

Kevin J. O'Brien

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Employment at Pacific Lutheran University

Professor of Religion (2018-present)

Associate Professor of Religion (2012-2018)

Assistant Professor of Religion (2006-2012)

Education

Emory University, Graduate Division of Religion Ethics & Society Program, Ph.D., 2006

Union Theological Seminary, M.A., 2001

Earlham College, Religion Major, B.A., 1999

Grants and Honors

Collaborative Growth and Innovation Grant, with Dr. Forrest Clingerman, New American Colleges and Universities (2018)

K. T. Tang Faculty Excellence Award in Research (2015-16)

Kelmer Roe Student Faculty Research Grant, "Ethics, Now and Then" with Brenda Llewellyn Ihssen (2014-15)

Regency Advancement Award for summer research, "Personal Care Products, Toxics, and Environmental Health" with Susan Harmon and Brian Naasz (Summer 2014)

Wabash Center Grant, "Fostering Research Programs in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Religion and Theology" with Dr. Forrest Clingerman (2013)

Louisville Institute Sabbatical Research Grant, with Dr. Kathryn Blanchard, "Prophets Meet Profits: Christian Environmentalism and Free Markets" (2012-13)

Property and Environment Research Center, Lone Mountain Research Fellowship (Fall, 2012)

American Academy of Religion Collaborative Research Grant with Dr. Whitney Bauman and Richard Bohannon, "Inherited Land: The Changing Grounds of Religion and Ecology" (Spring 2009)

Wabash Center Research Fellowship (Summer 2008)

Dean's Teaching Fellowship, Emory University (2005-2006)

Briggs Award for Conscience & Courage in Scholarship, Union Seminary (2001)

Earlham College and Departmental Honors, Phi Beta Kappa (1999)

Selected Publications

- Scholarly Texts* *Environmental Ethics and Uncertainty: Wrestling with Wicked Problems* Co-authored with Whitney A. Bauman (Routledge, 2019)
- The Violence of Climate Change: Lessons of Resistance from Nonviolent Activists* (Georgetown University Press, 2017)
- An Ethics of Biodiversity: Christianity, Ecology, and the Variety of Life* (Georgetown University Press, 2010)
- Textbooks* *Grounding Religion: A Field Guide to Religion and Ecology* 2nd Edition. Co-edited with Whitney Bauman & Richard Bohannon. (Routledge, 2nd ed. 2017; 1st ed. 2011)
- An Introduction to Christian Environmentalism: Ecology, Virtue, and Ethics* Co-authored with Kathryn D. Blanchard (Baylor University Press, 2014)
- Edited Volumes* *Theological and Ethical Perspectives on Climate Engineering: Calming the Storm* Co-edited with Forrest Clingerman (Lexington Books, 2016)
- Inherited Land: The Changing Grounds of Religion and Ecology*, with co-editors Whitney Bauman & Richard Bohannon, Jr. (Pickwick, 2011)
- Peer-Reviewed Articles*
- “Approaching Crisis in a Subjunctive Mode: Climate Change in Religious Studies Classrooms,” *Worldviews* 25:1 (2021): 33-47
- “Climate Change and Intersectionality: Christian Ethics, White Supremacy, and Atmospheric Defilement,” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 40:2 (2020): 311-329.
- “The Scales of Integral Ecology: *Laudato Si'*, Hierarchies, and Christian Ecological Ethics,” *Religions* (2019).
- “‘More Than an Idea or a Norm’: Religion, Justice, and Practicality in Dialogue with the Tollgate Principles,” with Forrest Clingerman and Laura Hartman, *Ethics, Policy, & Environment* (2018)
- “The ‘War’ Against Climate Change and Christian Eco-Justice: Ethical Implications of Martial Rhetoric.” *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology*, 16 (2012)
- “*La Causa* and Environmental Justice: César Chávez as a Resource for 21st Century Christian Ecological Ethics.” *The Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 32.1 (2012)
- “Natural Disasters as Moral Lessons: Nazianzus and New Orleans” (co-written with Anna Duke and Brenda Ihssen). *The Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture*. 6:1 (2012)
- “Thinking Globally and Thinking Locally: Ecology, Subsidiarity, and a Multiscalar Environmentalism.” In *The Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture* 2.2 (2008).
- “An Ethics of Natureculture and Creation: Donna Haraway’s Cyborg Ethics as a Resource for Ecotheology,” in *Ecotheology* 9:3 (2004)

*Book
Chapters*

- “First Be Reconciled’: The Priority of Repentance in the Climate Engineering Debate,” in *Theological and Ethical Perspectives on Climate Engineering*.
- “Religion” and “Ecology” (co-authored with Richard Bohannon and Whitney Bauman), “Justice” (co-authored with Richard Bohannon), and “Despair, Hope, and Action” (co-authored with Whitney Bauman) in *Grounding Religion*, 2nd Edition.
- “Toward an Ethics of Biodiversity: Science and Theology in Environmentalist Dialogue” in *Eco-Spirit: Religions and Philosophies for the Earth*. Laurel Kearns and Catherine Keller, eds. Fordham Press, 2007

*Popular
Writing*

- “Religious Action and Climate Change” (Response to “Where Conversations Happen and Values Emerge”) in *Issues in Science and Technology*, 38:3, Spring 2022. <https://issues.org/religious-action-climate-change-clingerman-veldman-forum/>
- “The Heart of Faith from a Christian Perspective” in Earth Ministry’s *Greening Congregations Toolkit* (2021)
- “Ignoring it won’t make it go away: Why climate engineering deserves your attention” with Forrest Clingerman and Laura M. Hartman. Published by the [Forum on Religion and Ecology](#), January 14, 2019.
- “When the Humanities are Useful in Teaching Climate Engineering” with Forrest Clingerman, *Forum for Climate Engineering Assessment Blog*, June 1, 2018. <http://ceassessment.org/teaching-ce/>
- “Is Climate Change a New Kind of Problem? The Role of Theology and Imagination in Climate Ethics” with Forrest Clingerman. *WIREs Climate Change* (2017, e480)
- “Character and Religion in Climate Engineering,” with Forrest Clingerman and Thomas P. Ackerman, *Issues in Science and Technology*, Fall 2017.
- “A Cloud of Witnesses” *Earth Letter*, Spring 2017
- “Finding Hope Outside” *Earth Letter*, Fall 2015
- “Playing God: Religion in the Geoengineering Debate” with Forrest Clingerman. *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, May/June, 2014.
- “Learning from Life’s Variety” *Earth Letter*, Spring 2013
- “Love in the Political Process” *Earth Letter*, Fall 2012

Selected Presentations

*Invited
Presentations*

- “If a Few Drops of the Ocean are Dirty: The Tools of 20th Century Nonviolence in the Anthropocene” for the “Being Human in an Age of Humans” Workshop, The University of Chicago, October 16, 2017
- “Religion and Climate Change in the Public Sphere,” (Panelist) American University, September 28, 2015
- “Ecological Scale and Christian Ethics: Bringing Religion and Science Together to Think About Climate Change,” University of Washington Tacoma, November 3, 2014
- “Can Christian Ecological Ethics Learn from Free Market Environmentalism?” University of Chicago Divinity School, May 20, 2013
- “Prophets Meet Profits: Christian Virtues and Free Market Environmentalism,” (Colloquium) Boise State University, October 17, 2012
- “César Chávez and the Ecological Virtue of Sacrifice,” Boise State University, October 16, 2012
- “A Global Church and a Global Ethics: Globalization and Catholic Social Teaching,” Aquinas Center of Theology at Emory University, January 30-31, 2007
- “It Doesn’t Matter If I Mean Well: What White People Might Learn from Malcolm X & Martin Luther King,” Lutheran Studies Conference at PLU (September 9, 2016)
- “Hope, Anger, and Courage: Faithful Witness in a World of Climate Change,” with Dr. Brian Naasz, Keynote for Earth Ministry’s Annual Celebration of St. Francis, Columbia City, WA (October 4, 2012)
- “Justice Rolling Like Waters: Environment and Ethics in Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King, Jr., and César Chávez,” PLU Lutheran Studies Conference (September 29, 2011)

*Peer-
Reviewed
Conference
Presentations*

- “I Wouldn’t Say Suffer: The Strategic Honesty of Anger and Other Lessons for Christian Ethics from Disability Studies,” Annual Meeting of the Society of Christian Ethics, January 9, 2022.
- “Christian Nonviolence as a Response to Climate Change,” Just Sustainability: Hope for the Commons Conference, Seattle University, August 8, 2016
- “Teaching Climate Controversies as Theological Conflicts,” American Academy of Religion, Atlanta, GA, November 2015
- “Questioning the ‘War’ on Climate Change: Christian Eco-Justice and Militaristic Rhetoric in the Environmental Movement,” American Academy of Religion, Atlanta, GA, November 1, 2010

*Podcasts &
YouTube*

- PLU’s [“The Liberal Arts Can Save the World”](#)
- PLU’s [“Open to Interpretation”](#)
- PLU’s [“D-Chat”](#)
- PLU’s [Listen](#)
- [Symposium Ethics](#)
- [“Land as Community”](#) for the Faith Land Project of the Southwest Washington ELCA synod

Selected Service to Pacific Lutheran University

<i>Administrative</i>	Dean of Humanities (2016-2022)
	Interim Dean of Interdisciplinary Programs (2019-2020)
	Chair of Environmental Studies (2013-2016)
	Faculty Representative to the Board of Regents, 2014-16
	Faculty Affairs Committee, 2013-14
	Sustainability Committee Chair, 2011-12
	Presidential Search Committee, 2011-12
	Faculty Secretary, 2011-12
Taskforce on Schedule and Calendar Member, 2011-12	
<i>Faculty Governance</i>	Representative to Strategic Enrollment Management Advisory Committee, 2017-2021
	Co-Chair of Ad Hoc Committee on General Education, 2018-2019
	Staff Seminar on Vocation Co-Facilitator, Fall 2016

Selected Service to the Profession & Community

- Member, Steering Committee, "Curriculum for the Bioregion" Initiative (2008-2018)
- Series Co-editor (with Sarah Fredericks), "Religious Ethics and Environmental Challenges," Lexington Books (2016-present)
- Co-Organizer, "Inquiring Into an Ethics of Place" Workshop, Sponsored by the Curriculum for the Bioregion (January, 2016)
- Member & Treasurer, Earth Ministry Board of Directors (2009-2015)
- Program Unit Chair, "Religion and Society," Pacific Northwest Regional American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature (2011-2014)
- Assessor of Dr. Laura M. Hartman's scholarship for her tenure application to Augustana College (Fall, 2013).
- Reviewer for Scholarly Publications: Cambridge University Press, Fordham University Press, Georgetown University Press; *Worldviews; Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture; Teaching Theology and Religion, The Journal of Religious Education*
- Sermons and Christian Adult Education: Agnus Dei Lutheran (Gig Harbor), Calvary Lutheran (Federal Way), Christ Episcopal (Tacoma), Creator Lutheran (Sumner), Harbor Covenant (Gig Harbor), Hope Lutheran (Enumclaw), Mountain View Lutheran (Edgewood), St. Marks by the Narrows Lutheran (Tacoma), Trinity Presbyterian (Tacoma), United Church (University Place)