

## Mark Thompson

PhD; UT-Dallas  
Humanities (History of Ideas)

### Education:

PhD	Humanities (History of Ideas)	UT-Dallas	2022
M.S.	Interdisc. Studies (Phil/Am. Studies)	University of North Texas	2010
M.A.	History	University of North Texas	2007

### Employment:

2022—Present: Adjunct-Professor of History and Humanities, Collin College  
2021—2022: Guest-Lecturer in Honors Department, UNT-Denton  
2018—Present: Adjunct-Professor of History, University of North Texas at Dallas  
2008—2021: Adjunct-Professor of History, Humanities, and Philosophy, North Central Texas College  
2013—2018: Teacher's Assistant, UT-Dallas (Intro to Humanities; United States History; History of Technology; Philosophy of Technology)  
2005—2007: Teacher's Assistant, University of North Texas (History)

### Current Research Activities:

-My current focus is twofold: an interdisciplinary look at how older categories of human responsibility, sin, and shame were transformed into psychological/biological categories due to the paradigm shift in the academic disciplines (pre- and post-Darwin). I will be using research from my dissertation to continue probing the monumental shifts from a culture based on "character" (in Warren Susman's terms) to one mainly dealing with "personality." The implications are important because of the rise of ethical relativism and the twentieth-century obsession with fulfilling Nietzsche's goal of moral transvaluation. The other is a methodological inquiry: the use of human desire to chart how "objective history"—in Peter Novick's phrase, the chase after "that noble dream"—can be fruitfully demonstrated if one looks at the common, human aspirations/desires that stimulate their behaviors/actions.

-**"Sci-Fi Meets Existentialism: *The Incredible Shrinking Man* and José Ortega y Gasset's *Philosophy of Life*."** This is being prepared for the 2025 Special Edition of *Film-Philosophy* entitled "Existentialist-Screen Philosophy."

**-“The Aesthetics of Survival: The Elective Affinities of Film Noir and Social Darwinism.”** In preparation for *Film & History*

**-“Human Desire and Objective History: The Return of ‘That Noble Dream’ to the Classroom.”** In preparation

**-Completed dissertation. Advisor: Daniel Wickberg.** Title is “Biologizing Eros: The Problem of Love in an Age of American Social Science, 1890s-1950s.” It is an interdisciplinary study of the impact of the social and natural sciences on conceptions of love and romance in the United States from the 1890s through the mid-twentieth century. My dissertation employs artifacts of mass culture (Hollywood films/pulp and detective fiction) and the key texts from American philosophers/psychologists (William James, G. Stanley Hall, and John Watson) to chart the trajectory of *eros* up to the late 1950s.

### **Specialized Areas:**

Modern Transatlantic Philosophy/Religion  
History of Western Philosophy/Psychology  
Concepts of Human Nature in History, Literature, and Philosophy  
United States Cultural and Intellectual History  
Film Studies  
General Humanities

### **Courses Taught: (2008-present)**

U. S. History (1<sup>st</sup> Half: “Age of Exploration —Civil War”)  
U. S. History (2<sup>nd</sup> Half: “Reconstruction—Present”)  
High School Dual-Credit U. S. History (Both Halves)  
Intro. to Humanities (“Humanities and Science”)  
Intro. to Ethics  
Intro. to Philosophy

### **Courses Qualified to Teach:**

U.S. Intellectual and Cultural History  
Philosophy of History  
Race Relations in the United States  
History of Psychology and Sexuality since Erasmus Darwin  
History of Western Science  
American Philosophy/Pragmatism  
Film Noir and Existentialism  
Religion in the United States  
Transatlantic Modern Philosophy  
History of Western Philosophy  
Intro. to Eastern Philosophy  
Darwinism in the United States  
Aristotle vs. Darwin: Philosophy of Biology  
Ancient and Modern Ethics

## **Publications/Writings:**

“The Aesthetics of Survival: The Elective Affinities of Film Noir and Social Darwinism.” In preparation for *Film & History*

*Biologizing Eros: The Problem of Love in an Age of American Social Science, 1890s-1950s*  
(PhD Dissertation; UT-Dallas, 2022)

“The Elective Affinities of Film Noir and Social Darwinism.”

Posted at Society for Intellectual History Blog, December 17, 2016

<https://s-usih.org/2016/12/the-elective-affinities-of-film-noir-and-social-darwinism/>

“Did William James Lose?” Book review of *William James at the Boundaries* (Chicago, 2008)  
by Francesca Bordogna

Posted at Society for Intellectual History Blog, September 28, 2013

<https://s-usih.org/2013/09/did-william-james-lose/>

“The City of Supernaturalism and the City of Naturalism: Never the Twain Shall Meet?” Book review of *Confessing History* by John Fea, et al. (Notre Dame, 2010)

Posted at Society for Intellectual History Blog, June 23, 2013

<https://s-usih.org/2013/06/the-city-of-supernaturalism-and-the-city-of-naturalism-never-the-twain-shall-meet/>

*Space / Race: African-American Newspapers Respond to Sputnik and Apollo 11*  
(M.A. Thesis; University of North Texas, 2007)

## **Presentations, Conferences, and Committees:**

Panelist for film presentation, *Psycho*. “Nothing New Under the Sun: Remakes and Remixes.”  
Collin College Auteur Film Series (Plano, TX; October 17, 2023)

“Eros and Political Ideology in the Fiction of Isabel Paterson and Ayn Rand.” Presented at Society for United States Intellectual History (Plano, TX; October 27, 2017)

Moderator for film presentation, “*Gattaca*: Genetic Engineering, Determinism, and Philosophy”  
(North Central Texas College, Flower Mound, TX; March 9, 2016)

“The Philosophy of Film Noir.” Lecture presentation

(North Central Texas College, Corinth, TX; October 30, 2015)

“Film Noir and Social Darwinism.” Presented at RAW Student Conference  
(University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, TX; March 8, 2015)

Served on Search Committee for “Nineteenth Century U.S. History”  
(University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, TX: 2014-15)

“Culture or Standards Lag at the Community College?” Presented at Annual Faculty Conference

(North Central Texas College, Corinth, TX; December 15, 2010)

**Professional Affiliations and Awards:**

UT-Dallas: TA-Fellowship – 2013-2018

Berkeley Fellowship in Interdisciplinary Studies - 2009

UNT: TA-Fellowship – 2005-2007

William James Society

American Historical Association