

# VALERIE SIRENKO

## EDUCATION

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Ph.D., English, The University of Texas at Austin, 2019

Specializations: Nineteenth-Century U.S. Literature and Culture, African American and Multi-Ethnic U.S. Literature, Critical Race Theory, Cultural Studies, Law and Literature

Dissertation: *Property, Agency, and the Last Will and Testament in American Literature, 1790-1925*

Committee: Gretchen Murphy, Matt Cohen, Edlie Wong, Phillip Barrish, and Martin Kevorkian

M.A., English, The University of Texas at Austin, 2014

B.A., English, Duke University, *summa cum laude*, 2011

## PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

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Adjunct Instructor of Writing, Seattle Pacific University, 2019-2021.

Assistant Instructor, University of Texas at Austin, 2015-2019.

Teaching Assistant, University of Texas at Austin, 2012-2014.

## PUBLICATIONS

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### BOOK PROJECT

*Fictions of Agency: Property, Personhood, and the Fragility of Legal Documents in American Literature.*  
(Manuscript in progress)

### ARTICLES

“Destroyed Documents and Racial Vulnerability in the Literature of Slavery’s Legal Afterlife.”  
*American Literature* 95.1 (2023): 1-28.

“Property’s Narratives: ‘Unreasonable and Unnatural Distributions of Human Will’ in Charles Brockden Brown’s *Arthur Mervyn* and Early American Contract Law.” *Early American Literature* 57.1 (2022): 123-148.

“Property and the Ideology of Improvement in María Amparo Ruiz de Burton’s *The Squatter and the Don* and California Travel Narratives.” *Western American Literature* 54.4 (2020): 345-380.

“Cooper’s Revolution: The Language of Law and Love in *The Pilot*.” *ESQ: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century American Literature and Culture* 63.1 (2017): 37-77.

### BOOK CHAPTERS

“Literary and Legal Genres in Pauline Hopkins’s *Hagar’s Daughter*: Black Testimony, the Production of Truth, and the Regulation of Property.” *Yours for Humanity: New Essays on Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins*, ed. JoAnn Pavletich. University of Georgia Press, 2022.

## REVIEWS

“The Year in Conferences—2016.” *ESQ: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century American Literature and Culture* 63.1 (2017): 118-143. Co-authored with James Van Wyck, Eric Morel, Allie Reznik, and Clare Mullaney.

Karla Holloway, *Legal Fictions: Constituting Race, Composing Literature*. Reviewed in *E3W Review of Books* 16 (2016).

Blake A. Watson, *Buying America from the Indians: Johnson v. McIntosh and the History of Native Land Rights*. Reviewed in *Studies in American Indian Literature* 26:1 (2014): 118-121.

Anthony Mora, *Border Dilemmas: Racial and National Uncertainties in New Mexico, 1848-1912*. Reviewed in *E3W Review of Books* 14 (2014).

Maurice O. Wallace and Shawn Michelle Smith, eds, *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity*. Reviewed in *E3W Review of Books* 13 (2013).

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND INVITED TALKS

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“The Materiality of Documentation: African American Property Rights and Racialized Legal Procedure.” Association for the Study of Law, Culture, and the Humanities, Works in Progress Webinar, Property and Contract Law Roundtable, 2021.

“Performing Economic Citizenship in Frank Webb’s *The Garies and Their Friends*: Black Property’s Vulnerability to Extralegal Violence.” C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists. Online, Seminar Format, 2020.

“The Destruction of Legal Documents in African American Fiction: Archival Materiality and Black Dispossession in Gayl Jones’s *Corregidora*.” Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States (MELUS). (Postponed to 2022 due to COVID-19).

“Corporate Personhood and the Limits of the Human (Rights) in Ted Chiang’s ‘The Lifecycle of Software Objects.’” Association for the Study of Law, Culture, and the Humanities. North Haven, Connecticut, 2020.

“‘The Law Will Decide’: Destroyed Documents and Embodied Law in Charles Chesnutt’s *The Marrow of Tradition* and Frances Harper’s *Iola Leroy*.” The University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, Colloquium Series. January 30, 2020.

“A House of Her Own: The Redemptive Power of the Unmarried Woman’s Property Rights in Charles Chesnutt’s *The House Behind the Cedars*.” American Literature Association. San

Valerie Sirenko

Francisco, California, 2018.

“The Illusory Legal Agency of the Last Will and Testament in Frances Harper’s *Iola Leroy*.” C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists. Albuquerque, New Mexico, 2018.

“The Mixed-Race Heir to the Southern Plantation: Race and the Southern Gothic Tradition in E.D.E.N. Southworth and William Faulkner.” Society for the Study of Southern Literature. Austin, Texas, 2018.

“The Courtroom Drama of *Hagar’s Daughter*: Evidence Law and Black Testimony.” American Literature Association. San Francisco, California, 2016.

“Inheritance Law and Legal Personhood in E.D.E.N. Southworth’s *The Discarded Daughter*.” C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists. University Park, Pennsylvania, 2016.

“Literary Narrative and Legal Reasoning in Momaday’s *House Made of Dawn* and Silko’s *Ceremony*.” Native American and Indigenous Studies Association. Austin, Texas, 2014.

“The Legal Periphery and Colonial Evidence Law in Forster’s *A Passage to India*.” American Comparative Literature Association. New York, New York, 2014.

“Condemning Evidence: The Legal Life of Objects in *A Passage to India*.” University of Virginia Department of English Graduate Conference. Charlottesville, Virginia, 2013.

“Spatial Imaginaries and the Production of Local Knowledge in María Amparo Ruiz de Burton’s *The Squatter and the Don*.” University of Texas at Austin American Studies Graduate Conference. Austin, Texas, 2013.

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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### INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD

#### Seattle Pacific University

WRI 1100: Disciplinary Research and Writing Seminar, Spring 2021 (2 sections)

*First-year writing seminar that develops critical thinking, research, and writing skills for working within the humanities disciplines.*

WRI 1000: Reading and Writing about Race in the Black Lives Matter Era, Winter 2021

*First-year writing seminar with emphasis on rhetorical knowledge, critical inquiry, and the writing process.*

WRI 1000: Reading and Writing about Race in the Black Lives Matter Era, Fall 2020 (2 sections)

WRI 1100: Disciplinary Research and Writing Seminar, Spring 2020

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WRI 1000: Academic Inquiry and Writing: Race and Social Justice, Fall 2019

*First-year writing seminar with emphasis on rhetorical knowledge, critical inquiry, and the writing process.*

### The University of Texas at Austin

ENG 316: Survey of American Literature: Beginnings to Present, Fall 2018.

*Core Course. Covers American literature from the colonial period to the present in diverse genres. Provides students with critical approaches for studying literature, including historical context, close reading, and applying critical frameworks for examining race, class, gender, and colonialism.*

ENG 342: Southern Literature: Identity and Conflict on the Margins, Fall 2018.

*Upper Division Literature Course. Examines literary representations of the U.S. South as a porous region of shifting boundaries, diverse populations, and highly contested history.*

AFR 317/ENG 314: African American Literature and Culture, Spring 2018.

*Writing Intensive. An introduction to the African American literary canon and methods of literary analysis.*

ENG 314: Banned Books & Novel Ideas: Introduction to Literary Analysis, Spring 2017.

*Writing Intensive. Teaches close reading, methods of literary analysis, information literacy, research skills, and academic writing.*

RHE 306: Rhetoric and Writing: Race and Criminal Justice, Spring 2016.

*First-year writing course that situates rhetoric as the art of participating in civic discourse. Students engage in public debates by analyzing viewpoints, researching their audiences, and writing for different contexts.*

RHE 306: Rhetoric and Writing: Race and Criminal Justice, Fall 2015.

### TEACHING ASSISTANT

Survey of British Literature: Empire, Identity, & Literature, Spring 2014, Dr. George Christian

Human Rights and Social Justice: Theories/Practices, Fall 2013, Dr. Barbara Harlow

Survey of American Literature, Spring 2013, Dr. James Cox

Survey of American Literature, Fall 2012, Dr. Gretchen Murphy

### GUEST LECTURES

“Close Reading Zitkala-Sa’s ‘School Days of an Indian Girl’ and the Dawes Act.” The University of Texas at Austin, TA Orientation Training. August 24, 2018.

“The Legal Construction of Race in Mark Twain’s *Pudd’nhead Wilson*.” The University of Texas at Austin, “The American Novel before 1920.” April 14, 2016.

“Racialized Criminality in E. M. Forster’s *A Passage to India*.” The University of Texas at Austin,  
“British Literature: Empire, Identity, & Literature.” April 25, 2014.

#### FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS

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2018	Outstanding Assistant Instructor Teaching Award, The University of Texas at Austin
2017	Excellence Fellowship, The University of Texas at Austin (Fall)
2017	Excellence Fellowship, The University of Texas at Austin (Summer)
2016	Excellence Fellowship, The University of Texas at Austin (Fall)
2016	Professional Development Award, UT Austin Graduate School (Spring)
2013	Professional Development Award, UT Austin Graduate School (Spring)

#### SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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2021-present	Organizing Committee, ASLCH Works in Progress Webinar in Law and Literature
2021	Event Organizer, Property and Contract Law Roundtable, ASLCH Works in Progress Webinar in Law and Literature
2021	“Beyond Pedagogy” Anti-Racist Equity Workshop, Seattle Pacific University
2021	Trauma-Informed Pedagogy Workshop, Seattle Pacific University
2020	University Colloquium Instructor, “Thriving at SPU,” Seattle Pacific University
2019	“Teaching Underprepared Writers,” Student Success Workshop, Participant, Seattle Pacific University
2018	Anti-Racist Pedagogy Workshop Series, Participant, UT Austin
2018-2019	Professional Skills Committee, Co-Organizer, UT Austin
2018	Department of English Hiring Committee, Graduate Student Representative, UT Austin
2018	TA Mentorship Program, Orientation Instructor, UT Austin
2017	TA Mentorship Program, Mentor, UT Austin
2017	First Year Forum Curriculum Committee, Rhetoric Department, UT Austin
2017	Difficult Dialogues Symposium, UT Austin Humanities Institute
2016	Graduate Student Reporter, ESQ Year in Conferences: MLA 2016
2016	Event Organizer, Caleb Smith Lecture, UT Austin
2015-present	Duke Chapel Advisory Board, Duke University
2015-2016	American Literature Interest Group, Coordinator, UT Austin
2013	American Literature Reading Group, Co-Organizer, UT Austin

#### RELATED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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2012	Ethnographic Research (conducted in Spanish) for <i>Asociación Amistad</i> , Cochabamba, Bolivia
2009-2012	Duke University Press, Book Acquisitions Editorial Intern
2009-2011	Undergraduate Writing Tutor, Duke University Writing Studio
2009	Internship with NGO ProPeru, Urubamba, Peru

#### LANGUAGES

English; Spanish, proficient in written and spoken

## PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

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African American Intellectual History Society  
American Comparative Literature Association  
American Literature Association  
American Studies Association  
Association for the Study of Law, Culture, and the Humanities  
C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists  
Modern Language Association  
Native American and Indigenous Studies Association  
Rhetoric Society of America  
Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States (MELUS)  
Society of Early Americanists (SEA)