

HELEN SARAH KAPSTEIN

John Jay College of Criminal Justice, The City University of New York (CUNY)
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EDUCATION

PhD, English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University, New York, NY, 2002
Dissertation: *The Castaway State: On Islands and Nation-Building*
MPhil, English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University, 1998
MA, English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University, 1995
Master's Thesis: "A Peculiar Shuttling Movement': Madness, Passing, and Trespassing in Bessie Head's *A Question of Power*"
BA with Honors, Literature and Society, Brown University, Providence, RI, 1992
Honors Thesis: "Reading Between the Lines: *The Weekly Mail* Under a State of Emergency"

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Full Professor, English Department, John Jay College, CUNY, August 2020-present
Associate Professor, August 2015-August 2020
Tenured Assistant Professor, September 2007-August 2015
Assistant Professor, September 2002-August 2007

PUBLICATIONS**Works in Progress**

Petroforms. Book under contract with West Virginia University Press's Energy and Society series.
Small Worlds: The Paracosms of the Brontë Juvenilia. Book project in progress.

Books

Postcolonial Nations, Islands, and Tourism: Reading Real and Imagined Spaces. London & New York, Rowman & Littlefield International, 2017. (Paperback 2019.)

Articles & Book Chapters

"Power Failures: The Public Poetics of Eskom and Energy." *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*. Forthcoming.
"Bad Readers." Spec. issue of *Journal of Academic Freedom*, "Landscapes of Power and Academic Freedom," forthcoming Nov. 2023.
"Petrofeminism: Love in the Age of Oil." *Oil Fictions: World Literature and Our Contemporary Petrosphere*. Eds. Stacey Balkan and Swaralipi Nandi. The Pennsylvania State University Press. 2021.
"Apartheid: A Crime Against Humanity." Revised and republished. *International and Transnational Crime and Justice*. Ed. Mangai Natarajan. New York: Cambridge UP. 2019. 345-349.
---. Revised and republished. *International Crime and Justice*. Ed. Mangai Natarajan. New York: Cambridge UP. 2011. 314-320.
---. *Introduction to International Criminal Justice*. Ed. Mangai Natarajan. McGraw-Hill. 2005. 279-286.
"Crude Fictions: How New Nigerian Short Stories Sabotage Big Oil's Master Narrative." *Postcolonial Text*. 11.1 (2016): 1-18.
"The Hysterics of *District 9*." Spec. issue of *ESC: English Studies in Canada*, "Hysteria Manifest: Cultural Lives of a Great Disorder." 40.1 (2014): 155-75.

- “Coffins, Corpses and Wheelchairs’: Mass Hysteria and Postcolonial Constitutions.” Spec. issue of *Studies in the Humanities* on “Globalism from Below.” 39.1-2 and 40.1-2 (June-Dec 2012): 57-88.
- “A Travel Paradise: Tourism Narratives from Robben Island.” *Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Studies*. 10.4 (October 2009): 449-458.
- “A Culture of Tourism: Branding the Nation in a Global Market.” *Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Studies*. 8.1 (January 2007): 109-115.
- “A Peculiar Shuttling Movement’: Madness, Passing, and Trespassing in Bessie Head’s *A Question of Power*.” *Critical Essays on Bessie Head*. Ed. Maxine Sample. Westport, CT: Praeger-Greenwood, 2003. 71-98.
- “Red Herrings: Looking Back at Apartheid through James McClure’s Detective Fiction.” *Contingency and Creativity: South Africa After Apartheid*. Spec. issue of *Anthropology and Humanism*, 28.1 (June 2003): 85-100.
- “A Town Called Nobody: Violence, Nationalism, and Witch-burning.” *Alternative Modernities in African Literatures and Cultures*. Spec. issue of *Journal of Literary Studies*, 18.1/2 (June 2002): 85-110.
- “Allegories of Space: The Question of Robben Island.” *Spaces and Crossings: Essays in Literature and Culture in Africa and Beyond*. Eds. Rita Wilson and Carlotta von Maltzan. Germany: Peter Lang, 2000. 319-33.

Book Reviews

- Rev. of *Political Blackness in Multiracial Britain*, by Mohan Ambikaipaker. *Lateral: The Journal of the Cultural Studies Association* 8.1. 2019.
- Rev. of *Tourist utopias: offshore islands, enclave spaces, and mobile imaginaries*, ed. Tim Simpson. *Island Studies Journal* 13.1 (May 2018): 305-6.
- “Reverse Teleologies.” Rev. of *Theory from the South: or, How Euro-America is Evolving Toward Africa*, by Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff. *Reviews in Cultural Theory* 4.1 (January 2013): 6-9.
- “Above and Beyond.” Rev. of *Apartheid and Beyond: South African Writers and the Politics of Place*, by Rita Barnard. *Twentieth Century Literature* 53.4 (Winter 2007): 530-534.
- “Outsider Theory: A North American Academic Reads South Africa.” Rev. of *Against Normalization: Writing Radical Democracy in South Africa*, by Anthony O’Brien. *Contemporary Literature* 44.3 (Fall 2003): 559-62.
- Rev. of *Colonization, Violence, and Narration in White South African Writing: André Brink, Breyten Breytenbach, and JM Coetzee*, by Rosemary Jane Jolly. *Yearbook of English Studies* 29 (1999): 340-1.
- Rev. of *In Darkest Hollywood: Exploring the Jungles of Cinema’s South Africa*, by Peter Davis. *Cineaste* 23.1 (1997): 60.
- Rev. of *Essays on African Writing 2: Contemporary Literature*, ed. Abdulrazak Gurnah, and *Bessie Head-Thunder Behind Her Ears: Her Life and Writing*, by Gillian Stead Eilersen. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 23.3 (1997): 515-8.

Other Publications

- “What the US can learn about apartheid-era book bans in South Africa.” *The Conversation*. July 27, 2022.

“The Brontë Archive Needs to be Secured for Public Use and Made Accessible.” *Hyperallergic*. July 12, 2021.

“A Novel Future: The Pandemic Reveals Alarming Parallels Between Gilead and U.S.” *Ms. Magazine*. April 14, 2020.

GRANTS, HONORS, & AWARDS

Co-Principal Investigator, Black, Race and Ethnic Studies Initiative (BRESI) Award for “Decolonizing the John Jay English Major: Creating Foundational Introductory Courses,” 2022.

PSC-CUNY Enhanced Research Award, 2021.

PSC-CUNY Research Award, 2020.

Senior Scholar Release Award, Office for the Advancement of Research, John Jay College, 2019.

Stefan Bernard Baumrin Associate Professor Travel Award, CUNY Academy, 2019.

PSC-CUNY Research Award, 2018.

Research in the Classroom Award, CUNY, 2018.

Associate Professor Travel Award, CUNY Academy, 2017.

PSC-CUNY Enhanced Research Award, 2017.

PSC-CUNY Research Award, 2015.

Senior Scholar Release Award, Office for the Advancement of Research, John Jay College, 2015.

Faculty Fellowship, The Center for Place, Culture, and Politics, The Graduate Center, CUNY, 2014-15.

PSC-CUNY Research Award, 2014.

Mellon Mid-Career Faculty Fellowship, The Committee on Globalization and Social Change, The Graduate Center, CUNY, 2011-12.

PSC-CUNY Research Award, 2011.

PSC-CUNY Research Award, 2010.

PSC-CUNY Research Award, 2009.

PSC-CUNY Research Award, 2008.

John Jay College Research Assistance Award, 2008.

PSC-CUNY Research Award, 2007.

Fellow, Faculty Fellowship Publications Program, CUNY, 2007.

PSC-CUNY Research Award, 2005.

PSC-CUNY Research Award, 2004.

PSC-CUNY Research Award, 2003.

President’s Fellowship, Columbia University, 1995-2001.

Andrew W. Mellon Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Summer Research Fellowship, Columbia University, 1998.

Magna Cum Laude, Brown University, 1992.

Phi Beta Kappa, Brown University, 1992.

INVITED TALKS & MEDIA APPEARANCES

“There’s No Place Like Home: Domestic Tourism and the Business of Selling the Nation.” Keynote address. Graduate webinar, “Lingue, Comunicazione Interculturale e Management del Turismo.” Roma Tre University, Rome, Italy. Oct 24, 2022.

“Virtual Proximity: Touring the Remote Island Remotely.” Tourism Studies Working Group. April 23, 2021.

“Misinformation Superhighway: Infodemic, Propaganda & Anti-Social Engineering,” *Dark Web Exposed*, Oxygen True Crime, Season 2, Episode 6. Feb 2021.

“The Fantasy of Bodily Sovereignty.” Plenary speech. 18th Annual Cultural Studies Association (CSA) Virtual Conference, May 2020.

“Explorations in Cultural Theory.” Meet the Authors panel participant. 17th CSA Conference, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA, May 2019.

Delta Boys Q&A. EcoCinema Café, John Jay College, April 16, 2019.

- Postcolonial Nations, Islands, and Tourism*. Book publication talk. John Jay College, English Department. Oct 12, 2017.
- “Crude Fictions.” St John’s University, English Department. April 7, 2015.
- “Sabotaging Fictions.” *Masks of Conquest* 25th Anniversary Symposium. Columbia University, November 7, 2014.
- “‘A Culture of Leisure’: Tourism in the New South Africa.” Michigan State University, Department of History, March 1, 2013.
- “A Travel Paradise: Tourism Narratives of Robben Island.” The CUNY Graduate Center Postcolonial Studies Group Colloquium Series, October 16, 2009.
- “Solidarity: Scholarship, Activism, Aesthetics.” Panel participant. The Committee on Globalization and Social Change, The Graduate Center, CUNY, March 30, 2012.
- “Making Objects Speak” workshop participant. John Jay College, June 2009.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

Paper Presentations

- “Just in Time: Moving Beyond Petrofiction: Narrating Green Transition,” Panel participant, MLA, San Francisco, Jan. 2023.
- “Lessons from South Africa,” Session on Academic Freedom and Anti-Racism, MLA, San Francisco, Jan. 2023.
- “Petrohorror.” “Petrocultures: Transformations” Conference. Stavanger, Norway, August 2022.
- “Petrohorror: Oil Documentary as Horror Film.” 19th Annual CSA Conference. June 2021.
- “The Virtual Island: Remote Tourism on Robben Island.” The First International Small Island Studies Association (ISISA) Global Island Studies Webinar, June 2020.
- “Petrofeminism: Love and Pleasure in the Age of Oil.” MLA, Seattle, January 2020.
- “Performing the Archive.” 17th Annual CSA Conference, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA, May 2019.
- “Interventions in the Archive: The Brontë Juvenilia.” 16th Annual CSA Conference, Carnegie Mellon, Pittsburgh, PA, May 2018.
- “Petrofeminism: Love in the Age of Oil.” 15th Annual CSA Conference, Georgetown University, May 2017.
- “Fantasies of Failure: The Anti-Theme Park Theme Park.” 14th Annual CSA Conference, Villanova University, June 2016.
- “Postcolonial Toxic Hysteria.” American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA) Annual Meeting, Harvard University, Boston, MA, March 2016.
- “Toxic Hysterias.” 13th Annual CSA Conference, Riverside, CA, May 2015.
- “Sabotaging Fictions.” 12th Annual CSA Conference, The University of Utah, Salt Lake City, May 2014.
- “The Hysterics of *District 9*.” ACLA Annual Meeting, New York University, March 2014.
- “‘Coffins, Corpses and Wheelchairs’: Mass Hysteria and Postcolonial Constitutions.” 21st Annual British Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies Conference, Savannah, GA, February 2012.
- “Tourism as Translation.” ACLA Annual Meeting, Harvard University, March 2009.
- “‘A Kind of Whole Country of Animals’: Refugees and the Wildlife Refuge in Gordimer’s ‘The Ultimate Safari.’” United States Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies 4th International Conference, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA, October 2006.
- “A New Kind of Safari: Nature, War, Tourism.” 2nd Annual CSA Conference, Northeastern University, Boston, MA, May 2004.
- “Serendipity: Violence and National Form in Romesh Gunsekera’s Novels.” 12th Annual British Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies Conference, Savannah, GA, February 2003.
- “Modernity, Tradition, and Violence in South African Nation-Building.” Modernist Studies Association Conference, University of Wisconsin, Madison, October 2002.
- “Known Things: Commodities and Capital in *Howards End*.” The Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Toronto, May 2002.

- “Unspoiled Spots: Ecotourism in a Global Economy.” ACLA Conference, Yale University, New Haven, CT, February 2000.
- “Allegories of Space: The Question of Robben Island.” The South African Society for General Literary Studies Conference, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, June 1998.
- “‘Sight-Seeing Bores Me’: A Crisis of Visibility in *A Passage to India*.” “Terrains: Landscapes/ Bodyscapes, A Cultural Studies Conference,” State University of New York, Stony Brook, NY, March 1998.
- “A Town Called Nobody: Witchcraft and Violence in South Africa.” Seventh Annual Cultural Studies Symposium, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS, March 1998.
- “Working at the Screen: Borders and Boundaries in *On the Wire*.” Fifth Annual Interdisciplinary German Studies Conference, University of California, Berkeley, CA, March 1997.

Panels Organized & Chaired

- “Oil Visualised,” Panel chair, Petrocultures: Transformations, Stavanger, Norway, August 2022.
- Presidential Plenary. Chair and organizer, CSA Conference, Columbia College, Chicago, IL, June 2022.
- “Energy Reckonings.” Seminar co-chair, CSA Conference, Columbia College, Chicago, IL, June 2022.
- “Imperial Debt—Accounting for Empire, part 1.” Chair, CSA Conference, Columbia College, Chicago, IL, June 2022.
- Presidential Plenary. Chair and co-organizer, CSA Virtual Conference, June 2021.
- “Documentary and the Body: Coloniality, Migration, and Urbanization.” Panel chair, CSA Virtual Conference, June 2021.
- Job Seekers Workshop. Mentor. CSA Virtual Conference, June 2021 and May 2020.
- “Reproducing Oppression: Sexual Violence and Bodily Sovereignty.” Panel chair. CSA Virtual Conference, May 2020.
- “Explorations in Cultural Theory.” Meet the Authors panel chair. 17th Annual CSA Conference, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA, May 2019.
- “Small Interventions: Studies in the Miniature.” Panel co-organizer. 16th Annual CSA Conference, Carnegie Mellon, Pittsburgh, PA, May 2018.
- “Cultural Studies of Cognition, Experience, and Emotion.” Panel chair. 16th Annual CSA Conference, Carnegie Mellon, Pittsburgh, PA, May 2018.
- “Petrocultures.” Panel co-organizer. 15th Annual CSA Conference, Georgetown University, DC. May 2017.
- “Food Studies: Cornering the Market.” Panel chair. 14th Annual CSA Conference, Villanova University, PA. June 2016.
- “Literature Working Group: Global Energy Narratives.” Panel chair. 12th Annual CSA Conference, the University of Utah, Salt Lake City. May 2014.
- “Person and Politics in South Africa.” Panel chair. 21st Annual British Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies Conference, Savannah, GA. February 2012.
- “Tourism in Text, Theory, and Practice.” Seminar organizer and moderator. 8th Annual CSA Conference, Berkeley, CA. March 2010.
- “Taking Risks in Literature and Culture.” Seminar organizer and moderator. 6th Annual CSA Conference, New York University, New York, NY. May 2008.
- “Set Apart: The Culture and Politics of Confinement.” Seminar co-organizer. American Comparative Literature Association Conference, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO. April 2001.

S E R V I C E

Professional Service

Leadership Positions

- Chair or Co-Chair, Literature Working Group, CSA, Fall 2021-present, Spring 2019-Spring 2021, Fall 2007-Fall 2013.
- Immediate Past President, Cultural Studies Association (CSA), June 2022-June 2023.
- Governing Board Executive Committee member, CSA. June 2018-June 2023.

President, CSA, June 2020-June 2022.
 Governing Board member, CSA. Jan 2015-June 2022.
 Vice President, CSA. June 2018-May 2020.
 Program Committee member, CSA. May 2015-June 2018.
 Site Committee member, CSA. May 2015-June 2016.

Professional Service

Manuscript & Project Reviewer

Anthropocene Review
Contemporary Literature
 CUNY Community College Research Grant Program
Essays in Romanticism
International Feminist Journal of Politics
Island Studies Journal
ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment
The Journal of Commonwealth Literature
The Journal of the African Literature Association
Lateral—Journal of the Cultural Studies Association
Mosaic
Politikon
Postcolonial Text
Safundi
Social Dynamics
 Swiss National Science Foundation

University Service

Senator, CUNY University Faculty Senate (UFS). Fall 2014-Spring 2020.
 Member, CUNY UFS Status of the Faculty Committee. Fall 2015-Fall 2017.
 Faculty Mentor, CUNY BA program, Fall 2017-present.
 Member, CUNY UFS Academic Freedom Committee. Spring 2014-Spring 2015.
 Second Alternate Delegate, CUNY University Faculty Senate. Fall 2013-Spring 2014.
 Participant, Online Writing-Intensive Project, CUNY. Spring 2005.

College Service

Organizer & Respondent, “Let’s Talk Rotten English: A Workshop and Discussion,” Jan. 2023.
 Member, Council of Major/Minor Coordinators, John Jay College, Fall 2022-present, Fall 2017-Spring 2021.
 Member, General Education Working Group, John Jay College, Spring 2020-present.
 Board Member, Advisory Board, Office for Student Research and Creativity, John Jay College, Fall 2017-2021.
 Consultant, Program and curriculum development. Human Rights MA Program. Fall 2015
 Faculty in Environmental Justice Minor, John Jay College. Fall 2012-present.
 Faculty in Human Rights Studies Minor, John Jay College. Fall 2012-present.
 Co-Author, Human Rights Studies Minor, John Jay College, 2010.
 Faculty in Gender Studies Program, John Jay College. Fall 2009-present.
 Member, Human Rights Group, John Jay College. Fall 2009-present.
 Member, Distance Learning Task Force, John Jay College. Fall 2006-Spring 2007.
 Co-chair, Women’s Studies Committee’s Women’s History Month Writing Contest, John Jay College. Spring 2003 and Spring 2004.
 Member, John Jay College Committee on Undergraduate Admissions. Fall 2003-Spring 2004.
 Member, Gender Studies Committee (previously Women’s Studies Committee), John Jay College. Fall

2002-Spring 2007.

Volunteer, John Jay course fair. Spring 2003.

Volunteer Academic Advisor, John Jay College. Fall 2002.

Department Service

Co-organizer, "Curriculum Jam: A Hands-On Workshop," John Jay College English Department, May 1, 2023.

Member, General Education Working Group, John Jay College English Department, Fall 2022-present.

Member, English Department Racial Justice Committee, John Jay College, December 2020-present.

Member, English Department Personnel and Budget Committee, John Jay College. Fall 2020-present, Fall 2017-Spring 2018, Fall 2006-Spring 2007.

English Minor Coordinator, John Jay College, Fall 2022-present, Fall 2017-Spring 2021.

Member, Literature Major/Minor Assessment Committee, John Jay College, Fall 2019-present.

Member, English Major Advisory Committee, John Jay College, Fall 2017-present.

Chair, English Department Curriculum Committee, John Jay College. Fall 2009-Spring 2010 and Fall 2013-Spring 2015.

Participant, *OED* workshop, John Jay English Department, December 2015.

English Major Advisor, John Jay College. Spring 2010-Fall 2010 and Spring 2012.

Junior faculty advisor, English Department, John Jay College. Fall 2009.

Member, English Department Curriculum Committee, John Jay College. Fall 2004-Spring 2006 and Spring 2012.

Co-coordinator, English Department Major Task Force, John Jay College. Spring 2004-2005.

Co-Author, BA in English, John Jay College, 2008.

Member, English Department Appeals Committee, John Jay College. Fall 2003-Spring 2004.

Coordinator, Cultural Studies Dissertation Seminar, Columbia University. Fall 1997-Spring 1999.

Member, graduate student selection committee, English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University. Spring 1998.

Other Service

Board member, The Dessoff Choirs, Spring 2022-present.

TEACHING

Macaulay Honors Seminar, The People of New York City (Spring 2023)

American Stories (Spring 2023)

Research Across Disciplines (Fall 2022)

Senior Seminar in Literature:

Telling Tales of Climate Crisis (Fall 2022)

Literature After Nature (Spring 2020)

Small Worlds: Miniatures, Islands, Books (Spring 2017)

Crude Fictions: Oil Narratives, Energy, and Crisis (Spring 2015)

Literature as Witness:

Witnessing Our Climate Crisis (Fall 2022)

Witnessing the Future (Spring 2020, Fall 2019)

Literary Tourism (Spring 2018)

Plotting Terror (Fall 2017)

Viewing Violence (Spring 2016, Fall 2015)

Toxic Texts (Spring 2014)

The South African Struggle (Fall 2013)

Crime, Punishment, and Justice in World Literature (Spring 2022)

Justice by the Book:

Doing Dickens Justice (Fall 2021, Fall 2020)

Topics in 20th Century Literature:

Bodies in Parts (Spring 2021)
Ecocriticism (Spring 2014, Spring 2011)

Topics in 19th Century Literature:

Victorian Secrets (Fall 2020)
Victorian Sensations (Fall 2019, Fall 2012)

Text and Context:

Oil & Ink (Spring 2019)
The Brontë Sisters: A Boxed Set (Spring 2018, Spring 2017)

Independent Study Supervisor (Spring 2019, Spring 2016)

Selected Historical Topics in Literature:

Adventures in the Digital Archive: Exploring the Brontë Juvenilia (Fall 2018)

Introduction to Literary Study:

The Literary Corpus (Fall 2018)
(Fall 2014, Spring 2010, Fall 2007)

Honors Course Supervisor (Spring 2017)

Gender and Identity in Literary Traditions:

Bad Girls (Fall 2015)

Word as Weapon:

Commodity Satires (Spring 2015)
Resistance and Protest Literature (Spring 2006)

Banned Books (Spring 2013, Fall 2009, Spring 2008)

Breaking with Tradition: Reading the Modern World (Fall 2013)

Cultures in Conflict:

South African Literature (Spring 2012)

Modern Literature:

(Post)Colonial Writing (Spring 2013, Fall 2012, Spring 2008, Fall 2003, Fall 2002)
Commodities and Culture (Spring 2012, Spring 2011, Fall 2011)
Literary Tourism (Fall 2010)
Colonial and Postcolonial Bodies (Fall 2009, Fall 2007)
Commodities, Capital, Colonialism (Fall 2006)

Literature of the African World:

Contested Commodities (Fall 2010)

Medieval and Early Modern Literature:

Imagined Geographies (Spring 2010, Spring 2007, Spring 2006)

On the Case: Reading the Detective Novel (Spring 2007)

Literature of Apartheid: South African Writing and Culture Since 1948 (Fall 2005, Fall 2003)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Postcolonial literature and theory

Cultural and media studies

Tourism and museum studies

Feminism and gender studies

Petrocriticism and commodity studies

Ecocriticism and island studies

Nationalism and globalization

South African literature and culture

Nigerian literature and culture

Contemporary and Victorian British literature

Popular literature and genre studies

LANGUAGES

French; translation competency in Afrikaans and Spanish

MEMBERSHIPS

American Association of University Professors (AAUP)

American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA)

The Brontë Society

Cultural Studies Association (CSA)

CUNY Academy

Modern Language Association (MLA)

Professional Staff Congress-CUNY (PSC-CUNY)

Society for Critical Exchange

United States Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies

REFERENCES

Available upon request