

CHELSEA LENN PHILLIPS

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APPOINTMENTS

Associate Professor Villanova University, Department of Theatre	August 2021-Present Villanova, PA
Assistant Professor Villanova University, Department of Theatre	August 2015-August 2021 Villanova, PA

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Theatre History, Literature, and Criticism The Ohio State University	2015 Columbus, OH
M.F.A., Dramaturgy Mary Baldwin College	2009 Staunton, VA
B.A., English Bryn Mawr College	Magna cum Laude, 2005 Bryn Mawr, PA

PUBLICATIONS

MONOGRAPHS

In Process

Women and The World (1787) – Short Monograph

A micro-history of theatrical news and gossip in the daily newspaper *The World* between 1787-1791, using the dual theatrical and editorial career of Mary Wells as a focal point. This book aims to better understand the layering of personal and professional networks shaping the daily history of the theatres in the eighteenth-century in an era of increasingly powerful press outlets and greater investment and participation by women across media. It explores questions of gossip, celebrity, gender, and power.

Backstage at the Patent Theatres: Culture, Community, and Competition – Full Monograph

The aim of this project is to map the overlapping personal and professional networks that shaped the day-to-day operations of Drury Lane and Covent Garden. The monograph moves from a variety of non-textual sources (maps, blueprints, financial documents) to more familiar written material (correspondence, memoir and biography, periodicals and so forth) to build an expansive view of backstage culture and community within London theatres, chasing and illuminating the friendships, rivalries, mentoring and romantic relationships, and informal collaborations and partnerships that shaped daily theatrical life.

Published

Carrying All Before Her: Celebrity Pregnancy and the London Stage 1689-1800 (University of Delaware Press, 14 January 2022). **Co-Honorable Mention, Society for the Study of Early Modern Women and Gender First Book Prize.** 12 citations.

Using the experiences of six celebrity women—who collectively gave birth to at least thirty-four children—this project reads women’s reproductive bodies back into theatre history. I argue that pregnancy and childbirth shaped celebrity identity, altered company repertory, changed company hierarchy, influenced the development and performance of new work, affected audience reception and interpretation of performance, and impacted the financial situation of women and their theatrical companies.

Reviews:

- Brown, Susan E. *Studies in Romanticism* 62, no. 3 (Fall 2023): 443-446.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/srm.2023.a909929>.
- Buckley, Jennifer. *ABO: Interactive Journal for Women in the Arts, 1640-1830* 13, no. 1 (Summer 2023): Article 15. <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/abo/vol13/iss1/15>
- Bush-Bailey, Gilli. *Theatre Notebook* 76, no. 2 (2022): 112-113.
muse.jhu.edu/article/878033.
- Conti, Meredith. *Theatre History Studies*. 42 (2023): 166-168.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/ths.2023.a934450>.
- Lock, Georgina. *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Theatre Research* 35 (2023): 127-131.
- Nachumi, Nora. *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 56, no. 4 (Summer 2023): 651-653.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/ecs.2023.a900674>
- Read, Sara. *WSG Reviews* (blog). *Women’s Studies Group 1558-1837*, April 13, 2023.
<https://womensstudiesgroup.org/2023/04/13/carrying-all-before-her-celebrity-pregnancy-and-the-london-stage-1689-1800-chelsea-phillips-review-by-sara-read/>.
- Schneller, Beverly. *Eighteenth-Century Intelligencer*. 38, no 2 (September 2024).
- Straub, Kristina. *Theatre Survey* 64, no. 1 (January 2023): 93-95.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040557422000369>
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WEB RESOURCES

The Spanish Tragedy Archive, <https://spanishtragedy.villanova.edu/>

Forthcoming

Book Chapters

- “Meanings and Representations of Pregnancy in the Eighteenth-Century World.” *The Bloomsbury Cultural History of Pregnancy*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury. 8,000-10,000 words. Anticipated 2026.
- “Vocal Flexibility and ‘Universal Playing:’” Hannah Pritchard's Voice. *Women's Innovations in Theatre, Dance, and Performance*, v.1. New York, NY: Bloomsbury. Anticipated 2025.

Reviews

- “Review of *Laboring Mothers*” by Ellen Malenas Ledoux. *Eighteenth-Century Studies*.

Published

Scholarly Editing

- Such Things Are* (1787) by Elizabeth Inchbald, in *The Broadview Anthology of Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Drama*, ed. Diana Solomon and David Weston (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2024).

Articles

- “Care and Pregnancy Loss.” *ABO: Interactive Journal for Women and the Arts, 1640-1830* 13, no 2, article 16 (December 2023). Tampa, FL: University of South Florida, Tampa. <http://doi.org/10.5038/2157-7129.13.2.1382>.
- “Accommodations for Pregnancy and Childbirth on the Late-Eighteenth Century London Stage.” *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 56, no 3 (2023), 425-447. **Winner of the 2025 Annibel Jenkins Prize.** <https://doi.org/10.1353/ecs.2023.0031>.
- Phillips, C., KL Bradley, V Brown, L Davis, K Fischer, A Gonzalez, J Bean Schwab, T Storey, S Stryker (2023). “The Dramaturgy of Ophelia's Bouquet.” *Shakespeare*, 19(1), 108-124. Co-authored with students enrolled in the graduate course, *Shakespeare on Stage*.
- “Bodies in Play: Maternity, Repertory, and the Rival *Romeo and Juliets*, 1748-1751.” *Theatre Survey* (60.2), 207-236. Spring 2019. **Winner of the 2020 Gerald Kahan Scholar's Prize.** 7 citations.
- “‘Mrs. Pickle's Mistake’: The Origins of an 18th Century Satirical Print.” *Women's History Magazine* (Special Issue on Pregnancy), 23-25. July 2016.
- “‘Unsex me Here’: Bodies and Femininity in the Performance History of Lady Macbeth.” *Testi E Linguaggi* (Vol. 7), 353-361. University of Salerno, 2014. 5 citations.

Book Chapters

- “Elizabeth Inchbald's *Such Things Are*.” *Women Experimenting in Theatre: Early Modern to Contemporary*, ed. Kate Aughterson and Deborah Philips (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2025), 69-82. ISBN: 3031636880
- “Pregnancy and the Late Stuart Stage, 1661-1702.” *English Theatrical Anecdotes 1660-1800*. Ed. Heather Ladd and Leslie Ritchie (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2022). ISBN: 9781644532614. 2 citations.
- “‘Rudely Stamped:’ Supernatural Generation and the Limits of Power in *Richard III*.”

- Shakespeare and the Supernatural*, ed. Victoria Bladen and Yan Brailowski (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020). ISBN: 9781526109064. 1 citation.
- “‘I Have Given Suck:’ The Maternal Body in Sarah Siddons’ *Lady Macbeth*.” *Shakespeare Expressed: Page, Stage, and Classroom*. Edited by Kathryn M. Moncrief, Kathryn R. McPherson, and Sarah Enloe. Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2013. 19-33. ISBN: 9781611475616. 7 citations.

Reviews

- “Archival Gossip: A Scholarly Take on Nineteenth Century Tattletales. Katrin Horn (Review).” *Scholarly Editing*, v.41. DOI:[10.55520/TCXNXRWS](https://doi.org/10.55520/TCXNXRWS)
- “Review of Giving Birth in Eighteenth-Century England by Sarah Fox.” *ABO: Interactive Journal for Women and the Arts, 1640-1830*. 1620 words. Single-Blind Review.
- Women in Wartime: Theatrical Representations in the Long Eighteenth Century* By Paula R. Backscheider (Review) (3rd ed., vol. 64). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1069 words. Editorial Board Review.
- “*Vanity Fair* (review).” Review of Kate Hamill’s *Vanity Fair* at Shakespeare Theatre Company, directed by Jessica Stone. *Theatre Journal*, 72:1 (March 2020), 96-97. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- “Blood will have Blood: Titus Andronicus at the RSC.” *Upstart: A Journal of English Renaissance Studies*. Clemson, 2013.
- “The Gutter and the Glitter: A Mad World My Masters at the RSC.” *Upstart: A Journal of English Renaissance Studies*. Clemson, 2013.

Encyclopedia Entries

- Entries: Alice Gibson Knyvett, Rebecca and Ann West, Sophia Carew, Jeanne St. George. *Biographical Encyclopedia of Early Modern English Women*. Edited by Carole Levin, Anna Riehl Bertolet, and Michele Osherow. Routledge, 2017. ISBN: 9781315440705.

Public Engagement

- A Bit Lit* podcast and blog. Interview about *The Spanish Tragedy*. (Forthcoming).
- “Why Caregivers are STILL so important.” Still...?! podcast. ViaBrooklyn. 24 July 2024.
- “New Books in Women’s History: *Carrying All Before Her: Celebrity Pregnancy and the London Stage, 1689-1800*.” New Books Network podcast. 4 April 2022.
- “Celebrity Pregnancy and the London Stage, 1689-1800.” Invited talk. *Women’s History Seminar, Institute of Historical Research*. 22 October 2021.
- “Accounting for Relationships: The Drury Lane Financial Records.” *The Collation*. Folger Shakespeare Library. 12 March 2019. <https://collation.folger.edu/2019/03/accounting-for-relationships/>
- “Concealing and Revealing” & “Controlling the Narrative” (Two-part blog posting on Beyoncé’s pregnancy photo shoot). *Perceptions of Pregnancy Researcher’s Network Blog*. April/May 2017. Part One: <https://perceptionsofpregnancy.com/2017/04/18/concealing-and-revealing-beyonces-pregnancy-photo-shoot-part-one/>;

Part Two: <https://perceptionsofpregnancy.com/2017/05/02/controlling-the-narrative-beyonces-pregnancy-photoshoot-part-2/>

AWARDS, GRANTS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

2025 Annibel Jenkins Prize. South-East American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies.

Awarded biannually for the best article in performance and theater studies published in a scholarly journal, annual, or collection for “Accommodations for Pregnancy and Childbirth on the Late Eighteenth-Century Stage” in *ECS* (2023).

Shakespeare, Publics, and the Humanities Colloquium Fellowship. Folger Shakespeare Library.

Washington, D.C. 2024-25. \$5000 in funding to support a year-long inquiry into and development of Public Humanities projects.

University Travel Grant. \$2000. Villanova University. Villanova, PA. 2024.

Grant for Research for Arts and Sciences Professors, with Alice Dailey. \$25,000. Villanova University, Villanova, PA. 2023-24.

Faculty Research and Development Grant, with Alice Dailey. \$3000. Villanova University, Villanova, PA. 2023-24.

VITAL Mini-Grant for Course Development, with Alice Dailey. \$12,000. Villanova University, Villanova, PA. Summer 2023.

Gerald Kahan Prize. American Society for Theatre Research, 2020. Awarded for Best Essay in Theatre Studies by a Newer Scholar for “Bodies in Play: Maternity, Repertory, and the Rival *Romeo and Juliets*, 1748-1751” in *Theatre Survey* (Spring 2019).

Maryette Charlton Fellowship in the Performing Arts. Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. 2018.

Folger Institute Short-Term Fellowship. Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C. 2018.

University Summer Grant. Villanova University, Villanova, PA. 2017.

Lewis Walpole Library Travel Grant. Farmington, CT. 2016.

Folger Institute Grant-in-Aid Award. . Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C. 2014.

Visual and Performing Arts Award. Ohio State University, Columbus, OH. 2014.

Presidential Fellowship. Ohio State University, Columbus, OH. 2014.

CONFERENCES and INVITED TALKS

International

“Theatrical Gossip and in the Late Eighteenth Century.” Society for Theatre Research 75th Anniversary Conference. Bristol, UK. July 2024.

“Dramaturgy in Fine Art.” Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas. Philadelphia, PA. July 2022.

“Siddons, Garrick, and the Shakespeare Jubilee of 1785.” British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. Oxford, UK (online). January 2020.

National

- “Hope, Evidence, and Access: Embodied History in the Archive.” American Society for Theatre Research. Providence, RI. November 2023.
- “Colonial Capital in Inchbald’s *Such Things Are* (1787).” East-Central American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. Williamsburg, VA. October 2023.
- “Feminine Disruptions.” American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. St. Louis, MO. March 2023.
- “Rage Against the Dying of Your Rights: An 18th Century View of Dobbs.” American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. St. Louis, MO. March 2023.
- “Sarah Siddons and the Future of Tragedy.” American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. Baltimore, MD. April 2022.
- “Celebrity Casting in Sheridan’s *Pizarro*,” American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR), (*initially accepted for November 2020, delayed to 2021 for COVID; I was ultimately unable to present this paper as my pregnancy was too far advanced for air travel and there were no accommodations made by the organization for remote attendance*).
- “Pregnancy and the Late-Stuart Stage,” ASTR, Arlington, VA, November 2019.
- “‘I’ll make thee think thy swan a crow:’ Rivaling Juliets on the Eighteenth-Century Stage,” Blackfriars Conference, American Shakespeare Center, Staunton, VA, October 2019.
- “Celebrity Pregnancy and Theatrical History.” Arousing the Bodies of Pre-1850 Performance Working Group. American Society for Theatre Research. San Diego, CA. November 2018.¹
- “The Rival Juliets: Reassessing the ‘Battle of the Romeos.’” American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. Orlando, FL. March 2018.
- Convener. Pregnancy and Motherhood Working Group. American Society for Theatre Research. Atlanta, GA. November 2017.
- “‘To Please Tomorrow’s Audience:’ Ending *The Spanish Tragedy*” (with Alice Dailey). Ninth Blackfriars Conference. American Shakespeare Center, Staunton, VA. October 2017.
- “Celebrity Benefit Announcements as Print Performance.” American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. Minneapolis, MN. March-April 2017.
- “Uncommon Exertion: Maternal Labor on the Mid-Eighteenth Century Stage.” Association for Theatre in Higher Education. Chicago, IL. August 2016.
- “Recovering the Pregnant Performing Body in Theatrical History.” American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. Pittsburgh, PA. March-April 2016.

Regional

- “Accommodations for Pregnancy and Childbirth on the Late 18th-Century Stage” at the South-Eastern American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (SEASECS) conference, February 2021.
- “Narrative Repertoires: Theatrical Business and Audience Pleasure in 1742.” East Central American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies. West Chester, PA. November 2015.

University

¹ This conference was cancelled; the Working Group shared and discussed work over email.

Organizer and Presenter. Spanish Tragedy symposium (with Alice Dailey). Villanova University, Villanova, PA. April 2024.

Organizer and Presenter. Interdisciplinary Pregnancy Colloquium (with W. Rayna Martin and Suzanne Smeltzer). Villanova University, Villanova, PA. October 2017.

Invited Talks

“Mary Wells and the Press.” Theatronics Workshop. NIU Galway. April 2025.

“Work, Life, Disruption: Women in the Theatres 1740-1800.” *Women’s Studies Group, 1557-1837*. March 7, 2024.

“Rivaling Juliets on the 18th-Century Stage.” *Shakespeare Center of Los Angeles Bard Talks series*. 13 June 2020. *Cancelled due to COVID*.

TEACHING

VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY, DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE

FALL 2015-PRESENT

Graduate Courses:

Legacies of Revenge

Modern Dramaturgy

Classical Dramaturgy

New Play Development

Shakespeare on Stage

Undergraduate Courses:

Fundamental Principles of Acting

Improvitational Theatre

Sex and Celebrity on the 18th Century Stage (Honors)

Performing Shakespeare

ADDITIONAL COURSES TAUGHT:

Script Analysis

Introduction to Theatre

Human Foundations

Censorship and Live Performance

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Member, Advisory Board, The London Stage Database.

November 10, 2023 – present

NEH funded project, hosted at the University of Oregon.

Member, R/18 Collective. International.

February 2023 - Present

Consulting Editor, *Journal of the Mid-American Theatre Conference*

2015-Present

Associate Director, Perceptions of Pregnancy Researchers’ Network (International) 2014-2022

UNIVERSITY SERVICE (VILLANOVA)

Associate Artistic Director for Villanova Theatre	Fall 2019-present
Mentor for Graduate Dramaturgs. Villanova University, Villanova, PA	2015-present
Irish Studies Committee. Villanova University, Villanova, Pa.	Spring 2016-2017
Production Committee. Villanova University, Villanova, Pa.	2015-Present

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Shakespeare, Publics, and the Humanities. Folger Institute. Dir. Reuben Espinoza and Amanda Bailey. Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C. 2024-25.

“Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Editorial Futures.” Dir. Brandy K. Adams, Claire M.L. Bourne, Rory Loughnane, and Catherine Richardson. Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C. October 2024.

Academics for Black Survival and Wellness. June 19-25, 2020. Online.

“The Embodied Senses.” Folger Institute. Dir. Bruce Smith, Laura Gowing, and Mark Jenner. Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C. 2017.

“Performing Restoration Shakespeare.” Folger Institute. Dir. Richard Schoch and Amanda Eubanks Winkler. Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C. 2014.

“London Theatre.” Study Abroad program, Ohio State University. London, UK. 2010 and 2013.

“Researching the Archives.” Folger Institute. Dir. Alan Stewart and Carole Levin. Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C. 2012-13.

PRODUCTION

Co-Director, <i>The Spanish Tragedy</i> (with Alice Dailey)	Spring 2024
Villanova University, Villanova, PA	
Associate Artistic Director for Villanova Theatre	Fall 2019-present
Villanova University, Villanova, PA	
Interim Artistic Director for Villanova Theatre	Spring 2018
Villanova University, Villanova, PA	
Resident Dramaturg for Villanova Theatre	January 2017-present
Villanova University, Villanova, PA	
Freelance Dramaturg	2009-present
Graduate Dramaturg	2009-2014
Ohio State University, Columbus, OH	
Graduate Dramaturg and Actor	2006-2009
Mary Baldwin College, Staunton, VA	

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIPS IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies	2015-present
Association for Theatre in Higher Education	2015-present
Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas	2009-present
American Society for Theatre Research	2008-present