

# SAVE THE DATE: UPCOMING TALK ABOUT CULTURAL STUDIES IN CHINA

Visiting East Asian Professionals Program  
The Center for the Humanities  
The Center for International and Area Studies



Wang Ning, one of China's leading and most intriguing humanist scholars in literary and cultural studies, will visit Washington University on Monday and Tuesday, October 10 and 11. He will speak at a free brown bag lunch open to faculty and students on Monday, October 10 at noon. Please RSVP at 314-935-5576, since seating is very limited. He will speak again on Tuesday, October 11 at 12-2 P.M. to National Narratives Study Group. For locations, check the website

for the Center for the Humanities at <http://cenhum.artsci.wustl.edu/> after Sept. 20.

Dr. Wang is Professor of English and Comparative Literature and Director of the Center for Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies at Tsinghua University. Apart from his numerous publications in Chinese, his English essays on comparative literature and cultural studies frequently appear in *New Literary History*, *Critical Inquiry*, *European Review*, *Comparative Literature Studies*, etc. He is currently Distinguished Visiting Professor of Chinese and Comparative Literature at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Wang's presentation on October 10th will deal exclusively with cultural studies, including elite culture and its products—literature and performing arts—as well as studies of film, TV, and other channels of popular culture in contemporary China. His talk will particularly emphasize the currently prevailing model of cultural studies introduced from the West into China in the early 1990s. Wang will address the following issues: how cultural studies was introduced into the Chinese context, how it is integrated with domestic elite culture studies and comparative literature studies, how it is institutionalized in the Chinese context, and how it is developing into an equal intellectual partner in dialogue with the Western scholarship in the age of globalization. Wang maintains that cultural studies and literary studies have a lot in common, especially in the Chinese context, so that these two branches of learning need not oppose each other. Rather, a sort of complementary dialogue could be realized between the two fields.

Please call 935-5576 for more information.

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## Blind Side

A few weeks ago my husband and I attended a large social function. My husband went to get us something to drink. What should have been a short trip for a drink turned into a long absence. I looked around the room and saw that someone with whom we had a passing acquaintance had pulled my husband into an intense conversation. I managed to catch his eye to give him an inquisitive and impatient look. My husband looked back in a way that said he had to finish this conversation. When he finally returned, he said the man's wife told him she wanted to leave him. Without meaning to be heartless, I asked why it took so long to talk about that. My husband then provided more of the story, "He said he did not see it coming—he was completely blindsided." His story could belong to many of us. He was so consumed with his daily life that the frantic pace and hypnotizing routine blinded him to the fragile nature of all those things we live for and love but so often take for granted.

That fragility was magnified hundreds of thousands of times when New Orleans was reduced to a swamped ghost town in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, leaving a

million people homeless. For the majority of those escaping the disaster, nothing about their daily life will be routine for years to come. The fragility of almost every material thing they loved and lived for was demonstrated when they were blindsided by the storm. For those tens of thousands of poor people who could not escape the city, the fragility of less material things was also exposed. After the storm, the city was engulfed in chaos as frantic families combed through stores for food and water while criminals looted abandoned businesses and homes. The unrelenting images splashed across the television screen told a grim story: Those left after the storm were nearly all black, poor, and desperate. The thousands of people packed into the Superdome were reduced to a pathetic state of waiting for food and water while conditions around them deteriorated rapidly. Their belief that our government, the government of one of the wealthiest nations on the earth, would come to their rescue was exposed as an all too fragile assumption that government was supposed to serve the public good. But government agencies appeared paralyzed, unable to provide food, water, or medical

supplies for three or four days. There were images of young men racing through water-filled streets clutching boxes and bags of looted goods. There were images of mothers and fathers looking for lost children, and families reduced to the status of refugees in their own country. Seeing these people, we could see that one last thing we have taken for granted was exposed by the storm. The fragile illusion that race no longer matters in 21st-century America was blindsided by the color of those left behind to suffer.

But are we really blindsided by any of these events? The story the man at the party told my husband included signs that a marriage was going cold. He refused to see this until he was blindsided. What about New Orleans? A network of levees and canals protected a city that was 10 feet below sea level when the Mississippi River flooded, but the result was the disappearance of millions of acres of marshes and barrier islands that would have cushioned the storm surge of Hurricane Katrina. We may have a blind belief in our ability to change nature to suit ourselves, but without these natural barriers, this natural catastrophe was inevitable.



Dr. Jian Leng

editor's notes

Continued...

The human catastrophe that followed it, however, was not. Government agencies whose responsibility was to have a disaster plan in place appeared to be blindsided, but the fact is that there was no local or state plan to evacuate the estimated 134,000 residents, short of the illusion that they would all use their own cars. Affluent and middle-class residents were able to jump into their cars or buy airplane tickets before the storm hit. The poor, who in New Orleans were living in the city's lowest-lying districts, had no cars and had probably already exhausted their monthly subsistence checks even could they have found buses to take them to safety. And no one could have been blindsided by the presence of the poor. New Orleans had high rates of illiteracy and high rates of poverty long before Hurricane Katrina hit. About 60% of births in the city are out of wedlock. Stripped of the economic and emotional support of a two-parent family and condemned to one of the worst school systems in the country, too many black children grow up without the basic tools they need to escape poverty. We were blindsided by these things because we turned our heads and looked the other way.

My husband and I were driving to Toronto for a wedding as this tragedy was playing out. When we listened to the wedding vows, I was reminded that all the fragile promises we make toward the future—the ones we make both to ourselves and to the ones we love, as well as those we make publicly as citizens of a democratic nation—require constant vigilance. We cannot be held accountable for the unexpected natural disaster, but we are responsible for the things the storm exposed. And much of what was exposed was there all along, there on our blind side.

Jian Leng  
Assistant Director  
Center for the Humanities



## Events in October

All events are free unless otherwise indicated. Book events are followed by signings. All phone numbers take 314 prefix unless indicated.

### Saturday, October 1

St. Louis Writers Guild presents **Cathi LaMarche** giving a workshop on "So You've Written the Great American Novel, *Now What?*" B&N, 9618 Watson, 821-3823.

**Dr. Noel Ignatiev**, author of *How the Irish Became White*, explores issues of race in American culture, Missouri History Museum, Forest Park, 1pm, 361-7229.

### Tuesday, October 4

**Robert L. Bradley** discusses his book *Wake Up: An Analysis of African-American History from a Glorious Past to the Present Crisis*, Webster Groves Public Library, 301 E. Lockwood, 7pm, 961-3784.

LBB features **Myla Goldberg**, author of the new *Wickett's Remedy*, 399 N. Euclid, 7pm, 367-6731.

### Wednesday, October 5

SLCL presents **Andrew Carroll** reading from his book *Behind the Lines: Powerful and Revealing American and Foreign War Letters – and One Man's Search to Find Them*, SLCL Headquarters, 1640 S. Lindbergh, 7pm, 994-3300.

National Book Award-winning author **Jonathan Kozol** discusses *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*, Ethical Society, 9001 Clayton, 7pm, 367-6731.

Food Network host **Giada de Laurentiis** signs copies of her book *Everyday Italian: 125 Simple & Delicious Recipes*, LBB, 399 N. Euclid, 7pm, 367-6731.

# St. Louis Li

WU Assembly Series presents physicist **Pamela Nagami** lecturing on the topic "Science Is Important, But It Isn't Everything," Graham Chapel, WU, 11am, 935-5297.

### Thursday, October 6

SLCL Grand Glaize Branch hosts a writing workshop to critique participants' work in progress, 1010 Meramec Station, 7pm, 262-6454.

LBB features **Caryl Phillips**, author of *A Distant Shore* and *Dancing in the Dark*, 399 N. Euclid, 7pm, 367-6731.

U. City Great Books Discussion Group discusses two short stories from *A Work of Great Stories*, "Act of Faith" and "Man's Faith," Trinity Presbyterian Church, 6800 Washington, 8pm, 966-8425.

Poets **Marcus Cafagna** and **Suzanne Rhodenbaugh** read from their work, Schlitz Tap Room, 2100 Locust, 8pm, 221-8671.

### Monday, October 10

St. Louis Writers Workshop presents **Geoffrey Hill** reading from *Your Life on Paper in Poetry and Prose*, Mondays beginning Oct. 10, St. Louis Branch, Company, 4651 Maryland, 7pm, 692-2629.

**Denise Nicholas** discusses her debut novel *Freshwater Road*, LBB, 399 N. Euclid, 7pm, 367-6731.

**Richard Burgin** reads from his new collection of short stories, *The Identity Club*, DuPont Restaurant, 7:30pm, 392 N. Euclid, 533-4533.

### Tuesday, October 11

St. Louis Writers Guild hosts Open Mic Night, Sunset 44 Bistro, 118 W. Adams, 7pm, 821-3823.

St. Louis Writers Workshop offers Workshops in personal essays/memoirs, Tuesdays beginning Oct. 11, 6324 Westminster Pl, 7pm, 692-2629.

LBB presents **Gregory Maguire** reading from his work, SLPL Schlafly Branch, 225 N. Euclid, 7pm, 367-6731.

### Wednesday, October 12

WU Assembly Series presents Mexican novelist and statesman **Carlos Fuentes** "Celebrating Cervantes and Don Quixote," Graham Chapel, WU, 11am, 935-5297.

# Literary Calendar

*Works in Progress*, an eight-week workshop offered by **St. Louis Writers Workshop** begins, Blue Ribbon Realtor, 4924 Hampton, 7pm, 692-2629.

## Thursday, October 13

**International Authors Book Discussion Group** discusses *Of Beetles & Angels*, SLPL Carpenter Branch, 3309 S. Grand, 7pm, 772-6586.

**Ridley Pearson** discusses his young adult book, *Kingdom Keepers*, B&N, 8871 Ladue, 7pm, 862-2948.

**Rick Moody** talks about his novel *The Diveriners*, LBB, 399 N. Euclid, 7pm, 367-6731.

**Margot Livesey** reads from her novel *Banishing Verona*, Gallery 210, UMSL, 8pm, 516-6845.

**Elliott Hester** discusses *Adventures of a Continental Drifter: An Around-the-World Excursion into Weirdness, Danger, Lust, and the Perils of Street Food*, SLCL Headquarters, 1640 S. Lindbergh, 7pm, 994-3300.

## Saturday, October 15

Missouri Chapter of the Romance Writers of America presents **Victoria Alexander** giving a workshop, "Beginnings, Endings, and A Couple of Interesting Things in Between," B&N, 9618 Watson Road, 11am, 843-9480.

## Sunday, October 16

**St. Louis Poetry Center** hosts a poetry workshop, University City Library, 6701 Delmar, 1:30pm, 770-9130.

## Monday, October 17

SLPL Julia Davis Branch kicks off the **Teen Book Discussion Group**, 4415 Natural Bridge, 3pm, 383-3021.

LBB features **Terry Iacuzzo**, author of *Small Mediums at Large: The True Tale of a Family of Psychics*, 399 N. Euclid, 7pm, 367-6731.

**Spanish Book Discussion Group** discusses *La Muerte de Artemio Cruz*, SLPL Carpenter Branch, 3309 S. Grand, 7pm, 772-6586.

St. Louis author **Dan Dillon** discusses *So, Where'd You Go to High School? Volume 2: The Baby Boomer Edition*, SLCL Headquarters, 1640 S. Lindbergh, 7pm, 994-3300.

*River Styx* presents **Tayari Jones** and **David Carkeet** reading from their work, Duff's Restaurant, 392 N. Euclid, 7:30pm, 533-4541.

## Tuesday, October 18

**David Carkeet** reads from his memoir *Campus Sexpot*, UMSL, Gallery 210, 7pm, 516-6845.

## Wednesday, October 19

LBB hosts a "First Fiction Night" featuring debut novelists **Victoria Vinton** (*Jungle Law*), **Karen Olsson** (*Waterloo*), and **Lisa Selin Davis** (*Belly*), Schlafly Tap Room, 2100 Locust, 7pm, 367-6731.

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist **Haynes Johnson** discusses *The Age of Anxiety: McCarthyism to Terrorism*, LBB, 399 N. Euclid, 7pm, 367-6731.

## Thursday, October 20

LBB features **Micaela Gilchrist**, author of *The Fiercer Heart*, 399 N. Euclid, 7pm, 367-6731.

St. Louis Writers Guild presents **Richard Burgin** discussing writing for literary journals, B&N, 8871 Ladue, 7pm, 821-3823.

## Saturday, October 22

**Mystery Lover's Book Club** meets to discuss *The Ritual Bath*, SLPL Carondelet Branch, 6800 Michigan, 10am, 752-9224.

St. Louis Publishers Association hosts the **St. Louis Book Festival & Craft Art Fair** at The Muny, Forest Park, 10am, 636-448-9821. Sunday also.

## Sunday, October 23

**Missouri Association of Playwrights** meets, SLCL Headquarters (East Room), 1640 S. Lindbergh, 2pm.

**The BookClub** discusses *The Old Gringo: A Novel*. For time and venue, call 636-451-3232.

## Monday, October 24

**Ingrid Newkirk**, founder of PETA, talks about her book *Making Kind Choices: Everyday Ways to Enhance Your Life Through Earth- and Animal-Friendly Living*, LBB, 399 N. Euclid, 7pm, 367-6731.

## Tuesday, October 25

**WU Assembly Series** presents **Richard W. Burkhardt** on "Konrad Lorenz and Niko

Tinbergen: The Science and Politics of the Founding of Ethology, 1930-1973," Rebstock 215, WU, 4pm, 935-5297.

**Eileen Dreyer** discusses *Saints and Sinners*, LBB, 399 N. Euclid, 7pm, 367-6731.

## Wednesday, October 26

MICDS counselor **Michael Cerkovnik** discusses *Einstein Never Used Flashcards: How Our Children Really Learn—And Why They Need to Play More* by Kathy Hirsh-Pasek et al, B&N, 8871 Ladue, 10am, 862-2948.

**Mark Bittman** talks about *The Best Recipes in the World: More than 1,000 International Dishes to Cook at Home*, LBB, 399 N. Euclid, 7pm, 367-6731.

## Thursday, October 27

**Schlafly Book Discussion Group** discusses *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, SLPL Schlafly Branch, 225 N. Euclid, 7pm, 367-4120.

## Saturday, October 29

Saturday Writers presents **Rose Marie Kinder** speaking on "Developing Character Through Speech and Thought," St. Peters Community and Arts Center, 1035 St. Peters Howell Road, 11am, 636-448-8983.

## Notices

St. Louis Writers Guild and The Book House are hosting a **Youth Writing Contest** for young people in grades 4-8. Contest runs through October 8. For contest guidelines, call 821-3823.

First Run Theatre is holding its **4th Annual Playwriting Competition**, submissions accepted until November 30. For details, contact Donald Weiss at First Run Theatre, 5230 Springtrail Drive, Florissant, MO 63033.

## Abbreviations:

B&N: Barnes & Noble; LBB: Left Bank Books; SLCL: St. Louis County Library; SLPL: St. Louis Public Library; WU: Washington University.

Check the online calendar at [cenhum.artsci.wustl.edu](http://cenhum.artsci.wustl.edu) for more events. To advertise, send event details to [litalc@artsci.wustl.edu](mailto:litalc@artsci.wustl.edu), or call 314-935-5576.