

Sean A. Witters, Ph.D.

Senior Lecturer
Department of English,
University of Vermont,
400 Old Mill
Burlington, VT 05405
switters@uvm.edu
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9395-9215>

Education

Ph.D. English and American Literature, Brandeis University, 2010
Field: 20th Century American Literature
Dissertation: *The Logic of the Brand: Authorship and Literary Authenticity in the Modern American Novel*. with committee members Michael T. Gilmore (dir.), Caren Irr, and Stephen Whitfield.
MA English and American Literature, Brandeis University, 2001
BA English, with honors, University of Vermont, 1998

Honors and Awards

2026 UVM Humanities Center Coors Grant: Health & Humanities Symposium
2024 UVM Humanities Center Coors Grant: Faculty Talk
2014 UVM Kroepsch-Maurice Excellence in Teaching Award
1999-2000 Fredrick M. Corse Fellowship for Post-Graduate studies in Literature

Book Project:

Using Addict: Representing Drugs and Dependency—1821 to the Present

Submitted Articles and Works in Progress

"Skyflowers: Ideology Critique and *Land of the Dead*," *Horror Capital Labor*, Vol. II: *Ideology, and Aesthetics as Cinematic Nightmare Fuel*, 2025 [Submitted, accepted pending revision]

"The Connotations of an English Opium-Eater: Thomas De Quincey Using 'Addict.'" [revision submitted]

Publications

"Where We Go One, We Go Not-All": A Lacanian Analysis of QAnon and the Politics of Addiction," co-authored with Frank Smecker. *Everyday Psychoanalysis Series, Sublation Media*, 2024

"Drugs Cause Paranoid Reading and Writing," *Points: The Blog of the Alcohol & Drugs Society*. 29 Mar., 2019. Web < <https://pointsadhsblog.wordpress.com/2019/03/21/drugs-cause-paranoid-reading-and-writing>>

"Literary Value and the American Marketplace." *The Handbook of the American Novel of the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries*. Ed. Timo Müller, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017.

"For the Love of Big Brother: Paranoid Reading and Nineteen Eighty-Four." *Nineteen Eighty-Four: Critical Insights*. Ed. Thomas Horan. Ipswich, Ma: Salem Press, 2016.

"'Observe,' said the Director': Brave New World, Surveillance Studies, and the Dystopian Tradition." *Brave New World: Critical Insights*. Ed. M. Keith Booker. Ipswich, Ma: Salem Press, 2014.

"Words have to mean something more: Folkloric Reading in Brave New World." *Huxley's Brave New World: Essays*. Ed. David Garrett Izzo and Kim Kirkpatrick. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2008.

"Mary McCarthy." *The Literary Encyclopedia*. 1 Mar. 2008. The Literary Dictionary Company.
<http://www.litencyc.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=3028>

Conference Papers

"Remarks of Jouissance: Žižek on Derrida," *Derrida Today Conference*, École Normale Supérieure, Paris, France, July 2026.

"Cocteau's Opium Acrostics and Historical Translations of the Addict," *Drug and Alcohol History Society Conference*, Sorbonne University, Paris, France, June 2026.

"The Limits of Addiction: Genre, Enjoyment, and the Death Drive in Anna Kavan's *Ice*," *LACK V Conference*, Otterbein University, Columbus, Ohio, March 2025

"The French Connection: Forbidden Jouissance and Derrida's Drug Smuggling," *Derrida Today Conference*, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece, May 2024.

"Deep Blue Day in the Toilet: Addiction, Abjection, and Psychoanalysis." *LACK IV Conference*, University of Vermont, Burlington VT, April 2023

"Organizing During COVID-19." AAUP Summer Institute, July 2020

"The Primal Addict: Freud, Cocteau, and the Productivity of Pleasures." *LACK III Conference*, Clark University, Worcester, MA, May 2019

"Not many people ever hear it": Addiction, Abstraction, and Soul in "Sonny's Blues." *Persisting Souls Conference*, Catholic University of Paris, Paris, France, April 2019

"Using Addict, or Is It Working Yet?" Substance Use and Abuse in the Long 19th Century Conference, Edgehill University, Ormskirk UK, September 2018.

"Trapped in Your Own Dirty Body: Genre, Identity, and Authenticity in *Giovanni's Room*." *James Baldwin Society Conference*, Suffolk University, Boston MA, March 2009.

"Disunity: Mary McCarthy and the Branded Self." *American Comparative Literature Association Conference*, Princeton University, May 2006.

"Words have to mean something more: Folkloric Reading and *Brave New World*," *Society for the Study of Narrative Literature Conference*, University of Vermont/Middlebury College, April 2004

Invited Talks:

"Where We Go One, We Go Not-All": A Lacanian Analysis of QAnon and the Politics of Addiction," University of Vermont Humanities Center Talk, Sept. 2024

Co-presenter at university-wide presentation on diversity and equity in education, "From Allies to Accomplices to Co-Conspirators: A Conversation." March 2021, University of Vermont.

"Needle, Image, Tomb: Rebecca Massey Wood, History, and Addiction" 16 Oct, 2019 *Victorian Persistence Seminar*, LARCA (*Laboratoire de Recherche sur les Cultures Anglophones*), University Paris-Diderot, Paris, France.

"Bebop Epiphanies and 'Sonny's Blues.'" Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Lecture, Brandeis University. Oct 2006

Appearances

"The Steps of Capital: QAnon and Anti-Recovery," *Jouissance Vampires* with Daniel Tutt, 17 Feb, 2020.

Vermont State Senate Education Committee, Expert Testimony, May 2020

"The Job Market for Professors," *Vermont Edition* 11 Dec. 2014, Vermont Public Radio.

"Salinger Expert Says Posthumous Works Coming," 29 Jan. 2012, WCAX.

Editorial Service/Peer Reviewer

Manuscript peer reviewer for monograph on American literature and culture, Bloomsbury 2024

Manuscript peer reviewer for monograph on cultural studies in addiction, Bloomsbury 2022

Manuscript peer reviewer for monograph on cultural studies in addiction, Routledge 2021

Acknowledge Editorial Review, *Norton Anthology of Literary and Critical Theory*, 3rd Edition.

Select Courses Taught (UVM)

English 2000 "Literary Theory": a theory course for upper level and advancing English majors.

English 1740 "The Art of the Essay": a creative writing course exploring the evolution of the essay form from Montaigne to Zadie Smith.

English 1500: Introductory seminar for new English majors, teaching genre, close reading skills, and a broad view of literary theory.

English 1260 "Using Addict: Drug and Addiction Literature and Film." Representations of drug use and addiction in literature, film, culture, medicine, and law from 1821 to the Present.

English 1124 American Literature II: a survey of American literature from 1865 to the present.

English 1123 American Literature I: a survey of early American Literature to 1865.

English 1010 "Writing and Drugs": a first year seminar using the history of writing on drugs and addiction to teach writing and research skills.

English 1210 "Race & Ethnicity": a course that explores the "metaphors and metaphysics" of race in America through modern and postmodern fiction and culture.

English/Film & Television Studies 096 "Dystopian Narratives in Modernity": traces the evolution of the dystopian genre in British, American, and European novels and films.

Jewish Studies 193/English 030 "Kafka and his Children": a diasporic study of Franz Kafka and his influence on modern American and global writing.

Film & Television Studies 008 Classical Cinema: a survey of early film from 1895-1945.

Academic Appointments

Senior Lecturer, Graduate College, University of Vermont, Spring 2018 to Present

Senior Lecturer, English Department, University of Vermont, Fall 2018 to Present

Lecturer, English Department, University of Vermont, 2006-2018

Visiting Assistant Professor, General Education Department, Berklee College of Music, 2002-2004

Lecturer, English Department, Suffolk University, Fall 2003

Graduate Teaching Fellow, English Department, Brandeis University, 2001-2003

Instructor, English as a Second Language Program, Brandeis University, 2001-2003

Graduate Teaching Assistant, English Department, Brandeis University, 2001-2002

Department and University Service

2023-to Present English Department Student Engagement Committee

2018-to Present United Academics Department Representative

2024-2025 English Department Assessment Committee

2022 General Education AH1 curriculum proposal sub-committee

2016-2020 United Academics Civil Rights Committee.

2020 English Department Symposium Director

2019 Host Visiting Scholar: Susan Zieger

2018 English Department Symposium Co-Director

2016-2018 United Academics Full-time Bargaining Unit Contract Negotiation Team

2015 ENGS 086/100 Sub-Committee for Curriculum Revision

2013-2015 English Dept. Evaluation Committee 2012 English Dept. Curriculum Committee

2012 United Academics PT Bargaining Unit Contract Negotiation Team April

2011 Faculty Sponsor and host for performance and talk by Robert Pinsky

2008 Co-Host Visiting Scholar: Lauren Berlant

2003: English as a Second Language Planning Committee, Brandeis University

2003: English as a Second Language Student Admissions Reader, Brandeis University

Grad and Honors College Thesis Supervision & Committees, University of Vermont

2025-2026 MA Thesis Committee, "An Intermingling of Efforts: Psychological Warfare, MKULTRA, and the Career of Colonel James L. Monroe." [Defended April 2026]

April 2026 HCOL Thesis: Dylan Moody A'ness, "Dead Men Walking: Zombies, the Human Condition, and a Search for Utopia"

2022-2023 MA Thesis Supervisor: Devon Moore, "They Made Me and Destroyed Me, and Mr. Zuckerman, They Aren't Finished With Me Yet": J.D. Salinger, Philip Roth, and the Subject of Late Modernism" [Defended March 2023]

2019-2020 MA Supervisor: comprehensive exam and tutorials on Postmodernism.

Nov 2020 HCOL Thesis: Lindsey Imhoff, "The Writing on the Wall: Queer: Asynchronicity and Queer Literature"

May 2018 HCOL Thesis:, Elizaveta Shkurina, "Fragments of Memories in Translation."

Nov. 2017 HCOL Thesis: Alex Benoit, "Concepts of Moral Geography in Dante Alighieri and James Joyce"

May 2017 HCOL Thesis:: Sophie Thorup, 'Let Us Record the Atoms as They Fall Upon the Mind': Virginia Woolf Wrestles With James Joyce's Ulysses"

May 2017 HCOL Thesis:: Ashlin Ballif, "Felix Gonzalez-Torres and Ken Okiishi: The Evolution and Representation of Experience."

May 2016 HCOL Thesis: Molly Gormley, "Rumination, Negative Life Events, and Depressive Symptoms in a Sample of College Students."

May 2015 HCOL Thesis:: Grady Kennison, "And the Tide was Way Out."

Dec 2014 HCOL Thesis: Marissa Bucci: "It's the End of the World as We Know It (And I Feel Fine): MTV, Postmodern Theory and Generational Shifts in the United States."

May 2014 HCOL Thesis: Michael Eaton, "Small Town Sense of Place: The Search to Find Meaning in a Rural Setting."

May 2009 HCOL Thesis: Alyssa Samson, "The Key to the Locked Room: An Existential Exploration of Paul Auster's Fiction."

April 2009 HCOL Thesis: Jacqueline Ryan, "She's Still There: Self-Portraits in Acrylic."

May 2008 HCOL Thesis: Michael D. Raymond, "Liberalism's Endless Task: Accommodating Citizens in State Education."

May 2007 HCOL Thesis:: Drew Bucy, "Virginia Woolf, Sigmund Freud, and the Modern, Post-War Consciousness."

Professional Affiliations

LACK (Lacanian psychoanalytic theory and German Idealism)

Derrida Today

MLA

AAUP/AFT

United Academics