

JOSIAH TARU, PhD

Oklahoma State University – Center for Health Sciences

1111 W 17th Street, Tulsa, OK 74107 · | josiah.taru@okstate.edu

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

2026 - present	Postdoctoral Associate <i>Center for Health Sciences</i> Oklahoma State University, Tulsa, USA
2023–2026	Postdoctoral Associate <i>Boniuk Institute for the Study and Advancement of Religious Tolerance</i> Rice University, Houston, USA
2021–2023	Postdoctoral Fellow <i>Centre for the Advancement of Scholarship</i> University of Pretoria, South Africa
2010–2023	Senior Lecturer <i>Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology</i> Great Zimbabwe University, Zimbabwe
2015–2016	Tutor, Department of Sociology University of Pretoria, South Africa
2008–2010	Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of Sociology University of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe

EDUCATION

2020	Ph.D., Humanities <i>Department of Anthropology, Archaeology, and Development Studies</i> University of Pretoria, South Africa
2010	M.Sc., Sociology and Social Anthropology University of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe
2008	B.Sc., Sociology University of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe

COMPUTER SKILL

Kobo Toolbox for Humanitarian
SPSS, NVivo & R
Quantum GIS

PUBLICATIONS

BOOK (MANUSCRIPT)

In progress	Taru, J. <i>African Pentecostalism and Moral Order in Postcolonial Economies: Negotiating Faith, Prosperity, and Precarity.</i> [Under contract University of Virginia Press]
-------------	--

BOOK CHAPTERS

- In press **Taru, J.** & Basure, H. S. 'Migration and Reproductive Decision-making: A Study of Zimbabwean Couples in South Africa and the United Kingdom.' In Mkhwanazi, N. & Bhana, D. (eds.) *Conceiving Change: Rethinking Reproduction in Africa*. London: Zed Books.
- 2025 Igboin, B. & **Taru, J.** 'Africa.' In Adogame, A. & Harvey, G. (eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Indigenous Religions*. Routledge. ISBN 9781032201412.
- 2024 Muyambo, T., **Taru, J.** & Sibanda, F. 'Situating Mainline Christian Churches' Responses to COVID-19 Vaccination in Masvingo and Bikita Districts, Zimbabwe.' In Muyambo, T., Sibanda, F. & Chitando, E. (eds.) *Religion and COVID-19 Vaccination in Zimbabwe*. Routledge. ISBN 9781032483573.
- 2022 Macheke, M. T., **Taru, J.**, & Sibanda, F. 'Emergency Remote Instruction in Times of COVID-19 Pandemic.' In Mogaji, E. (ed.) *Re-imagining Educational Futures in Developing Countries*. Palgrave MacMillan. ISBN 9783030882334.
- 2020 **Taru, J.** 'Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and the Management of Precarity in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe.' In Öhlmann, P., Gräb, W. & Frost, M. (eds.) *African Initiated Christianity and the Decolonization of Development*. Routledge. ISBN 9781032175799.
- 2019 **Taru, J.** 'Mobile Applications and Religious Processes among Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians in Zimbabwe.' In Fewkes, J. H. (ed.) *Anthropological Perspectives on the Religious Uses of Mobile Apps*. Palgrave MacMillan. ISBN 9783030263768.

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

- 2026 **Taru, J.** & Ecklund, H. E. 'Beyond FFP: Religion and Ethical Thinking among Scientists in Three National Contexts.' *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*.
- 2025 **Taru, J.** & Ecklund, H. E. 'Science and Religion in the Context of a Good Death.' *Review of Religious Research* 0(0): 1–26.
- 2024 **Taru, J.** & McNeill, F. "'Faith it, till you make it": Prosperity Gospel and Spiritual Hustling among Young Pentecostal Christians in Harare." *African Studies Review* 67(4): 941–966.
- 2020 Gukurume, S. & **Taru, J.** "'We are soldiers in God's army": Spiritual Warfare and Adoption of the Military Trope in Pentecostal Charismatic Churches in Southern Africa.' *Journal of Religion in Africa* 50: 278–298.
- Morreira, S., **Taru, J.** & Truys, C. 'Place and Pedagogy: Using Space and Materiality in Teaching Social Science in Southern Africa.' *Third World Thematic* 5(2): 137–153.
- Taru, J.** 'Envisioning an Alternative: A Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement and Everyday Life in Post-colonial Zimbabwe.' *Religion, State & Society* 48(4): 239–255.
- Chitongo, L. & **Taru, J.** 'Framing Subalternity, Precarity and Poverty in Selected Songs by Leonard Zhakata.' *Muziki* 16(2): 22–37.
- 2019 Basure, H. S., **Taru, J.** & Mutangi, G. T. 'Livelihoods Fragility and Land Tenure in the Post Fast Track Land Reform Era in Upper-Guruve, Zimbabwe.' *Anthropology Southern Africa* 42(3): 259–270.
- 2015 **Taru, J.** & Settler, F. 'Patterned Consumption and Materialism among Zimbabwean Christians.' *Journal for the Study of Religion* 28(2): 137–137.
- Taru, J.** & Chazovachii, B. 'Rural Households' Livelihoods Diversification through Termite Utilization in a Depressed Region of Zimbabwe.' *Chinese Journal of Population Resources and Environment* 13(4): 373–378.
- 2013 **Taru, J.** & Basure, H. S. 'Conflicts, Contestation, and Marginalization in Urban Agriculture: Experiences from Kuwadzana Extension, Harare.' *Russian Journal of Agricultural and Socio-Economic Sciences* 18(6): 15–26.
- Taru, J.** & Gukurume, S. 'Corporate Social Responsibility in the Tourism Industry: Lessons from Communities Surrounding Great Zimbabwe Monuments.' *Journal of Tourism Challenges and Trends* 6(1): 59–74.

BOOK REVIEWS

- 2024 **Taru, J.** Review of Bekithemba Dube (ed.), *Religious Leaders and the Regime in the Second Republic of Zimbabwe*. (Lexington Books, 2023). *African Studies Review* 1–3.

- 2023 **Taru, J.** Review of Devaka Premawardhana, *Faith in Flux: Pentecostalism and Mobility in Rural Mozambique*. (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018). *Anthropology Southern Africa* 46(1): 64–66.

PUBLISHED CONFERENCE PAPERS

- 2023 Museva, T. & **Taru, J.** ‘Green Energy, Land and Rights of Indigenous Communities in Chisumbanje, Zimbabwe.’ *National Symposium on Realizing Sustainable Development and Human Rights in Zimbabwe*. Raoul Wallenberg Institute.

SELECTED FELLOWSHIPS

- 2025–2026 **Visiting African Scholar** (with Kiama Mugambi) [Declined]
Council on African Studies (CAS), Whitney & Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies
Yale University
- 2023 **Visiting Fellow** (with Daniel Miller)
Centre for Digital Anthropology, University College London
- 2023 **Visiting Fellow** (with Afe Adogame)
Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity, Princeton Theological Seminary
- 2021 **Visiting Fellow** (with Katrien Pype)
City and Technology Odysseus Project, KU Leuven, Belgium
- 2020 **Konnect Fellowship** (with Thomas Kirsch)
Zukunftskolleg, University of Konstanz, Germany

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

- 2021–2024 **“African Spirituality, Health, and Well-being in the Face of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Zimbabwe”**
Engaging African Realities grant · Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity
- 2021 **“Vulnerability, Inequality, and the Politics of Pandemic Responses”**
Evidence in Governance & Politics (EGAP) · Toronto Metropolitan University
- 2021 **“The Grammar of the Spirit World in Pentecostalized Africa” — International Conference Grant**
DFG-Programme & Point Sud · Conference held in Ghana, September 2021
- 2020–2022 **“Interrogating the Inclusion and Participation of Vulnerable Groups in Zimbabwe's Local Democracy”**
Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD)
- 2020 **“Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, Cityscapes and Urban Form in Harare” — Fieldwork Grant**
French Institute of South Africa (IFAS-Research)
- 2020 **Research Grant — Green Fuel and Human Rights**
Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law
- 2019 **FlyHigher@UP Grant** · University of Pretoria
- 2016–2018 **Post-Graduate Doctoral Bursary for Humanities** · University of Pretoria
- 2015–2019 **Human Economy Programme Doctoral Fellowship** · Andrew Mellon Foundation
- 2014 **Outstanding Teaching Award** · School of Social Sciences, Great Zimbabwe University

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2024–2025 **Science, Religion, and Health: A Sociological Approach** (co-teach)
Rice University
- 2024–2025 **Facilitator - Boniuk Institute Educator Professional Development Program**

	Rice University
2024–2025	Guest Lecturer — Religion and Politics in Africa; African Pentecostalism in the diaspora Rice University
2020–2023	Science, Innovation and Society (postgraduate) Great Zimbabwe University (Senior Lecturer)
2018–2020	Religion and Peacebuilding Great Zimbabwe University
2016–2023	Anthropology of Religion Great Zimbabwe University
2010–2023	Introduction to Social Anthropology I & II Great Zimbabwe University
2016	Individual and Society (Tutor) University of Pretoria
2008–2009	Introduction to Social Anthropology: Economy, Society, and Governance (Teaching Assistant) University of Zimbabwe

MENTORING EXPERIENCE

2023-2026	I am mentoring five undergraduate and two graduate fellows at the Boniuk Institute Organizing and incorporating undergraduate and graduate fellows into research activities. Rice University
2010-2023	I have supervised 67 honors dissertations I have supervised 3 Master's dissertations to completion. Martin Charambira – “Schisms and splinters in African Initiated Churches: A phenomenological study of Johane Masowe eChishanu.” 2021. Andrew Matake – “Social media and Evangelization in Missionary Churches in postcolonial Zimbabwe.” 2022. Great Zimbabwe University

SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2024	‘Religious and Scientific Boundaries in the Context of Good Death and End-of-Life Care.’ Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Annual Meeting · Pittsburgh, USA, October 19
2024	‘African Pentecostalism, Reverse Mission and Religious Pluralism: Challenges and Opportunities.’ Boniuk Institute Spring Convening on Religious Pluralism and Conflict · Houston, USA, May 30
2022	‘Technology, Spirituality and Intimacy among Pentecostal-Charismatic in Harare.’ African Studies Association Annual Meeting · Philadelphia, USA, November 19
2022	‘Managing Online Pentecostal Intimacy during the Pandemic.’ African Studies Association of the UK Biennial Conference · Liverpool, UK, September 4
2021	‘Green Energy, Land and Rights of Indigenous Communities in Chisumbanje, Zimbabwe.’ Realizing Sustainable Development and Human Rights in Zimbabwe Symposium · Raoul Wallenberg Institute, Harare
2019	‘Religious Peacebuilding Infrastructure in Zimbabwe.’ Churches Convergence on Peace (CCOP) · Zimbabwe Council of Churches & Great Zimbabwe University, August 22
2019	‘Religion, Ethics and the Environment: Lessons from AIC in Zimbabwe.’ Churches in Southern Africa as Civil Society Actors for Ecological Sustainability Symposium · University of Pretoria, October 29
2018	‘Mobile Phone Apps and Religious Processes among Pentecostal Charismatic Christians in Zimbabwe.’

Anthropology Southern Africa Annual Conference · University of Botswana, Gaborone, September 28

- 2018 **'Twixt the State and the Market: Situating Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Post-colonial Zimbabwe.'**
Human Economy SANORD Workshop · University of Pretoria, March 7
- 2017 **'Religion and Child Protection Systems in Zimbabwe: Challenges and Opportunities.'**
International Conference on Breaking the Nexus between Gender and Poverty · Great Zimbabwe University, Victoria Falls, May 15
- 2014 **'Conflicts and Contestations in Urban Agriculture: Narratives from Harare.'**
International Conference: Towards Resilient Urban Communities · UNICEF, Harare, September 18

PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 2025 Ecklund, H. E. & **Taru, J.** 'New Directions for Empirical Research on Religion and Science.' *Theologie und Naturwissenschaften*.
Taru, J. 'Food for God, Fees for the Daughters.' *The Reader*. Rice University Humanities Research Center.
- 2024 **Taru, J.** 'The Rise of African Prophets: The Unchecked Power of the Leaders of Pentecostal Churches.' *The Conversation*.
- 2023 **Taru, J.** 'Ezekiel Guti: Revered Zimbabwean Church Leader Who Preached Hard Work and Morals over Miracles.' *The Conversation*.
'Engaging African Realities: Role and Place of Religion in the Fight against COVID-19.' *GZU Campus Radio*. Two episodes: 22 Sep & 13 Oct.
- 2021 Chimbizikai, T. & **Taru, J.** 'How TB Joshua Overcame the Odds to Establish a Spiritual Empire Far Beyond Nigeria.' *The Conversation*.
- 2020 Kirby, B., **Taru, J.** & Chimbizikai, T. 'Pentecostals and the Spiritual War against Coronavirus in Africa.' *The Conversation*.
Taru, J. 'Digital Tragedy: Doing Online Teaching in Zimbabwe during the Pandemic.' *Corona Times*.
Taru, J. "'You Can Work from Home if the Situation at Home Allows': Teaching during the Pandemic." *p Education International*.

CONSULTANCIES

- 2021 **Evaluating the domestication of Mandela Rules in prisons and places of detention in Zimbabwe, eSwatini, and Zambia**
Consortium of Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) and Southern Africa Network of Prisons (SANOP)
- 2020 **Churches Convergences on Peace**
Zimbabwe Council of Churches
- 2019 **The state of Civic Engagement in Masvingo Province**
Good Governance Africa
- 2009 **Responding to the Cholera Outbreak in Epworth, Harare: Socio-cultural Drive**
Oxfam GB

CONFERENCES ORGANIZED

- 2022 **Reproduction in Africa: New Horizons**
University of Pretoria · September 12–14, 2022
- 2021 **The Grammar of the Spirit World in Pentecostalized Africa**
Point Sud · Accra, Ghana, September 2021

PROFESSIONAL & DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE

2023–2026	Steering Committee Member, RC22 Sociology of Religion · International Sociology Association (ISA)
2022–2026	Editorial Board Member · <i>Cambridge Journal for Anthropology</i>
2020–2025	Editorial Board Member · <i>Research and Development</i> (Humboldt University)
2020–2023	Research Chair, School of Social Sciences · Great Zimbabwe University
2021	Work Related Committee (January–July) · Great Zimbabwe University
2019–2020	School of Social Sciences Representative to the Research Board · Great Zimbabwe University
2012–2015	Student Internship Coordinator, School of Social Sciences · Great Zimbabwe University

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Academy of Religion · Society for the Scientific Study of Religion · Association for the Sociology of Religion · African Studies Association · Medical and Health Humanities in Africa · Religion, Health and Humanities Researchers · International Sociology Association · African Studies Association United Kingdom · Anthropology Southern Africa