

GALEN WATTS

Banting Fellow
Citizenship: Canadian
galen.watts@kuleuven.be

POSITIONS:

2020-22 Banting Postdoctoral Fellow
The Centre for Sociological Research, KU Leuven

EDUCATION:

2020 Ph.D. (Awarded June 4)
Cultural Studies Graduate Program, Queen's University
Kingston, Ontario
Dissertation: "The Religion of the Heart: Self, Solidarity, and the Sacred in Romantic Liberal Modernity"
Supervisor: Will Kymlicka; Committee Members: Sharday C. Mosurinjohn, Simon Coleman (University of Toronto); Internal Examiner: Richard S. Ascough; External Examiner: Lori G. Beaman (University of Ottawa)

2016 M.A., Queen's University, Cultural Studies
Thesis: "The Personal Politics of Contemporary Spirituality"
Supervisor: James Miller (Religious Studies)

2014 B.A. (Honours), Queen's University, Media in Philosophy – Drama

ACADEMIC AFFILIATIONS:

2020-2021 Visiting Scholar, Department for the Study of Religion, University of Toronto
2019 Visiting Graduate Student, Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University (Lent Term)
2019 Visiting Scholar, Woolf Institute, Cambridge University (Lent Term)
2017-18 Visiting Graduate Student, Department for the Study of Religion, University of Toronto

PUBLICATIONS:

Refereed Journal Articles

2020 "Religious Studies and the Spiritual Turn" (co-authored with Sharday C. Mosurinjohn), *Theory and Method in the Study of Religion* (Accepted)

- 2020 “The Religion of the Heart: ‘Spirituality’ in Late Modernity.” *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*. Advance Online.
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s41290-020-00106-x>
- 2020 “Making Sense of the Study of Spirituality: Late Modernity on Trial.” *Religion* 50(4): 590-614.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0048721X.2020.1758229>
- 2019 “Religion, Science and Disenchantment in Late Modernity.” *Zygon: Journal of Science and Religion* 54(4): 1022-1035.
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/zygo.12554>
- 2019 “Recovering Enchantment: Addiction, Spirituality, and Charles Taylor’s Malaise of Modernity.” *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 34(1): 39-56.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13537903.2019.1585102>
- 2018 “Missing the Forest for the Trees: ‘Spiritual’ Religion in a Secular Age.” *Toronto Journal of Theology* 24(2): 243-255.
<https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/abs/10.3138/tjt.2018-0112>
- 2018 “On the Politics of Self-Spirituality: A Canadian Case Study.” *Studies in Religion* 47(3): 345-372.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0008429818764114?journalCode=sira>
- 2017 “‘Of’ or ‘For’: The Study of Spirituality and the Problems Therein.” *Journal for the Study of Spirituality* (7)1: 64-71.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/20440243.2017.1290138>

Book Chapters

- In press “The Spiritual Turn in Canada: ‘Spiritual but not Religious’ Canadian Millennials” in *Emerging Church, Millennials, and Religion (Volume 2)*, eds. Terry Shoemaker, Rachel Schneider, and Xochitl Alvizo, (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers).
- In press “Self-Spirituality in the Twenty-First Century,” in *Mutual Enrichment Between Psychology and Theology*, ed. Russell Re Manning, (London: Routledge).
<https://www.routledge.com/Mutual-Enrichment-between-Psychology-and-Theology/Manning/p/book/9781472415899>

Book Reviews

- Under Review Emma Bell, Sorin Gog, Anca Simionca, and Scott Taylor (eds.) *Spirituality, Organization and Neoliberalism: Understanding Lived Experiences*. Review for *Journal of*

Contemporary Religion.

- 2020 Anna Fedele and Kim Knibbe (eds). *Secular Societies, Spiritual Selves*. Review for *Religion*. Advance Online.
- 2020 Joel Thiessen and Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme. *None of the Above: Nonreligious Identity In the US and Canada*. Review for *Religion*. Advance Online.
- 2019 Jason Ā. Josephson-Storm. *The Myth of Disenchantment: Magic, Modernity, and the Birth of the Human Sciences*. Review for *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 34(2).
- 2017 David Brooks. *The Road to Character*. Review for *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 29(1).

Non-Academic Publications

- 2020 “A hipster evangelical church is taking Toronto by storm” *CBC*, July.
- 2019 “The Antinomies of the Liberal Self-Image” *Liberal Currents*, November.
- 2019 “Marianne Williamson and the religion of ‘spirituality’” *The Conversation*, September.
- 2019 “Stop scolding men for being ‘toxic’” *The Conversation*, April 2019.
- 2019 “The Millennial Generation and the Problem of Meaning: Explaining Jordan Peterson’s Meteoric Rise” *Arc Digital*, January.
- 2019 “Are you Spiritual, Religious or Both?” *Wolf Institute Blog*, January.
- 2018 “Pioneering sociologist foresaw our current chaos 100 years ago” *The Conversation*, November.
- 2018 “Emile Durkheim, the Sacred, and the Nonreligious” *Nonreligion and Secularity Research Network blog*, November.
- 2018 “Self-Help in the ‘age of responsibility’ denies unequal realities” *The Conversation*, September.
- 2018 “Being a Progressive Christian shouldn’t be an oxymoron” *The Conversation*, May.
- 2018 “Is Alcoholics Anonymous a Religion?” *Religion Dispatches*, May.
- 2018 “Spirituality: Secular or Religious?” *Nonreligion and Secularity Research Network blog*, March.
- 2018 “Millennials abandon hope for religion but revere human rights” *The Conversation*, February.

- 2017 “What does it mean to be spiritual?” *The Conversation*, November.
- 2016 “‘Of’ or ‘For’: Studying Spirituality and the Problems Therein,” *Nonreligion and Secularity Research Network blog*, December.

AWARDS, DISTINCTIONS AND FELLOWSHIPS:

- 2020-2022 SSHRC Banting Postdoctoral Fellowship (\$140,000)
- 2020-2022 SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowship (\$90,000 - Declined)
- 2017-20 SSHRC Joseph-Armand Bombardier (CGS) Doctoral Scholarship (\$105,000)
- 2019 SSHRC Michael Smith Foreign Supplement (to cover term in Cambridge) (\$5,700)
- 2018-19 OCUFA Henry Mandelbaum Graduate Fellowship - Doctoral (\$5,000)
- 2018 SSHRC Storytellers Competition – Top 5 Finalist (\$3,000)
- 2018 Queen’s University Andrina McCulloch Prize in Public Speaking – First Runner Up (\$850)
- 2017 Honorable Mention for a Teaching Assistant Award
- 2016-17 Alfred Bader Graduate Fellowship in the Humanities (\$7,000)
- 2016-17 Ontario Graduate Scholarship-PhD (\$15,000)
- 2016-17 SSHRC Canada Graduate Scholarship – Master’s (CGS-M) (\$17,500)
- 2014 Queen’s University Graduate Award (\$9,000)
- 2013 The Pall Ardal Moral Philosophy Prize (\$300)

CONFERENCE ACTIVITY / PARTICIPATION:

Invited Talks

- 2020 “The Religion of the Heart: ‘Spirituality’ in Late Modernity,” *Worldviews 2020: Relations with Nature, Others, and the Spiritual World*, Third Age Learning Lakehead (TALL) (March 12).
- 2019 “The Religion of the Heart: The Spirit of Late Modernity,” Religion, Faith and

Society Research Group Workshop hosted by the Center for the Study of Islam in the UK, Cardiff University (March 20).

- 2019 “The Rise of the ‘Spiritual but not Religious’ in a Secular Age,” The Woolf Institute Public Lecture Series, Cambridge (March 7).

Conferences/Symposia Organized

- 2020 “Mapping the Spiritual Turn: Consolidating the Sociology of Spirituality,” for the 25th Nordic Conference in the Sociology of Religion, University of Gothenburg (with Dick Houtman) (Cancelled due to COVID-19)

Conference Presentations

- 2020 “‘Spirituality in Late Modernity: Legitimizing or Challenging the Neoliberal Order?’” Annual Meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSR), (Canceled due to COVID-19; Accepted for Presentation).
- 2019 “The Commensurability of Anthropology and Theology After the Ontological Turn,” Annual Meeting of the Society for the Anthropology of Religion (SAR), Victoria College, University of Toronto, (May 22).
- 2019 “Religion, Science, and Disenchantment in Late Modernity,” Annual Meeting of the Epiphany Philosophers, Magdalene College, Cambridge University (January 9).
- 2018 “A Global Ethic Without Guidance: ‘Spiritual but not Religious’ Millennials and the Search for Justice,” Parliament of the World’s Religions, Metro Toronto Convention Centre (November 6).
- 2018 “Spirituality and Discipline: (Re)producing and Challenging the (Neo)liberal Order,” Annual Meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSSR), Tropicana Hotel, Las Vegas (October 27).
- 2018 “The Gender Puzzle Revisited: Contemporary Spirituality and the Rise of the Feminine,” XIX ISA World Congress of Sociology, Metropolitan Toronto Convention Center (July 16).
- 2018 “Millennials, Higher Education, and the ‘Spiritual but not Religious’,” Annual Meeting of the Sociology of Religion Study Group (Socrel) of the British Sociological Association, University of Strathclyde (July 11).
- 2018 “The ‘Religious’ and ‘Secular’ Nature of Self-Spirituality: Insights from the Field,” Nonreligion and Secularity Research Network (NSRN) Annual Conference, King’s College London (July 6, 2018).

- 2018 “The Gender Puzzle Revisited: Contemporary Spirituality and the Rise of the Feminine,” Annual Meeting of the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion (CSSR), University of Regina (May 27).
- 2018 “‘Spiritual but not Religious’ Millennials in Canada: Liberal Cosmopolitanism and the Politics of Community,” 6th University of Toronto Centre for Ethics Annual Graduate Conference, University of Toronto, (May 11).
- 2018 “Disney and Self-Spirituality: A Match Made in Hollywood Heaven”, Annual International Conference on Religion & Film, University of Toronto, (May 4).
- 2018 “‘Spiritual but not Religious’ and the Antinomies of Contemporary Liberalism,” Annual Meeting of the British Sociological Association (BSA), Northumbria University, UK (April 11).
- 2017 “‘Spiritual but not Religious’ Millennials in Canada,” Annual Meeting of the American Academy for the Study of Religion (AAR), Boston (November 19)
- 2017 “A Quite New Predicament – The Rise of the ‘Spiritual but not Religious’ in a Secular Age,” *Problematizing Religious Diversity in a Secular Age*, McGill CREOR Annual Graduate Student Conference (September 16).
- 2017 “Rethinking the Social Study of Spirituality,” Annual Meeting of the Sociology of Religion Study Group (Socrel) of the British Sociological Association, University of Leeds (July 13).
- 2017 “Spirituality and Social Justice Among Canadian Millennials,” Annual Meeting of the International Society for the Sociology of Religion (ISSR), University of Lausanne, Switzerland (July 7).
- 2017 “The Politics of Self-Spirituality: A Canadian Case Study,” Annual Meeting of the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion (CSSR), Ryerson University (May 30).
- 2017 “A Spiritual Pedagogy for the Twenty-First Century,” Annual George Brown College Philosophy of Education Conference, George Brown College, ON (May 26).
- 2017 “Finding the Spiritual in Nature: So What?,” Queen’s School of Religion annual Graduate Conference, Queen’s University (May 13).
- 2017 “Social Inquiry on the Brink: Why the Ecological Crisis Requires Us to Rethink How and Why We Study Spirituality,” University of Toronto Department of Religion Annual Graduate Conference, University of Toronto (April 27).
- 2017 “The Politics of Self-Spirituality: A Canadian Case Study,” 7th International Conference on Religion & Spirituality in Society, Imperial College London (April

17).

- 2017 “Spirituality, Identity, and Modernity,” Queen’s Cultural Studies Annual Graduate Conference, Queen’s University (March 31).
- 2017 “Spirituality, Identity, and Modernity,” University of Ottawa Department of Modern Languages and Literatures Annual Graduate Conference, University of Ottawa (February 10).
- 2016 “Addiction, Spirituality and the Search for Meaning,” The British Association for the Study of Spirituality (BASS) 4th Biennial Conference, University of Manchester (May 25).
- 2016 “On the Politics of Spirituality: Moving Beyond Consumptive Capitalism,” Queen’s School of Religion Annual Graduate Conference, Queen’s University (May 14).
- 2016 “Addiction, Spirituality and the Search for Meaning,” Université De Sherbrooke Annual Conference on the Study of Religion, Université De Sherbrooke, QC (April 29).
- 2016 “Addiction, Spirituality and the Search for Meaning,” Queen’s Cultural Studies Annual Graduate Conference, Queen’s University (April 1).
- 2015 “On the Lived Nature of Contemporary Spirituality”, Queen’s School of Religion Annual Graduate Conference, Queen’s University (March 7, 2015).
- 2015 “On the Lived Nature of Contemporary Spirituality”, Queen’s Cultural Studies Annual Graduate Conference, Queen’s University (March 28).

Discussant

- 2018 Respondent on the “Social Networks” Panel, Planetary Humanities, Cosmopolitan Philosophies, Social Networks: Perspectives from China and the West – Public Workshop, Duke University, (March 26).

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

Instructor, Department of Philosophy, Queen’s University

PHIL 204 “Life, Death, and Meaning” (Fall 2019)

Teaching Assistant, Department of Religion, Queen’s University

RELS 401: Spiritual but not Religious – Honours Seminar (Winter 2017)

RELS 161: Problems in Religion and Culture (Fall/Winter 2016-17)

RELS 401: Spiritual but not Religious – Honours Seminar (Winter 2015)

Teaching Assistant, Department of Philosophy, Queen’s University

PHIL 296: Animals and Society (Winter 2018)

PHIL 347: Moral Responsibility (Fall 2017)

PHIL 259: Critical Thinking (Fall 2017)

PHIL 275: Thinking Gender, Sex, and Love (Fall 2016)

PHIL 201: Philosophy and Medicine (Winter 2016)

PHIL 115: New Eyes on Ancient Problems (Fall/Winter 2014-2015)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE:

Research Assistant, Department of Sociology, University of Toronto

I was hired by Dr. Ann Mullen, Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Toronto, in order to provide support on her qualitative research project, which examines the contemporary art worlds of New York and San Francisco. (Summer 2018)

Summer School Participant, University of Antwerp

Participated in the Annual Universitair Centrum Sint-Ignatius Antwerpen (UCSIA) Summer School on Religion, Culture and Society in Antwerp (August 27 – September 2, 2017)

<https://ucsia-summarschool.org>

SERVICE AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Service to Profession

Referee: *Studies in Religion*

Referee: *Social Compass*

Editorial

2017-19 Associate Editor for the Nonreligion and Secularity Research Network (NSRN) Blog

Departmental Service

2017 Cultural Studies Student Representative on Queen’s National Scholar “Philosophy

and Prisons” Hiring Committee

2016-17 Cultural Studies General Research Ethics Board (GREB) Committee Member

2016-17 Cultural Studies Communications Committee Member

Film/Television Appearances

2020 Featured in the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) Point Of View documentary *#Blessed* (Hot Docs Film Festival 2020 Selection), directed by Ali Weinstein.

2018 Interviewed on the Global Kingston Morning Show by Bill Welychka about “Spirituality and the Holidays” (aired December 20 @ 10-10:10am EST)

Radio Appearances

2020 Interviewed on “The Moment of Truth with David Moses” about the film *#Blessed* (with documentarian Ali Weinstein) (will air July 18)

2020 Interviewed on Conscious Living Radio by Tasha Simms about “*#Blessed*: Millennials and Spirituality” (aired July 8 @ 6 – 7pm PST)

2019 Interviewed on “Viewpoints with Todd van der Heyden” about the debates surrounding talk of “toxic masculinity” (aired May 5 @ 12-1pm EST)

2018 Was featured as a “Religion and Culture Expert” on Zoomer Radio’s “Good Friday Free For All” Show (aired March 30 @ 12-1pm EST)

2017 Interviewed on Global News Radio 770 CHQR by Andrea Montgomery about “Millennials, Religion and Spirituality” (aired December 24 @ 8-8:30am EST)

Print Media Appearances

2020 Interviewed by Michelle McQuigge for *Globe and Mail* news article, “Young Canadians say current events, string of bad news adding to anxiety” (published January 13, 2020).

TEACHING EXPERTISE:

Cultural Sociology
Sociology of Religion
Social and Cultural Theory

Theory and Method in Religious Studies
Qualitative Research
Political Philosophy

LANGUAGES:

Strong speaking and listening knowledge in French; improving reading and writing abilities

PROFESSIONAL / ACADEMIC ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS:

Association for the Sociology of Religion (ASR)
American Academy of Religion (AAR)
International Society for the Sociology of Religion (ISSR)
Canadian Society for the Study of Religion (CSSR)

REFERENCES

Available Upon Request