

## APRIL D. HUGHES

Department of Religion, Boston University  
145 Bay State Road, Boston MA 02215  
[adhughes@bu.edu](mailto:adhughes@bu.edu)

### EDUCATION

**Princeton University**, Ph.D. Department of Religion, 2008 – 2014.

**University of California, Berkeley**, M.A. Asian Studies, 2006 – 2008.

**University of California, Los Angeles**, M.A. East Asian Studies, 2001 – 2004.

**California State University, Northridge**, B.A. Religious Studies, 1997 – 2000.

### ACADEMIC POSITIONS

**Associate Professor, Boston University**, Department of Religion, 2022 – present.

**Assistant Professor, Boston University**, Department of Religion, 2016 – 2022.

**East Asia Career Development Professorship**, 2018 – 2021.

Courses taught: “Religions of Asia,” “Chinese Religion,” “Gender, Sexuality, and Buddhism,” “Sex, Death, and the Buddha,” “Art, Media, and Buddhism,” “Professional Development Seminar for Doctoral Students in Religion,” and Core Curriculum’s “The Way: Antiquity and the Medieval World.”

**Assistant Professor, Gonzaga University**, Department of Religious Studies, 2014 – 2016.

Courses taught: “Religions of China,” “Buddhism and Gender,” and “Visions of the Buddha: From Ancient India to Modern America [Buddhist Visual Culture].”

### PUBLICATIONS – MONOGRAPH

*Worldly Saviors and Imperial Authority in Medieval Chinese Buddhism*. University of Hawai'i Press (May 2021). [Interviewed by Natasha Heller (UVA) for New Books in Buddhist Studies podcast: [https://newbooksnetwork.com/worldly-saviors-and-imperial-authority-in-medieval-chinese-buddhism?fbclid=IwAR1peISiHkgw9FIrL1q\\_rt8mvRjGCmc2MuyzhBT0QRAbDpi8otMTOO2Mkkm](https://newbooksnetwork.com/worldly-saviors-and-imperial-authority-in-medieval-chinese-buddhism?fbclid=IwAR1peISiHkgw9FIrL1q_rt8mvRjGCmc2MuyzhBT0QRAbDpi8otMTOO2Mkkm)].

### PUBLICATIONS – ARTICLES

“Text, Materiality, and Practice: Evidence from the Dunhuang Buddhist Manuscripts of *Cause and Effects*.” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 143.2 (2023).

“Envisioning Paradise: The Terrestrial Utopia of Maitreya Buddha in the Medieval Murals at Dunhuang.” *Archives of Asian Art*, 71.2 (October 2021): 171-190.

“Re-examining the *Zhengming jing*: The Social and Political Life of an Apocryphal Maitreya Scripture.” *Journal of Chinese Religions*, 45.1 (May 2017): 1-18.

## **BOOK REVIEW**

“Review of *Agents of World Renewal: The Rise of Yonaoshi Gods in Japan*, by Takashi Miura,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 47.2 (2020): 365-368.

## **LANGUAGES**

Classical Chinese, Modern Chinese, Japanese, French

## **HONORS AND RECOGNITIONS**

Publication Subvention for *Worldly Saviors and Imperial Authority in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* monograph. Boston University Center for the Humanities. 2020.

Individual Research Grant Award for “Proscribing Practice: Local Rituals and Buddhist Practice in Medieval Dunhuang,” American Academy of Religion. 2019.

Junior Faculty Fellowship (one semester research leave), Boston University Center for the Humanities. Spring 2019.

Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship. 2013 – 2014.

Graduate Fellow, Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies. 2013 – 2014.

Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies (CHIBS) Fellowship for Graduate Students. 2013.

Teaching Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, Princeton University Department of Religion. 2012.

Graduate Fellow, Princeton University Center for the Study of Religion. 2011 – 2012.

Visiting Research Associate, Dunhuang Academy, Gansu Province, China. January – June 2011.

## **INVITED LECTURES**

McMaster University, “**Worldly Saviors, Terrestrial Utopias, and Imperial Authority in Medieval Chinese Buddhism.**” April 14, 2023. \*Postponed from April 3, 2020 due to Covid-19\*

University of Toronto, “**Text, Materiality, and Practice: Evidence from the Dunhuang Buddhist Manuscripts of *Cause and Effects.***” April 13, 2023. \*Postponed from April 2, 2020 due to Covid-19\*

John Hopkins University, “**Text, Materiality, and Practice in Silk Road Buddhist Manuscripts.**” October 13, 2020. \*Online due to Covid-19\*

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. “**Buddhas, Emperors, and Apocalyptic Saviors in Medieval China.**” April 20, 2020. \*Canceled due to Covid-19\*

Yale University, “**Buddhist Apocalyptic Saviors and Imperial Authority during the Reign of Empress Wu Zetian (690-705CE).**” February 27, 2020.

Harvard University, China Humanities Seminar. “**Apocalyptic Saviors, Terrestrial Utopias, and Imperial Authority: The Reign of Empress Wu Zetian (690-705CE).**” November 4, 2019.

### **INVITED LECTURE ON PROFESSIONALIZATION**

Princeton University, Islamic Studies Colloquium, “**Surviving and Thriving as a PhD Student.**” September 29, 2021.

### **CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

Association of Asian Studies Annual Meeting, Boston. “Conveying Meaning through Material Forms and Visual Format in Pre-Modern East Asian Texts” Panel. “**Medieval Chinese Reading Practices: Examining the Line Breaks in the Dunhuang Manuscripts of the *Shan’e yinguo jing*.**” March 16-19, 2023.

The University of Virginia, “Critical Terms for the Study of Chinese Religious Studies Conference Part II.” “**The Dao.**” June 6-10, 2022. \*Postponed from August 17-21, 2020 and then canceled 01/22 due to Covid-19\*

Elling Eide Center. “Recitation Practices from Dunhuang Buddhist Manuscripts” for the Ritual and Contemplative Practices in Chinese Religions (500 to 1500 CE) Conference. March 4-5, 2022.

Modern Language Association, Washington, D.C. “Medieval Textual Materialities” Panel. “**Medieval Chinese Reading Practices: Evidence from Silk Road Buddhist Manuscripts.**” January 9, 2022. \*Online due to Covid-19\*

Association of Asian Studies Annual Meeting, Seattle. “Unfurled and Unfolded: East Asian Buddhist Manuscript Cultures” Panel. “**Depravities and Atonement: The Function of a Dunhuang Manuscript Booklet.**” March 24, 2021 \*Online due to Covid-19\*

Harvard University, “End Times: Eschatology in Chinese Religions.” “**Buddhist Eschatology in Medieval China.**” April 10, 2020. \*Postponed due to Covid-19\*

Association of Asian Studies Annual Meeting, Boston. “Empowering Rulership: Politics of Legitimation in Asian Religions” Panel. “**Rebels, Rulers, and Buddhas: Worldly Saviors and Political Legitimation in Medieval China.**” March 20, 2020. \*Canceled due to Covid-19\*

American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, San Diego. “The Ambivalence of Buddhist Kingship,” Panel in the Buddhism Group. “**Wu Zhao (r. 690-705): Buddha, Emperor, Earthly Savior.**” November 24, 2019.

American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, San Diego. “Disaster and Calamity in Chinese Religions from the Medieval to the Modern Era,” Panel in the Chinese Religions Group. “**Disaster and Calamity in Medieval China.**” November 23, 2019.

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, “Critical Terms for the Study of Chinese Religious Studies Conference.” “**The Dao.**” June 21, 2019.

Association of Asian Studies Annual Meeting, Denver. “De-Centering Buddhist Kingship” Panel. “**Ideal Ruler: The Wheel-Turning King in the Maitreya Buddha Murals at Dunhuang.**” March 23, 2019.

Harvard University, “Mediating Religion: Text and Object in Chinese Religion.” “**Envisioning Paradise: Maitreya’s Utopia in Medieval Mural Paintings at Dunhuang.**” December 8, 2017.

American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, San Antonio. “Envisioning Salvation: Eschatology and Utopias in Medieval China,” Panel in the Chinese Religions Group. “**Imagining Utopia in the Canonical and Apocryphal Maitreya Scriptures.**” November 19, 2016.

Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and University of California, Los Angeles, Hong Kong, “International Conference on Empires and Religions in Comparison: The Graeco-Roman World and Early China.” “**Mother, Savior, Ruler: Apocalyptic Scriptures and Empress Wu.**” September 15, 2016.

The Dunhuang Academy, the China Academy of Culture, and the Wooden Fish Foundation, Dunhuang, China, “Dunhuang Conference on Sutra Transmission and Translation.” “**Maitreya and Prince Moonlight Scriptures Discovered at Dunhuang.**” June 16, 2016.

American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Atlanta. “Politics, Imperial Institutions, and Religion in Imperial China,” Panel in the Chinese Religions Group. “**Shifting Conceptions of Kingship in Medieval China: A Reexamination of the Canonical and Apocryphal Maitreya Scriptures.**” November 22, 2015.

University of California, Los Angeles, “Empire and Media of Religion: A Workshop on Comparative Approaches to the Study of Religion in the Greco-Roman Imperial Era and Early China.” “**The Role of Apocalyptic Concepts in Imperial Legitimation in Medieval China.**” May 22, 2015.

International Liaison Committee for Dunhuang Studies, Princeton University, “Prospects for the Study of Dunhuang Manuscripts: The Next 20 Years.” “**Chinese Visions of the End: An Examination of Three Dunhuang Scriptures.**” September 7, 2014.

The University of Chicago, “Refiguring East Asian Religious Art: Buddhist Devotion and Funerary Practice.” “**Visions of Earthly Paradise: Maitreya Mural Paintings at Dunhuang.**” May 25, 2014.

American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Baltimore, “Millennialism, Eschatology, and the Latter Day of the Dharma,” Panel in the Buddhism Group. “**Saviors from Chaos and Destruction: Maitreya Buddha and Prince Moonlight in Dunhuang Manuscripts.**” November 24, 2013.

## LECTURES AND PANELS AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Boston University, Core Curriculum, Lecture on the *Daodejing*. February 8, 2022; February 9, 2021; February 11, 2020; February 12, 2019; February 13, 2018; February 14, 2017.

Boston University, Core Curriculum, Lecture on the *Analects*. February 2, 2021.

Boston University “Tertulia” Junior Faculty Colloquium Series, “**Maitreya’s Paradise: Terrestrial Buddhist Utopias in Scriptures and Paintings in Medieval China.**” November 8, 2017.

Boston University Institute for Philosophy and Religion, “**Apocalypticism and Messianism in China.**” March 15, 2017.

Boston University Graduate Division of Religious Studies, Teaching Fellow Seminar “Composing A Statement of Teaching Philosophy.” February 23, 2017.

Boston University Center for the Study of Asia, East Asian Archeology Forum, “**Maitreya’s Terrestrial Paradise: Medieval Mural Paintings at Dunhuang.**” October 20, 2016.

Boston University Pardee School of Global Studies, Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs, and the Center for the Study of Asia, “Chinese Buddhist Charity in Comparative Perspective.” Panelist. September 9, 2016.

## ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE AND COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Director of Undergraduate Studies. Department of Religion, Boston University. Fall 2020 – Fall 2022.

Organizer of the Graduate Teaching Fellow Seminar. Department of Religion, Boston University. Fall 2020 – Spring 2022.

Member, Humanities Curriculum Committee, Boston University. Fall 2017-Spring 2018. Fall 2019 – Spring 2021.

Member, Search Committee for Assistant Professor Position in Chinese Art and Architecture, Boston University, Department of History of Art and Architecture. Fall 2017 – Spring 2018.

Member, Faculty Annual Review Evaluation Committee, Boston University, Religion Department. Spring 2017.

Member, Global Studies Taskforce, Gonzaga University College of Arts and Sciences. Fall 2015 – May 2016.

Member, Speaker’s Series Committee, Gonzaga University. Fall 2015 – May 2016.

Member, Search Committee for Assistant Professor Position in Islam, Gonzaga University, Religious Studies Department. Fall 2015 – Spring 2016.

Committee Chair, World or Comparative Religions Core Curriculum Committee, Gonzaga University. Spring 2015 – May 2016.

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

American Academy of Religion  
Association of Asian Studies  
Early Medieval China Group  
Society for the Study of Chinese Religions  
T'ang Studies Society