Whitney S. May

✉ wm1104@txstate.edu
☎ (XXX) XXX-XXXX

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Doctor of Philosophy | University of Texas
AUGUST, 2019 – MAY, 2025
Program: American Studies
Dissertation Title: *Pennywise and Pound Foolish: The Circus Clown in American Capitalist Folklore*[1]

Master of Arts | Texas State University
AUGUST, 2013 – MAY, 2015
Major: Literature; cognate in Critical Theory
Thesis Title: *William Wilson's Echoes: The Doppelgänger Theme in Late Victorian Horror Fiction*

Bachelor of Arts | Texas State University
AUGUST, 2009 – MAY, 2013
Major: English with Professional Writing concentration; minor in Media Studies

UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

Associate Professor of Instruction | Texas State University, Department of English
AUGUST, 2024 – PRESENT
Adjunct Professor | Texas State University, Department of English
AUGUST, 2015 – AUGUST, 2024
Teaching Assistant | University of Texas, Department of American Studies
AUGUST, 2019 – MAY, 2022
Adjunct Professor | Southern New Hampshire State University, Department of English
AUGUST, 2018 – DECEMBER, 2021
Teaching Assistant | Texas State University, Department of English
AUGUST, 2014 – MAY, 2015
Instructional Assistant | Texas State University, Department of English
AUGUST, 2013 – MAY, 2014

TEACHING AND PEDAGOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

Courses Taught at Texas State University

College Writing I (ENG 1310 [23 sections; cap of 21 students]): A study of expository writing as a means of exploring and shaping ideas, with an emphasis on critical reading and the improvement of essays through revision.

College Writing II (ENG 1320 [43 sections; cap of 21 students]): The study of expository writing as a means of analyzing and understanding texts, with an emphasis on writing for research.

British Literature After 1785 (ENG 2320 [5 sections; cap of 200 students]): A study of representative authors and works of British literature from the Romantic Period to the present.

---

[1] Nominated for the University of Texas Outstanding Dissertation Award for 2025.

Assisted by two TAs, I teach these large-lecture sections with an emphasis on horror studies by way of the Gothic and consumerism.

University Seminar (US1100 [7 sections; cap of 25 students]): An introduction to the nature and aims of university education, with special emphasis on the value of broad learning.

Courses Taught at Southern New Hampshire University (remote/online)

Critical Approaches to Literature (LIT 200 [2 sections; cap of 30 students]): A study of approaches to interpreting literature such as New Critical, reader-response, feminist, and psychoanalytic theories, especially as these develop broader critical-thinking and analytical skills for the professional workplace.

Literary Theory (LIT 300 [4 sections; cap of 30 students]): An introductory study of the major schools of contemporary critical theory, and an examination of principal exponents of these theories. These include the most important features of psychoanalytic criticism, Marxism, structuralism, and poststructuralism.

Graduate Theses at Texas State University

Thesis Committee Member

Taylor Kirby, *We Catastrophize.* M.F.A. (fiction), 2021.

Teaching Professional Development Activities Attended

August 2018. "Faculty Training and Assessment," online training through Southern New Hampshire University, Manchester, NH.

February 2018. "Activate Student Learning," Learning Experience Design Department, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX.

January 2018. "Designing Your Online Course (DYOC)," Quality Matters, San Marcos, TX.

August 2013 – May 2014. Practicum course in teaching, Department of English, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX.

SCHOLARLY WORK AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Scholarly Monographs

The Circus Clown in American Capitalist Folklore. Bloomsbury Academic. (Forthcoming, 2027.)

Edited Collections of Essays

(En)Countering Pennywise: Critical Perspectives on Stephen King's IT.[2] Ed. Whitney S. May. Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2022.

Book Chapters [6 total]

"The Way the Cookie Doubles: Cripping the Cyber-Gothic of *Black Mirror*'s AI Tech," *Humanity in a* Black Mirror*: Essays on Posthuman Fantasies in a Technological Near Future*. Eds. Jacob Blevins and Zahi Zalloua. McFarland Press, 2023. 48-68.

[2] Nominated for the Best Edited Collection in Popular and American Culture, 2022, Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association (PCA/ACA)

"Introduction: Counterpunch: *IT* as Modern Punch and Judy Show." *(En)Countering Pennywise: Critical Perspectives on Stephen King's* IT. Ed. Whitney S. May. University Press of Mississippi, 2022. 3-13.

"Topophilic Perversions: Spectral Blackface and Fetishizing Sites of Monstrosity in American Dark Tourism," *Religion, Culture, and the Monstrous: Of Gods and Monsters*. Eds. Joseph P. Laycock and Natasha Mikles. Lexington Books, 2021. 157-167.

"The Technology of Anguish: (Re)Imagining Post-9/11 Trauma in Tamora Pierce's Fantasy Universes," *Displaced: Literature of Indigeneity, Migration, and Trauma*. Ed. Kate Rose. Routledge, 2020. 229-244.

"Spectrality and Spectatorship: Heterotopic Doubling in Cinematic Circuses." *The Big Top on the Big Screen: Explorations of the Circus on Film*. Ed. Teresa Cutler-Broyles. McFarland Press, 2020. 31-46.

"'To Test the Limits and Break Through': How Femslash Rejects Straight-Coding of Queer Experiences in Disney's *Frozen*." *Representing Kink: Fringe Sexuality and Textuality in Literature, Digital Narrative, and Popular Culture*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2019. 117-140.

Journal Articles [5 total]

"Bearing the Palls of Shopping Malls: Necropsying (Dead) Mall Nostalgia in Netflix's *Fear Street* Trilogy." *Ampersand: An American Studies Journal*, 1.3 (2022).

"'Powers of Their Own Which Mere "Modernity" Cannot Kill': The Doppelgänger and Temporal Modernist Terror in *Dracula*," *Gothic Studies,* 23.1 (2021): 60-76.

"The Lioness and the Protector: The (Post)Feminist Dialogic of Tamora Pierce's Lady Knights."[3] *Children's Literature Annual*, 48 (2020): 51-79.

"Through the Cheval-Glass: The Doppelgänger and Temporal Modernist Terror in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Supernatural Studies*, 5.1 (2018): 121–135.

"The Influence of Place on Identity in Poe's 'Morella' and 'William Wilson.' *The Edgar Allan Poe Review*, 18 (2017): 218–233.

Book Reviews [4 total]

Review of Natalie Wilson, Willful Monstrosity: Gender and Race in 21st-Century Horror. *Supernatural Studies*, 7.2 (2022): 180-183.

Review of Tiya Miles, Tales from the Haunted South: Dark Tourism and Memories of Slavery from the Civil War Era. *Ethnic and Third World Literatures (E3W) Review of Books*, 19 (2020): 72-73.

Review of Emron Esplin, Borges's Poe: The Influence and Reinvention of Edgar Allan Poe in Spanish America. *The Edgar Allan Poe Review*, 17.2 (2016): 196-198.

Review of Robert T. Tally, Jr., Poe and the Subversion of American Literature: Satire, Fantasy, Critique. *Gothic Studies*, 17 (2015): 177-179.

Magazine/Trade Publications [3 total]

"Son of Freedom: Dissident Iranian Rapper Toomaj Salehi," *Pop Matters*, April 29, 2024. https://www.popmatters.com/toomaj-salehi-iranian-rap-feature.

"*Gol o Bolbol* Go Viral: Iranian Protest Songs in the Age of Social Media," *Pop Matters*, Oct. 11, 2023. https://www.popmatters.com/iranian-protest-anthems-social-media.

"Iranian Protesters Turn to TikTok to Get Their Messages Past Government Censors," *The Conversation*, Dec. 13, 2022. https://theconversation.com/iranian-protesters-turn-to-tiktok-to-get-their-message-past-government-censors-192321.

[3] Nominated for the Judith Plotz Emerging Scholar Award, 2021, the Children's Literature Association

Papers Presented at Professional Meetings [22 total]

May 2023. "Two Heads are Jester Than One: Mass Production and the Transformation of the American Circus Clown in the 1970s," American Literature Association, Boston, MA.

April 2022. "From 'The Black Cat' to 'Sexual Catnip': The Legacies of Edgar Allan Poe's Erotic Capital," the International Edgar Allan Poe Conference (sponsored by the Poe Studies Association). Boston, MA.

October 2021. "Bearing the Palls of Shopping Malls: Necropsying (Dead) Mall Nostalgia in Netflix's *Fear Street* Trilogy," Society for Comparative Literature and the Arts. Austin, TX.

January 2021. "At the Heart of the Helix: Northrop Frye's Spiral Curriculum," Modern Language Association, conference held virtually due to COVID-19 outbreak.

April 2020. "The Door Marked 'Not Scary At All': 'Evil Clowns' and Ontological Crisis Under Late Capitalism," Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association, Philadelphia, PA. (Event cancelled due to COVID-19 outbreak.)

March 2020. "The Door Marked 'Not Scary At All': 'Evil Clowns' and the Monstrous Abstract," American Comparative Literature Association, Chicago, IL. (Event cancelled due to COVID-19 outbreak.)

January 2020. "'It Was Only Because I Was Radically Both': *Fin de Siècle* Doppelgängers and the New British Cosmopolitanism," Modern Language Association, Seattle, WA.

January 2020. "'Many Books, Many Poes': Pop-Culture Authorship and the Cult of Edgar Allan Poe," Modern Language Association, Seattle, WA.

October 2019. "'They Tortured Us and Pretended it Was an Education': Netflix's *The Perfection* as Neo-Grotesque For the #MeTooPhD Era," Society for Comparative Literature and the Arts. Atlanta, GA.

April 2019. "Topophilic Perversions: Fetishizing Sites of Monstrosity in American Dark Tourism," *Of Gods and Monsters* conference. San Marcos, TX.

March 2019. "Remapping Terra Obscura: The Fetishization of Hauntology in American Dark Tourism," American Comparative Literature Association. Washington, DC.

October 2018. "Pennywise and Pound Foolish: Scary Clowns and the Monstrous Marketplace," Society for Comparative Literature and the Arts, The Woodlands, TX.

June 2018. "Fantastic Machines and National Trauma: Imagining the Post- 9/11 Future in Tamora Pierce's Tortall," Children's Literature Association. San Antonio, TX.

October 2017. "(In)Hospitable Spaces: How *American Horror Story* Reconsiders Transcendental Homelessness in the Digital Age," Society for Comparative Literature and the Arts, Baltimore, MD.

March 2017. "'Trapped and Bedeviled': Pop-Culture Authorship and the Cult of Edgar Allan Poe," North Eastern Modern Language Association, Baltimore, MD.

November 2016. "The Unmappable Self: Heterotopic Place and Gothic Dualism in Poe's 'William Wilson,'" South Central Modern Language Association, Dallas, TX.

August 2016. "A Sword in the Hand of the Goddess: Postsecular and Feminist Intersections in Tamora Pierce's Tortall," Mythopoeic Society, San Antonio, TX.

February 2016. "Shadows of Similitude: The Tomb as Interstitial Place in Poe's 'Morella,'" *Frontiers and Borders in American Literature* symposium, American Literature Association, San Antonio, TX.

May 2015. "'Half Myself Has Buried My Other Half': Early Modern Anxieties in Poe's 'The Man That Was Used Up,'" American Literature Association, Boston, MD.

October 2014. "Wildness and Wilderness: Eco-Empowering the Earth Mother in Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*, *Beloved*, and *Home*," South Central Modern Language Association, Austin, TX.

October 2014. "The Natural Features of the Natural Other: An Ecocritical Analysis of the *Skrælings* in *The Vinland Sagas*," Texas Medieval Association, Denton, TX.

February 2014. "*Paradise Lost*: An Ecocritically Oedipal Resolution,"[4] Sigma Tau Delta International English Honors Society Conference, Savannah, GA.

Invited Presentations [7 total]

October 2025: "Cripping the Cyber-Gothic of *Black Mirror*'s AI Tech." Innovative Anthropologies Lab, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX.

October 2023: "The Many Lives of Pennywise: *Bozo at the Circus* to the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army." Department of English, State University of New York—Old Westbury, New York, NY.

March 2023: "Citizen Journalism in the Age of TikTok: The Ongoing Revolution in Iran as Case Study." Department of Communication, Delaware County Community College, Media, PA.

February 2021. "Spectral Blackface: Fetishizing Sites of Monstrosity in the Ghost Tours of the American South." *Philosophy Dialogue Series*, Department of Philosophy, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX.

February 2020. "The Truth About Urban Legends and Myths," Common Experience Event, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX.

October 2018. Bookmarked, "'Do You Have a Double?' A Conversation on *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*," "Bookmarked": KZSM San Marcos Community Radio, San Marcos, TX.

October 2018. "Changing the Language of Sex: Disrupting Silos of Sexuality and Re-Envisioning Dialectics of Pleasure," with Shannon Shaw, Meg Griffitts, Amanda Scott, and Ali Salzmann. *Philosophy Dialogue Series*, Department of Philosophy, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX.

Scholarly Professional Development Activities Attended

August 2022. History of Capitalism Summer Camp. Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

February 2019. "Crafting Competitive Research Questions and Methodology for External Funding Proposals," Department of Methodology, Measurement, and Statistical Analysis. Texas State University, San Marcos, TX.

April 2018. "Finding & Using Images in Papers, Publications, & Presentations," University Library. Texas State University, San Marcos, TX.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Circus & Allied Arts Fellowship, Illinois State University, Milner Library, summer 2024 (Awarded)

Everett Helm Visiting Fellowship, Indiana University—Bloomington, Lilly Library, summer 2024 (Awarded)

Nontenure Line Faculty Workload Release, Texas State University, fall 2023/spring 2024 (Awarded)

Best Edited Collection in Popular and American Culture, Popular Culture Association, fall 2022 (Nominated)

Presidential Award For Excellence, Scholarly/Creative Category, Texas State University, Department of English, spring 2022 (Awarded at departmental level, nominated at college level)

[4] Awarded Best Critical Essay Award for British and World Literature Categories, 2014, Sigma Tau Delta International English Honors Society (annual conference)

Judith Plotz Emerging Scholar Award, the Children's Literature Association, fall 2021 (Nominated)

American Studies Research Award, University of Texas, Department of American Studies, spring 2021 (Awarded)

Louann Adkins Temple Endowed Presidential Scholarship in American Studies, University of Texas, Department of American Studies, spring 2021 (Awarded)

American Studies Research Award, University of Texas, Department of American Studies fall 2020 (Awarded)

Teaching Award of Honor For Recognition of Exemplary Service During the COVID-19 Crisis, Texas State University, spring 2020 (Awarded)

American Studies Research Award, University of Texas, University of Texas, Department of American Studies, spring 2020 (Awarded)

Professional Development Award, University of Texas, Department of American Studies, fall 2019 (Awarded)



MEDIA INTERVIEWS, TELEVISION, ETC.

Porter, Rebecca. "Edgar Allan Poe Speakeasy Returns to San Marcos," *The San Marcos Daily Record*, August 27, 2025. https://www.sanmarcosrecord.com/article/31110,edgar-allan-poe-speakeasy-returns-to-san-marcos

The UnXplained, season 7, episode 12, "Mysterious Urban Legends," aired July 18, 2025, on The History Channel.

Kwiatkowski, Amara. "American Studies Students at UT-Austin Are Taking Horror By the Horns," *The Daily Texan*, June 27, 2022. https://thedailytexan.com/2022/07/02/american-studies-students-at-ut-austin-are-taking-horror-by-the-horns/



SERVICE

INSTITUTIONAL

UNIVERSITY LEVEL

University Mentor, Bobcat Bond, Texas State University. September 2016 – Present.

University Mentor, Foster Care Alumni Creating Educational Success (FACES), Texas State University. October 2015 – 2024.

Member, Common Experience Committee, Texas State University. May 2019 – April, 2023.

Faculty Sponsor, Texas State University Anime Club. October 2019 – December 2020.

Faculty Sponsor, Summoners of Texas State University. September 2017 – May 2019.

Member, University Seminar Peer Mentor Focus Group, Texas State University. June 2018.

Judge, Texas State University Writing Center 2017 Essay Contest. February, 2018.

COLLEGE LEVEL

Committee Member, Future of Queer Studies Major, Texas State University: spring, 2022 – spring, 2024.

Judge, Bachelor of General Studies Poster Presentation, Texas State University: spring and summer semesters, 2019.

Judge, Bachelor of General Studies Poster Presentation, Texas State University: spring, summer, and fall semesters, 2018.

Judge, Bachelor of General Studies Poster Presentation, Texas State University: fall semester, 2017.

DEPARTMENT LEVEL

Committee Chair, Classroom Management Committee, Texas State University, Department of English. June 2025 – Present. (Committee Member since August, 2024.)

Committee Member, New Lecturer Support Committee, Texas State University, Department of English. August 2024 – Present.

Committee Member, First-Year English Advisory Committee, Department of English. August, 2024 – Present.

Founder, English Lecturer Writing Group, Texas State University, Department of English. July 2017 – May 2021.

Member, Lindsey Literacy Committee, Texas State University, Department of English. 2013 – 2014.

PROFESSIONAL

OFFICES

Faculty Advisory Editor (Content Specialist), *Young Scholars in Writing:* vol. 24. 2025.

Advisory Board Member, Society for Comparative Literature and the Arts. 2018-2022.

CONFERENCE PANELS CHAIRED

October 2019: "Socialization and Exclusion." (Chair) Society for Comparative Literature and the Arts. Atlanta, GA.

October 2015. "Mallory, Tennyson, and the Arthurian Cycle." (Chair) Texas Medieval Association annual conference. San Marcos, TX.

February 2014. "Investigating Shakespeare." (Chair) Sigma Tau Delta International conference. Savannah, GA.

PEER REVIEW OF SUBJECT TEXTBOOKS (COMPOSITION and LITERARY THEORY)

Bloomsbury Academic; Oxford University Press; Routledge Press; University Press of Mississippi.

PEER REVIEW OF JOURNAL ARTICLES

Supernatural Studies; Adaptation; Gothic Studies; Humanities.

ORGANIZATIONS

Society for the Study of the American Gothic (SSAG). 2025 – Present

American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA). 2019 – Present

Children's Literature Association (ChLA). 2018 – Present

Society for Comparative Literature and the Arts (SCLA) 2017 – Present

Modern Language Association (MLA) 2016 – Present

Poe Studies Association 2015 – Present

Sigma Tau Delta International English Honors Society 2012 – Present

Texas State Alumni Association 2009 – Present

American Studies Association (ASA) 2019 – 2025
Northeast Modern Language Association (NeMLA). 2016 – 2017
South Central Modern Language Association (SCMLA) 2014 – 2017