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Dietland Author Sarai Walker to Speak at June 2019 MFA Commencement

Bennington, VT: [Sarai Walker](#) MFA '03, author of the bestselling novel and critically-acclaimed AMC series [Dietland](#), will be the Commencement speaker for the **Bennington Writing Seminars** in June 2019. Walker is a graduate of the fiction program and will deliver the Commencement address on Saturday, June 22 at 7:30 pm in Bennington's Usdan Gallery.

While at Bennington, Walker will conduct a master class and give a reading. In addition, she will emcee a panel titled "Page to Screen to Film: Four Writers Discuss Their Experiences" with fellow alumni [Susan Scarf Merrell](#) MFA '09, whose novel *Shirley* is being made into a major motion picture starring Elizabeth Moss, and [Joanne Proulx](#) MFA '14, whose debut novel *Anthem of a Reluctant Prophet* is being made into a major motion picture starring Juliette Lewis, as well as faculty member [Manuel Gonzales](#), who teaches screenwriting at Bennington and whose first novel *The Regional Office is Under Attack* has been optioned for film. Walker will screen *Dietland* during the residency and Proulx will screen *Anthem*.

Walker's novel *Dietland* was one of *Entertainment Weekly's* Top Ten Books of the Year in 2015. *Dietland* was adapted for television in 2018 by AMC and is now on Hulu in the United States and on Amazon Prime globally. Her essays and articles have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, the *Washington Post*, and many national magazines. She also worked on the 2005 update of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*.

After receiving her MFA from the Bennington Writing Seminars in 2003, Walker earned a PhD in English from the University of London. Her research focused on normative femininity of the body; the fat female body; consciousness-raising and the "personal is political" in feminist practice and as a literary aesthetic; American second-wave feminist history and fiction; 'chick lit'; and critical theory, particularly Michel Foucault. She [talked with](#) NPR's Scott Simon about writing *Dietland* and reclaiming the word "fat."

She has taught writing and literature at several universities and lives in Los Angeles, where she is developing a new TV series, as well as writing her second novel, *The Cherry Robbers*, which will be published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in 2021.

About the Bennington Writing Seminars

Steeped in the Bennington College's literary legacy, [Bennington Writing Seminars](#) is consistently named one of the top low-residency Masters of Fine Arts in Writing programs. Founded in 1994, the Seminars was one of the first low-residency graduate writing programs in the country. During this two-year, low-residency program, students commit as much to reading as to writing and conceive reading lists that strengthen and broaden their knowledge. Students perform critical literary analysis and craft bold new works of fiction, nonfiction, or poetry inspired by their discoveries. They finish with a polished thesis and a parting lecture. All this with the expert guidance of authors who, throughout individualized instruction, become familiar with and develop a stake in students' work.

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