

Dept. of American Studies  
3800 Lindell Blvd., Rm. 131  
St. Louis, Mo. 63108-3414

e-mail: [ben.looker@slu.edu](mailto:ben.looker@slu.edu)  
office telephone: 314.977.3008  
faculty page: <https://bit.ly/2SzwJw8>

---

Associate Professor of American Studies, St. Louis University, July 2015–present; Assistant Professor,  
August 2009–June 2015

Arts & Sciences Graduate Faculty, PhD Mentor rank (2009–present)

Undergraduate courses designed and taught: Investigating America: An Introduction to American  
Studies; The Urban Crisis; Making the American City: Culture, Space, and 20th-Century U.S.  
Urbanisms; American Decades: Cold War Culture; Senior Thesis Seminar

Graduate courses designed and taught: Metropolitan America; Jazz, Cities, and Social Movements;  
The Practice of American Studies; Perspectives in American Studies; The Cultural Studies  
Movement: Origins and Contemporary Practice; Cold War Cultural Politics and the "American  
Century"

Teaching Fellow, Yale University, 2004–2007, 2008–2009

Research Assistant, Centre for Urban and Community Research, Goldsmiths College, London, 2001

---

*Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut*

PhD in American Studies (December 2009)

Dissertation committee: Michael Denning (advisor), Matthew Frye Jacobson, John Mack  
Faragher

MA (May 2005) and MPhil (May 2006) in American Studies

*Fulbright Scholar to Canada*

Award to conduct independent research on immigration, the arts, and urban space in Toronto,  
Ontario (2001–2002)

*Goldsmiths College, University of London*

MA (\*Wit- Mf Ꞥ L ý f

---

Books

## Press pieces

Contributor of occasional pieces on urban spaces, neighborhood life, and jazz history for St. Louis-area media outlets including the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *Metropolis*, *Marquis*, *The Commonsense*, *Gateway-Heritage*, and others, 2000–2005.



" 'A n Ethnic Walden Pond': Urban Decentralism, A lternative Technology, and 1970s Community A ctivism," paper at the Urban History Association (UHA) biennial conference, Las Vegas, NV, October 2010.

" Peaceable K ingdoms: N arrating the 1960s U rban Crisis in Stories for Children," paper at the Popular Culture Association and American Culture Association (PCA/ACA) annual joint conference, St. Louis, MO, April 2010.

" The 'Old Neighborhood': Political A daptations and Cultural Capital," paper at the A ssociation of Lutheran College Faculties (ALCF) annual conference, Ann Arbor, MI, October 2009.

" 'Power to the Neighborhoods!': The Cultural Politics of Neighborhood A utonomy in the 1970s," paper at the New England American Studies Association (NEASA) annual conference, New Haven, CT, September 2008.

" Elementary Republics and Little Platoons: Jane Jacobs's Localism, White E thnic Revival, and the 1970s Neighborhoods Movement," paper at the American Studies Association (ASA) annual meeting, Philadelphia, PA, October 2007.

" 'Poets of A ction': The Black A rtists' Group in St. Louis," paper at the Midwest Modern Language Association (M/MLA) annual conference, November 2004.

## Invited lectures

" The Cultural Construction of Neighborhood: A Workshop on Cultural Studies Approaches to Urban Historical Research," invited lecture/workshop for Department of History, Temple University, Philadelphia, February 2020.

" Race, Liberalism, and Neighborhood Exceptionalism in the Great Society City: Integration as Civic Showpiece in 1960s St. Louis," invited lecture for Department of History and School of Labor & Employment Relations, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, February 2019.

" Racial Identity and Stories for Children," keynote lecture for tenth annual student research conference, Concordia University, Ann Arbor, MI, April 2018.

" Peaceable Kingdoms and Urban Crises: Constructing the Great Society Neighborhood in Stories for Children," invited keynote lecture, plenary sessions, Midwest Popular Culture A ssociation, October 2013.

Invited keynote lecture on urban neighborhoods and cultural representation, Annual Graduate Student Symposium, Dept. of Historical Studies, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, April 2012.

Invited lecture on music and activism of the Black A rtists' Group (BA G) for NEH Summer Institute " The Sock Hop and the Loft: Jazz, Motown, and the Transformation of American Culture, 1959-1975," Washington U niversity, St. Louis, MO, July 2011.

" Visions of A utonomy: Surveying the 1970s Neighborhoods Movement, from New Left to White E thnic Revival," invited lecture at The City Seminar, Washington University, St. Louis, MO, March 2011.

" Big Birds and Big Shots: Re-Imagining the 'Old Neighborhood' from *Sesame Street* to Snyder A venue," invited lecture hosted by the Yale Club of Philadelphia, March 2007.

"'A Singular Expression': Performance and Cultural Politics in the Black Artists' Group of St. Louis," keynote lecture at the symposium/concert-series *Music and Musicians* in St. Louis, Washington University, St. Louis, MO, February 2006.

"Second Viennese School A tonality and Modern Jazz H armony," Department of Music Lecture Series, Washington University, St. Louis, MO, April 2000.

### Other conference activities

Co-organizer and participant for roundtable session "The Emergence and State of the Urban Humanities," American Studies Association (ASA) annual meeting, Atlanta, GA, November 2018.

Presenter for roundtable session "Cities in History and Literature: Global Perspectives," Urban History Association (UHA) biennial conference, Chicago, IL, October 2016.

Plenary Roundtable speaker: "Battleground Midwest: A Conversation with Ben Looker (President, MAASA), David Roediger (President, ASA), and Robert Warrior (President-elect, ASA)," Mid-America American Studies Association (MAASA) biennial conference, Lawrence, KS, March 2016.

Roundtable panelist for session entitled "The Pruitt-Igoe Myth," Organization of American Historians (OAH) annual meeting, St. Louis, MO, April 2015.

Presenter for roundtable session "Neighborhoods Matter: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Why Historians Should Still Study Neighborhoods in an Era of Metropolitan and Global History," Urban History Association (UHA) biennial con



Lecture on music and the Black Arts movement in St. Louis, Missouri History Museum book event, November 2004

---

## Doctoral dissertations advised

*In progress:* Michael Brickley, "Disconnected and Disaffected: Energy Insecurity and the Struggle for Climate Justice in St. Louis, Missouri" (working title)

*In progress:* Elizabeth Eikmann, "From Footnote to Foreground: St. Louis and the Visualizing of Race and Gender, 1857–1920" (working title)

Katharine Platchek, "'You're Too Smart for That!' The Representation of the American High School Teacher in Postwar Public Policy and Popular Culture" (defended July 2017)

Brandy Boyd, "Keep Your Chin Up and Your Skirt Down: Female Country Artists' Struggles for Respectability within the Nashville Music Industry, 1953–Present" (defended April 2015)

Brian Greening, "Representing New Orleans: Race, Space and Visibility in the Crescent City since 1965" (defended February 2014; under contract with Louisiana State University Press)

Jaclyn Kirouac-Fram, "'Yellow Rolling Cell Blocks': The Urban Bus and Race in the United States" (defended April 2013)

## Doctoral dissertation committee memberships (non-chair role)

*In progress:* Cicely Hunter, "Blaring Silence: The Silent Protest of 1917 and Its Historical Influence on Activism" (working title)

*In progress:* Kimberly Cowan, "Teaching Mary, Training Martha: Catholic Education for Girls in St. Louis, Missouri, from Suffragette to Rosie the Riveter" (working title)

Bryan Winston, "Mexican Corridors: Migration and Community Formation in the Central United States, 1900–1950" (defended July 2019)

Mark A. Koschmann, "Finding Their Footing in the Changing City: Protestant and Catholic Congregations Adapt to the New Urban Environment in Post-World War II Chicago" (defended May 2018)

Nicholas Porter, "Professional Wrestling in the United States, 1877–1920" (defended November 2018)

P G "Ke" ú W Pr C tes, 1877



**Other graduate advising**

Cohort advisor for incoming American Studies graduate-student class, 2010–2011, 2014–2015, 2017–2018, 2020–2021

Field director for numerous PhD comprehensive exam committees

Member of various MA thesis and MA portfolio-paper committees