David H. Pereyra

Architect and theologian

davidhpereyra.com

Profile

My area of expertise is the trans-disciplinary study and comparison of phenomenological and hermeneutical aspects of architecture and ritual, across philosophy, art forms, place and space. Since 1985, my academic focus has been the interaction of ritual activity and space, to strengthen the dialogue between contemporary life, culture and the rites of everyday life. My research asks how rituals and art expressions can deepen experience and knowledge and increase accessibility for people in vulnerable situations. At the Inclusive Design Research Centre (IDRC), OCAD University, I coordinate projects and community engagement with the disability community.

Education

- **Postdoctoral Fellow, Inclusive Design**, Inclusive Design Research Centre (IDRC), OCAD University, Toronto, 2012–2015
- **PhD in Theology (Philosophy in Theology)**, University of Toronto, 2007–2011. Dissertation: *The Ambo: A Liturgical Place for the Proclamation of the Word of God* (2011). Supervisor: Prof. DDr. Pablo Argárate
- **MA in Theology**, University of St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, 2003–2006. Thesis: *Celebrating the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation: A Study of the Place of Reconciliation for the New Rite* (2006)
- **Architect (Arquitecto)**, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Facultad de Arquitectura, Diseño y Urbanismo (FADU), 1981–1987

Professional Appointments

- **Project and Outreach Coordinator**, Inclusive Design Research Centre, OCAD University, Toronto — 2015–present
- **Professor, *Diseño Inclusivo y Emocional* (distance)**, Facultad de Arquitectura, Universidad Católica de Salta (UCASAL) — 2025–present
- **Instructor, *Liturgy I and II* (distance)**, Domuni Universitas — 2015–present
- **Adjunct Professor and continuing-education instructor**, Faculty of Theology and Continuing Education, University of St. Michael's College, University of Toronto — 2012–present
- **Adjunct Professor**, Faculty of Design and Office of Research & Graduate Studies, OCAD University — 2012–2015
- **Postdoctoral Fellow**, Inclusive Design Research Centre, OCAD University — 2012–2015
- **Coordinator of Inclusive Programs and Activities**, Spanish Centre for Language & Culture, Toronto — 2000–2022
- **Adjunct Professor,** *Arquitectura Sacra*, Facultad de Arquitectura, Universidad Católica de La Plata (UCALP) — 1996–1999
- **Director of Industrial Promotion** (1998–1999) and **Director of Private Works** (1995–1997), Municipalidad de Esteban Echeverría, Buenos Aires

Teaching

University courses

- *Diseño Inclusivo y Emocional*, UCASAL, Facultad de Arquitectura (distance) — 2025–present

- *Liturgy I and II* (in English and Spanish), Domuni Universitas (distance) — 2015–present
- *Early Christian Art and Architecture in its Cultural Context*, Faculty of Theology, University of St. Michael's College — 2012–2024
- *History of Christianity 1 (to 843 CE)*, Faculty of Theology, University of St. Michael's College (graduate) — 2012–2025
- *Christian Imagination I: Visual Arts*, Faculty of Arts & Science, University of St. Michael's College — 2016–2018
- *Christianity in Latin America*, Faculty of Arts & Science, University of St. Michael's College — 2014
- *Comparative Religions*, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Science, OCAD University — 2013–2020
- *Arquitectura Sacra*, Facultad de Arquitectura, Universidad Católica de La Plata — 1996–1999
- Teaching assistant, *Introduction to Liturgy*, University of St. Michael's College — 2010

Continuing education and other courses

- *Ritual Spaces and the Sacred Imagination* (hierotopy approach), University of St. Michael's College, Continuing Education — 2026
- *Paleo-Christian Art*, Parts I–II, University of St. Michael's College, Continuing Education — 2022–2024
- *Sacred Space and Sacred Places*, Parts I–III, University of St. Michael's College, Continuing Education — 2012–2023
- *Islamic Art*, University of St. Michael's College, Continuing Education — 2017
- *Values in Current Film Releases*, University of St. Michael's College, Continuing Education — 2013–2015
- *Understanding Religious Architecture Today*, University of St. Michael's College, Continuing Education — 2013
- *The Organic Development of Sacred Architecture*, University of St. Michael's College, Continuing Education — 2012
- *Diplomatura en Arte Sacro*, Module 3 (Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque art), UCASAL, Facultad de Teología — 2024–present (offered every other year)
- *Jornadas de Arquitectura Sacra*, "La Casa de Dios es Nuestra Casa: Re-Imaginar el Espacio Litúrgico" (organizer and sole speaker), UCASAL, Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo, Educación Continua — 2024

Academic series and supervision

- Coordinator and founder, **Liturgy Seminar**, Toronto School of Theology, University of Toronto — 2007–2021
- Coordinator and creator, **IN Series**, public talks on inclusion (disability, accessibility, health, education, art, culture and design), Inclusive Design Institute / IDRC, OCAD University — February 2013–2016
- Thesis advisor: Lucian Timofte, *A Dialogical-Self Narrative: Meanings of Inclusiveness between Disability, Design and Theology*, Master of Design in Inclusive Design, OCAD University, 2013
- Supervision of interns and research assistants (OCAD Faculty of Design) across the IDRC projects I coordinated, 2016–2024

Research Projects (Inclusive Design Research Centre)

I coordinate these projects unless noted otherwise.

- **Partnership for Financial Inclusion** (2026–2027). Addresses the systemic barriers that leave about 1 million Canadians unbanked and 5 million underbanked, especially people with disabilities, newcomers, racialized communities and people without stable housing. Funders: Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada; Employment and Social Development Canada

- **Accessible Canada, Accessible World** (2023–2025). A community of practice and international conference to co-develop resources for next-generation accessibility standards. Funder: Canadian Accessibility Standards Development Organization (CASDO)
- **Regulating the Digital Domain** (2023–April 2026). The systemic causes of digital disparity for persons with disabilities in information and communication technologies, and the role of standards. Funder: CASDO
- **Informing Standards for Acoustics and the Built Environment (Co-Design)** (2023). With the Accessibility Institute, Carleton University. Funder: CASDO
- **Communication Access within the Accessible Canada Act** (2021–2023). With Caren Watkins and Communication Disabilities Access Canada. Funder: CASDO
- **The Future of Work: Equitable Digital Systems (EDS)** (2020–2023). Funder: CASDO
- **Optimizing Diversity with Disability (ODD)** (2020–2022). Bias in hiring algorithms. Funders: Kessler Foundation; Microsoft
- **We Count** (2019–2022). Barriers and bias for persons with disabilities in the data economy; I coordinate outreach activities. Funder: Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, Accessible Technology Program
- **The Future of Work and Disability** (2020–2021). A study group of fifteen people on AI, automation, standards and employment. Funder: CASDO
- **Ontario Public Service Guidance on Inclusive Design of the Built Environment** (2021). Ad hoc architect's guidance to the OPS Accessibility Office. Funder: Ontario Public Service
- **Centre Block Design Review** (2021). Advised Dr. Jutta Treviranus on the Independent Design Review Panel for the new Centre Block, Parliament Hill
- **Our Doors Are Open: Welcoming People with Disabilities in Places of Worship** (2017–2021 and ongoing). I proposed and created the project. It includes more than 100 workshops and a one-day interfaith seminar with 110 participants. Funders: Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (2017–2019); Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, Scholar Vital Worship Grant (2020–2021)
- **CanHack 150** (2017). Inclusive design challenges and hackathons for Canada's 150th anniversary, with a national audience at IIDEXCanada 2017
- **Business Innovation Guide for Inclusive Design and Accessibility (BIG IDeA)** (2017–2019). A platform for Ontario businesses; the IDRC led the consortium. Funder: Accessibility Directorate of Ontario
- **aha! Accessibility Help and Advice** (2015–2016). A community of expert advisors from the disability community for small-business employers. Funder: Accessibility Directorate of Ontario
- **Toronto 2015 Mapathon** (2015). AXS Mapathons for grade 8–12 students at Pan Am and Parapan Am venues; more than 5,000 businesses mapped. Funder: Government of Ontario

Public Events, Forums and Exhibitions Organized

- **Interfaith Seminar:** *Opening Your Doors*, OCAD University, 8 September 2018
- **Public Forum on progress under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)**, 26 May 2014, with Dr. Jutta Treviranus. Opening remarks by Dean Mayo Moran, who was conducting the second independent review of Ontario's accessibility law. More than 60 attended.
- **Disrupting/Undoing: Challenging Constructs of Disability**, exhibition and salon, OCAD University, 1–5 April 2013
- **Public Debate on Design of Public Spaces in the Built Environment**, 17 September 2012. Forty-one organizations were invited and more than 70 people attended.

Publications

Books

Pereyra, David. *Proclaiming Holy Scriptures: A Study of Place and Ritual*. London: Routledge, New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology and Biblical Studies, 2021.

Dominello, Francesca, and David H. Pereyra, eds. *Forgiveness in Perspective*. Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2016. 144 pp.

Inclusive Design Research Centre, Vera Roberts and David Pereyra, eds. *Guide for Accessible Congregations* (*Our Doors Are Open* guide). Toronto: OCAD University, 2018.

Chapters in multi-author volumes

Roberts, Vera, and David Pereyra. “Inclusive Design Approaches for Implementing or Planning AI Systems in the Workplace.” Pp. 49–67 in *Navigating AI in the Workplace*, edited by Anne Rosken. Cham: Springer, 2025. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-92174-2_6

Roberts, Vera, and David Pereyra. “Inclusive Co-research with Experts with Disabilities.” Pp. 779–795 in *Handbook of Disability*, edited by M. H. Rioux et al. Singapore: Springer Nature, 2023. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6056-7_103

Pereyra, David. “Our Doors Are Open: Hospitality towards Immigrants with Special Needs in Places of Worship.” Pp. 521–541 in *Cercetări doctorale în pandemie – provocări, soluții, oportunități*, edited by Viorel Sava. Iași: Editura Doxologia; Graz: Universität Graz, 2021.

Pereyra, David. “The Sacrament of Reconciliation in the Roman Catholic Church: Where an Experience of Mercy and Forgiveness Can Fail.” In *Forgiveness in Perspective*. Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2016.

Pereyra, David. “Wholehearted Silences Complete a Meaningful Conversation.” Pp. 186–196 in *Blessed Are the Eyes That Catch Divine Whispering*, edited by Freek L. Bakker et al. Marburg: Schüren Verlag, 2015.

Pereyra, David. “Privileged Places of Marian Piety in South America.” Pp. 577–592 in *The Changing World Religion Map*, edited by Stanley D. Brunn. Dordrecht: Springer, 2015.

Pereyra, David. “Strengths and Inadequacies of the Ritual of Forgiveness in the Roman Catholic Church: The Sacrament of Penance.” In *Webbing Vicissitudes of Forgiveness*, edited by Karen Bettez Halnon. Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2014.

Pereyra, David. “Rediscovering Architecture’s Role in the Proclamation of Sacred Scriptures.” In *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference of the European Architectural History Network*, edited by Hilde Heynen. Brussels: Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van België, 2012.

Journal articles

Pereyra, David. “Diseño inclusivo – Desaprender para diseñar: Voces estudiantiles en la enseñanza de la arquitectura.” *Teks del Sud* 7(1): 89–100, 2026. https://revistas.ucasal.edu.ar/index.php/TDS/article/view/836

Pereyra, David. “The Voice in the Sacred Space.” *Jusur* (March 2025): 38–43. Issue: *Voice in the Age of the Image*.

Pereyra, David. “Accessibility for Different Abilities: A Report.” *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies* 5(1), 2016. McMaster University.

Pereyra, David. “Play, Symbol and Festival in Worship Design.” *2A Architecture & Art* 17, “Architecture, Culture & Spirituality Part II” (Spring 2011). Dubai.

Research papers and reports

Hernandez, Sebastian, Helena Wang, Badr Omrane, Vera Roberts, and David Pereyra. “Tech Reluctance: Fostering Empathy for Canadians Facing Challenges with Digital Systems.” Staff Discussion Paper 2025-2, Bank of Canada, 17 January 2025. https://doi.org/10.34989/sdp-2025-2

Book reviews

- Review of Frank C. Senn, *Embodied Liturgy*. *Religion and the Arts*, 2018.
- Review of Helen Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places in Anglo-Saxon England*. *Religion and the Arts*, 2016, pp. 241–242.
- Review of Douglas E. Cowan, *Sacred Space: The Quest for Transcendence in Science Fiction Film and Television*. *Religion and the Arts*, 2016, pp. 239–240.

- Review of Robin M. Jensen and Kimberly J. Vrudny, *Visual Theology. Religion and the Arts*, 2015, pp. 138–141.
- Review of Diane E. Peters, *The Many Faces of Martha of Bethany. Toronto Journal of Theology*, 2011.
- Review of the symposium *Sacred Space – Architecture for Worship in the 21st Century* (Yale University). *Journal of Architectural Education*, 2008, pp. 72–73.

Papers and Presentations

- II Congreso Internacional de Arquitectura y Arte Litúrgico, "Materialidades y simbologías de lo invisible." "Accesibilidad y belleza en el espacio litúrgico: ¿tensión o desajuste? Hierotopía y acceso al significado." Facultad de Arquitectura y Diseño, Universidad Católica de La Plata, 9–11 September 2026
- Jornadas de Arquitectura Sacra, "La Casa de Dios es Nuestra Casa: Re-Imaginar el Espacio Litúrgico" (organizer and sole speaker), UCASAL, Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo, Educación Continua, Salta, 2024
- Teacher-Scholar Panel: Inclusive Worship, Reconciliation, and Public Witness. Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, 2022 Online Grants Event, July 2022
- "Our Doors Are Open: Hospitality towards Immigrants with Special Needs in Places of Worship." XII–XIII *Studia Theologica Doctoralia* International Symposium, Romania (online), 10–11 May 2021
- Online seminar "Our Doors Are Open." Domuni Universitas, October–November 2019
- Workshop "Our Doors Are Open." Parliament of the World's Religions, Toronto, 3 November 2018
- "Making Buildings and Facilities Accessible in Places of Worship." Interfaith Seminar, OCAD University, 8 September 2018
- "Our Doors Are Open: Hospitality towards Immigrants with Special Needs in Places of Worship." 12th International Gathering of the Ecclesiological Investigations, *The Church and Migration*, University of St. Michael's College, 25–27 June 2018
- "Diseño inclusivo e incluyente: el lugar donde el usuario se transforma en protagonista." II Seminario Internacional de Diseño de Productos, Universidad de Chile, Santiago, November 2017
- Keynote: "Inclusive Design, Inclusive Design Research Centre at OCAD University." 8th Seminario Internacional de Investigación en Diseño, Universidad del Azuay, Cuenca, Ecuador, October 2016
- Panel: "Cosmopolitanism and Christian Ethics: Navigating the Complexities of Latino/a Identity across the Canadian-U.S. Border." Society of Christian Ethics annual meeting, Toronto, January 2016
- "The Danger of Taking Our Current Rituals for Granted." *Vatican II: The Promise of Renewal*, University of St. Michael's College, May 2015
- Invited workshop "La Palabra a través del cuerpo del Lector en la Liturgia de la Palabra." Catedral de Chascomús, Buenos Aires, December 2014
- Plenary: "Ritual Places for Reading Sacred Scriptures and Preaching: the Ambo in Early Christian Worship." Conference on Patristic Preaching and its History of Reception, Pappas Patristic Institute, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Boston, October 2014
- Co-chair and presenter: "Developing a Contemporary Sacred Space Identity in a Multicultural Setting." 6th Annual Architecture, Culture & Spirituality (ACS) Symposium, Trinity College, Toronto, June 2014
- "Strengths and Inadequacies of Rituals of Forgiveness." Inter-Disciplinary.Net, 6th Global Conference on Forgiveness, Oxford, July 2013
- "Wholehearted Silence Complete a Meaningful Conversation." *Silence and Religion in Film*, University of Groningen, June 2013
- "El lenguaje del juego, del símbolo y de la fiesta. La celebración litúrgica como experiencia de lo trascendente." XXXI Semana Argentina de Teología, Buenos Aires, July 2012
- "Rediscovering Architecture's Role in the Proclamation of Sacred Scriptures." European Architectural History Network, Second International Meeting, Brussels, June 2012

- "The Word through the Lector's Body: The Medium for Proclamation." *Commun(icat)ing Bodies*, The Body & Religion Conference, University of Graz, February 2012
- "The Marginalization of the Beauty in Impoverished Communities." Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, Loretto College, University of Toronto, October 2011
- "Play, Symbol, and Festival in Liturgical Environment." 2nd Annual ACS Symposium, St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota, June 2011

Liturgical Design and Architecture

Liturgical design and consulting (Canada)

- Interior design, St. Kateri Tekakwitha Chapel, St. Joseph's College, University of Alberta, Edmonton, 2014–2015
- Liturgical furniture (altar, ambo and presidential chair), St. Mary's University, Calgary, 2012–2013
- Design of the rituals and spaces of the Paschal Triduum for five consecutive years, Dominican Priory, University of Toronto

Architecture projects (Argentina), selected

- **Churches and chapels (new buildings and renovations):** Santa Ana de Glew, new parish church (1995) and Capilla Santa Ana with Soldi frescoes (1994–1996); Asunción de María parish church and community centre (1996–2002); Inmaculada Concepción, Monte Grande (1998–2000); Cristo de los Milagros (1994–1999); Nuestra Señora de Itatí (1994–1996); San Cayetano (1989–1990); Santa María Goretti (1994); San José, Remedios de Escalada (1994); Nuestra Señora de la Merced (1993–1998); Rosa Mística (1995–1997); Corazón Inmaculado de María (1996–1999); Capilla de la Eucaristía (1990); Seminary chapel, Diocese of Lomas de Zamora (1989–1990); San Antonio, Glew (1993)
- **Community centres:** S.J.M. Vianney (1993–1995); N.S. de Lourdes (1993–1996); El Ex-Telégrafo cultural centre (1995); San Antonio de Padua (1998–1999)
- **Schools:** Instituto San Francisco de Asís (1995–1997); Instituto Inmaculada Concepción (1992–1997)
- **Houses:** Garbarino (1993–1994); Antolini-Tognola (1994–1995); Fasanini (1995–1996); Cappelletti (1998–1999); Furozawa-Rodríguez (1996–1999); Salvidio (1996–1998); The Architect House (1998–1999)

Grants, Awards and Memberships

- Scholar Vital Worship Grant, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, 2020–2021
- Postdoctoral Fellowship, OCAD University, 2012–2015
- Junior Fellow, Massey College, University of Toronto, 2011; alumnus
- Advanced Degree Students' Association Council representative, Toronto School of Theology, 2009–2011
- Member, Association of Architects of Buenos Aires, 1996–1999

Languages

Spanish, English, Italian