

CURRICULUM VITAE

ELÍAS ORTEGA, Ph.D.

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EDUCATION

- 2011 Ph.D. (Magna Cum Laude), Religion and Society, Princeton Theological Seminary
- 2005 M.Div., Princeton Theological Seminary
- 2002 B.A. (Communication Arts & Sciences, Philosophy, and Religion), Calvin College

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING APPOINTMENTS

- 2019 - Present *Meadville Lombard Theological School*, President and Professor of Religion, Ethics and Leadership.
- 2011 - 2019 *Drew University Theological School*, Associate Professor of Social Theory and Religious Ethics.
- 2010 - 2011 *Mercer County Community College*.
- Fall 2010 *The College of New Jersey*, Adjunct Professor in African American Studies, "African and African Diaspora Religions," (Honors Undergraduate).
- Spring 2010 *Princeton University*: Lecturer in Sociology, "Latinos in American Public Life," (undergraduate level).
- Fall 2008 *Princeton University*: Lecturer in African American Studies, "Introduction to African-American Studies," (undergraduate level).
- Spring 2007 *Princeton Theological Seminary*: Teaching Fellow, "Cultural Hermeneutics," (graduate level).

VISITING FACULTY POSITIONS

- Summer 2013 *Vanderbilt Divinity School*
- Summer 2012 *New Brunswick Theological Seminary*

EDITORIAL EXPERIENCE

2006 - 2008 *Koinonia Journal*: Religion and Society Editor.

AREAS OF TEACHING COMPETENCE

Primary Cultural Sociology, Sociology of Religion, Religious Ethics, Social Movements, Critical Theory, Africana Studies, and Latino/a Cultural Studies.

Secondary Science and Religion, Latin American/ Latino/a Philosophy, Decolonial/Post-Colonial Studies, Liberation Theologies.

PUBLICATIONS

Forthcoming “Afro-Latinx Radicalism and Latinx Christianities: A Social Movement Perspective,” Oxford Compendium of Latinx Christianities.

2017 “The Haunting of Neo-Lynching Spectacles: Affect and the Survival of Black Bodies,” in *Anti-Black Racism and Christian Ethics*. Orbis Press (October 2017).

2017 “An Africana Reading of Complexity,” In *Entangled Words*. Catherine Keller and Mary-Jane Rubenstein (eds.), Fordham University Press (March 2017).

2017 “The Young Lords Party and The People’s Church: Social Movement Theology and the Telling of Brown Power Movements Impact on Latino/a Religious History,” *Perspectivas Journal* (April 2017).

2016 “Interfacing with Flesh: A Dialogue with Mayra Rivera’s *Poetics of the Flesh* in Times of Neo-Lynching,” *Syndicate Theology*, <http://syndicate.network/symposia/theology/poetics-of-the-flesh/>

2016 “Eucharistic Celebrations: Interdisciplinary Reflections on Faith and Science,” *Philosophy and Theology Journal* (Accepted for Publication).

2016 “The Defiance of an Honest Faith. A Review of Robin Meyers, *Spiritual Defiance: Building a Beloved Community of Resistance*” in *Homiletics*. Vol 41, No 1 (2016) – Special Issue - Black Homiletics and Economics.

2016 Review of *Poetics of the Flesh* by Mayra Rivera, in Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy. Vol.15, No.2 (Spring 2016).

2016 “Traditioning the Hope of Lo Cotidiano: A Commentary on Orlando Espin’s *Idol and Grace*,” *Syndicate Theology*, June 2016. <https://syndicatetheology.com/commentary/traditioning-hope-lo-cotidiano/>

2015 “Theologizing the Future into the Present as a Radical Alternative,” *Twelfth Newsletter of the Center of Liberation Theologies* (October 2015).

2015 “Democratic Futures In the Shadow of Mass-Incarceration: Towards a Political Theology

of Prison Abolition,” Catherine Keller, Melanie Johnson-Debaufre, and Elías Ortega-Aponte (eds.), *Common Goods: Economy, Ecology, Political Theology*, Fordham University Press (September 2015).

- 2015 “Children’s Picture Books: Visualizing Gender and Race,” in *ARTS: The Arts in Religious and Theological Studies*, 26.(2) 2015.
- 2014 With Laurel Kearns and James Spickard, “In Memoriam: Otto Maduro (1945-2013) Journal of the American Academy of Religion,” March 2014, Vol. 82, No. 1, pp. 22–29.
- 2009 Review of Arendt, Augustine, and the New Beginning: The Action Theory and Moral Thought of Hannah Arendt in the Light of Her Dissertation on St. Augustine, by Stephan Kampowski, *Koinonia* (Volume XXI, 2009).
- 2009 “Mulatez,” “Hip-Hop,” “Young Lords/Young Lords Party,” “Epistemology,” *Hispanic American Religious Culture*, Encyclopedia 2 vols. ed. Miguel De La Torre (ABC-CLIO Publishers, 2009).

BLOG POSTS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- Sep. 2015 “Are Our Sacred Spaces Safe for People of Color” for Sacred Conversation for Sacred Justice, September 6, 2015 Issue of *The Living Church Magazine*.
- Nov. 2014 “The Verdict on White Justice for Black Lives,” Public in the Blog of *Feminist Studies in Religion*. Nov.26, 2014
<http://www.fsrinc.org/blog/verdict-white-justice-black-life>.
- Nov. 2014 “Teaching in Times of Ferguson: A Personal Reflection on Social Justice Pedagogy in a Theological School” *Race Matters in the Class Room*, Wabash Center
http://wabashcenter.typepad.com/antiracism_pedagogy/2014/11/teaching-in-times-of-ferguson-a-personal-reflection-on-social-justice-pedagogy-in-a-theological-scho.html
- Nov. 2012 “Presidential Election Time: Disenfranchising the Margins in a Democratic Moment,” *Postcolonial Networks*. Nov. 2012.
<http://postcolonialnetworks.com/presidential-election-time-disenfranchising-margins-democratic-moment/>

WORKS IN PROGRESS

- Book length *Abolitionist Poetics: Decolonizing Political Theology for Black Freedom*
- Article “Lo Cotidiano of Doing Time: Latino/a Religion and Prison Life”
- Article “Tech-Teaching to e-Distractions”
- Article “Azucar negra: Towards an Black Latin American Liberation Theology”

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

- Oct. 2018 “It Is Not Just Sunday School: The Shared Ministry of Children’s Faith Formation,” at The Seminary of the South West,” TX.
- July 2018 “Democratic Possibilities, Religious Communities, and Social Change,” and “Centering Theology: Conversation About Faith, Race, and Liberation,” at Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly, Kansas City, MO.
- Nov. 2017 “Abolitionist Hope and Unitarian Universalist Theological Futures,” UU Collegium, at the American Academy of Religion, Boston, Massachusetts. “Biblical Interpretation and Activism,” Society of Biblical Literatures, Boston, Massachusetts.
- Oct. 2017 “Abolitionist Hope: Ecological Racism and Mass Incarceration,” Williams College, Massachusetts.
- Nov. 2016 “Criminalizing Latino Masculinities,” at American Academy of Religion, San Antonio, TX.
- June 2016 “Neonatal Palliative Care and Cultural Competence,” The Human Journey: Lessons in Neonatal Palliative Care, at Atlantic Health, Morristown Medical Center, Morristown, NJ.
- Mar. 2016 Respondent to the sessions of Religion and Leadership Session at Regional AAR, New Brunswick, NJ.
- Feb. 2016 “Life of the Mind: Intellectual Work and Worship Life,” Koinonia Forum, Princeton Theological Seminary, NJ.
- Feb. 2016 “The Prophetic Act of Living into Theological Questions,” Spring Matriculation Address, Drew University Theological School, Madison, NJ.
- Nov. 2015 “Afro-Latino Masculinity and Performance,” and “Interfacing with Flesh: An Engagement with Mayra Rivera’s *Poetics of the Flesh*,” American Academy of Religion, Atlanta, GA.
- June 2015 “It’s Gonna Get Serious: High-Stakes Conversations as Pedagogical Opportunities,” and “Let’s Type About It: Creating Online Cohorts,” in Pedagogical Possibilities: New Paradigms in Teaching for Ministry at Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville, TN.
- Apr. 2015 “Intersecting Realities of Race and Gender in Theological Education” Koinonia Forum, Princeton Theological Seminary, NJ.
- Mar. 2015 “Black Rebelliousness: Police Brutality, Riots and the Quest for Justice.” Public Lecture; Senior Seminar Presentation, “Political Theology and the Color of Law.” Lebanon Valley College, PA.
- Mar. 2015 “Afro-Latin@s Theologies and Theological Engagements,” Princeton Theological Seminary, NJ.
- Jan. 2015 “Neuroethics, Law, and Religious Ethics,” Society of Christian Ethics, Chicago, IL.
- July 2014 “Difficult Conversations in the Class Room,” Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning

in Theology and Religion, Crawfordsville, IN, Pre-tenure Workshop.

- July 2014 “Blackness in Latin America and the Spanish Caribbean,” Drew University, La Casa Annual Conference.
- Nov. 2013 “Azucar Negra: Latin American Liberation Theology and the Invisibility of Afro-descendientes,” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Baltimore, MD.
- Nov. 2013 “Vejigante Masks, Bomba Rhythms, and Isleño Flow: Puerto Rican Afro-Diasporic Aesthetics,” Society of Biblical Literatures Annual Meeting, Baltimore, MD.
- June 2013 “Critical Praxis and Engage Intellectuals: An Africana Perspective,” Roundtable Panel on Public Intellectuals, Thinking Publicly: A Conference on Public Intellectuals, Drew University, Madison, NJ.
- May 2013 “The Young Lords and the Peoples Church: Civil Engagement as a form of Spirituality,” DePaul University Center for Interreligious Engagement, Chicago, IL.
- Jan. 2012 “Lo Cotidiano of Doing Time: A Sociological Engagement with Isasi-Díaz’s Theo-Ethics in the Shadows of the Prison Industrial Complex,” Society of Christian Ethics Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.
- Nov. 2012 “Afro-Latinos/as’ Quest for Social Justice: Comment on the Intersection between Religious Ethics and the Social Sciences,” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.
- May 2011 “Empathy, Neuroethics, and Religious Morality,” Inaugural International Conference on Education Ethics, Duquesne University.
- Apr. 2012 “Religious Responses to Mass-Incarceration: An Economic Justice Perspective,” Drew Theological Seminary, Webinar.
- Feb. 2012 “Empathy and Religions Morality: Cultural Neuroscience Perspective,” Faculty Seminar, Drew University, NJ.
- Jan. 2012 “Attica’s Long Shadow: Coalitional Politics Against Global Lockdown!” Opening lecture for African Heritage Month, Drew University, NJ.
- Dec. 2011 “Converging Paths: Ideology, History, and the Recovery of Afro-Latino/a Identity in the Young Lords, New York,” and “Mayra Santos-Febres and the Performance of Blackness,” at the *Afro-Latin America: Rethinking, Identity, Politics & Culture* 27th Annual Symposium on African American Culture and Philosophy, Purdue University-West Lafayette, IN.
- Oct. 2011 Herencia Lecture: “Nuestra Negritud: Exploring the Complexities of Race and Gender in the Latina/o Theological Context,” Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ.
- Feb. 2011 “Afro-Latino/a Moral Subjectivity: Transnationalism, Barrio Politics, And a Christian Ethics of Dissent,” Lecture to Drew University Theological School.
- Nov. 2011 “Latino/a Religions in the United States: An Afro-Latino/a Perspective,” Lecture to Princeton University’s Gateway Course “Latinos in American Public Life” Princeton, NJ.

- Nov. 2011 “Afro-Latino/a Reading of Agamben: Biopolitics, Race, Political Space, and Social Mobility,” and “Neuroethics, Affectivity, and Divine Command Theory,” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA.
- Mar. 2010 “Ethical-Moral Thinking in Santería/Lukumí: Mythology, Individual, and Community,” American Academy of Religion Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting, New Brunswick, NJ.
- Mar. 2010 “Imaginative Horizons: Habermas and the Possibility of Theology,” American Academy of Religion Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting, New Brunswick, NJ.
- Nov. 2008 “Afro-Latino Radicalism: Towards a Religious Humanism of Resistance,” Drew University Theological Transdisciplinary Colloquium, Madison, NJ.
- Nov. 2008 “Imago Dei, the Young Lords, and the Struggle for Healthcare for Latinos/as,” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.
- Mar. 2008 “God’s Emotional Commands and Their Rational Tale? Finding a Place between Reason and Emotions: Divine Command Theory and Neuroscience,” American Academy of Religion Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting, New Brunswick, NJ.
- Mar. 2007 “The Path to Citizenship is White: The Whitening of Puerto Ricans 1898-1917,” Stony Brook Manhattan Graduate Conference, New York, NY.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS

- Apr. 2019 “Visioning Children’s Ministries,” Grace Episcopal Church, Madison, NJ.
- Mar. 2019 “The Digital Demos and the Common Good,” Theological Transdisciplinary Colloquium, Drew University, NJ.
- July 2018 “Center Theology: The Witness of Our Stories,” Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly.
- Oct. 2016 Faculty Panel with Jim Wallis on “America’s Original Sin,” Drew Theological School, Madison, NJ.
- June 2016 “Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of New Jersey: Dismantling Racism,” Presentation at the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly, Columbus, OH.
- Sep. 2015 “Foodways, Black Theology, and Community,” Discussion with Derek Hicks, Drew University, Madison, NJ
- May 2015 Moderate Panel with Robert Wright at Morris Museum, Morristown, NJ.
- Apr. 2015 “Mass-Incarceration, The Quest for Justice, and The 6th Principle,” Sermon Delivered at Ridgewood Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Ridgewood, NJ.
- Jan. 2015 “Mass-Incarceration, The Quest for Justice, and The 6th Principle,” Morristown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Morristown, NJ.

- Dec. 2014 “Packing for the Journey,” Sermon Delivered at Morristown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Morristown, NJ.
- Sep. 2014 “Cultural Competence and Sensitivity: A Life-Long Learning,” Drew University.
- Nov. 2014 “Violent Prevention,” Newark Tech High School, Feature Speaker Violence Prevention Week, Newark, NJ.
- May 2013 “Cultural Competence/Sensitivity as a Life-Long Learning Engagement,” ASCE Annual Conference Workshop, Indiana, IN.
- Mar. 2013 “Cultural and Spiritual Dimensions of End-of-Life Ethics,” Series of three seminars for Ombudsman, NJ.

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Summer 18-19 Wabash Center for the Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, “Online Theological Education.”
- Spring 2017 “Faculty Civic-Engagement Award,” Drew University, NJ.
- Jan. 2016 “Justice Builder Innovator,” Unitarian Universalists Service Committee
- Summer 2014 Wabash Center for the Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, Summer Research Grant, “Ethnography and Archival Research”
- 2013-2014 Wabash Center for the Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, Pre-Tenured Theological School Faculty Grant
- 2005-2009 Princeton Theological Seminary: Doctoral Fellowship
- 2009-2010 Hispanic Theological Initiative: Dissertation Award
- 2007 Hispanic Theological Initiative: Special Mentoring Award
- 2006 Hispanic Theological Initiative: Doctoral Grant
- 2002 Calvin College: Honors in Philosophy Kenneth Konyndyk Jr. Scholarship in Philosophy 1999-2000.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- American Academy of Religion
- American Philosophical Association
- American Society for Bioethics and Humanities
- Caribbean Philosophical Association
- Society of Christian Ethics.
- Society of Biblical Literatures.

ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

- 2019 - Present Meadville Lombard Theological School, President.
- 2018 - 2019 Drew University, Chair of Pan-African Studies.
- 2017 - 2019 Drew Theological School, Dean's Council Member.
- 2017 - 2019 Drew University Digital Humanities Initiative.
- 2017 - 2019 Drew University Title IX Committee Member.
- 2017 - 2019 Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession Committee, American Academy of Religion.
- 2015 - 2019 Steering Committee Member, AAR, Religion and Politics Section.
- 2012 - 2016 Steering Committee Member, AAR Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Group.
- 2015 - Present Member of the Unitarian Universalist Association *Religious Education Credentialing Committee* (RECC).

CIVIC ENGAGEMENTS/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP EXPERIENCES

- 2018 - 2019 Director of Children's Ministries, Grace Madison Episcopal Church, Madison, NJ.
- 2017 - 2019 Member of the Commission on Institutional Change, Unitarian Universalist Association.
- 2016 - 2018 Growing Racial Justice, Leadership Staff, Unitarian Universalist Association.
- 2015 - 2017 *New Jersey Parents Caucus*.
- 2015 - Present S.O.A.R (Student Outreach and Academic Reinforcement), Bethel Church, AME, Morristown, NJ.
- 2015 - 2018 *Co-Chair*, Unitarian Universalists Legislative Ministry of New Jersey, Dismantling Racism Group.
- 2012 - 2013 Advisory Board Member of Center for the Study and Practice of Urban Religion (CSPUR), New York Theological Seminary.
- 2011 - 2013 Board Member of Puerto Rican Diaspora Advisory Council to the Sila M. Calderón Foundation.