

Rachel Gabara

Department of Romance Languages
University of Georgia

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Academic Employment

- Nancy Gillespie Brining Professor in French, University of Georgia (2024 - current)
- Assistant and Associate Professor of French, University of Georgia (2005 - 2024)
- Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature, Princeton University (2000 - 2005)

Education

- Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and Graduate Certificate in Film Studies, University of Michigan – Ann Arbor, 2000
- Maîtrise and Diplôme d’Études Approfondies in Comparative Literature, Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris III, 1992 and 1993
- B.A. in Comparative Literature, Yale University, 1991

Fields of specialization

African and European cinema and literature in French; Documentary; Colonial and postcolonial studies

Publications

Books

Documentary Objectives: Filming Africa from Colonialism to Independence. Indiana University Press, forthcoming February 3, 2026. 354 pp.

From Split to Screened Selves: French and Francophone Autobiography in the Third Person. Stanford University Press, 2006. 232 pp.

- Winner, South Atlantic Modern Language Association Studies Book Award, 2007.

Selected Articles

- “African Film Criticism in the Colonial Capital, 1957-1967.” In *Global Movie Magazine Networks*, edited by Kelley Conway and Eric Hoyt, 184-201. University of California Press, 2025.
- “Cinephobia/Cinephilia: Modernism and Sub-Saharan African Film.” *Modernism/modernity* Print Plus (2024). <https://modernismmodernity.org/forums/posts/gabara-cinephobia-cinephilia-modernism-sub-saharan-african-film>.
- “*Restituer*: sharing colonial films.” *Contemporary French Civilization* 48, no. 1 (2023): 7-26.

- “Hunting Images: Sub-Saharan Africa in Early French Cinema.” *French Screen Studies* 23, no. 4 (2023): 249-269.
 - Winner, British Association of Film, Television, and Screen Studies (BAFTSS) Best Journal Article Award, 2023.
- “Complex Realism: Paulin Soumanou Vieyra and the Emergence of West African Documentary Film.” *Black Camera* 11, no. 2 (2020): 32-59.
- “From Ethnography to Essay: Realism, Reflexivity, and African Documentary Film.” In *A Companion to African Cinema*, edited by Kenneth Harrow and Carmela Garritano, 358-378. Wiley-Blackwell, 2018.
- “Abderrahmane Sissako: On the Politics of African Auteurs.” In *The Global Auteur: Politics and Philosophy in 21st Century Cinema*, edited by Jeremi Szaniawski and Seung-hoon Jeong, 43-60. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016.
- “Mixing Impossible Genres: David Achkar and African Autobiographical Documentary” (revised reprint). In *The Documentary Film Reader*, edited by Jonathan Kahana, 924-937. Oxford University Press, 2016.
- “War by Documentary.” *Romance Notes* 55, no. 3 (2015): 409-423.
- “Interrogating Images: *Lumumba: Death of the Prophet* as Reflexive Autobiographical Documentary.” In *Raoul Peck: Power, Politics, and the Cinematic Imagination*, edited by Toni Pressley-Sanon and Sophie Saint-Just, 153-170. Lexington Books, 2015.
- “Abderrahmane Sissako: Second and Third Cinema in the First Person.” In *Global Art Cinema: New Theories and Histories*, edited by Karl Schoonover and Rosalind Galt, 320-333. Oxford University Press, 2010.
- “‘A Poetics of Refusals’: Neorealism from Italy to Africa.” *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 23, no. 3 (2006): 201-215.
- “Screening Autobiography: Cyril Collard’s *Nuits Fauves*.” *French Cultural Studies* 16, no. 1 (2005): 55-72.
- “Mixing Impossible Genres: David Achkar and African AutoBiographical Documentary.” *New Literary History* 34, no. 2 (2003): 331-352.

Recent Film and Book Reviews

- Review of Rosine Mbakam, *Chez Jolie Coiffure*. *African Studies Review* 63, no. 4 (2020): E84-E86.
- Review of Emmanuel Gras, *Makala*. *Docalogue* (2019). <https://docalogue.com/august-makala/>
- Review of Marc Allégret, *Travels in the Congo*. *African Studies Review* 62, no. 2 (2019): E51-E53.
- Review of Dieudo Hamadi, *National Diploma* and *Mama Colonel*. *African Studies Review* 62, no. 1 (2019): E53-E55.
- Review of Valérie Orlando, *New African Cinema*. *African Studies Review* 61, no. 1 (2018): 263-264.
- Review of *Africa First, Volume Two*. *African Studies Review* 57, no. 3 (2014): 254-258.

- Review of Osvalde Lewat, *Black Business. African Studies Review* 57, no. 1 (2014): 238-240.
- Review of *Textual and Visual Selves: Photography, Film, and Comic Art in French Autobiography. Studies in 20th and 21st Century Literature* 37, no. 2 (2013): 169-171.
- Review of Mahamat-Saleh Haroun, *A Screaming Man. African Studies Review* 56, no. 2 (2013): 227-228.
- Review of Timothy Corrigan, *The Essay Film: From Montaigne, After Marker. Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 30, no. 4 (2013): 371-374.
- Review of Réda Bensmaïa, *Experimental Nations: Or, the Invention of the Maghreb. The Translator* 15, no. 1 (2009): 185-189.

Major Awards and Fellowships

Albertine Foundation and French Embassy in the U.S. French in Higher Education Grant (with co-PI Jonathan Haddad), August 2024-July 2026.

National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship, July 2020-June 2021.

National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend, June-July 2018.

American Philosophical Society Franklin Research Grant, June-July 2018.

Fulbright Scholar Program African Regional Research Grant, January-June 2003.

University of Georgia

- Center for Teaching and Learning Senior Teaching Fellowship, 2022-23.
- Willson Center for Humanities and Arts Research Fellowship, 2021-22.
- Albert Christ-Janer Creative Research Award, 2021.
- M.G. Michael Award for Excellence in Research, 2018.
- Willson Center for Humanities and Arts Research Fellowship, 2013-14.

Princeton University

- Christian Gauss Fund University Preceptorship, 2003-05.
- Old Dominion Faculty Fellow (Humanities Council), 2003-04.

Recent Professional Activities

Early African Cinemas Lab, Indiana University

- Co-organizer of archival workshop on the collections of Paulin Soumanou Vieyra and Ousmane Sembene, May-June 2025.

African Studies Review

- Senior Film Review Editor, 2020-23.
- Film Review Editor, 2019-20, 2024.

American Council of Learned Societies

- Selection committee, ACLS Fellowship Program, 2026.
- Reviewer for Mellon/ACLS Early Career Fellowship Program, 2007.

German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

- Postdoctoral Researchers International Mobility Experience reviewer, 2023.

National Endowment for the Humanities

- Peer review panelist, Awards for Faculty, 2022.

Society for Cinema and Media Studies

- Co-chair, French and Francophone Scholarly Interest Group, 2016-19.

American Comparative Literature Association

- René Wellek Book Prize committee, 2013-15 (Chair, 2013-14).

Bronze Lens Film Festival and Consulate General of France in Atlanta

- Co-organized and moderated visit, screenings, student workshop, and public discussion with filmmaker Abderrahmane Sissako, SCAD Atlanta and High Museum of Art, November 2015.
- Translated and facilitated public discussion with filmmaker Dyana Gaye, October 2014.
- Translated and facilitated public discussion with filmmaker Mahamat-Saleh Haroun, November 2013.

University of Georgia

- Panelist for Willson Center Cinema Roundtable, "Watching the First Lumière Films, 130 Years Later," November 2025.
- Organized visit and discussion with curator El Hadji Malick Ndiaye, Director of the Théodore Monod Museum (Dakar, Senegal), October 2023.
- Organized visit and screening with filmmaker Alain Kassanda, October 2022.

- Organized visit and moderated roundtable discussion with scholar Maboula Soumahoro (University of Tours), January 2022.
- Organized visit and lecture by scholar Jessica Silbey (Northeastern School of Law), February 2018.
- Organized public discussion and film screening with graphic novelist Marguerite Abouet and filmmaker Alain Gomis, October 2017.
- Organized “Afro-French Studies Colloquium,” featuring visiting scholars Pap Ndiaye (Institut d’Etudes Politiques, Paris) and Philippe Gumpelowicz (University of Paris Saclay), April 2017.

Selected Service

University of Georgia

Department of Romance Languages:

- Undergraduate Coordinator, 2023-current.
- Graduate Coordinator, 2013-17.
- Chair, Search Committee, Assistant Professor of French, 2024-25.
- Faculty Coordinator, French Language Community, 2008-13.

Franklin College of Arts and Sciences:

- Associate Faculty, Willson Center for Humanities and Arts, 2016-current.
- Affiliate Faculty, African Studies Institute, 2005-current.
- Franklin College Dean’s Faculty Advisory Committee, 2024-26.
- Franklin College Language Task Force, 2024-26.
- Advisory Board, Willson Center for Humanities and Arts, 2014-17 (Chair, 2015-17).

Princeton University

- Committee for Film Studies, 2001-05.
- Interdepartmental Committee, African Studies, 2001-05.
- Departmental Representative (Undergraduate Chair), Comparative Literature, 2001-02.

Languages

French (near-native fluency), Russian and Polish (reading knowledge), Wolof (elementary).