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EDUCATION

Ph.D.	2004	Emory University, Atlanta, GA Religion / Theological Studies
M.A.	1998	Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, MN Theology and Doctrine
B.A.	1995	Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN Religion and English, with emphasis in writing

CURRENT AND PREVIOUS POSITIONS

Professor of Religion, Augustana College (assoc. 2011-2019; assist. professor 2007-11)

Tenure granted 2011. Promotion to full professor in 2019.

Professional Development Program Officer, NetVUE (the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education) (part-time through Augustana “buyout,” beginning July 2026)

I organize and convene the [annual pre-AAR NetVUE gathering](#), co-lead the [Theology/Religion/Vocation summer disciplinary seminar](#), and coordinate other disciplinary seminars.

Founding Director, Presidential Center for Faith and Learning at Augustana College (2017-December 2026)

The Center lifts up Augustana’s commitments to interfaith engagement, social justice, spiritual exploration, the reasoned examination of faith, and vocational discernment as a way of sustaining and cherishing the college’s relationship with the church.

Editor, *Intersections: Faith, Learning and the Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education* (2012-2022)

Intersections is a journal publication by and largely for the 26 academic communities within the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities (NECU); it sustains reflection on the intersection of faith, learning, and teaching within Lutheran higher education.

Advisor, Pre-Seminary Program, Augustana College (2012-present)

Mentor and advise students through seminary exploration and preparation; communicate with local churches and Lutheran and other seminaries; co-teach with our campus chaplain a pre-seminary exploration course, “Working with Faith,” each Spring.

Mellon Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow, Duke University (2004-2007)

Taught undergraduate religion and writing courses on thematic topics. Received the Duke University Award for Excellence in Teaching Writing (university-wide award; sole recipient for 2007).

Instructor of Religion, Emory University and Candler School of Theology (2002-2004)

Through the Dean’s Teaching Fellowship, instructed two undergraduate courses and one master’s level course; served as various teaching assistants and associates.

TEACHING

AUGUSTANA COLLEGE COURSES (selection from most recently and consistently taught)

HON 202:	Reason and Faith in an Age of Machines
RELG 150:	Encountering Religion
RELG 204:	Christian Theology and Contemporary Issues
RELG 207:	Jesus and Discipleship: Then and Now
RELG 217:	Religion and the Vocation of Business (Business for Humanity program)
RELG 304:	Reasoned Examination of Faith (through Augustana Prison Education Program)
RELG 360:	Creator, Creation, and Calling (J Term, Holden Village, 2022, 24, 26)
RELG 370:	Suffering, Death, and Hope
RELG 372:	Restorative Justice (through Augustana Prison Education Program)

DUKE UNIVERSITY COURSES (selection from previously taught)

REL 185:	Narrative Religious Identity (Religion Department)
WR 20:	Re-Placing Religion: On Secularism and Belief (University Writing Program)
WR 20:	Negotiating Religious Pluralism (University Writing Program)

EMORY UNIVERSITY (selection from previously taught)

REL 100:	Introduction to Religion: Buddhism and Christianity (Emory College)
REL 366:	Evil: Philosophical and Literary Perspectives (Emory College)
TS 698:	Sin and Salvation: The Practices of Constructive Theology (Candler School of Theology)

AUTHORSHIP

BOOKS

- (1) *Neighbor Love through Fearful Days: Finding Purpose and Meaning in a Time of Crisis*. Fortress Press, 2021. [author]

My most popular/non-scholarly book, *“Neighbor Love through Fearful Days* is a reflection on the Covid-19 pandemic, the accompanying economic collapse, and the pandemic of white supremacy—as well as on the calling to ‘serve thy neighbor’ and work toward the common good, even and especially in times of crisis. Mahn's real-time reflections begin with an entry dated March 17, 2020, after the college where he teaches moved online and his family began sheltering in place; they end with an entry dated August 31, 2020, when the college reopened for an unprecedented fall term. Through the intervening entries, he reflects on perennial questions about purpose, faith, and vocation as they take on a newfound urgency as cities lock down, economies reopen and close again, and our fractured country teeters on the edge of civil war. Each entry grapples with the anxieties and opportunities, the suffering and sense of being summoned, that characterize that same period.” (from blurb from Fortress Press)

- (2) *Becoming a Christian in Christendom: Radical Discipleship and the Way of the Cross in America's “Christian” Culture*. Fortress Press, 2016. [author]

The book combines Christian thought with sociological perspectives and some new ethnographic research to inquire into the problems of Christian identity in an ostensibly Christian culture. I argue that contemporary “secular” culture remains an instance of “Christendom”—indeed, is Christendom's mirror opposite—and so continues to raise problems for “becoming a Christian in Christendom.” Christian formation today entails intentional, reflective practice in what writers in the wake of Luther call a theology of the cross and what some communarians influenced by the Radical Reformation have described as post-Constantinian discipleship. The project brings together these two clusters of Christian theologians to critique acculturation and accommodation in American Christianity.

- (3) *Fortunate Fallibility: Kierkegaard and the Power of Sin*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. [author]

The book is a constructive retrieval of Kierkegaard's later religious writings (1840's-50's), specifically, of his notion that the capacity or disposition to sin provides an essential component of Christian faith, and thus can be considered “fortunate” or “happy.” *Fortunate Fallibility* uses the “*felix culpa*” motif of the 5th century Holy Saturday liturgy, of Byron and other romantics, of 19th century German Idealist philosophy, and of the Lutheran tradition in order to trace Kierkegaard's strangely positive construal of sin, temptation, and *anfechtung* in relation to

Christian faith.

- (4) *So that All May Flourish: The Aims of Lutheran Higher Education*. Fortress Press, 2023. [co-editor with Marcia Bunge and Martha Stortz; author of introduction and chapter 5: "Educating Whole Persons for Wholeness."]

The book provides a substantive and accessible introduction to the vocation, educational priorities, and theological foundations of Lutheran Higher Education (LHE) and the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities (NECU). Intended as a "primer," the book seeks to cultivate knowledge of LHE and NECU that is both appreciative, critical, and constructive. The book includes 16 chapters across three organizing sections: Core Commitments, Distinctive Strengths, and Contemporary Callings.

- (5) *Radical Lutherans/Lutheran Radicals*. Cascade Press, 2017. [editor; author of Introduction and Chapter 5]

The book includes chapters on Luther, Kierkegaard, Bonhoeffer, Soelle, and "You" (a final chapter addressing the vocation of the student/reader). Each chapter shows how the figure returns to the roots (hence "radical") of Luther's life and writing and puts them toward radical politics (critiques of cultured Christianity, resistance to dominance by State or Market, preferential option for the poor and suffering, deep commitments to peace and justice, etc.).

- (6) *The Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education* (Lutheran University Press, 2016) [editor; author of Introduction and an additional chapter]

This edited anthology collects the most influential essays published in the journal *Intersections*, from 1996 to 2016, to support reflections on the intersection of the Lutheran faith, pedagogy, vocational reflection, and the institutional identities of ELCA colleges and universities. Published by Lutheran University Press under the sponsorship of the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities.

RECENT ARTICLES, REVIEWS & BOOK CHAPTERS

- "Gifted and Re-Gifting: Civic Participation, Ecological Membership, and Vocational Reflection for the 'Real World.'" *Studies in Vocation and Calling* 1, no. 2 (2026), forthcoming October 2026.
- "The Value(s) of Lutheran Liberal Arts in a Neoliberal Age." In *Called to Reckon: Re-placing History and Reclaiming Mission at a Midwestern College*, ed. Jane Simonsen. Southern Illinois University Press, 2025
- "Learning to See the Planet as Gift." *The Christian Century*. Feb., 2025. Online version: <https://www.christiancentury.org/features/learning-see-planet-gift>
- "On Becoming a Humus Being: Looking at Birds and Rereading Kierkegaard in the Anthropocene." In *Kierkegaard and the Poetry of the Gospel: Essays on the Lily Discourses*, ed. Rick Furtak and Frances Maugan-Brown., Bloomsbury Academic, 2025.
- Review of Norman Wirzba, *Love's Braided Dance: Hope in a Time of Crisis*." *Studies in Vocation and Calling* 1, no. 1 (2026): 152–55.

- Review of *Moral Goods: Reimagining Christian Political Duty* (Baker, 2024) by Ephraim Radner. *Local Culture*, Spring 2024.
- “The Bible and the Pandemic.” *The Christian Century*, October 21, 2020. Online version: <https://www.christiancentury.org/review/books/n-t-wright-and-walter-brueggemann-look-bible-wisdom-during-pandemic>
- “At War with a Virus?” *The Christian Century*, May 6, 2020. Online version: <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/critical-essay/are-we-really-war-coronavirus>
- “The Cheap Grace of White Privilege and the Costly Grace of Repentant Antiracism.” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 43.7 (June 2020) <http://www.currentsjournal.org/index.php/currents/article/view/254/282>
- “Faith Formation in my World Religion Classroom” *The Christian Century*. Feb. 12, 2020. Online version: <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/first-person/faith-formation-my-world-religions-classroom>
- “Sin: Leaping and Sliding and Mysteries Pointing to Mysteries,” In *Companion to the Theology of Kierkegaard*, ed. David Gouwens and Aaron Edwards, T&T Clark, 2019).
- “Roots and Shoots: Tending to Lutheran Higher Education,” *Intersections*, Spring 2019. <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1459&context=intersections>
- “The Conflicts in Our Callings: The Anguish (and Joy) of Willing Multiple Things,” in *Vocation Across the Academy: A New Vocabulary for Higher Education*, ed. David Cunningham; Oxford University Press, 2017
- “Church Hidden and Revealed in John Howard Yoder and Søren Kierkegaard,” in *Kierkegaard and Political Theology*, ed. Silas Morgan and Roberto Sirvent, Pickwick Publications, 2017
- “Why Interfaith Understanding is Integral to the Lutheran Tradition,” *Intersections*, Fall 2014; revised and reprinted in *The Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education*, ed. Jason Mahn, Lutheran University Press, forthcoming 2016)

RECENT BLOG ESSAYS AND INFORMAL ESSAYS

- “Imagining Sisyphus Happy?” *Vocation Matters*, May 20, 2025 (This and the *Vocation Matters* essays below can be found at: <https://vocationmatters.org/author/jasonmahn/>)
- “Death and Taxes and a Meaningful Life,” *Vocation Matters*, April 14, 2025
- “A ‘Mission from God’ versus Kierkegaard’s ‘Infinite Why,’” *Vocation Matters*, April 3, 2025
- “‘Voxistential’ Crises and Grappling with the Dark Side of Vocation,” *Vocation Matters*, February 13, 2025.

- “Gifted! Repaying Education with Good Work and Care,” Vocation Matters, June 6, 2023
- “Slow School: The Gift of Liberal Education,” Vocation Matters, April 25, 2023
- “Lucky Hank, Gifted Students, and Vocation in a Meritocratic Culture,” Vocation Matters, March 31, 2023
- “Second Changes and Good Time(s): Transformations and Transactions in Prison,” Vocation Matters, February 28, 2023
- “Still Loving What We Cannot Save,” Living Lutheran, February 21, 2021. (Online version found here: <https://www.livinglutheran.org/voices-of-faith/still-loving-what-we-cannot-save/>)

OTHER WORK & SERVICE (at national and local/institutional level)

Fall 2026	Current Augustana service on Honors Committee and EPC; co-lead the Business for Humanity advisory board and programming; assist Dr. Kiki Kosnick in leading Cultivating Vocation@Augustana College
August, 2026	Co-Leader (With Niki Johnson) of 2026 NetVUE Summer Seminar: “Religion/Theology/Vocation” See: https://cic.edu/opportunity/2026-netvue-summer-seminar-religion-theology-vocation/
June, 2026	Invited participant in the Collegeville Institute’s writing workshop, Publishing for the Public, led by Katelyn Beaty.
2024-present	Lead author a co-implementer (with Dr. Amanda Baugous and Lindsay Adolphs) of a \$105,000 NetVUE Vocation Across the Disciplines Grant to bring career preparation of Business Administration students together with liberal learning and deep vocational reflection. Grant awarded in full 2024.
2020-2024	Co-author (with Dr. Jane Simonson) of a \$40,000 NetVUE Institutional Saga Grant to reframe and re-narrate “the Augustana Story” with attention to nineteenth-century colonial settlements, race relations at a predominantly white institution, past and present immigration, and the College’s Lutheran heritage and contemporary commitments. Grant awarded in full, 2020.
2018-2020	Lead author in a \$50,000 NetVUE Program Development Grant to infuse vocational reflection into the curriculum through “Reasoned Examination of Faith” courses and high-impact immersive learning and to integrate with co-curricular student opportunities. Grant awarded in full, 2018.
2025-present	Editorial Board, <i>Studies in Vocation and Calling</i>
2021-2026	Advisory Board, Network of Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE)
2021-present	Keynote speaker at Notre Dame (3/7-8, 24), Loras College (10/18/23), Norwich University, VT (Oct. 22-23, 2022), St. Olaf College (6/30/21), and other venues

Summer 2019	Campus host for annual Convocation of Teaching Theologians, July 29-31, 2019. Conference theme: “Unearned Privilege as Cheap Grace.”
2016-17	Member of four-person writing team charged with drafting and revising “Rooted and Open: The Common Calling of the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities” https://www.augustana.edu/files/2018-08/rooted_feb_2018.pdf
2010-present	Leadership within the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities, including serving on the planning committee of the Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education conference; participating in the working group on Lutheran Higher Education; coordinating pilot programs around teaching Lutheran social statements; etc.
2022-2025	Full faculty representative on Augustana Faculty Council
2023-24	Co-Coordinator of Augustana’s Symposium Day
2020-22	Facilitator of Racial Healing Circles under Dr. Monica Smith’s leadership, after attending the Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Symposium at Villanova University, 2019
2020	Co-Chair of hiring committee for Campus Chaplain and Director of Spiritual Life
2014-15	Co-chair of Presidential Task Force (with Richard Priggie, campus chaplain) to critically reflect on, revise, and raise visibility of Augustana’s “Five Faith Commitments” (its articulation of its church-relatedness and institutional identity) on the 10 year anniversary of the document
2012	Waitlisted/selected as alternate for a Sabbatical Grant for Researchers, Louisville Institute. Project Title: “Becoming a Christian in Christendom.”
2008-present	Frequent adult education instruction and guest preaching at local congregations and spiritual retreat venues (Spirit in the Desert, Holden Village). Topics include interfaith relations, atonement theories, white privilege as cheap grace, Radical Lutherans, redemption and restorative justice, etc. For a preaching example, and one that deals with themes related to giftedness and grace, see the 2024 “Joy of Christmas” service at Augustana Lutheran Church, Andover, IL (34:45 mark).
1999-present	Member: American Academy of Religion, Søren Kierkegaard Society of North America, Society of Lutheran and Anglican Theologians
1995-present	Member and lay leader of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (various congregations/synods). Current membership is with St. Paul Lutheran Church in Davenport, Iowa, where I frequently lead adult education sessions and currently serve on an associate pastor call committee.