

Maxime D. McKenna

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EDUCATION

PhD, Cultural Studies, Graduate School of North American Studies expected March 2025
John F. Kennedy Institute | Freie Universität Berlin (Berlin, DE)
Dissertation: *Inter-States: Infrastructure in California Noir Fiction & Film, 1956–92*
Supervisor: Prof. Frank Kelleter

MA, English 2015
The University of Chicago (Chicago, USA)

BA, English, Summa Cum Laude 2010
The University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, USA)

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed

“Self-Driving Cars and Driving Selves: Automobility and the Epistemic Infrastructure of Liberalism.” *Transfers: Interdisciplinary Journal of Mobility Studies* (2025). In progress.

“From Superhighway to Hyperreality: The Infrastructure of ‘Astral America.’” *Review of International American Studies* 17.1 (Spring/Summer 2024): 139–150.

“The Freeway Fix: Infrastructure, Affect, and the Politics and Aesthetics of Distance in Joan Didion’s *Play It as It Lays*.” *AmLit – American Literatures* 2.1 (2022).

“Nothing Too Private: *The Letters of T.S. Eliot Volume 3: 1926-27*.” *The Journal of Modern Literature* 37.4 (Summer 2014): 182-185.

“In the Wake of Fair Use: Incest, Citation, and the Legal Legacy of *Finnegans Wake*.” *The Journal of Modern Literature* 35.4 (Summer 2012): 56-72.

Selected Essays and Criticism

“Teaching Lorine Niedecker in a Massive Open Online Context.” *Solitary Plover* 31 (Winter 2020).

“*Switched on Pop* Schools the Academy.” *PopMatters*. January 2020.

“Art is a Recycling Across Generations: In Conversation with Julia Holter.” *PopMatters*. October 2018.

“Owls, Aliens, and Others: Brian Phillips’s *Impossible Owls*.” *PopMatters*. October 2018.

“Revolution from Below: Tim Mohr’s *Burning Down the Haus*.” *PopMatters*. October 2018.

“*Novel Sounds* and the Southern Institution’s Rock ‘n’ Roll Problem.” *PopMatters*. October 2018.

“Reactionary Rockism: The Dangerous Obsession with ‘Authenticity’ in Indie Rock.” *PopMatters*. August 2018.

“Copyrights Wake: SOPA, James Joyce, and the Future of Intellectual Property.” *The Millions*. January 2012.

CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

“Superhighway *Noir*: Postwar Automobility and Conspiracy.” Cultures of Automobility; University of Konstanz; Konstanz, DE. October 2024.

“Interstates: California *Noir* and the Infrastructure of Neoliberalism, 1956–92.” New American Studies Research on Literature and Culture; University of Groningen; Groningen, NL. December 2023.

“Conspiracies of Infrastructure: Neo-*Noir* and the Case Against the New Deal.” SINAS Research Seminar; Uppsala University; Uppsala, Sweden. October 2023.

“From Superhighway to Hyperreality: The Infrastructure of Astral America.” 11th World Congress of the International American Studies Association; University of Silesia; Katowice, Poland. September 2023.

“Conspiracies of Infrastructure: Locating the Darkness in Technicolor *Noir*.” PopMeC Association for US Popular Culture Studies Virtual Conference. September 2023.

“The Oil Embargo, Fifty Years On: Fueling the (Long) Crisis of American Automobility.” 16th International Graduate Conference; JFK Institute; Freie Universität Berlin; Berlin, DE. June 2023.

“Interstate Postmodernism: Superhighway Subjects in *The Crying of Lot 49*.” British Association of American Studies Annual Conference; Keele University; Keele, UK. April 2023.

“Interstates: Superhighways, California *Noir*, & the Neoliberal Order, 1956–92.” HCA Spring Academy; Heidelberg Center for American Studies; Heidelberg, DE. March 2023.

“Neo-Noir’s Strange Loops: Infrastructure and the (Filmic) Past.” Eco-Temporalities & Geo-Politics; Universität zu Köln; Cologne, DE. October 2022.

“The Case of *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*: Intellectual Property, Neoliberalism, and Conspiracies of Infrastructure.” International PhD Seminar; Roosevelt Institute for American Studies; Middelburg, NL. May 2022.

“Zigzagging in the Motor Age: Automobility and Errant Mobility in *The Crying of Lot 49*.” Converging Narratives: The Personal Meets the National; University of Illinois at Chicago; Chicago, USA. April 2015.

“Authorities and Authors of Redevelopment: The Language of Black Displacement in Philadelphia.” Intertextuality; University of North Carolina – Wilmington; Wilmington, USA. April 2011.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor, John F. Kennedy Institute, Freie Universität Berlin 2023–25

Courses:

American Road Cultures After 1945

Investigating *Noir*: Classic, Neo, Eco

Responsibilities: Led self-designed, discussion-based seminars in American cultural studies—with emphasis on historical and interdisciplinary methods in the study of culture—as part of the Vertiefungsmodul in Culture for students in the Bachelor’s Program in North American Studies. Evaluated student research papers (Hausarbeit) and provided substantive written feedback on matters relating to argumentation, research, and writing style.

Teaching Assistant, The University of Pennsylvania 2012–2024

Course: Modern and Contemporary American Poetry

Responsibilities: Provided support for a recurring massive open online course offered by a professor at the University of Pennsylvania for demographically diverse learners.

Teaching Assistant, The University of Chicago 2015

Course: Introduction to Fiction

Responsibilities: Led a discussion section for and evaluated students in a bachelor-level survey course in Anglophone literature.

Teaching Assistant, The University of Pennsylvania 2013

Course: Kelly Writers House Fellows Seminar

Responsibilities: Helped to foster discussion, evaluate students, and coordinate logistics for visiting authors in a bachelor-level seminar in American literature.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Co-Organizer, International Graduate Workshop, Freie Universität Berlin 2022

American Grids: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Housing, Energy, and Infrastructure

Fiction Editor, *Chicago Review* 2021–21
University of Chicago

Co-Organizer, Annual Graduate Student Conference, U. Chicago 2014
Concussions, Commotions, and other Aesthetic Disorders

SELECTED AWARDS & HONORS

Visiting PhD Student, Swedish Institute for North American Studies 2023
Uppsala, Sweden

Recipient of Doctoral Scholarship 2021–24
Graduate School of North American Studies, Freie Universität Berlin | Berlin, DE

L. Barry Pick Prize, Best Thesis in English Honors Program 2010
University of Pennsylvania | Philadelphia, PA, USA

The College Alumni Society Henry Reed Prize, Best Essay on English Renaissance 2010
University of Pennsylvania | Philadelphia, PA, USA

LANGUAGES

English native fluency
French native fluency
German C1
Spanish B1