

## NEWSROOM

[Home](#) / [News](#) / [2026](#) / [February](#) / Angels, Demons, and the Salomons

## ANGELS, DEMONS, AND THE SALOMONS

## CNU PROFESSORS PEN BOOK ABOUT THE LITERARY ROLE OF SUPERNATURAL BEINGS

by [Kelli Caplan](#) | February 6, 2026

*Above: Kelly O'Connor-Salomon, Phoebe Salomon, and Dr. David Salomon*

The Salomon family hangs tight together. They all teach or work at Christopher Newport.

And now they have written a fascinating new book that takes a deep dive into how and why angels, demons, and demigods make their way into storylines of popular television shows, movies, and books such as “Star Wars” and “The Simpsons,” and “Harry Potter.”

Aptly titled [“Angels, Demons, and Demigods, An Encyclopedia of Supernatural Beings in Story and on Screen,”](#) the reference book was penned by Dr. David Salomon, director of [Student Research and Creative Activity](#) at CNU, and his wife, Kelly A. O'Connor-Salomon, an adjunct lecturer of [art history](#). It analyzes the presence of good and evil across popular culture, and even in literary works such as Shakespeare’s “Macbeth” and “Hamlet.”

To add one more familial thread, their daughter, Phoebe Salomon, '24 Anthropology, who works as the archives assistant at the Tribble Library, wrote an introductory essay that examines what defines popular culture and how it connects to the book’s topics.

“It’s the first time we’ve collaborated on anything,” said Dr. Salomon. “It was nice to work on the same project.”

The Salomons studied the roles supernatural beings play in stories and scripts and then put their existence into modern and historical context to add depth and interpretation.

The duo studied a wide array of familiar books, movies, and television that span the decades and have in common

the inclusion of supernatural antagonists, protagonists, or simply a ghost-like character.

The project came to light after Bloomsbury Press, the publisher of Dr. Salomon's last book, "[The Seven Deadly Sins: How Sin Influenced the West from the Middle Ages to the Modern Era](#)," put the idea forth. The Salomons began working on the book, but were stymied by the pandemic. Four years later, it is hitting shelves.

An interesting fact the Salomons uncovered in their research: The popularity of angels and demons tends to spike in accordance with emotional and stressful world events, such as the pandemic and 9/11, and causes readers and viewers to gravitate toward books and movies that incorporate the concepts of good and evil.

"There are reasons why these stories resonate at certain times in history," said O'Connor-Salomon.

People, she said, need heroes and turn to angelic characters to give them faith and optimism.

Interest in the supernatural spans ages and interests and "resonates no matter what religion you follow," said O'Connor-Salomon. There is a timeless attraction to the concept of heroes and villains.

"Essentially, people are still into angels, demons, and demigods," Dr. Salomon said. "They are still very popular today."

Even before the idea for the book surfaced, the family was tuned into the presence of the supernatural in popular culture. O'Connor-Salomon has an affinity for "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and Phoebe was named after a character in "Charmed."

In Phoebe's essay, she views pop culture through a historical lens, setting the scene of what it is and how it is reflected in the book. She is tuned into popular culture and how it plays out across generations and genres.

"I set up the essay in a historical sense," she said, thinking back to a discussion she had in ANTH 203: Cultural Anthropology, a class she took as a Captain with Dr. Seth Palmer, that dissected what defines culture.

As the Salomons were wrapping up the book, it became clear that one of the common denominators in each of their interpretations was not only the constant of good and evil, but also of the influence of pop culture.

"We realized we needed an introductory essay on what is popular culture," Dr. Salomon said. "The obvious choice was Phoebe."

What's next for the inquisitive and dynamic Salomon family?

Not another book, but they each have their own plans to make an impact on the academic world: Phoebe is working toward an MA in History at SUNY Brockport focusing on women in the Gilded Age; Dr. Salomon is busy with projects related to artificial intelligence and the liberal arts, and the common ideas in Carl Jung and St. Augustine; and O'Connor-Salomon is focused on images of witches in art and the connection to witch persecution.

"Although we have different interests, it was fun to work together on this project," Dr. Salomon said.

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