

**PARDIS DABASHI**

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Bryn Mawr College  
Department of Literatures in English  
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Bryn Mawr, PA 19010-2899

**EMPLOYMENT**

*Bryn Mawr College*

Assistant Professor of English, 2022-present

Affiliated Faculty in Middle Eastern Studies Program; Comparative Literature Program; and Film Studies Program.

*University of Nevada, Reno*

Assistant Professor of English and Film Studies, 2019-2022

**EDUCATION**

Ph.D., English, Boston University, 2019

B.A., English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University, 2008

Certificate in Theater Training, l'École Internationale de Théâtre Jacque Lecoq, 2009

**PUBLICATIONS**

**Books:**

*Losing the Plot: Film and Feeling in the Modern Novel* (University of Chicago Press, November 2023). Studies the status of plot in literary modernism and classical Hollywood cinema. Discovers that the plots of classical Hollywood melodrama became an object of fantasy and desire for literary modernists otherwise committed to an aesthetics of fragmentation and rupture. Argues for the necessity of a combination of archival research and speculative historiographical methods when analyzing the affects of aesthetic form and cinematic spectatorship.

Modernist Studies Association First Book Prize, 2024.

*Reading and Revelation: Islam and the Experience of Criticism* (in progress). Studies the history and consequences of the exclusion of Islam from the methodological landscape of Euro-American criticism and theory, relative to the acknowledged influence of Judaism and Christianity. Puts Islamic philosophy and theology into conversation with Enlightenment theories of interpretive dispute in order to offer a theory of critical experience—be that of assent or dissent—that escapes the scope of reason. Looks to early and medieval Islamic education and cultures of formal dispute for modes of argumentative engagement committed to the value of rigorous disagreement even as they abide by principles of charity. (Solicited by the University of Chicago Press)

**Edited Volumes**

*The New William Faulkner Studies*, co-editor with Sarah Gleeson-White (Cambridge UP, 2022).

**Articles, Book Chapters, and Other Publications**

“Close Reading and the General: Qolamhossein Yousefi on Ahmad Shamlu” In *Close Reading for the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Dan Sinykin and Johanna Winant. (In production, under contract with

- Princeton UP; forthcoming October 2025).
- “Persianate Words and Worlds.” Guest column. *PMLA* 139.2 (March 2024): 193-199. Introduction to “The Persianate,” a “Theories and Methodologies” forum.
- “The Persianate.” Editor and Coordinator. *PMLA* special feature “Theories and Methodologies” forum, 139.2 (March 2024): 299-367. Contributors: Atefeh Akbari; Catherine Ambler; David Brophy; Manu Chander; Aria Fani; Nicole Ferreira; Supriya Gandhi; Alexander Jabbari; Anahid Nersessian; Kevin Schwartz. Respondent: Nile Green.
- “‘There is No Gallery’: Race and the Politics of Space at the Capitol Theater.” *Early Popular Visual Culture* 21.2 (2023): 208-2022.
- Response to a Letter to the Editor about “Cultures of Argument” forum, written by Max Chapnick. *PMLA* 136.5 (October 2021): 809-812.
- Response to a Letter to the Editor about “Cultures of Argument” forum, written by Donald Lazere. *PMLA* 136.2 (March 2021): 322-323.
- “Cosmopolitan Secrets: The Racialist Affordances of Equivocation in Henry James’s *The American*.” *MFS: Modern Fiction Studies* 66.4 (Winter 2020): 620-649.
- “The Rise of the Absurdly Demanding Job Ad,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (June 4, 2020).
- “The Loose Garments of Argument.” *PMLA* 135.5 (2020): 946-955. Introduction to “Cultures of Argument,” a “Theories and Methodologies” forum.
- “Cultures of Argument.” Editor and Coordinator. *PMLA* special feature “Theories and Methodologies” forum, 135.5 (2020): 946-1020. Contributors: Amanda Anderson; Michael Bérubé; Robert Chodat; Nijah Cunningham; Kathleen Fitzpatrick; Kyle Kaplan; Grace Lavery; Yoon Sun Lee; Erin Spampinato. Respondent: Heather Love.
- “Helga Crane’s Camera Obscura: Nella Larsen, Garbo’s Face, and the Modernist Longing for Plot.” *Textual Practice* 34.12 (2020): 2069-2089.
- “‘too soon too soon too soon’: Continuity, Blame, and the Limits of the Present in *As I Lay Dying*.” *Arizona Quarterly* 75.4 (Winter 2019): 107-130.
- “Dear Nella: What Did You See?” *Modernism/modernity* Print Plus 4.3 (November 2019).
- “Iraj Pezeshkzad’s *My Uncle Napoleon*,” B-sides Series, *Public Books* (July 4, 2019). Reprinted in *B-side Books: Essays on Forgotten Favorites*, ed. John Plotz (New York: Columbia UP, 2021). 174-178.
- “The Art of the High-Born: A Look Back at Bahman Farmanara’s *Prince Ehtejab*,” *Politics/Letters* #13 (September 2018).
- “The Compsos Were Here: Indexicality, the Actuality, and the Crisis of Meaning in *The Sound and the Fury*,” *Modernism/modernity* 24.3 (September 2017): 527-548.
- “Literature, Lecoq and the ‘nouveau roman’.” *The Routledge Companion to Jacques Lecoq*, eds., Mark Evans and Rick Kemp (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016): 79-86.

### **Book Reviews**

- Review of Octavio González, *Misfit Modernism: Queer Forms of Double Exile in the Twentieth-Century Novel*. In *The Space Between: Literature and Culture 1914-1945* vol. 19 (2023).
- Review of Sarah Keller, *Anxious Cinephilia: Pleasure and Peril at the Movies*. In *Modernism/modernity* 29.4 (November 2022): 896-899.
- Review of Daniel Morgan, *The Lure of the Image: Epistemic Fantasies of the Moving Camera*. In *Film Quarterly* 76.1 (Fall 2022): 101-102.
- Review of Malcom Turvey, *Play Time: Jacques Tati and Comedic Modernism*. *Modernism/modernity* 28.3 (September 2021): 585-587.

### **Continuing Editorial Work**

- Co-editor, with Alix Beeston, of [Visualities](#), a forum discussing modernist visual cultures, on *Modernism/modernity* Print+.

## INVITED TALKS

- “Humiliation and Mourning: On Revolution and Martyrology in Iranian New Wave Cinema.” Invited talk sponsored by Literature of Annihilation, Exile, and Resistance Series in the Department of English, Notre Dame. September 18, 2025.
- “On Judgement and Dispute in Hume, Kant, Ibn Rushd, and Al-Ghazali.” Invited talk sponsored by the Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures, University of Washington. May 23, 2025.
- “Toward a Theory of Critical Dispute.” Invited talk sponsored by the English Department, College of the Holy Cross. February 11, 2025.
- “The Qur’an and Critical Experience: On Reason, Revelation, and the Limits of Argument.” Event sponsored by the Edward J. and Dorothy Clarke Kempf Fund Colloquium Speaker Series in the Department of Comparative Literature, Yale University. February 18, 2025.
- Book Talk on *Losing the Plot: Film and Feeling in the Modern Novel*. Invited talk sponsored by the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. November 8, 2024.
- “Al-Ghazālī and Ibn Rushd: On Reason, Revelation, and the Limits of Critical Argument.” Event sponsored by the 20th/21st Century Workshop in the Department of English, University of Chicago. November 7, 2024.
- Book Talk on *Losing the Plot: Film and Feeling in the Modern Novel*. Seminar Co-op Bookstore, University of Chicago. Respondent: Daniel Morgan. November 6, 2024.
- Lecture on *The Blue Angel* (Josef von Sternberg, 1930) at the Global Melodrama Film Series. Event sponsored by the Moving Image Workshop, Michigan State University. September 20, 2024.
- Book Talk on *Losing the Plot: Film and Feeling in the Modern Novel*. Invited talk sponsored by the English Department, Michigan State University. September 19, 2024.
- “Film History Now: A Conversation with Pardis Dabashi and Allyson Nadia Field.” Invited talk sponsored by the Cinema Arts department, University of Iowa. April 30, 2024.
- “Criticism and Revelation: On the Limits of Argument in Hume, Kant, and the Qur’an.” Invited talk and graduate seminar sponsored by the Critical Speaker Series, UNC-Chapel Hill. October 11-12, 2023.
- Book Talk on *Losing the Plot: Film and Feeling in the Modern Novel*. Invited talk sponsored by the Novel Theory Symposium, Harvard University. Respondent: Paul Saint-Amour. October 23, 2023.
- Book Talk on *Losing the Plot: Film and Feeling in the Modern Novel*. Invited talk sponsored by Film and Media Studies speaker series, Lafayette College. October 19, 2023.
- “Nella Larsen and Greta Garbo: On (In)Consequence.” Invited talk sponsored by the Modernist and Contemporary Literatures Reading Group, University of Pennsylvania. November 18, 2022.
- “Critical Argument and Critical Disagreement.” Invited talk sponsored by the English Department, University of California, Riverside. October 13, 2022.
- “Critical Argument and Critical Disagreement.” Invited talk sponsored by the English Department, Fordham University. October 3, 2022.
- “Watching Dietrich: On Silence, Restraint, and the Modernist Longing for Plot.” Invited talk sponsored by the Eugene Lang College of the Liberal arts, The New School. May 4, 2022.
- Formal response to Rivky Mondal, “Tact in Henry James and Nella Larsen.” Event sponsored by the 20th/21st Century Workshop in the Department of English, University of Chicago. April 25, 2022.
- “Knowledge, Faith, Conviction, Conversion: What is Aesthetic Criticism?” Invited talk sponsored by the Trans Area Literature Collective, Vanderbilt University. April 7, 2022.
- Roundtable participant for “The State of Modernist Studies Now” event sponsored by the Department of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University. November 12, 2021.
- “Evidence, Causality, and the Writing of Colonial Violence in Graham Greene’s *The Quiet American*.” Invited talk at the Brandeis Novel Symposium, Brandeis University. October 22, 2021.
- “In What Does Critical Disagreement Consist?” Invited talk sponsored by the Philosophy and Literature Initiative, Stanford University. April 8, 2021.

Formal response to Peter Gordon, “A Precarious Happiness: Adorno on Negativity and Normativity.”  
Event sponsored by the Program in Critical Theory, University of California, Berkeley. March  
16, 2021.

Formal response to performances by Javon Johnson and Albert Lee. Black Studies Roundtable,  
Universities of Nevada. February 26, 2021.

“Cuteness and Work: *Gremlins* and Late Capitalism.” Invited talk sponsored by ETH Zürich. June 9,  
2020.

## **CONFERENCES and COLLOQUIA**

“Reading for the Plotters in Surah Yusuf.” Seminar presentation. Annual Conference of the American  
Comparative Literature Association. Zoom. May 2025.

“On Certainty and Doubt: Islam and the Speculative Turn in Black Feminist Film and Media  
Historiography.” Annual Conference of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies. Chicago,  
IL. April 2025.

Invited speaker at the Modernist Studies Association annual conference. Roundtable for First Book Prize  
shortlisted authors. Chicago, IL. November 9, 2024.

Invited plenary speaker at the Modernist Studies Association annual conference. Roundtable on the topic  
of *Passing* (Rebecca Hall, 2021). Chicago, IL. November 10, 2024.

“Monarchy, Modernity, and Religion in Iranian New Wave Cinema.” Invited roundtable participant.  
Modernist Studies Association Annual Conference. Chicago, IL. November 8, 2024.

“Qur’anic Signs and Critical Evidence.” Princeton Islamic Studies Conference on the topic of “Muslim  
Debates and Contestations.” Princeton University, April 5, 2024.

“Qur’anic Revelation and the Limits of Critical Argument.” MLA. Philadelphia, PA. January 2024.

“Persian Modernism and the Problem of the Golestān Palace Library and Archive.”  
Biannual Conference of the Society for Novel Studies. Madison, WI. May, 2023.

“Knowledge and Faith in Film Criticism.” Roundtable participant. Annual Conference of the Society for  
Cinema and Media Studies. Denver, CO. April 2023.

“Cultures of Argument and Collaboration.” Invited roundtable participant. MLA. Washington, D.C.,  
January 2022.

“Recite!?: Reading Criticism and Theory Closely.” Roundtable participant. Association for the Study of  
the Arts of the Present (ASAP) Annual Conference. Zoom conference. October 2021.

“Nella Larsen/Garbo’s *Passing*.” Annual Conference of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies.  
(Zoom.) March 21, 2020.

“Modernist Plot as Media History.” Roundtable Presenter. Prose Fiction Session. MLA. (Zoom.) January  
2021.

“Nella Larsen, Garbo’s Face, and the Whispers of the Archive.” “Audience Lost: Minority Women and  
Spectatorship” conference sponsored by Ghent University. Ghent, BE, November 2019.

“Cultures of Argument and Academic Precarity.” Invited roundtable participant. Modernist Studies  
Association Annual Conference. Toronto, CA, October 2019.

“Scenes of Embarrassment in the Aristocratic Families of William Faulkner and Bahman Farmanara.”  
The Annual Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference. Conference Theme: Faulkner’s Families.  
Oxford, MS, July 2019.

“The Art of the High-Born: Stillness and Denial in Bahman Farmanara’s *Prince Ehtejab*.” Annual  
Conference of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies. Seattle, March 2019.

“A Case for the Modest (Young) Critic.” MLA. Chicago, IL, January 2019.

“Nella Goes to the Movies: Classical Hollywood *Bildung*.” “Bildungsroman: Form and Transformations,”  
international conference sponsored by the University of Sydney. Sydney, AU, November 2018.

“The Ache of Departure: The End of the *Bildungsroman* and the Coming of Classical Film.”  
Modernist Studies Association Annual Conference. Columbus, OH, November 2018.

“Demolition of a Wall: Irreversibility and Plot in Early Film.” Invited roundtable participant. Biannual

- Conference of the Society for Novel Studies. Cornell University, May 2018.
- “Towards a Theory of Middlebrow Critique: From Jane Austen (Adaptations) to Busby Berkeley.” Annual Conference of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies. Toronto, March 2018.
- “We’re in the Money: On Busby Berkeley’s Auteurism.” Seminar presentation. Annual Conference of the American Comparative Literature Association. University of California, Los Angeles, March 2018.
- “The Public’s Optical Unconscious: The Cinematic Demise of the Rational Public Sphere in Theodore Dreiser’s *An American Tragedy* and Fritz Lang’s *M*.” Modernist Studies Association Annual Conference. Amsterdam, NL, August 2017.
- “The Art of Asphyxiation: The Suffocating Beauty of Max Ophuls’ Narrative.” Annual International Conference on Narrative. Lexington, KY, March 2017.
- “What Does This Mean for Women?” Invited roundtable participant. Boston University Center for the Humanities, November 2016.
- “Monster Time: The Temporality of Spectacle in Tod Browning’s *Freaks*.” Film and History Annual Conference. Milwaukee, WI, October 2016.
- “‘too soon too soon too soon’: The Present Tense and the Problem of the Event in William Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying*.” Northeast Modern Language Association Annual Conference. Hartford, CT, March 2016.
- “The Compsons Were Here: Indexicality, the Actuality, and the Crisis of Meaning in *The Sound and the Fury*.” “Literature and Crisis,” conference sponsored by Florida International University. Miami, FL, April 2015.

### **Organizer: Seminars/Panels/Symposia**

- Organizer, “Aesthetic Approaches the Qur’an and Islam.” Seminar at the Annual Conference of the American Comparative Literature Association. Zoom. May 2025.
- Organizer, “Persianate Words and Worlds.” Symposium at Bryn Mawr College. Confirmed participants: Aria Fani, Samuel Hodgkin, Supriya Gandhi, Atefeh Akbari, Alexander Jabbari, Catherine Ambler, Nicole Ferreira, Manu Chander, Anahid Nersessian, Guangtian Ha. Keynote speaker: Mana Kia. April 18-19, 2024.
- Organizer, “Criticism and Theology.” Special Session at the MLA Conference. Philadelphia, PA, January 2024.
- Organizer, “Persian Novel/Iranian Archive.” Biannual Conference of the Society for Novel Studies. Madison, WI, May 2023.
- Co-organizer with Kartik Nair and Nicholas Baer, “The State of Method in Cinema and Media Studies.” Annual Conference of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies. Denver, CO. April 2023.
- Co-organizer with Alix Beeston. “The Modernist Scene.” Seminar at the Modernist Studies Association, “Between the Acts,” Zoom Event. April 11, 2022.
- Co-leader with Laura Green (Northeastern), “Narrating Atrocity,” graduate seminar at the Brandeis Novel Symposium. Brandeis University. (Zoom.) October 22, 2021.
- Co-organizer with Rivky Mondal, “Reciprocity and Criticism.” Roundtable at the Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present (ASAP) Annual Conference. Zoom conference. October 2021.
- Co-organizer with Matthew Hart, “Modernism from the Standpoint of Labor.” Roundtable Special Event sponsored by the Modernist Studies Association. (Zoom.) November 10, 2020.
- Co-organizer with Alix Beeston. “The Modernist Scene.” Seminar at the Modernist Studies Association Annual Conference. Brooklyn, NY, October 2020. Postponed due to Covid-19. Rescheduled for MSA 2021.
- Organizer, “Post-Critique and the Profession.” Special Session at the MLA Conference. Chicago, IL, January 2019.
- Co-organizer with Alix Beeston, “The Pasts and Futures of Hollywood’s Golden Age: Reading Classical Cinema in Literary Modernism.” Panel at the Modernist Studies Association Annual Conference.

Columbus, OH, November 2018.  
Co-organizer with Rebecca Kastleman, “Modernist Ensembles: Collaboration and Interdependence in Theater and Film.” Seminar at the Annual Conference of the American Comparative Literature Association. UCLA, March 2018.

### **FELLOWSHIPS and HONORS**

Modernist Studies Association First Book Prize, 2024 (*Losing the Plot: Film and Feeling in the Modern Novel*)  
National Humanities Center Fellowship, 2024-2025, Alternate  
Regional Scholar, Middle East Center, University of Pennsylvania, Fall 2022-Present  
W.M. Keck Foundation Fellowship at the Huntington Library, Spring 2021  
Boston University Center for the Humanities, Dissertation Fellow, Spring 2019  
Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship Competition, 2018-19, Honorable Mention  
AAUW Dissertation Fellowship Competition, 2018-19, Alternate  
John W. Hunt Memorial Scholarship, William Faulkner Society, Summer 2017  
Summa Cum Laude, Course in French Civilization, Paris-Sorbonne University, June 2011

### **PUBLIC EVENTS:**

Lecture on *The Scarlet Empress* (Josef von Sternberg, 1934). The Bryn Mawr Film Institute, November 30, 2023.  
Lecture on *Brainwashed* (Nina Menkes, 2022), The Bryn Mawr Film Institute, November 16, 2022.

### **MEDIA APPEARANCES:**

Interview with Kaveh Akbar, New York Times bestselling author of *Martyr!*, on podcast “Novel Dialogue.” October 24, 2024.  
Interview with Emma Wilson of The History of Literature Podcast, about *Losing the Plot: Film and Feeling in the Modern Novel*. January 22, 2024.  
Interview with Kim Adams of humanities podcast, “High Theory,” about *Losing the Plot: Film and Feeling in the Modern Novel*. January 5, 2024.  
Interview with Shirin Jaafari of PRX’s and GBH’s “The World,” about the death of Iranian author, Iraj Pezeshkzad. January 14, 2022.  
Interview with John Plotz of humanities podcast, “Recall This Book,” about Iraj Pezeshkzad’s novel *My Uncle Napoleon*. June 14, 2021.  
Interview with Kim Adams of humanities podcast, “High Theory,” about Theodor Adorno’s concept of the “autonomous work of art.” August 30, 2020.

### **TEACHING**

#### Bryn Mawr (2022-present)

Iranian Cinema: Before and After the Revolution  
Aesthetic Approaches to the Qur’an (to be taught in 2025-6 AY)  
Form and Aesthetics Across Time and Media (Co-taught graduate seminar)  
Global Cinema  
Methods of Literary Study  
Introduction to Film  
A Star is Born: Race, Gender, and Celebrity  
Emily Balch Seminar (Composition course: topic, “Narratives of Passing in Film and Literature”)

#### University of Nevada, Reno (2019-2022)

Global Cinema (upper-division undergraduate/graduate)  
Horror: Text and Screen (upper-division undergraduate/graduate)  
A Star is Born: Race, Gender, and Celebrity (undergraduate)  
Introduction to Theory and Criticism (undergraduate)  
US American Literature, 1900 to the Present: The Aesthetics of Empire (undergraduate)  
The Modernist American Novel: Form, History, and Politics (graduate)

### **SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION**

National Endowment for the Humanities (Documentary Film & Media Arts), Peer-review Panelist, Spring 2024  
GS Prose Fiction Forum Executive Committee Representative at MLA Delegate Assembly, (January 2022-2025)  
Modernist Studies Association, Program Chair (October 2022-October 2024)  
External Honors Examiner, Swarthmore College, Spring 2023  
Society for Cinema and Media Studies, Program Committee Member, Fall 2022  
National Endowment for the Humanities (American Literature), Peer-review Panelist, Summer 2021  
Peer review: *Feminist Media Histories*; *Film Quarterly*; *Modernism/modernity*; *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*; *Early Popular Visual Culture*; Johns Hopkins University Press; *MELUS: Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the United States*; *Comparative Literature and Culture*; *College English*

#### External Ph.D. Advising:

ETH Zürich, Dissertation, second reader: Sebastien Fanzun (Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft, defended 2022)

### **INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE**

Search Committee, Assistant or Associate Professor position in African American and/or African Diasporic Literatures and Cultures, Bryn Mawr College, 2023-2024  
Flexner Lecture Series Planning Committee, Bryn Mawr College, 2022—  
  
Cinema and Media Studies Committee, University of Nevada, 2019—2022  
Literature Committee, University of Nevada, 2019—2022  
Visiting Speakers Committee, University of Nevada, 2020—2022  
Graduate Committee, University of Nevada, 2020—2022  
Search Committee, Teaching Assistant Professor position in Cinema and Media Studies, University of Nevada, 2019-2020

#### Ph.D. Advising, University of Nevada, Reno:

Dissertation committee, reading member: Lee Olsen (English, defended 2020)

### **LANGUAGES**

Persian: fluency speaking and reading; Arabic: research reading; French: fluency speaking and reading; German: some speaking and reading; Italian: some speaking and reading.

### **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

Modern Language Association; American Comparative Literature Association; Modernist Studies Association; Society for Cinema and Media Studies; Middle Eastern Studies Association; Association for the Study of Persianate Societies; Iranian Studies Association; Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present

## **PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES**

Available upon request.