

Dr. Kristi Upson-Saia, David B. and Mary H. Gamble Professor

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Education

Duke University	2006
Ph.D. Department of Religion, Late Ancient Mediterranean Religion Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies/Gender Studies	
Princeton Theological Seminary	2000
M.Div. <i>magna cum laude</i>	
University of Washington	1996
B.A. Sociology major, History minor, <i>cum laude</i>	

Academic positions

<i>David B. and Mary H. Gamble Full Professor of Religious Studies</i> , Occidental College	2018-present
<i>Founding Director of the Center for Research & Scholarship</i> , Occidental College	2017-2021
<i>Chair of the Religious Studies Department</i> , Occidental College	2015-2021
<i>Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence</i> , Occidental College	2012-2017
<i>Associate Professor of Religious Studies</i> , Occidental College	2012-2018
<i>Assistant Professor of Religious Studies</i> , Occidental College	2006-2012
<i>Instructor in the Religion & Women's Studies Departments</i> , Duke University	2004-2006

Professional positions

<i>Co-Founder & co-Director</i> , International working group, Religion, Medicine, Disability, and Health in Late Antiquity (ReMeDHe)	2013-present
<i>Series Editor</i> , Religion, Medicine, and Health in Late Antiquity series , Routledge	2021-present
<i>Nominating Committee member</i> , North American Patristic Society (Chair in 2019 & 2020)	2016-2020

Grants

- Co-PI and Program Coordinator, "Humanities for Just Communities," Mellon Foundation grant, 2022-2025 (24% acceptance rate, \$1.5 million)
- National Endowment for the Humanities, Summer Stipend, 2024 (13% acceptance rate, \$6,000)
- Study Group Initiative grant, North American Patristics Society: "ReMeDHe Article-in-Progress Workshop," 2021; "ReMeDHe First Book Workshop," 2020; "The Professor, Politics, and Curriculum of Late Antiquity," 2017
- Brown Humanities grant, Occidental College, 2019
- Small project grant, "Politics, Pedagogy, and the Profession: Teaching Socially Relevant Courses on Late Antique History and Religion," Wabash Center, 2017-18
- Arnold L. and Lois S. Graves Award in the Humanities, American Council of Learned Societies, 2013-2014
- Franklin Humanities Institute Mellon Fellowship, John Hope Franklin Humanities Institute, 2005-2006

Honors and Awards

- American Academy in Rome, Visiting Scholar, Fall 2018
- Tod and Linda White Teaching Prize, Occidental College, 2012
- Donald R. Loftsgordon Memorial Award for Outstanding Teaching, Occidental College, 2011
- Best First Article Prize by the North American Patristic Society, 2008
- HOPE teaching award, Duke University, Spring 2006
- Phi Beta Kappa, University of Washington, 1996

Selected Publications

Books and edited volumes

Medicine, Health, and Healing in the Ancient Mediterranean (500 BCE to 500 CE): A Sourcebook. With Heidi Marx and Jared Secord. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2023.

Dressing Judeans and Christians in Antiquity. Co-edited with Carly Daniel-Hughes and Alicia J. Batten. London: Routledge, 2014.

Early Christian Dress: Gender, Virtue, and Authority. New York: Routledge, 2011.

Special Issues

Guest editor, special issue on “Rethinking Medical Metaphors in Late Ancient Christianity,” *Studies in Late Antiquity* 2.4 (Winter 2018).

Guest editor (with Heidi Marx-Wolf), special issue on “Religion, Medicine, Health, and Disability,” *Journal of Late Antiquity* 8.2 (Fall 2015).

Guest editor, special issue on “Teaching and Religion,” *TransFORMATIONS: The Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy* 25.1 (Winter 2014–Spring 2015).

[*The “Teacher’s Talk” interview coordinated by Upson-Saia was nominated for the 2015 Sylvia Rivera Award in Transgender Studies*](#)

Peer-reviewed Articles and Essays

Co-authored with Maria Doerfler. “Politics and the Pedagogue of Late Antiquity.” *The Wabash Center Journal on Teaching* 1.3 (August 2020): 9-22.

“Gregory of Nyssa on virginity, gardens, and the παράδεισος.” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 27.1 (Spring 2019): 99-131.

“Wounded by Divine Love.” In *Melania: Early Christianity through the Life of One Family*, 86–105. Edited by Catherine M. Chin and Caroline T. Schroeder. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017.

Co-authored with Heidi Marx-Wolf. “State of the Question: Religion, Medicine, Disability, and Health in Late Antiquity.” *Journal of Late Antiquity* 8.2 (Fall 2015): 257–72.

“Hairiness and Holiness in the Early Christian Desert.” In *Dressing Judeans and Christians in Antiquity*, edited by Kristi Upson-Saia, Carly Daniel-Hughes, and Alicia J. Batten, 155–72. London: Routledge, 2014.

Co-authored with Alicia J. Batten and Carly Daniel-Hughes. "What shall we wear?" In *Dressing Judeans and Christians in Antiquity*, edited by Kristi Upson-Saia, Carly Daniel-Hughes, and Alicia J. Batten, 1–18. London: Routledge, 2014.

Co-authored with Suzanne Scott. "Using iAnnotate to enhance feedback on written work." *Journal of Teaching and Learning with Technology* 2.2 (Dec 2013): 43–59.

"Holy Child or Holy Terror? Understanding Jesus' anger in the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*." *Church History* 82.1 (Mar 2013): 1–39.

"The Capstone Experiences for Religious Studies Majors." *Teaching Theology & Religion* 16.1 (Jan 2013): 3–17.

"Playing the Role of Religious Studies Researcher in the Senior Capstone." *Teaching Theology & Religion* 15.1 (Jan 2012): 42–43.

"Resurrecting Deformity: Augustine on the Scarred, Marked, and Deformed Bodies of the Heavenly Realm." In *Disability in Judaism, Christianity and Islam: Sacred Texts, Historical Traditions and Social Analysis*, edited by Darla Schumm and Michael Stoltzfus, 93–122. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

"Gender and Narrative Performance in Early Christian Cross-Dressing Saints' Lives." *Studia Patristica* XLV (2010): 43–48.

"Caught in a Compromising Position: The Biblical Exegesis and Characterization of Biblical Protagonists in the Syriac Dialogue Hymns." *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 9.2 (July 2006).

[*Awarded "Best First Article Prize" by the North American Patristic Society*](#)

Entries in Reference Works—

"Gender Transgression: Early Church." In *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Gender Studies*, volume 2, edited by Julia O'Brien, Rachel Havrelock, Davina C. Lopez, Todd Penner, Ken Stone, Ilona Zsolnay, 315–20. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

"Eustochium" and "Paula" in *Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity*. Ed. Daniel Patte, 391–92, 931–32. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

"Communism" in *Encyclopedia of Protestantism*, volume I. Ed. Hans Hillerbrand, 485–86. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Conference Papers and Invited Lectures

Invited lecture for the Columbia University Classics Colloquium. "Dental Distress in the Ancient Mediterranean." Columbia University. February 2024

Invited participant in the ACU Rome seminar. "Dental Distress in the Ancient Mediterranean as an Idiom for Afterlife Suffering." Rome, Italy. September 2023.

Invited lecture for the Cambridge Body and Food Histories Group. "Disruptive and disobedient bodies in ancient Mediterranean medicine." Sponsored by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and University of Cambridge. July 2021.

Invited panelist for 2020 Hispanic Theological Initiative Book Prize Winner (Peter Mena, *Place and Identity in the Lives of Antony, Paul, and Mary of Egypt: Desert as Borderland*). October 2020.
Published as “Anzaldúa, Latinx theory, and Late Ancient Studies” *Perspectivas* 18 (2021).

“Why study the history of medicine, health, and healing? A case study of patient-centered medicine in the ancient Mediterranean.” Invited speaker for the Health Humanities Research Cluster at the University of Manitoba. November 2020.

Organized the “Politics, Pedagogy, and the Profession” two-day workshop. November 2018

“Departmental and Institutional Conditions.” Ethical Engagement and the Study of Antiquity conference. University of Southern California. April 2017.

“(Re)theorizing Modesty: Gender, Religion, and Dress.” Politics of Dress and Identity in Eastern Mediterranean Societies: Past and Present. Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam. March 2016.

“Sexuality in the Garden: Priapus and the Christian Virgin Policing the Boundaries of the Good Life.” XVII International Conference on Patristic Studies. Oxford, UK. August 2015.

Organized and chaired the wildcard session: “Religious Dress in the Ancient Mediterranean” session, American Academy of Religion. Chicago, IL. November 2012.

“Hair and holiness in the early Christian desert.” Canadian Society of Biblical Literature. Waterloo, Ontario. May 2012.

“The angry young Jesus of the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*.” XVI International Conference on Patristic Studies. Oxford, UK. August 2011.

“Paul’s Use of Bodily Stigmata and Social Stigmatization in his Letter to the Galatians.” Society of Biblical Literature (Disability Studies and Healthcare in the Bible and Near East session). Atlanta, GA. November 2010.

“Resurrecting Deformities in Early Christian Writers.” North American Patristic Society. Chicago, May 2010.

Invited participant in the *Reimagining Pauline Legacies: Works beyond Laws, Theories after Theologies, Paths toward Transformations* workshop. Center for Jewish Studies at Baylor University. April 2010.

“The Capstone Experience for the Religious Studies Major.” American Academy of Religion (Teaching Religion Section). Montreal, Quebec. November 2009.

“Scars, Marks, and Deformities in Augustine’s Earthly and Resurrected Bodies.” American Historical Association/American Society of Church History. New York City, NY. January 2009.

“Disabilities and Deformities in Augustine of Hippo.” American Academy of Religion (Religion and Disability Studies Group). Chicago, IL. November 2008.

Steering committee member of American Academy of Religion “Sex, Gender, and Sexuality in Pre-Modern Christianity” session. 2007-2010.

Organized and chaired the wildcard session: “The Holy Child: Traditions of the Infant and Child Jesus.” American Academy of Religion. San Diego, CA. November 2007.

Roseanne L. Hoefel Scholar-in-Residence. Alma College Women's Studies Program. Alma, MI. October 2007.

"Gender Performance and Cross-Dressing in Early Christian Saints' *Lives*." XV International Conference on Patristic Studies. Oxford, UK. August 2007.

"*Enfant Terrible*: Reading *Infancy Thomas* with Ancient Rhetorical Practice." American Society of Church History (Reading Strategies for Early Christian Apocryphal Gospels section). Salt Lake City, UT. April 2007.

"Performativity and Text in Late Antiquity: Historiographical Considerations." Western Commission for the Study of Religion (History of Christianity section). Berkeley, CA. March 2007.

"Making an Appearance: Religious and Gender Performance in the Attire of Ancient Female Christian Ascetics." North American Patristic Society (Women's Studies and Patristic Studies section). Chicago, IL. May 2006.

"Performance Anxiety: Religious and Gender Performance in the Attire of Ancient Female Christian Ascetics." American Academy of Religion (Women and Religion section). Philadelphia, PA. November 2005.

"Desiring Monasticism: A Response to Naomi Koltun-Fromm and Derek Krueger." Issues of Sexuality in Late Antiquity symposium. Duke University, Durham, NC. March 2005.

"Changing Garb, Changing Gender: Gender Resistance or Re-inscription Among Early Christian Ascetics?" Second Annual Christina Conference in Women's Studies. University of Helsinki, Finland. March 2005.

"Re-writing the Bible: 'Orthodox' Theology in the Syriac Dialogue Hymns." Society of Biblical Literature (History of Interpretation section). San Antonio, TX. November 2004.

"Ancient *Bling*: Pagan and Early Christian Attitudes toward Female Adornment." UCLA Graduate Late Antiquity Conference. Los Angeles, CA. May 2004.

"Local Edessene memories as a critique of Empire." The North Carolina Colloquium in Medieval and Renaissance Studies. Chapel Hill, NC. February 2004.

"Imagining Magic: Jesus as Magician in Ancient Christian Art and Text." Social Scientific Study of Religion Annual Conference. Norfolk, VA. Oct. 2003.

Reading language proficiencies

Ancient: Greek, Latin, Syriac, Hebrew

Modern: French, German, Spanish

Public Scholarship

"The Mifepristone Case Hinges on Whether or not Pregnancy Should be Considered an 'Illness' – What Can We Learn When We Look for Medical Precedent?" [Nursing Clio](#). June 21, 2023.

“Ancient Greek and Roman Medicine.” [You’re Dead To Me](#). BBC Radio 4. February 5, 2021.

“Early Christians Would Have Found the Met Gala Gaudy.” [Hyperallergic](#). May 15, 2018.

“Traditionally, Christianity Is Against ALL Marriage.” [Huffington Post](#). April 29, 2013.