

Rebecca Starr Nisetich

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Education

Ph.D. in English, University of Connecticut, 2014

MA in English, with Honors, University of Massachusetts, 2007

BA in English, *cum laude*, Colby College, 2005

Professional and Teaching Experience

Assistant Professor, Honors Program, University of Southern Maine, 2018-current

Lecturer, Honors Program, University of Southern Maine, 2016-2018

Interim Director, Honors Program, University of Southern Maine, 2015-2016

Assistant Director, Honors Program, University of Southern Maine, 2014-2015

Research and Teaching Interests

Twentieth-century American literature, African American literature, Critical Race Theory, law and literature, humor studies, service learning, composition studies.

Publications

“Person/Property: The Invisible Barking Dogs of Pudd’nhead Wilson”—under consideration, *Mark Twain Annual*.

“Faulkner’s Future Americans.” *Faulkner’s Families*, ed. Jay Watson, Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Series, University Press of Mississippi (forthcoming).

“When Difference Becomes Dangerous: intersectional identity formation and the protective cover of whiteness in Faulkner’s *Light in August*.” *The Faulkner Journal* issue 31.1 (Spring 2019). pp. 43-66.

“Reading Race in Nella Larsen’s *Passing* and the Rhinelander Case.” *African American Review*, Volume 46.2 (Summer-Fall 2013). pp. 345-361. Honorable Mention, Weixlmann Prize 2015.

“The Nature of the Beast: Scientific Theories of Race and Sexuality in *McTeague*.” *Studies in American Naturalism*, Volume 4.1 (Summer 2009). pp. 1-21. Winner of the Robert H. Elias Graduate Essay Prize.

“From ‘Shadowy Anguish’ to ‘The Million Lights of the Sun’: Racial Iconography in Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening*.” *Kate Chopin in the 21st Century: New Critical Essays*. Heather Ostman (Editor). Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2008. pp. 121-136.

Raising the Bar: Satirizing Law in 21st Century American Literature and Popular Culture—in process.

“Satirizing Segregation in the era of Black Lives Matter”—in process.

“Alternative Systems of Justice in Louise Erdrich’s *The Round House*”—in process.

Awards, Fellowships, and Grants

USM Provost’s Pillar Grant: Cohort-Based Faculty Antiracism Training and Course Restructuring Program (2021-2022). Awarded. \$39,000. In process.

USM Provost’s Pillar Grant: Honors Peer Mentor Program (2021-2022). Awarded. \$26,300. In process.

National Collegiate Honors Council Summer Institute: “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Honors Programs and Colleges: Approaches to Anti-Racism in Honors.” Awarded. \$3,000. June 2021. Complete.

Antiracism Institute 2021: Cohort-Based Antiracist Training Program. Awarde. \$32,000. Complete.

Antiracism Institute 2020: Cohort-Based Antiracist Training Program. Awarded. \$40,000. Complete.

Creator and Facilitator: Common Read Facilitator Training, University of Southern Maine. \$400. Spring 2020. Complete.

Antiracist Practice Group for USM Leadership Cabinet. Awarded. \$3,000. January-May 2020. Complete.

University of Maine System, Maine Economic Improvement Fund Grant. \$591,693. February 2019-February 2022. In process.

University of Southern Maine, Faculty Chair, Gloria S. Duclos Convocation: "Race and Trauma" (\$15,000), 2018-2019. Complete.

University of Southern Maine, Title III HIP Minigrant (\$1,000).

University of Southern Maine, Osher Map Library Teaching With Maps Faculty Fellowship. \$1,000.

Center for Mark Twain Studies, Invited Speaker. Trouble Begins Lecture Series. Awarded. \$1,000 and residency at Quarry Farm Center for Mark Twain Studies. May 2018.

University of Southern Maine, President's Award for Achievement, 2018.

University of Southern Maine, Faculty co-chair, Gloria S. Duclos Convocation: "Race and Participatory Democracy" (\$70,000), 2017-18. Complete.

University of Maine System, Maine Economic Improvement Fund Grant. \$500,000. February 2016-February 2019. Complete.

University of Southern Maine, Center for Technology Enhanced Learning, Summer Course Design Grant (\$300), July 2017, July 2018, and August 2019.

University of Southern Maine, Center for Technology Enhanced Learning Course Design Grant. \$1,000. January 2017-May 2017. Complete.

University of Southern Maine, Center for Collaboration and Development Grant, Faculty Interest Group Leader. 2015-16 and 2017-18. \$2,000. Complete.

Weixlmann Prize, Honorable Mention, *African American Review*, 2015.

University of Southern Maine, Core Curriculum Service-Learning Mini-Grant, University of Southern Maine, 2015.

University of Southern Maine, Title III Mini-Grant, University of Southern Maine, 2014.

Selected Conference Presentations

"Emerging and Dismantling: Feminist Killjoys Confront SSSL's Past and Present." The Society for the Study of Southern Literature Biennial Conference. Atlanta, GA and Online: February 2022.

"Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Anti-Racism Workshop." The National Collegiate Honors Council's annual Conference. Online: October 2021.

Invited Speaker. "Reparative Teaching: Antiracism in the Classroom." The William Faulkner Society's annual "Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha" Conference. Oxford, MS: July 2021.

"How Integrating Meditation and Compassion Practices Changed Everything about How I Teach." New England Modern Language Association Conference. Online: March 2021.

"#Honorssowhite? Representing Diverse Student Voices." The National Collegiate Honors Council's annual Conference. Virtual: November 2020.

"Emerging and Dismantling: Feminist Killjoys Confront SSSL's Past and Present." The Society for the Study of Southern Literature Biennial Conference. Fayetteville, AR: April 2020. —*conference canceled due to Covid-19*

“Experiences of Emerging Women, Trans, and Non-Binary Scholars in the Academy.” New England Modern Language Association Conference. Boston, MA: March 2020.

“Walking the Honors Tightrope without a Safety Net: Honors Directors Without Tenure.” The National Collegiate Honors Council’s annual Conference. New Orleans, LA: November 2019.

“Thesis Preparation Courses: Designing Robust Interdisciplinary Experiences.” The National Collegiate Honors Council’s annual Conference. New Orleans, LA: November 2019.

“Faulkner’s Future Americans.” The William Faulkner Society’s annual “Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha” Conference. Oxford, MS: July 2019.

“Mark Twain and Margaret Garner: Personhood, Property, and Kinship in *Puddn’head Wilson*.” American Literature Association Annual Conference. Boston, MA: May 2019.

“The Slave Cabin as Liminal Queer Space.” Southeast American Studies Association Conference. Atlanta, GA: March 2019.

“High Impact Honors: Internship and Study Abroad.” The National Collegiate Honors Council’s annual Conference. Boston, MA: November 2018.

“Expanding Honors Thesis Project Opportunities within Biology and Allied Health Fields.” The National Collegiate Honors Council’s annual Conference. Boston, MA: November 2018.

“The Slave Cabin as Liminal Space in Faulkner’s *Light in August*.” The William Faulkner Society’s annual “Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha” Conference. Oxford, MS: July 2018.

“The Architecture of Exclusion: Law and Race in Twain and Beatty.” *Trouble Begins Lecture Series*, Center for Mark Twain Studies. Elmyra, NY: May 2018.

“Teaching Race in Maine: Exploring the Archives.” *Black New England Conference*. Durham, NH: October 2017.

“Raising The Bar: Satirizing Law in *Puddn’head Wilson* and *The Sellout*.” The American Literature Association Conference. Boston, MA: May 2017.

“Passing out of Race: Leaving the South in Faulkner and Chesnutt.” The Society for the Study of Southern Literature. Boston, MA: March 2016.

“Non-Identity, Dis-Identity: Contesting Identities in Modern American Literature.” New England Modern Language Association Conference. Hartford, CT: March 2016.

“Representing Law in American Literature” (chair). American Literature Association Conference. Boston, MA: May 2015.

“Modern and Contemporary American Literature in a Global Frame” (chair). American Literature Association Conference. Boston, MA: May 2015.

“Building Writing Support into Advanced Composition Courses: The Honors Thesis Curriculum at the University of Southern Maine.” Engaging Practices: Conference on the Teaching of Composition. Boston, MA: March 2015.

Selected Antiracist Work

Invited Speaker and Facilitator: the William Faulkner Society’s annual “Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha” conference. Oxford, MS: 2021.

Creator and Facilitator: “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Honors Programs and Colleges: Approaches to Anti-Racism in Honors.” National Collegiate Honors Council Summer Institute. Online: June 2021.

Creator and Facilitator: Antiracist Institute. University of Southern Maine. 2020-2021

Creator and Facilitator: Antiracist Practice Group. University of Southern Maine. 2019-2021

Creator and Facilitator: Common Read Facilitator Training, University of Southern Maine, Spring 2020.

Creator and Facilitator: Antiracist Practice Group for Leadership Cabinet, University of Southern Maine, January-May 2020.

Academic Service

Member: Steering Committee, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Council (IDEC), 2020-present

Co-chair: Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Council (IDEC) Curriculum Committee, 2020-present

Interim Faculty Chair: Intercultural and Diversity Advisory Council to the President, University of Southern Maine, 2020.

Committee Member: Diversity Committee, National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC), 2018-present.

Faculty Chair: Gloria S. Duclos Convocation, University of Southern Maine, 2017-2019.

Faculty Chair: Thinking Matters: Student Research, Scholarship, and Creativity Symposium, University of Southern Maine, 2015-2019.

Member: Writing Center Visioning Committee, University of Southern Maine, 2019.

Annual Guest Lecturer: "How to Start a Research Project," School of Music Capstone course (Parchman) 2016-2021.

Guest Lecturer: "Integrating Convocation into the Coloring Book Project," Art Department Digital Design course (Piribeck), 2019.

Faculty Leader: "Let's Talk About It," Maine Humanities Council, Race and Family, (Topsham Public Library). 2018-2019.

Council Member: Food Studies Faculty Council, University of Southern Maine, 2017-18.

Creator: "Let's Talk About It" Book Group Reading List (theme: Race and Family), Maine Humanities Council, 2017-18.

Facilitator: "Lit and Ed" Book Group for Work Program, Maine Humanities Council, 2017-18.

Facilitator: "Escape to Cuba," Let's Talk About It Book Group, Maine Humanities Council, 2017.

Executive Committee Member: Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society, 2015-current.

Leadership Team Member: AAC&U Institute on Integrative Learning and the Departments, 2016.

Executive Committee Member: American Association of State Colleges & Universities (AASCU) Conference, 2015.

Administrator: Honors Leadership Development Scholarship, University of Southern Maine, 2014-current.

Member: First Year Experience Committee, University of Southern Maine, 2014-15.

Teaching Experience

Assistant Professor, University of Southern Maine, 2018-current

Lecturer, University of Southern Maine, 2016-2018

Instructor, University of Southern Maine, 2014-2016

Selected Course Descriptions:

HON 115: Introduction to Honors (formerly HON 101: Entry Year Experience), University of Southern Maine

A three-credit course required for first-year Honors students. Students explore evolving conceptions of “race” in the United States, beginning in the antebellum period and extending into the present day. Course texts are drawn from a variety of disciplines including literature, art, history, law, sociology, and anthropology. The course emphasizes the dynamic power relationships that are engendered and sustained by American legal and cultural and practices, and asks students to chart the conversations about “race” as they emerge in written and visual representations. Special emphasis is given to changing conceptions of “race” in Maine. Experiential activities include a field trip to Malaga Island, a walking tour of the Portland Freedom Trail, a semester-length service-learning project with Portland Housing Authority, etc. This course fulfills the Diversity and Engaged Learning requirements of the USM Core Curriculum. It is a required course in the Honors Minor.

HON 215: Thinking in Honors, University of Southern Maine

HON 215 is a writing-intensive course that builds off of the learning outcomes of HON 100 (Writing in Honors). Students will attain critical reading, writing, revision, and presentation skills and be introduced to the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge creation and production. Students will use a variety of research methods to craft independent projects. They will attain an understanding of different disciplinary conventions, audiences, and rhetorical modes. By the end of the semester, students will be able to conduct independent academic research, critically review literature, and understand the practices and conventions of research-based writing. In addition to these attentions to writing, this course also offers an extended exploration of how we learn and communicate what we need to know and share that learning in a variety of venues. Our hope is that students in this course will develop a supportive group of intellectual peers and a deeper understanding of how knowledge is created and disseminated, both inside and outside of the academy. This course fulfills the Writing, Reading, and Inquiry 2 requirement of the USM Core Curriculum. It is a required course in the Honors Minor.

HON 207: Multiethnic Graphic Novels and Memoirs

A three-credit course elective for Honors students. This course invites students to explore the field of Comics Studies, with a particular focus on the graphic novel. We consider texts from a variety of genres (including memoir, fiction, fantasy, journalism), perspectives, and contexts. In particular, we consider how graphic and sequential artists use the form to bring marginal voices to the center, and we consider what particular aspects of sequential art lend themselves to marginalized individuals and stories. Students have opportunities to learn theories and approaches in Comics Studies, and to create graphic and sequential art of their own. This course fulfills the Creative Expression area of the USM Core Curriculum. It is an elective in the Honors Minor.

HON 410: Thesis Workshop I, University of Southern Maine

A three-credit course for advanced Honors students. The Honors Thesis course sequence at USM provides students with the opportunity to undertake and complete an independent research project. Students investigate the thesis subject thoroughly, write and revise a formal research statement, conduct a review of the appropriate literature, choose a thesis advisor and committee, embark on a research program, and produce a formal thesis prospectus. This course fulfills the Writing, Reading, and Inquiry 3 requirement of the USM Core Curriculum. It is a required course for Honors students writing a thesis.

HON 321: Honors Internship

The purpose of the Honors internship is to provide students with the opportunity to advance and refine their skills in the disciplines as well as develop essential skills, refine technical and transferable competencies during employment with a business, industry, or community partner. I liaise with community partners to secure appropriate internships with students (e.g. New England Ocean Cluster, Maine Medical Center Research Institute, Martin’s Point, Idexx, Wex, Goodwill Northern New England, etc.). The internship course is structured around self-directed learning experiences that allow each student to transfer academic knowledge and skills into competencies required for successful careers. Each student is expected to take control of the learning experience and manage the learning process. The self-directed experience develops critical management abilities such as decision-making, time management, and self-reflection/metacognition, in

addition to developing technical job-related competencies. This course fulfills the Engaged Learning requirement of the USM Core Curriculum.

HON 331: Independent Study, University of Southern Maine

This optional course allows an Honors student with interests in a particular subject area to research that area under the direction of a faculty supervisor. The research may be carried out in any subject area. I have advised students studying the writings of Charles Sanders Peirce, Multiethnic American Women Writers, Death and Dying in Hospice Care (with an extensive service-learning component), and Multiethnic Graphic American Novels and Memoirs.

HON 415: Honors Capstone, University of Southern Maine

A three-credit course that asks students to identify and reflect upon their own interests, skills, values, and learning styles and to articulate how these relate to their future career and education goals. The course will explore and evaluate potential careers through research, informational interviews, networking activities and more. Students will end the course having completed three job or graduate school applications to organizations of interest and begin the process of identifying a career plan to help students fulfill their life ambitions. This Capstone course is focused on higher-level educational outcomes: application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. There is also a strong emphasis on metacognition: I encourage students to reflect upon their thinking, learning, and development during their time at USM and in Honors. In tandem with this reflective practice, students will be guided through a formal job search: writing formal Resumes and Cover Letters, creating job-specific content (elevator pitches), and learning essential skills. The course includes workshops on networking, interviewing, etc. This course is required in the Honors Minor.

Professional Experience

Director, Honors Program, University of Southern Maine, 2015-current

I oversee all Honors Program operations, including curriculum development, faculty review, student learning assessment, program review, student recruitment and retention. I am P.I. on a Maine Economic Improvement Fund grant that supports the Honors Comprehensive Study Abroad Program, which I oversee. I serve as Lead Academic Advisor for Honors students and coordinate advising of Honors students with faculty and professional staff advisors. I manage the Honors Living and Learning Community and serve on a variety of committees aimed at expanding the Learning Communities program at USM. I direct the Honors Leadership Development Scholarship. As an Honors faculty member, I design and teach interdisciplinary and writing-intensive seminars for the Program.

Co-President, William Faulkner Society, 2021-2023

The Co-Presidents have the responsibility for chairing the meetings of the Executive Committee and the annual business meetings of the general membership of The William Faulkner Society. The Co-Presidents oversee the maintenance of the website; oversee the competition for scholarships the Society offers; write a presidential letter and send it to members at least once a year; and communicate regularly with the Executive Board about ongoing and new concerns of the Society. The Co-Presidents select the speakers and programs for the Modern Language Association and the American Literature Association conferences, subject to Board approval.

Secretary, William Faulkner Society, 2018-2021

The Secretary is responsible for providing minutes of each meeting to be posted on the website by the President, tend to William Faulkner Society correspondence, and will assume leadership of the newsletter.

Inaugural Emerging Scholar, Mark Twain Circle Executive Committee, 2020-2022. This position was created in 2019 by unanimous vote of the membership. The objective is to provide opportunities to emerging scholars to become engaged in the planning and decision making of the organization.

Faculty Co-Chair, Gloria S. Duclos Convocation, University of Southern Maine, 2017-2019

In collaboration with a faculty co-chair, I have articulated the themes “Race and Participatory Democracy” and “Race and Trauma” for USM’s Convocation, a year-long commitment to exploring the ways that race and democracy are inextricably interconnected in the U.S. and in Maine, specifically. Convocation is intended to reach a broad audience: we are working to engage our university and also the greater Maine community. Convocation is a celebration of community learning. Our roster of events and activities includes large public lectures, structured panel discussions, a film series, book discussion groups, a political art poster contest, and a large outdoor spring concert. We have built partnerships to support these events: our collaborators include the University of Maine School of Law, the SPACE Gallery, the Portland Museum of Art, the Center for Collaboration and Development, the Maine Humanities Council, Maine College of Art, the Civil Rights Team Project, etc.

Faculty Chair, Thinking Matters Student Research Symposium, University of Southern Maine, 2015-2019

My primary duties as the Thinking Matters Faculty Chair is to serve as liaison with USM faculty, staff, students, administration and the greater Portland community to make Thinking Matters (TM) an outstanding event. I chair an interdisciplinary faculty board that reviews student abstract submissions in collaboration with USM’s Internal Review Board. As Faculty Chair, I am responsible for educating and engaging faculty at USM, and I have also built relationships with Southern Maine Community College, Kennebec Valley Community College, and Central Maine Community College so that these students and faculty also have a venue where they can showcase their work. I partner with the Marketing and Advancement teams to engage the community in supporting and attending this event. In collaboration with the USM Libraries, I mentor students presenting at the symposium.

Thesis Advising

Katie Prior, “Rewilding: Our spiritual relationship with nature, traced throughout the literary tradition.” Primary Faculty Advisor: Rebecca Nisetich.

Griffin Germond, “Checking In, Concussions Out: Body Checking in Maine Girls' High School Ice Hockey & Beyond.” UROP recipient. Primary Faculty Advisor: Dennis Gilbert.

Emma Quinn, “Myth, Metaphor, and Memorialization: A History of the Spanish Civil War through Pablo Picasso’s Guernica and Robert Capa’s photography.” UROP recipient. Primary Faculty Advisor: Libby Bischof.

Haley Depner, “The chemical properties of soil in the vicinity of two genera of ant belonging to the subfamily Myrmicinae, Aphaenogaster, and Myrmica.” UROP Recipient. Primary Faculty Advisor: Joe Staples.

Madeleine Sherrill, “Impulsivity and Cardiovascular Reactivity: Examining Correlations Between Impulsivity as Measured by Self Report, Delay Discounting, and Response Inhibition and Cardiovascular Response to Stress.” UROP recipient. Primary Faculty Advisor: Liz Vella.

Margo Arruda, “Does This Unit Have a Soul?” A Roboethical Examination of Concepts of Personhood and Synthetic Life in the Mass Effect Trilogy. UROP recipient. Primary Faculty Advisor: Ben Bertram.

Bryer Sousa, “Methods of Optimization in Data Science and Data Mining: A Comprehensive Review.” UROP recipient. Primary Faculty Advisor: Muhammad El Taha.

Jazmyn Sylvester-Cross, “Long-distance Wh-movement in Germanic Languages: AN Account Based on Case-making and Language Production Pressures.” UROP recipient. Primary Faculty Advisor: Dana McDaniel.

Jacob LiBrizzi, “The Haunted Animal: Peirce’s Community of Inquiry and the Foundation of the Self.” Primary Faculty Advisor: Jason Read.

Sergey Miller, "Pastoral Reverences and Remembrances: Poetic Measuring of Nature." Primary Faculty
Advisor: Ben Bertram.

Professional Affiliations

William Faulkner Society, Co-President, Secretary

Mark Twain Circle, Executive Committee's Emerging Scholar

Modern Language Association

American Studies Association

American Literature Association

Society for the Study of Southern Literature

American Humor Studies Association

National Collegiate Honors Council, Diversity Committee

Maine Humanities Council

Multi-Ethnic Literature in the United States Association