

Meaghan O’Keefe

Email: mmokeefe@ucdavis.edu

Education

Ph.D. in Rhetoric, Carnegie Mellon University, 2012

M.A. in English/Rhetoric, Carnegie Mellon University, 2005

B.A. in English with Honors, University of Maryland - College Park, 2002

Areas of Expertise

Contemporary Catholicism. Religious discourse in contemporary American political debate. Other areas include bioethics, bureaucratic language, genetic and reproductive technologies, and public health policy.

Research

My research and scholarship focus on public argument in the United States, particularly how authority and trust are negotiated by those in positions of moral leadership. I use insights and methods from linguistics to demonstrate how small-scale grammatical constructions form the scaffolding for large-scale rhetorical goals, particularly as those goals revolve around public argumentation, ethics, and trust.

As part of my larger interest in public policy and argument, I have been part of the UC Bioethics North Collaboratory team research projects on normative communication ethics, such as the importance of using appropriate metaphors when discussing promissory technology, such as CRISPR-Cas9, neuroscience (particularly how patients negotiate moral and religious issues), Physician Aid in Dying, and applied ethics.

Academic Positions

2013-Present	Assistant Professor, Religious Studies, University of California Davis
2010-2013	Lecturer, Religious Studies Program, University of California Davis
2008-2009	Lecturer, University Writing Program, University of California Davis
2007-2009	Lead Instructor, Summer College Preview program, Carnegie Mellon University, Qatar Campus (CMUQ)
2004-2008	Instructor, Department of English, Carnegie Mellon University

Monograph

My book, *The American Catholic Bishops and the Politics of Scandal: Rhetoric of Authority* (Routledge 2019) investigates how the sexual abuse scandals have affected the political statements issued by the American Catholic hierarchy in the period from 2002 when scandals emerged until the 2016 presidential election.

Peer-reviewed Publications

Single Author Publications

O’Keefe, M. (2015) "Borrowed Authority: The American Catholic Bishops’ Argument by Citation." *Written Communication*. 32 (2), 150-173

O’Keefe, M. (2013) “Sainthood as Rebuke: The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Strategic Canonization of Dorothy Day.” *Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric*. 3(1):1-16.

O'Keefe, M. (2008). "Rhetorical Figures in English Composition for Arabic Speakers." *ITL International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, (156), 237-238.

Co-Authored Publications

Perrault, Sarah and Meaghan O'Keefe. "New Metaphors for New Understandings of Genomes." *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 62:1 (Winter 2019): 1-19.

Perrault, Sarah and Meaghan O'Keefe. "Journeys as Shared Human Experiences." *The American Journal of Bioethics* 16.10 (2016): 13-15.

O'Keefe, Meaghan, Sarah Perrault, Jodi Halpern, Lisa Ikemoto, Mark Yarborough & UC North Bioethics Collaboratory for Life & Health Sciences. "Editing" Genes: A Case Study About How Language Matters in Bioethics." *The American Journal of Bioethics* 15.12 (2015): 3-10.

Book Reviews

"Gaymon Bennett, *Technicians of human dignity: bodies, souls, and the making of intrinsic worth.*" Review. *American Journal of Bioethics*. (2016). 1.

Robert A. Yelle, *The semiotics of religion: Signs of the sacred in history.*" Review. *Language in Society* 43.02 (2014): 245-248.

Manuscript Reviewer

2017-9 *Genetics and Medicine*

2016-7 *Journal of General Internal Medicine*

2016 *Journal of Medical Humanities*

2015 *Written Communication*

Public Service and Outreach

2017-19 University of California Davis Hospital Ethics Committee. Member

2017-18 The California End of Life Option Act Task Force. Steering Committee Member

2015 "End of Life Option Act Response Conference." Group facilitator. San Francisco, December 12th.

Affiliations

Berkeley Genomics/Bioethics/Policy Supergroup

UC North Bioethics Collaboratory

Law and Society Association

American Society for Bioethics and Humanities

UC Davis Bioethics Commons

Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART) Working Group

Affiliated Faculty, UC Davis Medical School Bioethics Program

Affiliated Faculty, UC Davis Jewish Studies Program

Affiliated Faculty, UC Davis Graduate Group in the Study of Religion

Affiliated Faculty, Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies

Research Support

Current Research Support

2019-2021 Mellon New Directions Fellowship, \$215,000. “Technologies of Life.” The Fellowship covers tuition for courses in genetics and law and salary support for one year.

Completed Research Support

- 2016-7 Feminist Research Institute Seed Grant, \$5000 (shared with Ranal Jaleel, Lisa Ikemoto, and Sarah Perrault) “Developing and Democratizing Feminist Frameworks for the Ethics of Genome Modification through Digital Humanities.”
- 2015-16 The University of California North Bioethics Collaboratory. Funded by a Multi-Campus Research Program grant from the University of California Office of the President. As a Collaboratory member, I was awarded **summer salary in 2015 and 2016.**

Selected Public Presentations

“Creating Right Relations: Justification in Evangelical Christian ART Discourse.” Baby Markets Roundtable. Washington DC, June 2019.

“The Reconfiguration of Human Dignity and the Erasure of Communities, People, and Rights in Reproduction and Intimacy.” International Meeting on Law and Society, Washington DC, June 2019.

“Genomic Technologies and American Evangelical Women.” International Meeting on Law and Society, Mexico City, Mexico, June 2017.

“CRISPR Dreams and Women's Bodies: Ethics, Theology, and Public Opinion About Human Germline Modification Through Assisted Reproduction.” American Society for Bioethics and Humanities Conference, Washington, DC, October 2016.

“Ethics and metaphors in CRISPR Discourse.” CRISPR Technology: Responsible Discourse about Science and Bioethics, Davis, CA. May 2016.

“Digital Invention: Finding, Selecting, and Using Digital Tools for Rhetorical Study.” Rhetoric Society of America Conference, San Antonio, TX May 2014.

“America’s Nuns, the Vatican’s Bishops: Individuals and Institutions in American Catholic Politics.” First Annual Conference on Interdisciplinary Encounters in Religion, Law, and Ethics. UC Irvine, May 2013.

“Crimes and Freedoms: Abortion and the American Catholic Bishops’ Emergent Discourse of Rights.” 2013 American Academy of Religion Western Region Conference. Tempe, AZ.

“Religion and American Politics: The Catholic Bishops’ Voting Guide.” The Paul and Marie Castelfranco Lecture in Religion and Common Understanding, University of California, Davis, 2012.

“Teaching the American College Admission Essay in the Persian Gulf.”
Invited Speaker, Carnegie Mellon University Communication Symposium, Summer 2009.

“Doubt in the Qatari Classroom: Teaching the ‘Hedge’ in Academic ESL English.”

Invited Speaker, Carnegie Mellon University Communication Symposium, Summer 2008.

“The Pope and the Public: The Role of Intention in Apologies.” 2007 Modern Language Association. Chicago, IL.

“Story and Argument: Rhetorical Uses of Embedding and Focalization” 2007 Midwest Modern Language Association. Cleveland, OH.

“Just Fears: Francis Bacon’s Religious War Rhetoric.” International Society for the History of Rhetoric, July, 2007. Strasbourg, France.

“Strategy and Absence: An Argument for Eloquence.” Teaching English Globally: 2006 Communication Symposium, Carnegie Mellon University. Pittsburgh, PA.