

Lanta Davis

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EDUCATION

PhD in Literature and Religion
Baylor University, Waco, TX

M.A. in Bible and Theology in Christian Heritage
Sioux Falls Seminary, Sioux Falls, SD

B.A. in English
South Dakota State University, Brookings, SD

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Professor of Humanities and Literature (2016-current)
John Wesley Honors College; Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion, IN

Program Director and Assistant Professor of English (2013-2016)
Northwest Christian University, Eugene, OR

Instructor of Record (2007-2013)
Baylor University, Waco, TX

PUBLICATIONS

Books:

Becoming by Beholding: The Formative Power of the Imagination. Baker Academic, July 2024.

Refereed Journal Articles:

“The Art of Practicing Hope.” Forthcoming in *Teleios*.

“Wisdom’s Guiding Compass: Lady Prudence as a Pedagogical Model.” *Religions* 11.4 (2020): 1-11. *MDPI*, doi: 10.3390/rel11040153.

“Formative Assessments to Form Christian Readers.” *International Journal of Christianity and Education* 23.1 (January 2019): 1-14. *Sage*, doi: 10.1177/2056997118814013

“Redemptive Suffering in the Isenheim Altarpiece and Bernard MacLaverty’s *Cal*.” *New Hibernia Review* 22.3 (2018): 81-95. doi: 10.1353/nhr.2018.0032

“‘This Confession Has Meant Nothing’: Bret Easton Ellis’s *American Psycho*.” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 45.4 (Summer 2016): 311-330.

“Triple Time Rhythm: Waltzing toward God in Zelda Fitzgerald’s *Save Me the Waltz*.” *Literature and Belief* 33.1 (Spring 2013): 1-12.

“‘Calmly Making Ribbons’ of Eternity: The Futility of the Modern Project in Flann O’Brien’s *The Third Policeman*.” *Renascence* 64.4 (Summer 2012): 341-52.

“Embracing Paradox: A Dialogue of Suffering between John Paul II and Shūsaku Endō.” *Intégrité* 11.1 (Spring 2012): 27-40.

Book Chapters:

“Joyful Repetition: How to Fight Academic Acedia.” *Purpose and Joy: Sustaining a Meaningful Career in Christian Higher Education*, Ed. Kristin VanEyck and Elisabeth Lefebvre. Abilene Christian University Press, 2026.

“Learning to See: Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s ‘Aurora Leigh.’” *A Reader on Vocation in Higher Education*. Ed. Jessica Hooten Wilson and Jacob Stratman. Zondervan Academics, 2022.

“‘And Then I Fell A-Weeping’: Tears and Reconciliation in Puritan Captivity Narratives.” *The Captivity Narrative: Enduring Shackles and Emancipating Language of Subjectivity*. Ed. Benjamin E. Allen. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012. 31-52.

Book Reviews:

“Review of Judith Wolfe’s *The Theological Imagination*.” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 54.4 (Summer 2025), 100-102.

Popular Articles:

“Harry Clarke’s Fairytale Vision of the Gospel.” Forthcoming in *Christian Century*.

“Harry Clarke’s Window into Our Lady of Sorrows.” *Dappled Things* blog, September 2025.

“Harry Clarke’s Window into Our Lady of Sorrows.” *Dappled Things* blog, September 2025.

“Shaping Witnesses: Baylor’s English Graduate Program.” *Christian Scholar’s Review* blog, December 2024, (co-written with Jeff Bilbro).

“Bone Chapels and Their Strange Art.” *Christian Century*, October 2024.

“These Notorious Roman Emperors Became Ghostly Legends.” *National Geographic*, October 2024 (co-written with Vince Reighard).

“Discover the Mysteries of Italy’s Park of Monsters, a 16th-Century Garden Filled with Strange, Colossal Stone Creatures.” *Smithsonian Magazine*, October 2024 (co-written with Vince Reighard).

“Visual Meditation on Harry Clarke: Stations of the Cross, Saint Patrick’s Basilica.” *ArtWay*, Kirby Laing Centre for Public Theology in Cambridge, September 2024.

“The Art of Fashioning the Soul.” *Christianity Today*, July 2024.

“Personifying Prudence: The Face(s) of Wisdom. *Christian Scholar’s Review* blog, July 2024.

“Making Virtue Personal.” *Christian Scholar’s Review* blog. July 2024.

“Saint Patrick Opened a Portal to Purgatory on This Little-Known Irish Island.” *Smithsonian Magazine*, March 2024 (co-written with Vince Reighard).

“The Witness of Women Is Written on the Walls.” *Christianity Today*, March, 2024.

“Saint Patrick’s Windows into Grief.” *Plough*, March, 2024.

“The Faces of Freedom: Art of the Cardinal Virtues.” *Parabola*, Spring 2024.

“Nationalism as a Failure of the Imagination.” *Christian Century*, December 28th, 2021.

“How the Muppets Helped Me Contemplate My Mortality This Christmas.” *Christ and Pop Culture*, December 28th, 2020.

“Covid-19 Is Our Monster and Our Mirror.” *Christ and Pop Culture*, September 16th, 2020.

HONORS and AWARDS (SELECTED)

University Scholars Award: \$9000 (2025)

Finalist, *Christianity Today* Book of the Year Award in Culture, Poetry, Arts (2024)

Honorable Mention, *Southwestern Journal of Theology’s* Book of the Year Award in Spiritual Formation/Discipleship (2024)

Lilly Faculty Award: \$6000 (2024)

Sabbatical Award (2022-23)

Fulbright U.S. Scholar Award (2021): Queen’s University, Belfast

Lilly Faculty Scholarship Award: \$5800 (2021)

IWU Outstanding Scholar of the Year (2020)

Division Professor of the Year (2019)

Lilly Emerging Scholars Grant: \$4000 (2019)

Lilly Strategic Emphasis Grant: \$4000 (2018)

Lilly Endowment Fieldtrip Experiential Learning Grant: \$1500 (Spring 2017 and Fall 2017)

Baylor Outstanding Instructor Award Nomination (2012 and 2013)
Designated for the top 20 instructors (out of approximately 300)

Conyers Scholar (2011- 2012)

Religion and Culture Scholar (2010- 2011)

Alpha Tau Omega's Top Faculty (2011)

Alpha Delta Pi's Top Baylor Administrator (2009)

INVITED LECTURES

Arts Week Keynote Speaker, Dallas Theological Seminary, October 2026.

Festival of Faith and Writing, Calvin University, Grand Rapids, MI, April 2026

Woolman Lecturer in Christian Scholarship, Center for Christian Faith and Culture, Malone University, OH, March 2026

St. Mary University, Bismark, ND, March 2026

Teleios Conference Keynote Speaker, San Antonio, TX, February 2026

Faith and Life Series Lecturer, Minneapolis, MN, October 2025

Trinity Forum Conversation: Spiritual Formation through Our Imaginations, March 2025

Palm Beach Atlantic University, West Palm Beach, FL, February 2025

Redeemer Anglican Church, Richmond, VA, January 2025

Veritas School, Richmond, VA, January 2025

Podcast/Radio Interviews: The Alabaster Jar, The Habit, In All Things, Our Church Speaks, Lough Derg, Old Books with Grace, Context Matters, Christian Century, Across the Canon, Guilt Grace Gratitude, “The Ride Home with John and Kathy” on WORD FM radio

COURSES TAUGHT

At Indiana Wesleyan:

Rhetoric and the Sacramental Imagination

What Is Beauty?

Great Texts I

Great Texts II

How Then Shall We Live? (co-taught)

Ignatian Spiritual Exercises

Italy Travel Course: The Christian Imagination

At Queen's University, Belfast, during the Fulbright

Contemporary Irish Women's Literature

(Un)Belief in Troubles Novels: Contemporary Irish Literature

At NCU (now Bushnell) and Baylor:

Ideas Matter: Engaging World Thought and Culture I

Ideas Matter: Engaging World Thought and Culture II

Great Texts: Intellectual Traditions of the Ancient World

Mythology

Honors Colloquium

Christianity and Literature

Postmodern Film, Literature, Music and Art in America

Bible as Literature

British Literature Survey

American Literature Surveys and Special Topics

English Capstone

Advanced Writing

Introductory Writing Courses—Composition and Research Writing

Creative Nonfiction Workshop

PRESENTATIONS (SELECTED)

“Putting a Face on Virtue.” Educating Character Across Differences: Cultivating Communities of Character in the University, at Wake Forest University, December 2024.

“What Does Womanly Virtue Look Like? Feminine Virtues vs. the Lady Virtues.” Invited Panelist at Evangelical Theological Society, November 2024.

“Personifications of Vices as a Mirror for the Soul.” Ever Ancient, Ever New: de Nicola Center for Ethics at Notre Dame and Catholic Imagination Conference, October 2024.

“Becoming by Beholding: The Imagination and Spiritual Formation.” IFL Conference: Art Seeking Understanding, October 2022.

“The Personification of Prudence as a Pedagogical Model.” The Character of the University Conference, October 2019.

“‘Nada Be Thy Name’: Empty Christian Signifiers in Hemingway.” International Ernest Hemingway Society Conference, July 2018.

“Appreciating the Text, Living the Text: Assessment that Forms Attitude.” MLA International Conference, January 2018.

“Pedagogical Strategies for Forming Charitable Readers.” Western Regional Conference of Christianity and Literature (CCL), May 2017.

“Grunewald’s Isenheim Altarpiece as a Model of Redemptive Suffering in Bernard MacLaverly’s *Cal*.” Eastern Regional Conference of Christianity and Literature (CCL), May 2016.

“The Modern Transformation of Witness, Penance, and Atonement in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*.” Western Regional Conference of Christianity and Literature (CCL), May 2012.

“Oppressing the Oppressor: Phillis Wheatley’s Elegies.” South Central Modern Language Association (SCMLA), October 2011.

“‘And Then I Fell A-Weeping’: Tears and Reconciliation in Puritan Captivity Narratives.” Popular Culture and American Culture Association (PCA/ACA), April 2011.

“Embracing Paradox: A Dialogue of Suffering between John Paul II and Shūsaku Endō.” South Central Modern Language Association (SCMLA), October 2010.

“The Madwoman in *The Office*.” Baylor Graduate Student Association Academic Forum on Pop Culture, March 2009.

“Everyday Redemption: Salvation in the Sacred Ordinary in *The Color Purple*.” South Central Modern Language Association (SCMLA), November 2008.

ACADEMIC SERVICE (SELECTED)

IWU Faculty Development Lecture and Workshop on the Christian Imagination (2025)

IWU Common Learning Theme Committee (2024-current)

Global Studies Committee (2024-current)

Assessment Committee (2016-current)

Assessment Fellow (2016-current)

John Wesley Honors College and Luther Lee Scholars Interviewer (2016-current)

General Education Revision Focus Group (2025-26)

Academic Affairs Voting Member (2016-2023)

Aldersgate Book Award Selection Committee (2016-2022)

Interviewer for JWHC Guest Authors, including Makoto Fujimura, Vittorio Montemaggi, and Jeff Bilbro (2016-2024)

Christianity Today Book-of-the-Year Judge—Fiction (2020)

Conference on Christianity and Literature Book Award Judge (2019)

Peer Reviewer for *The Explicator* (2020)

Aldersgate Magazine Supervisor (2018-2021)

Study Abroad Leader: Italy (2018), UK (2016)

Film Club (2016)

Faculty Adviser for the British Studies Club (2015-16)

Writing Center Director (2013-16)

Chair, Faculty Forum (2014-15)

General Education Committee (2014-15)

Study Abroad Committee (2014-15)

Undergraduate Research Committee (2013-14)

SCMLA Christianity and Literature Chair (2011)