

# Curriculum Vitae of Justin W. Henry

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## EMPLOYMENT

- 2023-present    Bhagwan Padma Prabhu Endowed Assistant Professor,  
Department of Religious Studies, University of South Florida.
- 2021-2023      Lecturer, Georgia College and State University.
- 2019-2021      Visiting Lecturer, Georgia College and State University.
- 2018             Lecturer, The University of Chicago.
- 2016-2018      Instructor, Loyola University Chicago, Department of Theology.
- 2015-2016      Instructor, Elmhurst College.

## EDUCATION

- 2017             Ph.D. The University of Chicago Divinity School, History of Religions.
- 2009             M.A. Cornell University, Asian Studies.
- 2005             B.A. Colgate University, Honors in Philosophy, *magna cum laude*.

## COURSES TAUGHT

World Religions | Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Religion | Religions of India |  
Buddhist Traditions in Asia | Buddhist Philosophy and Literature | Introduction to  
Hinduism | Sex, Yoga and Dieting in Indian Religions | Religion, Sects and Cults |  
The God Debate | Religion and Wealth

## MONOGRAPHS

202

JOURNAL ISSUE

2019 Guest editor and introduction co-author for *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*

- 2019 “Explorations in the Transmission of the *Ramayana* in Sri Lanka.” *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 42.4: pp.732-46. DOI: 10.1080/00856401.2019.1631739.
- [with S. Pathmanesan and Krishantha Fedricks] “Reclaiming Ravana in Sri Lanka: Ravana’s Sinhala Buddhist Apotheosis and Tamil responses.” *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 42.4: pp.796-812. DOI: 10.1080/00856401.2019.1631900.
- 2017 [with Alastair Gornall] “Beautifully Moral: Cosmopolitan Issues in Medieval Pali Literary Theory.” *Sri Lanka at the Crossroads of History*. Ed. Zoltán Biedermann and Alan Strathern. University College London Press: pp.77-93.
- 2012 “The Polysemic Nature of *paritta*: One Buddhist Ritual and its Interpretations.”
- [*Mr. D. S. Godage Felicitation Volume*]. Ed. Ven. Induragare Dhammaratana, et al. Godage International Publishers: pp.702–709.

#### BOOK REVIEWS

- [forthcoming] Review of Justin McDaniel, “Wayward Distractions: Ornament, Emotion, Zombies and the Study of Buddhism in Thailand” (National University of Singapore Press, 2022). *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies*.
- 2022 Review of Alastair Gornall, “Rewriting Buddhism: Pali literature and monastic reform in Sri Lanka, 1157–1270” (University College London Press, 2020). *Religion* 52.3. DOI: 10.1080/0048721X.2022.2065188.
- Review of John S. Strong, “The Buddha’s Tooth: Western Tales of a Sri Lankan Relic” (University of Chicago Press, 2021). *Material Religion* 18.2. DOI: 10.1080/17432200.2022.2047531.
- Review of Frank Korom and Leah Lowthorp (ed.), “South Asian Folklore in Transition: Crafting New Horizons” (Routledge, 2019). *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 26.2. DOI: 10.1007/s11407-022-09320-3.
- 2019 Review of Thomas Patton, “The Buddha’s Wizards: Magic, Protection, and Healing in Burmese Buddhism” (Columbia University Press, 2018). *Bulletin for the Study of Religion* 48.3-4: DOI:10.1558/bsor.38314.
- 2018 Review of Gil Fronsdal, “The Buddha Before Buddhism: Wisdom from the Early Teachings” (Shambala, 2016). *JAAR/Reading Religion*.

2014 Review of Stephen C. Berkwitz, “Buddhist Poetry and Colonialism: Alagiyavanna and the Portuguese in Sri Lanka” (Oxford University Press, 2013). *Symposia* 6: pp.110-13.

#### SELECTED AWARDS

2024 “Life Worth Living” Faculty Course Development Fellowship. To develop a graduate course on “Christian and Buddhist Ethics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” underwritten by the John Templeton Foundation in conjunction with the Yale Center for Faith & Culture

2019



- 2022 Forum on Contemporary Theory Annual International Conference (plenary panel on “The State of Theory in the World Today”). Guwahati, India. December 22.
- “Hinduism and the New Spirit of Capitalism: Neoliberal online discourse in India and North America.” *American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting*. Denver, CO. November 20.
- “The *Ravana Katava* and the Sinhala *Ramayana* Tradition.” *The 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on South Asia*. Madison, WI. October 22.
- “Sinhala Buddhist Identity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Ravana Movement.” *Buddhist Identities in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Asia*. Cambridge University. April 9.
- “Research as a CAORC-NEH Fellow in Sri Lanka.” *Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference*. Honolulu, Hawai’i. March 28.
- 2021 “Facebook as Laboratory of Myth: The ‘Sinhala Ravana’ phenomenon and the rewriting of ethnic history in 21<sup>st</sup> century Sri Lanka.” *Association of Global South Studies 38th Annual Conference*. Georgia Southern University [online participation]. December 15.
- “Terraforming the Past: Buddhist majoritarianism and the Sinhala Ravana movement.” *American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting*. San Antonio, TX [online participation]. November 19.
- “Literary Patronage and Print Culture in Sri Lanka’s 19<sup>th</sup> century Sanskrit Renaissance.” *Changing patterns of patronage across South Asia in the early modern and colonial periods*. Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland [online participation]. October 16.
- “The 19<sup>th</sup> century Sri Lankan Sanskrit Renaissance.” *The 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the European Association for South Asian Studies*. Vienna, Austria [online participation]. July 27.
- 2019 “Social Media and the Birth of Buddhist Ravana.” *The 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on South Asia*. Madison, WI. October 18.
- “Ravana’s Palace and Sita’s Prison: Stratigraphies of Hindu and Buddhist mythology and devotional space in central Sri Lanka.” *British Association for South Asian Studies Annual Conference*. Durham, UK. April 4.
- 2018 “A Bridge too Close: Ram diplomacy, Ravana sovereignty and the technological past in 21<sup>st</sup> century Sri Lanka.” *American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting*. Denver, CO. November 19.

- “Of Kokilas and Jaguars: Modern Sanskrit revivalism in Sri Lanka.” *The 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on South Asia*. Madison, WI. October 13.
- “The *Mahavamsa* and Competing Visions of the National Past in Sri Lanka.” *The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Theravada Studies Conference* (Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting). Washington, DC. March 22.
- 2017 “Alternative Media Coast to Coast: Conspiracy, apocalypticism and populism in maverick AM radio broadcasting.” *American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting*. Boston, MA. November 20.
- 2016 “Balancing Mount Kailash: Ravana’s Sanskrit in the Dravidian and Sinhala Buddhist nationalist movements.” *American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting*. San Antonio, TX. November 20.
- “Divided Skies: Religious identity, language and devotional landscapes in 15<sup>th</sup> century Sinhala messenger poetry.” *The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on South Asia*. Madison, WI. October 21
- “Triangulating Religious Pluralism: Temple patronage and devotional landscapes in pre-colonial Sri Lanka.” *The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual South Asia Graduate Student Conference*, The University of Chicago. March 3.
- 2015 “Negotiating the Past: Vernacular historiography in Sri Lanka from the 14<sup>th</sup> century.” *American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting*. Atlanta, GA. November 22.
- “Ravana, King of Lanka.” *The 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on South Asia*. Madison, WI. October 23.
- 2014 “Crisis and Historical Imagination in Kandyan Era Sinhala Historiography.” *Revisiting Social Responsibility in Contexts of Crisis: Challenges and Possibilities in Sri Lanka* (Colombo University Faculty of Arts 2014 International Conference). November 17.
- “Reinscribing Lithic History: Tamil *kalve u* literature and the career of King Kulakkotta .” *The 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference on South Asia*. Madison, WI. October 18.
- 2012 “The Alluring Stylus: Monastic poets in medieval Buddhist Sri Lanka.” *Sri Lanka: Intersections* (graduate student conference). Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA. November 9.
- 2010 “Tame ng M t

- 2009 “Gratitude Great and Small: Comparative reflections on Sinhala devotional works and the writings of Shinran.” *The 14<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies*. Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan. June 14.
- 2007 “Poet Kings and the Kings of Poetry: *rasa* and rulership in medieval Sinhala literature.” *American Academy of Religion Eastern International Regional Conference*. Waterloo, ON. May 5.

#### PUBLIC TALKS AND INVITED LECTURES

- 2023 Faculty of Humanities, University of Jaffna. December 8.
- Faculty of Humanities, University of Kelaniya. December 5.
- Center for Research and Publication in the Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna. July 19.
- American Ceylon Mission, Batticaloa, Sri Lanka. July 15.
- University of Colombo, Department of History. July 13.
- Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Center for Tamil Studies Special Lecture Series. June 20.
- American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies “New Books Series” [online]. March 29.
- 2022 University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. December 8.
- Pali and Buddhist University, Homagama, Sri Lanka. December 5.
- Council of American Overseas Research Centers, Fellowship Alumni Panel [webinar]. September 14.
- École française d'Extrême-Orient, Pondicherry, India. August 8.
- Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry, India. July 29.
- 2019 Georgia College & State University. October 2.
- 2017 Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka, Colombo. July 31.
- The Open University of Sri Lanka, Colombo. July 25.
- 2015 The University of Chicago, paper given at the *Theory and Practice in South Asia* weekly seminar. February 5.



2010 Colombo University, Department of Sinhala. Lecture in the university's Sinhala Studies Seminar series. July 20.

2007 Colgate University, Hamilton, NY. April 5.

#### SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP

Department of Religious Studies Undergraduate Committee, University of South Florida. Fall 2023-present.

Liaison between Georgia College and State University and the Federation of Jain Associations in North America to establish an Endowed Professorship in Jain Studies at GCSU. 2022-23.

College of Arts & Sciences Dean's Advisory Council, Georgia College and State University. 2021-2023 (chair, 2021-2022).

Faculty co-supervisor for the Georgia College Student Meditation Club. 2020-present.

Panelist for student organized events on "religion and immigration" and "religious perspectives on medical ethics" through the Hindu Students' Organization and Theta Alpha Kappa, Loyola University Chicago. Spring and fall 2018.

Workshop on the *Ramayana* in Sri Lanka organized for the American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies. Colombo, Sri Lanka. July 2016.

Co-president, Buddhist Studies Group. The University of Chicago Divinity School, 2009-2012.

#### CONSULTING

Consultant for the Council of American Overseas Research Centers on an application for 2022-23 award funding through the Fellowship Programs at Independent Research Institutions (FPIRI) program, administered by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Summer 2021. (Successfully awarded, April 2022, \$150,000.)

Consultant for Wide Angle Films on *Legends of the Ramayana with Amish*, documentary series currently available on *Discovery+*. Summer 2021.

Consultant for a documentary series sponsored by Roar Media and produced by Sarah Kabir entitled *72*, an educational film series on the cultural and political history of Sri Lanka. Spring 2021.

