



ATLANTIC  
HISTORY

**UCLA**



Join us on **Thursday, May 8th, 2025**, for  
our

Atlantic History Colloquium with  
**Susan Juster**

**Hybrid event**

Bunche Hall 6275 & [Zoom](#)

Thursday, May 8, 2025

**12:30-2:00 PM**

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**A Common Grave: Being Catholic in English America**

From Nevis to Newfoundland, Catholics were everywhere in English America. But often feared and distrusted, they hid in plain sight, deftly obscuring themselves from the Protestant authorities. Their strategies of concealment, deception, and misdirection frustrated colonial census takers, and their presence has likewise eluded historians of religion, who have portrayed Catholics as isolated dots in an otherwise vast Protestant expanse.

Pushing against this long-standing narrative, Susan Juster provides the first comprehensive look at the lived experience of Catholics—whether Irish, African, French, or English—in colonial America. She reveals a vibrant community that, although often forced to conceal itself, maintained a rich sacramental life saturated with traditional devotional objects and structured by familiar rituals. As Juster shows, the unique pressures of colonial existence forced Catholics to adapt and transform these religious practices. By following the faithful into their homes and private chapels as they married, christened infants, buried loved ones, and prayed for their souls, Juster uncovers a confluence of European, African, and Indigenous spiritual traditions produced by American colonialism.

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Susan Juster is W. M. Keck Foundation Director of Research at the Huntington Library. Prior to joining The Huntington, Juster was the Rhys Isaac Collegiate Professor of History at the University of Michigan, where she also served as Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. A recipient of a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, Juster is the author of numerous books on the religious history of the early English Atlantic. In 2014, she was awarded a yearlong fellowship at The Huntington which led, in part, to the publication of her 2016 book, *Sacred Violence in Early America*. Her most recent book, *A Common Grave: Being Catholic in English America*, is forthcoming in June 2025.

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The Atlantic History Group generates innovative scholarship on the relations linking Africa, Europe, and the Americas by investigating the expansion of markets during the slave trade; the production of literary texts and forms of historical memory; the politics of religious dissent and conversion; the growth of colonial science and cartography; Native American ethnogenesis; the rise of abolitionist and Pan-African ideologies; and the dynamics of race, gender and creolization throughout the Atlantic world.

Please visit [UCLA Atlantic History](#) for more information and a complete schedule of events in 2025.