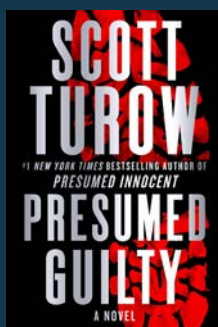




Creative Life Series

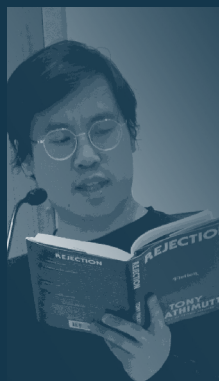


FEATURED AUTHORS:

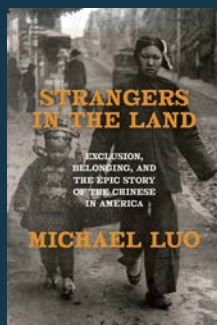
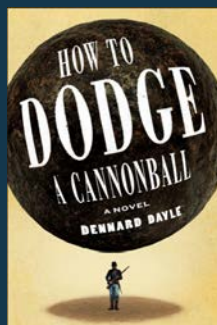
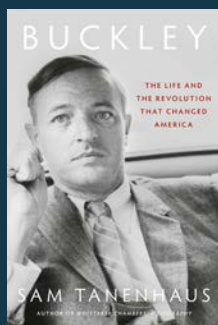
Ken Auletta
Cathy Linh Che
Adam Johnson
Mark Kurlansky
Valeria Luiselli
Ruth Reichl
Scott Turow

FEATURED EVENTS:

Albany Book Festival
Creative Life Series
with Peter Wolf of the J. Geils Band
Marathon Public Reading of LEGS
Telling the Truth 2025



Literary
Conversations



Student
Engagement



Celebrating
William Kennedy's
Books



**NEW YORK STATE
WRITERS INSTITUTE**

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY State University of New York

FALL EVENTS 2025



GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR

I've been thinking about age and the passage of time lately. I turned 66 in June, the same month my 93-year-old mother passed away. Our founder Bill Kennedy is working on a new novel at 97. Our beloved Writers Institute is completing its 42nd year with this fall's lineup.

The age of 42 in Buddhism and Hinduism is associated with reaching a state of enlightenment. In American culture, 42 might be considered an age ripe for a midlife crisis. And in Douglas Adams' science fiction novel *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, the number 42 is a supercomputer's answer to "the Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe, and Everything."

What does it mean that the Writers Institute is 42 this year? Well, we're not going through a midlife crisis. We like to think we spread a bit of enlightenment. We don't

Time stops for a reader immersed in a masterful narrative. New worlds are revealed. Fresh ways of looking at human experience unfold.

pretend to hold the ultimate answer to life's deepest questions.

We do offer respite from these polarizing times. We believe in our mission statement: *"We foster a vibrant community of readers and writers who engage in meaningful dialogue."*

We have welcomed more than 3,000 of the best writers from around the world to campus in 42 years. Where do we fit within today's world where everything is accelerating and attention spans are being compressed down to nanoseconds?

Time stops for a reader immersed in a masterful narrative. New worlds are revealed. Fresh ways of looking at human experience unfold. We gain empathy for the characters and are transformed by the elements of literature created by a skilled writer, who elicits deep emotions that are real, not artificial. Who would want to outsource that to ChatGPT?

Reading a good book is about quieting one's overstimulated headspace. Shutting out the noise and distractions of our devices, social media and political grievances. By focusing line by line on words on a page (or a screen), we lose ourselves in a story. It is a mindful conversation, bound by a sacred trust between reader and writer on a journey together. We come together in person at our events to listen attentively, to ask questions of the author, to get our book signed, to connect with others, and to glean insight in the process.

It pleases us to read that indie bookstores are thriving. Maybe reading has become retro chic, like vinyl records and vintage clothing and typewriters. Bring it on, we say.

When you flip through these pages and see the brilliant authors we will welcome this fall, from acclaimed masters to dynamic and diverse new voices, this is what 42 looks like. Bold. Confident. Expansive. A wide-angle view of humanity. Be enlightened. Join the conversation.

Paul Grondahl,
Opalka Endowed Director, NYS Writers Institute



FALL 2025 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

EVENT GUIDELINES

Events are free and open to the public and take place on the University at Albany's Uptown Campus, unless otherwise noted. **All events are subject to change.** Refer to page 24 for information on free on-campus parking for events.

For the most up-to-date event information, visit our website:
www.nyswritersinstitute.org

DISCOVER MORE EVENTS Sign up for email updates and additional information on events, **visit: www.nyswritersinstitute.org**

SEPTEMBER



Photo: Pableaux Johnson

SAVING CIVILIZATION

September 2 (Tuesday)

Manuel Gonzales

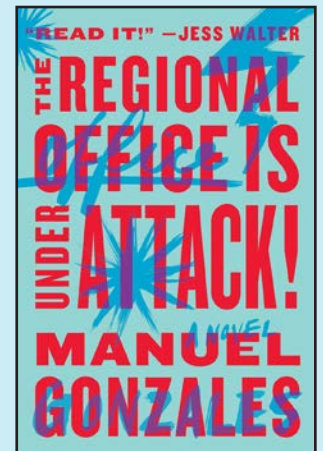
4:30 p.m. — Conversation / Q&A

Multi-Purpose Room, Campus Center West
Addition, Uptown Campus

Manuel Gonzales is the author of *The Regional Office is Under Attack!* (2017), a highly inventive novel about a team of female assassins charged with combating "the amassing forces of darkness that threaten, at nearly every turn, the fate of the planet." The book explores

comic book and movie tropes, and weaves them into a profound and thoughtful meditation on human nature, cherished institutions, and narrative convention. *Lit Hub* said, "With this debut novel, Gonzales... proves himself to be both a wonderful addition to a proud literary tradition (that of Vonnegut, Borges, Saunders, Bender, and Barthelme, et al) and a true original."

Cosponsored by the English Department's Creative Writing Program and Young Writers Project, UAlbany's Writing & Critical Inquiry Program (WCI), and the Honors College.



A COMEDY OF CHILDHOOD

September 4 (Thursday)

Edward Hirsch

7:30 p.m. — Conversation / Q&A

Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue, Downtown Campus

Edward Hirsch is a major American poet, advocate for the art of poetry, and president of the Guggenheim Foundation. His new memoir is *My Childhood in Pieces: A Stand-Up Comedy, a Skokie Elegy* (2025). *Kirkus Reviews* said, "Hirsch channels the voices and personalities of his Chicagoland Jewish childhood to create a memoir composed of jokes and short vignettes, one setup-and-punchline after another... sometimes silly, sometimes off-color, often Yiddish-flavored, with a penchant for puns and dad jokes that never quits.... A unique recreation of a great life in a largely vanished world." His 1999 book, *How to Read a Poem: And Fall in Love with Poetry*, was a national bestseller.

Cosponsored by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern New York.

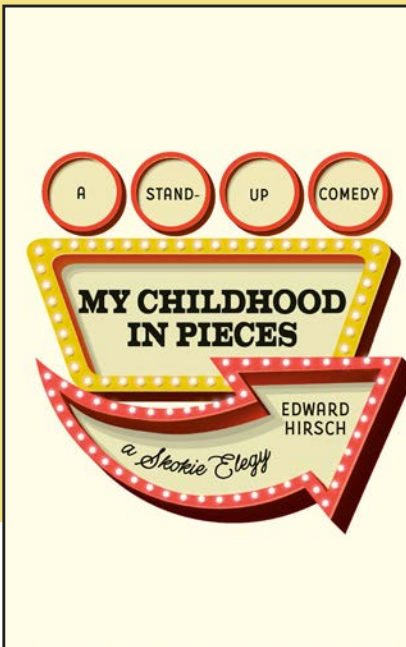


Photo: Michael Lionstar

The Creative Life

Produced by the New York State Writers Institute in collaboration with WAMC Northeast Public Radio, this series features leading figures from a variety of artistic disciplines in conversation with WAMC's "Roundtable" host Joe Donahue about creative inspiration, craft, and career.

A Conversation Series at UAlbany

LOVE STINKS

Peter Wolf

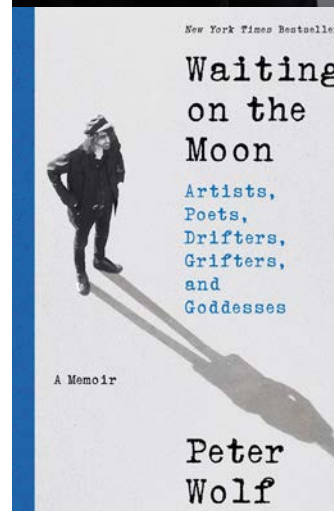
September 5 (Friday)

7:30 p.m. — Conversation with WAMC's Joe Donahue

Main Theatre, UAlbany Performing Arts Center, Uptown Campus



Photo: Tim Palmer



Peter Wolf made his mark as lead singer of The J. Geils Band, widely regarded as the #1 "party band" of the early 1980s— known for many Top 40 hits including "Freeze Frame," "Must of Got Lost," "Centerfold," and "Love Stinks." He's also the author of the current *New York Times* bestseller, *Waiting on the Moon: Artists, Poets, Drifters, Grifters, and Goddesses* (2025), a memoir of his eventful life, musical career, marriage to Faye Dunaway, and encounters with Muddy Waters, Bob Dylan, Mick Jagger, Marilyn Monroe, David Lynch, and many others. Elvis Costello said, "This is the book I've been hoping Peter would write since we walked the streets of Paris together, back in the 20th Century. [It's] a true account of his life, love and music told with unique humor and rare humility."

Major support for *The Creative Life* is provided by the University at Albany Foundation.

50 YEARS ON: THE AFTERLIFE OF THE VIETNAM WAR

September 9 (Tuesday)

Cathy Linh Che and Gerald McCarthy

4:30 p.m. — Conversation / Q&A,

Multi-Purpose Room, Campus Center West Addition, Uptown Campus



Photo: Katie Bloom

Cathy Linh Che is the author of *Becoming Ghost* (2025), a poetry collection that documents her parents' experiences as Vietnam War refugees who, after escaping by boat to the Philippines, were cast as extras in Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*, placing them at the margins of their own story. The book was featured in *Ms.* magazine's "Best Poetry of 2024 and 2025." *Split* (2014), her first collection, won the Norma Farber First Book Award from the Poetry Society of America. She is also the author of a children's book, *An Asian American A to Z: A Children's Guide to Our History* (2023).



Gerald McCarthy, poet and anti-war activist, is the author of *Hitchhiking Home from Danang: A Memoir of Vietnam, PTSD and Reclamation* (2023). The memoir recounts his tour of duty as a Marine in Vietnam, his subsequent desertion, and his time spent in civilian jails, military brigs, and a Navy psychiatric ward. Upon receiving a medical discharge, he worked as a stonecutter, concrete finisher, and shoe factory worker before attending the Writers Workshop at the University of Iowa. His poetry collections include *Shoe Town* (1992), *Trouble Light* (2008), and *Door in the Wall* (2020). His poems also appear in several notable anthologies of war poetry.

Cosponsored by the English Department's Creative Writing Program and Young Writers Project, and UAlbany's Writing & Critical Inquiry Program (WCI).

CELEBRATING CONSTITUTION DAY 2025

Join us for a weeklong, campus-wide program of events in honor of **Constitution Day (Wednesday, September 17th)**, celebrating civil discourse, inclusivity, and free speech, which are the foundations of scholarly inquiry and higher education. For a complete schedule of events, visit

**Great
Dane
Dialogue**

<https://www.albany.edu/great-dane-dialogue>

Cosponsored by the Offices of Communications and Marketing, Inclusive Excellence, Student Affairs, First Year Experience, CATLOE, OGCR/Leading Questions, Rockefeller College, Interfaith Center, University Libraries, and the New York State Writers Institute.

THE RACE TO INVENT THE FUTURE

September 11 (Thursday)

Keach Hagey

4:30 p.m. — Conversation / Q&A

Recital Hall, UAlbany Performing Arts Center, Uptown Campus

Keach Hagey, *Wall Street Journal* reporter, is the author of *The Optimist: Sam Altman, OpenAI, and the Race to Invent the Future* (2025), the first biography of the enigmatic leader of the AI revolution, charting his ascent within the tech world as



Photo: Beowulf Sheehan

The Optimist
Sam Altman,
OpenAI, and
the Race to
Invent
the Future
Keach Hagey

well as his ambitions for this powerful new technology. Pulitzer-winning journalist Steve Coll said, "*The Optimist* is a wonder of fair-minded investigation and page-turning storytelling. It reveals Sam Altman—our self-styled messiah of the age of artificial intelligence—in all his charismatic self-contradiction. A must-read for anyone worried that AI will alter or even end human society."

Cosponsored by the New York State Writers Institute and the AI & Society College and Research Center.



GEN Z, TAKING CHARGE

September 15 (Monday)

Amanda Litman

4:30 p.m. — Conversation / Q&A

Multi-Purpose Room,
Campus Center West Addition,
Uptown Campus

Amanda Litman, cofounder of the political organization, Run for Something, is the author of the new book, *When We're in Charge: The Next Generation's Guide to Leadership* (2025), a "guide for the next



Photo: Barb Kinney

**WHEN WE'RE
IN CHARGE**
The NEXT GENERATION'S
GUIDE to LEADERSHIP
AMANDA LITMAN
Cofounder of RUN FOR SOMETHING

generation of leaders on how to show up differently, break the cycle of bad boomer leadership, and navigate the changing demands of those in power and the evolving expectations people have of their workplace." Litman has been recognized as one of her generation's most innovative political thinkers in *Politico*, *Bloomberg* and *Fortune*, and was named one of *TIME* magazine's "NEXT 100," a list of 100 rising stars. She is also president of RFS Civics, a 501c3 that works to end "the gerontocracy."

Major support and funding provided by Heidi Knoblauch. Cosponsored by the Massry School of Business, offering three concentrations in Entrepreneurship, and the Honors College.



Great
Dane
Dialogue

MIGRATION AND BELONGING

September 18 (Thursday)

Valeria Luiselli

4:30 p.m. — Conversation / Q&A

Recital Hall, UAlbany Performing Arts Center, Uptown Campus

Valeria Luiselli, major contemporary author whose work explores Mexican-American migration, identity and belonging, is a 2019 MacArthur "Genius" Fellow, and a National Book Foundation "5 Under 35" honoree. Her 2019 novel, *Lost*

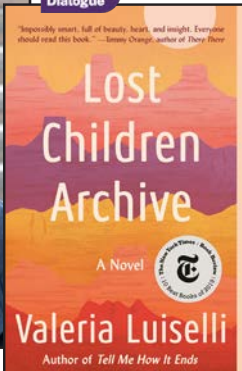


Photo: Diego Berruecos, Gatopardo

Children Archive, tells the story of a family road trip that collides with an immigration crisis at the southwestern border. The *New York Times* named it one of the "10 Best Books of the Year." Writing in Oprah's O. magazine, Carmen Maria Machado said, "Not since *Lolita* has a road trip so brilliantly captured the dark underbelly of the American dream, the gulf between its promise and reality." Her other bestselling books include *The Story of My Teeth* (2015) and *Tell Me How It Ends* (2016).

Cosponsored by the Departments of Sociology; Africana, Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies; the English Department's Creative Writing Program and Young Writers Project; UAlbany's Writing & Critical Inquiry Program (WCI); and the Honors College.



New York State AUTHOR & POET AWARDS CEREMONY

September 26 (Friday)

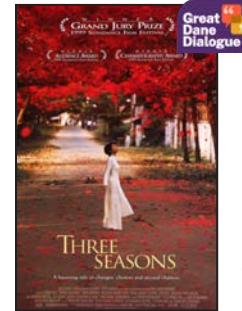
7:30 p.m. — Award Ceremony, Recital Hall,
UAlbany Performing Arts Center, Uptown Campus

Kimiko Hahn will receive the **Walt Whitman Citation of Merit for Poetry** and **Min Jin Lee** will receive the **Edith Wharton Citation of Merit for Fiction**.

Born in Mount Kisco, Westchester County, and raised in Pleasantville, **Kimiko Hahn** is the child of artists—a Japanese American mother from Hawaii and a German American father from Wisconsin. She is a distinguished professor in the MFA Program in Creative Writing & Literary Translation at Queens College of the City University of New York.

She is the author of acclaimed poetry collections, including *The Ghost Forest: New and Selected Poems* (2024), *Foreign Bodies* (2020); *Brain Fever* (2014); *Toxic Flora* (2010); *The Narrow Road to the Interior* (2006); *The Unbearable Heart* (1996), winner of the

Photo: Beowulf Sheehan



THE GLEN TROTINER ENDOWED LECTURE IN FILMMAKING

September 19 (Friday)

THREE SEASONS

Screening with commentary by director **Tony Bui**

7:00 p.m. — Screening/ Q&A

Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue, Downtown Campus

(Vietnam, 1999, 113 minutes, color, Rated PG-13) Directed by Tony Bui. Starring Don Duong, Nguyen Ngoc Hiep, Tran Manh Cuong, Zoe Bui, and Harvey Keitel.

The first film to receive both the Grand Jury Prize and the Audience Award at the Sundance Film Festival, *THREE SEASONS* presents a variety of characters as they experience the past, present, and future of Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) in the early days of "Đổi Mới," the state capitalist market reforms initiated in 1986. *THREE SEASONS* was the first American film to be made in Vietnam after the U.S. lifted its 30-year trade embargo in 1994.

Tony Bui, filmmaker, was born in Vietnam and came to the U.S. with his family in 1975 at the age of two, as a refugee of the U.S.-Vietnamese war— leaving Vietnam approximately one week before the Fall of Saigon. He is currently artist-in-residence at Columbia University. His other feature films as director include *GREEN DRAGON* (2001), and *THE THROWAWAYS* (2015). His short film, *YELLOW LOTUS* (1997), was the first Vietnamese language film to be screened at the Sundance Film Festival, and received more than 15 national and international festival awards.

Presented by The Glen Trotiner Endowed Lecture in Filmmaking fund in memory of Glen Trotiner '78, MS '79, a highly regarded filmmaker and a distinguished UAlbany alumnus.

American Book Award; and *Earshot* (1992), winner of the Theodore Roethke Prize. In 2023, Hahn was named a Chancellor for the Academy of American Poets and the winner of the 2023 Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize.



Photo: Elena Seibert

Born in Seoul, South Korea, **Min Jin Lee** emigrated to the U.S. with her family at the age of 7. She grew up in the Elmhurst neighborhood of Queens and learned to read and write at the Queens Public Library. She resides in Harlem.

Her novel *Pachinko* (2017) was a finalist for the National Book Award for Fiction, a runner-up for the Dayton Literary Peace Prize, and one of the *New York Times* "Ten Best Books of 2017." A *New York Times* bestseller, *Pachinko* was also one of the "Ten Best Books" of the year for the BBC and the New York Public Library. Her debut novel *Free Food for Millionaires* (2007), a national bestseller, was named one of the best books of the year by the *Times* of London, NPR's *Fresh Air*, and *USA Today*.

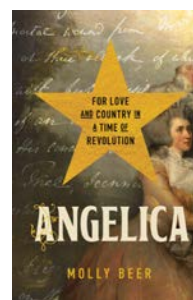
ALBANY BOOK FESTIVAL 2025

**Saturday, September 27,
University at Albany
10:30 am - 5:30 pm**

JOIN US FOR:

- Bestselling and award-winning authors
- Book signings
- Children's Room with authors and fun activities
- Online how-to workshops for aspiring authors

PANEL TOPICS:

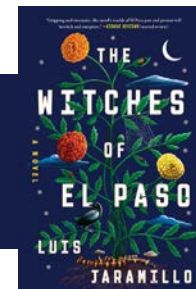


BECOMING NEW YORK

Molly Beer
Angelica
Russell Shorto
Taking Manhattan

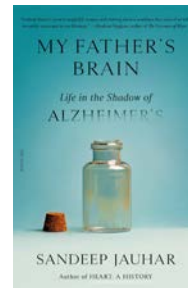
FAIRY TALES FOR ADULTS

Luis Jaramillo
*The Witches
of El Paso*
Julia Phillips
Bear



POETS RESPONDING TO TAYLOR SWIFT

Kristie Frederick
Daugherty
Leah Umansky



DAD'S BRAIN

Sandeep Jauhar
My Father's Brain
Natasha Williams
The Parts of Him I Kept



MASCULINITY

Jordan Castro
Muscle Man
Niobe Way
*Rebels with
a Cause*

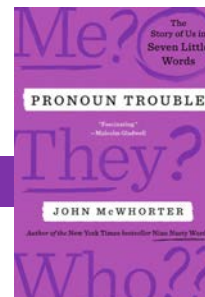


TONI MORRISON AND AMERICA IN THE 1980s

Paul Elie
The Last Supper
Dana A. Williams
Toni at Random

PRONOUN TROUBLE

John McWhorter



PYRAMID SCHEMES

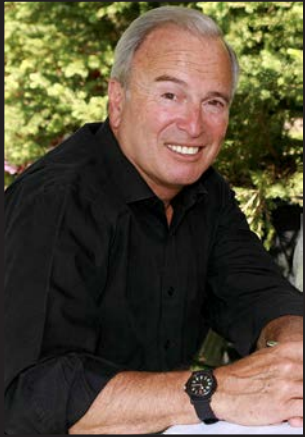
Megan Abbott
El Dorado Drive
Bridget Read
*Little Bosses
Everywhere*



NYS WRITERS INSTITUTE & ALBANY
ALBANY book FESTIVAL

www.albanybookfestival.com

OCTOBER



MEDIA, ENTERTAINMENT AND POWER

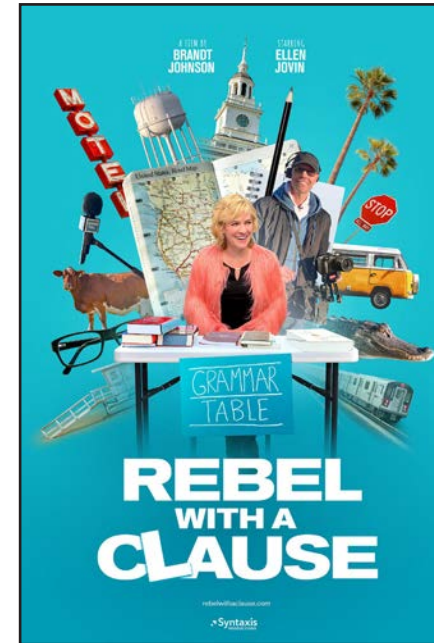
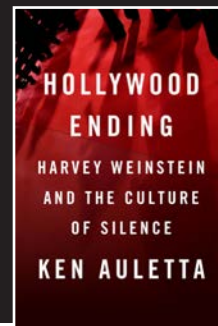
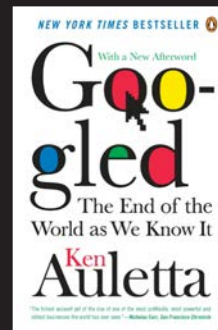
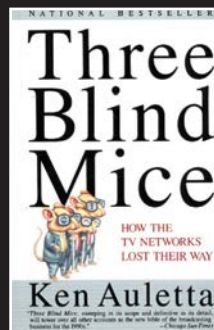
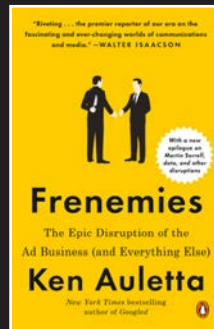
September 29 (Monday)

Ken Auletta

7:30 p.m. — Conversation / Q&A

Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue,
Downtown Campus

Ken Auletta, journalist and *New Yorker* columnist, is one of the nation's leading nonfiction storytellers covering the triumphs, blunders, and transformations of the media, information, finance and entertainment industries. His most recent book is *Hollywood Ending: Harvey Weinstein and the Culture of Silence* (2022)—named a best book of the year by the *New York Times*, *New Yorker*, and *Esquire*. His many bestsellers include *Three Blind Mice: How the TV Networks Lost Their Way* (1991); *The Highwaymen: Warriors of the Information Superhighway* (1997); *World War 3.0: Microsoft and Its Enemies* (2001); *Googled: The End Of The World As We Know It* (2009); and *Frenemies: The Epic Disruption of the Ad Business (And Everything Else)* (2018). Cosponsored by the Program in Journalism of the UAlbany Department of Communication.



FILM SCREENING

October 3 (Friday)

REBEL WITH A CLAUSE

Screening with commentary by star
Ellen Jovin and director Brandt Johnson

7:00 p.m. — Screening/ Q&A,

Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue,
Downtown Campus

(United States, 2025, 86 minutes, color)
Directed by Brandt Johnson.
Starring Ellen Jovin.

In this new "Docu-Comedy," grammar guru Ellen Jovin takes her pop-up grammar advice stand on a rollicking road trip across all 50 states to show that comma fights can bring us closer together in a divided time. Winner of the Audience Award for Documentary Feature at the Independent Film Festival of Boston.



Ellen Jovin, grammarian, is a founder of Syntaxis, a communication skills training consultancy. She holds degrees from Harvard in German and UCLA in comparative literature, and has studied twenty-five languages just for fun. The documentary is a companion to her 2022 national bestseller, *Rebel with a Clause: Tales and Tips from a Roving Grammarian*. Mary Norris, famed *New Yorker* grammar expert, called it, "A fresh and democratic take on language by a gifted teacher."



Brandt Johnson, Ellen Jovin's husband, is a filmmaker and both the star and creator of the TV comedy *BRAD ADVICE* (2016-18), about a failed investment banker who declares himself a communication skills coach, and does out what he thinks is good advice— it's not!

SWEET FICTION BY FOOD WRITERS

October 6 (Monday)

Ruth Reichl and Mark Kurlansky

7:30 p.m. — Conversation / Q&A

Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue, Downtown Campus



Photo: Shannon Greer



Ruth Reichl is a beloved cookbook author, six-time James Beard Award-winner, former editor-in-chief of *Gourmet* magazine, and one of the most influential restaurant critics of her generation. Her new book is the *New York Times* bestseller, *The Paris Novel* (2024), about a young American woman's unexpected adventures through the food, art, and fashion scenes of 1980s Paris. Julia Louis-Dreyfus said, "This is a sumptuous book that I simply could not put down. C'est formidable!" Reichl's previous bestsellers include the memoirs, *Tender at the Bone: Growing Up at the Table* (1998), *Garlic and Sapphires: The Secret Life of a Critic in Disguise* (2005), *Save Me the Plums* (2019), and the novel, *Delicious!* (2014).

Mark Kurlansky is best-known for national bestsellers that explore history through the lens of a single subject, including *Cod* (1997), *Salt* (2002), *Milk!* (2018), and *Salmon* (2021). Food writer Mark Bittman proclaimed in the *New York Times*, "Mark Kurlansky is among our most intelligent, prolific and literate writers about food." His newest book is the novel, *Cheesecake* (2025), the story of the inhabitants of a single block on the Upper West Side of Manhattan in the 1970s. A neighborhood already known for its poppyseed strudel, praline ice cream cake, and New York cheesecake, is forever changed by the rediscovery of a cheesecake recipe recorded by the Roman historian Cato the Elder (234-149 BC).

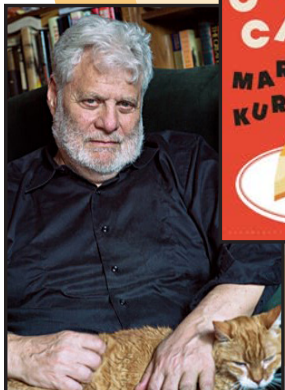
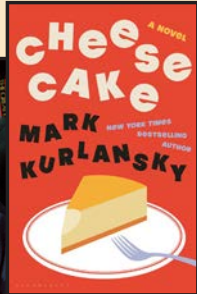


Photo: Sylvia Plachy



AGING WITH ATTITUDE, STYLE AND SASS

October 8 (Wednesday)

Lyn Slater and Sari Botton

6:30 p.m. — Conversation / Q&A

Recital Hall, UAlbany Performing Arts Center, Uptown Campus

The public is invited to a reception with light refreshments immediately following the event. [REGISTRATION REQUIRED]

Visit nyswritersinstitute.org to register.



Lyn Slater, UAlbany alum, is a 71-year-old social media influencer with almost a million followers across all platforms. She started her acclaimed fashion and style blog, "Accidental Icon," in 2014, and is widely celebrated for her "rules-are-meant-to-be-broken" attitude regarding aging, style and beauty. Her new book is *How to Be Old: Lessons in Living Boldly from the Accidental Icon* (2024), one of *Elle's* "Most Anticipated Nonfiction Books of 2024." Bestselling author Dani Shapiro said, "In equal parts inspirational and aspirational, Lyn Slater's *How to Be Old* is a rousing, thrilling ride of a book.... Slater's combination of curiosity, glamour, and activism will make readers of all ages take heart."

Sari Botton, UAlbany alum, is the creator of *Oldster Magazine*, a Substack publication with thousands of subscribers. Her newest book is *And You May Find Yourself...Confessions of a Late-Blooming Gen-X Weirdo* (2022), a memoir in essays about "the joys and pains of being a misfit" (*Publishers Weekly*). The book was chosen for the annual "5 over 50" feature in *Poets & Writers* magazine. A former editor at *Longreads*, Botton also edited the bestselling essay collections, *Goodbye to All That: Writers on Loving and Leaving New York* (2021), and *Never Can Say Goodbye: Writers on Their Unshakable Love for New York* (2014).



A celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the School of Social Welfare's Internships in Aging Project (IAP) at the University at Albany, a program founded to address the critical need for geriatric social workers. The program collaborates with agencies that provide services to older adults in the Capital District and the rural northeastern region of New York State. Cosponsored by the School of Social Welfare, College of Integrated Health Sciences, and the Albany Guardian Society.

FACULTY AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

October 9 (Thursday)

Aashish Kaul and Thomas Bass

4:30 p.m. — Conversation / Q&A

Multi-Purpose Room, Campus Center West Addition, Uptown Campus

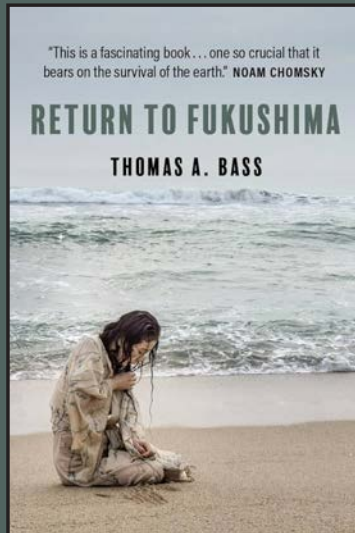


Bliss Mountain

Aashish Kaul

Aashish Kaul, UAlbany Associate Professor of English, is the author of the new novel, *Bliss Mountain* (2025). Moving from New York to London, Sydney, Delhi, the mid-Hudson region, and the vale of Kashmir, the novel blends finance, architecture, literature, geopolitics and observations of nature to offer a kaleidoscopic view of our globalized and fragmented moment in history. Kaul's previous book was *The Queen's Play* (2015), a chess-inspired novel that the *Sunday Guardian* named a "Best Book of the Year." Nobel laureate J. M. Coetzee said, "Aashish Kaul's stories.... lead us directly into the territory of late modernism, of Borges and Beckett and Nabokov."

Thomas Bass, UAlbany Professor of English and Communications, is the author of *Return to Fukushima* (2025), a new account of the aftermath of the 2011 nuclear disaster in Fukushima, Japan. Bass chronicles the slow reclamation of Fukushima by those who continue to live there— how, little-by-little, people are learning to live with radioactivity, decontaminate their fields, monitor their food, and prepare for the next tsunami. Noam Chomsky called the book, "Fascinating . . . a compelling message about a crucial question—one so crucial that it bears on the survival of the earth." Bass's previous book was *The Spy Who Loved Us: The Vietnam War and Pham Xuan An's Dangerous Game* (2009).



FATE, HEARTBREAK AND DESIRE

October 16 (Thursday)

André Aciman

4:30 p.m. — Conversation / Q&A

Multi-Purpose Room, Campus Center West Addition, Uptown Campus

André Aciman is the bestselling author of the contemporary classic, *Call Me by Your Name* (2007), a coming-of-age novel and bisexual romance that was adapted as a 2017 movie. Nominated for a Best Picture Oscar, the film won Best Screenplay for the adaptation by James Ivory. Aciman's newest work of fiction is *Room on the Sea: Three Novellas* (2025). *Publishers Weekly* said, "This exquisite triptych from Aciman explores desire and fate among old friends, new acquaintances, and heartbroken lovers . . . A triumph." *The Times* of London said, "You don't so much read André Aciman's novels as tumble breathlessly into them." His other works include the memoirs, *Roman Year* (2024) and *Out of Egypt* (1995), and the novels, *Enigma Variations* (2017) and *Find Me* (2019).

Cosponsored by the English Department's Creative Writing Program and Young Writers Project, UAlbany's Writing & Critical Inquiry Program (WCI), and the Honors College.

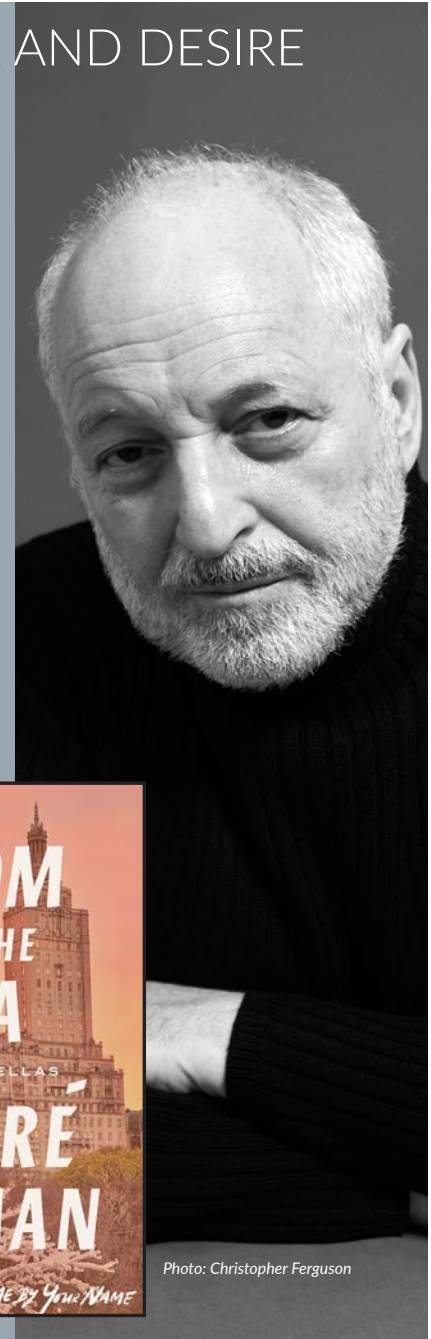
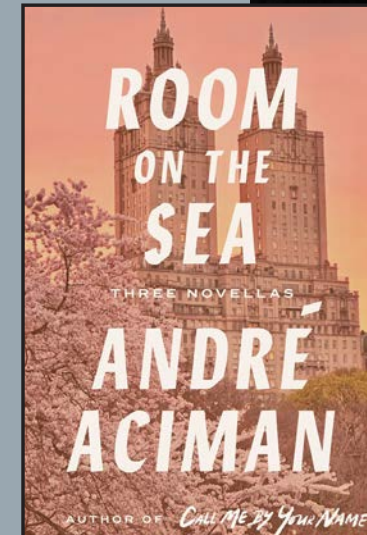


Photo: Christopher Ferguson



FILM SCREENING

October 17 (Friday)

INCIDENT

Screening with commentary
by director/producer Bill Morrison
and producer Jamie Kalven

7:00 p.m. — Screening/ Q&A

Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue,
Downtown Campus

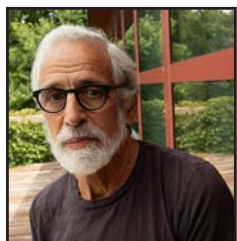
(United States, 2023, 30 minutes, color)
Directed by Bill Morrison.

Nominated for a 2025 Academy Award for Best Documentary Short, *INCIDENT* is a groundbreaking nonfiction film that attempts to reconstruct the disputed events of a 2018 police shooting using a collection of body camera and surveillance camera footage.



Photo: Wolfgang Wesener

Bill Morrison is a pioneering documentary filmmaker recognized for his inventive use of archival material. *DECASIA* (2002), a collage of rediscovered silent film fragments assembled into a new narrative, was selected for preservation in the U.S. National Film Registry for its cultural, historical and aesthetic significance. *DAWSON CITY: FROZEN IN TIME* (2016) is assembled from pieces of unknown silent films found discarded and buried in the Canadian permafrost after being screened during the Yukon gold rush. Kenneth Turan of the *LA Times* said, "If you love film, if you're intoxicated by the way movies combine image and emotion, be prepared to swoon."

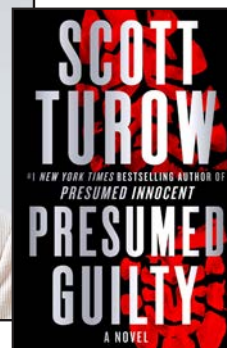


Jamie Kalven is an investigative journalist and founder of the Invisible Institute, a Chicago-based not-for-profit that monitors police misconduct. Known for its Citizens Police Data Project, the Institute won the Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting in 2021. His books include *A Worthy Tradition: Freedom of Speech in America* (1988), based on manuscripts written by his deceased father, University of Chicago law professor Harry Kalven, Jr.; and *Working with Available Light: A Family's World After Violence* (1999), about the emotional aftermath of a sexual attack on his wife, photographer Patricia Evans. The latter book is used as a resource for rape counselors, victims, and their families.



Photo: Audrey Snow Owen

"THE BARD OF OUR LITIGIOUS AGE"



October 20 (Monday)

Scott Turow

7:30 p.m. — Conversation with
WAMC's Joe Donahue

Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue,
Downtown Campus

Scott Turow is one of America's preeminent authors of legal and crime fiction. In 1990, he appeared on the cover of *TIME* magazine, which proclaimed him "The Bard of Our

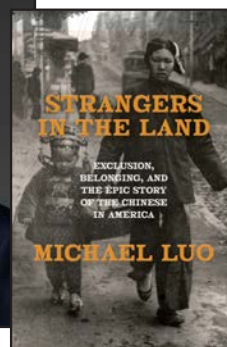
Litigious Age." A former practicing attorney, Turow is the author of 14 bestselling works of fiction, beginning with *Presumed Innocent* (1987), which became the basis of Apple TV's most-watched drama series in 2024, as well as an acclaimed 1990 film starring Harrison Ford. Turow's books have been translated into more than 40 languages, and have sold more than 30 million copies worldwide. His newest book is *Presumed Guilty* (2025), the long-anticipated third installment in the "Rusty" Sabich trilogy. Novelist Kristin Hannah called it, "A compelling, unputdownable legal thriller that explores the dark side of justice in a small town and on a fractured family."

Cosponsored by Albany Law School, the New York State Bar Association, and the Historical Society of the New York Courts.



Photo: Elinor Carucci

THE CHINESE IN AMERICA



October 23 (Thursday)

Michael Luo

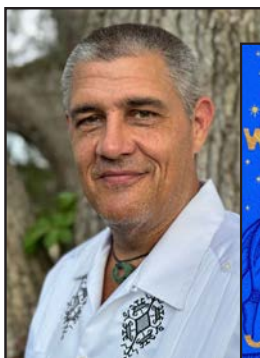
4:30 p.m. — Conversation / Q&A

Multi-Purpose Room,
Campus Center West Addition,
Uptown Campus

Michael Luo, Executive Editor at *The New Yorker*, is the author of a landmark work of American history, *Strangers in the Land: Exclusion, Belonging, and the Epic Story of the Chinese in America*

(2025). Min Jin Lee said, "This is the moving story of a people's persistence and resistance.... Luo's book serves as a witness of how powerful the love and aspirations of immigrants make real the most beautiful promises of a new homeland." Winner of a George Polk Award in Journalism, Luo writes regularly for *The New Yorker* about politics, religion and the Asian American experience.

Cosponsored by the Departments of East Asian Studies and History of the College of Arts and Sciences.



A POLYNESIAN EPIC

October 28 (Tuesday)

Adam Johnson

4:30 p.m.— Conversation / Q&A
Recital Hall, UAlbany Performing Arts
Center, Uptown Campus

Adam Johnson, major contemporary novelist, received the Pulitzer Prize for his 2012 novel of North Korea, *The Orphan Master's Son*. Writing in the *New York Times*, Michiko Kakutani called it, "a daring and remarkable novel, a novel

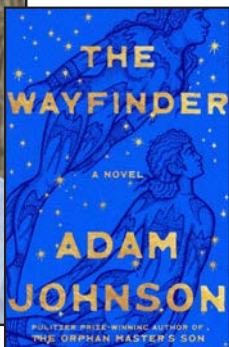


Photo: Justice Johnson

that not only opens a frightening window on the mysterious kingdom of North Korea but one that also excavates the very meaning of love and sacrifice." He also received the National Book Award for his 2015 story collection, *Fortune Smiles*. His new novel is *The Wayfinder* (2025), a historical epic about a girl from a remote Tongan island who embarks on a risky seafaring journey across a vast ocean empire built on power, consumption, and bloodshed. Born in South Dakota, Johnson is an enrolled member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe.

Cosponsored by the English Department's Creative Writing Program and Young Writers Project, the Writing & Critical Inquiry Program (WCI), the Honors College, and the Indigenous Student Association.



EXPLOITATION AND THE MUSIC INDUSTRY: YA FICTION

October 29 (Wednesday)

Tami Charles

6:30 p.m.— Conversation / Q&A
The Alice Moore Black Arts and Cultural
Center, 135 South Pearl Street, Albany

Tami Charles, bestselling author of children's books, will discuss her YA novel, *Muted* (2021), about a 17-year-old member of an R&B girl band—inspired in part by the author's own experiences as a member of a girl band

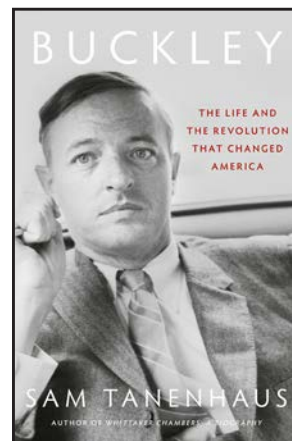


Photo: Krisann Binett

that opened for Boyz II Men. The novel exposes exploitation in the music industry—and what it takes for a young person to fight back. The author recorded four original songs for the Audible version of *Muted*. Her many prize-winning children's books include *We Are Here* (2023), and *All Because You Matter* (2020). Her newest, *Together, United* (2025), presents an inspirational message of unity and courage for children in difficult times. Earlier the same day, she will visit with students at elementary schools in Albany.

Major support and funding provided by the Carl E. Touhey Foundation.

NOVEMBER



ICON OF CONSERVATIVE POLITICS

November 3 (Monday)

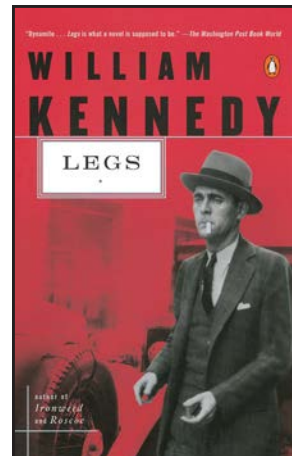
Sam Tanenhaus

7:30 p.m. – Conversation / Q&A

Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue, Downtown Campus

Sam Tanenhaus, longtime editor of *The New York Times Book Review* (2004-2013), began writing his biography of William F. Buckley in 1998, ten years before Buckley's death. Buckley himself had selected Tanenhaus specifically for the task, granting him extensive interviews, as well as access to his private papers. A monumental work, more than a quarter century in the making, *Buckley: The Life and the Revolution That Changed America*, is now available to readers. More than a

biography, the book helps explain the origins of latter-day Conservative politics. Max Boot called it, "A magnificent achievement—a long, gripping, and enthralling account of the life of America's premier conservative polemicist of the twentieth century."



MARATHON PUBLIC READING

November 5 (Wednesday)

LEGS by William Kennedy

11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Albany Distilling Co. Bar and Bottle Shop,
75 Livingston Avenue, Albany

[RESERVATIONS REQUIRED for reading slots]
Visit www.nyswritersinstitute.org to register

Raise a glass to William Kennedy, beloved Writers Institute founder and Albany's greatest storyteller, at a marathon reading of *Legs* (1975), the novel that launched his "Albany Cycle."

Legs tells the story of Jack 'Legs' Diamond, Albany bootlegger, Irish-American celebrity, self-made man, and one of the most notorious gangsters of the 1920s and '30s. Join Legs and his paramour, Marion 'Kiki' Roberts, on their wanderings through the gritty, glamorous, and very dangerous world of Prohibition-era Albany.

Albany Distilling Company, maker of Ironweed whiskey, is located in the North Albany neighborhood where William Kennedy grew up, and where some of the fictional scenes in the narrative take place.

Donations will be collected at the door to benefit the food pantry and free meal outreach at Sacred Heart Church, 33 Walter St. in Albany, which was Kennedy's childhood parish.



Photo: Johnny Tang

STRANGE TALES OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

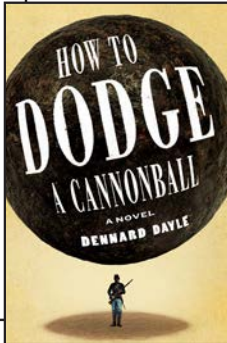
November 11 (Tuesday)

Dennard Dayle

4:30 p.m. — Conversation / Q&A

Multi-Purpose Room, Campus Center
West Addition, Uptown Campus

Dennard Dayle is a Jamaican American humorist and fiction writer whose work appears frequently in *The New Yorker*. His first novel is *How to Dodge a Cannonball* (2025), a razor-sharp satire that dives into the heart of the Civil



War. The novel follows the misadventures of a young white idealist who ultimately joins an all-Black Union regiment full of strange characters, including a science-fiction playwright, a Haitian double agent, and a former slave feuding with God. Gary Shteyngart said, "I can't think of a wittier, more hilarious or more relevant young writer. *How to Dodge a Cannonball* is the great Civil War novel I didn't know I needed."

Cosponsored by the English Department's Creative Writing Program and Young Writers Project, UAlbany's Writing & Critical Inquiry Program (WCI), and the Honors College.



November 14 (Friday)

5:30 p.m. — Symposium (2 Panel Discussions)

Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue, Downtown Campus

Join us for two panel conversations, "**Rethinking American Politics**," about finding common ground in an age of polarization, and "**Standing on Principles**," about reviving the foundational principles of American society, both moral and legal.

Panelists will include:

Andrew Yang, Ayad Akhtar, Lydia Polgreen, Chris Gibson,
and others to be announced.

Major support and funding provided by The Professor Ben-Ami Lipetz NYSWI Fund.

HENRY HOBSON RICHARDSON: DRAWINGS FROM THE COLLECTION OF
HOUGHTON LIBRARY, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

November 17 (Monday)

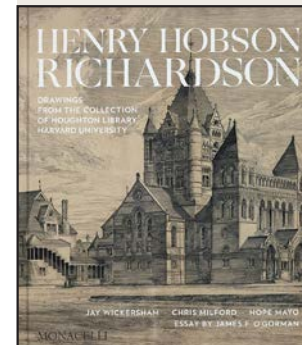
Jay Wickersham, Chris Milford, & Hope Mayo

4:30 p.m. — Presentation / Q&A

New York State Court of Appeals, 20 Eagle Street, Albany

[REGISTRATION REQUIRED] Visit nyswritersinstitute.org to register.

Join us for a moderated discussion about Henry Hobson Richardson, a visionary 19th-century architect who helped create and shape Albany's architectural landscape, including City Hall (built in 1883). The presentation will take place in the Courtroom of the Court of Appeals—designed by Richardson in 1881. The book presents dozens of unpublished sketches and plans of more than 50 projects.



Jay Wickersham is an architect, lawyer, architectural historian and former professor in practice at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. **Chris Milford** is a partner in the architectural firm of Milford & Ford Associates, specializing in historic preservation and restoration. **Hope Mayo** is the former Philip Hofer Curator of Printing and Graphic Arts at Harvard's Houghton Library.

Followed by post-talk reception and book signing,
Albany City Hall Rotunda, 24 Eagle Street, Albany

Presented by the New York State Court of Appeals and
co-sponsors Albany Law School, New York State Bar

Association, and the Historical Society of the New York Courts.

TELLING THE TRUTH 2025 PANELISTS

Ayad Akhtar, novelist and Pulitzer-winning playwright whose work frequently explores Muslim American experience.

Chris Gibson, Republican Congressman in New York's 19th and 20th districts from 2011 to 2017, and author of the new book, *The Spirit of Philadelphia: A Call to Recover the Founding Principles* (2025).

Lydia Polgreen, Opinion Columnist for the *New York Times* who writes about American and international culture and politics.

Andrew Yang, 2020 U.S. presidential candidate, ran on a platform promoting "universal basic income," decriminalizing drugs, data privacy rights, and ending corporate welfare.



Photo:
Damon Scheleur

Photo:
Gage Skidmore



Photo: Todd Estrin

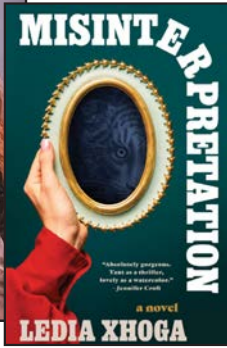
IMMIGRATION NOVEL: "TAUT AS A THRILLER"

November 18 (Tuesday)

Ledia Xhoga

4:30 p.m. — Conversation / Q&A
Multi-Purpose Room, Campus Center
West Addition, Uptown Campus

Ledia Xhoga is a fiction writer and playwright originally from Tirana, Albania. Her new novel, *Misinterpretation* (2024), based primarily in little-known ethnic enclaves in New York City, tells the story of an Albanian



translator who becomes entangled in the lives of a Kosovar torture survivor and a Kurdish poet— at the expense of her marriage and her mental health. Jennifer Croft, who received the International Booker Prize for her translation of Olga Tokarczuk's *Flights*, called it "Absolutely gorgeous. Taut as a thriller, lovely as a watercolor." *Misinterpretation* received the New York City Book Award, and was a finalist for the Center for Fiction's First Novel Prize.

Cosponsored by *Living in Languages*, a collaboration of the Departments of English, and Languages, Literatures, and Cultures.

SAVE-THE-DATE

LITERATURE IN PERFORMANCE

May 2, 2026 (Saturday)

selectedSHORTS
Let us tell you a story.

Performance — 7:00 p.m.,

Main Theatre, UAlbany Performing Arts Center, Uptown Campus

Advance tickets: \$15 general public • \$10 students, seniors & UAlbany faculty-staff. Day of show tickets: \$20 general public • \$15 students, seniors & UAlbany faculty-staff. For tickets, visit nyswritersinstitute.org

It's story time for adults

The acclaimed weekly public radio broadcast turned touring show has a simple premise: take great stories by well-known and emerging writers and have them performed by terrific actors of stage and screen. Be transported through the magic of fiction in this unique night of literature in performance. Stay tuned to nyswritersinstitute.org for more updates on the featured stories and cast.

DECEMBER

INTRODUCING THE AI & SOCIETY COLLEGE AND RESEARCH CENTER



December 2 (Tuesday)

7:30 p.m. — Panel Conversation / Q&A
Multi-Purpose Room, Campus Center West
Addition, Uptown Campus

Join us for a public conversation with faculty from the University at Albany's AI & Society College and Research Center, a bold initiative launched in 2025 to advance responsible, human-centered approaches to artificial intelligence. Grounded in a deep curiosity about the human experience and a belief that technology should enhance – rather than erode – what is most vital about it, the initiative brings together scholars from law, philosophy, political science, and technology. A cross-campus, inter-institutional model fosters collaboration to shape the future of AI, ethics, governance, and public life.

This evening offers the public an opportunity to explore how emerging technologies are reshaping democracy, education, and public services. The discussion will highlight the ethical frameworks and lived experiences that shape debates about bias, accountability, and human agency in the context of AI – and will ask how public dialogue itself might change in an AI-mediated world.

Panelists:

Ray Brescia is Associate Dean for Research & Intellectual Life and the Hon. Harold R. Tyler Professor in Law & Technology at Albany Law School. His most recent book is *The Private Is Political: Identity and Democracy in the Age of Surveillance Capitalism* (2025), an exploration of the threats posed by unfettered surveillance to privacy, expression, and democracy itself.

Virginia Eubanks is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University at Albany and author of *Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor* (2018). Her work investigates the intersections of data-based discrimination, public services, and poverty in America.

Jason D'Cruz is Director of the AI & Society College and Research Center, Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University at Albany, and Civil Discourse Fellow at the Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University. His research focuses on trust, character, and rationalization. He also serves as Principal Investigator of Trustworthy AI from a User Perspective, a multi-year project funded by the SUNY-IBM AI Research Alliance.

Moderator:

Elizabeth Gray is Associate Director of the AI & Society College and Research Center at the University at Albany. She leads strategic initiatives and collaborative programming across research, education, and public engagement at the intersection of technology and social impact.

Cosponsored by the New York State Writers Institute and the AI & Society College and Research Center.

To sign up for email updates and for additional information on events, video clips, and literary news, visit our website at: www.nyswritersinstitute.org and follow us on **Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Twitter (X)**.

On Campus Parking:

Courtesy parking for Writers Institute events on the Uptown Campus will be available in the **State Quad Student Parking Lot** one hour prior to and one hour after events.

Visitor Parking lots are also available for \$5 per vehicle, though parking spaces are very limited.

For Downtown Campus events, courtesy parking will be available in the **Thurlow Student Parking lot** on Western Avenue.

Handicapped entrances available: Milne Hall (from Washington Avenue) and Richardson Hall (Page Courtyard, Western Avenue).

For maps of the campuses including parking lots, visit: www.albany.edu/map

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The New York State Writers Institute

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FALL 2025
Schedule of Events

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