

Dianna Bell, Ph.D.
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Education

Brigham Young University	Anthropology	B.A. 2003
University of Idaho	Anthropology	M.A. 2008
Florida State University	Religious Studies	Ph.D. 2013

Positions Held

2013- Present	Mellon Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and Anthropology Islamic Studies (affiliated faculty) Vanderbilt University
2009- 2013	Instructor in Religious Studies Florida State University
2012- 2013	Instructor for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Florida State University
2009- 2011	Teaching Assistant in Anthropology Florida State University
2009- 2010	Tutor in Anthropology and Religious Studies, Athletic Academic Support Florida State University
2009	Research Assistant to Prof. Joseph Hellweg, Religious Studies Florida State University
2008- 2010	Teaching Assistant in Religious Studies Florida State University
2008	Instructor in Anthropology University of Idaho
2007	Research Assistant to Prof. Fenella Cannell, Anthropology London School of Economics
2006	Research Assistant to Prof. John Mihelich, Anthropology University of Idaho

Grants and Awards

- 2015-2016 Fellow of the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities
Vanderbilt University
- 2013 Ph.D. with Distinction
Department of Religious Studies, Florida State University
- 2011 International Dissertation Semester Research Fellow
Florida State University
- 2010 Research Grant (for preliminary dissertation fieldwork in Mali)
Center for the Advancement of Human Rights, Florida State University
- 2008- 2012 Travel grants for conference travel
Florida State University
- 2007 Research Grant (for thesis fieldwork in Mali)
Student Grant Program, University of Idaho
- 2007 Travel grants for conference travel
University of Idaho
- 2002- 2003 Dean's List, Brigham Young University

Publications

- 2015 "Choosing *Medersa*: Discourses on Islamic versus Secular Education in Mali, West Africa," *Africa Today*, vol. 61, no. 3.
- In Review "May God Repay Us: The Tenet of *Baraji* among Muslim Kin in Mali, West Africa," *Religion in Africa*.
- 2015 (Forthcoming) and Joseph Hellweg, "African Religions." In *Oxford Handbook of the Anthropology of Religion*, Joel Robbins and Simon Coleman, eds.
- 2016 (Forthcoming) and Joseph Hellweg. "Religion in Africa." In *The Blackwell Companion to Religious Diversity*. Kevin Schilbrack, ed.
- 2014 "Understanding a 'Broken World': Islam, Ritual, and Climate Change in Mali, West Africa," *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture*, vol. 8 no. 3, October 1.
- 2014 Update of "Mali." In *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Religious Practices, 2nd edition*, The Gale Group and Thomas Riggs & Company.
- 2013 "Understanding Currents of Islam in Mali." Fieldsights - Hot Spots, Cultural Anthropology Online, <http://production.culanth.org/fieldsights/312-understanding-currents-of-islam-in-mali>

- 2013 Review of Harri Englund (ed.), *Christianity and Public Culture in Africa*. H-Net.
- 2011 "The Formation of the Sokoto Caliphate." *ABC-CLIO Encyclopedia of World History*, edited by Alfred J. Andrea. Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO.
- 2010 Review of Daphne Lamothe, *Inventing the New Negro: Narrative, Culture, and Ethnography*. Western Folklore.
- 2007 Review of Matthew Engelke and Matt Tomlinson (eds.), *Limits of Meaning: Case Studies in the Anthropology of Christianity*. Journal of Folklore Research.

Conference Papers

- 2015 "Muslim Merit-Making in Posthumous Sacrifices in Mali, West Africa," Society for the Anthropology of Religion, San Diego, California, April 18.
- 2014 "Soothing 'God's Fight': Ritual Action during the 1968-1974 Sahelian Famine in Mali, West Africa," African Association for the Study of Religions and International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture, Cape Town, South Africa, August 1.
- 2014 "May God Accept Us: The Tenet of *Baraji* among Muslim Kin in Mali, West Africa," Mande Studies Association Conference, Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, June 19.
- 2013 "'Everything Except God': Colonial and Post-Colonial Era Perceptions of the French Education System in Mali, West Africa," Conference of the Comparative and International Education Society, New Orleans, Louisiana, March 13.
- 2012 "Understanding a 'Broken World': Islam and Climate Change in Mali, West Africa." American Academy of Religion, Chicago, Illinois, November 20.
- 2012 "Islam and Climate Change in Mali, West Africa." Florida State University Religion Graduate Symposium, Tallahassee, Florida, February 18.
- 2010 "Creating Communitas: Understanding Muslim Participation in Christian Services in Mali, West Africa." American Academy of Religion, Atlanta, Georgia, October 30.
- 2010 "Albert B. Lord's Oral Formulaic Theory and Qur'anic Recitation." Florida State University Religion Graduate Symposium, Tallahassee, February 21.
- 2009 "Prayer, Social Order, and Communitas." Across the Threshold: Creativity, Being and Healing Conference, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, March 20.
- 2009 "Disregarding Kin and Other Complications in Converting from Islam to Christianity in Mali, West Africa." Florida State University Religion Graduate Symposium, Tallahassee, Florida, February 22.
- 2008 "Beyond Baptism: Complications in Converting to Christianity in Ouélessébougou, Mali." Northwest Anthropology Conference, Victoria B.C., April 24.

- 2007 “Examining Muslim and Christian Relations in Mali, West Africa.” Poster presented at the American Anthropological Association Conference, Washington, D.C, November 29.

Invited Talks and Other Presentations

- 2015 Panel Respondent: *Religion and Law; Islam* (joint session). Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion, Nashville, Tennessee, March 7.
- 2015 “N’Ko Literacy and Healing in Mali, West Africa.” Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health, Nashville, Tennessee, February 23.
- 2014 Panel Respondent: *Religious Response to Climate Change and Climate Challenges in Africa*. American Academy of Religion, San Diego, California, November 24.
- 2014 “Colonization, Race, and Disease: Ebola in Context.” *Ebola in Perspective: Health, Panic, and Politics*, Vanderbilt University Center for Medicine, Health, and Society, Nashville, Tennessee, November 12.
- 2014 “Religious and Political Discourse in Colonial and Post-Colonial Era *Medersa* Education in Mali, West Africa.” Religion and National Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa Workshop, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, April 11.
- 2013 “Islam, *Baraji*, and the Life Cycle in Mali, West Africa.” Invited Lecture for the Department of Anthropology, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, October 30.
- 2013 “The Bamanankan Language in the Twenty-First Century.” Invited Public Lecture for the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics, Florida State University, Tallahassee, April 9.
- 2013 “May God Repay Us: Islam and *Baraji* in West Africa.” Florida State University Center for the Humanities and Society Series on Culture, Politics, and Society in Contemporary Africa, Tallahassee, January 31.
- 2010 “Employing Ethnography in Religious Studies.” Florida State University Dialogues Conference, Tallahassee, Florida March 22.

Panels Organized

- 2015 *The Morality of Mortality: Perspectives on Death in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Society for the Anthropology of Religion, San Diego, California, April 16-19.

University Courses Taught

Religion in Africa
 Islamic Traditions
 Anthropology and Religion
 Introduction to Anthropology (four-field)
 Encountering Religious Diversity

Islam in Africa
Ecology, Religion, and Power in Africa

Service

- 2015 Event co-convener (with Moses Ochonu)
Nelson Mandela Memorial Lecture, Vanderbilt University
- 2014- Steering Committee
Present Society for the Anthropology of Religion
- 2014- Assistant Editor
Present *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture*
- 2013- 2014 Workshop co-convener (with Moses Ochonu)
“Religion and National Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa,” Vanderbilt University
- 2012- Secretary-Treasurer
Present Mande Studies Association (MANSA)
- 2012- Steering Committee
Present The African Association for the Study of Religions, American Academy of Religion
- 2010- 2011 Grievance Committee
Graduate Students United, Florida State University
- 2010- 2011 Union Steward for Religion Department
Graduate Students United, Florida State University
- 2009 Tutor for K-12 foster children
Children’s Home Society of Florida
- 2007 Senate Speaker
University of Idaho Graduate and Professional Student Association
- 2007 Graduate Student Representative
University of Idaho Student Fees Committee
- 2006 Bylaws and Constitution Committee
University of Idaho Graduate and Professional Student Association
- 2002 Museum Volunteer
BYU Museum of Peoples and Cultures, Brigham Young University

Languages

Bambara: Fluent proficiency in reading/writing (Latin script; beginner, N’ko script)/speaking
French: Advanced proficiency in reading/writing; intermediate proficiency in speaking
Fulfulde: Elementary proficiency in reading/writing/speaking
German: Elementary proficiency in reading/writing/speaking

References

Tony K. Stewart, Chair, Department of Religious Studies, Vanderbilt University
tony.k.steward@vanderbilt.edu

Moses Ochonu, Associate Professor of African History, Vanderbilt University
moses.ochonu@vanderbilt.edu

Rosalind Hackett, Chair, Department of Religious Studies, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
rhackett@utk.edu

Joseph Hellweg, Associate Professor of Religion, Florida State University
jhellweg@fsu.edu

Professional Memberships

African Association for the Study of Religion (AASR)

American Anthropological Association (AAA)

American Academy of Religion (AAR)

African Studies Association (ASA)

Association for Africanist Anthropology (AfAA)

International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture (ISSRNC)

Mande Studies Association (MANSA)

Society for the Anthropology of Religion (SAR)