
Caleb D. Spencer

Curriculum Vitae

Associate Professor
Department of English
Honors College
Department of Art
Azusa Pacific University
901 E. Alost Ave., PO Box 7000
Azusa, CA 91702-7000

Education:

University of Illinois, Chicago Chicago, Illinois
PhD in English, May 2011
Thesis: "Protestant Postmodernism: Theory and Theology, Affect and Art."
Director: Walter Benn Michaels
Committee: Jennifer Ashton, Nicholas Brown, Rachel Havrelock and Roger Lundin (external)
Exam Fields:
British Fiction 1850-1950
American Fiction 1850-1950
British and American Poetry 1850-1950
Literary and Social Theory, Modern Theology

University of Illinois, Chicago Chicago, Illinois
Master of Arts in English (literature), May 2002
Thesis: "The Right Road Lost: Redemption and Blessing in Wordsworth's *Prelude*."
Director: Donald Marshall

Wheaton College Wheaton, Illinois
Bachelor of Arts in English, August 1999

Publications:

Books

Literature and Religious Experience (in progress). Edited volume

Postsecular Postmodernism: Experience and Theology, Sincerity and Art (in progress). Monograph on the ways that postsecularism emerges from the relationship between Protestant Liberalism (Theological Modernism) and artistic, literary, and theoretical postmodernism, demonstrating the structural indebtedness of the latter to the former.

Book Chapters

"Working Knowledge: Faith, Vocation, and the Evidence of Things Unseen," *Faithful is Successful: Notes to the Driven Pilgrim* (109-120). Edited David Lewis and Nathan Grills, Outskirts Press, 2014.

Academic Articles

"From *Traveling Mercies* to *Fight Club*: Spiritual Autobiography in an Age of Experience" Fall 2019 (52.1) *Religion and Literature*

"w/Sincerity: A Theological Concept that Never Left" *Christianity and Literature*, Winter 2017.

"History of Fish: from Reader Response to Intentionalism" under review at *Modern Theology* Fall 2019

"What Counts as Christian Criticism" *Christianity and Literature*, Winter 2009.

Where There's Smoke, There's Smoke, art catalog essay for David Hooker's Wheaton College Faith and Learning Project, published Spring 2009.

Reviews

review of Colin Jager's *The Book of God: Secularization and Design in the Romantic Era*, *Christianity and Literature*, Summer 2011

review of James Elkins' *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art*, in the *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture*, Volume XVII, Fall 2007

Other Writing

Regular article and Editor's Letter contributions as Contributing Editor, *BELONG* Magazine, Summer 2015-present

"Wasting July: An Encomium to the Tour de France," *Books and Culture*, July 2014.

Conference Papers, Invited Talks, and Presentations:

"A (Renewed) Aesthetic Education: Literature, Religious Experience, and Virtue." Baylor Symposium on Faith and Culture: the Character of the University, Institute for Faith and Learning, Waco, TX, October 2019

"Postsecular Signs: the disincarnate sign, the ordinary sacred, and transcendence in Jarmusch's "Paterson," Kogonada's "Columbus" and Malick's "Tree of Life". American Literature Association, Boston MA (panel convener and presenter, unable to attend and present due to funding withdrawal from university)

"Authenticity: The Problem with God and the Problem of Self-Truth." (convener and contributor of plenary panel) International Conference for Christianity and Literature: "The Problem with God." Harvard Divinity School, April 2019

"Weak Become Strong: Postsecular Formations & Strong Religion" American Literature Association International Conference: San Francisco, May 2018

"Art History Made New" Session Chair. CIVA Conference Los Angeles, CA June 2017.

"Postsecular Sacraments: Sacred Borders in Contemporary American Literature & Film; or Nothing is Sacred because Everything is." Western Conference on Christianity and Literature: Point Loma University, May 2017.

"An Evening with Dana Gioia" interview of the poet after his reading at Hedges Lectures, Los Angeles, CA February 2017

"The Transfigurations of Brent Dickinson: on the premier of 'Transfiguration on Forked River Mountain.'" Critical talk and artist interview at film premier Los Angeles Co, November 2, 2016

“Problems of the Postsecular?: Protestant Postmodernism and Belief” Postsecularism Conference: Ian Ramsey Center, Oxford University, Oxford, UK July 2016

“Beliefs and other problems with the Postsecular,” American Literature Association International Conference: San Francisco, May 2016

“Partially Faithful: the Postsecular Films of Nolan and Malick.” Western Conference on Christianity and Literature: Seattle University, May 2015.

“Narrating Nonreligion: Experience, Evidence, Mind.” Nonreligion and Secularity Research Network International Conference: Pitzer College: November 2014

“Secular Messianisms: Zizek’s ‘Children of Men’ and ‘The Lego Movie’” Institute for Faith and Culture, Faith and Film, Baylor University, October 2014

“Continental Messianisms: Badiou’s Event and Zizek’s ‘Children of Men’” Western Conference on Christianity and Literature: Westmont College, May 2014

“Self-Translation, Memoir and Memory: Knowledge, Self-Knowledge and Truth in Contemporary Memoir” Midwest Regional Conference, Christianity and Literature, March 2014

“Absent ‘Possibles:’ Cloning, Caring, Completing in Ishiguro’s and Romanek’s “Never Let Me Go”” Pacific British Studies Association, March 2014

“I’m Serious: Sincerity, Doubt, and Deconversion in Contemporary American Memoir” Midwest Modern Language Association: Milwaukee WI November 2013

“Losing Their Religion: belief and unbelief in de-conversion narratives after the New Atheism” Western Conference on Christianity and Literature: Seattle Pacific University, May 2012

“Auden’s ‘Urban’ Images: Perambulating, the Polis, and Dialogue,” Conference on Christianity and Literature, Midwest Regional Conference: Wheaton College, September 2009

“Stanley Fish’s God: Theology and the Interpretive Community,” *Opus* Speakers Series, Hope College, October 2008

“Aesthetic Reprisal: Late Modernism and the Return of the Aesthetic,” MLA Conference: Conference on Christianity and Literature, December 2007

“Integrate/Separate: A Colloquium on Religion and Art,” invited participant for a colloquium on the relationships between religion, fiction, poetry, visual art and scholarship at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, October 2007

Invited colloquium fellow, Nagoya Japanese American Studies Conference, July 2007, Nanzun University, Nagoya, Japan

“Closing the Open Text: the New Intentionalists and the Return to Meaning,” April 2006, Wheaton Theology Conference, Wheaton College

“The Avant-Garde and ‘Ultimate Reality’: Clement Greenberg and Paul Tillich on the Utility of Art,” March 2006, Conference on Christianity and Literature Western Regional Conference, Pepperdine University

“Topicality, Timelessness and Representation: Social Inequality and the Negro” April 2005, Lies and Literature Conference, University of Wisconsin, Madison

“Bourdieu’s Aesthetic: Class Distinction and the Impossibility of Beauty” Illinois Institute for the Humanities Graduate Student Conference, Chicago, IL Spring 2004

“The Right Road Lost: Redemption and Blessing in Wordsworth’s *Prelude*.” September 2001, South West Conference on Christianity and Literature at Baylor University (paper accepted but not delivered because 9/11 events prevented travel).

Invited Lectures:

2014-present Azusa Pacific University Honor’s College Lecture: Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, Chesterton’s *Orthodoxy*, Augustine’s *Confession*, Euripides’ *Bacchae*, Richard Rorty’s *Contingency, Irony, Solidarity*
2008 Hope College *Opus* Lecture

Awards:

CLAS Faculty Award for Distinguished Teaching 2015-2016, Azusa Pacific University (awarded to one professor per year)

Harvey Fellowship 2008-2011

University of Illinois Dean’s Scholar Fellowship, 2008-2009.

PHD funding award from University of Illinois includes the highest financial and fee remission award (awarded to one student per college, per year).

University of Illinois Board of Trustees Fellowship, 2008-2011

Conference on Christianity and Literature MLA Conference Graduate Student Award, December 2008

Academic Leadership:

Summer 2015-present *Christianity & Literature (CAL)*
Associate Editor

Journal coeditor with responsibilities for special issues, reviewing and disseminating unsolicited manuscripts to peer reviewers, working with *CAL* staff assistant editors, etc.

Summer 2016-present American Literature Association
American Religion and Literature Society
Advisory Board Member

Helped direct the future of the Society with the co-presidents, served as advisor and as a panel chair at the ALA conventions.

Summer 2015-present *BELONG* Magazine
Contributing Editor, Board member

Writer, editor, and photographer for nationally distributed journal for creative women entrepreneurs, writing editor’s letters, blog content, and various other support for magazine production. www.belong-mag.com & Barnes & Noble nationally.

Fall 2015-present Azusa Pacific University, English Department

MA Colloquia Director

Facilitated and hosted MA colloquia for all English grad students, including inviting guest lecturers, leading the discussion of their materials, and dinner at my home.

Summer 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018 Harvey Fellowship Summer Institute
Co-Director

Helped lead Fellowship seminar on the integration of religion and vocation, especially academic vocations and professions. Responsibilities included work life/balance lecture, fellows mentoring, event coordination and planning, institute planning and art night direction.

Teaching Experience:

Azusa Pacific University

Departments of English, Fine Arts, and Honors College

Fall 2017-present **Associate Professor**

Spring 2018 English 520: Theology & Literature: "Ideas of the Holy"

English 111: Studies in Literature

Fall 2017 Honors 300: Dostoyevsky to Rorty

English 111: Studies in Literature

Fall 2013-Spring 2017 Assistant Professor

Summer 2017 Art 520 Critical Issues in Art II: Modernism to Postmodernism: Signs, Theories, Art

Spring 2017 English 580: Postmodernism & Postsecularism Seminar: literary theory and religious studies

English 487: Literary Topics: Post45 & Postsecularism

Fall 2016 English 111: Studies in Literature

Honors 300: Dostoyevsky to Rorty

Summer 2016 Art 520: Critical Issues in Contemporary Art 2

Spring 2016 English 488: Contemporary Authors: David Foster Wallace and Friends

English 571: Theory and Theology: Biblical Hermeneutics, High Theory, A-theology

Honors 240: Plato to Augustine

Fall 2015 English 487: Literary Movements: Postmodernism

EnglishW 110: Four Transcendentals: Love, Goodness, Beauty, Truth

Spring 2015 English 489: Pynchon, DeLillo, McCarthy

English 354: American Literature 1865-present

English 111: Introduction to Literature

Fall 2014 English 490 (independent study): 20th-21st Century Literary Theory

English 410: the American Novel

English 310: Film and Literature

EnglishW 110: Four Transcendentals: Love, Goodness, Beauty, Truth

Spring 2014 EnglishW 110: Four Transcendentals: Love, Goodness, Beauty, Truth

English 111: Introduction to Literature

Fall 2013 English 110W: This Is the Way the World Ends: Apocalypse in Literature and Film

English 111: Introduction to Literature

Wheaton College (Illinois)

Fall 2011-Spring 2013

Department of English, Wheaton College, IL

Guest Assistant Professor

Faculty member teaching expository writing, the history of the University and theory of education in a writing intensive, introductory general education course.

Spring 2013 English 103 Writing Effective Prose: *The Idea of An Education: from Citizens to Knowledge Workers, Liberal Arts to Vocationalism*

Fall 2012 English 103 Writing Effective Prose: Film and Theology

Spring 2012 English 103 Writing Effective Prose: *The Idea of An Education: from Citizens to Knowledge Workers, Liberal Arts to Vocationalism*

Fall 2011 English 103 Writing Effective Prose: *The Idea of An Education: from Citizens to Knowledge Workers, Liberal Arts to Vocationalism*

Spring 2011

Department of English, Wheaton College, IL

Visiting Assistant Professor

Faculty member teaching expository writing, cultural theory, social class analysis, and theories of postmodernism

3 sections of English 103 Writing Effective Prose: *What has Williamsburg to do with Jerusalem? Coolhunting in Postchristianity*

Fall 2005-Spring 2006

Department of English, Wheaton College, IL

Visiting Instructor

Faculty member teaching American Literature, critical theory, expository writing, and theology of culture

Spring 2006: English 103 Writing Effective Prose: *Cultural Hermeneutics, Cultural Theology*
English 104 Writing Effective Prose: *Cultural Hermeneutics, Cultural Theology*

Fall 2005: English 341: American Literature: Colonial to Romantic (1620-1850)
English 103 Writing Effective Prose: *Cultural Hermeneutics, Cultural Theology*

School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Fall 2004-Summer 2013

Department of Liberal Arts, School of the Art Institute of Chicago,

Adjunct Faculty

Faculty member teaching American, British, and Classical Literature, literary and critical theory, writing, and aesthetics in the SAIC program.

Summer 2013: First Year Seminar II: *Apocalypse in Literature & Film*

Spring 2013: Transnational Modernisms: Anglophone literature 19th-21st century
Survey of Literature: American, British and Continental 1850-1950

Fall 2012: First Year Seminar II: *A Liberal Education*
First Year Seminar I: *Both/And: from Gods to Monsters*

Summer 2012: First Year Seminar II: *Beauties and Beasts: Ideality, Hybridity and Monstrosity*

Spring 2012: *Survey of Literature: American, British and Continental 1850-1950*
First Year Seminar II: *Technological Dystopias*

Fall 2011: First Year Seminar II: *A Liberal Education*
 First Year Seminar I: *Apocalyptic Literature and Film*

Fall 2010: First Year Seminar I *Normality and Subversion: New Historicism and Interrogations of the Cool*
 First Year Seminar I: *Tuning Taste: Social Class and Aesthetics*

Spring 2010: Literature in Historical Contexts: *Modern European Literature: Flaubert to the 1950s*
 First Year Seminar II: *Apocalyptic Literature and Film*

Fall 2009: First Year Seminar I *Beauties and Beasts: Ideality, Hybridity and Monstrosity*
 Literature in Historical Contexts: *History of Literary Theory: Ancient to Postmodern*
 First Year Seminar I: *Normality and Subversion: New Historicism and Interrogations of the Cool*

Summer 2008: First Year Seminar I: *The Proud, the Prejudiced, the Clueless, the Awakened and the Diaries they Keep: 19th century British and American Women's Fiction and 20th century Adaptations.*

Spring 2008: Literature in Historical Contexts: *Literary Theory: Surveying Theories of Reading*
 First Year Seminar I *Cultural Semiotics and Class*

Fall 2007-- Literature in Historical Contexts: *The Modern Novel : Transatlantic Modernism in Fiction*
 First Year Seminar I *Both/And: Hybrid and Ideal Creatures.*

Spring 2007—Literature in Historical Contexts: *Reading the Modern: Aesthetics, Theology and Modern Art*

Fall 2006—First Year Seminar II *Social Class and Aesthetics*
 First Year Seminar I *Both/And: Hybrid and Ideal Creatures.*

Spring 2006—Liberal Arts 1001 *Tuning Taste: Social Class and Aesthetics*

Fall 2005— Liberal Arts 1001 *Social Class and Aesthetics*
 First Year Seminar I *Both/And: Hybrid and Ideal Creatures.*

Fall 2004 – Liberal Arts 1001 *Hybrid Creatures and Ideality*

University of Illinois at Chicago

Fall 2001-Spring 2007

Department of English, University of Illinois at Chicago

Teaching Assistant

Instructor in the undergraduate English faculty: classes include introduction to classical literature, American literature and composition courses on the themes of poverty and social class in America, heroism, photography and identity, and ideology and identity).

Summer 2007—English 241: British Literature 1: beginnings to 1660 (TA)

Fall 2006—English 240: Introduction to Literary Study and Methods
 English 101: Introduction to Literature

Summer 2006—English 240: Introduction to Literary Study and Methods

Fall 2005—English 115: The Bible as Literature (TA)

Spring 2005 – English 105: Introduction to British and American Fiction

Fall 2004 –English 105: Introduction to British and American Fiction
English 161 (composition II): *1945-1955: The American Decade*

Summer 2004 – English 101: Introduction to Literature

Spring 2004 – English 101: Introduction to Literature
English 251: American Literature Survey: Romanticism to Modernism (TA)

Fall 2003 – English 101: Introduction to Literature
English 105: Introduction to British and American Fiction

Summer 2003 – English 105: Introduction to British and American Fiction

Spring 2003 - English 161: *Poverty and Social Class*

Fall 2002 - English 160 *Finding and/or Making: Dialogue of Identity.*

Spring 2002 - English 161(comp II): *Situating Supermen: Heroism from Homer to Home Simpson.*

Fall 2001 - English 160 (comp I): *Ideology and Identity: Composition in Context.*

Professional Organization Memberships:

Modern Languages Association
American Academy of Religion
Conference on Christianity and Literature
S.C.A.G. (SoCal Americanist Group)
C.L.A.S.S. (Chicago-land American Studies Society)

Recommendations:

Scholarly Recommenders:

Mark Eaton
Professor of English, Director Center for Research on Ethics and Values
Department of English
Azusa Pacific University
901 E. Alostia Ave., PO Box 7000
Azusa, CA 91702-7000
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Meaton@apu.edu

Alan Jacobs
Distinguished Professor of Humanities in the Honors Program
Morrison 203
Baylor University
Waco, Texas 76798

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Walter Benn Michaels
University Professor and
Director of Graduate Studies
Department of English
2027 University Hall
601 S. Morgan St. (M/C 162)
Chicago, IL 60607-7120
312 413 2200
wbm@uic.edu

Paul J. Griffiths
Warren Professor of Catholic Theology
Duke Divinity School
Box 90968
Durham, NC 27708
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Jennifer Ashton
Associate Department Head
Department of English
2027 University Hall
601 S. Morgan St. (M/C 162)
Chicago, IL 60607-7120
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Nicholas Brown
Department of English
2027 University Hall
601 S. Morgan St. (M/C 162)
Chicago, IL 60607-7120
312 413 2200
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Teaching Recommenders:

Mark Eaton
Professor of English, Director Center for Research on Ethics and Values
Department of English
Azusa Pacific University
901 E. Alost Ave., PO Box 7000
Azusa, CA 91702-7000
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Paul Ashley
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Department of Liberal Arts
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MacLean building
112 South Michigan Avenue
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Nicole Mazarella
Associate Professor and Director of Writing Program
Department of English
Wheaton College
501 College Avenue
Wheaton, IL 60187
nicole.mazarella@wheaton.edu