

Plenary Lecture for the American Academy of  
Religion-Western Region Annual Conference



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

Religious Studies  
& Classics



## Haunted America: Reading the Spiritual Turn

Saturday, April 2, 7:00PM  
Modern Languages Building 350  
**FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

2016 PLENARY SPEAKER:  
**Tracy Fessenden**

Dr. Fessenden is the Steve and Margaret Forster Professor of Comparative Mythologies on the Faculty of Religious Studies at Arizona State University.

What explains the renewal of interest in the spiritual in America today? Answers often point to the fact that Americans self-identify as never before as spiritual-but-not-religious, or to a dispersal of the sacred into the secular realms of media, politics and economics. Dr. Fessenden reads the spiritual turn as belonging also to a ghostly history of American violence, pursued in the name of individual freedoms. The project of reconciling this hidden history and its unquiet witness with the quest for psychic health and wholeness, she suggests, contributes an animating strain in the history of American spirituality from the Transcendentalists to the War on Terror.

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