

Aaron W. Hughes, University of Rochester



Aaron W. Hughes is professor of religious studies in the department of religion and classics at the University of Rochester. Hughes has published widely in Jewish Studies, Islamic Studies, and theory and method in the academic study of religion. He is also the incoming Editor-in-Chief of Method and Theory in the Study of Religion (MTSR), the only journal devoted explicitly to issues concerning method and theory in the field. Hughes has previously taught at the University of Calgary, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, McMaster University, and the State University of New York.

RSN: Please describe the series for our readers.

Hughes: As I understand it, the Academy Series is a "first book," but **not** a dissertation, series. This means that its goal is to help new authors begin the often daunting and complicated task of transforming their dissertations into publishable monographs with a world-class press, Oxford University Press. My goal is to work relatively closely with authors to help them negotiate some of the pitfalls that can arise at an early and formative stage of their careers as they make the transition from graduate student to academic professional. In addition, the series seeks to signal new trends in the field and to showcase the vitality of graduate work in religious studies. Unlike other AAR/OUP series, graduate advisors nominate young scholars who are doing interesting and original research. (A note to potential authors: not all advisors will do this or are even aware of the series; sometimes you have to nudge them.) Only manuscripts based on dissertations defended within two years of submission are eligible for the Academy Series.

In the Academy Series, the ideal author is someone who has defended their dissertation, incorporated the salient suggestions of their committee, and revised the manuscript so that it no longer reads as a dissertation. A dissertation, no matter what an advisor or committee may say, is not a book. Unfortunately I receive too many submissions that still state, "In this dissertation, I will..."

RSN: What are your goals for the series?

Hughes: My goal for the series is simple: to publish the best work currently being done in graduate departments in North America and beyond. I do not want young scholars or their (former) advisors to think that the Academy Series is "only a dissertation series." It is not, and the quality of the manuscripts that I have seen through the peer review process attests to this. In order to improve the already excellent quality of the series I would encourage advisors to let me know what is up-and-coming and young scholars to get in contact with me about their projects and their feasibility for the series.

RSN: What kind of submissions will you be seeking and what are important topics for future volumes?

Hughes: The Academy Series is a generalist series and, as such, is open to all. Because a series is only as good as the submissions it receives, however, I do have a "wish list" of the types of manuscripts that I would like to receive. In short, I want theoretically sophisticated works. I am most interested in projects that ask specific theoretical questions of their data that would, in turn, be useful or recognizable to scholars working with different data but asking similar questions. In my humble opinion, it is ultimately the questions, not the data-sets, that enable religionists to talk to one another. Within this context, I would like to see more manuscripts that deal with interrogating the very category "religion" in manifold traditions, historical periods, and geographic regions.

For more information about this series and our other book series, visit the AAR website at <http://www.aarweb.org/Publications/Books>

. AAR book series are published by Oxford University Press.