

The MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College Public Schedule – July 2015

The public is welcome to attend the morning lectures and evening readings in fiction and poetry offered during the Master of Fine Arts Program summer residency. Events last approximately one hour. Admission is free. The schedule is subject to change.

For more information, call the MFA Office: (828) 771-3715.

Readings will begin at 8:15 PM in Ransom Fellowship Hall
behind the Chapel, unless indicated otherwise.

READINGS by FACULTY

Wednesday, July 1—8:00 PM

Daisy Fried, Joan Silber, A. Van Jordan

Thursday, July 2

Lan Samantha Chang, Alan Shapiro, Lauren Groff, Monica Youn

Friday, July 3

Robert Boswell, Rodney Jones, Sarah Stone, Maurice Manning

Saturday, July 4—Gladfelter, Canon Lounge

Brooks Haxton, Caitlin Horrocks, C. Dale Young, Peter Turchi

Sunday, July 5—Gladfelter, Canon Lounge

Charles Baxter, Stephen Dobyns, Debra Spark, Ellen Bryant Voigt

Monday, July 6—no readings

Tuesday, July 7

Debra Allbery, David Haynes, James Longenbach, Kevin McIlvoy

READINGS by GRADUATING STUDENTS

Wednesday, July 8

Nathaniel Krause, Cynthia Quiñones, Sumita Mukherji, Rachele Ryan, Karen Smyte

Thursday, July 9

Anu Bharadwaj, Noah Friedman, Leslie Koffler, Lesley Valdes, Catherine Meeks

Friday July 10—4:30 PM, followed by Graduation Ceremony

Rose Auslander, Cynthia Gunadi, Sarah Strong, Heather Muller

The schedule of lectures by Warren Wilson MFA faculty follows →

Faculty Lectures – July 2015
The MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College

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Friday, July 3
9:30 AM

JAMES LONGENBACH: The Construction of Voice

Let's say you want to write a sentence that by its fourth or fifth syllable makes its readers feel instantly engaged with an interlocutor, as if the sentence were not written but spoken. We often refer to the "voice" or the "speaker" of any piece of writing, but of course these are metaphors: if we feel strongly the illusion of a speaking voice it is because diction, rhythm, and syntax have been manipulated strategically to create that illusion. This lecture will examine the precise ways in which the illusion of spokenness is constructed almost instantly and then sustained over time in John Donne's "The Canonization" and D. H. Lawrence's "Pomegranate"; moving away from these primary examples, the lecture will also look at sentences by Robert Browning, Marianne Moore, T. S. Eliot, Louise Gluck, John Ashbery, and Frank Bidart; in addition, it will examine prose passages by D. H. Lawrence and James Joyce.

Friday, July 3
10:45 AM

CHARLES BAXTER: The Poet's Story and the Dramatic Image

In trying to think about how dramatic images can carry the weight of a story's emotions, particularly the most intense ones, I find myself going beyond what T. S. Eliot called "the objective correlative" and into the realm of the image that can stop time altogether for the sake of an almost mythic intensity. Such images can bear the weight of a powerful emotion more steadily than discursive language can. These are images that do not easily give up their meanings but somehow seem "right" within a narrative. I will probably use Janet Kauffman's story "The Easter We Lived in Detroit" and Wright Morris's story "A Fight Between a White Boy and a Black Boy in the Dusk of a Fall Afternoon in Omaha, Nebraska," but students interested in this problem may want to hunt up Elizabeth Bishop's stories and Timothy Findley's novel *The Wars*. Other good examples of what I'm getting at are Sherwood Anderson's "The Corn Planting," Yasunari Kawabata's story "The Sparrow's Matchmaking" and, for poets, Edwin Arlington Robinson's "Eros Tyrannos."

**Saturday, July 4
9:30 AM**

DEBRA SPARK: Jump Already

I am interested in looking at moments in artists' lives when they move significantly forward, when they realize that, for whatever reason, the old way of doing things or thinking about things is not working, and they need to try something else. I'm interested in dead ends that are opportunities in disguise, failures that are, in hindsight, the necessary step to a new way of creating. To this end, I want to look at artistic leaps, particularly ones that bring students out of their apprenticeships and into their full creative selves and more seasoned writers through and beyond their talents to their most distinctive, original work. The focus will be on the material and craft "a-has!" that occasion development. I'll be considering the work of Rick Russo, Joan Silber, Steve Stern, and Joan Wickersham, as well as a few painters. No reading required.

**Saturday, July 4
10:45 AM**

**RODNEY JONES: Overriding the Autobiographical First-Person
Default: Writing Poetry in Fictional Points-of-View**

This lecture will discuss the predominant use of autobiographical first-person point-of-view by contemporary poets as an outgrowth of both the Romantic poetic sensibility and of the contemporary workshop, discuss the difficulties of overriding that model, and argue for the advantages of using points-of-view usually associated with fiction. It will feature close readings of several pertinent texts, including selections from Anne Carson's *The Beauty of the Husband*, Ellen Bryant Voigt's *Kyrie*, and Michael Ondaatje's *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*.

**Sunday, July 5
9:30 AM, Gladfelter-Canon Lounge**

**MAURICE MANNING: Here Lies Andrew Baker:
An Epitome on Figures of Speech**

As the title of this lecture implies, I will offer a survey of figures of speech, how they indeed come to us through speech (through the ear first, as Frost advises), and how they work to enrich and enliven our writing. The lecture will look at portions of poems by Emily Dickinson, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Robert Hayden, Philip Larkin, and Edward Thomas.

**Sunday, July 5
10:45 AM, Gladfelter-Canon Lounge**

LAUREN GROFF: Islands

"We are like islands in the sea," William James wrote, "separate on the surface but connected in the deep." Solitude breeds loneliness; human communication rose to salve, if not solve, our essential loneliness. During this lecture, we will think our way through issues of morality and connection through texts likely to include Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, J.M. Coetzee's *Foe*, Elizabeth Bishop's "Crusoe in England," Derek Walcott's *Omeros*, Anton Chekhov's "Sakhalin Island," and Tom McCarthy's *Satin Island*.

Thursday, July 9
9:30 AM

KEVIN McILVOY: Desinence

In this lecture I will concentrate upon the work of Henry David Thoreau, specifically the journal in which he uniquely accomplishes his poetic expression and his natural storytelling. Thoreau's literary contributions, which defy categorization into genres, mark all of American literature that reckons with the tragic and comic moments in which one attempts to reconcile spiritual and savage impulses, the paradoxes when one attempts to "let his mind descend into his body." While reflecting upon Thoreau's generative journal-keeping methods and his storytelling and poetry, I will specifically comment on what his work teaches us about the writer's approaches to desinence, the coming-to-an-end moment. This is an "answering" lecture to my long-ago lecture on "imminence" (the about-to-be moment).

To prepare for this lecture, saunter.

Thursday, July 9
10:45 AM

ALAN SHAPIRO: On Convention and Self-Expression

Convention and self-expression are often thought of as mutually exclusive or at least antagonistically related. In this lecture I hope to show how impersonal conventions and personality are or can be not only mutually entailing, not mutually exclusive, but that the very notion of self is inconceivable apart of the impersonal means by which self is expressed. Along the way we'll look at poems by Philip Larkin, Ben Jonson, J.V. Cunningham, Dan Pagis and Natalie Diaz.

Friday, July 10
10:00 AM

DAISY FRIED: "...ice/is also great/And would suffice"*: On Flatness

Last July, I lectured on "Heat": the uses of urgent, angry and upset tones in (mostly) poetry. This July, my subject is flatness, by which I mean dispassion, non- or anti-heroic tones, coolness, even coldness. To allege flatness in a workshop is generally to level a criticism, but when is flatness an engine rather than an error? What's exciting about lack of excitement? What are the ethical and expressive ramifications of flatness? How is it achieved? Candidates for discussion include Roy Fisher, Karen Solie, Thylia Moss, Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams, Robert Frost, Claudia Rankine, Joy Katz, Jennifer Moxley, Rae Armantrout, Louise Glück and others. Handouts will be provided.

**Robert Frost, "Fire and Ice"*

Friday, July 10
11:00 AM

**ROBERT BOSWELL: Take Me to the River:
Stories that Invent and Manipulate Rituals**

No reading is required for the lecture; however, ambitious students may wish to read the following: "Venus, Cupid, Folly, and Time," Peter Taylor; "The Wide Net," Eudora Welty; "Naked Ladies," Antonya Nelson; "Royal Beatings," Alice Munro; "Talk Show," Charles Baxter; "The Behavior of the Hawkweeds," Andrea Barrett; "Graveyard Day," Bobbie Ann Mason; "Barn Burning," William Faulkner; "In the Gloaming," Alice Elliott Dark; "Access to the Children," William Trevor; and "The Day the Pig Fell in the Well" and "The Swimmer," John Cheever. I'm still writing the lecture and I may not refer to all of these, but they are in the mix.