

# LAURA SPARKS

English Department  
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## ACADEMIC POSITIONS

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**Associate Professor**, Composition and Rhetoric, English Department, California State University, Chico. 2020-Present.

**Assistant Professor**, Composition and Rhetoric, English Department, California State University, Chico. 2014-2020.

## EDUCATION

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**PhD English**, Indiana University, Bloomington. Concentration in Composition, Literacy, and Culture. Minor in Cultural Studies. Dissertation: "Rhetoric in the Time of Torture." Directed by John L. Schilb. May 2014.

**MA English**, California State University, Chico. Emphasis in Language and Literacy. Thesis: "The Crisis Model: A Critical Analysis of Government Discourses of Survival." Directed by Cynthia Wolf. May 2008.

**BA English**, Cum Laude. California State University, Chico. May 2004.

## PUBLICATIONS

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Sparks, Laura. [\*Rhetoric in the Time of Torture\*](#). Rowman & Littlefield. Oct 2023.

Sparks, Laura. "Severe Pain and Good Faith: Rethinking Just War Theory's 'Right Intention' in the Bush-Era Torture Memos." *LIT: Literary Interpretation Theory*. 2023.

Sparks, Laura and Kim Jaxon. "Community-Building Through Embedded Writing Support in FYC." *Composition & Rhetoric in Contentious Times*, eds. Rachel McCabe and Jennifer Juskiewicz. Utah State UP. 2023.

Jaxon, Kim, Laura Sparks, and Chris Fosen. "Epic Learning in a "Jumbo" Writing Course." *Co-requisite Writing Courses: Equity and Access*, Special Issue of *Composition Studies*. Aug 2020.

Sparks Laura. "Lively, Dangerous Webs: Activism, Actancy, and Delivery in Digital Human Rights Rhetoric." *Writing New Material for Digital Culture*, Special Issue of *Trace: A Journal of Writing, Media, and Ecology*. Mar 2020.

Sparks, Laura. "Rhetoric, Torture, and Surveillance Time." *Screen Bodies: The Journal of Embodiment, Media Arts, and Technology*. Dec 2019.

Sparks, Laura. "Digital Stories About the Environment: A 'How To' Connecting Digital Composing Practices with Environmental Rhetoric." *Bridging the Gap? Digital Media in the Humanities Classroom*, Special Issue of *Interdisciplinary Humanities*. Feb 2020.

Sparks, Laura. "The Body Image: Selfies, SkinneePix, and Our Malleable Digital Bodies." U of Michigan *Digital Rhetoric Collaborative* Blog Carnival: "Material and Digital Rhetorics: Openings for Feminist Action," digitalrhetoriccollaborative.org, Dec 10, 2017.

Sparks, Laura. "Abu Ghraib and the Temporal Logic of Interruption." *Competing Narratives on/of Violence in a Globalizing World*, Special Issue of *Journal of Contemporary Poetics*, 2017.

Sparks, Laura. "Re-seeing Abu Ghraib: Cynical Rhetoric as Civic Engagement." *Present Tense: A Journal of Rhetoric in Society*, Sp 2016.

Sparks, Laura. "The Laugh of Recognition: Ethical Frames and Torture at Abu Ghraib." Essay. *Re/Framing Identifications*. Rhetoric Society of America Biennial Conference Proceedings (competitively selected). Ed. Michelle Ballif. Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2014.

### **Reviews**

Sparks, Laura. "Review of *Pathways to Pacifism and Antiwar Activism among U.S. Veterans: The Role of Moral Identity in Personal Transformation* by Julie Putnam Hart and Anjel N. Stough-Hunter." Book Review. *Journal of Veterans Studies*, Mar 14, 2019.

Sparks, Laura. Panel, "Auditing the Discipline: The Ethical and Institutional Risks of Disciplining Activism & Advocacy," Conference on College Composition and Communication. Review. *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*. technorhetoric.net, 2015.

Sparks, Laura. Panel, "Droopy, Performative, Mediated, Sequestered: Embodied Gateways Toward Interventionist Rhetorics," Conference on College Composition and Communication. Review. *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*. technorhetoric.net, 2012.

### **Instructor Manual Contributions**

Sparks, Laura. Selections in *Arguing About Literature, Instructor Manual*. Co-authored with John L. Schilb and John Clifford. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2014, 2016, 2020, 2023.

Sparks, Laura. Selections in *Making Literature Matter, Instructor Manual*. Co-authored with John L. Schilb and John Clifford. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2015, 2018.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

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### **National Conferences**

"Hope in Numbers: Nonscalability and Transformative Relationships in the First-Year Composition Jumbo," Co-written with Kim Jaxon. *Conference on College Composition and Communication*, Chicago, IL, Feb 2023.

"The Casualties of Surveillance Time," *Rhetoric Society of America Conference*, Baltimore, MD, May 2022.

"Bodies Mined for Data: On Rhetoric, Torture, and Surveillance Time," *Rhetoric Society of America Conference*, Portland, OR, May 2020. Accepted. Conference canceled due to Covid-19.

"Execute Justice, Not People': Rhetorical Delivery and the Digital Matter of Human Rights Activism," *Conference on College Composition and Communication*, Pittsburgh, PA, Mar 2019.

“Severe Pain and Good Faith: Rethinking Just War Theory’s ‘Right Intention’ in the Bush-Era Torture Memos,” *Rhetoric Society of America Conference*, Minneapolis, MN, Jun 3, 2018.

“Rhetoric and Invention in a Time of Torture.” Panel: “Composing in Repair: What We Learn from Makers and Making.” *Conference on College Composition and Communication*, Portland, OR, Mar 18, 2017.

“Digging Through the Ashes,” Co-written with Tom Fox. *Watson Conference*, University of Louisville, Oct 2016.

“Making Meaning: Invitation to Make in Theory and Practice,” *Digital Media and Learning Conference*, University of California, Irvine, Oct 7, 2016.

“The Ghosts of Abu Ghraib: On Violence and Rhetorical Lifeworlds.” Panel: “Structure of Change: Rhetoric and Imprisonment in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Prison Activism.” *Rhetoric Society of America Conference*, Atlanta, GA, May 27, 2016.

“The Body Image: Selfies, SkinneePix, and Our Malleable Digital Bodies,” *Conference on College Composition and Communication*, Tampa, FL, Mar 19, 2015.

“Rewriting Plato’s Legacy: Ethics, Rhetoric, and Writing Studies,” Pre-Conference Workshop, *Conference on College Composition and Communication*, Tampa, FL, Mar 18, 2015.

“Activism, Actancy, and Delivery in Digital Human Rights Rhetoric,” *Rhetoric Society of America Conference*, San Antonio, TX, May 22-26, 2014, Presenter and Panel Organizer.

“Rhetoric, Kairos, and the Making of the World,” *Rhetoric Society of America Conference*, San Antonio, TX, May 22-26, 2014.

“Made and Unmade After Abu Ghraib: Digital Media and the Rhetoric of Torture,” *Conference on College Composition and Communication*, Las Vegas, NV, Mar 16, 2013.

“The Laugh of Recognition: Ethical Frames and Torture at Abu Ghraib,” *Rhetoric Society of America Conference*, Philadelphia, PA, May 26, 2012.

“Citizen Cynics: Encountering Abu Ghraib, Again,” *Conference on College Composition and Communication*, St. Louis, MO, Mar 22, 2012.

“Rhetorical Witnessing and Public Performance in Anne Askew's *Examinations*,” *Conference on College Composition and Communication*, Atlanta, GA, Apr 9, 2011, Presenter and Panel Organizer.

“Related Objects-Related Cultures-Shop Online: Commodification and the Online Museum,” *Conference on College Composition and Communication*, Louisville, KY, Mar 19, 2010.

“Terror-Talk: Analyzing Government Discourses of Fear,” *Conference on College Composition and Communication*, Chicago, IL, Mar 23, 2006.

### ***Invited Talks / Workshops***

Faculty Writing Community Facilitator, Office of Fac Dev, CSU, Chico, Sp 2021.

“‘Scrolling is Inevitable, Like Falling’: Digital Rhetoric in Human Rights Activism,” Digital Humanities Speaker Series, CSU, Chico, Nov 6, 2019.

“Community-Building Through Embedded Writing Support in FYC,” *IU English Conference on “The Future(s) of the Field,”* Department of English, Indiana University, Apr 5-6, 2019.

“Facilitating Peer Response,” Academy E-Learning, CSU, Chico, Jun 8, 2016.

“How We Make the World,” English Graduate Student Council Symposium, CSU, Chico, Nov 4, 2015, Keynote Speaker.

“What *You* Can Do for the Writing Center: Preparing Your Students for Writing Workshops,” Sara Varnum Institute for Instructional Excellence: A Conference for Part-Time Faculty, Chemeketa Community College, Apr 2008.

## RESEARCH AWARDS / GRANTS

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- READI, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Travel Grant, CSU, Chico, 2022-2023.
- Sabbatical Research Award, Spring 2022.
- Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activities (RSCA) Grant Recipient, CSU system-wide, 2016-2017.
- Writing Proficiency/Writing Intensive Faculty Learning Community Grant Co-Recipient, Funded by CELT Learning Enhancement Grant, CSU, Chico, 2016-2017.
- Culbertson Dissertation Fellow, Department of English, Indiana University, 2012-2013.

## SERVICE

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### ***California State University, Chico, 2014-Present***

- Peer Reviewer, *Conference on College Composition and Communication*
- Peer Reviewer, *Prompt: A Journal of Academic Writing Assignments*
- Peer Reviewer, *Journal of Veteran Studies*
- Peer Reviewer, *Journal of Global Literacies, Technologies, and Emerging Pedagogies*
- Peer Reviewer, Connected Learning Summit, UC Irvine, Mar 2019.
- Peer Reviewer, Connected Learning Summit, MIT Media Lab, Jan 2018.
- Peer Reviewer, CCCC (Conference on College Composition and Communication) Regional Summer Conference, San José State University, Feb 2017.
- Academic Senate, Fa 2019-2022

## PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

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- National Council for Teachers of English
- Rhetoric Society of America
- National Council of Writing Program Administrators