

## Leah M. Sarat

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& Religious Studies  
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### EDUCATION

- 2010 Ph.D., Religious Studies, University of Florida  
Dissertation: *The God without Borders and the Mexican Dream: Religion, Space, and Migration in El Alberto, Hidalgo*  
Graduate Certificate, Latin American Studies, University of Florida
- 2006 M.A., Religion and Culture, Wilfrid Laurier University
- 2004 B.A. coursework, ethnic studies, Spanish, and Náhuatl, Universidad Veracruzana, Mexico
- 2001 B.A. *magna cum laude*, Comparative Cultures and Fine Art, Alfred University

### PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

- 2016- Associate Professor of Religious Studies, School of Historical, Philosophical & Religious Studies, Arizona State University
- 2010-16 Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, School of Historical, Philosophical & Religious Studies, Arizona State University

### PUBLICATIONS

#### Books

- 2013 *Fire in the Canyon: Religion, Migration, and the Mexican Dream*. New York University Press.  
Reviewed in *Choice*, *Pneuma: The Journal for the Society of Pentecostal Studies*, and *Hispanic American Historical Review*; featured on Horizonte (AZPBS)

#### Journal Articles

- 2022 "Captivity, Life and Death at the Nation's Edge: Two Christian Visions of the U.S. Immigrant Detention Regime." *International Journal of Religion* 3 (2) 69-83. Refereed.
- 2012 "El dios sin fronteras y el sueño mexicano: migración, turismo y pentecostalismo en una comunidad hñähñu." *Estudios de cultura Otopame* 8 (1) 327-348. Refereed.

## Manuscripts in Progress

“Where the Institution Becomes Flesh: Feasting, Fasting, and Resistance in the For-Profit Immigrant Detention Industry.” Article in preparation for submission to *Body and Religion*, est. 8,000 words.

## Book Chapters

2015 “Reimagining the border: religion, territory, and identity.” In Samuel Schmidt Nedvedovich and Marcelo González Tachiquín, ed., *La frontera de las identidades: Explorando los cruces y límites de las identidades*. Chihuahua: El Colegio de Chihuahua, Instituto Chihuahuense de Cultura, Secretaría de Educación y Deporte, 71-94.

## Other Publications

2017 Review of *Miraculous Images and Votive Offerings in Mexico* by Frank Graziano. *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture*, 86 (1): 272-274.

2015 “The Resident Alien,” Contribution to *The Social World of Deuteronomy* by Don C. Benjamin. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 62-64.

2010 “Mexico: Indigenous Religions.” In Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams, eds. *Encyclopedia of Religion in America*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

2008 “Anthropology of the Borderlands.” In Andrew G. Wood, ed. *The Borderlands: An Encyclopedia of Culture and Politics on the U.S.-Mexico Divide*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 10-13.

## GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

### External

2014-16 Sabbatical Grant for Researchers, The Louisville Institute. “Faith Behind Bars: Encountering Immigrant Detention in Arizona,” \$37,747. Funded.

### Internal

2018 “Community Dialogues: Profits and Punishment in Arizona” Public History Endowment, School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies, ASU. Developed public programming at Burton Barr Public Library for traveling national exhibit, “States of Incarceration.” \$2,394, PI. Funded.

2015-18 Project Lead, “States of Incarceration: Arizona.” Public History Endowment, School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies, ASU. Directed ASU Public History graduate students as they researched and curated Arizona component of a national, collaborative traveling exhibition; supervised exhibit installation at Burton

Barr Central Library, \$6,000, PI. Funded.

- 2012-13 Affinity Group Grant, “New Directions in American Religious History” (with Tracy Fessenden and Catherine O’Donnell), School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies, Arizona State University, \$500. Funded.
- 2011-12 Fellow, “Shielded By the Blood of Christ: Evangelical Migrants in Mexico and the United States,” Institute for Humanities Research, Arizona State University, \$17,000. Funded.
- 2007-9 Wells Fellowship, University of Florida, \$2,000 annually
- 2007 Tinker Field Research Grant, Center for Latin American Studies, University of Florida, \$1,500

#### **AWARDS AND HONORS**

- 2011 Noemí Quezada Award for the best dissertation about Otopame peoples, Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, UNAM, Mexico

#### **INVITED TALKS**

- 2021 Keynote Address. “The Terror of ‘Safety’: Christianity, Immigrant Policing, and Detention at the Nation’s Edge.” On the Edge: Religion at the Borders (online symposium). Center for the Study of Religion, Culture, & Society, Elon University, February 11
- 2021 Keynote Address. “Revisitando *Fire in the Canyon*: migración, pentecostalismo y la Caminata nocturna desde una perspectiva decolonial.” XIII Coloquio Internacional sobre Otopames, virtually hosted by Arizona State University, October 29
- 2020 Keynote Address. “‘Welcoming the Stranger’ on Occupied Land: Migration, Metaphor, and The Decolonial Challenge to Faith-Based Border Activism.” 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Religion Graduate Student Association Conference, University of Florida, February 21

#### **CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES**

##### **Papers Presented**

- 2022 “Where the Institution Becomes Flesh: Feasting, Fasting, and Resistance in Arizona’s For-Profit Immigrant Detention Regime.” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Denver, November 19

- 2021 “Profits, Prophecy, and Personhood: Evangelical Protestantism and Notions of the Self in the U.S. Immigrant Detention Regime,” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, San Antonio, November 21
- 2021 “Christianity, Immigrant Detention, and Personhood at the Nation’s Edge,” International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture, conference hosted virtually by Arizona State University, February 26
- 2018 “The Word is Not Detained: Trauma and Transformation in an Immigrant Detention Facility,” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Denver, November 19
- 2016 “From Fragmentation to Wholeness: Envisioning Immigrant Detention in the United States.” Religion and Media Workshop, American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX, November 18
- 2012 “I Lift up Mine Eyes to the North: Mexican Evangelicals and U.S. Migration.” XXX International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association. San Francisco, CA, May 23-26
- 2011 “God Bless America: Undocumented Evangelicals in the Shadow of Arizona’s S.B. 1070.” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, November 21
- 2011 “El dios sin fronteras y el sueño mexicano:’ religión, espacio, y migración en El Alberto, Hidalgo.” XIII Coloquio International sobre Otopames, Puebla, Mexico, October 29
- 2009 “El ‘sueño mexicano’ y el ‘Dios sin fronteras’: dos visiones del viaje indocumentado en El Alberto, Hidalgo.” 53 Congreso Internacional de Americanistas, Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, July 19-24
- 2008 “Reinventing the Border: Religion, Tourism, and the U.S.-Mexico Frontier.” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL. Oct 31-Nov 3
- 2008 “Simulated Border Crossing: On the Boundary of Ritual and Tourism in Mexico’s Parque EcoAlberto.” Southeastern Council of Latin American Studies Annual Meeting, Tampa, Florida, April 17-19
- 2006 “Prophecy, Predators, and Prayer: Ritual Dimensions of U.S.-Mexico Border Crossing.” Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, York University, Toronto, Ontario, May 27-June 3

### **Panels and Talks Organized**

- 2021 Organizer, “Mass Incarceration and Immigrant Policing in Arizona: Voices of Resistance” (bilingual roundtable organized with Trans Queer Pueblo). ASU Art Museum. October 28
- 2018 Organizer, States of Incarceration Exhibit Launch & Documentary Screening, Burton Barr Central Library, Phoenix, September 7
- 2018 Co-organizer, “Cuentos de Fortaleza/ Stories of Strength: Detention in the Southwest,” a Mass Story Lab workshop featuring the voices of youth and LGBTQ+ individuals impacted by detention, Burton Barr Central Library, Phoenix, September 22
- 2018 Organizer, “Who Cares about Immigrant Detention? Ignorance, Brutality, and Reasons for Optimism,” a coversation with *American Gulag* author Mark Dow,

- Arizona State University, October 2
- 2018 Co-organizer, “Confinement+Liberation: Finding Freedom in Spaces of Incarceration,” an open mic night with the youth arts organization Aliento, Burton Barr Central Library, Phoenix, October 5
- 2018 Organizer, “Is Incarceration the Best Approach to Address Criminal Behavior?” A public conversation with Dr. Julian Kunnie, Burton Barr Central Library, Phoenix, October 13
- 2014 Organizer, “Beyond the Border: Understanding the Central American Refugee Crisis.” ASU School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies, Arizona State University, September 3
- 2012 Organizer, “Homegrown Nativism or Corporate Profits? Culture, Detention, and the Politics of Immigration” with Robin Jacobson. Institute for Humanities Research, Arizona State University, March 27

### **Workshop Participation**

- 2019-20 “Recovering Moral Capital,” faculty discussion series, Arizona States University.
- 2017-18 “Taking Exception: Queering American Religion,” Department of Religion, Indiana University, Bloomington, March 30-April 1 2017 and April 2018
- 2019 Liberation Theology and Decolonial Thought Summer School, Santiago de Compostela, Spain, June 3-7
- 2019 “Religion, Journalism, and Democracy,” Cronkite School and Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict, ASU, March 22

### **CAMPUS AND DEPARTMENTAL TALKS**

- 2022 Discussant, Indigeneity and (Im)migration panel. Political Theology Network Conference, Political Theology Network and the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict, Arizona State University, April 8
- 2020 Paper presentation, “Salvation and Survival: Theologies of Detention at the Nation’s Edge,” Undoing Time: Art & Histories of Incarceration Convening, ASU Art Museum, January 10
- 2020 Presentation, “Faith and Immigration,” Princeton Theological Seminary Travel Course, Arizona State University, January 7
- 2019 Keynote presentation, “Captivity and Liberation: Religion and For-Profit Immigrant Detention.” Eighth Annual Prison Education Conference, Arizona State University, February 15
- 2015 Speaker, “Public Salon on Latino Religiosities,” with Felipe Hinojosa and Sujey Vega, October 19
- 2015 Panelist, “Is America Still the Land of Opportunity?” with Damien Cave, Julian Lim and Matthew Garcia, September 29
- 2012 Panelist, “Whose Nation Under God? Religious Identity and Belonging in the 2012 Presidential Election.” Kerr Cultural Center, Scottsdale, AZ, October 17
- 2012 Moderator, “Immigration Rights in Arizona.” Local to Global Justice Conference,

- Arizona State University, February 26
- 2011 Paper presentation, “A Cell Phone on her Pillow: Religion, Migration, and Those Who Stay Behind.” Religious Studies Faculty Forum, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ, September 1
- 2011 Presentation, “Crosses, Flags, and Fences: Religion on the U.S.-Mexico Border.” Religion in Many Places Faculty Panel, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ, Feb. 24

## **PUBLIC HUMANITIES ACTIVITIES**

- 2019-20 Exhibition consultant, “Undoing Time: Incarceration and Visual Culture” ASU Art Museum, Arizona State University
- 2018-19 Project lead, [Arizona Detention Research](#), a digital platform featuring an audio archive, film, and other web-based content highlighting the voices of those who have been held in immigrant detention in Arizona
- 2016-18 FRANK Talks scholar, Arizona Humanities and the Arizona State Library, Archives, and Public Records, <http://www.azhumanities.org/programs/frank-talks/>
- 2016 Moderator, “Foreigners in Their Own Land,” film screening and discussion sponsored by Arizona Humanities, St. Paul Cultural Center, Yuma, AZ, May 18

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

**Associate Professor – Arizona State University**  
(original courses developed marked \*)

### ***Graduate***

Religion, Borders, & Coloniality\* (REL 691) Spring 2020  
Introduction to College Teaching (HST / PHI / REL 700) Spring 2019  
Immigration, Incarceration, and the Borderlands\* (HST 598) Fall 2015  
Religion, Migration, and Mobility in the Americas\* (REL 591) Fall 2012  
Latin American Religious History (REL 690, Independent Study) Fall 2014

### ***Undergraduate***

Religion and Immigration in America\* (REL 394) Spring 2014, Spring 2011, Fall 2010  
Religion and Violence in America (Rel 219) Spring 2021 (online)  
American Religious Traditions (REL 320) Spring 2022 (online), Fall 2021 (online), Spring 2021 (online), Spring 2020 (online), Fall 2019 (online), Spring 2018, Fall 2016, Spring 2016, Spring 2015, Spring 2014, Fall 2013, Fall 2010  
Life, Sex, and Death (REL 205) Fall 2022 (online), Spring 2018 (online), Spring 2016  
Ritual, Symbol, and Myth (REL 207) Fall 2013, Spring 2013  
Religion in America (REL 321) Fall 2022 (online), Spring 2022 (online), Fall 2021 (online), Fall 2020 (online), Fall 2018 (online), Spring 2017, Spring 2013  
U.S. Latino Religions and Cultures (REL 326) Fall 2016, Fall 2012, Spring 2012, Spring 2011

## **Instructor – Department of Religion, University of Florida**

Religion and Society (Spring 2010)

American Religious History (co-instructor, Fall 2009)

Introduction to Argument and Persuasion (Fall 2007)

## **MENTORING AND STUDENT COMMITTEES**

### **Doctoral Dissertation (Chair)**

2021 Catherine May, History. “The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.-Mexico Border Region,” defended summer 2021

### **Doctoral Dissertation (Committee Member)**

2022- Aixen Aydin, Religious Studies, University of Texas at Austin, chair Jennifer Graber. “Rituals of Xenophobic Gender Violence in the U.S.”

2021- Yonca Cubuk Uzundag, chair Shahla Talebi. Title tbd.

2016-18 Judith Perera, History, dissertation chair Calvin Schermerhorn. “An Experience of Death: The Transformation of Immigration Enforcement from a Form of Exclusion to a Method of State-Sponsored Violence through the Lens of Immigrant Detention,” defended Spring 2018

2014-18 Vicki Cabot, Religious Studies, dissertation chair Joel Gereboff. “Home, Hearth and Heart: A Study of Identity Construction of *Ba’al Teshuvah* Women,” defended Spring 2018

### **Doctoral Qualifying Exam (Committee Member)**

2012 Lauren Berka, History, dissertation chair Catherine O’Donnell, “Christianity in the Americas” qualifying exam

### **Masters Thesis (Committee Member)**

2022 - Paige Baca, Religious Studies, thesis chair Jason Bruner. Title tba.

### **Undergraduate Honors Thesis (Director)**

2022 Ilse Rodriguez, “The Evangelical Latino Electorate: How Religion Shapes Voting Trends”

2020-21 Olena Melnyk, “‘Salvation’ in the Juvenile Justice System”

2019-20 Berenice Pelayo, “The Economic and Political Implications of the Privatization of Detention Centers and Prisons in Arizona”

2012-13 Claire Impehoven, “A Contemporary Analysis of the History, Development, and Symbolism of the Mexican Folk Saint, ‘Santa Muerte’”

### **Undergraduate Honors Thesis (Second Reader)**

2021-22 Kirsten Schroeder, "The Dynamics of Assisting Refugees and Asylum-Seekers"

### **Undergraduate Honors Enrichment Contracts**

Shaylah Terrell, "An Analysis of Martin Luther's Reformation" (Spring 2020), Elora Scamardo, "The Yaqui Tribe and Holy Thursday" (Spring 2018), Madeleine Randall, "Elegba's Presence in Two Artworks" (2018) Miranda Jacobs, "The Great Divide: Evangelicals and Climate Change" (Spring 2017); Matthew Kupres, "Land, Standing Rock, and the Dakota Access Pipeline" (Spring 2017); Mikayla Finger, "German Catholic Immigrants in the U.S." (Fall 2016); Cameron Mahai, "American Muslims & 9/11" (Fall 2013); Isabella Leavitt, "Santa Muerte (Fall 2012); Ellen Brooks, "Obeah" (Fall 2012); Tate Desper, "The LDS Church in Mexico" (Fall 2012); Claire Impehoven, "The Yaqui" (Spring 2012); Daniel Suber, "Liberation Theology and the Mainstream Catholic Church" (Spring 2012)

## **UNIVERSITY SERVICE**

### **To the Profession**

2022 External Reviewer, New York University Press  
2021 Conference Committee Member, XIII Coloquio Internacional Sobre Otopames, hosted virtually by Arizona State University, October 24-28  
2019 External Reviewer, Routledge Press  
2016 External Reviewer, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*  
2016 External Reviewer, *Journal of Contemporary Religion*  
2013 External Reviewer, *Latin American Research Review*  
2011 Book Discussant, *Entrenamiento para migrantes* by Aida Suarez Chavez, 2011 XIII Coloquio Internacional sobre Otopames, Puebla, Mexico, October 28  
2011 External Reviewer, *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture*

### **To Arizona State University**

2021- Member, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, The College, ASU  
2017 Conference Planning Committee, "Speaking the Unspeakable: A Conference on Colorblindness, Racism, and Antiracism," Arizona State University, February 17-18  
2012-14 Member, Advisory Board, Institute for Humanities Research  
2012 Panel Discussant, "Immigration, Transnationalism, and Nationhood," with Nancy Foner and Cecilia Menjivar. Institute for Humanities Research Fellows Symposium, Arizona State University, April 13

### **To ASU's School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies**

2022- Member, SHPRS Anti-Racism Committee  
2021 Chair, SHPRS Anti-Racism Committee



- 2019-21 Faculty Head, Religious Studies
- 2019-20 Member, Graduate Committee in Religious Studies
- 2018-19 Associate Director of Graduate Studies, SHPRS
- 2018-19 Search Committee Member, Black Experience in the Americas (History and Religious Studies, Open Rank)
- 2015-16 Search Committee Member, Modern Mexico (History, Open Rank)
- 2015-18 Member, Committee for Undergraduate Education in Religious Studies
- 2012-15 Member, Religious Studies Forum Committee (Chair 2014-2015)
- 2013-14 Search Committee Member, Assistant Professor of Borderlands History
- 2012-13 Search Committee Member, Assistant Professor of Environmental Humanities

### **Extracurricular Campus Service**

- 2014- Faculty Advisor, Graduate Association of Religious Studies, Arizona State University
- 2014-19 Faculty Advisor, Sun Devils are Better Together (undergraduate interfaith student organization), Arizona State University
- 2012-13 Faculty Advisor, Plan Milpa (urban gardening alliance between ASU students and Worker Rights Center in Phoenix, AZ)

### **MEDIA APPEARANCES**

- 2020 Episode appearance, [Making America](#), a 9-part web series featuring NFL linebacker Joshua Martin as he engaged with community leaders and chefs to discuss issues impacting their cities. Produced by Break! Media
- 2019 KAET Channel 8. *Arizona Horizon*, “*Reports of Inhumane Treatment at Immigrant Detention Facilities Holding Children are Coming out*,” aired July 25
- 2018 [“What’s the Difference between a Refugee and a Migrant? ASU professor says immigration distinctions are important in understanding the migrant caravan story.”](#) Interview with *ASU Now*, November 27
- 2018 [Worried about immigrant detention? Learn about immigrant detention, mass imprisonment at these Phoenix events.](#) Interview with *Phoenix New Times*, September 7
- 2018 [“The Morality of Immigration with Professor Leah Sarat.”](#) *The God Show*, aired August 26
- 2018 KAET Channel 8. *Arizona Horizon*, “Controversy Over Separating Kids from Immigrant Families Grows,” aired June 18
- 2014 KAET Channel 8. *Horizonte*, “Religion and Migration.” Aired September 25.
- 2014 KJZZ, *Here and Now*, “ASU Panel Considers Legal Questions about Migrant Children” (with Prof. Evelyn Cruz). Aired September 3
- 2012 Telemundo Arizona. Interviewed for *Latino Mormones*, special report by Janet Rodríguez. Aired October 25

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

- 2013-20 Core Member, The Phoenix Restoration Project, organization providing support to immigrants in detention in Arizona and those who are newly released
- 2011-12 Member, Board of Directors, Arizona Interfaith Alliance for Worker Justice, Phoenix, AZ
- 2009 Guest Speaker, “The Immigration Detention Industry,” Social Justice Roundtable, Gainesville Catholic Worker, Gainesville, FL, January 29
- 2009 Speaker, Migration Lecture Series, Casa de los Amigos, Mexico City, July 23
- 2007 Guest Speaker, “A Simulated U.S.-Mexico Border?” Café Cultural series, Institute of Hispanic and Latino Cultures, University of Florida, November 13
- 2002-3 House Coordinator, Casa de la Peregrina women’s shelter, Cd, Juárez, Mexico

## **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

American Academy of Religion  
International Society of Religion, Nature, and Culture

## **LANGUAGES**

Spanish - speaking (fluent), reading and writing (excellent)