

SAM HARRELSON

CURRICULUM VITAE

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ACADEMIC PROFILE

Ph.D. candidate in Philosophy and Religion, with a concentration in Ecology, Spirituality, and Religion, at the California Institute of Integral Studies. My work develops an ecological theology of perception through ecological intentionality and the Ecology of the Cross, bringing Edith Stein, Aristotle, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Henri Bergson, Raymond Ruyer, process-relational metaphysics, spiritual ecology, and place-based attention into conversation with ecological crisis, vegetal life, artificial intelligence infrastructure, and the moral imagination. I am also an ordained Cooperative Baptist Fellowship minister and an educator with more than fifteen years of classroom experience across theology, religious studies, science, mathematics, literature, and interdisciplinary learning.

EDUCATION

California Institute of Integral Studies | Ph.D. Candidate, Philosophy and Religion, Ecology, Spirituality, and Religion | 2024-present | Expected 2027

Advisor: Elizabeth Allison. Current research: ecological intentionality, Edith Stein, phenomenology, process thought, creaturely form, spiritual ecology, and the Ecology of the Cross.

Yale Divinity School | M.A.R., Religion and the Arts | 2002

Concentrations and interests included religion and literature, religious imagination, ancient and medieval art, ethics, and interdisciplinary theological study.

Wofford College | B.A., Religion | 2000

RESEARCH AREAS

Ecological theology and spiritual ecology; phenomenology of nature and perception; Edith Stein, empathy, finite being, and form; Maurice Merleau-Ponty, flesh, chiasm, and écart; Aristotle, Henri Bergson, and Raymond Ruyer; process thought and Alfred North Whitehead; ecological intentionality and more-than-human ethics; vegetal life and plant ethics; Christian theology of the cross, kenosis, and Carmelite spirituality; decolonial conservation and Gullah Geechee ecological practices; religion, artificial intelligence infrastructure, energy, and water ethics; Assyrian reliefs, displacement, museum ethics, and ancient art reception.

BOOK

Harrelson, Sam. *Asia Has Claims Upon New England: Assyrian Reliefs at Yale*. New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 2006. ISBN 0-89467-965-1.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION RESEARCH

2026. "Ecological Intentionality, Creaturely Form, and The Ecology of the Cross: A Cruciform Phenomenology of Creaturely Relation." Comprehensive examination paper, California Institute of Integral Studies, August 2026. 54 pp. Passed August 31, 2026.

2026-present. "Intimacy with Remainder: Toward Ecological Intentionality." Second comprehensive examination project bringing Edith Stein's non-primordially into conversation with Merleau-Ponty's flesh, reversibility, and écart, with attention to differentiated creaturely goods and ecological relation.

SELECTED RESEARCH PAPERS & ACADEMIC ESSAYS

2026. "A Life in Act: Edith Stein and the Education of Attention."

2026. "Displaced Forms: Assyrian Reliefs, Ecological Intentionality, and the Ethics of Perception."

2026. "Ecological Intentionality and the Metaphysics of Living Form."

2026. "Attention as Ecological Practice: AI Data Centers and the Limits of the Anthropocene."

2026. "Gigawatts and Wisdom: Toward an Ecological Ethics of Artificial Intelligence."

2026. "Creaturely Perception and the Greening of Being: Hildegard of Bingen, Edith Stein, and the Ecology of the Cross."

2026. "Learning to Be Addressed by Trees: Vegetal Empathy, Ecological Intentionality, and the Limits of the Human."

2026. "After the Crossroads: Artificial Intelligence, Place-Based Ethics, and the Slow Work of Moral Discernment."

2026. "Ecological Intentionality and the Depth of Being."

2025. "Quantum-Plasma Consciousness and the Ecology of the Cross."

2025. "Artificial Intelligence at the Crossroads of Science, Ethics, and Spirituality."

2025. "Integral Plasma Ecology: Toward a Cosmological Theology of Energy and Relation."

2025. "Integral Plasma Ecologies."

2025. "Integral Plasma Dynamics: Consciousness, Cosmology, and Terrestrial Intelligence."

2025. "Convergent Intelligence: Merging Artificial Intelligence with Integral Ecology and Whitehead Schedulers."

2025. "Conservation as Communion."

2025. "Process Ecology of the Cross: Communion, Kenosis, and the Politics of Planetary Becoming."

2025. "From Communion to Kenosis: Toward an Integral Ecology of the Cross."

2025. "Wording the Between: Toward an Ecological Metaphysics of Communion through Liturgy and Language."

2024. "Empathy, Embodiment, and Ecology: A Phenomenological Path to Decolonial Embodiment and Reconciliation."

2024. "Decolonial Methods and Epistemologies in the Study of Gullah Geechee Ecological and Spiritual Practices."

2024. "Reconstructing Relationships: Decolonial Methods and Epistemologies in the Study of Gullah Geechee Ecological and Spiritual Practices."

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS & INVITED ACADEMIC TALKS

2026. "History as Empathic Ecology: Edith Stein and the Creaturely Horizon of Catholic Memory." Eternity in Time: Thinking with the Church through History, Christendom College, Front Royal, VA, February 21.

2026. "Roots of Cruciform Consciousness: Returning to the Ground of Ecological Intentionality." Graduate Conference in Religion and Ecology, Yale Divinity School, New Haven, CT, February 20.

2026. "Ecologies of Refuge: Trees, Crosses, and the Art of Neighborliness." "And Who Is My Neighbor?" Symposium, DePaul University, Chicago, IL, February 17.

2025. "Re-envisioning Boundaries: Ecological Theology, Migration, and the Sacredness of the Non-Human." International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture Conference, University of California, Santa Barbara, June.

2025. "Relational Roots and Ecological Futures: Bridging Whitehead, Cobb, and Gullah Wisdom Toward a Decolonized Ecological Civilization." Accepted for Is It Too Late?: Toward an Ecological Civilization, Center for Process Studies, Pomona College, June; unable to attend.

2025. "Ecological Intentionality: Performing Peace Beyond Human Boundaries." American Academy of Religion, Western Region, Arizona State University, March 16.

2025. Moderator, "The Power of Water in Religious Networks and Creation," Seventh Annual Religion and Ecology Summit, California Institute of Integral Studies, April 21.

SELECTED PREACHING, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION & PUBLIC THEOLOGY

2026. "What We Ask of the Water." Guest meditation, Unitarian Universalist Church of Spartanburg, August 23.

2026. "The First Home Is a Watershed." Guest meditation, Unitarian Universalist Church of Spartanburg, August 16.

2026. "Labor Not in Vain." Progressive Christian Service, Spartanburg, September 6.

2026-present. Youth Sunday School teacher and curriculum designer, First Presbyterian Church, Spartanburg, SC; additional adult Bible study and small-group facilitation.

2014-present. Ordained minister, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship; preaching, teaching, ecological theology, congregational formation, and public theological reflection.

TEACHING & ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

California Institute of Integral Studies | Doctoral Researcher | 2024-present

Advanced research and writing in ecology, spirituality, religion, phenomenology, process-relational metaphysics, decolonial methodology, integral ecology, ecological ethics, and theology.

Wilson Hall, Sumter, South Carolina | Science Teacher | 2023-2024

Taught AP Physics, Environmental Science & Ecology, Physics I, and seventh-grade science; supported field-based environmental learning and interdisciplinary inquiry.

Thomas Sumter Academy, Rembert, South Carolina | Science Teacher & Dean of Students | 2021-2023

Taught Physical Science, AP Physics, and Earth and Space Science; provided student support, academic leadership, discipline, advising, and community formation. Golf coach.

Carolina Day School, Asheville, North Carolina | Science, Mathematics, History & English Teacher | 2011-2013

Interdisciplinary middle-school instruction across science and humanities. Baseball coach.

Spartanburg Day School, Spartanburg, South Carolina | Science Teacher | 2009-2011

Taught Physical Science and Robotics; designed inquiry-based science experiences integrating laboratory, engineering, and technology work.

Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, North Carolina | Instructor | 2007-2009

Taught Introduction to the Old Testament (Religion 101), including biblical interpretation, historical context, theological themes, discussion, writing, and assessment.

Additional Independent-School Teaching | South Carolina & North Carolina | 2002-2021

Additional appointments included Hammond School and other work at Spartanburg Day School and Carolina Day School. Courses across the full teaching record included Life Science, Environmental Science, Physical Science, Physics, Robotics, Design Technology, mathematics, religious studies, literature, and creative writing.

MUSEUM & CURATORIAL EXPERIENCE

Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut | Curatorial Assistant | 2000-2003

Research and museum work related to ancient Near Eastern art, Assyrian palace reliefs, biblical archaeology, nineteenth-century American religious imagination, and the collecting and display histories that became the basis of Asia Has Claims Upon New England.

PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP & DIGITAL RESEARCH

2026-present. Ecological Intentionality (ecologicalintentionality.org). Public field journal and research site documenting place-based phenomenological practice, creaturely perception, and the development of ecological intentionality through sustained observation of a black walnut in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

2026-present. Carolina Ecology (carolinaecology.com). Essays and public scholarship on ecology, water, infrastructure, memory, place, environmental ethics, and the Carolina Piedmont.

2003-present. samharrelson.com. Essays and public scholarship on theology, phenomenology, ecology, technology, education, ministry, and the Ecology of the Cross.

2023-2025. Poetry included in the South Carolina Poetry Collection.

Host, Thinking Religion podcast. Conversations and reflections at the intersections of religion, culture, ecology, theology, and public life.

CONSULTING & ORGANIZATIONAL WORK

Harrelson Agency / Sam Harrelson Consulting | Founder & Consultant | 2004-present

Digital strategy, marketing, web development, communications, and organizational storytelling for nonprofits, churches, schools, and mission-driven organizations.

MinistriesLab | Founder

Project focused on equipping faith communities for ecological futures through theology, ecology, and digital strategy.

StudiesLab | Founder

Intentional learning initiative for gifted young people centered on depth, flexibility, inquiry, and interdisciplinary formation.

SERVICE & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Board Member, First Presbyterian Church Weekday School, Spartanburg, South Carolina.
- Youth Sunday School Teacher and Curriculum Designer, First Presbyterian Church, Spartanburg, South Carolina.
- Facilitator, First Presbyterian Church Men's Bible Study, Spartanburg, South Carolina, 2026-present.
- Public testimony on children's well-being, housing, and ecology, South Carolina Committee on Children public hearing, Greenville, South Carolina, September 2026.
- AmeriCorps community service, Spartanburg, South Carolina, 1997-2000.

TEACHING COMPETENCIES

Biblical studies and Old Testament; introductory theology; Christian theology and ecology; spiritual formation; world religions; ethics and environmental ethics; religion and literature; religion and art; religion and science; academic writing and research; introductory religious studies; interdisciplinary humanities and science.

ACADEMIC PROFILES

Google Scholar; ORCID; Academia.edu; samharrelson.com/papers-and-publications.

SELECTED TECHNICAL & PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Academic writing and editing; curriculum design; biblical and theological instruction; interdisciplinary pedagogy; student advising and academic leadership; conference presentation design; Zotero; Obsidian; Google Workspace; WordPress; Divi; Substack; digital publishing; podcast production; SEO and digital strategy; web analytics; nonprofit communications.