

The MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College Public Schedule – January 2019

*The public is welcome to attend the morning lectures and evening readings in fiction and poetry offered during the Master of Fine Arts Program winter residency. Events last approximately one hour. Admission is free. The schedule is subject to change. PLEASE NOTE: The winter residency will be held at **Blue Ridge Assembly** in Black Mountain, NC, not on the Warren Wilson College campus.*

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

Readings will begin at 8:15 PM in the **Region Room** of **Blue Ridge Center** at Blue Ridge Assembly. 84 Blue Ridge Circle; Black Mountain, NC 28711.

READINGS by FACULTY

Thursday, January 3

Reginald Gibbons, Jane Hamilton, T. Geronimo Johnson, Pablo Medina, Sarah Stone

Friday, January 4

Liam Callanan, Rodney Jones, Christine Kitano, Antonya Nelson, Martha Rhodes

Saturday, January 5

Daisy Fried, C. J. Hribal, Marisa Silver, Dominic Smith, Connie Voisine

Sunday, January 6

Hanna Pylväinen, Alan Shapiro, Anna Solomon, Daniel Tobin, Laura van den Berg

Monday, January 7

Dean Bakopoulos, Gabrielle Calvocoressi, Maurice Manning; *tribute to Tony Hoagland* [Robert Boswell, Kevin McIlvoy, Antonya Nelson, Connie Voisine]

READINGS by GRADUATING STUDENTS

Wednesday, January 9

Faith Gómez Clark, Timur Karaca, Phuong Anh Le, Elizabeth Mayer, Aaron Strumwasser

Thursday, January 10

Lily Chiu-Watson, Cecille Marcato, Hannah Torres Peet, Sea Stachura, Candace Walsh

Friday, January 11

Sarah Audsley, Michael Feigin, Jodie Free, Sonja Srinivasan, Kelsy Yates

Saturday, January 12 ~ 4:30 PM, *followed by Graduation Ceremony*

Lillian Huang Cummins, Alyson Dutemple, Angel Nafis, Hieu Minh Nguyen, Rachel Wolff

The schedule of lectures by Warren Wilson MFA faculty follows →

The MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College Faculty Lectures – January 2019

All lectures will be in the **Region Room of Blue Ridge Center at Blue Ridge Assembly**.
For more information, call the MFA Office at Warren Wilson College: (828) 771-3715.
The schedule is subject to change. Please check www.friendsofwriters.org for updates.

**Friday, January 4
11:15**

**DEAN BAKOPOUOS ~ What is Your Life?: On the
Uncertainty Ahead**

This lecture, with a title inspired by the wonderfully annoyed New Testament verse, James 4:14, will explore the dynamic and haunting ways uncertainty (both autobiographical and fictional) can fuel one's work and enhance what's on the page. We will look at prose by Kiese Laymon, Jamel Brinkley, Marguerite Duras, Ottessa Moshfegh, and Patty Yumi Cottrell, as well as poems by Maggie Smith, Adrienne Rich, Erica Dawson, and Larry Levis.

**Saturday, January 5
9:30 AM**

SARAH STONE ~ Eruption/Incandescence

In those moments when the suppressed breaks into the open as conflict, as an unexpected action, as a flight of language, or as a confession, a work of fiction or poetry can reveal its teeth. Maybe the characters' or speaker's passions take over, maybe there's a fight or truth that's been on its way for a while. These eruptions can alter the rules a work has set out for itself in crucial structural and psychological terms and can create openings for complex resistance and re-evaluation on the part of the reader. Possible texts include Gabrielle Brant Freeman, "Girltrap"; Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah*; Aravind Adiga, *The White Tiger*; and George Saunders, *Lincoln in the Bardo*.

**Saturday, January 5
10:45 AM**

CHRISTINE KITANO ~ The Poetics of Witness

This lecture will examine the literature of witness, that is, literature that aims, as Carolyn Forché states, to mark "a resistance to false attempts at unification." Reality is difficult and messy, but the literature of witness and theories of trauma work to elucidate the troubled relationships between author, language, and subject. At stake in these issues are the following questions: What are our responsibilities as readers? As writers? How do we write as witness to the world, and how do we evaluate such writing? Is language capable of bearing witness? What do we do when language is inadequate? Possible texts: poems by Plath, Lowell, John Yau, Gregory Pardlo, Cathy Linh Che, Solmaz Sharif; fiction and nonfiction TBD.

**Sunday, January 6
9:30 a.m.**

**PABLO MEDINA ~ What are We Reading, the Poem
or the Translation?**

We live in a translated culture. Many of the works we consider part of the Western canon have been translated from languages most of us do not have access to, from ancient Greek to Hebrew to Anglo-Saxon, and we make judgments on these works based on their translations, not the originals. When we read a poem translated from a language we do not know, we conveniently assume that the translation is equivalent to the original poem. This lecture will explore how we read translations and how we assign to them the same literary value as their originals. We will look carefully into Anne Carson's versions of Sappho, Robert Lowell's *Imitations*, and Eliot Weinberger's translation of Vicente Huidobro's *Altazor*.

Sunday, January 6
10:45 AM

MARISA SILVER ~ The Mind of a Child

Who are children? We think because we have been a child, or because we have children of our own, or know some kids really well, that we have access to what goes on inside their minds, how they perceive themselves, the world, and the adults who rule them. Yet, when considering our own childhoods, we are subject to memory, which is a fickle reporter at best. As for our children, do we really know what or how they think? Are their consciousnesses merely projections, overburdened by adult presupposition and our tendency to psychologize and explain? In this lecture, we will discuss the particular challenges that arise when we put our work in the narrative hands of a child by looking at issues of narrative distance, perception and experience of time, language choice, and the child's sense of his or her body especially as relates to sexuality. Texts discussed might include *Shipwrecks* by Akira Yoshimura, *The Painted Bird* by Jerzy Kosinski, *Room*, by Emma Donoghue, *What Maisie Knew*, by Henry James, and *An American Childhood* by Annie Dillard.

Monday, January 7
11:00 AM

C.J. HRIBAL ~ You Want It Darker: Grappling with the Dark in Poetry and Fiction

Writers are "supposed" to write likeable characters with narrative arcs that bend towards, if not justice, at least redemption. But what if things instead bend sinister, descend into the dark, and possibly stay there? How does one write poetry or fiction that engages with the calamitous, the violent, the pessimistic, the tragic, while avoiding the gratuitous? Apocalyptic work seems fitting for these perilous political times. But there is darkness in the everyday as well: dark and violent acts are committed by or visited upon people, particularly the marginalized, and mayhem seems like a plausible response to the outrage. How can writers explore this darkness responsibly? A meditation on grappling with the dark in poetry and fiction. No required reading, handouts provided.

Friday, January 11
10:45 AM

ALAN SHAPIRO ~ Mark Twain and the Ambiguities of Expertise

As teachers and writers, we often talk about the creative process in contradictory ways: on the one hand we celebrate the importance of craft, which is to say, of knowing what we're up to when we write; on the other hand, we say that at our best we write by instinct, intuition, hunch—we try not to know too completely why we do what we do. We advocate for expertise and we distrust it. In this lecture we'll look at *Life on the Mississippi* to see what Mark Twain's description of his training to pilot a steamboat can tell us about these inherent and inescapable tensions between will and inspiration, calculation and intuition when it comes to writing poems and stories.

Saturday, January 12
9:30 AM

JANE HAMILTON ~ In Praise of No Big Idea

Many writers seem to feel a pressure to write topically, to take up the mantle of activism in fiction as we try, among other things, to figure out where we are, how we got here, and how to channel outrage into action. Is the coming-of-age novel, then, irrelevant, and that old matter of what it means to be human an antiquated question? Does every identity group have a different truth, a different answer? I'm going to consider Jane Gardam's work, especially her coming-of-age novels, *Bilgewater*, *The Flight of the Maidens*, *A Long Way from Verona*, to try to get at how she writes about matters that were topical to her time without seeming to be topical. (Has she in fact written "timeless classics", or is the Brit born in 1928 going to soon disappear from our lists?) Intercalated into her sentences is a secret mirth. How does she lace subject-verb-object with joy? To use Thomas McGuane's phrase, Can it be said that she has found *a language for the real*?

**Friday, January 12
10:45 AM**

**MAURICE MANNING ~ 17 o'clock: Reading and
Writing Beyond the Self**

This lecture will emphasize the value of reading and writing beyond one's personal experience and beyond one's identity in order to dramatize events, situations, and observations that have a broader appeal. Of course, the writer's identity and experience cannot truly be separated from the writing, but I'd like to explore the possibilities of a literary *self*, a creature who may be distinct from the person of the writer. The literary *self*, to mangle a line from Marianne Moore, dines on imaginary toads while reposing in an imaginary garden. No advance reading is required.