Featured Authors:
Julia Alvarez
Lydia Davis
Paul Harding
Tracy Kidder
Alice McDermott
Michael Wolff

Featured Events:
Albany Film Festival
Creative Life Series
Burian Lecture
Authors Theatre

New York State Writers Institute
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY State University of New York
Spring Events 2024
GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Get ready to party like it's 1844. Throughout 2024, we will celebrate the 180th anniversary of the founding of the University at Albany on May 7, 1844. As one of the nation’s preeminent literary organizations, we are proud of our role in the advancement of this great institution of higher education. UAlbany has been the home and stalwart supporter of the NYS Writers Institute over the past 40 years as we have welcomed more than 2,500 of the world’s greatest writers to campus.

The first state-chartered institution of higher education, it was christened the New York State Normal School—an archaic term for the training of teachers. It began with four faculty members and 29 students in an abandoned railroad depot on State Street in downtown Albany. It was renamed the New York State College for Teachers in 1914 and the State University of New York at Albany in 1962. Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom, graces its official seal.

Fast-forward to 2024 and UAlbany has grown to more than 16,000 undergraduate and graduate students across three campuses. It is one of the most diverse public research institutions in the country and has been recognized as a national leader in providing social and economic mobility for its students.

It is fitting, therefore, in this 180th anniversary year, that we highlight writers with strong connections to UAlbany. The list is extensive: former Writers Institute writing workshop teacher Elizabeth Benedict (Jan. 31); UAlbany faculty member Jennifer Burns and UAlbany alumna Jennifer Lemak with State Poet Patricia Spears Jones (Feb. 15); UAlbany staff member Richard Mirabella (Feb. 29); UAlbany alumna Molly Guptill Manning (March 6); UAlbany alumna Alice Green (March 14); UAlbany emerita professor Lydia Davis and UAlbany faculty member Lynne Tillman (March 26); UAlbany faculty members Amina Henry and Shaun Patrick Tubbs (April 2); and UAlbany faculty member Kyra Gaunt and UAlbany alumnus Stephen Soucy (April 6).

We mourn the passing of our dear friend and Writers Institute benefactor Grayce Burian, author, teacher, actor, director, and wife of the late UAlbany theatre professor and department chair Jarka Burian. Amazing Grayce, as we called her, died on November 16, 2023 at age 96.

I close with a stanza from Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and former U.S. Poet Laureate Tracy K. Smith (April 19), whose poetry feels at once timely and timeless, like these lines from her poem "Don't You Wonder, Sometimes?"

Time never stops, but does it end? And how many lives Before take-off, before we find ourselves Beyond ourselves, all glam-glow, all twinkle and gold?

Paul Grondahl, Opalka Endowed Director, NYS Writers Institute
**FILM SCREENING**

January 26 (Friday)

LACKAWANNA BLUES

Screening — 7:00 p.m.,
Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue,
Downtown Campus

(U.S., 2005, 95 minutes, color, Rated PG-13)
Written and directed by George C. Wolfe.
Adapted for the screen by Ruben Santiago-Hudson from his award-winning play, LACKAWANNA BLUES tells the story of a big-hearted woman, Rachel “Nanny” Crosby, who becomes a rock of stability for a collection of boarders, friends, and family members in a Rust Belt town in Western New York. Santiago-Hudson based the character on the woman who raised him after his own parents abandoned him.

Beltawanna BLUES

Meet Tony Award-winning actor, director, and playwright Ruben Santiago-Hudson at the annual Burian Lecture on Monday, Feb. 5th!

**WRITING ABOUT CANCER WITH HUMOR, WISDOM, AND TERROR**

January 31 (Wednesday)

Elizabeth Benedict

7:30 p.m.— Reading / Conversation
with Robert Boyers, Multi-Purpose Room, Campus Center West Addition


Cosponsored by UAlbany’s Women in Science and Health Network (WISH).

**FEBRUARY**

#1 NEW YORK TIMES YOUNG ADULT BESTSELLER

January 31 (Wednesday)

Angeline Boulley

4:00 p.m. — Virtual Author Event [REGISTRATION REQUIRED]
Please visit nyswritersinstitute.org to register.

Join Angeline Boulley, celebrated YA author and enrolled member of the Ojibwe community, for a virtual conversation as part of the School of Education’s “One School One Read” initiative. The featured book is Boulley’s bestselling 2021 debut novel, The Firekeeper’s Daughter, the story of a young Ojibwe woman, newly in love and college-bound, who must put her dreams on hold after the FBI pressures her to be an informant in the investigation of a local drug ring. TIME magazine named it a “Best YA Book of All TIME.” Her newest novel is Warrior Girl Unearthed (2023). For resources and discussion sessions, please visit www.albany.edu/education/faculty-development

Cosponsored by edTrends, AATLAS, and the UAlbany School of Education.

**A NEW LANDMARK ANTHOLOGY**

February 1 (Thursday)

Sandra Guzmán

4:30 p.m.— Conversation / Q&A,
Assembly Hall (2nd Floor), Campus Center

Sandra Guzmán, Afro Indigenous storyteller and literary editor, presents her new anthology, Daughters of Latin America: An International Anthology of Writing by Latin American and Indigenous Writers— many of them translated into English for the first time. Kirkus Reviews called it, “A significant collection of Latin women’s voices across five centuries… A fresh, indispensable look at the wide, multicultural world of Latin women writers.” Guzmán also served as producer and interviewer for the Emmy-nominated documentary, TONI MORRISON: THE PIECES I AM, which the Writers Institute screened in 2019 to celebrate the life of UAlbany faculty member Toni Morrison (1931-2019).

Cosponsored by UAlbany’s Department of Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino Studies and the Department of Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies.
Meet film legend Jacqueline Bisset, star of Francois Truffaut’s DAY FOR NIGHT and John Huston’s UNDER THE VOLCANO, at the 4th Annual Albany Film Festival on Saturday, April 6th, with her 2022 film LOREN & ROSE.

FILM SCREENING

February 2 (Friday)

THE SLEEPY TIME GAL

Screening — 7:00 p.m.,
Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue,
Downtown Campus

(U.S., 2001, 108 minutes, color, Rated R)

Directed by Christopher Munch.

Jacqueline Bisset, British actress who rose to Hollywood superstardom beginning in the 1960s, portrays an older woman who embarks on a search for the daughter she gave up for adoption in her youth, after becoming pregnant during an affair with a married man. Bisset regards this performance as the best of her career. It was nominated for the Grand Jury Prize for Best Dramatic Feature at the Sundance Film Festival.

2023 NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST

February 8 (Thursday)

Aaliyah Bilal

4:30 p.m. — Craft Talk,
Standish Room (3rd Floor), Science Library
7:30 p.m.— Reading / Conversation,
Recital Hall, UAlbany Performing Arts Center

Aaliyah Bilal’s debut story collection, Temple Folk (2023), is a groundbreaking portrait of the lived experiences of Black Muslims—a community rarely featured in U.S. literature—as they grapple with the challenges of faith, family, and freedom in America. Bilal, who grew up in a Black Muslim family outside Washington, D.C., presents a diverse cast of flawed, heroic, and memorable characters. Edward P. Jones said, "Temple Folk is more than a special literary accomplishment, it is a gift of glorious songs.... this gift should be praised from as many rooftops as possible." A finalist for the 2023 National Book Award for Fiction, it was named one of TIME magazine’s “100 Must-Read Books of 2023.”

Cosponsored by the English Department’s Creative Writing Program and Young Writers Project.

BURIAN LECTURE ON LIFE IN THE PERFORMING ARTS

February 5 (Monday)

7:30 p.m. — The 26th Annual Burian Lecture,
Recital Hall, UAlbany Performing Arts Center

Ruben Santiago-Hudson is a celebrated American playwright, actor, and director who has won major awards in all three categories. In 2021, he directed and starred in the Broadway production of his autobiographical play about growing up in a Rust Belt town outside Buffalo, Lackawanna Blues—marking the first time in Broadway history that an individual wrote, directed, and starred in a single play. He directed the 2022 Broadway production of Dominique Morisseau’s Skeleton Crew, which received four Tony nominations including Outstanding New Play. He also directed the 2017 Broadway production of August Wilson’s Jitney, which earned the Tony Award for Best Revival and five other Tony nominations. In 1996, he received the Tony Award as Featured Actor for his performance in August Wilson’s Seven Guitars. His 2021 screenplay adaptation of another Wilson play, Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, received several Oscar nominations, winning two for costume design and makeup.

Presented by the UAlbany Theatre Program and the Jarka and Grayce Burian Endowment in collaboration with the NYS Writers Institute.

Ruben Santiago-Hudson, playwright, actor, director
THE MORAL ARC TOWARD FREEDOM: Lincoln, King, and the Emancipation Proclamation

February 15 (Thursday)
7:00 p.m. — Readings & Conversation, Huxley Theatre, NYS Museum, 222 Madison Avenue, Albany

Join us for a lively program to mark the launch of a new temporary exhibit at the New York State Museum. The exhibit will showcase Abraham Lincoln’s preliminary draft of the Emancipation Proclamation (Sept. 22, 1862), written in his own hand, and an audio recording of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivering a speech on the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation in New York City in September 1962. The program will feature poetry, readings of brief excerpts of historical documents, and a conversation with the audience about the complicated legacy of slavery and emancipation in the United States. A major force of the New York City poetry scene since the 1970s, Patricia Spears Jones is the reigning State Poet of New York (2023-25), by proclamation of the Governor and mandate of the Legislature, under the auspices of the NYS Writers Institute. Dr. Jennifer Burns is Lecturer in Africana Studies at the University at Albany. Dr. Jennifer Lemak is Chief Curator of History at the NYS Museum.

Cosponsored by the New York State Education Department’s Office of Cultural Education and the Archives Partnership Trust in honor of African American History Month.

February 16 (Friday)
THE ARMOR OF LIGHT and Walt Disney’s 1928 animated short STEAMBOAT WILLIE

Screening — 7:00 p.m., Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue, Downtown Campus

The film screening event will open with STEAMBOAT WILLIE (U.S., 1928, 7 minutes, b/w, rated G)
A cultural artifact of extraordinary significance, the animated short that launched Mickey and Minnie Mouse loses its copyright protection and enters the public domain on January 1, 2024.

Featured Screening
THE ARMOR OF LIGHT (U.S., 2015, 88 minutes, color, rated PG-13) is an acclaimed documentary directed by Abigail Disney— outspoken critic of American capitalism, philanthropist, filmmaker, and daughter of Walt Disney Company co-founder Roy O. Disney.

The film tells the story of Evangelical minister Rob Schenck, a fixture on the political far right, who breaks with orthodoxy by questioning whether being pro-gun is consistent with being pro-life. The film earned the 2017 Emmy Award for Outstanding Social Issue Documentary.
February 20 (Tuesday)

Adjoa Asamoah
Political strategist and Civil Rights activist

7:00 p.m. — Celebration, Campus Center Ballroom

[Note: While this event is free, registration will be required.]
Visit www.albany.edu/odi for more info and to register.

Adjoa B. Asamoah, co-creator of the CROWN Coalition, is a lifelong racial equity champion, award-winning social impact strategist, highly sought-after political operative, and history-making policy architect. She developed the legislative strategy for and leads the groundbreaking CROWN Act movement, which seeks to make discrimination based on hairstyle illegal in all 50 states. CROWN stands for “Create a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair.” New York became the second state to sign the act into law on July 3, 2019. Asamoah also served as the Biden-Harris campaign’s National Advisor for Black Engagement, and was then tapped to serve as the Black Engagement Director for the historic 59th Presidential Inaugural Committee.

Sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Student Association, and the Honors College in collaboration with the NYS Writers Institute.

February 22 (Thursday)

Karin Lin-Greenberg

TALES OF A DYING MALL IN UPSTATE NEW YORK

4:30 p.m.— Conversation / Q&A, Assembly Hall (2nd Floor), Campus Center

Karin Lin-Greenberg is the author of You Are Here (2023), a debut novel about the residents of a small Upstate New York town who must grapple with the impending closure of a once-bustling shopping mall. The novel appeared on numerous “Best of” lists throughout 2023, including Elle magazine’s “Best and Most Anticipated Books of 2023,” the Washington Post’s “10 Noteworthy Books for May,” and Oprah Daily’s “Best Books You Might Have Missed in 2023.” Publishers Weekly called it a “remarkable study of ordinary people’s extraordinary inner lives.” Lin-Greenberg’s 2013 story collection, Faulty Predictions, won the Flannery O’Connor Award in Short Fiction. She is Associate Professor of English at Siena College.

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

February 23 (Friday)

FILM SCREENING

TURN EVERY PAGE: THE ADVENTURES OF ROBERT CARO AND ROBERT GOTTLIB

7:00 p.m.— Screening, Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue, Downtown Campus (U.S., 2022, 112 minutes, Rated PG) Written and directed by Lizzie Gottlieb.

Lizzie Gottlieb’s award-winning documentary explores the remarkable 50-year relationship between two literary legends, writer Robert Caro and his longtime editor Robert Gottlieb (the film director’s father who passed away in June 2023 at the age of 92). In the film, Caro was working to complete the final volume of his masterwork, The Years of Lyndon Johnson, for Gottlieb to edit. The New Yorker’s Mary Norris called it “a rare window into a relationship that usually goes undocumented... the dance between editor and writer.”

Adjoa B. Asamoah, co-creator of the CROWN Coalition, is a lifelong racial equity champion, award-winning social impact strategist, highly sought-after political operative, and history-making policy architect. She developed the legislative strategy for and leads the groundbreaking CROWN Act movement, which seeks to make discrimination based on hairstyle illegal in all 50 states. CROWN stands for “Create a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair.” New York became the second state to sign the act into law on July 3, 2019. Asamoah also served as the Biden-Harris campaign’s National Advisor for Black Engagement, and was then tapped to serve as the Black Engagement Director for the historic 59th Presidential Inaugural Committee.

Sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Student Association, and the Honors College in collaboration with the NYS Writers Institute.
Richard Mirabella
February 29 (Thursday)
4:30 p.m. — Conversation / Q&A, Recital Hall, UAlbany Performing Arts Center
Richard Mirabella is the author of the debut novel, *Brother & Sister Enter the Forest* (2023), a queer coming-of-age novel about a young man’s relationship with a violent older boyfriend—and how he and his sister survive a terrible crime. The book was named a *New York Times Book Review* Editors’ Choice, a *Washington Post* Noteworthy Book, and a *Harper’s Bazaar* Best New Book of 2023. The *Vulture* reviewer said, “Mirabella writes about the strange land between fable and reality... Part fantastical horror, part road trip narrative... [it’s] an uncanny portrait of the lengths we go to protect the people we love.” A member of the UAlbany community, Mirabella works for the University in the High School Program (UHS).
Cosponsored by the English Department’s Creative Writing Program and Young Writers Project.

William Wegman
February 27 (Tuesday)
7:00 p.m. — Conversation with WAMC’s Joe Donahue, Main Theatre, UAlbany Performing Arts Center
William Wegman is a beloved American artist known throughout the world for photographs and videos that feature his Weimaraner dogs in a variety of costumes and poses. His work is held in the permanent collections of major museums, including the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum. The author of many books for children, Wegman is also the creator of numerous short segments featuring his dogs for *Sesame Street*. His new book is *William Wegman: Writing by Artist* (2022), his first collection to focus on his multifaceted and deeply funny relationship to language, spanning the early 1970s to the present.

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

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**February 29 (Thursday)**

**Richard Mirabella**

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

Richard Mirabella is the author of the debut novel, *Brother & Sister Enter the Forest* (2023), a queer coming-of-age novel about a young man’s relationship with a violent older boyfriend—and how he and his sister survive a terrible crime. The book was named a *New York Times Book Review* Editors’ Choice, a *Washington Post* Noteworthy Book, and a *Harper’s Bazaar* Best New Book of 2023. The *Vulture* reviewer said, “Mirabella writes about the strange land between fable and reality…. Part fantastical horror, part road trip narrative... [it’s] an uncanny portrait of the lengths we go to protect the people we love.” A member of the UAlbany community, Mirabella works for the University in the High School Program (UHS).

Cosponsored by the English Department’s Creative Writing Program and Young Writers Project.

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**MARCH**

**February 27 (Tuesday)**

**William Wegman**

7:00 p.m. — Conversation with WAMC’s Joe Donahue, Main Theatre, UAlbany Performing Arts Center

William Wegman is a beloved American artist known throughout the world for photographs and videos that feature his Weimaraner dogs in a variety of costumes and poses. His work is held in the permanent collections of major museums, including the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum. The author of many books for children, Wegman is also the creator of numerous short segments featuring his dogs for *Sesame Street*. His new book is *William Wegman: Writing by Artist* (2022), his first collection to focus on his multifaceted and deeply funny relationship to language, spanning the early 1970s to the present.

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

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**FILM SCREENING**

**March 1 (Friday)**

**THE HUSTLER**

Screening — 7:00 p.m., Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue, Downtown Campus

(U.S., 1961, 134 minutes, b/w)

Directed by Robert Rossen.

Hollywood icon Paul Newman stars in this all-time classic about an up-and-coming pool player, “Fast Eddie” Felson, who risks it all in a match with pool champion “Minnesota Fats,” played by Jackie Gleason. The film was nominated for 9 Oscars, including Best Picture, Director, and Screenplay, winning for Cinematography and Art Direction. It frequently appears on lists of the best films of all time.

THE DARK SIDE OF OVER-ACHIEVING
March 5 (Tuesday)
Prachi Gupta
4:30 p.m.— Craft Talk / Q&A,
Multi-Purpose Room,
Campus Center West Addition
7:30 p.m.— Reading/Conversation,
Multi-Purpose Room,
Campus Center West Addition
Prachi Gupta is the author of They Called Us Exceptional: And Other Lies That Raised Us (2023), a memoir about growing up in an ambitious Indian-American immigrant family; the pressures to over-achieve and belong; the special hell of the “model minority” stereotype; and the hidden shame of mental illness and personal trauma. Celeste Ng said, “I read it in one sitting. Wow. It aims right at the tender spot where racism, sexism, and family dynamics collide.” Gupta is an award-winning journalist and former senior reporter at the feminist news site, Jezebel. She received a Writers Guild Award for her investigative essay, “Stories About My Brother.”
Cosponsored by the Honors College at UAlbany, Department of Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies and the Writing & Critical Inquiry (WCI) Program.

THE POWER OF WORDS AND BOOKS
March 6 (Wednesday)
Molly Guptill Manning
7:00 p.m.— Reading/Conversation,
Alumni House Conference Room
[REGISTRATION REQUIRED] Please visit nyswritersinstitute.org to register.
Cosponsored by the History Department and Alumni Association at UAlbany.
BLACK LIFE IN THE NORTH WOODS
March 14 (Thursday)
Alice Green and Amy Godine
6:00 p.m.—Conversation/Q&A, Albany Public Library, Community Room (2nd Floor), 161 Washington Ave, Albany
[REGISTRATION REQUIRED]
Please visit nyswritersinstitute.org to register.
Join us for a conversation about the Black history of the Adirondack Mountains with legendary civil rights activist Alice Green and historian Amy Godine.

Alice Green is the author of a new, second memoir, Outsider: Stories of Growing Up Black in the Adirondacks (Sept. 2023), an account of her childhood and young adulthood as one of very few Black residents in the tiny hamlet of Witherbee, Essex County, where her family grappled with poverty and racial issues in the mid-20th century. Green is the executive director of the Center for Law and Justice, a civil rights organization she founded in 1985 in Albany. She earned multiple degrees at UAlbany, including a B.A. in Africana Studies, and a Ph.D. in Criminal Justice.

Amy Godine is the author of The Black Woods: Pursuing Racial Justice on the Adirondack Frontier (Nov. 2023), a history of the pioneering Black families who migrated to the Adirondacks in the 1800s, mostly from urban areas, to establish farms and rural communities and — significantly — secured the right to vote in New York. Filmmaker Ken Burns said, "The Black Woods is a beautifully written, painstakingly researched, and uncommonly nuanced story."

Presented by the Albany Public Library and the New York State Writers Institute.

NEW YORK CITY MAYORS: THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE UGLY
March 18 (Monday)
Andrew Kirtzman and Terry Golway
7:00 p.m.—Conversation/Q&A, Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue, Downtown Campus
Join us for a conversation about the colorful parade of characters who have served as mayor of New York City—the brilliant and the incompetent, the virtuous and the corrupt, the boring and the bizarre.

Andrew Kirtzman is the author of Giuliani: The Rise and Tragic Fall of America's Mayor (paperback, 2023), a New Yorker Best Book of the Year. The Guardian called it "masterful and engrossing," and the L. A. Times said it "cuts through the myth and caricature that has too often defined Giuliani." An Emmy-winning former reporter for NY1, Kirtzman has covered Giuliani for three decades. His earlier biography, Rudy Giuliani: The Emperor of the City (2000)—published in paperback one year later with an added chapter about September 11th—remains the definitive portrait of the mayor at the height of his career.


Meet legendary filmmaker James Ivory, the oldest person ever to win an Oscar for screenwriting (at age 89, for CALL ME BY YOUR NAME), together with documentarian Stephen Soucy at the 4th Annual Albany Film Festival on Saturday, April 6th.

FILM SCREENING
March 15 (Friday)
MERCHAND IVORY
Screening — 7:00 p.m., Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue, Downtown Campus

(U.S., 2024, 112 minutes, color)
Directed by Stephen Soucy.
Arthouse film lovers will enjoy immersing themselves in the glorious history of Merchant Ivory Productions, a film company widely credited with creating its very own genre of films steeped in literature and history, featuring lavish sets and costumes, as well as nuanced performances by first-rate actors portraying disillusioned and extremely genteel characters. UAlbany alum Stephen Soucy worked closely with cofounder James Ivory himself to reconstruct the company's extraordinary journey.
A REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH TO HOMELESSNESS

March 20 (Wednesday)

TRACY KIDDER

7:00 p.m. — In conversation with WAMC’s Joe Donahue, Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue, Downtown Campus

Tracy Kidder, "a master of the nonfiction narrative" (Baltimore Sun), presents his new book Rough Sleepers (2023), the story of Dr. Jim O’Connell, a graduate of Harvard Medical School, who invented an unprecedented “community of care” for Boston’s unhoused population. The author of classic works of nonfiction, including Mountains Beyond Mountains (2003), and The Soul of a New Machine (1981), Kidder spent five years following Dr. O’Connell and his colleagues as they navigated the city streets at night, working with thousands of unhoused patients. Abraham Verghese said, “I couldn’t put Rough Sleepers down. I am left in awe of the human spirit and inspired to do better.”


ONE OF THE MOST ORIGINAL MINDS IN FICTION

March 26 (Tuesday)

LYDIA DAVIS

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

7:30 p.m.— Reading/ In Conversation with Lynne Tillman, Recital Hall, UAlbany Performing Arts Center

Lydia Davis, one of the most accomplished writers of our time, presents Our Strangers: Stories (2023), her new collection addressing topics ranging from marriage to tiny insects. The New Yorker called her "one of the most original minds in American fiction today," and Jonathan Franzen said, "She is the shorter Proust among us. She has the sensitivity to track the stuff that is so evanescent it flies right by the rest of us."

A former faculty member in the UAlbany English Department, Lydia Davis received the 2013 Man Booker International Prize for "continued creativity, development and overall contribution to fiction on the world stage." By request of the author, the new book is available only at independent booksellers and libraries.

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

APRIL

AUTHORS THEATRE

April 2 (Tuesday)

LITTLE RAPES by Amina Henry

7:30 p.m. — Staged Reading and Q&A with Playwright and director, Arena Theatre, UAlbany Performing Arts Center

Staged reading of LITTLE RAPES, a play-in-progress by Amina Henry. Directed by Shaun Patrick Tubbs. Featuring the students of the UAlbany Theatre Program

Workers at an independent video store in a college town in the late 1990s navigate sexual politics and the weirdness of life as 20-somethings. When it becomes clear that Julian has had sex with fellow employees Nora, Sam, and Lucy, the previously “chill” atmosphere at Red Door Video reaches a boiling point. As TITANIC plays endlessly on the TVs, these workers will either sink or swim.

Amina Henry is a Brooklyn-based playwright. Her productions include The Animals, Ducklings, Hunter John and Jane and The Johnsons (all at JACK in Brooklyn); and P.S. produced by Ars Nova (NYC). Winner of the 2020 Sarah Verdone Writing Award, she teaches contemporary theatre at UAlbany, and her play Interstate was featured in Authors Theatre in 2021.

Shaun Patrick Tubbs is Visiting Assistant Professor of Directing in the UAlbany Theatre Program. Recent directing credits include Ragtime (Union Avenue Opera), Defacing Michael Jackson (Miami New Drama), The Tempest (Powerhouse Theatre), and Troilus and Cressida (Juilliard). He directed the 2019 Authors Theatre reading Talkin’ to this Chick Sippin’ Magic Potion by James Anthony Tyler.

Featuring staged readings of original plays-in-progress or adaptations of work from other genres, Authors Theatre is designed to focus on dramatic writing as literary text and to provide a mechanism to assist playwrights in the creation of new work.

Presented by the UAlbany Theatre Program and the Jarka and Grayce Burian Endowment in collaboration with the NYS Writers Institute.
ALBANY FILM FESTIVAL
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
Saturday, April 6, 2024

FEATURING:
LOCAL SHORT FILMS
FEATURE FILMS
FILMMAKERS
SPECIAL GUESTS
PANEL DISCUSSIONS
FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

www.albanyfilmfestival.org

“A MORAL MASTERPIECE”
April 11 (Thursday)
ALICE MCDERMOTT
4:30 p.m.—Craft Talk / Q&A,
Multi-Purpose Room, Campus Center West Addition
7:30 p.m.— Conversation with
WAMC’s Joe Donahue,
Campus Center West Auditorium
Alice McDermott, one of the leading
novelists of her generation, is the
author of the New York Times bestseller, Absolution (2023), about the lives of American
women on the margins of the Vietnam War. Wives have appeared as minor characters
in Vietnam War fiction, but in Absolution they take center stage. Novelist Ann Patchett
said, “Absolution is one of the finest contemporary novels I’ve read. It is a moral
masterpiece.” McDermott is the author of nine novels, including Charming Billy, winner
of the National Book Award, and That Night, At Weddings and Wakes, and After This—all
three of them finalists for the Pulitzer Prize.

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

IT HITS YOU LIKE A COMET
April 16 (Tuesday)
DAVID WALLACE-WELLS
4:30 p.m.—Craft Talk / Q&A,
Multi-Purpose Room, Campus Center West Addition
7:30 p.m.— Conversation,
Campus Center West Auditorium
David Wallace-Wells is the author of
The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming (2019), a #1 New York
Times bestseller, now available in a new 2023 Young Adult edition.
The book argues that the state of the world, environmentally
speaking, is “worse, much worse, than you think. If your anxiety
about global warming is dominated by fears of sea-level rise, you
are barely scratching the surface of what terrors are possible—food shortages, refugee
emergencies, climate wars and economic devastation.” Farhad Manjoo said, “The
Uninhabitable Earth is the most terrifying book I have ever read,” and Andrew Solomon
said it “hits you like a comet.” Wallace-Wells is a weekly columnist and staff writer for
the New York Times.

Cosponsored by UAlbany’s Office of Sustainability, UAlbany Environmental Humanities Lab,
and the Honors College at UAlbany.
2024 ANNUAL MCKINNEY CONTEST GUEST SPEAKER

22nd Poet Laureate of the United States and Pulitzer Prize-winning author of Life On Mars

Tracy K. Smith

April 19 (Friday)

7:00 p.m. — Reading and McKinney Writing Contest Awards
EMPAC Building, Rensselaer (RPI), 110 8th St, Troy

Tracy K. Smith is an award-winning poet, memoirist, editor, translator, and opera librettist. She received the Pulitzer Prize for her 2011 poetry collection, Life on Mars, an elegy for her father, a scientist who worked on the Hubble Space Telescope. Her memoir, Ordinary Light, was a finalist for the 2015 National Book Award for Nonfiction. Smith served as the 22nd Poet Laureate of the United States from 2017-19. Her new book is To Free the Captives: A Plea for the American Soul (Nov. 2023), a stunning personal manifesto on memory, family, and history that explores how we in America might—together—come to a new view of our shared past. The book was named a TIME and Washington Post Best Book of the Year.

Sponsored by Rensselaer's Annual McKinney Writing Contest and Reading in partnership with the NYS Writers Institute.

For more information, contact McKinney@rpi.edu

BELOVED FICTION WRITER AND POET

Julia Alvarez

April 18 (Thursday)

4:30 p.m. — Conversation / Reading
Recital Hall, UAlbany Performing Arts Center

Julia Alvarez is one of America’s most acclaimed and best-loved fiction writers and poets. Her novels about the Dominican and Dominican-American experiences have not only inspired new generations of Latinx authors, they have also helped to enlarge the map of world literature. Her magical new novel, The Cemetery of Untold Stories (April 2024), explores what happens to stories that are left unfinished. Her 1991 novel, How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents, was named one of “21 new classics for the 21st century” by Library Journal. Her 1994 novel, In the Time of the Butterflies, was selected for “The Big Read” by the National Endowment for the Arts. In 2013, President Obama awarded her the National Medal of Arts and, in 2021, Mattel unveiled a Barbie doll in her honor.

Cosponsored by UAlbany’s Department of Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino Studies, and the Writing & Critical Inquiry (WCI) Program.

Photo: Todd Balfour for Middlebury College
AMUSINGLY VICIOUS AND VERY WELL-TIMED

April 25 (Thursday)

Michael Wolff

7:00 p.m. — Conversation
Page Hall, 135 Western Avenue, Downtown Campus


BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

AMUSINGLY VICIOUS AND VERY WELL-TIMED

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LITERATURE IN PERFORMANCE

April 27, 2024 (Saturday)

Performance — 7:30 p.m.,
Main Theatre, UAlbany Performing Arts Center

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 www.albany.edu/pac/tickets

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.

Presented in collaboration with the UAlbany Performing Arts Center with support from the University at Albany Foundation and University Auxiliary Services.

Grayce Burian, Remembering a Creative Force

The Writers Institute bids farewell to our dear friend Grayce Susan Burian, a creative force — actor, director, educator, flamenco dancer, wood sculptor, jewelry designer, garment maker, world traveler, memoirist, and philanthropist. Grayce supported and helped shape one of our longest-running programs: the Burian Lecture series (see pages 4/5 and 17), which brought dozens of leading theatre scholars and practitioners to the Albany campus over the course of 25 years. Her remarkable life is chronicled in her 2013 memoir, From Jerry to Jarka: A Breezy Memoir of a Long, Peripatetic Marriage (2013), about her life with Jarka Burian, a long-time Theatre professor at UAlbany. Grayce received her B.A. and M.A. from UAlbany, and served as director of the Schenectady County Community College theatre program, which she founded and nurtured into one of the state’s most successful two-year theatre programs. She died November 16, 2023 at age 96.
Support the NYS Writers Institute

If you enjoy attending the wide range of our cultural events, please consider supporting the NYS Writers Institute.

Yes! I/we would like to make a gift in support of the NYS Writers Institute.

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Mail check and form to: University at Albany Foundation
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Thank you for your generosity.
SPRING 2024
Schedule of Events