

# ELAINE PENAGOS

554 Stratford Grn, Avondale Estates, GA 30002 | 305-322-3502 | elaine.penagos@emory.edu

## EDUCATION

Emory University, Atlanta, GA

**Doctor of Philosophy, Religious Studies**

**2022**

Area of Concentration: American Religious Cultures

Dissertation: "Santería Poetics: Africana Continuity thro Afro-Cuban Religious Narratives"

University of Denver, Denver, CO

**Master of Arts, Religious Studies**

**2017**

Area of Concentration: Lived Religions

University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL

**Bachelor of Arts, Honors in Religious Studies**

**2014**

Minor: Sociology

## PUBLICATIONS

**"How We Heal: Genealogical Narratives of Healing Among San Lázaro Devotees,"** in Special Issue on Genealogies of Healing: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Stories, Studies and Strategies of Resistance and Transformation, *Genealogy*, 5: 18 (February 2021) (peer-reviewed) <https://www.mdpi.com/2313-5778/5/1/18/htm>

**"Teaching Religious Traditions Through Place: A Case for Place-Based Associative Pedagogy in Orisha Traditions,"** *Practical Matters*, 12 (June 2019) <http://practicalmattersjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Penagos-Teaching-Religious-Traditions.pdf>

**"Belief and the Cult of San Lázaro,"** in *The Oxford Handbook of Caribbean Religions*, ed. Michelle A. Gonzalez (Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2023–24) (invited)

## PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

**"¡Por Fin!,"** in *CO-VIDA 19: Life-sustaining conversations from the HTI community*, on HTI Open Plaza (December 2020), <https://www.htiopenplaza.org/content/por-fin>.

**"Pedagogical Justice in the Wake of Two Pandemics,"** in Wabash Center Social Justice and Civic Engagement blog series (December 2020), <https://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/2020/12/pedagogical-justice-in-the-wake-of-two-pandemics/>

**"Dangerous Pedagogy: Takeaways from Taking Sacred Drugs,"** co-authored with Gary Laderman, in *Sacred Matters* (December 2020), <https://sacredmattersmagazine.com/dangerous-pedagogy-takeaways-from-taking-sacred-drugs/>

**"A Saint for the Pandemic,"** in *CO-VIDA 19: Life-sustaining conversations from the HTI community*, on HTI Open Plaza (May 2020), <https://www.htiopenplaza.org/content/a-saint-for-the-pandemic>

**"Prayers for Sale,"** Photograph series in Wabash Teacher's Corner (April 2020), <https://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/resources/teachers-art-corner/>

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS**"The Poetics of Continuity: A Conversation on Cuban and Brazilian Afro Religious Traditions Translated through the Visual Arts"**

Keynote address with Yohana Junker at the Transdisciplinary Theological Colloquium  
Drew Theological School, Madison, NJ

2023

**"Religious Poetics and Afro-Latinx Art"**

Inaugural speaker of Religion Matters seminar series  
Emory University, Atlanta, GA

2023

**"Poetics/Not Pathology: The (Re)Forming of Afro-Cuban Religious Narratives"**

Paper presented at the African Diaspora Religions Unit,  
American Academy of Religion, Virtual Annual Meeting

2021

**"Santería Poetics: Africana Continuity through Afro-Cuban Religious Narratives"**

Cuban Heritage Collection Goizueta Fellows Forum,  
University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL, Online Presentation

2021

**"Pedagogical Justice in the Wake of Two Pandemics"**

Paper presented at La Comunidad of Hispanic Scholars of Religion,  
American Academy of Religion, Virtual Annual Meeting

2020

**"Synthesizing Evidence using Arts-Based Methods"**

LGS-SOAR Program (Laney Graduate School Summer Opportunity for Academic Research)  
Emory University, Atlanta, GA

2020

**"Sacred Communities and Communing with the Sacred"**

Round table presentation at Global Communities of Practice LUCE Seminar  
Emory University, Atlanta, GA

2019

**"The Cult of San Lázaro and Babalú Ayé: Faith and Healing in Latinx Culture in Miami"**

Race and Resistance panel presentation at DU's Research and Performance Summit  
University of Denver, Denver, CO

2017

**"Reclamation: Liberating the Orisha"**

Digital image series presented at Occupying the Academy: Being, Thinking and Doing  
Decolonization Faculty and Student Symposium  
University of Denver, Denver, CO

2016

**"The Pressure Cooker"**

Digital Story presented at Gifts from Grey: Journey, Embodiment, Survivance  
University of Denver, Denver, CO

2016

**"The Afro-Cuban Response to the Restrictions of Being Mary:**

*The Madonna-Whore Dichotomy, Ochún and Our Lady of Charity"*

IRISE Graduate Paper Competition

University of Denver, Denver, CO

2016

AWARDS, GRANTS, DISTINCTIONS, & HONORS

Graduating Women of Promise, Emory University	2023
Lilly Endowment Hispanic Theological Initiative Dissertation Fellowship	2021
Phi Kappa Phi Dissertation Fellowship	2021
Goizueta Graduate Research Fellowship, Cuban Heritage Collection, University of Miami	2021
Emory College Online Teaching Strategies (ECOTS) Fellow, Emory University	2020
Global Communities of Practice LUCE Grant, Emory University	2019
Emory Graduate Diversity Fellowship, Emory University	2017
Theta Alpha Kappa Faculty Representative's Award, University of Denver	2016
Student Spotlight, November, Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, University of Denver	2016
IRISE Graduate Paper Competition, University of Denver	2016
Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Student Research Grant, University of Denver	2016
Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Dean's Scholarship, University of Denver	2016
Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Dean's Scholarship, University of Denver	2015
Religious Studies Department Clift Award, University of Denver	2015
Theta Alpha Kappa Award, University of Miami	2014
The Goizueta Foundation Cuban Heritage Collection Undergraduate Scholar, University of Miami	2013

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Trinity University <b>Assistant Professor</b> Department of Religion	Fall 2023-Present
Lexington Theological Seminary <b>Contingent Faculty</b> Building Cultural Frameworks for Contemporary Contexts	Spring 2023
Emory University, Atlanta, GA <b>Visiting Assistant Professor</b> Department of Religion	Fall 2022 – Spring 2023
Emory University, Atlanta, GA <b>Guest Lecturer</b> Emmanuel Lartey, Spiritual Care in African Religious Traditions Axel Presas, Ancient West African Religious Systems in the United States Sara McClintock, Studying Religion at Emory	Fall 2019 & 2021 Fall 2021 Fall 2022
Texas Christian University <b>Guest Lecturer</b> Shari Mackinson, Black American Faith Communities	Fall 2022
Emory University, Atlanta, GA <b>Teaching Assistant/Associate</b> Gary Laderman, Religion and Sexuality Jill Robbins, Interpreting Religion Dianne Stewart, African Religious Cultures Gary Laderman, Sacred Drugs	Fall 2017 Spring 2018 Fall 2018 Fall 2020

Emory University, Atlanta, GA

**Facilitator**

Emory College Online Teaching Strategies, Religion and Classics Cohort

**Summer 2020**

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL

**Cuban Writers and Diasporic Griots**

**June 2021 – August 2021**

Archival research at the Cuban Heritage Collection on Lydia Cabrera, Rómulo Lachatañeré, and other Cuban writers and artists dealing with Afro-Cuban religious themes.

Emory University, Atlanta, GA

**Candomblé Communities in Bahia, Brazil**

**June 2019 – July 2019**

Supervised by Dr. David Nugent

Ethnographic research in various Candomblé communities in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, exploring the prevalence of orixá in culture and community.

University of Denver, Denver, CO

**The Cult of San Lazaro & Babalú Aye**

**June 2016 – August 2016**

Supervised by Dr. Luís León

Ethnographic research collecting stories of healing through faith from Cubans and other Latinx living in South Florida and worshipping at Rincon De San Lazaro Church; supplemented with archival research at the Cuban Heritage Collection.

University of Denver, Denver, CO

**Looking for Cuba in Miami though Mexico in Denver**

**March 2016 – May 2016**

Supervised by Dr. Luís León

Ethnographic research at a botanica in Denver, Colorado analyzing religion, economics and converging Latinx religious identities.

SERVICE

Emory University, Atlanta, GA

**Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Faculty Co-Coordinator**

**August 2022 – May 2023**

Emory University, Atlanta, GA

**Centro Latinx Advisory Board Member**

**August 2019 – July 2022**

Emory University, Atlanta, GA

**Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Graduate Mentor**

**August 2018 – May 2022**

PROFESSIONAL ACADEMIA-RELATED EXPERIENCE

Emory University, Atlanta, GA

**Program Assistant for the Emory Voluntary Core Curriculum**

**August 2019 – August 2021**

Coordinate lecture series events held every semester, including venue reservations, arranging catering services for proceeding dinners, and scheduling videography services. Collect and distribute attendance information for lecture events. Update and maintain departmental website with course offerings, faculty member information, and lecture event information. Assist program director and guest lecturers with other logistical matters as needed.

Dianne M. Stewart and Tracey E. Hucks, Atlanta, GA

**Image searcher, formatter, and permission acquirer for:**

**October 2020 – June 2021**

***Obeah, Orisa, and Religious Identity in Trinidad, Volumes 1 & 2***

Formatted and sourced over 50 images for a two-volume book project. Reverse searched images to locate originating sources. Used Adobe Photoshop to improve and enhance image quality when needed, including resizing to fit within publisher's specifications. Worked with various archives and repositories to obtain high-resolution images and reproduction permission. Collaborated with publisher and authors to ensure proper source information for captions. Created graph and tables in Adobe Illustrator and Microsoft Word for use in the book. (Duke University Press)

Bobbi Patterson, Atlanta, GA

**Formatter and Indexer for:**

**January 2019 – September 2019**

***Building Resilience Through Contemplative Practice:***

***A Field Manual for Helping Professionals and Volunteers***

Indexed and reviewed an eight-chapter book for proper citation and footnote formatting in Chicago style. Created original tables, graphs, and figures using Adobe Illustrator and Microsoft Word. Formatted chapter exercises for consistency. (Routledge)

University of Denver, Denver, CO

**Research Assistant for Sandra Dixon**

**October 2016 – June 2017**

Conducted research on published literature relating to religion and individuals with long-term commitment to moral causes and the impact that social support has on these individuals.

University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL

**Facilities Customer Service Supervisor and Data Custodian**

**February 2010 – July 2015**

Supervised a 24x7 work order control and call center. Monitored maintenance needs for university facilities and residential life by compiling historical data and analyzing work order information. Implemented and deployed new technologies for 80+ maintenance mechanics. Provided work status to customers and followed up with managers and lead mechanics to ensure customer satisfaction. Designed graphs, and wrote copy for policies and web publications. Participated in the coordination of various campus-wide events such as fall opening/move-in week, homecoming, VIP visits, commencement, Beaux Arts Festival, storm preparedness, and utility shut-downs. Conducted research for various projects and drafted Standard Operating Procedures. Served as part of the university's essential personnel team for emergency response.

## MEMBERSHIPS

AAR (American Academy of Religion)

ARC (Art, Religion, and Culture)

HTI (Hispanic Theological Initiative)

Phi Kappa Phi (National Honor Society)

Theta Alpha Kappa (National Honor Society for Religious Studies and Theology)

## LANGUAGES

Spanish – native speaker, read/write with high proficiency