

# BENNINGTON COLLEGE

BEGINNING OF TERM  
FALL 2009

- THURSDAY, AUGUST 27**      New Students Arrive/Orientation
- FRIDAY, AUGUST 28**      9:00 am - 4:00 pm - New/Visiting Faculty Orientation, *Barn 124*  
5:00 pm - Reception for New/Visiting Faculty, *Pangaea Lounge*
- SATURDAY, AUGUST 29**      8:00 pm - Student Works Performance, *Martha Hill*
- SUNDAY, AUGUST 30**      Returning Students Arrive  
1:00 - 5:00 pm Faculty-led Workshops  
5:00 - 6:00 - Reception for Orientation Workshop Faculty, *Pangaea Lounge*  
7:00 pm - Faculty Works Performance, *Martha Hill*
- MONDAY, AUGUST 31**      9:00 - 10:30 am - Faculty Meeting, *Carriage Barn*  
11:00 am -12:00 pm - Language Placement Tests  
11:00 am -12:00 pm - Vocal and Instrumental Placement Auditions  
12:00 pm - Faculty Lunch, *Jennings Terrace Lawn*  
2:00 - 3:30 pm - Faculty Advising (new students), *Faculty Offices*  
3:30 - 5:00 pm - New Student Registration Completion, *Greenwall*
- TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1**      9:30 - 10:45 am - Faculty Advising (returning students), *Faculty Offices*  
9:30 - 10:45 am – Information Session: Advancement of Public Action Curriculum with  
President Elizabeth Coleman and Associate Dean for Academic Services,  
Duncan Dobbelmann, *Martha Hill Dance Theater*  
11:00 am - Convocation, *Usdan*  
12:30 pm - Community Lunch, *Commons Lawn*  
2:00 - 3:00 pm - Vocal and Instrumental Placement Auditions  
2:00 - 3:00 pm - Dance Performance Project Auditions  
3:00 - 5:00 pm - Returning Student Registration (Add/Drop), *Greenwall*  
5:30 pm - Faculty Reception, *Brick House*
- WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2**      Classes Begin  
1:00 - 2:00 pm - Drama Forum, *VAPA D207*
- THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3**      6:30 - 8:00 pm - Dance Workshop, *Martha Hill Dance Theater*
- FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4**      1:00 - 2:00 pm - Science Workshop, *Dickinson Reading Room*
- MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7**      7:00 - 8:30 pm - Social Science Colloquium, *Barn 100*
- TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8**      8:00 pm - Music Faculty Concert: The eclectic opening-of-the-term concert, featuring new  
and old works performed, improvised, and composed. *Carriage Barn*

# BENNINGTON COLLEGE

## FIRST YEAR ADVISOR BIOS FALL 2009

### **JULIA MOFFIT**

Julia comes to Bennington with a range of experiences working with students of diverse backgrounds, interests and abilities. As an undergraduate, she studied History and English literature at the University of California, Los Angeles and was active in leading community outreach programs throughout the local area. As a native Angeleno, observing the educational disparities in her own hometown inspired her to join Teach for America upon graduation. She spent two years as a high school social studies teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota. She then moved to Portland, Oregon where she spent a year working in disability services at a local community college and coordinating a service learning program for teens. Graduate school led her eastward, where she earned her Master's degree in Higher Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and counseled Harvard undergraduates to enable them to think broadly about their academic and career goals. She is thrilled to be at such a dynamic institution and to begin working with the amazing staff, faculty and students at Bennington. When not at work, you will probably find her hiking up a nearby mountain, delving into some of her favorite books, or exploring local museums and concerts.

### **SEAN LANIGAN**

Sean comes to Bennington with many experiences in progressive educational environments. A 2001 graduate of the Putney School, Sean immersed himself in the school's agricultural, visual art, and self-governance programs, an experience that culminated with the honor of serving as a student trustee during his senior year. As an undergraduate at Brown, Sean helped to found Brown's Interfaith House, served as a peer Writing Fellow for the Dean of the College, and discovered a love for teaching English to adult language learners. Although Sean concentrated in the History of Art and Architecture and initially aspired to work in a museum, spending a semester at the Bank Street College of Education inspired Sean to pursue teaching after graduation. Moving to the Berkshires, Sean spent a year on the faculty at the Darrow School, teaching ninth and tenth grade English. Before arriving at Bennington, Sean most recently spent three years pursuing graduate study in religion at Yale Divinity School. A native Midwesterner, Sean enjoys squeaky cheese curds, Blue Moon ice cream, and all the other fine dairy products the region has to offer. Sean is excited to be at Bennington and to have the opportunity learn from the innovative, creative, and talented people – faculty and students alike – who are drawn to this place.

# BENNINGTON COLLEGE

ORIENTATION WORKSHOPS  
FALL 2009

## **STEREOTYPES IN SPANISH**

*Jonathan Pitcher*

Barn 244

Participants with little or no Spanish will catch a brief glimpse of art and film on Mexico, thus gaining some insight into the first year of studying a foreign language at Bennington. We will confront several stereotypes of Latin America, while simultaneously confronting our own preconceived notions of how a foreign language is taught. We will learn a modicum of vocabulary and several grammatical points, typical for this level, in atypical ways. There will also be opportunities to use our newfound abilities in hopefully meaningful scenarios.

Conducted in Spanish.

## **THE PHILOSOPHER'S EYE**

*Karen Gover*

Dickinson 225

What is art? How should we look at works of art? How is art related to its social context? Is there a "correct" interpretation of an artwork? We will confront these and other questions in this workshop devoted to philosophical thinking about art. Our case studies will be based on examples from art history, recent artworld controversies, and the Bennington art collection. The artworks will serve as provocations to philosophical questioning, which we will supplement with reading and research.

## **READING LITERARY FICTION**

*Doug Bauer*

Dickinson 209

We'll be reading two widely admired and anthologized 20th century American stories, "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?", by Joyce Carol Oates and "The Things They Carried", by Tim O'Brien. We'll discuss the visceral impact, transporting power and social message of these works, as conveyed by such literary features as narrative voice, strategies of language, chronology, intended meaning, and scenic and character richness -- as opposed to the too-often analytical tools of symbol and theme and other like devices, which threaten to take the very life out of the literature they claim to explain.

## **SUCCESSFUL DATING STRATEGIES**

*Eileen Scully*

Barn 100

Welcome one and all, whether you are an experienced dater or really don't have a clue how to discern the age or historical era of an image, building, or text. After a brief orientation in basic dating techniques, we will go out on the town, Benning-town to be more precise. A brief, sober visitation in the local graveyard will be followed by a livelier stroll through the city center, equipped with phrase books, maps, broadsides, song sheets, and good behavior manuals from across several centuries.

## **VOCAL WORKSHOP**

*Tom Bogdan*

Carriage Barn, Fireplace Room

Considering all aspects of vocal production, we'll explore the fundamentals of breathing and resonance, working to build an awareness of the whole body's support of speaking and singing. We'll work with improvisational exercises designed to build listening and observational skills and develop fundamental vocal compositions. We'll also learn a few of Meredith Monk's simple choral pieces.

## **INNOVATIVE FICTION AND LITERARY TRADITION**

*Chris Miller*

Dickinson 117

The focus of this workshop is innovative current writing and its relation to earlier writing. Most innovative writers have been highly literate people, because a knowledge of the literary past is liberating: the more you know about what writers have already done, the better you will understand the things they're doing now, and the more options you'll be aware of in your own writing. (Writers who don't know much about the past tend to conform to the fashions of the present.) We will discuss texts by Lydia Davis, Italo Calvino, Nicholson Baker, Ben Marcus, and others. There will be several writing exercises.

## **HOW TO READ A PLAY**

*Kathleen Dimmick*

VAPA E315

What are dramatic conventions? How do they work? What brings them into being and then causes them to lose their power over time? We'll look at early scenes from four plays: Ibsen's *A Doll House*, Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Beckett's *Endgame*, and Muller's *Hamletmachine*. We'll note how Ibsen and Wilde use the nineteenth-century convention of the paradigm scene to set up the thematic and dramatic development of the play. We'll then see how Beckett and Muller, twentieth-century experimental writers, subvert and theatricalize this same convention.

## **DRAWING TOWARD SCULPTURE**

*Jon Isherwood*

VAPA Drawing Studio and Kinoteca

We will start by analyzing twelve figurative sculptures that have found considerable significance in the history of Art. Firstly, we will ask, what is the work saying to us? What were the cultural and social narratives requiring of these artists? And what are the visual constructs that make the sculptures successful? Selecting and staging six of these works, we will draw directly from a life model to further understand these entangled spatial and narrative dynamics. No prior drawing skill necessary, materials provided.

## **READING LANDSCAPE**

*Kerry Woods*

Commons Lounge

Natural history is the art and science of figuring out where you are by using your own observations of the world around you to build and assess hypotheses about processes and patterns. The landscape around Bennington is a rich one, shaped by deep geological processes, a series of glaciations ending only 10,000 years ago, and management by a series of human cultures beginning with the last glacier's retreat. All of these leave their signature on the forested terrain surrounding campus. We'll begin learning how to read those signatures, and meet some local flora and fauna along the way. We'll be walking the land in diverse terrain; come prepared with good shoes, clothes that you're willing to wear in the brush.

## **DRUGS AND NATURAL REMEDIES: THE CHEMISTRY BEHIND THE ADVERTISING**

*Janet Foley*

Dickinson 212

We are bombarded by the media with claims about the effects of pomegranate juice, Vitamin Water, Echinacea, St. John's Wort, and many other supplements and natural remedies. TV sells us drugs for depression, stomach upset and erectile dysfunction. How do we know if they work as claimed? What do you go by when you decide to purchase a product? Do natural remedies work better than synthetic drugs? Does advertising affect your choices? We will take a look at what we know about drugs and how we know it. In the lab we will extract a natural product, betulin, from birch bark, derivatives of which have shown anticancer properties. Come to this workshop with questions and an open mind.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

*Mansour Farhang*

Barn 240

In 50 years, human rights have evolved into a distinct issue in national and international affairs, leading to the flourishing of human rights studies globally. The disciplines of political science, philosophy, sociology and cultural studies are all looking at aspects of human rights. Moreover, despite criticism of its foundations, human rights discourse has been taken up with vigor by social movements and grassroots organizations in protest against governments as well as multinational corporations. The purpose of this workshop is to familiarize the students with the history and principles of human rights, the debate over their justification and the present state of their implementations.

Interested students are expected to read the following articles before we meet:

- Frederick Douglass, *What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?* A lecture delivered on July 5, 1852 at the invitation of the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society.
- Steven Lukes, *Five Fables About Human Rights*.
- Richard Rorty, *Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality*.

Copies of these articles will be available to students at the time of registration for the workshop.

## THE POETICS OF FILM

*Isabel Roche*

Dickinson 148

What does it mean to analyze a film? In this workshop, we will work with methods and techniques that differentiate the intellectual act of analyzing a film from viewing one for pleasure. In developing our understanding of the ways in which one can “read” a film, we will focus on the effects produced by narrative, technical, and interpretative choices.

The workshop, although conducted in English, will additionally give students a sense of how film is used in foreign language courses at Bennington to advance linguistic development, analytical skills, and cultural knowledge. Scenes studied will be drawn from *Le dernier métro* (Truffaut, 1980), *Au revoir les enfants* (Malle, 1987) and *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* (Jeunet, 2001).