

NICOLE M. MEROLA, PH.D.
Professor of Environmental Humanities & American Literatures
Department of Literary Arts & Studies
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EDUCATION

Ph.D. English Literature, University of Washington Seattle, Seattle, Washington, December 2003
M.A. English Literature, University of Washington Seattle, Seattle, Washington, June 1998
B.A. English and Religion, External Examination Program with Honors, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, June 1994
University of Wisconsin-Madison Study Abroad Program in Nepal, focus on Tibetan language, culture, and Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, 1992-1993

FACULTY APPOINTMENTS—RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN

Professor of Environmental Humanities & American Literatures, Department of Literary Arts & Studies, July 2017-present
Associate Professor of Ecocriticism & American Literatures, Department of Literary Arts & Studies, July 2011-June 2017
Assistant Professor of Ecocriticism & American Literatures, Department of Literary Arts & Studies, September 2005-June 2011

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS—RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN

Dean of Faculty, Interim, July 2022-June 2024
Director, Teaching & Learning Lab, Interim, July 2022-December 2024
Co-Manager (with the Dean of Architecture + Design), Department of Architecture, July 2022-February 2023
Department Head, Literary Arts & Studies, July 2013-June-2019
Graduate Program Director, Master of Nature-Culture-Sustainability Studies (NCSS), September 2017-June 2018

RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

Literary and Visual Studies & the Environment, Animal Studies, Anthropocene Studies, Climate Change Cultures, Energy Humanities, Environmental Justice, Theories of NatureCulture, New Formalisms, Post-1945 American Literatures, Inclusive Pedagogies, Community-Based Learning, Contemplative Practice, Experiential Education

PUBLICATIONS

“‘the machine took me in’: Processing the Manhattan Project in Kathleen Flenniken’s *Plume*.” *The Routledge Companion to Ecopoetics*, edited by Julia Fiedorczuk, Mary Newell, Bernard Quetchenbach, and Orchid Tierney, Routledge, 2023, 196-205.
“Assembling the Archive: Close(ly) Reading Great Auk Extinction with Walton Ford.” *Close Reading the Anthropocene*, edited by Helena Feder, Routledge, 2021, 45-59.

- "Double Take." *Manual*, vol. 15, 2021, 28-29.
- "Archives of Ecocatastrophe; or, Vulnerable Reading Practices in the Anthropocene." *American Literary History*, vol. 30, no. 4, 2018, 820-835.
- "'what do we do but keep breathing as best we can this / minute atmosphere': Juliana Spahr and Anthropocene Anxiety." *Affective Ecocriticism: Emotion, Embodiment, Environment*, edited by Kyle Bladow and Jennifer Ladino, University of Nebraska Press, 2018, 25-49.
- "Engaging the 'Eaarth': Teaching and Making Climate Change Cultures in an Art and Design Context." *Teaching Climate Change in the Humanities*, edited by Stephanie LeMenager, Stephen Siperstein, and Shane Hall, Routledge, 2016, 146-152.
- "'for terror of the deadness beyond': Arctic Environments and Inhuman Ecologies in Michelle Paver's *Dark Matter*." *Ecozon@: European Journal of Literature, Culture, and Environment*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2014, 22-40.
- "Materializing a Geotraumatic and Melancholy Anthropocene: Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods*." *the minnesota review*, vol. 83, 2014, 122-132.
- "Mediating Planetary Attachments and Planetary Melancholy: Lars von Trier's *Melancholia*." *Design, Mediation, and the Posthuman*, edited by Amy Proppen, Colbey Emmerson Reid, and Dennis Weiss, Lexington Books, 2014, 249-267.
- "T. C. Boyle's Neoevolutionary Queer Ecologies: Questioning Species in 'Descent of Man' and 'Dogology.'" *America's Darwin: Darwinian Theory in U.S. Culture*, edited by Tina Gianquitto and Lydia Fisher, University of Georgia Press, 2014, 534-575.
- Review of *The Great Immensity. Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities* vol. 2, no.1, 2014, n.p.
- "Thinking with Ursula Heise." *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities* vol. 1. no. 3, 2014, 206-209.
- "*Cosmopolis*: Don DeLillo's Melancholy Political Ecology." *American Literature*, vol. 84, no. 4, 2012, 827-853.
- "The Muse of Difference: Race and Writing Placement at Two Elite Art Schools." Co-authored with Anthony Lioi. *Race, Writing, and Writing Assessment*, edited by Mya Poe and Asao B. Inoue, Peter Lang Press, 2012, 155-167.
- Review of T. S. McMillin, *The Meaning of Rivers Flow and Reflection in American Literature* and Lloyd Willis, *Environmental Evasion: The Literary, Critical, and Cultural Politics of "Nature's Nation."* *American Literature* vol. 84, no. 2, 2012, 440-442.
- "Monkeys, Apes, and Bears, Oh My!: Illuminating the Politics of Human-Animal Relationship in Jill Greenberg's *Monkey Portraits* and *Bear Portraits*." *JAC: Rhetoric, Writing, Culture, Politics*, vol. 30, no. 3-4, 2010, 645-681.
- "Connecting to Narragansett Bay: Fostering Ecological Citizenship through Environmental Humanities and Art and Design." *Transformations: The Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy*, vol. 21, no.1, 2010, 60-78.
- "A Litany of Disasters or Going with the Flow: New Developments in Water Politics." *Journal of Postcolonial and Commonwealth Studies*, vols. 13.2-14.1, 2006-2007, 160-172.
- "Reading (in) the Blue Ridge: The Bioregional Imperative of *Cold Mountain*." *Reader*, vol. 53, 2005, 45-75.
- "Attending to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and Coastal Plain: Subhankar Banerjee's Photographic Journey as Riposte." *Green Letters*, vol. 6, 2004, 50-60.
- "Conformity and Order: A Grammar Handbook Case Study." *Journal of Teaching Writing*, vol. 16, no. 2, 1998, 263-271.

ARTICLES IN PROGRESS

- "Jamaica Kincaid's Anticolonial, Black, Cross-Species, Embodied, Feminist Onto-Epistemologies" (forthcoming, Spring 2026, *Teaching With Science Writing in the Humanities Classroom*, edited by Allison Dushane, Lisa Ottum, and Rosalind Powell, The Modern Language

Association of America)

“a privileged anxious view’: Samantha Harvey’s *Orbital*” (under review, *The Anthropocene and Literature*, edited by Tore Rye Andersen, contracted by Cambridge University Press)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (2012-PRESENT)

“Close(ly) Reading Extinction with Walton Ford.” Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Conference. Virtual. 26 July-6 August 2021.

“Close(ly) Reading Extinction with Walton Ford.” American Literature Association. Virtual. 7-11 July 2021.

“‘sometimes there’s not enough time to confirm the disaster at hand’: Toxicity and Environmental Anxiety in Samanta Schweblin’s *Fever Dream*.” British Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies Conference. 21-22 February 2020.

“Byproducts of Petrocapitalism—Exhibit One: Anthropocene Anxiety.” MLA International Symposium. 23-25 July 2019.

Presenter, “Affective Ecocriticism Seminar.” Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Conference. 26-30 June 2019.

“Revenant Hydrocarbon: Appropriating the Future.” American Comparative Literature Association Conference. 7-10 March 2019.

Presenter, “Crafting Global Citizenships” Panel (organized by RISD Global). “Artists Designers Citizens” AICAD Symposium 2018. 7-9 November 2018.

“‘simply a receiving station for a series of overwhelming transmissions’: Appropriating the Human in Jeff VanderMeer’s *Borne* and *Area X: The Southern Reach Trilogy*.” American Comparative Literature Association Conference. 29 March-1 April 2018.

“Byproducts of Petrocapitalism—Exhibit One: Anthropocene Anxiety.” Northeast Modern Language Association Conference. 21-24 March 2018.

“Making Climate Change Cultures at the Rhode Island School of Design.” Northeast Modern Language Association Conference. 17-20 March 2016.

Deep Times: Imagining Geomaterial Horizons Seminar Participant. “Embracing Cryomateriality.” Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Conference. 23-27 June 2015.

“Environmental Melancholies.” Northeast Modern Language Association Conference. 30 April-3 May 2015.

“Environmental Melancholies.” Modern Language Association Conference. 8-11 January 2015.

“Film and Planetary Feeling in the Digital Era: Lars von Trier’s *Melancholia*.” The Society for Philosophy and Technology Conference. 4-6 July 2013.

“‘Perhaps the universe is the memory of our mistakes’: Materializing the Anthropocene in Jeanette Winterson’s *The Stone Gods*.” Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Conference. 28 May-1 June 2013.

Climate Change Ecocriticism Seminar Participant. “Confronting Climate Denial: Helen Simpson’s *In-Flight Entertainment*.” Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Conference. 28 May-1 June 2013.

“‘Perhaps the universe is the memory of our mistakes’: Materializing the Anthropocene in Jeanette Winterson’s *The Stone Gods*.” American Comparative Literature Association. 4-7 April 2013.

“Litter on the Beach: The Insect Phenomenologies and Carrion Poetics of Jim Crace’s *Being Dead*.” Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts Conference. 27-30 September 2012.

“Litter on the Beach, ‘a heavy price for their nostalgia’: The Entomological Poetics of Decay in Jim Crace’s *Being Dead*.” American Comparative Literature Association Conference. 29 March-1 April 2012.

“The Spoils of War: Psychological, Physical, and Environmental Violence in J. Robert Lennon’s *Castle*.” Northeast Modern Language Association Conference. 15-18 March 2012.

ADDITIONAL CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION (2012-PRESENT)

Attendee, POD Network Conference, "Relationships at the Core of Educational Development." 11-14 November 2024.

Participant, "The Teaching Effectiveness Framework: From Idea to Institutionalization," POD Network Pre-Conference Workshop. 10 November 2024.

Attendee, AAC&U Conference on General Education, Pedagogy, and Assessment. 11-13 April 2024.

Co-organizer and Co-Chair, "Appropriation and Its Discontents." American Comparative Literature Association Conference. 7-10 March 2019.

Co-organizer and Chair, "The Idea of Anthropocene Literature." American Literature Association Conference. 25-28 May 2017.

Attendee, "Anthropocene Reading." American Comparative Literature Association Conference. 17-20 March 2016.

Attendee, Association of American Colleges & Universities Conference. 18-20 February 2016.

Invited Chair and Respondent, "Modes of Misery, Genres of Grief: Narrative Forms of Environmental Suffering." American Studies Association Conference. 8-11 October 2015.

Organizer and Chair, "Biodiversity and Extinction Narratives." American Literature Association Conference. 21-24 May 2015.

Co-organizer and Chair, "Native Literary Ecologies." American Literature Association Conference. 21-24 May 2015.

Attendee, "Anthropocene Historicism." American Comparative Literature Association Conference. 26-29 March 2015.

Attendee, "The Future of the Anthropocene." American Comparative Literature Association Conference. 26-29 March 2015.

Attendee, "The Opening of the Field: New Approaches to Ecopoetics." American Comparative Literature Association Conference. 26-29 March 2015.

Attendee, 2014 ADE-ADFL Summer Seminar West. 19-22 June 2014.

Co-Organizer and Co-Chair, "Littered with Meaning: Environmental Pollution and Waste in Literature and Other Arts." American Comparative Literature Association Conference. 29 March-1 April 2012.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE—RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN, COURSES DESIGNED AND TAUGHT
Undergraduate First-Year Literature Seminars

LAS-E101 The Animal Other
Petrocultures

Undergraduate Literature, Theory, and Film Courses

LAS-E280 Narrating Evolution

LAS-E320 Contemporary Ecological Fictions

LAS-E321 Representing "Unrepresentable" Environments: Climate Change

LAS-E324 Contemporary Ecopoetries: North Americas+

LAS-E503 Theories of NatureCulture

LAS-E521 Theorizing the Anthropocene

LAS-E522 Geographical Imaginations: Wilderness

LAS-E561 Green Theory/Green Reading: Pollution

LAS-E713 Posthumanisms: Critical Animal Studies

LAS-E714 Investigating Water: Connecting to Narragansett Bay

LAS-E715 Green Cultural Studies: Film

Undergraduate Liberal Arts Elective Courses

LAEL-LE98 Digital [LEGO] Analog: Phase 1: Research Seminar
LAEL-W127 Environmental Humanities Research Seminar

Wintersession Travel Courses

LAEL-1584 Portugal: Material Practices (Co-taught with Laura Briggs [Architecture])
Mapping Portugal: Bio-Geo-Cultural Heritages (Co-taught with Eduardo Duarte [Interior Architecture])
LAS-E717 Exploring the Art & Science of Biodiversity in Guyana (Co-taught with Lucy Spelman [History, Philosophy, and the Social Sciences])
LAS-W725 See Naples and Die: Cooler and Warmer (Co-taught with Nick De Pace [Landscape Architecture])

Graduate Commons Courses

132G Theories of NatureCulture
162G Advanced Research Seminar: Putting Your Work in Context

Graduate Nature-Culture-Sustainability Studies Courses

NCSS-700G Theories of NatureCulture
NCSS-701G Theories of NatureCulture: Research Practicum

Thesis Committees and Independent Study Project Direction

Nature-Culture-Sustainability Studies Masters—Thesis First Reader
Sarah Manion (Spring-Fall 2020), Valeria Ramirez Ensastiga (Spring-Fall 2020)

Nature-Culture-Sustainability Studies Masters—Thesis Second/Third Reader
Victor Rivera-Diaz (Spring-Fall 2022)

Art and Design Masters—Thesis Committee Member
Beth Johnson, Photography (2021-2022); Stephanie Tyson, Printmaking (2018-2019); Elaina Runge, Textiles, (2016-2017); Melissa J. Tyson, Jewelry + Metalsmithing (2016-2017); Genevieve Lowe, Printmaking (2011-2013); Amber Heaton, Printmaking (2011-2012); Amanda Thackray, Printmaking (2011-2012); Peiqi Tang, Industrial Design (2011-2012)

A.B. Thesis Committee Member
Bryna Cofrin-Shaw, Environmental Studies, Brown University (2013-2014)

Undergraduate Student Independent Study Projects
Environmental Humanities and Speculative Fiction, Postcolonial and Environmental Literary Studies on Maui, Representing the Environmental Crisis Through Photography, Sustainable Agricultural Practices

Graduate Student Independent Study Projects

The Limitations of Language: Phenomenology and Painting, The Real and the Unreal:
Framing Wildness

SELECTED SERVICE & PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Required Academic Service, Rhode Island School of Design

Chair, Search Committee (LAS/NCSS) (September 2021-April 2022)
Member, Conduct Board (Fall 2020-Spring 2022)
Department Head, Literary Arts & Studies (July 2013-June 2019)
Graduate Program Director, NCSS MA (September 2017-June 2018)
Chair, Nominating Committee (Fall 2011-Spring 2012)
Member, Nominating Committee (Fall 2010-Spring 2011)
Chair, Steering Committee (Fall 2007-Fall 2009)
Member, Steering Committee (Fall 2005-Spring 2007)

Additional Academic Service, Rhode Island School of Design

Curriculum/Program Development

NCSS MA Advisory Board (Fall 2020-Spring 2022)
Faculty Lead, Liberal Arts Graduate Degrees Workgroup (September 2016-August 2017)
Member, GAC MA Workgroup (March-June 2016)
Member, NCSS MA Workgroup (March-June 2016)
Member, Writing Cultures MA/MFA Workgroup (Fall 2014)
Member, NCSS Concentration Advisory Board (Fall 2013-Spring 2019)
Chair, NCSS Concentration Task Force (Summer 2011-Spring 2012)
Member, NCSS Concentration Task Force (Spring 2010-Spring 2011)

Committees/Searches/Workgroups

Member, VP for Social Equity and Inclusion Search Committee (Fall 2022-Spring 2023)
Member, NCSS MA Admissions Committee (Wintersession and Spring 2018, 2020, 2021)
Member, Graduate Education Workgroup, Strategic Planning Process (Fall 2017-Fall 2018)
Member, Scheduling Workgroup, Strategic Planning Process (Fall 2017-Fall 2018)
Member, Humanities Lab Workgroup, Strategic Planning Process (Fall 2017-Fall 2018)
Member, Humanities Lab Workgroup, Division of Liberal Arts (Summer 2016-Fall 2017)
Co-Chair, RISD Department Heads Meeting (with David Frazer, September 2016-August 2017)
Member, VP of Enrollment Management Search Committee (April-June 2016)
Member, Brown/RISD Climate Change and the Arts Workgroup (Spring 2015)
Member, Herman Miller Classroom Workgroup (WS and Spring 2015)
Member, Imagining America Workgroup (Fall 2015)
Member, Global Classroom Workgroup (Spring 2014)
Member, Digital Learning Workgroup (Fall 2013-Spring 2016)
Member, Humanities Fund Committee (Fall 2010-Spring 2012)
Member, RISD Common Reading Event Committee (Fall 2010-Fall 2011)
Member, RISE (Fall 2009-Spring 2012, Fall 2013-Spring 2019, Fall 2021-present)
Member, HPSS Sociology Position Search Committee (Wintersession-Spring 2008)
Member, Green Initiatives Group (Fall 2007-Fall 2008)

Other

Member, Fulbright Interview Committee (Fall 2015, 2017, 2021)
Member, Maraham Steam Fellowship Interview Committee (Spring 2016, 2017, 2022)

Member, Robert Turner Theatrical and Performance Design Fund, Student Internship Selection Committee (Spring 2023)

Member, Windgate-Lamar Selection Committee (Fall 2023, 2022)

Service to the Profession

Invited Reviewer, *Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies* (July 2016-present)

Invited Reviewer, *Ecozon@: European Journal of Literature, Culture and Environment* (January 2015-present)

Invited Reviewer, *English Studies* (July 2024-present)

Invited Reviewer, *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* (July 2019-present)

Invited Reviewer, *TRANSPOSITIONES: Journal for Transdisciplinary and Intermedial Cultural Studies* (June 2025-present)

Invited Reviewer, *Twentieth-Century Literature* (September 2016-present)

Panel Organizer and Chair for odd-year ALA Conference ASLE panels (2014-2018)

Member, Subvention Committee, ASLE (2013-2016)

Professional Mentor, ASLE (2007-2010)

Panel Organizer and Chair for NeMLA Conference ASLE panels (2006-2010)

Non-Profit Board of Directors Service

Creature Conserve, Board Member (2015-present)
