

## LOWELL HUMANITIES SERIES



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## Event Calendar

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### October 1, 2014

**Matt Taibbi:** *The Divide: American Injustice in the Age of the Wealth Gap*

Gasson Hall, Room 100 • 7:00 p.m.

In *New York Times* bestseller *The Divide: American Injustice in the Age of the Wealth Gap*, Matt Taibbi takes readers on a galvanizing journey through both sides of our new system of justice: the untouchably wealthy and the criminalized poor. As he narrates these incredible stories, he draws out and analyzes their common source, and unveils what we need to do to stand up against the troubling trend of the Divide.

Taibbi is also the author of *Griftopia*, one of the most entertainingly quotable, scathing, and illuminating histories of the economic crisis. In 2008, he won the National Magazine Award for his columns in *Rolling Stone* (where he was a contributing editor). He was recently sought out by First Look Media to launch a digital magazine focused on financial and political corruption. He is also the author of *The Great Derangement: A Terrifying True Story of War, Politics and Religion*.



### October 15, 2014

**Mark Edmundson:** *Why Football Matters: What's Gained (and Lost) from a Gridiron Education*

Gasson Hall, Room 100 • 7:00 p.m.

In *Why Football Matters*, Mark Edmundson, a University Professor and Professor of English at the University of Virginia, considers the paradoxical game that transformed him as a young man. Football teaches self-discipline and teamwork; it also celebrates violence. It showcases athletic beauty and physical excellence; it also damages young bodies and minds. It instills confidence and purpose, and also cockiness and an inflated sense of superiority. Edmundson's many other books include *Why Read?*, *Why Teach?*, *Kings of Rock and Roll*, *The Death of Sigmund Freud*, and *Nightmare on Main Street*. His essays have appeared in *Harper's*, *The New York Times*, *The American Scholar* and *Raritan*, to which he is a contributing editor.



### October 22, 2013

**Stuart Dybek:** *Ecstatic Cahoots*

Gasson Hall, Room 100 • 7:00 p.m.

Stuart Dybek is the author of five books of fiction including *Childhood and Other Neighborhoods*, *The Coast of Chicago*, and *I Sailed with Magellan* and most recently *Ecstatic*

*Cahoots* and *Paper Lantern*, both published in 2014. He has also published two volumes of poetry, *Brass Knuckles* and *Streets In Their Own Ink*. His work is widely anthologized and his fiction, poetry, and nonfiction have been translated into French, Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, Polish, Czech, Dutch, Italian, and Arabic. He is the recipient of many literary awards, including the PEN/Bernard Malamud Prize for "distinguished achievement in the short story," a Lannan Award, the Academy Institute Award in Fiction from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Whiting Writer's Award, two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, and four O. Henry Prizes. His work has appeared in *Best American Poetry* and *Best American Fiction*. He is the recipient of the 2014 Harold Washington Literary Award. In 2007, he was awarded both a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant and the Rea Award for the Short Story. He currently teaches at Northwestern University where he is Distinguished Writer in Residence.



### November 5, 2014

**Laura Kasischke:** *Presented by Poetry Days*

Gasson Hall, Room 100 • 7:00 p.m.

Poet and novelist Laura Kasischke was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan and teaches in the MFA program at the University of Michigan. Her books of poetry include *Wild Brides*, *Fire and Flower*, *Dance and Disappear*, *Gardening in the Dark*, *Lilies Without*, and *Space, in Chains*, which won the 2011 National Book Critics Circle Award. Kasischke has won numerous awards for her poetry, including the Juniper Prize, the Beatrice Hawley Award, the Alice Fay DiCastagnola Award, the Bobst Award for Emerging Writers, and the Rilke Poetry Prize from the University of North Texas. She has also won several Pushcart Prizes, as well as receiving fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Guggenheim Foundation.



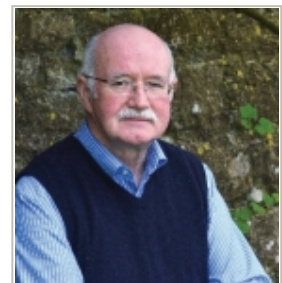
Kasischke's narrative expertise helps account for her dual career as a novelist. Her novels include *Suspicious River*, *White Bird in a Blizzard*, *The Life Before her Eyes* (subsequently made into a movie starring Uma Thurman), *In a Perfect World*, and *The Raising*. Taking on such subjects from global pandemics to school shootings, Kasischke's novels have enjoyed broad popular appeal. In the *New York Times*, Erika Krouse noted the poetic qualities of Kasischke's fiction: "It is not enough to say that Kasischke's language is 'poetic,' a word that has come to mean 'pretty.' Rather, her writing does what good poetry does—it shows us an alternate world and lulls us into living in it."

### November 12, 2014

**Peter Fallon:** *Strong, My Love: A Poetry Reading*

Gasson Hall, Room 100 • 7:00 p.m.

Peter Fallon grew up on a farm near Kells in County Meath in the Irish midlands. He is a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, where he has taught as a Writer Fellow and is now an Adjunct Professor of English. A prize-winning poet, his books include *News of the World: Selected and New Poems*, *The Georgics of Virgil* (a Poetry Book Society Recommended translation, 2004, reissued in Oxford World's Classics, 2006 and 2009) and *The Company of Horses*. He has been invited to read his poems around the world and they have been translated into various languages, including *Selected Poems* in Hungarian and Romanian. At the age of eighteen, in 1970, he founded The Gallery Press, Ireland's leading literary publishing company, and he has edited and published five hundred books of poems and plays by the country's finest established and



emerging authors, including Derek Mahon, John Montague, Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, Seamus Heaney, Paul Muldoon, Ciaran Carson, Medbh McGuckian, John Banville and Brian Friel. With Derek Mahon he edited the bestselling *Penguin Book of Contemporary Irish Poetry*. He was the Burns Library Visiting Scholar at Boston College in 2012-2013. A new collection of poems, *Strong, My Love*, was published in 2014. He lives in Loughcrew in County Meath.

#### November 19, 2014

**Jeff Chang:** *Who We Be: The Colorization of America*

Gasson Hall, Room 100 • 7:00 p.m.

Jeff Chang is the Executive Director of the Institute for Diversity in the Arts at Stanford University. His first book, *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation*, won the American Book Award, and is only ostensibly about hip-hop; it's really a cultural history. His new book, *Who We Be: The Colorization of America*, examines the cultural transformation of the U.S. over the last three decades. Chang grew up in Honolulu, received a Master's in Asian American Studies from UCLA, and was an organizer for the National Hip-Hop Political Convention. Chang was editor of *Total Chaos*, an anthology examining the influence of hip-hop culture into other art forms. He has written for *The Nation*, *The New York Times*, *Foreign Policy*, *VIBE*, and The L.A. Review of Books.



#### February 11, 2015

**Alison Bechdel:** *Watch Out for Alison Bechdel*

Gasson Hall, Room 100 • 7:00 p.m.

Alison Bechdel is an internationally beloved cartoonist whose darkly humorous graphic memoirs, astute writing and evocative drawing have forged an unlikely intimacy with a wide and disparate range of readers. For twenty-five years, from 1983 to 2008 Alison self-syndicated *Dykes to Watch Out For*. The award-winning generational chronicle has been called "one of the pre-eminent oeuvres in the comics genre, period" by *Ms.* magazine. In 2006 she published *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*. *Time* magazine named it the Best Book of the year, describing the tightly architected investigation into her closeted bisexual father's suicide "a masterpiece about two people who live in the same house but different worlds, and their mysterious debts to each other." *Fun Home* was a finalist for a National Book Critics Circle Award and was adapted into an award winning musical that opened Off-Broadway in 2013. A Broadway premiere is being planned for 2015. In her work, Alison is preoccupied with the overlap of the political and the personal spheres, the relationship of the self to the world outside. Her 2012 memoir *Are You My Mother? A Comic Drama* delved into not just her relationship with her own mother, but the theories of the 20<sup>th</sup> century British psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott. According to the *New York Times*, "there's a lucidity to Bechdel's work that in certain ways ... bears more resemblance to poetry than to the dense, wordy introspection of most prose memoirs." Alison's comics have appeared in numerous publications including; *The New Yorker*, *Slate*, *McSweeney's*, *The New York Times Book Review*, and *Granta*. Her work is widely translated and she was the recipient of a 2012 Guggenheim Fellowship. Alison lives in Vermont, where she is a Marsh Professor at Large at the University of Vermont.



#### March 11, 2015

*An Evening with* **Dennis Lehane**

Gasson Hall, Room 100 • 7:00 p.m.

Dennis Lehane was born and raised in Dorchester, MA. Since his first novel, *A Drink Before the War*, won the Shamus Award, he has published nine more novels that have been

translated into more than 30 languages, won the Edgar Award and many other honors, and become international bestsellers:

*Darkness, Take My Hand; Sacred; Gone, Baby, Gone; Prayers for Rain; Mystic River; Shutter Island; The Given Day; Moonlight Mile; and Live by Night.* His next novel, *World Gone By*, will be published in March 2015. Three of Lehane's novels have been adapted into award-winning films. Lehane was a writer on the acclaimed HBO series *The Wire* and was a writer-producer on the 4th season of HBO's *Boardwalk Empire*. The film "The Drop"

(2014), featuring James Gandolfini in his last role, was inspired by an earlier short story by Lehane entitled "Animal Rescue," which he has expanded for publication as a paperback original novel. Lehane is also working on *Ness*, a drama series in development at WGN America.



*Dennis Lehane's visit to BC is made possible by the Gerson Family Lecture Fund, established by John A. and Jean N. Gerson, P'14.*

### March 18, 2015

**Diarmaid Ferriter:** *"Scrambling for the bones of the patriot dead." Remembering the Irish Revolution, 1913-23*  
Gasson Hall, Room 100 • 7:00 p.m.

Diarmaid Ferriter is one of Ireland's leading historians. He is a Professor of Modern Irish History at University College Dublin and was the visiting Burns Library Scholar at Boston College from 2008-9. His books include the bestsellers *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000*, *Judging Dev: A Reassessment of the life and legacy of Eamon de Valera*, and *Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern Ireland*. His most recent book is *Ambiguous Republic: Ireland in the 1970s*. He appears regularly on radio and television, and his three-part television history of twentieth century Ireland, *The Limits of Liberty*, was broadcast on RTE in 2010.



### March 25, 2015

**Ira Berlin:** *Rethinking the Demise of Slavery in The United States*  
Gasson Hall, Room 100 • 7:00 p.m.

Ira Berlin is a distinguished historian of America and the larger Atlantic world in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, particularly the history of slavery. His books include *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South*, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in Mainland North America*, and *Generations of Captivity: A History of Slaves in the United States*. Among the many honors these books have received are the Bancroft Prize, the Albert Beveridge Prize, and the Frederick Douglass Prize. He is also the founding editor of the Freedmen and Southern Society Project. The project's multi-volume *Freedom: A Documentary history of Emancipation* has twice been awarded the Thomas Jefferson Prize of the Society for History in the Federal Government, as well as the J. Franklin Jameson Prize of the American Historical Association, and the Abraham Lincoln Prize for excellence in Civil-War studies.



He has served as president of the Organization of American Historians and in 2004 he was elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

### April 8, 2015

**Dinaw Mengestu:** *Politics and Aesthetics in Literature*  
Devlin Hall, Room 101 • 7:00 p.m.

Dinaw Mengestu is the author of *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*, a *Los Angeles Times* bestseller and Seattle Reads pick of 2008, as well as *How To Read the Air* and *All Our Names*. He was born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 1978. In 1980, he immigrated to the United States with his mother and sister, joining his father, who had fled Ethiopia during the Red Terror. He is a graduate of Georgetown University and Columbia University's MFA program in fiction as well as the recipient of a 2006 fellowship in fiction from the New York Foundation for the Arts and a 5 Under 35 Award from the National Book Foundation in 2007. He has written for *Rolling Stone* and *Harper's*, among other publications. He now lives in Washington, D.C.



*Sponsored by the Lowell Humanities Series, Fiction Days, and African and African Diaspora Studies.*

### April 13, 2015

**Sheri Fink:** *Five Days at Memorial*  
Gasson Hall, Room 100 • 7:00 p.m.

Sheri Fink is the author of *Five Days at Memorial: Life and Death in a Storm-Ravaged Hospital*, winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for nonfiction, the Ridenhour Book Prize, the J. Anthony Lukas Book Prize, and the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize. Fink's news reporting has been awarded the Pulitzer Prize, the National Magazine Award, and the Overseas Press Club Lowell Thomas Award, among other journalism prizes. A former relief worker in disaster and conflict zones, Fink received her M.D. and Ph.D. from Stanford University. Her first book, *War Hospital: A True Story of Surgery and Survival* (PublicAffairs), is about medical professionals under siege during the genocide in Srebrenica, Bosnia-Herzegovina. She is a correspondent at the *New York Times*.

