

Courtney Thorsson

November 2021

Department of English
University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403

thorsson@uoregon.edu
(541) 346-1473

Education

Ph.D., English, Columbia University, 2009

M.A., English, Columbia University, 2004

B.A., English and African American Studies, University of Virginia, 2000

Employment

2015- Associate Professor of English, University of Oregon

2009-15 Assistant Professor of English, University of Oregon

2009-10 Postdoctoral Fellow in African American Literature, Rutgers University

Publications

Books

The Sisterhood: Black Women's Literary Organizing, Columbia University Press (forthcoming).

Women's Work: Nationalism and Contemporary African American Women's Novels. University of Virginia Press, 2013.

Reviewed in *American Literature*, *American Literary History*, *Journal of American Culture*, *Novel*, *Modern Fiction Studies*, and *Studies in the Novel*.

Peer-Reviewed Articles and Chapters

"They could be killing kids *forever!*": The Atlanta Child Murders in African American Literature," *African American Review*. 53.4 (Winter 2020): 315-332.

Winner of the 2020 Weixlmann Prize for best essay in *African American Review* on twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature.

"Kitchen, Nation, Diaspora: Ntozake Shange's African American Foodways." *Foodscapes: Food, Space, and Place in a Global Society* edited by Carlita Greene. Peter Lang, 2018: 199-222.

"Foodways in Contemporary African American Poetry: Harryette Mullen and Evie Shockley." *Contemporary Literature*. 57.2 (Summer 2016): 184-215.

Co-author, "Black Women's Food Work as Critical Space." *Gastronomica* 15.4 (Winter 2015): 34-49.

"Gwendolyn Brooks's Black Aesthetic of the Domestic." *MELUS: Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States* 40.1 (Spring 2015): 149-176.

"James Baldwin and Black Women's Fiction." *African American Review* 46.4 (Winter 2013): 615-31.

"Dancing Up A Nation: Paule Marshall's *Praisesong for the Widow*." *Callaloo* 30.2 (2007): 644-52.

Book Reviews

Review of *From Slave Cabins to the White House: Homemade Citizenship in African American Culture* by Koritha Mitchell. *Legacy* (forthcoming December 2021).

"Fairy Tales of Race and Nation," Review of *Gingerbread* by Helen Oyeyemi. *Public Books*, April 9, 2019.

"Why Now?: Recent Writings on Black Power and the Black Panther Party." *Callaloo* 32.2 (2009): 670-75.

Review of *Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food & Power* by Psyche Williams-Forsen, *Atlantic Studies* 5.1 (2008): 146-48.

Selected Fellowships and Awards

- 2021-23 Norman H. Brown Faculty Fellow, University of Oregon
- 2021 Faculty Research Award, Office of the Vice President for Research & Innovation, University of Oregon
- 2020 Weixlmann Prize for best essay in *African American Review* on twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature
- 2018-19 Public Scholar Award, National Endowment for the Humanities
- 2018-19 Ernest G. Moll Research Professorship, Oregon Humanities Center (declined)
- 2016 Fund for Faculty Excellence Award, University of Oregon
- 2015-16 College Scholars Teaching Fellowship, University of Oregon
- 2014 Early Career Award, Office of Research and Innovation, University of Oregon
- 2013-14 Junior Professorship Development Award, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Oregon
- 2013-14 Faculty Research Award, Office of Research, Innovation and Graduate Education, University of Oregon
- 2012-13 Ernest G. Moll Research Professorship, Oregon Humanities Center
- 2012 Faculty Research Grant, Center for the Study of Women in Society, University of Oregon
- 2010-11 New Faculty Award, University of Oregon
- 2009-10 Postdoctoral Fellowship in African American Literature, Rutgers University

Selected Invited Presentations

- Panelist, "Creation Is Everything You Do: Shange, The Sisterhood, and Black Collectivity," Barnard College, March 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tv322Y_qZgc.
- "Black Feminisms," Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race Graduate Seminar "Methods in American Studies," Columbia University, March 2021.
- "The Sisterhood, Literary Organizing, and The Archive," African American Literature and Culture Now Symposium, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, November 2019.
- "Frederick Douglass in Contemporary African American Novels," Frederick Douglass and Literary Crossroads NEH Institute, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, IL, July 2019.
- "Douglass and Black Women," Frederick Douglass and Literary Crossroads NEH Institute, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, IL, July 2019.
- "The Sisterhood and Black Women's Literary Organizing," University of Georgia, Athens, GA, February 2019.
- Panel Chair, "Black Poetics," Race and Resistance Conference, Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA, October 2016.

Panel Chair, "Soul Survivals: Black Cultural Production in the 1970s," Race and Resistance Conference, Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA, October 2016.

Keynote Speaker, "Women's Work: Nationalism and Contemporary Black Women's Novels," Radical Historiographies Conference, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, March 2014.

"Vertamae Grosvenor's Revolutionary Recipes," University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS, January 2014.

Participant, "Multiplying Standpoints and Participatory Feminisms" Conference, Fembot Collective, Portland, Oregon, July 2013.

Presenter, Faculty Forum on Race and Ethnicity, Rutgers University, April 2010.

Panelist, closing roundtable, Celebrating African American Literature Conference, Pennsylvania State University, October 2009.

Selected National and International Presentations

"The Sisterhood and Black Women's Literary Organizing," African American Literature and Culture Society, American Literature Association, San Francisco, CA, May 2018.

"Boundaries of Race, Place, and Form: The Atlanta Child Murders in African American Literature," Modern Language Association, Austin, TX, January 2016.

Roundtable Participant, "Radical Curators, Vulnerable Genres," Modern Language Association, Chicago, IL, January 2014.

"Foodways in Twenty-First-Century African American Poetry," Modern Language Association, Chicago, IL, January 2014.

Roundtable Participant, "The Good, The Bad, The Unforgivable: Black Women's Food Work as Spaces of Dissent and Strategic Acquiescence," American Studies Association, Washington D.C., November 2013.

"Foodways and African American Poetry," Celebrating African American Literature, Pennsylvania State University, October 2013.

"Women's Work: Nationalism and Contemporary Black Women's Novels," African American Literature and Culture Society, American Literature Association, Boston, MA, May 2013.

"Vertamae Grosvenor's Revolutionary Recipes," Foodways: Diasporic Diners, Transnational Tables and Culinary Connections, University of Toronto, October 2012.

"James Baldwin and Black Women's Fiction," Celebrating African American Literature, Pennsylvania State University, September 2011.

"'There were lives in the buildings': Gwendolyn Brooks's Black Aesthetic of the Domestic," Northeast Modern Language Association, New Brunswick, NJ, April 2011.

"Mapping and Moving Nation: Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day*," Modern Language Association, Philadelphia, PA, December 2009.

"Inscribing Community: Toni Morrison's *Paradise*," Celebrating African American Literature, Pennsylvania State University, October 2009.

Panel Chair, "James Baldwin: In His Time/In Our Time," Suffolk University, Boston March 2009.

"Cooking Up Community: Ntozake Shange," Modern Language Association, San Francisco, CA, December 2008.

Moderator, "Graduate Scholar Presentations," Conversation Series, Institute for Research in African American Studies, Columbia University, Spring 2008.

"A Language to Dwell In: James Baldwin's *Another Country*," James Baldwin: Work, Life, Legacies, Queen Mary University, London, June 2007.

"Dancing Up A Nation: Paule Marshall's *Praisesong for the Widow*," Black Diaspora in the South and the Caribbean, Louisiana State University, March 2007.

"America ain't entered the question at all: Mapping Home and Community in Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day*," Envisioning Home, City University of New York, November 2006.

Selected Local Presentations

- Discussion Leader, Karla Holloway's *A Death in Harlem*, Center for the Study of Women in Society, University of Oregon, January 2020.
- Panelist, Teaching Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me*, Common Reading Program, University of Oregon, May 2016.
- African American Literary Studies, Faculty Fireside, Sigma Tau Delta English Honor Society, University of Oregon, April 2015.
- "Women's Work: Nationalism and Contemporary Black Women's Novels," Works in Print, English Department, University of Oregon, April 2014.
- Moderator, Arlene Keizer presentation and discussion of Kara Walker exhibit, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, Eugene, Oregon, February 2014.
- "Revolutionary Recipes: Foodways and African American Literature," Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Eugene, Oregon February 2013.
- "Revolutionary Recipes: Foodways and African American Literature" Works in Progress, Oregon Humanities Center, University of Oregon, November 2012.
- Moderator, "Dangerous Dependencies: Domestic Slavery and Servitude in the Americas" roundtable, University of Oregon, May 2012.
- "Vertamae Grosvenor's Revolutionary Recipes," Works in Progress, Food in the Field Research Interest Group, University of Oregon, May 2012.
- "Women's Work: Nationalism and Contemporary African American Women's Novels," Women Faculty Research Series, Center for Study of Women and Society, University of Oregon, April 2012.
- "Vertamae Grosvenor's Revolutionary Recipes," Place and Displacement in African American Literature Symposium, University of Oregon, March 2012.
- Moderator, "New Approaches to the Study of Slavery and Abolition in the Americas," Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies, University of Oregon, November 2010.

Selected Interviews

- The Sporkful*. August 2019. Podcast.
- UO Today*. <https://media.uoregon.edu/channel/archives/7597>. April 2014. Television and web.
- "Books Aren't Dead." Fembot Collective. March 2014. Podcast.
- WURD*, Philadelphia, PA. September 2013. Radio.

Selected Event Organizing

- Organizer, Matt Sandler book talk and discussion, *The Black Romantic Revolution: Abolitionist Poets at the End of Slavery*, November 2020.
- Organizer, Tanisha Ford talk, "The Politics of Style: Black Women, Social Movements, and Global Fashion Economies," University of Oregon, April 2016.
- Co-Organizer, "Hands Up & Breathe: A Conversation About Racial Justice and Hip Hop Culture with Jeff Chang and James Peterson," University of Oregon, March 2015.
- Organizer, screening of *Reflections Unheard: Black Women in Civil Rights* and discussion with director Nevline Nnaji, University of Oregon, April 2014.
- Organizer, "Racial Representations: African American Literature Since 1975" symposium, University of Oregon, April 2013.
- Organizer, "Place and Displacement in African American Literature" symposium, University of Oregon, March 2012.
- Organizer, reading, talk, and interview with author Mat Johnson, University of Oregon, May 2011.
- Founder and Co-Chair, African Americanist Colloquium, Columbia University, 2007-09.

TeachingUndergraduate*University of Oregon*

English 104: Introduction to Fiction

English 106: Introduction to Poetry

English 241: Introduction to African American Literature

English 316: Black Women's Novels

English 360: African American Writers 1870-1920

English 360: Black Feminist Literature

English 391: Nineteenth-Century American Novel

Ethnic Studies 399: The Harlem Renaissance

English 403: Directed Study for Honors Thesis

Honors College 424: Contemporary African American Women's Novels

Honors College 444: Black Feminist Literature

English 468: Contemporary Black Fiction

English 479: Toni Morrison

English 498: Contemporary African American Women's Novels

Rutgers University

English 251: Black Literature 1930 to the Present

Columbia University

University Writing 1010: Freshman Composition

English 3011: Critical Reading, Critical Writing

African American Studies 3930: African American Foodways

English 4624: Contemporary African American Women's Novels

Graduate*University of Oregon*

English 510: Contemporary Black Women's Fiction

English 568: Contemporary Black Fiction

English 579: Toni Morrison

English 598: Contemporary African American Women's Novels

English 605: Independent Study: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity

English 605: Independent Study: African American Literature to 1900

English 605: Independent Study: Article Revision and Submission

English 660: African American Foodways

English 660: Contemporary Black Fiction

English 660: 21st-Century Black FictionDissertations

Director

2020- Carmel Ohman, English, "Writing Erotic Freedom in Black Feminist Fiction and TV, 1973-2019"

2016-18 Angela Rovak, English, "Make Something Besides A Baby: Race, Gender, and Reproductive Science in Black Women's Twentieth Century Novels"

2012-14 Bethany Jacobs, English, "Refusing Mothers: The Dystopic Maternal in Contemporary American Women's Literature"

Member

- 2020- Will Conable, English, "Intimate Other: The Rhetorics of Race, Gender, and Place in A Southern Environmental Imagination"
- 2019- Cassie Galentine, English, "Race, Hygiene, and Environmental Justice in U.S. Multiethnic Working-Class Literature"
- 2018-20 Carmel Ohman, English, "Writing Erotic Freedom in Black Feminist Fiction and TV, 1973-2019"
- 2015-19 Margaret Bostrom, English, "Clearing the Static: Challenging the Limits and Repetitions of Single-Issue Feminisms in the Era of Women's Studies' Institutionalization"
- 2017-18 Celena Simpson, Philosophy, "The Mixed-Race W.E.B. Du Bois: Historical and Contemporary Insights"
- 2015-18 Helen Huang, English, "We Have No Bananas: Cultural Imaginings of the Banana in America from 1880-1945"
- 2015-18 Sean Peterson, Music, "Something Real: Rap, Resistance, and the Music of the Soulquarians"
- 2015-17 Taylor McHolm, English and Environmental Studies, "Representational Challenges: Nature, Race, and Form in Literature of Environmental Justice"
- 2013-16 Ramona Tougas, Comparative Literature, "Performing Work: Internationalism and Theatre of Fact Between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R."
- 2011-14 Jeni Rinner, English, "Mid-Century American Poets and the Identity of Place"
- 2011-13 Phoebe Bronstein, English and Cinema Studies, "Televising the South: Race, Gender, and Place in TV Dramas"

Master's Theses

Member

- 2014-15 Andy Mueller, English, "Representation and Abstraction in Gwendolyn Brooks's 'Two Dedications'"
- 2011-12 Jessi DiTillio, Art History, "Perverse Fascination: Medium, Identity, and Performativity in the Art of Kara Walker"
- 2010-11 Sarah Sandri, Folklore, "Performativity, Gender and Ethnicity in African Dance Communities in the U.S."

Undergraduate Theses

Director

- 2020-21 Emily Duru, McNair Scholars Program, "Black Women's Coming-of-Age in Contemporary American Literature"
- 2015-16 Sam Rodgers, English Honors and Clark Honors College, "James Baldwin Across Literary Forms"
- 2014-15 Mallory Davis, McNair Scholars Program, "Of Cost and Consequence: Examining the Price of White Liberalism in James Baldwin's *Another Country*"

Breadth and Major Field Examination Committees

Director

- 2021 Holly Jones, Breadth Fields: Critical Race Theory, Medical Humanities
- 2020-21 Sabrina Sherman, Breadth Fields: Black Feminisms and Literature, 20th-Century U.S. Novels; Major Field: Twentieth and Twenty-First Century African American Literature
- 2019-21 Jiesha Stephens, Breadth Fields: U.S. Multiethnic Literature 1945-Present, Black Sexuality Studies; Major Field: U.S. Black Literature and Culture, 1965-present; Paper: "Imaginative Histories: The Body as Archive in Ana Maurine Lara's *Kohnjehr Woman*"

- 2015-16 Angela Rovak, Breadth Fields: Feminist Theories, Post-1945 American Novels; Major Field: African American Literature; Paper: "Eugenics Discourse in the Harlem Renaissance: Reproductive Science, the Birth Control Movement, and Nella Larsen's Novels"
- 2011-12 Bethany Jacobs, Breadth Fields: Race Theory, Modernism; Major Field: American Fiction Since 1945; Paper: "Matriarchal Threat in the Novels of Octavia Butler"
- Member**
- 2021 Emalydia Flenory, Breadth Field: Pre-1945 Representations of Black Sexuality
- 2021 Jesse Heine, Breadth Field: Black Feminisms and American Literature
- 2017 Alex Cavanaugh, Breadth Field: Post-1945 U.S. Literature
- 2015 Margaret Bostrom, Major Field: Twentieth-Century U.S. Literature; Paper: "The Personal, the Political, and the Poetic: Feminist Histories and the 1974 National Book Award for Poetry"
- 2015 Avinnash Tiwari, Major Field: African American Literature; Paper: "No Longer Torn Asunder: Living and Writing Double Consciousness"
- 2015 Carmel Ohman, Breadth Field: Theories of Race and Ethnicity
- 2015 Jungyeon Yoon, Breadth Field: Critical Race Theory
- 2014 Danielle Seid, Major Field: Asian American and African American Literature; Paper: "'All I'm Asking For Is My Skin': Kim Fu's *For Today I Am A Boy*"
- 2012 Jessica Crane, Major Field: Literature of the Long Eighteenth Century 1700-1832; Paper: "Reading Cugoano: Journey, Jeremiad, and Social Justice"
- 2012 Sarah Ray Rondot, Breadth Field: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity
- 2012 Hannah Godwin, Major Field: British and American Modernism; Paper: "Scalpels and Babes: Reproductive Ideology in Djuna Barnes *Ladies Almanack*"
- 2011 Dan Platt, Major Field: American Fiction Since 1945; Paper: "Failing to Identify: Toxic Risk and Collective Organization in David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest*"
- 2010 Jeni Rinner, Major Field: Twentieth-Century American Literature; Paper: "Gwendolyn Brooks and Place: The Odd Aural Construction of 'In the Mecca'"

ServiceDepartment

- 2021-22 Chair, Third-Year Review Committee
- 2020- Diversity Committee
- 2020-21 Chair, Search Committee, Director of Composition
- 2019-20 Curriculum Committee
- 2019-20 Tenure Review Committee
- 2019-21 Mentor, Postdoctoral Fellow in Ethnic American Literature
- 2018, 2020 Judge, Janine Thornton Essay Competition for Best Graduate Student Essay about African American Literature
- 2017-18 Chair, Search Committee, Assistant Professor of Nineteenth-Century African American Literature
- 2017-18 Tenure Review Committee
- 2015-16 Chair, Diversity Committee
- 2015 Ad Hoc Committee on Tenure Track Faculty Professional Responsibilities
- 2014-15 Ad Hoc Committee on Merit Review Policy
- 2014 Merit Review Committee (elected)
- 2014, 2016 Judge, Sarah Harkness Kirby Award for Best Graduate Student Essay
- 2013-15 Diversity Committee

2013 Volunteer, Student Academy to Inspire Learning
 2012-15 Judge, Malarkey Prize for Best Graduate Student Essay about African American Literature and Culture (annual)
 2011-13 Designated Advisor to English Majors
 2011-13 English Department Council (elected)
 2011-13 Curriculum Committee
 2010-11 Search Committee, Assistant Professor of Native American Literature

University

2021 Provost's Faculty Advisory Committee for the Institutional Hiring Plan
 2020 Graduate Student Grant Application Reviewer, Center for the Study of Women in Society
 2017-18 Mentor to Junior Faculty, Division of Equity and Inclusion
 2016- Participating Faculty, Politics, Culture, and Identity Graduate Specialization
 2015-16 Advisory Board Member, Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
 2013-15 Diversity Committee, Division of Equity and Inclusion
 2013-14 Advisory Team Member, Kara Walker Exhibit, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art
 2013- Participating Faculty, Food Studies Program
 2013- Affiliate Faculty, Department of Women's and Gender Studies
 2011- Affiliate Faculty, Center for the Study of Women in Society
 2011-17 Participating Faculty, Ethnic Studies Department

Professional

2020- Reader, *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*
 2019 Reader, *Contemporary Literature*
 2018 Manuscript Reviewer, University of Virginia Press
 2018 Reader, *Southern Quarterly*
 2016 Jurist, John Dos Passos Prize
 2014 Reader, *The Scholar & Feminist Online*
 2013-19 Reader, *PMLA: Publication of the Modern Language Association*
 2013- Editorial Board Member, *Food and Foodways*
 2013-19 Reader, *MELUS: Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States*
 2013 Reader, *Comparative Literature*
 2013-18 Reader, *Ada: A Journal of Gender, New Media, and Technology*
 2012- Editorial Board Member, *The James Baldwin Review*
 2012 Reader, *Journal of American Studies*