

William M. Burton

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Academic appointments

Assistant professor, Department of French, University of California, Berkeley, 2021–present.

Affiliate faculty of: the Center for Science, Technology, Medicine, and Society; the Department of Gender and Women’s Studies; the Program in Critical Theory; Canadian Studies.

Lecturer, Department of French and Romance Philology, Columbia University, 2020–21.

Education

Columbia University

Ph.D., Department of French and Romance Philology, 2020. Dissertation: *On the Origin and End of Sex. Language, Science and Social Contract in Rousseau and Wittig*. Committee: Joanna Stalnaker (chair), Pierre Force, Camille Robcis.

M.Phil., French and Romance Philology, 2017.

M.A., French and Romance Philology, 2015. Thesis: “‘Cette voix intérieure qui me juge en secret’: Morale, fictions et politique chez Rousseau” (Supervisor: Joanna Stalnaker).

Université de Montréal

Maîtrise ès arts (M.A.), Études anglaises, 2014. Thesis: “‘A Most Weird Dialectic of Inversion’: Revolutionary fraternity, sexuality and translation in Pierre Vallières and Eldridge Cleaver” (Supervisor: Robert Schwartzwald.)

McGill University

B.A. (First Class Honours), Lettres et traduction françaises, 2010. Minor concentration in linguistics.

Fields of teaching and research interest

Intellectual history	18 th -century French literature and philosophy
Gender, sexuality, and feminism	20 th -century French literature and philosophy
History of science	Translation theory
History of philosophy	Quebec studies

Publications

Books

The End of Sex: Science and the Social Contract from Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Monique Wittig. In preparation.

Edited volumes

Monique Wittig: Sex, Literature, Politics, a special issue of *L’Esprit créateur*, forthcoming summer 2025.

Peer-reviewed articles

“Structuralist or lesbian? Claude Lévi-Strauss and Monique Wittig on Rousseau’s ‘science’,” forthcoming in *Modern Intellectual History*.

“Translatability and Queer Desire in *Nègres Blancs d’Amérique*: Three Theses + a Hypothesis.” *Québec Studies*, 61, June 2016: 137–64. doi:10.3828/qs.2016.9.

Other scholarly publications

Report on “Entangled Diasporas: Shadow Archives in Black, Queer and Postcolonial Studies”, co-written with Lydia Epp Schmidt, in *Bulletin-Info*, Zentrum für transdisziplinäre Geschlechterstudien, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Berlin, 29 (2018) 57, pp. 55-58.

“Inverting the Text: A Proposed Queer Translation Praxis.” In “Translating Queers, Queering Translation”, special issue edited by B.J. Epstein of *In Other Words: The Journal for Literary Translators*, no. 36 (2010): 54–68.

Other media

“What the 1755 Lisbon Earthquake Can Teach Us Now.” *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 9 April 2020. <https://lareviewofbooks.org/short-takes/1755-lisbon-earthquake-now/>

Fellowships, awards, honours

Humanities Research Fellowship, University of California – Berkeley. Declined.

Core Preceptor Fellowship, Center for the Core Curriculum, Columbia University, 2019-20.

Bourse Chateaubriand en Sciences humaines et sociales, affiliated with the Centre d’études et de recherches interdisciplinaires en Lettres, Arts, Cinéma (CERILAC), Université Paris Diderot, Fall 2018. Supervisor: Anne F. Garréta. €6000.

Visiting scholar, Zentrum für transdisziplinäre Geschlechterstudien (ZtG), Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, summer semester 2018.

Otis Fellows Fellowship in French, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Columbia University, 2017-2018. Approx. \$29 000.

Summer funding, Department of French and Romance Philology, Columbia University, to undertake archival research in Switzerland and France, 2017. \$3000.

Teaching fellowship, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Columbia University, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017. Approx. \$29 000/year.

Intensivsprachkursstipendium, Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD), summer 2015. €2763.

Summer funding, Department of French and Romance Philology, Columbia University, to undertake research and coursework in digital humanities methodology, 2014. \$3000.

Dean’s Fellowship, first-year fellowship for PhD students in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Columbia University, 2013-2014. Approx. \$27 000.

Bourse Monseigneur Olivier-Maurault, scholarship awarded to one master’s student in the humanities to support thesis research and writing. Faculté des arts et des sciences of Université de Montréal, 2012-2013. \$3000 (CAD).

Robert Kessler Martin Prize for Best Essay by an M.A. Student, Département d’études anglaises (Université de Montréal), 2011-2012.

Hugh Hood Memorial Entrance Scholarship for Most Outstanding Master’s Student in the Département d’études anglaises (Université de Montréal), 2011-2012. \$3000 (CAD).

Bourse d’exemption des droits de scolarité supplémentaires, Faculté des études supérieures et postdoctorales, Université de Montréal, 2011-2012. \$6200 (CAD)/semester.

McGill University Faculty of Arts major entrance bursary, 2006-2010. \$10 000 (CAD)/year for four years.

Presentations and conferences

Conference presentations

- “Rousseau at the lesbian bar: Sources of Wittig’s critique of the social sciences.” In panel “Experimental Communities: Authors in Dialogue” at the annual meeting of the Society for French Studies (UK) (University of Stirling, July 2024).
- “From names to nouns: The linguistic origin of sexual difference in Rousseau.” In panel “Rousseau and Gender II” organized by Masano Yamashita and the Rousseau Association at the annual meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (St Louis, March 2023).
- “Is marriage natural? Buffon, Locke and Rousseau through the prism of Carib marriage practices.” In panel on “The Married Condition in the Eighteenth-Century Americas”, at the annual meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (online, April 2021).
- “Rousseau’s materialist theory of linguistic embodiment.” Doktorand_innentag des Zentrums für transdisziplinäre Geschlechterstudien, Humboldt-Universität von Berlin (6 July 2018).
- “La traductibilité queer, ou *Nègres blancs d’Amérique* en anglais.” Premier Congrès mondial de la traductologie, Paris Ouest-Nanterre-La Défense (11-14 March 2017).
- “Barthes and Moses: The Critic as Prophet of the End of Literature.” “Language is Never Innocent: Roland Barthes,” Boston College interdisciplinary graduate student conference (14 November 2015).
- “Translatability and Queer Desire in *Nègres blancs d’Amérique*.” Panel “Pluralities”, as a part of the colloquium “Queer Quebec”, conference of the American Council for Quebec Studies, held in Montreal (16-19 October 2014).
- “An Intolerable Comparison: The Illegibility of Transracial Identification and Solidarity in *Les Nègres blancs d’Amérique*.” “Of Human Bondage: Literatures of Constraint,” Université de Montréal English Graduate Students’ Society annual conference (1-2 March 2013).
- “L’envers des mots’: Hétérotopie, ironie et traduction féministe dans *Le Désert mauve* de Nicole Brossard.” “Art and Politics of Irony” conference, organized by the Institute for the Public Life of Arts and Ideas (McGill University) (12-14 April 2012).
- “White-washing or incitation? Race, translation and utopia in Nicole Brossard’s *Mauve Desert*.” “Literature from the margins”, Université de Montréal English Graduate Students’ Society annual conference (11-12 March 2011).

Conferences organised

- “Monique Wittig: Twenty Years Later / Ving tans après.” Co-organiser with Ilana Eloit as well as Ty Blakeney, Mary Mussman, Carolina Topini, and Agnès Vannouvong, Department of French, University of California – Berkeley and Institut Études Genre, Université de Genève (17-18 March 2023 and 27-28 June 2023).
- “The Crypt(ic).” Co-organiser, Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, Columbia University, annual graduate student conference (29 March 2014).
- “Of Human Bondage: Literatures of Constraint.” Co-organiser (ex officio as president of the Graduate Students’ Society), Université de Montréal English Graduate Students’ Society annual conference (1-2 March 2013).

Translations

- Hyppolite, Jean. “A New Perspective on Marx and Marxism.” In *Jean Hyppolite*, special issue of *Pli. The Warwick Journal of Philosophy*. Coventry: University of Warwick. 2013. 24:18–39.

Translation of: “Une perspective nouvelle sur Marx et le marxisme.” In *Contemporary Philosophy: A Survey*, edited by Raymond Klibansky. Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1971. IV:339–57.

Angenot, Marc. “The Historian in Prosecutor’s Garb, Or, The Idea of Legal And/Or Moral Responsibility in Historiography: The Example of Communism.” *AmeriQuests* 10, no. 1 (2012). <http://vurj.vanderbilt.edu/ojs/index.php/ameriquests/article/view/3639>.

Translation of: “L’historien en robe de procureur. La notion de responsabilité morale/juridique chez les historiens,” 2011. <http://marcangenot.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/La-notion-de-responsabilit%C3%A9-chez-divers-historiens.pdf>.

Advising

Dissertations

Committee member, Jacob Raterman, *Queer Idiosyncrasies: Description and deviance in Zola and Huysmans*. Submitted summer 2023, graduation fall 2023.

Undergraduate theses

Sixtine Léonard, Department of Political Economy, “A Study of *La France Insoumise*. A Laborious Process of Feministization,” completed spring 2024.

Marley Fortin, Department of Comparative Literature, “La musique de Monique Wittig,” completed spring 2023.

R. J. McIntyre, Department of French, “La défamiliarisation de la langue et la référentialisé dans *Virgile, non*,” completed spring 2022.

Service

Departmental Service, French Department, Berkeley: Member of the Graduate Studies Committee (2021–3) and faculty search committee (2023–4).

Secretary, French Graduate Students’ Association (FGSA), Department of French and Romance Philology, Columbia University. 2014–15.

President, English Graduate Students’ Society (EGSS), Département d’études anglaises, Université de Montréal. 2012–13.

Students’ Society of McGill University representative to the Equity Subcommittee on Queer People, a consultative body of the Joint-Senate Board Committee on Equity. September 2010 – December 2010.

Vice-president (external affairs), Association générale des étudiants de langue et littérature françaises (AGELF), Département de langue et littérature françaises, McGill University. 2008–09.

Teaching experience

University of California – Berkeley

Graduate seminars. *Le Roman comme expérience: Littérature, savoirs, engagement, 1940–90*; “French Theory” via Rousseau; “Race” and “Sex”: Entangled conceptual histories, 1945–68; *The Ends of Man* (an introduction to French theory).

Undergraduate courses. *Man, Woman, Other: Across and beyond the gender binary in Francophone cultures*; *Montreal: Colonisation, urbanisation, migration (1900–present)*; *Elles: Solidarity, desire, and conflict between women (2nd-wave feminist literature and film)*; *Pronoun wars (linguistics and literature in the postwar period)*.

Columbia University

Undergraduate courses. Literature humanities (first-year Core Curriculum seminar);
Introduction to French Literature (before 1800); French as a second language (Elementary
French I and II, Intermediate French I and II, Advanced Conversation).
Graduate courses: Rapid Reading and Translation (French for academic research).

Université de Montréal

English composition (as teaching assistant and as instructor).

Languages

Native: English. *Fluent:* French. *Advanced:* German, Portuguese. *Read:* Latin.