WASHINGTON COLLEGE
literary events
CALENDAR
2017-2018

SOPHIE KERR PROGRAM & ROSE O’NEILL LITERARY HOUSE
The Sophie Kerr Legacy

Sophie Kerr, a prolific and popular American writer of the early twentieth century, has left an indelible literary mark on Washington College. The gift that Kerr bequeathed more than 50 years ago enables the College to bring to campus a succession of the nation’s top writers, editors, and scholars. Edward Albee, Joseph Brodsky, Gwendolyn Brooks, Lucille Clifton, Junot Díaz, Jonathan Franzen, Lauren Groff, Daniel Handler (Lemony Snicket), Mary Karr, Ted Kooser, Colum McCann, Toni Morrison, Joyce Carol Oates, Robert Pinsky, Claudia Rankine, Charles Simic, Jane Smiley, Natasha Trethewey, and Jacqueline Woodson are just a few of the literary heavyweights who have inspired and instructed the next generation of American writers at Washington College.

In addition to the Sophie Kerr Speaker Series, the Sophie Kerr Gift provides scholarships for students who show literary promise, pays for library books, and supports various student literary activities. The result is a vibrant intellectual culture where the literary arts thrive.

The Kerr endowment also funds the Sophie Kerr Prize, awarded each year to the graduating senior who demonstrates the best ability and promise for future fulfillment in the field of literary endeavor. Valued at $63,711 in 2018, it is the nation’s largest literary prize awarded solely to undergraduate students.

The Rose O’Neill Literary House

The creative writing culture so much in evidence at the Rose O’Neill Literary House is grounded in Washington College’s historic commitment to foster writing across all disciplines and to connect our students and faculty to the wider culture of literature and the creative arts. In collaboration with the English Department and the Sophie Kerr Committee, the Lit House hosts literary seasons of programming built around themes such as “Poets Writing the Lyrical Essay,” “What’s Found in Translation,” “The Verbal & the Visual,” and “Queer Voices.”

Fiction writers, poets, essayists, playwrights, critics, editors, singer-songwriters, and studio artists routinely join us from around the world for readings, craft talks, and residencies. Recent guests include Chris Abani, Jericho Brown, Joy Castro, Denise Duhamel, Mark Doty, Carolyn Forché, Neil Gaiman, Matthea Harvey, Saeed Jones, Maggie Nelson, Anthony Swofford, and Brian Turner.
Literary House Orientation Open House and Print Shop Demo

Friday, August 25, 9:00 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House

The Lit House welcomes the Class of 2021. Learn about the campus publications as well as art, music, and writing groups. Try your hand at letterpress printing, and connect early with like-minded upper-class students and arts faculty.

Print Shop Workshops

Our free, non-credit Print Shop workshops are open to students, faculty, and staff at Washington College, and our Chestertown neighbors. Come learn the history of the book and experience letterpress printing and bookbinding. Master Printer T. Michael Kaylor instructs the 7-week course. Registration begins on August 28, 2017. The Beginner’s Workshop begins Tuesday, September 12, and the Advanced Workshop begins Thursday, September 14. To sign up, email lit_house@washcoll.edu.

Beginner’s Workshop: Introduction to Letterpress
Tuesdays 6:30–8:30 p.m., Print Shop, Rose O’Neill Literary House

Advanced Workshop: Book Arts
Thursdays 6:30–8:30 p.m., Print Shop, Rose O’Neill Literary House

Fall Movie Nights at the Literary House

Literary films, popcorn, and snacks—what could be better? Come enjoy films picked by students and Lit House staff. Be sure to stay afterward for a rousing discussion of the evening’s movie.

**Spotlight**
Friday, September 8, 6:30 p.m., Enclosed Porch, Rose O’Neill Literary House

*Spotlight* is based on a series of stories by *The Boston Globe*’s “Spotlight” investigative journalist team that earned *The Globe* the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service. This 2015 film follows the “Spotlight” team as it investigates cases of widespread and systemic child sex abuse in the Boston area by numerous Roman Catholic priests. The film stars Mark Ruffalo, Michael Keaton, Rachel McAdams, John Slattery, Stanley Tucci, Brian d’Arcy James, Liev Schreiber, and Billy Crudup. This film was chosen by the staff of *The Elm*. Its runtime is two hours and eight minutes.
Dead Poets Society  
**Friday, October 6, 6:30 p.m., Enclosed Porch, Rose O'Neill Literary House**

Directed by Peter Weir, written by Tom Schulman, and starring Robin Williams, this film tells the story of an English teacher at an elite boarding school who inspires his students through his teaching of poetry. The film won the BAFTA Award for Best Film, and Schulman received an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay. This film was chosen by the students in the Writers' Union. Its runtime is two hours and nine minutes.

Hidden Figures  
**Friday, December 8, 6:30 p.m., Enclosed Porch, Rose O'Neill Literary House**

Directed by Theodore Melfi, this Oscar-nominated 2016 film is based on the nonfiction book of the same name by Margot Lee Shetterly about African American female mathematicians who worked for NASA during the Space Race. The film stars Taraji P. Henson, Octavia Spencer, and Janelle Monáe. Its runtime is two hours and seven minutes.

Sophie Kerr Lecture Series  
**A Reading by Maureen Corrigan**  
**Wednesday, September 6 at 5:00 p.m., Rose O'Neill Literary House**

Maureen Corrigan, book critic for NPR's *Fresh Air*, is The Nicky and Jamie Grant Distinguished Professor of the Practice in Literary Criticism at Georgetown University. She is an associate editor of and contributor to *Mystery and Suspense Writers* (Scribner) and the winner of the 1999 Edgar Award for Criticism, presented by the Mystery Writers of America. Corrigan served as a juror for the 2012 Pulitzer Prize in Fiction. Her book *So We Read On: How The Great Gatsby Came To Be and Why It Endures* was published by Little, Brown in September 2014. Corrigan’s literary memoir, *Leave Me Alone, I’m Reading!* was published by Vintage in 2005. Corrigan is also a reviewer and columnist for *The Washington Post*’s Book World. In addition to serving on the advisory panel of *The American Heritage Dictionary*, she has chaired the Mystery and Suspense judges’ panel of the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize, and is currently a curator at the American Writers Museum in Chicago.

First-Year Book Event  
**A Reading by Dr. Lauret Savoy**  
**Thursday, September 21 at 4:30 p.m., Decker Theatre, Gibson Center for the Arts**

Each year, all new students read a book that reflects the mission of Washington College. Students read this book the summer before they begin their studies at the College, in anticipation of the rigorous
conversation they will have with a book discussion leader and their Peer Mentor. This program introduces new students to Washington College’s wealth of interesting lectures and presentations outside of the classroom. The 2017 First-Year Book is Lauret Savoy’s *Trace: Memory, History, Race, and the American Landscape* (Counterpoint Press, 2015).

Dr. Lauret Savoy is a professor of environmental studies and geology at Mount Holyoke College. *Trace* won the 2016 American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation. *Trace* was also a finalist for the PEN American Open Book Award and the Phillis Wheatley Book Award, as well as shortlisted for the William Saroyan International Prize for Writing.

This event is co–sponsored by the Sophie Kerr Committee, the C.V. Starr Center, the Joseph H. McLain Lecture Series in Environmental Studies, the William James Forum, the Provost’s Office, and the Center for the Environment and Society.

Sophie Kerr & C.V. Starr Center

A Talk by Craig Steven Wilder

**Thursday, September 28 at 4:30 p.m., Hynson Lounge, Hodson Hall**

Craig Steven Wilder is a historian of American institutions and ideas. His most recent book is *Ebony & Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America’s Universities* (Bloomsbury, 2013), which *Kirkus Reviews* named one of the best nonfiction books of the year and which won multiple book awards. It inspired the Grammy Award–winning artist Esperanza Spalding’s song, “Ebony and Ivy” in *Emily’s D+Evolution* (Concord Records, 2016). A book titled *Ebony & Ivy* was featured in the film *Dear White People* (Code Red Films, 2014). He is also the author of *A Covenant with Color: Race and Social Power in Brooklyn* (Columbia University Press, 2001) and *In the Company of Black Men: The African Influence on African American Culture in New York City* (New York University Press, 2001). Professor Wilder began his career as a community organizer in the South Bronx. He is a senior fellow at the Bard Prison Initiative, where he has served as a visiting professor, a commencement speaker, and an academic advisor. He has taught at Dartmouth College, Williams College, and Long Island University, and he has been a visiting professor at the New School University and University College London. He is currently the Barton L. Weller Professor of History at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Sophie Kerr & C.V. Starr Center

**Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of American Universities, A Panel Discussion**

**Friday, September 29 at 10:00 am, CAC Commons Room**

A group of Washington College professors and staff will talk with Professor Wilder about the ideas central to his book, *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of American Universities.*
Sophie Kerr Lecture Series

A Creative Nonfiction Reading by James Allen Hall

Monday, October 9 at 5:00 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House

James Allen Hall is an associate professor of English at Washington College, where he also serves as Director of the Rose O’Neill Literary House. In April 2017, he published *I Liked You Better Before I Knew You So Well*, a book of lyric personal essays which won Cleveland State University Poetry Center’s Essay Collection Award, judged by Chris Kraus. Also a poet, Hall is the recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York Foundation of the Arts, the University of Arizona Poetry Center, and others. His first book of poems, *Now You’re the Enemy* (University of Arkansas Press, 2008), won awards from the Lambda Literary Foundation, the Texas Institute of Letters, and the Fellowship of Southern Writers. He has received fellowships to attend the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference and the Sewanee Writers’ Conference and has been guest faculty in the Iowa Summer Writing Festival and at the Frost Place Conference on Poetry. His work has appeared in *Best American Poetry 2012*, *A Public Space*, *The American Poetry Review*, *Boston Review*, *New England Review*, *Story Quarterly*, *Bennington Review*, and in other national literary magazines and journals.

Literary House Series

*Scream*: A Literary House Press Book Launch

with Lia Purpura

Thursday, October 19 at 4:30 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House

Join us for a creative nonfiction reading and book signing as the Literary House Press releases a special, limited-edition letterpress chapbook, *Scream (or never minding)* by Lia Purpura, including original illustrations by local artist Stuart Cawley.

Lia Purpura is the author of four collections of poetry, including *It Shouldn’t Have Been Beautiful* (Penguin/Viking, 2015), *King Baby* (Alice James Books, 2008), *Stone Sky Lifting* (Ohio State University Press, 2000), and *The Brighter the Veil* (Orchises Press, 1996). In addition, she has authored three collections of essays: *Rough Likeness* (Sarabande Press, 2011), *On Looking* (Sarabande Press, 2006), and *Increase* (University of Georgia, 2000). A Finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award (for *On Looking*), she has also been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, an NEA Fellowship, a Fulbright Foundation Fellowship, three Pushcart Prizes, a grant from the Maryland State Arts Council, and multiple residencies and fellowships at the MacDowell Colony. Purpura is Writer in Residence at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, in Baltimore, MD and teaches at the Rainier Writing Workshop in Tacoma, WA.
Literary House Series

Under Your Spell—The Psychology of Witches: A Tea and Talk with Dr. Cristina Casado Presa

**Tuesday, October 31 at 4:30 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House**

Cristina Casado Presa is an associate professor of Spanish, Chair of the Modern Languages Department, and Director of the Gender Studies Program at Washington College, where she teaches all levels of Spanish. She also teaches courses on the contemporary literature of Spain; representations of the Spanish Civil War; female writers after Franco’s death; contemporary Spanish theater; and witches, ghosts, and vampires. She is an expert in twentieth and twenty-first century literature and culture of Spain, and focuses her research on women writers and representations of witchcraft in literature and culture. Some of her publications on those subjects are: “The Witch as a Power Paradigm in Two Contemporary Spanish Dramas” published in *Monographic Review*, “Silence as a Conflict in a Drama by Pilar Pombo” published in *Letras Femeninas*, and “Mother–Daughter Relationships in Contemporary Spanish Theater” in the volume *The Changing Spanish Family: Essays on New Views in Literature, Cinema and Theater* (McFarland, 2011). Currently she is working on a book project dedicated to the figure of the witch in contemporary Spanish literature.

Literary House Series

A Reading by Terrance Hayes

**Wednesday, November 1 at 4:30 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House**

One of the most compelling voices in American poetry, Terrance Hayes is the author of five books of poetry: *How to Be Drawn* (Penguin Books, 2015), longlisted for the 2015 National Book Award in Poetry; *Lighthead* (Penguin Books, 2010), winner of the 2010 National Book Award in Poetry; *Wind in a Box* (Penguin Books, 2006), winner of a Pushcart Prize; *Hip Logic* (Penguin Books, 2002), winner of the National Poetry Series, a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Award, and runner–up for the James Laughlin Award from the Academy of American Poets; and *Muscular Music* (Carnegie Mellon, 2006), winner of both the Whiting Writers Award and the Kate Tufts Discovery Award. He has been a recipient of many other honors and awards, including a 2014 MacArthur Foundation Genius Award, two Pushcart selections, eight *Best American Poetry* selections, and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Guggenheim Foundation. His poems have appeared in literary journals and magazines including *The New Yorker, The American Poetry Review, Ploughshares, Fence, The Kenyon Review, Jubilat, Harvard Review, and Poetry*. His poetry has also been featured on *PBS NewsHour* with Jim Lehrer.
Literary House Series

A Celebration of Gwendolyn Brooks
(with Terrance Hayes)

Thursday, November 2 at 4:30 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House

Gwendolyn Brooks was born in 1917. In this, the 100th year since her birth, we celebrate the former Poet Laureate and the first African American woman to win the Pulitzer Prize (for Annie Allen, her second book of poems). Brooks was also the first African American woman to become the U.S. Poet Laureate. She wrote twenty books of poetry, publishing her first, A Street in Bronzeville (Harper & Brothers) in 1945. She also authored a novel, two autobiographies, and books for children. Her musicality, mastery of tone, gift with received forms like sonnets, and insistence on writing about marginalized people make Brooks one of our most important and relevant poets. Participants are welcome to bring and read a poem inspired by Brooks, or to read one of their favorites of hers. The acclaimed poet Terrance Hayes will also attend and talk about the influence Ms. Brooks had on his work as well as how he developed the form “the golden shovel” based on her work.

First-Year Reading

Tuesday, November 28 at 7:00 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House

Come hear Washington College first-year writers read from their original work!
Literary House Series

A Reading by Natalie Diaz

**Thursday, February 1 at 4:30 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House**

Natalie Diaz was born and raised in the Fort Mojave Indian Village in Needles, California, on the banks of the Colorado River. She is Mojave and an enrolled member of the Gila River Indian Tribe. Her first poetry collection, *When My Brother Was an Aztec*, was published by Copper Canyon Press in 2012. Diaz’s work has also appeared in *Narrative Magazine*, *Gwarlingo*, *The Rumpus*, and *Ploughshares*. Her poetry has garnered the Nimrod/Hardman Pablo Neruda Prize for Poetry, the Louis Untermeyer Scholarship in Poetry from Bread Loaf, the Narrative Poetry Prize, the Holmes National Poetry Prize from Princeton University, a United States Artists Ford Fellowship, a Native Arts Council Foundation Artist Fellowship, and a Lannan Literary Fellowship. Her poems, folding Spanish and Mojave into American English, yield an urgent and important new voice to the canon of contemporary Native American poetry, finding a place among the work of Leslie Marmon Silko and Joy Harjo.

Sophie Kerr Lecture Series

*Sometimes We Tell the Truth:*

A Reading by Kim Zarins

**Tuesday, February 6 at 4:30 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House**

Kim Zarins has a Ph.D. in English from Cornell University and teaches medieval literature and children’s literature at Sacramento State University. Her debut novel, *Sometimes We Tell the Truth* (Simon and Schuster, 2016), retells Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* with modern teens, transforming the fourteenth-century collection into contemporary genres and tackling issues relevant for today’s teens. On the long bus ride to Washington, D.C., a group of seniors each tell a story—some fantastical, some realistic, some downright scandalous—in a competition for the ultimate prize: a perfect grade. Whether zombie war epic, love story between an angel and a devil, tale of interracial adoption, eulogy for a lost sibling, or *Harry Potter* fan fiction, the tales entertain and invite empathy. In this contemporary young adult adaptation of *The Canterbury Tales*, students wrestle with issues of class and wealth, fears of going off to college, moral reckoning with the cost of cheating, and LGBTQIA identity. Most lies are really just lies—but, sometimes, they can tell the truth. In addition to *Sometimes We Tell the Truth*, Zarins has published two picture books for very young children, *The Helpful Puppy* (Holiday House, 2012) and *The Playful Bunny* (Cartwheel Books, 2006).
Literary House Series

The Poetics of Eros: A Tea & Talk with Professor Elena Deanda

**Wednesday, February 14 at 4:30 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House**

Elena Deanda-Camacho is an associate professor of Spanish and Director of the Black Studies Program at Washington College. She studies transatlantic Spanish literature from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment in Spain and New Spain. She has published recent essays and articles on Cervantes, Lope de Vega, and Teresa de Cartagena.

The Literary House at AWP Conference & Bookfair

**March 7–10, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. each day, Tampa Convention Center & Marriott Tampa Waterside, Tampa, Florida**

Visit the Rose O’Neill Literary House’s table in the Bookfair at the 2018 Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference in Tampa, FL. Our students are excited to be there! At the Bookfair, we will be debuting our 2018 AWP Commemorative Broadside (a collaborative project with the literary organization Reading Queer) and the fourth issue of *Cherry Tree: A National Literary Journal @ Washington College*. Visit awpwriter.org to register.

Sophie Kerr Lecture Series

A Talk by Phil Sicker

**Wednesday, March 21 at 4:30 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House**

Literary House Series

A Reading by Amy Hempel

Tuesday, March 27 at 5:30 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House

Amy Hempel is the author of four short story collections. Her Collected Stories (Scribner, 2006) won the Ambassador Award for Best Fiction of the Year, and was a finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Award. It was named one of the New York Times’s Ten Best Books of the Year. Hempel’s fiction and nonfiction have appeared in Harper’s, GQ, Vanity Fair, The Quarterly, and the New York Times Magazine, among many others. Her work has been translated into more than two dozen languages. Her awards and honors include a Guggenheim Fellowship, a United States Artists Foundation Fellowship, the PEN/Malamud Award for Literary Excellence, and the Harold D. Vursell Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 2008, she won the REA Award for the Short Story. Newly elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Hempel has taught at Harvard, Princeton, NYU, Sarah Lawrence, and Bennington, and now teaches at Stony Brook University.

Literary House Series

Fiction Writer Amber Dermont, 2018 Mary Wood Fellow

Amber Dermont is the author of the novel, The Starboard Sea (St. Martin’s Press, 2012), and the short story collection, Damage Control (St. Martin’s, 2013). A graduate of the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, Dermont received her Ph.D. in literature and creative writing from the University of Houston. Her short fiction has appeared in TriQuarterly, Tin House, Zoetrope: All–Story, and in the anthologies Best New American Voices, Best American Nonrequired Reading, The Worst Years of Your Life, and Home of the Brave. A recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, InPrint, the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference, and the Sewanee Writers’ Conference, she is currently an associate professor of English and creative writing at Rice University in Houston, Texas. She is at work on another novel called The Laughing Girl.

Craft Talk

Tuesday, April 10 at 4:30 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House

Please join us for an afternoon focused on the craft of fiction and the power of narrative. Amber Dermont, the 2018 Mary Wood Fellow, will lead this afternoon talk. Please check the Literary House website for more information.

A Fiction Reading by Amber Dermont, 2018 Mary Wood Fellow

Wednesday, April 11 at 4:30 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House
Senior Reading

**Tuesday, April 17 at 7:00 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House**

Come hear graduating senior writers read from their original pieces. The Literary House will also announce the winners of the Literary House Genre Fiction Prize, the William W. Warner Prize for Creative Writing on Nature and the Environment, and the Jude & Miriam Pfister Poetry Prize.

Sophie Kerr Prize Event

**Date, Location, and Time TBA**

This event to announce the winner of the annual Sophie Kerr Prize features a keynote address by a noted author and readings by the student finalists. Previous speakers have included National Book Award—winner Colum McCann, Pulitzer Prize—winner Michael Dirda, renowned poet Mary Jo Salter, author and 1982 Sophie Kerr Prize winner Peter Turchi, author and translator Roy Kesey, and the acclaimed writer and poet Elizabeth Spires. In 2018, the Prize will be valued at $63,711. This event is free and open to the public. Please check english.washcoll.edu in the fall for more information.

Cave Canem Residency

**June 2018, Rose O’Neill Literary House**

The Rose O’Neill Literary House partners with Cave Canem, the nation’s leading organization for African American poets, to provide a month—long residency in historic Chestertown, Maryland annually to one Cave Canem Fellow. Cave Canem’s mission is to serve as “a home for the many voices of African American poetry and is committed to cultivating the artistic and professional growth of African American poets.” Chosen through a rigorous application process, the Fellow will spend time researching and writing in Chestertown. Additionally, the Fellow will give a public reading as part of the Summer Literary Salon. Our 2017 Fellow was poet Laura Swearingen-Steadwell. Check our website, lithouse.washcoll.edu, for more details.

Literary House Series

**Summer Literary Salon**

**Tuesday, June 19 at 4:30 p.m., Rose O’Neill Literary House**

Join us for an afternoon of poetry and prose, local music, tasty food and drink, and good conversation about the literary life!
2018 Cherry Tree Young Writers' Conference

July 18–21, 2018

At the Cherry Tree Young Writers' Conference, high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors can experience the literary community that Washington College has to offer and discover the many opportunities available to undergraduates: internships and funding grants in publishing, writing, and editing; a host of student–run publications; and the chance to serve as editorial screeners on Cherry Tree, Washington College's national literary journal. At the Young Writers' Conference, students can take intensive creative writing workshops in a choice of three genres (poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction). They can discuss literature at the college level with current English department faculty, attend professional readings at the Rose O'Neill Literary House, and even take a class on how to draft effective college admissions statements.

All events listed in this brochure are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted. Visit lithouse.washcoll.edu and english.washcoll.edu for updates, more info, and additional events.
“Have FAITH that the disappointing directions life takes you may also OPEN DOORS and lead you somewhere VITAL and UNEXPECTED. It is often the UNPLANNED DETOUR that leads to a wonderful poem or story.”

-poet Elizabeth Spires, in her keynote address for the announcement of the 2017 Sophie Kerr Prize