Abigail Modaff

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**Education**

**Harvard University**, Cambridge, MA

**PhD**, History, May 2021

Dissertation: “‘To Meet Life Face to Face’: Communication and American Social Reform from Haymarket to the Harlem Renaissance”

Committee: Prof. James Kloppenberg, Prof. Jill Lepore, Prof. James Engell; outside reader: Prof. Gary Gerstle

**Cambridge University**, Cambridge, England

**MPhil with Distinction**, Political Thought and Intellectual History, 2013

Dissertation: “Sin, Conscience, and Authority in the Pro-Toleration Writings of Edmund Calamy and John Shute Barrington, c. 1704”

**Harvard University,** Cambridge, MA

**A.B. *summa cum laude*,** Social Studies, language citation in Russian, Phi Beta Kappa, 2012

Thesis: “Dilemmas of Popular Revolution: Popular Sovereignty and the Crowd in Post-Revolutionary America and Russia”

**Academic Appointments**

**College Fellow in Social Studies**, Harvard University, July 2021–

**History Prize Instructor**, Harvard University, 2019-20

**Research and Teaching Areas**

*Research areas:* American cultural and intellectual history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; progressivism and reform; African-American history and literature; settlement houses; identity, race, and Americanism; anarchy and radicalism; English and German Romanticism

*Teaching areas:* American history; cultural and intellectual history (American, European, and global); race, immigration, and identity; women’s activism; expository writing; interdisciplinary humanities; engaged scholarship

**Fellowships, Prizes, and Awards**

**At Harvard University**

Boston Ruskin Prize, awarded for essay “’Those Who Have Ears to Hear, Let Them Hear’: William James and the Significant Life,” May 2021

Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History Dissertation Completion Fellowship, 2020-21

Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History Graduate Term-Time Research Grant, Modified and Honorary, Fall 2019

Harvard Kennedy School Ash Center for Democracy Doctoral Fellowship, 2018-19

History Departmental Summer Research Grant, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020

Lionel DeJersey Harvard Cambridge Scholarship, 2012-13

Hoopes Undergraduate Thesis Prize, 2012

**At Cambridge University**

Quentin Skinner Prize, awarded for outstanding performance in the MPhil in Political Thought and Intellectual History, 2013

**Teaching**

**Teaching and Advising Awards**

Special Commendation for Extraordinary Teaching in Extraordinary Times, Spring 2020

History Prize Instructor, awarded May 2019

Phi Beta Kappa Alpha Iota Award for Outstanding Teaching, May 2019

Nominee, Star Family Award for Excellence in Advising, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2020-21

Nominee, Derek C. Bok Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching of Undergraduates, 2016-17

Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, Five-Time Recipient (2016–2019)

**As Instructor of Record**

Identity and Protest in Modern America, Harvard University, Fall 2021

Identity Before Identity Politics: America in the Progressive Era, Harvard University, Spring 2020

**As Lecturer**

Social Studies 10b, Harvard University, Spring 2022

Social Studies 10a, Harvard University, Fall 2021

**As Teaching Fellow**

The American Revolution, Prof. Jane Kamensky, Harvard University, Fall 2019

What is Intellectual History?, Prof. James Kloppenberg, Harvard University, Spring 2018

A Humanities Colloquium from Homer to Garcia Marquez, Prof. Jill Lepore, Harvard University, Fall 2016 and Fall 2017

A Humanities Colloquium from Joyce to Homer, Prof. Jay Harris, Harvard University, Spring 2017

**Guest Lectures**

“Progressive Reform, the Social Gospel, and Social Settlements.” History 1330: Social Thought in Modern America, Harvard University, February 2017 and October 2019.

“Activating the Declaration of Independence.” History 1776: The American Revolution, Harvard University, October 2019.

**Advising and Student Life**

Co-Convenor, Center for European Studies Undergraduate Thesis Workshop, Harvard College, Fall 2021–

Chair, Selection Committee; and Member, Governance Committee, Harvard-Cambridge Scholarships, June 2018–

Thesis Advisor to Thomas Elliott, History Department, Harvard University, 2018-19, for his thesis titled “Pledging Allegiance: Religion and Federal Anti-Communism in the United States in the Early Cold War, 1950-1954”

Facilitator, Yearly Workshop on Post-Graduate Fellowship Opportunities for History Students, Harvard College, Fall 2017–

First-Year Proctor (residential staff) and Member of the Board of First-Year Advisors, Harvard College, Fall 2017–Spring 2020

Non-Resident Tutor in Fellowships, Adams House, Harvard University, Fall 2016–Spring 2018

**Publications**

“The Hidden Life: Ellen Gates Starr, Vida Dutton Scudder, and Catholic Socialist Progressivism.” Undergoing revisions for *Modern Intellectual History*.

“Progressivism, Then and Now: Teaching Identity, Difference, and the Meaning of Americanism.” [*The Journal of the History of Ideas Blog*, September 7, 2020](https://jhiblog.org/2020/09/07/progressivism-then-and-now-teaching-identity-difference-and-americanism-in-2020/).

“[Review of] *William James: Psychical Research and the Challenge of Modernity*, by Krister Dylan Knapp.” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* Vol. 48, no. 4 (Spring 2018): 572–74.

“[Review of] *William James, Pragmatism, and American Culture*, by Deborah Whitehead.” *William James Studies* Vol. 14, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 185-91.

**Papers and Presentations**

**Conference Papers**

“Black Truth and Black Beauty: Authentic Expression and the Harlem Renaissance.” Northeast Modern Language Association Annual Meeting, March 2019. Unable to present due to illness.

“’The Great Wells of Human Experience’: Communication, Reform, and Revolution in Chicago, 1884-1910.” Society for United States Intellectual History Conference, Chicago, November 2018.

“’The Heat and Jostle of the Crowd’: Jane Addams on Art and the Other.” North American Victorian Studies Association Annual Meeting, University of Florida, October 2018.

“Dynamite and Deliberation: Anarchist ‘Bomb-Talking’ and the Violence of Language.” McGill-Queens Graduate Conference in History, McGill University, March 2018.

“Ideals in Brick and Mortar: Space and the Social Thought of Jane Addams.” Graduate Conference in Intellectual History, Cambridge University, June 2017.

“Crossing the Line: Division and Dialogue in Jane Addams’s Democratic Vision.” International Conference on Public Intellectuals, University of the Azores, May 2017.

\**Invited presentation*

“On a Certain Silence: Literary Form Against Philosophy (Against Itself) in William James.” American Comparative Literature Association, Harvard University, March 2016.

\**Nominated for the Horst Frenz Prize for best presentation by a graduate student*

“Religion as Toleration: Dissent and Truth in Early-Eighteenth-Century England.” Graduate Conference, Harvard Divinity School, October 2015.

“Varieties of Collective Individualism: William James and Émile Durkheim on Religious Life.” Graduate Conference in Intellectual History, Cambridge University, May 2015.

**Panels Organized**

“Philosophy and Literature Without Interdisciplinarity” (co-organizer), American Comparative Literature Association, Harvard University, March 2016.

**Professional Activities and Academic Service**

Member, Harvard History Department Course Support Team, May–September 2018 and Summer 2021

Member, Twentieth-Century United States History Workshop, September 2018–December 2019

Faculty Representative, History Graduate Student Association, Harvard University, Fall 2017–Summer 2019

Search Committee for Professor of the Indigenous History of North America (graduate representative), History Department, Harvard University, 2016–7

Research Assistant for Professor James Kloppenberg, Spring 2012 and Summer 2016

**Languages**

**German:** advanced reading with dictionary, intermediate speaking

**Russian:** intermediate reading and speaking

**Spanish:** intermediate reading and speaking

**French:** basic reading and speaking

**References**

James Kloppenberg

Charles Warren Professor of American History

Harvard University

Cambridge, MA

[Jkloppen@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:Jkloppen@fas.harvard.edu)

Jill Lepore

David Woods Kemper ’41 Professor of American History

Harvard University

Cambridge, MA

[Jlepore@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:Jlepore@fas.harvard.edu)

Jane Kamensky

Jonathan Trumbull Professor of American History and Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foundation Director, Schlesinger Library

Harvard University

Cambridge, MA

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