

<b>Masaryk University</b>	
<b>Faculty</b>	Faculty of Arts
<b>Procedure field</b>	History of Concrete Literatures (Germanic Literatures)
<b>Applicant</b>	Jeffrey Alan Smith
<b>Applicant's home unit, institution</b>	Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky, Filozofická fakulta MU
<b>Habilitation thesis</b>	Perpetual Scriptures: Quests for Textual Authority in Nineteenth-Century American Literature Culture
<b><u>Board members</u></b>	
<b>Chair</b>	prof. Mgr. Milada Franková, CSc., M.A. <i>Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University</i>
<b>Members</b>	Prof. Susan Belasco <i>University of Nebraska-Lincoln</i> Assoc. Prof. Amy Earhart <i>Texas A&amp;M University</i> doc. PhDr. Stanislav Kolář, Dr. <i>Ostravská univerzita</i> doc. PhDr. Tomáš Pospíšil, Ph.D. <i>Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University</i>

### **Evaluation of the applicant's scholarly/artistic qualifications**

The candidate Jeffrey A. Smith, Ph.D. (1958) received his Master of Arts degree in the Department of English Language and Literature at University of Chicago in 1981 and Master of Fine Arts at School of Theatre, Film and Television at University of California in 1993. His Doctor of Philosophy degree from Chicago University (2006) is in the fields of American Literature, American Studies, Cultural Studies and Film/Mass Media. Since then, his academic activities, interests and research have explored all these related fields. In these areas he published two books: *The Presidents We Imagine: Two Centuries of White House Fictions on the Page, on the Stage, Onscreen, And Online* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2009) and *Thinking The Unthinkable: Nuclear Weapons and Western Culture* (Indiana University Press, 1989). At the same time, he published shorter pieces, such a chapter in a scholarly book publication, 12 articles in WoS, Scopus and peer reviewed journals in the USA and the Czech Republic. He is the author of two original works of art (stage plays), six reviews of scholarly publications and a large number (25) of pieces of academic journalism mostly for Chicago Tribune throughout the 1980s. Dr. Smith delivered 12 invited lectures at the Universities of Ostrava, Opava, Athens, Regensburg, Plovdiv and Valparaiso. His 21 conference presentations range from American universities and associations in the 1980s and 90s to his more recent European conference attendance at all our partner Moravian and East Bohemian universities and Universities of London and Oxford. His published work has received 310 citations, which is an indicator of the work's significance.

**Conclusion:** The applicant's scholarly/artistic capabilities **meet** the requirements expected of applicants participating in a habilitation appointment procedure in the field of History of Concrete Literatures (Germanic Literatures).

### **Evaluation of the applicant's pedagogical experience**

Dr. Smith's pedagogical work and experience goes back to the 1980s and 90s when he started his teaching career at Universities of Illinois and California, teaching a variety of Bachelor's courses on Specialized Writing, Mass Media and Popular Culture, at American University in Bulgaria in 2007, two courses on American Literature and Film. During his Fulbright Fellowship at Ostrava University in 2012-13, he taught Bachelor's and Master's courses in American Literature and Culture. Since 2013, in the Department of English and American Studies at Masaryk University, he has taught a large variety of Bachelor's and Master's courses in American Literature, Culture and Theory, such as Literary and Cultural Theory II, American Literature: Beginnings to 1865, Conspiracy and Paranoia in American Fiction and Culture, North American Cultural Geographies. In the Department's doctoral program Literatures in English, he teaches one of the compulsory subjects, The Profession of English. Besides the wide-ranging teaching, he also devotes his time to working as the Artistic Director with the Department's student drama group Gypsywood Players on producing their much acclaimed theatre performances.

Dr. Smith is a member of state examination boards (SEB) and doctoral committees (DC). He has supervised 37 successful Bachelor's Theses and 44 Master's Theses, one successfully defended Ph.D. dissertation and currently he supervises two PhD students. He taught courses as Erasmus guest lecturer at Universities in Regensburg (2016), Athens (2015) and Berlin (2015).

**Conclusion:** The applicant's pedagogical capabilities **meet** the requirements expected of applicants participating in a habilitation appointment procedure in the field of History of Concrete Literatures (Germanic Literatures).

### **Habilitation thesis evaluation**

Dr. Smith's habilitation thesis "Perpetual Scriptures: Quests for Textual Authority in Nineteenth-Century American Literature Culture" (currently in press with Bloomsbury Publishing) was assessed for the purpose of habilitation by three specialists in American literature and culture. All three reviewers/opponents declare that Dr. Smith's manuscript meets the required standards for habilitation.

Professor Brian Yothers (University of Texas at El Paso) considers Dr. Smith's thesis to be "the widest-ranging and most thoroughly integrated engagement with US literary, religious, media, and political history in the nineteenth century currently available, ... a major contribution of truly original and illuminating scholarship at the nexus of American literary and religion studies".

Dr. David Copland Morris (University of Washington Tacoma) finds "the topic of Smith's manuscript extremely relevant to the fields of literature, American studies and cultural studies ..., thoroughly interdisciplinary and ambitiously seek[ing] to identify main themes of American intellectual, political and religious development". He appreciates that Smith "synthesizes materials that are usually separated" and praises his "scrupulously produced scholarship".

Dr. Andrew Taylor (University of Edinburgh) writes that the thesis "presents a rich and wide-ranging engagement with the hermeneutical challenge posed both by the Bible and by the creation of para-scriptural texts (novels, poetry, declarations, speeches) ... to advance or critique what the author suggests were uniquely American conceptions of nationhood and citizenship. The book is eloquently written ... and shows a deft knowledge of the critical fields upon which it draws." He appreciates that "there is so much here to admire in the way that the author synthesises a substantial amount of material" while pointing out that "it was in the more tightly-focused sections that the author was able to make the most impressive interventions."

**Conclusion:** The applicant's habilitation thesis **meets** the requirements expected of habilitation theses in the field of History of Concrete Literatures (Germanic Literatures).

