

# Blakey Vermeule

Albert Guérard Professor in Literature

**Stanford** | Department of English

Stanford, CA 94305-2087

## Employment

Stanford University, Department of English

Albert Guerard Professor in Literature (2019-present)

Professor (September 2011-present)

Associate Professor (September 2005-2011)

Northwestern University, Department of English

Associate Professor (July 2002-present)

Assistant Professor (July 2000-July 2002)

Stanford University, Department of English

Visiting Associate Professor (September 2003-August 2004)

Yale University, Department of English

Assistant Professor (June 1995-June 2000)

## EDUCATION

Ph.D., English Literature, University of California, Berkeley, 1995

B.A., English, Yale University, 1988 (Summa cum Laude)

## Current Projects

### The Wealth of Notions: How Economic Psychology took over the Mind

(represented by agent; complete manuscript)

This book examines how Western culture's preoccupation with productivity and efficiency emerged from developments in economic psychology and business education. Through analysis of corporate psychological concepts like decision fatigue, nudge theory, and choice overload, I trace how business thinking has profoundly shaped both societal values and individual wellbeing. The work demonstrates how behavioral economics, from its rise in the 1970s to the present, has become fundamentally intertwined with Western understanding of human cognition and behavior.

Whitey and Billy: Book project on Boston in the 1970's through the lives of brothers Whitey and Billy Bulger, one a famous gangster, the other the President of the Massachusetts State Senate.

## Published Books

Action versus Contemplation: Why An Ancient Debate Still Matters (with Jennifer

Summit), University of Chicago Press, April 2018

Why Do We Care About Literary Characters? The Johns Hopkins University Press,  
December 2009

The Party of Humanity: Writing Moral Psychology in Eighteenth-Century Britain  
Johns Hopkins University Press, December 2000

Major Service

English Department Chair (2019-2022)

Vice Chair of Stanford Faculty Senate (2021-2022)

Co-director of the Public Humanities Initiative (2022-present)

Co-editor, Palgrave Series on Cognitive Approaches to Literature

Recent Courses

BOSP-Cape Town: Cape Town as Archive

Introduction to Graduate Study in English

COLLEGE 101: Why College?

Chaucer

Milton

Enlightenment and Its Shadows

BOSP-Oxford: Modern and Contemporary British Art

BOSP-Paris: The Engaged Intellectual

The Human Predicament in Three Masterpieces (Continuing Studies)

The Financial Markets In Fiction and Film

Thinking Matters: Stories Everywhere

Sports and Culture

Literary History 2

The Ethical Gangster

Irony from Plato to David Foster Wallace

Literature and the Brain

IHUM English sequence: Contemplation or Action?

Philosophy and Literature

Restoration Literature

Jane Austen

Eighteenth-Century Satire

Post-Colonial British Fiction

Eighteenth-Century Fiction

"Sports and the University" with Susan Stephens and Kenneth Ligda (2017)

Telluride Association Summer Program (2018)

Other relevant experience:

Stanford Leadership Academy, 2022-2023 cohort