

J. MICHELLE MOLINA

Northwestern University,
Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Religion, Crowe Hall
1860 Campus Drive, 4-136 Evanston, IL 60208-2164
molina@northwestern.edu
847-491-2620

EDUCATION

PhD, History, University of Chicago (December 2004)
BA, History, University of California at Berkeley (December 1991)

RESEARCH

History of Mexico; History of Religions; Transregional Religions; Society of Jesus,
Colonialism; Subjectivity; Embodiment and Materiality

POSITIONS

Associate Professor in Catholic Studies, Department of Religious Studies,
Northwestern University. July 1, 2008 - present.

Director, Latin American & Caribbean Studies. Northwestern University, July 1,
2013 - July 2015.

Assistant Professor, Trans-Regional Religion, Department of History, University of
California, Irvine. July 1, 2004 – June 2008.

Instructor, "Colonial Mexico," University of Illinois at Chicago (Summer Session,
1999): Created and taught introductory course on colonial Mexico (1492-1821).

Preceptor, Masters' Program in Social Science, University of Chicago -- MAPSS
(1997-99): Taught a social science theory course called "Perspectives in the Social
Sciences" directed student MA Theses in conjunction with faculty advisor and
served as academic advisor.

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS AND HONORS

Faculty Fellow, Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities. 2021-2022.

Northwestern Alumnae Course Enhancement Award, "Religion Moves People: A Digital Humanities Project." 2021.

Northwestern Open Educational Resources Award, "Religion Moves People: A Digital Humanities Textbook." 2021-22.

Provost's Faculty Research Grant. Northwestern University. Summer 2019.

Visiting Research Faculty, École Normale Supérieure Lettres et Sciences Humaines-Lyon, France. May 2013.

Women's Studies in Religion Fellowship. Visiting Faculty and Research Associate in Women's Studies and the History of Christianity at Harvard Divinity School (Academic year 2007-08)

Fellow at Atlantic History Seminar, Harvard University. July 31-Aug 10th, 2006. Theme: "The Transit of Christianity."

PUBLICATIONS

Articles & Essays

"Colonial Sovereignty and the Intermittent Order of Silver Things." *Religion* 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0048721X.2024.2444128>

"Inventories of Jesuit Silver Altarware Classifying the Shape-Shifting Substance of Colonial Theopolitics." *Textual Cultures* 17.2 (2024): 137–156.

"How to Be a Country Jesuit: Contenance, Care and Containment in a Racializing Religiosity." In *Jesuits and Race*, edited by Nathaniel Millet and Charles Parker: University of New Mexico Press,

2022. Peer Reviewed.

"God in All Things? The Sacramental Logics of Jesuit Material Remains."
Social Analysis 64:4 (Winter 2020a). Peer Reviewed.

"Consolation without Previous Cause? Consolation, Controversy, and
Devotional Agency." *The Challenge of God: Continental Philosophy
and the Catholic Intellectual Tradition*. (Oxford: T&T Clark, 2020b). Peer
Reviewed.

"Fluid Indigeneity: Indians, Catholicism, and Spanish Law in the Mutable
Americas." [The Immanent Frame](#) (2017a).

"Making a Home in an Unfortunate Place: Phenomenology and Religion,"
The Anthropology of Catholicism eds. K. Norget, V. Napolitano, and,
M. Mayblin. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017b). Peer
Reviewed.

"Father of My Soul: Reason and Affect in a Shipboard Conversion
Narrative," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 2:4 (December 2015). Peer Reviewed.

"Missionary Orders and Communities," *Princeton Companion to Atlantic History*,
ed. Joseph C. Miller, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

Respondent, "Off the Cuff: The Vatican Spring?" *Immanent Frame*, May 2013.

"[Francis the Jesuit: A Philosopher Pope?](#)" *Religious Dispatches*, April 18, 2013.

"[Pope Francis: A Jesuit Self in the World](#)," *The Washington Post*, April 2, 2013.

"An Ambivalent Philosophy of the Concrete," in *Rethinking the Human*, eds. J.
Michelle Molina and Donald Swearer, (Harvard University Press, 2010) Peer
Reviewed

"The Global Currency of Female Sanctity: A Seventeenth-Century Mexican
Mystic and her Jesuit Biographers from the Spanish and German Empires,"
(Co-authored with Ulrike Strasser), *Women and Religion in the Atlantic*

World, 1600-1850 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009). Peer Reviewed

“Technologies of the Self: The Letters of Eighteenth-Century Mexican Jesuit Spiritual Daughters.” *History of Religions* 47:4 (May 2008). Peer Reviewed

“True Lies: Athanasius Kircher’s *China Illustrata* and the Life Story of a Mexican Mystic,” *Athanasius Kircher: The Last Man Who Knew Everything*, ed. Paula Findlen, (New York: Routledge, 2004). Peer Reviewed

“Spirituality and Colonial Governmentality: The Jesuit *Spiritual Exercises* in Europe and Abroad,” *Postcolonial Moves: Medieval through Modern*, eds. Patricia Ingham and Michelle Warren (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). Peer Reviewed

Edited Books

Rethinking the Human, (Harvard University Press, 2010), co-edited with Donald Swearer

Books

‘To Overcome Oneself’: The Jesuit Ethic and Spirit of Global Expansion, 1542-1767 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

Works in Progress

Book-length monograph: “Inventories of Ruin: The Demise of the Mexican Jesuits, in Three Acts.” *Sending to publishers Dec 2023*

INVITED PAPERS AND PUBLIC LECTURES

Newberry Library, Workshop Leader, with Lia Markey and Jessica Keating: Captured Objects: Studying Premodern Inventories. May 6, 2022.

University of Texas at Austin. “Shape-shifters: Sacramental silver and the body of Christ.” Luce-UT Austin Conference on Material Religions in the Americas. October 9, 2022.

Notre Dame University. “Silver and the Sacramental Logic of Colonial Power in New

Spain.” Kellogg Working Group on Latin American Studies. October 4, 2022.

University of California, Berkeley. “Inventories of Ruin.” Renaissance and Early Modern Mediterranean workshop. September 9, 2022.

University of California, San Diego. “Counting the Dead: Felix de Sebastián’s *Memorias* and the Demise of the Mexican Jesuits (1767-1796). Encounter, Religion and Early Modern European Global Expansion. February 4, 2022.

University of Illinois, Chicago. “Jesuits (and a Protestant) at Sea: An Intimate Encounter Between Early Modern Global Catholicism and the Late 18th Century.” Catholic Studies Program UIC. February 22, 2017.

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Center for the Humanities: “Confessional Encounters in the Late Eighteenth Century.” Global Reformations: Religion and the Making of the Modern World. May 2016.

Loyola University, Chicago. Response to plenary speaker for “The Challenge of God: Continental Philosophy and the Catholic Intellectual Heritage.” April 14-16, 2016.

University of Minnesota, Keynote Lecture for “Early Modern Missionaries” conference. “I Love the Jesuits’: Reason and Affect in an Eighteenth-Century Shipboard Conversion Narrative.” May 28, 2015.

University of Indiana, Bloomington. “I Love the Jesuits’: Reason and Affect in an 18th Century Conversion Narrative.” December 5th, 2014.

University of Toronto, Workshop: “Critical Catholic Studies: Exploring New Horizons.” September 27, 2012.

University of Toronto. “Philosophy in the Mission Field: Evangelization and Consolation in 17th Century New Spain.” Latin American Studies Workshp. September 27, 2012.

Holy Cross College, “The Gender of Obedience: Jesuit Spiritual Consolation in the

16th and 17th Centuries.” April 17, 2012. Jesuit Heritage 2011-2012: Jesuits and Colleagues at Work.

University of Wisconsin, Madison. “Academic Spiritual Exercises: Philosophy in Action” Mellon Workshop: *Lived Inquiry: Anthropologies of the Intellect* November 10, 2011.

University of Wisconsin, Madison. “Jesuit Heart and Science.” Lecture in conjunction with Jesuit Knowledge: Science and Print Culture. November 11, 2011.

University of Chicago, Mexican Studies Lecture Series. “Circulations: Heart and Science in the Catholic Atlantic World.” February 12, 2010.

XII Jornadas Internacionales sobre las Misiones Jesuíticas, Buenos Aires, Argentina. “Un mundo con forma de corazón.” September 24-26, 2008.

Freiburg University, Freiburg, Germany. “Conversion to Self.” June 25-29, 2008.

Boston College, Center for Women’s Studies. “A Heart-Shaped World.” March 11, 2008.

Harvard University Divinity School. “A Heart-Shaped World: Jesuit Consolation Culture in a Globalizing World, 1500-1800.” February 7, 2008.

“Désirs de fondations et expériences de mobilité: La construction des espaces jésuites à l’époque moderne.” October 19-20, 2007. Maison Française d’Oxford, Oxford, England. Paper Title: “Technologies of the Self in the Letters of Jesuit Spiritual Daughters.”

PRESENTATIONS AT PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS & CONFERENCES

“Sacramental Logics of Jesuit Material Remains.” American Historical Association Meeting, New York. January 2020.

American Academy of Religion, San Diego. “Penitential Practices, Silver Altarware, and Sacramental Logics.” November 2019.

“Holding Objects in Mind.” Comment on Panel: Translating Science: Disciplines, Objects, Process. American Historical Association Meeting, New York, NY, January 3, 2015.

“Meditative Action and Early Modern Catholic Globalization . . . according to Spinoza.” World History Association Meeting, San Juan, Costa Rica, July 2014.

“Pocket-Sized Solace: Jesuit Spiritual Consolation Designed for the Road.” Panel: Jesuits at Counselors, I. Renaissance Society of America, New York, March 27th, 2014.

“Varieties of Historical Experience: Some Mediations on Prayer as Embodied Action,” Mexican Studies Committee: Religion and Mexican Historiography, American Historical Association Meeting, Washington, D.C., January 3, 2014.

“Negotiating Your Employment Contract,” Panel organized for Committee on Women Historians for the American Historical Association Meeting, Washington, D.C., January 3, 2014.

“Jesuit Spiritualities in Global Perspective: A Heart-Shaped World.” American Historical Association, Annual Meeting, January 2012. Chicago, Illinois.

“Vibrant Materiality, Vibrant Spirituality: A Comment on Faith, Words, and Tears: Tangible Products of Jesuit Missions.” American Historical Association, Pacific Coast Meeting. August 11-13, 2011. Seattle, Washington.

“Self and World: A Comment on Christianity and Colonialism.” American Historical Association, January 2011. Boston, Massachusetts.

“Intimacies of Empire.” World History Association, June 26, 2010. San Diego, California.

“Circulations: Heart and Science in the Catholic Atlantic World.” History of Science Society, November 19 – 22, 2009. Phoenix, Arizona. Paper:

“Consolation and Self-Formation in Seventeenth-Century Europe and New Spain.” Atlantic History Seminar, July 31 – Aug 10th, 2006. Harvard University.

“Spiritual Selves: Mexican Women’s Self-Discovery in the Late-Colonial Period.”
European Social Science History Conference, March 22-25, 2006.
Amsterdam, Netherlands.

“Practices of the Self: ‘Christian,’ ‘Modern,’ ‘Alternative.’” Religions: History, Theory,
Practice, March 18th, 2006. University of California, Irvine.

“Jesuit Spiritual Daughters in Eighteenth-century Europe and Mexico.” Women’s
Stories Conference, March 4-5, 2005. Sarah Lawrence College.

“Consoling Souls, Improving Habits: Jesuit Spirituality and Social Reform in Colonial
Mexico.” Empires and Cultures, May 24, 2003. Stanford University.

“True Lies: Athanasius Kircher’s *China Illustrata* and the Life Story of a Mexican
Mystic.” Baroque Imaginary: The World of Athanasius Kircher, April 27-
28, 2001. Stanford University.

“Spirituality and Colonial Governmentality: The Jesuit *Spiritual Exercises* in New
Spain.” Postcolonial Moves: Postcolonial Studies and the Early Modern and
Medieval Worlds, February 24-26, 2000. Miami University.

"A Woman and the World: A Jesuit Network of Information." Europe and Empire:
Encounters, Transformations, Legacies, October 16th-18th, 1998. The Minda
de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Harvard University.

"A Woman and the World: Colonial Governmentality and the Modernity of Imperial
Spain. Comparative Colonialisms: Preindustrial Colonial Intersections in
Global Perspective, October 31st, 1997. Binghamton, New York.

DEPARTMENTAL AND UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE SERVICE

Faculty Chair, Public Affairs Residential College, Fall 2022-ongoing

Faculty Associate Chair, Public Affairs Residential College, 2019-2022.

Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Religious Studies, 2017-2020

Director, Latin American & Caribbean Studies, 2013-2016

COMMITTEE SERVICE FOR PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Co-Chair, Catholic Studies Steering Committee, American Academy of Religion, 2020-present.

Associate Editor for *Church History*, 2016-present.

Advisory board member and participant (lecturer) for the Northwestern Pritzker-Pucker Studio Lab on approaches to mental illness and health on the screen (2020-2023).

Advisory member, Kaplan Institute Humanities Council, 2017-2018.

Committee on Women Historians, American Historical Association, 2012-2015

Roman Catholic Steering Committee, American Academy of Religion, 2011-2014