

PAUL CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON
Departments of History and Afroamerican & African Studies
University of Michigan
paulcjh@umich.edu

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

2010- Professor
Departments of History and Afroamerican and African Studies
University of Michigan

2005 Associate Professor
Departments of History and Afroamerican and African Studies
University of Michigan

2003 Associate Professor
Department of Religious Studies
University of Missouri

1997-2002 Assistant Professor
Department of Religious Studies
University of Missouri

ADMINISTRATIVE and EDITORIAL POSITIONS

2015- Editor, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*

2008-2014 Director, Doctoral Program in Anthropology and History
University of Michigan

EDUCATION

1997 Ph.D., History of Religions (Awarded with Distinction)
University of Chicago

1990 M.A., Religious Studies
University of Chicago

1986 B.A., Psychology, German, Religion (three majors completed)
Hope College

RESEARCH and TEACHING AREAS

Anthropology of Religions	Afro-Atlantic Religions	Diasporic Forms
History of Religions	History of Brazil	Ritual and Materiality
Theory of Religion	Caribbean Religions	Spirit Possession
Church and State	Near-humanness	Religious Secrecy and Publics

PUBLICATIONS

Books

- In press *Handbook on Religion and Secrecy*. Edited by Hugh B. Urban and Paul Christopher Johnson. London: Routledge Press, 2021.
- 2021 *Automatic Religion: Nearhuman Agents of Brazil and France*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- ** Antonio Cândido Prize for Best Book on Brazil, Latin American Studies Association, 2021.
- A religião automática: agentes quasi-humanos no Brasil e na França*. Portuguese translation in process. Approved by the editorial board at Editora Unicamp, São Paulo, and sent for outside review, for 2022 publication.
- 2018 *Ekklesia: Three Inquiries on Church and State*. Paul Christopher Johnson, Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, and Pamela E. Klassen. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- 2014 *Spirited Things: The Work of "Possession" in Afro-Atlantic Religions*. Edited by Paul Christopher Johnson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- 2007 *Diaspora Conversions: Black Carib Religion and the Recovery of Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- ** Wesley-Logan Prize for Best Book on the African Diaspora, American Historical Association, 2008.
- 2002 *Secrets, Gossip and Gods: The Transformation of Brazilian Candomblé*. New York and London: Oxford University Press.
- **Best Book Prize in Analytical-Descriptive Studies, American Academy of Religion, 2003.

Articles and Chapters [*peer-reviewed]

- In process "The Duplication of Skins: Building 'Sacred Space' in Hilma af Klint's Temple for the Paintings." *Material Religion*.
- In press "From the Social Lives of Secrecy to the Secret Lives of the Social: Notes on Religion, Power, and the Public." With Hugh B. Urban. In *The Routledge Handbook of Religion and Secrecy* (Routledge 2022).

- In press "Architectures of Secrecy." In *The Routledge Handbook of Religion and Secrecy* (Routledge 2022).
- *In press "Automaton Religion and the National Body: Ajeeb in Brazil." *Grey Room*.
- *In press "Maneiras e humores da Escrava Anastácia, um santo Afro-Brasileiro," *Debates do Núcleo de Estudos da Religião*.
- *2021 "Translating Spirits: Medical-Ritual Healing and Law in Brazil and the Broader Afro-Atlantic World." *Osiris: History of Science* 36: 1-20.
- *2020 "Spirit Incorporation in Candomblé," in *Companion to Material Religion*. Edited by Vasudha Narayanan. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 269-309.
- *2019 "Photographe, esprit, esprit-photographe: Un cas d'enchêvetrement sémiotique au Brésil, 1871." *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 187: 103-126.
- *2018 "Fakecraft." *Journal for the Study of Religion* 31(2): 105-137.
- *2018 "Material Modes and Moods of 'Slave Anastácia,' Afro-Brazilian Saint." *Journal de la société des américanistes* 104(1): 27-73.
- *2018 "The Dead Don't Come Back like the Migrant Comes Back: Many Returns in the Garifuna Dügü." In *Passages & Afterworlds: Anthropological Perspectives on Death and Mortuary Rituals in the Caribbean*. Edited by Maarit Forde. Duke University Press, 31-53.
- *2018 "Possession's Native Land." *Ethnos* 83 (1): 1-16.
- *2018 "Afro-Latin American Religions." Co-authored with Stephan Palmié. In *The Cambridge Handbook of Afro-Latin American Studies*. Edited by Alejandro de la Fuente and George Reid Andrews, 438-485.
- *2017 "Possessed Persons and Legal Persons in Brazil." *Maryland Journal of International Law* 29: 180-216.
- *2017 "L'automatisme: mécanismes de la religion en France et au Brésil." *Asdival: Revue genevoise d'anthropologie et d'histoire des religions* 11: 79-103.
- 2017 "Postface." Postface to second edition of Stefania Capone, *La quête de l'Afrique dans le Candomblé: pouvoir et tradition au Brésil*. Paris: Éditions Mimésis, 347-54.
- *2016 "Scholars Possessed! On Writing Africana Religions with the Left Hand." *Journal of Africana Religions* 4(2): 154-185.

- 2016 “Criticisms, Debates, and Futures: The Anthropology of Religion in Hybrid-Human and Non-Human Worlds.” In *Social Religion*. Edited by Jeff Kripal. New York: Macmillan, 273-290.
- *2016 “Syncretism and Hybridisation.” *Oxford Handbook of the Study of Religion*. Edited by Steven Engler and Michael Stausberg. New York: Oxford University Press, 754-772.
- 2015 “Uma genealogia atlântica da ‘possessão de espíritos.’” *Translating the Americas*. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
- 2014 “Les marronages Garifuna: L’ethnogenese d’un ‘tribu colonial.’ In *Les marronages: mémoires, patrimoines, identités, histoire*. Edited by Jean Moomou. Guyane, Guadeloupe, Martinique: Editions Ibis Rouge, 233-246.
- *2014 “Objects of Possession: Spirits, Photography and the Entangled Arts of Appearance.” In *Sensational Religion: Sense and Contention in Material Practice*. Edited by Sally Promey. New Haven: Yale University Press, 25-46.
- *2014 “Introduction: Spirits and Things in the Making of the Afro-Atlantic World,” in *Spirited Things: The Work of “Possession” in Afro-Atlantic Religions*. Edited by Paul Christopher Johnson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1-22.
- *2014 “Toward an Atlantic Genealogy of ‘Spirit Possession.’” In *Spirited Things: The Work of “Possession” in Afro-Atlantic Religions*. Edited by Paul Christopher Johnson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 23-46.
- 2014 “Theorizing Africana Religions.” *Journal of Africana Religions* 2 (1): 135-39.
- 2013 “Whence ‘Spirit Possession?’” In *The Handbook of Contemporary Animism*, edited by Graham Harvey. London: Routledge, 325-41.
- 2013 “Religions of the African Diaspora: ‘Religion,’ ‘Africa,’ ‘Diaspora.’” In *A Companion to Diaspora and Transnationalism*. Edited by Girish Daswani and Ato Quayson. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 509-24.
- *2012 “Religion and Diaspora.” *Religion and Society* 3 (1): 95-114.
- 2012 “Bodies and Things in the Forest of Symbols.” *Religion* 42 (4): 633-643.
- *2011 “An Atlantic Genealogy of ‘Spirit Possession.’” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 53 (2): 393-425.
- 2008 “Vodou Purchase: The Louisiana Purchase in a Caribbean Perspective.” In *New Territories, New Perspectives: The Religious Impact of the Louisiana*

Purchase. Edited by Richard J. Callahan. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 146-67.

- *2007 "On Leaving and Joining Africanness Through Religion: The "Black Caribs" Across Multiple Diasporic Horizons." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 37(2): 174-211.
- 2006 "Introduction: The Work of Possession(s). *Culture and Religion* 7(2): 111-122.
- *2006 "Secretism and the Apotheosis of Duvalier." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 74(2): 420-445.
- *2006 "Joining the African Diaspora: Dynamics of Migration and Urban Religion." In *Women and Religion in the African Diaspora: Knowledge, Power, and Performance*. Edited by R. Marie Griffith and Barbara D. Savage. Johns Hopkins Press, pp. 37-58.
- *2005 "Savage Civil Religion." *Numen* 52: 289-324.
- *2005 "Three Paths to Legitimacy: African Diaspora Religions and the State." *Culture and Religion* 6 (1): 79-105.
- 2003 "Misrecognition and Rituals." In *Encyclopedia of Religious Rituals*. New York: Routledge, 249-52.
- *2002 "Migrating Bodies, Circulating Signs: Brazilian Candomblé, the Garifuna of the Caribbean, and the Category of 'Indigenous Religions.'" *History of Religions* 41 (4): 301-27.
- *2002 "Models of the Body in the Ethnographic Study of Religion: The Cases of Brazilian Candomblé and the Garifuna of the Caribbean." *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 14:170-95.
- 2002 "Death and Memory at Ground Zero: A Historian of Religion's Report." *Council of Societies for the Study of Religion Bulletin* 31 (1): 3-7.
- *2001 "Law, Religion and 'Public Health' in the Republic of Brazil." *Law and Social Inquiry* 26 (1): 9-33.
- *1999 "The Fetish and McGwire's Balls," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 68 (2): 243-264.
- *1998 "Naming and 'African-ness' in Brazilian Umbanda," *Palara: Publication of the Afro-Latin Research Association* 3: 47-64.

- *1997 “The 'Rationality' of a Buddhist King: Mongkut, King of Siam, 1852-1868.” In *Sacred Biography in South and Southeastern Asian Buddhism*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 232-259.
- *1997 “Kicking, Stripping and Re-dressing a Saint in Black: Visions of Public Space in Brazil's Recent Holy War.” *History of Religions* 37 (2): 122-141.
- *1996 “Notes (and Problems) on 'Participant-Observation' from Urban Brazil.” *Religion* 26 (2): 183-196.
- *1995 “Shamanism From Ecuador to Oak Park: A Case Study in New Age Ritual Appropriation.” *Religion* 25 (2): 163-178.

Articles Reprinted in Edited Volumes

- 2017 “Kicking, Stripping and Re-dressing a Saint in Black: Visions of Public Space in Brazil's Recent Holy War,” *History of Religions* 37 (2): 122-141; reprinted in Russian translation as “Pinki, razdevanie i pereodevanie sviatoi: publichnoe prostranstvo v nedavnei brazil'skoi 'sviashchennoi voine””, *Gosudarstvo, religiia, tserkov' v Rossii i za rubezhom* 35(2): 123–149.
- 2013 “Whence ‘Spirit Possession?’,” reprinted in *The Handbook of Contemporary Animism*. Edited by Graham Harvey. London: Routledge, 325-41.
- 2013 “Death and Memory at Ground Zero: A Historian of Religion's Report,” reprinted in *Reinventing Religious Studies: Key Writings in the History of a Discipline*. Edited by Scott S. Elliott. London: Routledge, 239-249.
- 2008 “On Leaving and Joining Africanness Through Religion: The “Black Caribs” Across Multiple Diasporic Horizons,” reprinted in *Africas of the Americas: Beyond the Search for Origins in the Study of Afro-Atlantic Religions*. Edited by Stephan Palmié. Leiden: Brill, 39-78.
- 2008 “Savage Civil Religion,” reprinted in *Religion, Terror and Violence: Religious Studies Perspectives*. Edited by Philip L. Tite and Bryan Rennie. London: Routledge, 41-65.
- 2004 “Migrating Bodies, Circulating Signs: Brazilian Candomblé, the Garifuna of the Caribbean, and the Category of Indigenous Religions,” reprinted in *Indigenous Diasporas and Dislocations: Unsettling Western Fixations*. Edited by Graham Harvey and Charles D Thompson Jr. London: Ashgate. 37-52

- 2002 “Shamanism from Ecuador to Oak Park: A Case Study in New Age Ritual Appropriation,” reprinted in *Shamanism: A Reader*. Edited by Graham Harvey. New York: Routledge. 334-54.
- 2001 “The Fetish and McGwire’s Balls,” reprinted in *From Season to Season: Sports as American Religion*. Edited by Joseph L. Price. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press. 77-98.

Encyclopedia Articles and Other Reference Works

- *In press “Possession.” *Oxford Handbook of Caribbean Religions*. Oxford, UK and New York: Oxford University Press.
- 2015 “Possession.” *Vocabulary for the Study of Religion*. Edited by Robert Segal and Kocku von Stuckrad. Leiden: Brill.
- 2015 “Diaspora.” *Vocabulary for the Study of Religion*. Edited by Robert Segal and Kocku von Stuckrad. Leiden: Brill.
- 2011 “Candomblé.” *Encyclopedia of Global Religion*. Edited by Mark Juergensmeyer and Wade Clark Roof. New York: Sage.
- 2011 “Diaspora.” *Encyclopedia of Global Religion*. Edited by Mark Juergensmeyer and Wade Clark Roof. New York: Sage.
- 2011 “Karl Marx.” *Encyclopedia of Global Religion*. Edited by Mark Juergensmeyer and Wade Clark Roof. New York: Sage.
- 2011 “Candomblé.” *World Book Encyclopedia*. New York: Berkshire Hathaway.
- 2004 “Religion and Transculturation: The Caribbean.” *Encyclopedia of Religion, 2nd Edition*. New York: Macmillan.
- 2004 “Garifuna Religion.” *Encyclopedia of Religion, 2nd Edition*. New York: Macmillan.

Public Writing, Fiction, Responses

- 2019 “Spirit.” Social Science Research Council, *The Immanent Frame*, “A Universe of Terms.” (<http://tif.ssrc.org/2019/11/14/spirit-johnson/>)
- 2017 “Democracity, 2042.” Social Science Research Council, *The Immanent Frame*. (<https://tif.ssrc.org/category/is-this-all-there-is/>)

- 2013 Response essay to Stephan Palmié, “Mixed Blessings and Sorrowful Mysteries: Second Thoughts on Hybridity.” *Current Anthropology* 53 (4).
- 2013 “History-Machines! Featuring the Pequod, the Nautilus, the Secularism Book, the Harrow, Mr. Spear’s Penetrator, and Other Astonishing Inventions.” *Religion in American History*. <http://usreligion.blogspot.com/>
- 2011 “Technologies of Spirit.” In *Frequencies: A Collaborative Genealogy of Spirituality*. Social Science Research Council. (<http://freq.uenci.es/>)
- *1998 “The Knife,” *Anthropology and Humanism*, 23 (2): 1-5.
(*awarded honorable mention in 1997 fiction competition)

Book Reviews

- 2020 Robert A. Yelle, Sovereignty and the Sacred: Secularism and the Political Economy of Religion. *Sociology of Religion*.
- 2019 N. Fadeke Castor, Spiritual Citizenship: Transnational Pathways from Black Power to Ifá in Trinidad. *Anthropos*.
- 2018 Luis Nicolau Parés, The Formation of Candomblé: Vodun History and Ritual in Brazil. *Hispanic American Historical Review*.
- 2017 Marilyn McKillop Wells, Among the Garifuna: Family Tales and Ethnography from the Caribbean Coast. *New West Indian Guide*.
- 2013 Keith McNeal, Trance and Modernity in the Southern Caribbean. *New West Indian Guide*.
- 2013 Kelly Hayes, Holy Harlots: Femininity, Sexuality and Black Magic in Brazil. *History of Religions*.
- 2012 Manuel Vásquez, More Than Belief: A Materialist Theory of Religion. *Religion*.
- 2011 Stefania Capone, Searching for Africa in Brazil: Power and Tradition in Candomblé. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*.
- 2011 Beatriz Goís Dantas, Nagô Grandma and White Papa: Candomblé and the Creation of Afro-Brazilian Identity. *Nova Religio*.
- 2009 Thomas A. Tweed, Crossing and Dwelling: A New Theory of Religion. *History of Religions: An International Journal for Comparative Historical Studies*

- 2009 Anna L Peterson and Manuel A. Vásquez, editors, Latin American Religions: Histories and Documents in Context. *Catholic Historical Review*.
- 2008 Nicole Von Germeten, Black Blood Brothers: Confraternities and Social Mobility for Afro-Mexicans. *Religious Studies Review*.
- 2008 Emma Cohen, The Mind Possessed: The Cognition of Spirit Possession in an Afro-Brazilian Religious Tradition. *Journal of Religion*.
- 2008 Kristina Wirtz, Ritual, Discourse, and Community in Cuban Santería: Speaking a Sacred World. *Journal of Anthropological Research*.
- 2008 Joseph A. Palacio, editor. The Garifuna, A Nation Across Borders: Essays in Social Anthropology. *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*.
- 2005 Jacob K. Olupona, editor. Beyond Primitivism: Indigenous Religious Traditions and Modernity. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*.
- 2005 Patricia R. Pessar, From Fanatics to Folk: Brazilian Millenarianism and Popular Culture. *Journal of Religion*.
- 2004 Margarite Fernández Olmos and Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert, Creole Religions of the Caribbean: An Introduction from Vodou and Santería to Obeah and Espiritismo. *Journal of Haitian Studies*.
- 2004 Neil L. Whitehead, Dark Shamans: Kanaimà and the Poetics of Violent Death. *Journal of Religion*.
- 2004 James V. Spickard, J. Shawn Landres and Meredith B. McGuire, Personal Knowledge and Beyond: Reshaping the Ethnography of Religion. *Journal of Religion*.
- 2002 Rachel E. Harding, A Refuge in Thunder: Candomblé and Alternative Spaces of Blackness. *History of Religions*.
- 2002 André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani, eds. Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America. *American Journal of Sociology*.
- 2000 John Burdick, Blessed Anastácia: Women, Race and Popular Christianity in Brazil. *Journal of Religion*.
- 2000 Thomas M. Cohen, The Fire of Tongues: António Vieira and the Missionary Church in Brazil and Portugal. *Journal of Religion*.

- 1999 Anthony Gill, Rendering Unto Caesar: The Catholic Church and the State in Latin America. *American Journal of Sociology*.
- 1995 Joseph M. Murphy, Working the Spirit: Ceremonies of the African Diaspora and Karen McCarthy Brown, Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn. *Journal of Religion*.
- 1993 Todd A. Diacon, Millenarian Vision, Capitalist Reality: Brazil's Contestado Rebellion, 1912-1916. *Journal of Religion*.
- 1993 David Parkin, Sacred Void. *Journal of Religion*.
- 1993 David J. Hess, Spirits and Scientists: Ideology, Spiritism and Brazilian Culture. *Journal of Religion*.

Guest Editor

- 2006 “The Work of Possession(s).” *Culture and Religion* 7(2). With Mary Keller.

HONORS, AWARDS AND GRANTS

- 2020 Institute for the Humanities Fellowship (Summer), University of Michigan.
- 2019 Michigan Humanities Fellowship, University of Michigan
- 2014-17 Senior Fellow, Society of Fellows, University of Michigan.
- 2009 Wesley-Logan Prize for *Diaspora Conversions: Black Carib Religion and the Recovery of Africa* (University of California Press, 2007), American Historical Association. Award for best book on the history of the African diaspora.
- 2008 John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship.
- 2008 Institute for the Humanities Fellowship, University of Michigan.
- 2005 American Society for the Study of Religion. Nominated and elected honorary society of senior scholars.
- 2003 American Academy of Religion Award for Excellence, for *Secrets, Gossip and Gods: The Transformation of Brazilian Candomblé* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). Best “analytical-theoretical” book of the year.

- 2003 Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship, Center for the Study of Religion, Princeton University.
- 2003 NEH Fellowship Award—full-year fellowship.
National Endowment for the Humanities
- 2001 NEH Fellowship Award—full-year fellowship.
National Endowment for the Humanities
- 1998 Susan Colver Rosenberger Dissertation Prize, University of Chicago. Awarded to best dissertation on religion over a three-year period.
- 1999 Honorable Mention, for “The Knife.” Fiction and Anthropology.
Anthropology and Humanism
- 1997 Ph.D. Awarded with Distinction.
University of Chicago
- 1995 Fulbright-Hays Dissertation Fellowship.

RESEARCH WORKING GROUPS

- 2020-2025 “The Governmateriality of Indigenous Religions.” International project funded by Norway, through the Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø.
- 2019-2022 “Horror & Enchantment.” Four year interdisciplinary collaborative project organized by faculty of the University of Michigan, New York University, and Tulane University, with yearly conferences and publishing/teaching/performance agenda.
- 2018-2020 Teaching Law and Religion Case Study Archive, Politics of Religion at Home and Abroad. Northwestern University.
- 2017-2021 Fellow, “Material Economies of Religion in the Americas: Arts, Objects, Spaces, Mediations.” Center for the Study of Material and Visual Cultures of Religion, Yale University. Henry Luce Foundation funded five-year collaborative project. Yearly conferences and publishing project.
- 2012-13 Faculty Seminar on Religion and the Secular. University of Michigan. Convened and directed by Paul Christopher Johnson and Tomoko Masuzawa.
- 2009-11 Fellow, “Yale Initiative for the Study of Religion and Visual Culture.”