

BENNINGTON WRITING SEMINARS

ALL THINGS SCHEDULE

January 8 – 18, 2009

NOTE: Schedule Subject to Change

All lectures, seminars, and panels will be held in Tishman Auditorium, and all faculty and graduate readings will be held in Usdan Gallery, unless otherwise indicated.

Thursday, January 8

- Noon-5:00 Student Check-in, Commons Lounge
- 3:00 Core Faculty Meeting, Barn Room 124
- 4:00 New Faculty Meeting, Barn Room 124
- 5:30-6:30 New Student/Mentor Dinner, Yellow DR
- 7:00 Faculty & Guest Readings: **Major Jackson and Phillip Lopate**
- 8:30 Welcoming Reception, Student Center

Friday, January 9

- 9:00-10:15 New-Student Orientation, Barn Room 100
- 10:30-11:45 All-Community Orientation, Tishman
- 11:45 Class Photo, Location TBA
- 1:00-2:30 Faculty Lecture: **Alice Mattison** “What Killed The Queen? And Other
Uncertainties That Keep A Reader Reading”
- 2:45-3:45 Introductory Writing Workshops, Locations TBA
- 2:45-3:45 Jan 09 Graduates Meeting, Barn Room 124

Graduate Readings:

- 4:00 Sara Majka
- 4:20 Sarah Mattson-Fishman
- 4:40 Susan Merrell
- 7:00 Faculty & Guest Readings: **Katie Ford and Tom Piazza**

Saturday, January 10

Graduate Lectures:

9:00 **Joseph Angelella:** “Cloudcuckooland: Mixing the Fucking Funny with Violence-The Tangibles of Trauma, An Examination of the Idiosyncratic Effects of Humor and Violence in Fiction; or How to Laugh at a Decapitated Chicken.” **WARNING!** Side-effects of attending this lecture may include: nightmares, rapid breathing, panic attacks, nausea, muscle tension, sweating, headaches, stomach and chest pain, alcohol and drug abuse, exotic phobias, chronic anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, severe irritability, outbursts of anger, debilitating guilt, crushing shame, searing hopelessness, uncontrollable crying, divorce and separation, or unemployment.

9:40 **Ann Brandon:** “A Subtle Knot: *The Odyssey* as a Marriage Bed Story”. Homer wove a seminal pattern in *The Odyssey* for stories that strengthen the marriage bed. For three thousand years, writers have borrowed his structure for novels, plays, operas, and films that depict domestic struggles. Two genres’ examples, Wolfgang Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro* and Frank Capra’s *It Happened One Night*, demonstrate how to develop a marriage bed story.

10:30-Noon Visiting Writer Lecture: **Katie Ford:** “The Craft of Emotion.”

1:00-3:00 Writing Workshops

Graduate Readings:

4:00 Jeffrey Perkins

4:20 Jamie Quatro

5:30-6:45 Faculty & Staff Dinner, Purple & Yellow DRs

7:00 Faculty & Guest Readings: **Wyatt Mason and Lia Purpura**

Sunday, January 11

Graduate Lectures:

8:20 **Lisa Brennan-Jobs:** “Is That What Really Happened?” On Writing Memoir: The Perils and the Thrills.

9:00 **Ellen Prentiss Campbell:** “Unreal Estate.” Edith Wharton said, “The impression produced by a house should always, to the novelist, be an event in the history of the soul.” I will consider lost, abandoned, and remembered homes in Marilynne Robinson’s *Housekeeping* and William Maxwell’s *So Long, See You Tomorrow*.

9:40 **Jack El-Hai:** “The Lives of Others.” The centuries-old genre of the biographical essay offers satisfactions that too few writers appreciate today. In this exploration of works by Samuel Johnson, Theodore Dreiser, and John McPhee, we'll investigate how these essays reveal as much of their writers as of their subjects. Gratuitous multimedia is featured.

10:30-Noon Visiting Writer Lecture: **Lia Purpura:** “On Sensibility.” An attempt – part polemic, part rescue operation – to discuss why it’s hard, but still worthwhile, to believe in such an old- fashioned notion. Included will be a sampler of others’ (writers! artists! musicians!) definitions of “sensibility” real-life stories and more....

Noon Second New Faculty Meeting: Purple DR

Graduate Readings:

1:00 Hugh Ryan
1:20 Melanie Smith

2:30-3:30 Craft Seminar: **Phillip Lopate:** “How Do You End An Essay?”

7:00 Faculty & Guest Readings: **Sven Birkerts and Alice Mattison**

Monday, January 12

Graduate Lectures:

9:00 **Chris Fahrenthold:** “Sampling Shakespeare.” Based on a novel by.... What does that mean, “based on?” Is Joyce’s *Ulysses* a reinterpretation of *The Odyssey*, or something more? If so, what? Is *Apocalypse Now* a “remake” of Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, or something else? What is going on between a parent work and the artist’s creative imagination when she “samples” a classic? Looking specifically at novels like Jane Smiley’s *A Thousand Acres* and David Wroblewski’s *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*, I will explore these issues with respect to their parents’ works, Shakespeare’s *King Lear* and *Hamlet*.

9:40 **Ann Fitzsimmons:** “Walker Percy’s *The Moviegoer*: Or, Why This Book Should Be On Your Reading List.” Walker Percy was a white, male, Southern Catholic, and at times a cranky writer who wrote *The Moviegoer* almost fifty years ago. In this lecture I hope to show how, despite all of that, those in the audience who don’t know of the book should, and those that do might want to revisit it.

10:30-Noon **Faculty Lecture: Askold Melnyczuk:** “Bitte, ich spreche nur amerikanisch: Some Remarks on Translating and Reading Translations.”

Noon Second New Student Orientation Lunch, Purple DR

1:00-3:00 Writing Workshops

Graduate Readings:

4:00 Joseph Stracci

4:20 Ross Angelella

7:00 Faculty & Guest Readings: **André Aciman and Lynne Sharon Schwartz**

Tuesday, January 13

Graduate Lectures:

8:20 **Marguerite Greenfield:** “Demeter and Persephone - Mothers and Daughters Wrestling at the Precipice.” Ancient myths and modern poetry reverberate in the inner lives of contemporary mothers and daughters, pose conflicts of dependence and autonomy, separation and reunion and disappointment and acceptance, and offer the welcome comfort of ambiguity.

9:00 **Ralph Hamilton:** “To Make Laugh & To Hurt: Deep Comedy in Four Contemporary American Poets”. Suicide, poverty, war, infidelity, cannibalism, corruption—that’s the stuff of comedy. Walter Kerr notes, “Comedy is not lyric, not rhapsodic, not reassuring; putting its last and best foot forward, it puts it squarely down in dung.” The lecture explores comedy in Denise Duhamel, Dean Young, Harryette Mullen and Russell Edson.

9:40 **Dayna Lorentz:** “After the Blood, Sweat, and Tears Comes the Real Trouble: Ibsen and *A Doll’s House*.” You think it’s over once you’ve written your masterpiece? So did Ibsen. This lecture talks about the many difficulties that can arise after you’ve finished that final draft by looking at what happened to Henrik Ibsen when he sent *A Doll’s House* into the world.

10:30-Noon **Visiting Writer Lecture: André Aciman:** “Parallax: a Disturbance of the soul.”

Graduate Readings:

1:00 Ian Williams

1:20 Winona Wendth

1:40 Ann Brandon

2:30-3:30 Visiting Writer Reading/Talk: **Peter Campion:** “*Dronng*: Some Notes on Poetic Diction.”

3:45-4:45 1st Meeting of June 09 Graduates, Barn Room 100

DARK KNIGHT—No Readings

Wednesday, January 14

Graduate Lectures:

9:00 **Sara Majka:** “Images from a fading world: Creating ghosts without breaking the dream of the realistic world.” I’ll use passages from W.G. Sebald’s *Austerlitz*, James Joyce’s “The Dead,” and Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*, works haunted by the passing of time and the disappearance of the living.

9:40 **Sarah Mattson-Fishman:** “Yona Wallach, A Poet Unmasked.” Yona Wallach was a radical Israeli poet whom a member of Israeli’s Knesset labeled “an animal in heat.” Beginning in the 1970s, Wallach’s poetry relentlessly explored identity, gender, and sexuality using free association, symbolic reference, and personae. Even 23 years after her death, she remains a force. Come hear why.

10:30-Noon Visiting Writer Lecture: **Peter Campion:** “*Dronng*: Some Notes on Poetic Diction.”

Noon-1:00 Lunch for Graduates and Bennington College Dean & Provost, Elissa Tenny, Yellow DR

1:00-3:00 Writing Workshops

Graduate Readings:

4:00 Lisa Brennan-Jobs

4:20 Ellen Prentiss Campbell

5:30-6:30 Graduate and 4th Term Student Dinner

7:00 Faulty & Guest Readings: **David Gates and Askold Melnyczuk**

Thursday, January 15

Graduate Lectures:

8:20 **Susan Merrell:** “Shirley Jackson: Home and the Illusion of Safety”. Moving beyond the famous story, “The Lottery,” we will examine the life and work of Bennington’s own master of the gothic, the late Shirley Jackson.

9:00 **Jeffrey Perkins:** “Creating Space in Poetry Through Intimate Architecture.” Everyone knows what it is to live between a ceiling and a floor. Between walls. How can a poet use this shared experience to build symbolic meaning? This lecture will consider the use of domestic spaces that spark associative leaps in readers—bringing you from a bathroom to a theater, a living room to a grave.

9:40 **Jamie Quatro** : “Among Mutinous Helium Bursts Around Saturn: Workshopping Barry Hannah.” It may be near sacrilege to attempt to codify the magic of Hannah’s unique idiom, to even ask the question this lecture will only begin to answer: what makes style STYLE? I’ll take a microscope to Hannah’s short fiction to examine the ways in which he re-calibrates American syntax -- and show you why he gets away with it.

10:30-Noon Faculty Lecture: **Lynne Sharon Schwartz**: “Who’s That in the Mirror?
or,
Some Cases of Doubles in Fiction.”

Graduate Readings:

1:00 Chris Fahrenthold
1:20 Ann Fitzsimmons
1:40 Jack El-Hai

2:30-3:30 Life of Letters Seminar: **Tree Swenson**:

4:00-5:00 2nd Meeting of June 09 Graduates, Barn Room 100

5:30-6:45 Graduates/Faculty Dinner, Purple & Yellow DRs

7:30 **NOTE: Later Start Time**
Faculty & Guest Readings: **Doug Bauer and Susan Kinsolving**

Friday, January 16

Graduate Lectures:

9:00 **Hugh Ryan**: “Nonlinear Nonfiction from A to Z.” What are the risks and rewards in trying a nonlinear structure in nonfiction? As a literary movement, where does nonlinear nonfiction fit?

9:40 **Melanie Smith**: “Raising the Pedestrian to the Sublime.” The English novelist Henry Green has been described as a dispossessed poet. I will explore how much of the meaning of Green’s fiction is conveyed through poetic methods--vision, imagery, symbolism, and language. Green’s prose tends toward high intensity, sometimes mannered, often oblique, always magnificent.

10:30-Noon Visiting Writer Lecture: **Martha Cooley**: “Look Again: Some Thoughts on Revision.”

1:00-3:00 Writing Workshops

Graduate Readings:

- 4:00 Marguerite Greenfield
 4:20 Ralph Hamilton
 4:40 Dayna Lorentz
 5:00 Parturition Meeting for Graduates, Usdan Gallery
- 7:00 Faculty & Guest Readings: **Michael Krüger and Bob Shacochis**

Saturday, January 17

Graduate Lectures:

- 8:20 **Joseph Stracci:** ~~“I Could Have Cut This Title Down:~~ “How Minimalism Works And Why You Don’t Need That Announcement Sentence.” Starring Ernest Hemingway, Raymond Carver, Mary Robison, and Amy Hempel. Co-starring Chuck Palahniuk, Don DeLillo, and Sandra Cisneros. You are not the kind of person who would be at a lecture like this at this time of the morning. But here you are, and you cannot say that the terrain is entirely unfamiliar, although the details are fuzzy.
- 9:00 **Winona Wendth:** “Spots of Time: The Memoir, the Photograph, and the Recombinant Self.” Selected passages from Wordsworth’s *The Prelude* provide insights into the structure of the lyric response, the double-consciousness of the memoirist, and the dynamic nature of the self that is activated when we apprehend certain photographic images.
- 9:40 **Ian Williams:** “Smell, Memory.” Smell is powerful in its ability to evoke emotional memory and yet it is often ignored in literature. I will explore the physiological basis of smell and consider examples of its use in poetry, fiction and non-fiction. My purpose is to encourage writers to explore this sense and harness its power to enliven their work.
- 10:30-12:00 Associate Faculty Lecture: **Michael Krüger:** “A discussion on Nobel Laureate Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio and the concept of world literature.”
- 1:00-2:30 Writer-in-Residence Lecture: **Bob Shacochis:** “Reality Hunger: An Imagined Conversation with David Shields about his new manifesto concerning the nature of 21st century nonfiction.”

Graduation Ceremony:

Speaker: **Michael Krüger**

- 4:30 Grads and Faculty to VAPA D-208 to don robes for graduation
 5:00 Commencement Ceremony, Usdan Gallery
 6:15 Reception, Greenwall
 6:45 Dinner, Greenwall
 9:00 Dance Party, Student Center

Sunday, January 18

10:00-Noon

Writing Workshops

Monday, January 19

Depart by 11:00 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Visiting Writer:

André Aciman is the author of the novel *Call Me by Your Name*, of *Out of Egypt: A Memoir*, and of *False Papers: Essays on Exile and Memory*. He has also co-authored and edited *The Proust Project* and *Letters of Transit*. Born in Alexandria, he lived in Italy and France. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard University and has taught at Princeton University and Bard College and is currently the chair of The CUNY Graduate Center's Doctoral Program in Comparative Literature and the director of The Writers' Institute at The Graduate Center. He is the recipient of a Whiting Writers' Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and a fellowship from The New York Public Library's Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers. His work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The New Republic*, *The Paris Review*, as well as in several volumes of *The Best American Essays*.

Lecture:

Will also give a reading.

Faculty:

Doug Bauer's novels are *The Book of Famous Iowans* (Holt, 1997), *The Very Air* (Morrow, 1993), and *Dexterity* (Simon & Schuster). In 2006 the University of Michigan Press published a second expanded edition of his essays, *The Stuff of Fiction: Advice on Craft*, and Mr. Bauer has also published another nonfiction book, *Prairie City, Iowa* (Putnam, 1979 and The University of Iowa Press, 2008). He's edited the anthologies, *Prime Times: Writers on Television* and *Death by Pad Thai and Other Unforgettable Meals*. He has received fellowships in fiction from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Massachusetts Council on the Arts. He holds a Doctor of Arts from the State University of New York at Albany and a B.A. in journalism from Drake University. He has taught, among other places, at Harvard, Rice University, and Smith College and is currently a member of the undergraduate literature faculty at Bennington College.

Will give a reading.

Faculty/Director:

Sven Birkerts has been editor of *Agni* since July 2002. His most recent books are *Art of Time in Memoir: Then, Again* (2007, Graywolf) and *Reading Life: Books for the Ages* (2007, Graywolf). His other books include *An Artificial Wilderness: Essays on 20th Century Literature* (William

Morrow), *The Electric Life: Essays on Modern Poetry* (William Morrow), *American Energies: Essays on Fiction* (William Morrow), *The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age* (Faber & Faber), *Readings* (1999, Graywolf), and *My Sky Blue Trades: Growing Up Counter in a Contrary Time* (2002, Viking). He has edited *Tolstoy's Dictaphone: Writers and the Muse* (Graywolf) as well as *Writing Well* (with Donald Hall) and *The Evolving Canon* (Allyn & Bacon). He has received grants from the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Foundation and the Guggenheim Foundation. He was winner of the Citation for Excellence in Reviewing from the National Book Critics Circle in 1985 and the Spielvogel-Diamonstein Award from PEN for the best book of essays in 1990. Mr. Birkerts has reviewed regularly for *The New York Times Book Review*, *The New Republic*, *Esquire*, *The Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, *Mirabella*, *Parnassus*, *The Yale Review*, and other publications. He has taught writing at Harvard University, Emerson College, and Amherst and has most recently been Briggs-Copeland Lecturer in Nonfiction at Harvard. He is a core faculty member and recently was appointed Director of the Bennington Writing Seminars. He lives in Arlington, Massachusetts, with his wife and two children.

Will give a reading.

Visiting Writer:

Peter Champion is the author of two books of poems, *Other People* (University of Chicago Press, 2005) and *The Lions* (University of Chicago Press, 2009.) Mr. Champion is the winner of a Pushcart Prize. He also edits *Literary Imagination* and teaches at Auburn University.

Lecture: "Dronng: Some Notes on Poetic Diction." [That weird word is from an anecdote about John Coltrane.]

Will also give a Craft Seminar/Reading

Visiting Writer:

Martha Cooley's first novel, *The Archivist*, was published in 1998 by Little, Brown, and has appeared in translation in eleven languages. Her second novel, *Thirty-Three Swoons* (also by Little, Brown) was published in the U.S. and Italy in 2005 and is now in paperback. Ms. Cooley's short fiction and nonfiction have appeared in *A Public Space*, *AGNI*, *Washington Square*, and elsewhere. She has taught in the M.A. programs in writing at Boston University and Manhattanville College. Ms. Cooley is on the English Department faculty (undergraduate and M.F.A) at Adelphi University.

Lecture: "Look Again: Some Thoughts on Revision."

In his "Mad Gardener's Song," Lewis Carroll introduces a daft horticulturalist who can't see things for what they are: "He thought he saw a Rattlesnake / That questioned him in Greek: / He looked again, and found it was / The middle of next week..." This gardener's a good model for us, since we writers, too, often struggle to see things for what they are. And like gardeners, we must be ready to spade, prune, weed, cut, and graft--but also to re-vision, to see anew. In this lecture I'll raise questions about how and why all this gets done.

Visiting Writer:

Katie Ford is the author of *Deposition*, *Colosseum*, and a chapbook, *Storm*. *Colosseum* was named by *Publishers Weekly* as one of the Best Books of 2008, and Ms. Ford is the recipient of a 2008 Lannan Literary Award. Her poems have appeared in *The Paris Review*, *The American Poetry Review*, *Pleiades*, *Poets & Writers*, *Seneca Review*, and other journals. She is the poetry editor of the *New Orleans Review* and has taught at Loyola University, Reed College, the Iowa Summer Writing Festival, and now at Franklin & Marshall College. She lives in Philadelphia with her husband, the novelist Josh Emmons.

Lecture: “The Craft of Emotion.”

Writing about emotion does not, necessarily, evoke emotion. How do poets incite fear, anxiety, joy, epiphany, sensations of danger or an upwelling of love? We will look at masterful examples of this craft, analyzing what kinds of music, rhythm, form, and diction yield emotion in the reader. Marina Tsvetaeva, Emily Dickinson, Yehuda Amichai, Yusef Komunyakaa, May Swenson, and emerging poets will be discussed in order to see how we can craft rich emotion in our own writing.

Will also give a reading.

Faculty:

David Gates is the author of the novels *Jernigan* (Knopf, 1991) and *Preston Falls* (Knopf, 1998), and a collection of stories, *The Wonders of the Visible World* (Knopf, 1999). Mr. Gates's fiction, articles, and reviews have been published in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *Newsweek*, *Esquire*, *Rolling Stone*, *Tin House*, *Bomb*, *Salon.com*, *The Oxford American*, *The Journal of Country Music*, and elsewhere. He edited the fiction anthology, *Labor Days*, and has written introductions to works by Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, and Donald Barthelme. He took a B.A. from the University of Connecticut and was ABD in graduate studies there. He's received a Guggenheim fellowship, and his books have been finalists for the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award. Mr. Gates has taught at Harvard, Columbia, the University of Virginia, Hunter College, and The New School. He lives in Brooklyn and Washington County, New York.

Will give a reading.

Faculty:

Susan Kinsolving's books of poems are *The White Eyelash* (Grove Press, 2003), *Dailies & Rushes* (Grove Press, 1999), a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award, *Among Flowers* (Random House, 1993), and forthcoming *My Glass Eye*. Her poems have appeared in many anthologies and journals, including *The New York Times*, *Poetry*, *Paris Review*, *Harvard Magazine*, *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *Grand Street*, *Yale Review*, *The New Criterion*, and *The Washington Post*. She has taught at the University of Connecticut, California Institute of the Arts, Southampton College, and Willard-Cybulski Men's Prison. Ms. Kinsolving has been awarded poetry fellowships to France, Italy, Switzerland, and Scotland. She originated and directed poetry reading series for The New York Public Library, CalArts, and The American Poetry Maze. As a guest lecturer and reader, she has appeared at The Harman Center for the Arts in Washington, D.C., Dunvegan Arts Festival of Scotland, The Printemps du Livre of France, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation of Virginia, The Yeats Society of New York, Harvard

University, and The French Consulate of New York. As a librettist, her cantata was commissioned and performed by Glimmerglass Opera of New York, and published by Carl Fischer Music. Her poem *Dance Steps* was presented in a televised ceremony to Her Majesty the Queen of the Netherlands, and performed in Italy and the United States. A song cycle, commissioned for American soprano Christine Brewer, will premiere in California, 2010. Ms. Kinsolving is a graduate of the University of California at Los Angeles and California Institute of the Arts. She lives in rural Connecticut.

Will give a reading.

Associate Faculty:

Michael Krüger is a writer and the publisher of Carl Hanser Verlag, Zsolnay Verlag, and Nagel & Kimche Verlag. He is also the editor of the literary magazine *AKZENTE*. Mr. Krüger has published novels, poetry and essays, some of them translated into English. He is a member of the Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung, the Academy of Science and Art, and the Bavarian Academy, as well as being an Officier des Arts de la Republique Francaise and a Commandante dell'Arte of Italy. Mr. Krüger lives in Munich, Germany.

Lecture: “A discussion on Nobel Laureate Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio and the concept of world literature.”

Mr. Krüger will also give the Commencement address, as well as a reading of his own work.

Faculty:

Phillip Lopate's books of nonfiction include *Waterfront: A Journey Around Manhattan* (Crown Publishers, 2004), *Getting Personal: Selected Writings* (Basic Books, 2003), *Totally, Tenderly, Tragically* (Doubleday, 1998), *Portrait of My Body* (Doubleday, 1997), *Against Joie de Vivre* (Simon & Schuster, 1989), *Bachelorhood: Tales of the Metropolis* (Little, Brown, 1981), and *Being with Children* (Doubleday, 1986). *Two Marriages* (novellas) was published by Other Press in September 2008, and *Notes on Sontag* by Princeton University Press in 2009. Mr. Lopate edited *American Movie Critics: From the Silents Until Now* (Library of America 2006). His novels are *The Rug Merchant* and *Confessions of Summer*, and his books of poems are *The Daily Round* and *The Eyes Don't Always Want to Stay Open*. He edited *The Art of the Personal Essay* (Doubleday, 1995) and *Writing New York* (Library of America, 1998). Mr. Lopate has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the NEA, and the New York Foundation for the Arts. He has taught at New York University, Hofstra University and Columbia University, where he has been named a Professor of Professional Practice. He was recently a fellow at the Center for Scholars and Writers at the New York Public Library. Mr. Lopate took a B.A. from Columbia College and a Ph.D in English from the Union Institute. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Craft Seminar: “How Do You End An Essay?”

Will also give a reading.

Faculty:

Wyatt Mason is a contributing editor of *Harper's Magazine*. He has also written for *The New Yorker*, *The New Republic*, *The London Review of Books*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *The Nation*, *Slate* and *The New York Times Magazine*. Modern Library publishes his translations of the works of Arthur Rimbaud, *Rimbaud Complete* and *I Promise to be Good*. A 2004 fellow of the Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers at the New York Public Library, Mr. Mason received the 2005 Nona Balakian Citation for excellence in reviewing from the National Book Critics Circle. His reviews and criticism for *Harper's Magazine* earned him a National Magazine Award in 2006 for his exhibiting "endless erudition and a singular, tireless focus on quality." He lives in New Hampshire.

Will give a reading.

Faculty:

Alice Mattison's new novel, *Nothing Is Quite Forgotten In Brooklyn*, was published in 2008 by Harper Perennial; an excerpt previously appeared in *The New Yorker*. Her collection of connected stories, *In Case We're Separated*, was a *New York Times* Notable Book and won the Connecticut Book Award for Fiction. Ms. Mattison's previous novels are *The Wedding of the Two-Headed Woman*, *The Book Borrower* (a *Times* Notable Book), *Hilda and Pearl*, and *Field of Stars*. She is the author of three earlier collections of stories, including *Men Giving Money*, *Women Yelling* (also a *Times* Notable Book), and a collection of poems, *Animals*. She is co-editor of *As I Sat On the Green: Living Without a Home in New Haven*. Her stories, poems, and essays have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The Women's Review of Books*, *Ploughshares*, *The Threepenny Review*, *Michigan Quarterly Review* (which awarded her the Lawrence Foundation Prize), *Agni*, and elsewhere, and have been reprinted in *The Pushcart Prize* and *Best American Short Stories*. She holds a bachelor's degree from Queens College and a Ph.D. in English literature from Harvard. She lives in New Haven, Connecticut.

Lecture: "What Killed The Queen? And Other Uncertainties That Keep A Reader Reading." "I'll investigate some ways in which books hold onto their readers, and will discuss several novels as examples, including *The Fountain Overflows* by Rebecca West, *The Man Who Loved Children* by Christina Stead, *The Quiet American* by Graham Greene, and *The Years* by Virginia Woolf. It's not necessary to have read any of these novels in advance, but reading one or two might be helpful."

Will also give a reading.

Faculty:

Askold Melnyczuk's latest novel, *The House of Widows*, was published this spring. His second novel, *Ambassador of the Dead*, was a Los Angeles Times Best book for 2002. His first, *What is Told*, was a New York Times Notable Book. He has also published a novella about Rimbaud titled *Blind Angel*, and translated *Girls*, a novella by Oksana Zabuzhko, as well as a selection of poems, *Eight Notes from a Blue Angel*, by Marjana Savka. He received a three-year fellowship in fiction from the Lila Wallace Foundation and numerous grants from the NEA for his work as editor of *Agni*, which he founded in 1972. He has also edited six books, including three volumes in Graywolf's *Take Three Poetry Series*, as well as an anthology of writing from Ukraine, *From Three Worlds*, a volume on the painter Gerry Bergstein, and a book of essays about Father Daniel Berrigan. He has published work in *The New York Times*, *The Nation*, *The Boston Globe*,

Ploughshares, *Grand Street*, *Poetry*, and so on. He has taught at Harvard and currently teaches at the University of Massachusetts Boston. He is the founder of Arrowsmith Press.

Lecture: “Bitte, ich spreche nur amerikanisch: Some Remarks on Translating and Reading Translations.”

Will also give a reading.

Visiting Writer:

Lia Purpura’s collection of essays, *On Looking*, published by Sarabande Books in August 2006, was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. From that collection, “Glaciology” was awarded a Pushcart Prize, and other essays were named “Notable Essays” in *Best American Essays*. In 2004, she was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in Prose. Her new cycle of poems, *King Baby Poems*, won the Beatrice Hawley Award from Alice James Books and was published in April, 2008. *Increase*, her first collection of essays, won the Associated Writing Programs Award in Creative Nonfiction and was published by the University of Georgia Press in 2000. Her collection of poems, *Stone Sky Lifting*, won the Ohio State University Press/*The Journal* Award and was published in 2000 as well. She is also the author of *The Brighter the Veil* (winner of the Towson University Prize in Literature/Poetry), and *Poems of Grzegorz Musial: Berliner Tagebuch and Taste of Ash*, translated on a Fulbright year in Poland. Her poems and essays appear in many magazines, including *Agni*, *DoubleTake*, *Field*, *Georgia Review*, *Iowa Review*, *Orion*, *Parnassus: Poetry in Review*, *Ploughshares* and *Southern Review*. A graduate of Oberlin College and the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, where she was a Teaching/Writing Fellow in Poetry, Ms. Purpura is Writer-in-Residence at Loyola College in Baltimore, MD and teaches at the Rainier Writing Workshop.

Lecture: “On Sensibility.”

An attempt – part polemic, part rescue operation – to discuss why it’s hard, but still worthwhile, to believe in such an old-fashioned notion. Included will be a sampler of others’ (writers! artists! musicians!) definitions of “sensibility” real-life stories and more....

Will also give a reading.

Faculty:

Lynne Sharon Schwartz is the author of 21 books, including novels, short story collections, nonfiction, poetry, and translations. Her new memoir, *Not Now, Voyager*, will be appearing from Counterpoint in April. Her first novel, *Rough Strife*, was nominated for a National Book Award and the PEN/Hemingway First Novel Award. Other novels include *The Writing on the Wall*; *In the Family Way: An Urban Comedy*; *Disturbances in the Field*; and *Leaving Brooklyn*, nominated for the PEN/Faulkner Award. Her latest story collection is *Referred Pain*, published in 2004. The anthology she edited, *The Emergence of Memory: Conversations with W. G. Sebald*, which includes interviews and essays, has just been published by Seven Stories Press. She is also the author of the memoir, *Ruined by Reading*, the essay collection, *Face to Face*, and the poetry collection, *In Solitary*. Her translations from Italian include *A Place to Live: Selected Essays of Natalia Ginzburg*, and *Smoke Over Birkenau*, by Liana Millu. Ms. Schwartz has received grants

from the Guggenheim Foundation, the NEA, and the New York State Foundation for the Arts. Her stories and essays have been reprinted in many anthologies, including *The Best American Short Stories*, *The O. Henry Prize Stories*, and *The Best American Essays*. She has taught writing and literature at colleges and universities here and abroad. She lives in New York City.

Lecture: “Who’s That in the Mirror? or, Some Cases of Doubles in Fiction.”

The double, or look-alike, has long been a staple in literary and popular culture, sometimes as a separate being (*The Prince and the Pauper*), sometimes as the rotten inside of a seemingly benign original (*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*), or as a heroic version of the ordinary (Superman and Clark Kent). In all instances, the double signifies the divided self and raises disturbing questions about the fragility of identity. This talk will focus on novels by Dostoyevsky, Philip Roth, Orhan Pamuk, and José Saramago, all of which use the double theme to ask who we are, how do we know, and how can this knowledge be threatened.

Will also give a reading.

Writer in Residence:

Bob Shacochis is a novelist, essayist, short story writer, educator, and journalist. His collection of stories, *Easy in the Islands*, received the 1985 National Book Award for First Fiction, and his novel, *Swimming in the Volcano*, was a finalist for the 1993 National Book Award. He is also the author of a second collection of stories, *The Next New World*, and was the recipient of the Prix di Rome in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He has published two nonfiction books: *The Immaculate Invasion*, which chronicled the U.S. military’s occupation of Haiti and was a finalist for the New Yorker Magazine Book Awards for Best Nonfiction in 1999, and *Domesticity*, a collection of essays on food and love. He is a contributing editor at *Harper’s* and *Outside* magazines. His novel-in-progress, *The Woman Who Lost Her Soul*, will be published in 2008 by Grove/Atlantic. He has an MFA from the Iowa Writers Workshop, and an MA and a Bachelor of Journalism from the University of Missouri. He has taught at the Iowa Writers Workshop. He lives in Florida and New Mexico.

Lecture: “Reality Hunger: An Imagined Conversation with David Shields about his new manifesto concerning the nature of 21st century nonfiction.”

Will also give a reading.

Life of Letters Seminars’ Guest:

Tree Swenson is the Executive Director of the Academy of American Poets, which sponsors *Poets.org*, the web’s most comprehensive site devoted to poetry; National Poetry Month, the largest literary celebration in the world; the Poetry Audio Archive, capturing the voices of major American poets for generations to come; *American Poet*, a biannual literary journal; and numerous awards and prizes for poets. Immediately prior to joining the Academy, Ms. Swenson served as Director of Programs for the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Prior to that, she was the Publisher and Executive Director of *Copper Canyon Press*, which she co-founded in 1972, and where she worked for twenty years to establish a national press that remains dedicated to publishing poetry.

