

Marlena Graves, Ph.D.

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Ph.D. in American Cultural Studies, assistant professor of spiritual formation at Northeastern Seminary, public scholar. Award-winning author with over 15 years of interdisciplinary teaching and leadership experience.

Specializes in U.S. social history; religion & politics; race, gender, & social identity in American history; Christian nationalism; public memory; political/public theology; and historical trauma. American religious history and Christian spirituality.

Experienced public speaker and published author in both academic and trade contexts.

EDUCATION

Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH

Ph.D. American Cultural Studies (2024)

Primary: Ethnicity, Gender & Social Identities | Secondary: American Social History

Presidential Diversity Scholar | Full-Tuition & Graduate Fellowship Recipient

Northeastern Seminary, Rochester, NY

Master of Divinity (2007)

Distinguished Alumni Award (2021)

Cedarville University, Cedarville, OH

B.A. History & Secondary Education (2001), with honors

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Professor of Spiritual Formation

Northeastern Seminary, Rochester, NY | 2022–Present

- Teach M.A., M.Div., and D.Min. students; supervise theses/dissertations
- Director, Spiritual Formation and *Familias Unidas* (Lilly Endowment Grant)

Graduate Teaching Assistant – Women’s Studies

Bowling Green State University, OH | 2020–2022

- Sole instructor for “Introduction to Women’s Studies”

Adjunct Professor – Theology & Spiritual Formation

Winebrenner Theological Seminary, Findlay, OH | 2015–2022

- Courses: Individual and Collective Formation
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SELECTED NONPROFIT & MINISTRY LEADERSHIP POSITIONS**Director of Communications & Organizer**

Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Toledo, OH | 2018–2020

- Spearheaded bilingual communications, organizing, and advocacy initiatives
- Partnered with NAACP and grassroots coalitions on labor justice and justice for immigrants
- Organizer

Minister of Pastoral Care

St. Andrew’s UMC, Findlay, OH | 2014–2017

- Oversaw chaplaincy and pastoral care for elders
- Trained and equipped lay ministers and visitation teams

Resident Director

Cedarville University, Cedarville, OH | 2008–2013

- Supervised residence life, mentored students, and academic advisor
 - Served on the Diversity Committee and oversaw student programming
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HONORS & AWARDS

- Distinguished Alumni Award, Northeastern Seminary (2021)
 - Christianity Today Award of Merit, *The Way Up Is Down* (2021)
 - Outreach Magazine Recommended Resource (2021)
 - Presidential Diversity Scholarship, BGSU (\$7,500, 2020)
 - Hearts & Minds Best First Book on Spiritual Formation (2014)
 - Christianity Today Her.meneutics Top Articles (2010–2012)
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PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Books

- *The Gospel of Peace in a Violent World: Christian Nonviolence for Communal Flourishing* (IVP Academic, co-edited with Shawn Graves)
- Book proposal: invited by Oxford University Press (in process)

Chapters and Articles

- “Conspiracy Theories and Meaning in Life,” in *Christianity and Conspiracy Theories*, Eerdmans
 - “Immigration and the Church: Who Is My Neighbor?” in *The Gospel of Peace*
 - “Introduction,” in *The Gospel of Peace*, with Shawn Graves
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TRADE BOOKS

- *A Beautiful Disaster* (Brazos Press, 2014 - Award-winning)
 - *Who’s My Neighbor?* (Our Daily Bread, 2020)
 - *The Way Up Is Down* (IVP, 2020 – Award-winning)
 - *Forty Days On Being A Nine* (IVP, 2021)
 - *Bearing Christ* (NavPress, 2023)
 - *Grace for the Common Life* (IVP, forthcoming)
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SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- “The Politics of Love,” Peace and Justice Studies Association, Niagara University (2024)
 - “George Wallace’s Legacy,” Conference on Faith and History (2024)
 - “White Evangelicals & Selective Compassion,” BGSU Latino/a/x Issues Conf. (2022)
 - “Bless the Hands that Feed Us,” Vanguard University (2022)
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SELECTED SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Plenary Speaker, Ohio State University Carmen House of Christian Studies (Nov. 2025)
- Plenary Speaker, Abilene Christian University Clergy Retreat, Lake Dallas, TX (Sept. 2025)
- Plenary Speaker, Jesus Collective Regional Meeting, Newark, DE (Jun. 2025)
- Plenary Speaker, MTS Preaching Institute, Chicago, IL (May 2025)

- Plenary Speaker, Open Table Conference, Tyler, TX (Mar. 2025)
 - Plenary Speaker, Free Methodist Justice Conference (June 2024)
 - Plenary Speaker, Jesus Collective Unite Conference, St. Paul, MN (2024)
 - Roberts Wesleyan University Chapel (2024)
 - Urbana Conference, InterVarsity (2022)
 - Tyndale College Doctor of Ministry Lecture (2024)
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SELECTED MEDIA & ARTICLES

- Contributor: *Christianity Today*, *The Christian Century*, *Religion News Service*, *Sojourners*
 - Interviewed by *Reuters* and *New York Magazine* about white evangelicals and Trump
 - Walter Brueggemann interview: “It’s Not a Matter of Obeying the Bible. It’s About Obeying the Gospel,” *Faith Street* (2015)
 - Contributor: *Our Daily Bread*, *Relevant Magazine*, *Missio Alliance*, *In Touch Magazine*
 - 200+ published devotionals, interviews, and op-eds (full list available upon request)
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SELECTED PODCASTS

Appeared on over fifty podcasts interviews as an invited guest

- Sacred Thoughts Podcast (Nov 2024)
 - Englewood Review of Books (Jan 2024)
 - CXMH: On Faith & Mental Health (Dec 2023)
 - Jesus Collective Podcast (Oct 2023)
 - The Two Cities Podcast (Jul 2023)
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SKILLS & LANGUAGES

Skills: Organizational Leadership, Academic Mentorship, Public Speaking, Writing, Curriculum Design, Project Management

Technology: Various LMS like Canvas, Populi, Zoom, Top Hat, Microsoft Office, Google Suite

Languages: Native Spanish speaker (fluent)
