

J. BARTON SCOTT

Departments of Historical Studies and the Study of Religion

University of Toronto

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

- 2021– Associate Professor, Departments of Historical Studies (UTM) and Religion (UTSG)
University of Toronto
- 2015 Assistant Professor, Departments of Historical Studies (UTM) and Religion (UTSG)
University of Toronto
- 2010 Assistant Professor, Department of History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies
Montana State University

EDUCATION

- 2010 Ph.D., Religion, Duke University
- 2001 B. A., Religion and English Literature, Swarthmore College, High Honors

RESEARCH & TEACHING INTERESTS

Modern South Asia	Cultural history of the study of religion
British Empire	Religion and media
Secularism	Religion and law
Postcolonial theory/anticolonial thought	Religion, affect, and emotion

PUBLICATIONS

Books

- In progress *The Piercing Virtue: Isberwood's Guru in Adorno's Los Angeles*
- 2023 [*Slandering the Sacred: Blasphemy Law and Religious Affect in Colonial India*](#). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, in the "Class 200: New Studies in Religion" series. Delhi: [Permanent Black](#), in the "Hedgehog and Fox: History and Politics" series, co-published with Ashoka University.
- 2016 [*Spiritual Despots: Modern Hinduism and the Genealogies of Self-Rule*](#). Chicago: University of Chicago Press), in the "South Asia Across the Disciplines" series co-published with Columbia University and University of California Presses. Delhi: [Primus Books](#), 2017.
Sole Honorable Mention for the American Comparative Literature Association's Harry Levin Prize for an Outstanding First Book.

- 2016 [*Imagining the Public in Modern South Asia*](#). Edited by Brannon Ingram, J. Barton Scott, and SherAli Tareen. London: Routledge. From a 2015 special issue of *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*.

Articles and Chapters [* peer-reviewed]

- In progress “Heterodoxies of the Body: Death, Secularism, and the Corpse of Raja Rammohun Roy”
- *2023 “Insulting Religion: Penal Secularism and the Government of Feeling,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, forthcoming.
- *2019 [“Translated Liberties: Karsandas Mulji’s *Travels in England* and the Anthropology of the Victorian Self,”](#) *Modern Intellectual History* 16 (3): 803-33.
- *2019 [“A Commonwealth of Affection: Modern Hinduism and the Cultural History of the Study of Religion.”](#) In *Constructing Nineteenth-Century Religion: Literary, Historical, and Religious Studies in Dialogue*, eds., Joshua King and Winter Jade Werner, pp. 46-64. “Literature, Religion, and Postsecular Studies.” Columbus: Ohio State University Press.
- 2019 [“Only Connect: Three Reflections on the Sociality of Secularism.”](#) *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 6 (1): 48-69.
- 2016 [“The Supernatural and Colonialism.”](#) In *Super Religion*, ed. Jeffrey J. Kripal, *Religion: Sources, Perspectives, Methodologies*, Vol. 9, pp.277-91. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- *2015 [“How to Defame a God: Public Selfhood in the Maharaj Libel Case.”](#) *South Asia: The Journal of South Asian Studies* 38 (3): 387-402.
- 2015 [“What is a Public? Notes from South Asia.”](#) Co-authored with Brannon Ingram. *South Asia: The Journal of South Asian Studies* 38 (3): 357-370.
- *2015 [“Aryas Unbound: Print Hinduism and the Cultural Regulation of Religious Offense.”](#) *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 35, no. 2 (2015): 294-309.
- *2015 [“Luther in the Tropics: Karsandas Mulji and the Colonial ‘Reformation’ of Hinduism.”](#) *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 83 (1): 181-209.
- *2014 [“Unsaintly Virtue: Swami Dayananda Saraswati and Modern Hindu Hagiography.”](#) *Journal of Hindu Studies* 7 (3): 371-391.
- *2010 [“Comic Book Karma: Visual Mythologies of the Hindu Modern.”](#) In “Inscriptions,” ed. Jeremy Stolow and Lisa Gitelman, special issue of *Postscripts: The Journal of Sacred Texts and Contemporary Worlds* 4 (2): 177-197.
- *2009 [“Miracle Publics: Theosophy, Christianity, and the Coulomb Affair.”](#) *History of Religions* 49 (2): 172-196.

Digital Scholarship

- 2021– “[The Global Blasphemer: An Atlas of Insult](#).” Collaborative research website funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Culture Criticism, Book Reviews, and Public Writing

- 2023 [Podcast Interview](#) on *Slandering the Sacred*. New Books Network: Indian Religions.
- 2023 “Book Excerpt: [A New Book Explores the Cultural, Intellectual, and Legal Pre-History of India’s ‘Blasphemy Law.’](#)” *Scrollin*, 24 April 2023.
- 2022 [Review of *Venus*](#) (dir. Jaume Balagueró, 2022), *Journal of Religion & Film* 26, no. 2, Article 21.
- 2022 [Review of *Werkmeister Harmonies*](#) (dir. Béla Tarr and Ágnes Hranitzky, 2000), *Journal of Religion & Film*, 26, no. 2, Article 20.
- 2022 [Review of *223 Wick*](#) (dir. Sergio Myers, 2022), *Journal of Religion & Film*, 26, no. 2, Article 17.
- 2022 “[Welcome to the Blasphemosphere](#).” *The Global Blasphemer*, March.
- 2021 “[The Strange Sanctity of Pakistan’s Priest-King](#),” *The Global Blasphemer*, December.
- 2021 “[Religion in Lovecraft Country](#),” *The Revealer: A Review of Religion and Media*, February.
- 2020 “[Mucho Mucho Amor, Much Mucho Religion](#),” *The Revealer: A Review of Religion and Media*, October.
- 2020 [Review of Richard S. Weiss, *The Emergence of Modern Hinduism: Religion on the Margins of Colonialism*](#) (University of California Press, 2019). *Journal of Asian Studies* 79 (2): 529–31.
- 2018 [Review of *Reason \(Vivek\)*](#) (dir. Anand Patwardhan, 2018). *Journal of Religion & Film* 22 (2) (October).
- 2018 [Review of *Ad Vitam*](#) (dir. Thomas Calley, 2018) *Journal of Religion & Film* 22 (2) (October).
- 2017 [Review of *Les Affamés*](#) (dir. Robin Aubert, 2017). *Journal of Religion & Film* 21(2) (October).
- 2017 [Review of Timothy Dobe, *Hindu Christian Faqir: Modern Monks, Global Christianity, and Indian Sainthood*](#) (Oxford University Press, 2005). *History of Religions* 57 (2): 225-227.
- 2016 [Comment on Benjamin Berger, *Law’s Religion: Religious Difference and the Claims of Constitutionalism*](#) (University of Toronto Press, 2015). *The Immanent Frame*. 20 July.

HONORS, AWARDS, GRANTS, & FELLOWSHIPS

- 2023–24 Chancellor Jackman Research Fellow in the Humanities, University of Toronto Jackman Humanities Institute (12-month)

- 2021–24 Social Science and Humanities Research Council, Insight Grant (“The Global Blasphemer”)
- 2019-2020 Visiting Scholar, Center for Religion and Media, New York University
- 2018 University of Toronto-Mississauga Annual Research Prize in the Humanities (one of three research awards, per three divisions of the faculty, awarded annually)
- 2018 Harry Levin Prize, Honorable Mention: Sole Runner Up for the Best First Book Award from the American Comparative Literature Association
- 2016-2018 Connaught New Researcher Award
- 2016-2017 University of Toronto-Mississauga Research and Scholarly Activity Fund Grant
- 2013-2014 Mellon-Humboldt SIAS Summer Institute, National Humanities Center and Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin
- 2012-2013 Scholarship and Creativity Grant, Montana State University
- 2007-2008 American Institute of Indian Studies, Junior Fellowship
- 2007-2008 American Institute of Pakistan Studies, Research Fellowship
- 2003-2007 James B. Duke Fellowship, Duke University
- 2003-2004 Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship for Humanistic Studies

RECENT LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

- 2023 Respondent, “Author-Meets-Critics Roundtable on Barton Scott’s *Slandering the Sacred*,” with Kamari Maxine Clarke, Inder Marwah, Benjamin Berger, and Catherine Evans. Law, Culture, & Humanities Conference. Toronto, ON. June 22.
- 2023 “How the Indian Penal Code Came to Canada: Law, Religion, and the Global Lives of Empire.” Weatherhead Center, Canada Seminar. Harvard University. Cambridge, MA. 27 February.
- 2022 “A Postal Slapping: Jains, Arya Samajists, and the Documentary Practice Culture of Religious Controversy in Nineteenth Century India.” Beyond Boundaries: A Celebration of the Work of John E. Cort. University of California-Davis. 13 August.
- 2022 “Penal Secularism in Colonial India.” Symposium on “Global Religion: Invention, Translation, Critique.” Northwestern University. Evanston, IL. 3 June.
- 2022 “What We Talk About When We Talk About Modern Hinduism.” Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies workshop on “Rethinking Colonial Hinduism.” 4 February.
- 2022 “The Gods in the Time of the Picknicker: A Response to Kajri Jain’s *Gods in the Time of Democracy*.” University of Toronto. 14 January.
- 2021 “Race, Empire, and Inequality in the Study of Religion: Panel Response.” Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion. San Antonio, TX. 19 November.
- 2021 “The Global Blasphemer: Notes Toward a History of Injured Religion,” Dalhousie University, Stokes Seminar, Halifax, NS. 15 October.
- 2021 “Insulting Religion, from Blasphemy to Hate Speech: The Forgotten History of Section 295A,” NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad. 27 September.

- 2019 Policing ‘Secular Heresy’: Religion and the Law of Sediton in Colonial India.” Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion (Political Theology Unit). San Diego, CA. November.
- 2019 Chair and Respondent, “Authors-Meet-Critics: Brannon Ingram’s *Revival from Below* (2018) and SherAli Tareen’s *Defending Muhammad in Modernity* (2019).” Annual Conference on South Asia. Madison, WI. 19 October.
- 2019 “Translating Self-Help: Toward a Genealogy of ‘Economy’ in Victorian India.” Annual Conference on South Asia. Madison, WI. 18 October
- 2019 “Was the Arya Samaj Secular?,” University of Victoria, workshop on “Indian Secularisms,” Victoria, BC. 14 March.
- 2019 “From Insult to Injury: Hinduism and Religious Offense Before 1927,” Columbia University, South Asia Institute Colloquium Series. New York, NY. 28 January.
- 2017 “The Hunt for the Hindu Luther: Re-imagining the Reformation in Colonial India.” Amsterdam Centre for Religious History workshop, “From Reformation to Reformations: On Analogies, Ideals and Ideas.” Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam. 21-22 September.

SELECT ADMINISTRATIVE AND EDITORIAL POSITIONS

- 2021–2023 Director of Graduate Studies, Department for the Study of Religion, University of Toronto
- 2019–2022 Section Editor, “South Asian Religions,” *Religion Compass*
- 2015– Associate Editor, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*
- 2015–2021 Co-Chair, Cultural History of the Study of Religion Unit, American Academy of Religion

LANGUAGES

Advanced: Modern standard Hindi

Reading knowledge: French, German, Gujarati, Urdu

Elementary: Sanskrit