

SARAH BLACKWOOD

FIELDS

Early- and nineteenth-century American and African American literature, art, and visual culture.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in English, Northwestern University, 2009

M.A. in English, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 2001

B.A. with High Distinction in English and Women's Studies, University of Virginia, 1998

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Chair of English, Pace University, 2020-present

Associate Chair of English, Pace University, 2018-2020

Associate Professor of English, Pace University, 2015-present

Director, American Studies Program, Pace University, 2012-2017

Assistant Professor of English, Pace University, 2009-2015

Visiting Assistant Professor of English, Northwestern University, 2008-2009

BOOK

The Portrait's Subject: Picturing Inner Life in Nineteenth-Century America. (University of North Carolina Press, Studies in U.S. Culture series, 2019)

Reviews:

Owen Clayton, *American Literary History* 34.2 (2022): 693-695.

“Well written and powerfully argued, *The Portrait's Subject* makes a significant contribution to knowledge in the fields of visual culture, art history and literary studies.”

Erica Fretwell, *New England Quarterly* 94.2 (2021): 295-298. “A radiant and revelatory new book.”

E. Thomas Finan, *Henry James Review* 42.1 (2021): E1-4. “In energetic prose, *The Portrait's Subject* presents a perceptive account of the intermingling of science and cultural expression in the nineteenth century. . . Blackwood's wide-ranging account of portraiture reaches across disciplinary boundaries and reveals underlying issues involved in accounts of the mediated self.”

David Greven, *Nathaniel Hawthorne Review* 46.2 (2020): 251-257.

“Blackwood offers an engaging, fine-tuned, subtle, thorough, compelling

history of the centrality of the portrait to nineteenth-century American literature's depictions of interiority and psychology.”

T. Nygard, *Choice* 57.11 (2020): “This is a theoretical book about a subject that is rarely theorized—portraiture.”

INTRODUCTIONS AND EDITIONS

Little Women (Norton, forthcoming 2023)

The Custom of the Country by Edith Wharton (Penguin Classics, 2022)

The Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton (Penguin Classics, 2019)

Co-Editor and Co-Founder, [Avidly Reads book series](#). Crossover trade-scholarly series published by NYU Press. Conceptualized, acquired, and edited six books between 2016-2021.

REFEREED JOURNAL ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

“The Group (Text), or the Small Stuff.” *Feminists Reclaim Mentorship: An Anthology*. Ed. Nancy K. Miller and Tahneer Oksman. (SUNY Press, forthcoming February 2023).

“Theorizing Vision and Selfhood in Early Black Writing and Art.” *African American Literature in Transition, 1800-1830*. Ed., Jasmine Cobb. (Cambridge University Press, 2021).

“‘Making Good Use of Our Eyes’: Nineteenth-Century African Americans Write Visual Culture.” *MELUS: Multiethnic Literature of the United States* 39.2 (Summer 2014): 1-24.
--. Republished in *The Elizabeth Keckley Reader*. Sheila Smith McKoy, ed. (Asheville, NC: Eno Publishers), 2016.

“Isabel Archer’s Body.” *The Henry James Review* 31.3 (Fall 2010): 271-280.

“Psychology.” *Henry James in Context*. David McWhirter, ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2010): 270-280.

“Fugitive Obscura: Runaway Slave Portraiture and Early Photographic Technology.” *American Literature* 81.1 (March 2009): 93-126.

“‘The Inner Brand’: Emily Dickinson, Portraiture, and the Narrative of Liberal Interiority.” *The Emily Dickinson Journal* 14.2 (Fall 2005): 48-59.
---. Republished in *Critical Insights: Emily Dickinson*. J. Brooks Bouson, ed. (Pasadena: Salem Press), 2012.

BOOK REVIEWS

“Spiritual Exercises.” *The New York Review of Books*. 21 July 2022. Review of Alison Bechdel’s

new graphic memoir, *The Secret to Supernatural Strength*.

“Emerson and Thoreau’s Fanatical Freedom.” *The New Republic*. 6 January 2022. Review of Robert A. Gross’s *Transcendentalists and Their World*.

“Children’s Lib!” *The New York Review of Books*. 13 May 2021. Review of Leslie Brody’s new biography of children’s book writer Louise Fitzhugh.

“In *The Golden State*, Lydia Kiesling Brings Motherhood on the Road.” *The New Yorker*. 3 September 2018. Review of Lydia Kiesling’s debut novel.

“Why *Little Women* Endures.” *The New Republic*. 18 August 2018. Review of Anne Boyd Rioux’s *Meg, Jo, Beth, Amy: The Story of Little Women and Why It Matters*.

“Is Motherhood a Genre?” *Los Angeles Review of Books*. 20 May 2018. Review of a collection of recent books about motherhood. **Nominated for a Pushcart Prize**.

“*Room* is the Crash of Feminism.” *Los Angeles Review of Books*. 4 November 2015. Review of Emma Donoghue’s 2010 novel *Room* and its 2015 film adaptation.

“The Woman Wild.” *Los Angeles Review of Books* 16 October 2014. Review of Marilynne Robinson’s novel *Lila*.

Review essay: “Seeing Black.” *American Quarterly* 65.4 (December 2013): 927-936.

Books reviewed: Bridget R. Cooks, *Exhibiting Blackness: African Americans and the American Art Museum* (U Massachusetts P, 2011); Leigh Raiford, *Imprisoned in a Luminous Glare: Photography and the African American Freedom Struggle* (U North Carolina P, 2011); Maurice Wallace and Shawn Michelle Smith, *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity* (Duke UP, 2012); *Envisioning Emancipation: Black Americans and the End of Slavery* by Deborah Willis and Barbara Krauthamer (Temple UP, 2012).

ESSAYS & CULTURE REVIEWS

“[A Woman’s Intimate Record of Wyoming in the Early Twentieth Century](#).” *The New Yorker*. 18 July 2021.

“[A Forgotten Twentieth-Century Photographer’s Wild Portraits of Women in Nature](#).” *The New Yorker*. 11 May 2020.

“[The Uncanny Domestic Spaces of Becky Suss](#).” *The New Yorker*. 3 March 2020.

“[Little Women and the Marmee Problem](#).” *The New Yorker*. 24 December 2019.

“[Warren Invites Us In: On the Selfie Line](#).” *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 3 October 2019

“[The Secret Rebellion of Amelia Bedelia, the Bartleby of Domestic Work](#).” *The New Yorker*. 10 June 2019.

[“A Lost and Found Portrait Photographer.”](#) *The New Yorker*. 14 February 2019.

Parenting by the Books. Monthly column. *The Hairpin*, September 2016–December 2017.
Highlighted in *New York Times* “What We’re Reading” column, 26 September 2017.

“The Function of Pettiness at the Present Time.” *ASAP/J*. 22 July 2017. Co-author with Sarah Mesle.

“Monstrous Births.” 10 August 2016. *The Hairpin*. Translated into Spanish and republished in *LatFem: Periodismo feminista* October 2018.

“Editing as Carework: The Gendered Labor of Public Intellectuals.” *Avidly*. 6 June 2014. (Finalist in *3 Quarks Daily* Arts and Literature Prize, 19 June 2015).

“‘So Difficult to Instruct:’ Re-envisioning Abraham and Tad Lincoln.” *Common-Place* (Sponsored by the American Antiquarian Society) 13.4 (Summer 2013).

“Dance Dance Revelation.” *Los Angeles Review of Books*. 18 September 2012.

“Our Bella, Ourselves.” *The Hairpin.com*. 16 November 2011.

“Generation FNL.” *The Awl.com*. 14 July 2011.

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS

Kenan Award for Teaching Excellence, Pace University, May 2021

Classroom-Based Research Award for “‘You cannot put a fire out’: Emily Dickinson, Audre Lorde, and Organizing to Empower Marginalized Voices,” \$5000. Pace University Provost Office. Fall 2020.

NEH Summer Institute, “The Visual Culture of the American Civil War.” Summer 2012

Kenan Faculty Development Fund Awards. Spring 2013, Spring 2016, Fall 2018, Spring 2020.

Scholarly Research Awards, Pace University. Spring 2010, Fall 2010, Spring 2012, Fall 2017, Spring 2019

Weinberg Dissertation Research Fellowship, Northwestern University. 2008

Patricia and Phillip Frost Fellowship, Smithsonian American Art Museum. 2007

INVITED LECTURES

“Envisioning Whiteness as Property.” Pace University Law School Faculty Workshop. 27 April

2022.

“Humanities in Public.” Franklin and Marshall College Humanities Symposium. 22 March 2022.

Respondent, “The Problem of Visibility” by Kelly Ross. Columbia University Seminar on Cinema and Interdisciplinary Interpretation. 10 March 2022.

“The Portrait’s Subject.” Smithsonian American Art Museum Lunchbag Series. 21 January 2021.

“Writing for the Public Speaker Series.” CUNY Graduate Center. 18 November 2020.

“Writing for the Public.” Northwestern University Department of English Graduate Student Colloquium. 23 October 2020.

“[100 Years of Innocence: A Conversation with Scholars](#).” The Mount | Edith Wharton’s Home. Commemorative public lecture for 100th anniversary of the publication of *The Age of Innocence*. 9 July 2020.

[Clements Library Bookworm. Zoom interview with Paul Erickson](#), Director of the University of Michigan Clements Library about my book, *The Portrait’s Subject*. 1 May 2020.

“Women’s Work: Writing Children’s Literature at Mid-Century.” Columbia University Faculty Seminar on American Studies. 21 April 2020. (*postponed due to Coronavirus)

“Joshua Johnson’s Portraits of Whiteness.” *The Precariousness of Freedom*. Harvard University Workshop. 26-27 April 2018.

“Olive & Rosamond & Joanna & Marmee: On Smallness and Irrelevance.” Keynote. *Fifth Annual Queens College Graduate Conference*. 18 April 2018.

“Writing Next.” *NextGen PhD*, NEH-funded workshop program for graduate students in the humanities and social sciences at CUNY Graduate Center. 9 August 2017.

Panel Discussion of Janet Neary’s new book *Fugitive Testimony: On the Visual Logic of Slave Narratives*. CUNY Graduate Center. 24 February 2017.

“The Critic as Writer.” Hendrix College. 26 February 2016.

“Hand in Mind: X Ray Portraiture and the Invention of Inner Life.” Pomona College. 15 October 2015.

“Avid Criticism.” Columbia University American Studies Seminar. 15 September 2015.

“Painting Portraits, Dismembering the Mind: Portraiture and the Somatic Mind in Nineteenth-Century America.” University at Albany, SUNY. Albany, New York. 15 November 2013.

“The Twilight of American Literature.” Bowdoin College. New Brunswick, Maine. 24 April 2012.

“Edwin Hale Lincoln’s *Magnolia Virginiana* (1914).” New York Public Library. New York, New York. 9 December 2011.

“Hepzibah’s Scowl: In the Portrait Gallery of American Literature.” McNeil Center for Early American Studies Brown Bag Series. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. 14 April 2010.

INTERVIEWS AND MEDIA APPEARANCES

Quoted in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, “The Quiet Crisis of Parents on the Tenure Track” by Maggie Doherty. 9 September 2021.

Invited speaker, Catbird Book Club on *The Age of Innocence*. Public-facing event to run discussion of Edith Wharton’s *The Age of Innocence*. March 3, 2020.

Interviewed and Quoted in *The New York Times* by Katherine Shattuck, “[Really Seeing Marmee: Oh, How Little Women’s Matriarch Has Changed](#)” 16 January 2020

Quoted in *The Wall Street Journal* about *Little Women*, February 6, 2020.

Moderator, NYPL Young Lions Cocktails and Conversations on *Little Women* with writer Jenny Zhang, 22 November 2019.

“NYU Press to Launch *Avidly Reads* Series.” 15 August 2019. *Publisher’s Weekly*. Interviewed as editor of *Avidly Reads* books series.

“The Problem with Humans of HUD.” *CityLab* (a part of *The Atlantic Magazine*). 19 October 2018. Interviewed as expert on portraiture by arts journalist Kriston Capps in article about a new federal portraiture project.

SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“Line.” *Keywords in Black Visual Culture* Roundtable. American Studies Association. 14 October 2021.

Respondent, “Face Time: Prehistories of the Selfie.” Roundtable. C19: Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists. 15 October 2020.

Respondent and Chair, “Reading Motherhood Now” panel. Modern Language Association. Seattle, WA. 5 January 2020.

“Harriet Jacobs and Hannah Crafts in the Portrait Gallery of American Literature.” Black Portraitures Conference. New York, NY. 18 October 2019.

“Fear and Affiliation, or There Are Things We Didn’t Know We Could Say.” American

- Comparative Literature Association. Washington, D.C. 7-10 March 2019.
- “Reconsidering the Death Drive in End Times” ASAP Conference: Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present. New Orleans. 17-20 October 2018.
- “Expanding Forms: A Writing Workshop.” C19: Society for Nineteenth-Century Americanists. Albuquerque. 22-25 March 2018.
- “Self-Help.” ASAP Conference. Oakland. 26-29 October 2017.
- “The Function of Pettiness at the Present Time.” Modern Language Association. Philadelphia. 7 January 2017.
- “Olive Chancellor’s Strenuous Parlor.” C19: Society for Nineteenth-Century Americanists. State College. 17 March 2016.
- “Race and Nineteenth-Century Media.” Modern Language Association. Austin. 10 January 2016.
- “Public Intellectualism: Remaking Institutions.” American Studies Association Annual Conference. Toronto. 9 October 2015.
- “Selfie Nation.” American Studies Association Annual Conference. Los Angeles, California. November 2014. (Panel organizer and participant)
- “Editing the Commons.” C19: Society for Nineteenth-Century Americanists. Chapel Hill, North Carolina. 15 March 2014.
- “The Slave in the Portrait Gallery.” American Comparative Literature Association. Toronto, Canada. April 5 & 6 2013. (Panel organizer and participant)
- “Monstrous Births, or Is the Uterus a Grave?” American Literature Association Symposium. Savannah, Georgia. February 2013. (Panel organizer and participant)
- “How to Do Things with *Twilight*: Young Adult Fiction in the College Classroom.” Roundtable featuring Lev Grossman (author), Leigh Bardugo (author), Sarah Mesle (UCLA), Jonathan Beecher Field (USC), and Peter Coviello (Bowdoin). Modern Language Association. Boston, Massachusetts. 5 January 2013. (Panel organizer and participant).
- “‘A More Perfect Likeness:’ African American Writers on Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture.” C19: Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists. Berkeley, California. 12 April 2012.
- “The Claims of the Negro Aesthetically Considered.” Northeast Modern Language Association. New Brunswick, New Jersey. 8 April 2011.
- “‘So difficult to instruct:’ Elizabeth Keckley, Tad Lincoln, and White Illiteracy.” Modern Language Association Annual Conference. Los Angeles, California. 8 January 2011.

- “Jamesian Defacement.” Modern Studies Association Annual Conference. Victoria, British Columbia. 13 November 2010.
- “Senses of the Past: Digital Media and the Visual.” C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists Inaugural Conference. State College, Pennsylvania. 21 May 2010.
- “Before the Real Thing: Rethinking Portraiture and Authenticity.” Panel Organizer and Chair. American Literature Association Meeting. San Francisco, California. 24 May 2008.
- “‘Mere Thinking’: The Racial Mind in Thomas Eakins’s *Negro Boy Dancing* (1878).” College Art Association Conference. Dallas, Texas. 23 February 2008.
- “‘The Absent Thing,’ or the Aesthetics of Psychology in Jamesian Biography.” Conference on Reading Henry James. Salem, Massachusetts. 31 May 2007.
- “Nathaniel Hawthorne’s Portraits of Mind.” Smithsonian American Art Museum Fellows Lectures. Washington, D.C. 17 May 2007.
- “Picturing the Interior: Frederick Douglass, Henry James, and the Nineteenth-Century Portrait.” Midwest Modern Language Association Conference. Chicago, Illinois. 10 November 2006.
- “Portrait of the Slave as a Young Artist: Harriet Jacobs, Runaway Slave Advertisements, and the Camera Obscura.” New England American Studies Association Conference. Worcester, Massachusetts. 28 September 2005.
- “‘Could you believe me – without?’: The Portrait and Ekphrastic Interiority in Emily Dickinson and Harriet Jacobs.” Conference on Exposing the Nineteenth Century: Interiors, Interiority, and Introspection. New Brunswick, New Jersey. 6 November 2004.
- “‘The Inner Brand’: Emily Dickinson, Visuality, and the Narrative of Liberal Interiority.” The Conference of the Emily Dickinson International Society. Hilo, Hawaii. 31 July 2004.

COURSES TAUGHT

Courses marked with ** are courses I have conceived, developed, and implemented.

All other courses represent my development of existing curriculum. All syllabi are entirely original to me.

Pace University:

Upper-level Literature Seminars:

American Literature to 1865: Against the American Grain**

American Short Fiction: Mind, Body, and Sensation**

Special Topics: American Literature and Visual Culture **

Feminist Issues in Literature: Home and Away**

How to Read *Moby-Dick***

African American Literature: The Politics of Genre**

Upper-level Writing Seminars:

Professional Writing: Writing Cultural Criticism**

Women's and Gender Studies

Feminist Theory

American Studies:

Introduction to American Studies (Learning Community)

General Education:

Introduction to Literature, Culture, and Media

Early American Black Lives Matter

Scriveners and Slackers: Early American Literature and Contemporary Society**

Young Adult Fiction**

Writing Composition:

Critical Writing: Literacy and Life

Writing in the Disciplines: "Our" America

Northwestern University:

Upper-level Seminars:

American Literature and Visual Culture**

African American Writers and Photography**

How to Read Henry James**

The Real Thing**

The Art of Protest**

Freshman Seminar:

The Art of Protest**

SERVICE

Profession

Referee, Columbia University Press, *J19: Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists*, *Studies in the Novel*, *MELUS: Multiethnic Literature of the United States*, *Winterthur Portfolio*, *Literature and Medicine*, *Studies in American Fiction*, *ASAP: The Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present*

Selection Committee Member, National Endowment for the Humanities / American Antiquarian Society Long-Term Fellowship Program. March 2021.

External Tenure Reviewer

University / College

Advisory Board Member, Writing for Diversity and Equity in the Arts, 2020-present

Panelist, "Classroom Based Research Experiences Workshop," October 2022

Teaching Observation, Department of Environmental Science, September 2021

Panelist, "Teaching with Archives" Faculty Center Workshop, 21 April 2021

Panelist, Future of Work Conference, Office of the Provost, 8 April 2021

Organizer and Moderator, "What are You Going to Do with That?" Prospective Student Recruitment Event with Admissions, 15 December 2020.

Moderator, "Interrogating Whiteness" roundtable discussion, oMA, 13 October 2020

Ad Hoc Committee, #ScholarStrike for Black Lives, Summer 2020

Search Committee Member, Film and Screen Studies, 2019-2020

Faculty Mentor, Center for Teaching and Learning Academic Portfolio Workshop, 2015-2020
Member, Dyson Tenure and Promotion Committee, 2015-2017
Convener & Chair, Working Group on Critical Race and Ethnicity Studies, 2014-2016
Member, Ad Hoc Tenure and Promotion Committee in Political Science, Fall 2015
UNV 101 Instructor/Advisor, 2015-2016
Secretary, Dyson Faculty Assembly, 2013-2015
Panelist, Career Services Panel on Writing for the Web, October 2014
Presenter, Dyson Humanities and Social Sciences Seminar, October 2014
Member, New York Faculty Council Admissions and Retention Committee, 2013-present
Member, Non-Profit Studies Minor Working Group, 2012-2013
Birnbaum Library Speaker Series, invited lecture, April 2013
Member, Dyson College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Advisory Council, 2012-present
Member, Dyson College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee, 2010-present
Member, New York Faculty Council Academic Resources Committee, 2010-2013
Pforzheimer Honors College, Thesis advising (6 theses to date)
Pforzheimer Honors College, "Got Knowledge" presentation, March 2012.

Department

Chair, 2020-present
Associate Chair, 2018-2020
Organizer and Moderator, "Getting the Career in Publishing that You Want" panel discussion with Ashley Garland, Rumaan Alam, Vinson Cunningham, and Jennifer Weltz. 9 April 2019.
Chair, Tenure and Promotion Committee, 2017, 2018
Chair, American Studies Program, 2012-2017
Member, English Department Personnel Committee, 2011-present (Search Committee: 2012-13; Chair of Search Committee: 2013-2014)
Chair, English Department Elections Committee, 2012-2014
Chair, English Department Curriculum Committee, 2010-2012; 2014-2016, 2019-2020
Co-Chair, English Department Writing Awards, 2010-2012
Judge, English Department Writing Awards, 2010-present
Member, Student Affairs Committee, 2010-2012

TEACHING AND RESEARCH INTERESTS

Early- and nineteenth-century American literature; African American literature and culture; visual, print, and material cultures; popular culture; public humanities; gender studies; critical and cultural theory; history of photography.