

Rebecca Ann Sears

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John and Penelope Biggs Department of Classics
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Research Interests

Greek and Roman music, papyrology, Latin poetry (Ovid), reception studies, ancient magic

Education

University of Michigan: Ph.D., August 2012

Dissertation: "The Practical Muse: Reconstructing the Contexts of a Greek Musical Papyrus" (Arthur M. Verhoogt, Chair)

Classical Summer School at the American Academy in Rome, Summer 2010

Bowdoin College: B.A. Summa cum Laude, May 2002, Classics and Music Double Major

Honors Thesis: "Investigations into the Dating and Provenance of Bowdoin's Notated Liturgical Manuscript" (Mary K. Hunter and Robert K. Greenlee, Advisors)

Professional and Research Appointments

Washington University in St. Louis, Senior Lecturer, 2024-present

Copy Editor for *Greek and Roman Musical Studies* (Brill), January 2024-present

Washington University in St. Louis, Lecturer, 2018-2024

Tulane University, Visiting Assistant Professor, 2015-2018

Wake Forest University, Visiting Assistant Professor, 2014-2015

University of Michigan, Lecturer, 2012-2013

University of Michigan, Assistant Collection Manager, Papyrology Collection, 2010-2011

Publications

"*Sucis Hecateidos Herbae*: A Magical Curiosity in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*," in L. Pratt and C. M. Sampson, eds., *Engaging Classical Texts in the Contemporary World: From Narratology to Reception*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018.

"A Michigan Musical Papyrus Revisited," *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* (Vol. 52, 2015) 143-179.

"Reconstructing the Contexts of a Greek Musical Papyrus," in T. G. Wilfong and Andrew Ferrara, eds., *Karanis Revealed: Uncovering the Past and Present of a Michigan Excavation in Egypt*, Kelsey Museum Publication 7 (Ann Arbor: Kelsey Museum Publications, 2014).

Reviews

Spencer A Klavan, *Music in Ancient Greece: Melody, Rhythm and Life*. In *Greek and Roman Musical Studies*, Vol. 11, Issue 2, 2023; https://brill.com/view/journals/grms/11/2/article-p449_10.xml

Tosca Lynch, Eleonora Rocconi, *A companion to ancient Greek and Roman music. Blackwell companions to the ancient world*. In *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2021.07.07; <https://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2021/2021.07.07/>

John C. Franklin, *Kinyras: The Divine Lyre*. In *New England Classical Journal*, Vol. 44, Issue 2: 114-117.

Andrew Barker, *Ancient Greek Writers on their Musical Past: Studies in Greek Musical Historiography*. In *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2016.01.39; <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2016/2016-01-39.html>

Works in Progress

An Introduction to Greek and Roman Music, under contract for University of Michigan Press.

“Singing the New Music in Egypt: Melody and Style in the Karanis Musical Papyrus” in preparation for *Greek and Roman Musical Studies*

“Translation, Interpretation, and Reception in the *Metamorphosen* Symphonies of Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf” in preparation for *Classical Receptions Journal*

Presentations

Refereed Abstract

“*Memento Romane Regere*: A New Approach to Teaching Graduate Latin Prose Composition,” accepted for The Society for Classical Studies (SCS), Annual Meeting, San Francisco 2026

“*Phrygio numero*: Musical Multimodality as Intermediality in Republican Latin Poetry,” SCS, Philadelphia 2025

“The Hidden Springs of the Muses in Catullus 68,” The Classical Association of the Middle West and South (CAMWS), St. Louis 2024

“What Can Poetry Tell Us About Musical Practice in Rome? Ovid’s Representation of the Sound of Mystery Cult Music,” The International Society for the Study of Greek and Roman Music and its Cultural Heritage (MOISA), 13th Annual Meeting, Strasbourg 2022

“Dramatic Melodies: Three Examples of Musical Style from Karanis (P. Mich. inv. 2958),” The Society for Classical Studies (SCS), Virtual Annual Meeting 2021

“With Clashing Bronze and Shrieking Pipes: Ovid’s Representation of the Sound of (Mystery Cult) Music,” SCS, San Diego 2019

“Inscribing Musical Epitaphs in Virgil’s *Eclogue* V and the Roman Empire,” CAMWS, Albuquerque 2018

“Translating Ovid into Musical Pictures: The *Metamorphosen* Symphonies of Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf,” SCS, Toronto 2017

“Old Women, Wands, and Potions: The Witchcraft of Ovid’s Minerva,” CAMWS, Boulder 2015

“*Sucis Hecateidos Herbae*: A Magical Curiosity in Ovid’s Arachne episode,” The Classical Association of Canada (CAC), Montreal 2014

“The Musical Culture of Roman Egypt,” The American Philological Association (APA, now SCS), Seattle 2013

“‘The Beginning in the End’: Frames, Gutters and Resolution in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* 15,” CAMWS, Grand Rapids 2011

“Violent Passions? *Nekudaimones* in Greek Erotic Magic,” CAMWS, Minneapolis 2009

“Old Latin Stress in the Scipio Epitaphs: An Alternate Accentual Scansion,” Panel of the Society for the Study of Greek and Latin Linguistics, APA, Philadelphia 2009

“P. Mich. inv. 2958: A Michigan Musical Papyrus Reconsidered” XXV International Congress of Papyrology, Ann Arbor 2007

Invited Presentations

“Gamifying Graduate-level Latin Prose Composition,” presentation at the Language Teaching Fair, Washington University, August 2025

COGSIP Mentoring Roundtable, representative of the Contingent Faculty Committee, anticipated for the SCS Annual Meeting, Philadelphia 2025

“Normalizing Enslavement in the Ancient World: Case Studies and Controversies in the Presentation of Slavery in Latin and Greek Language Textbooks,” presentation at the Language Teaching Fair, Washington University, August 2023

“Musical Papyrology” for the Ancient Music Workshop, University of Vermont (remote/Zoom), January 26, 2023

“Amy Sillman: *After Metamorphoses*—Video Screening and Live Q&A,” co-presenter, for the “In Conversation” Series at the Kemper Art Museum, Washington University in St. Louis, April 10, 2021.

Language Teaching Fair, presenter and co-facilitator for “What to Do with the Elephants in the Classroom: Inclusive Language Teaching,” Washington University, August 2019

“Translating Ovid into Musical Pictures: The *Metamorphosen* Symphonies of Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf,” Washington University, November 2018

“Musical Communities in Roman Egypt,” Tulane University, October 2016

“Musicians, Instruments, and Musical Documents in Roman Egypt,” North Carolina Classical Association, Spring Meeting, March 2015

“P. Mich. inv. 2958: La Notation Vocale” presentation to a seminar on Ancient Greek Papyrology directed by Annie Bélis at the Institut de Papyrologie de la Sorbonne, Paris 2008

Honors and Fellowships

Cultivating Disagreement Curricular Development Grant (Civil Society Initiative at WashU), AY 2025-2026

ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Award, 2012 (nominated for the 2013 National Council of Graduate Schools’ Dissertation Award in the Humanities)

Departmental Dissertation Fellowship, Spring 2011

Rackham One-Term Dissertation Grant, Spring 2010

Rackham Humanities Research Candidacy Fellowship, University of Michigan, Fall 2008

Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant (for research travel to Paris), Spring 2008

Courses Taught

Washington University

Latin Language

- L10 3171 Survey of Latin Literature: The Republic (Fall 2018, two sections; Fall 2019, two sections; Fall 2020; Fall 2021, two sections; Fall 2024, two sections)
- Latin 3180 Survey of Latin Literature: The Empire (Spring 2023, two sections; Spring 2024; anticipated Spring 2026)
- Latin 4320 Horace's *Odes* (Fall 2020; Fall 2025)
- L10 433 Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Spring 2019; Fall 2022)
- L10 444 Latin Prose Composition (Spring 2021; Spring 2025)
- L10 471 Latin Elegiac Poetry (Spring 2020; Fall 2023)
- L10 534 Ovid's *Fasti* (graduate seminar, Fall 2021)

Greek Language

- L09 101D Beginning Greek I (Fall 2018; Fall 2020)
- L09 102D Beginning Greek II (Spring 2019; Spring 2021)
- Greek 3170 Intermediate Greek: Plato (Fall 2022, Fall 2023; Fall 2025)
- L09 416 Hesiod (Spring 2022; Spring 2025)

Classics (Courses in Translation)

- Classics 1190 First Year Seminar: Republic of Empire? Recreating Roman Politics of the Second Triumvirate (in development for Spring 2026)
- L08 115 First Year Seminar: Engaging the Classical Past in Modern Fiction (Fall 2019; Spring 2021; Spring 2024)
- Classics 2510 Projecting the Past: Ancient Greece and Rome in Modern Film (Fall 2023; Fall 2025)
- L08 3153 The Women of Greek Tragedy (Writing Intensive; cross-listed with Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Performing Arts Department, and Comparative Literature; Spring 2020, two sections; Fall 2022; Fall 2024)
- L08 462 Ancient Greek and Roman Music (cross-listed with Department of Music; Spring 2019; Spring 2021; Spring 2023; Spring 2025)
- Classics 5050 Seminar in Classics Pedagogy for Graduate Students (Spring 2022; Spring 2024; anticipated Spring 2026)

Independent Studies listed in Advising (below)

Tulane University

- Ancient Greek Music (Spring 2017)
- Introduction to Latin Literature (Fall 2016)
- Ancient Rome in Film (Spring 2016)
- Intermediate Latin (Spring 2016; Spring 2018)
- Elementary Latin (Fall 2015; Fall 2017)
- Mythology (Fall 2015, two sections; Spring 2016; Fall 2016, two sections; Spring 2017, two sections; Fall 2017, two sections; Spring 2018, two sections)

Wake Forest University

- Elementary Latin 2 (Spring 2015)
- Intermediate Greek (Spring 2015)
- Greek Myth (Spring 2015)
- Elementary Latin 1 (Fall 2014)
- Intermediate Greek: Hesiod's *Theogony* (Fall 2014)
- Greek Comedy: Aristophanes' *Frogs* (Fall 2014)

University of Michigan

Primary Instructor

- Classics and Cinema (Spring 2013)
- Roman Elegy (Fall 2012)
- Intermediate Latin: Virgil's *Aeneid* (Fall 2012 and Spring 2005)
- Ovid's *Metamorphoses* mini-course (Fall 2008)
- Intermediate Latin: Introduction to Prose (Fall 2007)
- Elementary Latin 2 (Fall 2006)
- Elementary Latin 1 (Spring 2006)

Teaching Assistant

- War in Greek and Roman Civilization (Spring 2013)
- The Ancient Greek World (First-year Writing Requirement; Fall 2011)
- Great Books (First-year Writing Requirement; Fall 2009)
- War in Greek and Roman Civilization (Upper-level Writing Requirement; Spring 2009)
- Greek Mythology (Spring 2008)
- The Ancient Roman World (Spring 2007)

Advising

Washington University

PhD Dissertation Committee Member

- Henry Schott, "Military Language in Plautus." PhD Dissertation, doctoral committee, Summer 2023 to present

MA Theses Directed

- Ana Maria Ribeiro, title TBD. MA Thesis, supervisor, AY 2025-2026
- Zhiyuan Wang, title TBD. MA Thesis, supervisor, AY 2025-2026
- Christopher Robertson, "Music and Gender in Euripides." MA Thesis, supervisor, Fall 2023 to Summer 2024 [F23 L09 590, S23 L09 590]
- Shangwei Deng, "*Puella Musica*: Cynthia as a Musician in Propertius 1.2, 2.3, 2.34." MA Thesis, supervisor, Fall 2020 to Summer 2021 [F20 L10 590, S21 L10 590]

MA Thesis Committee Member

- María Eugenia Bonaparte Giménez, "Women's Emotions and Narrative Patterns in Sophocles' Fragmentary Tragedies." MA Thesis, thesis examination committee, in progress Spring 2025.
- Rachel Hanlin, "The Carper, the Wallflower, and the Voyeur: Silencing *Amicitia* at the *Cena Inaequalis*." MA Thesis, thesis examination committee, Spring and Summer 2022
- Zixing Elva Chen, "For Whom is She Singing? The Songs of Electra in Euripides' and Sophocles' *Electra*." MA Thesis, thesis examination committee, Spring 2020

Supervised Teaching Experiences

- Ana Maria Ribeiro and Owen Embree, Instructional Assistant for Classics 2510 Projecting the Past, Fall 2025
- Christopher Robertson, Instructional Assistant for L08 251 Projecting the Past, Fall 2023
- Emily Parise, Instructional Assistant for L08 3153 Women in Tragedy, Spring 2020 [including L08 5011 Pedagogy Independent Study]

Supervised Research Experiences

- Zhiyuan Wang, Research Assistant, Summer 2025
- Christopher Robertson, Research Assistant, Summer 2023

BA Honors Thesis Committee Member

- Maddy Beldner, "The Vilification of Cleopatra by Roman Authors Compared to Ovidian Myths." Senior Honors Thesis, thesis examination committee, in progress Spring 2025
- Grace Tillman, "Anti-Pagan Rhetoric in Late Antiquity: A Survey." Senior Honors Thesis, thesis examination committee, Fall 2023
- Efimia Karageorgiou, "A Die Study of Syrian Minted Silver Tetradrachms of Cleopatra VII and Mark Antony." Senior Honors Thesis, thesis examination committee, Spring 2023

Capstone Projects

- Graham Taggart, Title TBD. Capstone Project (Latin Comic Book), supervisor, Fall 2025 [as part of Latin 4320]
- Carlee Averbeck, "Genealogy in Hesiod's *Theogony*." Capstone Project (Canva genealogy and research portfolio), supervisor, Spring 2025 [as part of L09 416]
- Gracie Gentzler, "Polygnota: an *Auletris*." Capstone Project (Original Short Story), supervisor, Spring 2023 [as part of L08 462]
- Nina Bhatia, "Antiracism, Allyship, and Antiquity: The Future of Classics." Capstone Project, supervisor, Spring 2021 [S21 L08 493]
- Sanjeevani Bhavsar, "*Puellam Dolorem Cano*." Capstone Project (Latin Novella), supervisor, Spring 2021 [as part of L10 444]
- Jessica Tu, "Primary Text Translation Portfolio: Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid." Capstone Project, supervisor, Spring 2020 [as part of L10 471]

- Justin Chen, "The Cost of Rebellion: Transformation as a Metaphor for Anti-Augustanism." Capstone Project, supervisor, Spring 2019 [as part of L10 433]

Undergraduate Major and Minor Advising within the Classics Department, Spring 2023 to present (currently 4 Major advisees)

Tulane University

Supervised Teaching Experiences

- Mary-Evelyn Farrior, Amanda Fetter, AJ Maroney, Caroline Cervera, Mallory Cormack, Wesley Beck, Teaching Assistants for Mythology (Fall 2015 through Spring 2018)
- Mallory Cormack, Teaching Assistant for Intermediate Latin (Spring 2018)

Wake Forest University

- Conor Stark, "The City, The Man, The Comic Resolution?: Aristophanes' Defense of the City and Incorporation of the Socratic Individual in *Clouds*." Senior Honors Thesis, second reader, Spring 2015

University of Michigan

Supervised Teaching Experiences

- Louise Loehndorff, Teaching Assistant for Classics and Cinema (Spring 2013)

Other Teaching Activities

Washington University

Language Teaching Spring Showcase, participant/presenter, April 2025

Classics Workshop, organizer, AY2024-2025

Literacies for Life and Career, Arts & Sciences Signature Initiative, pilot program (2nd cohort), AY2024-2025

Theater Culture Studies I, guest presentation on Women and Greek Drama, February 2023.

Classics Workshop, facilitator for discussion of Classics pedagogy, October 2022

Faculty Reading Community (Peter Felten and Leo M. Lambert, *Relationship Rich Education: How Human Connections Drive Success in College*), participant, Fall 2022

Faculty Reading Community (James M. Lang, *Small Teaching: Everyday Lessons from the Science of Learning*, second edition), participant, Fall 2021

Graduate Student Sight Reading Group (Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*), facilitator, Summer 2020

Classics Department Instructional Technology facilitator (Canvas, Hypothesis, AWW, Zoom, Padlet, Poll Everywhere), Spring 2020 to present

Luis Alfaro, *Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles*, Repertory Theatre St. Louis; Classics Department sponsored field trip, organizer and facilitator; February 2020

Language Teaching Fair, presenter and co-facilitator for "What to Do with the Elephants in the Classroom: Inclusive Language Teaching," August 2019

First-Year Orientation, Department of Classics co-organizer, August 2019

Graduate Proseminar, guest presentation on Classical Reception; October 2018, December 2020, September 2022, November 2024

Tulane University

Tulane University PossePlus Retreat 2017, "Us Vs. Them," faculty participant invited by Posse Scholar Jenny Ly, March 2017

Wake Forest University

Department of Classical Languages organizer, World Cultural Festival

Committees

Society for Classical Studies

SCS Contingent Faculty Director (nationally elected position), January 2025 to January 2027

SCS Committee on Contingent Faculty, member, January 2023 to January 2025

Washington University

PhD Program Revision Committee, member, Summer 2025

Colloquium Committee, AY 2024-2025

MA Latin Examination Committee, member, Summer 2022, Fall 2022, Fall 2023, Fall 2024, Spring 2025

Other Service

Referee for:

- *Greek and Roman Musical Studies* (Brill), February 2023
- University of Michigan Press, March 2023

Outreach

Presentation, "The Latin Text of the John Rutter's *Magnificat*," for the Chancel Choir of Ladue Chapel Presbyterian Church; November 25, 2024

Interview with Marieke Van Der Steenhoven, Special Collections Education and Engagement Librarian, Bowdoin College, August 12, 2024

Book Discussion Facilitator (Megan Edwards, *A Coin for the Ferryman*), for the Classical Club of St. Louis; January 14, 2023

"Greek Teacher Idea Exchange" Facebook Group, co-admin, September 2021 to present

Copula Program (<https://copulaprogram.org/>), Academic Mentor, August 2021

"Greek Teacher Idea Exchange" Facebook Group, member, April 2019 to present

Presentation, "Gregorian Chant: *Rorate Caeli Desuper*," for the Youth Choir of Ladue Chapel Presbyterian Church; November 24, 2019

Presentation, "Carmina Burana: Manuscript and Language," for the Washington University Choirs; February 27, 2019

Presentation, "Translating Ovid into Musical Pictures: The *Metamorphosen* Symphonies of Karl Dittersdorf," for the Classical Club of St. Louis; March 9, 2019

“Teaching Latin Traditionally” Facebook Group, member, December 2017 to present
Presentation, “Musical Technologies,” for the Latin V class at the Episcopal School of Baton Rouge, LA; October 19, 2017
“Latin Teacher Idea Exchange” Facebook Group, member, September 2016 to present
Presentation, “Biblical Papyrology,” for the Lyceum Series at the First Congregational Church of Milford, NH; June 7, 2016

Musical Education and Experience

Violin Education: Susan Gottschalk (1984-1995), Allison Bailey (1995-1996), Michael Rosenbloom (1996-1998), Stephen Kecskemethy (1998-2002)
Orchestral Experience: Lowell Philharmonic Orchestra (c. 1993-1998), Nashua Symphony Orchestra (1997-1998), Midcoast Symphony Orchestra (1998-2002), Arlington Philharmonic Orchestra (2002-2014), Wake Forest University Orchestra (2014-2015), New Orleans Civic Symphony (2015-2017), Washington University Symphony Orchestra (2018-2020, 2021-2022)
Videographer and Sound Technician, Music Program, First Congregational Church, Milford NH, volunteer position, March 2020 to August 2021

Professional Memberships

Society for Classical Studies
Classical Association of the Middle West and South
MOISA: International Society for the Study of Greek and Roman Music and its Cultural Heritage