

CIWR

The Center for Interdisciplinary Writing and Research
Daytona State College

SPRING COLLOQUIUM SERIES

Tuesdays at 6 pm*

Southeast Museum of Photography (Madorsky) Theater
*(except Friday, February 26)

Feb. 2 *Poets, Playwrights, and Lovers Evermore: The Women of Michael Field*

Dr. Michelle Lee

An examination of the work of two extraordinary women who joined forces and lives under one pseudonym to become "Michael Field," a successful literary sensation in 19th c. London.

Feb. 16 *Unmasking the American Way: An Investigation of the Dual Ideological Identity of the New Wave of Superhero Films*

Dr. Seth Blazer

An exploration of the recent explosion of superhero films in American cinema and its relationship to America's current anxieties regarding the "war on terror" by looking closely at the film, "The Dark Knight."

Feb. 26 (*Friday) 11:00 - 12:20 p.m.

Ditch of Dreams: The Cross Florida Barge Canal and the Struggle for Florida's Future

Drs. Steven Noll (Senior Lecturer of History, University of Florida) and David Tegeder (Professor of History, Santa Fe College, Gainesville). Two prominent Environmental Historians will discuss the fascinating cultural history of the Florida Barge Canal with reference to its impact on our state's ecological development and environmental policy.

March 2 *Economic Crisis and Focalization in Ellen Glasgow's Vein of Iron*

Dr. Ashley Lear

A discussion of novelist Ellen Glasgow and her novel, *Vein of Iron*, looking particularly at the narrator's rendering, or focalization, of the main character's perspective and its larger relationship to economic and gender issues.

April 6 *Francis Fukuyama's End of History - A Roundtable*

Led by Dr. Perry Ballard and Dr. Chris Whitaker

A re-examination of Francis Fukuyama's shocking pronouncement in 1989 that we had come to "the end of history," that after the fall of the Berlin wall, the world was destined to become more westernized. This roundtable discussion will take another look at Fukuyama's idea in the wake of events in Eastern/Central Europe, and Russian since 1989.

April 20 *Marketing Fictions: Product Branding and Late 19th-Century American Literature*

Dr. Ben Graydon

Using William Dean Howells' novel *A Hazard of New Fortunes* as a central example, this presentation will tell the story of how branding and realism helped usher each other into existence.

COLLOQUIUM NOTES

Poets, Playwrights, and Lovers Evermore: The Women of Michael Field

One hundred and twenty-five years ago, a new playwright named Michael Field created a buzz among London literati with the print debut of two poetic dramas in a single volume: the ancient Greek *Callirrhoe* and the English historical *Fair Rosamund*. United under the pseudonym Michael Field, Katharine Bradley and her niece Edith Cooper would collaborate on a canon that includes more than twenty-five closet dramas and eight volumes of poetry. Field would become a literary figure whose "existence" would extend beyond a canon of little-read, but beautifully printed, dramas and poetry to a transformative space where two women could speak through a multitude of voices. These voices would allow them to access worlds they could not enter, transcend gender boundaries, and experience a unique (and possibly scandalous) love as well as a working partnership that, to this day, defies a name.

Unmasking the American Way: An Investigation of the Dual Ideological Identity of the New Wave of Superhero Films

This presentation examines the recent explosion of superhero films within American cinema in the past decade. Some critics argue that responsibility for the influx of these films lies in large part to advances in cinematic special effects, while some film scholars write off these films as little more than box office fluff at best and ideological state apparatuses at worst. This presentation, however, posits that this "new wave" within the superhero genre of film stems from America's current anxieties regarding its national character in the face of the "War on Terror." This point now seems obvious to most. However, the cultural and ideological meaning behind these films remains debatable. Some film critics claim these films champion conservative ideology, and some left-wing scholars decry them as the same. This presentation seeks to synthesize these views while couching them within a close textual reading of "The Dark Knight" to reveal the dual ideological aspect of this movement—a duality that has been present in our shared conception of what it means to be an American since the nation's founding and that continues to be purposefully shaped by American myth-makers across mediums to inform our national identity, particularly in times of crisis.

Ditch of Dreams: The Cross Florida Barge Canal and the Struggle for Florida's Future

Funding for a canal to bisect the Florida peninsula was authorized in 1935 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Construction began twice, but was never completed, and the project was canceled for good in 1991. The Cross Florida Greenway State Recreation and Conservation Area was established in its place, and in 1998 became the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway, named after the environmentalist who led the struggle to end the canal project. *Ditch of Dreams* is a fascinating and complex tale of competing interests and political intrigue which continues to this day—the fate of the Rodman Reservoir, a remnant of the original barge canal project, remains unresolved.

Economic Crisis and Focalization in Ellen Glasgow's Vein of Iron

This presentation will examine the relationship between economic crisis and focalization patterns in Ellen Glasgow's *Vein of Iron* to show how the nature and frequency of Ada Fincastle's inner thoughts, as detailed by a third person narrator, become more compatible with the dialogues of the narrative once she begins to contribute to the financial well-being of her family. In "Vein of Iron," the narrator initially focalizes through Ada to show how her inner thoughts clash with her actions and dialogue in the novel, then change, as Ada becomes an adult helping to support her family. As Ada steps outside her role in the home to work in a department store, the narrator begins focalizing through her less often, and those passages begin to accent, rather than challenge, the dialogue she has with other characters. This narrative style indicates a parallel between the need for focalization to reveal the inner thoughts of a subjugated character and that character's level of dependence or subjugation. The increased autonomy experienced by Ada frees the narrator from having to constantly detail her inner thoughts in the narrative.

Francis Fukuyama's End of History – A Roundtable

A re-examination of Francis Fukuyama's shocking pronouncement in 1989 that we had come to "the end of history," that after the fall of the Berlin wall, the world was destined to become more westernized. This roundtable discussion will take another look at Fukuyama's idea in the wake of events in Eastern/Central Europe, and Russia since 1989. November 9 marked the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, which led Francis Fukuyama in 1989 to famously declare "the end of history" in an essay in the *National Interest* and later in a book titled *The End of History and the Last Man*. The general assumption in Western academic minds after reading Fukuyama's essay was that the world would in one way or another become more westernized. The real question is whether other theories and/or systems of governance have emerged since 1989 that challenges Fukuyama's hypothesis. This roundtable discussion will attempt to address this issue by examining what has transpired in Eastern/Central Europe, Russia, and other parts of the world since 1989.

Marketing Fictions: Product Branding and Late 19th-Century American Literature

Two milestones in American cultural history occurred in 1890: the J. Walter Thompson Company became the first advertising agency to surpass one million dollars in annual billings, and William Dean Howells published *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, the definitive novel of American literary realism. The Thompson Company's achievement reflected rapid growth in product branding and a decisive shift in conceptions of value. Prior to branding's emergence in the economic rebuilding that followed the Civil War, product value derived from physical characteristics and practical utility. By 1890, however, widespread branding had relocated product value in abstraction—the images, slogans, and social expectations associated with the product. American literary realism developed at least partly as a response to this shift. Emphasizing character study, detailed description, and objective renderings of social and economic issues, realism emerged as the leading mode of narrative discourse in the late nineteenth century because of its suitability for puncturing the cartoonish and often misleading cultural representations branding produced. Using *A Hazard of New Fortunes* as a central example, this presentation will tell the story of how branding and realism helped usher each other into existence, a story that concludes with realism—initially conceived as branding's opposite—becoming itself a prominent brand.