

John G. Grisafi

Ph.D. Candidate
Yale University

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EDUCATION

Degrees & Diplomas

Ph.D., Religious Studies, Yale University, In-progress

Fields of Study: Asian Religions; Religion & Modernity

Committee: Hwansoo Kim, Tisa Wenger, Eric Greene

MA, East Asian Languages & Civilizations, University of Pennsylvania, 2018

Concentration: Korean Studies

Thesis: "U.S. Occupation and the Religious Cold War in Korea: Religious Policy and Strategy of the U.S. Occupation of South Korea, 1945-1948"

Committee: Eugene Park and Jolyon Thomas

BA, East Asian Languages & Civilizations, History, University of Pennsylvania, 2017

Concentrations: Korean Studies; World History

Distinctions: Dean's Scholar, Summa cum laude, Dean's List

Diploma, Korean Language, Defense Language Institute, 2005

Other Educational & Professional Development Programs

Kim Koo Professional Series, Korea Society, 2021

Summer Program, Sun Academy Nihongo Center, 2021

Kyujanggak Korean Studies Summer Workshop, Seoul National University, 2020

Knowing North Korea Workshop, National Committee on North Korea, 2018

Korean Language Enhancement and Assessment Program, Kyunghee University, 2010

Advanced Leader Course, U.S. Army, 2012

Basic Leader Course, U.S. Army, 2007

EMPLOYMENT

Teaching Fellow, Yale University, 2021–2023

Instructor, Program for Teaching East Asia, University of Colorado, 2022–2023

Japanese & Korean Technical Services Assistant, Penn Libraries, University of Pennsylvania, 2017–2019

Contributor and Analyst, NK News/NK Pro, 2013–2017

Korean Linguist and Military Analyst, United States Army, 2003–2013

UNIVERSITY TEACHING

Teaching Fellow, Yale University

“Philosophy of Religion,” by John Pittard, Spring 2023

“Buddhist Thought: The Foundations,” by Eric Greene, Fall 2022

“Introduction to Chinese Philosophy,” by Lucas Bender and Eric Greene, Spring 2022

“Religion and Culture in Korea,” by Hwansoo Kim, Fall 2021

Guest Lecturer, Yale University

“Situating and Interpreting Juche,” in “North Korean History,” by Ria Chae, Spring 2021

OTHER TEACHING

Primary Instructor, Program for Teaching East Asia (TEA)

“Korean Religion: History and Present State of Diversity and Diffusion,” February 2023

“Korean Religion: History and Present State of Diversity and Diffusion,” November 2022

Primary Instructor, Connecticut Korean Presbyterian Church

“Korean History Lecture Series,” January–March 2020

Guest Lecturer, Connecticut Korean Presbyterian Church

“Religions of Korea,” in Sunday School 2, December 2019

FELLOWSHIPS & GRANTS

CEAS Summer Language Mini-Grant, Yale University, 2021

Franke Fellowship in the Humanities, Yale University, 2019–2020

James Joo-Jin Kim Program in Korean Studies Graduate Student Conference Travel Grant, University of Pennsylvania, 2018

Faculty Buddhist Studies Working Group Travel Grant, University of Pennsylvania, 2018

James Joo-Jin Kim Program in Korean Studies Graduate Research Grant, University of Pennsylvania, 2017

Undergraduate Fellowship, James Joo-Jin Kim Program in Korean Studies, University of Pennsylvania, 2016–2017

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

“A Marginal Religion and COVID-19 in South Korea: Shincheonji, Public Discourse, and the Shaping of Religion,” *Nova Religio* 25, no. 1 (August 2021): 40–63.

<https://doi.org/10.1525/nr.2021.25.1.40>

Other Journal Articles (not peer-reviewed)

“Popular Anxieties and Miyazaki’s Optimism: Concerns about the Youth and Future of Japan in Popular Culture of the Post-Bubble Economic Era,” [Penn Asian Review 6 \(Spring 2016\)](#): 15–19. (Undergraduate journal)

Essays

“[Discourses on Religion in the US and Their Complex Influences in Japan and Korea](#),” *American Religion*, 22 February 2021.

Book Reviews

“Heonik Kwon and Jun Hwan Park, *Spirit Power: Politics and Religion in Korea’s American Century*,” *Journal of American-East Asian Religions* 30, no. 2 (2023). Forthcoming

Works-in-Progress

Paper on Postcolonial Memory and Traces of Seoul’s Shinto Shrines

Paper on Historiographic and Ideological Narratives of Religion in North Korean Textbooks

Paper on “Benevolent Neutrality” as USAMGIK’s Policy on Religion in Occupied South Korea, 1945–1948

Paper on Confucianism, Religious Polemics, and Early Modern ‘Secularism’ in Korea

Journalistic News Reports & Analyses (selections)

“[DPRK history: the 170mm self-propelled gun in the Iran-Iraq War](#),” *NK News*, 19 June 2016.

“[N. Korean ‘human roller coaster’ case of mistaken identity](#),” *NK News*, 13 June 2016.

“[N.Korea reveals details of 300mm multiple rocket launcher](#),” *NK News*, 4 March 2016.

“[North Korea’s nuclear force reshuffles its politics, economy](#),” *NK News*, 11 February 2016.

“[Ma Won Chun reappears after 11-month absence, purge rumor](#),” *NK News*, 8 October 2015.

“[Pointing the world’s largest bomb at North Korea](#),” *NK News*, 27 September 2015.

“[Wonsan Airport nears completion, with potential for impact on tourism and economy](#),” *NK Pro*, 30 July 2015.

“[North Korea’s million man army in post-unification Korea](#),” *NK News*, 31 May 2015.

“[Imagery reveals renovations of Pyongyang airfields](#),” *NK News*, 28 May 2015.

“[South Korea faces tough choice on THAAD](#),” *NK News*, 24 March 2015.

“[Wonsan airport undergoing major renovation, expansion](#),” *NK Pro*, 19 January 2015.

“[Three-year anniversary of Kim Jong Il’s death important milestone](#),” *NK News*, 17 December 2014.

“[Kim Jong Un still a no-show, but coup unlikely](#),” *NK News*, 9 October 2014.

Journalistic News Reports & Analyses (selections, continued)

- [“The An-2: N. Korea’s surprisingly capable Soviet-era biplane,”](#) *NK News*, 16 September 2014.
- [“Recent launches revealed as surface-to-surface missile,”](#) *NK Pro*, 16 August 2014.
- [“Deploying THAAD on the Korean Peninsula,”](#) *NK News*, 28 July 2014.
- [“Two Koreas to resume joint excavation of ancient palace,”](#) *NK News*, 24 July 2014.
- [“Crashed drones reveal state of North’s drone program,”](#) *NK News*, 3 April 2014.
- [“The threat of North Korea’s new rocket artillery,”](#) *NK News*, 13 March 2014.

PRESENTATIONS & TALKS**Refereed Research Presentations**

- “Cold War Reconfigurations of Religion in US-Occupied South Korea,” AAS-in-Asia Conference, Kyungpook University, June 2023
- “Critically Demystifying North Korea’s Approach to Religion and Religious Freedom,” Korean Studies Research Hub Graduate Workshop, University of Melbourne, June 2022
- “Setting the Boundaries of Religious Freedom and National Interest in North Korea,” 44th Annual Susman Graduate History Conference, Rutgers University, April 2022
- “Anti-Imperialism and Anti-Americanism in the North Korean Understanding of Religion,” Association for Asian Studies Conference, March 2022
- “The Limits of Religious Freedom in North Korea: How the North Understands Religion,” USC KSI Graduate Symposium, University of Southern California, February 2022
- “Rational Restriction on Religion? How North Korea Conceives of Religious Freedom,” New England Association for Asian Studies Conference, Harvard University, December 2021
- “The Boundaries of Religious Freedom in North Korea: Excluding Religion to Protect the Revolutionary State,” Graduate Student Conference on “Religion and (Breaking) Boundaries,” Boston University, September 2021
- “A Marginal Religion and COVID-19 in South Korea: Shincheonji, Public Discourse, and the Shaping of Religion,” 8th Annual Korea University Graduate Student Conference, Korea University, May 2021
- [“The Memory and Legacy of Shinto Shrine Sites in Seoul: The Geography of Colonial Religious Topoi,”](#) Contesting Memorial Spaces in the Asia-Pacific Conference, Kyushu University, November 2020
- “Marginal Religion and COVID-19 in Korea: Shincheonji, Public Discourse, and the Shaping of Categorical Language,” New England Association for Asian Studies Conference, University of Vermont, October 2020
- “Mapping the Traces of the Kami: A Geographic Historiography of Shinto Shrine Sites in Seoul,” Beyond Boundaries: Fifth Annual Symposium, Yale University, event cancelled

Refereed Research Presentations (continued)

- “City Boundaries and the Traces of the Kami: Borders, Urban Spaces, and the Legacy and Memory of Shinto Shrines in Seoul,” Harvard East Asia Society Conference 2020, Harvard University, February 2020
- “A ‘Laissez Faire Policy?’ Defining and Categorizing Religion in Occupied South Korea,” Implicit Religion USA conference, Monmouth University, June 2019
- “‘Nothing Less Than a Religious War’: The Genesis of the Religious Cold War in Korea,” 2019 International Graduate Conference on the Cold War, George Washington University, May 2019
- “Managing Post-Colonial Religious Rights: Religious Freedom and Religions Policy of the U.S. Military Occupation of South Korea, 1945-1948,” Penn EALC Graduate Conference: Myth, Management, and Materiality, University of Pennsylvania, April 2019
- “Benevolent Neutrality: Religious Freedom and Religions Policy of the U.S. Military Occupation of South Korea, 1945-1948,” 28th Annual Graduate Student Conference on East Asia, Columbia University, February 2019
- “Fostering Freedom and Faith: Religious Liberty and Christianization in the U.S. Occupation of South Korea, 1945-1948,” 47th Annual Mid-Atlantic Region Association for Asian Studies Conference, November 2018
- “Politics, Public, and Shamans: Marginalization of Shamanism in Korea, Past and Present,” 6th International Conference of NextGen Korean Studies Scholars, University of Michigan, May 2018
- “Religious and National Identity in Korea, 1860-1945,” 46th Annual Mid-Atlantic Region Association for Asian Studies Conference, October 2017
- “Respected but Marginalized: The Paradoxical Treatment of Shamanism in South Korea,” [James Joo-Jin Kim Program in Korean Studies Undergraduate Fellow Research Symposium](#), University of Pennsylvania, May 2017
- “The Soviet-based Korean Communist Movement beyond Kim Il Sung,” [Structure & Subordination: Law, Science, and Religion in East Asia](#) graduate conference, University of Pennsylvania, April 2017
- “The Politics of Shintō in Colonial Korea: Religion on the Margins of Japan’s Empire,” [26th Annual Graduate Student Conference on East Asia](#), Columbia University, February 2017
- “Shintō in Colonial Korea: A Broadening Narrative of Imperial Era Shintō,” [What Isn’t Shinto? Shinto Symposium 2016](#), University of Pennsylvania, September 2016

Invited Lectures and Panels

[“The ‘Other Korea’: What is North Korea Really Like?”](#) Bristol Public Library, September 2021

[“Chairman Lee, Shincheonji, and COVID-19: The Verdict”](#) webinar, Center for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR), February 2021

“Covering North Korea: Analysis, Journalism, Scholarship” featured speaker event, ThiNK at Yale, Yale University, December 2019

“North Korea: What Do We Know?” at “Basketball Diplomacy and the North Korean Mind: Film and Discussion,” World Affairs Council of Philadelphia, November 2016

Co-organized Panels & Roundtables

“Religion, Barriers, Possibilities,” in “Disability as Possibility: A Panel in Honor of Mark R. Bookman,” Association for Asian Studies Conference, February 2023

“A More Credible Deterrent?: Nuclear and Missile Developments in North Korea, 2016,” in “Missiles, Nukes, Markets, Madman?: North Korea in 2016” North Korea Roundtable, University of Pennsylvania, October 2016

MEDIA OUTREACH & MENTIONS***Quoted Interviews and Commentary***

Elizabeth Shim [“South Korea's approach to secretive church could backfire, analyst says,”](#) UPI, March 5, 2020.

PROFESSIONAL & UNIVERSITY SERVICE***Event & Panel Organization and Management***

Panel Co-organizer, “Religion and Cold War in East Asia,” AAS-in-Asia Conference, Kyungpook University, June 2023

Panel Organizer, “Nation, Religion, and Society in Modern Korea,” New England Association for Asian Studies Conference, Harvard University, December 2021

Panel Organizer, “COVID-19 in Japan and Korea: Disability, Religion, and Political Change,” New England Association for Asian Studies Conference, University of Vermont, December 2020

MC and Panel Chair, 5th Yale-Ewha Conference, Yale University, October 2019

Panel Organizer and Chair, “Colonialism, Christianization, and Community: Understanding Transnational Interactions in 20th Century Korea,” 47th Annual Mid-Atlantic Region Association for Asian Studies Conference, November 2018

Conference Organizing Chair, “Bodies and Borders: Inclusion, Exclusion, and Excision in East Asia,” East Asian Languages and Civilizations Graduate Student Conference, University of Pennsylvania, April 2018

Event & Panel Organization and Management (continued)

Conference Organizing Committee, "Structure & Subordination: Law, Science, and Religion in East Asia," East Asian Languages and Civilizations Graduate Student Conference, University of Pennsylvania, April 2017

"Missiles, Nukes, Markets, Madman?: North Korea in 2016" North Korea Roundtable, University of Pennsylvania, October 2016

Publication Production and Editing

Indexing and additional proofreading, for Jolyon Thomas on *Faking Liberties: Religious Freedom in American-Occupied Japan*. University of Chicago Press, 2019.

Editor-in-Chief, *Penn Asian Review* 7 (Spring 2017)

Associate Editor, *Penn Asian Review* 6 (Spring 2016)

Associate Editor, *Penn Asian Review* 5 (Spring 2015)

Peer Reviewing

Yale Undergraduate Research Journal, 2021–Present

Mentoring and Advising

Project Tutor (Korean), East Asian Studies Senior Project Language Support Program, Yale University, 2021–Present

[Ambassador](#), Service to School, 2021–Present

Divinity Doctoral Studies Liaison, Yale University, 2020–2021

Mentor, Graduate-Undergraduate Mentorship Initiative, Yale University, 2020–Present

Graduate Advisor, THINK at Yale, Yale University, 2019–Present

Professional Organization Memberships

Association for Asian Studies (AAS)

American Academy of Religion (AAR)

Student Veterans Research Network (SVRN)

Campus Organization Leadership

Coordinator, Korean Studies Graduate Student Community, Yale University, 2019–Present

Coordinator, Korean Studies Reading Group, Yale University, 2022–Present

Chair, East Asian Languages and Civilizations Graduate Student Research Colloquium, University of Pennsylvania, 2017–2018

President, University of Pennsylvania Student Veteran Association, 2017–2018

Founder and President, Penn East Asian Studies Student Association, 2016–2017

Editor-in-Chief, *Penn Asian Review*, University of Pennsylvania, 2016–2017

Other Service

Facilitator, Accessibility Mapping Project (AMP), University of Pennsylvania, 2018–2019

AWARDS & HONORS

Graduate Student Paper Prize, NEAAS, 2020

Dean's Scholar, University of Pennsylvania, 2017

Phi Alpha Theta National History Honor Society, 2016

SALUTE Veterans National Honor Society (Alpha Tier), 2016

Dean's List, University of Pennsylvania, 2015, 2016, & 2017

Army Commendation Medal, U.S. Army, 2012

Award for Linguistic Excellence, 501st MI BDE, U.S. Army, 2012

Distinguished Top Graduate, Analyst Course, U.S. Army, 2009

Commandant's List, Basic Leader Course, U.S. Army, 2007

LANGUAGES

English: native

Korean: advanced professional-level reading/writing/speaking; >6 years equivalent education, >16 years professional experience; Defense Language Proficiency Test, ILR Level 3

Japanese: intermediate to advanced reading/writing/speaking; >3 years education

German: elementary reading/speaking; 4 years education; AATG National German Exam

Chinese, Mandarin: beginner reading/speaking

Chinese, Classical/Literary: beginner reading

ADDITIONAL SKILLS, EXPERIENCE, & HOBBIES

Archival research experience and tools familiarity, including at private and government archives, and usage of Tropy

Library and information systems and standards including OCLC, MARC 21, and Alma

Mapping and geospatial analysis and research tools and experience including formal training in map reading, ArcGIS, Google Earth, land navigation, and imagery analysis

Experienced with Canvas as an instructor

Experienced with other software and webtools including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, WordPress, Tableau, and Zoom

Photography, using DSLR and phone cameras

Artistic and leisure activities related to Asian Studies including calligraphy (Korean, Chinese, and Japanese), go/baduk, janggi (Korean chess), mahjong, and hwatu/go-stop