

# Barbara Postema, Ph.D.

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## Current Academic Appointment

**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR (LIMITED TERM) | 2015-2016**

Department of English, Concordia University

## Previous Appointments

**SSHRC POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOW | 2013 - 2015**

English Department / Modern Literature and Culture Research Centre, Ryerson University

**Postdoctoral Project:** "Telling Stories without Words: Visual Communication in Silent Comics"  
(Supervisor: Dr. Irene Gammel)

## Education

**PHD ENGLISH | MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY, 2010**

**Concentration:** 20<sup>th</sup> Century and Contemporary Literature, Narrative Theory, Visual Culture

**Dissertation:** "Mind the Gap: Absence as Signifying Function in Comics" (Supervisor: Dr. Judith Roof)

**MA ENGLISH AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE | UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK, UK, 2000**

**Concentration:** Feminist Theory, Caribbean Literature, Postcolonial Literature and Theory

**MA/BA ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE | UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM, 1998, *Summa cum laude***

**Concentration:** Contemporary American Literature, Literary Stylistics

**MA Thesis:** "The Question is the Story Itself: Detective Genre in Paul Auster's *New York Trilogy*"  
(Supervisor: Dr. Marijke Rudnik-Smalbraak)

**FOREIGN LANGUAGES:** Dutch, German, French

## Publications

**PEER-REVIEWED MONOGRAPH**

*Narrative Structure in Comics: Making Sense of Fragments.* Rochester, NY: Rochester Institute of Technology Press, 2013.

**SELECTED REVIEWS:**

- Beronä, David A. "Review." *International Journal of Comic Art* 15.2 (2013): 784-786.
- Pedri, Nancy. "Review." *European Comic Art* 7.1 (2014): 116-118.
- Royal, Derek P. "Critical Takes." *The Comics Alternative*. 25 July 2014. <http://bit.ly/1oDUQSP>.
- Marrone, Daniel. "Review." *Studies in Comics* 5.1 (2014): 211-215.
- Haddad, Vincent. "Book Review." *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* (2015).  
DOI: 10.1080/21504857.2015.1009924.

**PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES**

- "Establishing Relations: Photography in Wordless Comics." *The Narrative Functions of Photography in Comics*. Spec. issue of *Image and Narrative* 16.2 (2015): 84-95.
- "Following the Pictures: Wordless Comics for Children." *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 5.3 (2014): 311-322.
- "Draw a Thousand Words: Signification and Narration in Comics Images." *International Journal of Comic Art* 9.1 (2007): 487-501.
- "Memories that Don't Weaken: Seth and Walter Benjamin." *International Journal of Comic Art* 6.2 (2004): 266-272.

**PEER-REVIEWED CHAPTERS**

- "The Visual Culture of Comics in the Last Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Comics without Words." *Transforming Anthony Trollope: Dispossession, Victorianism and 19<sup>th</sup> century Word and Image*. Ed. Laurence Grove and Simon Grennan. Leuven: Leuven UP, 2015. 131-147.
- "Silent Comics." *The Routledge Companion to Comics and Graphic Novels*. Ed. Frank Bramlett, Roy T. Cook and Aaron Meskin. New York: Routledge. 15p. Accepted by editors September 8, 2014.
- "Literary Theory/Narrative Theory." *The Routledge Handbook of the Secret Origins of Comics Studies*. Ed. Matthew J. Smith and Randy Duncan. 15 p. Accepted by editors October 7, 2015.

**PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES AND CHAPTERS IN PREPARATION**

- "Sequential Art without Sequences: Working at the Limits of the Graphic Novel." *Genre*. 15 p. To be submitted October 2015.
- "Adding up to What? Degrees of Narrative in Wordless Abstract Comics" (invited chapter). *Abstraction and Comics*. Ed. Aarnoud Rommens et al. University Press of Liege. 20 p. To be submitted November 15, 2015.

"Long Length Wordless Books" (invited chapter). *The Cambridge History of the Graphic Novel*. Ed. Hugo Frey, Jan Baetens, and Stephen Tabachnick. Cambridge University Press. 18 p. To be submitted November 2016.

#### PEER-REVIEWED ENCYCLOPEDIA ENTRIES

"Blankets"; "Castle Waiting"; "Children's Comics"; "First Second Books"; "Gloeckner, Phoebe"; "It's a Good Life, If You Don't Weaken"; "Medley, Linda"; "Playboy, The"; "Summer of Love, The"; "Top Shelf Productions". *Comics through Time: A Historical Encyclopedia, Volume 4*. Ed. M. Keith Booker. New York: Greenwood Press, 2014. 8750 words.

"Dear Julia (Biggs, Brian)"; "Night Fisher (R. Kikuo Johnson)"; "Robot Dreams (Sara Varon)." *Graphic Novels: Reference Encyclopedia*. Ed. Bart H. Beaty and Stephen Weiner. Ipswich, MA: H.W. Wilson / EBSCO Publishing, 2011. 6500 words.

"Chat Room"; "Internet"; "Gender Roles: Contemporary Understandings"; "Sexual Abuse". *The Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender*. Ed. Fedwa Malti-Douglas. Farmington Hills, MI: Macmillan, 2007. 3000 words.

#### NON- PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

"Take This Waltz: Review of *The Wordless Leonard Cohen Songbook* by George A. Walker." *StripGids* 40 (2015): 92.

"Men's Comics are from Mars, Women's Comics are from Venus: A Visual Exploration." *Interplanetary Journal of Comic Art: A Festschrift for John Lent*. Raleigh, N.C.: Lulu, 2007. 41-46.

Exhibition Review. "Present Tense. Contemporary Project Series No. 31: Seth." *International Journal of Comic Art* 8.1 (2006): 589-591.

## Conferences

#### SELECTED PEER-REVIEWED CONFERENCE PAPERS

"Comics Diplomacy: Using Genre for Cultural Positioning." *Politics of Attachment: Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis Annual Conference*. University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands. March 27, 2015.

"Family Life in Canada: Exploring Canadian Family Comics through Lynn Johnston's *For Better or For Worse* and Doug Wright's *Nipper*." *Canadian Society for the Study of Comics (CSSC) Conference*. Toronto, ON. May 10, 2014.

"Exploring the Family Comics Genre." *Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture since 1900*. University of Louisville, Louisville, KY. February 22, 2014.

"Silent Comics and Reader Empathy." *New Narrative VI*. University of Toronto, Toronto, ON. May 10, 2013.

**(CONFERENCE PAPERS CONT.)**

- “Making Them Speak Without Words: Character in Silent Comics.” *Popular Culture Association / American Culture Association National Conference*, Washington, DC. March 29, 2013.
- “Narrative Structure in Comics: Making Sense of Fragments.” *Popular Culture Association / American Culture Association National Conference*, Boston, MA. April 14, 2012.
- “Illustration against Alienation? Comics without Sequential Images.” *New Narrative IV*. University of Toronto, Toronto, ON. May 5, 2011.
- “Personal Graphics: Working at the Limits of the Graphic Novel.” *Modern Language Association (MLA) National Convention*. Philadelphia, PA. December 29, 2009.
- “Mind the Gap: Absence as Narrative Function in Comics.” *Another New Narrative*. University of Toronto / Toronto Comic Art Festival, Toronto, ON. May 9, 2009.
- “‘Welcome to Chickenopolis:’ The Urban Utopianism of Sara Varon’s Chicago.” *International Comic Arts Forum*. School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL. October 9, 2008.
- “Sequential Art? Reading Narrative in Combinations of Panels.” *Midwest Modern Language Association (MMLA) Conference*, Cleveland, OH. November 10, 2007.
- “Pictures Speak: The Narrative Qualities of Images in Comics.” *Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture since 1900*. University of Louisville, Louisville, KY. February 22, 2007.
- “Mixing Modes: Linguistic and Pictorial Qualities in Comics Communication.” *Word and Image: Annual Conference of the Association for the Study of New English Literatures*. University of Koblenz-Landau, Koblenz, Germany. May 25, 2006.
- “Hieroglyphic Civilization: Comics, Animation and Film.” *Cultural Studies Conference: Visual Culture, Image Icon Ideology*. Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS. March 12, 2005.
- “Moving Pictures: A Look at *Ghost World* in Two Media.” *Midwest Conference on Literature, Language, and Media*. Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL. April 3, 2004.
- “The Pedestrian: Benjamin and *It’s a Good Life If You Don’t Weaken*.” *International Comic Arts Forum*. Georgetown University, Washington, DC. September 4, 2003.
- “A Walk Up-Town: Representations of Cities in Comics.” *Trajectories of Modernism in 20th-Century Theory: A Conference*. University of Windsor, Windsor, ON. March 7, 2003.

**INVITED TALKS AND KEYNOTE ADDRESSES**

- “Keynote Roundtable: Thresholds in the Humanities: Finding the Way Forward.” *Intersections 2015 | Thresholds: Presence, Absence, and Territory*, Communication and Culture Graduate Conference, Ryerson and York Universities. Toronto, ON. March 13, 2015.
- “Comics Theory Roundtable.” *Modern Language Association (MLA) National Convention*. Vancouver, BC. January 11, 2015.

“Comics Studies, the Critical Era.” Plenary Presentation. *Rocky Mountain Conference on Comics and Graphic Novels*. Denver Comic Con, Denver, CO. June 13, 2014.

“Draw a Thousand Words: Signification and Narration in Comics Images.” John A. Lent Award Lecture. *International Comic Arts Forum*. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. October 13, 2006.

### **WORKSHOPS**

“Writing Successful Grant Applications: Roundtable.” *Northeast Modern Language Association (NeMLA) Convention*. Toronto, ON. May 1, 2015.

“Professional Development Workshop.” *Rocky Mountain Conference on Comics and Graphic Novels*. Denver Comic Con, Denver, CO. June 14, 2014.

### **CONFERENCES ORGANIZED**

Co-organizer (with J. Andrew Deman). *Canadian Society for the Study of Comics Annual Conference*. Toronto, ON. May 7-8, 2015.

Co-organizer (with Glenn Willmott). *Canadian Society for the Study of Comics Annual Conference*. Toronto, ON. May 9-10, 2014.

Co-organizer (with Joseph Jones). *2<sup>nd</sup> Annual American Studies Graduate Conference*. Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, October 1-2, 2004.

### **SESSIONS AND LECTURES ORGANIZED**

“*Twelve-Cent Archie*: America’s Most Iconic Teenagers in Comics.” Lecture by Bart Beaty. MLC Research Centre, Ryerson University, Toronto, ON. December 8, 2014.

“The Brinkley Girls, World War I, and American Patriotism in Comics.” Lecture by Trina Robbins. MLC Research Centre, Ryerson University, Toronto, ON. May 8, 2014.

“Comics and Canons.” *Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture since 1900*. University of Louisville, Louisville, KY. February 22, 2014.

“The Politics of Comics.” *Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture since 1900*. University of Louisville, Louisville, KY. February 22, 2014.

“Comics and Graphic Novels.” *Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture since 1900*. University of Louisville, Louisville, KY. February 22, 2007.

### **SESSIONS AND KEYNOTES CHAIRED OR MODERATED**

“Thinking Between Space and Time: Ephemeral Memory in Altered, Mediated, and Absent Spaces.” *Intersections 2015 | Thresholds: Presence, Absence, and Territory*, Communication and Culture Graduate Conference, Ryerson and York Universities. Toronto, ON. March 13, 2015.

“Visual Languages.” *Canadian Society for the Study of Comics Conference*. Toronto, ON. May 10, 2014

“Comics and Classrooms.” *Festival of Cartoon Art*. Ohio State University, Columbus, OH. November 15, 2013.

“Making *the Property*.” Keynote by Rutu Modan. *New Narrative VI*. University of Toronto, Toronto, ON. May 10, 2013.

“Gender and Sex.” *New Narrative VI*. University of Toronto, Toronto, ON. May 10, 2013.

“Non/Normative.” *New Narrative V*. University of Toronto, Toronto, ON. May 4, 2012.

“Gender and Female Bodies.” *New Narrative IV*. University of Toronto, Toronto, ON. May 5, 2011.

## Public Engagement

### EXHIBITIONS CURATED

“The Graphic Life Narrative of Marta Chudolinska: An Exhibition.” MLC Gallery, Ryerson University. May 6-13, 2015

### MEDIA – FEATURED INTERVIEWS

Joveski, Emily. “FolioPhonic, episode 5: Stories without Words.” *Ryersonfolio.com*. Ryerson Folio Magazine, Podcast, 18 Feb. 2015. Web.

Cosgrove, Emma. “Comics beyond Tights and Capes: Ryerson Researcher Discusses Unconventional Comics.” *Theeyeopener.com*. The Eyeopener, Arts & Life, 31 Jan. 2015. Web.

### MEDIA – INTERVIEWED AS EXPERT SOURCE

Chandler, Justin. “Cold-blooded Justice.” *The Eyeopener* 28 Jan. 2015: 7. Print.

### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Moderator, “Spotlight: Barbara Stok.” *Toronto Comic Arts Festival*, Toronto Reference Library, Toronto, ON. May 9, 2015.

Member, Nominations Committee. *Doug Wright Awards* (for Canadian Comics), 2015.

“Panel Discussion: Comics and Undergrads.” *Librarian & Educator Day*, Toronto Comic Arts Festival. Toronto Reference Library, Toronto, ON. May 9, 2014.

## Scholarships and Awards

SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowship, 2013-2015; \$81,000

Peter Rollins Travel Grant for Early-Career Faculty, PCA/ACA, 2013; \$500

TAA Publication Grant. Text and Academic Authors Association, 2012; \$625

First Place, MSU Graduate Student Book Collection Competition, 2009; \$500

**(SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS CONT.)**

Graduate School Dissertation Completion Fellowship, MSU, 2008; \$1,000  
 John A. Lent Scholarship, International Comic Arts Forum, 2006; \$500  
 Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, Netherlands, 2002; \$3,100  
 Fundatie Vrijvrouwe van Renswoude te s'Gravenhage, Netherlands, 2002; \$5,600  
 Stichting Dr. Hendrik Muller's Vaderlandsch Fonds, Netherlands, 2002; \$2,500  
 NUFFIC Talentenbeurs, Netherlands, 1998; \$15,000

**Academic Teaching and Mentorship****GRADUATE COURSES TAUGHT:**

- CC 8836: Topics in Media & Culture: Wordless & Silent Media. Summer 2015 (new course). Communication and Culture MA and PhD Program, Ryerson University.
- CC 8987: Selected Topics in Technology in Practice–Comics Studies and Visual Narratives. Summer 2014 (new course). Communication and Culture MA and PhD Program, Ryerson University.

**UNDERGRADUATE COURSES TAUGHT:**

Concordia University | Department of English

- ENGL 350: Contemporary Literature. Fall 2015-Winter 2016
- ENGL 251: The Graphic Novel. Fall 2015

Ryerson University | Department of English & Chang School of Continuing Education

- ENG 907: Senior English Project–Comics through Theory and Practice. Fall 2014 (new course)
- CENG 112: Zap, Pow, Bang–Pop Lit. Distance education. Winter 2013
- CENG 112: Zap, Pow, Bang–Pop Lit. Summer and Fall 2012, Winter 2013
- ENG 101: Laughter and Tears–Comic and Tragic Modes. Fall 2011, Summer 2012
- CENG 108: The Nature of Narrative I. Winter 2012
- SSH 205: Fundamentals of Academic Writing and Research. Fall 2011
- ENG 602: Women's Writing. Winter 2011
- ENG 610: The Language of Love, Sex and Gender. Winter 2011

University of Windsor | Department of English Language, Literature and Creative Writing

- 26-354: Literature and Postcolonialism. Fall 2009
- 26-122: Drama of the Western World: The Tragic Vision. Fall 2008 and 2009
- 26-123: Drama of the Western World: The Comic Vision. Winter 2008

Michigan State University | Center for Integrative Studies in Arts and Humanities (CISAH)

- IAH 201: The US and the World. Summer 2007

## SELECTED TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

Michigan State University | Department of English; Department of Writing, Rhetoric and American Cultures; CISAH

- ENG 153: Introduction to Women Authors. Summer 2006
- WRA 140: Writing- Women in America. Spring 2006
- WRA 125: Writing- American Racial and Ethnic Experience. Fall 2005
- IAH 201: The US and the World. Fall, Spring, and Summer 2002-2005

University of Amsterdam | Department of English Language and Literature

- Translation English-Dutch. Spring 1998
- Translation Dutch-English. Fall 1997

## GUEST LECTURES

“The Art of Cultural Positioning: Comics Genres in North America and the Netherlands.” Lunch Bag Talk, Department of English, Ryerson University. January 27, 2015.

“Getting It Out There – Publishing in Journals.” *PUBZ: Writing and Publishing Zone*, MLC Research Centre, Ryerson University. May 14, 2013.

“Bande Dessinée: French Language Comics.” Course 29-260: Modern French Culture, Dr. Jeremy Worth, University of Windsor. November 7, 2006.

## GRADUATE STUDENT MENTORSHIP

Senior Adviser. *PUBZ: Writing and Publishing Zone*. MLC Research Centre, Ryerson University, 2013-2015.

External Examiner. Samuel Strong. “The Comic’s Heartbeat: Framing Affective Structures in Comics History.” MA Thesis. OCAD University, Toronto, ON. April 20, 2015.

External Examiner. Tara Akitt. “Get Your Mind Outta the Gutter: Actor-Network Theory and Panel Layout in the Comic Arts.” MA Thesis. OCAD University, Toronto, ON. April 15, 2014.

Supervisor. “Cross Sections: Annual Exhibition.” *Intersections 2014: Thinking | Feeling*, Communication and Culture Graduate Conference. Ryerson and York Universities. Toronto, ON. March 10-21, 2014.

Mentor. English Department Graduate Student Mentorship Program. Michigan State University, 2004-2006.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

University Teaching Development Program (UTDP), Ryerson University, Winter Semester 2015.



“Effective Teaching in Large Lectures.” Learning & Teaching Office, Ryerson University, October 2014.

“Teaching Graduate Students: Best practices and strategies to engage them.” Learning & Teaching Office, Ryerson University, March 2014.

“Teaching Online Courses.” Learning & Teaching Office, Ryerson University, January 2013.

“Understanding Learning Differences.” Learning & Teaching Office, Ryerson University, March 2013.

Orientation workshop for instructors of writing courses. Department of Writing, Rhetoric and American Cultures, Michigan State University. August 2005.

Internship Professional Translation, UvA Vertalers. University of Amsterdam, February-April 1997.

## Academic Service

### DEPARTMENTAL AND UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Workshop Leader, Recruitment Workshop, Arts & Culture Specialist High Skilled Majors (SHSM) Day, Ryerson University, December 10 2014.

Events Liaison, Modern Literature and Culture Research Centre, 2013-2015.

Editorial Board Member, *Atlantikos*, 2005-2008.

Budget Officer, *Atlantikos* (English Department on-line graduate journal, Michigan State University) 2006-2007.

Publicity officer and committee liaison, Association of English Graduate Students, Michigan State University, 2005-2006.

Graduate Committee Student Representative, English Department, Michigan State University, 2004-2005.

Workshop Presenter, Teaching Assistant Training Week, CISAH, Michigan State University, August 2004.

Student Member, English Department Executive Committee, University of Amsterdam, 1996-1997.

### PROFESSIONAL SERVICE FOR ASSOCIATIONS

Secretary-Treasurer. Canadian Society for the Study of Comics, 2014-2016.

VP Communications, English. Canadian Society for the Study of Comics, 2013-2014.

### PEER-REVIEWER FOR JOURNALS AND PRESSES

*Children's Literature Review* (Gale/Cengage), August 2014.

*Digital Humanities Quarterly*, 2013-present.

## Professional Memberships

Modern Language Association, 2008-present

Popular Culture Association / American Culture Association, 2011-present

Canadian Society for the Study of Comics, 2011-present

## REFERENCES

**Irene Gammel**, PhD, FRSC

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**Bart Beaty**, PhD

Professor

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**Judith Roof**, PhD

Professor and Department Chair

Department of English, Rice University

Houston, TX

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## TEACHING REFERENCE

**Nima Naghibi**, PhD

Associate Professor and Department Chair

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Toronto, ON

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