



THE DISTINGUISHED  
COLUMBIA FACULTY AWARDS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, 2018

THE ITALIAN ACADEMY

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK



## THE DISTINGUISHED COLUMBIA FACULTY AWARDS

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The Distinguished Columbia Faculty Awards were created in 2005 when Trustee Gerry Lenfest '58LAW, '09HON made a gift to the University to establish a new category of awards honoring exceptional teaching in the arts and sciences. The awards are given annually to faculty of unusual merit, across a range of professorial activities—including scholarship, University citizenship, and professional involvement—with a primary emphasis on the instruction and mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students.

## THE DISTINGUISHED COLUMBIA FACULTY AWARDS

### WELCOME

David Madigan

*Executive Vice President and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences*

### MASTER OF CEREMONIES

James J. Valentini

*Dean of Columbia College, Henry L. and Lucy G. Moses Professor, and Vice President for Undergraduate Education*

### INTRODUCTIONS

Carlos J. Alonso

*Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Morris A. and Alma Schapiro Professor in the Humanities, and Vice President for Graduate Education*

Lisa Rosen-Metsch

*Dean of School of General Studies and Professor of Sociomedical Sciences*

### PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

Courtney Bender

*Professor of Religion*

Presented by Angela Xia '18CC

Eleanor Johnson

*Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature*

Presented by Lindsey Sanderson '18CC

Branden W. Joseph

*Frank Gallipoli Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art*

Presented by Alicia Schlieffman '18CC

Molly Przeworski

*Professor of Biological Sciences and Systems Biology*

Presented by Yuki Haba '17GSAS

Shelley A. Saltzman

*Senior Lecturer in Discipline*

Presented by Raktim Borpatragohain '23GS

Neslihan Şenocak

*Associate Professor of History*

Presented by Emily Gruber '19CC

Josef Sorett

*Associate Professor of Religion and African-American Studies*

Presented by Nza-Ari Khepra '18CC

Marc Van de Mieroop

*Professor of History*

Presented by Gavin Lance Powell '19CC

## Courtney Bender

Courtney Bender, Professor of Religion, is a leading sociologist of religion whose fieldwork displays her mastery of microsociology, her disciplinary rigor, and her ability to illumine cultural issues. Professor Bender's work opens new vistas in the sociology and comparative study of religion—from investigating a kitchen serving those with AIDS to showing how a range of spiritual ideas and practices are embedded in marginal institutions and arise from historical trajectories dating back to the country's founding.

She has written carefully and responsibly on an impressive range of traditions, from Christianity and Islam to Hinduism, Buddhism, and Anabaptism. Her forthcoming work, *The Religion of the Future*, promises to expand her already broad interdisciplinary reach by venturing into art and architecture.

Professor Bender has served in the Department of Religion for several years, and in multiple capacities—as director of undergraduate studies, chair, and director of graduate studies. Her service to the department, the University (through the Society of Fellows in the Humanities; the Institute for Religion, Culture, and Public Life; the University Seminars; and her commitment to alumni education), and the profession (in the American Academy of Religion, American Sociological Association, and American Society for the Study of Religion) is simply exemplary.

Professor Bender is a dynamic and enriching presence, a committed and engaged scholar, and a beloved colleague who works tirelessly as a teacher and mentor to students, one of whom reports: “In her pedagogy, Professor Bender is thoughtful, demanding, and able to coax students of very different backgrounds and abilities into thinking critically about religion, the secular, and the social.” She is “able to hear and hone the uniqueness of each of her students' voices,” comments another. In addition to groundbreaking courses on Religion in the City, Religious Worlds of New York, and Field Methods in Religious Studies, Professor Bender has consistently taught Contemporary Civilization for the Core Curriculum.

In recognition of this outstanding record of scholarship and service to our students, we hereby bestow the Distinguished Columbia Faculty Award on Professor Courtney Bender.

## Eleanor Johnson

Eleanor Johnson, Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature, is an exceptionally successful teacher, a superb and prolific scholar, and a dedicated contributor to the University. She has produced a formidable portfolio that has helped to shift her field's emphasis from historical scholarship to close encounters with literary texts. In particular, Professor Johnson's attention to how texts work on their readers and viewers is opening up new formalist methodologies, making well-known literature fresh and surprising. Beyond her scholarly work, which includes appearances as keynote speaker, invited lecturer, panelist, and book reviewer, Professor Johnson is also a poet. In 2016, she was selected as a Public Voices Fellow, and she continues to develop her voice beyond the academy.

Her record of service, both to the English Department and the University as a whole, from the Sexual Respect Task Force to the Heyman Center for the Humanities, is outstanding. She has served on the English Department's Committee on Undergraduate Education, the Creative Writing Prize Committee, the Committee on Graduate Education, and the Personnel and Policy Committee. As the current director of the Graduate Placement Committee, she is guiding numerous students through the academic hiring process.

Professor Johnson is a truly superb educator who fully embodies the ideal of an active researcher whose teaching excellence complements and expresses her scholarly accomplishments. Her course enrollments tell part of the story: in her first year at Columbia, she had twelve students in her Chaucer lecture; the next time, nearly ninety. There is also a noticeable trend of her Literature Humanities students choosing to become English majors. Her students speak of her tremendous wealth of knowledge; her love of the material; her great skill as a discussion leader, welcoming every student to the conversation; and her dedication to each student's intellectual development. One student remarked, “Professor Johnson is one of the best professors I have ever had at Columbia or Barnard. Not only is she brilliant, but she is down-to-earth...I always felt that my questions and ideas were taken seriously.” Another student commented, “Professor Johnson is terrific at making difficult material accessible and engaging.”

In recognition of this outstanding record of scholarship and service, as well as her exemplary dedication to teaching and mentoring, we hereby bestow the Distinguished Columbia Faculty Award on Professor Eleanor Johnson.

## Branden W. Joseph

Branden W. Joseph, Frank Gallipoli Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art, has pioneered the study of post-World War II art in its intersections with music and film. Through works such as *Random Order: Robert Rauschenberg and the Neo-Avant-Garde*, *Beyond the Dream Syndicate: Tony Conrad and the Arts after Cage*, and the essays collected in *Experimentations: John Cage in Music, Art, and Architecture*, he has set the standard for the field by centering the compositions, texts, and teaching of John Cage and avant-garde music more broadly. In the same vein, Professor Joseph's emphasis on experimental film in North America and Europe has made it an essential focus of modern art history, providing a theoretical and historical foundation for its presence in museums worldwide.

He is also among the most astute critical voices on artists working today. As co-curator of the groundbreaking exhibition Carolee Schneemann: *Kinetic Painting* (2015–2018), Professor Joseph moved from the page to the gallery to make visible the beauty and import of Schneemann's unique aesthetic vision as it traversed painting, film, performance, and multimedia. He has lectured at institutions across the globe, in venues ranging from leading universities and museums to micro-cinemas and artists' lofts.

Professor Joseph is also a founding editor of the journal *Grey Room*, now a touchstone for scholarship at the nexus of art, architecture, media, and politics. In this role, Professor Joseph not only published seminal essays by leading scholars and theorists, but he also shepherded the early work of young scholars, many of whom have emerged as prominent experts in their fields.

No less impressive than his widely influential scholarship is Professor Joseph's mentorship of students and emerging scholars. He is a beloved and respected teacher of twentieth-century art, and of nearly every aspect of post-World War II art in North America and Europe. He has advised numerous undergraduate, master's, and doctoral theses and regularly offers his mentorship to students well beyond graduation. As director of Art Humanities, Professor Joseph has endeavored to enrich the classroom experience for both Columbia undergraduates and the faculty and graduate-student instructors. And he forever brims with new ideas to enhance the learning and love of modern art on Columbia's campus and beyond.

In recognition of this outstanding record of scholarship and service to the field and to our students, we hereby bestow the Distinguished Columbia Faculty Award on Professor Branden W. Joseph.

## Molly Przeworski

Molly Przeworski, Professor of Biological Sciences and Systems Biology, is widely recognized as a leading population geneticist. Her analysis of genomic data and development of evolutionary models have led to fundamental insights into the genetic and evolutionary processes that shape heritable variations in humans and other species. Professor Przeworski's work has led to significant advances in understanding how meiotic recombination events are specified in vertebrates and how natural selection has influenced the human genome. Her achievements have earned her wide recognition in the field, along with honors such as the Rosalind Franklin Award, a Sloan Research Fellowship in Computational Biology, and a Howard Hughes Early Career Scientist Award.

Professor Przeworski's work is truly interdisciplinary, sitting at the interface of human genetics, evolutionary biology, and computational biology. As biology has become an information science, she has approached research questions with rigorous analytical skills and deep biological understanding. Through her work, Professor Przeworski also prepares the next generation of biological scientists, ensuring her lab members receive the rigorous, interdisciplinary training necessary to develop and apply tools that will analyze genetic variation, with a firm grounding in genetics and evolutionary biology.

Professor Przeworski is a dedicated mentor and educator who is committed to helping undergraduate and graduate students as well as postdoctoral fellows develop professionally, from preparing papers for journal submission to presenting technical papers in a weekly journal club. Thanks to her guidance and support, numerous alumni of her lab, including a number of women and members of other underrepresented groups, have gone on to prestigious graduate programs, postdoctoral fellowships, and faculty appointments. Professor Przeworski has also developed new courses in evolution and population genetics, meeting a critical need at Columbia. One undergraduate commented, "She is definitely one of the best teachers I have ever been taught by," describing her lectures as "well-designed" to build a keen understanding of and active engagement with the material. She has also evinced her commitment to education and the field by successfully initiating and co-organizing the first annual New York area meeting in population genetics, bringing together researchers of all career stages.

For her unparalleled contributions to her field and her exemplary dedication to teaching and mentoring, we hereby bestow the Distinguished Columbia Faculty Award on Professor Molly Przeworski.

## Shelley A. Saltzman

Dr. Shelley A. Saltzman, Senior Lecturer in the American Language Program, has more than twenty-five years of teaching experience, specializing in English for Specific Purposes and Advanced Academic Writing. In her role as associate director for University Partnerships, she works with Columbia University's undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools to develop curricula that meet the specific needs of their international students. Her devotion to teaching and the development of interdisciplinary curricula has enriched every level of her program.

Dr. Saltzman has taught English at all levels of instruction, from beginner to advanced. She is a beloved teacher, dedicated to her students and to the University as a whole. During Columbia's sescentennial, she was chosen by students as "one of the 250 Columbians who have made a difference." Multiple General Studies valedictorians have cited her as having a tremendous impact on their lives.

Dr. Saltzman's work has been innovative across fields. She designed one of the first English for Legal Purposes courses in the country, and since then she has developed programs for the Law School to prepare incoming international LLM students for Law School studies. She has taught in the Law School summer program for twenty years, and during this time she was honored with an award for outstanding contributions to international legal skills education. She has also designed courses for Columbia Engineering, the School of Social Work, the School of International and Public Affairs, the School of Public Health, and the School of Professional Studies.

She is a frequent presenter at campus, national, and international conferences and lecture series, most recently in China and Mexico. And she currently serves on several University-wide committees, including the Education Committee of the Faculty Senate.

In recognition of her unwavering commitment to helping students succeed, and for the many roles she fills in bettering not only her department, but others across Columbia, we hereby bestow the Distinguished Columbia Faculty Award on Dr. Shelley A. Saltzman.

## Neslihan Şenocak

Neslihan Şenocak, Associate Professor in the Department of History, specializes in medieval religious, intellectual, and social history. In particular, her work focuses on the Franciscan Order, popular religion, the rise of scholastic education, the history of criminal justice, and the social and legal history of the medieval Italian communes. Professor Şenocak is also highly respected and admired among faculty and students alike as an approachable and engaging teacher who is able to present challenging material in elegant and illuminating ways.

Professor Şenocak is widely known for her enthusiasm, accessibility, and ability to be unfailingly encouraging without sacrificing academic rigor. Her seminars on medieval crime are particularly popular with undergraduate students, and she has also developed a creative course on medieval religion for graduate students in collaboration with a colonial Latin American historian.

Students and colleagues alike appreciate Professor Şenocak for approaching historical problems from unexpected and enlightening angles. Her first monograph started from previously unasked questions: How could Franciscans own books? How did a medieval religious order grounded in a commitment to poverty and humility quickly develop into one of the focal points for the development of the medieval university? Her answers rewrite the early history of the Order and its understanding of the idea of poverty. Her current research is further uncovering a new history of medieval pastoral care—of how priests and Christian communities generally served their members.

In recognition of her impact on her students and leading by example in asking new questions to uncover history's answers, we hereby bestow the Distinguished Columbia Faculty Award on Professor Neslihan Şenocak.

## Josef Sorett

Josef Sorett is an Associate Professor of Religion and African-American Studies at Columbia University, where he also directs the Center on African-American Religion, Sexual Politics, and Social Justice. As an interdisciplinary scholar of religion and race in the Americas, Professor Sorett employs primarily historical and literary approaches to the study of religion in black communities and cultures in the United States. In his time at Columbia, he has distinguished himself as an original and brilliant scholar, devoted teacher, and active citizen of the University.

A dedicated academic and educator, Professor Sorett has shaped the future of both Religion and African-American Studies at Columbia and is central to the growth and development of both fields. Professor Sorett has restructured and modernized the Introduction to African-American Studies course, which has resulted in greater interest and enrollment. The course now meets requirements for Columbia's Global Core, introducing the field of African-American Studies to larger numbers of undergraduates.

Students consistently praise Professor Sorett's passion and knowledge of the material, and several of those who have been inspired by his teaching have gone on to become African-American Studies majors. He has also built a core group of courses in the study of African-American religion and serves as an adviser to undergraduate and graduate students in Religion on their theses and dissertations. Since 2012, he has served tirelessly as the director of Undergraduate Studies for the Institute for Research in African-American Studies (IRAAS). His attention to rising scholars has led to an increase in the number of students nominated for and receiving various fellowships and prizes.

Professor Sorett has been described by a colleague as "one of our bright lights." In recognition of his dedication to improving his fields of study and providing opportunities and successes for undergraduate and graduate students, we hereby bestow the Distinguished Columbia Faculty Award on Professor Josef Sorett.

## Marc Van De Mieroop

Professor Marc Van De Mieroop is a specialist of the history of the ancient Near East, from the beginnings of the written word to the age of Alexander of Macedon. He is the author of more than one hundred articles and reviews and has published numerous books on various aspects of ancient Near Eastern history, Egyptian history, and world history. Many of his publications have been recognized as classics, and essential reading in the field.

Professor Van De Mieroop has chaired two departments and trained a line of historians of the ancient Near East in everything from cuneiform Sumerian and Akkadian to the most conceptually sophisticated historical methodology. Few members of the History Department have taught more undergraduates during their teaching careers than Professor Van De Mieroop. His course on Ancient Egypt draws approximately four hundred students each semester.

Just as his writing is marked by its clarity, lucidity, and talent for explaining difficult material in accessible terms, so too is his teaching focused on distilling complex material to his students. He has a keen focus on the needs of his students and is never hesitant to tackle large topics. Professor Van De Mieroop has spearheaded his departmental experiment with a "world" history survey and taught the first half of the course. His teaching has often included highly technical seminars in Sumerian and Akkadian languages and texts, topics rarely taught anywhere else in the country. He has also advised Ph.D. candidates over the years, helping them gain placement in a field that is exceedingly demanding and competitive.

In recognition of his monumental contributions to his field, and the countless students he has influenced with his teaching and expertise, we hereby bestow the Distinguished Columbia Faculty Award on Professor Marc Van De Mieroop.



# PAST RECIPIENTS OF THE DISTINGUISHED COLUMBIA FACULTY AWARDS

2016–2017

Elisheva Carlebach, *Jewish History, Culture, and Society*

James Curley, *Psychology*

Valentina Izmirlieva, *Slavic Literature and Culture*

Matthew P. McKelway, *Japanese Art History*

Samuel K. Roberts, *History and of Sociomedical Sciences*

Rachel Rosen, *Physics*

Dustin Rubenstein, *Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Biology*

Oliver Simons, *Germanic Languages*

2015–2016

Marcel Agüeros, *Astronomy*

Gil Anidjar, *Religion*

Susan L. Boynton, *Music*

Terence N. D'Altroy, *Archaeology*

Timothy Donnelly, *Writing*

Michael Golston, *English Comparative Literature*

Bärbel Hönlisch, *Earth & Environmental Sciences*

Dana Pe'er, *Biological Sciences*

2014–2015

Brian Cole, *Physics*

Patricia Dailey, *English and Comparative Literature*

Souleymane Bachir Diagne, *French and Philosophy*

Bradford Garton, *Music*

Stathis Gourgouris, *Classics, English, Comparative Literature and Society*

Liza Knapp, *Slavic Languages*

Rebecca Kobrin, *American Jewish History*

Feng Li, *Early Chinese History and Archaeology*

Molly Murray, *English and Comparative Literature*

Carol Rovane, *Philosophy*

Dorothea von Mücke, *Germanic Languages and Literatures*

2013–2014

Elizabeth Blackmar, *History*

Virginia Page Fortna, *Political Science*

Erik Gray, *English and Comparative Literature*

Peter Kelemen, *Earth and Environmental Sciences*

Ioannis Mylonopoulos, *Art History and Archaeology*

Christine Philliou, *History*

Valerie Purdie-Vaughns, *Psychology*

Joanna Stalnakier, *French and Romance Philology*

Brent Stockwell, *Biological Sciences and Chemistry*

Rafael Yuste, *Biology and Neuroscience*

2012–2013

Frances A. Champagne, *Psychology*

Jean Cohen, *Political Science*

Giuseppe Gerbino, *Music*

Don Jay Melnick, *Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology*

Rosalind C. Morris, *Anthropology*

Gerard Parkin, *Chemistry*

Caterina Pizzigoni, *History*

Ovidiu Savin, *Mathematics*

Melissa Schwartzberg, *Political Science*

Joseph Slaughter, *English and Comparative Literature*

2011–2012

Fredrick C. Harris, *Political Science*

Laura Kaufman, *Chemistry*

Holger A. Klein, *Art History and Archaeology*

Mark Mazower, *History*

Frances Negrón-Muntaner, *English and Comparative Literature*

Cathy Popkin, *Slavic Languages*

Emmanuelle Saada, *French and Romance Philology*

Robert Y. Shapiro, *Political Science*

Daphna Shohamy, *Psychology*

2010–2011

Rachel Adams, *English and Comparative Literature*

Stuart Firestein, *Biological Sciences*

Mahmood Mamdani, *Government and*

*Anthropology*

Stephen Murray, *Medieval Art History*

Paul Olsen, *Earth and Environmental Sciences*

Susan Pedersen, *Core Curriculum*

Achille Varzi, *Philosophy*

Katharina Volk, *Classics*

2009–2010

Stefan Andriopoulos, *Germanic Languages*

Harmen J. Bussemaker, *Biological Sciences*

Julie A. Crawford, *English and Comparative Literature*

Lydia Goehr, *Philosophy*

Steven L. Goldstein, *Earth and Environmental Sciences*

Ruben L. Gonzalez Jr., *Chemistry*

David A. Scott, *Anthropology*

2008–2009

Francesco de Angelis, *Art History and Archaeology*

Christopher Brown, *History*

Brent Edwards, *English and Comparative Literature*

Darcy Kelley, *Biological Sciences*

Philip Kitcher, *Philosophy*

Kevin Ochsner, *Psychology*

Nadia Urbinati, *Political Science*

2007–2008

Lila Abu-Lughod, *Anthropology*

Zainab Bahrani, *Art History and Archaeology*

Nicholas Dame, *English and Comparative Literature*

Peter deMenocal, *Earth and Environmental Sciences*

Sharon Marcus, *English and*

*Comparative Literature*

Amber Miller, *Physics*

Shahid Naeem, *Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Biology*

Colin Nuckolls, *Chemistry*

Pablo Piccato, *History*

Sudhir Venkatesh, *Sociology*

Katja Vogt, *Philosophy*

2006–2007

Virginia W. Cornish, *Chemistry*

Geraldine Downey, *Psychology*

Robert E. Harrist Jr., *Art History and Archaeology*

Rashid Khalidi, *History*

Philip Kim, *Physics*

Samuel A. Moyn, *History*

Robert G. O'Meally, *English and Comparative Literature*

Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *Anthropology*

Xavier Sala-i-Martin, *Economics*

Wei Shang, *East Asian Languages and Cultures*

2005–2006

Janet M. Conrad, *Physics*

Jonathan K. Crary, *Art History and Archaeology*

Jenny M. Davidson, *English and Comparative Literature*

Gil Eyal, *Sociology*

Pierre Force, *French and Romance Philology*

Farah Jasmine Griffin, *English and Comparative Literature*

Matthew L. Jones, *History*

James L. Leighton, *Chemistry*

Eric Jean-Paul Urban, *Mathematics*

Gareth David Williams, *Classics*

# GERRY LENFEST

'58LAW, '09HON

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A graduate of Washington and Lee University and Columbia Law School, Mr. Lenfest practiced law at the New York firm of Davis Polk & Wardwell before becoming corporate counsel of Walter Annenberg's Triangle Publications in 1965. In 1970, he was made managing director of the company's communications division, then consisting of *Seventeen* magazine and Triangle's cable television properties. In 1974, he started Lenfest Communications with the purchase of two cable television companies from Mr. Annenberg. In 2000, the company, with over 1.2 million subscribing homes, was sold to COMCAST Corporation.

Mr. Lenfest has been active in Law School affairs since his graduation, and received the School's Distinguished Achievement Award in 1997. He is permanent president of his class. In 2011, Mr. Lenfest was awarded the Alexander Hamilton Medal. He served on the Columbia Law School Board of Visitors from 1988 to 2000, and the Law School Association Board from 1969 to 1973. Mr. Lenfest is also a member of the Dean's Council of the Law School, and he has been a member of the University's Board of Trustees since 2001.

In addition, he serves or has served on the boards and councils of many nonprofit organizations, including the Philadelphia Museum of Art, where he serves as chairman of the board of trustees, chairman of the James Madison Council of the Library of Congress, and chairman of the board of trustees of the Curtis Institute of Music. He is a past trustee of Washington and Lee University and past president of the board of Mercersburg Academy.