

# **AAR-SBL Rocky Mountains – Great Plains Region Regional Meeting**

**March 25 & 26, 2022  
University of Denver  
Denver, CO**



UNIVERSITY *of*  
DENVER

# General Information

Welcome to the 2022 Rocky Mountain–Great Plains regional meeting of the AAR-SBL! After a hiatus due to the pandemic, we are glad to be able to be in person for this event.

The University of Denver serves as this year's host. Founded as Colorado Seminary in 1864, the University of Denver is Colorado's oldest university. More than 12,000 students currently attend the university, a number that is about evenly split between graduate and undergraduate students. The University of Denver and the Iliff School of Theology share a Joint Doctoral Program.

We are grateful to the University of Denver's College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and to the Department of Religious Studies, along with both the AAR and SBL, for sponsorship of this event. We hope you enjoy our time together.

## The Program Committee and Regional Officers

Jeffrey Scholes (University of Colorado, Colorado Springs), President

Zachary Smith (Creighton University), AAR Coordinator

Amy Balogh (Regis University)

Dheepa Sundaram (University of Denver), Conference Coordinator

Lynn Schofield Clark (University of Denver), Conference Co-Coordinator



## Session Locations

All sessions are held in Sturm Hall on East Asbury Street. Please note: this is NOT the Sturm College of Law Building. Sturm Hall is marked on the map to the left with a red star.

## Parking

Parking is available in the East Evans Parking Structure on South High Street. The parking structure is marked on the map to the left with a green star.

## **Luncheons and Breaks**

Coffee tea and pastries will be provided on Friday and Saturday mornings, and lunch will be provided by the locally owned Jerusalem Restaurant on Friday and the locally Indigenous owned Tocabe Restaurant on Saturday. A cocktail reception will be held at 4:30 – 6:30 pm Friday. Coffee and water with light refreshments will be provided throughout the conference.

## **Student Sessions**

The conference will feature two events of particular interest to students:

- ❖ Graduate Student Meet and Greet: A session with DU/Iliff Joint Doctoral Program Director Dr. Sandra Dixon. This session will be held over the Friday lunch hour. Please pick up your lunch in Sturm Hall 134 and join us in Sturm Hall 186.
- ❖ A session featuring undergraduate scholarship will be held Saturday morning, 9:15 – 10:00 am in Sturm Hall 287.

## **Lodging Near Campus**

Lodging is available for conference attendees at the Courtyard by Marriott Denver Cherry Creek.

Other options near campus include:

- ❖ Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott Denver Cherry Creek
- ❖ La Quinta Inn by Wyndham Denver Cherry Creek
- ❖ Hyatt Place Denver/Cherry Creek

## **Restaurants Near Campus**

The DU neighborhood is home to several local restaurants, a few of which are listed below. We also recommend the nearby Pearl Street and Washington Park neighborhoods for additional options.

- ❖ Asbury Provisions
- ❖ Birdcall - Evans
- ❖ Devour the 303
- ❖ Ginza Sushi and Grill
- ❖ Illegal Pete's DU
- ❖ Jelly U Cafe
- ❖ La Belle Rosette Espresso & Wine Bar
- ❖ Lucille's Creole Cafe
- ❖ Pete's University Park Café
- ❖ Phở Saigon Star
- ❖ Snarf's Sandwiches
- ❖ Spanky's Roadhouse

# American Academy of Religion Junior Scholar Keynote Address

Friday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 3:00–4:15pm

Lindsay Auditorium, Sturm Hall 281

## Assistant Professor Natalie Avalos

University of Colorado at Boulder

### *Decolonizing Metaphysical Worlds: Indigenous Religious Traditions and the Decolonial Turn*

While decolonization has been discussed as a material project in an Indigenous context, it has often been described as necessitating a shift in worldview, or rather a return to an Indigenous one (Deloria 1994). In this sense, Indigenous decolonization is a metaphysical project that redefines the larger decolonial turn. In this talk, I discuss how the resurgence of Indigenous religious life in urban contexts restores of Indigenous ontologies and heals historical trauma, but also challenges the normative assumptions of human/other than human/land relations extended by a settler colonial worldview.



Natalie Avalos is an assistant professor in the Ethnic Studies department at University of Colorado Boulder. She is an ethnographer of religion who received her Ph.D. in Religious Studies from the University of California at Santa Barbara with a special focus on Native American and Indigenous Religious Traditions and Tibetan Buddhism. She is currently working on her manuscript titled *Decolonizing Metaphysics: Transnational Indigeneities and Religious Refusal*, which explores urban Indian and Tibetan refugee religious life as decolonial praxis. She is a Chicana of Apache descent, born and raised in the Bay Area.



# **Society of Biblical Literature Senior Scholar Keynote Address**

Saturday, March 26<sup>th</sup>, 11:45am–2:00pm  
Sturm Hall 253

## **Professor Mark George**

Iliff School of Theology

### *From Alphabet to Dataset: How did we get here?*

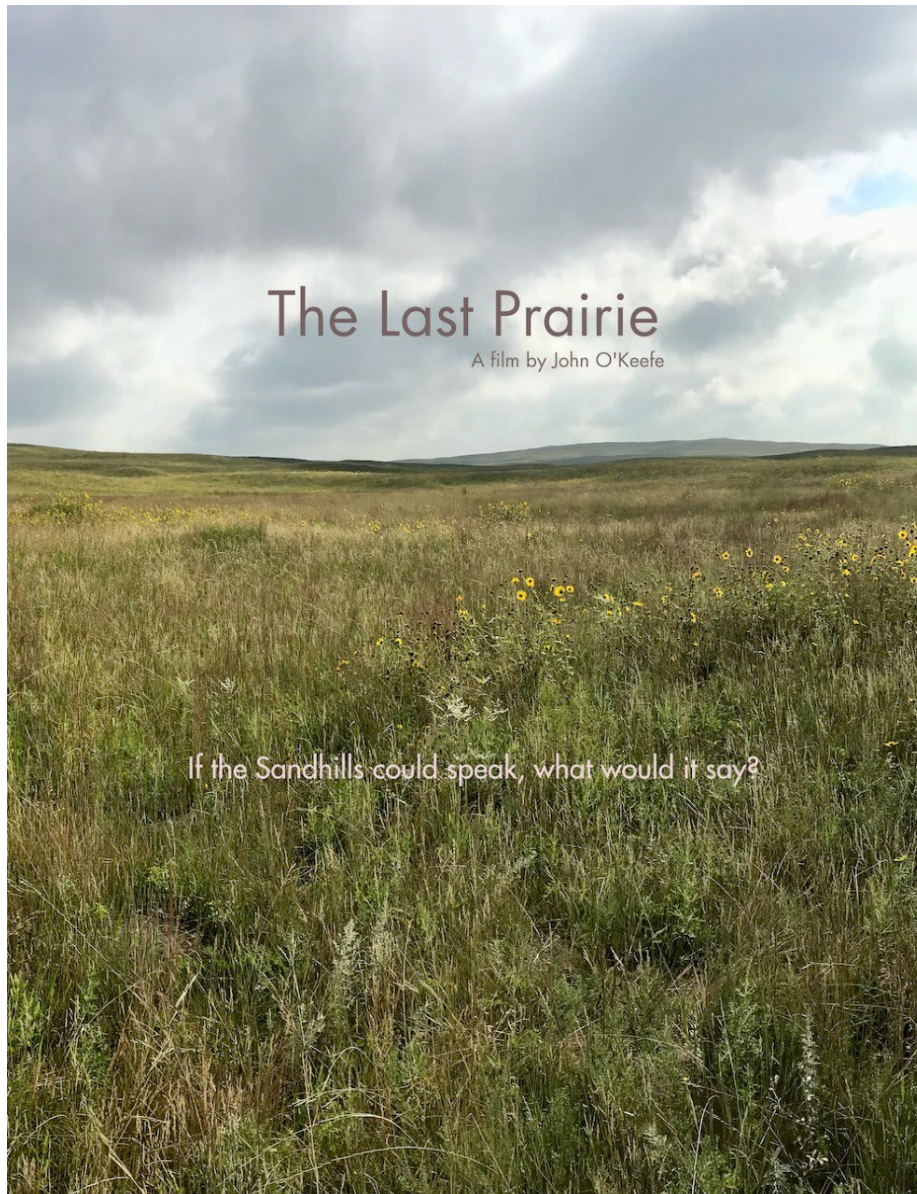
Most of us cannot live without our digital devices or technologies. The data they gather govern our lives: recording our actions, preserving our memories, storing our thoughts. How did we become our data? I suggest a previous technological revolution, involving writing, is part of the answer. Using the biblical book of Deuteronomy as an example, I argue that the recognition of certain affordances of writing were realized to create Deuteronomy's subject, called "Israel." The techniques by which one and all become Israel continue to influence how people today become data subjects.



Mark K. George is Professor of Bible and Ancient Systems of Thought at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado. He also serves as assistant director of the University of Denver/Iliff School of Theology Joint Ph.D. Program in the Study of Religion. His current book project focuses on how Deuteronomy makes Israel its subject in order to govern it. He has been active in the Rocky Mountain-Great Plains region for many years, including serving as SBL Regional Coordinator from 2009–14. He considers this region to be one of the best in the AAR & SBL because of its collegiality and combined meetings.

# **“The Last Prairie” Film Screening and Panel Discussion**

Saturday, March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2:00–4:30pm  
Sturm Hall 254



The Last Prairie is a film about the Nebraska Sandhills, an intact prairie ecosystem in Nebraska. The film offers an intimate portrait of the Sandhills, presented through voices of three different communities: ecologists who study the region's biodiversity; people who live and work there; and Native Lakota people whose ancestors were killed to make way for American westward expansion. The film can fairly be described as a theological meditation on a landscape.

## **Panelists:**

**John O'Keefe**

Creighton University, Filmmaker

**Amy Balogh**

Regis University

**Zach Smith**

Creighton University

# Academic Program

## 2022 AAR/SBL Rocky Mountain–Great Plains Regional Meeting

*All conference sessions are held in Sturm Hall on the University of Denver campus.  
Please note: This is NOT the Sturm College of Law building.*

**FRIDAY, MARCH 25TH  
7:30am–4:00pm**

### **Registration**

**Outside Lindsay Auditorium, Sturm Hall 281**

*Coffee, tea, and pastries will be served*

**FRIDAY, MARCH 25TH  
Session 1, 8:30–10:00am**

### **1A Religious Studies in Dialogue Sturm Hall 275**

#### **CHAIR/RESPONDENT:**

Tony Alumkal (Iliff School of Theology)

#### **PRESENTERS:**

Patrick Bowen (Independent Scholar), “Jonathan Edwards, John Locke, and . . . Ibn Tufayl? Reinterpreting Evangelical and American Religious History From a World-Historical Perspective”

Nicolae Roddy (he/him) (Creighton University), “The Rroma and the Romanian Orthodox Church Past and Present”

Jim Sharp (Colorado State University – Pueblo), “Intelligent Design: A Critical Analysis of a Religious Response to Evolutionary Theory”

Dan Clanton (he/him) (Doane University), “‘Snatching Away’ in the Iliad and in Paul”

### **1B Religion, Culture, and Identity Sturm Hall 287**

#### **CHAIR/RESPONDENT:**

Jason Jeffries (University of Denver)

#### **PRESENTERS:**

Jeremy Fricke (he/him) (Tri-Faith Initiative), “I have to Defend my People: Imagined Communities and the Evolutionary Psychology of Religion in Racist Odinism”

Benjamin Nourse (he/him) (University of Denver), "In Search of Beijing's Tibetan Buddhist Past: Religious Spaces, Memory, and Identity in Modern Beijing"

Jack Hamblin (University of Denver/Iliff School of Theology), "Should the Fourteenth Dalai Lama Be the Last?"

Sydney Barofsky (they/them) (University of Denver School), "Unmasking Ceramic Colima Dogs and Their Ritual Significance"

**1C Biblical Interpretation & Early Christianity**  
**Sturm Hall 187**

CHAIR/RESPONDENT:

Eric Smith (University of Denver/Iliff School of Theology)

PRESENTERS:

Woodrow Michael Kroll (Retired scholar; President, Davis College), "Stake or Cross: Upon Which was Jesus Crucified"

Dulcinea Boesenberg (she/her) (Creighton University), "Moses and Elijah at Luke's Empty Tomb"

Michelle A. Stinson (Denver Seminary), "Sowing Tears, Reaping Joy: The Cultivation of Hope in the Psalms of Ascents (Pss 120-134)"

Albert McClure (he/him) (Metropolitan State University of Denver), "Iconoclastic Production in Exodus 34 and Deuteronomy 12"

**10:00–10:15am**

**Break**

*Coffee will be available outside Lindsay Auditorium (Sturm Hall 287)*

**Session 2, 10:15–11:45am**

**2D Religious Authority and Collaboration from Ancient Something to the Digital Age**  
**Sturm Hall 287**

CHAIR/RESPONDENT:

Deborah Whitehead (University of Colorado at Boulder)

PRESENTERS:

Seth M. Walker (he/him) (Independent Scholar), "The Right to Copy: Challenging Authority and Intellectual Property in the Context of Religion"



Padraic Fitzgerald (he/him) (University of Denver/Illiff School of Theology), “Heeding the Skalds: Musicians and Spiritual Authority in Nordic Neopaganism”

Heidi Ippolito (she/her) (University of Denver/Illiff School of Theology), “Memes as Matrix Red-Pilling: The QAnon Conflation of Religious Community, On-Screen Storytelling, and Internet Culture”

## **2E The Bible and Early Church Leaders Sturm Hall 187**

CHAIR/RESPONDENT:  
Rick Hess (Denver Seminary)

PRESENTERS:  
Tod Harris (he/him) (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Translation Division), “Before Luther: Early German Preachers and Their Place in the Tradition of Bible Translation”

Jackson Abhau (University of Arizona), “Whence the Womb? John 7:38 and the Motherhood of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel”

Christina Ouyang (Augustine Institute), “‘My Son was Dead, and is Alive Again’: Eschatological Implications in Luke 15”

Hesron Sihombing (University of Denver/Illiff School of Theology), “The Economy of the Effects of Grace”

## **2F Religion, Power, and Authority Sturm Hall 275**

CHAIR/RESPONDENT:  
Trishula Patel (University of Denver)

PRESENTERS:  
Alyssa Putzer (she/her) (University of Denver), “The Lingering ‘Colonial Matrix of Power’: Colonialism, Nationalism, and the COVID-19 Crisis in India

Andrea Stanton (she/her) (University of Denver), “Preachers and Believers on Muslim Religious Apps”

Roger Green (he/him) (Metropolitan State University of Denver), “White Supremacy and Eurochristian Worldview”

Elizabeth Sperber (she/her) and Paige Wietzel (she/her) (University of Denver), “Catholicism and Democratization in Africa: Presenting a New Archive of Church Documents and Qualitative Analysis

## **2G Rhetoric and the Metaphors of Structure in Apocalyptica Sturm Hall 186**

CHAIR/RESPONDENT:

Tom Leininger (Regis University)

PRESENTERS:

Colin McAllister (University of Colorado – Colorado Springs), “Ich fühle Luft von  
anderem Planeten: Arnold Schoenberg as Apocalyptic Prophet”

Jon Forshee (University of Colorado – Colorado Springs), “Apocalyptic Time and  
the time of APOKATASTASIS: Musical Flow Experience as Eschatology in Current  
Compositional Practice”

James D. Romano (Fuller Theological Seminary), “The Shoot That Does Not Strike:  
Apocalyptic Expression of Justice in the Gospel of Matthew:

**11:45am–1:15pm**

### **Lunch in Sturm Hall 134**

*Lunch buffet provided by Jerusalem Restaurant*

**12:00–1:00pm**

### **Graduate Student Colloquium with Sandy Dixon (University of Denver) (12:00- 1:00pm)**

*Bring your lunch to Sturm Hall 186*

**Session 3, 1:15–2:45pm**

## **3H Religion and (De)colonization Sturm Hall 287**

CHAIR/RESPONDENT:

Benjamin Nourse (University of Denver)

PRESENTERS:

Deeptangshu Das (he/him) (University of Denver, Iliff School of Theology), “Musical  
Hinduism: Constructing and Contesting Religion in Indian Popular Music Videos from  
the 1990s”

Angela Hummel (Naropa University, Front Range Community College, and Rocky  
Mountain College of Art and Design), “Art Theology: Decolonizing Theology through  
Creative Pedagogy

Patrick J. D'Silva (he/him) (University of Colorado – Colorado Springs), "Sharing Siva's Secrets: Translating Svarodaya as Anti-Colonial Knowledge Production in 20<sup>th</sup> CE India"

Jared Lacy (he/him) (University of Denver), "Newness Born Islam: Orientalism, Third Space, and the Nation of Gods and Earth"

**3I Gloria Anzaldúa Revisited: The Borderlands of Identity, Politics, and Spatial Theory**  
**Sturm Hall 275**

CHAIR/RESPONDENT:

Kristy Ulibarri (University of Denver)

PRESENTERS:

Isabela Rosales (University of Denver/Iliff School of Theology), "What it Means to Embrace 'Nepantla' in a U.S. Latinx/e Context in Critical Dialogue with American Indian Worldview"

Rebecca M. David Hensley (University of Denver/Iliff School of Theology), "Expanding Borderlands: A Necropolitical Deathscape"

Taylor Muma (University of Denver/Iliff School of Theology), "The Spatiality of the Borderlands: an Examination of Liminal Space and Identity Constructs"

**3J Coalitions and Common Themes in Religion BCE to the Early Christian Period**  
**Sturm Hall 186**

CHAIR/RESPONDENT:

Jason Jeffries (University of Denver)

PRESENTERS:

Rachel Bell (Augustine Institute), "By His Words All Things Hold Together: Revelation, Wisdom and the Cosmos in the Cultic Imagination of Ben Sira"

Richard S. Hess (he/him) (Denver Seminary), "Ammonite and Israelite Religion: Perspectives from the Personal Names"

Kevin Grane (University of Denver), "Cherubim in Antiquity: a Test Case in Christian Dialogue"

**2:45–3:00pm**

**Break**

**3:00–4:15pm**

**Junior Scholar Keynote Address (AAR)**

Lindsay Auditorium

Sturm Hall 281

**Natalie Avalos (University of Colorado – Boulder)**

*Decolonizing Metaphysical Worlds: Indigenous Religious Traditions and the Decolonial Turn*

**4:30–6:30pm**

**Reception**

**Sturm Hall 286**



**SATURDAY, MARCH 26TH**  
**7:30am–12:00pm**

**Registration**

**Outside Lindsay Auditorium**

**Sturm Hall 281**

*Coffee, tea, and pastries will be served*

**8:00–9:00am**

**Rocky Mountain/Great Plains**

**Program Committee Business Meeting**

**Sturm 258**

**9:00–9:15am**

**Break**

*Coffee will be available outside Lindsay Auditorium (Sturm Hall 281)*

**Undergraduate Panel, 9:15–10:15am**

**Intersectional Exploration of Religion, Violence, and Trauma**  
**Sturm 287**

CHAIR/RESPONDENT:

Elizabeth Sperber (University of Denver)

PRESENTERS:

Jasper Lumadue (they/them) (Washburn University), “Trauma, Liminality, and ASC: An Exploration of Miko and Mudang”

Katlin Smith (she/her) (University of Denver), “Marginalized Dharma: A Feminist Critique of the Historiography of Buddhist Warfare and Peace Movements in Japan”

DISCUSSANT:

Steven M. Vose (he/him) (Colorado College)

**Session 4, 10:15–11:45am**

**4K Religion, Community, and the Making of Religious Publics**  
**Sturm Hall 275**

CHAIR/RESPONDENT:

Andrea Stanton (University of Denver)

PRESENTERS:

Sarah Schwartzman Ramsey (she/her) (University of Colorado at Boulder), “A Smile of Patronizing commiseration for His Former Self’: Assimilative Storytelling in Arendt and Yekl”

Zachary Simpson (he/him) (University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma), “The ‘Wager’ as Prudential Belief and Practice in Pascal, William James, and Contemporary Theory”

Mary L. Keller (she/her) (University of Wyoming), “How to Bring Religion to a Transdisciplinary Team”

Kyle Inselman (he/him) (University of Denver), “Buddhist Right Livelihood and Career Guidance: Expanding From Mindfulness at Work to Mindfulness of Work”

#### **4L Feminist Practices and Theologies Sturm Hall 186**

CHAIR/RESPONDENT:

Michelle Stinson (Denver Seminary)

PRESENTERS:

Cathy Gilmore (she/her) (Utah State University), “The Persistence of Spirit: Women’s Lived Religion in the Arizona Colonies, 1890-1910”

Sau Nam (University of Denver/Illiff School of Theology), “Reinterpreting a Burmese Word, Phon for Decolonizing the Authoritarian and Patriarchal Church and Society”

Wendy Felese (University of Denver/Illiff School of Theology), “In Memory of Her”

Hesron Sihombing (University of Denver/Illiff School of Theology), “Performative Hopelessness and Public Space: Ecojustice Praxis in Indonesia”

#### **4M Apocryphal Stories, Prophets, and Contested Canons Sturm Hall 187**

CHAIR/RESPONDENT:

James Romano (University of Colorado – Colorado Springs)

PRESENTERS:

Aaron Lockhart (he/him) (University of Denver/Illiff School of Theology), “Leaning on the Shaft That Pierces: Biblical Canon in the Light of Neglected Voices”

Sidney Fox (Independent Scholar), “The Bible as an Archeological Dig – A Relook at the Prophet Hosea, the Exodus in the Written Prophets, a Follow-On to Richard Elliot Friedman, The Exodus”

Tod Harris (he/him) (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Translation Division), “Egil Skallagrímsson – An Icelandic Elijah?”

**11:45am–2:00 pm**

**Lunch and Senior Scholar Keynote Address (SBL)**

Sturm Hall 253

**Mark George (Iliff School of Theology)**

*From Alphabet to Dataset: How Did We Get Here?*

**2:00–4:30 pm**

**Screening of “The Last Prairie” followed by panel discussion**

Sturm Hall 254

**With John O’Keefe (filmmaker)**

**Responses from Amy Balogh and Zach Smith**



Thank you for attending and see you in 2023!