

# SUSANNA L. SACKS

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## Education

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Ph. D., English, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, June 2019 (expected)  
Graduate Certificate in African Studies.

Dissertation: “Viral Verses: Poetic Movements and Social Media in Southeastern Africa.”  
Committee: Evan Mwangi (Chair), Wendy Griswold, Andrew Leong, Harris Feinsod, and James Hodge.

MA., English, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, 2015

BA., Sociology and English (*with honors*), Haverford College, Haverford, PA, May 2013

## Publications

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### Peer Review Article

“The Poetics of Dictatorship: Song and Sound in H. K. Banda’s “Tenth Republic Anniversary Tour.”” *Research in African Literatures*, 50:2 (forthcoming, 2020): 25 ms. pp.

### Book Chapter

“Slam Poetry in Malawi: Digital Media Aesthetics and Translingual Poetic Forms.” In *Digital Technology and Languages in African Communities and Classrooms: Innovations and Opportunities*. Ed. Leketi Makelela and Goodith White. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters Press (forthcoming, 2019): 19 ms pp.

## Fellowships, Awards, and Honors

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| 2018    | Best Graduate Student Essay Prize for “Digital Voices: Negotiating Global Forms and Local Identity in Cape Town Performance Poetry,” African Literature Association.                            |
| 2018-19 | Virgil Heltzel Fellowship, Department of English, Northwestern University.  |
| 2018    | Honorable Mention, Best Graduate Student Essay Prize for “Poetry in Action: Evan Mawarire’s ‘This Flag,’ Networked Protest, and the Hashtag as Collective Poetry,” African Studies Association. |
| 2018    | Digital Humanities Research Grant, The Graduate School, Northwestern University.  |
| 2017-18 | Franke Graduate Fellow, Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities, Northwestern University.   |

- 2017-18 Graduate Writing Fellow, The Writing Place, Northwestern University.
- 2016, 2017 Travel Grant, Program of African Studies, Northwestern University.
- 2016 Dissertation Research Award, Buffett Institute for Global Studies, Northwestern University.
- Graduate Research Award, The Graduate School, Northwestern University.
- Hans E. Panofsky Pre-Dissertation Research Award, Program of African Studies, Northwestern University.
- 2015, 2016 Summer Language Grant, Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Program
- 2015 Morris Goodman Award, Program of African Studies, Northwestern University.
- 2013 Mellon Interdisciplinary Cluster Fellowship. African Studies, Northwestern University.

### **Invited Talks**

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- 2018 “Performing Community: Networked Poetics and the Malawian Public Sphere,” Department of African & African American Studies, Washington University. 18 September 2018.
- 2015 “The Performance of Nationhood: Poetry and National Identity Formation in Malawi Under Hastings Banda, 1963-1993.” English Department Seminar, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa. 26 August 2015.
- “Contemporary Malawian Poetry.” Kistrech Poetry Festival, Kisii University, Kisii Kenya. 3-10 August 2015.

### **Conference Presentations**

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- 2019 “Posting Poetry, Publishing Protest: Social Media Publications and Poetic Activism in Zimbabwe.” Modern Language Association, 3-6 January 2019.
- 2018 “Poetry’s Interfaces: Tracing Digital Logics in Malawian Performance Poetry.” African Literature Association Annual Conference. 23-26 May 2018.
- 2017 “Poetry in Action: Evan Mawarire’s ‘This Flag,’ Networked Protest, and the Hashtag as Collective Poetry.” African Studies Association Annual Meeting. 16-18 November 2017.
- Panel Chair, “Word! Languages and Institutions Over Time.” African Studies Association Annual Meeting. 16-18 November 2017.
- “Digital Voices: Negotiation Global Forms and Local Identity in Cape Town Performance Poetry.” African Literature Association Annual Conference. 14-17 June 2017.
- “The Migrant and the Refugee: Contrasting Images of Movement in Zimbabwean Poetry from South Africa.” African Literature Association Annual Conference. 14-17 June 2017.
- Panel Chair, “Literary Performance in Cyberspace.” African Literature Association Annual Conference. 14-17 June 2017.

“WhatsApp Poetics: The Structure and Style of Chichewa Poetry Groups on WhatsApp.” British Association for Applied Linguistics Seminar Series. 28-30 April 2017.

“Slam Africa: Language and Politics in the International Poetry Slam.” Northwestern University African Studies Graduate Student Conference. 14-17 April 2017.

2016 “*Zonse Zimene za Kamuzu*: Genre, Performance, and the Construction of a Malawian National Identity Under H. Kamuzu Banda.” Boston University African Studies Graduate Student Conference. 25-26 March 2016.

### **Intramural Talks**

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2018 “Viral Verses: Poetic Movements and Social Media in Southeastern Africa.” Kaplan Institute for the Humanities, Franke Futures Forum. 20 April 2018.

2017 “Poetry in Action: Evan Mawarire’s ‘This Flag,’ Networked Protest, and the Hashtag as Collective Poetry.” English Department Graduate Student Colloquium. 15 November 2017.

“Page and Stage in the Digital Age: Tracing Poetic Circulations in Southeastern Africa.” Africa Seminar. 16 February 2017.

2016 “Locating the Performative in Print Nationalist Texts.” English Department Graduate Student Colloquium, 17 February 2016.

### **Teaching Experience**

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#### **Teaching Areas**

African Poetic Traditions, Postcolonial Literature, Global Modernisms, Poetry and Poetics, Technologies of the Self, Digital Humanities Research Methods, Social Media and Literature

#### **Instructor of Record**

“Writing Human Rights,” Northwestern University, Spring 2018.

- Designed and taught a freshman seminar on the connections between literature and human rights law.
- Taught memoirs by Frederick Douglass, Antjie Krog, and Primo Levi, and essays and short stories by Rachel Carson, Toni Morrison, Kwame Nkrumah, Ken Saro-Wiwa, Ramachandra Guha, Wangari Maathai, and Craig Santos Perez.

“Traveling English,” Northwestern University, Spring 2017.

- Designed and taught an expository writing seminar on experiences of migration through language.
- Taught work by Louise Bennett, Kamau Brathwaite, NoViolet Bulawayo, Lorna Dee Cervantez, Junot Díaz, Yiyun Li, Haryette Mullen, and Gene Luen Yang.

“Global Englishes, Local Identities,” Northwestern University, Winter 2017.

- Designed and taught an expository writing seminar on the history of English as a language of imperial power.

- Taught work by Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, Louise Bennett, Kamau Brathwaite, Lorna Dee Cervantez, Junot Diaz, Ken Saro-Wiwa, Benjamin Zephaniah, and August Wilson.

### Teaching Assistant

“Introduction to Fiction,” Winter 2015

- Teaching assistant to Prof. Jules Law. Led two weekly discussion sections.
- Taught novels by Arthur Conan Doyle, Mary Shelley, Bram Stoker, Joseph Conrad, Dashiell Hammett, and Toni Morrison.

“American Literary Traditions I,” Fall 2015.

- Teaching assistant to Prof. Jay Grossman.
- Taught works by Charles Brockden Brown, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Frederick Douglass, Edgar Allen Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mary Rowlandson, Anne Hutchinson, Ben Franklin, and Phyllis Wheatley.

### Professional and Community Activities

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- 2017-19      Founder and Co-facilitator, Graduate Student Digital Humanities Pedagogy Workshop Series, Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities, Northwestern University.
- Founded and organized a year-long workshop series for twelve graduate student teachers on integrating methods and tools from the digital humanities into the university classroom.
- 2017-19      Graduate Writing Fellow, The Writing Place, Northwestern University.
- Mentored graduate student writers through year-long research projects and article development.
  - Led interdisciplinary and discipline-specific workshops on cover letters and writing for public audiences.
- 2018          Organizer, Lingua Franca Artists-in-Residency Program, Program of African Studies, Northwestern University.
- Developed and facilitated a 2-week artists’ residency for the 10-person Lingua Franca Spoken Word Collective in honor of the Program of African Studies’ seventieth anniversary.
  - Planned four talks at Northwestern and three performances in Chicago schools and theaters.
- 2016          Chair and Co-organizer, “Knowing Africa” Graduate Student Conference, Program of African Studies, Northwestern University, 15-17 April 2016.
- Led a 5-person interdisciplinary team to organize a 3-day, 30-person graduate student conference.
- 2015-16      Student Facilitator, Africa Seminar, Northwestern University.
- Organized weekly seminars and annual conference.
- 2015-16      Graduate Assistant, *Triquarterly* journal, Northwestern University.
- Collected metadata for the journal’s digitization project.

## **Other Training**

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- 2018          Digital Humanities Summer Institute. University of Victoria, Victoria, BC.  
Weeklong seminar on documenting and archiving born-digital work.
- 2016          The Centre for Language Study. University of Malawi, Blantyre.  
10-week intensive Chichewa training, second year level.
- 2016          Sound Studies Seminar. Summer Institute Cologne, Cologne.  
2-week intensive seminar on sound studies.
- 2015          Programming Bootcamp (Python). Northwestern University Big Data Initiative.  
2-week intensive introduction to Python.
- 2015          The Centre for Language Study. University of Malawi, Blantyre.  
10-week intensive Chichewa training, first year level.
- 2010          Middlebury Summer Language School: French. Middlebury, Vermont.  
French language program, fourth-year level.

## **Languages**

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- English – native  
French – fluent  
Chichewa – advanced  
Italian – reading

## **Professional Memberships**

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- African Studies Association  
African Literature Association  
Modern Language Association