Reedley College and the Literary Arts

A little history...

In 1999, the Reedley College Speakers Series began with an appearance by local peach farmer and author David Mas Masumoto. In subsequent years, the series went on to host such writers and public figures including Charles Baxter, Nanci Kincaid, Bettina Gregory, Bernard Cooper, Ron Hansen, Robert Hellenga, and Patricia Hampl.

Then, in 2012, to supplement available funds for the Speakers Series, as well as our First Wednesdays at One (1W1) series, and Symmetry, our student literary publication, a group of faculty formed The Reedley College Literary Arts group. Since its formation, our guests have included Tobias Wolff, Jane Smiley, Richard Blanco, Philip Levine, Joyce Carol Oates, Brian Turner, Manuel Muñoz, Ana Castillo, and many others.

In 2016, the RC Literary Arts adopted the 1Book/1College program, hoping to create a college- and community-wide conversation around a single work in the belief that a shared experience leads to deeper and more meaningful engagement and connection. That first 1B/1C selection was Richard Rodriguez’s Hunger of Memory followed by T.C. Boyle’s The Tortilla Curtain. For 2018, our common read was The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, featuring members of the Lacks family as our guests. In 2019, we hosted Meg Wolitzer, author of The Female Persuasion, and in 2020, we will welcome Susan Orlean and her account of the 1986 LA Public Library Fire, The Library Book.
On the morning of April 29, 1986, a fire alarm sounded in the Los Angeles Public Library. As the moments passed, the patrons and staff who had been cleared out of the building realized this was not the usual fire alarm. The fire was disastrous. By the time it was extinguished, it had consumed four hundred thousand books and damaged seven hundred thousand more.

Weaving her lifelong love of books and reading into an investigation of the fire, award-winning New Yorker reporter and New York Times bestselling author Susan Orlean delivers a mesmerizing and uniquely compelling book that manages to tell the broader story of libraries and librarians in a way that has never been done before.

Brimming with her signature wit, insight, compassion, and talent for deep research, The Library Book is Susan Orlean’s thrilling journey through the stacks that reveals how these beloved institutions provide much more than just books—and why they remain an essential part of the heart, mind, and soul of our country. It is a master journalist’s reminder that, perhaps especially in the digital era, they are more necessary than ever.
Reedley College Literary Arts presents
Manuel Muñoz and
Helena María Viramontes
April 4, 2019
7:00 PM
RC Forum Hall
Reading • Q&A • Book signing

Admission is free
Donations gratefully accepted
(suggested: $5 general; $2 student)

HELENA MARÍA VIRAMONTES is the author of The Moths and Other Stories and two novels Under the Feet of Jesus and Their Dogs Came with Them. A recipient of numerous awards and honors, including the John Dos Passos Award for Literature, and a United States Artist Fellowship, her short stories and essays have been widely anthologized and her writings have been adopted for classroom use and university study. A community organizer and former coordinator of the Los Angeles Latino Writers Association, she is a frequent reader and lecturer in the U.S. and internationally. Currently she is completing a draft of her third novel, The Cemetery Boys.

Dinuba native, MANUEL MUÑOZ, received his BA in English and American Literature and Language from Harvard College in 1994 and an MFA in Creative Writing from Cornell University in 1998, where he was mentored by Helena María Viramontes. He is the author of two short-story collections, Zigzagger and The Faith Healer of Olive Avenue, which was shortlisted for the Frank O’Connor International Short Story Award. His first novel, What You See in the Dark, was published by Algonquin in 2011. His New York Times op-ed “Leave Your Name at the Border,” about the anglicizing of Mexican names, has been frequently anthologized.
Reedley College Literary Arts presents
the Seventh Annual Clark Family Reading

Meg Wolitzer
March 7, 2019
7:00 PM
RC Cafeteria

Reading • Q&A • Book signing

VIP Tickets available for $25
Donations gratefully accepted
(suggested: $5 general; $2 student)

Charming and wise, knowing and witty, Meg Wolitzer delivers a novel about power and influence, ego and loyalty, womanhood and ambition. At its heart, *The Female Persuasion* is about the flame we all believe is flickering inside of us, waiting to be seen and fanned by the right person at the right time. It’s a story about the people who guide and the people who follow (and how those roles evolve over time), and the desire within all of us to be pulled into the light.
NIKIKO MASUMOTO first learned to love food as a young child slurping the nectar of overripe organic peaches on the Masumoto Family Farm. Since then, she has never missed a harvest.

Farmer, artist, and leader, Nikiko works alongside her father to raise organic peaches, nectarines and grapes. She hopes to add another generation’s voice to the story of the Masumoto Family Farm. She calls herself an “agrarian artist” cultivating the richness of life in the Central Valley through farming, food, stories, art, & community.

In 2007 she graduated from UC Berkeley with a B.A. in Gender and Women’s Studies and in 2011 completed a Master of Arts in Performance as Public Practice at the University of Texas, Austin. She debuted her one-woman show “What We Could Carry” about Japanese American Redress hearings in 2011. In 2017, she and Brynn Saito co-founded the Yonsei Memory Project. Through art and creative engagement, the Yonsei Memory Project awakens the archives of Japanese American history to foster understanding, healing, and justice. Her intellectual & artistic curiosities continue to inspire creations and inquiries into community building, memory, place, public art, justice and healing.

In 2013 she published her first book *The Perfect Peach* (Ten Speed Press), co-authored with Marcy & David Mas Masumoto. She and Mas co-wrote, *Changing Season: A Father, A Daughter, A Family Farm* published by Heyday in 2016.
Victoria Baptiste is Henrietta Lacks’s great granddaughter. She travels regularly to talk about the Lacks family’s story. Inspired by Henrietta’s life, she is a nephrology nurse at a dialysis center. As a patient’s advocate, Victoria prides herself on treating patients with respect and dignity and most importantly making sure they understand their care.

Reedley College Literary Arts presents

The Lacks Family
March 15, 2018

1:00 PM Madera AM120 7:00 PM RC Cafeteria

Presentation and Discussion

Madera: Admission is free
Reedley: Reserved seat tickets available for $25
Donations gratefully accepted
(suggested: $5 general; $2 student)
Parking relaxed at both locations

David Lacks, Jr. is the grandson of Henrietta Lacks and the son of David “Sonny” Lacks. David has a degree in computer information systems and has traveled around the United States and Canada setting up computer systems and labs for companies and educational institutions. He also lends his talent to the Lacks family’s website. David is honored to serve on the National Institutes of Health panel, where he reviews proposals from researchers seeking to use the HeLa genome in their research.

Winner of the 2015 University of Texas System’s Board of Regents’ Outstanding Teaching Award, Sasha teaches contemporary American poetry, poetry writing and creative nonfiction writing, with research foci on Asian American, Black, Jewish American, and Latin American poetics at the University of Texas at El Paso. She’s an Associate Professor in a bilingual (Spanish-English) MFA Program to writers from across the Americas in the Department of Creative Writing, and serves as affiliated faculty in the Chican@ Studies Program.

Sasha holds an MFA in Creative Writing from California State University, Fresno. She lives in El Paso, Texas with her husband, the historian Michael Topp, on the border of Ciudad Juárez, México.
An award-winning novelist and nonfiction author, Mark Salzman has written on a variety of subjects, from a graceful novel about a Carmelite nun’s ecstatic visions and crisis of faith to a compelling memoir about growing up a misfit in a Connecticut suburb—clearly displaying a range that transcends genre. As a boy, all Salzman ever wanted was to be a Kung Fu master, but it was his proficiency on the cello that facilitated his acceptance to Yale at the age of 16. He soon changed his major to Chinese language and philosophy, which took him to mainland China where he taught English for two years and studied martial arts. He never gave up music, though, and Salzman’s cello playing appears on the soundtrack to several films, including the Academy Award-winning documentary *Breathing Lessons: The Life and Work of Mark O’Brien*. He has also played with Yo-Yo Ma and pianist Emanuel Ax at Lincoln Center. Salzman’s unusual combination of talents – as both a well-known author and a concert-proficient cellist – led to a feature profile about him in *The New Yorker* magazine. He was also recently presented with the Algonquin West Hollywood Literary Award.
Fifth annual Clark Family Reading presents

T.C. Boyle
March 16, 2017
7:00 PM
RC Cafeteria
Reading • Q&A • Book signing

VIP Tickets available for $25
Donations gratefully accepted
(suggested: $5 general, $2 student)

Please join us for an evening of fiction and poetry as Reedley College welcomes

Richard Blanco
and Ito Romo
Reedley College
November 10, 2016
7:00 PM
Forum Hall
Reading • Q&A • Book signing

Suggested donation:
Students, $2; General, $5
Veteran, poet, memoirist
Brian Turner

Reedley College
October 13, 2016
7:00 PM
Forum Hall
Reading • Q&A • Book signing

Suggested donation:
Students, $2; General, $5

Please join us for an evening with
Ana Castillo
May 5, 2016
7:00 PM
RC Forum Hall
Reading • Q&A • Book signing

Donations gratefully accepted
(suggested: $5 general; $2 student)
Fourth annual Clark Family Reading presents

Richard Rodriguez

March 10, 2016
7:00 PM
RC Cafeteria
Reading • Q&A • Booksigning

VIP Tickets available for $25
Donations gratefully accepted
(suggested: $5 general; $2 student)

Fiction writer, essayist, poet
Charles Baxter

at
Reedley College
October 15, 2015
7:00 PM
Forum Hall
Reading • Q&A • Booksigning

Suggested donation:
Students, $2; General, $5

Additional Q&A and informal discussion
October 16 at 10:00 AM
SOC 39
All are welcome!
Third annual Clark Family Reading presents
America’s foremost woman of letters

Joyce Carol Oates

March 19, 2015
7:00 PM
RC Forum Hall
Reading • Q&A • Booksigning

VIP Tickets available for $25
Donations gratefully accepted
(suggested: $5 general; $2 student)

Join us for an evening with

Manuel Muñoz

February 19, 2015
7:00 PM
RC Forum Hall
Reading • Q&A • Booksigning
VIP Tickets available for $10
Donations gratefully accepted
(suggested: $5 general; $2 student)
Second annual Clark Family Reading presents
US Poet Laureate, 2011-2012

Philip Levine
at
Reedley College
March 27, 2014
7:00 PM
Forum Hall
Reading • Q&A • Booksigning

Suggested donation:
Students, $2; General, $5

Pulitzer Prize winner
Jane Smiley
at
Reedley College

October 24, 2013
7:00 PM
RC Forum Hall
Suggested donation:
$2 students; $5 general
Richard Blanco was made in Cuba, assembled in Spain, and imported to the United States—meaning his mother, seven months pregnant, and the rest of the family arrived as exiles from Cuba to Madrid where he was born. Only forty-five days later, the family emigrated once more and settled in New York City, then eventually in Miami where he was raised and educated.

His acclaimed first book of poetry, *City of a Hundred Fires*, explores the yearnings and the negotiation of cultural identity of a Cuban-American, and received the Agnes Starrett Poetry Prize from the University of Pittsburgh Press. His second book, *Directions to the Beach of the Dead*, won the Beyond Margins Award from the PEN American Center for its continued exploration of the universal themes of cultural identity and homecoming. A third collection, *Looking for the Gulf Motel*, was published by the University of Pittsburgh Press in 2012.

Prior to his selection as poet for President Obama’s Second Inauguration, his poems have appeared in top literary journals including, *The Nation, the New Republic, Ploughshares, Michigan Quarterly Review,* and *TriQuarterly Review,* and several anthologies including, *The Best American Poetry,* *Great American Prose Poems, Bread Loaf Anthology of New American Poets,* and *American Poetry: The Next Generation.* He has been featured on National Public Radio’s *All Things Considered,* and various conferences and venues including the Miami Book Fair, *The Southern Writers Conference,* *The Sunken Garden Poetry Festival,* the *Dodge Poetry Festival,* and *The Poetry Center at Smith College.*

Blanco is recipient of two Florida Artist Fellowships, a Residency Fellowship from the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and is a John Ciardi Fellow of the Bread Loaf Writers Conference. A builder of cities as well as poems, he holds a bachelors of science degree in Civil Engineering and Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing.
TOBIAS WOLFF
March 14, 2013
7 p.m. • Forum Hall
Clark Family Reading
suggested donation: $5 general, $2 students

Tobias Wolff is the author of the novels The Barracks Thief and Old School, the memoirs This Boy’s Life and In Pharaoh’s Army, and the short story collections In the Garden of the North American Martyrs, Back in the World, and The Night in Question. His most recent collection of short stories, Our Story Begins, won The Story Prize for 2008. Other honors include the PEN/Malamud Award and the Rea Award—both for excellence in the short story—the Los Angeles Times Book Prize, and the PEN/Faulkner Award. He has also been the editor of Best American Short Stories, The Vintage Book of Contemporary American Short Stories, and A Doctor’s Visit. The Short Stories of Anton Chekhov. His work appears regularly in The New Yorker, The Atlantic, Harper’s, and other magazines and literary journals.
A few of our core principles...

- Literature is not (and was not) written by dead people; it is a part of our daily, ongoing conversation about present concerns and a connection to a living past.

- Hearing writers and poets speak to the issues of their craft leads to a greater participation on the part of students and an enrichment of their reading experience.

- The college is meant to be a place for engagement, not only for students, but for faculty, staff, administration, and the community at large.