

# ALF SEEGER

Department of English  
University of Utah  
255 S. Central Campus Dr. Room 3500  
Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Email: [alf.seegert@utah.edu](mailto:alf.seegert@utah.edu)  
Phone: (801) 581-6168

## GENERAL AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- British and American Literature
- Modern and Postmodern Literature
- Film, New Media, and Video Games
- Online Teaching

## SPECIFIC TOPICS OF INTEREST

- Video Game Narrative
- Literature, Film, and Video Games
- Fantasy and the Fantastic
- Virtuality and Nature
- Enchantment

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## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

**2010- Present, Department of English**  
Professor (Lecturer, Career-line: Teaching)  
Affiliate Professor, Division of Games

University of Utah

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## EDUCATION

**Ph.D. English (British & American Literature)**  
2010

University of Utah

Dissertation: *Cybercultural Ecologies: Interfacing Nature, Virtuality, and Narrative*

Committee: Steve Tatum (chair), Vincent Cheng, Joseph Metz, Lance Olsen, Matthew Potolsky

**M.A. English (British & American Literature)**  
2004

University of Utah

**M.S. Philosophy (Environmental Philosophy)**  
1998

University of Utah

Thesis: *Ontology Recapitulates Ecology: the Relational Real in Evolution and Ecophilosophy*

**B.S. Philosophy**  
1996

University of Utah

Senior Project: *Heidegger and Questions Concerning Technology and the Scientific World View*

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## AWARDS AND HONORS

### TEACHING AWARDS

**2023 Distinguished Teaching Award**

University of Utah

- The Distinguished Teaching Award is set aside for faculty with eight or more years of service at the University of Utah and recognizes outstanding teaching, innovative pedagogy, concern for students, and exemplary contributions to the educational process outside the classroom.

**2016 Faculty Teaching Award for Innovation in General Education      University of Utah**

- Annual University-wide award. The award emphasizes innovative pedagogy in the Humanities curriculum.

**2014 Early Career Teaching Award      University of Utah**

- Annual University-wide award to faculty rewarding distinction in teaching, demonstrated by activities that result in increased learning by students, such as the development of new methods or other curricular innovation.

**2007 Ramona Cannon Award: Graduate Student Teaching Excellence      University of Utah**

- Annual award recognizing one graduate student whose teaching has shown extraordinary merit.

## **RESEARCH AWARDS**

**2010 College of Humanities Graduate Student Research Award      University of Utah**

- Annual award recognizing one student whose research has extraordinary merit and has garnered attention outside of the University of Utah

**2009-2010 Tanner Doctoral Fellowship      University of Utah**

- One of two graduate fellowship recipients (College-wide) for research-focused fellowship

**2008-2009 Steffensen Cannon Graduate Fellowship      University of Utah**

- One of four graduate fellowship recipients (College-wide) for research-focused fellowship

**2004-2006 Vice-Presidential Fellowship      University of Utah**

**1997-1998 Tanner Graduate Research Fellowship      University of Utah**

## **TEACHING**

**English 2040      *Contemporary Literature: Utopia, Dystopia, and Ecotopia***

- *Existing course designation; I developed the special course topic myself.*
- *Successfully applied for renewal of **HF** (Humanities Exploration) credit.*

**English 2070      *Popular Culture: Weird Tales and Fantastic Fiction***

- *Existing course designation; I developed the special course topic myself.*

**English 2085      *Digital Culture***

- *I created this new course designation myself and successfully applied for **HF** (Humanities Exploration) credit.*
- *This is the first Digital Culture course in the English Department.*

**English 2090                      *Video Game Storytelling (both traditional and online)***

- *I created this new course and designation (originally as “Video Games and Storytelling”) and successfully applied for **HF** (Humanities Exploration) credit. This is the first video games course in the English Department.*
- *This course regularly fills to 65-75 students per semester, including new online sections with lessons I created for it.*
- *Created the first **online** version for the English Department after first teaching it five years in the classroom.*

**English 2220                      *Novels and Films: Virtuality and Nature***

- *Existing course designation; I developed the special course topic myself. Fulfills **HF** Gen Ed requirement.*

**English 2235                      *Fantasy: The Lord of the Rings on Page and Screen (trad. and online)***

- *Existing course designation; I developed the special course topic myself. Fulfills **HF** Gen Ed requirement.*
- *Created the first **online** version for the English Department after teaching it several times in the classroom.*

**English 2600                      *Critical Introduction to Literary Forms (traditional and online)***

- *Created the first **online** version for the English Department.*

**English 3080                      *Studies in Environmental Literature***

**English 3600                      *Introduction to Critical Theory (traditional and online)***

- *Created the first **online** version for the English Department.*

**English 5010                      *Studies in Fiction: Nature, Virtuality and Re-Enchantment***

- *Existing course designation; I developed the special course topic myself.*

**English 5050                      *Studies in Genre: Virtuality and Nature***

- *Existing course designation; I developed the special course topic myself.*

**English 5090                      *Literature, Film, and Video Games (traditional and online)***

- *I created this new course and designation to develop our “Video Game Narrative” track*
- *Created the first **online** version for the English Department after teaching it several times in the classroom.*

**English 5095                      *Advanced Video Game Storytelling***

- *I created this new course and designation to develop our “Video Game Narrative” track*

**English 5210                      *Film Genres: Virtuality and Enchantment***

- *Existing course designation; I developed the special course topic myself.*

**HONORS COLLEGE**

Honor 2102                      *Honors Core in Intellectual Traditions: Flowering of the Common Era*

Honor 2103                      *Honors Core in Intellectual Traditions: The Rise of Modernity*

**WRITING PROGRAM**

Writing 2010                      *Academic Writing and Argument*

Writing 3200                      *Writing for the Research University*

## PUBLICATIONS

Ranked as a top-level contributor on [Academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu) (393 Followers / 18,276 Total Views).

### REFEREED ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

Seegert, Alf. "Into the Wilde? Theatricality, Technological Media, and the Lethal Indifference of Nature in Werner Herzog's *Grizzly Man*." *Eco-Trauma Cinema*. Routledge Advances in Film Studies anthology (October 2014).

Seegert, Alf. "The Mistress of Sp[ell]ices: Technovirtual Liaisons in Adolfo Bioy Casares' *The Invention of Morel*." *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 23.2, January 2013.

Seegert, Alf. "Ewe, Robot." *Philip K. Dick and Philosophy*. Popular Culture and Philosophy Anthology (November 2011)

Seegert, Alf. "Till We Have [Inter]faces: the Cybercultural Ecologies of *Avatar*." *Western Humanities Review* (Summer 2010)

Seegert, Alf. "Harsh to the Feet of Shadows: The Wild Landscape of the Real in C.S. Lewis' *The Great Divorce* and William Faulkner's 'The Bear.'" *Doors in the Air: C.S. Lewis and the Imaginative World* (Portal Editions anthology, June 2010)

Seegert, Alf. "Technology and the Fleshly Interface in E.M. Forster's 'The Machine Stops': An Ecocritical Appraisal of a One-Hundred Year Old Future." *The Journal of Ecocriticism* 2:1 (January 2010)

Seegert, Alf. "'Steam of Consciousness': Technology and Sensation in Dickens' Railway Sketches." *Philament: The University of Sydney's Online Journal of the Arts and Culture* 14: Sense and Sensation (August 2009)

Seegert, Alf. "'Doing There vs. 'Being There': Performing Presence in Interactive Fiction." *Journal of Gaming and Virtual Worlds* 1:1 (January 2009)

### GAME PUBLICATIONS

Board games featured in academic contexts:

- *Haven*, Red Raven Games, 2018 (eco-themed board game – designer). Cited in the book *Playing Oppression* (MIT Press, 2023) as an example of a game which resists standard tropes of colonization in board games. Also mentioned in "[12 Board Games that Fix the Biggest Problem with \*Settlers of Catan\*](#)," *Inverse*, 4/21/21 as part of their Earth Day games list.
- *The Road to Canterbury: a Game of Pilgrims, Pardoners, and the Seven Deadly Sins*, Eagle-Gryphon Games, 2011 (in 2021 the publisher produced a new "Impoverished Pilgrim's Edition," now with Middle-English text supplementing the components). Humorous and strategic literary board game based on "The Pardoner's Tale" from Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* – designer. Featured in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *The Guardian UK*, *GAMES Magazine*, *The Onion AV Club*, *The New Yorker blog*, *the Huffington Post*, and in the U of U's own magazine *Continuum*.

- *Illumination*, Eagle-Gryphon Games, 2021 (board game based on medieval illuminated manuscripts and a spiritual sequel to *The Road to Canterbury* – designer). This game was chosen by the Getty Museum as an example of new games inspired by the Middle Ages and I was an invited panelist on this subject in 2023.

Other board games and related publications:

- Authored a chapter in the anthology *Board Game Design Advice from the Best in the World*, ed. Gabe Barrett, 2018.
- *A Bard Day's Night*, Eagle-Gryphon Games, 2023 (board game – designer). Humorous procedurally generated collaborative ballad-making board game featuring rival bards singing for their supper like Jaskier in *The Witcher*.
- *Fantastika: Rival Realms*, Eagle-Gryphon Games, 2018 (card game – designer)
- *Heir to the Pharaoh*, Eagle-Gryphon Games, 2016 (board game – designer)
- *Dingo's Dreams*, Red Raven Games, 2016 (board game – designer)
- “Designing Games of Fantasy with Non-Fantastical Bits.” Chapter for *Game Designer's Handbook*, Eagle-Gryphon Games, 2014
- *Musée*, Gryphon Games, 2014 (art-based card game – designer)
- *Cubist*, Gryphon Games, 2014 (art-based board game – co-designed with Steven Poelzing)
- *Fantastika*, Gryphon Games, 2012 (emergent storytelling board game with fine art – designer)
- *Trollballa*, Z-Man Games, 2011 (board game – designer)
- *Bridge Troll*, Z-Man Games, 2009 (board game – designer)

## INTERACTIVE NARRATIVE AND DIGITAL WRITING

- *Sleeping Gods: Tides of Ruin*, Red Raven Games, 2021 (storytelling board game – story co-writer)
- *Near and Far*, Red Raven Games, 2017 (storytelling board game – story co-writer)
- *Above and Below*, Red Raven Games, 2015 (storytelling board game – story co-writer)
- *Ritual* (originally part of the [Inklewriter Online Library](#)), 2014. Republished in *Gathering Storm: A Magazine of Fantasy, Science Fiction, Lovecraftian Horror, and Sword & Sorcery*, Spring 2017.

## BULWER-LYTTON AWARDS

Published Finalists in the [Bulwer-Lytton Bad Fiction Writing Contest](#)

- “The Zinfandel poured pinkly from the bottle, like a stream of urine seven hours after eating a bowl of borscht.” (*Dishonorable Mention, Purple Prose*)
- “Wet leaves stuck to the spinning wagon wheels like feathers to a freshly tarred heretic, reminding those who watched them of the endless movement of the leafy earth—or so they would have, if only those fifteenth-century onlookers had believed that the earth actually rotated, which they didn't, which is why it was heretical to say that it did—and which is the reason why the wagon held a freshly tarred heretic in the first place.” (*Dishonorable Mention, Historical Fiction*)

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## PRESENTATIONS

**2023**      “Modern Games, Medieval Wireframes”      Getty Museum, Los Angeles (online)

Invited presentation and roundtable as part of *Play and Pastimes in the Middle Ages*. Discussed my medieval-themed board games *The Road to Canterbury* and *Illumination* along with the Art Directors of the

video games *Inkulinati* and *Pentiment*.

- 2022                    “Game Design and Literary Narrative”                    Salt Lake City, UT**  
Guest presentation for Phillip Bimstein’s Honors College course *The Artfully Extended Mind*
- 2022                    Tanner Humanities Center Author Meets Reader Event                    Salt Lake City, UT**  
Interviewer for Thi Nguyen and his book *Games: Agency as Art*
- 2018                    Awe and Attention Symposium                    Salt Lake City, UT**  
“The A-ha of Attention in Video Games (*Sword and Sworcery: EP* and *Gorogoa*)”
- 2018                    EAE Game Lecture Series                    Salt Lake City, UT**  
“Cardboard Fantasies: Board Game Design and Storytelling” presentation with Ryan Laukat. For the Entertainment Arts & Engineering Program, University of Utah.
- 2017-                    SaltCon                    Layton, UT**  
Yearly panelist, Board Game Designer and Publisher Panel
- 2017                    CLCS 6900: Aesthetics – Empathy – Form                    University of Utah**  
“Virtuality and Empathy in the film *Atonement*” presentation for Joseph Metz’s class.
- 2017                    Blade Runner panel discussion                    University of Utah**  
Panelist with Lisa Swanstrom and Mike White in the Union Theater. English Student Enrichment Association (ESEA)-sponsored event tied to the opening of *Blade Runner 2049*.
- 2017                    Gateways to Learning, Literary Classics III                    University of Utah**  
“‘The Machine Stops’ and *WALL-E*” (Teacher Workshop coordinated by Vince Cheng)
- 2016                    ENGL 2045: Greatest Hits in Literature                    University of Utah**  
“E.M. Forster’s ‘The Machine Stops’ and Contemporary Cyberculture” (Spring and Fall)
- 2015                    SaltCon                    Layton, UT**  
“Storytelling and Game Mechanics.”
- 2014                    ComicCon                    Salt Lake City, UT**  
Panelist, Board Game Designer and Publisher Panel
- 2014                    American Library Association                    Las Vegas, NV**  
“Component-Inspired Game Design and Storytelling.”
- 2014                    SaltCon                    Layton, UT**  
“Materials and Mechanics in Game Design.”
- 2014                    Interdisciplinary Symposium on Empathy, Contemplative Practice and  
Pedagogy, The Humanities, and the Sciences                    Salt Lake City, UT**  
“Pixels and Pathos: Video Games and Empathy.”
- 2014                    Society for Novel Studies – “Land and the Novel”                    Salt Lake City, UT**  
“Desert of the Real, Oasis of the Virtual: Technostalgic Pastoral in *À Rebours* and *Ready Player One*.”

2012	<b>HUM 6102 Field Methods in Environmental Humanities</b> “Nature and Virtuality in Ecocriticism” presentation for Kevin DeLuca’s class.	University of Utah
2010	<b>Tanner Humanities Center Work-in-Progress Talk</b> “Cybercultural Ecologies: Interfacing Nature and Virtuality”	University of Utah
2010	<b>South Central Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies</b> “Knotty Problems of Narrative Identity in <i>Tristram Shandy</i> ”	Salt Lake City, UT
2009	<b>Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association</b> “Virtuality, For and Against Nature in William Morris’ <i>News From Nowhere</i> and J.-K Huysmans’ <i>A Rebours</i> ”	Salt Lake City, UT
2009	<b>Association for the Study of Literature &amp; the Environment</b> “Into the Wilde? Theatricality, Technological Media, and the Lethal Indifference of Nature in Werner Herzog’s <i>Grizzly Man</i> ”	Victoria, BC
2008	<b>Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts, &amp; Letters</b> “Mediating Contact with Technology and Flesh in E.M. Forster’s “The Machine Stops””	Salt Lake City, UT
2006	<b>Humanities Graduate Conference</b> “Blood, Time and Selfhood: Reinscribing the Boundaries of Identity in Faulkner’s <i>Light in August</i> ”	Salt Lake City, UT
2006	<b>Confutati Graduate Conference</b> “From the Cosmic to the Comic: The Miller’s Astrological ‘Quiting’ of the Knight in <i>The Canterbury Tales</i> ”	Salt Lake City, UT
2005	<b>Western Humanities Association</b> “The Horror of Unbounded Spaces (and Races): Colonial Anxiety and Boundary-Making in <i>Heart of Darkness</i> and <i>A Passage to India</i> ”	Tucson, AZ
2003	<b>Humanities Graduate Conference</b> “The Problem of Painlessness: Why Deep Ecology Won’t Work Without a Willingness to Feel”	Salt Lake City, UT
2002	<b>N. Amer. Interdisciplinary Conference on Enviro. &amp; Community</b> “Pain, Feedback, and the Ecological Self”	Ogden, UT

## SERVICE

### STUDENT MENTORSHIP

- 2015- **Honors Thesis Faculty Supervisor**
- Chris Payne, “Looping as the Keystone of the Video Game Medium” (2020)
  - Christian Hansen, “Visionary Worlds, Visionary Minds: Diegetic Storytelling in the Video Games of Miyazaki, Ueda, and Chen” (2018)
  - Alex Boren, “Questioning My Answers: Exploring *Cloud Atlas* in Relation to my B.U.S. Degree, ‘Philosophy For Life’” (2015)

**2017-2020      Innovation Scholar Roadmaps**

- Mentor for multiple students enrolled in the Innovation Scholar Roadmap program

**2012-2015      Faculty Mentor, Bachelor of University Studies      University of Utah**

- Alex Boren

**2012-2013      Service Learning Scholar Faculty Advisor      University of Utah**

- Annika Pecchia-Bekkum

**2012-2013      Faculty Sponsor, Undergrad. Research Opportunity (UROP)      University of Utah**

- Annika Pecchia-Bekkum, press coverage at *Daily Utah Chronicle* 3/20/13

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

**2019      Venture Academy Guest Presentation – High School      Ogden, UT**

- “Tolkien and Four Kinds of Fantasy”

**2012-2013      “Worlds of Fantasy” Author Series      Salt Lake City, UT**

- Faculty Representative & Host for four-week event sponsored by Utah Humanities Council which included presentations by authors Brandon Sanderson and Tracy Hickman

**DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE**

**2022-2023      English Department Search Committee: Video Game Narrative**

- Committee member for hiring a tenure-line faculty member focusing on video game narratives

**2018      SLCC Bridge Course Presentation      Salt Lake Community College**

- Presented for ‘Ila Tua’one’s SLCC classroom to share how video games narratives are taught in the U of U English Department.

**2017-2018      “Awe and Attention” Symposium      University of Utah**

- Co-organizer with Scott Black. February 2018 conference hosted by the Department of English with keynote presentations by authors David Abram and Patrick Curry.

**2010-      Online Course Development, Dept. of English      University of Utah**

- Faculty Representative and tutor for online course instruction by faculty and graduate students.
- Developed multiple new online courses for the Department: ENGL 2600 Online, ENGL 3600 Online, ENGL 2090 Online, ENGL 2235 Online, and ENGL 5090 Online.

**STUDENT CLUBS**

**2010-2018      Great Movers Game Club      University of Utah**

- Faculty Sponsor/Advisor

**2014-2017      Dungeons & Dragons Society      University of Utah**

- Faculty Sponsor/Advisor

## AFFILIATIONS

### Editorial Advisor, *The Ecological Citizen*

- *The Ecological Citizen* is an independent, peer-reviewed, free-to-access journal that provides a forum for inspiring and mobilizing discussion with an Earth-centered perspective.

## MENTIONS IN MEDIA

- ["The Surprising Case for Video Games as Literature,"](#) *Deseret News/Deseret Magazine*, 12/23.
- ["The Stigma Around Video Games is Changing,"](#) *Utah Business*, 12/16/22.
- ["Playing Video Games for Credit: Faculty Feature with Alf Seegert,"](#) *College of Humanities News* 8/29/22
- ["U Professors Discuss Game Design at Author Meets Reader Event,"](#) *Daily Utah Chronicle* 9/9/22
- ["12 Board Games that Fix the Biggest Problem with \*Settlers of Catan\*,"](#) *Inverse*, 4/21/21. Interview on ecology and colonization themes in board games.
- ["Can Interactive Fiction Be More Engaging Than Realistic Video Games?"](#) *Medium.com*. The article profiles my research on how a game player's performance creates a sense of presence even without the use of graphics. 10/31/2021
- Consultant for the Project Maestro digital game "The Search for Harmony," which was a recipient of an NEH Humanities Advancement grant (2021-2022).
- ["Humans of the U – Professor Alf Seegert,"](#) *@theU* 8/12/2016
- ["Video Games Course has Students Playing for Credit,"](#) *Daily Utah Chronicle* 4/13/2016
- ["English Prof. Reflects on Love for U, Open-ended Learning and Teaching,"](#) *Daily Utah Chronicle* 3/26/2014
- Listed in *Who's Who in Research: Media Studies*. Intellect Books, 2013
- ["Your Turn to Invent a Literary Board Game,"](#) *Guardian UK* 5/24/2011
- ["You've Read \*The Canterbury Tales\*: Now Play the Board Game,"](#) *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 5/5/2011
- ["The Art of Play: For U Professor Alf Seegert, Storytelling Takes Many Forms,"](#) *Continuum Magazine*, Winter 2011

## REFERENCES

Dr. Scott Black  
*English Department Chair*  
Department of English  
University of Utah  
scott.black@utah.edu

Dr. Lance Olsen  
*PhD Committee Member / Colleague*  
Department of English  
University of Utah  
lance.olsen@utah.edu

Dr. Joseph Metz  
*PhD Committee Member / Colleague*  
Department of Languages and Literature  
University of Utah  
joseph.metz@utah.edu

Dr. Stephen Tatum  
*PhD Committee Chair / Colleague*  
Department of English (Emeritus Professor)  
University of Utah  
stephen.tatum@utah.edu

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