

HEATHER FINCH

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Education

Auburn University

PhD, English (Early American / African-American Literature), December 2015

Women's Studies Graduate Minor

Dissertation - "What was her name?": Pre-nineteenth Century Slave Women's Fragmented Narratives"

MA, English, May 2007

Tuskegee University

BA, English, *summa cum laude*, May 2005

Teaching and Professional Experience

Belmont University | Nashville, TN

Associate Professor of English & Honors (Department of English & Global Honors)

August 2025 - Present

Sullivan Foundation Associate (Fisk Belmont Social Justice Collaborative)

Assistant Professor of English & Honors (Department of English & Global Honors)

August 2019 - July 2025

Courses: BIPOC Representations in Film and Literature | Citizenship and Black American Literature | First Year Writing | Honors Seminar

Special Topics: Literature and Culture of the African Diaspora

Third Year Writing | Trauma Studies | Travel Writing | What's Your Why?

Single Author: Jesmyn Ward | American Literature Surveys

Study Abroad: Maymester - Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2020); Summer - Italy (2020)

Maymester: Dominican Republic (2021); Summer - Italy (2021)

(2020 and 2021 canceled due to the COVID-19 Global Pandemic)

Assistant Director, Teaching Center

Fall 2021

Faculty Fellow in English (Department of English)

June 2017 - July 2019

Courses: First Year Writing | Third Year Writing | Travel Writing | Honors Seminar | Trauma Studies | College Reading and Writing (Bridges to Belmont Summer Program)

Study Abroad: Maymester - Haiti/Dominican Republic (2018); Dominican Republic (2019)

Spring Break - Atlanta, Montgomery, Birmingham, Memphis, and Nashville (2019)

Auburn University | Auburn, AL

Diversity Initiatives Coordinator (Women's Center - Office of Inclusion and Diversity)

January 2015 - May 2017

October 2014 - January 2015 (Part-time)

Instructor (Women's Studies)

August 2015 - May 2017

Courses: Intro to Women's Studies

Teaching and Professional Experience

Graduate Teaching Assistant/Instructor of Record (Department of English)
August 2009 – December 2014; August 2005 – May 2007
Courses: English Composition I | English Composition II
World Literature Beginnings to 1650 | World Literature 1650 to Present
American Literature Beginnings to 1865 | American Literature 1865 to Present

Summer Enrichment Experience Instructor (Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs)
Summer 2011 – Summer 2014; Summer 2016 | Course: English Composition

Research Experience for Undergraduates Instructor (Office of University Writing)
Summer 2014 | Course: Writing in the Sciences

Writing Center Consultant
August 2012 – October 2014; August 2005 – May 2007

Coordinator of Publicity and Federal Internships (Office of the Vice President for Research)
November 2007 – August 2009

Smarthinking/Pearson Education | Washington, DC/Auburn, AL

New Start Program Mentor
May 2013 – March 2015

On-line Writing Tutor
July 2010 – May 2013

Publications

Finch, H., S. Longard, & A. Hodges Hamilton. (2020). "The Personal as Transformative in the Liberal Arts Classroom." In S. Storms, S. Donovan, & T. Williams (Eds.), *Breaking Down Silos for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Teaching and Collaboration Across Disciplines*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Finch, Heather. Review of *Fire on the Water: Sailors, Slaves, and Insurrection in Early American Literature, 1789-1886*, by Lenora Warren. *Early American Literature*, Vol. 56, Number 2, 2021.

"'From Star to Star': Phillis Wheatley Peters' Blueprint and African American Studies' Past, Present, and Future." *The Living Legacy of African American Studies: Its Past, Present, and Future(s)*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press. (Forthcoming)

"'Staring at the Stars Above': Black Women's Narratives and Astronomical Imagery." (In Progress)

"Risk, Writing, and Worth." *The Scholarly Teacher*. (In Progress)

"'A quiet, gentle shift': The Pedagogical Practices of a Trauma Studies Integrated Learning Community." (In Progress)

"Married to Oppression: Black Women's Relationship to America." (In Progress)

Awards, Grants, and Fellowships

The Algernon Sydney Sullivan Foundation Regional Faculty/Staff Service Award (2025)
Forest Service Overseas Environmental Experience (FORSEE) Faculty Fellowship Program (2024-2025)
Teaching Center Grant – Belmont University (Spring 2023)
Most Valuable Professor (MVP) – Belmont University Athletics (Fall 2021; Fall 2023)
Outstanding Faculty – Black Student Association (2022)
Society of Early Americanists – Junior Scholar of the Month (May 2018)
Women's Studies Graduate Student Achievement Award (2012)
NCPTW Registration and Grub Grant (2013)

Selected Presentations

"Risk, Writing, and Worth." Scholarship Symposium – Belmont University (May 2024)

"Risk, Writing, and Worth." Lilly Conferences Evidence-Based Teaching and Learning (May 2023)

"'Bow low to the earth': Jesmyn Ward's Forgotten Rural South." College English Association 52nd Annual Conference (March 2023)

"'Entered the fire for me': Transnational Feminism and Black Motherhood Experiences." National Women's Studies Association Conference (September – November 2021)

"'Wild and Unlikely Places': Connecting Enslaved Women's and Black Women Activists' 'Creative Spirits.'" Twelfth Biennial Society of Early Americanists Conference (March 2021)

"Reflections on Black Voices and Democracy." 19th Annual Humanities Symposium – Belmont University (September 2020)

"'Black Twitter': Marginalized Narratives in National Conversations." Convocation – Belmont University (January 2020)

"Becoming Story." Spring Chapel Series – Belmont University (Invited Presentation – January 2020)

"Wendell Berry's *The Hidden Wound*." *The Membership: A Wendell Berry Podcast*. Guest. (Invited Interview – October 2019)

"'The Year of the Return': Lessons from Enslaved People's Narratives," College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences Seminar – Belmont University (Invited Presentation – October 2019)

"Just Mercy: A Look at Criminal Justice." Hope Talks Convocation – Belmont University (Invited Speaker – October 2019)

"Define and Empower: Education's Role in Recognizing Gender and Sexuality." Diversity and Equity in Education. Vanderbilt University (Invited Presentation– September 2019)

"Slavery, the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement in Public Memory." Difficult Pasts, Difficult Presents Session – Symposium with Queens University, Belfast (March 2019)

Selected Presentations

The Rape of Recy Taylor Film Showing. Discussion Leader/Facilitator (Invited). Women's History Month – Belmont University (March 2019)

"'Her Story is Our Story': What Black Women's Narratives Teach Us About America." National Women's Studies Association Conference (November 2018)

"Reclaiming Enslaved Women's Literacy Experiences." South Atlantic Modern Language Association 90 Conference (November 2018)

"What Do Christians Believe about Diversity?" Panelist (Invited). Chapel Convocation. Belmont University (October 2018)

I Am Not Your Negro. Discussion Leader (Invited). Pre-Symposium International Film Festival. Belmont University (September 2018)

"At the Intersection of Black, Woman, and Southern." Christian Scholars' Conference (June 2018)

"Bridging Past and Present: Enslaved Women's Literacy Experiences." College English Association 49th Annual Conference (April 2018)

"'History Lives in the Present': Recovering Black Women's Narratives from the Margins." College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences Seminar – Belmont University (Invited Presentation – March 2018)

"'Her Story is Our Story': Black Women's Narratives and America," Spring Speakers Series – Belmont University (Invited Presentation – February 2018)

"Enslaved Women's Fragmented Narratives: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Early American Research," Senior Seminar in English Studies – Belmont University (Invited Presentation – October 2017)

"'What was her name?': Pre-nineteenth Century Enslaved Women's Fragmented Narratives," Women and Rhetoric Class – Belmont University (Invited Presentation – September 2017)

Green Dot Training (Co-Trainer) – Sexual Assault Awareness Month – Auburn University (April 2017)

"'We'll consider them here': Phillis Wheatley and the Limitations of Literary Evidence." Society of Early Americanists 10th Biennial Conference (March 2017)

"Marginal Connections: Authenticity and Visibility of Women of Color." Auburn University Outreach and Tuskegee Auburn Women's Alliance Symposium (February 2016)

"Think then Speak: Creating Inclusive Spaces." Space Club: CANSAT Competition Team and Robotic Mining Competition Team (Invited Presentation– November 2015)

"Cultivating the College Seed: Engagement through Reading" Symposium presentation with Desmond Delk at the 15th Annual Conference of the Engagement Scholarship Consortium, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada (October 2014)

Selected Presentations

- "Traumatic Travel: Traces of Eighteenth Century Slave Women in Early Americas' Seas."
American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, 45th Annual Meeting (March 2014)
- "Think then Speak: Creating Inclusive Spaces." Space Club: CANSAT Competition Team
and Robotic Mining Competition Team (Invited Presentation- November 2015)
- "Cultivating the College Seed: Engagement through Reading"
Symposium presentation with Desmond Delk at the 15th Annual Conference of the
Engagement Scholarship Consortium, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada (October 2014)
- "Traumatic Travel: Traces of Eighteenth Century Slave Women in Early Americas' Seas."
American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, 45th Annual Meeting (March 2014)
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Professional Involvement, Service and Certifications

- National Women's Studies Association Proposal Review Committee (2025)
Sullivan Foundation Fellows Committee (2024-2025)
Graduate Thesis Director (2023-2024)
Spanish Hiring Committee - Belmont University (2023)
Storytelling Taskforce (Spring 2023)
Teacher Education Advisory Council - Belmont University (2022-2025)
African Student Organization Faculty Advisor (2021-2023)
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences Policy Committee - Belmont University (2021-2023)
Composition Committee - Department of English, Belmont University (2021-2022)
Graduate Studies Committee - Department of English, Belmont University (2021-2022)
Creative Writing Hiring Committee - Belmont University (2021-2022)
Psychology Hiring Committee - Belmont University (2021-2022)
Crabb Writing Award Committee - Belmont University (Spring 2021)
Faculty Work-Life Committee - Belmont University (Spring 2021)
Education Technology Advisory Committee - Belmont University (Fall 2021)
Faculty Mentor - Antiracism Initiative. Nashville Faith-Based Institutions (2020-2021)
Humanities Symposium Committee - Belmont University (2020)
Teaching Center Mentor - Belmont University (2020-2021; 2023-2024)
Frist Art Museum Advisory Board for Kara Walker Exhibit (2020-2021)
Graduate Thesis Committee (2019-2020; 2020-2021; 2021-2022)
Honors Thesis Director (2019-2020)
Women's History Month Co-Chair - Belmont University (2019-2020; 2023-2024)
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences Hiring Committee - Belmont University (2019-2020)
College of Interdisciplinary Studies and Global Education Hiring Committee - Belmont University (2019)
Faculty Development Grant Review Committee - Belmont University (2019-2020)
Martin Luther King, Jr. Planning Committee - Belmont University (2018 - Present)
Exploring Haiti Workshop Certificate - Vanderbilt University (2018)
Mentor - Bridges to Belmont - Belmont University (2017-2019)
Faculty Participant - "Building Racial Bridges; Seeking Racial Understanding" - Lilly Fellows Program (2017-2018)
Bias Education and Response Team - Auburn University (2017)
Auburn University Senate - Lectures Committee (Program Representative)
Mentor - Auburn University Housing and Residence Life (2016 - 2017)

Professional Involvement, Service and Certifications

Academy for Civic Engagement – College of Liberal Arts – Auburn University (2016)
Moderator, Sustained Dialogue – Auburn University (Dinner with Strangers)
Certified Green Dot Instructor (College)
Competitive Outreach Scholarship Grant Review Panel – Auburn University
Early African American Literature Hiring Committee – Auburn University
I Love My SSU! Scholarship Foundation (Scholarship Coordinator)
Society of Early Americanists
National Women's Studies Association
Tuskegee Auburn Women's Leadership Alliance (Founding Member 2014)
The Black Doctoral Network

Teaching Interests

Early American Literature | American Literature to 1865 | African American/Black Literature
African Diaspora Literature | Issues in American Literature | Postcolonial Literature
Women's Studies | World Literature 1650 to Present | African American Studies
American Studies

Languages

French (Reading Proficiency)
Spanish (Reading Proficiency)

Community Involvement

Room in the Inn (Christ the King)
tnAchieves Mentor
Greater Nashville Regional Council Volunteer
Nashville Public Library Volunteer
Camp Good Grief Volunteer Counselor
Poetry Out Loud Volunteer