

## **Gwendolyn L. Gillson**

Illinois College

Department of History, Political Science, Philosophy, and Religion

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### **-----Education-----**

**Ph.D.**, May 2018. University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA.  
Religious Studies

**M.A.**, December 2015. University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA.  
Religious Studies

**M.L.I.S.**, May 2012. University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK.  
Concentration: Archives

**B.A.**, May 2009. Gustavus Adolphus College, Saint Peter, MN.  
Major in Religion, Minors in Sociology/Anthropology and Music  
President's List, Dean's List

**Kenkyū-in (Visiting Researcher)**, 2016-2017. Bukkyō University, Kyoto, Japan.

**Participant**, Japanese Language Program for Specialists (in Cultural and Academic Fields),  
Summer 2014. Japan Foundation. Japanese Language Institute. Rinku Town, Japan.

**Foreign exchange student**, Spring 2008. Kansai Gaidai University, Hirakata City, Japan.

### **-----Professional Appointments-----**

**Illinois College**, Department of History, Political Science, Philosophy, and Religion. Assistant  
Professor of Asian Studies, 2019-present .

**Oberlin College**, Departments of Religion and East Asian Studies. Visiting Assistant Professor,  
2018-2019.

### **-----Publications-----**

*The Basics: Buddhism*. Editor. Digital textbook. Part of *Bloomsbury Religion in North America*.  
In press.

“Buddhism: Overview.” In *The Basics: Buddhism*. In press.

“Feasting with Buddhist Women: Food Literacy as Gendered Currency in Religious Belonging.”  
With Paulina Kolata. *Numen*. Part of a Special Issue “Aesthetics and Emotions of  
Religious Belonging.” In press.

“Traversing the Nenbutsu: The Power of Ritual in Contemporary Japanese Buddhism.” *Japanese  
Journal of Religious Studies* 46, no. 1 (2019): 31-51.

“Feminist Ethnography in the Study of Religion.” *Religion Compass*. Under review following  
Revise and Resubmit.

Review of *Buddhism and Business: Merit, Material Wealth, and Morality in the Global Market  
Economy*, edited by Trine Brox and Elizabeth Williams-Oerberg. *Asian Ethnology*.

Invited review. Under review.

### **Web-Based Publications**

“Predictability (and Flexibility) in Times of Crisis.” *Teaching and Learning During Crisis*.

Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion. August 12, 2020.

<https://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/2020/08/predictability-and-flexibility-in-times-of-crisis/>.

“Reflective Journaling in Any Context.” *A Proven Practice: Reflections on Teaching Online*.

Religious Studies News (American Academy of Religion). <https://rsn.aarweb.org/proven-practice-reflections-teaching-online-part-2>.

### **-----Fellowships and Awards-----**

**Alice Margret Engelbach Memorial Grant for Asian Studies**, Illinois College, 2020

**Richard T. Fry Faculty Collaboration Grant**, Illinois College, 2020

**Student Senate Faculty/Staff of the Month for March**, Illinois College, 2020

**H. H. Powers Faculty Travel Grant**, Oberlin College, 2019

**Presidential Graduate Research Fellowship**, University of Iowa, 2012-2018

**Graduate Student Senate Travel Fellowship**, University of Iowa, 2018

**U.S. Fulbright Graduate Research Fellow**, Japan-United States Fulbright Commission, 2016-2017

**Japanese Studies Doctoral Fellowship**, Japan Foundation, 2016-2017, declined

**Graduate Fellow**, Obermann Center for Advanced Studies, Graduate Institute on Engagement and the Academy, 2016

**Alice Lampe Heidel and John B. Heidel Teaching Award**, University of Iowa, 2016

**Center for Asian and Pacific Studies Research Fellowship**, University of Iowa, 2016, declined.

**Graduate Research Scholarship in Religious Studies**, University of Iowa, 2015

**Louis B. Penningroth Award for Teaching and Mentoring**, University of Iowa, 2015

**Center for Asian and Pacific Studies Language Scholarship**, University of Iowa, 2014

**Stanley Summer Scholarship for Asian Language Study**, University of Iowa, 2014

**Kansai Summer Language Institute Grant**, Japan Foundation, 2014

**Theta Alpha Kappa**, University of Iowa, 2014

**Beta Phi Mu**, Lambda of Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma, 2013

**Robberson Conference Presentation and Creative Exhibition Travel Grant**, University of Oklahoma, 2011

**Floy Elliott Cobb Scholarship**, University of Oklahoma, 2011

**Nannie B. Trammell Scholarship**, University of Oklahoma, 2010-2011

**Phi Beta Kappa**, Eta of Minnesota, Gustavus Adolphus College, 2009

**President's Scholarship**, Gustavus Adolphus College, 2005-2009

## -----Conference Participation-----

### Conferences/Symposia Organized

- Organizer, "From School to the Streets: Graduate Student Activism," with Joshua Reno, Upper Midwest AAR Regional Conference, April 2017, St. Paul, MN.
- Graduate Student Co-Chair, Upper Midwest Regional AAR Conference, April 2017, St. Paul, MN.
- Chair, Graduate Student Council Student Roundtable Series, American Academy of Religion National Conference, November 2016, San Antonio, TX.
- Graduate Student Representative, American Academy of Religion Conference, November 2016, San Antonio, TX.
- Graduate Student Co-Chair, Upper Midwest AAR Regional Conference, April 2016, St. Paul, MN.
- Graduate Student Representative, American Academy of Religion Conference, November 2015, Atlanta, GA.
- Chair, Careers Outside the Academy, University of Iowa, April 2014, Iowa City, IA.
- Chair, Three Minute Thesis at the University of Iowa, April 2014, Iowa City, IA.
- Graduate Student Chair, Religion, Literature, and the Arts Conference, September 2013, Iowa City, IA.
- Organizer, Oklahoma Library Association Conference, March 2012, Norman, OK.

### Presentations

- "Consuming Buddhism: Women and Transnational Buddhist (Dis)Connections through Food and Body." American Academy of Religion National Conference, November 2019, San Diego, CA.
- "Surviving and Even Enjoying Comprehensive Exams." American Academy of Religion National Conference, November 2019, San Diego, CA.
- "Finishing the Dissertation On-Time and with Your Sanity Intact," American Academy of Religion National Conference, November 2018, Denver, CO.
- "Bosses, Boyfriends, and Buddhism: Kikuchi Yūken-sensei and Young Japanese Women's Search for Meaning," Association for Asian Studies National Conference, March 2018, Washington D.C.
- "Buddhist Ritual against Vulnerability: Japanese Women's Use of Pure Land Ritual to Create the Emotional Basis of Social Bonds," American Academy of Religion National Conference, November 2017, Boston, MA.
- "Supplementing the *Uchi* through Buddhism: Japanese Women's New Visions of Stranger and Neighbor," American Academy of Religion National Conference, November 2017, Boston, MA.
- "Student-Centered Learning: A Practical Guide," American Academy of Religion National Conference, November 2017, Boston, MA.
- "Graduate Student Seminar: Online Presence and Identity," with Joshua Reno, Upper Midwest AAR Regional Conference, April 2016, St. Paul, MN.
- "Meditation is Zen: The Conflict Concerning Meditation in Worldwide Jōdo Shinshū," Upper Midwest AAR Regional Conference, April 2015, St. Paul, MN.
- "Code as Self: An Analysis of the Global English of Asian Code," Craft, Critique, Culture Conference, April 2015, Iowa City, IA.

- “Divining for Love in Japan: Use of ‘Kitsune Tarot’ for Building Love, Business, Education, and Relationships,” Upper Midwest AAR Regional Conference, April 2014, St. Paul, MN.
- “Pure Land and Politics: An Examination of the Religious Underpinnings of Burakumin Political Action in the Postwar Period,” James F. Jakobsen Graduate Conference, April 2014, Iowa City, IA.
- “Speaking of the Pure Land: A Comparison of the Commentaries on the *Guan Wuliangshao-jing* of Huiyuan and Shandao,” James F. Jakobsen Graduate Conference, April 2013, Iowa City, IA.
- “Taking the Mystery Out of Aging: Eight Decades of Older Adult Detectives,” with Dr. Connie Van Fleet, National Popular Culture Association, April 2011, San Antonio, TX.

**Moderator**

- “World Religions: Asian Religions.” Upper Midwest AAR Regional Conference, April 2016, St. Paul, MN.
- “Dealing with The Dossier: A Proactive Approach to Documenting Your Teaching” by Raj Balkaran. American Academy of Religion Conference, November 2015, Atlanta, GA.

-----**Teaching Experience**-----

**Illinois College**

- Cults and the End of the World, Spring 2021
- Space, Place, and Religion, Spring 2021
- World Religions, Fall 2019, Spring 2020, Fall 2020, Spring 2021
- Healing and Healthcare, Fall 2020
- First Year Seminar: Living and Dying in East Asia, Fall 2020
- Gods, Monsters, and Sex in East Asia, Spring 2020
- Killing in the Name of God(s), Spring 2020
- Japanese History and Religion, Fall 2019

**Oberlin College**

- Seminar: Globalization and East Asian Religions, Spring 2019
- Japanese Thought and Religion, Spring 2019
- Gender and Sexuality in East Asian Religions, Spring 2019
- First Year Seminar: Life, Death, and Religion in East Asia, Fall 2018
- Chinese Thought and Religion, Fall 2018

**University of Iowa**

**Instructor**

- Religion and Social Life: Cults, New Religious Movements, and the End of the World, Spring 2016

**Teaching Assistant**

- Bible and the Holocaust, Fall 2015
- Introduction to Buddhism, Spring 2015
- Women and Islam in the Middle East, Fall 2014
- Religions in a Global Context, Spring 2014
- Religion and Liberation, Fall 2013

-----**Research Experience**-----

**Research Assistant**, University of Iowa, 2012-2013.  
Supervisor: Dr. Melissa Anne-Marie Curley

**Graduate Assistant**, University of Oklahoma, 2010-2012.  
Dr. Connie Van Fleet and Dr. Susan Burke

-----**Professional Experience**-----

**Intern**, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, OK, Summers of 2011 and 2012

**Intern**, Indian Land Tenure Foundation, Little Canada, MN, Summer 2010

-----**Professional Service**-----

**American Academy of Religion**

Steering Committee Member, Body and Religion Unit, American Academy of Religion 2020-  
Student Director, Graduate Student Committee, Upper Midwest Region, 2015-2017  
Student Representative, Upper Midwest Region, 2015-2017  
Student Advisory Committee Member, Scientific Study of Religion Group, 2015-2018

**Illinois College**

Newman Student Civic Fellowship Committee, 2020  
Curriculum Review Committee, 2020-  
Faculty Symposium Coordinator, Fall 2020  
Gender and Women's Studies Committee, 2020-  
Theta Alpha Kappa Religious Honor Society Coordinator, 2020-  
Phi Beta Kappa Committee Member, 2019-  
Luce LIASE Grant Curriculum Development Group Coordinator, 2019-2020  
Accounting Search Committee Member, 2020  
Japanese Club Advisor, 2019-  
Individual Success Advisor, seven students, Spring 2020

**University of Iowa**

Co-President, Religious Studies Graduate Student Organization, 2015-2016  
Religious Studies Senator, Graduate Student Senate, 2012-2015  
Chair, Graduate Student Success Committee, 2014-2015  
Graduate Student Senate Representative, Graduate and Professional Student Allocation  
Committee, 2014-2015  
Grant Reviewer, Executive Council of Graduate and Professional Students, 2013-2014  
Graduate Representative, Undergraduate Studies Committee, 2014  
Graduate Mentor, Academic Mentoring Committee, 2013-2014  
Mentor Program Chair, Religion Graduate Student Organization, 2014

**University of Oklahoma**

Secretary, Curriculum Committee, School of Library and Information Science, 2010-2012

President and Founder, Society of American Archivists at OU, 2011-2012

**-----Language-----**

Advanced Proficiency: Japanese

**-----Professional Affiliations-----**

American Academy of Religion

Association of Asian Studies

Society for the Study of Japanese Religion

National Women's Studies Association

American Library Association

Association of College and Research Libraries