

## Ben Bascom

Department of English  
Ball State University  
Robert Bell Building  
Muncie, IN 47306

2000 W. University Ave.  
Muncie, IN 47306  
(801) 717-6983  
bdbascom@bsu.edu

### ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Professor of English, Ball State University, 2017–Present

### EDUCATION

Ph.D. in English, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2017  
M.A. in English, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2011  
B.A. in English, *summa cum laude*, Brigham Young University, 2009

### MONOGRAPH MANUSCRIPT

“Feeling Singular: Queer Masculinities in the Early United States” (under contract, Oxford University Press)

My book project uncovers a series of early national U.S. failures—figures who aspired for recognition, achievement, success, but were unable to obtain their desires—and places them in conversation with the then-emerging norms of republican belonging that underscore their particular plights. Through focusing on the stories and writings of an eccentric and motley set of characters, this book upends the predominance of the canon for the period’s literary history, interrogates the presumed stability of early national cultural norms, and provides a compelling cast of under-examined figures who will expand scholarly and popular knowledge of the period. This project has been supported through the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Ball State Junior Faculty Research Award, and Penn State University’s Center for American Literary History’s First Book Institute.

### PUBLICATIONS

“Feeling Solitary in the Seductive Republic: Narrative Deviance in Elizabeth ‘Harriot’ Wilson and William ‘Amos’ Wilson,” accepted for publication in *Early American Literature* on 22 June 2023.

“Longing for Annabel: Queer Love and the Melancholic Critic,” accepted for publication in *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists* on 18 October 2022.

“Queer Anachronism: Jeffrey Brace and the Racialized Republic.” *Arizona Quarterly* 75.1 (Spring 2019): 23–47.

“‘A thought struck me’: John Fitch and the Federal Republic.” *Early American Literature* 48.1 (Spring 2013): 153–76.

“Frontier History and Domestic Fiction: *Angle of Repose* and 1970s Marriage Politics.” *Papers on Language and Literature* 46.4 (Fall 2010): 415–40.

## WORK IN PROGRESS/FORTHCOMING

“Eccentric Queers: Sexuality and Debility in the Nineteenth Century.” In process book project.

“Desiring Sacrifice: Louisa May Alcott’s *Work* and the Aesthetics of Labor,” *Radical Transcendentalisms* (eds. Alex Moskowitz and Ted Stolze), under contract with Brill

## FELLOWSHIPS

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 2023      | William H. Helfand Fellow in American Medicine, Science, and Society, Library Company of Philadelphia, \$2,000 |
| 2022      | College of Charleston, The Pearlstine/Lipov Center for Southern Jewish Culture, \$500                          |
| 2021      | Filson Fellowship, The John Filson Historical Society, \$500   |
| 2019      | NEH Fellowship at American Antiquarian Society, semester release, \$21,000                                     |
| 2018      | First Book Institute at Penn State’s Center for American Literary Studies, \$1,500                             |
| 2018      | New Faculty Research Grant, Ball State University, \$9,500   |
| 2017      | NEH Summer Institute for College Teachers, 2-week research fellowship, \$2,100                                 |
| 2015–2016 | Lauter McDougal Fellowship, University of Illinois, 4-course teaching release, \$20,000                        |
| 2015      | Dissertation Travel Grant, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Illinois, \$3,000               |
| 2015      | Summer Fellowship, Competitive English Department Award, \$3,000   |
| 2015      | Phillips Library Visiting Fellowship, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA, \$700                                   |
| 2015      | Kate B. and Hall J. Peterson Fellowship, American Antiquarian Society, \$1,800                                 |
| 2014–2015 | Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities Fellowship, 2-course teaching release, \$10,000                |
| 2015      | Gragg-Barr Graduate Fellowship, University of Illinois English Department, 2-course teaching release, \$10,000 |
| 2014      | Mildred E. and William E. Winter Fellowship, 2-course teaching release, \$10,000                               |
| 2014      | Summer Fellowship, Competitive English Department Award, \$3,000   |
| 2012      | Nicholson Graduate Student Summer Fellowship, \$1,400  |

## BOOK REVIEWS

Revs. of Elizabeth Freeman’s *Beside You in Time: Sense Methods and Queer Sociabilities in the American 19th Century*, Natasha Hurley’s *Circulating Queerness: Before the Gay and Lesbian Novel* and Benjamin Kahan’s *The Book of Minor Perverts: Sexology, Etiology & the Emergences of Sexuality*. “Groping Toward Perversions: From Queer Methods to

Queer States in Recent Queer Criticism.” *American Literary History* 32.2 (Summer 2020): 396–404.

Rev. of Readex America’s Historical Imprints: Early American Imprints Series II: Shaw-Shoemaker supplements from the American Antiquarian Society and the Library Company of Philadelphia. *Early American Literature* 55.3 (2020): 921–23.

Rev. of Branka Arsić, *Bird Relics: Grief and Vitalism in Thoreau* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press. 2016. 455 pp.) and Audrey Raden, *When I Came to Die: Process and Prophecy in Thoreau’s Vision of Dying* (Boston: Univ. of Massachusetts Press. 2017. 156 pp.), *American Literature* (June 2019).

Rev. of Mari Ruti, *The Ethics of Opting Out: Queer Theory’s Defiant Subjects* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press. 2017. 252 pp.) *The ALH Online Review*.

“Strong Abjections.” Rev. of Mark J. Miller’s *Cast Down: Abjection in America, 1700–1850* (U of Pennsylvania P, 2016) in *Common-Place: The Journal of Early American Life* 17.4.5 (Fall 2017). <<http://common-place.org/book/strong-abjections/>>.

## ONLINE PUBLICATIONS

“Fragmentary Seductions.” *Just Teach One*. Online archive for teaching neglected or forgotten texts. *Common-Place: The Journal of Early American Life*. July 2018. <<http://jto.common-place.org/2018/07/09/bascom/>>.

Rev. of “Digressions on Falling: Departing from the Work of Henri Michaux” by Berkay Ustun. *Forty-Five: A Journal of Outside Research* (14 Nov. 2017). <<http://forty-five.com/papers/139,>>.

“Citizens as Verbs: The Politics of Belonging in Nineteenth-Century and Contemporary American Citizenship.” *Kritik*. Response to Derrick Spires and J. David Cisneros. 18 Mar. 2016. <<http://unitcrit.blogspot.com/2016/03/unit-faculty-fellows-symposium-panel-3.html>>.

“Jonathan Plummer and the Problem of Print.” *Conversant*. 23 Nov. 2015. <<http://www.pem.org/library/blog/?p=8484>>.

“Sexual Sovereignties.” *Kritik*. Response to Ann Cvetkovich. 10 Mar. 2014. <<http://unitcrit.blogspot.com/2014/03/sexual-sovereignties-guest-writer-ben.html>>.

“Pleasure without Depth.” *Kritik*. Response to Stephen Best and Heather Love. 17 Feb. 2012. <<http://unitcrit.blogspot.com/2012/02/ends-of-history-pleasure-without-depth.html>>.

## TEACHING HONORS

Department of English Teaching Award, University of Illinois (student-nominated and peer-reviewed), Fall 2016

List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: Summer 2016, Spring 2011, Fall 2010, Spring 2010

## PRESENTATIONS and SEMINARS

- 2024 “The Phenomenology of the Phallus: Archival Affects and the Hunt for Sexuality.” C19: Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists. Pasadena, CA: 14–16 March.
- 2023 “How (Not) to Leave a Legacy in the Early Republic: John Fitch, ‘Lord’ Timothy Dexter, and the Lessons of John Filson.” *New Voices in Kentucky Material Culture*. **Invited Talk** by the Filson Historical Society, Louisville, KY. 14 October.
- “Feeling Solitary in the Seductive Republic.” Charles Brockden Brown Society Conference. University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK, 14 September.
- “‘Lord’ Timothy Dexter’s Queer Incorporation.” Society of Early Americanists. College Park, MD: 9 June.
- “Teaching the Fragments” in “Creative Approaches to Teaching the History of the Early American Book.” Society of Early Americanists. College Park, MD: 9 June.
- “Early U.S. Federalism in Drag: Timothy Dexter’s Queer Monuments.” Modern Language Association. San Francisco, CA: 7 January.
- 2022 “Reconstructing *Work*: Louisa May Alcott and the Problem of Sacrifice.” C19: Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists. Coral Gables, FL: 2 April.
- “Empire of Smell: Douglass, Thoreau, and Queer Fungibility.” Modern Language Association. Washington, D.C.: 9 January.
- 2020 “The Biopolitics of Republican Virtue: Steam, Power, and the State.” C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists. Digital Conference: 16–18 & 23–25 October.
- 2019 “Settler Palimpsest: John Filson’s *Kentucke* and the Topography of the State.” Charles Brockden Brown Society Conference. Lexington, KY: 3–5 October.
- “Intimate Smells and the Plummer Archive.” Association for the Study of Literature and Environment. Davis, CA: 26–30 June.
- “Round Table on Today’s Academic Job Market: Strategies and Considerations I.” American Literature Association. Boston: 23–26 May.

- 2018 “The Hermitess and *The Coquette*: Recovering Fantasies of Solitude in the Seductive Republic.” Society for the Study of American Women Writers. Denver: 7–11 November.
- “Smelling Thoreau.” C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists. Albuquerque: 22–25 March.
- 2017 “When Hermits Were Queer: Solitary Counterpublics and the Early Republic.” American Studies Association. Chicago: 9–12 November.
- “Perversions in Prints: Privacy and Community in the Early Republic.” Narrative Conference. Lexington: 23–26 March.
- 2016 “Jonathan Plummer and the Perambulations of Print.” McNeil Center for Early American Studies. Philadelphia: 25–27 May.
- “Unsettling Vermont: Whiteness, Witness, and the Memoirs of Jeffrey Brace.” C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists, State College, PA: 17–20 March.
- “Jeffrey Brace and the Black Anti-Sentimental Tradition.” Modern Language Association. Austin, TX: 7–10 January.
- 2015 “John Fitch Queered: Steam, Manhood, Failure.” American Studies Association. Toronto, Canada: 8–11 October.
- “Jonathan Plummer’s Conversions.” Society for Historians of the Early American Republic. Raleigh, NC: 16–19 July.
- Seminar participant in Cultural History seminar with Jay Cook and Alexis McCrossen. Society for Historians of the Early American Republic, Raleigh, NC: 18 July.
- “Sentimentalizing Memory.” Futures of American Studies. Hanover, NH: 22–27 June.
- “Feeling Singular: Republican Desire and the Art of Failure.” Brown Bag Lunch. American Antiquarian Society. Worcester, MA: 21 May.
- 2014 “Print Seductions: ‘Harriot’ Wilson and the Evangelical Hermit.” Seminar participant in Meredith McGill’s “Public Domains: Print and the Commons in the 19th Century U.S.” C19: The Society for Nineteenth-Century Americanists, 13–16 March.
- “Poe, Dickinson, and Solitude’s Queer Spaces.” Emily Dickinson International Society and Poe Studies Association at the Modern Language Association. Chicago: 9–12 January.
- 2013 “Museum/Empire: *The Last American* and World Culture.” American Literature in the World. Yale University Graduate Conference. New Haven, CT: 19 April.

- 2012 “The Nineteenth-Century Imperial Balloon: Race, Empire, Spectacle.” American Studies Association. San Juan, Puerto Rico: 15–18 November.
- “Reading *Sheppard Lee*: The Body and the Book in Antebellum Print.” Rocky Mountain MLA. Boulder, CO: 11–13 October.
- Seminar participant in John Brenkman’s “Philosophy of the Passions/Rhetorics of Affect.” School of Criticism and Theory, Cornell University, June–July
- “John Fitch and the Republic of Risk.” Charles Brockden Brown Society Conference. CUNY Graduate Center. New York City: 19–21 April.
- “Getting and Keeping Students Involved: Discussion Sections in Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences.” Graduate Academy for College Teaching. Urbana, IL: 11 January.
- 2011 “Eating Bodies/Consuming Fictions.” Gender and Women’s Studies. University of Illinois. Urbana, IL: 12 December.
- “Guarding the Gold: Catechisms, Didactic Fictions, and the Mainstreaming of Moroni.” Summer Symposium on Mormon Culture. Provo, UT: 18 August.
- “Politics and Prostitution: Caroline Slade and Sociopolitical Modernism.” Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture since 1900. Louisville, KY: 24–26 February.
- 2010 “Killing a Lobster/Killing a Man: Animality, Absurdity, and the Ethics of Form.” University of Illinois British Modernities Group. Urbana, IL: 23 April.
- 2009 “The Racial Operating Table: Technology and the Human in *Pudd’nhead Wilson*.” International Mark Twain Conference. Elmira, NY: 7 August.

### **PANELS ORGANIZED and CO-ORGANIZED**

- 2020 “Queer Eccentricity in the Long Nineteenth Century,” C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists, Digital Conference: 16–18 & 23–25 October.
- 2016 “Unsettled Conversions: Race, Religion, and the Politics of Belonging,” C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists, State College, PA: 17–20 March.
- 2015 “Queer Misery: Queer Lives, Queer Texts, and Producing the Possible in Early America,” American Studies Association. Toronto, Canada: 8–11 October.
- 2012 “Whales, Balloons, and Boxcars: Imperial Objects in the Long Nineteenth Century,” American Studies Association, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 15–18 November.

### **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

## Ball State University

*Undergraduate*

Introduction to Literature, Spring 2020, Spring 2021, Spring 2022

Reading and Writing about Literature, Fall 2023

Queer Literature/Queer Theory, Fall 2019, Fall 2020, Fall 2022, Spring 2023, Fall 2023

Survey of American Literature before 1860, Fall 2018, Spring 2020, Spring 2022

Studies in Early American Literature, Spring 2018, Fall 2019, Fall 2021, Spring 2023

Studies in Nineteenth-Century American Literature, Fall 2017, Fall 2020, Fall 2022, Fall 2023

Senior Seminar: “Queer Cultures: Art, Drag, Politics,” Fall 2021; “Queer Performances,” Fall 2022

Literature & Gender, Fall 2017, Fall 2018

*Graduate*

Studies in Early American Literature, “Queer Lives in Early America,” Spring 2018; “Early American State Formations and the Biopolitics of Individualism,” Fall 2020, Spring 2023

Studies in Nineteenth-Century American Literature, “American Renaissance/American Wreckage,” Fall 2019

Gender Studies: “Remembering Queer/Queer Remembering,” Spring 2021, Summer 2023

Cultural Studies: “The Cultural Politics of Feelings,” Fall 2021

## University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

*Instructor of Record*

Nineteenth-Century African American Literature, Fall 2016

Persuasive Writing, Fall 2016

Business Publics, Spring 2017, Summer 2016

Business and Technical Writing, Fall 2009, Spring 2011

**EDITORIAL EXPERIENCE**

Assistant Editor, *American Literary History*, 2012–2014

First-reader of submissions to the journal: wrote reports assessing essays’ argumentative clarity and critical stakes; in consultation with Professor Gordon Hutner, invited specialists to write readers’ reports for approved essays; conducted correspondence with authors and external reviewers; assembled recently published monographs for essay reviews and proposed names of invited authors.

Managing Editor, *American Literary History*, 2011–2012

Proofread and formatted accepted essays; worked with authors to clarify prose and verify citations; corresponded with authors regarding publication schedule; ordered new academic-press books for external review.

**UNIVERSITY SERVICE**

### PhD Committees

Rachel Evans, PhD oral exam on November 29, 2023  
Steven Lively, ongoing  
Cody Mullins, “Writing the Appalachian Commons: White Women Novelists on Ecological Disaster and Repair,” defended March 2023  
Evan Ward, ongoing

### MA Theses:

Amelia Brewers, “Adapting Anne Lister: From Diaries to Period Dramas to Decoded Queerness,” English (submitted June 2023) [advisor]  
Gabby Eshelman, “Reimagining the Monstrosity of Sapphic Consumption: From Sheridan Le Fanu’s ‘Carmilla’ to the film *Jennifer’s Body*,” English (submitted May 2023) [advisor]  
Taylor Lutz, “‘Trembling on the Brink’: The Fantasy of Female Subjectivity in the Precipice Stage,” English (submitted May 2021) [advisor]  
Drew Gaidosh, “‘If I See Another Stocking, Lord, I Swear to God I’m Walking Lord’: A Queer Critical Analysis of Trixie Mattel’s Campy Drag Music,” Communications (defended May 2021) [committee member]  
Rachel Wood, “The Game’s Afoot: Ludonarrativity and Player Agency in Science Fiction Crime Games,” Emerging Media Design and Development (defended March 2020) [committee member]

### Honors Theses:

Elizabeth Jolly, Graduate December 2022  
Sammy Bredar, Graduated May 2022  
Julian Price, Graduated May 2021  
Anna Marie McAtee, Graduated May 2020

Faculty Advisor, Practical Criticism Midwest Conference, Ball State University, October 2019  
Literature Area Secretary, Ball State University English Department, 2018–present  
University Library Committee, 2020–present  
English Department Assessment Committee, 2020–present

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

MLA Executive Committee LLC for Early American Literature, 2024–  
Charles Brockden Brown Society Advisory Board, 2023–  
NEH Summer Institute Review Panel, 2022  
Manuscript reviewer, *American Literary History*  
Manuscript reviewer, *Great Plains Quarterly*

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Muncie Outreach, LGBTQ Youth Center, Essay Competition Reader, 2022, 2023  
Panelist on Banned Book Week, Muncie Public Library, 25 September 2021  
Public Lecture on Walt Whitman for Pride Month, Muncie Public Library, 19 June 2019



## MEMBERSHIPS

American Studies Association  
C19: The Society for Nineteenth-Century Americanists  
Charles Brockden Brown Society  
Margaret Fuller Society  
Modern Language Association

## REFERENCES

Gordon Hutner  
Professor of English  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
hutner@illinois.edu

Greta LaFleur  
Associate Professor of American Studies and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies  
Yale University  
greta.lafleur@yale.edu

Trish Loughran  
Associate Professor of English and History  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
loughran@illinois.edu

Justine Murison  
Professor of English  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
jmurison@illinois.edu

Jordan Alexander Stein  
Professor, FCLC Honors Program Director  
Fordham University  
jstein10@fordham.edu