

Jeffrey Karnicky

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Academic Employment

Professor. Department of English. Drake University, Fall 2017-present

Associate Professor. Department of English. Drake University, Fall 2011-Spring 2017

Assistant Professor. Department of English. Drake University, Fall 2007-2011

Visiting Assistant Professor. Department of English. Drake University, Fall 2005-Spring 2007

Assistant Professor. Department of English. Millersville University, 2002-2005

Lecturer. Department of English. The Pennsylvania State University, 2001-2002

Teaching Assistant. Department of English. The Pennsylvania State University, 1994-2001

Education

Ph.D. English, The Pennsylvania State University, August 2001
Specialties: Contemporary American Fiction, Contemporary British (especially Scottish) Fiction, Critical Theory, Literature and the Environment, Postmodern Literary Criticism, Cultural Studies

M.A. English, The Pennsylvania State University, May 1996

B.A. English/Creative Writing, high departmental honors, Rutgers University, May 1993

Books

“Scarlet Experiment:” Birds and Humans in America. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, November 2016.

In the 21st century, birds have become cognitive individuals and populations, subject to human governmentality. Through population management, governmental and nongovernmental agencies regulate bird life through legislation, public policy, and scientific study. Literary renderings of birds have also influenced human perceptions of and actions toward birds. Birds are managed, then, through multiple aspects of biopolitical power, for better and for worse, depending on the species and the situation. Some birds, such as the European Starling and the House Sparrow, thrive under this regime of intensive management; others, such as the Red Knot, and birds on the Federal Endangered Species List, may not. *Scarlet Experiment* focuses on six bird species—the Blue Jay, the European Starling, the Red Knot, the Canada Goose, and the Tufted Titmouse and Black-Crested Titmouse—as a means of examining the management of bird life in America from the 19th century to today.

Contemporary Fiction and the Ethics of Modern Culture. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, March, 2007.

This study articulates and performs an ethics of reading at the intersection of literary and cultural studies. Ethics, in my definition, considers fiction not as a static site for textual interpretation, but as an always contextual, and always social, means of transformation for both reader and text. The work considers the institutional positions of reading, ethics, and postmodern literary criticism while reading works by Susan Daitch, David Markson, Herman Melville, Irvine Welsh, David Foster Wallace, and Richard Powers. The ethics formulated in the manuscript pay careful attention to the ways that readers respond to the singularity of literary texts and the ways that reading negotiates among social contexts. *Contemporary Fiction and the Ethics of Modern Culture* views ethical reading as a means of reconfiguring the social realm through acts of reading that pay close attention to what Félix Guattari calls the “reinvention of the subject.” That is, I argue that contemporary fiction questions the basic distinctions between self and other that ground many understandings of ethical engagement.

Articles

"Ornithological Biography, Animal Studies, and Starling Subjectivity." *Humanimalia: A Journal of Human/Animal Interface Studies* 2:3 (2011).

"Avian Consciousness in Don DeLillo's *The Body Artist*." *Anthrozoös* 22:1 (2009): 5-18.

"What is the Red Knot Worth?: Valuing Human/Avian Interaction." *Society and Animals* 12:3 (2004): 253-266.

"Irvine Welsh's Novel Subjectivities." *Social Text* 76 (Fall 2003): 135-153.

"Wallpaper Mao: Don DeLillo, Andy Warhol, and Seriality." *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 42:4 (Summer 2001): 339-356.

"Keanu Rhizome." *symploke* 1-2 (1998): 135-144.

"George Bataille and the Visceral Cinema of Kathryn Bigelow." *Enculturation* 2:1 (Fall 1998): http://www.uta.edu/huma/enculturation/2_1/.

Book Chapters

"'An awfully good impression': truth and testimony in *Lunar Park*." In 'Bret Easton Ellis: *American Psycho*, *Glamorama* and *Lunar Park*,' Continuum (2011).

Reviews

Review of *Five Fictions in Search of the Truth*. Myra Jehlen. *The European Legacy* 15.1 (2010).

Review of *After Utopia: The Rise of Critical Space in Twentieth-Century American Fiction*, Nicholas Spencer. *Modern Fiction Studies*: 53:1(2007).

"Beyond Polemics: Posthuman Readings." Review of *Posthuman Bodies*, Judith Halberstam and Ira Livingston, eds., *Socialist Review* 26:1-2 (1996): 175-179.

Invited Lectures

Humanities Center Colloquium: What Happens When Birds Become Data? Drake University, February 24, 2017.

Humanities Center Colloquium: Truth and Fiction in Bret Easton Ellis's *Lunar Park*. Drake University, December 2, 2011.

English Colloquium: "Birds Of A Feather (or: A Fowl Undertaking?)." University of Nebraska, Lincoln. February 26, 2010.

Humanities Center Colloquium: Thinking with Blue Jays. Drake University, September 28, 2007

Keynote Address: "The Blue Jay's Future." The Sixth Annual Craft Critique Culture Conference: Redefining Nature, The University of Iowa, April 7-9, 2006.

Papers Presented

Exploding Heads in Jeff VanderMeer's Recent Fiction." Society for Literature, Science, and Art Conference, Toronto, Canada November 15-18, 2018.

"Reading Jeff VanderMeer's *Borne* After the End of the World." Society for Literature, Science, and Art Conference, Tempe, Arizona, November 9-12, 2017.

"Post-Apocalyptic Desire and Creative World-Building in *Adventure Time*." Society for Literature, Science, and Art Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, November 3-6, 2016.

"Broken Biopolitics in Jeff VanderMeer's *Southern Reach* Trilogy." Society for Literature, Science, and Art Conference, Houston, Texas, November 12-15, 2015.

"Avian Governmentality: Birds Becoming Data." Society for Literature, Science, and Art Conference, South Bend, Indiana, October 3-6, 2013.

"Do Birds Exist? The "Existential Refrain" of the European Starling." Society for Literature, Science, and Art Conference, Indianapolis, Indiana, October 28-31, 2010.

"Who's Hailing Whom?: Individuals, Populations, and Multispecies Relationships." Society for Literature, Science, and Art Conference,

Atlanta, GA, November 3-6 2009.

"Reiterations of Ornithological Biography." Society for Literature, Science, and Art Conference, Charlotte, NC, November 13-16, 2008.

"'Included in this classification:' Encoding American Birds." Society for Literature, Science, and Art Conference, Portland, ME, November 1-4, 2007.

"A Promise to Return: Evolution, Migration, and 'Nuisance' Birds." Society for Literature, Science, and Art Conference, New York, NY, November 9-12, 2006.

"Ethics and Animal Consciousness in Don DeLillo's *The Body Artist*." 20th Century Literature Conference, University of Louisville, February 23-25, 2006.

"Birds Watching Humans: A Blue Jay Looks Back." Society for Literature and Science Conference, Durham, NC, October 14-17, 2004.

"Birding with Nietzsche." Society for Literature and Science Conference, Austin, TX, October 26-29, 2003.

"Cultivating Silence in Irvine Welsh's Fiction." The Northeast Modern Language Association (NEMLA) Conference, Buffalo, NY, April 7-9, 2000.

"Kinds of Stasis in David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest*." 20th Century Literature Conference, University of Louisville, February 24-26, 2000.

"Wallpaper Mao: Don DeLillo, Andy Warhol, and Seriality." 20th Century Literature Conference, University of Louisville, February 24-26, 2000.

"Remixing Deleuze and Guattari: The Spaces of Music and Literature." Society for Literature and Science Conference, Pittsburgh, PA, October 29-31, 1997.

"Keanu Rhizome." Becoming Interdisciplinary: Practicing Deleuze and Guattari Conference, Pennsylvania State University, November 8-10, 1996.

"Symptoms of the Non-Human Body." Society for Literature and

Science Conference, Emory University, October 10-13, 1996.

"The Logic of the (H)AND: Amputation, Deleuze & Guattari, and Feminism." Gender and Resistance: Midwest and Mid Atlantic Feminist Graduate Student Conference, Pennsylvania State University, February 16-18, 1996.

"Mapping Hands, Forgetting the *Femme Fatale*." . . .Ellipses. . .: The Eighth Annual Graduate Student Interdisciplinary Conference, The State University of New York at Stony Brook, November 3-4, 1995.

Teaching Experience

Drake University

Mass Extinction in the Humanities, Sciences, and Arts

Upper-level, crosslisted course. Students from all disciplines, especially those interested in interdisciplinary work, are welcome to this class. We will read works that theorize the Anthropocene from a scientific and from a cultural perspective. We will read works of literature, cultural criticism, science writing, and scientific writing that explain, interrogate, and investigate the causes and effects of "the sixth great extinction," the human driven "biological annihilation" of life on Earth. We will read part of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. We will read scientific papers such as Gerardo Ceballos, et al.'s "Biological annihilation via the ongoing sixth mass extinction signaled by vertebrate population losses and declines." We will read works of literature such as Brooke Bolander's *No Flight without the Shatter*. We will comparatively study the art of John James Audubon and Walton Ford. We will read from Elizabeth Kolbert's *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*, and from Ursula K. Heise's *Imagining Extinction*. We will listen to songs about extinction! We will watch *Jurassic Park*! Students will work to produce an interdisciplinary project over the course of the semester.

Topics in Literary Theory: Climate Fiction

Upper-level course focused on the multiple genres that engage the causes and effects of climate change, including realist fiction, science fiction, and fantasy. Read novels by writers like Jeff VanderMeer, Barbara Kingsolver, Clare Vaye Watkins. Some of our guiding questions: How does fiction engage the amorphous, slow-moving,

enormous concept of climate change? How might fiction affect the ways that we think about Earth, climate, and human influence?

Topics in Literary Theory: Foucault / Zizek

Upper-level course focused on work of two culturally relevant philosophers. The philosopher Gilles Deleuze once wrote that Michel Foucault's work "changed our conception of thinking." Slavoj Zizek has been described as a critic who "hopes to call forth new potentials in thinking and self-reflexivity." Course sought to engage the work of Foucault and Zizek in order to explore just what these new ways of thought might be.

Contemporary British Literature

Upper-level course focused on the ways that literature informs and is shaped by the national, regional, cultural, and personal identity of both authors and readers. Read works by Denise Mina, Irvine Welsh, China Mieville, Hilary Mantel, Kazuo Ishiguro, Zadie Smith

Literary Theory

Upper-level course focused on focus on the ways that contemporary theory and criticism engages with the contemporary world. As a means of engagement with the texts under consideration, we thought about how various critics and theorists define the literary and social roles of language, subjectivity, and institutions. We read, thought about, and discussed, such areas as post-Marxism, Globalism, Animal Studies, Feminism, Gender Studies, Race Studies, and Disability Studies.

Literary Theory

Upper-level course on how literary theory configures reading, and how one reads literary theory. Did close and careful readings Franz Kafka's fiction as primary text and then read various critical responses to Kafka. Discussed how literary theory thinks about the act of reading.

African American Science Fiction: Senior Capstone

Course focused on African-American Science fiction in literature and music, from Charles M. Chestnutt's late 19th century short stories to 20th century Afro-Futurism to 21st century Steampunk. Read from a wide variety of authors and critics include Samuel Delaney, Octavia Butler, Walter Mosley, Kodwo Eshun, and Mark Dery. Listened to and read about music from Sun Ra, Parliament, Jimi Hendrix, D.J. Spooky, Deltron 3030, Erykah Badu, and Janelle Monae.

Animal Studies: Senior Capstone Course

Capstone course focused on the newly developing field called “Animal Studies.” Largely based in the humanities, and specifically in English, Animal Studies engages with what the philosopher Jacques Derrida calls, “the question of the animal,” that is, the ways that humans represent, understand, and act toward animals. Using insights from many disciplines—philosophy, cognitive science, ethology, even ornithology—animal studies focuses on how humans relate to non-human animals. In this seminar we read a selection of theoretical, literary, philosophical, and scientific texts. Students designed, and wrote, a semester long project.

Animal Minds in Literature and Culture: Senior Capstone Course

Course focused on issues surrounding various configurations of animal consciousness, considering theoretical, cultural, philosophical, and scientific, among other, ways of understanding non-human consciousness.

Contemporary African-American Literature

Upper-level course focused on novels by contemporary African-American writers Walter Mosley, Colson Whitehead, Samuel Delaney, Octavia Butler, Toni Morrison, and Percival Everett. Focused on how these writers think about the past, present, and future of America in their historical fiction, realistic fiction, and science fiction. Discussion of cultural, racial, literary, and national identity.

Major Authors: Walter Mosley

Upper-level course focused on the work of Walter Mosley, considered such issues as: identity (especially in relation to race and class) in 20th and 21st America, cultural geography (especially in relation to Los Angeles and New York), novels and philosophy, stylistics and genre writing, politics and contemporary literature.

Introduction to African-American Literature

Course worked to define and understand the constitutive role that African-American literature plays in American literature; to think about the ways that historical and social forces have shaped, and continue to shape, African-American literature; to know the history of African-American literature, from slave narratives to contemporary literature; to understand and articulate how racial oppression connects to American literature.

Genres: Crime and Detective Fiction

Course focused on the roles of logic and reason in this genre.

Genres: 21st Century Literature

Class focused on fiction written in the first decade of the 21st century. Addressed the social role of the 21st century novel.

Literary Theory

Focused on how literary theory configures reading, and how one reads literary theory. Did close and careful readings Franz Kafka's fiction as primary text and then read various critical responses to Kafka. Discussed how literary theory thinks about the act of reading.

Environmental Literature

Upper-level course, cross-listed with Environmental science program, that examines the history, from the 19th to the 21st century, of human interactions with the natural world. Readings include Darwin, Thoreau, Audubon, Dickinson, Whitman, E.O. Wilson, Marc Bekoff, T.C. Boyle, and Donna Haraway.

Literary Study

This course, designed for English majors, minors, and others interested in literary study, focuses on readers and authors. We read novels, short stories, poems, essays, and other texts. Some of the questions we will address include: What is the relationship between readers and authors? How do they depend on one another? What are their respective roles in the production of meaning? How are readings produced by readers, and, conversely, is there a way in which readers are produced by what they read?

20th Century American Literature

Upper-level course that explores experimental and realistic literature by such writers as Ben Marcus, Katherine Davis, Raymond Carver, Marilynne Robinson, and Wallace Stevens.

American Literature Since 1960

Course considers the role of contemporary literature in the 21st century. Explores how fiction responds to, interacts with, and possibly helps to define, contemporary experience. Writers discussed include Paula Fox, Bret Easton Ellis, Walter Mosley, and Daniel Clowes.

Approaches to American Literature

Students read 19th-21st century American literature that addresses questions of mobility and migration within the American landscape,

from Frederick Douglass and Walt Whitman, to Jack Kerouac and Patricia Highsmith, to Ruth Ozeki and Don DeLillo.

Black Panther Comics and Social Diversity: First Year Seminar

Course focused on how Black Panther comics have portrayed social difference, and more recently, how diversity in comics' creators and audiences has affected the production of contemporary comics.

Comics and Social Diversity: First Year Seminar

Course focused on how comics have portrayed social difference, and more recently, how diversity in comics' creators and audiences has affected the production of contemporary comics.

Batman and Cultural History: First Year Seminar

Course focused on Batman as a cultural and historical icon. Read Batman comics from multiple eras, and paired these readings with critical essays to construct an understanding of this character and his role in American culture.

Encountering Nonhuman Minds: First Year Seminar

Explored the world of nonhuman consciousness and intelligence. Starting with Thomas Nagel's famous question "What is it like to be a bat?", investigated, through reading and writing, the multiple ways that minds can be understood.

Writing the Environment: First Year Seminar

Class addresses question of how humans live in and with the "natural" world. Students consider the following questions, among others: How and why is the environment valued in writing? How do humans interact with other species? How do science, history, and politics intersect in environmental literature?

Millersville University

(25 total sections)

Pennsylvania State University

(28 total sections)

At Drake University

Department Service

Chair: English Department Curriculum Committee (Fall 2013-Spring 2016)

Chair: English Department Student Awards and Co-Curricular Committee (2018-2019)

English Department Curriculum Committee (Fall 2009-present)

English Department Search Committee (Spring 2008-Fall 2009)

College Service

Coordinator of Humanities Colloquium Series (Fall 2017-present)

Co-Founding Member of Organizing Committee for Concentration in the Interdisciplinary Study of the Humanities and Science (Fall 2015-present)

Chair: Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee (Fall 2013-Spring 2015)

Arts and Sciences Council (Fall 2008- Spring 2011)

Philosophy Department Search Committee (Spring 2009-Fall 2010)

Academic Advisor (Fall 2008-present). Advise twenty-five undergraduate majors in curriculum choices.

University Service

Book Club Facilitator (Spring 2019)

CREW Mentor (Fall 2017-present)

University Hearing Panel (Fall 2015-present)

Outside Drake

Book Review Editor

Book Review Editor, *Configurations: the Journal of the Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts* (Fall 2015-Present)

Manuscript Evaluator

Reviewed and made publication recommendations on book-length

manuscripts for State University of New York Press and Routledge Press.

Article Evaluator

Reviewed and made publication recommendations on submitted articles for *Modern Fiction Studies*, *Twentieth-Century Literature*, *Public Culture*, *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*

Honors and Awards

Drake University Faculty Reassigned Time Grant. Fall 2010. Awarded a one-course reassignment for research.

Drake University Center for the Humanities Tenure-Track Support Program. Spring 2009. Awarded a two-course release.

Drake University Travel Grants. 2005-2018. Awarded for travel to conferences.