

CHRIS MILLER

chrisdaniel.miller@mail.utoronto.ca | 226-899-1476

CDHI Postdoctoral Fellow with the Jackman Humanities Institute at the University of Toronto

Research Areas: Sociology of Religion; Death and Dying; Religion and Popular Culture; Non-Religion and Secularity; New Religious Movements

Teaching Areas: Religion and Popular Culture; Sociology of Religion; New Religious Movements; Theory and Method in the social sciences; Religion and gender; Sociology of sport

Education

University of Waterloo 2022

PhD

Dissertation: "Out of the 'Broom Closet' and into the Academy: The Development of Contemporary Pagan Studies and the Role of Scholarship in Shaping Legitimacy"

Supervisor: Dr. Douglas E. Cowan

Saint Mary's University 2016

Master of Arts

Thesis: "The Present State of Mormon Studies: An Inquiry Concerning the Development of an Academic Field"

Supervisor: Dr. Syed Adnan Hussain

University of Toronto 2013

Honours Bachelor of Arts

Research Experience

CDHI Postdoctoral Fellow 2024-present

Jackman Humanities Institute | University of Toronto

Supervisor: Dr. Pamela Klassen

- As a member of the Jackman Humanities Institute Circle of Fellows, collaborated with faculty, postdocs, graduate, and undergraduate students in research and conversations around the annual theme "Undergrounds/Underworlds"
- Carried out independent research on the green burial movement in Canada, including site visits across the country, interviews with staff, activists, and clients, and analysis of digital media
- As a member of U of T's Critical Digital Humanities Initiative, fostered the development of DH research by organizing regular events as well as coordinating a bi-weekly newsletter with over 1,000 subscribers

Postdoctoral Fellow
University of Ottawa | Nonreligion in a Complex Future Project
Supervisor: Dr. Lori G. Beaman

2022-2024

- Developed and implemented various mixed-methods projects analyzing the impact of rising nonreligion on societal responses to death and dying
- Performed data collection on several projects, including focus groups and interviews with over 100 participants
- Constructed coding frameworks to guide analysis of text and interview data
- Supervised and trained research assistants in Canada, Australia, Argentina, and Brazil
- Met regularly with principal investigator and research team members around the world to explore the impact of rising nonreligion and religious transformation on how people understand death

Research Assistant
University of Victoria

2023

- Supported the SSHRC-funded research project *Global Spiritualities, Local Bodies: Modern Postural Yoga in Canada and the United States*
- Analyzed data from a survey with roughly 650 respondents
- Communicated results and implications with principal investigator and other members of the research team

Research Assistant
University of Waterloo

2023

- Supported a Program Renewal working group for the Religious Studies undergraduate program at the University of Waterloo
- Conducted an environmental scan of all Religious Studies programs across Canada
- Developed, conducted, and analyzed a series of surveys of over 150 students and alumni
- Communicated results with working group members and offered insights on potential strategies to implement to re-structure the program

Publications

Journal Articles

- 2024 Chris Miller. "A Century of Canadian Obituaries: Transforming Ways in Which People Commemorate the Deceased." *Mortality* Online ahead of print
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13576275.2024.2421928>.
- 2024 Chris Miller, Hannah McKillop, and Sohini Ganguly. "Remembering the Dead: Shifting Forms of Commemoration and Immanent Understandings of Death in Obituaries." *Omega – Journal of Death and Dying* OnlineFirst
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00302228241272505>.
- 2024 Chris Miller. "Fastest Growing Religion? Reflections on Contemporary Paganism's Rapid Growth and How Scholars Describe That Which They Study." *The Pomegranate: International Journal of Pagan Studies* 24.2 <https://doi.org/10.1558/>.

- 2024 Chris Miller and Lori G. Beaman. "Nonreligious Afterlife? Emerging Understandings of Death and Dying." *Religions* 15.1 <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15010104>.
- 2022 Chris Miller. "Writing in a Field with Many Audiences, Outlooks, and Opinions: Celebrating the Work of Dr. Ronald Hutton." *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 17.1 muse.jhu.edu/article/859782.
- 2022 Chris Miller. "The Sephora Witch Kit Trials: Identity and Community Construction Through Protests of Commodified Religion." *Nova Religio* 25.3 <https://doi.org/10.1525/nr.2022.25.3.87>.
Winner of Second Prize in the Thomas Robbins Award for Excellence in the Study of New Religious Movements
- 2022 Chris Miller. "How Modern Witches Enchant TikTok: Intersections of Digital, Consumer, and Material Culture(s) on #WitchTok." *Religions* 13.2 <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13020118>.
- 2022 Chris Miller. "Reconciling Identities in HBO's Room 104: LGBTQ2S Mormons and Shifting Mainstream Perceptions." *Panic at the Discourse: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 2.1 <https://www.panicdiscourse.com/reconciling-identities-pdf/>.
- 2020 Chris Miller. "New Religious Movements in the Town of South Park: Separating the Mainstream from the Marginal." *The Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* 32.2 <https://doi.org/10.3138/jrpc.2018-0039>.

Book Chapters

- 2024 Chris Miller. "How Do Scholars Study Pagans?" In *Pagan Religions in Five Minutes*, edited by Suzanne Owen and Angela Puca. Sheffield: Equinox.
- 2024 Chris Miller. "Do Pagans Avoid Technology?" In *Pagan Religions in Five Minutes*, edited by Suzanne Owen and Angela Puca. Sheffield: Equinox.
- 2024 Chris Miller. "What are Technopagans?" In *Pagan Religions in Five Minutes*, edited by Suzanne Owen and Angela Puca. Sheffield: Equinox.
- 2021 Chris Miller. "New Religious Movements, New Media, and Religious Innovation." *Bloomsbury Religion in North America: A Bloomsbury Digital Academic Digital Resource*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781350930896.010>.

Book Reviews

- 2024 Chris Miller. "TikTok Cultures in the United States, edited by Trevor Boffone." *Journal of Religion, Media, and Digital Culture* 12.1 <https://doi.org/10.1163/21659214-bja10091>.

Conference Presentations

- 2024 Chris Miller. "The Furry Friends We Leave Behind: Human-Animal Relationships Commemorated in Obituaries." Presentation at the American Academy of Religion 2024 Annual Meeting
- 2024 Chris Miller. "From Church Graveyards to Country Clubs: Changing Preferences and Understandings of End-of-Life Rituals." Presentation at the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion 2024 Annual Meeting
- 2024 Chris Miller. "Talking About it Won't Kill You: The COVID-19 Pandemic, Death Awareness, and Responses." Presentation at *Religions and Societies During the Pandemic: International and Multisectoral Symposium*
- 2024 Chris Miller and Lori G. Beaman. "Nonreligious Afterlife? Emerging Afterlife Imaginaries in Death Cafés." Presentation at the Association for the Sociology of Religion
- 2024 Chris Miller. "Plus ça change: Online Religious Practice, from Cyberhenge to WitchTok." Presentation at the American Academy of Religion – Online June Sessions
- 2023 Chris Miller. "Caffeine & Contemplation: Community Connection and Death Positivity at Death Cafés." Presentation at the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion 2023 Annual Meeting
- 2023 Chris Miller. "Navigating Shaky Ground – An Environmental Survey of the Study of Religion in Canada." Presentation at the North American Association for the Study of Religion 2023 Annual Meeting
- 2023 Chris Miller. "Talking Around Death: Analyzing Language to Describe Death in Canadian Obituaries, 1970-2021." Presentation at the Canadian Sociological Association 2023 Annual Meeting
- 2023 Chris Miller, Hannah McKillop, Sohini Ganguly, and Achintya Shree Vijay Sai. "Remembering the Dead: Canadian Obituaries and Immanent Understandings of Death." Presentation at the Nonreligion and Secularity Research Network 2023 Conference
- 2023 Chris Miller. "The Fastest Growing Religion? Paganism's Rapid Growth and How Scholars Describe What They Study." Presentation at the American Academy of Religion Eastern International Region 2023 Annual Meeting

- 2022 Chris Miller. "'Like and Follow for More!': Social Media Infrastructure and Religious Transformations on #WitchTok." Presentation at the American Academy of Religion 2022 Annual Meeting
- 2020 Chris Miller. "Author Meets Critics: Celebrating Ronald Hutton's Contribution to the Academic Study of Religion." Presentation at the American Academy of Religion 2020 Annual Meeting.
- 2020 Chris Miller. "How Do We Solve a Problem Like Sabrina? The Construction of Marginal Religion in *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*." Presentation at the Conference on Current Pagan Studies.
- 2019 Chris Miller. "What is Going on in *Room 104*? Mormons and Shifting Mainstream Perceptions." Presentation at the International Conference on Religion and Film.
- 2019 Chris Miller. "Something Witchy This Way Comes: Examining Contemporary Pagan Backlash to the Sephora Witch Kit." Presentation at the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion Annual Conference.
- 2019 Chris Miller. "The Sephora Witch Kit Trials – An Exploration of Opposition to the Commodification of Religion." Presentation at the American Academy of Religion – Eastern International Regional Meeting.
- 2018 Chris Miller. "Cultural Identity and Wiccan Appropriation." Presentation at the International Symposium on Cultural Identity and Confidence in the Era of Post-Multiculturalism.
- 2018 Chris Miller. "Atheist Comedy as Reality Maintenance." Presentation at the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion Annual Conference.
- 2017 Chris Miller. "Mormons, Wiccans, Scientologists and the Politics of Academia." Presentation at the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion Annual Conference.
- 2017 Chris Miller. "Marginal Religions in the Town of South Park." Presentation at the American Academy of Religion – Eastern International Regional Meeting.
- 2016 Chris Miller. "Great Awakenings as Phases of American Religious Life." Presentation at the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Annual Meeting.
- 2016 Chris Miller. "Insiders and Outsiders in Canadian Public Schools." Presentation at the UPEI Multidisciplinary Graduate Research Conference.
- 2016 Chris Miller. "Positing a Fourth Great Awakening." Presentation at the University of Lethbridge - Research in Religious Studies Conference.

Public Scholarship

2024. "Remembered By Our Pets: More Animals Are Getting a Mention in Obituaries." *The Conversation*. January 16, 2024. <https://theconversation.com/remembered-by-our-pets-more-animals-are-getting-a-mention-in-obituaries-220838>.
2024. "Nonreligious Afterlife? Death Cafés and Emerging Understandings of Death." *Nonreligion and Secularity Research Network Blog*. April 16, 2024. <https://thensrn.org/category/nsrn-blog/>.
- 2023 "What do Obituaries Tell us About Nonreligion?" *Nonreligion in a Complex Future – Projects Underway*. <https://nonreligionproject.ca/obituaries/>.
- 2023 "What are Death Cafés, and What Can They Tell us About Nonreligion?" *Nonreligion in a Complex Future – Projects Underway*. <https://nonreligionproject.ca/death-cafes/>.
- 2022 Chris Miller. "How Modern Witches are Enchanting TikTok." *The Conversation*. January 19, 2022. https://theconversation.com/how-modern-witches-are-enchanting-tiktok-174576?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter.
- 2021 Chris Miller. "What Does it Take to be Mainstream? New Religions in the Town of South Park." *UTP Journals Blog*. January 4, 2021. <http://blog.utpjournals.com/2021/01/04/what-does-it-take-to-be-mainstream-new-religions-in-the-town-of-south-park/>.
- 2018 Chris Miller. "What is Going on in Room 104?" *Mormons and Mainstream Perceptions*. *Religio-*. November 24, 2018. <https://uwaterloo.ca/religious-studies-phd/blog/post/what-going-room-104-mormons-and-mainstream-perceptions>.

Media Appearances

Consulted for stories with various outlets, including radio interviews with CBC, The Canadian Press, CHED Edmonton, and CJOB Winnipeg, and consultation for stories from The National Post, Broadview Magazine, and ELLE France.

Teaching Experience

McMaster University

Sessional Instructor

2022

SCAR 2BB3 – Images of the Divine Feminine

University of Waterloo

Sessional Instructor

2020 – 2024

RS 270 – Religion and Popular Film

ARTS 130 – Sports and Society

UNIV 101 – Strategies and Skills for Academic Success

Teaching Assistant

2016 – 2020

JS 233/RS 272 – Holocaust and Film

JS120/RS 111 – Relationships in the Bible

RS 266 – Death and Dying

RS 271R/FN 253 – Thematic Approaches to Religion and Film: Comedy

RS 100 – Eastern Religions

RS 100 – Religions of Asia (online)

Student Success Office – Peer Success Coach

2019 – 2020

- Worked in collaboration with Instructor on UNIV 101 to plan and deliver lecture content
- Facilitated engaging seminar workshops
- Graded assignments and provided students with guidance over the term

Saint Mary's University

Teaching Assistant

2015 – 2016

RELS 2353 – Death and the Afterlife

RELS 1251 – Religion and Contemporary Culture

RELS 2001 – Judaism

Royal Ontario Museum

ROMKids Instructor

2016-2020

- Facilitated museum learning with registered guests and the public in the ROM's galleries and classroom spaces
- Courses covered a wide variety of natural history and world cultures disciplines
- Planned & delivered engaging lessons and hands-on activities for children aged 5-16

Pedagogical Training

University of Waterloo

- Completed the Certificate in Teaching Excellence Program
- Workshops completed include:
 - Teaching Methods
 - Effective Lesson Plans
 - Giving Quality Feedback
 - Active Learning

Saint Mary's University

- Completed University Teaching Certification Course

Awards

Fellowships and Awards

Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Jack Shand Research Grant Value: \$2,000	2024
University of Waterloo Doctoral Thesis Completion Award Value: \$5,000	2022
University of Waterloo Graduate Research Studentship Value: \$6,000	2022
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Graduate Scholarship Value: \$40,000 (over 2 years)	2019 & 2020
University of Waterloo President's Graduate Scholarship Value: \$20,000 (over 2 years)	2019 & 2020
Ontario Graduate Scholarship Value: \$15,000	2018
University of Waterloo President's Graduate Scholarship Value: \$5,000	2018

Grants and Travel Awards

University of Waterloo Graduate Studies Research Travel Assistantship Value: \$800	2020
American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting Travel Grant Value: \$500	2022
American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting Travel Grant Value: \$500	2020
University of Waterloo Arts HeForShe Travel Grant Value: \$200	2019
University of Regina Graduate Student Travel Award Value: \$500	2018
University of Waterloo Graduate Studies Research Travel Assistantship Value: \$1,000	2018
University of Waterloo Graduate Studies Research Travel Assistantship Value: \$1,000	2017
University of Waterloo Religious Studies Graduate Scholarship Value: \$20,976 (over 3 years)	2016-2018
St. Mary's University FGSR Graduate Award Value: \$11,500	2015

Service

AAR Chief Regional Officer

2022-present

- Represent all members of the Eastern International Region
- Deliver concerns of the region to the AAR National Executive
- Organize the Annual Regional Meeting
- Manage the region's web presence and social media platforms

CSSR Recording Secretary

2022-present

- Coordinate with all CSSR Executive members to schedule regular meetings
- Record and circulate detailed minutes from each meeting to Executive members
- Record and circulate minutes from the Annual General Meeting to inform the general membership of developments in the organization

NSRN Blog Co-Editor

2023-present

- Manage editorial responsibilities for the Nonreligion and Secularity Research Network online blog
- Solicit posts from scholars on cutting-edge research
- Manage copy-editing, formatting, and posting content on the website

Peer Reviewer

- 2024 – Peer Reviewer for *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (1); *Review of Religious Research* (1); *Religions* (2); Book manuscript for MIT Press (1)
- 2023 – Peer Reviewer for *The Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* (1); *Review of Religious Research* (1)
- 2022 – Peer Reviewer for *The Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* (1); *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* (1); and *The Pomegranate: International Journal of Pagan Studies* (1)
- 2021 – Peer Reviewer for *The Pomegranate: International Journal of Pagan Studies* (1)

CSSR Local Area Coordinator for Congress

2023

- Assisted in the planning for the 2023 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences by liaising between Congress organizers and CSSR executive

AAR Regional Student Director

2020-2022

- Represent all student members of the Eastern International Region (EIR)
- Represent the Region on the AAR's Graduate Student Committee
- Assist in organizing the region's Annual Meeting
- Manage various social media platforms, including Twitter and Facebook

CSSR Graduate Student Member-at-Large

2021-2022

- Represent all student members of the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion
- Organize roundtables and workshops at the CSSR's Annual Meeting
- Coordinate a team of Student Ambassadors who represent universities across Canada
- Along with a team of other student representatives, organize virtual writing groups with students across Canada
- Manage communications via email and social media platforms

CSSR Student Ambassador

2018-2021

- Represent the University of Waterloo as Student Ambassador for the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion
- Encourage Graduate and Undergraduate student participation in the CSSR

- Disseminate important information (e.g. Calls for Papers or funding opportunities) to students
- Communicate the concerns and needs of students to the CSSR

CSSR Local Area Coordinator for Congress

2020

- Assisted in the planning for the 2020 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences by liaising between Congress organizers and CSSR executive

University of Waterloo – Religious Studies Department, Workshop Facilitator 2018-2019

- In 2019, in collaboration with other SSHRC recipients, assisted first and second-year PhD students in preparing their proposals for the doctoral dissertation award
- Evaluated their work-in-progress for clarity and public intelligibility
- Responded to student questions and concerns
- In 2018, guided graduate students on how to best prepare their work for presentation at the 3 Minute Thesis Competition, including how to construct powerful visual aids and translate research for better public intelligibility

Web Master

2018

- Responsible for maintaining the Religious Studies Undergraduate and Graduate web pages on the UW website
- Created content (e.g., announcements for upcoming events) in engaging and informative formats

University of Waterloo Graduate Student Representative

2018

- Participated in meetings of the Joint Committee, interacting with Graduate Chairs and Department Heads from the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University
- Delivered important information to students in the program about their rights and responsibilities
- Communicated students' concerns of students to members of the committee.

Additional Work Experience

Royal Ontario Museum

Various Roles from 2007-2020

ROMKids Instructor – 2016 – 2020

- Developed and delivered engaging lessons in history, world cultures, and science for children aged 2-16
- Handled artefacts from the ROM's collections and guided children through object-based learning while ensuring the safety of both participants and objects
- Planned and facilitated creative activities involving ceramics, paint, and other media

ROMKids Studio Assistant – 2013-2015

- Coordinated the numerous aspects involved in the ROM's many children's programs
- Managed payroll, purchasing of supplies and coordinated staff schedules
- Developed content that the museum delivers, through hands-on activities
- Nurtured staff development of volunteers and paid assistants