

Joseph Darda

Professor of English | Michigan State University

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Education

PhD, English, University of Connecticut, 2015

MA, English, University of Connecticut, 2012

BA, *magna cum laude*, English (with distinction), Psychology, University of Washington, 2009

Professional History

Professor of English, Michigan State University, 2025–

Associate Professor of English, Michigan State University, 2023–25

Associate Professor of English, Texas Christian University, 2020–23

Humanities Institute Fellow, University of Connecticut, 2022–23

Assistant Professor of English, Texas Christian University, 2015–20

Mellon Sawyer Seminar Fellow, University of California, Irvine, 2016–17

Publications

Books

Gift and Grit: Race, Sports, and the Construction of Social Debt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press in May 2025.

The Strange Career of Racial Liberalism. Post•45. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2022.

How White Men Won the Culture Wars: A History of Veteran America. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021.

Empire of Defense: Race and the Cultural Politics of Permanent War. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019.

“Athletic Revolutionaries: Jack Scott and the Jocks Who Brought the Left to the Locker Room.” In *progress*.

Edited Book

“Distance: On Running, and Not Running, in America.” Under advanced contract with University of Washington Press.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

“Runner’s Low.” In “Sport, Narrative, and the Past,” edited by and Carlo Rotella and Daniel A. Nathan, 48–54. Special forum, *Journal of Sport History* 52, no. 1 (2025).

“The Mismeasure of Sport: Race and the Science of Athletic Performance.” *differences* 35, no. 1 (2024): 43–73.

With Amira Rose Davis. “The Body Athletic.” In “The Body Issue: Sports and the Politics of Embodiment,” edited by Joseph Darda and Amira Rose Davis. Special issue, *American Quarterly* 75, no. 3 (2023): 443–68.

“The Racialization of the Student-Athlete.” *American Studies* 62, no. 1–2 (2023): 57–86.

“Roberto Clemente on the Black/Brown Color Line.” *Journal of American Studies* 57, no. 3 (2023): 416–42.

“The Great American Baseball Novel: How Literature Invented the National Pastime.” *American Literary History* 34, no. 4 (2022): 1335–57.

“Antiracism as War.” *Representations*, no. 156 (2021): 85–114.

“The Race Novel: An Education.” *MELUS* 45, no. 3 (2020): 1–24.

“The Thin White Line: Veterans and the White Racial Politics of Creative Writing.” *American Literature* 91, no. 4 (2019): 783–810.

“Like a Refugee: Veterans, Vietnam, and the Making of a False Equivalence.” *American Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (2019): 83–104. Constance M. Rourke Prize finalist (best article in *American Quarterly*).

“Military Whiteness.” *Critical Inquiry* 45, no. 1 (2018): 76–96.

“Dispatches from the Drug Wars: Ishmael Reed, Oscar Zeta Acosta, and the Viet Cong of America.” *Modern Fiction Studies* 64, no. 1 (2018): 79–103.

“Kicking the Vietnam Syndrome Narrative: Human Rights, the Nayirah Testimony, and the Gulf War.” *American Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (2017): 71–92.

“The Ethnicization of Veteran America: Larry Heinemann, Toni Morrison, and Military Whiteness after Vietnam.” *Contemporary Literature* 57, no. 3 (2016): 410–40.

“The Exceptionalist Optics of 9/11 Photography.” *Journal of American Studies* 50, no. 1 (2016): 185–204.

“The Literary Afterlife of the Korean War.” *American Literature* 87, no. 1 (2015): 79–105.

“Airport Memory: Recalling Vietnam from the Terminal in Andrew Pham’s Travel Writing.” *Criticism* 57, no. 2 (2015): 191–210.

“Universality at War: Race, Nation, and Communism in Chester Himes’s *If He Hollers Let Him Go*.” *African American Review* 48, no. 1–2 (2015): 157–73.

“The Visual Apologetics of Philip Roth’s Pastoral America.” *Philip Roth Studies* 11, no. 2 (2015): 77–94.

“MLK at the LA Riots: Civil Rights, Memory, and Neoliberalism in Charles Johnson’s *Dreamer*.” *Twentieth-Century Literature* 60, no. 2 (2014): 197–221.

“Precarious World: Rethinking Global Fiction in Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.” *Mosaic* 47, no. 3 (2014): 107–22.

“The Sacrificial Enterprise: Negotiating Mutilation in W. D. Howells’s *A Hazard of New Fortunes*.” *American Literary Realism* 46, no. 3 (2014): 210–29.

“Graphic Ethics: Theorizing the Face in Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis*.” *College Literature* 40, no. 2 (2013): 31–51.

Book Chapter

“The Whiteness of Blue Lives: Race in American Policing.” In *A Field Guide to White Supremacy*, edited by Kathleen Belew and Ramón A. Gutiérrez, 304–11. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021.

Special Issues

Editor with Amira Rose Davis. “The Body Issue: Sports and the Politics of Embodiment.” Special issue, *American Quarterly* 75, no. 3 (2023).

Editor with Donald E. Pease. “Literary Counterhistories of US Exceptionalism.” Special issue, *LIT: Literature Interpretation Theory* 25, no. 2 (2014).

Book Reviews

Review of *Contemporary Drift: Genre, Historicism, and the Problem of the Present*, by Theodore Martin. *Modern Fiction Studies* 65, no. 2 (2019): 385–88.

Review of *The Racial Imaginary of the Cold War Kitchen: From Sokol’niki Park to Chicago’s South Side*, by Kate A. Baldwin; and *Reading America: Citizenship, Democracy, and Cold War Literature*, by Kristin L. Matthews. *American Literature* 90, no. 3 (2018): 664–66.

Review of *Whiteness on the Border: Mapping the U.S. Racial Imagination in Brown and White*, by Lee Bebout; and *Playing in the White: Black Writers, White Subjects*, by Stephanie Li. *Critical Inquiry* 44, no. 4 (2018): 791–93.

Review of *Cold War Friendships: Korea, Vietnam, and Asian American Literature*, by Josephine Nock-Hee Park. *MELUS* 42, no. 2 (2017): 203–5.

Review of *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature*, by Rebecca L. Walkowitz. *Modern Fiction Studies* 63, no. 1 (2017): 169–71.

Review of *Distant Wars Visible: The Ambivalence of Witnessing*, by Wendy Kozol. *Critical Inquiry* 42, no. 3 (2016): 714–16.

Review of *Humanitarian Violence: The U.S. Deployment of Diversity*, by Neda Atanasoski. *MELUS* 40, no. 3 (2015): 205–7.

“The Global Remaking of the American Political Novel.” Review of *Toward the Geopolitical Novel: U.S. Fiction in the Twenty-First Century*, by Caren Irr. *Contemporary Literature* 55, no. 2 (2014): 430–37.

Review of *No Accident, Comrade: Chance and Design in Cold War American Narratives*, by Steven Belletto. *Modern Fiction Studies* 60, no. 2 (2014): 390–93.

“Old Left, New Class: Literary Anxiety in the Consumers’ Republic.” Review of *Fantasies of the New Class: Ideologies of Professionalism in Post–World War II American Fiction*, by Stephen Schryer; *Hip Figures: A Literary History of the Democratic Party*, by Michael Szalay; and *American Night: The Literary Left in the Era of the Cold War*, by Alan M. Wald. *Minnesota Review*, no. 82 (2014): 151–60.

“When Is Postwar?” Review of *War Time: An Idea, Its History, Its Consequences*, by Mary L. Dudziak; *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government*, by James T. Sparrow; and *How We Forgot the Cold War: A Historical Journey across America*, by Jon Wiener. *American Quarterly* 65, no. 4 (2013): 639–48.

Review of *Constructing the Enemy: Empathy/ Antipathy in U.S. Literature and Law*, by Rajini Srikanth. *MELUS* 38, no. 3 (2013): 175–76.

Public Writing

“Dunk Days: On Theresa Runstedtler’s *Black Ball*.” *Los Angeles Review of Books*, March 19, 2023.
<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/dunk-days-on-theresa-runstedtlers-black-ball/>.

“The Racial Politics of National Defense.” *Los Angeles Review of Books*, June 15, 2019.
<https://blog.lareviewofbooks.org/essays/racial-politics-national-defense/>.

“The Philosophy of Creative Writing.” *Los Angeles Review of Books*, February 25, 2019.
<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/philosophy-creative-writing/>.

“The Thin White Line.” *Los Angeles Review of Books*, November 19, 2018.
<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/the-thin-white-line/>.

“The Surprising Roots of Recent White Extremism.” *Los Angeles Review of Books*, April 9, 2018.
<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/the-surprising-roots-of-white-extremism/>.

“Post-Traumatic Whiteness: How Vietnam Veterans Became the Basis for a New White Identity Politics.” *Los Angeles Review of Books*, November 21, 2017.
<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/post-traumatic-whiteness-how-vietnam-veterans-became-the-basis-for-a-new-white-identity-politics/>.

“A New *New* White Man: Toni Morrison’s *Playing in the Dark* Turns Twenty-Five.” *Los Angeles Review of Books*, August 17, 2017. <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/a-new-new-white-man-toni-morrison-playing-in-the-dark-turns-25>.

“How America Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Drone.” *Austin American-Statesman*, August 2, 2017. <http://www.mystatesman.com/news/opinion/commentary-how-america-learned-stop-worrying-and-love-the-drone/vmNttxMpgnzZC2UhOTf45K/>.

“Trump Taps a Long U.S. Cultural History of Pitting Immigrants against Veterans.” *Dallas Morning News*, July 10, 2017.
<https://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/commentary/2017/07/10/trump-taps-long-us-cultural-history-pitting-immigrants-veterans>.

Presentations

Invited Talks

“Civil Rights without Human Rights.” Rose Gladney Lecture for Justice and Social Change, University of Alabama, March 2023.

“Saturday Night Lights: The Integration of College Football and the End of the Full Ride.” AddRan Distinguished Faculty Lecture, Texas Christian University, March 2023.

“Owning Le’Veon Bell and Other White Fantasies.” University of Connecticut Humanities Institute, November 2022.

“Racial Politics and Veteran America.” War Studies Collaborative, Fordham University, April 2022.

“The Whiteness of Blue Lives: Race in American Policing.” Conversations on Race and Policing, California State University, San Bernardino, November 2021.

“Antiracism as Education: How Americans Learned to Read for Racial Change.” Elon University, September 2021.

“Is There An Antiwar Literature?” Bastian Lecture, Centre College, September 2020.

“Like a Refugee: Veterans, Vietnam, and the Making of a False Equivalence.” Critical Voices Series, University of California, Irvine, June 2017.

“Defense in the Fifth Domain.” Interdisciplinary Center for the Scientific Study of Ethics and Morality, University of California, Irvine, March 2017.

“Kicking the Vietnam Syndrome with Human Rights.” University of Connecticut, April 2016.

Conferences

“Glimpses of an Athletic Revolution: The Campus Sports Novel That Susan Choi Didn’t Write.”
Modern Language Association, Toronto, January 2026.

“You Say You Want an Institution: The Athletic Revolution Goes to College—and Flunks Out.”
American Studies Association, San Juan, November 2025.

Chair. “Methods Through the Mayhem: Doing Critical Sports Studies in Precarious Times.”
American Studies Association, San Juan, November 2025.

“Side Hustle: Athletic Labor, NIL, and the No-Pay University.” Modern Language Association,
New Orleans, January 2025.

“I Don’t Jog, I Run: Jack Scott and the Demise of an Athletic Revolution.” American Studies
Association, Baltimore, November 2024.

“Colonize Your Diet: *Born to Run* and the Selling of the Indigenous Metabolism.” Modern Language
Association, Philadelphia, January 2024.

“Let Them Eat Passion: College Athletics and the No-Pay University.” American Studies
Association, Montreal, November 2023.

Cochair with Amira Rose Davis. “Sports and the Politics of Embodiment: A Roundtable on the
American Quarterly Special Issue.” American Studies Association, Montreal, November 2023.

“Athlete Economies: Business Literature, Financialization, and the Birth of Sports Management.”
American Literature Association, Boston, May 2023.

“Antiracist Reading at the End of Liberal Time.” Modern Language Association, San Francisco,
January 2023.

“The Dumb Jock.” Modern Language Association, San Francisco, January 2023.

“The Jock Caucus: The White Ex-Athlete Goes to Washington.” American Studies Association,
New Orleans, November 2023.

“The Racial Invention of the Student-Athlete.” Postwar Faculty Colloquium, Denton, TX, April
2022.

“How White Liberals Learned to Read.” Modern Language Association, Washington, DC, January
2022.

“A Connecticut Yankee on King Arthur’s Diamond: Mark Twain, Baseball, and the Making of a
White Reunion.” Modern Language Association, Washington, DC, January 2022.

“The Race Novel: An Education.” American Studies Association, San Juan, October 2021.

- “White Reunion: Vietnam Veterans and the Racial Politics of Post–Civil Rights War Remembrance,” Modern Language Association, Toronto, January 2021.
- “Veteran America: *Bakke*, War Stories, and the Memory of Vietnam,” Modern Language Association, Toronto, January 2021.
- “The Race Novel: An Education.” American Studies Association, Baltimore, November 2020 (canceled).
- “The Race Front: Ruth Benedict, Gunnar Myrdal, and the Strange Career of Racial Liberalism.” Postwar Faculty Colloquium, Denton, TX, March 2020 (canceled).
- “Operation Homegoing: Tourism and American Veterans in Postwar Vietnam.” Modern Language Association, Seattle, January 2020.
- “Two Appeals to the World! W. E. B. Du Bois, Harry Truman, and the Turn from Human to Civil Rights.” Modern Language Association, Seattle, January 2020.
- “White Liberal, Black Mask.” American Studies Association, Honolulu, November 2019.
- “Whiteness on the Edge of Town: Bruce Springsteen and the Racial Politics of Heartland Rock.” Postwar Faculty Colloquium, Denton, TX, March 2019.
- “The Philosophy of Creative Writing.” Modern Language Association, Chicago, January 2019.
- “The Thin White Line.” American Studies Association, Atlanta, November 2018.
- “MFA vs. PFC: Creative Writing and the War Story.” Postwar Faculty Colloquium, Denton, TX, April 2018.
- “The Veteran and the Refugee.” Modern Language Association, New York, January 2018.
- “A New *New* Normal: The Distinguished Warfare Medal and the Cultural Politics of Permanent War.” Modern Language Association, New York, January 2018.
- “Defense in the Fifth Domain.” American Studies Association, Chicago, November 2017.
- “Like a Refugee: Veterans, Vietnam, and the Making of a False Equivalence.” Association for Asian American Studies, Portland, OR, April 2017.
- “Military Whiteness.” American Studies Association, Denver, November 2016.
- “The Craft of Counterinsurgent Whiteness.” American Literature Association, San Francisco, May 2016.
- “The Ethnicization of Veteran America: Larry Heinemann, Toni Morrison, and Military Whiteness after Vietnam.” American Comparative Literature Association, Cambridge, MA, March 2016.

- “Human Rights, the Nayirah Testimony, and the Gulf War.” American Literature Association, Boston, May 2015.
- “The Exceptionalist Optics of 9/11 Photography.” American Comparative Literature Association, Seattle, March 2015.
- “Dispatches from the Drug Wars.” American Studies Association, Los Angeles, November 2014.
- “Antiwar Liberalism against Liberal War.” Futures of American Studies Institute, Hanover, NH, June 2014.
- “The Literary Afterlife of the Korean War.” American Literature Association, Washington, DC, May 2014.
- “Airport Memory: Recalling Vietnam from the Terminal in Andrew Pham’s Travel Writing.” American Comparative Literature Association, New York, March 2014.
- “Universality at War: Race, Nation, and Communism in Chester Himes’s *If He Hollers Let Him Go*.” Society for the Study of Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States, Oklahoma City, March 2014.
- “The Sacrificial Enterprise: Negotiating Mutilation in William Dean Howells’s *A Hazard of New Fortunes*.” American Literature Association, Boston, May 2013.
- “MLK at the LA Riots: Civil Rights, Memory, and Neoliberalism in Charles Johnson’s *Dreamer*.” Society for the Study of Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States, Pittsburgh, March 2013.
- “Graphic Ethics: Theorizing the Face in Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis*.” Modern Language Association, Boston, January 2013.
- “When Theory of Mind Fails: Race and Folk Psychology in William Faulkner’s *Light in August*.” Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association, Boston, April 2012.
- “Iconographic Immersion in Jonathan Safran Foer’s *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*.” American Comparative Literature Association, Providence, March–April 2012.

Courses Taught

Michigan State University

Graduate

English 826: Special Topics Seminar

English 818: Studies in Genre and Media

Undergraduate

English 323: Readings in Nonfiction

English 320A: Methodologies of Literary History: Genre
English 320D: Methodologies of Literary History: History and Theory of Creative Writing
English 210: Introduction to Literary Studies
Integrative Studies in the Arts and Humanities 207: Literatures, Cultures, Identities
Journalism 492: Journalism Special Topics

Texas Christian University

Graduate

English 60143: Methods in American Studies
English 55763: Race and Gender in American Literature
English 55213: Seminar in American Literature since 1900
English 55003: Introduction to Graduate Studies and the Profession of English
Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies 70001: Portfolio

Undergraduate

English 40753: Seminar in American Studies
English 40683: Studies in Twentieth-Century American Literature
English 40663: Transnational American Literature
English 30593: Post-1945 American Literature
English 30853: Asian American Literature
English 30693: US Multiethnic Literature
English 20553: Introduction to American Studies
English 20523: Sports and American Literature
English 20503: Major American Writers
Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies 20003: Seminar in Critical Race Theory

University of California, Irvine

Undergraduate

Literary Journalism 103: Topics in Literary Journalism

University of Connecticut

Undergraduate

English 2203: American Literature since 1880
English 1011: Seminar in Writing through Literature
English 1010: Seminar in Academic Writing

Service

Professional

Board of Managing Editors, *American Quarterly*, 2024–

Michigan State University

Critical University Studies Series Coordinator, Department of English, 2025–26
Policy Committee, Department of English, 2024–
Literary Studies Now Series Coordinator, Department of English, 2024–25
Leadership Fellows Program, College of Liberal Arts, 2024–25
Graduate Committee, Department of English, 2023–24
Associate Member, Equity and Justice Committee, Department of English, Spring 2024
College Graduate Council, College of Arts and Letters, Fall 2023

Texas Christian University

Core Faculty, Department of Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies, 2015–23
Associate Faculty, Department of Women and Gender Studies, 2015–23
Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies, 2021–22
Executive Committee, Department of Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies, 2021–22
Personnel Advisory Committee, Department of Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies, 2020–22
Faculty Search Committee (Department Chair), Department of Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies, 2021–22
Curriculum Committee, Department of Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies, 2017–21
Graduate Pedagogy Mentor, Department of English, 2020–21
Undergraduate Studies Committee, Department of English, 2015–16, 2019–20
Undergraduate Council, College of Liberal Arts, 2017–20
Diversity Taskforce, Department of English, 2018–19
Faculty Search Committee (Black Studies), Department of English, 2017–18

Awards

College of Liberal Arts Distinguished Faculty Lecture, Texas Christian University, 2023
Humanities Institute Fellowship, University of Connecticut, 2022–23
Graduate Faculty of the Year Award, Department of English, Texas Christian University, 2022
CHOICE Outstanding Academic Title (for *How White Men Won the Culture Wars*), 2022
Deans' Research and Creativity Award finalist, Texas Christian University, 2021
Constance M. Rourke Prize finalist (best article in *American Quarterly*), American Studies Association, 2020
Research Award, Department of English, Texas Christian University, 2020
Junior Faculty Summer Research Program Grant, Texas Christian University, 2019
OpEd Project Fellowship, University of California, Merced, 2017
Mellon Sawyer Seminar Fellowship, University of California, Irvine, 2016–17
First Book Institute Fellowship, Pennsylvania State University, 2016
Junior Faculty Summer Research Program Grant, Texas Christian University, 2016

Professional Associations

American Studies Association
Modern Language Association