

## LOWELL HUMANITIES SERIES



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## Fall 2011 - Spring 2012

LOWELL HUMANITIES SERIES

### FALL 2011 PROGRAMS

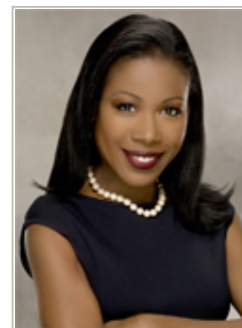
#### October 5, 2011

**Isabel Wilkerson:** *The Warmth of Other Suns*

Gasson 100

7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Isabel Wilkerson, Professor of Journalism and Director of Narrative Nonfiction at Boston University, was the first black woman to be awarded a Pulitzer Prize in journalism and the first black American to win for individual reporting. She received a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship to complete the research for *The Warmth of Other Suns*, her epic account of the Great Migration, which also won the Mark Lynton History Prize.

 Watch Isabel Wilkerson's lecture on [Front Row](#).


#### October 19, 2011

**Gary Shteyngart:** *Super Sad True Love Story*

Gasson 100

7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Gary Shteyngart was born in Leningrad in 1972 and came to the United States seven years later. His first novel, *The Russian Debutante's Handbook*, won the Stephen Crane Award for First Fiction and the National Jewish Book Award for Fiction. His second novel, *Absurdistan*, was a national bestseller, named one of the 10 Best Books of the Year by *The New York Times Book Review*, *Time*, and several other publications. His latest novel, *Super Sad True Love Story*, was an instant *New York Times* bestseller.

 Watch Gary Shteyngart's lecture on [Front Row](#).


#### November 2, 2011

**Beth Raymer:** *Lay the Favorite*

Devlin 101

7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

As a Fulbright fellow with an MFA from Columbia University, Beth Raymer studied offshore gambling operations in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama. Her memoir, *Lay the Favorite* (2010), tells the story of Raymer's years in the high-stakes, high-anxiety world of sports betting. Focus Features and Random House Films acquired the rights to produce a film adaptation, which is slated for release in 2012.

Watch Beth Raymer's lecture on [Front Row](#).



#### November 16, 2011

**Alex Ross:** *Listen to This*

Gasson 100

7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Alex Ross has been the music critic of *The New Yorker* since 1996. His first book, *The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century*, became an international bestseller and has been translated into sixteen languages. His second book, *Listen to This*, appeared in 2010. He is now working on a book entitled *Wagnerism*.



#### December 7, 2011

**Mary Lefkowitz:** *Why We Can't Understand Greek drama: Some Theological and Practical Considerations.*

Devlin 101

7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Mary Lefkowitz, who was the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Wellesley College from 1979 until her retirement in 2005, is one of the best-known classical scholars in this country. In her recent work Lefkowitz has sought to restore the gods to their original and frequently misunderstood role in ancient narratives. According to *The New York Times Book Review*, the "thought-provoking *Greek Gods, Human Lives* is precisely an attempt to write the gods back into Greek myths."



Watch Mary Lefkowitz's lecture on [Front Row](#).

### SPRING 2012 PROGRAMS

#### February 8, 2012

**James T. Fisher:** *A "Fallen-Away" Catholic's Monastic Vocation in Autismland*

Devlin 101

7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.



This year's annual Candelmas Lecture features James T. Fisher, who holds a PhD from Rutgers University and is a professor of theology at Fordham University. Fisher's research interests include the cultural history of religion and ethnicity in the United States as well as American Catholic studies. His most recent book, *On the Irish Waterfront: The Crusader, the Movie, and the Soul of the Port of New York*, not only offers a fresh

reading of Kazan's famous film but also gives a detailed social history of the New York/New Jersey waterfront. Fisher is also an autism advocate, and was one of the organizers of the recent *Autism and Advocacy* conference at the Curran Center for American Catholic Studies at Fordham.

Watch James Fisher's lecture on [Front Row](#).

### February 15, 2012

The Lowell Humanities Series and Fiction Days Present **Junot Díaz**  
Murray Function Room  
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Junot Díaz was born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and is the author of *Drown* and *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* which won the John Sargent Sr. First Novel Prize, the National Book Critics Circle Award, the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, the Dayton Literary Peace Prize, and the 2008 Pulitzer Prize. His fiction has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *African Voices*, *Best American Short Stories* (1996, 1997, 1999, 2000), *Pushcart Prize XXII*, and *The O'Henry Prize Stories 2009*.



Watch Junot Díaz read from from two of his short stories on [Front Row](#).

### March 1, 2012

The Lowell Humanities Series and Poetry Days Present **Billy Collins**  
Gasson 100  
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Billy Collins is an American phenomenon. No poet since Robert Frost has managed to combine high critical acclaim with such broad popular appeal. His work has appeared in a variety of periodicals including *The New Yorker*, *The Paris Review*, and *The American Scholar*; he is a Guggenheim fellow and a New York Public Library "Literary Lion." In June 2001, Billy Collins was appointed United States Poet Laureate for 2001-2003. In January 2004, he was named New York State Poet Laureate for 2004-06. Billy Collins is a Distinguished Professor of English at Lehman College of the City University of New York, as well as a Senior Distinguished Fellow of the Winter Park Institute at Rollins College.



Watch Billy Collins read from his work on [Front Row](#).

### March 21, 2012

**Claudia Kinmonth:** Rural Ireland – The Inside Story  
Devlin 101  
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Claudia Kinmonth, author of *Rural Irish Interiors in Art* (2006), presents this lecture sponsored by the Lowell Humanities Series, the McMullen Museum of Art, and the Institute for Liberal Arts, and given in conjunction with the exhibition *Rural Ireland: The Inside Story* at the McMullen Museum. Kinmonth discovered and analyzed dozens of previously unknown works depicting the homes and lives of Ireland's poorer classes. Her work revealed a little known tradition of Irish genre painting and helped make it available for further investigation by social historians, archaeologists, and scholars of visual culture. The Lowell Humanities Series is pleased to welcome Dr. Kinmonth on March 21st. The McMullen Museum will be open for additional hours the evening of this lecture, from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm. Kinmonth will conduct a tour of the exhibition after her lecture



for those interested in further viewing of *Rural Ireland: The Inside Story*.

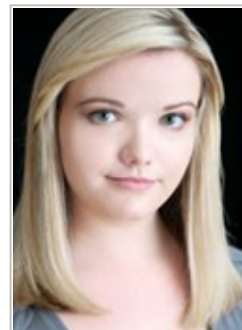
### March 28, 2012

**Téa Obrecht:** *The Tiger's Wife*

Devlin 101

7:00 p.m. – 8:30 pm.

Téa Obrecht is the author of the instant New York Times bestseller *The Tiger's Wife*. She was born in 1985 in the former Yugoslavia, and spent her childhood in Cyprus and Egypt. Her family immigrated to the United States in 1997, and she attended the University of Southern California and received her M.F.A. from Cornell. Her fiction debut—an excerpt from *The Tiger's Wife* in *The New Yorker*—was selected for the *2010 Best American Nonrequired Reading*. Her short story "The Laugh" was published in *The Atlantic*, and appears in the *2010 Best American Short Stories*. She has also published nonfiction about vampire hunting in *Harper's*. She was the youngest writer named to *The New Yorker's* "Best 20 Writers Under 40" and was also named a "Best 5 Writers Under 35" by the National Book Foundation. She lives in Ithaca, New York.



Watch Téa Obrecht's lecture on [Front Row](#).

### April 11, 2012

**Brenda Wineapple:** *On the Brink of War – Literary Boston in 1860*

Devlin 101

7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Brenda Wineapple's most recent book, *White Heat: The Friendship of Emily Dickinson and Thomas Wentworth Higginson* (2008), was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle award, a winner of the Washington Arts Club National Award for arts writing, and a *New York Times* "Notable Book"; it was also ranked among the best nonfiction of the year in *The Washington Post*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Economist*, among other publications. She is also the author of *Genêt: A Biography of Janet Flanner*; *Sister Brother: Gertrude and Leo Stein*; and *Hawthorne: A Life*, which received the Ambassador Award of the English-speaking Union for the Best Biography of 2003 and the Julia Ward Howe Prize from the Boston Book Club. Currently Director of the Leon Levy Center for Biography at The Graduate School, City University of New York, Wineapple also teaches in the MFA programs at The New School and Columbia University's School of the Arts. This event is presented in conjunction with the Forgotten Chapters project.



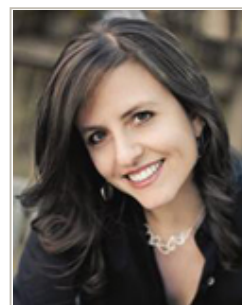
### April 25, 2012

**Rebecca Skloot:** *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*

Murray Function Room

7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Award-winning science writer Rebecca Skloot has made a career of probing the intersections between hard science and human experience; the resulting stories have been as varied as cellular research and cancer, medical care for pet goldfish, and the science behind personal motivation. In her bestselling book *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (2010), Skloot tells the story of a young black woman who died of cervical cancer in 1951 and left behind an inexplicably immortal line of cells known as HeLa. Skloot spent more than ten years researching Henrietta Lacks, whose cells—harvested without her knowledge or consent—contributed to scientific advancements as varied as the



polio vaccine, treatments for cancers and viruses, in-vitro fertilization, and our understanding of the impact of space travel on human cells. Part detective story, part scientific odyssey, and part family saga, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* raises fascinating questions about race, class, and bioethics in America. This event is presented in partnership with the Winston Center for Leadership and Ethics.

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