



SACRED WRITES
PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP ON RELIGION

PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP CATALYST GRANT RECIPIENTS SELECTED

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sacred Writes Public Scholarship on Religion is delighted to announce the winners of our inaugural **Public Scholarship Catalyst Grant**, generously funded by the Henry R. Luce Foundation. This program is designed to foster meaningful collaborations between scholars and community organizations centering race, justice, and religion, to benefit the public. Our review committee selected three collaborative projects out of a competitive pool, each will receive \$19,000 for work completed in the next 18 months.

The Black Church Food Justice Movement is a collaboration between Dr. Nina Brown, Professor of Anthropology at the [Community College of Baltimore County](#) and the [Black Church Food Security Network](#) (BCFSN), led by [Rev. Dr. Heber Brown III](#), which addresses the systemic problem of racially unequal access to healthy food by sourcing produce from Black-owned farms and using Black churches as food distribution hubs. Dr. Brown will work with a team of scholars and students to conduct oral history interviews with Black elders in Baltimore who are keepers of Black agricultural heritage; create digital story maps documenting the history of several of the farms affiliated with the networks, the people who have lived and worked on them, and the history of dispossession. The oral histories and story maps will be then incorporated into a digital exhibition with an interactive component inviting community contributions, and launched in a daylong conference bringing together religious and secular food justice activists and scholars in Baltimore in November 2025.

Archiving Care: Trans and Queer Spiritual Activism with Saint Sylvia Rivera is a collaboration between Sam Davis, community archivist and PhD Candidate, Florida State University, with the Metropolitan Community Church of New York (MCCNY), to honor Sylvia Rivera-Murray, a Puerto Rican trans woman, Stonewall veteran and gay liberation activist whose legacy continues today in Sylvia's Place and the Sylvia Rivera Memorial Food Pantry, which shelter, support, and feed homeless and cash-poor Black and Latinx trans and queer youth community in Hell's Kitchen. The project will include: a two-day memorial vigil in the MCCNY sanctuary during Pride Month 2024; the preservation of the "Saint Sylvia Collection" of video, audio, and personal belongings; and recording of oral histories with organizers who worked with Saint Sylvia. These community activities are designed to bring public awareness and material support for these crucial services as they battle state and city budget cuts to homelessness services; increased policing of homeless people, and an upsurge in trans and queerphobia.

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Sacred Dances, Sacred Resistance: Struggles Toward the Respect of Nahua Religious Practices in San Miguel Tzinacapan, Puebla, Mexico, a collaboration between Sitalin Sánchez, MTS candidate at Harvard Divinity School and Maseual ceremonial dancer, and The Takachualis Commission, a human organization protecting the town's indigenous community. The visibility of their fifteen ceremonial dance groups as symbols of Mexican indigeneity has brought conflict with the local Catholic hierarchy, which views their worship as unorthodox; tourism, which photographs and records performances without consent; and the media, which seeks to profit from this objectification. The project will work to strengthen the community's ability to protect themselves by recording and preserving local histories of acts of resistance since 1980; leading a three-day community meeting for town elders to collaboratively develop a set of ethical guidelines; and incorporating these stories and guidelines into a two-week workshop for the children of the community..Their stories and artwork will be included in a public exhibit.

Sacred Writes: Public Scholarship on Religion is a project hosted by Northeastern University that provides training, resources, and networks to scholars of religion committed to translating their work beyond the academy. Since 2019 we have trained more than 100 scholars who have produced more than 450 pieces of public scholarship on religion. For more information or to hire us, visit sacred-writes.org or contact Director Liz Bucar e.bucar@northeastern.edu.