

The Department of English at the William Paterson University of New Jersey is proud to continue its annual Spring Writer's Conference, which in the past has hosted such luminaries as Paul Muldoon, Francine Prose, David Means, Terese Svoboda, Russell Banks, Alison Lurie, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Yusef Komunyakaa, Chang-Rae Lee, Kimiko Hahn, Sindiwe Magona, Anthony Swofford, Porochista Khakpour, and Luc Sante. Join us for a day of workshops and readings in fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, script writing, editing, and publishing. We welcome participation from scholars in all disciplines, creative writers of all stripes, professional editors, secondary-, middle-, and elementary-level educators, graduate and undergraduate students, and the general public—in short, anyone interested in reading, writing and literary pursuits. We offer Professional Development Hours to New Jersey Educators.

## Keynote Speaker: Rick Moody



***“Funny, fierce, and generous, Moody’s maximalist prose gives the writer leeway, and the reader pleasure. Sometimes swashbuckling, sometimes laserlike, he can spin out the absurdity of human behavior in giddy syntactic arabesques, or nail it with a single noun.”***

—*The Boston Globe*

***“Rick Moody is the gutsiest writer of his generation.”***

—*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

***“[Moody is] that rare writer who can make the language do tricks and still suffuse his narrative with soul.”***

—*Esquire*

Rick Moody's first novel, *Garden State*, was the winner of the 1991 Editor's Choice Award from the Pushcart Press and was published in 1992. His second novel, *The Ice Storm* was published in May 1994 by Little, Brown & Co. Foreign editions have been published in twenty-two countries and a film version, directed by Ang Lee, was released by Fox Searchlight in 1997. A collection of short fiction, *The Ring of Brightest Angels Around Heaven* was also published by Little, Brown in August 1995. Moody's third novel, *Purple America*, was published in April 1997. An anthology, edited with Darcey Steinke, *Joyful Noise: The New Testament Revisited*, appeared in November 1997. In 1998, Moody received the Addison Metcalf Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 2000, he received a Guggenheim fellowship. In 2001, he published a collection of short fiction, *Demonology*, also published in Spain, France, Brazil, Germany, Holland, Portugal, Italy, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere. In May of 2002, Little, Brown & Co issued *The Black Veil: A Memoir with Digressions*, which was a winner of the NAMI/Ken Book Award, and the PEN Martha Albrand prize for excellence in the memoir. His novel, *The Diviners* was published in September 2005 and won the Mary Shelley Award from the Media Ecology Association. It appeared on “best of the year” lists in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Washington, Boston, and elsewhere. Since 2005, he has published a collection of novellas, *Right Livelihoods*, a new novel, *The Four Fingers of Death*, and a collection of essays on listening entitled *On Celestial Music*. In November 2015, he published *Hotels of North America*. It was long-listed for book of the year at the Brooklyn Public Library. His short fiction and journalism have been anthologized in *Best American Stories 2001*, *Best American Essays 2004*, *Year's Best Science Fiction #9*, and, multiply, in the *Pushcart Prize* anthology. He is Bonderman Professor of Literary Practice at Brown University. He lives in Astoria, New York, and Cranston, Rhode Island.



# Spring Writer's Conference

Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018

9:30 AM – 3:30 PM

*featuring*

Rick Moody

*and writing workshops in*

\* Poetry \* Fiction \* Creative Nonfiction \* Script Writing \*  
\* Publishing \* Memoir \*

To register, go directly to

<https://springwritersconference2018.eventbrite.com>

Or for more information visit

[www.wpunj.edu/writing](http://www.wpunj.edu/writing)

*Please note that we will be convening in  
the Multipurpose Room in the John Victor Machuga Student Center*

**Please convene in the Multipurpose Room in the John Victor Machuga Student Center**

**Breakfast - Orientation-Registration, 9:30 AM – 10:00 AM  
Rick Moody's Keynote Address, 10:00 AM - 11:15 AM**

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**Morning Workshops, 11:30AM-12:45PM**

❖ **Rules For Revision, with Rick Moody, our keynote speaker.** For the class, I would like to give my lecture "Rules For Revision," which purports to codify a number of approaches to the art of revision, so neglected in the American creative writing workshop. We will be thinking creatively about syntax and paragraph construction and about how to edit selectively and comprehensively. I will give a couple of short assignments that dramatize issues raised by the lecture, and will assign a couple of readings by writers who exemplify some of the points to be raised.

❖ **Writing the Hybrid Essay, with Nancy Hightower.** What story do you have to tell the world? More journals and magazines are looking for hybrid essays that connect one's personal narrative to larger political and cultural issues. Yet how much of one's own story needs to be explored before integrating the political? Is research necessary, and if so, how can one incorporate information without interrupting the flow of the essay? Participants will read recently published hybrid essays by emerging and established authors and then will workshop a personal essay of their own that they would like to make into a social commentary. **Nancy Hightower** received a PhD in English/Creative Writing from the University of Denver, and has published hybrid essays on religion and politics in *HuffPost*, *Vol. 1 Brooklyn*, *Entropy*, and *Heavy Feather Review*. Currently she is working on a book about digital fictions with Paul D. Miller (aka DJ Spooky) for Duke University Press, as well as a memoir about growing up in the evangelical South. She teaches at Hunter College.

❖ **Writing Your Life: Shaping Your Family into Characters in Your Memoir, with Jayanti Tamm.** Writing a memoir is the process of transforming internal personal memory outward toward the reader. In order to formulate your life experience into a memoir, you will need to use the tools to transform your personal life so that it will resonate on the page. A key step to achieving that is to begin the task of delicately rendering real people—family, friends, co-workers—into fully formed characters. Through a concrete exercise and a study in craft, this workshop will focus on techniques to shape the actual people who most impacted you into vivid characters in your memoir. **Jayanti Tamm** is the author of the critically-acclaimed memoir *Cartwheels in a Sari: A Memoir of Growing Up Cult* (Random House, 2010). A Princeton University Mid-Career Fellow, Jayanti teaches memoir writing for UCLA and is an Associate Professor at Ocean County College.

❖ **Writing Towards: Re-envisioning the Ode, with Emily Skillings.** This interdisciplinary poetry workshop will ask participating poets at all levels of experience to consider what it is we do when we focus the attention of our poems on singular objects, artworks, concrete subjects. How can we use the familiar spaces of this form to go somewhere radically new, even strange? What new zones and registers are achieved when we move beyond mere description and towards investigation, research, and communion? In this workshop we will read poems by John Keats, Ross Gay, and Dorothea Lasky. We will use art, objects, and prompts to provoke dynamic new poems that celebrate our various obsessions and devotions, creating new atmospheres and tactics for *encountering*. **Emily Skillings** is the author of the poetry collection *Fort Not* (The Song Cave, 2017), which *Publishers Weekly* called a "fabulously eccentric, hypnotic, and hypervigilant debut," as well as two chapbooks, *Backchannel* (Poor Claudia) and *Linnaeus: The 26 Sexual Practices of Plants* (No, Dear! Small Anchor Press). Recent poems can be found/are forthcoming in *Poetry*, *Harper's*, *Boston Review*, *Brooklyn Rail*, *BOMB*, *Hyperallergic*, *LitHub*, and *jubilat*. Skillings is a member of the Belladonna\* Collaborative, a feminist poetry collective, small press, and event series. She received her MFA from Columbia University, where she was a Creative Writing Teaching Fellow in 2017. She splits her time between Brooklyn and Hudson, NY.

**Buffet Lunch, 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (Multipurpose Room)**

## Afternoon Workshops, 2:15 PM–3:30 PM

❖ **Literary Publishing: Some Rules of Engagement, with Minna Proctor.** In this session we'll discuss publishing and the state of literary presses, small magazines, independents, university presses, ebooks and art books. We'll cover what you need to know in order to get started publishing and how to calibrate your efforts to your individual project. We will review the submissions process, cover letters, query letters, first pages, and pitches—all in the context of the writing process. **Minna Zallman Proctor** is Editor of *The Literary Review* and has been working in publishing as an editor and critic for over 20 years. She is the author of the memoir *Landslide: True Stories*.

❖ **Writing Scenes for Screen or Stage, with Philip Cioffari.** This workshop will focus on the elements necessary to create strong, vibrant scenes for film or theatre. Attendees are encouraged to bring one or more of their own scenes for discussion. **Philip Cioffari**, Professor of English at William Paterson, is the author of five books of fiction, the latest of which is *The Bronx Kill*, as well as the writer/director of the independent film, *Love in the Age of Dion*. His plays have been produced Off-Off Broadway at theatres in and around New York City. He is a playwright member of the Actor's Studio in New York City.

❖ **Sentence Writing, with Jacob Suskewicz.** This two part workshop will first include a literature seminar discussion of Barthelme's classic short story, "The Indian Uprising," with a focus on prose style, at the sentence-level, seeking to unpack and utilize Barthelme's empowering declaration: "*Strings of language extend in every direction to bind the world into a rushing, ribald whole,*" followed by a Writing Workshop: "What Can We Expect From Sentences?" Following Barthelme's advice, the class will write and workshop surprising, beautiful, true, and metaphysically dimensional sentences. **Jacob Suskewicz** received his MFA from The New School, and teaches creative writing at Rutgers University. He is the author of the chapbook, *Set a Fire Burning*, and the forthcoming novel of the same name.

❖ **Poetry and the Ecstatic Tradition, with Timothy Liu.** The Ecstatic Tradition in Poetry reaches back over centuries and continents from Hindu and Sufi Mystics (Rumi, Hafiz, Kabir, and Mirabai) to our present day (Allen Ginsberg, Linda Gregg, W.S. Merwin, Jean Valentine, James Wright). Ecstasy, from the Greek *Exstasis*, means to "stand outside or beyond oneself," transported by divine love/vision. This workshop will take a close look at ecstatic poems; writing prompts will follow. **Timothy Liu's** *Luminous Debris: New & Selected Legerdemain (1992-2017)* will be out in 2018. His poems have appeared in *Best American Poetry*, *The Pushcart Prize*, *New York Times Book Review*, *Washington Post Book World*, *The Nation*, *American Poetry Review*, *Paris Review* & *The New Republic*. A Professor of English at William Paterson University, he is also a reader of occult esoterica. <http://www.timothyliu.net>

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### REGISTRATION INCLUDES

Light Breakfast, 9:30-10:00

Plenary Reading with Rick Moody, 10:00-11:15 am

One Morning Workshop, 11:30 am-12:45 pm

Full Buffet Lunch, 1:00-2:00 pm

and One Afternoon Workshop, 2:15-3:30 pm

Tickets: Regular \$55. WPU Alumni \$44. WPU Graduate Students \$33. WPU Undergraduate Students \$22.

*Late registration (after April 7) is \$66, so please register early.*

<https://springwritersconference2018.eventbrite.com>

or

[www.wpunj.edu/writing](http://www.wpunj.edu/writing)