

ALISON JAMES

Department of Romance Languages and Literatures
The University of Chicago
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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Associate Professor, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Chicago, 2013–present.

Assistant Professor, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Chicago, 2005–2013.

Contemporary Civilization Preceptor, Center for the Core Curriculum, Columbia University, 2004–2005.

Instructor, Department of French and Romance Philology, Columbia University, 1999–2002.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in French Literature, Columbia University, 2005. Dissertation with Distinction.

Diplôme d'Études Approfondies in French Literature, Université de Paris VIII, 2003. Mention très bien.

Visiting Student, École Normale Supérieure, Paris, 2002–2003.

M.Phil. in French Literature, Columbia University, 2002.

M.A. in French Literature, Columbia University, 2000.

B.A. in Modern and Medieval Languages (French and German), University of Cambridge, UK, 1998.

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Constraining Chance: Georges Perec and the Oulipo. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2009.

Reviewed in *French Studies* 63.4 (2009); *The French Review* 84.3 (2011); *Modern Language Notes* 125.4 (2010); *Roman* 20–50, 51 (2011), *The Romanic Review* 103.3–4 (2013).

Edited Volumes and Special Issues

Co-editor and introduction, with Olivier Dubouclez: “Valère Novarina: une poétique théologique?” Special issue of *Littérature*, n° 176 (2014).

Co-editor and introduction, with Christophe Reig: *Frontières de la non-fiction: littérature, cinéma, arts*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2013. Reviewed in *The French Review* 89.4 (2016).

Editor and introduction, “Forms of Formalism.” Special issue of *L'Esprit créateur* 48.2 (2008).

Journal Articles

- “Interlingual Oulipo.” *Modern Language Notes* 131.4 (September 2016): 864–876.
- “History-Forms: Jacques Jouet’s Documentary Poems.” *Contemporary French & Francophone Studies: Sites* 20.3 (2016): 444–452.
- “Distention et dispersion: temporalités dans le théâtre de Valère Novarina.” *Littérature* 176 (December 2014): 108–118.
- “Thinking the Everyday: Genre, Form, Fiction.” *L’Esprit créateur* 54.3 (Fall 2014): 78–91.
- “Poem-Walking: The Survival of Paris in Jacques Roubaud’s *La Forme d’une ville*.” *Modern Philology* 111.1 (August 2013): 107–131.
- “After Fiction? Poetic Imagination in an Age of Facts.” *Revue critique de fiction française contemporaine* 6 (2013). <http://www.revue-critique-de-fiction-francaise-contemporaine.org/rcffc/article/view/fx06.04>
- “Nobody’s Animals: Language, Limits, and Forms of Life in Queneau and Roubaud.” *Contemporary French & Francophone Studies: Sites* 16.4 (2012): 487–495.
- “Transatlantic Oulipo: Crossings and Crosscurrents.” *Formules* 16 (2012): 249–262.
- “The Surrealism of the Habitual: from Poetic Language to the Prose of Life.” *Paragraph: A Journal of Modern Critical Theory* 34.3 (2011): 406–422.
- “Beyond the Book: François Bon and the Digital Transition.” *SubStance* #125, 40.2 (2011): 37–51.
- “Paysages de la mémoire: Proust, Aragon, Perec.” *Théorie, littérature, épistémologie* 26 (2009): 163–83.
- “Mètre, contrainte, procédé: quelques problèmes de la forme poétique en France et aux Etats-Unis.” *Formules: revue des créations formelles* 13 (2009): 153–67.
- “Jacques Roubaud and the Ethics of Artifice.” *French Studies* 63.1 (2009): 53–65.
- “Grids and Transparencies.” *L’Esprit créateur* 48.2 (Summer 2008): 74–85.
- “The Maltese and the Mustard Fields: Oulipian Translation.” *SubStance* #115, 37.1 (2008): 134–47.
- “Reflets et représentations: Richard Rorty et Clément Rosset face à la littérature.” *Littérature* 147 (September 2007): 99–114.
- “Automatism, Arbitrariness, and the Oulipian Author.” *French Forum* 31.2 (Spring 2006): 111–25.
- “Pour un modèle diagrammatique de la contrainte: l’écriture oulipienne de Georges Perec.” *Théorie, littérature, enseignement* 22 (2004): 55–81. Prix de l’Association internationale des études françaises, 2005; repr. in *Cahiers de l’Association internationale des études françaises* 58 (May 2006): 379–404.

Book Chapters

- “Dans la caverne de Platon ou de la fiction comme ‘réalité augmentée.’” In *Régis Jauffret: éclats de la fiction*, ed. Christophe Reig. Paris: Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2017. 101–118.
- “Perec and the Politics of Constraint.” In *The Afterlives of Georges Perec*, ed. Rowan Wilken and Justin Clemens. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, February 2017. 157–170.

- “Percé aux marges de la fiction.” In *Relire Percé*, ed. Christelle Reggiani. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2016. 59–72.
- “Écritures en collaboration.” In *Onlipo mode d'emploi*, ed. Christelle Reggiani and Alain Schaffner. Paris: Éditions Honoré Champion, 2016. 303–316.
- “La Force des faits dans l'écriture du présent.” In *Pour un récit transnational: la fiction au défi de l'histoire immédiate*, ed. Yolaine Parisot and Charline Pluvinet. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015. 311–323.
- “Citation, mythe, mémoire: formes et fonctions du détournement oulipien.” In *Pratiques et enjeux du détournement dans les discours littéraire et critique des XXe et XXIe siècles*, ed. Nathalie Dupont and Éric Trudel. Québec: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2011. 59–74.
- “Le fait divers aux frontières de la fiction: la rhétorique documentaire d'André Gide.” In *Gide à la frontière, Actes du colloque de Granville*. Spec. issue of *Bulletin des Amis d'André Gide* 177–78 (2013): 75–86.
- “Poetic Form and the Crisis of Community: Revisiting Rancière's Aesthetics.” In *Thinking Poetry: Philosophical Approaches to Nineteenth-Century French Poetry*, ed. Joseph Acquisto. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. 167–83.

Encyclopedia and Dictionary Articles

- “Parole muette.” In *Understanding Rancière, Understanding Modernism*, ed. Patrick M. Bray. New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2017. 251–254.
- “Aleatory Poetics.” *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, Fourth Edition, ed. Roland Greene and Stephen Cushman. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.

Book Reviews

- Poétiques oulipiennes: la contrainte, le style, l'histoire*, by Christelle Reggiani. *The French Review* 90.3 (2017): 266.
- Les Mythologies individuelles. Récit de soi et photographie au XX^e siècle*, by Magali Nachtergaele. *The French Review* 88.1 (2014): 239.
- Délict de fiction: la littérature, pourquoi?* by Luc Lang. *The French Review* 87.3 (2014): 271–272.
- L'Éternel et l'éphémère: temporalités dans l'œuvre de Georges Percé*, by Christelle Reggiani. *The French Review* 86.4 (2013): 832–33.
- Subversions of Verisimilitude: Reading Narrative from Balzac to Sartre*, by Lawrence R. Schehr. *Modern Philology* 110.3 (2013): E197–E200.
- Écrire ses mémoires au XXe siècle*, by Jean-Louis Jeannelle. *French Studies* 65.3 (2011): 413–14.
- Mémoires du quotidien: les lieux de Percé*, by Derek Schilling. *The French Review* 83.4 (2010): 876–77.
- Accident: A Philosophical and Literary History*, by Ross Hamilton. *Romanic Review* 100.4 (2009): 575–79.
- Romans à contraintes*, by Jan Baetens. *Romanic Review* 100.3 (2009): 403–404.
- Georges Percé ou le dialogue des genres*, by Michel Sirvent. *The French Review* 82.4 (2009): 857–58.
- The Violence of Modernity: Baudelaire, Irony, and the Politics of Form*, by Debarati Sanyal. *Modern Philology* 106.2 (2008): 332–36.

Genetic Criticism, Texts and Avant-Textes, ed. Jed Deppman, Daniel Ferrer, and Michael Groden. *Romanic Review* 95.4 (2004): 480–82.

Literary Memory, Consciousness, and the Group Oulipo, by Peter Consenstein. *Romanic Review* 93.3 (2002): 474–78.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Faculty Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching and Mentoring, University of Chicago, 2017.

Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques, 2016.

Neubauer Collegium Faculty Research Award (project, “Fact and Fiction: Creations, Forms, Boundaries”) 2016–2017.

Center for Disciplinary Innovation: support for co-taught graduate seminar: “Philosophy and the Poetics of Presence in Postwar France,” with Mark Payne (Classics/Social Thought), Autumn 2012.

Center for Disciplinary Innovation: support for co-taught graduate seminar, “Seeing/Writing the Everyday in 20th-Century France. Co-taught with Jennifer Wild (Cinema and Media Studies), Spring 2010.

Faculty Residential Fellowship, Franke Institute for the Humanities, 2008–2009.

Prix de l'Association internationale des Études françaises (for best article by an early-career scholar), 2005.

Whiting Foundation Dissertation Fellowship, Columbia University, 2003–2004.

PANELS, CONFERENCES AND EVENTS ORGANIZED

Conference Organizer: “Fact and Fiction: Creation, Forms, Boundaries.” Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society, University of Chicago, May 19–20, 2017.

Conference Co-organizer (with Daisy Delogu): “*Querelles des femmes*, or The Long History of Feminism.” Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality, University of Chicago, April 21–22, 2017.

“Back to Facts,” a conversation with Alexandre Gefen and Françoise Lavocat. Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society, “Fact and Fiction” project, April 4, 2017.

Panel Organizer and Chair: “French Literature and the Archive,” MLA Annual Convention, Austin, TX, January 9, 2016.

Conference Organizer: “Fiction/Non-Fiction: The Uses and Truths of Literature.” University of Chicago, November 13–14, 2015. Support from the France Chicago Center, the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, the Franke Institute for the Humanities, the Center for International Studies (Norman Wait Harris Fund), the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures.

Member of Program Committee: “Faire le point: quand la littérature fait savoir,” 20th and 21st Century French and Francophone Studies International Colloquium, Baton Rouge, LA, February 26–March 1, 2015.

Panel Organizer and Chair: “L’Institution de l’Oulipo” and “Forms of Erudition in Contemporary Experimental Writing.” 20th and 21st Century French and Francophone Studies International Colloquium, Baton Rouge, LA, February 27, 2015.

Panel Organizer and Chair: “Literature and/as Ethnography,” MLA Annual Convention, Chicago, IL, January 9, 2014.

Conference Organizer: “Littérature et théologie: autour de Valère Novarina.” With Olivier Dubouclez (Paris IV-Sorbonne), Université Paris VII-Denis Diderot and Université Paris IV-Sorbonne, March 15–16, 2013.

Conference Co-organizer (with Christophe Reig): “Frontières de la non-fiction: l’esthétique documentaire et ses objets.” University of Chicago Center in Paris, February 24, 2012.

Panel Organizer and Chair: “Who’s Writing in French? Language and Identity Formations.” MLA Annual Convention, Seattle, WA, January 7, 2012.

Symposium Organizer: “Le qui et le quoi du paysage littéraire contemporain français.” Organized with Diane Eberhardt, and featuring authors Arno Bertina, Mathieu Larnaudie, Claro, and Oliver Rohe. Alliance Française de Chicago, November 1, 2008.

Conference Organizer: “Forms of Formalism: Poetics, Play, and Prescription in Modern and Contemporary French Literature.” University of Chicago, May 12, 2006.

INVITED TALKS

“Assembling the Infinite: Lists and Limits in Experimental Writing.” Keynote Address, *Mosaics: difference, diversity, assemblance*, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, February 24, 2017.

“Paper Witnesses: Voices and Documents in Contemporary French Literature.” Keynote Address, Cincinnati Conference on Romance Languages and Literatures, Cincinnati, Ohio, April 7, 2016.

“Enumeration and Potential Knowledge: Oulipian Lists.” Bucknell University, Pennsylvania, September 16, 2015.

“The Quotidian and the Limits of Fiction.” Indiana University Bloomington, October 29, 2010.

“Myth and the Ordinary: Proust, Aragon, Perec.” University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, April 29, 2009.

“Jean Hatfeld’s *La Stratégie des antilopes*.” Alliance Française de Chicago, February 7, 2009.

“The Twentieth-Century French Novel: Crisis and Invention.” Emeritus Club of the University of Chicago, March 29, 2006.

“Inevitable Accidents and Arbitrary Necessity: Chance in Proust and Perec.” Franke Institute for the Humanities, University of Chicago, October 26, 2005.

SELECTED CONFERENCE PAPERS

“French Modernism and the Documentary Imagination.” ACLA Annual Meeting, Utrecht, Netherlands, July 7, 2017.

“From Human Documents to Fiction as Alibi: Modes of Reference in the French Novel.” Conference on “Fact and Fiction: Creation, Forms, Boundaries,” Neubauer Collegium for culture and Society, University of Chicago, May 19, 2017.

- “Voicing Vision: Narrative Authority and Documentary Evidence in Postwar France.” 20th–21st Century French and Francophone Studies International Colloquium, Bloomington, Indiana, April 7, 2017.
- “Contraintes oulipiennes et poésie sonore.” Conference on “Les Oulipiennes,” University of Toronto, Canada, March 31, 2017.
- “Generic Categories: ‘Fictions’ in Recent French Theory, Criticism, and Practice.” Narrative Conference, Lexington, Kentucky, March 26, 2017.
- “Gide, Ciné-Ethnography, and Documentary Modernism.” Transnational French Modernisms Conference, Durham University, UK, July 8, 2016.
- “Speaking Facts: Paradoxes of the Literary Document.” Conference on “Fiction/Non-Fiction: The Uses and Truths of Literature,” University of Chicago, November 14, 2015.
- “Perec aux marges de la fiction.” Conference “Georges Perec : nouvelles approches,” Centre Culturel International de Cerisy-la-Salle, France, 15 July 2015.
- “Pouvoir et potentialité de la littérature.” Conference “Pouvoir, puissance, force de la littérature, de *l’energeia* à *l’empowerment*,” Université Rennes 2, France, 26 June 2015.
- “History-Forms: Jacques Jouet’s Documentary Poems.” 20th–21st Century French and Francophone Studies International Colloquium, Baton Rouge, LA, February 26, 2015.
- “Interlingual Oulipo.” Conference on “Translating Constrained Literature,” Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, October 11, 2014.
- “Imaginary Capitals: The Urban Fantastic and the Edges of Fiction.” ACLA Annual Meeting, New York, March 23, 2014.
- “Disappearing Debts: Economic Crisis and Narrative Possibility in Contemporary French Literature.” 20th and 21st Century French and Francophone Studies International Colloquium, New York, March 6, 2014.
- “Soif du réel, crise de la fiction ? La force des faits dans l’écriture du présent.” International Comparative Literature Association (AILC/ICLA), 20th Conference, Paris IV-Sorbonne, July 19, 2013.
- “Distension et dispersion: temporalités dans le théâtre de Valère Novarina.” Conference on “Littérature et théologie: autour de Valère Novarina,” Université Paris IV-Sorbonne, March 16, 2013.
- “Beyond the Book: French Literature Online.” Humanities Day, University of Chicago, October 20, 2012.
- “The *fait divers* at the Frontier of Fiction: Rhetoric and Voice in Gide’s Documentary Texts.” “Gide at the Frontier” Conference, Denison University, OH, June 14, 2012.
- “Ascending the Archive: Marguerite Yourcenar’s Family Chronicles.” 20th and 21st Century French and Francophone Studies International Colloquium, Long Beach, CA, March 30, 2012.
- “Boredom and Constraint.” Annual Meeting, Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present, Pittsburgh, PA, October 29, 2011.
- “Transatlantic Oulipo: Procedure and Experiment in Contemporary Poetry.” *Oulipo@50* Colloquium, Buffalo, NY, October 6, 2011.

- “Nobody’s Animals: Language, Limits, and Forms of Life in Queneau and Roubaud.” 20th and 21st Century French and Francophone Studies International Colloquium, San Francisco, CA, April 2, 2011.
- “Fact and Fiction in Recent French Literature.” Humanities Day, University of Chicago, October 23, 2010.
- “François Bon and the Returns of the Novel.” Society for French Studies 51st Annual Conference, University of Swansea, UK, July 6, 2010.
- “Citation, mythe, mémoire: formes et fonctions du détournement oulipien.” Congrès de l’Association francophone pour le savoir, Université de Montréal, Quebec, May 14, 2010.
- “Proust, Benjamin, and the Mysteries of the Everyday.” Conference on “Proust and His Era,” University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, April 9, 2010.
- “Surrealism and the Ordinary.” MLA Annual Convention, Philadelphia, PA, December 28, 2009.
- “From Net to Novel: François Bon Online.” 20th and 21st Century French and Francophone Studies International Colloquium, Minneapolis, MN, March 28, 2009.
- “Contraintes et procédés: formes du formalisme poétique en France et aux États-Unis.” Conference, “La Forme et l’informe dans la création moderne et contemporaine,” Centre Culturel International de Cerisy-la-Salle, France, July 14, 2008.
- “Escape and Engagement: History in the Works of Georges Perec.” Symposium on “Literature as a Test of History,” University of Chicago, April 18, 2008.
- “Reading the Streets: Jacques Roubaud’s Poetic Paris.” 20th and 21st Century French and Francophone Studies International Colloquium, Georgetown University, Washington, DC, March 6, 2008.
- “Zola and the Limits of Form.” Nineteenth-Century French Studies Annual Colloquium, Mobile, AL, October 20, 2007.
- “Story, Structure, Speech: The Oulipian Author as Scheherazade.” ACLA Annual Meeting, Puebla, Mexico, April 21, 2007.
- “A Science of Exceptions: the Collège de ‘Pataphysique.” 20th and 21st Century French and Francophone Studies International Colloquium, College Station, TX, March 24, 2007.
- “Pataphysics and Parody: Raymond Queneau.” Midwest Modern Language Association Convention, Chicago, IL, November 10, 2006.
- “Grids and Transparencies: Forms of Realism.” Conference on “Forms of Formalism,” University of Chicago, May 12, 2006.
- “Georges Perec, Harry Mathews: Oulipian Translation.” ACLA Annual Meeting, Princeton University, March 25, 2006.
- “Authenticity and Artifice: Oulipian Autobiographies.” 20th-Century Literature and Culture Conference, University of Louisville, Kentucky, February 25, 2006.
- “Mathematics and Machines: New Models for Literary Creation in the 1960s and 70s.” Humanities Open House, University of Chicago, October 22, 2005.
- “The Subject of Writing: Potentiality and Meaning.” MLA Annual Convention, Philadelphia, PA, December 28, 2004.

WORKSHOP AND SEMINAR PAPERS

- “Paper Witnesses: Documentary Literature and Postwar Memory.” Modern France Workshop, University of Chicago, May 26, 2017.
- “Exterior Lives: Suspicion of the Self in Contemporary French Autobiography.” Academic Consultation on “Dialogue with the Self: The Quest for Wisdom and the Hazard of Self-Deception,” Chicago Wisdom Research, Hyatt Place Chicago, April 24, 2015.
- “Autobiography in the Archive: Marguerite Yourcenar’s Family Chronicles.” French Studies Seminar, University of Pennsylvania, February 28, 2014.
- “Transatlantic Oulipo: Procedure and Experiment in Contemporary Poetry.” Poetics Workshop, Stanford University, April 19, 2011.
- “Literary Facts: Documenting the Everyday from Naturalism to the Present.” Modern France Workshop, University of Chicago, February 26, 2010.
- “Memory and Movement in Jacques Roubaud’s *La Forme d’une ville*.” Poetry and Poetics Workshop, University of Chicago, October 12, 2009.
- “From Surrealism to the Infra-Ordinary.” Fellows’ Workshop, Franke Institute for the Humanities, May 18, 2009.
- “A Challenge to Chance: The Poetics of the Oulipo.” Poetry and Poetics Workshop, University of Chicago, January 16, 2007.
- “Hasard, contrainte et récit dans *La Disparition* et *La Vie mode d’emploi* de Georges Perec.” Séminaire Georges Perec, Université de Paris-VII, February 7, 2004.

COURSES TAUGHT**University of Chicago**

Undergraduate: Readings in World Literature; Human Being and Citizen; European Civilization II and III; Gender and Sexuality in World Civilizations; Introduction to 19th-Century French Literature; Introduction to 20th-Century French Literature; Introduction to Autobiography; Introduction to 20th-Century French Poetry, Gender and Work.

Undergraduate/graduate: Stylistics; Approches à l’analyse littéraire; Georges Perec and the Oulipo; Oulipo in Context; Realism and its Returns in Twentieth-Century France; Autobiography in the 20th Century; History in the Novel; The Literary Avant-Garde; Littérature et photographie.

Graduate seminars: Seeing/Writing the Everyday in 20th-Century France; Philosophy and the Poetics of Presence in Postwar France; Margins of Fiction in Contemporary France.

Reading and Research courses on Marcel Proust, Maurice Barrès, Albert Camus, Samuel Beckett, modern French poetry, postwar French literature, 20th-century French theatre.

Columbia University

Contemporary Civilization (Core Curriculum); Introductory and Intermediate French.

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Humanities Division Policy Committee, 2016–2019.

Graduate Advisor for French, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, 2014–2015, 2016–2017.

CGS/ProQuest Dissertation Award Nomination Committee, 2017.

Stuart Tave Selection Committee, 2006, 2016, 2017.

Faculty Advisory Committee, France Chicago Center, 2005–present.

Affiliated Faculty, Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality, 2011–present.

Fulbright and Lurcy Selection Committee, 2015.

Director of Graduate Studies and Chair of Graduate Student Affairs Committee, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, 2014–2015.

Chair of Undergraduate Student Affairs Committee, 2012–2013.

Undergraduate Advisor for French, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, 2006–2007, 2009–2013.

Faculty Sponsor: 20th/21st-Century Workshop, 2015–2017; Poetry and Poetics Workshop, 2011–2016; Modernisms Workshop, 2014–2015; Modern France Workshop, 2011–2013 and 2016–2017.

Faculty Committee, Program in Poetry and Poetics, 2006–present.

Creative Writing Committee, 2012–2017.

Harper-Schmidt Fellowship Search Committee, 2009–2010.

Neubauer Fellowship Selection Committee, 2007.

France Chicago Center Fellowship and Travel Grant Selection Committee, 2006–2007.

Aims of Education Colloquium Leader, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009.

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

PMLA Advisory Committee, 2014–2017

Member of research group DifePo: “Différences de potentiel: Histoire, poétique et esthétique de l’Oulipo.” Agence Nationale de la Recherche, France. 2011–2016.

MLA Executive Committee of the Division on Twentieth-Century French Literature. 2011–2016

Member of Editorial Boards for *Romanic Review*, *Revue critique de fiction française contemporaine*, *Formules: créations formelles et littératures à contraintes*.

H-France Book Review Advisory Panel, 2014–present.

Referee for journal articles: *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies, Contemporary Literature, French Studies, Journal of Religion, Modern Language Notes, Modern Philology, PMLA, Romanic Review, Style, Studies in Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Literature, Social and Cultural Geography, Symposium.*

Press reader for book manuscripts: Northwestern University Press, University of Chicago Press, University of Delaware Press, MIT Press, Oxford University Press, Yale University Press.

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Association of Teachers of French; Association Georges Perec; Association des Amis d'André Gide; American Comparative Literature Association; International Society for the Study of Narrative; Modern Language Association; Society for French Studies (UK).