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2015

## 2015-16 Series Brochure - Reimagining Community

University Center for the Humanities

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# University Center for the Humanities

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

2015-16 Series

Reimagining Community

# Welcome

The theme for our speaker series in 2015-16 is Reimagining Community. In a global culture of war, social injustice and environmental calamity, and with our country's stark racial turmoil and political divisions, reimagining the idea of community—what it means for us now and for our future on this planet—might be the most important first task for all of us as we attempt to address the issues of human healthcare, racial equity, gender roles, feeding the human population, and the idea of the human community. We are all in this planet's developing story together, regardless of our ideologies, faiths, and perceptions. What shape and function will we give to this new vast and diverse global community whose common history and future must be understood and crafted in collaboration?

Please join us as our speakers address a variety of ways in which we in Kalamazoo and Southwest Michigan can move forward with our shared interests, beliefs and our mutual understanding of our evolving role in earth's community.

All events are free and open to the public.

Katherine Joslin, Director; Scott Bade, Coordinator

Cover image of Jasper Johns "Map" by Dan McKay, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/mukluk/434192625>

## About the Center

The mission of the Center is to recognize and support the humanities at Western Michigan University. As a gathering place for dialogue, the Center acts as an incubator for the exchange of ideas among faculty, emeriti, alumni, undergraduate and graduate students, and people in the wider community. Through the understanding of diverse cultural, professional, political, and intellectual landscapes, we nurture engaged academic and community life.

Visit the University Center for the Humanities online at: [www.wmich.edu/humanities](http://www.wmich.edu/humanities)

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## About the Humanities

The humanities provide fundamental intellectual resources for exploring the issues of our day. Rooted in diverse perspectives, the humanities comprise the classics, languages, literature, philosophy, ethics, history, jurisprudence, religion, archaeology, cultural studies, the social sciences, such as cultural anthropology, economics, geography, political science, and sociology, and have close links to the study of visual and performing arts, the sciences, engineering, business, and health sciences. Moreover, the humanities cross disciplinary boundaries, taking up questions about the meaning of human existence that transcend the thinking of any single field of study.

The deep wellsprings of humanities scholarship have long been honored in higher education, but are too often neglected, taken for granted, or regarded as the self-sufficient domains of academic specialists. Within the culture of the university, we all stand to gain from successful measures to encourage, encounter, and learn from the many forms of humanities scholarship that, as a learning community, we are able to share. A university culture that opens such pathways of appreciative understanding will both nurture diverse particular strands of scholarship in the humanities and enhance formation of connections across the university, with our students, and in our wider community.



## Nellie Hermann

Oct. 8, 2015 | 7 p.m. | 2452 Knauss Hall, WMU

### “Creative Writing and the Capacity for Empathy”

Nellie Hermann is Creative Director of the Program in Narrative Medicine at Columbia University. Her first novel, *The Cure for Grief* (Scribner: 2008), received national acclaim and was chosen as a Target “Breakout” book. Hermann’s short story, “Can We Let the Baby Go?” won first prize in *Glimmer Train’s* 2008 “Family Matters” competition and was published in the Winter, 2010 issue. Her latest novel about the early life of Vincent van Gogh, *The Season of Migration*, was published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in January 2015, and was a *New York Times* editor’s choice.

In this discussion Nellie Herman will talk about the use of creative writing and narrative to enhance our capacity for understanding and empathy in the clinical encounter.





## Ta-Nehisi Coates

Nov. 3, 2015 | 8 p.m. | Miller Auditorium, WMU

### Kalamazoo Community Foundation's 2015 Community Meeting: "Ta-Nehisi Coates: On Race in America"

An *Atlantic* National Correspondent, Ta-Nehisi Coates has penned many influential articles. One of the most famous is "This is How We Lost to the White Man," a searingly honest look at the generational and ideological rifts in the black community. Last year, Coates's lively *Atlantic* blog—a lesson in how to thoroughly engage a community of readers—was named by *Time* as one of the 25 Best in the World. Ta-Nehisi Coates's critically hailed debut book, *The Beautiful Struggle*, is a tough and touching memoir of growing up in Baltimore during the age of crack. Coates's new book *Between the World and Me*—a bold and personal literary exploration of America's racial history—was published on July 14, 2015.

Coates is a former writer for *The Village Voice*, and a contributor to *Time*, *O*, and *The New York Times Magazine*. In 2012, he was awarded the Hillman Prize for Opinion and Analysis Journalism. Coates is the Journalist in Residence at the School of Journalism at CUNY. He was previously the Martin Luther King Visiting Associate Professor at MIT.

For more information about the Kalamazoo Community Foundation visit: [www.kalfound.org](http://www.kalfound.org)



## Gloria Steinem

Nov. 6, 2015 | 7:30 p.m. | Miller Auditorium, WMU

### An Evening with Gloria Steinem

In partnership with the Lee Honors College Raise Your Voice Series ([wmich.edu/honors/raise-your-voice](http://wmich.edu/honors/raise-your-voice))

Gloria Steinem is a writer, lecturer, political activist, and feminist organizer. She travels in the U.S. and abroad as an organizer and lecturer and is a frequent media spokeswoman on issues of equality. She is particularly interested in the shared origins of sex and race caste systems, gender roles and child abuse as roots of violence, non-violent conflict resolution, the cultures of indigenous peoples, and organizing across boundaries for peace and justice.

In 1968, Gloria Steinem helped to found *New York* magazine, where she was a political columnist and wrote feature articles. In 1972, she co-founded *Ms.* magazine, and remained one of its editors for fifteen years. She continues to serve as a consulting editor for *Ms.*, and was instrumental in the magazine's move to join and be published by the Feminist Majority Foundation. As a freelance writer, she was published in *Esquire*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and women's magazines as well as for publications in other countries. Her new book, *My Life on the Road* will be released in Fall, 2015.





## **Kami Pothukuchi**

**March 17, 2016 | 7 p.m. | Dalton Center Recital Hall, WMU**

### **“What is the Community that Feeds You?: Re-imagining Food, Re-imagining Community in Detroit”**

Detroit is now considered to be the hotbed for urban agriculture and local food system development. Drawing from her study of these activities in Detroit, and on conversations with community leaders over the last decade, Pothukuchi will discuss how ideas of community have grown and evolved as activities to grow urban agriculture and local food systems have developed. Although conversations about community are never done or resolved, she will highlight what it means in a particular place and time to re-imagine community by rethinking our food.

Kami Pothukuchi is associate professor and interim chair of the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at Wayne State University. She is the founding director of SEED Wayne, a campus-community collaborative dedicated to building sustainable food systems at WSU and in Detroit neighborhoods. Her action research examines how interventions in community food systems may advance goals in public health, economic development, social justice, and ecological sustainability.



## Helene Klodawsky

April 14, 2016 | 6:30 p.m. | 2452 Knauss Hall, WMU

### “Encounters Through A Documentary Lens”

Helene Klodawsky's cinéma vérité feature *Grassroots in Dry Lands* was released in 2015. The film takes us into low income, “off the radar” Middle East neighborhoods, and tells of Nuha Dweikat Shaer's important work empowering disadvantaged families in Palestine. In this talk, Klodawsky and Dweikat Shaer will describe their recent experience of working together, with Dweikat Shaer offering insight into what it means to be a character in an independent documentary and to facilitate media access to individuals overlooked by most journalists. Additionally, they will share insights into the rewards and challenges of working with groups and organizations in order to get meaningful stories told.

Klodawsky's work, spanning some thirty years, has been screened, televised, and discussed around the world in venues as diverse as New York's Museum of Modern Art and Kenyan refugee camps. Her work has received awards and nominations from the Academy of Canadian Cinema, Hot Docs, Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois, the Jerusalem International Film Festival, and the San Francisco International Film Festival, to name a few. She is a graduate of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.

## Become a Friend of the Humanities

**Who?** Friends of the Humanities form a community dedicated to strengthening the humanities in the Kalamazoo community and on the Western Michigan University campus.

**How?** To become a Friend of the Humanities, individuals, organizations, and companies are invited to make an annual gift to the University Center for the Humanities through the WMU Foundation by visiting [www.wmich.edu/humanities/giving](http://www.wmich.edu/humanities/giving).

**Why?** Given the wide-ranging activities of the Center, private donors can have a real impact. Even smaller amounts go a long way to enhancing the opportunities for citizens, scholars, and students to do research, write books, give lectures, organize discussions, and work in the community.

**What?** Friends of the Humanities will receive invitations to special events, including a fall gathering of people from the community and University. At events, you will have reserved seating, opportunities to meet and talk with guest speakers and visiting scholars, and invitations to receptions. As a member, you will receive brochures, postcards, emails, and an annual report with detailed information about all of our activities so that you will see how your donation enhances the humanities at WMU and in Kalamazoo.

## Series Partners:



Center for the Study of Ethics in Society, WMU  
College of Arts and Sciences, WMU  
College of Fine Arts, WMU  
College of Health and Human Services, WMU  
Departments of Anthropology, Biological Sciences, Comparative Religion,  
English, History, Philosophy, Sociology, and Theatre, WMU  
Haenicke Institute for Global Education, WMU  
WMU Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine  
Kalamazoo Community Foundation  
Lee Honors College, WMU  
Lewis Walker Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnic Relations, WMU  
Office for Sustainability, WMU  
Office of Academic Affairs, WMU  
WMU Alumni Association



The background is a vibrant, abstract collage of various colors (red, yellow, blue, white) with overlapping, semi-transparent text of US state names. Visible names include OREGON, NEVADA, CALIFORNIA, TEXAS, GEORGIA, ATLANTIC, SOUTH, and others. The text is rendered in different fonts and sizes, creating a layered, textured effect.

# Calendar

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