

SAGE GERSON

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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

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

Concentration Coordinator, 2024-2026
Nature-Culture-Sustainability Studies (NCSS) Undergraduate and Graduate
Concentrations, 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. Under contract and in production 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

“Petroheist, Petrohorror: The Infrastructural Imaginary of the film *How to Blow Up a Pipeline*,” accepted for inclusion in *Haunted by Hydrocarbons: Petrogothic and Petrohorror in the Contemporary Imagination*, ed. by Jennifer Schell and Madalynn Madigar.

“Energy: Wastelands, Sacrifice Zones, and Environmental Justice.” *Waste Collection: The Ecologies, Politics, and Complexities of Discard*, ed. by Jeremy Chow and Sage Gerson. Under contract and in production with Bloomsbury, expected 2027.

“Introduction: On Waste Worlding.” Co-Authored with Jeremy Chow. *Waste Collection: The Ecologies, Politics, and Complexities of Discard*, ed. by Jeremy Chow and Sage Gerson. Under contract and in production 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 2026.

Book Reviews

The Cinema of Extractions: Film Materials and Their Forms by Brian R. Jacobson for *H-Net*. July 2026.
<https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showpdf.php?id=62673>

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>

Other Essays and Public Humanities Writing

"Queer-Feminist Pedagogies: On Worldbuilding" for *in kindred ways: queer and trans* spatial histories of infrastructures and ecologies*, ed. by Janus Lafontaine Carboni, S.E. Eisterer, Favor Idika, Sergio Villanueva Preston, and Malcolm John Rio. Published by Centre Canadien d'Architecture. Forthcoming 2026.

"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

2026	John R. Frazier Award for Excellence in Teaching
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2025	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

PRESENTATIONS, WORKSHOPS, CONFERENCES

Invited Talks

- 2024 Keynote: “Queer-Feminist Pedagogies: On Worldbuilding” as part of Cross Words // Queer Worlds, Centre Canadien d’Architecture’s Toolkit for Today, July 2024, Montreal
- 2023 “Wastewater: Ecologies, Infrastructures, Imaginaries,” co-presented with Jeremy Chow at Arizona State University’s 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
- 2022 “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)

- 2021 “‘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)

Workshops

- 2026 “Paper Relations: Histories and Futures of Indigenous Print Cultures,” American Antiquarian Society, Summer Seminar in the History of the Book, co-led by Kathryn Walkiewicz and Kelly Wisecup, June 2026, Worcester

Native American and Indigenous Studies Syllapalooza, co-sponsored by University of Connecticut, Mohegan Tribe, and Connecticut Humanities, January 2026, Montville

- 2025 “Race & Electric Utilities in the United States,” Emory University, March 2025, Atlanta

Conference Presentations

- 2027 “Post-Oil Energy (In)Justice in Nnedi Okorafor’s *Noor*,” Modern Language Association, January 2027, Los Angeles (scheduled)

Round table: “Emancipatory Narratives through Place-Based Pedagogy,” Modern Language Association, January 2027, Los Angeles (scheduled)

- 2025 “Reading Beyond the Anthropocene: Indispensability as Environmental Justice in N.K. Jemisin’s *Emergency Skin*,” RISD Humanities Forum, September 2025, Providence

“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, Panels, and Sessions Organized

2026 Co-organizer with Christian Kieve and Panel Respondent: “Creative Methods for Environmental Justice,” American Studies Association, October 2026, Chicago (scheduled)

Panel Chair: “Aesthetics of Regression: Cultural Representations and Critiques of Conservatism,” American Studies Association, October 2026, Chicago (scheduled)

Co-organizer with Sedonna Goeman-Shulsky and Moe Gámez: “Environmental Justice Caucus Mentoring Session,” American Studies Association, October 2026, Chicago (scheduled)

Co-organizer with Jiya Pandya and Dalena Ngo, “Joint Networking Session,” American Studies Association, October 2026, Chicago (scheduled)

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 NatureCulture
Energy Pasts/Presents/Futures

Undergraduate Courses

Imagining Indigenous Futurity
Literary Arts and Studies Open Seminar
Literary Worldmaking: A First-Year Literature Seminar
Native Feminist and Two Spirit Literatures
Reading Banned Books
Visionary Fictions

Independent Studies

Stories of Flight: A Series of Explorations into Birds, Feathers, and Flight from a Hawaiian Traditional, Historical, and Scientific Perspective
Queer Ecologies, Multispecies Kinships
Welsh Identity: Folk Tales, Stories from Industry, Conquest, and Futurities

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 College

2026-2027	Frazier Award Committee
2026	Arts & Language Redefining Writing Essay Contest Panel Judge
2024-2026	Nature-Culture-Sustainability Studies Undergraduate and Graduate Concentration Coordinator
2024-2025	The Partnership for Academic Leadership on Sustainability (PALS) Faculty Fellow
2023-2026	Instruction Committee
2023-2026	Curriculum Committee
2023-2025	Nature-Culture-Sustainability Studies Graduate Concentration Proposal Author and Coordinator
2022-2023	Professional Development Fund Committee

To the Profession

2026-present	Environmental Justice Caucus Senior Chair for the American Studies Association (ASA)
2024-2026	Environmental Justice Caucus Junior Chair for the American Studies Association (ASA)

To the Community

2026-present	Smith Hill Representative, Community Libraries of Providence (CLPVD), Board of Directors
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