

public scholarship  
on religion

# SACRED WRITES

a Henry Luce Foundation-funded project  
hosted by Northeastern University

A person sitting on a stool, holding a large newspaper that is on fire. The person is wearing a dark jacket and pants. The newspaper is held open, and the top edge is engulfed in bright orange and yellow flames. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

# PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP SYLLABUS





## WHAT IS PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP?

Public scholarship is a challenge: communicating complex ideas quickly and clearly without sacrificing nuance. Public scholars who do this work well make it look easy, but it takes a lot of skill, a lot of practice, and a lot of patience. **Sacred Writes** teaches academics to hone their public communication skills, especially when addressing complicated issues like religion. Our trainings help you make the most of those 700 words in your local newspaper, the three minutes you get with a policy maker, the 30 second sound bite on a television interview, or that 20 minute podcast appearance -- preparing you to be as clear and as effective as you can.

## WHY PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP?

Because smart, accessible work on religion creates a more literate, curious, and engaged public, one that better understands how religion shapes the world around them (even if they're not religious themselves). Because public scholarship can promote equity and justice. Because it can expand your audience and impact. Because it can connect you with new conversation partners. Because religion *matters*, and sharing your work with the public can help more people understand why.

getting started



risks, rewards,  
& responsibilities



what's next?



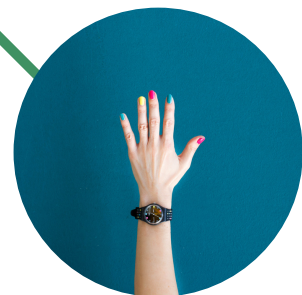
rethinking



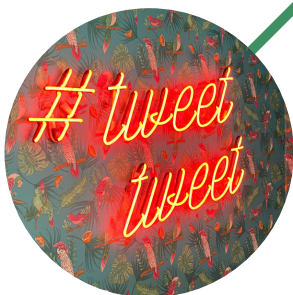
audio/video



expertise



work



communicating  
with the public



social media

op-eds and explainers



# WHY GO PUBLIC?

*How, where, and why scholars make their work more accessible*

## From Sacred Writes

- Goodwin and Bucar, "[Public Scholarship as a Feminist Project](#)," *Women in Higher Education* (4 October 2021)
- Goodwin and Bucar, "[Training Scholars from a Social Distance](#)," *National Teaching & Learning Forum* 31.1 (December 2021)
- Goodwin, "[Challenges and Responsibilities for the Public Scholar of Religion](#)," *Religious Studies Project* (25 March 2019)



## Further Reading

- Bond, "[Vox Populi](#)," *Forbes* (31 January 2018)
- Goodwin, Morgenstein Fuerst, and Singh, "[Public Scholarship and Representation](#)," *Keeping It 101: A Killjoy's Introduction to Religion Podcast* (27 January 2021)
- McGregor, "[Podcasting, Public Scholarship, and Accountability](#)," *Secret Feminist Agenda* (23 November 2017)
- Pryal, "[Ten Questions Every Academic Should Ask before Writing for the Public](#)," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (1 December 2019)

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# REWARDS, RISKS, & RESPONSIBILITIES

*What's at stake in sharing your work with the public*

## From Sacred Writes

- Junior, "[Saying All Black Lives Matter Matters](#)," *DAME* (22 June 2020)
- Rodríguez V, "[Comida de Pobre](#)," *HTI Open Plaza* (20 March 2020)
- Singh, Sundaram et al, "[Hindutva's Threat to Academic Freedom](#)," *Religion News Service* (7 July 2021)



## Further Reading

- Cottom, "[Everything but the Burden](#)," *Some of Us Are Brave* (12 May 2015)
- Truschke, "[Hate Male](#)," *The Revealer* (14 June 2020)

# RETHINKING EXPERTISE

*You don't have to know everything to say something*

## From Sacred Writes

- Aghapour, Goodwin, and Morgenstein Fuerst, "[Night at the Museum](#)," *Keeping It 101: A Killjoy's Introduction to Religion Podcast* (11 May 2022)
- Epstein-Levi, "[How Ancient Rabbis Can Help Combat STI Stigma](#)," *Religion Dispatches* (26 August 2019)
- Petersen, "[How 9/11 Helped China Wage Its Own False War on Terror](#)," *Al Jazeera* (8 September 2021)



## Further Reading

- Cottom, "[Your Success Probably Didn't Come from Merit Alone](#)," *New York Times* (13 April 2021)
- Pryal, "[You Want to Write for the Public, but about What?](#)" *Chronicle of Higher Education* (10 January 2020)

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# COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC

*Getting your message across*

## From Sacred Writes

- Baker, "[Writing for a Public Audience](#)," *Cold Takes* (31 July 2019)
- Baker, "[How to Craft a Pitch](#)," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (7 June 2017)
- Goodwin, "[The University of Vermont Might Be Done with Religion, but Religion Is Not Done with Us](#)," *Religion Dispatches* (7 December 2020)



## Further Reading

- Herrera, "[How to Successfully Pitch the New York Times](#)," Neiman Lab (22 October 2018)



# OP-EDS AND EXPLAINERS

*Inform, persuade, analyze, and re-frame the conversation*

## **From Sacred Writes**

- Bucar, "[Dear Nancy Pelosi and the Democrats: A Hijab is Not a Hat](#)," *Religion News Service* (3 January 2019)
- Clites, "[The Problem with Spotlights](#)," *The Revealer* (2 March 2020)
- Gomez, "[Postapocalyptic Communities](#)," *The Revealer* (9 March 2021)
- Goodwin, "[Abuse Happens Because We Let It](#)," *Sojourners* (7 July 2020)
- Jalalzai, "[Please Stop Using Islam to Critique the Abortion Ban](#)," *Religion Dispatches* (3 September 2021)
- Pratt, "[Following Attempted Coup, Biden Administration Must Prioritize Anti-Racism Work](#)," *National Catholic Reporter* (8 January 2021)
- Ugoretz, "[The Untidiness of Marie Kondo's Eclectic Spirituality](#)," *Religion News Service* (3 August 2021)



# SOCIAL MEDIA

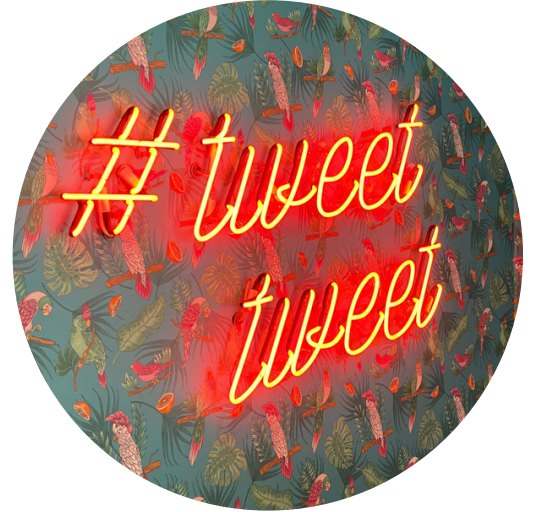
*Making the most of your network*

## From Sacred Writes

- Hill and Rodríguez, "[Dreams and Hauntings](#)," *Sound of the Genuine* (29 April 2022)

## Further Reading

- Demby, "[If and When to Share Videos of Violence](#)," *NPR* (12 May 2020)
- Inskip, "[A Finder's Guide to Facts](#)," *NPR* (11 December 2016)
- Jackson, "[We Need to Talk about Digital Blackface](#)," *Teen Vogue* (2 August 2017)
- Ketchum, "[Report on the State of Resources Provided to Support Scholars against Harassment, Trolling, and Doxxing While Doing Public Media Work](#)," *Medium* (14 July 2020)
- Kozinski and Kapur, "[Social Media Security & Privacy Checklists](#)," *New York Times Open Team* (27 February 2020)
- Williams, "[Forget Platform — Build a Bridge](#)," *Brevity* (26 May 2020)



# AUDIO & VIDEO WORK

*What to expect when you're expecting an interview*

## From Sacred Writes

- Britton with Goodwin and Morgenstein Fuerst, "[African Diasporic Religions](#)," *Keeping It 101* (29 September 2021)
- Elfenbein, "[Combatting Islamophobia in the US](#)," *The Revealer Podcast* (1 December 2021)
- Gerber, "[The Pink and Purple Church in the Castro](#)," *American Religious Sounds Project* (June 2021)
- Mansour, "[Catholic Libraries, Muslim Books](#)," *Classical Ideas* (20 November 2021)
- Scharnik-Udemans, "[Religious Pluralism in South Africa](#)," *Classical Ideas* (13 November 2021)

## Further Listening

- McGregor, "[Living a Feminist Life with Sara Ahmed](#)," *Secret Feminist Agenda* (3 May 2019)





# WHAT'S NEXT IS UP TO YOU



PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP SYLLABUS

CURATED BY DR. MEGAN GOODWIN



**SACRED WRITES**

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