

# ELISABETH ANKER

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George Washington University  
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## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

### George Washington University

Department of American Studies and Political Science associate faculty  
Associate Professor, 2015-  
Assistant Professor, 2007-2015

### Brown University

Carol Lederer Postdoctoral Fellow, Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women  
2007-2008

## EDUCATION

### Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley

- Department of Political Science, 2007
- Designated Emphasis in Film Studies, 2007
- Dissertation: "The Venomous Eye: Melodrama and the Making of National Identity and State Power." *UC Berkeley Paul Rozance Dissertation Prize in Political Theory*
- Advisors: Wendy Brown (Chair), Linda Williams, Judith Butler, Shannon Stimson

### Ed.M. Harvard University

- Graduate School of Education, 1998
- Emphasis: Critical Theory, Social and Education Policy

### A.B. Brown University

- Honors, Department of Public Policy and American Institutions, 1997

## PUBLICATIONS

BOOK:

### **Orgies of Feeling: Melodrama and the Politics of Freedom**

Duke University Press, 2014

- Finalist, Lora Romero Prize for Best First Book in American Studies, The American Studies Association, 2015
- Choice Outstanding Academic Title, 2015
- The 2015 Featured Book: Feminist Theory Workshop of the Western Political Science Association
- Reviewed: *Perspectives on Politics, Political Theory, Journal of American History, American Literature, Journal of American Studies, Theory & Event, Review of Politics, Choice, Cultural Critique, Sympløke, European Journal of American Studies, Textual Practice, Political Studies Review, Brown Alumni Magazine, Communication Booknotes Quarterly, American Studies Journal*

JOURNAL ARTICLES:

**White and Deadly: Sugar, Slavery, and the Sweet Taste of Freedom**

Special symposium on article with responses.

*Theory & Event*, Vol 23, No. 1, January 2020, pp. 169-206.

**I Feel Your Pain: A Reckoning**

*Politics and Gender*, March 2018, pp. 127-131.

**Longing for Sovereignty: Violence and Power in the Trump Era**

*Theory@Buffalo*, 20th Anniversary Special Issue: Doing Theory, Spring 2018, pp. 39-49.

**Sovereign Aspirations: National Security and Police Power in a Global Era  
Co-Authored with William L. Youmans**

*Theory & Event*, 20th Anniversary Special Issue, 20:1, January 2017, pp. 3-18.

**Thwarting Neoliberal Security: Inertia, Bureaucracy, and Outmodedness in *The Wire***

*American Literary History*, 28:4, Winter 2016, pp. 759-778.

**The Cinematic Dream-Life of American Politics**

*Political Theory*, 44:2, (May 2016): 207-218.

**Three Emancipations: *Manderlay*, Slavery, and Racialized Freedom**

*Theory & Event* 18:2 (May 2015)

- Republished in *Politics, Theory, and Film: Critical Encounters with Lars von Trier*, eds. Bonnie Honig and Lori Marso. (Oxford University Press, 2016): 216-239.

**Liberalism and Its Horrors**

*Social Research* 81:4 (Winter 2014): 795-823.

**Freedom and the Human in 'Evolutionary' Political Theory**

*Political Research Quarterly*, 67:2 (June 2014): 453-456.

**Feminist Theory and The Failures of Post-9/11 Freedom**

*Politics and Gender* 8:2 (June 2012): 207-216.

**Left Melodrama**

*Contemporary Political Theory* 11.2 (May 2012): 130-152.

**Heroic Identifications: Or 'You Can Love Me Too—I Am So Like The State'**

*Theory & Event* 15.1 (March 2012)

**Villains, Victims and Heroes: Melodrama, Media and 9/11.**

*Journal of Communication*. 55:1 (March 2005): 22-37.

ARTICLES IN BOOKS:

**The Exceptional Sovereign**

*Theologies of American Exceptionalism*, eds. Winnifred Sullivan and Elizabeth Hurd (Indiana University Press, 2020)

### **Mobile Sovereigns: Guns In Public**

*The Lives of Guns*, eds. Jonathan Obert, Andrew Poe and Austin Sarat (Oxford University Press, 2019)

### **The Communist Manifesto in an Era of Late-Capital: Melodrama and Melancholia**

*The Cambridge Companion to the Communist Manifesto*, eds. Terrell Carver and James Farr. (Cambridge University Press, 2015).

### **The Melodramatic Style of American Politics**

*After The Tears: New Perspectives on the Politics of Victimhood*, eds. Scott Loren and Joerg Mettleman. (Amsterdam University Press, 2015.)

### **The Limits of Neoliberalism: *The Wire* and Market Rationality**

*Everything is Connected: The Politics of HBO's "The Wire"* eds. Shirin Deylami and Jonathan Hovercraft. (Routledge, 2014).

### **Wendy Brown**

*The Encyclopedia of Political Thought* eds. Michael Gibbons, Diana Coole, Lisa Ellis (Wiley-Blackwell, 2014.)

### **Discourse**

*The Encyclopedia of Governance*, ed. Mark Bevir. (California: Sage, 2007.)

### REVIEW ESSAYS:

### **Worldmaking In A Shitstorm: Review Of *The Hundreds***

*Theory and Event* 23:3 (July 2020)

### **Ranciere's Sentiments**

*Perspectives on Politics*, 17:1 (March 2019)

### **War Crimes, Atrocity, and Justice**

*Perspectives on Politics*, 14:2 (June 2016): 13-14

### **Red Alert: Communism, Protest, and the End of Democracy**

*Political Theory*, 43:2 (April 2015): 262-270.

Reviews of Jodi Dean, *The Communist Horizon*; Slavoj Zizek, *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously*; Alain Badiou, *The Rebirth of History*.

### **Terror Firma: The Landscape of Terror in American Politics**

*Theory and Event*. 14.1 (March 2011)

Reviews of *Terrorist Assemblages* by Jasbir Puar and *States of Terror* by Robin Goodman.

### **Reviews: *American Multiculturalism After 9/11* and *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel*.**

*American Literature* 83:2 (June 2011): 471-474.

### **National Love in Violent Times**

*Political Theory* 36:5 (October 2008 ):762-769

Reviews of *Postcolonial Melancholia* by Paul Gilroy and *The Truth About Patriotism* by Steven Johnston.

### **The Only Thing We Have To Fear. . .**

*Theory and Event*. 8:3 (September 2005)

Reviews of *Fear: The History of a Political Idea* by Corey Robin and *In The Shadow of No Towers* by Art Spiegelman.

POPULAR SCHOLARSHIP, PODCASTS, AND INTERVIEWS:

**“Trickle Down Domination”**

*Daily Nous*, November 2020

**“2020 Election”**

*Arab Studies International Livecast*, November 2020

**“Ugly Freedoms”**

*Talking Violence Podcast*, October 2020

**"On the 2016 Election"**

*Daily Nous*, November 2016

**"Trump's Melodrama"**

*Daily Nous*, March 2016

**"New Books In Political Science Podcast: Orgies of Feeling"**

*New Books Network Podcast*, November 2015

**"Orgies of Feeling: Melodrama and the Politics of Freedom"**

*StatusHour Radio Podcast*, May 27, 2015

**“Elisabeth Anker: Orgies of Feeling”**

*Process: A Blog for American History from the Journal of American History*, March 12, 2015

**“New Texts Out Now: Elisabeth Anker’s Orgies of Feeling”**

*Jadaliyya*, February 11, 2015

**“The Danger in Political Melodrama”**

*New America Foundation: The Weekly Wonk Magazine*, October 9, 2014.

**"Lights, Camera Action: The Politics of Melodrama"**

*Columbian College of Arts and Sciences Magazine*, September 2014

IN PROGRESS:

**Ugly Freedoms**

Forthcoming, Duke University Press 2022

**The Sovereign’s Wrath**

Book project on the return of state and individual sovereignty. Manuscript in progress.

**MEDIA APPEARANCES**

*Al Jazeera English*: November 5, 2020, November 1, 2020, June 29, 2020, June 2, 2020; March 3, 2020, February 29, 2020, January 24, 2020; November 20, 2019, November 7, 2019, September 26, 2019, July 24 2019, June 26 2019, February 27 2019, Monday, Feb 11, 2019, September 1, 2018, January 30, 2018, October 30 2017,

September 26 2017, July 24 2017, March 21 2017, February 4 2017, February 21 2016, August 30 2014, September 15 2012, June 18 2012

*BBC*: February 27 2019, February 15 2019, November 29 2018, May 3 2018, January 19 2017, November 15 2016.

*Al Jazeera Arabic*: November 7, 2020, October 21, 2020, June 1, 2020, March 21, 2019, Jan 20, 2019, Jan 18, 2019, Jan 10, 2019, November 1, 2018, October 18, 2018, May 5, 2018; May 4, 2018; April 3, 2018, February 9, 2018, January 20 2018, January 19 2018, December 11 2017, November 1 2017, September 30 2017, August 13 2017, April 25 2017, April 16 2017, March 21 2017, March 10 2017, March 8 2017, February 22 2017, January 31 2017, January 29 2017

*CNN, The Situation Room*: January 25, 2017

*France24*: November 6, 2020; October 22, 2020; May 30, 2020; March 3, 2020; January 6, 2018

*3Sat German Television*: January 20, 2017

*RTE*: January 15, 2017; November 12, 2016, November 9, 2016

*Voice of America*: November 8, 2016

*Al Arabiya*: June 12, 2016

*MetroTV Indonesia*, November 2, 2012

*Stealing America: Vote By Vote*. Documentary Film Dir: Dorothy Fadiman. (Concentric Media, 2008. DVD)

## INVITED LECTURES AND COLLOQUIA

### **Columbia University Political Theory Colloquium**

November 2020 virtual

### **University of Erlangen Germany**

Global Sentiments, November 2020 virtual

### **University of California Humanities Research Institute**

Civil War, October 2020 virtual

### **University of Copenhagen**

Election 2020, October 2020 virtual

### **University of Colorado, Boulder**

Ugly Freedoms, December 2020 virtual

### **University of Alabama Department of Race and Gender**

Ugly Freedoms, October 2020 virtual

### **Invited Speaker, Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy**

Fascism in a Global Era, November 2019

### **Ohio State University Political Theory Colloquium**

Neoliberalism and the Loss of Vision, October 2019

**Annual Sandison Memorial Lecture, Western Washington University**  
Sugar, Slavery, and The Politics of Freedom, May 2019

**World Issues Forum, Fairhaven College at Western Washington**  
Freedom and Climate Violence, May 2019

**New York University Latinx Project**  
2018 Midterm Elections, December 2018

**Brown University Political Theory Colloquium**  
The Sweet Taste of Freedom, October 2018

**Neal Maxwell Endowed Lecture In Political Theory and Politics, University of Utah**  
The Sovereign's Wrath: Whiteness and Vengeance, September 2018

**University of London, SOAS**  
Colonial Unfreedom and Material History: On the Intimacies of Four Continents, June 2018

**The Potomac Center for the Study of Modernity**  
Repair and Reparations, April 2018

**Georgetown University**  
Affective Environmentalism, February 2018

**University of Illinois, Biohumanities Institute**  
Freedom of the Anthropocene, December 2017

**Cultural Studies Association**  
Plenary Speaker. Grab Em By The Pussy: Sovereign Longings in the Trump Era , May 2017

**Emory University Department of Women and Gender Studies**  
New Scholarship in Affect Sawyer Seminar, May 2017

**American University Beirut, Lebanon**  
CASAR Center for American Studies, April 2017

**University of Chicago Department of Cinema and Media**  
Keynote Address: Melodrama and Trauma Conference, April 2017

**Georgetown University**  
Thinking the Anthropocene, April 2017

**University of Hawaii Department of Political Science**  
Climate Change in the Anthropocene, March 2017

**Mount Holyoke College Climate Change Lecture Series**  
Freedom and Climate Violence, March 2017

**Amherst College**  
Gun Ownership and Sovereign Desires, March 2017

**University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill**  
Freedom and the Anthropocene, December 2016

**Cornell University Political Theory Workshop**

Tragedies of Emancipation, October 2016

**University of Basel, Switzerland**

Keynote Address: Feminist Affect Studies, September 2016

**Bard College at Simon's Rock, Center for Humanistic Inquiry**

Freedom and Climate Violence, September 2016

**American University Beirut, Lebanon**

Melodramas of Global Security, May 2016

**University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany**

Melodrama, Trump, and the Politics of Sovereignty, April 2016

**University of Wisconsin, Madison Political Theory Workshop,**

Tragedies of Emancipation: Race and Freedom in the Aftermath of Slavery, April 2016

**New York University, Social and Cultural Analysis**

Orgies of Feeling book talk, April 2016

**Georgetown University Political Theory Workshop**

Tragedies of Emancipation: Race and Freedom in the Aftermath of Slavery, April 2016

**George Mason University Cultural Studies Colloquium**

Melodramas of Global Security, March 2016

**Busboys & Poets Washington DC**

Conversations about Citizenship in Contemporary America, March 2016

**Duke University, John Hope Franklin Humanities Institute,**

Melodrama and the Politics of Freedom, December 2015

**Colorado College Department of Film and Media**

Standard Operating Procedure and the Neoliberalism of Horror, October 2015

**University of Maryland College Park, Potomac Center Graduate Workshop**

The End of Sovereignty?, October 2015

**Uppsala University, Sweden, Department of English**

Cultures of Security, August 2015

**University of Chicago, Neubauer Collegium**

Articulating Politics: Author Meets Readers, *Orgies of Feeling*, April 2015

**University at Buffalo Graduate Conference in Comparative Literature**

Keynote Address: Optimism in the Age of Catastrophe, April 2015

**University of Maryland Department of Women's Studies**

Orgies of Feeling Book Discussion, March 2015

**George Mason University School of Policy, Government and International Affairs**

Orgies of Feeling: Melodrama and American Politics, November 2014

**George Washington University Honors Program**

The Theft of Freedom: Hollywood Addresses Racism, November 2014

**UCLA Political Theory Workshop**

Tragedies of Emancipation, November 2014

**School of Media And Public Affairs at George Washington University**

Orgies of Feeling: Melodrama and American News Media, October 2014

**Studio Theatre, Washington DC**

The Apple Family Plays and Post-9/11 Politics, January 2014

**The University of Utah Neal Maxwell Lecture in Politics, Commentary**

Freedom and the Human in 'Evolutionary' Political Theory, September 2013

**Johns Hopkins University Department of Political Science**

Heroic Identifications: Melodrama and the Politics of Freedom, November 2012

**University of St. Gallen, Switzerland**

After The Tears: Victimhood and Subjectivity in the Melodramatic Mode, November 2011

**University of Virginia Workshop in Political Philosophy**

Orgies of Feeling, February 2011

**Union College 21st Century Feminisms Lecture Series**

Feminist Theory and the Melodrama of the Iraq War, February 2011

**United States Embassy of Switzerland, and University of St. Gallen, Switzerland**

Lecture series on "Orgies of Feeling" manuscript, October 2010

**SUNY SCCC and the Capital Region Arts Council**

Melodramatic Politics After 9/11, April 2010

**University of California, Berkeley, Department of Rhetoric**

Feminist Theories of Melodrama, April 2010

**University at Albany, SUNY Political Theory Workshop**

Melodramatic Politics and Nietzschean Discontents, March 2010

**Brown University, Department of English Mellon Seminar**

Politics and Forms: Practices of Political Misreading, January 2010

**Union College Department of Political Science**

Melodrama and Media, January 2010

**Brown University Political Philosophy Workshop**

Vengeance, Melodrama and the Legitimation of State Power, May 2008

**Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University**

Melodramatic Media, Symposium on Global Media, April 2008

**The Johns Hopkins Political Theory Colloquium**

Villains, Victims and Heroes: Melodrama, Media and 9/11, March 2004



## FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS AND AWARDS

**University Facilitating Fund**, George Washington University, 2020-2021

**Humanities Facilitating Fund**, George Washington University, 2020, 2019, 2018

**Finalist, Lora Romero Prize for Best First Book in American Studies**, The American Studies Association, 2015

**Columbian College Facilitating Fund**, George Washington University, 2018, 2015, 2013, 2010

**Political Research Quarterly Outstanding Reviewer Award**, 2017

**Faculty Fellow**, Honors Program Initiative, George Washington University, 2014-2015

**Dean's Enhanced Travel Award**, George Washington University, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2019

**Paul Rozance Dissertation Prize in Political Theory**, UC Berkeley, 2007

**Seminar in Experimental Critical Theory Scholarship**, UC Humanities Research Institute, 2007

**Graduate Fellowship, Department of Political Science** UC Berkeley, 2005-2006

**Graduate Division Summer Grant**, UC Berkeley, 2005

**Society of Cinema and Media Studies Graduate Grant** (2005)

**Dean's Fellowship**, Graduate Division, UC Berkeley (2004-2005)

**Travers Fellowship in Ethics and Politics**, Institute of Governmental Studies, UC Berkeley (2000-2001, 2001-2002) Received two years.

**Anti-Defamation League Steinberg Leadership Institute Fellow**, Anti-Defamation League (2001-2002)

**Graduate Assembly Travel Grant**, UC Berkeley Graduate Assembly (2000, 2002)

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS, 2010+

### **Ugly Freedoms**

National Communication Association, November 2019

### **Energetic Sensations and the Material of Politics**

American Political Science Association, September 2019

### **Rejection Without Vision: Boredom, Dysfunction, and Other Challenges to Neoliberalism**

American Political Science Association, September 2019

### **Lisa Wedeen's Authoritarian Apprehensions**

American Political Science Association, September 2019

### **Dust and The Politics of Climate Freedom**

Western Political Science Association, March 2019

**Sugar, Slavery and The Politics of Freedom**  
American Studies Association, November 2018

**Mobile Sovereigns**  
Association for Political Theory, October 2018

**Guns, Publics, and Appearances**  
American Political Science Association, August 2018

**Masculinity in the Age of Trump**  
Western Political Science Association, March 2018

**Roundtable on Liberal Dissent**  
American Studies Association, November 2017

**Freedom of the Anthropocene**  
American Political Science Association, August 2017

**Roundtable on Disavowed Violence in America**  
American Political Science Association, August 2017

**Humble Humanity in the Thought of William Connolly**  
International Studies Association, February 2017

**Sovereign Aspirations in the Trump Era (co-authored With William Youmans)**  
International Studies Association, February 2017

**What is the Anthropocene?**  
Association for Political Theory, October 2016

**Tragedies of Emancipation**  
American Political Science Association, September 2016

**Freedom of the Anthropocene**  
Western Political Science Association, March 2016

**The Promises and Perils of Visual Analysis Roundtable**  
Western Political Science Association, March 2016

**The (Neo)Liberalism of Horror**  
American Political Science Association, September 2015

**Ugly Freedoms: Insect Gestures in *The Metamorphosis***  
Western Political Science Association, April 2015

**Punishment and Emancipation**  
Law, Culture and the Humanities, March 2015

**The Tragedy of Emancipation**  
American Studies Association, November 2014

***Leviathan: A Tale of Two Monsters***  
Association for Political Theory, October 2014

**Tragedies of Emancipation**

American Political Science Association, August 2014

**Passivity and The Practice of Freedom**

Association for Political Theory, Vanderbilt University, October 2013

**The Tragedy of Ugly Freedom**

American Political Science Association, Chicago, IL August 2013

**Melodramas of Failed Sovereignty**

Western Political Science Association, Los Angeles CA, March 2013

**The Affective Terrain of Post-9/11 Politics**

Association for Political Theory, Columbia, SC October 2012

**The Political Power of Pathos**

Western Political Science Association, Portland OR, March 2012

**Feminist Perspectives on Freedom and Rights, Roundtable Participant**

American Political Science Association, Seattle WA, September 2011

**Melodramatic Theater and Political Critique**

American Political Science Association, Seattle WA, September 2011

***Three Kings* and the Repoliticization of War**

American Studies Association, San Antonio TX, November 2010

**Felt Legitimacy**

Association for Political Theory, Portland OR, October 2010

**Political Theory and Leftist Politics, Roundtable Participant**

American Political Science Association, Washington DC, September 2010

**Genres of Political Theory**

Western Political Science Association, San Francisco CA, March 2010

**Power and Empire in the Age of Obama**

Telos Institute Annual Conference, New York City, January 2010

**SERVICE TO THE ACADEMY**

*Theory & Event* Journal

Co-editor, 2020-2024

American Political Science Association

Foundations of Political Theory Program Co-Chair, 2015-2016

*Politics and Gender* Journal

Associate Editor, 2016 -- 2018

*Contemporary Political Theory* Journal

Associate Editor, 2013 -- 2016

Potomac Center for the Study of Modernity  
Symposium Organizer, "The End of Sovereignty?" Fall 2015

Association for Political Theory  
Chair of the Governing Council, 2013-2014  
Governing Council, 2010-2014  
Conference Program Committee, 2009-2010

Manuscript and Scholarship Reviewer

*Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Chicago University Press, Duke University Press, Political Theory, American Political Science Review, American Quarterly, Contemporary Political Theory, differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies, Modern Drama, Millennium: Journal of International Studies, Stanford University Humanities Center, Theory & Event*

#### EDITORIAL BOARDS

*American Political Science Review (APSR)*  
Editorial Board, 2016 -- 2020  
*Theory & Event*  
Editorial Board, 2015 –  
*Contemporary Political Theory*  
Editorial Board, 2018-  
*Reinventing Critical Theory* Book Series, Roman & Littlefield  
Editorial Board, 2014-2018

#### PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Political Science Association  
Association for Political Theory  
American Studies Association  
Society for Cinema and Media Studies

#### COURSES

GRADUATE:

Worldmaking and The Politics of Freedom  
Democracy and Violence  
Capitalism and Neoliberalism  
Freedom and Domination  
Debating Democracy in America  
Critical Theory  
American Political Thought and the Melodramatic Imaginary  
Post-9/11 Politics and Culture

UNDERGRADUATE:

Politics, Culture, Climate  
Democracy and Power in a Global Era  
Politics and Feelings  
Freedom in American Thought and Culture  
Senior Research Seminar  
Politics and Film  
American Political Culture After 9/11