

**Thomas Alan Dichter**  
Curriculum vitae

Committee on Degrees in History and Literature  
Harvard University  
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**CURRENT EMPLOYMENT**

Program Assistant, Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Partnership, Harvard Medical School, 2020-present

Lecturer in History and Literature, Harvard University, 2018-present

**PAST EMPLOYMENT**

Lecturer in English, Harvard University, 2018-2020

Visiting Assistant Professor in Law, Jurisprudence, & Social Thought, Amherst College, 2017-2018

Lecturer in History and Literature, Harvard University, 2015-2017

**EDUCATION**

Ph.D., English, University of Pennsylvania (2015)

*Dissertation:* “Violent Convictions: Punishment, Literature, and the Reconstruction of Race”

*Committee Members:* Amy Kaplan (chair), Thadious Davis, David Kazanjian, Marie Gottschalk

M.A., English, University of Pennsylvania (2011)

B.A., English and American Literature and Language, Harvard University (2008)

**RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS**

Book Manuscript:

“Abolition Literature: Writing Captivity and Freedom”: *examines ideologies of incarceration and literary forms of resistance to the carceral state across sites of captivity in the turn-of-the-century United States. Brings the conceptual framework of prison abolitionism to bear on an unconventionally early historical period.*

#### Journal Articles:

“Mob Scenes: Lynching, Literature, and the Carceral State” (*in progress*)

“‘An Extreme Sense of Protest against Everything’: Chester Himes’s Prison Novel.” *American Literature* 90.1 (2018).

“Worst of the Worst: Rehabilitationist Roots of Life without Parole.” *Law, Culture and the Humanities* (online 2017, print forthcoming).

“Paul Laurence Dunbar’s *The Sport of the Gods* and the Modern Discourse of Black Criminality,” *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists* 4.1 (2016).

#### Reviews and Reference Entries:

Review of *Native Students At Work: American Indian Labor and Sherman Institute's Outing Program, 1900-1945*, by Kevin Whalen. *Native American and Indigenous Studies* 7.1 (2020).

“Lynching,” *Oxford Bibliographies in African American Studies* (2019). Oxford University Press.

### **HONORS, AWARDS, AND FELLOWSHIPS**

Certificate of Teaching Excellence, Harvard University, 2021, 2019, 2018, 2017

Provostial Fund for Arts and Humanities Grant, Harvard University, 2021

Curricular Innovation Award, Mindich Center for Engaged Scholarship, Harvard University, 2020

Special Commendation for Extraordinary Teaching in Extraordinary Times, Harvard University, 2020

Jan Thaddeus Teaching Prize, History & Literature, Harvard University, 2020

Provostial Fund for Arts and Humanities Grant, Harvard University, 2018

Five College Center for Crossroads in the Study of the Americas Fellowship, 2017-2018

School of Arts and Sciences Dean's Award for Distinguished Teaching by Graduate Students, University of Pennsylvania, 2014-2015

Critical Writing Teaching Fellowship, University of Pennsylvania, 2014-2015

MLK Action Project Alumni Award, Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School, Sudbury, MA, 2015

Kosciuszko Foundation Tuition Scholarship, 2014-2015

Graduate Humanities Forum Fellowship, Penn Humanities Forum, 2013-2014

Harvard University Undergraduate Commencement Address (English-language), June 2008

## TEACHING & RESEARCH INTERESTS

Nineteenth- & Twentieth-Century U.S. Literature, American Studies, Race & Ethnicity, Incarceration, Law & Literature, African American Studies, Settler Colonialism

## LECTURES AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Co-organizer, Co-chair, and Seminar Participant, “Carceral Revolt,” American Studies Association, October 2021

Comment and Chair, “They Say Alt-Ac, We Say Fight Back!: Organizing for a Future in Academia & Beyond,” Northeast Modern Language Association, Boston, MA, March 2020

“Carlisle and the Domestication of the ‘Indian Problem,’” American Studies Association, Atlanta, GA, November 2018

“Captivity without Coercion: Thomas Mott Osborne and the Fantasy of the Democratic Prison,” Association for the Study of Law, Culture and the Humanities, Georgetown University, Washington, DC, March 2018

“Resisting Insecurity Beyond the Academy,” Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities, Modern Language Association, New York, NY, January 2018 (Roundtable Participant)

“Mob Scenes: Lynching, Conquest, and the Carceral State,” Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, Brown University, Providence, RI, November 2017 (Invited Talk)

“Life-without-Parole, Reform, and Abolition,” American Studies Association, Denver, CO, November 2016

“Narratives of Slavery and Incarceration: *The Life and the Adventures of a Haunted Convict*,” C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists, State College, PA, March 2016 (Roundtable Participant)

“Public Safety and the Rhetoric of State Violence,” Modern Language Association, Austin, TX, January 2016 (Presenter and Panel Organizer)

“Prison Literature, the Revictimization Relief Act, & the Future of Mass Incarceration,” Literature and Social Justice, Lehigh University English Graduate Conference, March 2015

“National Pastime: Lynching and Law-making during Jim Crow,” American Studies Association, Washington, DC, November 2014 (Presenter and Panel Organizer)

“Prison Writing and Carceral Grammar in the 20th Century US,” Futures of American Studies Institute, Dartmouth College, June 2014

“A Wall Is Just a Wall: Prison Writing, Carceral Grammar, and the Abolitionist Imagination,”  
Modern Language Association, Chicago, IL, January 2014

“New Threadbare Lies: Modern Black Criminality Discourse and Its Critics, 1892-1902,” American  
Literature Reading Group, University of Pennsylvania, October 2013

“Civil Whiteness: Legitimate Violence and the Literature of Lynching,” Penn Program on  
Democracy, Citizenship, and Constitutionalism, University of Pennsylvania, February 2013

“The Joint: Hip Hop and Mass Incarceration,” English Graduate Student Organization Conference,  
SUNY Albany, April 2011

## **COURSES TAUGHT**

Prison Abolition, Harvard University (History and Literature), Fall 2021, Spring 2021

On the Run: Refugees and Fugitives in American Literature, Harvard University (English), Spring  
2020, Spring 2019, Spring 2018

The American Prison and the Literature of Punishment, Harvard University (History and  
Literature), Fall 2019, Spring 2019, Spring 2017

Black New England, Harvard University (English), Fall 2018

Junior Tutorial in American Studies, Harvard University (History and Literature), 2018-2019

Fugitives in US Law & Literature, Amherst College (Law, Jurisprudence, and Social Thought),  
Spring 2018

The American Prison, Amherst College (Law, Jurisprudence, and Social Thought), Fall 2017

Race, Law, and American Literature, Amherst College (Law, Jurisprudence, and Social Thought),  
Fall 2017

Junior Tutorial in American Studies, Harvard University (History and Literature), 2016-2017

English/Writing Seminar, University of Pennsylvania (Pre-Freshman Program) University of  
Pennsylvania, Summer 2016; Summer 2015

Junior Tutorial in American Studies, Harvard University (History and Literature), 2015-2016

Reading Karl Marx, University of Pennsylvania (Critical Writing Program), Fall 2014; Spring 2015

Literature and Law: American Narratives of Justice and Injustice, University of Pennsylvania  
(English), Summer 2013

The Prison in American Literature, University of Pennsylvania (Critical Writing Program), Fall 2011; Spring 2012

### **ADDITIONAL TEACHING**

Senior Thesis Advisor, Harvard University (History and Literature), 2021-2022, 2019-2020, 2015-2016

Independent Study Advisor, Amherst College (Law, Jurisprudence, and Social Thought), Spring 2018

Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) Certificate, University of Pennsylvania, Spring 2014

Teaching Assistant, “The Vietnam War in Literature and Film,” English Department, University of Pennsylvania, Professor Amy Kaplan, Spring 2011

### **ACADEMIC AND COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Organizer, “Abolition, Activism and the Imagination: A Roundtable with Movement Leaders” (panel discussion), Harvard University, November 17, 2021

Co-Founder and Co-Coordinator, “Off the Ladder” (interdisciplinary non-tenure-track faculty research seminar), Harvard University, 2018-2020

Organizer, “Fighting Wrongful Convictions in the Age of Mass Incarceration” (panel discussion), Harvard University, April 22, 2019

Member, Committee on Instruction, History and Literature, Harvard University, 2018-2019

Member, Tutorial Board, Committee on Degrees in History and Literature, Harvard University, 2015-2017, 2018-present

Graduate Admissions Reader, English Department, University of Pennsylvania, 2013-2014

Consultant, Interviewed for “Commonwealth,” Audience Channel, DirecTV (documentary film on school funding cuts and prison expansion), 2014

Member, Decarcerate PA (grassroots organization against mass incarceration), 2011-2017

Officer and Coordinator, English Graduate Association, 2010-2012

Co-organizer, “Political Prisoners, Politicized Prisoners: A Roundtable on State Violence and Radical Thought,” University of Pennsylvania, April 13, 2012

Co-coordinator, American Literature Reading Group, English Department, University of Pennsylvania, 2010-2011

## REFERENCES

Professor David Kazanjian  
Department of English  
University of Pennsylvania  
3340 Walnut Street, Room 127  
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(215) 746-3768  
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Department of English  
University of Pennsylvania  
3340 Walnut Street, Room 127  
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Professor Marie Gottschalk  
Department of Political Science  
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