



DUKE ENGLISH

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# BLACKBURN REPORT

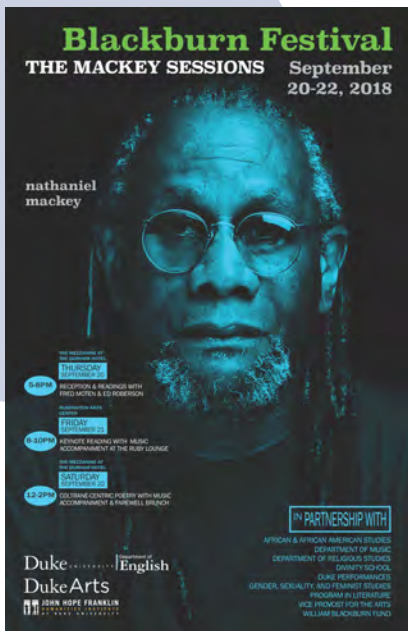
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2018 - 2020

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## Poetry Festival: The Mackey Sessions



The Blackburn Poetry Festival featured a 3-day multi-venue event series centered on the work of Nate Mackey (Reynolds Price Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing). Highlights from this event series included an opening night reading and reception with Fred Moten (NYU) and Ed Roberson (Artist-in-Residence, Northwestern University), a headline performance with musical accompaniment by Nate Mackey, workshops led by Professors Tsitsi Jaji (English) and J. Kameron Carter (Religious Studies, English, AAAS), and a farewell brunch poetry open mic.

## Fiction with Lucy Corin



Lucy Corin was the English Department's Blackburn Visiting Professor in the Fall of 2018. Corin, a former Duke English major, is currently a Professor at the University of California, Davis. She has published two short story collections and a novel, with a second novel forthcoming. During her visiting professorship, Corin taught two creative writing courses and worked with undergraduate students to build their fiction-writing skills. She also co-organized the Blackburn Fiction Series events. The 2018 Blackburn Fiction Series featured Maria Kuznetsova, novelist and Duke English alumna, who visited creative writing classes and participated in a panel about "Fiction Writing as a Way of Life."

The reading series also provided a unique opportunity for students and faculty to hear from three generations of Duke English writers as Corin, Kuznetsova, and English faculty member Melissa Malouf came together for a joint reading of their work.

## Poetry Series with John Peck

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Featuring acclaimed poet and Pound scholar, John Peck, the Blackburn Poetry Series in Spring of 2019 included a well-attended poetry reading and reception at the East Duke Parlors. Many of our creative writing students attended the event, as well as faculty from Duke and surrounding universities as well. While on campus, Mr. Peck visited poetry writing classes to workshop directly with students on their own work.

## Creative Prose with Verlyn Klinkenborg

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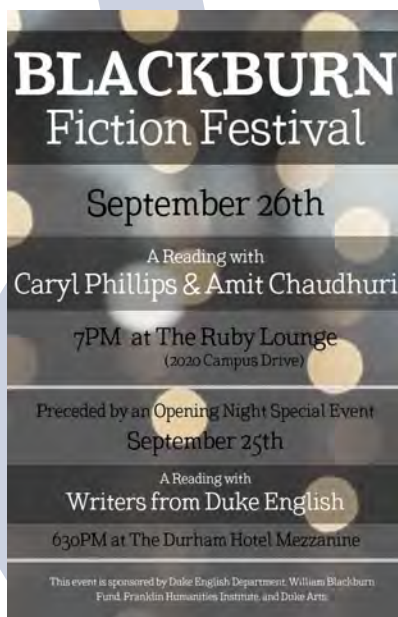
Verlyn Klinkenborg, former editorial writer for the New York Times, author, and Yale professor, was the English Department's Blackburn Visiting Lecturer in Spring 2019. During his semester in the department, Klinkenborg taught two writing courses which focused on creative prose. He also met regularly with undergraduate students to discuss their writing and help develop their skills. On April 17, he gave a reading, followed by a Q&A, which was attended by our students and faculty, as well as residents from the community. Klinkenborg also led a workshop for the faculty and graduate students who are participating in the department's "Writing and Academic Thinking" group.

## Fiction Festival



The Blackburn Fiction Festival in Fall 2019, a 2-day multi-venue event series centered on the work of novelists and essayists Caryl Phillips and Amit Chaudhuri (Professor of Contemporary Literature at the University of East Anglia). The opening night featured a fiction reading and reception with

members of the Duke English faculty: Michelle Dove, Faulkner Fox, JP Gritton, Melissa Malouf, and Mesha Maren. The following night featured a joint reading with Phillips and Chaudhuri followed by a conversation and Q & A with the crowd. While on campus, both authors participated in multiple events with our co-sponsor, Franklin Humanities Center, including panel discussions and a musical performance.



## Author-in-Residence: Caryl Phillips

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Caryl Phillips was the English Department's Blackburn Author-in-Residence in 2019-20. Phillips, an extraordinarily accomplished novelist, playwright, and essayist, has published over a dozen novels, multiple essay collections, and has won multiple prizes including being awarded the Commonwealth Writers Prize twice. For two weeks in Fall 2019 and two weeks in February 2020, Phillips met regularly with undergraduate students, both individually and in class. During the first part of his residency, Phillips was also the featured author for the Blackburn Fiction Festival, where among other events, he did a joint reading with Indian novelist and essayist, Amit Chaudhuri.

The second part of Phillips' residency included a workshop for advanced creative writing undergraduates; daily office hours attended by undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty; visits to several writing classes; and three public events: a literary critical talk, a joint reading, and a pedagogy roundtable. This was one of the most successful Blackburn residencies in recent years, in large part because of Phillips' engagement with a significant percentage of English students—both undergraduate and graduate—and faculty.



## Roundtable

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To begin the multi-event series with Caryl Phillips, Duke English hosted a Creative Writing/Literary Criticism Pedagogy Roundtable discussion which featured Phillips and English professors Sarah Beckwith, Tsitsi Jaji, Mesha Maren, Akhil Sharma, and Corina Stan. Two of these are creative writing faculty, two are literary critical faculty, and one teaches both creative writing and literary criticism. The purpose of the roundtable was to share teaching techniques among faculty, especially between those who teach creative writing and those who teach literary criticism.

This was an important departmental event and facilitated extremely productive conversations about literature and teaching among English department faculty.



## Lecture

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As part of the Blackburn residency, the English Department hosted a public lecture on February 24, 2020. Caryl Phillips gave a literary critical talk entitled “In the Ghetto: One Night in Venice.”

## Fiction Series

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As the culminating event of his residency, Caryl Phillips participated in the Blackburn Fiction Series event which featured a joint reading and conversation with Akhil Sharma, author and newest English Department faculty member. This event drew a wide-ranging audience from the local community and surrounding universities in addition to Duke students and faculty.





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