

# Rachel Somerstein

917-538-4105 | Rachel.Somerstein@gmail.com | New Paltz, NY, 12561

[www.rachelsomerstein.com](http://www.rachelsomerstein.com)

## Professional Summary

Writer, editor, and researcher with a PhD in mass communications, an MFA in creative writing, and 17 years of experience writing accessible and thoroughly researched publications including peer-reviewed studies, literature reviews, feature stories, essays, press releases, op-eds, social media, art, film, and book criticism, and blog posts for diverse audiences. Experience working with experts and data to craft clear, non-technical, evidence-based reports with implications for research and practice. Passionate about efficiently crafting clear, readable, and evidence-driven narratives for use by journalists, academics, and policymakers from across the world.

## Relevant Skills

- **Expert writer and editor with ability to identify trends, understand and use qualitative and quantitative data, and develop written arguments;** published hundreds of articles and other web content in print and digital magazines and newspapers, a book forthcoming from a Big Five publishing company, and 9 scholarly papers.
- **Experience working with authors, including non-native English speakers, to develop, report, write, and revise their work,** and developing leaders' talking points for nonprofit and governmental organizations
- **Confident communicator to audiences with a diverse range of expertise,** having taught 10 courses, presented at 14 conferences, hosted more than 10 lectures and other events given by visiting scholars, facilitated events for 100+ attendees for nonprofit organizations, and functioned as a subject expert for my book, research, and reportage.

## Work History

**Associate Professor, Journalism,** SUNY New Paltz, New Paltz, New York, Aug. 2014—Present

*Develop and teach 8 seminar and lecture-based journalism courses (20-40 students per class) emphasizing writing, reporting, and critical thinking while balancing personal research agenda, administrative, and advising responsibilities.*

- Make connections between current affairs and my own research; disseminate those connections to public audiences as a subject expert on such programs as NPR's "[On the Media](#)" and in pieces for the magazine [Guernica](#).
- Conducted research using real-world data to confirm differences in photojournalists' work assignments based on their gender; used this data to write about the consequences of these differences in an op-ed published in the [Washington Post](#) and a story for [Women's Media Center](#).
- Work collaboratively with colleagues from other disciplines to organize a conference on transnational memory; with co-authors from Europe and the Middle East, investigate how different cultures' media commemorate war, culminating in a co-authored book [chapter](#).
- Provide structural and developmental editing in a fast-paced environment on a variety of student writing, including research papers, discussion posts, and news writing.
- Using real-world data from a variety of news organizations, structured, wrote, and [published](#) 7 sole-authored and 2 co-authored peer-reviewed publications with an emphasis on cross-cultural comparisons of collective memory.
- Conceptualized, developed, and analyzed survey data on the obstacles photojournalists encounter while working; published results in a [peer-reviewed journal](#) with an eye toward implementing more-protective and effective practices to protect journalists.
- Supervise research assistants and interns; as chair of the department's committee, mentor junior faculty through the processes of reappointment and tenure, helping them to identify strengths and make concrete plans to address weaknesses in their applications.
- Clearly communicated complex research findings to diverse audiences through presentations at 14 conferences, including invitation-only conferences with a focus on international journalism.

**Freelance Writer,** Self, New York and New Paltz, New York, Aug. 2006 – Present

- Published [\*Invisible Labor: The Untold Story of the Cesarean Section\*](#) (Ecco, June 2024) by interviewing more than 100 sources and analyzing data on historical and contemporary maternal mortality and the risks and techniques of C-sections .
- Pitched and wrote several hundred pieces of reportage, criticism, and essays in magazines including *ARTnews*, [\*Afterimage\*](#), the [\*Boston Globe\*](#), [\*DAME\*](#), [\*n+1\*](#), [\*PBS.org\*](#), [\*Sustainable America\*](#), [\*Washington Post\*](#), and [\*WIRED\*](#) and researcher for books *American City X* and *New Public Works* (both Princeton Architectural Press, 2013).
- Developmentally edited [\*The Art of Choosing\*](#) (Twelve Publishing, 2010), working with author Sheena Iyengar to create an accessible voice and strengthen the book's narrative drive.
- Write and proofread press releases about events, grants, and other news for nonprofit organizations including the Jewish Community of New Paltz, the Margaret Wade-Lewis Center, and Salt City DISHES; circulate releases to local news organizations and press contacts.
- Research, report, and write plain-language articles for academics, journalists, and policymakers on complex initiatives such as [land banking](#) and federal programs such as the [Low-Income Housing Tax Credit](#) for the Department of Housing & Urban Development; craft talking points for leaders on housing; work closely with federal experts to review materials and messaging.
- Juggle competing deadlines from multiple editors and from a variety of publications, each with its own style and fact-checking processes.

**Director (2017-present) and Member**, James H. Ottaway Sr. Visiting Professor in Journalism, SUNY New Paltz, New Paltz, NY, 2014 – Present

- Collaborate with 5 colleagues from across the university to select a journalist to teach a semester-long class at SUNY New Paltz; steer committee to hire more female journalists and more journalists of color
- Work with colleagues from external affairs to write press releases about events and craft Q&As, notes, and other talking points for the SUNY New Paltz President to use during Ottaway events.

**Founder and Co-Director**, Salt City DISHES, Syracuse, NY, October 2010 – January 2013

- Founded and co-organized DISHES, a nonprofit community organization that hosts a community dinner, charges \$10 for admission, and donates the funds to a public art project chosen by the audience to provide needed funding during a municipal fiscal shortage.
- Organized 4 dinners for 200 people each, secured donations of food and drink from local businesses, obtained necessary licenses, and wrote successful grants to ensure that the events were budget-neutral.

### Additional work history

- Adjunct Instructor and Writing Mentor, New York University Stern School of Business, 2010 – 2011
- Staff Writer, [\*Next American City\*](#), New York, NY, 2009 – 2010
- Researcher, Resource Development, D.E. Shaw & Company, New York, 2007 – 2009
- Production Manager, Carnegie-Knight Initiative, New York, NY, Summer 2006 and summer 2007
- Editorial Assistant, *ARTnews*, New York, NY, 2004 – 2006

### Education

- Syracuse University, PhD in mass communications, 2014
- New York University, MFA in creative writing, 2009
- Cornell University, BA in English and history, cum laude, Lang Prize for best thesis in history or American studies, 2000

### Languages

- Basic reading, speaking and writing of French and Spanish; proficient in Hebrew

### Honors and Awards

- American Academy of University Women Award, Short-Term Research Publication Grant, 2016
- Great Ideas for Teaching award for curriculum design in journalism from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (AEJMC), 2016