

Fact Sheet:

Courts in the Age of Reformations: Germany in the Sixteenth Century

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Project Description and goals:

With the generous support of the *Religion and Diversity Project's* Graduate Research Grant, I traveled to Germany from January to March 2015 to undertake preliminary archival research for my dissertation, titled "The Reformation Suits: Peace, Property, and the Politics of Difference in a Sixteenth-Century German Imperial Court." It attempts to account for the most consequential legal transformation of the early Reformation period: while 1521 marks the moment at which Lutheranism was declared a heresy (in the Edict of Worms), in 1555 it was recognized as a legal confession (in the Augsburg Peace). How did they from Worms to Augsburg? Put another way, how did the issue transform, at law, from a matter of heresy to a matter of religion? Through close readings of court records, the dissertation explores the fraught early modern beginnings of "religion" as a secular legal category.

Methodology:

At the heart of the dissertation are case files and judges' notes from the *Reichskammergericht* (Imperial Chamber Court). My main task while in Germany was to read and/or gather (through digital scans) case files relevant to my topic.