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EDUCATION

PhD, Department of Italian Language and Literature, Yale University, 2001

BA, Yale University, *Summa cum Laude*, double major in French (with Distinction) and Italian (with Exceptional Distinction), 1991

French Baccalaureate, Lycée Français de Washington (Washington, D. C.), with honors, 1986

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Associate Professor of French and Italian, Department of French and Italian, Stanford University (8/2012-present)

Assistant Professor of French and Italian (tenure track), Department of French and Italian, Stanford University (8/2004-8/2012)

Assistant Professor of Italian (tenure track), Department of French and Italian, Department of Comparative Literature, affiliated with the Department of Film Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara (7/2000-6/2004)

EXTRAMURAL AWARDS AND HONORS

NEH Fellowship, National Endowment for the Humanities (September 2014-August 2015)

Charles S. Ryskamp Fellowship, American Council of Learned Societies (September 2014-May 2015)

Penn Neuroscience Boot Camp, University of Pennsylvania (July 30-August 8 2012)

Summer Research Fellowship, American Academy in Rome (July-August 2008)

NEH Summer Research Stipend (summer 2002)

Rome Prize Fellowship, American Academy in Rome (Post-Classical Humanistic Studies) (1997-98)

Charlotte W. Newcombe Dissertation Fellowship, Woodrow Wilson Foundation (1996-97)

Fulbright Scholar (University of Bologna, Bologna, Italy) (1991-92)

Elected to Phi Beta Kappa (1991)

INTRAMURAL AWARDS AND HONORS (RECENT)

Enhanced Sabbatical Grant, Stanford University (2022-23 academic year)

“Cultivating Humanities and Arts” Grant, Stanford University (conference and panels to be organized in 2021-2023)

Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education, Stanford University, Course Development Grant (summer and fall 2012, research assistant and web site development funding)

Language, Literature, and Mysticism Research Unit, Stanford University (2010-14, Conference, Course Development, and research funding)

California Interdisciplinary Consortium for Italian Studies Annual Meeting 2009, Stanford University (2009, Conference and research funding)

BOOKS

IN PRINT:

***The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Modern Mourning, and the Reinvention of the Mystical Body*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011.**

This book explores the creation and reception of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier – an Italian, French, and British invention at the end of the First World War – as an emblem for modern mourning, from a cultural, historical, and literary perspective. It draws on literary and filmic evocations of the Unknown Soldier to interpret this memorial's longstanding popularity and politically subversive meanings.

Winner of the 2012 Marraro Award from the Society for Italian Historical Studies, American History Association.

Reviewed in The Journal of Modern Italian Studies, *January 2013*; The Journal of Modern History, *September 2013*; The University of Toronto Quarterly, *2013*; Italian Culture, *March 2014*; The Los Angeles Review of Books, *13 November 2014*.

***Il milite ignoto: Storia e Mito*. Trans. Andrea Capra and Silvia Pontarollo. Gorizia, Italy: LEG, 2021.**

Revised edition and Italian translation of *The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier*.

IN PROGRESS:

***Faith in the Age of Irony*.**

This book examines rewritings of the Biblical story of the resurrection of Lazarus in the modern European context, in plays, novels, and fictionalized memoirs about near-death experiences, dating between 1880 to 2010. It interrogates authors such as Leonid Andreyev, Luigi Pirandello, Graham Greene, André Malraux, and Peter Nádas, in order to explore what, if anything, can replace traditional forms of faith in individual or collective survival beyond death, in a culture dominated by ironic deconstruction. Its central question is thus how modern stories about the afterlife, in literature, science, and popular culture, not only reveal our enduring anxiety about death, but also contain utopian blueprints for how individuals as well as social groups can create enduring meaning from the process of coming to terms with mortality and grief. Such blueprints address directly a core issue in Medical Humanities: What constitutes empathy and what are its goals, when addressing patients with terminal illness and those who grieve their loss? How do we witness their life stories and how does such witnessing connect to our concept of a “good death”?

EDITED VOLUMES

The Sacred in Italian Culture. Vol. 5 of California Italian Studies (CIS). Co-Edited with Simonetta Falasca Zamponi and Jon Snyder. July 2015.

Futurism: An Anthology, ed. Christine Poggi (Visual Arts), Lawrence Rainey (Manifestos), and Laura Wittman (Literary Works) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). Includes Laura Wittman, “Introduction to Part III: Stars-in-Freedom and the Dark Night of Futurism.”

Italy and France: Imagined Geographies, ed. Laura Wittman. Special double issue of the *Romanic Review*, May-November 2006. Includes Laura Wittman, “Introduction: Imagined Geographies.”

ARTICLES IN PEER-REVIEWED JOURNALS

- “**Divine Women and the Poetry of Alda Merini.**” *The Sacred in Italian Culture*. Vol. 5 of California Italian Studies (CIS) (July 2015).
- “**‘Cuore-proiettile’ [projectile-heart]: From Marinetti’s *Mafarka* to World War One and Ungaretti.**” *L’anello che non tiene* 22 (Spring-Fall 2010).
- “**Mystical Insight and Psychoanalysis in the Fin-de-Siècle Novel: Huysmans, Bourget, d’Annunzio.**” *Forum Italicum* 32:1 (Spring 2008): 30-51.
- “**A proposito di un dialogo post-francescano.**” [A propos of a post-Franciscan dialogue] *Yale Italian Poetry*, vol. VII, Fall 2003: 257-67.
- “**Vittorio Sereni o l’istinto della gioia.**” [Vittorio Sereni or the instinct for joy] *Forum Italicum*, Fall 2001: 403-31.
- “**Introduction and Notes to the Selections from the Unpublished Diaries of F. T. Marinetti.**” (with Lawrence Rainey) *Modernism/Modernity* 1, no. 3 (September 1994): 1-25.

CHAPTERS IN PEER-REVIEWED BOOKS

- “**Pirandello, Svevo, Gadda.**” In *The Oxford Handbook of Italian Literature*. Forthcoming in 2024.
- “**Battlefields and Killed in Action: The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and Commemoration.**” In Roberto Parra et. al., eds., *Anthropology of Violent Death: Theoretical Foundations for Forensic Humanitarian Action* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2021).
- “**Pirandello and Religion.**” With Robert Harrison. In *Pirandello in Context*, ed. Patricia Gaborik and Gabriele Pedullà (Cambridge University Press, 2020).
- “**Italian Futurism and the Explosive ‘Now.’**” In *Futures*, ed. Sandra Kemp and Jenny Andersson (Oxford University Press, 2020).
- “**Embodiment and Unconventional Mourning.**” In *The Edinburgh Companion to the First World War and the Arts*. Fall 2017.
- “**Mimetic Desire in Otherworldly Narratives.**” In *Studies in Violence, Mimesis, and Culture*, ed. Heather Webb and Pierpaolo Antonello (Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2015).
- “**Undefended Communication.**” In *Discourse, Boundary, Creation*, ed. Peter Carravetta. New York: Bordighera Press, 2013.
- “**The Visible, Unexposed: Francesco Rosi’s *Salvatore Giuliano* (1961).**” In *Mafia Movies*, ed. Dana Renga (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011)
- “**Omnes velut aqua dilabimur: Antonio Fogazzaro, *The Saint*, and Catholic Modernism.**” In *Italian Modernism*, ed. Mario Moroni and Luca Somigli (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS

- “**The Embodied Mind and Time.**” *Mantis*, Spring 2020.
- “**Fogazzaro tra Occultismo e Modernismo**” [Fogazzaro between Occultism and Modernism]. In *Fogazzaro nel mondo*, ed. Adriana Chemello and Fabio Finotti (Vicenza, Italy: Accademia Olimpica, 2013).

“Eugenio Montale: *Cuttlefish Bones, The Occasions, and The Storm, Etc.*” In *World Literature and Its Times, vol. 7: Italian Literature and Its Times*, ed. Joyce Moss (Santa Monica, CA: Thomson Gale, 2006).

“Giuseppe Ungaretti: *Life of a Man.*” In *World Literature and Its Times, vol. 7: Italian Literature and Its Times*, ed. Joyce Moss (Santa Monica, CA: Thomson Gale, 2006).

“Benedetta's Lyrical Transfiguration of Matter.” *Polytext*, winter 1999-2000: 180-92.

INVITED LECTURES (RECENT)

Series of talks and lectures at the Sorbonne, Paris: “Foundations of Medical Humanities,” “Narrative Medicine” and “Narrative Medicine and Art during Covid-19” March 6-10, 2022.

Series of talks and lectures at the Sorbonne, Paris: “Medical Humanities in the USA,” “Art and Covid,” and “Near-Death Experiences from a Health Humanities Perspective.” October 25-29, 2021.

“History, Identity, and Reciprocity.” Keynote for “Porosity and Reciprocity” Graduate Student Conference, UCLA, 24-25 October 2019.

“Values and Functions of Emotions.” Chaired panel with introduction and commentary on papers. “Emotions in the Therapeutic Relationship” Health Humanities Conference, Sorbonne University, 4-5 September 2019.

“Pirandello’s Legacy.” Panel discussion with Michael Subialka. Italian Cultural Institute, San Francisco, 25 October 2017.

“Modernism and Fascism: Response Paper” Modernist Studies Association Annual Conference, Pasadena, California, 17-10 November 2016.

“Can Death be Re-Enchanted?” Distinguished Careers Institute, Stanford University, April 20, 2016.

“The Return of the Unknown Soldier.” FrIt50. Conference celebrating the 50 years of the French and Italian Department at the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA, October 29-31, 2015.

“Consciousness and the Visionary Mind in Near-Death Experiences.” Interdisciplinary Approaches to Consciousness Series, Stanford University, 9 May 2013.

“Memory, Vision, and the Unmaking of the Self.” Narrative Medicine in the 21st Century Conference. The Ohio State University, 5-6 April 2013.

“Lazarus’ Silence.” *How I Think About Literature* Series, Stanford University, 15 March 2013.

The Mafia in Italy and Beyond.” *Stanford Saturday University*, Fall 2012.

“The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Modern Mourning, and the Reinvention of the Mystical Body.” *Harvard University, De Bosis Colloquium*, Boston, 26 March 2012.

“Personal Mythology, Mass Mourning, and Catholic Modernism During World War One: d’Annunzio, Ungaretti, and Marinetti.” Penn Center for Italian Studies, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 23 February 2012.

“The Unknown Soldier Returns: Mutilation, Spectacle, and the Mystical Body of the Nation,” keynote address at *(Dis)Unity in Italy (Annual Graduate Student Conference at UCLA)*, University of California, Los Angeles, January 27-28, 2012.

“Fogazzaro fra occultismo e modernismo” [Fogazzaro between occultism and modernism], *Fogazzaro nel Mondo*, Vicenza, Italy, 10-11 October 2011.

“Mimetic Desire in Otherworldly Narratives,” *Deceit, Desire and the Novel Fifty Years Later*, Stanford University,

14-15 April 2011.

“Undefended Communication,” *Between Logos and Nomos: Festschrift for Paolo Valesio*, Columbia University, 23 April 2010.

LECTURES (RECENT)

“Religious Umoreismo in Pirandello’s *Lazzaro*,” American Association of Italian Studies Annual Conference, Columbus, Ohio, 19-22 April 2017.

“Near-Death, Grief, and Hope in Historical Perspective.” International Association for Near-Death Studies Conference, Crystal City, Virginia, August 29-September 1, 2013.

“Holism in Italian Philosophy and Neuroscience.” Modern Language Association Conference, Los Angeles, CA, 6-9 January 2011.

“Out-of-Body Experience and Embodied Communication.” *Language, Literature, and Mysticism*, Stanford University, 15-16 October 2010.

MEDIA APPEARANCES

“Near-Death Experiences and their relevance to Health Humanities. *High Theory Podcast*, 2022.
<http://hightheory.net/2023/01/23/near-death-experience/>

“Alessandro Manzoni’s *The Betrothed* and the plague.” *Philosophy Talk*, 2020.
<https://soundcloud.com/philosophytalk/laura-wittman-extended-2020>.

“The Unknown Warrior Podcast.” *Squeaky Pedal*, www.squeakypedal.co.uk Dec. 2020.

“1890s Counterculture.” Launch party for the new journal, *The New Modality*. <http://thenewmodality.com>. 18 May 2019.

“Stanford University’s Teagle Humanities Courses Promote Faculty Graduate Teaching.” Ruth Starkman, Huffington Post Blog Post, 3/27/13. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ruth-starkman/stanford-universitys-teag_b_2918005.html

“What Fiction Can Tell Us About NDEs.” Laura Wittman, Huffington Post Blog Post, 11/28/2012.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/laura-wittman/nde-near-death-experiences-fiction_b_2204774.html

“From the Bible to the lab: Stanford scholar decodes the near-death experience.” By Camille Brown, *Stanford Report*, 10/30/2012. <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2012/october/near-death-experience-103012.html>

“Mourning the Unknown Soldier: An Interview with Laura Wittman.” With Thomas Wisniewski, Harvard University, 5/5/2012. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tT5ErXelNY>

“A Conversation with Robert Harrison on Georges Bataille.” *Entitled Opinions (about Life and Literature)*, with Robert Harrison, on KZSU – 90.1 Stanford University Radio Station. 5 May 2010.

“A Conversation with Robert Harrison on the Poetry of A. R. Ammons.” *Entitled Opinions (about Life and Literature)*, with Robert Harrison, on KZSU – 90.1 Stanford University Radio Station. February 2008.

“A Conversation with Robert Harrison on Michel Tournier’s *Friday*.” *Entitled Opinions (about Life and Literature)*, with Robert Harrison, on KZSU – 90.1 Stanford University Radio Station. 14 September 2005.

CONFERENCES AND LECTURES ORGANIZED (RECENT)

“Art, Grief, and Social Justice in the Wake of Covid-19.” Health Humanities Conference held at Stanford University Medical School, May 18-19, 2023.

Delivered paper: **“Solidarity, Pandemics, and the Narratives of Others.”**

California Interdisciplinary Consortium for Italian Studies, 2019 Annual Meeting. Stanford Humanities Center, Stanford, CA. 8-9 March 2019.

War and the Arts. Organizer. International conference. Stanford Humanities Center, Stanford, CA. 9-10 November 2019.

Franco Baldasso on Curzio Malaparte. Organized visit. 19 April 2018.

Ruth Ben-Ghiat on Empire’s Cinema. Organized visit. 3 October 2017.

Costanza Dopfel: “Fertilissima Firenze.” Organized visit. 10 February 2017.

Stephanie Malia Hom: “The Village in Theory, or The Aftermath of the Camp in Postcolonial Italy.” Organized visit. May 4, 2016.

ACADEMIC AND UNIVERSITY SERVICE AT STANFORD (RECENT)

UNDERGRADUATE ADVISING AND PROGRAM:

Chair of Undergraduate Studies, Division of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages (2023-present)

Co-Chair, Interdisciplinary Minor in Medical Humanities (with Tanya Luhrmann) (2023-present)

Chair, Department of French and Italian (2019-2022)

Acting Chair, Department of French and Italian (2016-2017)

GRADUATE ADVISING AND PROGRAM:

Chair of the Graduate Affairs Committee, DLCL (2015-2022)

Head of the Collaborative Teaching Project, DLCL (2017-2022)

Graduate Advisor, Italian PhD, Department of French and Italian (2015-2022)

Graduate Advisor, Joint French and Italian PhD, Department of French and Italian (2006-2022)

OTHER SERVICE AT STANFORD:

Co-Chair, Geballe Stanford Humanities Center Workshop in Health Humanities. With Professors Tanya Luhrmann and Audrey Shafer. (2020-present)

Committee for the Review of the Undergraduate Major (C-RUM), Chair. (2018-2022)

Member, Medicine and the Muse Steering Committee. (2018-2021)