

Alexandra Kirby Sokolow
Curriculum Vitae
Doctoral Candidate

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EDUCATION

Ph.D.	Religious Studies University of Pennsylvania	2025 (expected)
	In progress dissertation: “Buddhism Behind Bars: Transforming Race, Religion, and Power” Advisor: Dr. Jolyon Thomas	
M.A. (incidental)	Religious Studies University of Pennsylvania	2023
M.A. (terminal)	Religious Studies New York University	2018
	Thesis: “Materializing Postmemory: A Study of Embodiment in Second- and Third-Generation Holocaust Documentaries” Advisor: Dr. Angela Zito	
B.A.	Religion (with honors) Wesleyan University	2014
	Thesis: “Cyberspirituality: Constructing Religion Through the Internet” Advisor: Dr. Justine Buck Quijada	

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS

Boardman Fellowship , University of Pennsylvania	2024–2025
Dissertation Research Award , SAS, University of Pennsylvania	2024–2025
President Gutmann Leadership Award , University of Pennsylvania	2023
SAS Dean's Travel Subvention , University of Pennsylvania	2023
SASgov Research Grant , University of Pennsylvania	2023
Wolf Humanities Center Doctoral Fellow , University of Pennsylvania	2023–2024
Dissertation Research Award , SAS, University of Pennsylvania	2023–2024
Israel Goldstein Prize , Religious Studies, University of Pennsylvania	2022
Meltzer Graduate Fellowship , University of Pennsylvania	2021–2022
Sidney H. Ellis Graduate Fellowship , University of Pennsylvania	2020–2021
SAS Dean's Travel Subvention , University of Pennsylvania	2020
GAPSA Research Council Travel Grant , University of Pennsylvania	2020
Benjamin Franklin Fellowship , University of Pennsylvania	2019–2024
Departmental Fellowship , Religious Studies, New York University	2016–2018

PRESENTATIONS

- “Meditation as Affective Freedom: Emotion and Power Behind Bars,” International Association of Buddhist Studies XXth Conference, August 2025 (paper accepted).
- “Between Interest, Guilt, and Pleasure: Reading in and out of Academic Time,” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2024 (paper accepted).
- “Buddhist Exceptionalism Behind Bars: Transforming Religion, Race, and Power,” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2023.
- “Feeling Diagnosis: Uncertainty and Pleasure in the Medical Model of Disability,” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2023.
- “Transforming the Incarcerated Self: Buddhist Modernism in American Prisons,” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, December 2020 (online conference).
- “Accessibility in the Online Classroom and Beyond, co-presenter, University of Pennsylvania Department of Religious Studies Colloquium, September 2020 (online presentation).
- “Materializing Postmemory: A Study of Embodiment in Second- and Third-Generation Holocaust Documentaries,” Concordia University Annual Graduate Interdisciplinary Conference, Montréal, QC, Canada, February 2020.
- “Materializing Postmemory: A Study of Embodiment in Second- and Third-Generation Holocaust Documentaries,” Queen’s University Context & Meaning graduate research conference, Kingston, ON Canada, January 2020.
- “Materializing Postmemory: A Study of Embodiment in Second- and Third-Generation Holocaust Documentaries,” Boston University Graduate Conference on Religion and Technology, Boston, MA, September 2018.

PUBLICATIONS

Book Reviews

McDaniel, Justin and Sokolow, Kirby. “KARMA AND PUNISHMENT: Prison Chaplaincy in Japan by Adam J. Lyons.” *Pacific Affairs* 95, no. 4 (December 2022): 855–857. <https://pacificaffairs.ubc.ca/book-reviews/karma-and-punishment-prison-chaplaincy-in-japan-by-adam-j-lyons/>.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, University of Pennsylvania

Teaching Assistant to Professor Justin McDaniel
Course: “Introduction to Buddhism”

Fall 2023

Responsibilities: Leading two, one-hour recitation classes each week. Grading assignments and providing detailed feedback to students. Meeting one-on-one with students to discuss class material and assignments.

Teaching Assistant to Professor Anthea Butler Spring 2023
Course: "Religion from Civil Rights to Black Lives Matter"
Responsibilities: Graded essays and provided detailed, individual feedback to students. Led one class on the topic of "Christian Views on Segregation."

Teaching Assistant to Professor Steven Weitzman Spring 2021
Course: "Jews, Race, and Religion" (online format)
Responsibilities: Graded writing assignments and provided detailed, individual feedback to students. Met with students to discuss class material and academic paper-writing.

Teaching Assistant to Professor Jolyon Thomas Fall 2020
Course: "The Religion of Anime" (online format)
Responsibilities: Taught two, one-hour recitation classes each week. Graded writing assignments and provided detailed, individual feedback to students. Met one-on-one with students to discuss class material and academic paper-writing.

Guest Lectures, University of Pennsylvania

"Buddhism, Sex, and Desire" Fall 2023
Course: "Gender, Sexuality, and Religion," taught by Jeremy Steinberg.

"Buddhism, Celibacy, and Sex Work" Fall 2023
Course: "Gender, Sexuality, and Religion," taught by Jeremy Steinberg.

SERVICE

University of Pennsylvania

Asian Pacific American Religions Research Initiative, Mid-Atlantic Regional Meet-Up Co-Organizer Spring 2024

Wolf Humanities Center Symposium on Revolution Co-Organizer Spring 2024

Research Assistant to Dr. Jolyon Thomas Fall 2022

SASgov Student Government Representative for Religious Studies 2021–2022

Community

Prison Health News January 2023–Present
Writer, co-editor, and fact-checker articles for the quarterly newsletter, which is distributed in prisons across the U.S. Corresponded with incarcerated and non-incarcerated Advisory Board members. Wrote grant applications.
<https://prisonhealth.news/>

LANGUAGES

English: Native language

French: Professional reading proficiency, moderate writing and speaking proficiency

Spanish: Professional reading proficiency

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Academy of Religion