

October 25, 2016

Thomas J. Otten

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Employment

Department of English, Boston University
Lecturer, 2009-present
Visiting Associate Professor, 2004-2009

Associate Professor of English and American Studies, Yale University, 2000-2004

Assistant Professor of English, Yale University, 1994-2000

Preceptor, Expository Writing Program, Harvard University, 1992-1994

Teaching Assistant, Department of English, University of California, Los Angeles, 1985-1991

Education

Ph.D. English, University of California, Los Angeles, 1993

M.A. English, University of California, Los Angeles, 1988

B.A. Lawrence University, Appleton, Wisconsin, June 1984
Magna cum laude, English major

Publications

A Superficial Reading of Henry James: Preoccupations with the Material World
(Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006).

“Henry James,” Cambridge Companion to American Novelists, ed. Timothy Parrish
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). 52-60.

“Hawthorne’s Twisted Letters,” Modern Language Quarterly 70 (2009): 363-386.

“Emily Dickinson’s Brain: On Lyric and the History of Anatomy,” Prospects: An Annual of American Cultural Studies 29 (2005): 57-83.

“Jorie Graham’s _____s,” PMLA 118 (March 2003): 239-253. Reprinted in Jorie Graham: Essays on the Poetry, ed. Thomas Gardner (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005).

“Slashing Henry James (On Painting and Political Economy, Circa 1900),” Yale Journal of Criticism 13 (2000): 293-320.

“The Spoils of Poynton and the Properties of Touch,” American Literature 71 (1999): 263-290.

“Pauline Hopkins and the Hidden Self of Race,” ELH 58 (1992): 227-256.

Work in Progress

“No Analogue: The Genre of Post-Apocalyptic Narrative.” Book manuscript.

Invited Lectures and Seminars

“Natural Histories from the Future: On WALL-E and The Road,” Princeton Americanist Colloquium, Department of English, Princeton University, Nov. 7, 2013.

Seminar on Property Theory and The Spoils of Poynton, Graduate Seminar on Henry James, Department of English, Salem State College, December 3, 2008.

“A History of Containers (On the Changing Matter of the Genres, from Porcelain to Polyvinyl Chloride),” Graduate Seminar on Postmodernism, Department of English, University of Kentucky, February 28, 2006.

“John Ashbery, Dead Shopping Malls, and the Political Economy of Poetic Form,” Barrs Lecture, Department of English, Northeastern University, October 28, 2004.

“Narratives of the Tabletop: William James, Russel Wright, Karim Rashid,” Class of 1916 Lecture, Department of English, Cornell University, November 14, 2003.

Conference Papers and Other Public Presentations

“Stories About Walls,” Nathaniel Hawthorne Society Annual Conference, Concord MA, June 28, 2010.

“Between Word and Image: Sarah Wyman Whitman, Book Bindings, and the Meaning of the Decorative Arts,” Session on “Art about Art: Ekphrasis and the American Literary Tradition,” American Literary Association, May 22, 2009.

“How Book Bindings Mean: Henry James, Sarah Wyman Whitman, and the Literary Significance of the Decorative Arts,” Henry James Society Conference, July 10, 2008.

“Stories about Walls,” Session on “Haunted Chambers: Neurology, Literature, and the Proprioceptive Self,” Narrative Conference, March 14, 2007.

“The Visual Studies of May Swenson and Elizabeth Bishop,” Session on “The Poetics of Everyday Life in Postwar Poetry,” Modern Language Association Convention, December 29, 2004.

“Harryette Mullen, African American Postmodern Beat Surrealist,” Contemporary Poetry Group, Yale University, February 24, 2004.

“Frost’s Monochromes,” Robert Frost Society Panel, Modern Language Association Convention, December 29, 2003.

“John Ashbery, from Abstract Space to Junkspace,” Session on “Against Architecture,” Modern Language Association Convention, December 29, 2003.

“John Ashbery and the Matter of Abstract Space,” Session on “Mass Cultures and Material Cultures in American Literature,” American Literature Association Conference, May 24, 2003.

“Reading Jorie Graham,” Contemporary Poetry Group, Yale University, November 13, 2002.

“Hawthorne’s Twisted Letters,” Nathaniel Hawthorne Society Conference, Smith College, June 21, 2002.

“The Plastic Hand,” American Material Culture Study Group, Yale University, February 14, 2002.

“Jorie Graham’s _____s,” Whitney Humanities Center, Yale University, September 22, 2000.

“Emily Dickinson and the Sound of Snow,” Yale Americanist Colloquium, March 3, 2000.

“Slashing Henry James,” Whitney Humanities Center, Yale University, February 19, 1999.

“‘Shape and Flow’: What American Literature Has Been Teaching Us,” Session on the Teaching of American Literature, Yale Americanist Colloquium, April 14, 1997.

“Emily Dickinson’s Brain,” American Literature and Culture Seminar, Center for Literary and Cultural Studies, Harvard University, April 20, 1995.

“The Spoils of Poynton and the Properties of Touch,” Special Session, Modern Language Association Convention, December 29, 1994.

“The Gaze in The Blithedale Romance,” University of California Dickens Project, UC Riverside, February 12, 1989.

Honors and Fellowships

Outstanding Teaching Award, College Honors Program, Boston University, 2008-09

Senior Faculty Fellowship, Yale University, 2000-2001

Morse Fellowship, Yale University, 1997-98

Bradford Booth/Majl Ewing Dissertation Fellowship, Department of English, UCLA, 1990-91

University Fellowship, Department of English, UCLA, 1984-5

Phi Beta Kappa, Lawrence University, 1983

Teaching Experience

Department of English, Boston University

EN 180: Post-Apocalyptic Narrative

EN 220: Seminar in Literature (introduction to the English major)

EN 323: British Literature II

EN 333: American Literature, Beginnings to 1855

EN 334: American Literature, 1855-1918

EN 347: Contemporary American Novel

EN 345: Nineteenth-Century American Novel

EN 401/402: Work for Distinction (projects on Emily Dickinson and on maps and nineteenth-century American fiction)

EN 465/665: Critical Studies in Literature and Society: Social Theories of the American Novel, 1789-1900

EN 491/492: Directed Readings: (tutorials on The Symbol of Nature in American Literature; Herman Melville; Masculinity in Contemporary American Fiction and Cultural Theory)

EN 495/695: Critical Studies in Literary Topics: Aestheticism

EN 733: Hawthorne and James

Department of English, Yale University

Word and Image from Lessing to Foucault (graduate seminar)

Hawthorne and James, Reading and Seeing (graduate seminar)

American Poetry and Contemporary Culture (undergraduate seminar)

Emily Dickinson (undergraduate seminar)

Work, Money, and Things: American Writing from 1885 to 1915 (undergraduate seminar)

American Literature, 1865-1910 (lecture course)

American Gothic (freshman seminar)

Major English Poets (introduction to the English major)
Introduction to Literary Study (composition course)
Reading and Writing Poetry (independent study)
Advisor, Senior Essays on Poe, Twain, James, Stevens, Plath, Alfred Hitchcock, William Gibson

Expository Writing Program, Harvard University
Literature of the American Renaissance
American Spaces and Settings

Department, University, and Professional Service (major activities only)

“Reading Robert Frost,” Teachers as Scholars seminar, Boston, May 4 and 18, 2007

Yale University

Course Director, English 115: Introduction to Literary Study, 2001-2003

Senior Essays Committee, Chair, 2002-2004

Yale Americanist Colloquium Organizing Committee, 2002-2004

Presentations on Pedagogy, Graduate Student Teaching Colloquium, 2002

Fellow, Whitney Humanities Center, Yale University, 1998-99, 2000-2002

Undergraduate Studies Committee, 2001-2003

Honors and Prizes Committee, Department of English, 1995-2004

Junior Appointments Committee, Department of English, 1997-98

Guest Critic, Department of Graphic Design, Graduate Program, School of Art, Spring 2002

Freshman Advisor, 1995-97

Reader’s Reports, Studies in the Novel, American Quarterly, PMLA, and Routledge Press

Dissertation

“Subjects of Curiosity: Observation and Narrative Practice in Hawthorne and James”