

Jeffrey Karnicky

Department of English
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Academic Employment

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

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

Publications

Book

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: 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

“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

(29 total sections)

Animal Studies: Senior Capstone Course (one section: Spring 2011)

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.

Major Authors: Walter Mosley (one section: Spring 2010)

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.

Encountering Nonhuman Minds: First Year Seminar (four sections; Fall 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011)

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.

Animal Minds in Literature and Culture: Senior Capstone Course (one section; Fall 2008)

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

consciousness.

Genres: 21st Century Literature (three sections; Spring 2008, 2010, 2011)

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

Literary Theory (three sections; Spring 2008, 2009, 2011)

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 (one section; Fall 2007)

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 (nine sections; Fall 2007-Fall 2011)

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 (two sections; Spring 2007, Fall 2009)

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 (two sections; Spring 2006, Spring 2007)

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 (seven sections; Fall 2005-Spring 2007)

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.

Writing the Environment: First Year Seminar (three sections; Fall 2005, Fall 2006, Fall 2007)

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)

Service

Committee Member

English Department Curriculum Committee (Fall 2009-present)
English Department Search Committee (Spring 2008-Fall 2009)
Philosophy Department Search Committee (Spring 2009-Fall 2010)

Arts and Sciences Council (Fall 2008- Spring 2011)

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

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. 2005,2006, 2007, 2008, 2009.
Awarded for travel to conferences.