

SAGE GERSON

Department of Literary Arts and Studies
Nature-Culture-Sustainability Studies Concentration
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EDUCATION

- 2022 **Ph.D.** in English
Interdepartmental Ph.D. Emphasis in Environment and Society
University of California, Santa Barbara
- Dissertation: *The Leaky Grid: Black and Native Electrified Imaginaries*
- 2018 **M.A.** in English
University of California, Santa Barbara
- Exam fields: Theories of Literature and the Environment; U.S. Race and Ethnic Literatures; Literature and Theory of Technology
- 2013 **B.A.** in English (with honors)
Minor in Environmental Studies
University of Chicago

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Concentration Coordinator, 2024-present
Nature-Culture-Sustainability Studies (NCSS) Undergraduate and Graduate Concentrations, RISD

Assistant Professor, 2022-present
Department of Literary Arts and Studies, RISD

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Charged Imaginaries: Rewriting the Flows of Power in Black and Native Literature.
Monograph in preparation.

Edited Collections

Waste Collection: The Ecologies, Politics, and Complexities of Discard, co-edited with Jeremy Chow. Book manuscript under contract with Bloomsbury, expected 2027.

Journal Articles

“Reading Beyond the Anthropocene: Indispensability as Environmental Justice in N.K. Jemisin’s *Emergency Skin*.” *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*. August 2025.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/isle/isaf062>

“Siphoning and Sabotage: Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* and US Electricity Theft.” *Social Text*. Special Issue: “Reading for Infrastructure: Worlds Made and Broken,” ed. Adriana Johnson and Daniel Nemser. December 2022.

<https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-10013346>

“Reading California’s Power Grid: A Metonymic Methodology.” *Media+Environment*. Special Issue: “Energy Justice in Global Perspective,” ed. Javiera Barandiaran, Mona Damluji, Stephan Miescher, David Pellow, Janet Walker. August 2022.

<https://doi.org/10.1525/001c.35472>

“A Field Guide to Oil in Santa Barbara: Pedagogy and Praxis for Environmental Media Studies.” Co-authored with Emily Roehl for *Media+Environment*. Special Issue: “Energy Justice in Global Perspective,” ed. Javiera Barandiaran, Mona Damluji, Stephan Miescher, David Pellow, Janet Walker. August 2022.

<https://doi.org/10.1525/001c.36325>

“Wasted: Wastewater, Hygiene Theatrics, and Contaminated Imaginaries.” Co-authored with Jeremy Chow for *Lateral*. June 2022.

<https://doi.org/10.25158/L11.1.2>

Book Chapters

“Energy: Environmental Justice and the Violence of Extraction.” *Waste Collection: The Ecologies, Politics, and Complexities of Discard*, ed. by Jeremy Chow and Sage Gerson. Collection under contract with Bloomsbury, expected 2027.

“Pedagogical Interventions in the Energy Humanities: A Place-Based Approach.” *Teaching Energy Humanities*. Modern Language Association (MLA), ed. Debby Rosenthal and Jasen Molesky. Forthcoming.

Book Reviews

Oil by Michael Tondre for *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*. September 2025.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/isle/isaf074>

Nikky Finney’s *Love Child’s Hotbed of Occasional Poetry* for the *Journal of Appalachian Studies*’ special issue: “Speculative Fabulation: Queering Appalachian Futurisms.” ed. Jessica Cory and Z. Zane McNeill. April 2022.

<https://doi.org/10.5406/23288612.28.1.09>

Public Humanities Writing and Other Essays

“‘Perspectives *from within* Earthly Interiorities’: Reflecting on Janet Walker’s Career” for the *Media Fields* special issue: “Media Inside Out.” ed. by Trinankur Banerjee, Ian Laughbaum, and Richard Farrell. August 2025.

<https://mediafieldsjournal.squarespace.com/perspectives-from-within-earth/>

Wall Label: “Julia Samuels’ *From One Minute on April 29th, 2009*,” RISD Museum. February 2025.

“An Environmental Justice Approach to Hydroelectric Damming.” *Relief Remix*. Water Justice & Tech. Ed. Theodora Dryer and Amrah Salomón. September 2023.

<https://waterjustice-tech.org/>

“An Environmental Justice Approach to Hydroelectric Damming.” *Water and Technology 2021 Report: North America and Central America*. New York University’s AI Now Institute and the Center for Interdisciplinary Environmental Justice. Ed. Theodora Dryer. January 2022.

<https://ainowinstitute.org/publications/water-justice-and-technology-report>

“Reimagining California’s Relationship to Fire.” *Foundry*. “Under Fire” Series. University of California Humanities Research Institute. August 2021.

<https://uchri.org/foundry/reimagining-californias-relationship-to-fire/>

“Chokehold.” *Foundry*. University of California Humanities Research Institute. “Reading for Infrastructure.” Keyword Entry. February 2021.

<https://uchri.org/foundry/reading-for-infrastructure/>

“Rehearse, Resist, Riot, Repeat: Policing Through Time.” Co-authored with Taylor Holmes and Nirvana Shahriar. *The Black Scholar*. “Social Justice Handbook Series.” July 2020.

<https://www.theblackscholar.org/social-justice-handbook-series-rehearse-resist-riot-repeat-policing-through-time/>

SELECTED FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

2024	Mellon /American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Dissertation Completion Fellowship Alumni Microgrant
2023-2025	Faculty Fellowship at the RISD Museum in the Prints, Drawings, and Photographs Collection, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence
2022-2023	Mahindra Humanities Center, Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Environmental Humanities, Harvard University, Cambridge (declined)

2021-2022	Mellon / American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Dissertation Completion Fellowship Link to Fellow Bio
2020-2021	Graduate Humanities Research Fellowship, Graduate Division, University of California, Santa Barbara
2020	“Reading for Infrastructure, Infrastructure for Reading,” Short-Term Collaborative Research Residency, University of California Humanities Research Institute (held virtually due to COVID-19)
2020	Richard Helgerson Graduate Student Achievement Award, Department of English, University of California, Santa Barbara Awarded for dissertation chapter, “Siphoning and Sabotage: Ralph Ellison’s <i>Invisible Man</i> and U.S. Electricity Theft”
2018-2019	Mellon Sawyer Seminar on Energy Justice in a Global Perspective , Graduate Fellowship, University of California, Santa Barbara

CONFERENCES AND INVITED TALKS

Invited Talks

Workshop: “Race & Electric Utilities in the United States,” March 2025, Atlanta

Keynote: “Queer-Feminist Pedagogies: On Worldbuilding” as part of Cross Words // Queer Worlds, Centre Canadien d’Architecture’s Toolkit for Today, July 2024, Montreal

“Wastewater: Ecologies, Infrastructures, Imaginaries,” co-presented with Jeremy Chow at the Ecologies of Justice: Wastelands, Wastewaters, and Human Disposability Symposium, March 2023, Phoenix

“Art, Climate Crisis, and Activism,” co-presented at the RISD Museum, March 2023, Providence

“Siphoning and Sabotage: Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* and US Electricity Theft,” African American Urbanism, University of Freiburg, November 2022, Freiburg im Breisgau (held virtually)

“‘Don’t make the mistake of calling us resilient’: Urban Indians and City Belonging in Tommy Orange’s *There There*,” RUDESA Spring Academy, March 2021, Duisburg/Essen (held virtually due to COVID-19)

“Deer Woman: A Vignette,” Body as Archive: Animacy/Native American Ways of Knowing, University of California, Santa Barbara, February 2021 (held virtually due to COVID-19)

Conference Presentations

- 2025 “Environmental Justice in N.K. Jemisin’s *Emergency Skin*, Modern Language Association, January 2025, New Orleans
- 2024 “‘America is a land of bad math and science’: Pipelines, Lead Pipes, and Black and Native Confluences Against Environmental Violence,” American Studies Association, November 2024, Baltimore
- “‘Perspectives *from within* Earthly Interiorities’: Reflecting on Janet Walker’s Career,” Media Inside Out, April 2024, Santa Barbara
- 2023 “Reading N.K. Jemisin’s Visionary Fiction: Environmental Justice in *Emergency Skin*,” American Studies Association, November 2023, Montreal
- “Learning from the Land: Cultivating Listening to the More-Than-Human World in the College Classroom,” Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, May 2023, Toronto
- “No one asked the water what it wanted’: Hydroelectric Imaginaries in Linda Hogan’s *Solar Storms*,” American Comparative Literature Association, March 2023, Chicago
- 2022 “Wastewater and its Contaminated Imaginaries,” co-presented with Jeremy Chow at the American Studies Association, November 2022, New Orleans
- 2021 “Energy Justice on California’s Central Coast: A Public Syllabus,” co-presented as part of the Recentering Energy Justice Collaborative at Radical Climate Justice for the Global Commons, October 2021, held virtually as part of the Nearly Carbon Neutral Conference
- “Experimental Practices of Siphoning and Sabotage: Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* and U.S. Electricity Theft,” Transatlantic Rust Belts: Scripting Urban Futures, September 2021, Detroit (held virtually due to COVID-19)
- “Wastewater Media,” co-presented with Jeremy Chow at the Cultural Studies Association, June 2021 (held virtually due to COVID-19)
- “Reading N.K. Jemisin’s Visionary Fiction,” International Conference on Narrative, May 2021 (held virtually due to COVID-19)
- “The Leaky Grid: Electrified Imaginaries and Infrastructural Porosity,” American Comparative Literature Association, April 2021 (held virtually due to COVID-19)
- “Queer Appalachia: Dwelling in the Intersections of Art and Activism,” Appalachian Studies Association, March 2021 (held virtually due to COVID-19)
- “Sonic Environmentalism and EMPTY/EVERY MT’s Speculative Soundscape,” Modern Language Association, January 2021 (held virtually due to COVID-19)

- 2020 “Out of Narrative Sight, Out of Mind: A Cultural Commentary on Indifference to Incarcerated Labor in the Graphic Narrative *A Fire Story*,” University of California, Santa Barbara Graduate Comix Symposium, January 2020, Santa Barbara
- “‘Don’t make the mistake of calling us resilient’: Urban Indians and City Belonging in Tommy Orange’s *There There*,” Modern Language Association, January 2020, Seattle
- 2019 “Experimental Practices of Siphoning and Sabotage: *Invisible Man* and U.S. Electricity Theft” Society of Literature, Science, and the Arts, November 2019, Irvine
- “Reading like a Buzzard: Circling the Woman-Animal in Faulkner’s Archive,” Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha, July 2019, Oxford
- Respondent: Mellon Sawyer on Energy Justice in a Global Perspective Hydro Symposium, February 2019, Santa Barbara
- “Visionary Fictions: ‘Making with’ Feminist Science and Technology Studies,” Modern Language Association, January 2019, Chicago
- 2018 “‘Weaving Something Other Than a Shroud’: Radical Queer Rurality in Electric Dirt and Goodbye Gauley Mountain,” Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present, October 2018, New Orleans
- “Piratical Concatenation in Detroit and Chester: Electricity Siphoning, Racial Capitalism, and Environmental Justice,” American Comparative Literature Association, March 2018, Los Angeles
- 2017 “On Becoming-Goatman: ‘Speculative Design’ as a Genre of Resistance,” Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, June 2017, Detroit
- “The Doomsday Clock: Measuring the Approaching Apocalypse,” 6th Annual University of California Los Angeles History Graduate Student Association Conference, April 2017, Los Angeles

Symposia and Panels Organized

- 2024 Organizer and Panel Chair: “Situating Watery Relations: Thinking with Water about Indigeneity, Race, Diaspora, and Migration,” American Studies Association, November 2024, Baltimore
- Co-organizer with Jeremy Chow, “Waste Worlding,” 2024 Bucknell Humanities Center Summer Institute, June 2024, held virtually
<https://summerinstitute.scholar.bucknell.edu>

- 2023 Co-organizer with Sunaina Kale and Margaret McMurtrey and Panel Chair: "'Listening to the Land: Sounds and Stories from Turtle Island and Hawai'i,'" Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, March 2023, Toronto
- Organizer and Panel Chair: "Pasts/Presents/Futures of Electric Cultures," American Comparative Literature Association, March 2023, Chicago
- 2022 Planning Committee: "Imagining Indigenous Futurities," 9th Annual American Indian and Indigenous Collective Symposium, April 22-24, 2022, University of California, Santa Barbara (held virtually due to COVID-19).
- 2021 Planning Committee: "Native Arts Colloquium: Expressing Relations of Bodies and Lands," American Indian and Indigenous Collective, University of California Santa Barbara, April 2021, University of California, Santa Barbara (held virtually due to COVID-19)
- Co-organizer, Moderator, and Discussant: "Lands/Cosmologies: Ways of Knowing" and "Native Feminisms: Reflections on *Mark my Words* and *Spiral to the Stars*," 8th Annual American Indian and Indigenous Collective Symposium, February 2021, University of California, Santa Barbara (held virtually due to COVID-19)
- Planning Committee: "Native Feminisms: Centering American Indian and Indigenous Lands and Peoples," 8th Annual American Indian and Indigenous Collective Symposium, February 2021, University of California, Santa Barbara (held virtually due to COVID-19).
- 2020 Planning Committee: "Body as Archive," 7th Annual American Indian and Indigenous Collective Symposium, February 2020, University of California, Santa Barbara.
- 2019 Co-organizer: "Affinities and Affiliations, Familial and Otherwise," Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha, July 2019, Oxford

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Rhode Island School of Design (since 2022)

Graduate Courses

Theories of Nature/Culture
 Energy Pasts/Presents/Futures
 Queer Ecologies, Multispecies Kinships (Independent Study)

Undergraduate Courses

Literary Worldmaking: A First-Year Literature Seminar
 Native Feminist and Two Spirit Literatures
 Visionary Fictions
 Imagining Indigenous Futurity

Stories of Flight: A Series of Explorations into Birds, Feathers, and Flight from a
Hawaiian Traditional, Historical, and Scientific Perspective (Independent Study)
Welsh Identity: Folk Tales, Stories from Industry, Conquest, and Futurities (Independent
Study)

University of California, Santa Barbara

Center for Innovative Teaching, Research, and Learning

Course Design for Equity Community of Practice, 2021-2022

Department of English

Undergraduate Courses

Science Fiction: Visionary Fictions

Introduction to Native American Narrative: Animacy and the Speaking Earth: The
Power of Native Story

Literatures of Southern California

Reading Infrastructure, Building Worlds

Environmental Studies Department

Undergraduate Courses

“Energy Justice, Scholar-Activism, and Community Based Research” (Independent
Group Study)

SERVICE

To the Profession

2024-present

Environmental Justice Caucus Junior Chair for the American
Studies Association (ASA)

To the College

2024-present

Nature-Culture-Sustainability Studies Concentration Coordinator
The Partnership for Academic Leadership on Sustainability
(PALS) Faculty Fellow

2024-2025

2023-2025

Nature-Culture-Sustainability Studies Graduate Concentration
Proposal Author and Coordinator

2023-present

Instruction Committee

2023-present

Curriculum Committee

2022-2023

Professional Development Fund Committee

Graduate Thesis Committees

Daniela Ruiz Perez

Ali Vedad Yuner

Chhavi Jain

Jocelyn Salim

Jacquiline “Kate” Walker

Sierra Gideon

Journal Peer Reviewer

Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment
Journal: Midwest Modern Language Association