Vaughn Joy

gvaughnjoy@gmail.com
Needham, MA

Education & Experience

Education

University of London – University College London (UCL), London, United Kingdom
Ph.D. History, November 2024
Dissertation Title: "A Cold War Christmas: Reflections of American Politics and Culture in Hollywood Christmas Films, 1946-1961"
Supervisors: Melvyn Stokes and Alex Goodall
Committee: Thomas Doherty (Brandeis University) and Nick Witham (UCL)

University of London – UCL, London, United Kingdom
M.A. History, 2018
Thesis Title: "Venus in Manhattan: A Study of Gender Relations in Post-WWII New York Through Comics"

University of Dublin – Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland
M.Phil. Classics, 2017
Thesis Title: "Reproductive Demonesses: Mental Escapism from Reproductive Failures in the Ancient World"

La Salle University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States of America
B. A. History & B.A. Classical Languages, 2016

Professional Appointments

Associate Lecturer, University of Massachusetts Boston, 2026 – Present
Lecturer, Massasoit Community College, 2026 – Present
Social Media Manager, Northeast Modern Languages Association, 2026 – Present
Senior Post-Graduate Teaching Assistant, UCL, 2020 – 2024

Fellowships

Fellow of the Higher Education Academy for Excellency in Teaching, 2024

Certifications

Online Teacher Training Institute Certificate, Canvas, September 2026
HarvardX Computer Science 50 Certificate, 2025
HarvardX Introduction to Digital Humanities Certificate, 2025

Research

Peer-Reviewed Publications

Books

Selling Out Santa: Hollywood Christmas Films in the Age of McCarthy, De Gruyter, November 2025. Open Access funded by UCL.

Work in progress project on nostalgia, portrayals of 1950s Americana in film, TV, and music, and public cultural memory

Articles

"Selling Santa: How *Miracle on 34th Street* (1947) Stole and Rebranded Christmas." *Comparative American Studies An International Journal*, Taylor & Francis, October 2023, https://doi.org/10.1080/14775700.2023.2267337. Open Access funded by UCL.

"Jokes and Mirrors: Using Cartoons as Primary Sources for Historical Research." Adam Matthew Digital, SAGE Research Methods, December 2021. https://doi.org/10.47594/RMPS_0065.

Chapters

"Cosmic Microcosms: Story Structure Across the Cinematic Universe" in Collection on *Andor*, edited by Samuel Thomas and Arin Keeble (Manchester University Press), Forthcoming, 2028].

(Co-Authored) Vaughn Joy and Kassie Jo Baron. "Merry Mill Girls: Christmas and Industrialization in 19th Century New England" in *Dreaming of Christmas: Rediscovering the Nineteenth-Century Anglo-American Christmas Story*, edited by Monika Elbert and Thomas Ruys Smith (University of Alabama Press), [Forthcoming, 2027].

"Love, Marriage, and a Snow-Covered Carriage: Foundations of the Romantic Christmas Genre in Post-HUAC Hollywood, 1949-1954" in *Under the Mistletoe: Holiday Romance Films*, edited by Liz W. Faber (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2024).

(Co-Authored) Vaughn Joy and A. Stuart-Thompson. "*O Ornitólogo*, João Pedro Rodrigues (2016)" in *Um Olhar Português: Cinema e Natureza no Século XXI*, edited by Filipa Rosário and José Duarte (Lisbon: Editora Documenta/Sistema Solar, 2024).

Book Review

"Review: *The Metropolitan Police and the British Film Industry, 1919-1956* by Alex Rock (BFI Collection)." *Twentieth Century British History*, Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/hwae001.

Invited Lectures

"Back to the Retrofuture: Weaponized Nostalgia in *The Stepford Wives* (1972, 1975, & 2004)." Dina G. Malgeri Modern American Society and Culture Seminar Series, Massachusetts Historical Society, Fall 2026.

"From Stepford, CT to Yesteryear Ranch: A Cultural History of Women's Roles, Choices, and Perceptions." West Hartford Reads Series, West Hartford Library, October 2026.

"*Selling Out Santa*: Christmas Films, McCarthyism, and Grad School." Graduate English Colloquium at Fitchburg State University, December 2025.

Inaugural Olga Peterson Memorial Keynote Address. 'Tis the Season: Christmas in Popular Culture, 1900-2000 Conference. Shasta College, November 2025.

Panels, Papers, and Talks

"Public Scholarship: Commitment & Motivation" at Northeast Modern Language Association (NeMLA), Newport, RI, March 2027.

Book Talk: "*Selling Out Santa*" at Needham Public Library, Needham, MA, September 2026.

"'No Cheeses for Us Meeces': Food Abundance and Scarcity Across Adaptations of *A Christmas Carol*" at NeMLA, Pittsburgh, PA, March 2026.

Book Talk: "*Selling Out Santa*" at the Edgartown Public Library, Edgartown, MA, December 2025.

"Sexual Acts of Resistance: Euphemism and Subversion in Hollywood Cinema Under the Hays Code" at NeMLA, Boston, MA, March 2024.

"Heart-Shaped Hot Tubs and Coin-Operated Beds: Hollywood's Honeymoon Destination, 1940-1980" at NeMLA, Niagara Falls, NY, March 2023.

"'Satisfying Fundamental Urges': Competing Small-Town Philosophies in *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946)" at NeMLA, Baltimore, MD, March 2022.

"'You'll Be Living Rent Free': Disney's Villainous Marriage Proposal in *Babes in Toyland* (1961)" at Archival Kismet Conference, Mississippi State University, April 2021.

International

"Bird's Eye View: The Ecological Queering and Eroticisation of the Holy Trinity in *O Ornitólogo* (2016)" at Imagining Queer Ecologies Symposium, British Society for Literature and Science, University of Oxford, December 2023.

"Capra-Vision: The Cinematography and Authorial Gaze of Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946)" at Experiencing Visual Images, UCL, November 2022.

"Dressing Up New York: Meeting Cosmopolitan Standards in *Pocketful of Miracles* (1961)" at Cosmopolitan Aspirations in English-Speaking Cinema and Television, Société pour l'Enseignement et la Recherche du Cinéma Anglophone, Universidad de Zaragoza, September 2021.

"Starry-Eyed Dreamers: Capitalistic Idealism in *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946)" at Historical Fiction, Fictional History, and Historical Reality International Conference, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, March 2020.

"The Common Man's Capitalist: George Bailey and the Question of Communist Subversion in *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946)" at Trinity History Con, Trinity College Dublin, November 2019.

Publishing and Research Awards

Open Access Funding for Manuscript – UCL, 2025
Open Access Funding for Journal Article – UCL, 2023
UCL Travel Grant, 2022, 2023

Teaching

Courses Taught

UMass Boston, 2026 – Present

"Witches and Witch-Hunts," Fall 2026

200-level Intermediate Seminar on cultural study skills including research design, question asking, critical and creative thinking skills, film and printed art analysis, and historical document analysis centered on the topic of witches and witch-hunts in history and culture

Massasoit Community College, 2026 – Present

"World History I," Fall 2026

100-level course on world history from origins of civilization to the Post-Classical Era with emphases on philosophies, religions, political and

economic systems, cross-cultural interactions and trade, and the developments of science and technology

UCL, 2020 – 2024

"Making History," Spring 2022, 2023, 2024

First-year course on spatial, material, and public history theories and methods, assessed by two creative and collaborative public scholarship outputs

"Writing History," UCL, Fall 2020, 2021

First-year course on how to write an academic history essay for first-year students with introductions to structure, research, and historiographical engagement

Curriculum Development

Designed a new project track for "Making History" on the changing concept of the "home" in Britain between 1800 and the present day

Designed a new project track for "Making History" on the gendered relationship between modern London and the ancient Egyptian monuments in the city

Guest Professor

"Introduction to Film Theory, Analysis, and Hollywood History." 90-minute lecture at University of Texas at Austin for Dr. Michael Webber's interdisciplinary engineering course "Energy at the Movies", August 2023.

Pedagogical Training and Professional Development

Massasoit Monthly Pedagogy Reading Group, Fall 2026
UMass Boston Research Across the Curriculum, Information Processing Training, September, 2026
Massasoit Critical and Creative Thinking Training Workshop, September 2026
American Historical Association Advocacy 101 Training Workshop, June 2026
Scholars Strategy Network Convening, June 2026
UCL Collaborative Approaches to Teaching and Learning – DEI, June 2024
UCL Teaching Associate Programme – DEI, April – May 2024
UCL Arena IDEAs Workshop, March 2024
UCL History Assessment and Feedback Training, November 2020, 2021
UCL History Inclusivity Training, October 2020

Public Humanities

Professional Affiliations

Scholars Strategy Network Member 2026

Public Scholarship

Black & White & Read All Over. September 2025 – Present

Creator, designer, and administrator of a public scholarly website that hosts multiple American Studies publications, as well as resources for first-generation academics, independent scholars, grad students, and early career researchers to connect them with open access research, publication, promotional, and professional opportunities. The site also has a guide for how to add public scholarship to one's repertoire and offers advice on finding the best medium for one's research and developing a public scholarly voice.

Review Roulette. September 2023 – Present

A weekly film review with the goal of encouraging media literacy among the public and breaking down barriers between academic film criticism and non-specialist viewer responses. Having begun with an introductory methodology post on 13 approaches to film analysis with definitions and examples of questions for consideration, I watch a film from the 20th century and randomly select an approach from that list with which to review it.

"Archives, McCarthyism, and the Legendary Pink Capra-Corn: An Excerpt from *Selling Out Santa: Hollywood Christmas Films in the Age of McCarthy*," *Pittsburgh Review of Books*, December 2025.

"Silent Night, Political Night: Christmas Films in Cold War America," De Gruyter Conversations, December 2025.

"To Invent Immortality: *Frankenstein* Yearns to Live," Analysis of adaptations of the novel from silents to Guillermo del Toro's 2025 film. *Contingent* magazine, November 2025.

"'Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Tom Hanks fan club?': Modern McCarthyism in America." Clio and the Contemporary, September 2025.

"How Monopolies are Making TV Worse." *ProMarket* – University of Chicago School of Business, November 2023.

"The WGA Strike Is Part of a Recurring Pattern When Technology Changes." Made by History – *The Washington Post*, May 2023.

"The Retail World at the Heart of *Miracle on 34th Street* No Longer Exists." Made by History – *The Washington Post*, December 2022.

"The Paramount Decrees and the Deregulation of Hollywood Studios." *ProMarket* – University of Chicago School of Business, December 2022.

"Monopolywood: Why the Paramount Accords Should Not Be Repealed." *Red Pepper Magazine*, December 2022.

"Christmas Films as Reflections of American History, Part III: Perfecting the Paradigm from the 1990s to the Present." Clio and the Contemporary, December 2021.

"Christmas Films as Reflections of American History, Part II: Stop-Motion, Action, and Horror in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s." Clio and the Contemporary, December 2021.

"Christmas Films as Reflections of American History, Part I: Dickens, Romance, and the US Military in the 1940s and 50s." Clio and the Contemporary, December 2021.

Media Projects and Appearances

Researcher and Host, *Impressions of America* Podcast, 2020 – 2023

Bi-weekly podcast dedicated to 20th and 21st century US history, focusing on politics past and present, culture, social histories, economics, and perceptions of "Americanism" throughout the century, occasionally spotlighting journalists, historians, economists, and Pulitzer Prize winning authors as guest hosts and interviewees such as Ellen Schrecker and Louis Menand

Researcher and Host, *The Joy of Star Wars* Podcast, 2022 –2023

Podcast dedicated to 20th and 21st century US history through the lens of *Star Wars*, exploring topics and themes such as justice, indoctrination, political corruption, and the concept of "joy"

Selected Broadcast Appearances

"Which chimney did Santa come down?" Interviewee, *Q&Abe* Podcast, December 18, 2025

"Christmas Films, the Early Cold War & the FBI," Interviewee, *Unsung History* Podcast, December 15, 2025

"*Yankee Doodle Dandy* (1942) w/ Dr. Vaughn Joy," Interviewee, *You're Missing Out: A National Film Registry Podcast*, December 11, 2025

"Public Scholarship," Interviewee, *The Social Academic Podcast*, September 29, 2025

"What Do Christmas Films Tell Us About America?" Interviewee, *America: A History Podcast*, December 10, 2024

"How is Barbie Still Relevant?" Interviewee, *America: A History Podcast*, August 22, 2024

Film Review: "*A Christmas Story*," Interviewee, *Historians at the Movies* Podcast, December 20, 2023

"Holiday Joy and Cold War Ideology," Interviewee, *The Show* – NPR Broadcast, December 22, 2022

"Holidays on Film," Interviewee, *Braaains* Podcast, December 13, 2022

"The StarWarstorian's Craft with Chris Kempshall and Vaughn Joy," Interviewee, *A Larger View of the Force* Podcast, October 3, 2022

"LIVE Christmas Eve Show with Vaughn Joy," Interviewee, *Unsung History* Podcast, December 24, 2021

Film Review: "*The Trial of the Chicago 7* with Katie Halper and *Impressions of America*," Guest Host, *Struggle Session* Podcast, November 16, 2020

Professional Service

Students and Department

Course advisement – Mentored students who wanted to apply to a different UCL program decide which and why, helped build their applications, and wrote letters of recommendation on their behalf to facilitate the transfer

Co-Convenor of Weekly Theory & Methods Reading Group, UCL History, 2020 – 2022
Seminars included conversations around black feminist literature and pedagogy (bell hooks), anthropological discussions of Western terminologies (Emmerson), and hegemony and state-apparatuses (Marx, Gramsci, Althusser)

University

University & College Union Departmental PGTA Representative, UCL, 2021 – 2024
Post-Graduate Research Academic Representative, UCL History, 2021 – 2022

Student Experience Panel – Post-Graduate Panelist, UCL 2018
Graduate Student Union – Representative, Trinity College Dublin, 2016 – 2017

Profession

Editorial Board Member, *International Journal of Disney Studies*, May 2026 – Present

Northeast Modern Language Association
Organizer of monthly Interdisciplinary Roundtable Discussion Series
"Interdisciplinarity in the Spotlight," April 2026 – Present
Social Media Manager, March 2026 – Present
Organizer of a Book Forum in Celebration of NeMLA Authors with Recent Publications, March 2026
Organizer of a Colloquium of Summer Fellows, March 2026

Professional Development Workshops Hosted

"Public Scholarship for the Humanities: How and Why," at NeMLA, Newport, RI, March 2027.
"Improvisation and Innovation: New Possibilities for Public Scholarship," at American Studies Association, Chicago, IL, October 2026.

Panels Organized and Chaired

Chair: "Feast or Famine: Food in Our Culture" at NeMLA, Pittsburgh, PA, 2026.
Chair: "'But your kids are gonna love it': Nostalgic Extremism in Depictions of the 1950s" at NeMLA, Boston, MA, 2024.