



2019

Truth 2018-2019

University Center for the Humanities

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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
University Center for
the Humanities



2018 – 2019

Welcome

The truth is easy. Tell me it's raining outside, or not. But we know the truth is easy only until it's not. When it really matters, and when matters are complex, the truth is in question, contested, open to interpretation, subject to doubt, even strategically denied. On the big questions, truth functions as a fragile, even suspect ideal. For this reason, truth has long been a central theme of the humanities. What should we believe, whom should we trust, how can we capture and face deep truths about ourselves, our social lives, the fundamental conditions of life and well-being?

This year's lecture series is an invitation to engage with scholars who demonstrate what it means to pursue vital truths in contentious domains. Their work exemplifies how deeply such pursuits, at a time of widespread cynicism and doubt about the very idea of truth, make a true difference in our lives.

All events are free and open to the public.

Free parking in Parking Structure #2 adjacent to Miller Auditorium.

University Center for the Humanities
Katherine Joslin, Director
Scott Bade, Coordinator

Cover photo inspired by Thibodeau Photography:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/pthibodeau/3311731924/>





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

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Series Partners:

Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership, Kalamazoo College

Center for the Study of Ethics in Society, WMU

College of Arts and Sciences, WMU

College of Education and Human Development, WMU

College of Fine Arts, WMU

College of Health and Human Services, WMU

Department of Communication, WMU

Department of English, WMU

Department of Teaching, Learning and Educational Studies, WMU

Department of World Languages and Literatures, WMU

Gwen Frostic Reading Series

Kalamazoo Community Foundation

Kalamazoo Institute of Art

Lee Honors College, WMU

Office of Academic Affairs, WMU

Timothy Light Center for Chinese Studies

University Libraries, WMU

WMU Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine



Khalid el-Hakim

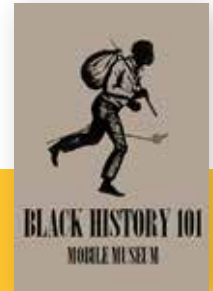
September 25, 2018 | 3:30 p.m. | 2008 Richmond Center, WMU



"The Truth Hurts: Black History, Honesty, and Healing the Racial Divide"

Khalid el-Hakim's talk will center on the development of the *Black History 101 Mobile Museum* with a focus on the current exhibit '68: How Far Have We Come? Using original artifacts from the exhibit, Khalid will make present day connections with the past by inviting the audience to engage in an honest dialogue about the impact of racism and the struggle for social justice in America.

Khalid el-Hakim is an educator, entrepreneur, as well as founder and curator of the *Black History 101 Mobile Museum*, a collection of over 7,000 original artifacts of Black memorabilia dating from the trans-Atlantic slave trade era to hip-hop culture. Khalid has been called the "Schomburg of the Hip-Hop generation" because of his passionate commitment to carry on the rich tradition of the Black Museum Movement. He has received national and international attention for his innovative work of exhibiting Black history outside of traditional museum spaces. Most recently Khalid was named one of the 100 Men of Distinction for 2017 by the highly respected business magazine *Black Enterprise*. Khalid taught social studies in Detroit for 15 years and is currently a doctoral student in the College of Education at the University of Illinois (Champaign-Urbana).





Marion Nestle

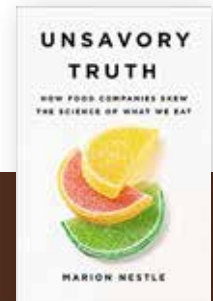
September 25, 2018 | 6:30 p.m. | Chenery Auditorium, 714 S Westnedge Ave., Kalamazoo
Lee Honors College Lyceum Lecture Series



"Unsavoury Truth: How Food Companies Skew the Science of What We Eat"

Is chocolate heart-healthy? Do pomegranates help cheat death? News headlines bombard us with such claims. They are reported as science, and have dramatic effects on what we eat. Yet, as food expert Marion Nestle explains, these studies are more about marketing than science. Whether it's a Coca-Cola-backed study hailing light exercise as a calorie neutralizer, or a report from investigators paid by a blueberry trade group concluding that this fruit prevents erectile dysfunction, every corner of the food industry knows how to turn conflicted research into big profit. As Nestle argues, it's time to put public health first. In this talk, Marion Nestle reveals how the food industry manipulates nutrition science—and suggests what we can do about it.

Marion Nestle is Paulette Goddard Professor of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health, Emerita, at New York University, which she chaired from 1988-2003 and from which she officially retired in September 2017. She is also Visiting Professor of Nutritional Sciences at Cornell. She earned a Ph.D. in molecular biology and an M.P.H. in public health nutrition from the University of California, Berkeley.





Angela Davis

September 28, 2018 | 2 p.m. | Dalton Center Recital Hall, WMU
Richmond Center for Visual Arts

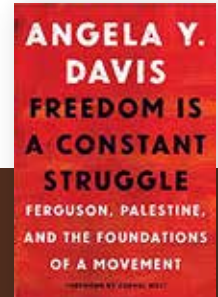


"Art & Activism: On the Inside Out"

Join us for a panel discussion with legendary activist and academic Angela Davis and artists Maria Gaspar (Chicago, IL) and Tyanna Buie (Detroit, MI). In an intimate and wide-ranging discussion, these three women will discuss the intersection of art and activism as it pertains to the crisis of mass incarceration. Drawing on both personal experience and the socio-political narratives that underpin the prison industrial complex, this panel aims to highlight a multitude of perspectives, including such themes as isolation, the inside/outside boundary and the prison wall itself, as well as the psychological and political barriers affecting incarcerated populations and their surrounding communities, cities, and families.

This program is presented in conjunction with the group exhibition *On the Inside Out*, on view at the Richmond Center for Visual Arts through October 28, 2018.

Professor Angela Davis is the author of nine books and has lectured worldwide. Professor Davis' teaching career has taken her to San Francisco State University, Mills College, and UC Berkeley. She also has taught at UCLA, Vassar, the Claremont Colleges, and Stanford University. She spent the last fifteen years at the University of California Santa Cruz where she is now Distinguished Professor Emerita of History of Consciousness, an interdisciplinary Ph.D. program, and of Feminist Studies.





Nikole Hannah-Jones

October 30, 2018 | 6 p.m. | Miller Auditorium, WMU Kalamazoo
Community Foundation's 2018 Community Meeting



"Race And Education In America"

"When we look at racial inequality, police violence for instance, it's very visible, and it's very visceral and it's very easy to have a reaction to that," says Hannah-Jones. "But it's much harder to see why neighborhoods are segregated, who's pulling the strings, how did this happen? And I see my job as exposing how things are working behind the scenes to create the reality that we all live in."

Nikole Hannah-Jones was named a 2017 MacArthur Genius Grant Fellow for "reshaping national conversations around education reform" and for her reporting on racial re-segregation in our schools. Hannah-Jones has won many awards for her reporting including, in 2017, a National Magazine Award for her story on choosing a school for her daughter in a segregated city. She has written extensively on the history of racism, school resegregation, as well as the decades-long failure of the federal government to enforce the landmark 1968 Fair Housing Act. Hannah-Jones co-founded the Ida B. Wells Society for Investigative Reporting. She holds a Master of Arts in Mass Communication from the University of North Carolina and earned her BA in History and African-American studies from the University of Notre Dame. Along with *The New York Times*, her reporting has been featured in *ProPublica*, *The Atlantic Magazine*, *Huffington Post*, *Essence Magazine*, *The Week Magazine*, *Grist*, *Politico Magazine*, and on *Face the Nation*, *This American Life*, *NPR*, *The Tom Joyner Morning Show*, *MSNBC*, *C-SPAN*, *Democracy Now*, and radio stations across the country.



Lara Blanchard

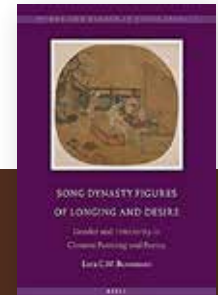
November 8, 2018 | 6:30 p.m. | Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, 314 S Park St, Kalamazoo



“Women Envisioning Women in Contemporary China: Subjectivity, Objectification, and the Problem of Authenticity in Art”

Images of beautiful women have historically been a significant subgenre of Chinese painting—but most of the painters were male, constructing idealized female figures from a distinctly gendered perspective. In contemporary China, women artists such as Cui Xiuwen (b. 1970) have used their work to explore women’s subjectivity and women’s objectification. This paper will focus on *Cui’s Ladies’ Room* (2000), a surreptitiously shot video focusing on sex workers in a Beijing nightclub’s restroom. This work considers women in terms of gendered spaces and gendered gazes and presents a telling contrast with premodern, male-authored paintings. Rather than idealizing her subjects, Cui Xiuwen uses her hidden camcorder to explore the dichotomy between public and private and to raise questions about representation, voyeurism, and authenticity.

Lara C. W. Blanchard received her Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in 2001 and has taught since then at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York, where she is the Luce Professor of East Asian Art. Her recent publications include *Song Dynasty Figures of Longing and Desire: Gender and Interiority in Chinese Painting and Poetry* (2018) and the co-authored textbook *Asian Art* (2015). She is currently researching conceptions of women’s authorship in an early nineteenth-century history of women painters in imperial China, itself compiled by a female author.





Mark Nepo

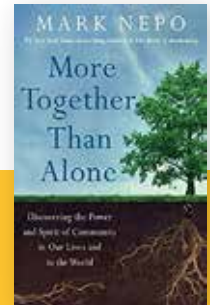
February 21, 2019 | 7 p.m. | 2452 Knauss Hall, WMU
WMU College of Health and Human Services –
Bill Burian Community Lecture Series



“More Together Than Alone: The Power and Spirit of Community”

In this talk, Mark will explore the heartwork required to inhabit our lives by engaging our ongoing relationships to self, other, work, community and Source. The integrity of our heartwork depends on integrating who we are with what we do. Regardless of the service we're called to, the central questions have always been: How will we inhabit our time on Earth? How can we live fully alone and together? How will we know and be known? How do we hold each other as we tumble along in the story of our lives? How will we care for each other in the face of crisis?

Mark Nepo moved and inspired readers and seekers all over the world with his #1 New York Times bestseller *The Book of Awakening*. Beloved as a poet, teacher, and storyteller, Mark has been called “one of the finest spiritual guides of our time” and “an eloquent spiritual teacher.” His work has been translated into more than twenty languages. A bestselling author, he has published twenty books and recorded fourteen audio projects. In 2015, he was given a Life-Achievement Award by *AgeNation*. And in 2016, he was named by *Watkins: Mind Body Spirit* as one of the 100 Most Spiritually Influential Living People, and was also chosen as one of *OWN's SuperSoul 100*. In 2017 Mark became a regular columnist for *Spirituality & Health Magazine*.





Kevin Young

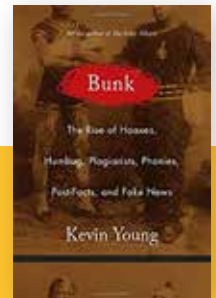
March 28, 2019 | 7 p.m. | 2452 Knauss Hall, WMU
Gwen Frostic Reading Series – Department of English



“Bunk: The Rise of Hoaxes, Humbug, Plagiarists, Phonies, Post-Facts, and Fake News”

In this talk award-winning poet and critic Kevin Young tours us through a rogue’s gallery of hoaxers, plagiarists, forgers, and fakers—from the humbug of P. T. Barnum and Edgar Allan Poe to the unrepentant bunk of JT LeRoy and Donald J. Trump. *Bunk* traces the history of the hoax as a peculiarly American phenomenon, examining what motivates hucksters and makes the rest of us so gullible. Disturbingly, Young finds that fakery is woven from stereotype and suspicion, race being the most insidious American hoax of all. He chronicles how Barnum came to fame by displaying figures like Joice Heth, a black woman whom he pretended was the 161-year-old nursemaid to George Washington, and What Is It?, an African American man Barnum professed was a newly discovered missing link in evolution.

From 2005-2016, Kevin Young served as Curator of the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library—a 75,000-volume collection of rare and modern poetry housed at Emory University. In 2008, Young was also named Curator of Literary Collections. Named University Distinguished Professor at Emory University, Young was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2016. His many other honors include a Stegner Fellowship in Poetry at Stanford University, a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, a MacDowell Colony Fellowship, and an honorary doctorate from Beloit College. Kevin Young is the Director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and is widely regarded as one of the leading poets of his generation. Young is also poetry editor at *The New Yorker*.





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

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 who support the humanities and arts. At events, you will have reserved seating, opportunities to meet and talk with guest speakers and visiting scholars, and invitations to receptions. You will also 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.

Calendar

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