

Lara Farina

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Education

Ph.D. in English (1999), M.A. in English (1992), Fordham University
B.A. in Humanities *summa cum laude* (1989), University of California, Berkeley

Employment History

- 2019- Professor of English, West Virginia University
Courses include Medieval Literature, Chaucer, World Literature, and graduate seminars on textual communities, trans-temporal reading, and sensory studies.
- 2008-19 Associate Professor of English, West Virginia University
- 2002-08 Assistant Professor of English, West Virginia University
- 2000-02 Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow and Lecturer, Grinnell College
- 1998-00 Visiting Assistant Professor, Fordham University

Editorial Work

- 2015 -21 Editor of *postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies*
Acted as one of two editors for a cross-disciplinary, award-winning scholarly journal. Published quarterly by Palgrave.
(<http://www.palgrave-journals.com/pmed/index.html>)

Recent Awards

- 2019 Art in the Library Grant, WVU Library
Award of funds and resources for “Big Green Data,” a two-room installation at the library.
- 2019 Bordinat Award (for best article in department, “Vegetal Continuity”)
- 2016 Huntington Library Research Fellowship
One-month residency for the topic “On the Sense Lives of Plants”

- 2016 WVU Senate Grant for Research
For archival research at the British Library and the National Library of Wales
- 2014 Bordinat Award (for best article in department, “Wondrous Skins”)
- multi-year WVU Travel Grants and Development Grants

Publications

Book:

Erotic Discourse and Early English Religious Writing. NY: Palgrave, 2006.

Looking at devotional and advisory literature from the tenth to thirteenth centuries, this study examines how pleasure and desire factored into the act of reading for people whose profession depended on constant interaction with written material: monks, nuns, anchorites, friars, and vowed laypeople. Arguing for an understanding of reading as movement of the body, it emphasizes the somatically directive power of affective, eroticized rhetoric and traces an evolving articulation of sexual fantasy as spatially private. [Reviewed in *Speculum* 84.1, *GLQ* 16.3, *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 30, *Sixteenth Century Journal* 40.4]

Edited Collections:

The Middle Shore. Online: Electric Press, 2018.

An online, collaborative project on the affective dimensions of collecting and curating fragmentary artifacts. The site features exhibits, essays, and audio files, and will host continuing installations. <http://electric.press/titles.html>

The Intimate Senses: Taste, Touch, and Smell. *postmedieval* 3.4, 2012.

This special issue of *postmedieval* pushes the history of the pre-modern sensing body beyond the current emphasis on visual culture by focusing on the proximate and intimate relationships between taste, touch, and smell in a variety of medieval and early modern contexts, including dramatic performance, urban geography, inter-ethnic relations, pilgrimage, architecture, comic literature, and medicine.

Articles:

“Vegetal Continuity and the Naming of Species,” invited article published in *Premodern Plants*, a special issue of *postmedieval*, eds. Robert Barratt and Vin Nardizzi. 2018.

“Get a Grip: The Tactile Object of *Handlyng Synne*.” In *Feeling Things: Objects and Emotions Through History*, eds. Stephanie Downes, et al. Oxford, UK: Oxford UP, 2018.

“Medieval presence, postmedieval dispersal.” (with Myra Seaman). Introduction to *postmedieval* 8.4, 2017.

“Curl.” in *Veer Ecology*, eds. Jeffrey J. Cohen and Lowell Duckert. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota UP, 2017.

“Working and Playing on *The Middle Shore*.” With Katherine Richards. In *The Routledge Research Companion to Digital Medieval Literature*, eds. Jennifer Boyle and Helen J. Burgess. Routledge, 2017.

“Breathing Together/The Ocean Air.” Exhibit and essay for *The Middle Shore*, ed. Lara Farina and Katherine Richards. (Online): Electric Press, 2017.

“Missing Something? Queer Desire.” in *Clinical Encounters: Psychoanalytic Practice and Queer Theory*, eds. Noreen Giffney and Eve Watson. Brooklyn, NY: Punctum Press, 2016.

“Sticking Together.” in *Burn After Reading/The Future We Want*. Ed. Eileen Joy. Brooklyn, NY: Punctum, 2014.

“Wondrous Skins and Tactile Affection: The Blemmyae’s Touch.” in *Reading Skin in Medieval Literature and Culture*, ed. Katie Walter. New York and London: Palgrave, 2013.

“Intimate Senses/Sensing Intimacy.” Co-authored with Holly Dugan. *postmedieval* 3.4, 2012.

“Once More with Feeling: Tactility and Cognitive Alterity, Medieval and Modern.” *postmedieval* 3.3, 2012.

“Women and Reading.” in *History of British Women’s Writing, Vol. 1 (1350-1500)*. Eds. Liz Herbert McAvoy and Diane Watt. New York and London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012.

“Queer History and Erotic Reading.” in *The Lesbian Premodern*, eds. Noreen Giffney, Michelle Sauer, and Dianne Watt. New York and London: Palgrave, 2011.

“Money, Books, and Prayers: anchoresses and Exchange in Thirteenth-Century England.” in *Women, Wealth, and Power in Medieval Europe*, ed. Theresa Earenfight. New York and London: Palgrave, 2010.

“Before Affection: *Christ I* and the Social Erotic.” *Exemplaria* 13.2, 2001.

Forthcoming:

“Editing postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies.” Invited article for XXX (2021), co-authored with Myra Seaman.

Contribution to forum. *postmedieval* 12.1 (2021).

“Cold Comfort: Reading Old English.” Invited article for *The Yearbook of English Studies* (2022), eds. Clare A. Lees and Joshua Davis. (Annual journal of the Modern Humanities Research Association: <http://www.mhra.org.uk/>).

“Remote Sensing: Touch at a Distance.” Invited short article for Forum on “Sensology” to be published in *Exemplaria* 34.4 (2022), eds. Helen Cushman, Richard Newhauser, and Arthur Russell.

“Climate Change.” *The Chaucer Encyclopedia*, ed. Richard Newhauser. Wiley-Blackwell. 2022.

Work In Progress:

Tactile Readings. A book on the sense of touch, haptic reading, and medieval culture.

“In/human Sensations of the Little Ice Age,” article for *Senses and Society*.

The Hand You’re Dealt, issue of *Thresholds*, ed. with Helen Burgess.

Reviews (since 2010):

Slow Scholarship: Medieval Research and the Neoliberal University. Ed. Catherine E. Karkov. *The Medieval Review* (2021).

Reading Medieval Anchoritism. By Mari Hughes-Edwards. *Speculum* (2013).

The Milieu and Context of the Wooing Group. Ed. Susannah Chewning. *Speculum* (2011).

Creative/Other Work:

“Big Green Data: Herbals, Science, and Art.” Installation for the WVU Library (2019), reinstalled at the West Virginia Botanic Garden (2021).
<https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/biggreen-exhibit/>

“About the Cover.” *postmedieval* 10.1 (2019).

“About the Cover.” *postmedieval* 9.4 (2018).

“Better Living Through...” *Thresholds* 2. Ed. Frances McDonald and Whitney Trettien. 2018. <http://openthresholds.org/2/introduction>

Presentations (since 2010)

“Sensing the Song: Embodied Interpretation in Medieval Devotion.” Invited presentation for The Song of Songs through the Ages, University of Vienna, Austria. [Canceled due to COVID.]

“Remote Sensing: Touch at a Distance.” Accepted for both Uncommon Senses III (Concordia University, Montreal, Canada) and the New Chaucer Society biennial conference (Durham University, Durham, UK). [Both meetings canceled due to COVID].

“Big Green Data: Gallery Talk.” WVU Library. (October, 2019)

“Calculating the Past.” Invited response for The Sewanee Medieval Colloquium, University of the South, TN. (2019)

“A Sensory History of Material Texts.” Invited response for Renaissance Society of America conference. Toronto, ON. (2019)

“Simples and the Foliation of Language.” Biennial Conference of the New Chaucer Society, Toronto, ON. (2018)

“In/human Sensations of the Little Ice Age.” Uncommon Senses II. Concordia University, Montreal, QC. (2018)

“Tactile Bodies, Exemplary Affect.” Invited talk at Carnegie Mellon University (for the Pittsburgh Consortium of Medieval and Renaissance Studies, PA. (2018)

“Mystical Sensation.” Invited response for The Sewanee Medieval Colloquium, University of the South, TN. (2018)

“Vegetal Continuity.” Renaissance Society of America Conference. New Orleans, LA. (2018)

“Haptic Reading for Medievalists.” ANZAMEMS. Wellington, NZ. (2017)

“Vines, Petals, Nerves.” Invited talk at Washington and Lee University, VA. (2017)

“Picking Up the Pieces: Gender, Affect, and Medieval Studies.” Biennial Conference of the New Chaucer Society. London, UK. (2016)

“Trees Again: Time Travel with Plants.” International Congress of Medieval Studies. Kalamazoo, MI. (2016)

- “The Secret Lives of Plants.” Invited response for The Sewanee Medieval Colloquium. University of the South, TN. (2016)
- “That Old Dance: Moving Readers and the Forms of Affect Theory” Affect Theory Conference. Lancaster, PA. (2015)
- “Anti-Advice for Counter-Productivity.” Babel Working Group Conference, Toronto, ON. (2015)
- “Walking the Digital Beach.” Babel Working Group Biennial Conference. Santa Barbara, CA. (2014)
- “Enjoy Your *Handlyng!*” New Chaucer Society. Reykjavik, IS. (2014)
- “Vines, Petals, Nerves: Feeling Floral Skins.” International Congress of Medieval Studies. Kalamazoo, MI. (2014)
- “Practicing Uncanny Tactility with *Handlyng Synne*.” The Senses and Religion. York, UK. (2013)
- “The Manual of/in/and Devotion.” Invited talk: College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA. (2013).
- “The Disaggregate Body.” Invited talk: George Washington University, Washington DC. (2012)
- “Getting a Feel for the *House of Fame*.” New Chaucer Society, Portland, OR. (2012)
- “Sticking Together.” International Congress of Medieval Studies. Kalamazoo, MI. (2012)
- “The Intimate Senses: A *postmedieval* Approach.” Invited talk for “Shakespeare and the Senses” conference. Globe Theater, London. (2011)
- “Feelers: Touch, Cognition, and Identity.” New Chaucer Society. Siena, Italy. (2010)
- “Feminist Ethics.” International Medieval Congress. Leeds, UK. (2010).

Courses Taught

Graduate:

Sensory Studies and Literature
 Medieval British Literature
 Visions and Wonders
 Textual Communities: Reading, Gender, and Patronage
 Blasphemy and Other Sins of the Tongue
 Romance, Dream Vision, Allegory
 Premodern Texts/Postmedieval Readings
 Chaucer

Undergraduate:

Literature of the Middle Ages
Medieval Fantasies
Chaucer
The Celtic World
Anglo-Saxon England
Literature of the Early North Atlantic
Women and Literature Before 1600
Love, Sex, and Gender Before Modernity
British Literature to 1800
English Major's "Capstone"
Environmental Criticism
Sexual Diversity in Literature and Film
History of the English Language
Structure of the English Language
Non-Western World Literature
Short Story and Novel
Foundations of Literary Analysis
English Composition

Dissertations Supervised

Director for Adrienne Izaguirre, (on sensory environments), in progress.

Director for Michael Green (on weird fiction, affect, and the uncanny), in progress.

Director for Scott Dennis, "Chaucer's Boethian Poems and Usk's *Testament of Love*:
Foundations of English Prison Literature," 2013.

Director for Marisa Klages, "Rhetorics of Pain and Desire: The Writings of the Middle English
Mystics," 2008.

Committee Member for Dustin Purvis, Christopher Urban, Frank Izaguirre, April McGinnis,
and Lacey Bonar (History). All in progress.

Committee Member for Beth Staley, "'Echo has no Magistrate': Emily Dickinson's Echology,"
2019.

Committee Member for Katherine Richards, "Medical Celebrity: Intersections of Medical
and Celebrity Culture in Eighteenth-Century Britain," 2018.

Committee Member for Alyson De Maagd, "Alternative Sensoriums in Modernist Women's
Writing," 2018.

Committee Member for Amanda Bailey, “Metaphors of Reading: Cognition and Embodiment in Contemporary Metafiction,” 2017.

Committee Member for Teresa Pershing, “Errant Romanticism: Queering Gender and Sexuality in British Literature, 1790-1840,” 2016.

Committee Member for Rebecca Doberspike, MFA thesis, 2014.

Committee Member for Heather Zias, “Derrida’s Daughter,” 2009.

Service (since 2010)

2020-21 Director of Graduate Studies
Chair of Graduate Program Committee
Editorial Board, *postmedieval*
Committee for targeted hire

2019-20 Director of Graduate Studies
Chair of Graduate Program Committee
Hiring Committee member for Dept. of Art History
Organizer of Research Expo, New Chaucer Society Biennial Meeting

2018-19 Trained as Director of Graduate Studies
Humanities Center Advisory Board
PhD & MA Admissions Committees
Graduate Program Committee

2017-18 Humanities Center Advisory Board
English Department Faculty Evaluation Committee
Babel Working Group Conference Organization Committee
Organizer of Affirmative Values Reading

2015-16 Elected member of the Steering Committee of the Babel Working Group
Proseminar Committee
Advisory Committee for a new Humanities Center

2014-15 Elected member of the Steering Committee of the Babel Working Group
Hiring Committee Chair (British Lit); Hiring Committee (Endowed Chair)
Co-author of Proposal for a new Medieval/Renaissance Minor

2011-12 English Department Faculty Evaluation Committee
Hiring Committee (for three British Lit positions)
Faculty Advisor for EGO (graduate student organization)

2010-11 PhD. Admissions Committee
Proseminar Committee
Faculty Advisor for EGO

Multi-year Reviewer of manuscript submissions for: *postmedieval*, *Resilience*, *Philological Quarterly*, *Studies in Medievalism*, *Literature Compass*, *Medieval Feminist Forum*, WVU Press, Ohio State University Press, and University of Wales Press.