

Lara Farina

Associate Professor of English
West Virginia University
Morgantown, WV 26506
Lara.Farina@mail.wvu.edu

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

- 2008 - Associate Professor of English, West Virginia University
Courses include Medieval Literature, Chaucer, Non-Western World Literature, and graduate seminars on textual communities, visionary literature, and sensory studies.
- 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 - Co-editor of *postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies*
Acting 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

- 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, forthcoming Fall 2017.

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 once published. <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:

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

“Curl.” in *Veer Ecology*, ed. Jeffrey J. Cohen and Lowell Duckert. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota UP, 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*, ed. 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 (December 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)*. Ed. Liz Herbert McAvoy and Diane Watt. New York and London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012.

“Queer History and Erotic Reading.” in *The Lesbian Premodern*, ed. 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 (Fall 2001).

Forthcoming:

“Working and Playing on *The Middle Shore*.” In *Digital Medieval Literature and Culture*, ed. Jen Boyle and Helen Burgess. Accepted for publication by Routledge.

Work In Progress:

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

“Sensing Species,” invited article to be published in *Premodern Plants*, a special issue of *postmedieval*, ed. Robert Barratt and Vin Nardizzi.

Reviews (since 2011):

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

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

Presentations (since 2010)

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

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

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

“The Secret Lives of Plants.” Invited response for The Sewanee Medieval Colloquium. University of the South, TN. (April 2016)

“That Old Dance: Moving Readers and the Forms of Affect Theory” Affect Theory Conference. Lancaster, PA. (October 2015)

“Anti-Advice for Counter-Productivity.” Babel Working Group Conference, Toronto, CA. (October 2015)

“Walking the Digital Beach.” Babel Working Group Biennial Conference. UC Santa Barbara. (October 2014)

“Enjoy Your *Handlyng!*” New Chaucer Society. Reykjavik, IS. (July 2014)

“Vines, Petals, Nerves: Feeling Floral Skins.” International Congress of Medieval Studies. Kalamazoo, MI. (May 2014)

“Practicing Uncanny Tactility with *Handlyng Synne*.” The Senses and Religion. University of York, York, UK. (July 2013)

“The Manual of/in/and Devotion.” Invited talk at College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA. (February, 2013).

“The Disaggregate Body.” Invited talk at George Washington University, Washington DC. (October 2012)

“Squeezebox: Getting a Feel for the *House of Fame*.” New Chaucer Society, Portland, OR. (July 2012)

“Sticking Together.” International Congress of Medieval Studies. Kalamazoo, MI. (May 2012)

“The Intimate Senses: A Postmedieval Approach.” Invited talk for “Shakespeare and the Senses” conference. Globe Theater, London. (November 2011)

“Feelers: Touch, Cognition, and Identity.” New Chaucer Society. Siena, Italy. (July 2010)

“Feminist Ethics.” International Medieval Congress. Leeds, UK. (July 2010).

Courses Taught

Graduate:

Sensory Studies and Literature

Medieval British Literature

Visions and Wonders

Textual Communities: Reading, Gender, and Patronage in Medieval England

Blasphemy and Other Sins of the Tongue

Romance, Dream Vision, Allegory

Premodern Texts/Postmedieval Readings

Chaucer

Undergraduate:

Love, Sex, and Gender Before Modernity

Literature of the Middle Ages

Chaucer

The Celtic World

Anglo-Saxon England

Literature of the Early North Atlantic

British Literature to 1800

English Major’s “Capstone”

Sexual Diversity in Literature and Film

History of the English Language

Non-Western World Literature

The Ancient Greek World

Short Story and Novel

Foundations of Literary Analysis

English Composition

Dissertations Supervised

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 Alyson De Maagd, “Alternative Sensoriums in Modernist Women’s Writing,” in progress.

Committee Member for Katherine Richards, “Medical Celebrity: Intersections of Medical and Celebrity Culture in Eighteenth-Century Britain,” in progress.

Committee Member for Beth Staley, “‘Echo has no Magistrate’: Emily Dickinson’s Echology,” in progress.

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 Heather Zias, “Derrida’s Daughter,” 2009.

Service (since 2010)

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| 2017- | Babel Working Group Conference Organization Committee
Organizer of Affirmative Values Reading |
| 2015-2016 | 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: <i>postmedieval</i> , <i>Resilience</i> ,
<i>Philological Quarterly</i> , <i>Studies in Medievalism</i> , <i>Literature Compass</i> ,
<i>Medieval Feminist Forum</i> , and the WVU Press. |