

ARIANE KOVAC

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CURRENT POSITION

- Since 01/2024 Research Associate in the project "Religion, Digitality, Confessionality", funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) (Direction: Prof. Dr. Anna Neumaier)
Center for Religious Studies (CERES), Ruhr University Bochum
- Ph.D. project Sending Christianity to therapy. How evangelical megachurches navigate religion, politics, and identities (working title)
Institute for Religious Studies, Leipzig University

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Contemporary evangelical Christianity in the US and Germany
- Religion and medicine, "wellbeing," and therapeutization
- History of emotions and religious emotions
- Digital Religion
- Ethnographic methods and Grounded Theory

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

- Since 02/2020 **Doctorate** at the Institute for Religious Studies, University of Leipzig
Working title of the dissertation: Sending Christianity to therapy. How evangelical megachurches navigate religion, politics, and identities
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Sebastian Schöler
- 2016 – 2019 **M.A. Societies, Globalization, and Development** (Final grade 1.1)
University of Bonn
MA thesis: Religion in micro processes of dealing with political conflict: Forgiveness and reconciliation in Ayacucho, Peru
- 2012 – 2016 **B.A. Political Science (major), Geography (minor)** (Final grade 1.4)
University of Jena
BA thesis: Indigenous knowledge in decolonization processes. The example of indigenous organization and justice in Bolivia
- 2003 – 2011 Albrecht-Altdorfer-Gymnasium Regensburg (Abitur, Final grade 1.3)

ACADEMIC OCCUPATION

- 02/2020 – 04/2023 **Research Associate** in the project "When Healing Fails", funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) (Direction: JProf. Dr. Bernadett Bigalke, Prof. Dr. Sebastian Schöler, Dr. Sabrina Weiß)
Institute for Religious Studies, Leipzig University
- 2017 – 2019 **Student Assistant**
Forum Internationale Wissenschaft, Bonn University

2014 – 2016 Student Assistant

Department for Political Theory and History of Ideas, Jena University

04-07 / 2015 Tutor for the UNIGA (simulation of the UN General Assembly)

Department for International Organizations and Globalization, Jena University

NON-ACADEMIC OCCUPATION

Since 2014 Freelance travel author and journalist

Work published in Malik National Geographic, Reisedepeschen, and The Travel Episodes, among others

2016 – 2017 Student Assistant in the study abroad program for US exchange students

Academy for international education (AiB), Bonn

SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS

2023 Fulbright Ph.D. program scholarship for a research stay at the University of California at Santa Barbara, November 2023 – March 2024

2023 Conference participation travel grant, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

2023 Conference participation travel grant, German Association for the Study of Religions (DVRW)

2022 DVRW grant for the organization of several workshops as part of the project „Mapping Religious Studies“

2018 DAAD PROMOS grant for a research stay in Peru as part of my master thesis

2016 DAAD PROMOS grant for an internship at the German Embassy in Quito, Ecuador

RESEARCH STAYS

11/2023 – 03/2024 Research stay at the University of California at Santa Barbara, funded by the Fulbright Program

04-05 / 2022 Research stay in Seattle and California, US
Funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG)

09-12 / 2018 Research stay in Ayacucho, Peru

INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

04-07 / 2016 Internship at the German Embassy, Quito, Ecuador

03-04 / 2015 Internship at the Research and Documentation Service of the German Bundestag

09-10 / 2014 Internship at the Heinrich Böll Foundation Thuringia

2011 – 2012 Volunteer service with the NGO “Ciudad Saludable” in Lima, Peru, as part of the program “weltwärts” by the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ)

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles (* peer-reviewed)

* Kovac, Ariane (2024): Deconverted Hearts in a Deconverted Church. The Therapeutization of Intra-Evangelical Deconversion. In *Entangled Religions* 15 (2).

Kovac, Ariane (2021): Forschen im Lockdown-Blues. Methodische Reflektionen zum wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten in der Pandemie. In *Zeitschrift für junge Religionswissenschaft* 16 (Special Issue: Mapping Religionswissenschaft).

Articles in Edited Volumes

Kovac, Ariane (2022): Political Violence and Religious Change in Ayacucho, Peru: Reconciliation and Forgiveness as Local Mechanisms among Evangelical Conflict Survivors. In Karen Silva-Torres, Carolina Rozo-Higuera, Daniel S. Leon (ed.): *Social and Political Transitions During the Left Turn in Latin America*. London: Routledge.

Book Reviews

Kovac, Ariane (2023): Travis W. Cooper, The Digital Evangelicals, and Corrina Laughlin, Redeem All. In *Journal of Religion, Media, and Digital Culture* 12 (2-3), p. 363-369.

Kovac, Ariane (2021): Nora Kim Kurzewitz, Gender und Heilung. Die Bedeutung des Pentekostalismus für Frauen in Costa Rica. In *Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft* 29 (1), p. 148-151.

Kovac, Ariane (2021): Stefanie Wiehl, Genozidale Gewalt? Der peruanische Staatsterror 1980–1994. In *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 69 (5), p. 492-493.

Blog Articles and Working Papers

Kovac, Ariane (2023): The Revival will not be televised. Das Asbury Revival und die Inszenierung von Authentizität auf Social Media. In *Marginalien. Religionswissenschaftliche Randbemerkungen*. Online at: <https://marginalie.hypothesen.org/2649>.

Kovac, Ariane (2021): "Press down while you pray" – Churchome und das Beten via App. In *Marginalien. Religionswissenschaftliche Randbemerkungen*. Online auf: <https://marginalie.hypothesen.org/1616>.

Kovac, Ariane (2020): Redeemed, Reborn, Forgiven. Local Processes of Forgiveness and Reconciliation in Post-Civil War Evangelical Communities in Ayacucho, Peru. *FIW Working Paper*. Online at: <https://www.fiw.uni-bonn.de/publikationen/FIWWorkingPaper/fiw-wp-no-13-final-website.pdf>.

CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

Presentations

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| 2023 | Sending Christianity to Therapy. Emotions and Therapeutization in Inner-Evangelical Boundary Maintenance Under Construction. Religion as Practice and Process. XXXVth Annual Conference of the German Association for Religious Studies (DVRW), Bayreuth (Germany), September 25-28 |
| 2023 | "Going beyond a building." Digital modes of belonging as identity work in an evangelical megachurch |

- Religions and Technologies. 20th annual Conference of the European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR), Vilnius (Lithuania), September 4-8
- 2023 Taking Christianity to Therapy: Spiritual (Un-)Learning and Mental Health in a Global Megachurch
Conference "Religion and Spirituality as Sites of Learning", Turku (Finland), May 15-17
- 2023 "Going Beyond a Building." Digital Social Forms as Identity Work in an Evangelical Megachurch
Workshop "Religious Social Forms in American Christianity", Bochum (Germany), March 22-24
- 2022 Reflexive Authentizität Wie eine evangelikale Megachurch ihre eigene Inszenierung durchbricht
Summer School "Situierete Emotionen. Anthropologie und Geschichte im Gespräch," Bayonne (France), October 3-7
- 2022 How to be Apolitical? Strategien "unparteilicher" US amerikanischer Megakirchen angesichts zunehmender gesellschaftlicher Polarisierung
41st Conference of the German Association for Sociology (DGS), Bielefeld (Germany), September 26-30
- 2022 Simplify Your God: (Un-)Learning Religion in an Evangelical Megachurch
Summer School "Religious Conversion in Plural Societies Past and Present", Erfurt (Germany), July 11-15
- 2022 When God becomes your therapist: Negotiating mind, body, and God in religious learning
States of freedom. 19th annual Conference of the EASR, Cork (Ireland), June 27 – July 1
- 2021 Practicing resilience. Verknüpfung religiöser und therapeutischer Diskurse in evangelikalen Kirchen am Beispiel des Resilienz-Diskurses
Religion in Relation. 34th Annual Conference of the DVRW, Leipzig (Germany), September 13-16
- 2021 "Practicing resilience:" How the therapeutic resilience discourse enters evangelical Christianity
Resilient Religion. 18th Annual Conference of the EASR, Pisa (Italy), August 30 – September 3
- 2021 "Now it's getting really personal." Breaching the front stage in digital research
Resilient Religion. 18th Annual Conference of the EASR, Pisa (Italy), August 30 – September 3
- 2019 Political violence and religious change in Ayacucho, Peru
Conference "Latin American Transitions: Processes of Reconfiguration", Leipzig (Germany), October 17-19
- 2019 Religion in Mikro-Prozessen der Konfliktaufarbeitung. Versöhnung und Vergebung in Ayacucho, Peru
Conference "Futuro Hoy / Ayer / Mañana. Visiones de Futuro(s) en las Américas", Bonn (Germany), June 12-14
- 2019 Religion in Mikro-Prozessen der Konfliktaufarbeitung. Versöhnung und Vergebung in Ayacucho, Peru
6th Conference for young scholars of the German Association for Latin American Studies, Hamburg (Germany), May 17-18

Panel Chair

- 2023 Creative and medialized practices of boundary drawing and identity work in evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity, with Nadine Walter
Under Construction. Religion as Practice and Process. XXXVth Annual Conference of the German Association for Religious Studies (DVRW), Bayreuth (Germany), September 25-28
- 2023 Online since before it was a thing. Digitalisation and religion beyond the pandemic, with Benedikt Römer
Religions and Technologies. 20th annual Conference of the European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR), Vilnius (Lithuania), September 4-8
- 2021 Doing (field) research in a pandemic, with Leonie Geiger
Resilient Religion. 18th annual Conference of the EASR, Pisa (Italy), August 30 – September 3

LECTURES AND WORKSHOPS

- 2024 Taking Christianity to Therapy: Evangelical Conflicts Over (Therapeutic) Emotions
Public Lecture at University of California at Santa Barbara, January 31
- 2023 Redeemed, reborn, forgiven. Conversions to evangelicalism in the context of violence and civil wars in Latin America
Public lecture at Bayreuth University, November 16
- 2023 Conception, organization, and moderation of a digital workshop on method and theory in religious studies as part of the project "Mapping Religionswissenschaft" / "Mapping Religious Studies"
March 29, with Dunja Sharbat Dar
- 2023 Jesus als Psychotherapeut: Emotionen und Therapeutisierung in einer evangelikalen Megakirche
Public lecture at the University of Leipzig, January 27
- 2022 Conception and organization of the workshop "When Healing Fails", University of Leipzig, March 3-4, with Daniel Ellwanger and Thomas Heinrich
- 2022 "Helikopter-Jesus" oder "Anker-Jesus"? Der Umgang mit Lebenskrisen in zwei christlichen US-amerikanischen Kirchen
Public lecture at the University of Leipzig, January 19
- 2021 "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might." Neoliberale Ideologien und pentekostale Kirchen jenseits eines „harten“ Wohlstandsevangeliums
Lecture at the PhD Student Forum „Theology and politics“, University of Rostock, November 4-6
- 2020 Politische Gewalt und religiöser Wandel: Versöhnung und Vergebung als lokale Konfliktaufarbeitungsmechanismen unter evangelikalen Konfliktopfern in Ayacucho, Peru
Public lecture at the University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, January 28
- 2018 Conception and direction of a workshop on "Buen Vivir" for the working group on International Development of the KLJB, Bonn

TEACHING

- 2024 Seminar "'In the Name of Jesus.' Evangelikale Lebenswelten in Europa und den USA" ("In the Name of Jesus.' Evangelical Lifeworlds in Europe and the U.S.") at the Institute for Religious Studies, University of Leipzig, with Berndett Bigalke and Leoni Wohlfahrt
- 2022 Completion of Module 1 of the Saxonian Certificate for Didactics of Higher Education
- 2022 Seminar "Heilung per Fernseher und Beten via App: Protestantismus und Medien" ("Healing through television and praying via apps: Protestantism and media") at the Institute for Religious Studies, University of Leipzig, with Thomas Heinrich

MEMBERSHIPS

- German Association for the Study of Religions (DVRW)
- Working Group on Evangelical, Charismatic, and Pentecostal Movements of the DVRW
- Working Group Digital Religion
- Project team "Mapping Religious Studies"

LANGUAGE SKILLS

German	native
English	fluent
Spanish	proficient
French	intermediate
Portuguese (Brazil)	intermediate
Quechua (Chanca)	basic

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Since 2021 Member and teacher at the nonprofit swing dance association "Swing Connection", Leipzig
- 2012 – 2014 Mentor for international exchange students, University of Jena