



## Nancy Ruttenburg

William Robertson Coe Professor of American Literature, Emerita  
English

 Curriculum Vitae available Online

### Bio

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#### BIO

Nancy Ruttenburg is the William Robertson Coe Professor of American Literature in the English Department at Stanford. She also holds courtesy appointments in the Department of Comparative Literature and the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. She received the PhD in Comparative Literature from Stanford (1988) and taught at Harvard, Berkeley, and most recently at NYU, where she was chair of the Department of Comparative Literature from 2002-2008. Her research interests lie at the intersection of political, religious, and literary expression in colonial through antebellum America and nineteenth-century Russia, with a particular focus on the development of liberal and non-liberal forms of democratic subjectivity. Related interests include history of the novel, novel theory, and the global novel; philosophy of religion and ethics; and problems of comparative method, especially as they pertain to North American literature and history.

Prof. Ruttenburg is the author of *Democratic Personality: Popular Voice and the Trial of American Authorship* (Stanford UP, 1998) and *Dostoevsky's Democracy* (Princeton UP, 2008), and she has recently written on the work of J. M. Coetzee and on Melville's "Bartleby." Books in progress include a study of secularization in the postrevolutionary United States arising out of the naturalization of "conscience" as inalienable right, entitled *Conscience, Rights, and 'The Delirium of Democracy'*; and a comparative work entitled *Dostoevsky And for which the Russian writer serves as a lens on the historical development of a set of intercalated themes in the literature of American modernity. These encompass self-making and self-loss (beginning with Frederick Douglass's serial autobiographies); sentimentalism and sadism (in abolitionist fiction); crime and masculinity (including Mailer's The Executioner's Song); and the intersection of race, religious fundamentalism, and radical politics (focusing on the works of James Baldwin and Marilynne Robinson). Her courses will draw from both these projects.*

Prof. Ruttenburg is past president of the Charles Brockden Brown Society and has been the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a National Humanities Center Fellowship, a University of California President's Research Fellowship, as well as fellowships from the Social Science Research Council for Russian and East European Studies, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the American Council for Learned Societies.

#### ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Emeritus (Active) Professor, English

#### ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS

- William Robertson Coe Professor of American Literature, Stanford University, (2009- present)
- Professor of English, Comparative Literature, & Slavic Literatures, Stanford University, (2009- present)
- Professor of Comparative Literature, English & Slavic Literatures, New York University, (2007-2009)

- Associate Professor of Comparative Literature, English, & Slavic, New York University, (2001-2006)
- Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and English, University of California, Berkeley, (1996-2001)
- Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature and English, University of California, Berkeley, (1990-1996)
- Assistant Professor of English, Harvard University, (1987-1990)

## BOARDS, ADVISORY COMMITTEES, PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Fellowship, Guggenheim Foundation (2008 - 2009)

## PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- Ph.D., Stanford University , Comparative Literature (1988)
- M.A., Stanford University , Comparative Literature (1982)
- B.A, University of California, Santa Cruz (1980)

## Teaching

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### COURSES

#### 2025-26

- History, Memory , Fiction: ENGLISH 317, JEWISHST 317 (Win)
- The Literature of Exile: ENGLISH 336, JEWISHST 336 (Aut)

#### 2024-25

- Comedy and Social Critique: ENGLISH 274 (Aut)
- Self-Impersonation: Autobiography, Memoir, Fictional Autobiography: ENGLISH 284 (Aut)
- Transatlantic Gothic: COMPLIT 338, ENGLISH 338, FRENCH 338 (Win)

#### 2023-24

- Character: Studies in Fictional Being: ENGLISH 250A (Win)
- History and Theory of the Novel I & II: ENGLISH 360C (Aut, Win)
- Moby-Dick and the Role of the Animal in Fiction: ENGLISH 127A (Aut)

#### 2022-23

- Comedy and Social Critique: ENGLISH 274 (Aut)
- Self-Impersonation: Fiction, Autobiography, Memoir: ENGLISH 283E (Win)
- The American Underground: Crime and the Criminal in American Literature: ENGLISH 186B (Aut)
- Women and Puritanism: ENGLISH 363C (Win)

## STANFORD ADVISEES

### Doctoral Dissertation Reader (AC)

Katie Livingston, Andrew Touma

## Publications

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### PUBLICATIONS

- “‘The Silhouette of a Content’: ‘Bartleby’ and American Literary Specificity,” *Melville and Aesthetics*  
Rutenberg, N.  
edited by Otter, S., Sanborn, G.

New York: Palgrave-Macmillan,.2011

- **The Human Document** *Journal of Literary Studies (South Africa)*,  
Rutenburg, N.  
2009; 25 (5)
- **Dostoevsky's Democracy**  
Rutenburg, N.  
Princeton University Press.2008
- **Democratic Personality: Popular Voice and the Trial of American Authorship**  
Rutenburg, N.  
Stanford University Press,.1998