

# MAYA BERNSTEIN-SCHALET

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## Education

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**University of Arizona**, Tucson, AZ

May 2026 (expected)

*Master of Fine Arts*, Creative Nonfiction Writing, **GPA: 4.00**

**Wesleyan University**, Middletown, CT

May 2020

- *Bachelor of Arts*, Anthropology with special emphasis in Cuban history, political anthropology, temporal theory, theory of capitalism and communism, **GPA: 3.97/4.00**
- Certificate: Civic Engagement with a focus on refugee rights and resettlement
- Honors Thesis, Wesleyan Department of Anthropology, *[“If Not for the Base: Futures, Ruptures, and Aftermaths in Caimanera, Cuba”](#)*. Thesis Advisor: Joseph Weiss. Committee: Daniella Gandolfo (Anthropology), Roman Utkin (Feminist, Gender, & Sexuality Studies/Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies)

## Teaching Experience

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**Earlham College**, *Guest Lecturer*, Border Studies Program, Tucson, AZ

November 2024

- Creative writing workshops with an emphasis on power, migration, and systems thinking

**University of Arizona**, *Graduate Instructor*, English Department, Tucson, AZ

August 2023 – Present

- English 101 and English 102, First-Year Composition/Foundations Writing
- English 201, Introduction to Creative Nonfiction Writing

**Wesleyan University**, *Undergraduate Teaching Assistant*, Sociology Department, Middletown, CT

January – May 2020

- Course: Paternalism and Social Power with Professor Jonathan Cutler

## Awards and Fellowships

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- **Awardee**, Monique Wittig Writer’s Scholarship, 2025
- **Winner**, University of Arizona Writing Program Difference and Inequality Teaching Award, 2025
- **Notable Essay**, *Best American Essays of 2024* collection, 2024
- **First Place**, The Bill Waller Award for Creative Nonfiction, 2024
- **Fellowship**, The Pyeatte Family Professional Development Fellowship, 2024
- **Nominee**, Best of the Net by *Waxing & Waning* editors, 2023
- **Nominee**, Pushcart Prize by *Briar Cliff Review* editors, 2023
- **Winner**, Annual Award for Nonfiction Writing, *The Briar Cliff Review*, 2023
- **Fellowship**, Coro Fellowship in Public Affairs, 2020
- **Phi Beta Kappa**, Wesleyan University, 2020
- **Fellowship**, Wesleyan University Center for the Humanities, 2019-2020
- **Winner**, Parker Prize for Public Speaking, 2017
- **Winner**, Wangari Maathai Prize for Civic Participation in Sustainability, 2016

## Grants

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- Graduate and Professional Student Council Travel Grant, 2024
- Wesleyan University Center for the Humanities Research Fund, 2019
- Davenport Grant for Research in the Social Sciences, 2019
- Goffe Summer Experience Grant for Anthropological Research, 2018
- Wesleyan University Summer Experience Grant, 2017

## Published Writing

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### **“The True Image of the Past Flits By: Walter Benjamin and the Brain on Alzheimer’s,” *The Briar Cliff Review*** April 2023

- Winner of the *Briar Cliff Review* 2023 Award for the Nonfiction
- Notable essay in *Best American Essays of 2024*
- Nominated for the national independent, small press Pushcart Prize
- Featured award winner in *Poets & Writers*
- “A beautiful meditation that masterfully weaves together and connects life and death, family history, neuroscience, and literary theory. Bernstein-Schalet’s work calls us to re-examine our conceptions of philosophy and language and reveals for us the healing, restorative power of the creative spirit amidst disability and disease.” - Editors Paul Weber and Ryan Allen

### **“cooked: a pandemic in review,” *Waxing & Waning*** Spring 2023

- Nominated for *Best of the Net* anthology
- Featured in Sari Botton’s *Memoir Monday* Newsletter

## Heritage Radio Network Podcast Segments

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### **“Over Foraging of Ramps”** June 2021

- Wrote, edited, and produced interview with Neftalí Duran, an indigenous foodways activist and founder of the [i-collective](#), covering the over foraging of ramps in the Northeast and indigenous rights.

### **“Nice White Organics”** May 2021

- Wrote, edited, and produced story featuring activist Abby Ang about how the ties between white supremacy and organic food challenged a farmer’s market in Bloomington, Indiana to reckon with racial and class conflict in food spaces.

### **“Overtime Pay for Farmworkers in NY State” (English) or “Horas Extras Para Trabajadores Agrícolas en Nueva York” (Spanish)** May 2021

- Wrote, edited, and produced story about farmworkers’ labor rights in New York State in English and Spanish.

### **“La Feria de la Agrobiodiversidad”** March 2021

- Wrote, edited, and produced interview with Yira Vallejo and Jonathan Barbieri, organizers of the Feria de la Agrobiodiversidad, about spiritual relationships to corn in Oaxaca, Mexico.

### **“Rethinking Surplus: Innovative Solutions to Excess”** March 2021

- Edited and produced episode covering the food sharing economy, upcycling leftover grain from breweries to eliminate surplus in dairy production, and closed-loop manufacturing that turns

surplus waste into household products.

## Research Experience

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### **Disneyland & Addiction in Anaheim, *Independent Research*, Anaheim, CA**

August 2021-Present

- Investigating addiction treatment industry in Anaheim, including lack of regulations, finances, and treatment effectiveness
- Historical research into the effect of Disneyland on the city of Anaheim, including economic development, land zoning, labor issues, and community programming

### **GloFish Pets, *Independent Research*, Remote**

November 2020 – Present

- Researching the first transgenic pet available for commercial sale in the United States
- Interviewing scientists, CEOs, lawyers, and salespeople involved in the sale, distribution, dispute, and study of GloFish

### **Heritage Radio Network, *Radio and Research Intern*, Remote**

February – July 2021

- Trained in Solutions Journalism methods, an evidence-based mode of reporting that focuses on how communities are responding collectively to environmental and social issues
- Sourced audio and images for podcast episode distribution on all major platforms from free, online databases

### **Belly of the Beast Cuba, *Researcher*, Remote**

January– April 2021

- Investigated U.S. government funding for democracy promotion in Cuba through critical fact-checking, fact-finding, and background research using databases and public records

### **University of Miami Cuban Heritage Collection, *Researcher*, Miami, FL**

June 2019

- Researched Cuban refugees in the Miami area with a special focus on the refugee camps at the U.S. Naval Base in Guantánamo Bay in the 1990s; reviewed newspapers, comics, poems, visual art, and creative writing by Cubans leaving Cuba during the Special Period
- Environmental focus on how the U.S. and Cuban governments used manmade and natural borders to prevent migration, such as mines, fences, cacti, and the expanse/danger of the bay

### **United States National Archives at College Park, *Researcher*, College Park, MD**

June 2019

- Examined U.S. government documents pertaining to the U.S. military occupation of Guantánamo Bay with a special focus on the interactions between U.S. military personnel during WWI and WWII and Cuban citizens in the state of Guantánamo
- Environmental focus on competition for natural resources and the geographical advantage of Guantánamo Bay; special interest in how the ecology of the region effected political relations between the U.S., Cuba, and surrounding Caribbean countries

### **Instituto de Historia de Cuba, *Researcher*, Cuba**

June-August 2019

- Conducted independent archival research at the Instituto de Historia de Cuba on the U.S. military occupation of Guantánamo Bay, beginning in 1898 and continuing through 2019

## **International Refugee Assistance Project, *Coordinator*, Middletown, CT**

September 2017 – May 2020

- Managed twenty-person research team to compile a comprehensive, state-by-state guide to resettlement and social services for refugee and immigrant communities in the United States
- Environmental focus on climate refugees and climate conditions causing migration
- Grant from the Wesleyan Green Fund to provide food for volunteer team from Sanctuary Kitchen, a New Haven-based collective of refugee chefs

## **Wesleyan Special Collections & Archives, *Archivist*, Middletown, CT**

September – December 2019

- Completed data entry of thousands of archival materials to facilitate easy access to research materials

## **Relevant Coursework**

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- University of Arizona, ENVS/GEO 304: Water, Environment, Society, Spring 2024, Ongoing
  - Topics: global change, ecosystem services, groundwater, urbanization, land use, watershed and river basin management, stakeholder processes, and water policy
- Wesleyan University, ANTH296: Capitalist Globalization, Spring 2019, Grade: A+
  - Topics: capitalism, markets, globalization, power, social change, consumerism, extraction, natural resources management, labor and environmental policy
- Wesleyan University, SPAN278: Dangerous Plots, Spring 2017, Grade: A
  - Topics: environmental governance, Latin American history and politics, Latin American environmental literature and film, the Amazon, indigenous rights, environmental justice, wildlife and natural resources conservation, “green washing,” eco-capitalism, development in Latin America

## **Relevant Service/Professional Experience**

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### **Work-in-Progress Reading Series, *Organizer*, Tucson, AZ**      January 2024 – Present

- Coordinates University of Arizona Master of Fine Arts reading series, including booking readers, securing location, providing catering, and scheduling event

### **Academic Writing in the Borderlands, *Participant*, Tucson, AZ**

September – November 2024

- Trained to incorporate multi-lingual and multi-cultural materials in course planning for undergraduate students

### **Freakonomics Radio, *Freelance Assistance*, Remote**

June – December 2021

- Prepared podcast transcripts for web postings according to *New York Times* style guide
- Edited WordPress website for consistent, organized content to boost audience engagement

### **Wesleyan University Local Food Co-operative, *Produce Coordinator*, Middletown, CT**

September 2019 – March 2020

- Coordinated weekly produce distribution from local farm for over 600 student, faculty, and Middletown community households
- Ensured quality and quantity of fresh, local, organic produce to promote sustainable and cooperative living in university environment

**Project Elea, Volunteer, Athens, Greece**

June – August 2017

- Scheduled appointments, restocked supplies, and organized food and clothing distribution facilities to provide over 1,500 refugees with support on a daily basis
- Organized the largest ever undergarment distribution of 2,000 pairs of underwear to address urgent needs
- Successfully facilitated the coordination of dental appointments for adults and children in cooperation with local community center and international NGO to support camp resident's health and well-being

**The Marshall Project, Intern, New York, NY**

September 2015 – June 2016

- Produced in-depth research on capital punishment using Nexis and other investigative tools in support of editorial team's groundbreaking reporting for [\*the Next to Die\*](#) project
- Investigated the causes of death of detained immigrants to expose the treatment and conditions for immigrants in U.S. detention centers

**The Green Belt Movement, Intern, New York, NY**

June – August 2016

- Created detailed plan for youth engagement in sustainability and the environmental teachings of Nobel Prize Winner Wangari Maathai

**New York 2 X Coalition, Youth Organizer, New York, NY**

July 2013 – August 2016

- Organized environmental justice workshops and service brigades to urban farms in New York, New Orleans, and Philadelphia for hundreds of youth, building a youth coalition to fight environmental injustice and climate change in their local communities

**Technology Experience and Specialized Skills**

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- Grant writing for artists and writers
- Investigative journalism: people/location finder, financial document acquisition and analysis, social media reviews, etc.
- Problem-solving and conflict mediation
- Fluent in Spanish
- Interviewing, fact-checking, copy editing
- Archival, ethnographic, and digital media research in English and Spanish
- Zencastr, Trint, Descript, ProTools, Reaper, Airtable, WordPress, Wix, Squarespace
- Microsoft Word, Powerpoint, Excel
- Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides