

NIKI KASUMI CLEMENTS

Rice University
Department of Religion
6100 Main Street MS-15
Houston, TX 77021
001.718.915.3141
niki.clements@rice.edu

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENT

Watt J. and Lilly G. Jackson Assistant Professor of Religion, Rice University, 2014-Present.

PREVIOUS POSITIONS

Brown/Wheaton Faculty Fellow, Wheaton College (MA), Spring 2014.
Instructor, Department of Religious Studies, Brown University, Fall 2013.

EDUCATION

2014 Ph.D., Religion and Critical Thought, Brown University
2007 M.T.S., History of Christianity, Harvard Divinity School
2003 B.A., Philosophy, Sarah Lawrence College
2002 Study Abroad, New York University in Paris

AREAS OF RESEARCH

Philosophy of Religion; Ethics; Michel Foucault; Christianity in Late Antiquity; Asceticism and Mysticism in Mediterranean Thought and Practice; Theories & Methods in the Study of Religion; Religion and Science; Religion, Medicine, and Mental Health.

PUBLICATIONS

Monograph

Sites of the Ascetic Self: John Cassian and Christian Ethical Formation (University of Notre Dame Press, May 2020).

Edited Volume

Mental Religion: The Brain, Cognition, and Culture (Macmillan Press, September 2016).

Peer-reviewed Articles and Book Chapters

“Asceticism and Self-Cultivation,” *The Encyclopedia of Religious Ethics: Volume 1-Moral Inquiry*, William Schweiker, chief editor (Wiley-Blackwell, April 2020).

“John Cassian,” *Brill Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (Brill Academic Publishers, forthcoming 2020).

“The Asceticism of Interpretation: John Cassian, Hermeneutical *Askēsis*, and Religious Ethics,” *Normative Dimensions: Scripture, Tradition, and Reason in Christian Ethics*, Bharat Ranganathan and Derek Woodard-Lehman, eds. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

“Emotions and Ascetic Formation in John Cassian’s *Collationes*,” *Studia Patristica* 83.9 (December 2017).

“Mental Religion: Intersections of Religion and Brain Science,” *Religion: Sources, Perspective, and Methodologies*, Jeffrey J. Kripal, ed. (Macmillan Press, January 2016).

Peer-reviewed Policy Documents

“Religious Studies Companion Document for the C3 Framework,” co-author under the American Academy of Religion, *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework* (National Council for the Social Studies, June 2017).

Encyclopedia Essay Contributions

“δεσπότης,” “δύναμις,” “ἐλεημοσύνη,” co-authored with Mikael Parsons as Lead Researcher, *Contexticon of New Testament Language*, 2009.

“ἐπιστρέφω,” “πλανάω,” co-authored with Vernon Robbins as Lead Researcher, *Contexticon of New Testament Language*, 2009.

Work in Progress

Monograph

Foucault the Confessor: Christianity and Critique in Foucault’s Ethical Turn.

Short Monograph

Foucault’s Final Confessions: From Histories of Sexuality to Arts of Living.

Peer-reviewed Book Chapters

“Foucault and Arts of Life in Late Ancient Asceticism,” in *Late Antique Monasticism: An Archaeological and Historical Guide*, Darlene L. Brooks Hedstrom, editor, Cambridge University Press.

INVITED LECTURES and PRESENTATIONS

- 2021 *Practices of Self in Antiquity Workshop*, University of Virginia.
- 2020 “The Noonday Demon as the Eighth Deadly Sin,” Menil Collection, Houston.
- 2019 “Technologies of the Ascetic Self: τέλος in John Cassian and Michel Foucault,” *International Kosmoi Conference*, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.
- 2019 “Foucault the Confessor,” *The Elizabeth A. Clark Center for Late Ancient Studies*, Duke University.
- 2018 “Foucault, Christianity, and an Aesthetics of Existence,” *Religion and Critical Thought Colloquium*, Department of Religious Studies, Brown University.
- 2018 “Foucault’s Christianities,” *Philosophy of Religion Workshop & Early Christianity Workshop*, University of Chicago Divinity School.
- 2017 “Medicalizing Melancholia: The Noonday Demon from Antiquity to the Present,” *The History & Culture of Diseases and Healing Seminar Series*, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, School of Public Health, UTHealth.
- 2017 “An Ascetic Art of Living: Extending the Turn to Late Antiquity,” *Rice Workshop in Humanistic Ethics*, Department of Philosophy, Rice University.
- 2016 “Ethical Know-How and Christian Contemplative Practices,” Master Lecturer, *International Symposium for Contemplative Studies 2016*, Mind and Life Institute.
- 2016 Contributor, *National Council for the Social Studies Appendix on Religious Studies*, American Academy of Religion and Religious Freedom Center, Washington D.C.

- 2016 “Ascetic *Discretio* and Philosophical Critique in the Contemporary Study of Religion,”
Symposium on The Future of the Philosophy of Religion, Boston University.
- 2013 “*Affectus* as Ethical Disposition: On John Cassian's Reading Practices,”
Brown-Yale-Princeton Ethics Colloquium, Yale University.

REFEREED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2020 “ ‘Care of the self’ (ἐπιμελεία ἑαυτοῦ) in Gregory of Nyssa and Michel Foucault,”
North American Patristics Society, Chicago, IL. (Plus, lightning talk on Foucault.)
- 2019 “A Typology of Emotion, Affect, and Feeling for the Study of Religion and Cognition,”
Religion, Affect, and Emotion Unit and Science, Technology, and Religion Unit,
American Academy of Religion, San Diego, CA.
- 2019 “Virginité as an Art of Life: Michel Foucault on Gregory of Nyssa’s Περὶ παρθενίας,”
XVIII International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford University, Oxford, UK.
- 2018 “Genealogically Engaging the Concepts of Critical Subjectivity,”
Contemplative Studies Unit, *American Academy of Religion*, Denver, CO.
- 2018 “Technologies of the Ascetic Self: Reconsidering Foucault via Cassian,”
North American Patristics Society, Chicago, IL.
- 2017 “Form and Feeling in Cassian’s Liturgical Practices,”
Patristic, Medieval, Renaissance Conference, Villanova University, Villanova, PA.
- 2017 “Integral Emotions in Cassian’s Ascetic Subjectivity,”
North American Patristics Society, Chicago, IL.
- 2016 “Ascetic Eros and Foucault,” Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Group,
American Academy of Religion, San Antonio, TX.
- 2016 “Academic Anxieties in the Study of Religion,” Theology and Religious Reflection
Section, *American Academy of Religion*, San Antonio, TX.
- 2016 “Material Minds and Subtle Bodies: On the Integrating Ethics of John Cassian,”
Patristic, Medieval, Renaissance Conference, Villanova University, Villanova, PA.
- 2016 “Demons, Depression, and the Dangers of Naps: Depathologizing ἀκηδία with John
Cassian,” *North American Patristics Society*, Chicago, IL.
- 2015 “Ritual Reading and Affective Shaping: John Cassian and Late Antique Technologies of
the Self,” Cognitive Science of Religion, Religion, Affect, and Emotion, Science,
Technology, and Religion, SBL Religious Experience in Antiquity Groups,
American Academy of Religion, Atlanta, GA.
- 2015 “Ritual Reading and the Emotions: John Cassian and Cognitive Science of Religion,”
Philosophy of Religion Section, *American Academy of Religion*, Atlanta, GA.
- 2015 “Cassian’s *Conlationes* and an Affective Ethics of Reading,”
XVII International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford University, Oxford, UK.
- 2013 “The Ethical Force of the Affective: John Cassian and Late Antique Ethics,” Theology and
Religious Reflection Section, *American Academy of Religion*, Baltimore, MD.
- 2012 “Body-brains that Matter: John Cassian and Ethics of Late Antiquity,”
Body and Religion Group, *American Academy of Religion*, Chicago, IL.
- 2012 “The Embodied Ethics of Asceticism: A Case Study of John Cassian,”
North American Patristics Society, Chicago, IL.

- 2012 “John Cassian and Embodied Ethics,” Regional Meeting, *American Academy of Religion*, New Brunswick, NJ.
- 2011 “Challenges to Interiority: Foucault, Cassian, and Pre-Modern Sensibilities,” *Early Cultures Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference*, University of California, Irvine, CA.
- 2006 “The First is By Nature, the Second by Grace: On Maximus the Confessor’s Soteriological Schema,” *Archbishop Iakovos Graduate Student Conference*, Pappas Patristic Institute, Holy Cross Greek School of Theology, Brookline, MA.

LOCAL PRESENTATIONS and COMMENTARIES

- 2019 “Foucault’s Virginity,” *Gnosticism, Esotericism, Mysticism Seminar*, Rice University.
- 2018 “Foucault’s Christianities,” *Medieval and Early Modern Studies Program*, Rice University.
- 2018 “Foucault’s Christianities: From Pastoral Power to *Confessions of the Flesh*,” *Gnosticism, Esotericism, Mysticism Seminar*, Rice University.
- 2017 “The Noonday Demon: From the Melancholic Genius to the Manic Patient,” *Medical Humanities Symposium*, Rice University.
- 2017 “The Institutional Life of the Mind: Embodied Cognition from Monasticism to Academia,” *Religion and Public Life Program*, Rice University.
- 2017 “Three Historical Stages in the Construction of Melancholia,” *Rice Alliance for Mental Health Awareness*, Rice University.
- 2015 “Demonizing Mental Illness,” *Coffee Chat with Rice Medical Humanities*, Rice University.
- 2015 “Cassian’s *Meditatio* as Mundane Mysticism,” *Gnosticism, Esotericism, Mysticism Seminar*, Rice University.
- 2015 “Religion, Ethics, and Science at the Intersection,” *Religion and Public Life Program*, Rice University.
- 2015 “‘Not merely as mechanisms’: Practical Ethics Beyond Morality,” *Humanities Advisory Board*, School of Humanities, Rice University.
- 2012 Respondent to Jennifer Herdt: “Social Practices, Autonomy, & the Conceptual Structure of Reality: The Return of *Bildung*,” *Religion & Critical Thought Colloquium*, Brown University.
- 2011 Respondent to Douglas Finn: “Life in the Spirit: Trinitarian Grammar and Pneumatic Community in Hegel & Augustine,” *Religion & Critical Thought Colloquium*, Brown University.
- 2010 “Ethical Agency as a *Dunamic* Ethics,” *Religion & Critical Thought Colloquium*, Brown University.
- 2010 Respondent to Andrew Dole’s “Schleiermacher and the Essence of Religious Studies,” *Religion & Critical Thought Colloquium*, Brown University.

AWARDS and SCHOLARSHIPS

- 2019 Finalist, Sophia Meyer Farb Phi Beta Kappa Prize for Teaching, Rice University
- 2019 Undergraduate Research Assistantship, Humanities Research Center
- 2017-2018 Faculty Fellowship (semester leave), Humanities Research Center, Rice University
- 2017 Award for Outstanding Service, Department of Religion, Rice University
- 2017 Outstanding Faculty Associate Award, Jones College, Rice University
- 2016 Distinguished Faculty Associate Award, Jones College, Rice University
- 2016 Finalist, Sophia Meyer Farb Phi Beta Kappa Prize for Teaching, Rice University
- 2016 Grant for Guest Lecturer on Religious Literacy, Boniuk Institute, Rice University
- 2014-2019 Mosle Award, Rice University
- 2014 Watt J. and Lilly G. Jackson Assistant Professor of Religion
- 2014 Phi Beta Kappa, Brown University
- 2013-2014 Brown/Wheaton Faculty Fellow, Brown University

2012-2013 Graduate Fellowship, Brown University
 2011 Mellon Fellowship for the Summer Workshop on Cognitive Science/Neuroscience and the Humanities, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford University
 2011 Departmental Nominee, Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching, Brown University
 2009-2011 Summer Study Fellowship, Brown University
 2008-2009 Graduate Fellowship, Brown University
 2004-2006 Institutional Grant for Tuition Remission, Harvard Divinity School
 2003 Stanley & Evelyn Lipkin Prize in the Humanities, Shared, Sarah Lawrence College

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Assistant Professor, Department of Religion, Rice University

Spring 2020 Introduction to the Study of Religion; Foucault & the Hermeneutics of Self
 Fall 2019 Nineteenth Century Theory and Methods in the Study of Religion (Graduate)
 Spring 2019 Religion and the Art of Happiness
 Fall 2018 Religion & Science (Seminar); Foucault & the Hermeneutics of Self (Graduate)
 Spring 2017 Christianity in Late Antiquity (Graduate); Demons, Mental Illness, & Medicine
 Fall 2016 Foucault & the Hermeneutics of Self (Graduate)
 Spring 2016 Religion and the Art of Happiness; Demons, Mental Illness, & Medicine
 Fall 2015 Nineteenth Century Theory and Methods in the Study of Religion (Graduate)
 Spring 2015 Religion and the Art of Happiness (2 courses);
 Independent study on Performativity, Practices, & Embodied Cognition (Graduate)
 Fall 2014 Demons, Mental Illness, & Medicine

Instructor, Religious Studies Department, Wheaton College (Norton, MA)

Spring 2014 Demons, Melancholia, & Madness

Instructor, Religious Studies Department, Brown University

Fall 2013 Senior Seminar and Thesis Workshop

Instructor, Continuing Education, Brown University

Summers 2013, 2014 Between Darwin and Design: Science and Religion in Conversation

Teaching Assistant, Religious Studies Department, Brown University

Spring 2012 Introduction to Buddhism (Sawada)
 Fall 2011 Great Contemplative Traditions of Asia (Roth)
 Spring 2011 Modern Problems of Belief (Cladis)
 Fall 2010 Reason, Religion, and Ethics from Kant to Nietzsche (Lewis)
 Spring 2010 Love: The Concept and Practice (Cladis)
 Fall 2009 On Being Human: Conceptions of the Self (Lewis)

Teaching Assistant, Continuing Education, Brown University

Summer 2013 Writing the College Admissions Essay (Sheehan)

Teaching Assistant, Pappas Patristic Institute, Holy Cross Greek School of Theology

August 2008 Ancient Philosophy and Christianity (Moore)

Teaching Assistant, Department of Philosophy, Sarah Lawrence College

2002-2003 Nature, Mind, and Knowledge in Ancient Greece (Raymond)

Guest Lecturer

- 2017 “*Life of Antony & the Politics of Asceticism*,” *World of Late Antiquity* (Maas), Rice University
2015, 2016 “Christianity,” *Introduction to Religion* (Kripal), Rice University
2015 “Cassian & Hermeneutics,” *Mysticism Throughout the Ages* (Ogren), Rice University
2012 “Intro to Buddhism,” *Introduction to Contemplative Studies* (Roth), Brown University
2012 “Intro to Daoism,” *Introduction to Contemplative Studies* (Roth), Brown University
2012 “Mysticism, Gender, & Iconography of Christ,” *Christianity* (Harvey), Brown University
2010 “Nietzsche and the Body,” *Reason, Religion, and Ethics* (Lewis), Brown University
2010 “Frankfurt & the Reasons of Love,” *Love: The Concept and Practice* (Cladis), Brown University
2009 “Augustine and the Order of Time,” *On Being Human* (Lewis), Brown University
2004 “Typology in Byzantine Iconography,” *Theory of Knowledge* (Raymond), Sarah Lawrence College

ADVISING

Dissertation Co-Director for Biko Mandela Gray, “Enfleshing the Subject: Race and Religion in the Development of Subjectivity.” Doctoral dissertation in the Department of Religion, Rice University. Defended April 2017 with honors, now Assistant Professor of Religion, Syracuse University.

Dissertation Committee Member, Rodrigo Martini Paula, “*Mutatis Mutandis*: Reverse Mimesis and Modernist Literature.” Doctoral dissertation in the Department of English, Rice University. Defended December 2019.

Dissertation Committee Member, Seth Morton, “Modernist Media Aesthetics: Idiosyncratic Approaches to Digital Modernism.” Doctoral dissertation in the Department of English, Rice University. Defended May 2019.

Dissertation Committee Member, Sherry Kao, “Living Reflectively.” Doctoral dissertation in the Department of Philosophy, Rice University. Defended April 2019.

Dissertation Committee Member for Michael Heyes, “The Metamorphosis of Monsters: Christian Identity in Medieval England and the Life of St Margaret.” Doctoral dissertation in the Department of Religion, Rice University. Defended April 2015.

Dissertation Committee Member for Renee Ford, Justin Kelley, Gregory Perron, John Blatzheim, Waleed Rikab, Charles Schmidt, and Tommy Symmes, all in process.

Undergraduate Thesis Director for Ariana Engles, “The Intersection Between Indigenous Religions and their Medicinal Practices: Curanderismo, Spirit Healers, and Modern Medical Applications.” Honors thesis in the Department of Religion, Rice University. 2019-2020.

Undergraduate Thesis Director for Isaac Carroo, “Religious Experience in Prosociality and Proenvironmentalism.” Honors thesis in the Department of Religion, Rice University. 2018-2019. Winner of Rice Undergraduate Research Symposium, Best Oral Presentation in Humanities, 2019.

Undergraduate Thesis Director for Chloe Wilson, “Mysticism and Feminism.” Honors thesis in the Department of Religion, Rice University. 2018-2019.

Undergraduate Thesis Director for Zoe Tao, “Shame: A Public Feelings Project.” Honors thesis in the Department of Religion, Rice University. 2016-2017, now at UT Southwestern Medical School.

SERVICE

To Rice University

2018-Present Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of Religion
2018-Present Faculty Advisory Board Member,
Center for Energy and Environmental Research in the Human Sciences
2016-Present Faculty Advisory Board Member, Boniuk Institute for Religious Tolerance
2016-2017 Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of Religion
2014-2016 Associate Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of Religion
2016-2017 Faculty Mentor, RELI@Rice Graduate Group, Department of Religion
2016-2017 School Course Review Committee, School of Humanities
2015-2019 Faculty Mentor for Incoming Students, Jones College at Rice University
2014-Present Faculty Associate, Jones College at Rice University
2015, 2016 Faculty Representative for Humanities, Office of Admissions
2015 Faculty Presenter, Humanities Advisory Board, School of Humanities

To Brown University

2017-Present Governor (Appointed, inaugural PhD), Brown Alumni Association Board of Governors
2017 Finalist (Nominated candidacy), New Alumni Trustee, Corporation of Brown University
2017-2018 Alumni Volunteer, Undergraduate Applicant Interviewer, Brown University
2012-2014 Head Fellowship Advisor (to Dean Dunleavy), Dean of the College Office
2013 Committee Member and Mentor, Rhodes, Marshall, & Mitchell Fellowships
2012-2013 Inaugural Chair, Religious Studies Graduate Organization, Religious Studies
2012-2013 Inaugural Facilitator, Departmental Undergraduate Mentor Program in Religious Studies
2011-2013 Committee Member and Mentor, Fulbright Fellowship
2010-2011 Fellowship Advisor, Dean of the College Office
2009-2013 Writing Associate, Writing Center (with ESL Certification)

To the Profession

2017-2020 Steering Committee Member, Contemplative Studies Group, American Academy of Religion
2018-Present Advisory Board, SUNY Press, Contemplative Studies Series

RESEARCH TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

2010-2014 Religion and Critical Thought Colloquium and Workshop, Brown University
Summer 2011 Mellon Fellowship for the Summer Workshop on
Cognitive Science/Neuroscience and the Humanities,
Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford University
May 2010 Comparative Ethics Workshop, Center for World Religions, Harvard University
2010-2011 “Overcoming the Mind-Body Dualism,” Mellon Sponsored Seminar, Brown University
2010 “Cognitive Science and Religion,” Mellon Sponsored Seminar, Brown University
2012 “Authenticity, Origins, and Authority in the Practice and Study of Religion,”
Religious Studies Graduate Conference, Brown University
2010 “Architecture of Minds and Cultures: Cognitive Science and the Humanities,”
Religious Studies Graduate Conference, Brown University
2006-2008 Research Assistant, Jonathan Schofer, Harvard Divinity School
2006-2008 Assistant Researcher & Associate Editor, *Contexticon of New Testament Language*
2002-2006 Associate Director & Editor, *Campbell Corner*, Sarah Lawrence College

RESEARCH LANGUAGES

Ancient Greek, Koiné Greek, Latin, French, German, and Spanish