April 2026

PETER COVIELLO

curriculum vitae

UIC English, 2027
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Employment

Professor and Head of English, University of Illinois, at Chicago, 2014-present
Head of English, 2022-present
Director of Graduate Studies, 2018-2021

Asst., Assoc., and Professor of English, Bowdoin College, 1998-2014
Chair, Department of English, 2010-2012
Acting Director, Program in Africana Studies, 2006-2008
Chair, Program in Gay and Lesbian Studies, 2002-2006 (co-chair, '02-3)

Visiting Associate Professor of English, Northwestern University, 2009

Education

Cornell University, 1993-1998
Ph. D. in English, May 1998 (M.A. 1996)
Northwestern University, 1989-1993
B.A. with Highest Distinction, 1993; with Honors in English and in Poetry

Books

Is There God After Prince?: Dispatches from an Age of Last Things (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2023).
–Selected as a 2023 notable book by *The Millions, Lambda Literary Review*, the Seminary-Coop Bookstore, Downbound Books, the Chicago *Tribune*

Vineland Reread (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), inaugural volume in the "Rereadings" series.
–Selected as "New & Noteworthy" title, the *New York Times*, Jan. 2021

Make Yourselves Gods: Mormons and The Unfinished Business of American Secularism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), in the "Class 200: New Studies in Religion" series.
–Finalist for the 2020 John Whitmer Historical Association Best Book Prize

Long Players: A Love Story in Eighteen Songs (New York: Penguin Books, 2018).
–Selected for *ARTFORUM's* Ten Best Books of 2018

Tomorrow's Parties: Sex and the Untimely in Nineteenth-Century America (New York: New York University Press, 2013), in the "America and the Long 19th Century" series.
–Finalist for a 2013 Lambda Literary Award in LGBT Studies
–Alan Bray Memorial Book Prize (honorable mention), 2014

Intimacy in America: Dreams of Affiliation in Antebellum Literature (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

Editions:
Billy Budd, Bartleby, and Other Stories, by Herman Melville (New York: Penguin Classics, 2016).

Leaves of Grass and Selected Poems and Prose, by Walt Whitman (New York: Penguin Books Drop Cap Series, 2014).

Memoranda During the War, by Walt Whitman (New York: Oxford UP, 2004).

In Progress:
After Ahab, under contract with the University of Chicago Press.

Awards and Honors

"Maybe Don't Talk to the *New York Times* About Zohran Mamdani" selected by Masha Gessen for *The Best American Essays*, 2026
The Maxine and Jonathan Marshall Lecture on Religion and Conflict, Arizona State University, 2024
The John Whitmer Historical Association Best Book Prize, Finalist (*Make Yourselves Gods*), 2020
The Heller Visiting Fellow, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, 2019
Member, The Institute for Advanced Study, at Princeton, School of Social Science, 2017-18
Fellowship, The Society for the Humanities, Cornell University, 2017 (declined)
Fellowship, The Institute for the Humanities, UIC, 2017 (declined)
Hurst Family Visiting Professorship, Washington University at St. Louis, 2015
The Edith Baine Lecture at the University of Mississippi, 2015
Alan Bray Memorial Book Prize (from the GL/Q caucus), Honorable Mention (*Tomorrow's Parties*), 2014
Lambda Literary Award in LGBT Studies, Finalist (*Tomorrow's Parties*) 2013
Faculty Leave Fellowship, Bowdoin College, 2008-09
Instructor for "Hawthorne and Longfellow: A Literary Friendship," an NEH Institute at Bowdoin College, Summer 2006
The Karofsky Faculty Encore Lecture Prize, Bowdoin College, 2004, and 1999
The Kenan Fellowship, Bowdoin College, 2001-03
Moses Coit Tyler Prize in American Studies for "Intimate Property: Race and the Civics of Self-Relation," Cornell University, 1997
Clark Distinguished Teaching Award, Cornell University, 1997
Corson-Bishop Poetry Prize, Cornell University, 1997 (second prize, 1996)
Mellon Dissertation Fellowship, 1997

Articles, Chapters, Introductions (*=blind peer review)

"What Is Antifascist Theory?" *Critical Inquiry*, forthcoming Winter 2027.

"Infrastructures of Escape," *Film Quarterly* 79:3 (2026), 32-38.
(See also "'I hope *One Battle After Another* wins a million awards': A Q&A with Peter Coviello", University of California Press Blog, 26 February 2026, https://www.ucpress.edu/blog-posts/i-hope-one-battle-after-another-wins-a-million-awards-a-q-a-with-peter-coviello)

"Apocalypse Later: How the World Used to End," *Parapraxis* 5 (2025), 256-263.
https://www.parapraxismagazine.com/articles/apocalypse-later

"Have Joy: Queer Theory and Mormon Studies," solicited "disciplinary essay" for *Mormon Studies Review* 12 (2025): 57-69.

"Between Us: A (Brief) Poetics of Queer Historiography," in *The Routledge Companion to Queer Literary Studies*, ed. Melissa E. Sanchez (New York: Routledge, 2024), 71-82.

*"Did God Write *Moby-Dick*?" for "Talking About Religion" special issue, ed. Charles LaPorte and Mark Knight, *MLQ - Modern Language Quarterly* 83:4 (December 2022): 443-459.

"Secularism, Race, Sex," in *American Literature in Transition, 1876-1910*, ed. Lindsay V. Reckson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 59-77.

"Remediations in an Emergency," *American Literary History* 34:1 (Spring 2022): 77-90.

"Mormon Dialectics," *American Religion*, concluding essay in the "Mormons, Race, and the History of Sexuality" dossier (responses to *Tabernacles of Clay*, by Taylor Petrey, and *Make Yourselves Gods*), April 15, 2022
https://www.american-religion.org/mormons-race-sexuality/coviello

"Empire, Biopolitics, Secularism," *Political Theology*, for "Body Politics," a forum on Jasbir Puar's *The Right to Maim*, May 25, 2021.
https://politicaltheology.com/empire-biopolitics-secularism/

"So-Called Normal People," *Post45*, "Reading Sally Rooney" cluster, ed. Gloria Fisk, June 15, 2020.
http://post45.org/2020/06/so-called-normal-people/

"Violence and Thinking about Violence," *Political Theology*, for "Laws, Attention, and the Question of Violence: A Roundtable on Thoreau," April 16, 2020.
https://politicaltheology.com/violence-and-thinking-about-violence/

"Phoebe Bridgers, 'Motion Sickness,' SZA, 'Love Galore,'" *ASAP Journal*, "Crisis Harmonies" cluster, ed. Michael Boyce Gillespie, April 2, 2020.
http://asapjournal.com/phoebe-bridgers-motion-sickness-sza-love-galore/

"Secularism and Viable Life," *American Quarterly* 71:3 (September 2019): 889-894. Special issue on "Origins of Biopolitics in the Americas," ed. Greta LaFleur and Kyla Schuller.

"How the Mormons Became White: Scripture, Sex, Sovereignty," in *Americanist Approaches to The Book of Mormon*, ed. Elizabeth Fenton and Jared Hickman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 259-276.

"Hollow: 'Cactus Tree' and the Signs of Freedom," in *Joni Mitchell: New Critical Readings*, ed. Ruth Charnock (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 185-200.

"Introduction: Relation, Exception, and the Horizons of Critique in Jasbir Puar's Work," co-authored with Hentyle Yapp, *Social Text: Periscope*, October 25, 2018.
https://socialtextjournal.org/periscope_article/introduction-relation-exception-and-the-horizons-of-critique-in-jasbir-puars-work/

"Volatile Signs: Feminism, Secularism, Political Economy," *The Immanent Frame* (in the "Sex, Secularism, and Femonationalism" forum), May 18, 2018.
https://tif.ssrc.org/2018/05/18/volatile-signs/

"Civil War," in *Walt Whitman in Context*, ed. Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 269-277.

*"The Wild Not Less Than the Good: Thoreau, Sex, Biopower," *GLQ* 23-4 (Fall 2017): 509-532.

"Plural: Mormon Polygamy and the Biopolitics of Secularism," *History of the Present: A Journal of Critical History* 7:2 (Fall 2017): 219-241.

"A Conversation with Peter Coviello," conducted by Hélène Quanquin and Cécile Roudeau, *European Journal of American Studies* 11:1 (2016), document 7, http://ejas.revues.org/11532

"Peculiar Tendernesses: *Cecil Dreeme* and the Queer Nineteenth Century," introduction to *Cecil Dreeme*, by Theodore Winthrop (1861; New York: New York University Press, 2016), ix-xx.

"Introduction," in *Billy Budd, Bartleby, and Other Stories* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2016), vii-xxviii.

"Difficult Love," *The LARB Quarterly Journal*, "The NO CRISIS Issue" (Fall 2015), 30-35.

"Probable Chaos" (part of "Gimme Gimme This, Gimme Gimme That: Listening to, with, and through José Muñoz," [328-342]), *JPMS: Journal of Popular Music Studies* 27:3 (September 2015), 332-334.

"Introduction: After the Postsecular," co-authored with Jared Hickman, *American Literature* 86:4 (December 2014): 645-654.

"Homobonding and the Nation," in *The Cambridge History of Gay and Lesbian Literature*, ed. Mikko Tuhkanen and Ellen McCallum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 241-53.

"What Came Before," in *Unsettled States: Nineteenth-Century American Literary Studies*, ed. Dana Luciano and Ivy Wilson (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 298-306.

"Love in the Ruins" in *Should I Go to Graduate School?: 41 Answers to an Impossible Question*, ed. Jessica Loudis et al (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 105-109.

*"The Pistol in the Suitcase: Motive, Temporality, Queer Youth Suicide," *ESC: English Studies in Canada* 38:3-4 (2013): 63-82. Special double issue entitled "Childhood and Its Discontents," ed. Natasha Hurley.

"Alone and In Company: Some Pleasures of the Text," *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists* 1:1 (Spring 2013): 6-14.

*"Whitman's Children," *PMLA* 128:1 (2013): 73-86.

"Never the Usual Terms: A Song for Twenty-First Century Occupations," co-authored with Elizabeth Freeman, *Social Text: Periscope*, March 28, 2013.
http://www.socialtextjournal.org/periscope/2013/03/never-the-usual-terms-a-song-for-21st-century-occupations.php

"Call Me Morbid," *JPMS: Journal of Popular Music Studies* 23:4 (Winter 2011): 381-392.

"Battle-Music: Melville and the Forms of War," in *Melville and Aesthetics*, ed. Geoff Sanborn and Samuel Otter (New York: Palgrave, 2011), 193-212.

"Desire My Pilot Is," in *Shakesqueer: The Queer Companion to The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. Madhavi Menon (Duke University Press, 2010), 278-285.

*"The Sexual Child; or, This American Life," *Raritan* 27:4 (Spring 2008): 134-157.

"How to Do Things with Joy," *theory@buffalo* 12 (2008): 61-85. Special issue on "**(**Re)Visions of Excess: Language of the Outside"

"World Enough: Sex and Time in Recent Queer Studies," *GLQ* 13:2-3 (Spring/Summer 2007): 387-401. Special double issue on "Queer Temporalities," ed. Elizabeth Freeman.

"Whitman at War," in *Memoranda During the War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), ix-liv.

*"Poe In Love: Pedophilia, Morbidity, and the Logic of Slavery," *ELH – English Literary History* 70:3 (Fall 2003): 875-901.

*"Intimacy and Affliction: DuBois, Race, and Psychoanalysis," *MLQ - Modern Language Quarterly* 64:1 (March 2003): 1-32.

*"Agonizing Affection: Affect and Nation in Early America," *Early American Literature* 37:3 (Fall 2002): 439-468.

*"The American in Charity: 'Benito Cereno' and Gothic Anti-Sentimentality," *Studies in American Fiction* 30:2 (Autumn 2002): 155-180.
*(Reprinted in *Short Story Criticism* [Thompson Gale Press, 2007])

*"Intimate Nationality: Anonymity and Attachment in Whitman," *American Literature* 73:1 (March 2001): 85-119.

"Apocalypse From Now On," in *Queer Frontiers: Millennial Geographies, Genders, and Generations*, ed. Joseph Allen Boone, et al (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), 39-63.

Essays

"Maybe Don't Talk to the *New York Times* About Zohran Mamdani," forthcoming in *The Best American Essays*, ed. Masha Gessen and Kim Dana Kupperman (HarperCollins, 2026).

"Maybe Don't Talk to the *New York Times* About Zohran Mamdani," *LitHub*, November 7, 2025.
https://lithub.com/maybe-dont-talk-to-the-new-york-times-about-zohran-mamdani/
linked also in: *Longreads* (https://longreads.com/2025/11/07/maybe-dont-talk-to-the-new-york-times-about-zohran-mamdani), *The Guardian* (UK) (https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/nov/14/climate-crisis-communication-super-rich), and *Daily Kos* (https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2025/11/9/2352910/-Prof-Peter-Coviello-shreds-the-NY-Times)

"Memos of Blood and Fire," *N+1*, March 7, 2025.
https://www.nplusonemag.com/online-only/online-only/memos-of-blood-and-fire/

"A Brief Queer History of Going to Bed with Your Hot Friends," *Public Books*, February 27, 2025.
https://www.publicbooks.org/a-brief-queer-history-of-going-to-bed-with-your-hot-friends/

"Praisesongs, Descants, Whatever," *Chicago Review*, in the "Memoir" dossier, January 28, 2022.
https://www.chicagoreview.org/praisesongs-descants-whatever/

"Done, and Done," *Paideuma* 46, 2019 [2021]: 207-212.

"Anthony and Carmela Get Vaccinated", *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, April 19, 2021.
https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/anthony-and-carmela-get-vaccinated/

"The Novel and the Secret Police," *Boston Review*, September 11, 2020.
http://bostonreview.net/arts-society/peter-coviello-pynchon-and-coming-police-state
"Our Man Foucault," *BullyBloggers*, June 29, 2020.
https://bullybloggers.wordpress.com/2020/06/29/our-man-foucault-by-peter-coviello
"Mercy Hours," *Boston Review*, April 10, 2020.
http://bostonreview.net/arts-society/peter-coviello-mercy-hours
"Secularism's Saints," *Boston Review*, October 29, 2019.
https://bostonreview.net/gender-sexuality/peter-coviello-women-mormons-secularism
"Struggles of the Nineteenth Century Persist for the Mormons," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, October 15, 2019, A11.
https://www.sltrib.com/opinion/commentary/2019/10/15/peter-coviello-struggles/
"Where I Want to Be," *Hyped on Melancholy*, June 28, 2019.
https://www.hypedonmelancholy.com/pete
"Killing Joke," *Public Books*, April 22, 2019.
https://www.publicbooks.org/killing-joke/
"The Last Psychedelic Band," *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, March 9, 2019.
https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/the-last-psychedelic-band/
"Encores of Love and Listening: Sarah Blackwood and Peter Coviello Discuss *Long Players*," *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, August 26, 2018.
https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/encores-of-love-and-listening-sarah-blackwood-and-peter-coviello-discuss-long-players/
"I Was Her Stepdad. Now I'm Just Pete," *Elle*, June 14, 2018.
https://www.elle.com/life-love/a21350189/what-do-you-call-an-ex-stepdad/
"Playlist," *Largehearted Boy* (essay and playlist for *Long Players*), June 19, 2018.
http://www.largeheartedboy.com/blog/archive/2018/06/peter_coviellos.html
"Graceless," *The Immanent Frame* (in the "Is This All There Is?" forum), January 8, 2018.
https://tif.ssrc.org/2018/01/08/graceless/
"Say Chi City," *Public Books*, November 22, 2017.
http://www.publicbooks.org/say-chi-city/
"Same Drugs," *Avidly*, June 27, 2017.
http://avidly.lareviewofbooks.org/2017/06/27/same-drugs/
"Thugs Scum Punks Freaks," *Avidly*, February 23, 2017.
http://avidly.lareviewofbooks.org/2017/02/23/getting-us-through-thugs-scum-punks-freaks/
"My Thoughts Are Murder," *Avidly*, December 9, 2016.
http://avidly.lareviewofbooks.org/2016/12/09/my-thoughts-are-murder/
linked in *Longreads* "Top Five Longreads of the Week," December 23, 2016
https://longreads.com/2016/12/23/the-top-5-longreads-of-the-week-149/
"Is There God After Prince?" *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, April 22, 2016.
https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/is-there-god-after-prince/
"Our Noise," *Avidly*, April 18, 2016.
http://avidly.lareviewofbooks.org/2016/04/18/our-noise/
"Ghost Stories; or, What To Do With the Words You Do Not Have," *Avidly*, June 25, 2015.
http://avidly.lareviewofbooks.org/2015/06/25/ghost-stories-or-what-to-do-with-the-words-you-do-not-have/
linked in the *New York Times* "What We're Reading Now," 3 July 2015.
http://news.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/07/03/what-were-reading-69/
"Difficult Love," *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, February 1, 2015.
http://lareviewofbooks.org/essay/difficult-love
On Chrissie Hynde's cover of Radiohead's "Creep," Critical Karaoke 2014 dossier, *The Journal of Popular Music Studies*, October 2014.
http://popmusicstudies.org/ck/?p=21

"Reading Jeter's Joy," *Avidly*, September 28, 2014.
http://avidly.lareviewofbooks.org/2014/09/28/reading-jeters-joy/
"… and Circumstance," *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, May 19, 2014.
https://lareviewofbooks.org/essay/circumstance
"What Like Abandonment" (response to John Modern's "Vinyl Prayers"), *Reverberations*, Jan 10, 2014.
http://forums.ssrc.org/ndsp/2014/01/10/what-like-abandonment/
"Easy," *Avidly*, June 27, 2013.
https://avidly.lareviewofbooks.org/2013/06/27/easy/
"Love in the Ruins; or, Should I Go to Grad School?" *Avidly*, November 13, 2012.
https://avidly.lareviewofbooks.org/2012/11/13/love-in-the-ruins-or-should-i-go-to-grad-school/
"The Talk That Does Not Do Nothing," *The Believer* 10:6 (July-August 2012): 7-11.
"Call Me Always," *Avidly*, June 26, 2012.
https://avidly.lareviewofbooks.org/2012/06/26/call-me-always/
"Talk, Talk," *Frieze* 148 (June-July-August 2012): 23-24.

Special Issues

Co-editor, with Hentyle Yapp, of "Jasbir Puar: From *Terrorist Assemblages* to *The Right to Maim*," a *Social Text: Periscope* dossier, October 2018.
https://socialtextjournal.org/periscope_topic/jasbir-puar-from-terrorist-assemblages-to-the-right-to-maim/
Co-editor, with Jared Hickman, of "After the Postsecular," a special issue of *American Literature* 86:4 (December 2014).

Reviews

"The Secular Alibi" (review of Joan Wallach Scott's *Sex and Secularism*), in *Tocqueville 21* June 18, 2018
https://tocqueville21.com/focus/the-secular-alibi/
Review of Daniel Kane's *"Do You Have A Band?": Poetry and Punk Rock in New York City*, in *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 30:1-2 (March-June 2018): 183-186.
Review of *Collected Poems: Joseph Ceravolo*, in *Italian Americana* 32:1 (Winter 2014): 109-10.
Review of Christopher Castiglia's *Interior States: Institutional Consciousness and the Inner Life of Democracy in the Antebellum U.S.*, in *MLQ* 71:3 (September 2010): 374-376.
Review of Justus Nieland's *Feeling Modern*, Leo Bersani and Adam Phillips's *Intimacies*, and Lauren Berlant's *The Female Complaint*, in *American Literature* 81:2 (June 2009): 407-9.
"Real Men" (review of David A. Gerstner, *Manly Arts: Masculinity and Nation in Early American Cinema*), *GLQ* 14:2-3 (2008): 439-441.
Review of David Greven's *Men Beyond Desire: Manhood, Sex, and Violation in American Literature*, in *Studies in American Fiction* 36:2 (Autumn 2008): 244-6.
Review of Kristin Boudreau's *Sympathy in American Literature* and Marietta Messmer's *A Vice For Voices*, in *American Literature* 75:1 (March 2003): 179-181.
"Love American Style" (review of Jonathan Ned Katz's *Love Stories: Sex Between Men Before Homosexuality*), *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Newsletter* 29:2-3 (Summer / Fall 2002): 3.
Review of Jacqueline Foerstch's *Enemies Within*, in *South Atlantic Review* 67:1 (Winter 2002): 145-147.
"Better Than Normal" (review of Michael Warner's *The Trouble with Normal*), *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Newsletter* 28:1 (Spring 2001): 7-8.

Keynotes, Readings, and Lectures by Invitation

"What Is Antifascist Theory?"
Princeton University, November 2025
-University of Chicago, November 2025
-Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory, UIUC, September 2025

"Love and Ruin; or, *The Shining* in an Age of Last Things"
Notre Dame University, November 2024
Louisiana State University, September 2024
"Is There God After Prince?: Dispatches from an Age of Last Things"
Readings in Chicago; Baltimore; Los Angeles; Ann Arbor; Salt Lake City; Berkeley; Princeton; Westport, CT; Madison, WI; Portland, ME; and Lancaster, PA; as well as at Haverford College; Bowdoin College; the University of Georgia; the American Writers Museum in Chicago; the Rain Taxi Twin Cities Book Festival in Minneapolis; the American Writers Festival in Chicago; and The Printer's Row Book Festival, October 2023 – September 2024
"Is There God After Prince?: Icons in an Age of Ruin"
The Maxine and Jonathan Marshall Lecture on Religion and Conflict – Keynote address for "Spiritual Powers: A Conference on Cultural Icons," Arizona State University, April 2024
"Between Us: A (Brief) Poetics of Queer Historiography"
University of California-Davis, February 2024
"Tom the Modernist"
Department of English Studies Research Seminar, Durham University, March 2023
"Did God Write *Moby-Dick*?"
American Literature Seminar, The Newberry Library, September 2022
–University of Texas-Dallas, April 2022
"Love in a Time of Last Things: Notes on Writing, Criticism, Disaster."
Keynote address for the DePaul English Graduate Conference, May 2022
"Inside the Queer Parenthesis"
On Dr. Beth McClean's mss. *The Topographical Parenthesis: Henry James's Spaces of Desire*, University of Melbourne, February 2022
"Extinction and World-Making"
First Book Workshop for Prof. Sarah Ensor's *Terminal Regions: Queer Environmental Ethics in the Absence of Futurity*, University of Wisconsin, Madison, November 2021
"*Make Yourselves Gods*: A Symposium"
Rutgers University, with Dana Luciano, John Modern, Nancy Bentley, and Jasbir Puar, September 2021
"Thoreau's Taste"
Roundtable on Alda Balthrop-Lewis's *Thoreau's Religion*, Haverford College, February 2021
"Affection and Antagonism"
Roundtable on Jane Bennett's *influx & efflux*, for Duke University Press, November 2020
"Heresy, Barbarism, Depravity: Imperial Secularism and the Mormon Dilemma"
Utah Valley University, inaugural lecture for the "Mormonism and the Challenges of Whiteness" speaker series, October 2020; April 2021
"Sex and the Gods: Mormonism, Secularism, Biopolitics"
University of Virginia, February 2020
"Does Sex Make You a God?"
University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, April 2019
"Long Players: A Love Story in Eighteen Songs"
Readings in Chicago; Portland, ME; Fairfield, CT; Brooklyn; Washington D. C.; Aurora, IL; Cambridge, MA; Milwaukee; Toronto; Cleveland; Princeton, NJ; and St. Louis; as well as at Bowdoin College, Boston College, Franklin & Marshall College, University of Tampa, University of Dubuque, Bethany College, the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, and for *The Believer* at the Mission Creek Festival in Iowa City, June 2018 – April 2019
"Make Yourselves Gods: Sex, Secularism, and the Radiant Body of Early Mormonism"
Case Western Reserve University, November 2018

"Gods in Subjection: Women, Polygamy, and the Biopolitics of Secularism"
History and Literature Program, Harvard University, October 2018
-University of South Florida, October 2018
-Bonham Center for Sexual Diversity Studies, University of Toronto, October 2018
-Gender and Sexuality Studies, Princeton University, March 2018
"Annihilation and Unknowing in the Anthropocene; or, *The Shining*"
"Sándor Ferenczi: Interdisciplinary Approaches," Center for Advanced Research, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, September 2018
"Make Yourselves Gods"
"18th and 19th-Century Secularities," Princeton University, April 2018
"The Sentimental Politics of Life"
Roundtable on Kyla Schuller's *The Biopolitics of Feeling*, Women's and Gender Studies, Rutgers University, March 2018
"Sex, Tears, & Rock-n-Roll: Notes on Criticism, Heartbreak, Writing"
University of Missouri, November 2017
"Sex and the Gods: Early Mormonism and the Biopolitics of Secularism"
"Queer Trans Race Empire" symposium, University of North Carolina-Greensboro, February 2017
"The Wild Not Less Than the Good: Thoreau, Sex, Biopower"
Oberlin College, October 2016
-University of California-Irvine, February 2016
-Haverford College, November 2015
-Keynote address, "Queertopia" conference, Northwestern University, May 2015
- Columbia University, American Studies Seminar, March 2015
- The Edith Baine Lecture at the University of Mississippi, March 2015
"Plural: Mormon Polygamy and the Biopolitics of Secularism"
"The Ontology of the Couple" symposium, the ICI-Berlin, June 2016
"The Polygamist's Complexion: *The Book of Mormon* and the Biopolitics of Secularism"
University of California-Davis, March 2016
"The Polygamist's Complexion; or, *The Book of Mormon* Goes West"
University of California-Los Angeles, February 2016
-Franklin & Marshall College, November 2015
"Not For This World"
"Words Unofficial" graduate student conference, University of Chicago, November 2015
"Why I Love This"
Stonecoast Writers Conference, University of Southern Maine, July 2015
"How the Mormons Became White"
Brown University, April 2015
- Hurst Visiting Professorship Lecture at Washington University, St. Louis, March 2015
- Ohio State University, April 2014
- Princeton University, April 2013
- Keynote speaker, "Sexual Sovereignty: Citizenship, Govermentality, Territory," American University of Beirut, March 2013
"A Confusion of Tongues; or, Doing Things with Joy"
Seminar for "Between Camps: Writing In and Beyond the Academy" series, Brown University, April 2015
"Queer Children, Queer Theory, Queer Suicide"
Hurst Visiting Professorship Seminar, Washington University, St. Louis, March 2015
Invited panelist for "On Moving Ground: The Unsettled States of American Studies"
Northwestern University, October 2014
"What Does the Polygamist Want?"
Whitman College, April 2014

- University of Illinois, Champagne-Urbana, seminar, February 2014
- University of Utah, March 2013
- Haverford College, November 2011

"Words on Fire: Literature and Secularization"
Yale University, roundtable on Caleb Smith's *The Oracle and the Curse*, January 2014

"How to Do Things with Joy"
Stonecoast MFA Program in Creative Writing, January 2014
- Brown University, MFA "Demitasse" reading, November 2013

"Prophets in Love: Polygamy and Indigeneity in Early Mormonism"
"Credulity" conference, Columbia University, April 2013

"The Unspeakable Past: Earliness and Sex in Nineteenth-Century America"
Keynote speaker, "Rising Early: An Imaginary Vistas Symposium," Penn State, November 2012
- Fordham University, March 2010

"The Pistol in the Suitcase: Motive, Temporality, and Queer Youth Suicide"
Keynote speaker, "Low Affects / High Stakes," University of Sussex, November 2012

"Joseph Smith in Love: Polygamy, Indigeneity, Sovereignty"
Cornell University, October 2012

"Writing and Talking About Writing"
Stonecoast MFA Program in Creative Writing, July 2012

"Never the Usual Terms: A Song for 21st-Century Occupations" (with Elizabeth Freeman)
"As Yet Unnamed: Queer Theories and the Nineteenth Century," Pomona College, March 2012

"Fighting About Steely Dan: Notes on Joy"
"Moonlighter Presents" reading series, Brooklyn, NY, July 2011

"The Tenderness of Beasts: Hawthorne and the American History of Sexuality"
University of Texas at Austin, April 2009

"How to Do Things with Joy: Pynchon and *Vineland*"
Northwestern University, February 2009
- University of Sussex, October 2008

"Pip's Descent: Freedom and Terror in *Moby-Dick*"
Maine Historical Society, April 2008

"Walt Whitman's *Memoranda During the War*"
South Street Seaport Museum, NYC, July 2005

"No Covenants but Proximities: Intimacy and History"
Keynote speaker, "Intimacy / Proximity" national interdisciplinary graduate student conference, Indiana University, April 2005

"The Sexual Child; or, This American Life"
Johns Hopkins University, April 2005

"Intimacy and History"
Cornell University, April 2005

"The Heart of a Stranger: Whitman, War, and the American History of Sexuality"
University of Connecticut, April 2005

"Intimacy in America: Notes on Affect and History"
Williams College, March 2005

"Whitman at War"
Harvard University, November 2004

"Agonizing Affection: Belonging and Belief in Early American Literature"
University of Maine, Augusta, July 2004

"'Canker'd, Crude, Superstitious, and Rotten': Whitman's America and Our Own"
Bowdoin College Common Hour, the Karofsky Faculty Encore Lecture, January 2004

"Poe In Love: Pedophilia, Morbidity, and the Logic of Slavery"
Johns Hopkins University, October 2002

Conferences Organized

"Tomorrow's Parties: A Queer Americanist Colloquium"
April 30-May 1, 2010, Bowdoin College, featuring Kathryn Bond Stockton, Katherine Biers, Elizabeth Freeman, Kara Keeling, Dana Luciano, Molly McGarry, Jordan Stein, and Pamela Thurschwell

Other Media

Featured on "Recall This Book" Podcast, Ep. 161, "*One Battle After Another*: A West Newton Cinema Discussion with Peter Coviello and Ethan Warren," interviewed by Prof. John Plotz, 4 December 2025

Featured on the Lit Hub Podcast, "Giving Up on *The New York Times* and Remembering Literary Twitter," interviewed by Drew Broussard. Originally aired 21 November 2025.

Featured on Two Month Review (TMR) Podcast, Ep. 28.6, "Preparation H [*Vineland*]", Originally aired 2 October 2025.

Featured on WORT 89.9 Madison Radio for Madison Book Beat, "It's Not Nothing: Essayist Peter Coviello on How Our Favorite Books and Songs Help Us Make Worlds Together," interviewed by Andrew Thomas. Originally aired 5 Feb. 2024.

Featured on the Chills at Will Podcast, Ep. 224, "Is There God After Prince?," interviewed by Peter Riehl. Originally aired Feb. 2024.

Featured in the Popular Music Books in Process Series, from the International Association for the Study of Popular Music, interviewed by Gustavus Stadler. Originally aired 5 December 2023.

Featured on "American History Hit" podcast, entitled "Mormons & the Founding of Salt Lake City," interviewed by Don Wildman. Originally aired 20 July 2023.

Featured on New Books Network for *Make Yourselves Gods*, interviewed by Carrie Lynn Evans. Originally aired 12 October 2022.

Featured on the "American Vandal" podcast, hosted by Prof. Matthew Seybold, entitled "The Sopranos Revival (Remember The End of The End of History?) with Peter Coviello & Xine Yao." Originally aired 29 September 2022.

Featured on New Books Network for *Vineland Reread*, interviewed by Christian B. Long. Originally aired 28 September 2022.

Featured on "Scholars and Saints: The University of Virginia Mormon Studies Podcast," entitled "Mormonism, Secularism, and Biopolitics, with Peter Coviello and Kathleen Flake." Originally aired 4 January 2021.

Featured on Youth Southpaw's "Etcetera Etc" podcast, entitled "Peter Coviello on Thomas Pynchon's *Vineland*." Originally aired 21 December 2020.

Featured on the Seminary Co-Op Bookstore's "Open Stacks" podcast, entitled "A Not Uncritical Openheartedness." Originally aired 30 September 2018.

Featured on "This Is Your Mixtape" podcast, entitled "More Than I Have Words For." Originally aired 7 September 2018.

Featured on WKUM's "Marginalia," hosted by Beth Golay. Originally aired June 2018.

Commentator in "American Icons: The Scarlett Letter," national NPR broadcast of "Studio 360," hosted by Anna Sale. Originally aired November 2013.

Commentator in "Walt Whitman: Song of Myself," on New York Public Radio, hosted by Carl Hancock Rux. Originally aired November 2005.

"Walt Whitman's War," on *The Connection* from WBUR Boston and NPR, hosted by Dick Gordon. Originally aired 20 December 2004.

Teaching

Courses (from first-year writing classes to large lectures to graduate seminars) in 18th, 19th, and 20th-Century American Literatures and Queer Theory, as well as in American religion, literary theory, race and psychoanalysis, feminist theory, poetry and poetics, creative nonfiction.

Academic Service

(at UIC):
Head, Department of English, 2022-present
Director of Graduate Studies, 2018-2021
Graduate Committee, 2014-15, 2016-17
(at Bowdoin College):
Chair, Department of English, 2010-2012
Acting Director, Program in Africana Studies, 2006-2008
Chair, Program in Gay and Lesbian Studies, 2002-06 (co-chair, '02-3)
Member (elected), Committee on Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure, 2004-06
Member (elected), Committee on Appeals (Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure), 2002-03, 2012-2014
Member, Bias Incident Group, 2006-2008
Faculty advisor to the Bowdoin Gay-Straight Alliance, 1999-2001
Member, Committee on Gay and Lesbian Studies, 1998-2012
Member, Committee on Women's Studies, 1999-2001 (co-chair of the sub-committee on planning, 2000-01)
Member (elected), Committee on Governance, 1999-2001 (faculty representative to the Board of Trustees)

Professional Activities and Memberships

MLQ: Modern Language Quarterly, advisory board, 2023-present
Mormon Studies Review, advisory board, 2025-present
History of the Present, advisory board, 2020-present
American Literary History, advisory board, 2020-present
American Literature, editorial board, 2011-13
American Literature Section of the MLA, Advisory Council (elected; Chair), 2014-16
Member (elected), Delegate Assembly of the MLA, 2006-2009; 2012-15
Chair, Allen Bray Memorial Book Prize Committee, for the GL/Q Caucus of the MLA, 2013
Member (elected), Elections Committee of the Delegate Assembly of the MLA, 2012-14
Reader of manuscripts, Chicago, Duke, NYU, Columbia, Princeton, Johns Hopkins, Stanford, UNC, Minnesota, Cornell, Penn, Harvard, Oxford, Virginia, Fordham, Edinburgh, Broadview
Reader of submissions, *American Literature, GLQ*, *J19, American Literary History, PMLA, American Religion, The Journal of the American Academy of Religion, American Quarterly, Arizona Quarterly, Diacritics*, *Criticism*, *Early American Studies*, *History of the Present, Studies in American Fiction, ESQ*, *Modernism / Modernity, Modern Language Studies, Mediations, Poe Studies, Modern Philology*, *Legacy*, *Religion and American Culture, Papers on Language and Literature, Textual Practice*, *Contemporary Literature*, *Christianity & Literature*, *Transatlantica*, *Postmodern Culture*, *Religion & Literature*
Member, Modern Language Association, 1994-present
Member, American Studies Association, 1997-present
Member, C19, 2010-present
Co-organizer, Cornell Lesbian, Bisexual, and Gay Studies Colloquium Series, 1994-96
Member, Dean's Advisory Committee on LBG Studies at Cornell, 1994-1998

Conference Papers, Panels, and Lectures

"After Ahab"
"The Undergrounds of Tyranny and Sovereignty" panel, C19: Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists, Cincinnati, March 2026

"Still After"
"Beside You in the C19: Elizabeth Freeman's Legacies" panel, C19, Cincinnati, March 2026

"New Books in 19th-Century Queer Studies"
Panel chair, C19, Cincinnati, March 2026

"Fishers of Men: Perversity, Carnality, Thoreau"
"Thoreau's Revolutions: Annual Meeting of the Thoreau Society," Concord, MA, July 2025

"Bartleby, a Love Story"
"Queer Melville, and Beyond" panel, MLA, New Orleans, January 2025

"Melville and the Gods"
Panel organizer and chair for the Melville Society, ALA, Chicago, May 2024

"At the Last: Readings in Terminality"
Seminar co-led with Prof. Sarah Ensor, for C19: Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists, Pasadena, March 2024

"What We Talk About When We Talk About Historicism"
MLA, for the "What Do We Think We're Doing?" panel sponsored by the LLC-19th-Century American Forum, Philadelphia, January 2024

"Venerable"
MLA, for the "Queer Generations" panel, Philadelphia, January 2024

"The Statelet Across the Road: Scales of Violence in *Milkman*"
ACLA, for the "Waning Internationalisms" panel, Chicago, March 2023

"Melville's Misery"
"Whose Rooster?: A Roundtable on Thoreau, Melville, and Environmental Politics" American Academy of Religion (AAR), November 2021

"Make Yourselves Gods"
Respondent to a roundtable discussion of *Make Yourselves Gods*, ASA, October 2021

"A Lawful Rigor: Sex and Security in Melville"
"Melville and Sex and…" panel of the Melville Society, MLA, January 2021

"Make Yourselves Gods"
Respondent, "Mormonism and the History of Sexuality" panel discussion of Taylor Petrey's *Tabernacles of Clay* and my *Make Yourselves Gods*, AAR, December 2020

"Sex and Imperial Secularism"
"Postsecular Queer Theory," panel, American Academy of Religion (AAR), December 2020

"Secularism and Empire"
Roundtable Chair and convener, C19: Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists, October 2020

"Extermination and End Times: Notes on the Biopolitics of Secularism"
"Apocalypse (Then and) Now" panel, MLA, Seattle, January 2020

"Protohomonationalism: Biopolitics and the Mormons"
"Religion, Colonialism, and Postcolonialism" unit roundtable on the work of Jasbir Puar, American Academy of Religion (AAR), San Diego, November 2019

"Monogamy and Its Others"
"Queer Kinship After Critical Race Theory" panel, ASA, Honolulu, November 2019

"Secularism and Viable Life"
American Quarterly's "Origins of Biopolitics in the Americans" roundtable, ASA, Honolulu, November, 2019

"Secularism in 1846"
"Emergent Modernities" roundtable, MLA, Chicago, January 2019

"The Last Psychedelic Band,"
"Impossible Times" roundtable, ASAP, New Orleans, October 2018
"Pop Voices and #MeToo"
"Crisis Harmonies" roundtable, ASAP, New Orleans, October 2018
"Sex"
ACLA, for "Our Secular Concepts" panel, UCLA, March 2018
"Reluctant Monogamy: Early Mormonism and the Biopolitics of Secularism"
C19: Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists, Albuquerque, March 2018
"Histories of Sexuality in the Wake of the Postsecular Turn"
Roundtable, ASA, Chicago, November 2017
"Bad Belief"
"Histories of Sexuality in the Wake of the Postsecular Turn" panel, Omohundro Institute Annual Conference, Ann Arbor, MI, June 2017
"Sex and the Postsecular"
"Unknown Pleasures: Living Deliciously in the Winthropocene, and Beyond" roundtable, Society of Early Americanists, Tulsa, March 2017
"The Biopolitics of Secularism: Mormon Polygamy and Expendable Life"
"Beyond the Gay Male Archive in 19th-Century American Studies" panel, MLA, Philadelphia, January 2017
"Defunct Sexualities"
Panel chair, MLA, Philadelphia, January 2017
"Histories of Sexuality and Gender Before the 20th Century"
Panel chair, Organization of American Historians, Providence, RI, April 2016
"Untimely Erotics"
Seminar co-led with Elizabeth Freeman, C19: Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists, Penn State, March 2016
"Capacious Anachronism?"
Panel chair, C19: Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists, Penn State, March 2016
"Strayaways: Jewett On the Brink"
"Rethinking Sexuality at the Fin de Siécle" panel, MLA, Austin, January 2016
"Annihilation and Unknowing in New Millennial Capital; or, *The Shining*"
ASA, Toronto, October 2015
"Sorrows of the Algorithm"
"Listening in Public" roundtable, ASAP annual conference, Greenville, SC, Sept 2015
"Hollow: 'Cactus Tree' and the Signs of Freedom"
"Court and Spark: an international symposium on the work of Joni Mitchell," University of Lincoln, July 2015
"Probable Chaos"
"'Gimme Gimme This Gimme Gimme That': Listening with, to, and through José Muñoz" plenary session, IASPM-US annual conference, Louisville, Feb 2015
"The Wild Not Less Than the Good: Erotics and Biopower in Thoreau"
"Wildness" panel, ASA Los Angeles, October 2014
"Creep"
Critical Karaoke at the EMP Pop Conference, Seattle, April 2014
"Fables of Mobility: Woody, Joni, Jimmy"
Panel chair and respondent, EMP Pop Conference, Seattle, April 2014
"Brother Laman"
Roundtable on the Book of Mormon, C19: Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists, Chapel Hill, March 2014
"The Politics of Close Reading"
Panel chair, C19: Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists, Chapel Hill, March 2014

"Whitman in the House Divided"
"Melville, Whitman, and the Civil War" roundtable, "Melville and Whitman in Washington: The Civil War Years and After," International Conference of the Melville Society, June 2013
"Midnight Train"
The EMP-LA Pop Conference, USC, April 2013
"Joseph Smith in Love: Polygamy, Indigeneity, Sovereignty"
"Early American Sex" panel, MLA, Boston, January 2013
– "Dimensions of Empire and Resistance: Past, Present, and Future" panel, ASA, Puerto Rico, November 2012
"How to Do Things with *Twilight*: Young-Adult Fiction in the College Classroom"
Panel chair, MLA, Boston, January 2013
"Melville in the Darbies: Of Bonds, Binds, and Bondage"
Invited panel organizer and chair for the Melville Society, ALA, San Francisco, May 2012
"What Does the Polygamist Want?: Joseph Smith and the American History of Sexuality"
"Spirits that Matter: Nonsecular Embodiments in Antebellum America" panel, C19 Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists, Berkeley, April 2012
"Unceremoniousness: Melville's Marriages"
"Melville in Rome" conference of the International Melville Society, panel sponsor, and participant (for "Sex and the Foreign in Melville" panel), Rome, Italy, June 2011
"Call Me Morbid"
"Post-45" National Conference, "Adolescence and Abjection" panel, Rock-n-Roll Hall of Fame, April 2011
"Made for Love: Olive Chancellor, Henry James, Oscar Wilde"
MLA, "Form, Genre, and Judgment: Law and Literature Beyond New Historicism" panel, Los Angeles, January 2011
"Whitman's Children"
"Tomorrow's Parties: A Queer Americanist Colloquium," Bowdoin College, May 2010
"Rethinking Sex in the 19th Century"
Roundtable participant, C19 Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists Inaugural Conference, Penn State, May 2010
"Failures of Imagination: Reading Wrong and Feeling Bad in the 19th Century"
Panel Chair and Respondent, C19 Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists Inaugural Conference, Penn State, May 2010
"Disappointment, or, Thoreau in Love"
ASA, Washington D.C., November 2009
– International Conference on Narrative, Birmingham, UK, June 2009
"Sentiments of Slavery: Power and Resistance in Fictions of the Plantation"
Panel chair, American Literature Association, Boston, May 2009
"Desire My Pilot Is"
Cornell University, "Shakesqueer" conference, September 2008
"The Tenderness of Beasts: *The Blithedale Romance* and the American History of Sexuality"
British Association for American Studies, University of Edinburgh, March 2008
"Race, Place, and Story in American Literature"
Invited panel discussant, sponsored by APSA's "Politics, Literature, and Film" division, American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, PA, September 2006
"Whitman and War"
"Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*: A Sesquicentennial Roundtable," American Studies Association, Washington D.C., November 2005
"Ghosts of Freud"
Invited gallery talk for "The Disembodied Spirit" exhibition, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, November 2003

"Exile, Imagination, and Sexuality"
Invited panel chair, ASA, Houston TX, November 2002
"Boys on Lonely Walks: Vernacular Utopias in American Pop"
British Association for American Studies, Oxford University, April 2002
"The American in Charity: 'Benito Cereno' and Gothic Anti-Sentimentality"
MLA, New Orleans, December 2001
- The International Gothic Association, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, British Columbia, June 2001
"Whitman's Secrets"
Crossroads of Cultural Studies International Conference, University of Birmingham, UK, June 2000
"Foucault and Freud"
Panel organizer and chair, MLA, Chicago, December 1999
"The Intimate Life of Children"
Invited gallery talk for "The Sexual Child" photography exhibit, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, November 1999
"Conspiracies of Pleasure; or, in Praise of Secret Publics"
Invited all-campus lecture, Bowdoin College Common Hour, September 1999
"The Sexual Child"
Faculty Lecture Series, Bowdoin College, April 1999
"The Bonds of Sane Affection: Intimacy and Nationality in the American Renaissance"
British Association for American Studies, University of Glasgow, March 1999
"Works in Progress"
Invited talk to the Cornell Literature Group, Cornell University, February 1999
"Other Than Oedipus: Race, Attachment, and an Agnostic Psychoanalysis"
"Oedipus Today," the fourth annual conference of the Association for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society, Emory University, November 1998
"White Desire: Poe and Heterosexuality"
ASA, Washington, D.C., November 1997
"Race Without Flesh: Identification and Genre in New White Cinema"
MLA, Forum on Psychoanalysis and Race, Washington D.C., December 1996
- "Psychoanalysis and Social Change," the second annual conference of the Association for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society, George Washington University, November 1996
- "Recycling Culture," Cornell University's Society for the Humanities, April 1997
"Bowels and Fear: Nationalism, Sodomy, and Whiteness in *Moby-Dick*"
MLA, the Melville Society, Washington D.C., December 1996
"Apocalypse From Now On"
"Millennium Reproaches," Tufts University, October 1995
- "Queer Frontiers," the fifth annual national lesbian, gay, and bisexual graduate student conference, University of Southern California, March 1995
"Selling Kids: Punk and its Reproductions"
"Literature and Popular Culture," SUNY Binghampton, April 1995
"Desire and Another Person: John Ashbery's Poetics."
"Constructing Queer Cultures," Cornell University, February 1995
"The Queer at the End of the World"
"At Loose Ends," Cornell University, April 1994