

GEOFFREY R. KIRSCH

Trinity College, Cambridge CB2 1TQ, U.K.
gk499@cam.ac.uk • (603) 568-3695 (USA) • 07444 102802 (UK)

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

- 2027- UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, Gainesville, FL
Assistant Professor of Humanities
- 2023-2026 TRINITY COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, Cambridge, U.K.
Junior Research Fellow in English

EDUCATION

- 2023 HARVARD UNIVERSITY, Cambridge, MA
Ph.D. in English
Dissertation: "Opening New Channels: Nineteenth-Century American Literature and the Law of Commerce"
Advisors: Professors John Stauffer, Philip Fisher, Louis Menand, and Donald E. Pease
- 2012 HARVARD LAW SCHOOL, Cambridge, MA
Juris Doctor, magna cum laude
- 2009 DARTMOUTH COLLEGE, Hanover, N.H.
Bachelor of Arts in English, summa cum laude; *valedictorian*
Senior Honors Thesis: "'Et in America Ego': Nature, Culture, and the Dismantling of the Frontier in Thoreau, Faulkner, and Cormac McCarthy"
Advisor: Professor Donald E. Pease

PUBLICATIONS

Books:

- In progress *Just Compensation: Nineteenth-Century American Literature and the Law of Commerce*. Revise and resubmit, Oxford University Press.

Peer-Reviewed Articles:

- 2024 "Piercing the Corporate Whale: Agents, Principals, and the Personified Impersonal in *Moby-Dick*." *Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies* 26, no. 3: pp. 55-68.
- 2023 "'What's He a Judge Of?': *Blood Meridian*'s Paths of Law." *Law, Culture and the Humanities* 19, no. 3: pp. 569-83.
- 2023 "Loss Without Remedy: *Moby-Dick* and the Laws of Compensation." *PMLA* 138, no. 1: pp. 37-51.

- 2019 “Innocence and the Arena: Wharton, Roosevelt, and Good Citizenship.” *American Literary Realism* 51, no. 3: pp. 200-19.
- 2018 “‘So Much a Piece of Nature’: Emerson, Webster, and the Transcendental Constitution.” *The New England Quarterly* 91, no. 4: pp. 625-50.
- 2013 “Henry James, Inheritance, and the Problem of the Dead Hand.” *Real Property, Trust and Estate Law Journal* 47, no. 3: pp. 435-65.

Book Chapters/Reference Works:

- In progress “Infra-Humanism and Infrastructuralism.” Entry in *The Oxford Handbook of Henry David Thoreau*, edited by Kristen Case and James Finley, forthcoming.
- 2025 “Higher Law.” Entry in *The Elgar Concise Encyclopedia of Law and Literature*, edited by Robert Spoo and Simon Stern, pp. 233-36.

Book Reviews:

- 2025 Review of Stefanie Mueller, *The Corporation in the Nineteenth-Century American Imagination* (2022). *Law & Literature* 37, no. 1: pp. 211-13.
- 2024 Review of Erin Forbes, *Criminal Genius in African American and US Literature, 1793-1845* (2024). *The Review of English Studies* 75, no. 322: pp. 620-22.
- 2024 “What’s Past is Prologue.” Essay review of D. Berton Emerson and Gregory Laski, eds., *Democracies in America: Keywords for the 19th Century and Today* (2023), Kermit Roosevelt III, *The Nation That Never Was: Reconstructing America’s Story* (2022), and Cass R. Sunstein, *How to Interpret the Constitution* (2023). *American Literary History* 36, no. 3: pp. 797-808.
- 2021 Review of Lisa Siraganian, *Modernism and the Meaning of Corporate Persons* (2021). *Modern Fiction Studies* 67, no. 4: pp. 803-06.

Public Audience:

- 2023 “From Quiet Desperation to Quiet Quitting.” Review of John Kaag and Jonathan van Belle, *Henry at Work: Thoreau on Making a Living*. *Los Angeles Review of Books*, June 13, 2023.
- 2022 “From Compromise to New Birth: Lincoln’s Constitution, and Ours.” Review of Noah Feldman, *The Broken Constitution: Lincoln, Slavery, and*

the Refounding of America (2021), and James Oakes, *The Crooked Path to Abolition: Abraham Lincoln and the Antislavery Constitution* (2021). *New Rambler Review*, March 3, 2022.

2019 “Poetic Justice: Oliver Wendell Holmes’s Life in Law and Letters.” Review of Stephen Budiansky, *Oliver Wendell Holmes: A Life in War, Law, and Ideas* (2019). *Los Angeles Review of Books*, August 27, 2019.

2011 Chapters 1 (“The Land and the River: Land Use and Conservation”) and 2 (“Granite, Brick, Steel, and Wood: Our Built Environment”). In *Crosscurrents of Change: Concord, N.H. in the 20th Century*. Concord, N.H.: Concord Historical Society.

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

2024 Julien Mezey Dissertation Award, Association for the Study of Law, Culture, and the Humanities

Harvard University:

2023 Helen Choate Bell Prize for best dissertation in American literature

2018-22 Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, Fall 2018, Fall 2019, and Spring 2022

2021 Helen Choate Bell Prize for best essay in American literature

2021 CAPS (Center for American Political Studies) Study of the American Republic Graduate Fellowship, Spring 2021

2020 Merit/Graduate Society Term-Time Research Fellowship, Fall 2020

2020 Francis James Child Prize for Excellence in Teaching, Spring 2020

2020 Special Commendation for Extraordinary Teaching in Extraordinary Times (COVID-19 pandemic), Spring 2020

2017 Bowdoin Prize for Graduate Essay in English

2016-17 Eric Cooper and Naomi Siegel Graduate Fund Fellowship

Harvard Law School:

2009-12 Dean’s Scholar Award in Corporations, Criminal Law, Legislation and Regulation, and Property

Dartmouth College:

2009-12	Alfred K. Priest Fellowship (for study at Harvard Law School)
2009	Phi Beta Kappa
2009	Arthur Feinstein 1955 Memorial English Honors Award
2009	B. William Hochman 1955 Memorial Prize in American Literature
2007-09	Rufus Choate Scholarship

PRESENTATIONS

Invited Talks:

2024	“‘Few Are the Ears That Hear It’: Henry David Thoreau and Music.” <i>New England Conservatory, Boston, MA, March 29</i>
2023	“‘To Open an Intercourse With the World’: Nathaniel Hawthorne and Transatlantic Literary Commerce.” <i>Nineteenth-Century Research Seminar, University of Cambridge Faculty of English, Cambridge, U.K., October 24</i>
2020-23	“Forced Into Politics: Daniel Webster, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the Fugitive Slave Crisis.” <i>Public lecture for New Hampshire Humanities, Concord, N.H., December 4, 2020, Online; Orford Social Library, Orford, N.H., April 19, 2021, Online; New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, N.H., November 6, 2021; Atkinson Historical Society, Atkinson, N.H., January 6, 2022, Online; Pembroke Historical Society, Pembroke, N.H., February 24, 2023; Holderness Historical Society, Holderness, N.H., July 5, 2023; Haverhill Historical Society, Haverhill, N.H., July 12, 2023</i>
2023	“Piercing the Corporate Whale: Agents, Principals, and the Personified Impersonal in <i>Moby-Dick</i> .” <i>McNeil Center for Early American Studies, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, March 1</i>
2022	“Piercing the Corporate Whale: Limited Liability and the Personified Impersonal in <i>Moby-Dick</i> .” <i>Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H., July 19</i>
2021	“From Whale-Lines to Rail-Lines: <i>Moby-Dick</i> , Industrial Accidents, and the Laws of Compensation.” <i>Works in Progress Webinar in Law and Literature, Online, October 26</i>

- 2019 “Daniel Webster’s Defense of the Union.”
Guest lecture and interview, Daniel Webster and the Dartmouth College Case (Dartmouth College course), Hanover, N.H., February 5
- 2015 “Nature and the Unconscious in *The Scarlet Letter* and *Moby-Dick*.”
Guest lecture and interview, The American Renaissance: Classic Literature of the 19th Century (DartmouthX online course)

Conferences:

- 2025 “‘A Civil Right in the River’: Thoreau, the Concord River, and Legal Personhood.”
American Literature Association Conference, Boston, MA, May 22-24
- 2024 “*Uncle Tom’s House Divided: Domestic Institutions and the Arm of Commerce.*”
C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists Conference, Pasadena, CA, March 14-16
- 2023 “Of Bad Men and Nasty Women: Demystifying Contract from Holmes to Wharton.”
Association for the Study of Law, Culture, and the Humanities Annual Meeting, Toronto, ON, June 22-23
- 2023 “Literary Protectionism and the Rise of the American Novel.”
American Comparative Literature Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, March 16-19
- 2022 “Corporate Leviathan: Agents, Principals, and the Personified Impersonal in *Moby-Dick*.”
Melville Society International Conference, Paris, France, June 27-30
- 2021 “Sojourning in Civilized Life Again: Leaving Quarantine with Thoreau.”
American Literature Association Conference, Boston, MA, July 7-11
- 2021 “Piercing the Corporate Whale: Artificial Personhood in *Moby-Dick*.”
MLA Annual Convention, Online, January 7-10
- 2021 “‘Very Natural In Its Methods’: Thoreau’s Green Infrastructures.”
MLA Annual Convention, Online, January 7-10
- 2020 “The Greening of the American System: Thoreau and Internal Improvement.”
C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists Conference, Online, October 16-18, 23-25

- 2020 “Literary Protectionism.”
C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists Conference, Online, October 16-18, 23-25
- 2020 “Hawthorne’s Romance of the Revenue Service.”
Northeast Modern Language Association Convention, Boston, MA, March 5-8
- 2018 “Refilling the Swamp: Thoreau in an Age of Big Government Environmentalism.”
Harvard English Graduate Symposium, Cambridge, MA, November 15-16
- 2018 “‘A Track-Repairer Somewhere in the Orbit of the Earth’: Thoreau and the Commercial Imagination.”
Thoreau Society Annual Gathering, Concord, MA, July 12-15
- 2018 “‘The Laws of His Blood and Constitution’: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Daniel Webster, and the Failure of Law.”
Association for the Study of Law, Culture, and the Humanities Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., March 16-17

TEACHING

- 2025 English Tripos Part II, Paper 14: American Literature
Seminar Instructor and Tutor
Trinity College, University of Cambridge
- 2024 American Transcendentalism: Emerson, Fuller, Thoreau
Lecturer
Roundtable.org/92nd Street Y Online Course
- 2022 English 178x: The American Novel in the 20th Century
Teaching Fellow for Professor Philip Fisher
Harvard University
- 2021 English 98r: Junior Tutorial: The Law and Literature of American Slavery
Instructor
Harvard University
- 2020 English 98r: Junior Tutorial: The Transcendentalists and Their Legacy
Instructor
Harvard University
- 2019 English 62: Migrations: Castaways and Renegades
Teaching Fellow for Professor John Stauffer
Harvard University

- 2019 US-World 34: The Civil War from Nat Turner to Birth of a Nation
Teaching Fellow for Professor John Stauffer
Harvard University
- 2018 English 69: Migrations: American Literature to 1865
Teaching Fellow for Professor Stephen Osadetz
Harvard University

RESEARCH ASSISTANCE

- 2022 DETOUR FILMS, Austin, TX
"Concord" Film Project Researcher
- 2012 HARVARD LAW SCHOOL, Cambridge, MA
Research Assistant to Professor Robert H. Sitkoff
- 2008-09 CONCORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Concord, N.H.
Author/Researcher
- 2007-08 DARTMOUTH COLLEGE, Hanover, N.H.
Research Assistant to Professor Donald E. Pease

LEGAL EMPLOYMENT

- 2014-16 GOODWIN PROCTER, Boston, MA
Associate Litigation Attorney
- 2013-14 U.S. COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE FIRST CIRCUIT, Boston, MA
Law Clerk to the Honorable Jeffrey R. Howard
- 2012-13 U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF MAINE, Portland, ME
Law Clerk to the Honorable D. Brock Hornby

PROFESSIONAL AND DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE

- 2025 Examination Assessor
University of Cambridge Faculty of English
- 2025 Reviewer for *A History of Natural Law: From the Ancient World to the New Aristotelianism*, Cambridge University Press
- 2019-20 Graduate Student Representative, Hiring Committee for Literature and Environment Tenure-Track Position
Harvard University Department of English

2018-20

Co-Coordinator, Long 19th Century and Modernism Graduate Colloquium
Harvard University Department of English

LANGUAGES

French (basic reading); German (reading and basic conversation)