

Erica Fretwell

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Albany, NY 12222

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efretwell@albany.edu

Education

Ph.D. English, Duke University, 2005 – 2011
B.A. English and Anthropology (magna cum laude), New York University, 2000 – 2004

Academic Positions

Associate Professor of English. University at Albany, SUNY, 2020 – present
Assistant Professor of English. University at Albany, SUNY, 2013 – 2020
Visiting Assistant Professor. College of the Holy Cross, 2012 – 2013
Visiting Scholar. University of California, Berkeley, 2011 – 2012
Lecturer. San Francisco State University, 2011 – 2012

Administrative Appointments

Director of Graduate Studies Program. Department of English, University at Albany, 2023 –

Peer-Reviewed Publications

Books

The Art of Slight Living, 1900/2000. Monograph. (in progress)

Sensory Experiments: Psychophysics, Race, and the Aesthetics of Feeling. Duke University Press, 2020. Monograph.

- Awards: Finalist, Modernist Studies Association First Book Prize
- Reviews: *American Literary History*; *American Literature*; *Centaurus: The European Society for the History of Science*; *CHOICE*; *Essence & Critique*; *History and Theory*; *Papers in Language and Literature*; *Pulse: The Journal of Science and Culture*; *The Senses and Society*; *Social History of Medicine*

The Palgrave Handbook of Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Literature and Science. Co-editors Ahuja, Allewaert, et. al. Palgrave, 2020. Multiauthor Volume.

Edited Journal Issues

"Senses with/out Subjects." Co-editor Hsuan Hsu. *American Literature* 95.3 (2023)

"Common Senses, Critical Sensibilities." *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities* 5.3 (2018)

Journal Articles

"Sleeping in the Wake: Black Living and the Aesthetics of Unconsciousness." *Feminist Theory* (2026) <https://doi.org/10.1177/14647001261461770>

"The Affective Bind." *American Literary History* 36.4 (2024): 1077 – 1088.

"Redistributions of the Sensible." (with Hsuan Hsu) *American Literature* 95.3 (2023): 447 – 457.

"Sensitivity Training." *PMLA* 138.1 (2023): 144 – 150.

"Common Senses, Critical Sensibilities: An Introduction." *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities* 5.3 (2018): 1 – 9.

"Stillness Is a Move: Helen Keller and the Kinaesthetics of Autobiography." *American Literary History* 25.3 (2013): 563 – 587.

"Emily Dickinson in Domingo." *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists* 1.1 (2013): 71 – 96.

Book Chapters

"Sense." In *Keywords for Health Humanities*, ed. Sari Altschuler, Jonathan Metzl, Priscilla Wald, 183 – 186. New York University Press, 2023.

"How to Read Disabled Bodies in History." In *The Cambridge Companion to American Literature and the Body*, ed. Travis Foster, 165- 179. Cambridge University Press, 2022.

"Introduction." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Literature and Science*. Co-authors Ahuja, Allewaert, et. al., 1 – 25. Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.

"Black Power in the Kitchen." In *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Food*, ed. J. Michelle Coghlan, 182 – 196. Cambridge University Press, 2020.

"Haptic Feelings." In *The New Walt Whitman Studies*, ed. Matt Cohen, 144 – 160. Cambridge University Press, 2020.

"1833 – 1932: American Literature's Other Scripts." In *Timelines of American Literature*, ed. Cody Marrs and Christopher Hager, 21 – 36. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019.

Book Reviews

The Suicidal State: Race Suicide, Biopower, and the Sexuality of Population by Madoka Kishi. *American Literary History* 38.3 (2026): forthcoming.

Literature and the Senses edited by Annette Kern-Stähler and Elizabeth Robertson. *Anglia: Journal of English Philology* 143.1 (2025): 224 – 227.

Writing Pain in the Nineteenth-Century United States by Thomas Constantinesco. *Textual Practice* 39.1 (2025): 116 – 119.

[Writing the Brain: Material Minds and Literature, 1800 – 1880 by Stefan Schöberlein](#). *British Society for Literature & Science Reviews* (May 26, 2024)

Bio-Imperialism: Disease, Terror, and the Construction of National Fragility by Gwen Shuni D’Arcangelis. *American Literary History* 35.1 (2023): 672 – 675.

The Portrait’s Subject: Inventing Inner Life in the Nineteenth-Century United States by Sarah Blackwood. *The New England Quarterly* 94.2 (2021): 295 – 298.

Animate Literacies: Literature, Affect, and the Politics of Humanism by Nathan Snaza. *Studies in the Novel* 52.3 (2020): 368 – 370.

[The Biopolitics of Disability: Neoliberalism, Ablenationalism, and Peripheral Embodiment by David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder](#). *ALH Online Review* XIV (2018): 1 – 3.

Reading and the Body: The Physical Practice of Reading by Thomas McLaughlin. *SHARP* 25.3 (2016): 19-20

Public Writing and Short-Form Criticism

[After The Leftovers](#). Forum. Co-editor Anna Krauthamer. *Post45: Contemporaries*: January 1, 2025.

[“Introduction: After The Leftovers.”](#) with Anna Krauthamer. *Post45: Contemporaries*: January 1, 2025.

[“The Spell of the Sentimental.”](#) *World Picture*: Summer 2023.

[“Methods of Feeling.”](#) Response to *Beside You in Time: Sense Methods and Queer Sociabilities in the American Nineteenth Century* by Elizabeth Freeman. *Syndicate Network*. June 2021.

[“From Lynchings to the Capitol: Racism and the Violence of Revelry.”](#) *Al-Jazeera*. January 13, 2021.

“Dickinson Variations,” with Emily Ogden (Univ. Virginia) and Johanna Winant (Reed College). *Avidly: A Channel of the Los Angeles Review of Books*

- January 8, 2021. <http://avidly.lareviewofbooks.org/2021/01/08/dickinson-variations/>
- January 15, 2021. <http://avidly.lareviewofbooks.org/2021/01/15/dickinson-variations-2/>
- February 26, 2021. <http://avidly.lareviewofbooks.org/2021/02/26/dickinson-variations-3/>

["Reading Tactics."](#) #TeachingC19 Pedagogy Forum. C19 Society webpage. August 25, 2019.

["American Literature's Other Scripts."](#) Fellow Highlight, Library Company of Philadelphia. January 13, 2019.

Awards, Fellowships, and Grants

Franklin Research Grant, American Philosophical Society (2019)
Faculty Research Award Program, University at Albany (2019)
VW-Mellon Fellowship in the Humanities, Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (2017)
Drescher Leave Program Award, NYS/United University Professors (2016)
Mellon Foundation Fellowship, Library Company of Philadelphia (2015)
University Auxiliary Service Program Grant, University at Albany (2015)
College of Arts and Sciences Travel Award, University at Albany (2014)
Dean's Conference Support Award, University at Albany (2014)
Ashbel G. Brice Dissertation Fellowship Award, Duke University (2011)
Women's Studies Gender and Race Research Award, Duke University (2010)
Franklin Humanities Institute Dissertation Fellowship, Duke Univ. (2009)
Women's Studies Ernestine Friedl Research Award, Duke University (2009)
Graduate School Summer Research Fellowship, Duke University (2007)
Vertical Integration Grant, Duke University (2007)
Estelle Holmes Award for a Senior Thesis in U.S. Literature, NYU (2004)

Invited Lectures and Keynotes

"Sense and Insensibility, ca. 1900 and 2000." *Making Sense of America: Conversations on Matters and Methods*. Symposium. Department of American Studies, University of Innsbruck (Austria). July 2 – 3, 2026.

"The Tactile Print History of Experiential Learning." *Reading by Touch*. Virtual Symposium. Society of Fellows of Critical Bibliography. May 14, 2026.

"Black/out Power." *Haptic Trouble: A Symposium*. Sorbonne Nouvelle University (France). October 10, 2025.

"Out of Touch: Towards a Haptic Episteme." *Touch, Arts, Affect*. Lecture series. Sorbonne Nouvelle University (Virtual). April 9, 2025.

"The Affective Bind." *Trowbridge Symposium: Interlocutions in American Literary History*. Lecture series. University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. February 2, 2024.

“Once More without Feeling: The Sentimental Anaesthetics of Living.”

- *Guest Lectures in American Studies*. University of Münster (Germany). May 25, 2023.
- English Colloquium, University of Sussex (England). February 22, 2023.
- Virginia J. Rock Plenary Address, Canadian Association of American Studies (Virtual). October 29, 2022.
- *The Labor of Pain*. Symposium. University of Oxford (Virtual). June 24, 2021.

“Sensitivity Training.”

- *Sensation: A Lecture Series*. Concordia University (Virtual). November 4, 2022.
- *A19: 19th-Century Americanists*. Lecture Series. Université Paris-Cité. October 7, 2022.
- *Other(ing) Sensing: Practices, Politics, and Ethics of Sensitive Media*. Symposium. Brandenburg Centre for Media Studies (Virtual). June 17, 2021.

“Sensory Experiments in Nineteenth Century America.”

- *Culture and Technics*. Workshop. Centre for Humanities Research, University of the Western Cape (South Africa). November 10 – 12, 2025.
- *New Adventures in American Studies*. Symposium. Department of English, University of California – Berkeley. (Virtual) April 2, 2021.
- *Reading Late Nineteenth-Century African American Literature Now*. Graduate Seminar (Prof. Autumn Womack). Princeton University. April 1, 2021.
- *American Literature Seminar Series*. Rothermere American Institute, University of Oxford (Virtual). January 28, 2021.
- *American Science and Literature Lecture Series*. Department of English and Comparative Literature, University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill. (Virtual) January 25 – 26, 2021.
- Medical Humanities Research Group, Durham University (Virtual). Jan 20, 2021.

“Body Images and the Psychophysics of Phantom Limbs.”

- *Inter/dependency: A Symposium on the Medical Humanities*. Rutgers University. April 19, 2018.
- Department of American Studies. Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt. Eichstätt (Germany). June 14, 2017.
- *A19: 19th-Century Americanists*. Lecture Series. Université Paris-Diderot (France). March 3, 2017.

Interviews

[“Grief Tech: What AI, Aura Photos, and 19th-Century Spirit Photographs Have in Common.”](#) *The Short Version*. UAlbany Podcast. April 29, 2026.

[“Feeling and Knowing: An Interview with Erica Fretwell.”](#) *Transatlantica: Revue d'études américaines*. Vol. 2 (2023)

[“Sensory Experiments.”](#) *G19 New Book Forum*. May 25, 2021.

[“Sensory Experiments.”](#) *New Books Network*. Podcast. December 11, 2020.

[“Psychophysics, Mysticism, and Meaning.”](#) *The Deep Dive*. Podcast. December 3, 2020.

Events Organized

Symposiums

Douglass Day: A Celebration of Black History and Literature (with Wendy Roberts). University at Albany. February 13, 2026.

- “Curating Black History and Literature: A Conversation” with guest speakers Prof. Autumn Womack (Princeton) and Dorothy Berry (Smithsonian)
- Transcribe-a-thon

Literature, Culture, and the Work of the Humanities. Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies. Freiburg, Germany. July 19 – 20, 2017.

Lecture Series and Workshop Series

Resisting Anti-Blackness @ UAlbany: Research, Teaching, Activism (with Johana Londoño, Elliot Tetreault, Francisco Vieyra). University at Albany. 2020 – 2021.

Americanist Lecture Series (with Wendy Roberts). University at Albany. 2014–2015.

Graduate Student Pedagogy Workshop. Workshop. Duke University. 2009 – 2010.

Americanist Speaker Series. Lectures. Duke University. 2008 – 2010.

Conference Sessions

“Editorial Impact: Gordon Hutner and *American Literary History*.” (co-organized with Sarah Wasserman) Modern Language Association, 2026.

“Creative Cognitions.” American Studies Association, 2022.

“Racial Properties.” C19: The Society of 19th-Century Americanists, 2020.

“Synthetic Forms.” American Studies Association, 2018.

“Haptic Feelings: Texts, Textures, Textiles.” C19: The Society of 19th-Century Americanists, 2018.

“Common Senses, Critical Sensibilities.” C19: The Society of 19th-Century Americanists, 2014.

“Racial Impressions, Religious Expressions.” C19: The Society of 19th-Century Americanists, 2012.

“Toward a Sensual Politics.” American Studies Association, 2011.

“The Disorder of Things.” C19: The Society of 19th-Century Americanists, 2010.

Conference Presentations

“Literatures of Unlived Experience.” Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present, 2026.

“Spinal Life and the Novel.” Society for Novel Studies, 2025.

Respondent to Cécile Roudeau. *Jewett Rebound*. Symposium. University at Albany, SUNY, 2025.

“Black Rest and the Politics of Unlived Experience.” Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present, 2024.

“Almost White, But Not Quite.” *Ukraine: Crisis in Context*. University at Albany, SUNY, 2022.

“Maria Montessori’s Aesthetic Education.” American Comparative Literature Association, 2021.

“Good Sympathetic Vibrations.” C19: The Society for 19th-Century Americanists, 2020.

“Haptic Feelings.” Modern Language Association, 2020.

“Sensitivity, 1888.” Modern Language Association, 2019.

“Sexual and Organic Chemistry.” American Studies Association, 2018.

“Holding Patterns.” C19: The Society of 19th-Century Americanists, 2018.

- "Helen Keller: Skin (Touch) Flesh." American Studies Association, 2017.
- "Sense and Synaesthetics." American Comparative Literature Association, 2017.
- "The War of the Dots." C19: The Society of 19th-Century Americanists, 2016.
- "Bodies that Antimatter." C19: The Society of 19th-Century Americanists, 2014.
- "Phantom Limbs and the Times that Bind." American Studies Association, 2013.
- "Ultrasonic Youth: Sight, Sound, Citizenship." *Media in Transition*, MIT, 2013.
- "Racial Synaesthesia; or The Senses Pass." C19: The Society of 19th-Century Americanists, 2012.
- "Helen Keller and the Kinaesthetics of Autobiography." Modern Language Association, 2012.
- "Sensitive Citizenship and Other Nervous Conditions." American Studies Association, 2011.
- "Recipes for Reading." Society for Textual Scholarship. 2011.
- "Scents of Subjection." University of Chicago, English Graduate Conference, 2010.
- "Sonographic Youth: Ultrasounds, Albums, and Affiliation." American Studies Association, 2009.
- "Annotations in Time and Space." Digital Humanities, 2009.
- "Unborn Images: The Promise and Disavowal of Race in Fetal Sonograms." Yale University, American Studies Graduate Conference, 2008.

Graduate Teaching and Advising

Graduate Courses, University at Albany

ENG 580	Realism and Racial Modernity
ENG 581	Taste-making in Postbellum America
ENG 582	Emily Dickinson, Writing Otherwise
ENG 681	<i>Moby-Dick</i>
ENG 681	Archives in Black and White
ENG 685	Thinking Feeling
ENG 685	Literary Sense and Scientific Sensibility
ENG 710	Textual Studies I
ENG 771	Practicum in Teaching Writing and Literature

Doctoral Dissertation Committees

- Nikko Capati (in progress) "Transnational Time Travel: Queer Temporality in Asian Speculative Fiction." College of Arts and Sciences. Director.
- Donna Hayles (in progress) "Silence, Diaspora, and Identity Formation in Selected Caribbean Women Writers." College of Arts and Sciences. Director.
- Eugene Pae (in progress) "Rethinking Black Ontology and the Theory of the Human: Subject Formation in Narratives of Slavery." College of Arts and Sciences. Director.
- Timothy Laberge (in progress) "Problems of Historical Imagination in the Postmodern Era." College of Arts and Sciences. Member.
- Andrew Butt (in progress) "'To become interesting': An Approach to Affect and Reason in Modernist Literature." College of Arts and Sciences. Member.
- Julie Edewaard (in progress) "Confucianism in Transcendentalism: Lydia Maria Child, Henry David Thoreau, and Ralph Waldo Emerson." College of Arts and Sciences. Director.

Eric Koch (2024) "Contemporary American Fiction and the New Sincerity." College of Arts and Sciences. Member.

Naoto Kojima (2022) "Before Realism: The Great American Novel and the Forms of Nationhood, 1852 – 1881." Member.

C. Alice Hofmann (2021) "Trauma Before the Name: Impersonal Violence in Nineteenth-Century American literature." Member.

Miaad Mahmood (2021) "The Paradox of Intimacy in Victorian and Early Twentieth Century Novels." Member.

Skye Anicca (2019) "The Fiction of Women in Contemporary American Literature: The Borderlands of Intersectional Feminism, Postcolonial American Studies, and Creative Writing." Member.

Doctoral Exam Committees

Faezeh Mohajeri (2027), Director.

Nikko Capati (2026), Director.

Donna Hayles (2025), Director.

Timothy Laberge (2023), Member.

Julie Edewaard (2022), Director.

Paul Lashway (2022), Member.

Andrew Butt (2022), Member.

Eugene Pae (2020), Member.

Miaad Mahmood (2019), Member.

Skye Anicca (2018), Member.

Naoto Kojima (2015), Member.

Master's Thesis Projects

Sydney Nguyen (2026) "Kindness without Hope: Ocean Vuong's *The Emperor of Gladness* as a Refugee Novel." Reader.

Nyna Dies (2024) "Topographies of Desir: On Becoming the Other in Urban Crime Fiction." Reader.

Kelly D'Souza (2022) "Body, Mind, and Locale: Understanding the American Reality through Blended Environs in William Carlos Williams's Poetry." Reader.

April Quattlebaum (2021) "Defining African American Authorship from James Weldon Johnson to Melvin B. Tolson." Director.

Natalia Davila (2021) "Uncle Tom's Women: Slavery and Black Female Sexuality." Director.

Tommie Ann Sutton (2021) "Gendered Rhetoric of Video Game Streaming: Female Agency, Harassment, and Cat Girls." Reader.

Jillian Shea (2020) "Idealist and Materialist Approaches to Abolition in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The Daughter of Adoption*." Co-director (with Rick Barney).

Lauren Weeks (2020) "The Legacy of Uncle Tom: The Transformation of Black Masculinity and Racial Politics." Director.

Joanna Heath (2019) "Emily Dickinson and the Book of Job." Co-director (with Wendy Roberts).

Julian Mostachetti (2018) "(i)." Co-director (with Aashish Kaul).

Awards Graduate Students Received

Lauren Weeks, English Dept. Award for Outstanding M.A. Thesis (2020)

Teaching Mentorship

Julie Edewaard

Mari Christmas

Undergraduate Teaching and Advising

Undergraduate Courses, University at Albany

ENG 413 Sentimentality

ENG 374 Race and Realist Fiction

ENG 373 Literature of the Americas: New World Genres

ENG 368 Women Writers: Our Emily Dickinson

ENG 337 Nineteenth-Century U.S. Literature

ENG 205 Introduction to Writing in English Studies

Senior Honors Thesis Mentorship

Lilian Magurno, Senior Honors Thesis (2026) “Thicker Than Water: Stories of the Individuals Who Make Up Postwar Families.” Director.

Kylieann Krause, Senior Honors Thesis (2026) “Poe to Peele: The Reflection of Cultural Anxieties within Horror’s Architecture.” Reader.

Margaret O’Connor, Senior Honors Thesis (2021) “Performing American Eugenics.” Director.

Emily Lange, Senior Honors Thesis (2015) “The Failure of Science Fiction: Revisiting Scientific Romance.” Director.

Awards Undergraduate Students Received

Margaret O’Connor, Presidential Award for Undergraduate Research (2021)

*Published in *Intersect: The Stanford Journal of Science & Technology* 15.1 (2021): 1 – 15.

Emily Lange, Presidential Award for Undergraduate Research (2015)

Other Teaching and Mentoring Experience

Senior Honors Thesis, Bates College (2025-26)

Evan McMahan, “The Wilderness Within US: Anxieties of Environmental Self-Control in Early and Nineteenth-Century American Eco-gothic Literature.” Reader.

Graduate Course, San Francisco State University (2012)

ENG 760 Nineteenth-Century American Gothic

Undergraduate Courses, College of the Holy Cross (2012 – 13)

ENG 368 African American Literature

ENG 351 American Renaissance

ENG 295 Readings in Twentieth-Century American Literature
ENG 201 Masterpieces of American Literature
ENG 121 Critical Reading and Writing

Undergraduate Courses, San Francisco State University (2011 – 12)

ENG 528 American Literature: 1914 – 1960
ENG 260 Introduction to Science Fiction

Undergraduate Courses, Duke University (2007 – 2009)

ENG 90 American Literature: Civil War to Civil Rights
ENG 26 Autobiography and the Lives of Others
TWP 20 Alone Together: Odd Couples

Professional Service

Book Series Editor

Oxford Studies in American Literary History (co-editor Sarah Wasserman), 2025 – present

Editorial Board Member

American Literature, 2022 – 2025

External Reviewer for Tenure & Promotion

Skidmore College, Department of English (2025)
Dickinson College, Department of English (2023)
University of New Mexico, Department of English (2022)

Book Manuscript Reviewer

Cambridge University Press (2026)
New York University Press (2026)
Fascination: Trance, Enchantment, and American Modernity by Patrick Kindig (Louisiana State University Press, 2022)

Journal Essay Manuscript Reviewer

American Literary History (2018); *American Literature* (2022 – 2025); *American Quarterly* (2022); *Contemporary Women's Writing* (2025); *ESQ: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century American Literature and Culture* (2020); *EurAmerica: A Journal of European and American Studies* (2019); *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* (2023); *History of Psychology* (2022); *Isis: A Journal of the History of Science Society* (2023); *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth Century Americanists* (2022); *Journal of Modern Literature* (2023); *Nineteenth-Century Literature* (2024); *PMLA* (2024, 2025); *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities* (2020); *The Senses & Society* (2024); *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* (2023); *Victorian Studies* (2023)

Fellowship Application Reviewer

Leverhulme Trust (UK)

Freiburg Institute of Advanced Studies (GER)

Endorsement Writer

How We Became Sensorimotor by Mark Paterson (Univ. Minnesota Press, 2021)

Editorial Assistant

American Literature, 2009 – 2011

Assistant Editor

Walt Whitman Digital Archive, 2007 – 2008

Project Manager

NEH Digital Humanities Grant for Walt Whitman's Marginalia, 2007 – 2008

<http://www.whitmanarchive.org/manuscripts/marginalia/>

Institutional Service

University at Albany, College of Arts and Sciences

CAS Council, Vice-Chair. Fall 2021

CAS Council, Representative. Fall 2017; Fall 2019 – Spring 2021

University at Albany, Department of English

Graduate Advisory Committee

Chair (ex officio). 2023 – present

Member. 2019 – 2022

Writing Center Advisory Committee, Member. 2025 – present

Tenure & Promotion Committee (E. Tetreault), Member. 2024 – 2025

Pre-tenure Review Committee (E. Tetreault), Chair. 2021 – 2022

"Living in Languages" colloquium, Panel Moderator. 2024; 2026.

Professionalization Committee, Member. 2013 – 2017; 2021 – 2022

Undergraduate Awards Committee, Member. 2020 – 2021

Honors Program Committee, Member. 2019 – 2020

Faculty Diversity Committee, Member. 2018 – 2019

Undergraduate Advisory Committee, Member. 2017 – 2018