

CALEB SMITH

Professor of English and American Studies, Yale University
PO Box 208302, New Haven, CT 06520
caleb.smith@yale.edu

Literary representation: The Strothman Agency, NYC (strothmanagency.com)

EDUCATION

Duke University, Durham, NC
PhD, English, 2005

University of California, Berkeley
BA, English, 1999, Highest Honors

FACULTY APPOINTMENTS

Yale University, 2005-present
Professor of English, tenured and promoted spring 2012
Secondary Appointment in American Studies, 2007-present

HONORS, FELLOWSHIPS, and EDITORIAL APPOINTMENTS

George P. Lacay endowed lecturer, Georgetown University, spring 2019
Editorial Board, *American Literature*, 2017-2019
Contributing Editor, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 2014-present
Institute Faculty, Futures of American Studies Institute, Dartmouth College, 2008, 2013-2016
Heyman Prize for Outstanding Scholarly Publication by a Junior Faculty Member in the
Humanities, Yale University, for *The Prison and the American Imagination*, 2009
Whitney Humanities Center Fellowship, Yale University, 2008-09
Morse Junior Faculty Fellowship, one year research leave, Yale University, 2008-09
Hilles Publication Award (subvention), Whitney Humanities Center, 2008
Foerster Prize Honorable Mention, MLA Division on American Literature, 2006
Middlesworth Award for outstanding work using Duke University Special Collections, 2005
Steven Horne Teaching Award, Duke English Department, 2004
Editorial Intern, *Bomb Magazine*, 2001
Reader, *The Paris Review*, New York City, 2001
W.W. Norton Scholar's Prize, 1999
Pushcart Prize nomination, 1998

RESEARCH and PUBLICATIONS

Books

Thoreau's Axe: Distraction and Discipline in American Culture. Princeton University Press, in production, forthcoming January 2023.

Selected advance press: *Publisher's Weekly*.

The Life and the Adventures of a Haunted Convict, by Austin Reed. Edited and with an Introduction by Caleb Smith, with a Preface by David W. Blight and Robert B. Stepto. New York: Random House, 2016. Paperback edition (Modern Library) 2017.

Selected press: *New York Times*; National Public Radio; *Atlantic Monthly*; *The Guardian (UK)*; *O: The Oprah Magazine*; *Harper's*; *Washington Post*; *San Francisco Chronicle*; *Boston Review*; *Huffington Post*; *Smithsonian Magazine*; *Publisher's Weekly*; *Library Journal*; *Journal of American History*; *Reviews in American History*.

The Oracle and the Curse: A Poetics of Justice from the Revolution to the Civil War. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013.

Selected reviews: *American Literature*; *American Literary History*; *College Literature*; *Commonplace*; *Choice Reviews*; *Civil War Book Rev.*; *Journal of Southern History*; *19th-Century Literature*; *Novel*.

The Prison and the American Imagination. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009. Paperback edition, 2011.

Heyman Prize for outstanding publication by a junior faculty member in the humanities at Yale, 2009. Selected reviews: *New Yorker.com*; *American Literary History*; *American Literature*; *Chronicle of Higher Education Review*; *Novel*; *Crime, Media, Culture*.

Edited special series

Reading with Sam See: a *Los Angeles Review of Books* special series devoted to the posthumous publication of Sam See's *Queer Natures*, *Queer Mythologies*, organized and introduced by Caleb Smith, online spring 2020. Contributions by Merve Emre, Christopher Looby, Kate Marshall, Wendy Moffat, Michael North, and Caleb Smith.

No Crisis: a *Los Angeles Review of Books* special series and journal issue on criticism in the 21st century, edited by Merve Emre, Sarah Mesle, and Caleb Smith, Jan.-Oct., 2015. Print edition, *LARB Quarterly Review*, winter 2016. Contributions by Johanna Drucker, Virginia Jackson, Tavia Nyong'o, Namwali Serpell, Kenneth Warren, ten others.

Journal Articles and Book Chapters

Solicited contribution to *boundary2* special issue on prisons. In progress.

“Conversions of Jacob Hodges: Religion, Race, and Labor in Industrial Prison Reform Literature.” Under review.

“Disciplines of Attention in a Secular Age.” *Critical Inquiry* 45 (Summer 2019).

Preface to *Prison Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning from Imprisoned Writers*, ed. Joe Lockard and Sherry Rankins-Robertson. Syracuse University Press, 2018.

“Histories of the Present in Law and Literature.” In Elizabeth S. Anker and Bernadette Meyler, eds. *New Directions in Law and Literature*. Oxford University Press, 2017.

“Crime Scenes: Fictions of Security in the Antebellum American Borderlands.” In Martha Nussbaum, Richard McAdams, and Alison LaCroix, eds. *Fatal Fictions: Crime and Investigation in Law and Literature*. Oxford University Press, 2016.

"Imprisonment without Justice." In Austin Sarat, ed., *The Punitive Imagination*. University of Alabama Press, 2014.

“Prison.” In Glenn Hendler and Bruce Burgett, eds. *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*. Fordham University Press, 2014. Third edition 2020.

"From the Critique of Power to the Poetics of Justice." *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists* 1:1 (Spring 2013). Invited contribution to inaugural issue.

“Harriet Jacobs among the Militants: Transformations in Abolition’s Public Sphere, 1859-61.” *American Literature* 84:4 (December 2012).

“Harry Hawser’s Fate: Eastern State Penitentiary and the Birth of Prison Literature.” In Michele Tarter and Richard Bell, eds. *Buried Lives: Voices from the Early American Prison*. University of Georgia Press, 2011.

“American Undead: Teaching the Cultural Life of Civil Death.” In A. Sarat, M. Anderson, and C. Frank, eds. *Approaches to Teaching Law and Literature*. MLA Press, 2011.

“Torture, Interrogation, and American Modernist Literature.” Invited contribution to *Northern Illinois Law Review* 29:2 (Spring 2009).

“Detention without Subjects: Prisons and the Poetics of Living Death.” Invited contribution to *Cultures of Detention*, special Issue of *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 50:3 (September 2008).

“Bodies Electric: Gender, Technology, and the Limits of the Human, Circa 1900.” *Mosaic* 41:2

(June 2008).

“Emerson and Incarceration.” *American Literature* 78:2 (June 2006).

“Williams’ ‘Pastoral (When I Was Younger).’” *Explicator* 64:3 (Spring 2006).

Essays, Reviews, and Interviews

Review of *Awkward Rituals: Sensations of Governance in Protestant America* by Dana Logan. Solicited by *American Religion*. Filed with editors October 2022.

“The Berlant Opening.” *Critical Inquiry* (online), July 2021.

“Thoreau in Good Faith.” Review of *Thoreau’s Religion* by Alda Balthrop-Lewis. *Public Books*, July 2021.

Untitled (remembrance for Lauren Berlant), *n+1* (online), July 2021.

Caleb Smith and Rachel Kushner, “Discipline and Abolish,” *Yale Review*, summer 2021.

Caleb Smith and Irina Dumitrescu, “The Demon of Distraction.” *Critical Inquiry* 47, winter 2021.

“Bad Religion, or Bad Faith?” *Chronicle of Higher Education Review*, January 2021.

“Unvicarious: Reading with Sam See,” *Los Angeles Review of Books*, May 2020.

Featured Review of *Civilizing Torture: An American Tradition* by W. Fitzhugh Brundage. *American Historical Review*, April 2020.

“That Terrible Thoreau.” *Political Theology*, April 2020.

“American Death Cult: A Love Story.” *Los Angeles Review of Books*, July 2019.

“The Art of Debunking.” Review of *Credulity* by Emily Ogden. *The Immanent Frame*, 2019.

Review of *Civic Longing* by Carrie Hyde. *Nineteenth-century Literature*, 2019.

“Crime Genres as Curiosities.” Review of *Literature and Criminal Justice in Antebellum America* by Carl Ostrowski. *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, 2019.

Review of *The Gist of Reading* by Andrew Elfenbein. *Critical Inquiry*, July 2018.

“In a Different Light.” In O. Enwezor, ed. *James Casebere: Fugitive*. Prestel, 2016.

With Bashaun Brown, "In for Doom: Austin Reed's *The Life and the Adventures of a Haunted Convict*." *Los Angeles Review of Books*, August 26, 2016.

"Gay Marriage Plots." *Avidly/Los Angeles Review of Books*, September 2015.

"Introducing *No Crisis*." *Los Angeles Review of Books*, February 2015.

Review of *Can't and Won't* by Lydia Davis. *Yale Review*, Fall 2014.

"Charismatic Malediction, or Martyrdom in Antebellum America." *The Immanent Frame*, October 2014.

"Ferguson's Literary History." Group essay. *Avidly/LARB*, August 22, 2014.

"Late Don Draper, or Television at Stage Nine." *Avidly/LARB*, May 12, 2014.

"Poe in Hard Times." Review of *Terror of the Soul* (Morgan Library), *LARB*, Nov. 26, 2013.

On Chris Burden's *Porsche with Meteorite*. *Paper Monument* (online), Fall 2013.

"Say Hello to My Little Friend." *Avidly/LARB*, July 17, 2013.

"A Spectacle in Love." Review of *The Great Gatsby*, dir. Baz Luhrmann. *LARB*, June 6, 2013.

"Spaces of Punitive Violence." Review of *Prisons of Poverty* by Loïc Wacquant, *Criticism* (Winter 2013).

Review of *The Flame Alphabet* by Ben Marcus. *Yale Review* (December 2012).

"Sad, but True." *Avidly/LARB*, July 24, 2012.

Review of *Someday This Will Be Funny* by Lynne Tillman. *Yale Review* (January 2012).

Review of *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet* by David Mitchell. *Yale Review* (April 2011).

"Prison as Resurrection: Ten Questions for Caleb Smith." *Religion Dispatches*, Oct. 23, 2009.

Review of *Forced Passages* by Dylan Rodriguez and *Fitting Sentences* by Jason Haslam, *American Literature* (March 2007).

Review of *Surrealism and the Exotic* by Louise Tythacott, *American Anthropologist* (March 2005).

"Solitude and Freedom." *Postmodern Culture* 14:3 (July 2004).

“The Collaborator and the Multitude: An Interview with Michael Hardt” (with Enrico Minardi).
Minnesota Review 61 (Spring 2004).

Review of *Edison and the Electric Chair* by Mark Essig, *Bomb* (Fall 2003).

Interview with Reynolds Price. *Bomb* (Summer 2002).

Invited lectures and presentations

“Other Attention Economies,” Johns Hopkins University, February 2021

“Conversions of Jacob Hodges: Love in the Prison Archives.” UC Irvine, February 2020.

“Disciplines of Attention.” Georgetown University, February 2019; University of Toronto, March 2018; University of Colorado, April 2018; UCLA, May 2018.

“Attending to Earthly Things.” Dartmouth Summer Institute for American Studies, June 2016.

“Race and Performance in the Prison Archive: *The Life and the Adventures of a Haunted Convict*.” Cornell University, October 2015; Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, June 2016; American Antiquarian Society, September 2016; Northwestern University, October 2016; University of Texas, November 2016; University of Rochester, February 2017; University of Southern California, February 2018.

“On the Type of Writing Known as ‘Reading.’” Dartmouth Summer Institute, June 2015.

“Crime Scenes: Fictions of Security in the Antebellum American Borderlands.” University of Maryland, May 2014; University of Texas, February 2014; University of Pennsylvania, February 2014; University of Chicago Law School, February 2014.

“Symptoms, Surfaces, and the Poetics of Justice.” Penn State University, April 2014.

“Imprisonment without Justice.” University of Pennsylvania, February 2014; Mahindra Institute, Harvard University, November 2013; Princeton University, April 2013; University of Alabama Law School, September 2012.

“Charismatic Abjection.” Dartmouth Summer Institute for American Studies, June 2013; Syracuse University, April 2013.

“The Prison Crisis and the Historical Imagination,” Princeton University Center for African American Studies, March 2011; CUNY Graduate Center, April 2011.

“Blasphemy and Evil Speaking ‘At the Court of Hell’,” Vanderbilt Univ., March 2011.

“The Prison and the American Imagination.” Carleton Lecture, Bates College, spring 2010;

Hunter College, spring 2010; Connecticut College, spring 2010; Hartman-Hotz Lecture in Law and Liberal Arts, Univ. of Arkansas Law School, Nov. 2009.

“The American Curse.” Dartmouth Summer Institute, June 2008.

“The ‘Mongrel’ Atlantic: Herman Melville’s Afterlives.” Plenary lecture, *The Literature of the Middle Passage* conference, Nkrumah Centre, Univ. of Ghana, November 2007.

“New Egos: Modernism and the Media.” Univ. of Louisiana, March 2007.

TEACHING and ADVISING

Areas of specialization: American literature, including African American and American Indian literatures; law and literature; prison studies; critical theory.

PhD student advising

Tom Koenigs (2009-2014), Associate Professor of English, Scripps College
Leslie Jamison (2011-2015), Assistant Professor of Writing, Columbia University
Ryan Carr (2008-2016), Post-doctoral fellowships at Newberry Library, Emory Univ.
Ittai Orr (2017-2020), Assistant Professor of English, University of Michigan
Jason Bell (2016-18), attending Harvard Law School
Sarah Robbins (2014-2021), Assistant Professor of English, Tufts University
Stephen Krewson (2014-present); Helen Yang (2019-present); Ben Pokross (2019-present)

Graduate seminars

Historicism
Transformations of the Confession: Slavery, Secularism, Sexuality
Reading, Attention, and Distraction
Prison Studies and Prison Literature
Literary Studies and the Critique of Power
Antebellum American Literature and Culture

Undergraduate lectures and seminars

Love and Hate in the American South (lecture)
American Literature, Civil War to World War I (lecture)
The Literature of the Middle Passage (senior seminar traveling to Ghana, fall 2007)
William Faulkner (senior seminar)
Law and Literature (junior seminar)
American Literature and the History of Punishment (junior seminar)
Early American Literature (junior seminar)
American Literature in the Electric Age (junior seminar)
Readings in American Literature (introductory)

Prison education

Kafka and Poe, co-taught w/ Paul North, summer 2022, Yale Prison Education Initiative
Readings in American literature, summer 2018, Yale Prison Education Initiative
Readings in American literature, spring 2015, via Wesleyan Center for Prison Education

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS and SERVICE

Memberships

Modern Language Association
American Studies Association
C19

Service

In the fields of literary and cultural studies

Fellowship application reviewer: National Endowment for the Humanities; Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada; Beinecke Library

Book manuscript referee: University of Chicago Press; Harvard UP; NYU Press; Oxford UP; University of Virginia Press; Broadview Press; Yale UP

Article manuscript referee: *PMLA*; *American Literature*; *American Quarterly*; *Journal of the Early Republic*; *J19*; *ESQ*; *Post-45*; *Mosaic*; *Society and Space*; *Journal of Law, Culture, and Humanities*.

Promotion and tenure referee: University of California, Irvine; University of Texas; Indiana University; Fordham University; CUNY/Hunter College; University of Wyoming; Scripps College; Georgetown University; Tufts University; University of Toronto; University of California, Santa Barbara; Macalester College; University of Rochester; University of Wisconsin.

Consultant, Million Books Project, curating and distributing “freedom libraries” for 500 U.S. prisons and jails, funded by the Mellon Foundation, Fall 2020

At Yale (University-wide)

Yale College Committee on Prison Education, 2020-present
Humanities Tenure and Appointments Committee, 2015-16, 2017-2019
Beinecke Library Advisory Committee, 2012-2016
Beinecke Library curator search committees, 2012, 2014
Freshman Advisor, Hopper College, 2007-08, 2014-15
Chair, Graduate School Committee on Academic Grievances, Fall 2013
Fact-finder to the Executive Committee, Yale College, 2012-13
Yale College Course of Study Committee, 2011-12

Frederick Douglass Prize Review Committee, Gilder Lehrman Center, 2011
Beinecke Research Fellowship Committee, 2010-11, 2012-13
Committee on Teaching in the Residential Colleges, 2009-10

In the Departments of English and American Studies

Director of Graduate Studies, English., January 2015-December 2019
Senior Appointments Committee, English 2014-15, 2017-18, 2020-21
Chair, promotion review committee, American Studies, 2020-21
Chair, target of opportunity appointment committee, English and African American Studies, 2020-21
Chair, Promotion Review Committee, English and African American Studies, 2017
Associate Director of Undergraduate Studies, English., 2009-10, 2011-13
Promotion Review Committee Chair, American Studies, 2015
Aims and Procedures Committee (elected), English., 4 academic years
Undergraduate Studies Committee, English., 2007-08, '09-10, 2011-13
Convener, Theory and Media Studies Colloquium, English., 2011-12
Americanist Colloquium, English., ongoing
PTAI (Graduate Student Teaching) Committee, American Studies, 2007-08
Director, Graduate Student Colloquium, Duke English Dept., 2001-05

LANGUAGES

Italian: advanced speaking, reading and writing knowledge. Graduated with highest honors, Università per Stranieri, Siena, Italy, Spring 1998.

French: reading and speaking knowledge. Completed five semesters, including upper-division reading and composition, UC Berkeley, 1995-97.

Spanish: basic reading and speaking knowledge. Private instruction, 2007-2009.