

# EMMA RIFAI

The University of Iowa | Department of Religious Studies  
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## EDUCATION

- 2021 **Ph.D., Religious Studies, The University of Iowa**  
*Title:* Secular Embodiments: Body Management, Protestant Culture, and American Secularism in the Twenty-First Century  
*Directors:* Kristy Nabhan-Warren and Jenna Supp-Montgomerie  
*Committee Members:* Natalie Fixmer-Oraiz, Naomi Greysen, and Raymond Mentzer
- 2017 **The Graduate Certificate in Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies**  
2017 **The Graduate Certificate in College Teaching**
- 2018 **M.A., Religious Studies, The University of Iowa**  
*Comprehensive Exam Areas:* American Religions; Critical Theory and Religion; and Religion, Food, and the Body
- 2011 **M.A., Middle East Studies, The University of Washington**  
*Thesis:* Fashioning Identities: New Relationships with Fashion and Modesty in Turkey
- 2009 **B.A., Sociology of Religion, Minnesota State University Moorhead**  
*Thesis:* Unveiling New Orientalism: An Exploration in Images
- 2008 **B.M., Instrumental Music and Religious Studies, Concordia College**  
*Thesis:* The Body's Iron Cage and Its Relationship to the Protestant Ethic

## PUBLICATIONS

### Refereed Journal Articles

"Digital Waistlands: Pro-Ana Communities, Religion, and Embodiment." *Journal of Religion, Media, and Digital Culture* 9 (2020): 207-227.

"Weighty Matter(s): Religion, Secularism, and American Weight Loss Culture." *Religion Compass* 14:2 (February 2020): 1-10.

"Spreading the Religion of Thinness from California to Calcutta: A Critical Feminist Postcolonial Analysis" with Michelle LeWica and Jenna McNallie. *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 24:1 (Spring 2009): 20-41. (Published under Emma Hoglund.)

### Textbook Entries

“Evangelical Christianities in North America.” *Bloomsbury Religion in North America*. (In press.)

“Women and Christianity.” *Bloomsbury Religion in North America*. (In press.)

### **Book Reviews**

Review of *The Story of Radio Mind: A Missionary’s Journey on Indigenous Land*, by Pamela E. Klassen. *Material Religion* 15:5 (July 2019): 644-645.

Review of *Religious Affects: Animality, Evolution, and Power*, by Donovan O. Schaefer. *Material Religion* 12:4 (December 2016): 515-516.

### **CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION**

#### **Conferences Organized**

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| 2020 | Religion and Media Workshop, Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Virtual                                 |
| 2019 | Annual Upper Midwest Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, St. Paul, Minnesota                                    |
| 2018 | Graduate Student Council Student Roundtable Series, Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Denver, Colorado |
| 2018 | Annual Upper Midwest Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, St. Paul, Minnesota                                    |
| 2017 | Graduate Student Council Programming, Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Boston, Massachusetts          |

#### **Conference Presentations**

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|------|---|
| 2020 | “DNA Dieting: Genetic Testing, Nutrigenetics, and American Secularism,” Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Virtual   |
| 2018 | “Uploading the Body; Embodying the Online: Bodies, Digital Space, and the Pro-Ana Movement,” Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Denver, Colorado                                       |
| 2018 | “Networked Anorexia: Pro-Ana Communities, Network Logic, and the Internet,” Conference of the International Society for Media, Religion, and Culture, University of Colorado Boulder, Boulder, Colorado |

- 2018 “Pro-Ana: An Internet-Mediated ‘New Religious Movement’?” Craft Critique Culture Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa
- 2017 “Disrupting Secular Space: Veiled Female Bodies in Turkish Shopping Malls,” Jakobsen Memorial Graduate Conference, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa
- 2016 “Fashioning Identities: New Relationships with Fashion and Modesty in Turkey,” Doing the Body in the 21st Century Conference, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- 2008 “The Body’s Iron Cage and Its Relationship to the Protestant Ethic,” Annual Upper Midwest Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, St. Paul, Minnesota
- 2007 “From California to Calcutta: Spreading the White-Western Devotion to Female Thinness—A Feminist Post-Colonial Analysis,” Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, San Diego, California

## **PRESENTATIONS AND LECTURES**

### **Colloquia**

- 2019 “Biohacking the Body: Fasting, Silicon Valley, and Protestant Privilege,” The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa

### **Guest Class Lectures**

- 2019 “Digital Waistlands: Pro-Ana Communities, Religion, and Embodiment,” in *Food, Body, and Belief: A Global Perspective* (RELS:2674), The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa
- 2014 “Spreading the Religion of Thinness from California to Calcutta: A Critical Feminist Postcolonial Analysis,” in *Women’s Religious History* (REL 374), Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota
- 2014 “Fashioning Identities: New Relationships with Fashion and Modesty in Turkey,” in *Social Theory* (SOC 302), Minnesota State University Moorhead, Moorhead, Minnesota

## **AWARDS AND HONORS**

- 2021 Barbara W. and Rex E. Montgomery Award, The University of Iowa
- 2019 President and Mrs. Eugene Gilmore Scholarship, The University of Iowa

- 2018 Rev. Louis Penningroth Award, The University of Iowa
- 2017 Alice Marguerite Blough Award, The University of Iowa

### **GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS**

- 2019 College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Dissertation Writing Fellowship, The University of Iowa
- 2019 Graduate College Post-Comprehensive Research Fellowship, The University of Iowa
- 2016, 2018 Graduate Student Senate Travel Grant, The University of Iowa
- 2010-2011 Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship, The University of Washington
- 2009-2010 Schwartz Fellowship, The University of Washington
- 2006-2007 Centennial Scholars Grant, Concordia College

### **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

#### **The University of Iowa, *Instructor***

- Harry Potter: Mystery and Magic of Life (RELS:1997), Fall 2020  
 Women and Religion in America Today (RELS: 2986), Spring 2020  
 Digital Media and Religion (RELS: 2930/COMM:2079), Spring 2018

#### **The University of Iowa, *Teaching Assistant***

- Modern Religion and Culture (RELS:1250/HIST:1050), Spring 2017, Spring 2021  
 Medieval Religion and Culture (RELS:1225/HIST:1025), Fall 2018  
 Harry Potter: Mystery & Magic of Life (RELS:1997), Fall 2017  
 Digital Media and Religion (RELS:2930/COMM:2079), Spring 2017  
 Religion in America Today (RELS:1702), Fall 2015, Fall 2016  
 Religion and Sport in America (RELS:2877), Spring 2015, Spring 2016

#### **The University of Iowa, *Teaching Practicum Participant***

- Magic Machines: Technology and Social Change (COMM:4153), Fall 2015  
 Women and Power in U.S. History Through the Civil War (GWSS:3280/HIST:3280),  
 Fall 2016

#### **Concordia College, *Teaching Assistant***

- Introduction to Religion (REL 100), Fall 2013  
 Catholicism (REL 328), Spring 2013  
 Religion and the Body (REL 382), Spring 2013

Women's Religious History (REL 374), Fall 2012

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

**The University of Iowa, *Research Assistant***

Jenna Supp-Montgomerie, Department of Religious Studies, 2015-2016

**Concordia College, *Research Assistant***

Michelle Leiwica, Department of Religion, 2006-2008

## ACADEMIC SERVICE

### Service to Profession

- 2018-Present      Chair and Steering Committee Member of the Religion and Media Workshop of the American Academy of Religion
- 2019                Peer Reviewer for *Communication, Culture and Critique*
- 2017-2019        Student Director of the Upper Midwest Region of the American Academy of Religion
- 2018                Peer Reviewer for *Contemporary Women's Writing*

### Departmental and University Service

- 2015-2018        Graduate Student Critical Theory Reading Group Coordinator, The University of Iowa
- 2015-2018        Religion Graduate Student Organization (RGSO), The University of Iowa  
Co-Coordinator, 2017-2018  
Faculty Committee Representative, 2016-2018  
Graduate Student Mentor, 2016-2017  
Secretary/Treasurer, 2016  
Social Event Chair, 2015-2016
- 2016-2017        UI Council on the Status of Women Member, The University of Iowa
- 2015                Advanced Graduate Student Workshop Leader, The University of Iowa

### Community Outreach

- 2019                "Islam and Veiling Practices" Workshop Host, Lutheran Campus Ministries, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa
- 2018                "Women and Islam" Workshop Host, JustChurch, Iowa City, Iowa

- 2018 “Women and Islam” Workshop Host, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Iowa City, Iowa
- 2017 “Islam” Three-Part Workshop Co-Host, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Iowa City, Iowa
- 2015 “Islam” Guest Discussion Leader, Lutheran Campus Ministries, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa

### **PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- 2019-2021 Secularity and Sanctity in the Modern Era Working Group, Obermann Center, The University of Iowa
- 2015-2020 Graduate Student Critical Theory Reading Group, The University of Iowa
- 2020 Humanities for the Public Good Networking Workshop, Obermann Center, The University of Iowa
- 2020 Bridging the Gap: What I Said vs. What They Heard Workshop, The University of Iowa
- 2019 Social Justice and Vulnerability in the Classroom Workshop, The University of Iowa
- 2019 Managing the Market Summer Professional Development Series, The University of Iowa
- 2018 Summer Doctoral Seminar with Bonnie Dow, Wayne State University
- 2018 Dissertation Writing Summer Camp, The University of Iowa
- 2018 Grant and Fellowship Writing Seminar, The University of Iowa
- 2016 Iowa N.E.W. Leadership Institute, The University of Iowa

### **COURSES PREPARED TO TEACH**

Evangelical Christianities in America: Gender, Women, and Sexuality  
 Harry Potter: Mystery and Magic of Life  
 Women and Religion in America Today: From Protestantism to Paganism  
 “World(?)” “Religion(s)(?)”(?): Theory, Methodology, and Gender

### **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

American Academy of Religion  
International Society for Media, Religion, and Culture  
Theta Alpha Kappa  
Alpha Kappa Delta

## **LANGUAGE**

Arabic, Reading Proficient

## **REFERENCES**

### **Naomi Greyser**

Associate Professor  
Departments of American Studies, English, and Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies  
The University of Iowa  
Iowa City, Iowa 52242  
naomi-greyser@uiowa.edu  
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### **Raymond Mentzer**

Professor and Daniel J. Krumm Family Chair in Reformation Studies  
Departments of Religious Studies and History  
The University of Iowa  
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### **Kristy Nabhan-Warren**

Professor and V.O. and Elizabeth Kahl Figge Chair, Catholic Studies  
Departments of Religious Studies and Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies  
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### **Jenna Supp-Montgomerie**

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