

Rebekah Trollinger

Department of Religion
University of Vermont
Rebekah.Trollinger@uvm.edu

Academic Employment

2024-present: Assistant Professor, Department of Religion, University of Vermont
2023-2024: Plowshares Associate Professor of Religion and African and African American Studies, Earlham College
2018-2023: Plowshares Assistant Professor of Religion, Earlham College
2016-2018: Visiting Assistant Professor, Religion Department, Department of English, African and African American Studies Program, Earlham College
2015-2016: Visiting Assistant Professor, African and African American Studies Program and Religion Department, Earlham College
2014-2015: Visiting Lecturer, Department of English, Indiana University-Bloomington

Education

Ph.D., Department of English, Indiana University Bloomington, August 2014
Minor Field: Religious Studies
M.A., English, Indiana University Bloomington, August 2007
B.A., English, *summa cum laude*, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, May 2004

Research Interests

African American religious history; Nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century American fiction and religion; Religious autobiography and conversion narratives; African American literature; theories of race and gender; literature and psychology; secularisms.

Book Project, *Acts of Obedience: Race and Gender in Rebecca Jackson's Visionary Writing*

My current book examines the writings of Black Shaker visionary Rebecca Jackson. Active in the middle of the nineteenth century, Jackson's accounts of her dreams, visions, and theology are a rare look at mid-century Black women itinerant preachers, as well as of African American members of Shaker communities—radical Christian utopian communities committed to racial and gender equality, economic sharing, and celibacy. This work will expand current understandings of Black religious women in nineteenth-century America. Further, my study of Jackson's writings also has the potential to reshape the map of contemporary feminisms. Recent works in religious studies have helpfully identified how American feminisms' reliance on concepts such as agency and self-determination fail to address religious women, and especially religious women of color. I want to draw on Rebecca Jackson in order to ask how our understandings of concepts such as bodily self-determination and agency change when meditating on the writings of a Black Shaker woman.

Grants, Fellowships, and Awards

The Humanities Center at the University of Vermont, Coor Programming Award, 2025.

University of Vermont EXPRESS Grant, 2025.

American Association of University Women American Short-Term Research Publication Grant, Summer, 2022.

Professional Development Grant, Earlham College, Summer 2022.

American Association of University Women Postdoctoral Research Leave Fellowship, Alternate, 2021-2022.

NetVUE Vocation Workshop Grant, Summer 2020 (moved to Summer 2021).

Professional Development Grant, Earlham College, Summer 2018.

Digital Writing Workshop, Earlham College, Spring 2017.

Tarkington Fellowship in American Literature, Indiana University, Fall 2010.

Selected Peer-Reviewed Publications

“The Book that is Not a Book: Rebecca Jackson and our Desires.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. Forthcoming.

“‘A peopel on earth’: Rebecca Jackson’s Search for Peoplehood.” *American Religion*, vol. 8, no. 1 (Fall 2026).

“Rebecca Jackson and the Problem of Celibacy.” *Religion and American Culture*, vol. 32, no. 3, (Fall 2022): 375-404.

“Revivals and Camp Meetings.” *The World of Jim Crow America: A Daily Life Encyclopedia*, edited by Steven A. Reich, ABC-CLIO, 2019, pp. 589-92.

“‘A New Religious Ideal’: George Albert Coe, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Religious Emotion.” *Arizona Quarterly*, vol. 72, no. 2, summer 2016, pp. 61-82.

“The Pleasure of Habit.” *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, vol. 71, no. 4, 2007, pp. 531-47.

Book Reviews

Long review essay, *Shakers at the Center: Manifesting Spirits & Spectacles in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. Douglas L. Winiarski. *Religious Studies Review*, forthcoming.

Book review, *Imagining Eden: Black Theology and the Search for Paradise*, Jamall A. Calloway. *Theology Today*, forthcoming.

Book review, *Realist Ecstasy: Religion, Race, and Performance in American Literature*, by Lindsay V. Reckson. *American Studies*, vol. 59, no. 4 (2020): 71-72.

Book review, *The Rabbi's Daughter: A Memoir*, by Reva Mann. *The Indiana Review*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2009, pp. 80.

Conference Presentations

“Communities in Critique: Black Shakers in the 19th Century” (November 2026), North American Religions Unit, American Academy of Religion, Denver.

“Re-envisioning Black Pentecostalism in Twentieth-Century America,” book panel (November 2026), American Academy of Religion, Denver.

“The Book that Isn’t a Book: Rebecca Jackson, Archives, and Contemporary Desires” (March 2026), C19: The Society of 19th-century Americanists, Cincinnati.

“Spiritual Reconciliations: Rebecca Jackson, Shakerism, and Spiritualism” (March 2026), C19: The Society of 19th-century Americanists, Cincinnati.

“Rebecca Jackson and the Archive” (November 2025), North American Religions Unit, American Academy of Religion, Boston.

“Rebecca Jackson’s Divine Call and Rethinking Authority in Black Religious Women’s Writing” (May 2025), American Literature Association, Boston.

“What we teach the dead: Rebecca Jackson, Spiritualist Practices, and Refusing Abuse” (March 2022), C19: The Society of 19th-century Americanists, Miami.

“‘He Had Not Power to Touch Me’: Rebecca Cox Jackson’s Celibacy” (November 2021), Religion and Sexuality Unit, American Academy of Religion.

“The Powerful Celibacy of Shaker Visionary Rebecca Cox Jackson” (March 2020), Feminist Theologies in American Literature session, Northeast Modern Language Association, Boston.

“Religious Rhetoric and Alternative Feminisms: Rebecca Cox Jackson and Black Womanhood in a Shaker Community” (October 2017), Feminisms and Rhetorics, University of Dayton.

“Subconscious and Soul in Pauline Hopkins’s *Of One Blood*” (October 2015), Sacred Literature, Secular Religion: A Conference on Cultural Practices, Le Moyne College.

“Pauline Hopkins and the Idea of the Soul” (May 2015), Christianity and Literature Conference: West Coast Regional, Seattle University [regretfully declined].

“Sweet and Clean as a Washing Machine: Early Pentecostalism and Psychology at the Turn of the Century” (January 2011), MLA, Los Angeles, CA.

“The Potential of Ecstasy: Race, Pentecostalism, and Psychology at the Turn of the Century” (May 2010), C19: The Society of 19th-Century Americanists, Penn State University, University Park, PA.

“The Pleasure of Habit in Mennonite Cookbooks” (Fall 2006), Mennonite/s Writing, Bluffton University, Bluffton, Ohio.

“An Act of Faith: Allegory and Narrative in Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*” (Spring 2006), Festival of Faith and Writing, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Invited Public Talks

Roundtable on the movie *Sinners* (November 2025), Department of Religion, University of Vermont, Burlington.

Roundtable on the movie *Heretic* (February 2025), Department of Religion, University of Vermont, Burlington.

Retreat Speaker at Interfaith Student Leadership Retreat (April 2024) Interfaith Center, University of Vermont, Burlington.

Presentation on my research on Rebecca Jackson (December 2022), Indianapolis Branch of the AAUW, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Interview (March 2021), *Philosophy Outreach Project*, Philosophy Department, Ball State University.

“19th-Century Spiritualism and NRMs” (November 2020), Religion in American Life undergraduate class, Alleghany College.

“The History and Persistence of Jim/Jane Crow America” (Fall 2020), Scholarstrike lecture, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana.

Organized Symposia

Co-Organizer and Presenter, “Building an Equitable Search: Best Practices for an Antiracist, DEI-informed Search Committee” (April 2021), Earlham College.

Co-Organizer, Faculty Retreat, “Antiracist Pedagogies in the Classroom, the Field, Collaborative Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity” (Summer-Fall 2020), Earlham College.

Organizer, Celebration of Toni Morrison (Spring 2020), Earlham College.

Co-Organizer, Women’s History Month events (Spring 2020), Earlham College.

Professional Workshops

2024-present: Humanities Writing Center Recent Hires Writing Group, University of Vermont, Burlington.

2026: “Scholarly Editing: Principles and Practices,” course at Rare Book School, Charlottesville, VA.

2024-2025: College of Arts and Sciences Peer Mentoring Circle for New Faculty, University of Vermont, Burlington.

2024: College of Arts and Sciences Grant Writing Bootcamp, University of Vermont, Burlington.

Teaching Experience

University of Vermont

Courses: Histories of African American Religions; Religion and Spirit in African American Literature; Race and Religion in America; Interpretations of Religion; Prophetic Black Women; Religion and Popular Literature

Earlham College

Courses: Senior Capstone in Religion; Theories and Methods of Religion; Prophetic Black Women; Radical Christianities; History of African American Religious Experiences; Black American Women Preachers of the 19th Century; Religion and Spirit in African American Literature; Religion and Popular Literature

Graduate Thesis Committee Work

Joseph Heinemann (Thesis for M.A. in History) “Black Intellectualism and Pan-Africanism in the 19th Century,” University of Vermont, Burlington, 2025-2026. Thesis committee member.

Lisa Cornish (Thesis for M.A. in Ministry), “Listening for the Female Ministry Voice: Mennonite Women Sharing Their Faith through Cookbooks.” Tabor College, Adelaide, Australia, 2021-2022. Thesis committee member.

Undergraduate Senior Thesis Committee Work

Eden Joyrich (Thesis for B.A. in Religion) “Following Fashion: Faith and Contemporary Meaning Making,” Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana, 2023. Chair of thesis committee.

Hallie Raikes (Thesis for B.A. in African and African American Studies) “Reaffirming Black Womanhood: Identity, Expression, and Liberation,” Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana, 2022. Chair of thesis committee.

Grace Neudek (Thesis for B.A. in Religion) “The Public Universal Friend and the Lives of Members of the Society of Universal Friends,” Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana, 2022). Chair of thesis committee.

Nick Carrizales (Thesis for B.A. in Religion) “A Biblical Argument of How Capital Punishment Prevents Redemption,” Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana, 2022. Chair of thesis committee.

Bridget Lewis (Thesis for B.A. in Religion) “Inviting Complexity: Loss and Higher Calling in the Life of Yashodhara,” Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana, 2022, Chair of thesis committee.

Eva Coley (Thesis for B.A. in Religion) “The Case for a ‘Rational’ Suicide: Examining the Relationship Between Self-Interest and Emotion through the Lens of LaVeyan Satanism.”

Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana, 2020. Chair of thesis committee.

Karly Hagerty (Thesis for B.A. in Religion and English) “These Children that Come at You With Knives: The Construction of the Castrated Woman as Told Through *The Haunting of Sharon Tate*,” Earlham College, 2020. Chair of thesis committee.

Celia Carr (Thesis for B.A. in Religion and Environmental Science) “Toward a Mycotheology,” Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana, 2019, Chair of thesis committee.

Raven Thibodeaux, (Thesis for B.A. in African and African American Studies) ““Just Pray on It: Addressing the Sources of Damaging Stigmas that Surround Mental Illness in the Black Church.” Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana, 2019. Chair of thesis committee.

Izzi Wilhelm. (Thesis for B.A. in Religion) “The Evolution of Emptiness: How Racism in White Buddhist Communities Led to the Emergence of Black Dharma,” Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana, 2018. Thesis committee member.

Cherrah Barclay (Thesis for B.A. in African and African American Studies) “The Reverberation of Prophetic Black Voices: A Critique of Popular Culture, the Exclusion of Women in Prophethood, and the Value of Prophetic Voice Through Music,” Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana, 2017. Chair of thesis committee.

Louisa Perry-Farr (Thesis for B.A. in Religion) “Black Women in the Church: Their Everyday Struggles of Faith and Life,” Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana, 2017. Thesis committee member.

Departmental and College Service

UVM

Academic Studies Committee (2026-present)

Elected Faculty Senate Representative (2025-present)

Departmental Subcommittee on Curriculum, Department of Religion (2024-present)

Major advising in Religion (2025-present)

Presented at and Co-organized Movie Nights for the Department of Religion (2024-present)

Humanities Center Writing Group Participant (2024-present)

Organized and facilitated visit by scholar Judith Weisenfeld, Department of Religion (Fall 2025)

Peer Mentoring Group Participant (2024-2025)

Earlham College

Chair, Religion Department (2018-2022)

Chair, Diversity Progress Committee (2020)

Nominating Committee, (2022-2024)

Diversity Progress Committee (2018-2024)

Student Conduct Council (2020-2024)

Search Committee, Registrar position (Spring 2021)

Search Committee, CIO position (Spring 2021)

Chair, Search Committee, Jewish Studies VAP and Chair of Jewish Studies Program (Spring 2020)

Admissions and Financial Aid Advisory Committee (2018-2019)

Major advising in Religion, African and African American Studies, and English (2016-2024)

First-year advising (2016-2024)

Professional Affiliations

American Academy of Religion

C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists

Modern Language Association

American Literature Association