

LARS ERIK LARSON, Ph.D. Associate Professor and Chair of English

Department of English
larsen@up.edu 503.943.7267

University of Portland
5000 N. Willamette Blvd.
Portland, OR 97203

EDUCATION

University of California, Los Angeles

M.A., English, 1998; Ph.D., English, 2004

University of Pennsylvania

B.A., English (American Studies minor), *magna cum laude*, 1993

DISSERTATION

Rewriting the Road: Representing Modern Social Space through American Highway Narratives

Martha Banta, director / Blake Allmendinger, Michael North, Edward Soja, readers

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

English Department Chair, University of Portland: July 2017-Present

Associate Professor, University of Portland: 2012-Present

Assistant Professor, University of Portland: 2006-2012

Visiting Assistant Professor, U. of Portland: 2005-2006

Visiting Lecturer, UCLA (lecture courses on American photography & literature, American nonfiction, film & literature, and American modernism): 2004-05

Undergraduate Academic Counselor, UCLA's College of Arts and Sciences: 2003-04

Teaching Assistant/Associate/Fellow, UCLA: 1996-98, 1999-01, 2002-03

RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

Twentieth-Century American Literature

Nineteenth-Century American Literature

Western American Literature

Literature and the Visual Arts, esp. Film

Cultural Geography

Literature of the Environment

Literature and Spatiality

Nonfiction

FELLOWSHIPS AND HONORS

Fulbright Award to Teach in India (5-month Fulbright-Nehru Grant, Fall 2014)

Faculty Outstanding Teaching Award, University of Portland, 2013

Butine Grant to study Pacific Northwest Literature through a Spatial Lens, for research, travel, and design of a new course, Summer 2013

Butine Grant for research that led to article "Literary Criticism's Road Scholars at the American Century's Turn" for *Literature Compass*, Summer 2007, U. of Portland

One of fourteen selected for UCLA's 2003 Teaching Fellows Program to teach an honors seminar ("The Modern Highway and the Image of the American West")

UCLA Jean Stone Dissertation Fellowship. 2001-2002

Nominated for university-wide Distinguished TA Award, UCLA. 2001 and 2002

Campbell Book Collection First Prize, for bibliographies "Growing Up in America" (2001) and "California Classics" (1999) Young Research Library, UCLA

Outstanding Teaching Award, UCLA English Department, for academic year 1999-2000

UCLA Dean's Fellowship. 1998-1999, 1995-96

Mandell Undergraduate Essay Award, University of Pennsylvania, 1993: best essay in the humanities (*All the News That's Printed to Fit: Literary Modernism and the Newspaper*)

Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society, University of Pennsylvania, 1993

PUBLICATIONS

- “Song of the Big Road: Negotiating Scale in Road Films of 21st Century India.” *The Global Road Movie: Alternative Journeys Around the World*, ed. José Duarte and Timothy Corrigan, Chicago: U Chicago Press/Intellect Ltd., 2018. 119-131
- “Quiet Violence in Willy Vlautin’s Novels.” *Under the Western Sky: Essays on the Fiction and Music of Willy Vlautin*, ed. Neil Campbell, Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2018. 142-166
- “The Urgency of Slowness,” in *Awaken the Stars: Reflections on What we REALLY Teach: Essays by 25 Distinguished Professors of the University of Portland*. ed. Shannon Mayer and Jacquie Van Hoomissen. Chicago: ACTA Publications, 2017. 105-108
- “Academia's Dialectical Dharma: How a Key Strategy from India’s Cultural History Inspires Stronger Classroom Thinking.” *The International Journal of Humanities Education*. (14.2) May 2016: 29-34
- “Routes and Roots: American Literature as a Means of Understanding Contemporary Space and Place.” *Pursuits* [Kerala, India] 13.1 (Aug-Sept. 2015): 1-10
- “Letter from India.” *Portland*, Winter 33.4 (2014): p.7. [circulation: 30,000]
- “Literary Criticism’s Road Scholars at the American Century’s Turn.” *Literature Compass* 6.6 (2009): 1071-1083
- “Free Ways and Straight Roads: the Interstates of Sal Paradise and 1950s America,” in *What’s Your Road, Man?: Critical Essays on Jack Kerouac’s On the Road*, ed. Hilary Holladay & Robert Holton. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008
- Review: *Secret Histories: Reading Twentieth-Century American Literature* by David Wyatt (Johns Hopkins UP, 2010) *Western American Literature* 46.4 (2012): 451-453
- Review: *Gravity, the Allure of Distance: Essays on the Act of Travel* by W. Scott Olsen (U Utah, 2003) & *Finding Higher Ground: A Life of Travels* by Catharine Brosman (U Nev., 2003) *Western American Literature* 39.3 (Fall 2004): 347-349
- Review: *Imagining Los Angeles* by David Fine (U New Mexico, 2000) *Southern California Quarterly* 85.3 (Fall 2003): 366-368

ARTICLES IN PROGRESS

- “Deep Time on the Road: Toward the Planetary with John McPhee,” in new book of essays on road literature, editor searching for publisher
- “Emily Post on the Road: Minding the Manners of a National Space.” Essay accepted and awaiting my revisions at *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*

PRESENTATIONS

“The Uncanny Western Space of Home, from *The Shining* to *Hereditary*.” Western Literature Association Conference, Estes Park, CO, Sept. 20, 2019

“Regarding the Rage of Others: Three Billboards toward Ebbing Misery.” Western Literature Association Conference, St. Louis, MO, Oct 26, 2018

“Experiencing India: a Film Introduction.” Presentation on Fulbright experience in India, featuring a 30-minute documentary film co-created with Molly Hiro. November 14, 2017. [Viewable at this link](#)

“Reading Regionality: Thinking through Field Guides to Western Space.” Western Literature Association Conference, Minneapolis, MN, October 26, 2017

A series of short essays on pedagogy for UP’s Teaching and Learning website (13 to date)

“Tech Talk” invited interviewee for 20-minute podcast on analog technology. Taped February 28, 2017, U. Portland. <https://sites.up.edu/techtalk/jomo-not-fomo/>

“The Professional Amateur as Scholarly Teacher.” Invited talk for UP’s hour-long series “UP Crossroads” February 17, 2017

“Material Wonder.” Invited speaker for the Garaventa Center’s panel talk on Forms of Wonder, Arlington Club, Portland, February 8, 2017

“Quiet Violence in Willy Vlautin’s Novels.” Western Literature Association Conference, Big Sky, MT, Sept. 24, 2016

“How to Do Things with Time: Five Western Directions for Pluralizing Temporality, from Alexie to Dillard.” American Lit. Assoc. Conf., San Francisco, CA, May 28, 2016

“Geologically Young in the Old West: Viewing John McPhee’s Road Atlas of Time.” Western Literature Association Conference, Reno, NV, Oct. 16, 2015

“Academia’s Dialectical Dharma: a Key Strategy from India’s Cultural History to Inspire Stronger Classroom Thinking.” New Directions in the Humanities Conference, U. British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada June 19, 2015

Invited leader for Profile Theater’s “In Dialogue” discussion of Gary Shteyngart’s novel *Super Sad True Love Story*, Portland, OR, Feb. 3, 2015

“Routes and Roots: American Literature as a Means of Understanding Contemporary Space and Place.” Invited lecture given at Kuvempu U. (Shimoga, India) Oct. 20, 2014, and as keynote speech at the Contemporary American Literature: Trends and Prospects Conference at Mercy College (Palakkad, India) Nov. 21, 2014

“Spatial Literary Theory.” Invited lecture at U. Mysore’s Academic Staff College, Nov. 5,

- 2014 for 50 English faculty from the region undergoing recertification
- "Salvation through Circulation? The Question of Aboriginal Mobility through Sherman Alexie's Native American Parallel *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*." Australian Indigenous Literature Symposium, Sept. 30, 2014, U. of Mysore, India
- "Dialectical Teaching in a Righteous Age." Invited talk for winning the Faculty Outstanding Teaching Award. U. of Portland, March 4, 2014. [Available as podcast through UP's Garaventa Center](#). Also delivered at UP's *Sigma Tau Delta* English Honors Society Induction Ceremony, April 3, 2014, and at the U. of Mysore, India Dec. 18, 2014 for 150 English professors from across Karnataka
- "The Walking Woman: Cheryl Strayed and 'Wild' Western Foot-Traffic, from Austin to Solnit." Western Literature Association Conference, Oct.12, 2013, Berkeley, CA
- "The West without Us: Poetics of Abandoned Infrastructure across Time." Western Literature Association Conference, Nov. 9, 2012, Lubbock, TX
- "Behind the Camera: Charis Wilson's Highway Prose in her 1940 Edward Weston Collaboration *California and the West*." Western Literature Association Conference, October 7, 2011, Missoula, MT
- "What Would Einstein Do?: Religion and Science in Einstein's '30s Writings." 2010 "Belief & Disbelief in the Space Between" Conference, June 17, U. of Portland, OR
- "Deep Time on the Road: Toward the Planetary with John McPhee." 2010 SWTX Popular & American Culture Association Conference, February 13, Albuquerque, NM
- "There Will Be Greed: *McTeague* and the Urban in Rural California." 2008 Modern Language Association Conference, December 29, San Francisco, CA
- "Containing Multitudes: Tourism and the Restrictions of the Open Road." 2007 Modernist Studies Association Conference, November 3, Long Beach, CA
- "*Lolita's* Desire Lines: Humbert in the Two-Way Roads of America." 2007 Twentieth Century Literature Conference, February 24, Louisville, KY
- "Heat-Moon's *Blue Highways* and its Interstate Connections." 2005 Image of the Road Conference, March 10, Colorado Springs, CO
- "Emily Post on the Road: Minding the Manners of a National Space." 2003 American Studies Association Conference, October 18, Hartford, CT
- "Tourists and Migrants on Steinbeck's Heterotopian Highways." 2003 American Literature Association Conference, May 23, Boston, MA
- "Introduction to John Dos Passos." Invited speaker for 2003 "Rethinking Dos Passos" Conference, May 8, UCLA

"Life in the Woods: Redefining American Wilderness in the Rural Tales of Melville."
1999 Modern Language Association Conference, December 28, Chicago, IL

"The California Highway As Habitat: Continental Drift After the Joads."
1999 Western Literature Association, October 14, Sacramento, CA

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Mysore, India: Guest lectures on various literary topics (*Macbeth*, study skills, poetry) during Fall 2014 semester.

Composition, Rhetoric, and Language (Eng. 107) Readings on culture, representation, identity; four written essays (Spr. + Win. '97, Fall '97, '05, '10, '11, '12, '13, '14, Spr. '06, Sum. '14)

Introduction to Literature, Critical Reading, and Writing (Eng. 112)
Readings in poetry, drama, short stories, and novels to develop close reading skills; three essays to develop argument-based writing skills (Fall '05-Fall '19 at UP; Fall '99-Winter '03 at UCLA)

Composition Theory and Practice (Eng. 317) Three-credit training seminar to create informed, self-critical, and attentive Writing Assistants, by way of readings in writing across the university, writing-center history, pedagogy styles, & service to diverse students (Fall '10,'11,'12,'13)

Studies in Nonfiction (Eng. 343) Literary mediation in creative nonfiction: "Decl. of Independence," *Walden*, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, *Hiroshima*, *In Cold Blood*, *One Writer's Beginnings*, *Fun Home*, *The Next American Essay*, *Dreams from my Father* (Fall '09, Winter '05)

Film and Literature: Adaptation in the Age of the Image (Eng. 352)
Genre-by-genre analysis of technique in moving from page to screen: *Citizen Kane*, *McTeague*, *Hamlet*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Memento*, *A River Runs Through It*, *American Splendor*, *The Orchid Thief* (Spring '18, Spring '16, Spring '11, Fall '07, Spring '05)

American Literature 1912-1945 (Eng. 356) Prose, poetry, and drama from the interwar period (Frost, Anderson, Stevens, Williams, Cather, Hemingway, Eliot, Larsen, Hughes, Faulkner, Parker, Bulosan, O'Neill) (Spring '17, Spring '09, Spring '05)

Contemporary American Literature 1945-Present (Eng. 357) Analysis of postwar prose, poetry, and drama, as well as American history and literary styles ranging from realism to postmodernism. Nabokov, Bishop, Ginsberg, Lowell, Plath, Dillard, Pynchon, Morrison, Alexie, Kushner, Spiegelman (Spring '13, '10, '08, Fall '06)

Pacific Northwest Literature through a Spatial Lens (Eng. 361) Approaches to regionalist literature in a time of globalism, using recent theories to rethink traditional notions of space, place, and local culture. Kesey, Gloss, Egan, Maclean, Alexie, Strayed (Fall '16, Spring '14)

City Life in American Literature (Eng. 370) Two centuries of literature and theory constructed around the space and the conflicts of the urban. Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, Whitman, Norris, Dos Passos, Yeziarska, Fitzgerald, Parker, West, Wright, Cheever, O'Connor, Merrill, Lowell, Rybczynski, Davis, de Certeau (Spring '19, Fall '15, Spring '12, Fall '08, Spring '07)

American Literature Survey II 1900-Present (Eng. 404) Survey of past 120 years of American Literature, including trends in history, culture, art, and criticism

(modernism/postmodernism). Frost, Stevens, Williams, Cather, Larsen, Hughes, Faulkner, O'Neill, Kerouac, Plath, DeLillo, etc. (Fall '17, '18)

The Modern Highway and the Image of the American West (UCLA Eng. 98)
Collegium Seminar: literature, film, and photography of the highway treated as a mode for shaping social ideas about the American West (Spring '03)

Literature, Photography, & Representation in 20th C. America (UCLA Eng.182)
Senior Seminar: theoretical treatment (Sontag, Benjamin, Barthes, Berger) of the intersection between writing and photography (Riis, Dos Passos, Agee/Evans, Frank, Waldie, DeLillo) (Fall '04)

Director of 38 English Capstone Papers to date (2006-19)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Modern Language Association (1996-)
Western Literature Association (2011-)
International Society for Travel Writing (2006-)

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Departmental Service:

- English Dept. Chair, 2017-Present
- English Dept. Development and Assessment, 2006+
 - Collaborating on English Dept. standards (English Major goals, capstone goals, writing standards for papers, grading rubric, Closing-the-Loop reports, 2009 English Dept. Program Review Report, subcommittee to assess English Major Outcomes, Core, and Effective Communication Requirements)
- Faculty Search, 2010-11 to fill Romanticist/Victorianist position.
- Northwest Undergraduate Conference on Literature (NUCL) 2006+, and Co-Chair, 2016
 - Promotion, recruitment, and review of submissions for the English Department's annual Spring undergraduate conference.
- Advisor to English Majors, 2006+

University Service:

- Walls and Borders Roundtable, literature's take on the topic (via Robert Frost and the US/Mexico border), as part of a three-faculty roundtable on the 30-year anniversary of the Berlin Wall's fall, Nov. 2019.
- Core Matters Program, soliciting/editing essays on departmental contributions to the UP Core, for the Teaching & Learning website, 2018-19
- Incoming Freshman Orientation Speaker for CAS Humanities, Aug. 2018
- Weekend on the Bluff Panelist on English, spring 2018, 2019
- English Dept./Schoenfeldt Reading & Lectures Series Co-host, Fall 2015-present
- Teaching and Learning Collaborative 2015+, creating online resources for campus teachers
- UP Presidential Search Committee 2013-14, which led to the selection of Fr. Mark Poorman
- Director of the Integrated Writing Program (UP Writing Center, Writing-Embedded Program, Turnitin.com Coordinator, Writing Workshop Leader), 2010-14
- University Core Curriculum Committee, 2013-14
- Workshops on writing assignment resources for Engineering and Business faculty, Fall 2013
- Workshop for faculty on using Peer Review in the classroom, April 2013
- Faculty Development Day presentation on UP's Writing-Embedded program, May 2013
- Presidential Advisory Committee on Student Media, 2011+ (incl. subcommittee on the *Beacon*)
- Presidential Advisory Committee on Technology (including subcommittees on the Web and

- Academic Technology), 2009-11
- Writing Workshop for Incoming Nursing Graduate Students, May 2009, 2010, 2011
 - Faculty Development Day presentation, May 2011 On using plagiarism software Turnitin.com
 - UP Residential Life volunteer (Led Schoenfeldt students on a half-day urban excursion), Oct 2010
 - Faculty mentor to Honors students; reviewer of honors applications 2008, 2010, 2013
 - Faculty Advisor for *UP Writers Magazine*, 2006-2010, 2013 Helping to coordinate a dozen undergrad. editors for the annual publication of the campus's undergraduate creative writing journal
 - Volunteer, Building Community/ Learning to Serve Program, Sept. 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2013 Faculty participant and discussion-leader for half-day freshman volunteer program
 - Co-presenter, Writing-Embedded Luncheons: "Responding to Student Papers and Using *A Writer's Resource*" (2007); "Strategies for Introductions" (2008); "Designing Assignments" (2008)
 - Faculty Development Day Presentation, May 2008 "Scoring the Class: Music as Emotional Prep"
 - Online host for Clark Library's Winter 2008 book reading of Barry Lopez's *Winter Count*. Providing questions, background for the UP community's web-based book group
 - Co-presenter, Writing-Embedded Workshop & Faculty Dev. Day Presentation, 2007 "What Do You Call That? How to Identify the Top Ten Student Writing Mistakes"
 - College of Arts & Sciences pedagogy reading group, 2006+ (co-leader in 2009: Donald Hall's *The Academic Community: A Manual for Change*). Reading/discussing James Zull's *The Art of Changing the Brain*, Ken Bain's *What the Best College Teachers Do*, and Walter Benn Michaels *The Trouble With Diversity*, Rebekah Nathan's *My Freshman Year: What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student*, and Maryellen Weimer *Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to the Practice*, William Deresiewicz *Excellent Sheep*, Barbara Seeber/Maggie Berg *The Slow Professor*, etc
 - Faith and Intellectual Life Reading Group, 2006-Present
 - Judge, UP Garaventa Center High School Essay Contest (Spring): 2008 ("What would a saint of your generation be like?"); 2009 ("A moment of revelation"); 2010 ("What we choose to remember"); 2011 ("How I learned it's not about me"); 2013 ("Behold, I am doing a new thing"); 2014 ("How I got over myself"); 2016 (The playlist of your life"); 2017 ("What's your game with God?"); 2018 ("Notes to my 12-year-old self"); 2019 ("If my classes talked to each other")
 - Host and Speaker for the African-American Read-In, Feb. 2007 and 2010
M.C. for the annual literature-reading event sponsored by the Bridge Builders Program

Other Service:

- Fulbright-Nehru Doctoral Research Fellowships National Selection Committee.
Read through applications and conducted 40 interviews at USIEF in New Delhi, India, to choose winners of 2015-16 Fulbright-Nehru Doctoral Research Fellowships for Indian Ph.D. candidates, Sept. 3-4, 2014. Also read applications for 2016-17 winners in August, 2015.
- Dissertation Reviewer for Periyar University, Tamil Nadu, India. Adjudicating the work of literature Ph.D.s; three in 2019.