

# SELINA LAI-HENDERSON

**Associate Professor  
American Literature & history  
Duke Kunshan University**

**8 Duke Avenue  
Kunshan City  
Jiangsu Province  
P.R. China 215316  
Email: [slai.henderson@duke.edu](mailto:slai.henderson@duke.edu)**

---

## ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Mar 2023 – Associate Professor of American Literature & History (with tenure)  
Duke Kunshan University  
2018 – 2023 Assistant Professor of American Literature & History  
Duke Kunshan University  
Jul 2020 – Assistant Professor of the Practice, Global Studies  
Duke University  
2014-2018 Research Assistant Professor of American Studies,  
The University of Hong Kong  
2013-2014 Lecturer, American Studies, The University of Hong Kong  
2011-2012 Research Assistant, English Department, Stanford University  
2008-2012 Research Assistant, American Studies, The University of Hong Kong  
2007-2008 Lecturer, American Studies, The University of Hong Kong  
2004-2005 Teaching Assistant, American Studies, The University of Hong Kong

## PROFESSIONAL TITLES

2023-24 Co-Chair, International Committee, American Studies Association  
2022-23 Chair, International Committee, American Studies Association  
2022-present Senior Consulting Managing Editor, *Journal of Transnational American Studies*  
2012-21 Associate Managing Editor, *Journal of Transnational American Studies*  
2020-present Advisory Board. *Global Nineteenth-Century Studies*. Liverpool UP  
2018-present Co-Director, Freedom Lab. Humanities Research Center, DKU and Duke University  
2018-present Advisory Board. Humanities Research Center, DKU and Duke University

## EDUCATION

The University of Hong Kong  
Ph.D. in American Studies, 2008-2013

Stanford University, Palo Alto  
Fulbright Scholar, 2011-12

Heidelberg University, Germany  
M.A. in American Studies, 2005-06

The University of Hong Kong  
B.A. in English and Comparative Literature, 1999-2002

## PUBLICATIONS

### Monographs

1. [Mark Twain in China](#) (Stanford University Press, 2015)  
note: please see reviews and citations of the monograph in appendix A on p.9 of the CV
2. "You Are No Darker Than I Am:" *Afro-Asian Imaginaries and Crossings*  
(in progress)

### Peer-reviewed Articles, Book Chapters, co-editorships

"[You Are No Darker Than I Am: The Souls of Black Folk in Maoist China.](#)" Special issue, Translation. *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 138, 3 (May 2023): 506-518. Cambridge UP.

\*\* [Winner of the 1921 Prize in American Literature](#) (tenured category), awarded annually by the American Literature Society to the "best article in any field of American literature."

"[Langston Hughes and the Shanghai Jazz Scene.](#)" *Langston Hughes in Context*, ed. Vera Kutzinski and Anthony Reed, 223-231. Cambridge UP, 2022.

"[Color Around the Globe: Langston Hughes and Black Internationalism in China.](#)" *MELUS: Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States*, 45, 2 (Summer 2020): 88-107. Oxford UP.

"[Langston Hughes's 'China: Why the previously unpublished poem is a revelation.](#)" *The Yale Review* (February 1, 2024).

Co-editor, with Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Tsuyoshi Ishihara, Ronald Jenn, and Holger Kerston. "[Global Huck: Mapping the Cultural Work of Translations of Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.](#)" Special Forum Introduction. *Journal of Transnational American Studies*. Dec 2021.

"[Appendix B: Chinese Translations of Huckleberry Finn.](#)" In "Global Huck: Mapping the Cultural Work of Translations of Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*." Co-ed., Fishkin, et al. Special Forum Introduction. *Journal of Transnational American Studies*. Dec 2021.

Co-editor, with Yuan Shu. Special Forum: "[Teaching and Theorizing Transnational American Studies Across the Globe.](#)" *Journal of Transnational American Studies* vol. 13, issue 2 (2022).

"[Translation and International Reception.](#)" *Mark Twain in Context*. Ed. John C. Bird, 317-26. New York: Cambridge UP, 2019.

"[American Studies Across the Pacific: Music, Film, and Literature.](#)" Guest Reprise Editor's Note. *Journal of Transnational American Studies*, 10: 2 (2019): 469-73.

"[Alain Locke's New Negro: Of Words and Images.](#)" *Rethinking America's Past: Voices from the Kinsey African American Art and History Collection*. Ed. Tim Gruenewald, 145-66. Ohio: University of Cincinnati Press, 2019.

[“Mark Twain the Chinese Boxer: On the Iconic American Writer’s Avowed Anti-Imperialism.”](#)  
Stanford UP Blog, May 7, 2015.

With Peter Swirski. [“Literature, Film, and Drama.”](#) *Encyclopedia of the Culture Wars*. Ed. Roger Chapman, 324-26. New York, London: M.E. Sharpe of Armonk, 2010.

[“Andy Warhol.”](#) *Encyclopedia of the Culture Wars*. Ed. Roger Chapman, 598-599. New York, London: M.E. Sharpe of Armonk, 2010.

“Lowbrow, Highbrow, and the Categorization of Art.” *Columbia Journal of American Studies* 9 (Fall 2009): 326-329.

[“Monk’s World.”](#) *Magill’s Survey of American Literature, Revised Edition*. Ed. Steven G. Kellman, 171-172. California, Pasadena: Salem Press, 2006.

“Harlem Renaissance & ‘Ghetto Renaissance’: Race Relations in the US through the Poetry of Langston Hughes and Nasir Jones.” *4th Annual Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities*; Proceedings, 2006. CD- ROM. ISSN 1541-5899: 3340-3352.

### **Book Reviews**

“American Vandal: Mark Twain Abroad.” *Canadian Journal of History* (Spring-Summer 2017).

“All Roads Lead to the American City.” *International Review of American Studies* 2, 3 (Sep 2007): 34-36.

“From Lowbrow to Nobrow.” *International Fiction Review* 34 (Sep 2007): 175-176.

### **Reviewer for journals:**

*PMLA*

*American Literary History*

*Asian Studies Review*

*Canadian Journal of History*

*International Fiction Review*

*Journal of Transnational American Studies*

### **INVITED LECTURES (selected)**

“Recovering the Lost Art of Thinking in Education – *How to Think Like Shakespeare: Lessons from a Renaissance Education.*” Princeton UP. Apr, 2022.

“Young Researchers in Transnational American Studies.” Obama Institute, University of Mainz, Germany. Dec 2021.

“W.E.B Du Bois in China: Translation and Reception.” Alliance of Asian Liberal Arts Universities (AALAU) Research Collaboration Workshop. Lingnan University, Hong Kong SAR, China, Jul 2019.

“W.E.B. Du Bois’s Black Internationalism in Republican and Maoist China.” Chinese Culture and Translation Studies Support, Beijing Language and Culture University, China, Mar 2019.

“Langston Hughes in Shanghai.” Forum on Migration, Barnard College / Columbia University, New York, May 2016.

“From Mark Twain to Langston Hughes in China.” Transnational American Studies Institute, Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz, Germany, May 2016.

“Mark Twain in China.” Mark Twain House and Museum, Hartford, CT, Jun 2015.

“Mark Twain and African American Voices in China.” Centre for Humanities Research, Lingnan University of Hong Kong, Mar 2015.

“Huckleberry Finn and Chinese Translations.” American Studies, Stanford University, Oct 2014.

### **CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS**

Co-Chair, “International Committee Luncheon.” American Studies Association Annual Meeting. Montreal, Canada. Nov 2023.

“The Sounds of Shanghai: Langston Hughes and Jazz in Interwar China. Panel: “Langston Hughes, Black Internationalist.” MELUS 37th Annual Conference. Apr 2023.

Chair, “International Committee Luncheon.” American Studies Association Annual Meeting. New Orleans, USA, Nov 2022.

Chair and Organizer, with Michio Arimitsu. “International Committee Talkshop. Worlding of Blackness: A Global Dialogue.” American Studies Association Annual Meeting. New Orleans, USA, Nov 2022.

Panel Organizer, “World Literature in China and China in World Literature.” American Comparative Literature Association Annual Meeting. Chicago, USA, Apr 2021.

“The *Linghun* of Black Folks: W.E.B. Du Bois, China, and Translation.” American Comparative Literature Association. Chicago, USA, Apr 2021.

“‘You Are No Darker Than I Am:’ W.E.B. Du Bois and Maoist China.” Humanities Research Center Annual Conference. Duke Kunshan University. Sep 2020.

“Decentering American Studies: Comparative Approaches to Understanding the US.” International Committee Talkshop 3. American Studies Association. Honolulu, USA, Nov 2019.

“International Collaborations.” Asian American Studies Program Launch. Duke University. Durham, NC, USA. Nov-Dec 2018.

“Langston Hughes and W.E.B. Du Bois in China.” Faculty Research Workshop. Center for the Study of Contemporary China. Duke Kunshan University, China. Nov 2018.

“‘Riddle of the Universe:’ Rethinking Race, Gender and Transnationalism through W.E.B. Du Bois’s Encounters in China.” American Studies Association. Atlanta, GA, USA, Nov 2018.

- “Riddle of the Universe:’ Rethinking Race, Gender and Transnationalism through W.E.B. Du Bois’s Encounters in China.” Humanities Research Center Launch Featured Presentation. Duke Kunshan University, China. Sep 2018.
- “Langston Hughes: Paris, Harlem, and Shanghai.” MLA International Symposium. Dusseldorf, Germany. Jun 2016.
- “Langston Hughes in China.” School of Modern Languages and Culture Series, The University of Hong Kong, Sep 2015.
- “Mark Twain and the Chinese Connection.” Centre for Humanities Research, Lingnan University of Hong Kong. Mar 2015.
- “Mark Twain in China.” School of Modern Languages and Culture Series, The University of Hong Kong, Sep 2013.
- “Mark Twain in China: Race, Translation, and the Transnational Setting.” The Seventh International Conference on the State of Mark Twain Studies. Elmira, CT, USA, Aug 2013.
- “Mark Twain in China: A Posthumous Adventure.” Association for Asian American Studies Conference. Seattle, WA, USA, Apr 2013.
- “Transnational American Studies.” American Studies, The University of Hong Kong, Sep 2012.
- Session Chair, “Transnational American Studies, Next Steps.” Oceanic Archives and Transnational American Studies. Hong Kong, The University of Hong Kong, Jun 2012.
- “*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in China.” American Literature Association. San Francisco, CA, USA, May 2012.
- “Mark Twain’s Adventures in China.” C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists Conference. University of California, Berkeley, CA, USA, Apr 2012.
- “Mark Twain.” English Department, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Jun 2011.
- “Translation.” English Department, City University of Hong Kong, May 2011.
- “Lighting Out For the Chinese Territory: Mark Twain & ‘Sivilization’ in China.” A Tale of Ten Cities: Sino-American Exchange in the Treaty Port Era, 1840-1950. American Studies Program, The University of Hong Kong, May 2011.
- “Was Twain White? Reading Race in the Man & His Works.” School of Modern Languages and Culture Series, The University of Hong Kong, Jan 2011.
- “African American Music: an Introduction.” American Studies, The University of Hong Kong, Oct 2010.

“Jazz, Rap, and American Culture.” American Studies, The University of Hong Kong, Oct 2010.

“Rap and Youth Cultures.” American Studies, The University of Hong Kong, Jan 2008.

“Singing the Hip-hop Politics: Sep 11 and Beyond in NAS's Rap Poetry.” American Literature Association. Beijing, Oct 2007.

“Harlem Renaissance & ‘Ghetto Renaissance’: Race Relations in the United States through the Poetry of Langston Hughes and Nasir Jones”; Session Chair, “American Studies.” Fourth Annual Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities. Honolulu, HI, USA, Jan 2006.

## **COURSES taught at Duke Kunshan University**

### **Undergraduate**

- Course Lead. China in the World (1<sup>st</sup> year common core)
- Module Lead, “Gender, Family, and Nation,” China in the World (1<sup>st</sup> year common core)
- The Art and Power of Banned Literature (300-level)
- American Ideas and the Idea of America (100-level). With Noah M. Pickus (Professor of Public Policy and Associate Provost, Duke University)
- The Art of Interpretation 1: Written Texts (100-level). With Lincoln Rathnam (Assistant Professor of Political Theory, DKU)
- The Epic of America: The Novel (100-level)

### **Mini-term course design**

- “The President and the Dissident: Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, the American Slavery Crisis and the Power of Words.” With Richard Brodhead (former President, Duke University)

## **COURSES TAUGHT in The University of Hong Kong**

### **Undergraduate**

- “The American City” (200-level)
- “Foundations of American Studies” (100-level)
- “African American Studies and History” (200-level)
- “American Literature: Race, Gender, and the American Dream” (200-level)
- “Consumer Culture: Decoding American Symbols” (100-level)
- “American Hardboiled: From Crime Fiction to Social Document” (200-level)
- “Dissertation in American Studies” (300-level)

### **Graduate Seminars**

- “Thesis Writing.”
- “Transferrable Skills.”

### **Summer Fieldtrip**

- “On the Road Again: Field Trip in American Studies.” Summers 2013 – 2017 (New York, Philadelphia, Lancaster, and Washington D.C.)

**SERVICE AT DUKE KUNSHAN****University Committees**

- Spring 2023-present. Tenure Review Committee.
- Spring 2023. Chair of Faculty Research and Traveling Scholarship Awards.
- Summer 2022. Reappointment Review Committee.
- Summer 2021. Reappointment Review Committee.
- Jun 2021-present. Fulbright faculty representative. Duke Kunshan University.
- Sep 2019. Student Teaching Evaluations Committee.
- Nov 2020. Core planner. 2020 Learning Innovation Fellowship. Duke and DKU.
- Jan 2019. Faculty cohort presentations, rehearsals, and social events.
- Jan 2019. Learning Innovation Fellowship Planning Committee.
- Fall 2018. Academic Structure Design Committee.
- Aug 2018. Faculty cohort presentations, rehearsals, and social events.
- Jul 2018-Jul 2020. University Colloquium Committee.

**Division of Arts and Humanities**

- Fall 2021. Search Committee for Global African Literatures.
- Spring 2020-2022. Literature cohort / major realignment.
- Jan-Dec 2019. Major Coordinator for US Studies.
- Fall 2019. Marketing and Promotion Sub-committee.
- Feb 2019. By-law Sub-committee.

**Humanities Research Center**

- Jan 2020-present. Co-Director (With Jesse Olsavsky). Freedom Lab. Please see the [list of events](#) organized since 2020.
- Spring 2023. Strategic planning of faculty committee for the Gender Studies Initiative.
- Feb 2018-present. Advisory Board.
- Spring 2023. Coordinator for Gender Studies Committee.

**Advising and other Student-oriented service**

- Jan 2018-present. Academic advisor to undergraduate students.
- Sep 2019-present. Advisor to the DKU student publication, “The Jade Dragon.”
- Mar 2019. Class demonstration to prospective students, “American Literature and Film.”
- Jul 2018. Open House with prospective Chinese students and parents on DKU experience.
- Jul 2018. Welcoming video shoot for inaugural undergraduate class.
- Apr 2018. Class demonstration to prospective students, “American City.”

**SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION**

- 2022-present. Co-Chair, International Committee. American Studies Association.
- 2021-22. Chair, International Committee. American Studies Association.
- Spring 2020-present. International Committee. American Studies Association.
- Aug 2022. Conference Planning Committee. *9<sup>th</sup> International Conference on the State of Mark Twain Studies*. Elmira, NY, USA.
- 2019-present. Editorial Board. *Global Nineteenth-Century Studies*. Liverpool UP.
- 2015-present. Senior Associate Managing Editor, *Journal of Transnational American Studies*. Sponsored by American Studies at Stanford University and University of Mainz.
- Mar 2019-21. Expert Consultant, Chinese Culture and Translation Studies Support. Beijing Language and Culture University, China.
- Reviewer for *PMLA*, *Asian Studies Review*, and *Journal of Transnational American Studies*.

## SERVICE AT HONG KONG UNIVERSITY

- 2015-17. Convener, School of Modern Languages & Cultures Speakers' Series.
- 2015-17. Faculty Review Committee, Faculty of Arts, HKU. Sep.
- Nov 2013. Program organizer, *10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of American Studies Network (USCET-ASN) Annual Conference*: "Transnational Currents of US-China Relations."

## RESEARCH GRANTS and AWARDS

- 2023. Winner of the 1921 Prize for American Literature (tenured category) for "You Are no Darker Than I Am: *The Souls of Black Folk* in Maoist China." Special issue, Translation. *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 138, 3 (May 2023): 506-518. Cambridge UP.
- 2020-21. Nomination for Best Teaching Award. Duke Kunshan University.
- 2021. With Jesse Olsavsky. "Freedom Lab." Humanities Research Center, Duke Kunshan University (usd 40,000)
- 2020. With Jesse Olsavsky. "Freedom Lab." Humanities Research Center, Duke Kunshan University (usd 40,000)
- 2019. With Jesse Olsavsky. "Freedom Lab." Humanities Research Center, Duke Kunshan University (usd 40,000)
- 2019. With Sucheta Mazumdar. "Global Engagements: Asian, African American, and Asian American Internationalisms and Solidarities, 1918-2018: Exhibit and Research Workshops for Pedagogical Initiatives in Global Humanities." Franklin Humanities Institute and the Office of Global Affairs / Andrew W. Mellon Endowment for Global Studies, Duke University (usd 10,000)
- 2018. With Sucheta Mazumdar. Small Event Grant, Humanities Research Center, Duke Kunshan University (usd 5,000)
- 2015. Seed Fund, The University of Hong Kong (119,050 hkd, approx.15,000 usd)
- 2012. Li Ka Shing Prize (Ph.D. Thesis of the Year, awarded to four best Ph.D. candidates of all disciplines at HKU annually) (20,000 hkd, approx.2,500 usd)
- 2011-12. Fulbright Junior Research Visiting Fellowship, Stanford University (25,000 usd)
- 2011. 1<sup>st</sup> Runner Up, Three-Minute Thesis Contest, Queensland University and HKU (5,000 hkd, approx. 640 usd)
- 2005. Landesbank Baden Württemberg (LB BW), University of Heidelberg (€ 5,000)
- 2001-02. Tufts Institute for Leadership and International Perspectives, Tufts University (travel scholarship and internship, 10,000 usd)

## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Modern Language Association
- American Studies Association
- American Literature Association
- American Comparative Literature Association
- MELUS Society
- Salzburg Seminar on Global American Studies

## LANGUAGES

- English (native)
- Cantonese (native)
- Mandarin (Advanced)



## **Appendix A**

### ***Mark Twain in China has been cited in the following works, among others:***

Wasserstrom, Jeffery. *Eight Juxtapositions in China Through Imperfect Analogies from Mark Twain to Manchukuo*. Penguin, 2016.

---. "The Odd Couple: On Political Dissent and the Remarkable Similarities Between Mark Twain and Yu Hua." *Los Angeles Review of Books* (August 2015).

Fishkin, Shelley Fisher. "Unsettling American Literature, Rethinking Nation and Empire." In *Cambridge Companion to Transnational American Literature*. Ed. Yogita Goyal. Cambridge UP, 2017.

---. "Traduttore/Traditore: Motivated Mistranslation and the Unsettling of America." *American Literary History* 28, 3 (2016): 596-604.

---. "Transnational American Studies Today: The U.S and China." In *The Power of Culture: Cultural Encounters in China and the United States*. Ed. Priscilla Roberts. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholarly Publishing, 2015.

---. "Originally of Missouri, Now of the Universe: Mark Twain and the World." In *Transnational American Studies*. Eds. Heike Spickermann and Anton Escher. Forthcoming in Germany.

---. "Collaboration and Transnational American Studies." In *A Companion to Transnational American Studies*. Eds. Alfred Hornung, Nina Morgan, Takayuki Tatsumi, et al., forthcoming.

Johnson, Kendall. *The Middle Kingdom: China and the Early American Romance of Free Trade*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2017.

D'haen, Theo. "Routes, roads and maps (of) literature." *The Routledge Companion to World Literature and World History*. Routledge, 2018. 146-158.

Qin, Amy. "The Curious, and Continuing, Appeal of Mark Twain in China." *New York Times, Beijing* (January 6, 2014): <http://sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/01/06/the-curious-and-continuing-appeal-of-mark-twain-in-china/? r=0>

Xu, Guoqi. *Chinese and Americans: A Shared History*. Harvard UP, 2014.

**Mark Twain in China has been reviewed in the following journals:**

1. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, by Géraldine A. Fiss (2015)
2. *American Studies Journal*, by Katherine E. Bishop (2017)
3. *Canadian Journal of History*  
“The volume provides a broad and useful introduction to the myriad ways Twain's work connected with Chinese politics and readers as well as an intriguing model for ways in which literary connections between countries might be introduced into transnational histories.” – Meredith Oyen
4. *Choice*  
“A useful epilogue illuminates modern Chinese history, Chinese internal policies, and Chinese interest in the US ... Lai-Henderson fills out the picture of Twain's anti-missionary position, adding helpfully to Susan Harris's discussion of the Philippines in *God's Arbiters*.” – David E. Sloane
5. *Literature & History*  
“Lai-Henderson has written a solid introductory history of Twain's literary legacy regarding the Chinese immigrants he observed first-hand during his literary apprenticeship in the American West during the Civil War era.” – Martin Zehr
6. *Twentieth-Century China*  
“The short but useful epilogue shows that the transnational approach adopted by the book is invaluable in pointing out the complexities of the journey of literary texts when positioned on a global stage, paving the way for future research.” – Hongmei Sun
7. *China Review International*  
“Was it the way that Huck's story resonated with the tenets of socialist realism? How did the themes about race ramify in languages that do not share that history? Did the emphases change depending on the political situation--how could we see Huck as a proletarian hero? These are the kinds of questions that *Mark Twain in China* inspires, and no doubt there will be other fascinating studies to come that will build on Lai-Henderson's book.” – Shiamin Kwa
8. *Journal of American Studies*  
Lai-Henderson's chapters on Twain's posthumous reputation in China are “eye-opening contribution” and are “full of information previously unavailable in English or scattered journals and library stacks.” – Thomas Peyser

9. *Mark Twain Annual*

Lai-Henderson introduces “new perspectives not just on Twain and his writings, but on the cultural contexts in which his works are read ... *Mark Twain in China* is grounded in a fact that few Americans know: people in other parts of the world value Mark Twain for different reasons than Americans do, in large part because they read Twain selections that most Americans don’t even know exist.” – Susan K. Harris

10. *American Literature*

Lai-Henderson begins “illuminatingly with Twain’s early education on race, showing how a Southerner, raised in a world of enslaved Africans, found his way into the politics of global racizliation through his early travels in the American West and encounters with the Chinese.” Lai-Henderson “provides original information on how Twain eventually traveled to China as an authorial presence in his texts, discussing numerous nineteenth- and twentieth-century translations and their further dissemination into variants suited to disparate Chinese political cultures (An added gift here is a fascinating final chapter on translation problems with American dialect).” – Philip Beidler

11. *Renmin Luntan*