

ABRAM C. VAN ENGEN

Washington University in St. Louis
Department of English

One Brookings Drive
St. Louis, MO 63130

(314) 935-4403
vanengen@wustl.edu

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Associate Professor, Department of English, Washington University in St. Louis, 2016-
(Faculty Affiliate, John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics, 2014-)

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Washington University in St. Louis, 2012-2016

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Trinity University, January 2011 – May 2012.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Northwestern University, English, 2010

M.A. Northwestern University, English, 2005

B.A. Calvin College, English, Honors Degree, 2003

Calvin College, Philosophy, Honors Degree, 2003

PUBLICATIONS

Books

The Meaning of America: How the United States Became the City on a Hill (New Haven:
Yale University Press, under contract)

Sympathetic Puritans: Calvinist Fellow Feeling in Early New England (New York: Oxford
University Press, 2015)

Special Issue

Co-Editing a special issue on Puritanism for the journal *American Literature*. In progress.

Co-editing a special issue on “Religious Affections in Early America” for *Eighteenth-
Century Theory and Interpretation*. In progress.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

- “The Religious Pursuit of History: Jeremy Belknap and the Making of American Historical Societies.” *Massachusetts Historical Review*. Accepted, with revisions.
- “The Last Cleric: Ann Douglas, Intellectual Authority, and the Place of *Feminization* at Forty.” Co-authored with Kevin Pelletier and Claudia Stokes. *J19*. Accepted.
- “Eliza’s Disposition: Freedom, Pleasure, and Sentimental Fiction.” *Early American Literature* 51.2 (2016): 297-331.
- “Origins and Last Farewells: Bible Wars, Textual Form, and the Making of American History.” *The New England Quarterly* 86.4 (December 2013): 543-92. Whitehill Prize Winner.
- “Advertising the Domestic: Anne Bradstreet’s Sentimental Poetics.” *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers* 28.1 (2011): 47-68.
- “Puritanism and the Power of Sympathy.” *Early American Literature* 45.3 (Fall 2010): 533-564.
- “Shifting Perspectives: Sin and Salvation in Julian’s *A Revelation of Love*.” *Literature and Theology* 23.1 (March 2009): 1-17.
- “Reclaiming Claims: What English Students Want from English Profs.” *Pedagogy* 5.1 (January 2005): 5-18.

Book Chapters

- “Claiming the High Ground: Puritans, Catholics, and the City on a Hill.” In *American Literature and The New Puritan Studies*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2017.
- “The Puritan Culture of Letters.” *Blackwell Companion to American Literature*. Forthcoming.
- “The Salem Witch Trials.” In *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*. 2016.
- “Puritanism.” In *Oxford Bibliographies in Atlantic History*. Ed. Trevor Burnard. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Review Essays

- “The Law and the Gospel.” A review essay of *Hartford Puritanism: Thomas Hooker, Samuel Stone, and Their Terrifying God* by Baird Tipson, *Common-place.org* 17.3 (Summer 2017).
- “A Medieval Puritan Welcomes the Early American Enlightenment: What Bible Commentaries Can Offer Post-secular and Literary Studies,” *Early American Literature* 52.2 (2017): 423-441.

“Three Questions for American Literature and Religion,” *Journal of American Studies* 51 (2017): 220-226.

“Anne Bradstreet in England.” *Women’s Studies* 43.3 (2014): 379-92.

Other Writings

“Reagan called America a ‘city on a hill’ because taxpayers funded the humanities,” *The Conversation* (3/16/17), republished in *Salon*. Another version of this op-ed was republished in *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch* as “Saving History” (5/11/16).

“A Rationale for Intervention,” *The Conversation* (9/22/17).

“Advancing God’s Kingdom: Calvinism, Calvin College, and Betsy DeVos,” *Religion and Politics* (1/30/17)

“Freedom and/of/from Guns,” *Avidly / LA Review of Books* (October 11, 2016).

“Clinton’s American exceptionalism puts a new twist on an old idea,” *The Conversation* (Sept. 7, 2016).

“Legacies.” *Common-Place* 15.2 (Winter 2015). Online at www.common-place.org.

“Dispatches from Paternity Leave,” *Avidly / LA Review of Books* (Nov. and Dec., 2013).

Book Reviews

“Mystery and Message,” review of Gregory Wolfe, *Intruding Upon the Timeless: Meditations on Art, Faith, and Mystery* (Square Halo Books, 2003), in *Books&Culture* (May 10, 2004). Online.

“Insect Theodicy,” review of Jeffrey Lockwood, *Locust: The Devastating Rise and Mysterious Disappearance of the Insect that Shaped the American Frontier* (Basic Books, 2004), in *Books&Culture* (June 21, 2004). Online.

“The Nature of Redemption,” review of Steven Kellman, *Redemption: The Life of Henry Roth* (Norton, 2005), in *Books&Culture* (January/February, 2006).

“Double Helix,” review of David Maine, *Fallen* (St. Martin’s Press, 2005), in *Books&Culture* (March/April, 2006).

“Teaching Life, with Restraint,” review of Stanley Fish, *Save the World on Your Own Time* (Oxford UP, 2008), in *Books&Culture* (2008). Online.

“The Good, the Bad, and the Puritans,” review of Sarah Vowell, *The Wordy Shipmates* (Riverhead, 2008), in *Books&Culture* (2008).

- “Meredith Neuman, *Jeremiah’s Scribes: Creating Sermon Literature in Puritan New England* (U of Pennsylvania P, 2013),” *Prose Studies* 36.2 (2014): 159-162.
- “David Powers, *Damnable Heresy: William Pynchon, the Indians, and the First Book Banned (and Burned) in Boston* (Wipf and Stock, 2015),” *The New England Quarterly* 88.4 (December 2015): 715-717.
- “Kevin Pelletier, *Apocalyptic Sentimentalism: Love and Fear in U.S. Antebellum Literature* (Georgia UP),” *Amerikanstudien/American Studies*, forthcoming.
- “Margaret Bendroth, *The Last Puritans: Mainline Protestants and the Power of the Past* (U of North Carolina P, 2015),” *Church History* 85.2 (2016): 398-401.
- “S. Bryn Roberts, *Puritanism and the Pursuit of Happiness: The Ministry and Theology of Ralph Venning, c. 1621-1674.*” *Church History*, forthcoming.
- “*Female Piety and the Invention of Puritanism* by Bryce Traister and *Cast Down: Abjection in America, 1700-1850* by Mark J. Miller,” *American Literature* 89.2 (2017): 425-428.

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

- National Endowment for the Humanities Public Scholars Fellowship, Spring 2018
- National Endowment for the Humanities Faculty Fellowship, 2016-2017
- Huntington Library Conference Grant, “Religious Affections in Colonial North America,” 2017
- Benjamin F. Stevens Fellowship, Massachusetts Historical Society, 2016-2017
- American Council of Learned Societies Faculty Fellowship, alternate, 2015-2016
- Center for the Humanities Faculty Fellowship, Washington University, Spring 2015 [declined]
- Center for the Humanities Writing Group Grant: American Religions, Wash U, 2016-2017.
- Center for the Humanities Reading Group Grant: Literature and Religion, Wash U, 2014-2015.
- Walter Muir Whitehill Prize in Early American History, 2012.
- Zuckerman Prize, finalist, McNeil Center for Early American Studies, May 2011.
- Hagstrum Prize for Best Dissertation, Northwestern English Department, May 2011.
- Mellon-Funded Warwick-Newberry Collaborative Programme: Reintegrating British and American History, 1660-1750. Newberry Library, July 2011.
- R.M. McFarlin Junior Faculty Fellowship, Trinity University, Summers 2010-2012.
- NEH Summer Institute, “From Metacom to Tecumseh: Alliances, Conflicts, and Resistance in Native North America,” Newberry Library, 2010.
- Presidential Fellowship, Northwestern University, 2008-2010.

Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Graduate Student Teacher Award, 2008.
 Karin Strand Prize for Best Essay, Northwestern University English Department, 2007.
 Hackler Prize for Best Essay, Oxford Honours Programme, xx2001.
 Pew Younger Scholars: University of Notre Dame, 2000-2001.

INVITED TALKS

“National Purpose.” Keynote address for symposium at Appalachian State University called
 “Sustaining Democracy: Existence, Persistence, Resistance.” September 2017.
 “We Shall Be as a City upon a Hill: John Winthrop’s Bible and the Making of American
 Exceptionalism.” Rare Book School Symposium at the University of Arkansas. 2017.
 “Missionary Impulses and Historical Societies: The Political Theology of American History
 in the Early Republic.” Missouri Regional Seminar on Early American History. 2016.
 “Jeremy Belknap, Missionary: Religion, History, and the Founding of the MHS.”
 Massachusetts Historical Society Brown Bag lunch series. October 2015.

PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

Colloquy on *Sympathetic Puritans* at the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies.
 March 2017.
 “Hop, Skip, and a Jump: Genealogies of Early American Literature.” Society of Early
 Americanists. March 2017.
 “Receiving *Feminization*.” MLA. January 2017.
 “Sentimentalism and Religion in America’s First Novel.” Sacred Literature, Secular
 Religion: A Conference on Cultural Practices. October 2015.
 “Religion, Politics, and Print Culture.” Chair and Organizer. Society of Early Americanists
 and Omohundro Institute Joint Conference. June 2015.
 Roundtable: C19 Religion and Literature, the State of the Field. American Literature
 Association Symposium, “God and the American Writer.” February 2015.
 “Contesting the City on a Hill: Protestants, Catholics, and Visible Truth.” American Society
 of Church History. January 2015.
 “Legacies” (invited speaker for a colloquy on *Seasons of Misery*). American Studies
 Association. November 2014.
 “The Puritans Today: Continuity or Contrast?” Society of Early Americanists. July 2014.

- “Sympathetic Puritans: Calvinist Fellow Feeling in Early New England.” American Society of Church History. January 2014.
- “Finding and Founding a City on a Hill: Recovering Winthrop in the Nineteenth Century.” MLA. January 2014.
- “Of a Feeling Make: Sympathy, Character, and Choice in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.” MLA 2014.
- “City on a Hill: Textual Form, Close Reading, and the Construction of American Culture.” Return of the Text: A Conference on the Cultural Value of Close Reading. Sept. 2013.
- “Sympathy as Sign in the Salem Witch Trials.” Society of Early Americanists. March 2013.
- “Love, Logic, and Seduction: Puritan Principles of Persuasion in the Antinomian Controversy.” Omohundro Institute for Early American History and Culture. June 2012.
- “Eliza’s Disposition: Freedom, Free Will, and Religion in *The Coquette*.” American Literature Association. May 2012.
- “Resisting Authority, Establishing Rule: The Geneva Bible, the KJV, and John Winthrop’s City on a Hill.” Renaissance Comparative Prose Conference. September 2011.
- “Affection and Election: The Political Assumptions of Sentimentalism.” American Culture Association. April 2011.
- “Tears Elect: Puritan Sensibilities in William Hill Brown’s *The Power of Sympathy*.” Society of Early Americanists. March 2011.
- “Performing Sincerity: Religious Affections in *The Eliot Tracts*.” Scholl Seminar in Early American History and Culture, Newberry Library. October 2010.
- “Writing to Prove, Speaking to Move: Native American Confessions in Puritan New England.” Rhetoric Society of America. May 2010.
- “Performing Sincerity: The Centrality of Amerindian Conversions in New England.” Early American Borderlands Conference for the Society of Early Americanists. May 2010.
- “Puritanism and the Power of Sympathy.” American Literature Association. May 2009.
- “Demonstrating the Spirit: The Emotional Design of Puritan Preaching.” College English Association. March 2009.
- “Advertising the Domestic: Anne Bradstreet’s Domestic Politics.” Society of Early Americanists. March 2009.

TEACHING AND RESEARCH INTERESTS

Early American literature and culture; religion and literature; puritanism; sentimentalism; the history of emotions; American exceptionalism.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- “Literature and Religion” (graduate seminar), Spring 2016.
- “Literature in English: Early Texts and Contexts (pre-1800)” (English 2151), Spring 2015.
- “City on a Hill: The Concept and Culture of American Exceptionalism” (AMCS 3081), 2014, 2016
- “Puritan Formations in American Culture” (grad seminar), Washington University, Spring 2014.
- “First Encounters: Natives and Newcomers in Early America” (English 423), Washington University, Spring 2013.
- “Literature and the Question of Religion” (English 171), Washington University, 2013-14.
- “Early American Literature” (English 425), Washington University, Fall 2012, Spring 2015.
- “American Literature to 1865” (English 321), Washington University, Fall 2012.
- “Early American Novels” (English 4323), Trinity University, Spring 2012.
- “The Puritans” (English 4325), Trinity University, Fall 2011.
- “Natives and Newcomers: Cultural Contact in Early America” (English 3370), Trinity, 2011.
- “American Literature: Colonization to 1900” (English 2303), Trinity University, 2011-2012.
- “Writing Workshop” (English 1302), Trinity University, 2011-2012.
- “The Power of Sympathy” (American Studies 310), Northwestern University, Fall 2010.
- “Dealing with Death: Literary Approaches to the End of Life,” Medical Humanities, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Winter 2009, Winter 2010.
- “What is Higher Education?,” Freshman Seminar, Northwestern University, Spring 2008.
- “Victorian Childhood,” Directed Research Tutorial, Northwestern University, Winter 2008.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- Director and Organizer, Society of Early Americanists Special Topics Conference: “Religion and Politics in Early America.” St. Louis, March 2018. Expecting 200 participants.
- Co-Organizer, Conference on “Religious Affections in Colonial North America,” Huntington Library, January 2017. Twelve invited scholars for a two-day conference.
- Program Committee, Society of Early Americanists, June 2015.
- Manuscript reviewer, Oxford University Press

Manuscript reviewer, University Press of New England

Manuscript review, Cambridge University Press

Manuscript reviewer, *Early American Literature*

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE

Department Service

Founder and Facilitator, Religion and Literature Reading Group, 2014-2015

Executive Committee, Washington University in St. Louis, 2014-2015

Placement Committee Co-Chair, Washington University in St. Louis, 2014-

Hurst Committee, Washington University in St. Louis, 2014-16

Research Committee, Washington University in St. Louis, 2014-16

Search Committee, Washington University in St. Louis, Fall 2012.

College Service

Invited Presentation to the Honorary Scholars Program in Arts & Sciences, Fall 2015

University Service

Marshall Scholarship Review Committee, Fall 2015

Previous Service

Publications Board, Faculty Mentor, Trinity University, Fall 2011.

Writing Curriculum Committee, Trinity University, Fall 2011.

Mentor, Cross Honors Colloquium, Northwestern University, 2008-2010.

Co-Chair, American Cultures Colloquium, 2007-2008.

Co-Chair, English Graduate Student Organization, 2005-2006.

GRADUATE STUDENT MENTORING

Paulo Loonin, advisor

Hannah Wakefield, advisor

Lauren Barbeau, dissertation committee (defended August 20, 2015)

Kenyon Gradert, dissertation committee (defended April, 2017)

Benjamin Meiners, dissertation committee

Nicholas Miller, dissertation committee (defended December 9, 2014)

Margaret Tucker, dissertation committee

Mary Bartling, DLA thesis advisor, University College