Service and Leadership at BYU-Idaho

**REFERENCES**

* Gail Stearns, Dean of the Fish Interfaith Center, Chapman University (stearns@chapman.edu)
* Tammi Schneider, Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities and Professor of Hebrew Bible, Claremont Graduate University (tammi.schneider@cgu.edu)
* Carleen Mandolfo, Chair of Religious Studies at Colby College (mandolfo@colby.edu)
* Lori Anne Ferrell, Chair of the English Department, Claremont Graduate University (lori.ferrell@cgu.edu)
* Marvin Sweeney, Professor of Hebrew Bible, Claremont School of Theology (msweeney@cst.edu )
* Richard Bushman, Gouverneur Morris Professor Emeritus of History, Columbia University (rlb7@columbia.edu)
* Scott Noegel, Chair of Near Eastern Language and Civilization, University of Washington (snoegel@uw.edu)
* Michael Williams, Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity, University of Washington (maw@u.washington.edu)
* Jim Wellman, Chair of Comparative Religion, University of Washington (jwellman@u.washington.edu)