

Thomas Fabisiak
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Education

PhD, Comparative Literature and Religion, Emory University, August 2014.

MTS, Harvard Divinity School, Harvard University, May 2005. Recipient of the class of 2005's Thayer Award for Academic Achievement.

BA, with distinction, Cornell University, May 2003.

Administrative and Leadership Experience

Program Administration

Assistant Dean of Social Sciences, College of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies, Life University, September 2022-present.

CGUS Arrendale Academic Success Coordinator, College of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies, Life University, September 2016-2022.

Program Coordinator, The Chillon Project, College of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies, Life University, January 2018-2022.

Co-Director, Certificate in Theological Studies at Arrendale State Prison, Emory University's Candler School of Theology, August 2015-December 2016.

Interim Director, Certificate in Theological Studies at Arrendale State Prison, Emory University's Candler School of Theology, June-August 2015.

Advanced Certificate Coordinator and Student Advisor, Certificate in Theological Studies at Arrendale State Prison, Emory University's Candler School of Theology, Fall 2013-December 2016.

Graduate Writing Coordinator and Advisor, Graduate Writing Support Service, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Fall 2012-May 2016.

Graduate Writing Coordinator, Emory Writing Program, Fall 2012-Spring 2013.

Writing Scholar, Emory University, Emory Writing Center, 2011-2012.

Graduate Fellow, Emory University, Emory Writing Center, 2010-11.

Leadership

Director, The Chillon Project, Center for Compassion, Integrity, and Secular Ethics, Life University, January 2017-Present.

Co-Executive Director, Georgia Coalition for Higher Education in Prison, February 2021-Present.

Higher Education in Prison Leadership Cohort (Sponsored by the Alliance for Higher Education in Prison for leaders in the HEP field), July 2020-July 2021.

Chair, Georgia Coalition for Higher Education in Prison (GACHEP) Executive Committee, May 2020-January 2021.

Co-Founder, Georgia Coalition for Higher Education in Prison (GACHEP), June 2018.

Grants Authored and Administered

\$1,019,166 over three years to the Georgia Coalition for Higher Education in Prison for “EnGAge: Building and Mobilizing a Higher Education Community of Practice in Georgia.” Ascendium Foundation. 2023-2026.

\$100,000 over two years to support the Chillon Project and launch the Chillon Fellowship program for formerly incarcerated leaders. Sunshine Lady Foundation. 2023-2025.

\$900,000 over three years to the Georgia Coalition for Higher Education in Prison to build pre-to-post release continuity of support for people pursuing higher education in and after prison in Georgia. Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Second Chance Act: Improving Reentry, Education, and Employment Services. 2023-26.

\$900,000 over three years to the Georgia Coalition for Higher Education in Prison to provide pathways from incarceration to higher education in Georgia. Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Second Chance Act: Improving Correctional Education. 2022-25.

\$50,000 over one year to Life University to provide on-site support for the Chillon Project. SunTrust Foundation Howell Fund. 2020-2021.

\$225,000 over 3 years plus a one-year extension for \$75,000 to Life University to support the Chillon Project. Laughing Gull Foundation. 2018-2022.

Three \$1800 travel grants for travel to NCHEP Conference. Laughing Gull Foundation. 2018, 2019, 2021.

Two internal grants of \$1945 from Life University’s Office of Sponsored Research and Scholarly Activity for faculty-mentored student projects. 2017-2018.

\$120,000 over three years (\$40000 per year) to support Life University’s implementation of a degree program at a Georgia State Prison. Laughing Gull Foundation. Second author, with primary author Dr. Brendan Ozawa-de Silva. 2015-2018.

Second Chance Pell Experimental Initiative at Life University (I wrote the description of Life University's higher education in prison programs in our successful application to participate in the Department of Education's experimental initiative to enable students in prison to receive Pell funding for the duration of the initiative). 2019-Present.

Research and Publications

IRB-Approved Research Projects

Principal Investigator, "Moral Injury Among Correctional Staff," Life University, October 2020-Present.

Co-Investigator, "Evaluating Effects of Educational and Contemplative Interventions in Correctional Settings," Life University, 2016-Ongoing.

Books

The "Nocturnal Side of Science" in David Friedrich Strauss's "Life of Jesus Critically Examined," (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2015).

Chapters in Edited Volumes

"Bonhoeffer's Critique of Morality as a Resource for Dismantling Mass Incarceration," with Jennifer M. McBride, in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Theology, and Political Resistance* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2020).

"On the Practice and Ethos of Self-Compassion in Higher Education in Prison," in *Critical Perspectives on Teaching in Prison: Students and Instructors on Pedagogy Behind the Wall*, edited by Rebecca Ginsburg (NY: Routledge, 2019).

"What Does Modernity Have To Do with the New Jerusalem? Apocalypticism and Modern Philosophy," in *Apocalypses in Context*, edited by Kelly J. Murphy (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016).

"Outlaw Christ: Sacred Revolt in the work of GG Allin," with Joseph Laycock, in *Music at the Extremes: Essays on Sounds Outside the Mainstream*, edited by Scott Wilson (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2015).

Selected Conference Papers and Presentations

"What is the Prison System Doing to Us All?" with Jennifer M. McBride, *International Bonhoeffer Society Annual Meeting*, Sydney, Australia, January 2024.

Opening Remarks, with Ved Price, *National Conference on Higher Education in Prison*, Atlanta, 2023.

“Gearing up for Pell for All: Requirements for Higher Education in Prison Programs,” with Belinda Wheeler, Senior Program Associate, Vera Institute for Justice, and Donna Zuniga, Associate Vice President, Lee College, *Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Virtual Annual Meeting*, December 2021.

“Bonhoeffer’s Critique of Morality and Mass Incarceration,” with Jennifer M. McBride, *International Bonhoeffer Society Annual Meeting*, Stellenbosch University, South Africa, January 2020.

“Evaluating the Effects of Educational and Contemplative Interventions in Carceral Settings,” with Peggy Samples and Avital Abraham, *Association of Justice Involved Females Biennial Conference*, Atlanta, December 2019.

“College Behind Bars” Panel Participant, 7 Stages Atlanta, November 2019.

“Doing Theology in Prison: Theological Education as a Form of Advocacy and Resistance,” *Ending Mass Incarceration*, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta, July 2019.

“The Psychological and Ethical Value of Self-Compassion for Teachers and Administrators in Higher Education in Prison,” *National Conference on Higher Education in Prison*, Indianapolis, November 2018.

“Evaluating an Associate’s Degree Program in a Prison in Georgia: Initial Findings,” *National Conference on Higher Education in Prison*, Indianapolis, November 2018.

“Research and Teaching Experiences from the Chillon Project at Life University: An Associate of Arts Degree Program in Positive Human Development and Social Change for Incarcerated Women,” *National Conference on Higher Education in Prison*, Dallas, Fall 2017.

“The Use and Status of the Bible in Justinus Kerner's Case Studies of the Possessions of Magdalena Grombach and ‘Anna U,’” *Contextual Biblical Interpretation, American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature*, Fall 2017.

“Difficult Questions and Limited Sources: Challenges of Student Research in a Georgia State Prison,” in *Research and Pedagogy in Prison Education Programs, National Conference on Higher Education in Prison*, Fall 2016.

“Educational modules created by students of the Chillon Project to teach Positive Human Development and Social Change,” in *Launching and Researching The Chillon Project at Life University, National Conference on Higher Education in Prison*, Fall 2016.

“Challenges of the ‘Secular’ in Secular Ethics,” *Religion, Conflict, and Reconciliation*, Kennesaw State University, Spring 2016.

“The Chillon Project: Bringing Higher Education to Georgia Correctional Facilities,” with Brendan Ozawa-de Silva, *National Conference on Higher Education in Prisons*, Fall 2015.

“Critique and Criticism in D.F. Strauss’s ‘Critical Examination’ of the Life of Jesus,” —in “Judith Butler and Biblical Interpretation,” *Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting*, Fall 2011.

Courses Taught

Life University, College of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies

PSY 320, *Health Psychology*

ENG 109, *Critical Reading and Thinking*

PSC 301, *Ethical and Moral Reasoning* (Arrendale)

PSY 302, *Secular and Environmental Ethics* (Arrendale)

PSC 203, *Compassion and Secular Ethics* (Arrendale, Distance Learning)

Emory University’s Candler School of Theology, Certificate in Theological Studies at Arrendale State Prison

Research and Writing Seminar

Religion and Mythology

Theological Foundations

Spiritual Practices

Biblical Foundations

Community Engagement and Service

Community Education

“Solidarity & Action: Workshop on Engaging in Mutual Aid & Student-centered Policy-issue Advocacy at the State and Regional Level,” with the Southern Collective for Higher Education in Prison, *National Conference on Higher Education in Prison*, Denver, November 2021.

“Thinking Outside the Cell,” with Dr. Tom Flores, Nassau Presbyterian Church, January 2021.

“Reckoning with Prisons, Restoring Justice,” St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, Atlanta, October 2020.

“Bonhoeffer Against Mass Incarceration,” with Dr. Jennifer McBride, *Bonhoeffer Otherwise*, Riverside Church, New York City, August 2020.

“Practicing Self-compassion: Setting Realistic Expectations as a Practical Tool for Students and Instructors in Prison,” *Alliance for Higher Education in Prison Community Conversations*, April 2020.

Additional Service

Southern Collective for Higher Education in Prison Annual Meeting Planning Committee,
National Conference for Higher Education in Prison, October-November 2021.

Octagon Conference Planning Committee, Life University, January 2019 and 2018.

National Conference for Higher Education in Prison Planning Committee, Fall 2017 &
2018.

Member, Georgia Justice Reform Partnership, July 2021-Present.

Founding Member, Georgia Coalition for Higher Education in Prison, 2018-Present.