

# Rachel Sagner Buurma

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## Current position

*Associate Professor of English Literature, Swarthmore College*

## Areas of specialization

Victorian literature and culture • history of the novel • disciplinary history • history of the book • literary informatics

## Appointments held

2014- Associate Professor, Department of English Literature, Swarthmore College  
2008-2014 Assistant Professor, Department of English Literature, Swarthmore College  
2007-2008 Assistant Professor, Department of English, University of Toronto  
2005-2007 Postdoctoral Lecturer, Department of English, University of Pennsylvania

## Education

2005 PhD in English, University of Pennsylvania  
1999 BA with High Honors in English Literature and Sociology + Anthropology, Swarthmore College

## Grants, honors & awards

2016-2017 Michener Faculty Fellowship, Swarthmore College  
2012-2014 Collaborative Research Fellowship, American Academy of Learned Societies, with Laura Heffernan (Assistant Professor, University of North Florida)  
2011 *New Literary History* Ralph Cohen Prize (for best article by an untenured scholar submitted in 2011)  
2011-2012 Michener Faculty Fellowship, Swarthmore College  
2009 Hungerford Fund Research Grant, Swarthmore College  
2008 SIG Research Grant, University of Toronto  
2007 Connaught Research Start-up Award, University of Toronto  
2006 James and Sylvia Thayer Short-Term Fellowship, UCLA Library  
2004-2005 American Dissertation Fellowship, American Association of University Women  
2004-2005 Josephine De Kármán Dissertation Fellowship (declined)  
1999-2004 Benjamin Franklin Fellowship, University of Pennsylvania

## Publications & talks

### ARTICLES

- 2016 “The Sympathetic Research Imagination: The Digital Humanities and the Liberal Arts.” With Anna Tione Levine. *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2015* Edited by Matthew K. Gold and Lauren F. Klein. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016 (2,500 words)
- 2015 “The Fictionality of Topic Modeling: Machine Reading Anthony Trollope’s Barchester Series,” *Big Data and Society* Special Theme: “Assumptions of Sociality: A Symposium on Social and Humanistic Scholars’ Encounters with the Methodological Ontologies of Big Data.” Edited by John Mohr and Robin Wagner-Pacifici. <http://bds.sagepub.com/content/2/2/2053951715610591>
- 2014 “Notation after ‘The Reality Effect’: Remaking Reference with Roland Barthes and Sheila Heti.” Co-authored with Laura Heffernan. Peer-reviewed special issue “Denotatively, Technically, Literally” edited by Elaine Freedgood and Cannon Schmitt. *Representations* 125.1 (Winter 2014):80-102.
- 2013 “Interpretation, 1980 and 1880.” Co-authored with Laura Heffernan. Special issue on “The Ends of History,” edited by Lauren Goodlad and Andrew Sartori. *Victorian Studies* 55.4 (Summer 2013), 615-6 628.
- 2013 “Critical Histories of Omniscience,” *New Directions in the History of the Novel*, edited by Patrick Parrinder, Nicola Watson, and Andrew Nash (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)
- 2013 “Publishing the Victorian Novel,” *The Oxford Handbook of the Victorian Novel*, edited by Lisa Rodensky (Oxford University Press, 2013) 87-110
- 2012 “The Common Reader and the Archival Classroom: Disciplinary History for the Twenty-first Century.” Co-authored with Laura Heffernan. *New Literary History* 43:1 (Winter 2012) 113-135
- 2008 “Anonyma’s Authors.” Special issue edited by U.C. Knoepfelmacher and Logan D. Browning. *Studies in English Literature* 48:4 (Autumn 2008) 839-848. Reprinted in *Victorian Hybridities: Cultural Anxiety and Formal Innovation*, Ulrich Knoepfelmacher ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010)
- 2008 “Ephemeral Forms: E.S. Dallas, Novel Reading, and the Victorian Review,” *English Language Notes* 46:1 (Autumn 2008) 119-125
- 2007 “Individuality, Corporate Authority and the Archive: the Production of Authorship in Late- Victorian England.” *Victorian Studies* 50:1 (Autumn 2007) 15-42

### FORTHCOMING ARTICLES

- 2016 “Reading.” In *Digital Pedagogy in the Humanities: Concepts, Models, and Experiments*, eds. Rebecca Frost Davis, Matthew K. Gold, Katherine D. Harris, and Jentery Sayers. Modern Language Association, 2016.
- 2017 “Axel’s Classroom: Modernism and Close Reading in the University.” Co-authored with Laura Heffernan. Invited submission for *Modernism and Close Reading*, ed. David James (Oxford: OUP, forthcoming 2017)

### UNDER REVIEW

- 2016 “The Classroom in the Canon: T. S. Eliot’s Modern English Literature Tutorial and *The Sacred Wood*”

### MANUSCRIPTS IN PROGRESS

- ”A MATERIAL HISTORY OF OMNISCIENCE: THE CRITICAL INVENTION OF THE VICTORIAN NOVEL”  
Reveals the social, literary-critical origins of our current notions of the Victorian novel’s form.

”THE TEACHING ARCHIVE: A NEW HISTORY OF ENGLISH STUDIES”

Co-authored with Laura Heffernan (University of North Florida). Examines the teaching archives of key and forgotten 20th-century literary scholars in order to rebuild a collective disciplinary history of English.

DIGITAL PROJECT

Early Novels Database (END) [www.earlynovels.org](http://www.earlynovels.org)

Role: Project Co-director (with Jon Shaw, University of Pennsylvania Libraries)

Selected recent presentations related to END:

- 2016 “Building an Eighteenth-Century Corpus.” Written with Lindsay Van Tine, Alice McGrath, Nora Battelle, and Beth Seltzer. ASECS, Pittsburgh, PA, March 2016
- 2015 “The Early Novels Database.” Panel on END, including the END team, with student presentations of their summer 2015 projects. EC-ASECS, West Chester University, Nov 2015
- 2015 Plenary panelist, “Special Collections Libraries as Liberal Arts Laboratories” at RBMS 2015: Preserve the Humanities! Special Collections as Liberal Arts Laboratory, June 25th, 2015
- 2014 Case study presentation at “Teaching with the Good Stuff: Educational Strategies for Archives, Libraries, and Museums,” PACSCL workshop, Nov 2014
- 2014 “The Interface and the Index: Rewriting Referentiality in the Eighteenth-Century Novel.” Presented by Nick Allred and Sierra Eckert. EC-ASECS, University of Delaware, Nov 2014
- 2014 “Index, Database, Interface: Teaching Bibliographic Description Using Digital Tools.” Written with Nick Allred and Sierra Eckert. ASECS, Williamsburg, VA, March 2014
- 2013 “The Early Novels Database,” Digital Projects Showcase SHARP (Society of the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publication), July 2013
- 2013 “END: an overview.” Drexel ExCITE Center lightning talks, with END project team, July 2013
- 2012 “The Early Novels Database,” Temple University Center for the Humanities, Digital Humanities Panel, November 2012
- 2010 “END: the Early Novels Database,” with Anna Levine (Swarthmore College) and Richard Li (Swarthmore College), invited talk, Philadelphia Philoblibion Club meeting, March 2010

REVIEWS

- 2014 Review of *The Textual Condition of Nineteenth-Century Literature* by Josephine M. Guy and Ian Small. *Victorian Studies* 56.2 (Winter 2014), 330-332
- 2012 Review of *The Art of the Epigraph: How Great Books Begin* by Rosemary Ahearn. *The Book* (The New Republic online book review, 2012)
- 2009 Review of *A Return to the Common Reader: Print Culture and the Novel, 1850-1900* edited by Beth Palmer and Adeline Buckland. (*Nineteenth-Century Books Online*)
- 2009 Review of *Commodity Culture in Dickens’s Household Words* by Catherine Waters. *The Review of English Studies* 60.246 (September 2009), 667
- 2009 Review of *The Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland. Vol. 4, Professionalism and Diversity, 1880–2000. The Papers/Cahiers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 47.1 (Spring 2009), 130

MISCELLANEOUS

- 2015 “Periodicals” in *The Encyclopedia of Victorian Literature*, edited by Dino Franco Felluga, Pamela K. Gilbert, and Linda K. Hughes (Wiley-Blackwell, 2015)
- 2014 American Academy of Learned Societies Research Snapshot blog post (co-authored with Laura

Heffernan) <http://www.acls.org/news/10-8-2014/>

2011 “The Early Novels Database: a case study,” co-authored with Richard Li (undergraduate, Swarthmore College) and Anna Levine (undergraduate, Swarthmore College). *Past as Portal: Teaching Undergraduates Using Special Collections and Archives*, edited by Peggy Seiden, Eleanor Mitchell, Suzy Taraba (American Council of Research Libraries Press, 2012)

2011 “The Early Novels Database: a case study,” with Richard Li and Anna Levine. The Academic Commons, April 30, 2011. <<http://www.academiccommons.org>>

2008 *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism* entries: “Hansard,” “Poole’s Guide to Periodical Literature,” “Samuel Phillips” (British Library/ ProQuest, Fall 2008)

#### INVITED TALKS

2016 “The Preparation of the Victorian Novel,” Department of English, University of Louisville, January 21, 2016

2015 “Canon, Corpus, Collection: DH between the classroom and the library,” November 6, 2015, Middleton Library, Louisiana State University

2015 “A New Archive for Disciplinary History,” November 5, 2015, Department of English, Louisiana State University

2015 Plenary panelist, “Special Collections Libraries as Liberal Arts Laboratories” at RBMS 2015: Preserve the Humanities! Special Collections as Liberal Arts Laboratory, June 25th, 2015

2015 “Note, Index, Topic: The Preparation of the Victorian Novel,” The Way We Read Victorians Now: CUNY Annual Victorian Conference, May 1, 2015

2015 “The Teaching Archive: A New History of Literary Study,” with Laura Heffernan. Faculty Lecture, Swarthmore College, February 19, 2015

2015 “A New Archive for Disciplinary History,” with Laura Heffernan. Department of English, Columbia University, February 17, 2015

2015 “Southall in The Sacred Wood: T.S. Eliot’s Extension School Teaching,” with Laura Heffernan. Department of English, Fordham University, February 18, 2015

2015 “New Disciplinary History: The Mid-Century Classrooms of Edmund Wilson and Cleanth Brooks,” with Laura Heffernan. Department of English, University of Tulsa, January 22, 2015

2014 Panel on “The Power of Lots of Syllabi,” The Open Syllabus Project conference and hackathon, Columbia University, June 2014

Video (at timemark 50:06): <http://youtu.be/v84ZFAqo42w?list=PLf1Dab4lwQhAvSNtzgUB8x3fSMVuwxDow>

2013 “Charles Reade’s Research,” Swarthmore College Faculty Lecture

2012 “The History of Critical Collectivity,” “The Ends of History” Symposium, Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory, University of Illinois Urbana Champaign, February 10, 2012

2011 “The Power and Mystery of Expertise,” Research Roundtable, seminar participant, Pembroke Center, Brown University, March 2011

2010 “The Rift in Reading and the Mid-Century Classroom: A Reparative Disciplinary History,” co-authored with Laura Heffernan (University of North Florida), University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana British Modernities Group, March 2010

2009 “The Material Form of the Victorian Review,” Penn History of Material Text Seminar, October 2009// “Readings of the Victorian Review: Critical Free Indirect Discourse, Ephemera and Publishing, and the New Historicism,” Delaware Valley British Studies Seminar, April 2009

#### CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS (SELECTED)

2017 “Metadata,” MLA Libraries and Research Forum roundtable on “Acknowledging our Boundary Conditions: Opening the Black Box of Creating Access to Digitized Collections.” Modern Languages Association of American annual conference (Upcoming Jan 2016)

2017 Organizer and chair, “Local DH” panel, Digital Humanities Forum, Modern Languages Association

- of American annual conference (Upcoming Jan 2016)
- 2016 “Classrooms without Canons.” Written with Laura Heffernan. Upcoming ASECS, Pittsburgh, PA, March 2016
- 2016 “Classroom Practice and Critical Disciplinary History,” with Laura Heffernan. New Disciplinary Histories panel, upcoming Modern Languages Association of America annual conference (Austin, TX)
- 2014 “J. Saunders Redding’s Disciplinary History,” with Laura Heffernan. African American Criticism and the Institutionalization of Modernism panel, Modernist Studies Association 16th Annual Conference (Pittsburgh, PA)
- 2014 “Index, Database, Interface: Teaching Bibliographic Description Using Digital Tools,” with Nick Allred (Rutgers) and Sierra Eckert (Columbia). American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies annual conference (Williamsburg, VA)
- 2013 “Charles Reade’s Indexical Sublime,” North American Victorian Studies Association (Pasadena, CA)
- 2013 “The Early Novels Database,” Digital Showcase. With Swarthmore students Sierra Eckert, Jocelyn Hawley, and Allison Schultes and Penn students Alexis Van Eycken and Michelle Moyes. Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing annual North American conference (Philadelphia, PA)
- 2013 “Charles Reade, Victorian Periodicals Researcher” (Research Society for Victorian Periodicals (University of Salford, Salford, UK)
- 2013 “How Should an Institution Be?” With Laura Heffernan. “New Sociologies of Literature” panel, American Comparative Literature Association (Toronto, Canada)
- 2012 “Reade’s Research,” North American Victorian Studies Association Conference (Madison, WI)
- 2012 “The Rift in Reading and the Classrooms of Edmund Wilson and Cleanth Brooks” with Laura Heffernan. 20th Century American Division panel, Modern Languages Association Conference
- 2010 “Critical Free Indirect Discourse,” International Conference on Narrative (Cleveland, OH)
- 2009 “Critical Histories of Omniscience,” Narrative Dominions: Oxford History of the Novel in English Conference (London, UK)
- 2009 “The Persistence of Victorian Ephemera,” North American Victorian Studies Conference (Cambridge, UK)
- 2008 “Ephemeral Forms: Fugitive Writing, Literary Durability, and the Victorian Review,” North American Victorian Studies Association (Yale University, New Haven, CT)
- 2008 “The Character of Impersonality,” Research Society for Victorian Periodicals (Roehampton University, UK)
- 2008 Panel moderator, Knowledge, Culture, and Human Rights Colloquium, Institute for the Study of Law, Technology, and Culture, University of Toronto Faculty of Law
- 2007 “Margaret Oliphant and the Materiality of the Unpublished,” North American Victorian Studies Association annual conference
- 2007 “Anarchism, Cosmopolitanism, Print Culture,” Northeast Victorian Studies Association annual conference (Cambridge, MA)
- 2005 “Margaret Oliphant’s Annals of a Publishing House: Theorizing Blackwood’s Magazine as an Affiliative Network,” Victorian Division panel, Modern Languages Association annual conference
- 2005 “By One of the Firm’: Corporate Authority and Literary Collaboration in Trollope,” Northeast Victorian Studies Association conference

## Teaching

### SWARTHMORE COLLEGE

- 2016 English 97: Literary Data Visualization (independent study)
- 2010-2015 Early Novels Database Summer Seminar
- 2014 English 40: Victorian Literature and Victorian Informatics

2010, 11, 13, 14, English 111: Victorian Novel Research Seminar  
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 2014, 2008 English 009Z: Close Reading and Its Discontents  
 2012, 2009 English 009Z: Literature against History?  
 2008-2015 English 35: The Rise of the Novel  
 2009, 2013 English 40: Victorian Studies: the Culture of the Review  
 2012 English 81/History 90C: Bad Research and Information Heresies. Co-taught with Timothy Burke.  
 2010 English 45: The Twentieth-Century Novel  
 2009 English 40B: The Nineteenth-Century Novel and the Canon. Co-taught with Anne Garrison.  
 2009 English 83: Formalisms and Historicisms  
 2010 Novel theory reading group (non-credit)

#### THESIS ADVISING, SWARTHMORE COLLEGE

Yumi Shiroma (Interpretation Theory honors thesis, 2015-2016), Joshua Gregory (Interpretation Theory directed reading, Spring 2015), Julia Carleton (English-Education Honors thesis, 2014-2015), Sierra Eckert (Interpretation Theory thesis project, 2013-2014), Nicholas Allred (Honors thesis, 2012-13), Alison Devine (honors thesis, 2012-13), Maisie Wiltshire-Gordon (English-Philosophy Honors thesis, 2012-13), Stephanie Su (English-Education Honors thesis, co-advisor 2011-12), Brendan Work (Comparative Literature thesis co-advisor, 2009-2010), Dennis Hogan (2009-2010 Comparative Literature thesis co-advisor, 2009-2010), Maria Dalini (Comparative Literature thesis co-advisor, 2008-2009), Melanie Spaulding (Honors thesis, co-advisor, Daisy Yuhas (Honors independent study, Spring 2009)

#### EARLY NOVELS DATABASE SUMMER RESEARCH SUPERVISION (10 WEEKS EACH SUMMER)

Anna Tione Levine (Swarthmore, 2009, 2010, 2011), Richard Li (Swarthmore, 2009, 2010), Alison Devine (Swarthmore, 2011, 2012), Madeleine Reichman (Swarthmore, 2011), Benjamin El-lentuck (Swarthmore, 2012), Catherine Park (Swarthmore, 2012), Mae Carlson (Bryn Mawr, part-time, 2012), Nick Allred (Swarthmore part-time, 2012, 2014 as alum), Sierra Eckert (Swarthmore, 2013, 2014 as alum), Allison Schultes (Swarthmore, 2013), Jocelyn Hawley (Swarthmore, 2013, 2014), Christina Aruffo (Swarthmore, part-time, 2013), Alexis Van Eyken (Penn, part-time, 2013), Michelle Moyes (Penn, part-time, 2013), Treasure Tinsley (Swarthmore, 2014), Emma Madarasz (Swarthmore, 2014), Katherine Poje (Haverford, 2015), Kirara Sato (Penn, 2015), Molly Hemphill (Penn, 2015), Gabriella Ekens (Swarthmore, 2015), Yumi Shiroma (Swarthmore, 2015), Nora Battelle (Swarthmore, 2015), Ian Hoffman (Swarthmore alum, 2015)

#### TEACHING EXPERIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

2007-2008 Fiction before 1832: The Rise of the Novel (third-year year-long course)  
 2007-2008 Narrative (first-year introduction to literature, year-long course)

#### TEACHING EXPERIENCE, TEMPLE UNIVERSITY CONTINUING EDUCATION

2003-2004 Books You Wish You'd Read

#### TEACHING EXPERIENCE, ROSENBACH MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

2012 Great Expectations Reading Group

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

2007	Theory of the Novel (Topics in the Novel upper-level seminar)
2006	Victorian Literature and the Culture of the Review (survey course)
2006	Theory in Practice (Topics in Literary Theory upper-level seminar)
2006	Anarchism, Cosmopolitanism, and Late-Victorian Literature Print Culture (independent study)
2006	Producing Novels, Consuming Fictions (Topics in the Novel upper-level seminar)
2006	The Nineteenth-Century Novel (survey course)
2005	Sympathetic Ink: Empire and Material Text in Victorian Literature (upper-level seminar)
2005, 2006	The Rise of the Novel (survey course)
2005, 2007	Jane Austen (upper-level seminar)
2005	Eighteenth-Century Print Culture (independent study)
2002	Anonymity, Pseudonymity, and Authority (writing class)
2001	Victorian Readings: Representations of Readers and Reading in Victorian England (writing class)
2001	Victorian Circulations: Print Culture and Representation in the Victorian Novel (writing class)
2000	Dangerous Sympathies (writing class)

## Dissertation committees

Beth Seltzer, Temple University, Department of English; Dana Harrison, Temple University, Department of English. Outside reader for Andrea Cabus, Temple University, Department of English.

## Service to the profession

2016-	Member, editorial board, <i>CA: Journal for Cultural Analytics</i>
2016-2019	Digital Humanities Forum MLA Executive Committee
2012-2015	Co-ordinator, P19: the Greater Philadelphia Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture Seminar <a href="http://p19.github.io/">http://p19.github.io/</a>
ms reviewing	<i>Victorian Studies</i> , <i>The Journal of Big Data and Society</i> , <i>Contemporary Literature</i> , <i>Nineteenth-Century Contexts</i> , <i>Journal of Victorian Culture</i> , <i>Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America</i> , <i>Media History</i> , Palgrave, Broadview Press

## Service to Swarthmore College

2016-2018	Director, Tri-College Digital Humanities Initiative
2014-2017	Chair, Mellon Tri-College Faculty Forum Committee
2015-2016	Co-convener, Faculty Seminar on Collaboration, Aydelotte Foundation for the Liberal Arts
2015-2016	Member, Salary Committee
2015	Convener, The Art of Topic Modeling, Trico Digital Humanities Faculty-Staff Seminar
2014-2015	Swarthmore Liaison, Tri-College Digital Humanities Steering Committee
2014-2015	Faculty advisor, Re:Humanities Conference
2010-2011, 2015-	Mellon Mays mentor
2016 2013, 2015	Alumni Weekend talks
2014-2015	Member, Library Committee
2014-present	Project Lead, Swarthmore Syllabus Project
2012-2014	Member, Aydelotte Foundation for the Liberal Arts Steering Committee
2010-2014	Co-organizer and founding member, Junior Faculty Writing Group
2012-2013	Washington, D.C. Area Swarthmore Alumni Book Group Mentor
2011	Lead organizer, Mellon 23 Collaborative Workshop, "Liberal Arts Education, Collaborative Research, and the Humanities"

2009-2015 Interpretation Theory Committee  
2009-2010 Committee on Awards and Fellowships  
2009-2010 New York City Swarthmore Alumni Book Club Mentor  
2008 A. Edward Newton Book Competition Judge