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Michael Lackey Named Distinguished McKnight University Professor

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Michael Lackey Named Distinguished McKnight University Professor](#)

Summary: Morris teacher, writer, editor recognized for groundbreaking literary scholarship.

MORRIS, Minnesota (April 18, 2016)—Michael Lackey, professor of English at the University of Minnesota, Morris, was named a 2016 Distinguished McKnight University Professor. The mid-career honor comes with a \$100,000.00 award. Recipients hold the title for as long as they work at the University of Minnesota. Lackey is one of seven University of Minnesota system faculty members to receive the honor, and the only scholar recognized from a statewide campus. He is the first Morris professor to receive the award.

Lackey, who has taught at Morris since 2007, also received the 2015-2016 UMM Faculty Distinguished Research Award.

Lackey is a scholar of 20th- and 21st-century intellectual history, and a leading scholar of the biographical novel, a rising literary form that names the protagonist after an actual historical figure. His research probes the role of literature in exposing oppression and finding pathways toward social justice.

Lackey's most recent book, *The American Biographical Novel*, published in March by Bloomsbury, traces the origins and development of "biofiction." Lackey charts the shifts in ideas that led to the genre's growing popularity and acceptance by the literary establishment.

Lackey is also the author of *The Modernist God State: A Literary Study of the Nazis' Christian Reich*; *African American Atheists and Political Liberation: A Study of the Socio-Cultural Dynamics of Faith*; *Truthful Fictions: Conversations with American Biographical Novelists*; and the forthcoming *Biographical Fiction: A Reader*. He has a PhD from the University of Kentucky.

Lackey's work offers "new perspectives on the history of race, religion, and literary form," says Bart Finzel, Morris vice-chancellor and dean. In his books, interviews and articles, "Professor Lackey has changed the way critics approach texts, and he has initiated significant scholarly conversations both culturally and across the humanities."

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