

MICHELLE ZERBA

Maggie B. Martin Professor of Rhetoric and Classical Studies

Departments of English; World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures; Comparative Literature

Affiliated Faculty Member of LSU Cyber Center

Section Head: Classics

Louisiana State University

Baton Rouge, LA 70803

mzerba@lsu.edu

225-578-4086

EDUCATION

Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley, Comparative Literature

M.A. University of California, Berkeley, Comparative Literature

B.A. (Double) University of California, Irvine, English and Classics

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS AND TITLES

- Louisiana State University
 - Professor, English, Classics, Comparative Literature, 2013-
 - Maggie B. Martin Professor of Rhetoric and Classical Studies, 2014-
 - Erich and Lea Sternberg Professor, Honors College, 2013-2014
 - Associate Professor, English, Classics, Comparative Literature, 1986-2013
 - Director and Producer, *Southern Crossroads: An Intersection of Diverse Artistic Expressions*, 2002-2005, Louisiana State University (with Ellis Marsalis and Wole Soyinka)
 - Associate Chair of English, 2003-2004
 - Director, LSU Study Abroad Program in Greece and Turkey, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2010, 2016
 - Director, Program in Comparative Literature, 1988-91
- University of Michigan, Assistant Professor, Classical Studies, 1982-86

GRANTS AND AWARDS

- LSU Provost's Research Funding for Big Ideas, The Mystery Project Collaborative Phase 1, December 2022
- Partnership University Fund (funded by French government), Grant, LSU-University of the Antilles Martinique, December 2017-January 2018 (teaching and research collaboration)
- National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship, September 2016-January 2017, Athens, Greece (held in conjunction with Senior Associate Membership, American School of Classical Studies at Athens), September 2016-May 2017)
- Distinguished Research Master Award, 2017
- LSU Regents' Research Grant, 2007, 2014, 2018
- LSU ORED Travel Grants, 2014, 2016-2017
- LSU HSS Travel Grant, 2014, 2016-2017
- Manship Summer Research Grant, 2021, 2013, 1999
- LSU Teaching Enhancement Fund Grant, 2013
- ATLAS Research Grant, 2010-2011
- Phi Beta Kappa

PUBLICATIONS

Books (Monographs)

- *Modern Odysseys: Cavafy, Woolf, Césaire, and a Poetics of Indirection* (Ohio State University Press, Classical Memories/Modern Identities Series, 2021).
- *Doubt and Skepticism in Antiquity and the Renaissance* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).
- *Tragedy and Theory: The Problem of Conflict Since Aristotle* (Princeton University Press, 1988). Reissued 2014 by Princeton University Press in Legacy Library as paperback and e-book.

Edited Journal and Book

- Aristotle, *Poetics*, Norton Critical Edition, Co-editor (Norton, 2018).
- *Journal of Comparative Literature*, Co-Editor, Special Edition: “Odyssey, Exile, Return,” September 2015. (Contributors: Jean-Luc Nancy, Françoise Lionnet, Haun Saussy, Wai-Chee Dimock, Michelle Zerba)

Articles

- “Medusa, Monstrous Beauty, and Neuroaesthetics.” Forthcoming in *Beauty and Monstrosity*, ed. Chara Kokkiou. Routledge, 2024.
- “Lightning in the Soul: Mystery and Translation in the Eleusinian Rites, the Dialogues of Plato, and Jewish Apocalypses.” Forthcoming in *Classical Translation Theory*, ed. Richard Armstrong. Oxford UP, 2024.
- “Reception of the Mystery Cults in Modern Europe.” Forthcoming in *Oxford Handbook of the Ancient Mystery Cults*, ed. Hugh Bowden. Oxford UP, 2024.
- “Eleusis at the Intersection of Antiquity and Modernity: The *Mysteria*, Altered Consciousness, and the Neuroscience of Transformational Experience.” *Beyond Eleusis: The Hybrid History of the Eleusinian Mysteries*, ed. Hans Beck, under review with Brill.
- “Diaspora, hellénisme, négritude: la sexualité et la race dans la poésie de Cavafy et Césaire.” *Méditerrané-Caraïbe: Deux Archipelités de Pensées*, ed. Franck Collin and Cécile Bertin-Elisabeth. Garnier, 2022.
- “La Dialectique Méditerranée-Caraïbe d’Édouard Glissant.” In *Édouard Glissant: l’Éclat at l’Obscur*. Martinique: Les Presses Universitaires des Antilles, 2021.
- “Renaissance Homer: Humanist Learning, the Visual Vernacular, and the Socialization of Bodies.” *Renaissance Quarterly* 70.3 (2017): 831-61.
- “Reflections on Skepticism in Homer’s *Odyssey* and the Poetry of C.P. Cavafy.” *Comparative Literature* 67.3 (2015): 246-64.
- “Introduction,” Special Edition of *Comparative Literature* (“Odyssey, Exile, Return”) 67.3 (2015): 1-15.
- “The Cynics” (article), *The Encyclopedia of Political Thought* (Wiley Blackwell, 2014).
- “On Doubt, Skepticism, and the Mystery of Call Numbers.” In *This Side of the Pond: The Blog of Cambridge University Press, North America*, June 2013.
<http://www.cambridgeblog.org/2013/06/on-doubt-skepticism-and-the-mysteries-of-call-numbers/>
- “What Penelope Knew: Doubt and Skepticism in Homer’s *Odyssey*.” *Classical Quarterly* 59.2 (2009): 295-316.
- “Odyssean Charisma and the Uses of Persuasion.” *American Journal of Philology* 130.3 (2009): 313-339.

- “Modalities of Tragic Doubt in Homer’s *Odyssey*, Sophocles’ *Philoctetes*, and Shakespeare’s *Othello*.” *Comparative Literature* 61 (2009): 1-25.
- “The Frauds of Humanism: Cicero, Machiavelli, and the Rhetoric of Imposture.” *Rhetorica* 22 (2004): 215-240.
- “Love, Envy, and Pantomimic Morality in Cicero’s *De Oratore*.” *Classical Philology* 98 (2003): 299-321.
- “Medea *Hypocrites*,” *Arethusa* 35.2 (2002): 315-37.

Work in Progress

- Book Manuscript, *Lightning in the Soul: Mystery, Secrecy, and the Occult in the Afterlives of the Ancient Mystery Cults*.
- Book Manuscript, “Aimé Césaire and Caribbean Postclassicisms,” for Bloomsbury’s Studies in Classical Reception series.

CONFERENCES, LECTURES, READINGS

- Paper, “Sacred Silence, Unspeakability, and the Recursivity of Mystery in the Eleusinian Rites,” Conference of Society for Classical Studies, New Orleans, January 2023.
- Co-Organizer of Conference Panel, “Ancient Mystery Cults: Vows of Silence, Practices of Secrecy,” Conference of Society for Classical Studies, New Orleans, January 2023.
- Moderator, Panel on “Text and Authority in the Early Modern Era” (Organized by the Society for Early Modern Classical Receptions), Conference of Society for Classical Studies, New Orleans, January 2023.
- Invited Paper, “Lightning in the Soul: Eleusis at the Intersection of Antiquity and Modernity,” University of Reading (England), June 2022.
- Invited Paper, “Diaspora, hellénisme, négritude: la sexualité et la race dans la poésie de Cavafy et Césaire,” Conference at the University of Limoges, France, October 2021.
- Invited Paper, “Eleusis at the Intersection of Antiquity and Modernity: The Ancient Mysteries, Initiation, and Secrecy in the 21st Century,” Conference at University of Münster, Germany, October 2021.
- Invited Paper, “Mystery and the Ancient *Mysteria*: Theorizing Cultural *Translatio*,” Conference sponsored by August-Herzog Bibliothek and Harvard Center for Hellenic Studies, Wolfenbüttel, September 2020.
- Paper, “Revolution, Populism, and Transgender Change in Woolf’s *Orlando*,” International Society for the History of Rhetoric, New Orleans, July 2019.
- Paper, “Montaigne’s Back Room, Pyrrhonist Skepticism, and the Puzzles of *Hamlet*,” Shakespeare Association of America, Washington DC, April 2019.
- Invited Paper, “Homer’s *Odyssey* and Caribbean Epic: Questions of Origin and Cultures of Mingling,” Program in Louisiana and Caribbean Studies, LSU, September 2019.
- Paper, “Trans* Concepts in Woolf’s *Orlando* and the Poetry of C.P. Cavafy,” Modernist Society of America, Columbus, Ohio, November 2018.
- Roundtable, “Homer’s *Iliad*, Responsibility, and Community,” Liberty Fund, Tucson, March 2018.
- Paper, “Ethics and the Orator,” American Political Science Association, Boston, September 2018.

- Invited Paper, “*La Dialectique Méditerranée d’Édouard Glissant*,” International Transdisciplinary Colloquium, University of the Antilles, Martinique, March 20-23, 2018.
- Paper, “The Return Tale in Woolf’s *Orlando* and Homer’s *Odyssey*,” International Virginia Woolf Society, University of Reading, July 2017.
- Paper, “Renaissance Homer: Reception at the Crossroads of Humanist Learning, the Visual Vernacular, and the Socializing of Female Bodies,” American Comparative Literature Association, Utrecht, The Netherlands, July 2017.
- Paper, “Homer’s *Odyssey*, Humanist Learning, and Renaissance Painting: Rethinking Reception,” Renaissance Society of America,” Boston, March 2016.
- Invited Lecture, “Homer’s *Odyssey*, Humanist Learning, and Renaissance Painting: Rethinking Reception,” UC Berkeley, December 2015.
- Invited Lecture, “Renaissance Homer and the Limits of Reception Theory,” Interdisciplinary Faculty Humanities Seminar, LSU, November 2015.
- Invited Lecture, “Skepticism in Homer’s *Odyssey*,” Philosophy Salon, LSU April 2015.
- Co-director, Panel, “From Nostalgia to Dystopia,” American Comparative Literature Association, Seattle, March 2015.
- Paper, “‘At the End of Daybreak’: Homecoming and the Journey into Memory in Homer’s *Odyssey* and Aimé Césaire’s *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal*,” American Comparative Literature Association, Seattle, March 2015.
- Invited Lecture, “Why the Humanities Matter,” LSU Academic Showcase for Honors College, February 2015.
- Invited Lecture, “Reflections on Skepticism in Homer’s *Odyssey* and the Poetry of C.P. Cavafy,” Institute for Cultural Inquiry and the Freie Universität, Berlin, Germany, 2013.
- Invited Lecture, “Homer’s *Odyssey*: Exile and Homecoming,” Department of Classics, Yale University, November 2013.
- Paper, “Odyssean Comparatims: Women, Sites of Passage, and Concepts of Home in Homer’s *Odyssey*,” International Comparative Literature Association, Paris, July 2013.

MEMBERSHIP

- American Comparative Literature Association
- Modern Language Association
- Association for Literary Scholars and Creative Writers
- International Comparative Literature Association
- International Society for History of Rhetoric
- Renaissance Society of America
- American Political Science Association