

Simon A. Wood

Associate Professor
Department of Classics and Religious Studies
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
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Current Position:

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Professor, 2025–

Previous Positions:

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Associate Professor, 2010–2025
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Assistant Professor, 2004–2010
Lehigh University, Adjunct Assistant Faculty, 2000–2003
Franklin and Marshall College, Adjunct Assistant Faculty, 2002

Education:

PhD 2004 Temple University, Religion (Distinction)
BA (Hons) 1992 University of Otago, New Zealand, (1st Class Hons), History & Religious Studies

Expertise and Research Interests:

History of Islam, particularly modern Islam
Fundamentalism
Christian-Muslim Relations

Languages:

Arabic, French (reading), German (reading)

Courses:

Judaism, Christianity and Islam
Introduction to World Religions
Introduction to Islam
Islam in the Modern World
The Qur'an
Fundamentalism, Religion, and Politics
Theories and Issues in the Study of Religion
History of Radical Islam

Arabic:

Responsible all aspects of UNL's Arabic program 2005–2013.

Memberships:

American Academy of Religion
Society of Biblical Literature

Other Research Grants and Awards:

University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Arts & Sciences “Enhancing Research Excellence,” 2013

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Grant in Aid, 2010, \$6,000

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Grant in Aid, 2007, \$6,000

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Layman Award, 2005, \$10,000

Other Awards:

University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Arts and Sciences “Academic Star,” 2010

University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Teaching Award, 2009

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Teaching Council & Parents Association Recognition Award, 2008

International Teaching and Engagement:

“Renewing Islam in a Time of Crisis: Democracy or Tyranny?”

Conference paper, Jerusalem, April, 2023.

“Religious Renewal in Times of Crisis” a conference sponsored by The University of Nebraska at Omaha, The Tri-Faith Initiative, and The Israel Palestine Center for Regional Initiatives.

“Islam in the Modern World” – an intensive weeklong seminar.

University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, February, 2011

“Islamic Historicism in the Aftermath of the First World War”

This paper was accepted for the quinquennial meeting of the International Association for the History of Religions, to be held in Dunedin, New Zealand, August, 2020. Unfortunately, the meeting was cancelled due to Covid.

Teaching Development:

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Peer Review of Teaching Project, 2007-08

Target Course: RELG 398 The Qur’an. Portfolio available online: <http://www.courseportfolio.org/>

Refereed Publications – Books:

- *Rashid Rida: The Caliphate or Supreme Imamate* (Yale University Press, 2024).

<https://yalebooks.yale.edu/book/9780300187298/the-caliphate-or-supreme-imamate/>

- *Fundamentalism: Perspectives on a Contested History* (University of South Carolina Press, 2014). Lead editor: Simon A. Wood; co-editor: David Harrington Watt. Introduction and Afterword by Wood and Watt.

<https://uscpress.com/Fundamentalism>

Reviewed in *Choice*, February, 2015

- *Christian Criticisms, Islamic Proofs: Rashid Rida's Modernist Defense of Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2008). Reprinted 2010; paperback 2012.

Hardback reviewed in *Journal of Islamic Studies* 20 (2009): 103-105.

Paperback reviewed in *Journal of Islamic Studies* 25.2 (2014): 246-248.

Refereed Publications – Book Under Contract:

- *Islamic Law for Modern Times: Rashid Rida's The Ease of Islam* (Bloomsbury Academic)

This book is a collaboration.

Coauthor: Abla Hasan

Coauthor: Khalid Blankinship

Refereed Publications – essays:

- Under review: “Renewing Islam in a Time of Crisis: Caliphate, Religion, and State” – submitted to Routledge April 2024 for consideration for an edited volume, 9,000 words.
- “Reforming Muslim Politics: Rashid Rida’s Visions of Caliphate and Muslim Independence.” *Journal of Religion and Society* Supplement 18 (2019): 63-78.
- “Modernists and their Opponents: Reading Islam” in *Routledge Handbook on Early Islam* Ed. Herbert Berg (New York: Routledge, 2017), 241-57.
- “Capturing Islam Religion, Identity, and the Turn to Islamism” *Journal of Religion and Society* (Supplement 13, 2016): 90-112.
- “The Concept of Global Fundamentalism: A Short Critique,” in *Fundamentalism: Perspectives on a Contested History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2014), eds. Simon A. Wood and David Harrington Watt, 125-143.
- “The Reign of Grace: Liberalism and Heresy in the New World” *Journal of Religious History* 38:4 (2014): 535-560.
- “Rethinking Fundamentalism: Ruhollah Khomeini, Mawlana Mawdudi, and the Fundamentalist Model.” *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* 11.2 (Spring 2011): 171-198.
- "Researching "The Scripture of the Other": Niqula Ghabriyal's Researches of the Mujtahids and Rashid Rida's Rejoinder." *Comparative Islamic Studies*: 6 (2010): 181-216.

Invited Publications:

- “Al-Sayf al-saqil,” 1,700 words, translation of an excerpt taken from Al-Tamimi l-Dari’s 1896 book of that name. In *Christian-Muslim Relations: Primary Sources 1700-1914* (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), 43-46. This Bloomsbury volume is a companion volume to the Brill volume referenced below.
- “Injil Barnaba,” 1,700 words, translation of an excerpt taken from Rashid Rida’s introduction to an Arabic edition of the Gospel of Barnabas, which he published in 1907 or 1908. In *Christian-Muslim Relations: Primary Sources 1700-1914* (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), 51-54.
- “Niqula Ghabriyal,” in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History* Volume 18 (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 636-44.

A 50-50 collaboration with my coauthor and UNL colleague Abba Hasan.

- “Al-Tamimi l-Dari,” in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History* Volume 18 (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 590-96.

A 50-50 collaboration with my coauthor and UNL colleague Abba Hasan.

Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History is an ambitious multi-volume bibliographic history of Christian works about Islam and Muslim works about Christianity from the rise of Islam to the end of the First World War. <https://brill.com/view/serial/HCMR1BP>. Brill is a leading publisher in Islamic studies.

Book Reviews:

- *Modern Things on Trial: Islam's Global and Material Reformation in the Age of Rida, 1865–1935*. Leor Halevi (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019). Pp. 384.

International Journal of Middle East Studies, February 2021, 159-61.

- Gabriele Marranci. *Rethinking Fundamentalism: Understanding Muslim Identity* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009). *Comparative Islamic Studies* 8.1 (January, 2014): 81-85.
This review was published online in August, 2012

Selected Conference Papers and Presentations:

“A Religion and/or a State: Revisiting the Abolition of the Caliphate”
American Academy of Religion, November 23, 2024, San Diego.

“Religion, Social Justice, and the Islamic Caliphate”
BSA Sociology of Religion Annual Conference 2024, July 2024, Newcastle, UK.

“Renewing Islam in a Time of Crisis: Democracy or Tyranny?” Pontifical Biblical Institute, Jerusalem, 4/27/23.

“Religious Renewal in Times of Crisis,” a conference sponsored by The University of Nebraska at Omaha, The Tri-Faith Initiative, and The Israel Palestine Center for Regional Initiatives

““Making Themselves like the Franks”: Europeanization and Conversion in Modern Islam.” American Academy of Religion, November 19, 2018, Denver, CO.

“Reviving and Reforming the Caliphate”
Creighton University Symposium, February, 2018.

“Messaging: Islamic State and Taliban Information Campaigns” Central and South Asia Seminar, University of Nebraska-Omaha. 11/17/16.

“Capturing Muslim Identities: Fundamentalism, Islamism, and Jihadism”
2015 Creighton University Symposium on Religion and Identity, Omaha, 02/20/15

“Rashid Rida’s The Caliphate and the Islamization of Governance”
2013 American Academy of Religion National Meeting, Baltimore, 11/26/13

“The Wahhabis and the Shi‘ites: Factionalism and Rapprochement in Modern Islam”
2012 Midwest American Political Science Association National Meeting, Chicago, 04/14/12

“The Qur’an in the Classroom: Pedagogical Challenges and Opportunities”
2009 Society of Biblical Literature National Meeting, New Orleans, 11/23/09

“Islam and Modernity”
2008 National Meeting of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists of North America (AMSS), University of Nebraska-Omaha, 04/19/08

“Egypt 1898-1914: Christian Tafsiir, Muslim Biblical Criticism”
2007 American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature Nat. Meeting, San Diego, 11/18/07

“Rethinking the “Fundamentals” of Fundamentalism: Dualism, Literalism, Golden Age-ism”
2006 American Academy of Religion National Meeting, Washington DC, 11/19/06

“Fundamentalism Revised: Mawdudi, Khomeini, and the Fundamentalist Paradigm”
2006 Midwest American Political Science Association National Meeting, Chicago, 04/20/06

“Islamic *Da’wah* and “the Religion of the Other”: Rashid Rida's Revision of Islamic Exclusivism”
2004 American Academy of Religion National Meeting, San Antonio, TX, 11/23/04

“Teaching Islamic Fundamentalism After 9/11”
2003 American Academy of Religion Mid-Atlantic Meeting, New Brunswick, NJ, 03/14/03

Selected Panels – National Conferences:

“Reading in Tandem: Pedagogical and Hermeneutical Issues in Analyzing Parallel Biblical and Qur’anic Texts with Lay Persons and Students” – Panel Moderator and Discussant
2012 American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature National Conference, Chicago, 11/18/2012

“Politics of the Middle East: Regional Security in the Middle East,” Panel Discussant
2012 Midwest American Political Science Association National Meeting, Chicago, 04/14/12

“Islam and Ecology: A Reassessment Ten Years after the Earth Charter,” Panel Moderator
2010 American Academy of Religion National Conference, Atlanta

“Christian-Muslim Debate and Dialogue in Post-industrial Society,” Panel Moderator
2009 Society of Biblical Literature National Conference, New Orleans, 11/22/09

“Islam, Human Rights, and the State,” Panel Moderator & Discussant
2009 Midwestern Political Science Association National Conference, Chicago, 04/04/09

Selected Invited Lectures and other Panels:

“Pilgrimages: Islam.” Osher Lifelong Learning Institute @ UNL
East Campus, UNL 9/12/2024

"Religion and Politics Globally." Osher Lifelong Learning Institute @ UNL
Geer Library, Lincoln, NE. 9/12/2024

“Radical Islam: Pedagogical Challenges” a talk delivered at a Nebraska Council on Global Islamic Studies Workshop, UNO, 5/12/2023

“Islamic State: Organizational Concepts and Theories,” a talk delivered at UNO’s Center for Afghanistan Studies, 4/10/2023

“The Origins of Fundamentalism.” Westminster Presbyterian Church, Lincoln, NE. 9/30/18.

“The Arab Spring.” University of Nebraska-Lincoln panel on “Global Matters.” 3/31/14.

“The Politics of Religious Diversity”
Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, NET building, Lincoln, NE, 10/24/13

“Fundamentalism: Perspectives on a Contested History”
Symposium Organizer and Panelist, UNL, 03/07-03/08/12

Governor’s 2012 Lecture in the Humanities; E.N. Thompson Forum on World Issues
30 minute “pre-lecture” foregrounding the Governor’s Lecture “American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us” by Robert Putnam, Harvard University
Lied Center, Lincoln, NE, 10/02/2012

“Diversity in World Religions”

Invited lecture, UNMC, Omaha, NE, 10/22/2012

“The Arab Spring, Islam, and Islamism in Egypt”

Invited lecture, Winter Lecture Series, Lincoln Unitarian Church, Lincoln, NE, 02/12/12

“Reading the Scripture of the Other”

Invited lecture, Temple Israel, Omaha, NE, 03/02/2012

“The Arab Spring: Uprising in the Middle East – Egypt and Bahrain”

Panelist, UNL, 04/11/2012

“Religion in American Life: Islam”

Doane College, Lincoln NE campus, 02/22/2012

“Theodicy in Islam”

Doane College, Lincoln NE campus, 07/09/2012

“Engaging Islam”

2011 Invited Lecture, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Lincoln, NE, 02/27/11

“The Qur’an: Jihad, Peace and War”

2010 Invited Lecture, University of Nebraska-Omaha, 04/16/10

“Colonialism and Fundamentalism”

Two lectures delivered at the 2006 Midland Lutheran College Forum on the Arts & Humanities
Fremont, NE, 07/04/06-08/04/06

Presenter and Panelist on “Islam in the Middle East”

Lincoln Unitarian Church, Lincoln, NE, 01/20/05 and 01/27/05

Theology for Lunch: three lectures on Islam

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Union, Fall 2004

“Christian Criticisms, Islamic Proofs: Rashid Rida’s Rationalist Defense of Islam”

Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, PA, 02/26/04

“Jihad in Islam”

Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA, 05/07/02

(respondent to keynote address by R. Scott Appleby)

“Islamic Modernities”

Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ, 04/26/02

“Rethinking the “fundamentals” of Islamic Fundamentalism”

St Joseph's University, Philadelphia, PA, 09/23/01

Manuscript and Proposal Reviewing:

The National Endowment for the Humanities

Yale University Press

Oxford University Press

Cambridge University Press

Routledge

Religion, Politics, and Ideology

Journal of the American Academy of Religion

Journal for Religion and Society

Die Welt des Islams

Journal of Islamic Studies

Journal of Religious History

Selected Outreach Activities, Committees, and Service:

- Vice Chair, Department of Classics and Religious Studies, UNL (Spring 2023 onwards, excluding Spring 2024)
- Executive Committee Chair, Department of Classics and Religious Studies, UNL (Spring 2023 onwards, excluding Spring 2024)
- UNL Faculty Senate (Fall 2024)
- Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee (February 2020 onwards).
2021-22: UNL Grievance Committee.
- Curriculum Advisory Committee, Department of Classics and Religious Studies, UNL (I have rotated on and off this committee since 2019. Presently – Fall 2024 – I serve on the committee.
- January, 2020, volunteered to serve on the UNL's Academic Rights and Responsibilities Panel
- "Islam and Human Rights," a talk delivered to the Forsythe Program on Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. 11/15/16.
- Undergraduate Advisor, Fall 2008; Fall, 2015-Fall, 2016.
- 2015-2016, Chair, Search Committee, hire in American Religions.
- 2014: agreed to serve on UNL's academic rights and responsibilities panel.

- 2015-2016: UNL Grievance Committee.
- Service in a National Organization: Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) Qur'an and Biblical Literature Unit Steering Committee, 2011-2013
- UNL College of Arts and Sciences Executive Committee, 2012-13 (including Fall, 2013).
- "Fundamentalism: Perspectives on a Contested History"
Organized and presented at a two-day symposium at UNL that brought three distinguished speakers to our campus: David Harrington Watt, Shaul Magid, and Lynda Clarke. 03/07-03/08/12.
- Interviewed by Jerry Johnston of NPR on the topic of the above symposium. The resulting story was played on Nebraska NPR.
- Coordinator and Supervisor: Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program (FLTA), 2009-2014.
- Search Committee: cluster hire in Digital Humanities, 2011-2012.
- Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Program, 2011: PI on UNL's application to secure federal funding for expanded Arabic instruction.
- Digital Humanities Task Force, 2011.
- Great Plains National Security Education Consortium, (GP NSEC), 2009.
- Department course scheduler, Fall 2008–2010.
- Search Committee 2008-09, hire in Asian Religions.
- UNL Academic Senate, 2004-07.
- Classics and Religious Studies Assessment Committee, 2006-07.