

James S. Finley

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EDUCATION

PhD, English, University of New Hampshire, 2014
MA, Literature, University of New Hampshire, 2009
BA, English, Grinnell College, 2003

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Associate Professor of English (with tenure), Texas A&M University-San Antonio, 2020-present
Assistant Professor of English, Texas A&M University-San Antonio, 2016-2020
Assistant Professor of English, New Mexico State University, 2014-2016
Instructor, American Studies Program, The University of Texas at San Antonio, 2013-2014
James H. and Claire Short Hayes Graduate Fellow in Digital Humanities, University of New Hampshire, 2012-2013
Graduate Teaching Fellow, English Department, University of New Hampshire, 2009-2012

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Henry David Thoreau in Context, editor (Cambridge University Press, 2017).

- Reviewed in *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*; *American Literary Scholarship*; *Modern Intellectual History*; *Thoreau Society Bulletin*; *Nineteenth-Century Prose*

Free-Soil Abolition: Race, Ecology, and Freedom in Antebellum America (monograph in preparation)
The Oxford Handbook of Henry David Thoreau, edited with Kristen Case (Oxford University Press, expected publication date: 2027)

Refereed Journal Articles and Book Chapters

“Henry David Thoreau and the Creation of the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument,” in *Thoreau in an Age of Crisis: Uses and Abuses of An American Icon*, edited by Kristen Case, Rochelle Johnson, and Henrik Otterberg (Wilhem Fink, 2021), 107-24.

- “Frederick Douglass in the United Kingdom: From the Free-Soil Principle to Free-Soil Abolition,” *The New North Star: A Journal of the Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* vol. 2 (2020): 45-60.
- “Pilgrimages and Working Forests: Envisioning the Commons in *The Maine Woods*,” in *Rediscovering the Maine Woods: Thoreau’s Legacy in an Unsettled Land*, edited by John Kucich (University of Massachusetts Press, 2019), 141-67.
- “A Free Soiler in his Own Broad Sense: Henry David Thoreau and the Free Soil Movement,” in *Thoreau at 200: Essays and Reassessments*, edited by K. P. Van Anglen and Kristen Case (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 31-44.
- “‘The Land of Liberty’: Henry Bibb’s Free Soil Geographies,” *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* vol. 59, no. 2 (2013): 231-62.
- “‘Justice in the Land’: Ecological Protest in Henry David Thoreau’s Antislavery Essays,” *The Concord Saunterer: A Journal of Thoreau Studies* n.s. 21 (2013): 1-35.
- “‘Who are we? where are we?’: Contact and Literary Navigation in Thoreau’s *The Maine Woods*,” *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* vol. 19, no. 2 (2012): 336-55.

Book Reviews and Other Essays

- “Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller, and Transcendentalism,” in *American Literary Scholarship: An Annual 2020* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022), 3-25.
- “Fostering Education and Challenging Our Lives: The Thoreau Society in Action,” co-written with Sandra Harbert Petruionis, *The Concord Saunterer: A Journal of Thoreau Studies* n.s. 28 (2020): 214-22.
- “Thoreau and Biography,” *The Concord Saunterer: A Journal of Thoreau Studies* n.s. 27 (2019): 116-18.
- Review of *Civilizing Thoreau: Human Ecology and the Emerging Sciences in the Major Works* by Richard J. Schneider (Camden House, 2016), *Nineteenth-Century Prose* vol. 44, no. 1 (2017): 208-12.
- Preface, *Henry David Thoreau in Context* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), xvii-xxiv.
- Review of *Bird Relics: Grief and Vitalism in Thoreau* by Branka Arsić (Harvard, 2016), *Thoreau Society Bulletin* 296 (Winter 2017): 8-9.
- Teaching Reflection: “The Afric-American Picture Gallery,” “Just Teach One: Early African American Print,” *Common-Place: The Journal of Early American Life* (Fall 2016).
- Review of *Black Atlas: Geography and Flow in Nineteenth-Century African American Literature* by Judith Madera (Duke, 2015), *Transfers: Interdisciplinary Journal of Mobility Studies* vol. 6 no. 1 (Spring 2016).
- Review of *Abolitionist Geographies* by Martha Schoolman (Minnesota, 2014), *Emerson Society Papers* vol. 26, no. 2 (Fall 2015): 14.
- “#ReclaimHDT,” *The Concord Saunterer: A Journal of Thoreau Studies* n.s. 23 (2015): 112-23. (part of a cluster on “Civil Disobedience” in the era of Black Lives Matter; republished at <http://www.thoreausociety.org/news-article/reclaimhdt-james-finley>)
- Review of *Walden Warming: Climate Change Comes to Thoreau’s Woods*, by Richard Primack (Chicago, 2014), *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* vol. 22, no. 1 (2015): 191-93.

- “Measuring Thoreau.” Review essay of *Thoreau the Land Surveyor*, by Patrick Chura (Florida, 2010) and *Thoreauvian Modernities: Transatlantic Conversations on an American Icon*, edited by François Specq, Laura Dassow Walls, and Michel Granger (Georgia, 2013), *Nineteenth-Century Prose* vol. 42, no. 1 (2015): 122-35.
- “Matter and Objects in *The Maine Woods*,” *The Concord Saunterer: A Journal of Thoreau Studies* n.s. 22 (2014): 112-29. (Part of a cluster on Thoreau and the Material Turn)
- Review of *Fallen Forests: Emotion, Embodiment, and Ethics in American Women’s Environmental Writing, 1781-1924*, by Karen L. Kilcup (Georgia, 2013), *Environment and Society: Advances in Research* 5 (2014): 151-53.
- “An Interview with Scot Miller about his New Illustrated Edition of *The Maine Woods*,” *Thoreau Society Bulletin* 285 (Spring 2014): 5-7.
- “Roundtable on Thoreau and Religion,” *Thoreau Society Bulletin* 283 (Fall 2013): 3.
- “Race and Nature in Nineteenth-Century American Literature: A Conversation,” co-written with Lance Newman, *Journal of Ecocriticism* vol. 5, no. 2 (2013): 1-21.
- Review of *Not Altogether Human: Pantheism and the Dark Nature of the American Renaissance*, by Richard Hardack (Massachusetts, 2012), *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* vol. 20, no. 2 (2013): 432-34.
- Review of *Nature and the Environment*, edited by Scott Slovic (EBSCO, 2013), *Thoreau Society Bulletin* 281 (Spring 2013): 9-10.
- “The Year in Conferences: American Literature Association Conference,” co-written with H. Marlowe Daly-Galeano, Luella Putnam D’Amico, Nels Olson, and Kelly Ross, *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* vol. 58, no. 1 (2012): 103-20.

Public Media

- “Let Community Vote on SAISD School Closure Plan,” opinion piece co-written with Jennifer Tobias, *San Antonio Express-News*, July 10, 2023.
- “Monument to Terror,” letter to the editor, *San Antonio Express-News*, August 21, 2017.
- Quoted in “Canoe Tour Commemorates 150th Anniversary of Thoreau’s ‘The Maine Woods,’” *Bangor Daily News*, May 14, 2014.
- Quoted in “Paddling with Penobscots: Revisiting the Unknown Chapter of Thoreau’s Maine Woods,” by Matthew Sturdevant, *Canoe and Kayak*, July 2014.
- Quoted in “Henry David Thoreau would have Given ‘12 Years a Slave’ the Oscar for Best Picture, Too,” by Brentin Mock, *Grist*, March 4, 2014.

HONORS, FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS

- National Endowment for the Humanities, Institute for College and University Teachers Faculty, “Transcendentalism and Social Reform: Activism and Community Engagement in the Age of Thoreau,” Concord, MA, 2022.
- National Endowment for the Humanities, Landmarks of American History Faculty, “Living and Writing Deliberately: The Concord Landscapes and Legacy of Henry David Thoreau,” Concord, MA, 2017, 2019.
- Frederick Douglass Institute, Postdoctoral Fellowship, University of Rochester, 2014-15.
[Declined]

Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, Postgraduate Student Abstract Competition Winner, UK and Ireland, 2013.
American Antiquarian Society, Barbara L. Packer Fellowship, 2012.
Thoreau Society, Short-Term Research Fellowship, 2012.

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

Invited Lectures

- “Frederick Douglass and the Prospect of Free Soil,” Colorado College, February 2019; University of New Hampshire, November 2018.
- “Henry David Thoreau and the Commons: From *The Maine Woods* to the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument,” University of Maine at Farmington, September 2017.
- “Looking West from Katahdin: *The Maine Woods* and the National Parks,” The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA. April 2017.

Papers Presented

- “Thoreau, Ableism, and Neurodivergent Expression,” with Kristen Case, *Modern Language Association*, Philadelphia, PA. July 2024.
- “Frederick Douglass in Ireland: Free Soil and Famine,” *#DouglassWeek Symposium*, online. February 2021.
- “Frederick Douglass and the Prospect of Free Soil,” *American Literature Association*, Boston, MA. May 2019.
- “The Hemispheric Free Soil Movement,” *C19: Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists Fifth Biennial Conference*, Albuquerque, NM. March 2018.
- “Slavery, Capitalism, and the Environment: The Question of Free Soil,” *Midwest Modern Language Association*, Cincinnati, OH. November 2017.
- “The Thoreauvian Commons,” *Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Biennial Conference*, Detroit, MI. June 2017.
- “Exodus and Ecology in the Antislavery Jeremiad,” *C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists Fourth Biennial Conference*, State College, PA. March 2016.
- “The Environmental Antislavery Jeremiad,” *Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Biennial Conference*, Moscow, ID. June 2015.
- “The Republican Landscapes of Lydia Maria Child’s ‘The Kansas Emigrants,’” *American Literature Association*, Boston, MA. May 2015.
- “Working Forests: *The Maine Woods* at 150,” *American Literature Association*, Boston, MA. May 2015.
- “Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Gorham Palfrey, and the Influence of Free Soil,” *Thoreau Society Annual Gathering*, Concord, MA. July 2014.
- “Is *The Maine Woods* to Object Oriented Ontology what *Walden* is to Ecocriticism?” *Thoreau Society Annual Gathering*, Concord, MA. July 2014.
- “Trees,” *C19: Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists Third Biennial Conference*, Chapel Hill, NC. March 2014.
- “Pollution and Vital Materiality: Emerson and Thoreau Respond to the Fugitive Slave Act,” *Modern Language Association*, Chicago, IL. January 2014.

- “A Free Soil Sense of Place: Frederick Law Olmsted and the Landscapes of the Antebellum South,” *Modern Language Association*, Chicago, IL. January 2014.
- “Henry David Thoreau and Free Soil: the Intra-Activism of Nature,” *Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, UK & Ireland*, Guildford, UK. August 2013.
- “Justice in the Land’: Environmental Protest in Thoreau’s Reform Essays,” *Thoreau Society Annual Gathering*, Concord, MA. July 2013.
- “Ecocritique: Thoreau’s Philosophy of Reform,” *American Literature Association*, Boston, MA. May 2013.
- “Slavery and Environment: John Greenleaf Whittier, John Pierpont, and the Poetics of Free Soil,” *Conference on Ecopoetics*, Berkeley, CA. February 2013.
- “Slavery obscures the land’: Nathaniel Rogers, Henry David Thoreau, and Anti-Slavery Environmentalism,” *Thoreau Society Annual Gathering*, Concord, MA. July 2012.
- “Thoreau’s Antislavery Writings: Environmental Justice Ecocriticism and the New Materialism,” *American Literature Association*, San Francisco, CA. May 2012.
- “This Moral Earthquake’: The Fugitive Slave Law and Henry Thoreau’s Ecological and Topographical Consciousness,” *Thoreau Society Annual Gathering*, Concord, MA. July 2011.
- “Agrarian Labor, Land Rights, and Environmental Destruction in David Walker’s *Appeal*,” *Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Biennial Conference*, Bloomington, IN. June 2011.
- “The Final Ruin of this Happy Republic’: The Agrarian Poetics of David Walker’s *Appeal*,” *Black New England Conference*, Durham, NH. October 2010.
- “The Land of Liberty’: The Egalitarian Agrarianism of Henry Bibb’s *Narrative*,” *American Literature Association*, San Francisco, CA. May 2010.
- “*Contact! Contact! Who are we? where are we?*: Thoreau’s Construction of a Middle Consciousness in *The Maine Woods*,” *Conference on Northern New England Literature*, Northfield, VT. April 2009.

Papers presented in Seminars and Workshops

- “Free Soil is not a Noun” presented in the “Racial Colonialism and Environmentalism” seminar, *C19: Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists Sixth Biennial Conference*, online. October 2020.
- “Soil,” presented in the “Material Affinities” seminar, *American Comparative Literature Association Conference*, Washington, DC. March 2019.
- “Free Soil,” presented in the “C19 Environmental Humanities” seminar, *C19: Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists Fifth Biennial Conference*, Albuquerque, NM. March 2018.
- “Eco-materialist Ethics in the Antebellum U.S.,” presented in the “Material Ecocriticism and Changing Natures” seminar, *Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Biennial Conference*, Lawrence, KS. May 2013.
- “A Free Soil Jeremiad: James M. Whitfield’s Environmental Antislavery Poetics,” presented in the “Upstate New York and Early African American Expression” seminar, *Northeast Modern Language Association*, Rochester, NY. March 2012.

Panels Organized and Chaired

- “Multilingual Thoreau,” *Modern Language Association*, Washington, DC. January 2022.
(Organized with John Kucich)
- “Thoreau and the Limits of the Human,” *Modern Language Association*, Seattle, WA.
January 2020. (Organized with John Kucich)
- “Thoreau and Teaching,” *American Literature Association*, Boston, MA. May 2019.
(Organized with John Kucich)
- “Thoreau and Biography,” *Modern Language Association*, Chicago, IL. January 2019.
(Organized with John Kucich)
- “Putting Thoreau in Context,” *Thoreau Society Annual Gathering*, Concord, MA. July
2017.
- “Digging in to the Rust Bin: 19th-Century U.S. Literature for 21st-Century Ecocriticism,”
Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Biennial Conference,
Detroit, MI. June 2017. (Organized with Michelle Neely)
- “Thoreau, Science, and Science Studies: Twenty Years after *Seeing New Worlds*,”
Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Biennial Conference,
Moscow, ID. June 2015.
- “‘The *solid* earth, the *actual* world!’: Thoreau Studies and the Material Turn: A
Roundtable Discussion,” *Thoreau Society Annual Gathering*, Concord, MA. July
2014. (Organized with Kathleen Coyne Kelly and Kristen Case)
- “Thoreau and Ecocriticism,” *Thoreau Society Annual Gathering*, Concord, MA. July
2013. (Organized with Kurt Moellering)
- “Race, Nature, and the New Materialism: A Roundtable,” *Association for the Study of
Literature and Environment Biennial Conference*, Lawrence, KS. May 2013.
(Organized with Lance Newman)
- “Transformations: Thoreau and Changing Nature,” *Association for the Study of
Literature and Environment Biennial Conference*, Lawrence, KS. May 2013.

Panels Chaired

- “Disability and Worlding,” *Thoreau Society Annual Gathering*, Concord, MA, July 2022.
- “Comparative Landscapes,” *Thoreau Society Annual Gathering*, Concord, MA, July
2022.
- “Remembering the Mass of Men,” *Thoreau Society Annual Gathering*, Concord, MA,
July 2021.
- “Principles of Justice,” *Thoreau Society Annual Gathering*, Concord, MA, July 2021.

COURSES TAUGHT

Texas A&M University – San Antonio

- ENGL 5370 Slavery and Freedom in Nineteenth-Century America (Graduate)
- ENGL 5360 U.S. Environmental Literature and Ecocriticism (Graduate)
- ENGL 5340 Major Authors – Frederick Douglass (Graduate)
- ENGL 5315 Theory and Methods (Graduate)
- ENGL 5300 Introduction to Graduate Study
- ENGL 4398 Senior Seminar
- ENGL 4398 Senior Seminar: Henry David Thoreau at 200
- ENGL 4392 Teaching English

ENGL 4370 Special Topics: The Literature of Slavery
ENGL 4365 Colonial Through Nineteenth-Century American Literature
ENGL 3363 American Romanticism
ENGL 3362 Early American Literature
ENGL 2362 Literature of the Americas

New Mexico State University

ENGL 569 Slavery and Race in the United States (Graduate)
ENGL 538 Antebellum American Literature (Graduate)
ENGL 469 Advanced Study in American Literature: Environmental Literature
ENGL 469 Advanced Study in American Literature: The Literature of Slavery and
Freedom
ENGL 423 Advanced Study in a Major Author: Melville and Hawthorne
ENGL 438 Antebellum American Literature: The Environmental Imagination
ENGL 251 Survey of American Literature I
ENGL 151 Perspectives on Literature

The University of Texas at San Antonio

AMS 3123 Applications of American Studies
AMS 3013 Early American Culture
AMS 2043 Approaches to American Culture

University of New Hampshire

ENGL 515 Survey of American Literature to 1865
ENGL 419 Introduction to Literary Analysis
ENGL 401 First Year Writing: Writing Sustainability
ENGL 401 First Year Writing

ACADEMIC SERVICE (selected)

Profession

Manuscript Reviewer: Oxford University Press, Princeton University Press, Routledge,
Arizona Quarterly, *Concord Saunterer: A Journal of Thoreau Studies*; *ESQ: A
Journal of Nineteenth-Century American Literature and Culture*; *ISLE:
Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*; *J19: Journal of
Nineteenth-Century Americanists*; *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*
Thoreau Society Board of Directors: 2020-2023; clerk, 2022-2023.
Reader for the Harriet Tubman Prize (Lapidus Center for the Historical Analysis of
Transatlantic Slavery), 2020.
Thoreau Society Fellowship Committee: member, 2015-2018; chair, 2019-present.
Editorial Advisory Committee, The Thoreau Society, 2012-2022.
Organizational Liaison between The Thoreau Society and the American Literature
Association and the Modern Language Association, 2018-2022. (With John
Kucich, I organized and chaired panels at ALA and MLA conventions)
Editor, *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, 2013-2014.

Organizational Liaison between The Thoreau Society and the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, 2012-2015. (Organized and chaired panels at the respective conferences)

Senior Advisor, *ESQ*: "Year in Conferences," 2012. Published as "The Year in Conferences: American Literature Association Conference," *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 59.1 (2013): 162-181.

Texas A&M University – San Antonio

English Teacher Certification Program Coordinator (2016-present)

English Graduate Coordinator (2023-present)

English Undergraduate Program Coordinator (2018-2020)

Faculty Senator (2018-2019, 2020-2023)

English Undergraduate Committee (2016-2023)

Diversity and Dialogue Working Group (2016-2019)

English Graduate Committee (2016-2018)

University Library Committee (2016-2018)

Community (San Antonio)

Reading Group Coordinator, *SATX4: Exposing Racial Injustice* (2017-2018)

Professional Mentor, Communications Arts High School (2016-2017)

New Mexico State University

General Education Committee (2014-16)

University of New Hampshire

Co-President, English Graduate Organization (2011-12)

Sustainability Steward (2011)

ADVISING

Master's Thesis, as chair

Amanda Muñoz, "Deconstructing Gendered Binaries: Sustainability and Environmental Justice in Margaret Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes*," May 2015.

Master's Thesis, as reader

Yvette Chairez, "Off-Putting or Putting on a Show? Fashion as a Tool of Subversion and Agency at the 2017 Amber Rose Slutwalk," August 2018.

John W. Milam, "Tamburlaine's Imperial *Theoria*: Contemplations of Imperial Ambitions and (Neo)Platonic Wisdom in Christopher Marlowe's Tamburlaine Plays," April 2018.

Sara K. Torres, Creative Writing, "Everything Adjusts in Time," April 2016.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Certificate in Inclusive Instruction for Equitable Learning, Association of College and University Educators, 2022.

AFFILIATIONS

C19: The Society for Nineteenth-Century Americanists

Modern Language Association

National Council of Teachers of English

Ralph Waldo Emerson Society

The Thoreau Society