

Derek R. Sweet
Communication Studies
Luther College
700 College Dr.
Decorah, IA 52101
sweede01@luther.edu
563.387.1566

Education

Ph.D. in Human Communication Studies.
Emphasis: Rhetoric and Communication Ethics.
University of Denver, March 2005.
Dissertation: Performative Rhetoric and the Reclamation of the Subcultural Self.
Dissertation Advisor: Dr. Roy V. Wood.

Master of Arts in Speech Communication.
Emphasis: Rhetorical Studies.
Colorado State University, August 1995.
Thesis: Samuel Adams and the Rhetorical Requirements of Leadership.
Thesis Advisor: Dr. Carl R. Burghardt.

Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communication.
Colorado State University, May 1990.

Work Experience

Professor of Communication Studies
Department of Communication Studies, Luther College, August 2005-Present.

Instructor of Speech Communication
Department of Speech Communication, Colorado State University, January 1996-June 2005.

Instructor of Communication Arts and Sciences
Department of Communication Arts and Sciences, The Metropolitan State University of Denver, August 2001-May 2003.

Instructor of Human Communication Studies
Department of Human Communication Studies, University of Denver, September 1998-March 2003.

Assistant Director of Oral Communication
Department of Human Communication Studies, University of Denver, June 2000-June 2001.

Instructor of Speech Communication
Department of Speech Communication, Colorado State University, August 1996-August 2000.

Graduate Teaching Assistant
Department of Speech Communication, Colorado State University, August 1992-May 1994.

Publications

Books

Sweet, Derek R. *Star Wars in the Public Square: The Clone Wars as Political Dialogue*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2016.

Nardi, Dominic J. and Derek R. Sweet, eds. *The Transmedia Franchise of Star Wars TV*. London, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2020.

Peer-Reviewed Articles and Book Chapters

Sweet, Derek R. "Age of Ultron as Geopolitical Script." In *War in the Whedonverse: Essays on Warfare and Military Studies in the Works of Joss Whedon*, edited by Ensley F. Guffey and Samira S. Nadkarni. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Forthcoming.

Sweet, Derek R. "Social Life and Death in The Leftovers: Surviving the Personal Apocalypse." In *Apocalypse TV: Essays on Society and Self at the End of the World*, edited by Michael G. Cornelius and Sherry Ginn. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2020.

Sweet, Derek R. "Mythologizing Mortis: *The Clone Wars* as Dialogic Spirituality." *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* (Fall 2018).

Sweet, Derek R. "America Assemble: *The Avengers* as Therapeutic Public Memory." In *Assembling the Marvel Cinematic Universe: Essays on the Social, Cultural and Geopolitical Domains*, edited by Julian Chambliss, Daniel Fandino, and Bill Svitavsky, 64-75. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2018.

Sweet, Derek R. "Some People Call Him a Space Cowboy: Kanan Jarrus, Outer Rim Justice, and the Legitimization of the Obama Doctrine." In *Star Wars and the History of Transmedia Storytelling*, edited by Sean Guynes and Dan Hassler-Forest, 241-252. Amsterdam, NL: Amsterdam University Press, 2018.

Sweet, Derek R. and Margaret McCue-Enser. "Losing Patience with an Imperfect President and Imperfect People." In *Reconsidering Obama: Reflections on Rhetoric*, edited by Robert E. Terrill. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2017.

Sweet, Derek R. "We are all Cylons: *Battlestar Galactica* and Fandom's Fitting Response." In *The Dynamics of Interconnections in Popular Culture*, edited by Ray G. Browne and Ben Urish, 95-113. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014.

Pierce, Teresa and Derek R. Sweet. "Magik on the Mounds: The (Re) Enchanted Spaces of the House on the Rock." *Arts and Social Sciences Journal* 5.1 (2014). doi: 10.4172/2151-6200.1000062.

Sweet, Derek R. and Margaret McCue-Enser. "Constituting 'the People' as Rhetorical Interruption: Barack Obama and the Unfinished Hopes of an Imperfect People." *Communication Studies* 62, no. 1 (2011): 602-622.

Sweet, Derek R. "The Rhetorical Turn." In *The Evolution of Human Communication from Theory to Practice*, edited by Teresa Pierce, 225-260. Oshawa, Ontario: EtrePress, 2009.

Sweet, Derek R. "More than Goth: The Rhetorical Reclamation of the Subcultural Self." *Popular Communication* 3 (2005): 239-264.

Sweet, Derek R. "The Magic of Communication: Starhawk and the Rhetoric of Resistance and Renewal." *Connections: Journal of Community, Philosophy, and Magick* 8 (2000): 14-21.

Reviews

Sweet, Derek R., *Review of Double-Consciousness and the Rhetoric of Barack Obama: The Price and Promise of Citizenship* by Robert Terrill. *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 46 no. 2 (June 2016): 493-494.

Sweet, Derek R. Review of *The Teleological Discourse of Barack Obama*, by Richard W. Leeman. *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 18 no. 1 (2015): 181-184.

Sweet, Derek R. Review of *Seers, Witches, and Psychics on Screen: An Analysis of Women Visionary Characters in Recent Television and Film*, by Karin Beeler. *Femspec* 10.1 (2009): 123-125.

Conference Presentations

"American Myths, Mythosaurs, and Mandalorians: Bo-Katan Kryze and Philosophical Pragmatism." Paper presented at the Popular Culture Association annual conference, Chicago, IL, March 2024.

"Countering Cruelty with Kindness: *Andor* and Random Acts of Rebellion." Paper presented at the Popular Culture Association annual conference, San Antonio, TX, April 2023.

"Tears of Joi in the Rain: Embracing Critical Empathy in *Blade Runner 2049*." Paper presented at the Popular Culture Association annual conference, Virtual, April 2022.

"Nevertheless She Persisted: Supergirl takes on the Alt-Right." Paper presented at the Popular Culture Association annual convention, Washington, DC, April 2019.

"Tears of Joi in the Rain: Challenging Contemporary Notions of Citizenship in *Blade Runner 2049*." Paper presented at the Film and History annual conference, Madison, WI, November 2018.

"The Force Awakens and the Cryptic Frame." Paper presented at the Popular Culture/American Culture Association annual convention, Indianapolis, IN, March 2018.

"The Smallville Effect: At Home in the Forever War." Paper presented at the Film and History annual conference, Milwaukee, WI, November 2017.

“Some People Call Him a Space Cowboy: Kanan Jarrus, Outer Rim Justice, and the Legitimization of the Obama Doctrine.” Paper presented at the Popular Culture/American Culture Association annual conference, San Diego, CA, April 2018.

“Remaking History through Popular Culture.: Historical Becoming in Star Trek Into Darkness.” Paper presented at the Film and History annual conference, Milwaukee, WI, November 2016.

“Rhetoric, The Avengers, and Foreign Policy: Age of Ultron as Geopolitical Script.” Paper presented at the Midwest Popular Culture Association annual convention, Chicago, IL, October 2016.

“Memories from the Speculative Future: Remembering Contemporary Dialogues in Pacific Rim and Edge of Tomorrow.” Paper presented at the Popular Culture/American Cultural Association annual convention, Seattle, WA, March 2016.

“The Clone Wars in the Public Square: Torture and the Path to the Dark Side.” Paper presented at the Popular Culture/American Culture Association annual convention, New Orleans, LA, April 2015.

“America Assemble! The Avengers as post 9/11 Therapeutic Rhetoric.” Paper presented at the Midwest Popular Culture/American Culture Association annual convention, Indianapolis, IN, October 2014.

“Obama, Obi-wan, and the Case for a Just War.” Paper presented at the Popular Culture/American Culture Association annual convention, Chicago, IL, April 2014.

“Occupy Coruscant: The Clone Wars, Affluence, and the Absent Middle Class.” Film and History Conference, Madison, WI, November 2013.

“The (re)enchanted rhetoric of House on the Rock.” Paper presented at the Popular Culture/American Cultural Association annual convention, Washington, DC, April 2013.

“The Meaning of Mortis: Star Wars as Spiritual Text.” Paper presented at the Popular Culture/American Culture Association annual convention, Boston, MA, April 2012.

“Inaugural Voices of Barack Obama: Dialogic Rhetoric and the Presidential Self.” Paper presented at the National Communication annual convention, New Orleans, LA, November 2011.

“Constituting The Clone Wars: Engaging Ethical Community in the Dialogic Moment.” Paper presented at the Popular Culture/American Culture Association annual convention, San Antonio, TX, April 2011.

“Reprinting Martin Luther King Jr.: Barack Obama and the Homogenization of Injustice.” Paper presented at the Western States Communication Association annual convention, Monterey, CA, February 2011. Top Four Paper in Rhetoric and Public Address.

“Constituting ‘the People’ as Rhetorical Interruption: Barack Obama and the unfinished hopes of an imperfect people.” Paper presented at the National Communication Association annual convention, San Francisco, CA, November 2011.

“Top Chef and the Taste of Public Discernment.” Paper presented at the Popular Culture/American Culture Association annual convention, St. Louis, MO, March 2010.

Panel Respondent. Western States Communication Association Undergraduate Scholars' Research Conference, Anchorage, AK, March 2010.

"Barack Obama's Rhetorical Magic: Hope as Transformational Political Praxis." Paper presented at the National Communication Association annual convention, Chicago, IL, November 2010.

"Almost Obi-wan: The Popcultural Self after Postmodernity." Paper presented at the Popular Culture Association annual convention, New Orleans, LA, March 2009.

"Performing Rhetorical Interruptions: Barack Obama and the Materiality of Hope." Paper presented at the Western States Communication Association annual convention, Phoenix, AZ, February 2009. Top Four Paper in Rhetoric and Public Address.

"Barack Obama's Rhetorical Magic: Casting a Spell of Hope." Paper presented at the Obama Effect convention, Minneapolis, MN, October 2009.

"We are All Cylons: Battlestar Galactica and Fandom's Fitting Response." Paper presented at the Popular Culture Association annual convention, San Francisco, CA, March 2008.

"Pareidolia and the Space of Communicative Praxis: Performing Mystery in the Presence of the Metaphysically Transcendent Other." Paper presented at the Western States Communication Association annual convention, Denver, CO, February 2008.

"The (Cyber)Self After Postmodernity." Paper presented at the National Communication Association annual convention, San Antonio, TX, November 2007.

"Living the Way of the Jedi: Rhetoric as Becoming." Paper presented at the National Communication Association annual convention, Boston, MA, November 2006.

"The Subcultural Self After Postmodernity." Top-rated student paper in Rhetorical and Communication Theory at the National Communication Association annual convention, Miami, FL, November 2003.

"The Interface and Infusion of Feminist Spiritualities in Academic Work." Moderator of roundtable discussion at the Western States Communication Association annual convention, Coeur d'Alene, ID, February 2001.

"The Magic of Communication: Starhawk and the Rhetoric of Resistance/Renewal." Paper presented at the Western States Communication Association annual convention, Sacramento, CA, February 2000.

Courses Taught

Luther College

COMS 132: Public Address.

COMS 133: Mass Media and Popular Culture.

COMS 134: Language and Society.

COMS 185: Kryptonite, Cows, and Caped Crusaders.

COMS 233: Rhetoric of Spirituality.
COMS 234: Rhetoric of Everyday Life.
COMS 239: Hyperspace, Hobbits, and the Hellmouth.
COMS 255: Advanced Public Address.
COMS 353: Argumentation.
COMS 354: Persuasion Theory.
COMS 356: Rhetorical Theories.
COMS 357: Research Methods.
COMS 359: Media and Popular Culture.
PCAP 450: Queering Subjectivities.
IDS 101: Systems of Power

Colorado State University

SPCC 100: Communication and Popular Culture.
SP 200: Public Speaking.
SP 310: Interpersonal Communication Skills.
SP 317: Women and Communication.
SP 333: Business and Professional Speaking.

The Metropolitan State College of Denver

SPE 4100: Techniques of Persuasion.
SPE 3090: Argumentation and Advocacy.
JRN 1010: Introduction to Journalism and Mass Media.

University of Denver

HCOM 1600: Communication and Popular Culture.
HCOM 2500: Effective Public and Professional Presentations.
CREX 1213: Creative Expression: Speaking on Special Occasions.
ORCO 0100: Oral Communication: Speech and Thought, Honors Section.

Professional and Community Service

Service to Department

- Department Head, August 2022-Present.
- Department Head, January 2017-August 2017.
- Communication Studies Visit Day Representative, September 2006-Present.
- Scholar Recognition Days, February 2007-Present. Presentations include “Harry Potter as Contemporary Fairy Tale” and “The Hunger Games as Equipment for Living.”
- Curriculum Development, Ongoing.
- Graduate Teaching Instructor Mentor, Colorado State University, August 2004-June 2005.
- Creative Expression Curriculum Development Committee, University of Denver, January 2001-June 2004.
- Graduate Teaching Instructor Mentor, University of Denver, September 2000-June 2004.
- Graduate Teaching Instructor Training Seminar Committee, Chair, University of Denver, September 2000-May 2001.

Service to College

- Campus Hearing Board, August 2020-Present.
- Traffic Hearing Board, August 2020-Present.
- Campus Life Committee, August 2018-2021
- Identity Studies Department August 2020-Present.
- Women and Gender Studies Board, August 2018-2020.
- Brand Advisory Task Force, May 2018-Present.
- Rebecca Traister, *Good and Mad* Book Study, October 2019.
- Social Media Specialist Hiring Committee, March 2019-May 2019
- Teaching and Learning Subcommittee Chair (Academic Planning Committee), August 2014-August 2016.
- Course and Program Review Subcommittee, August 2013-July 2014.
- Academic Planning Committee, August 2013-August 2016.
- Chair, Human Subjects Review Board, July 2011-August 2012.
- Human Subjects Review Board, May 2009-August 2012.
- Fall Faculty Days: Popular Culture in the Liberal Arts Curriculum, August 2010.
- Scandinavian Institute Lecture: Barack Obama and “We the People,” July 2010.
- Faculty Development Workshop: Making Popular Culture Matter, July 2010.
- Dennis M. Jones Distinguished Professorship Discussion Group, March 2010.
- Scandinavian Institute Lecture: Barack Obama and the Media, July 2009.
- Scandinavian Institute Lecture: Media and Political Branding, July 2008.
- Scholar Recognition Day Lecture: Harry Potter as Contemporary Fairy Tale, February 2008-Present.
- Campus Hearing Board, September 2007-2009.
- PRIDE Faculty Sponsor, September 2006-2009.
- Teagle Foundation Assessment Participant, May 2007.
- Campus Betterment Committee, Luther College, September 2006-May 2007.
- Community Assembly, September 2006-May 2007.
- Lutherlag Course: Harry Potter and the Chronicles of Narnia as Contemporary Fairy Tales, July 2006 & July 2007.

Service to Community

- Top Paper Award Committee, Science Fiction and Fantasy Division, Popular Culture/American Culture Association, April 2018-Present.
- Reviewer, University of California Press, June 2017-Present.
- Decorah Zen Center Advisory Group, July 2016-Present.
- Board of Directors, GriffinHarte Foundation, August 2011-Present.
- Reviewer, Kendall Hunt Publishing, July 2016.
- Editorial Board, The Circle@UOIT (University of Ontario Institute of Technology Peer Reviewed Student Journal), June 2010-2015.
- Reviewer, Western Journal of Communication, September 2009-Present.
- Reviewer, Journal of the Northwest Communication Association, January 2008-2010.
- Reviewer, Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies, May 2007-2010.
- Reviewer, Iowa Journal of Communication, October 2005-Present.
- Focus Group Participant, Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, September 2006.
- Sock Hop Chaperone, Virginia Court Elementary, March 2003.
- AmeriTowne Interviewer, Virginia Court Elementary School, December 2002.
- Copy Editor, Boulder County Housing Authority, October 2002.

- Youth Subculture Consultant, Adams County Gang Unit, April 1999.

Invited Lectures/Presentations

- Nevertheless, She Persisted: Supergirl takes on the Alt-Right, Luther College Women's History Month Lecture, March 2019.
- Seeking Popular Dialogue: Challenging the Forever War through Popular Culture, Northeast Iowa Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, April 2018.
- Living Buddha Living Christ, UCC Book Study Leader, October-November 2017.
- Presidential Debate Remarks. October 2016.
- Introductions and Conclusions. St. Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists: Spanish Language Class, October 2015.
- Religion Among the Liberal Arts Forum, November 2014
- Lessons from Water, Luther College Chapel Talk, September 2014.
- Buddhism and Happiness, POLS 185: In the Pursuit of Happiness, January 2014.
- Charlie Brown and the Bodhi Tree, Luther College Chapel Talk, December 2013.
- Ethnography & Autoethnography as Research Methods, COMS 356: Research Methods, May 2011.
- Listening Deeply, Luther College Chapel Talk, January 2011.
- Ethnography of Communication. COMS 356: Research Methods, April 2010.
- Living a Life that Matters. Northeast Iowa Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, January 2008.
- Starhawk. COMS 342: Feminist Rhetorical Theories, Luther College, October 2007.
- Conceptualizing Feminist Spirituality. Luther College Feminists, Luther College, April 2007.
- The Magick of Communication. Northeast Iowa Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, August 2006.
- Teaching Commemorative Speaking. Graduate Teaching Assistant Seminar, Colorado State University, November 2004.
- Reflections on the Columbine High School Tragedy: The Myth of the Benevolent Community. SP 415: Rhetoric and Civility, Colorado State University, October 2003.
- You are What You Eat, Wear, and Watch: Cultural Consumption as Identity. Pioneer Chapter of the National Association of College and University Residence Halls, University of Denver, May 2003.
- Subcultural Values and Resistance. SOCI 2701: Deviant Youth Subcultures, University of Denver, February 2003.
- Goth Talk: Media Representations, Identity, and Difference. Pioneer Chapter of the National Association of College and University Residence Halls, University of Denver, May 2002.
- Subcultural Identity. HCOM 1600: Communication and Popular Culture, University of Denver, January 2002.
- Communication Studies and Ethnography: Turning to the Dark Side. HCOM 1700: Intercultural Communication, University of Denver, April 2001.
- Dying to be Heard: A Goth Rhetoric of Resistance. School of Communication Research Colloquium, University of Denver, May 2000.
- Communication Research on the Fringe. COMN 0100: Introduction to Communication, University of Denver, May 2000.
- Subcultures and Communication. HCOM 1700: Intercultural Communication, University of Denver, April 2000.
- The Magic of Language: Diversity in the Aftermath of Columbine. First Unitarian Church of Denver, May 1999.
- Rhetoric, Resistance, and Renewal. CUUPS Coffee Klatch, March 1999.

Professional Memberships

Popular Culture/American Culture Association, 2008-Present.

Midwest Popular Culture Association, 2014-Present.

National Communication Association, 1992-Present.

Iowa Communication Association, 2008-2017.

Rhetoric Society of America, 2003-2017.

Western States Communication Association, 1998-2017.

Research Interests

Rhetoric, politics, and popular culture

Ethos and the rhetorical negotiation of ethical community

Postmodern public address

Performative rhetoric and subjectivity

Popular culture and the rhetoric of everyday life

Spectacular subcultures