



Maurizio Valsania

Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures and of Modern Cultures

University of Turin

Tel. (Italy): 346 97 94 922

Tel. (United States): 919 593 9503

E-mail: maurizio.valsania@unito.it

Research Topics and Areas of Expertise

- History of the Early American Republic.
- Intersections of Class, Gender, and Race in America.
- The American Founders within their Social, Intellectual, and Material Context.
- The Body.
- Manners and Clothing.

- Transatlantic Enlightenment.
- Radical Political Thought in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.
- Social and Political Philosophy.
- American Philosophy.
- Post-Structuralism.
- History and Theory (with an emphasis on the intersections between intellectual history and material history).

Education

1997: Ph.D. in History of Philosophy (Dottorato), University of Rome “Tor Vergata” in co-affiliation with the University of Urbino.

1993: Laurea in Filosofia (MA in Philosophy), University of Turin, Summa cum Laude. My MA thesis was awarded the 1993 “Emilio Bocca Prize” by the Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa.

Academic Appointments

2011-present: Associate Professor of American History (SPS/05) in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures and of Modern Cultures, University of Turin.

2000-2011: Associate Professor of History of Philosophy (M-FIL/06), Department of Education, University of Turin.

1999: Lecturer, Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, Naples, Italy.

1996-1999: Lecturer in History of Philosophy, Department of Philosophy, University of Turin.

Honors

1993: Emilio Bocca Prize for the best MA thesis, Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa, Italy.

Publications

A) *Books*

- Valsania, M. *First Among Men: George Washington and the Myth of American Masculinity*, Johns Hopkins University Press, trade book series, October 2022, 416 pp. I am represented by literary agent Scott Mendel of the Mendel Media Group. At JHUP, I've worked with editor Laura Davulis. The book has received a starred review in the *Library Journal* and has been featured in the *New York Times*, the *New York Post*, and the *Washington Post Magazine*.
- Valsania, M. *Jefferson's Body: A Corporeal Biography*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2017, 280 pp.
- Valsania, M. *Nature's Man: Thomas Jefferson's Philosophical Anthropology*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013, 216 pp.
- Valsania, M. *The Limits of Optimism: Thomas Jefferson's Dualistic Enlightenment*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011, 224 pp.
- Valsania, M. *Umanesimo postindustriale: breve apologia della speranza sociale* (Postindustrial humanism: a plea for social hope), Milano: Franco Angeli, 2005, 152 pp.
- Bonanate, U., and M. Valsania. *Le ragioni dei filosofi: Una storia del pensiero* (Philosophers' reasons: a history of thought), Roma: Carocci, 2003, reprint 2006, 2008, 368 pp.
- Valsania, M. *Lettura delle Meditazioni metafisiche di Descartes* (Descartes' Metaphysical Meditations: a reader), Torino: UTET Libreria, 1998, 184 pp.
- Valsania, M. *Mater Materia: Materialismo, panteismo e anti-umanesimo nella filosofia britannica del Settecento* (Mater Materia: materialism, pantheism, and anti-humanism in British 18th-century philosophy), Napoli: La Città del Sole, 1997 (from my Ph.D. dissertation), 276 pp.

B) Chapters in Books, Articles, Bibliographies, and Reviews (in English, peer reviewed)

- Valsania, M. “Thomas Jefferson and Joseph Mussi: Getting to Know Milanese Life in Philadelphia,” *The Italian Legacy in Philadelphia*, ed. Judith Goode and Andrea Canepari, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2021.
- Valsania, M. Foreword to Paul Merrill Spurlin, *The French Enlightenment in America*, orig. pub. 1984, new ed. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2021.
- Valsania, M. “Thomas Jefferson on Private Property: Myths and Reality,” *RiCognizioni*, 7(2020): 123-135.
- Valsania, M. Review of Armin Mattes, *Citizens of a Common Intellectual Homeland: The Transatlantic Origins of American Democracy and Nationhood*. *American Historical Review*, 123 (2018): 914-15.
- Valsania, M. “Thomas Jefferson,” *Oxford Bibliographies*, “Atlantic History,” ed. Trevor Burnard, New York: Oxford University Press, August 26, 2013. <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/> (revised 2017 edition online).
- Valsania, M. Review of Brian Steele, *Thomas Jefferson and American Nationhood*. *American Political Thought*, 3 (2014): 183-86.
- Valsania, M. “Dark Sides of the Enlightenment: An Essay on Optimism,” *A Warm Mind-Shake: Scritti in Onore di Paolo Bertinetti*, Turin: Trauben, 2014, 607-15.
- Valsania, M. “Beyond Particularism: Thomas Jefferson’s Republican Community,” *Cosmopolitanism and Nationhood in the Age of Jefferson*, ed. Peter Nicolaisen and Hannah Spahn, Heidelberg: Winter Verlag, 2013, 93-111.
- Valsania, M. Review of Peter S. Onuf and Nicholas P. Cole, eds., *Thomas Jefferson, the Classical World, and Early America*. *Reviews in History* (review no. 1285), <http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/1285>.
- Valsania, M. “‘Another and the Same’: Nature and Human Beings in Erasmus Darwin’s Doctrines of Love and Imagination,” *The Genius of Erasmus Darwin*, ed. C.U.M. Smith and Robert Arnott, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005, 337-55.
- Valsania, M. “Both Sides of the Moon: The Philosophical Journey of Erasmus Darwin and Joseph Priestley,” *Revolutionary Players of Industry and Innovation*, The Libraries Partnership, West Midlands, Birmingham, UK. <http://www.revolutionaryplayers.org.uk>.
- Valsania, M. “‘Our Original Barbarism.’ Man vs. Nature in Thomas Jefferson’s Moral Experience,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 65 (2004): 627-45.

C) Other Notable Publications

- Valsania, M. “Dude food is not patriotic—vegetables and moderations are more deeply rooted in the nation’s early history,” *The Conversation*, October 6, 2022. <https://theconversation.com/dude-food-is-not-patriotic-vegetables-and-moderation-are-more-deeply-rooted-in-the-nations-early-history-191839>.
- Valsania, M. “Abortion decision cherry-picks history—when the US Constitution was ratified, women had much more autonomy over abortion decisions than during 19th century,” *The Conversation*, July 6, 2022. <https://theconversation.com/abortion-decision-cherry-picks-history-when-the-us-constitution-was-ratified-women-had-much-more-autonomy-over-abortion-decisions-than-during-19th-century-185947>. 350k readers.
- Valsania, M. “The American founders could teach Putin a lesson: Provoking an unnecessary war is not how to prove your masculinity,” *The Conversation*, March 11, 2022. <https://theconversation.com/the-american-founders-could-teach-putin-a-lesson-provoking-an-unnecessary-war-is-not-how-to-prove-your-masculinity-178709>.
- Valsania, M. “Political rage: America survived a decade of anger in the 18th century – but can it now?” *The Conversation*, December 3, 2021. <https://theconversation.com/political-rage-america-survived-a-decade-of-anger-in-the-18th-century-but-can-it-now-172179>.
- Valsania, M. “The American founders didn’t believe your sacred freedom means you can do whatever you want – not even when it comes to vaccines and your own body,” *The Conversation*, October 21, 2021. <https://theconversation.com/the-american-founders-didnt-believe-your-sacred-freedom-means-you-can-do-whatever-you-want-not-even-when-it-comes-to-vaccines-and-your-own-body-169924>.
- Valsania, M. “When George Washington Ordered His Troops to Get Vaccinated,” *Defense One*, October 21, 2021. <https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2021/10/when-george-washington-ordered-his-troops-get-vaccinated/186287/>.
- Valsania, M. “America’s founders believed civic education and historical knowledge would prevent tyranny – and foster democracy,” *The Conversation*, July 8, 2021. <https://theconversation.com/americas-founders-believed-civic-education-and-historical-knowledge-would-prevent-tyranny-and-foster-democracy-162788>.
- Valsania, M. “All American presidents have made spectacles of themselves—and there’s nothing wrong with that,” *The Conversation*, March 18, 2021. <https://theconversation.com/all-american-presidents-have-made-spectacles-of-themselves-and-theres-nothing-wrong-with-that-157026>.
- Valsania, M. “Op-ed: Presidential etiquette? History is full of bad behavior—and at least one ripped-off toupee,” *Chicago Tribune*, online February 12, 2021, print February 15, 2021. <https://www.chicagotribune.com/opinion/commentary/ct-opinion-presidents-day-trump-etiquette-20210212-vjsae6odonbjnb4lwr7dcicwsi-story.html>.
- Valsania, M. “It’s not just Trump—presidents and politicians have long shredded etiquette,” *The Conversation*, February 12, 2021. <https://theconversation.com/its-not->

just-trump-presidents-and-politicians-have-long-shredded-etiquette-155180.

- Valsania, M. “How George Washington used his first Thanksgiving as president to unite a new country,” *Salon*, November 26, 2020. https://www.salon.com/2020/11/26/how-george-washington-used-his-first-thanksgiving-as-president-to-unite-a-new-country_partner/.
- Valsania, M. “George Washington would have so worn a mask,” *The Conversation*, June 1, 2020, updated November 25, 2020. <https://theconversation.com/george-washington-would-have-so-worn-a-mask-139718>.
- Valsania, M. “How George Washington used his first Thanksgiving as president to unite a new country,” *The Conversation*, November 23, 2020. <https://theconversation.com/how-george-washington-used-his-first-thanksgiving-as-president-to-unite-a-new-country-150630>.
- Valsania, M. “A brief history of incivility, from the Founders to Donald Trump,” *Wisconsin State Journal*, online November 20, 2020, print November 22, 2020. https://madison.com/wsj/opinion/column/maurizio-valsania-a-brief-history-of-incivility-from-the-founders-to-donald-trump/article_94a4a0e3-796a-5f49-a8b3-2e5d0050c9de.html.
- Valsania, M. “A brief history of presidents snubbing their successors—and why the founders favoured civility instead,” *The Conversation*, November 17, 2020. <https://theconversation.com/a-brief-history-of-presidents-snubbing-their-successors-and-why-the-founders-favored-civility-instead-149878>.
- Valsania, M. “Think American democracy is ending? You’re not alone,” *Salon*, September 19, 2020. https://www.salon.com/2020/09/19/think-american-democracy-is-ending-youre-not-alone_partner/.
- Valsania, M. “Pessimists have been saying America is going to hell for more than 200 years,” *The Conversation*, September 17, 2020. <https://theconversation.com/pessimists-have-been-saying-america-is-going-to-hell-for-more-than-200-years-145662>.
- Valsania, M. “George Washington and Eighteenth-Century Masculinity,” OUPblog (Oxford University Press’s Academic Insights for the Thinking World), February 19, 2018, <https://blog.oup.com/2018/02/george-washington-eighteenth-century-masculinity/>.
- Valsania, M. “French Hovels, Slave Cabins, and the Limits of Jefferson’s Eyes,” OUPblog (Oxford University Press’s Academic Insights for the Thinking World), April 13, 2017. <https://blog.oup.com/2017/04/french-hovels-slave-cabins-limits-jeffersons-eyes/>.

D) Interviews and Other Projects

- “Why George Washington was a man of many contradictions,” by Todd Farley, *New York Post*, October 15, 2022. <https://nypost.com/2022/10/15/why-george-washington-was-a-man-of-many-contradictions/>.
- “How 2022 Became the Year of Over-the-Top Masculinity in Politics,” by Bill Donahue, *The Washington Post Magazine*, June 20, 2022. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/magazine/2022/06/20/he-man-politics/>.
- “The Fox Hasn’t Fared Well in American Politics,” by Leah Askarinam, *The New York Times*, April 8, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/08/us/politics/capitol-hill-fox-history.html?searchResultPosition=1>.
- “First Among Men: George Washington and the Myth of American Masculinity,” *The Academic Minute, a WAMC National Production*, March 21, 2022. <https://academicminute.org/2022/03/maurizio-valsania-university-of-turin-first-among-men-george-washington-and-the-myth-of-american-masculinity/>.
- *Wisconsin State Journal* editorial board. “Meet the State Journal’s guest columnists from 2020,” *Wisconsin State Journal*, January 2, 2021. https://madison.com/wsj/opinion/editorial/meet-the-state-journals-guest-columnists-from-2020/article_b547c99a-40b0-5a7e-a348-36d81b7c8165.html
- “The Forum: The amazing Dr Darwin,” *BBC News World Service*, January 23, 2020. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3csyp60>
- Tom van der Voort, “What was Thomas Jefferson really like? Historian Maurizio Valsania talks about his new book, *Jefferson’s Body*, and our third president’s physical presence,” *The Miller Center*, April 19, 2017. <https://millercenter.org/what-was-thomas-jefferson-really>.
- “The Author’s Corner with Maurizio Valsania,” Interview with John Fea, Blog “The Way of Improvement Leads Home,” April 10, 2017. <https://thewayofimprovement.com/2017/04/10/the-authors-corner-with-maurizio-valsania/>.

E) Keynote Addresses, Conference Papers, and Presentations (selection)

- “First Among Men: George Washington and the Myth of American Masculinity,” The American Revolution Institute of the Society of the Cincinnati, Washington DC, October 12, 2022.
- “Ford Evening Book Talk and Official Book Launch: George Washington and the Myth

of American Masculinity,” George Washington’s Mount Vernon, October 11, 2022.

- “George Washington: An Education in Silk and Blood,” Symposium, Becoming George Washington, George Washington’s Mount Vernon, November 5-6, 2021.
- “George Washington: Portrait of the First American Male,” Lunch and Fellowship with Maurizio Valsania, George Washington’s Mount Vernon, Washington Library, September 27, 2021.
- Invited Keynote Speaker, “Trans-Atlantic Bodies: American Nationalism and the Politics of Corporeality,” Trans-Atlantic Conversations: New and Emerging Approaches to Early American Studies, Obama Institute, Mainz, Germany, October 4-6, 2018.
- “American Founders and the Politics of Corporeality,” American History and Culture: A Lecture Series, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität and the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, Munich, Germany, May 17, 2018.
- “Being Homogeneous: The American Nation and the Dark Side of Equality,” In the Footsteps of George Washington: Founders, Nations, and Constitutions in Comparative Perspectives, Turin, Italy, September 21-23, 2017. I was also the organizer of the conference.
- “Jefferson’s Body: A Corporeal Biography,” Book Launch, International Center for Jefferson Studies, Jefferson Library, Charlottesville, VA, June 6, 2017.
- “George Washington’s Body,” Lunch and Fellowship with Maurizio Valsania, George Washington’s Mount Vernon, Washington Library, March 15, 2017.
- “Thomas Jefferson and Nineteenth-Century Corporeality,” European Association for American Studies Biennial Conference, Constanta, Romania, April 22-25, 2016.
- “Enlightened Bodies,” Enlightenment Futures, Turin, Italy, May 18-19, 2015. I was also the organizer of the conference.
- “Performing Natural Wonders: Thomas Jefferson’s Irresistible Persuasion,” EEASA Biennial Conference, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin, Poland, December 11-13, 2014.
- “Thomas Jefferson’s Body,” Thirty-Sixth Annual Meeting, SHEAR, Philadelphia, PA, July 17-20, 2014.
- “Understanding Jefferson from Abroad,” Jeffersonians in Power: A Celebration of the Work of Peter Onuf, Robert H. Smith Center at Montalto, Charlottesville, VA, May 9-10, 2014.
- “The Indian Hall,” Creating the Past: Early America Museums between History and Education, University of Milan, Milan, Italy, November 18, 2011.
- “Looking Back to Places: Thomas Jefferson’s Emotional Geography,” EEASA Biennial Conference, University Paris-Diderot, Institut Charles V, Paris, France, December 9-11, 2010.
- “The Limits of Love: Jefferson’s Biological Look at Wards, States, Nations, and the Cosmopolitan Community,” Cosmopolitanism and Nationhood in the Age of Jefferson. An International Symposium Organized by the Robert H. Smith International Center for

Jefferson Studies and the John-F.-Kennedy-Institute for North American Studies, Berlin, Germany, December 2-3, 2010.

- “Thomas Jefferson: Looking at Industrial England,” Matthew Boulton and the Soho Manufactory 1809-2009, University of Birmingham Centre for Birmingham and Midlands History, Birmingham, UK, July 3-5, 2009.
- “The Curse of History: Leaders’ Distrust of American History, 1783-1828,” Brown-Bag Seminar at the McNeil Center for Early American Studies, Philadelphia, PA, February 28, 2007.
- “Social Hope and Prophetic Intellectuals in a ‘Hopeless’ World,” The Fifth Biennial Conference of the Radical Philosophy Association, Howard University, Washington, DC, November 3-7, 2004.
- “Pragmatism, Enlightenment and the Claim for Nature: Two Languages of American Philosophy,” The Fifth Biennial Conference of ASLE (Association for the Study of Literature and Environment), Boston University, Boston, MA, June 3-7, 2003.
- Invited Keynote Speaker, “Erasmus Darwin’s Doctrine of Love and Imagination,” International Conference and Commemoration of the Bicentenary of the Death of Erasmus Darwin, Lichfield, Birmingham, UK, April 19-22, 2002.

Teaching Activities

Since the year 2000, as a professor at the University of Turin, I have been offering seminars (sometimes called laboratories) and courses for both graduate and undergraduate students. A note: as a praxis, courses that Italian Universities offer do not have syllabi. Furthermore, Italian Universities rarely, if ever, make attendance mandatory. The customary format is lectures, and students may or may not choose to show up during class. (However, I have been among the few professors who have regularly experimented with a more discussion-oriented format.) Students do not have to turn in a written essay, but they must take a final exam, either oral or written.

Courses, typically, are divided into two parts, an “institutional” textbook, which every teacher has to follow (by giving lectures or recitations), plus a set of essays and/or books (the “monographic” part) that may vary from year to year. The textbook remains the same, year after year. Students must read and study these texts and, during their final exam, answer a set of questions based on them.

I have offered classes based on two main areas:

A) *Intellectual History (History of Philosophy)*

As a professor of History of Philosophy and Intellectual History in the Department of Education (2000-2012), I have taught courses on the Enlightenment from a trans-national and transatlantic perspective. While an emphasis on the intellectual dimensions (science, ethics, and philosophy) is obviously unavoidable, at the same time I have made students aware that the past never happens within precise disciplinary boundaries. By attending my courses, students have realized that styles, behaviors, anxieties, beliefs, practices of consumption, and materiality gave the “Long Eighteenth Century” its distinctive character, perhaps even more than philosophers’ tenets. I am the co-author of one of the most popular “institutional” textbook still in use in Italian Universities, *Le ragioni dei filosofi: Una storia del pensiero* (Philosophers’ reasons: a history of thought). As to the “monographic” part, I have given lectures and engaged students in discussions based on subjects that go beyond the age of the Enlightenment. I have taught a long list of contemporary classics: Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn, Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Max Weber, William James, Richard Rorty, Hannah Arendt, John Dewey, Ernst Cassirer, Martin Heidegger, John Rawls, Pierre Bourdieu, W.E.B. Du Bois, Alasdair MacIntyre, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Cornel West.

B) *US History:*

Since 2012, when I moved to the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures and of Modern Cultures, I have been offering survey courses (the equivalent of HIST 1XX) to international students who enroll in an MA program in English and American Studies, one of the most prestigious programs run by the University of Turin. The textbook used in class is the standard *Give Me Liberty!*, by Eric Foner (et al.)

In addition, I organize seminars on crucial moments in the history of the US: Constitution and Constitutional Debates, Middle Passage, Lewis & Clark Expedition, Caribbean World, Panic of 1819, Market Revolution, Underground Railroad, Civil War, Reconstruction, Gilded Age, Frontier Thesis, and Great Depression.

Thesis/Dissertation Tutoring

Over the last 20 years, at the University of Turin, I have supervised over 40 MA theses and Ph.D. dissertations covering a wide array of topics.

For the period 2009-2019:

- Religious radicalism in England
- Eighteenth-century materialism
- Thomas Jefferson and slavery
- The cultural history of marriage in the US
- Muhammad Ali and the Civil Rights Movement
- The Harlem Renaissance
- The role of C.I.A. in Iran
- The social philosophy of Roberto Mangabeira Unger
- George Mylonas and the relations between Greece and the US during the dictatorship of 1967-1974
- History of slavery in Virginia
- Sexuality in the eighteenth century

Grants and Fellowships

2021: Class of 2020-21, James C. Rees Fellowship on the Leadership of George Washington funded by the George Washington's Mount Vernon, Mount Vernon, VA.

2017: Residential Fellowship and Individual Research Grant funded by the George Washington's Mount Vernon, Mount Vernon, VA.

2015: Long Term Residential Fellowship and Individual Research Grant funded by the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich.

2014: Residential Fellowship and Individual Research Grant funded by the International Center for Jefferson Studies, Charlottesville, VA.

2011: Residential Fellowship and Individual Research Grant funded by the International Center for Jefferson Studies, Charlottesville, VA.

2010: Residential Fellowship and Individual Research Grant funded by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, New York, NY.

2009 (January 15th-March 15th): Long Term Residential Fellowship and Individual Research Grant funded by the John D. Rockefeller Library, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, VA.

2008: Residential Fellowship and Individual Research Grant funded by the International Center for Jefferson Studies, Charlottesville, VA.

2008: Residential Fellowship and Individual Research Grant funded by the Library Company of Philadelphia, PA.

2007: Residential Fellowship and Individual Research Grant funded by the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA.

2007: Associate Researcher at the McNeil Center for Early American Studies, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.

2006: Residential Fellowship and Individual Research Grant funded by the International Center for Jefferson Studies, Charlottesville, VA.

2003: Associate Researcher at the McNeil Center for Early American Studies, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.

From 1993 to 1997, I have spent several research periods in Birmingham, UK, London, and Munich, Germany, doing research for my Ph.D. dissertation.

Organization of International Conferences

September 21-23, 2017, Turin, Italy: *In the Footsteps of George Washington: Founders, Nations, and Constitutions in Comparative Perspective.* 18 scholars (including Pulitzer Prize winner Annette Gordon-Reed, Pulitzer Prize winner Edward Larson, Italian Senator Gian Giacomo Migone, and Italian Ambassador Sergio Romano) have gathered in the first capital city of Italy to discuss about the future of nations and nationalisms. The Compagnia di San Paolo (the foundation connected with the Banca Intesa San Paolo), the University of Turin, and the George Washington's Mount Vernon have helped me to raise a budget of \$100,000.

May 18-19, 2015, Turin, Italy: *Enlightenment Futures.* 15 scholars (including Pulitzer Prize winner Gordon Wood, Pulitzer Prize winner Alan Taylor, and Pulitzer Prize winner Annette Gordon Reed) have gathered in Turin to rethink the intellectual, social, cultural, and material history of the long eighteenth century through the lenses of possibility, probability, potentiality, and hope. The Compagnia di San Paolo and the Thomas Jefferson Foundation have helped me to raise a budget of \$70,000.

Academic Service

- Board, European Early American Studies Association (EEASA), 2014-present.
- Reviewer for *American Historical Review*.
- Reviewer for *Eighteenth-Century Studies*.
- Reviewer for *Journal of the Early Republic*.
- Reviewer for *American Political Thought*.
- Reviewer for *Reviews in History*.
- Reviewer for *Journal of American History*.
- Reviewer for *Intellectual History Review*.
- Reviewer for the Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD.
- Reviewer for the University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, VA.
- Reviewer for the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

Linguistic Skills

Languages, spoken/written: Italian, English, and French.

Languages, read: German, Spanish, Latin, and Ancient Greek.

Last revised: December 2022