Smith College and The Willa Cather Foundation Present

The International Cather Seminar 2011

Willa Cather and the Nineteenth Century

June 20-25, 2011 | Smith College, Northampton, MA
Willa Cather and the Nineteenth Century

The 13th International Cather Seminar will focus its work on the legacy of nineteenth-century culture in Cather’s life and work, exploring through her writing the transition from a Victorian to a modernist America. We envision this as a continuation and perhaps a complication or expansion of the conversation about the nature of Cather’s modernism that emerged so fruitfully from the 2009 Chicago Seminar. Through its papers and plenary sessions, the Seminar will address intersections and connections between the full range of Cather’s writing and this time of cultural transformation, including her relation to nineteenth-century writers and cultural figures, to the histories of race, sexuality, and class identity, and to the intellectual ferment that has defined this era. For the complete Call for Papers, please visit www.WillaCather.org; proposals are due March 1, 2011. While we encourage paper proposals related to the seminar theme, as always proposals addressing all aspects of Cather’s work are welcome, as are ideas for sessions that depart from the customary format.

The Seminar will feature addresses by distinguished scholar Nina Baym and acclaimed novelist Sue Miller, through whom we will continue the Seminar tradition of hearing contemporary writers discuss their encounters with Cather’s fiction. It will include plenary addresses by eminent Cather scholars, among them Deborah Carlin, Richard Harris, Melissa Homestead, Andrew Jewell, Marilee Lindeman, Mark Madigan, John J. Murphy, Michael Peterman, Guy Reynolds, Ann Romines, John Swift, Robert Thacker, and Steven Trout. Also among the Seminar activities: an opening reception, featuring an exhibition of Cather materials from Smith’s Mortimer Rare Book Room and from the collections of David Porter and others; a trip to the Cather-Lewis gravesite in Jaffrey Center, New Hampshire; and a closing banquet, with a performance of Aaron Copland’s setting of Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson, by Sarah Bach, soprano, and Emily Murphy, piano.
**Nina Baym** is Swanlund Endowed Chair and Center for Advanced Study Professor Emerita of English, and Jubilee Professor of Liberal Arts and Sciences at The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is the General Editor of *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* and the author of *The Shape of Hawthorne’s Career, Woman’s Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and About Women in America; Novels, Readers, and Reviewers: Responses to Fiction in Antebellum America; American Women Writers and the Work of History, 1790-1860; American Women of Letters and the Nineteenth-Century Sciences;* and, most recently, *Women Writers of the American West, 1833-1927.* Some of her essays are collected in Feminism and American Literary History; she has also edited and introduced many reissues of work by earlier American women writers, from Judith Sargent Murray through Kate Chopin. In 2000 she received the MLA’s Hubbell medal for lifetime achievement in American literary studies.

Photo: The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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**Sue Miller** is the best-selling author of nine novels: *The Lake Shore Limited, The Senator’s Wife, Lost in the Forest, The World Below, While I Was Gone, The Distinguished Guest, For Love, Family Pictures,* and *The Good Mother.* She has also published a collection of stories, *Inventing the Abbots,* and the acclaimed memoir *The Story of My Father.* About her most recent novel, *The Lake Shore Limited,* The Los Angeles Times reviewer wrote, “An elegant precision informs Sue Miller’s fiction, a craft that serves as a container and counterpoint to the messy lives and relationships at the core of her work.” Sue Miller lives in Boston, Massachusetts, and is the chair of PEN, New England.

Photo: Fred R. Conrad/The New York Times
Setting

The Seminar will take place on the campus of Smith College, in Northampton, MA, a setting replete with connections to Cather’s life and work, and close to many sites of literary and cultural interest, including Emily Dickinson’s house in nearby Amherst (easily accessible via public transportation). Not to be missed: a visit to the Smith College Museum of Art, one of the premier college art museums in the country. Northampton is a lovely small city, with a surprising array of restaurants, cafes, and shops and a lively local cultural scene.

Housing and Meals

Comfortable, inexpensive housing ($130 for the five nights of the Seminar) is available at the King/Scales dormitories on the Smith campus. Most rooms are singles (couples should request one of the few doubles available); the rooms are furnished with single beds, nightstand, desk and chair, and an overhead light. The dorms are not air conditioned, but fans will be provided, as will linens and towels. We recommend that participants bring an alarm clock and a bedside light. Bathrooms are shared. (If your travel plans dictate an early arrival, we can arrange for you to stay in the dorm the night of Sunday, June 19).

Less collegiate accommodations, which must be arranged independently, are available within walking distance at the elegant Hotel Northampton (downtown; 800-547-3259) and the nearby Autumn Inn (413-584-7660). Both offer a discounted rate for Smith College related events, so you should mention that when you make your reservation; the Autumn Inn does not have a restaurant. (The current discounted rate, not including tax, for the Hotel Northampton is $119 per night on weekdays, $180 on Friday and Saturday; for the Autumn Inn it is $85 on weekdays, $149 on Friday and Saturday). There are also several motels within easy driving distance. (For more information about places to stay, visit www.noho.com or www.explorenorthampton.com).

A full meal plan is available for $155. This includes all meals, beginning with dinner on Monday June 20th and ending with breakfast on Saturday, June 25th, except for dinner on Thursday night (on your own; Northampton is full of interesting restaurants at a range of prices) and Friday night’s closing banquet (included in the registration fee).
**TRANSPORTATION**

The closest airport to Northampton is Bradley International, which serves the Hartford, CT and Springfield, MA area and is serviced by most major airlines. Transportation from the airport to Smith College can be arranged through Valley Transporter, (413-253-1350 or www.valleytransporter.com). Amtrak trains stop in Springfield and, less frequently, in Amherst. The Peter Pan Bus Line, which operates throughout New England, offers frequent service to Northampton.

Northampton is located at Exit 18 of Interstate 91. For directions, please visit the Smith College website: www.smith.edu.

**FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

Thanks to the generosity of the Cather Project at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, some funding is available to assist graduate students with the costs of the seminar, including travel expenses. Please contact one of the seminar directors by March 20, 2011 to apply for this funding.

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS**

If you have further questions about any aspect of the Seminar, please contact either of the Seminar Co-Directors.

Anne Kaufman  
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Milton MA  
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Richard Millington  
Smith College  
Northampton MA  
rmillling@smith.edu
Please enroll me in the seminar. I understand that all but $25 will be refunded if I must withdraw before May 30, 2011.

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Phone

E-mail

Registration Fee (Registration includes: opening and closing receptions; all sessions; use of Smith College athletic facilities, and internet access; bus trip to gravesite; and banquet)

☐ $225 (for registrations mailed by April 1, 2011)

☐ $275 (for registrations mailed after April 1, 2011)

☐ $150 (for students, emeriti, and spouses/partners)

☐ $75 single day registration (limited to two days; does not include trip to gravesite)

Meal Package

☐ $155 (includes 5 breakfasts, 4 lunches, and 3 dinners)

Housing

☐ $130 (five nights in King/Scales dormitory)

Total

Please make checks payable to Smith College; send check and registration form to Cather Seminar Registration, c/o Ms. Bobbihye Kozash, Department of English, Smith College, Northampton, MA 01063.

Cancellation Policy

You will receive a full refund minus a $25 service charge for cancellations received before May 30, 2011.

A registration form can also be found at www.WillaCather.org or http://cather.unl.edu