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Author David James Duncan to Deliver 2006-7 Clark Lecture

How might Americans—and American literary genres like the Western—benefit from and be shaped by the spiritual and literary writings of the East? Author David James Duncan will explore this and related questions in his talk “**Why the American West Needs the Asian East**” on Tuesday, **October 24, 2006** as the Center’s 2006-7 Robert D. Clark Lecturer in the Humanities.

Having grown up in Oregon and lived for the past ten years in Montana, Duncan feels a deep connection to the American West and to its native literary genre, the Western, while at the same time finding the Western’s linearity and lack of nuance and mystery a bit too limiting for his wide-ranging, rhapsodic approach to storytelling. His solution to this dilemma is to

bend the genre just enough to suit his sense of things.

In describing his Eugene lecture, Duncan says, “I am a Montanan who wears cowboy boots and owns six translations of the *Bhagavad Gita* because my heart long ago proved partial to Eastern mysteries and Western wilds. I have been lucky enough to spend my life in the presence of both. The

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David James Duncan

Photo by Yogesh Simpson

OHC to Co-sponsor Two Author Events this Fall

In collaboration with the UO Bookstore, the OHC is pleased to co-sponsor two author events this fall. The first will take place on **Thursday, October 12, at 7 p.m. in Gerlinger Alumni Lounge.**

Editor **Barry Lopez** and co-editor **Debra Gwartney** will present their newly released anthology, *Home Ground: Language for an American Landscape*. This collection, with an introductory essay by Lopez, brings together forty-five American poets and writers to create more than 850 original definitions for words that describe the landscapes we inhabit—words like flatiron, bayou, meander bar, and everglade. The contributors to this “landscape dictionary” are men and women from all regions of the country,



including Barbara Kingsolver, Jon Krakauer, Charles Fraser, Samantha Chang, William Kittredge, John Daniels, Linda Hogan, Pattiann Rogers, Kim Stafford, and many others. In this volume they come together as “a community of writers in service to their country, reviving a language that suggests the variety and vastness of the American landscape.”

The OHC is also pleased to welcome author **William L. Fox** back to campus. Fox was the Center’s 2005-6 Clark Lecturer last fall, during which time he spoke about his 2005 book, *Terra Antarctica*, and about his personal journey as a writer. On **Thursday, November 16,**

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OHC Faculty Advisory Board Welcomes Seven New Members

The OHC Advisory Board is a fifteen-member faculty board whose members are nominated by peers and appointed by Vice President Linton and OHC Director Steve Shankman to serve a three-year term. This board is essential to the functioning of the Center. Members of the board review fellowship applications, advise the Director and Associate Director on policy issues affecting the Center, and suggest lecturers and conference topics.

This fall we welcome seven new members to the Center's Faculty Advisory Board, and we thank the departing members for their service.

The new members for the three-year term beginning in 2006-07 are **Michael Hames-Garcia**, English; **Jeffrey Librett**, Germanic languages and literatures; **Craig Parsons**, political science; **Jenifer Presto**, comparative literature; **John Schmor**, theatre arts; **Andrew Schulz**, art history; and **Ying Tan**, art. Please help us welcome them, and please share with them your ideas about how to strengthen and support the humanities, both on and off campus.

We would like to thank **Judith Baskin**, Judaic studies, **Carl Bjerre**, law, **Sandy Bonds**, theatre arts, **Charles Lachman**, art history, **Julie Novkov**, political science, **Judith Raitskin**, women's and gender studies, and **Nathan Tublitz**, biology, all of whom recently completed their service on the Board. We are grateful for their willingness to contribute their time and expertise in service to their colleagues in the humanities.

Our work would not be possible without the generous help and support of the faculty. We seek nominations for the Advisory Board each year in early May. We encourage faculty to nominate colleagues or consider serving on the Advisory Board themselves. For more information about the Advisory Board, please contact Julia Heydon at 346-1001.

UO Hosts the 2006 Romance Studies Conference: *Literature Matters*

The faculty in the Department of Romance Languages believe deeply that literature matters. In our troubled times the contemplative silence, the peering into other lives, the interruption of our workaday routines, and the intimate sensibilities we share while reading may well hold the key to some of what is needed to heal our broken world.

With this in mind, Romance Languages, with a CAS program grant and generous cosponsorship from the Oregon Humanities Center and several other university entities, is hosting the 2006 Romance Studies international conference, *Literature Matters* on **October 19-21**, on the **UO campus** and at **Valley River Inn**. This interdisciplinary and intercultural literary conference will bring to the UO campus some 100 scholarly participants and three distinguished keynote speakers in the fields of French, Italian, Spanish,

and Latin American Studies. Keynotes are **Doris Sommer**, Ira Jewell Williams, Jr. Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures at Harvard University; **Deborah Elise White** of Emory University; and **Barbara Spackman**, Giovanni and Ruth Elizabeth Cecchetti Chair in Italian Literature at UC Berkeley.

As part of the conference, there will be a special concert entitled "Baroque Music of Europe and the Americas" on Saturday, **October 21**, at **7:00 p.m.** in **Beall Hall**. The concert (*which was previously scheduled for 8 p.m.*) is free and open to the public, and will feature UO music faculty **Marc Vanscheeuwijck** (cello) and **Eric Mentzel** (voice), together with guest artists **Michael Sands** and **David Wilson** (violin), and **Phebe Craig** (harp-sichord). For more information about the conference, please call the Romance Languages Department at 346-4021.

Duncan

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Western novels I am struggling to write have proven partial to the same two directions. So when I come to Eugene I'll be sharing ideas and tales, my own and others, that turn as readily as my heart from East to West to East."

Duncan is a writer, musician, father, avid fly fisherman, self-described "regular guy-mystic," and a practitioner of "direct, small-scale compassion/activism" who has courted a life-long interest in the wisdom traditions of the East. He is the author of the novels *The River Why* and *The Brothers K*, the essay collections *River Teeth*, and *My Story as Told by Water*, and, most recently, a book of "churchless sermons" entitled *God Laughs & Plays*. He has taught writing at Reed College and the University of Montana, and is the recipient of numerous literary prizes and awards.

The lecture, which is free and open to the public, will take place at **7:30 p.m.** in **180 PLC**, and will be followed by a book sale and signing. Seating in the hall is limited to 350. For more information, please call (541) 346-3934.

Author Events

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at 7 p.m. in the Knight Library Browsing Room, Fox will read from his latest book, *Driving to Mars: With NASA in the Arctic on the Human Journey to the Red Planet* (September 2006). In his most recent work, Fox describes his experience of joining the NASA team on Devon Island in the Canadian High Arctic for three annual expeditions as part of the Houghton-Mars Project. The book is a fascinating first-hand account of the exploration of the Houghton Crater, a gargantuan chasm located nine hundred miles from the North Pole, and the closest thing we have to Mars on Earth. In a piece of landscape writing that is at once fascinating, entertaining, and sublime, Fox gives his readers a chance to visit Mars ahead of the fact and experience what it will feel like—while ultimately also addressing the question of *why* we explore.

For information about these events call the UO Bookstore at 346-4331.

Ruthann Maguire Retires After Sixteen Years with the Center

After sixteen years as the Oregon Humanities Center's administrative assistant, and almost thirty years on campus as a student and/or employee, Ruthann Maguire will be retiring on October 1, 2006. She offers the following reflections on her time at the University and at the Center. We will be holding a reception for Ruthann on Friday, September 29th, from 4-5:30 p.m. in the English Department's Booth Lounge, Room 108 PLC. We hope you will drop by to help us acknowledge Ruthann's many years of service to the Center and to the University, and to help send her off with our best wishes.



My long and satisfying association with the University of Oregon began in the fall of 1976, when I enrolled as an undergraduate voice major at the School of Music. This degree program allowed me to indulge in the study two of my deepest passions, music and text, and I was happy to graduate with a B.A. in Music in 1981.

In 1978, while still a student, I accepted a position in Interlibrary Loan at the Main (now the Knight) Library. My job was a humble one—retrieving requested items from the stacks—but I loved it, for I am never happier than when I am among books. I later worked in the Speech department for three years, and then left the university briefly to run my own word processing and editing business. In 1987 I returned to campus to work at the Western Regional Resource Center, a special education agency housed on the UO campus.

Then in 1990 I applied for a dream job at the Oregon Humanities Center and I got it—and I have been here ever since. It has truly been a pleasure to work in such a positive environment. I have had the opportunity to protect the privacy and quiet of UO faculty who have been in residence at the Center, to administer course enrichment funds for innovative classes for Center teaching fellowship recipients, and to help organize and host countless public programs. While working full time at the OHC, I was fortunate to be able to take a number of enlightening and challenging literature courses, and as a result I earned my M.A. in English in 1998.

Working at the Center for the past sixteen years has been both challenging and rewarding. Through many years and several changes in the staff, the mission of the Center—to promote public programs, and to support and encourage faculty research and teaching—has held fast, and it has been an honor to help in the fulfillment of that mission.

Now I'm looking forward to having time to travel with my husband, Joe, especially in the Western United States. We also hope to return to Ireland, which we visited in 2001, this time for a longer stay. And when we aren't traveling, I plan to volunteer for Committed Partners for Youth. I also look forward to sitting on my patio in summer, or in front of the fire in winter, surrounded by piles of books and reading, reading, reading. That is indeed a joy to contemplate!

The OHC Welcomes New Administrative Assistant, Melissa Gustafson

We are pleased to announce that Melissa M. Gustafson will be replacing Ruthann Maguire as the Center's Administrative Assistant beginning September 25,



2006. Melissa is a UO graduate, having earned two undergraduate humanities degrees—a B.A. in English Literature in 2001, and a B.A. in History, also in 2001. Melissa is delighted to be returning to campus after having worked at various jobs in the community for the past five years—and we are equally delighted that she has decided to come back to the UO, and more particularly, to the Humanities Center!

Melissa finds it personally important to work at jobs that are culturally relevant, and in which she can give something back to the community. That was in part what led her, upon graduating, to accept a position with OFAM (the Oregon Festival of American Music), first as the registrar for the community music program, and then as the special services coordinator, organizing concerts, ticket sales, and guest artist visits. She later worked in a temporary position as office manager and executive assistant to the CEO at the Oregon Pacific Chapter of the American Red Cross. Her supervisor there would happily have asked Melissa to stay on in a permanent capacity, but Melissa had her sights set on other goals, most particularly getting back into higher education.

Melissa is glad to be returning to campus after her five-year hiatus. She will bring to her new position at the Humanities Center both her strong educational background in the humanities and her excellent work experience. In her spare time Melissa enjoys reading, gardening, dancing (especially ballroom!), and doing tai chi. We are thrilled that she has decided to join our staff. Please help us to welcome her!



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Call 541-346-3934 or send an e-mail to: peg@uoregon.edu.

Mark Your Calendars

We continue our series of **work-in-progress talks** by University of Oregon faculty and graduate students on their current or recent research on **Fridays** at **noon** in the Humanities Center Conference Room, **159 PLC**. Brown-bag lunches are welcome!

November

- 10 **Leonard Feldman**, political science, will speak on "Democracy, Necessity, and Extra-legalism."
- 17 **Monique Balbuena**, Honors College, will speak on "Constructing Jewish Identities Through Languages and Texts: Cases in Sephardic Literatures."

December

- 1 **Sangita Gopal**, English, will speak on "No Place to Hide: Conjugal and Nationalism in Contemporary Hindi Film."

All faculty and graduate students are encouraged to attend. The conference room seats 18; early arrival is recommended.

The University of Oregon is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution committed to cultural diversity and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. To arrange disability accommodations for Humanities Center events or to obtain this newsletter in an alternative format, call 541-346-3934.

2007-08 OHC Fellowship Applications due October 30th

Don't miss the opportunity to apply for a 2007-08 Humanities Center fellowship!

Many faculty who have received OHC **Research Fellowships** tell us that the quiet time for reading and writing provided by their term at the Center was essential to the completion of a book chapter or an article. And **Teaching Fellowship** recipients—especially those who apply for the **Wulf Professorship** or other supplemental course funds—are grateful for the summer pay they receive, as well as for the funds to enhance their courses by bringing guest speakers, purchasing films or books, and incorporating new materials and technological innovations.

The deadline for submission of **OHC Research and Teaching Fellowship proposals** is **5 p.m. on Monday, October 30, 2006**.

The deadline for **2007-08 Graduate Research Fellowships** is **Monday, February 12, 2007**.

For questions about any of the OHC fellowship programs, please contact Julia Heydon at 346-1001 or Steve Shankman at 346-3997.