

KEVIN MCLAUGHLIN

*George Hazard Crooker Professor of English and Comparative Literature
Professor of English, Comparative Literature and German
Brown University*

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Comparative Literature, New York University, 1989
M.A., Comparative Literature, New York University, 1985
B.A., English, McDaniel College [Western Maryland College], 1981

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Brown University

Director, The John Nicholas Brown Center for Advanced Study, 2023-
Dean Emeritus of the Faculty, 2022-
Dean of the Faculty, 2011-2022
George Hazard Crooker Professor of English, Comparative Literature, and German Studies,
2012-present
Chair of the English Department, 2009-2011; 2005-2008
Interim Chair of the German Department, 2010-2011
Nicholas Brown Professor of Oratory and Belles Lettres, 2005-2011
Professor of English and Comparative Literature, 2003-2005
Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature, 2000-2003
Manning Endowed Assistant Professor of English, 1997-2000
Assistant Professor of English, 1996-1997

St. John's University

Assistant Professor, English, 1994-1996

Harvard University

Assistant Head Tutor, Literature Concentration, 1993-1994
Lecturer, Literature Concentration, 1988-1994

PUBLICATIONS

Books:

The Philology of Life: Walter Benjamin's Critical Program. New York: Fordham University

Press, 2023.

Poetic Force: Poetry after Kant. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014.

Paperwork: Fiction and Mass Mediacy in the Paper Age. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005.

Walter Benjamin, Arcades Project. Co-translation with Howard Eiland, with notes and introduction. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Writing in Parts: Imitation and Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Literature. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.

Edited Volumes:

Co-editor and co-translator of Walter Benjamin, *On Goethe* (with Susan Bernstein and Peter Fenves). Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2025.

Co-editor of *Points of Departure: Samuel Weber between Spectrality and Reading* (with Peter Fenves and Marc Redfield). Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2016.

Co-editor of Special Issue of *boundary 2* entitled “Benjamin Now: Critical Encounters with Benjamin’s *Arcades Project*.” *boundary 2*, 30.1 (with Philip Rosen) (Spring, 2003).

Chapters in Books:

“Philological Reflection: Schlegel after Benjamin.” *Sprachdenken in der Romantik/Thinking about language in the Romantic period*. Ed. Alexander Knopf. Hamburg: Meiner Verlag, 2025, 143-55.

“City and Porosity: Walter Benjamin’s Passages.” *Rome: Modernity, Postmodernity and Beyond*. Eds. Lesley Caldwell and Fabio Camilletti. Cambridge: Legenda, 2018, pp. 9-18.

“Parting with the Self: Samuel Weber’s Critique of Ipseity.” *Points of Departure: Samuel Weber between Spectrality and Reading*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2016, pp. 149-165.

“Erfahrung (German)— Experience (English).” *Dictionary of Untranslatables*. Eds. Emily Apter, Michael Wood, and Jacques Lezra. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2014.

“Erinnerung (Recollection) and Gedächtnis (Memory) in Hegel,” *Dictionary of Untranslatables*. Eds. Emily Apter, Michael Wood, and Jacques Lezra. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2014.

“Ur-ability: Force and Image from Kant to Benjamin.” *Releasing the Image: From Literature to New Media*, eds. Jacques Khalip and Robert Mitchell. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011, pp. 204-221.

“Bleak House, Paper, and Victorian Print.” *Approaches to Teaching Dickens’s Bleak House*. Eds. Gordon Bigelow and John O. Jordan. New York: Modern Language Association, 2008, pp. 57-63.

“Serialization,” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature*. Ed. David Scott Kastan. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

“Virtual Paris: Benjamin’s Arcades Project.” *Benjamin’s Ghosts: Interventions in Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory*, ed. Gerhard Richter. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2002, pp. 204-25.

Translation of Pierre Missac, “From Rupture to Shipwreck: Walter Benjamin’s Passagen-Werk.” (co-translator) in *On Walter Benjamin: Critical Essays and Recollections*, ed. Gary Smith. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988.

Refereed Journal Articles:

“Walter Benjamin: The Novel,” *Modern Language Notes* 139.3 (2024): 604-619.

“Delimiting Literary Criticism: Walter Benjamin’s Dissertation,” *CR: The New Centennial Review* 21.1 (Spring 2021): 71-100.

“Walter Benjamin’s Philology of Life: Methodological Reflections on ‘Two Poems by Friedrich Hölderlin,’ ” *Modern Language Notes* 135.3 (April 2020): 746-69.

“Biophilology: Walter Benjamin’s Literary Critical Legacy,” *Modern Language Notes* 133.3 (April, 2018): 562-84.

“Culture and Messianism: Disinterestedness in Arnold,” *Victorian Studies* 50.4 (2008): 615- 639.

“On Poetic Reason of State: Baudelaire and the Multitudes,” *Partial Answers* 5/2 (June 2007): 247-65.

“Benjamin’s Barbarism,” *Germanic Review* 81, 1 (Winter, 2006): 4-20.

“ ‘Images de papier’: Deleuze, Benjamin, Melville,” *Tropismes* 12 (Winter, 2004): 245-64.

“Benjamin Now: Afterthoughts on The Arcades Project,” *boundary 2* 30.1 (Spring, 2003): 191-197.

“The Coming of Paper: Aesthetic Value from Ruskin to Benjamin,” *Modern Language Notes* 114. 5 (December, 1999): 962-990.

“Just Fooling: Note on Paper in Poe,” *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 11.1 (Spring, 1999): 38-67.

“The Financial Imp: Ethics and Finance in Nineteenth-Century Fiction,” *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 29.2 (Winter, 1996): 165-83.

“Losing One’s Place: Domesticity and Displacement in Dickens’s Bleak House,” *Modern Language Notes* 108.5 (December, 1993): 875-90; Reprint in: *Critical Approaches to Charles Dickens’s Bleak House*. New Casebooks Series. Ed. Jeremy Tambling. London: Macmillan, 1998.

In Progress:

Disappearing Tales: The Novel and the End of Storytelling (book manuscript).

Radio broadcast:

Invited guest, "In Our Time" episode on Walter Benjamin (BBC Radio 4, February 10, 2022): <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0014710>.

Invited Lectures (selected):

"Benjamin: On Goethe." Workshop at New York University, Deutsches Haus. October 6, 2025.

"Benjamin: On Goethe." Workshop at Yale University, German Department. October 24, 2025.

"Walter Benjamin. The Novel," Yale University, February 7, 2024.

"Walter Benjamin's *Gehalt* Theory," University of California, Berkeley, October 24, 2023.

"Walter Benjamin: The Novel," Stanford University (Center for the Study of the Novel), October 23, 2023.

"Walter Benjamin's *Gehalt* Theory," University of Southern California, October 19, 2023

"Walter Benjamin: The Novel," University of California, Riverside, October 18, 2023,

"On Walter Benjamin's Philology of Life," European Graduate School, May 16, 2023.

"On Walter Benjamin's Philology of Life," University of Copenhagen, Department of English, Germanic and Romance Studies, May 4, 2023.

"The Philology of Life," Goldsmiths, University of London, June 10, 2019.

"Delimiting Literary Criticism: Benjamin's Dissertation," Williams College, April 5, 2018.

"Verschränkte Zeit: A Key to Benjamin's Biophilology," Formen der Zeit, Eikones Seminar, Basel, Switzerland, June 7, 2017.

"Biophilology: Walter Benjamin's Literary Critical Program," New York University, Department of Comparative Literature," December 8, 2016.

"Biophilology: Walter Benjamin's Literary Critical Program," Brown University, "Inheriting the Frankfurt School," September 24, 2016.

"City and Porosity: Walter Benjamin's Passages," Conference on "Rome's Modernity: Trauma, Fracture, Narration," The British School, Rome (Italy), October 17-19, 2012.

"Poetic Force: Kant, Benjamin, Hölderlin," Critical Speculations, University of Albany, SUNY, September 27-29, 2012.

"Poetic Force," Colloquium "Parting With: à partir du travail de Samuel Weber," Château de la

Bretesche, France, July 4-5, 2010.

“Making Room for reason,” Series: Lectures en question, Université de Lyon 2, France, October 5, 2009.

“Religion of Reason: from Kant to Derrida,” Northwestern University Paris Graduate Program in Critical Theory, Paris, France, October 7, 2009.

“Wiped Out: Matthew Arnold’s Resignation,” English Department, Université de Lille, France, October 6, 2009.

“Poetic Force: Making Room for Reason in Kant and Derrida,” Paris Program in Critical Theory, Northwestern University (Paris, France), October 7, 2009.

“Ur-ability: Kant, Benjamin, Weber,” Keynote address, “Communicability and Iterability: Benjamin and Derrida,” Northwestern University, Comparative Literary Studies, May 8, 2009.

“Wiped Out: Matthew Arnold’s Resignation,” Fred Garrigus Holloway Annual Lecture, McDaniel College, October, 2008.

Guest Professor, Cooper Union Graduate School of Architecture, Two Seminars on “The Architecture of Walter Benjamin,” October, 2008.

“Poetic Force: Hölderlin on Benjamin on Lacoue-Labarthe,” Colloquium in Memory of Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Departments of French and Comparative Literature, New York University, April 11, 2008.

“Walter Benjamin’s Italian Journeys,” Mediterranean Studies Conference, Castellamare di Stabia, Italy, July, 2007.

“Culture and Messianism,” Keynote address, “Mutual Misunderstanding,” Tunis, Tunisia, February, 2007.

Keynote Address, “Urbanism, Urbanity, and the Nineteenth-Century Novel,” University of California, Santa Cruz, August, 2006.

“Baudelaire and Arnold,” Series on Comparative Literature, Northwestern University, April, 2006.

“On Poetic Reason of State: Baudelaire and the Multitudes,” Princeton University, Department of Comparative Literature, March, 2006.

“Paperwork: Distraction in Poe,” University of Amsterdam. November 8, 2002.

“Paperwork: Distraction in Poe,” University of Groningen. November 6, 2002.

“Virtual Paris: Benjamin’s Arcades Project,” Guest Lecture, Bard College, April 17, 2000.

“The Coming of Paper: Aesthetic Value from Ruskin to Benjamin,” Guest Lecture, University of Colorado/Boulder, November 5, 1999.

- “The Legend of the Century: Walter Benjamin’s Nineteenth-Century Paris,” “Fin de siècle/Millénaire,” Wellesley College, April, 1997.
- “The Electric Life: Language, Ethics, and Exchange in Ruskin and Marx,” University of Connecticut, Storrs, March, 1997.
- “Reflections on Money and Culture,” La Bretesche Seminar, Château de la Bretesche, France, June, 1996.
- “Unearthing an Underground Classic: On Translating Walter Benjamin’s Arcades Project,” Translation Seminar, University Professors Program, Boston University, April, 1995.
- “Benjamin’s Semiotic History,” Construction Site: On Walter Benjamin, Princeton University, April, 1994.
- “Telling the Truth Ahead of Time: Poetry, Philosophy, and the Future in Nietzsche’s ‘Pathos of Truth.’ A Response to Arthur Danto,” Nietzsche Symposium, Tufts University, April, 1993.
- “The Limits of Frame: The Culture Industry and the Human Comedy,” Lecture Series on Literature and Philosophy, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1988.

Papers Read (selected):

- “Philological Reflection: Schlegel after Benjamin,” The Early Romantic Philosophy of Language, University of Copenhagen, June 24-25, 2021.
- “The Work: The Concept of German Romantic Criticism,” American Comparative Literature Association, Georgetown University, March 9, 2019.
- “The Ruins of the Bourgeoisie: Balzac’s Illusions perdues,” Nineteenth-Century French Conference, Yale University, October 16, 2010.
- “The Unsecured Site: Aesthetics and Politics in Later Kant,” Radcliffe Institute Seminar: The Politics and Philology of Security,” Cambridge, Mass., April 24- 25, 2009.
- “Poetic Force: Hölderlin,” American Comparative Literature Association annual convention, Harvard University, March 26-29, 2009.
- “Resuscitating Carthage: Flaubert’s Salammbô,” The Mediterranean Idea: From Carthage to the Present, Carthage, Tunisia, July, 2008.
- “Toward a Critique of Lyrical Violence,” Modern Language Association, Chicago, December 30, 2007.
- “Lyrical Evil,” The Flowering of Baudelaire, Brown Humanities Weekend, October 19, 2007.
- “Walter Benjamin’s Barbarism,” Modern Language Association, Philadelphia, December 28, 2004.

“Melville’s Paper Machine,” Whither Theory: New Directions in Anglo-American Studies,” Paris, France, June 21, 2003.

“Towards a Romantic theory of Value: Reflections on Aesthetic Divisibility,” North American Society for the Study of Romanticism Annual Convention, University of Washington, August 18, 2001.

“Staying in Character: Paper in Hardy,” British Comparative Literature Association Annual Convention, Swansea (Wales), July 25, 2001.

“Forgetting Ruskin: Value and Virtuality from Ruskin to Proust and Benjamin,” American Comparative Literature Association Annual Conference, Montreal, Canada, April 9- 11, 1999.

“From Substance to Field . . . and Back: Economic and Aesthetic Value in Ruskin,” Interdisciplinary Nineteenth-Century Studies Conference, New Orleans, April 17- 19, 1998.

“Virtual Translation: Translation, History and Content in Benjamin’s Arcades Project,” American Comparative Literature Association Annual Conference, Austin, Texas, March 26-28, 1998.

“Fame and Frame: the Case of Balzac’s *Comédie humaine*,” Modern Language Association Annual Convention, San Diego, December, 1994.

“Collecting the Collector: The Allegory of Walter Benjamin’s Arcades Project,” Modern Language Association Annual Convention, Toronto, December, 1993.

“Inside the July Monarchy: Interiors and Utopia in Balzac’s *La Peau de chagrin*,” Bryn Mawr French and Francophone Literature Conference, March, 1993.

“Domesticity and Displacement: Self-Estrangement in Dickens’s *Bleak House* and Hegel’s *Phenomenology*,” Interdisciplinary Nineteenth-Century Studies Conference, Yale University, 1991.

“The Book of Boz: Journalism and Self-Legitimation in Early Dickens,” Modern Language Association Annual Convention, Washington, D.C., 1989.

Book Reviews:

“Dreams of Perfection,” Review of Andrew H. Miller, *The Burdens of Perfection: on Ethics and Reading in Nineteenth-Century British Literature*, in *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 42.1 (2009).

Susan Bernstein, *Virtuosity of the Nineteenth Century*, in *Comparative Literature* 53.2 (Spring, 2001) 181-83.

Carol Jacobs, *In the Language of Walter Benjamin*, in *Modern Language Notes*, 114.5 (December, 1999), 1144-46.

Gene H. Bell-Villada, Art for Art's Sake and Literary Life: How Politics and Markets Helped Shape the Ideology of Aestheticism, 1790-1990, *Modern Philology: A Journal Devoted to Research in Medieval and Modern Literature*, 97. 2 (November, 1999) 310-303.

Samuel Weber, Mass Mediauras," *Modern Language Notes* 111.5 (December, 1996) 1019-1022.

Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe's Typography, *Erato/Harvard Book Review* 13 (Spring, 1990).

Hermann Broch, The Spell, *Erato/Harvard Book Review* 11 & 12 (Winter-Spring, 1989).

Academic Honors and Awards:

Wendy J. Strothman Faculty Research Award, Brown University, 2009
National Endowment for the Humanities Research Grant, 2002-2003
Bronson Research Fellowship, Brown University English Department, 1999-2000
National Endowment for the Humanities Research Translation Grant, 1994-96
St. John's University Faculty Summer Research Grant, Summer, 1995
Dean's Dissertation Fellowship, New York University, 1987-88
Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst Graduate Fellowship (Frankfurt), 1986-87
Fulbright Quadrille Ball Fellowship (Frankfurt), declined, 1986-87
Sidney and Celia Siegel Fellowship in the Humanities, New York University, 1984-85
University Developmental Fellowship, New York University, 1982-84
Phi Beta Kappa, 1981

Service to the Profession:

Member, Board of Trustees, The European Graduate School, 2024-
Managing Editor, *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 2023-
Social Science Research Council Agenda Committee, 2019-2022.
American Council of Learned Societies Strategic Plan Advisory Group, 2019-2022.
Modern Language Association, Divisional Committee for Romanticism and Nineteenth- Century
Comparative Literature, 2004-2009 (Chair 2007).
PMLA Advisory Committee, 2002-2005. Referee for the journal *Novel* (1996-2011)
Referee of book manuscripts (Princeton UP, Harvard UP, Cambridge UP, Stanford UP, Fordham
UP, and others).
Referee for tenure review (Harvard University, New York University, University of Connecticut,
Brigham Young University, University of California).
Referee for the journal *Dickens Studies Annual* (1995).
Referee for Modern Language Association (Approaches to Teaching Honoré de Balzac's "Le
Père Goriot"), 1998.

Service to the University

Co-Chair, Steering Committee, Brown 2026, 2024-2027
Watson Dean Search Committee, 2024-2025
Dean of the Faculty, 2011-2022.
Chair, Department of English, 2005-2011.
Cogut Humanities Center Governing Board, 2005-2011.
Interim Chair, Department of German, 2010-2011
Chair, Search Committee for the Dean of the College, 2006.
Search Committee, Dean of the Faculty, 2004.

Service to the Department

First-year Seminar Leader, 2007.
Concentration Advisor, English Department, 2007.
Director of Graduate Studies, Department of English, 2004-05; 2000-2002.
English Department Senate, 2004-2011.
German Department Graduate Board, 2004-2011.
Acting Chair, Department of English (Fall, 2003)
Faculty Search Committee in English (Contemporary Literature), 2003.
Faculty Search Committee in Comparative Literature and German, 2003.
English Department Curriculum Committee, 2000-2011.
English Department Senate, 2000-2011.
English Department Search Committee (Postcolonial position), 2001-02.
Director of Honors Program, 1998-99.
Curriculum Committee, 1998-99; 2000-2011.
Graduate Committee, 1996-2011.
Department Senate, 1997-2011.
Graduate Admissions Committee, 1996, 1997, 2000.
Freshmen Advisor (10 Freshmen each year), 1997-99.
Seminar Leader, "Points of the Compass," 1997.
Leader of Group for Research and Curriculum in Enlightenment and the Rise of National
Literatures (Area 2), Department of English, 1999
Honors Director, Department of English, 1998-99
Curriculum Committee, Department of English, 1998- 99
Lecture Committee, Department of English, 1998-99
Senator, Department of English, 1997-99
"Points on the Compass" speaker, 1997
Freshmen Advisor, 1997-2011
Honors Committee, Department of English, 1996-97
Graduate Admissions Committee, Department of English, 1996-97
Graduate Committee, Department of English, 1996-2011
Concentration Advisor, Department of English, 1996-2011
Job Placement Officer, Department of English, 1996

Ph.D. Dissertations Directed:

Hartz, Alisa L. "Reckoning with Disinterest: Kant and the Victorian Novel." *Comparative Literature*, 2006.
Shepherd, Bethany Snow, "Automatically Popular: Exoticism and Mass Media in Nineteenth Century British Fiction," *English*, 2011.
Wong, Derek M, "Creating Something from Nothing: the Economics of Risk and Ethics of Value in James, Zola, Dreiser, and Norris, 1869-1927," *Comparative Literature*, 2011.
Baumgarthuber, Christine M, "Writing the Poverty Line: Dickens, Gissing, Orwell and the Social Scientists," *English*, 2012.
Christensen, Signe L, "Being in Communities in 20th- and 21st- Century French, British, Canadian, and Francophone Novels," *Comparative Literature*, 2013.
Traisnel, Antoine G, "After the Animal: Predatory Pursuits in Antebellum America," *Comparative Literature*, 2013.
Solomon, Susan L, "New Writing: Modernism, Punctuation, and the Intermedial Text," *Comparative Literature*, 2013.

Ph.D. Dissertations Committees:

Koelz, Stephen Edward, "Speculating Experience: Marianne Moore, Elizabeth Bishop, James Merrill," English, 2008.

Vegari, Amy N., "Violence, Immediately: Representation and Materiality in Coetzee, Ellis, Cooper, Beckett, Godard, and No  ," Comparative Literature, 2008.

Kreitz, Kelley, "Foreign Correspondences: Nineteenth-Century News and Literature in Latin America and the United States," Comparative Literature, 2009.

Sweeney, Brian D, "Professional Sentiments: Professionalism, Affect, and American Literature, 1830-1910," English, 2010.

Steinlight, Emily. "The Society of the Surplus: Literary Form and the Politics of Population in Nineteenth-Century British Culture," English, 2010.

Powers, Michael, "Clouds: Walter Benjamin and the Rhetoric of the Image," German Studies, 2015.

Updated November, 2025