



SPR 2020

# TOWNSEND

CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES UC BERKELEY

AVENALI LECTURE **Jill Lepore** *The End of Knowledge* ART OF WRITING **Joyce Carol Oates** EXHIBITION **Ken Light** *American Stories*



**TOWNSEND CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES**

University of California, Berkeley  
220 Stephens Hall  
Berkeley, CA 94720-2340

(510) 643-9670  
townsendcenter@berkeley.edu

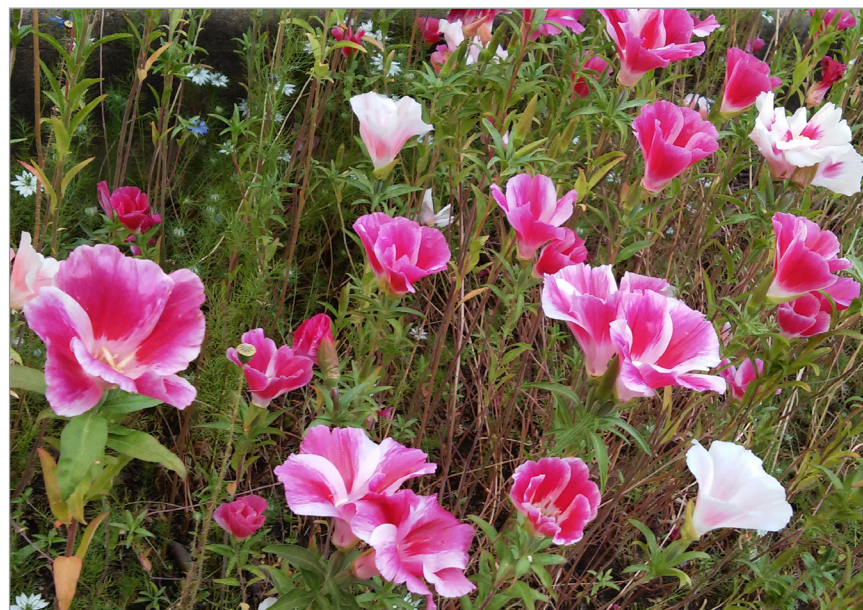
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IMAGE CREDITS FRONT COVER (clockwise from left): Jill Lepore, by Stephanie Mitchell/Harvard University; Joyce Carol Oates and Campanile through Magnolia Blossoms, by Eric Kotila; *Friendly Fire* (detail), acrylic on canvas, 2001, by Kara Maria; *Rope Swing* (detail), photograph, 2010, by Ken Light. BACK COVER: *Opening San Francisco Opera*, photograph, 2014, by Ken Light.

INTERIOR: Godetia, Heart Gymnasium Courtyard, by Eric Kotila, p. 2; *Erato, Muse of Love Poetry*, oil on canvas, 1800, by Charles Meynier, Cleveland Museum of Art, p. 3; Jill Lepore, see above, p. 4; *Friendly Fire*, see above, p. 5; Joyce Carol Oates, by Eric Kotila, p. 7.

# VOICES OF INNOVATION

**M**OST OF WHAT I KNOW, I learned from graduate students. Some were my own friends in graduate school, where we kept each other intellectually awake with informal reading groups. But the lion's share of what I know has come from Berkeley graduate students in the humanities. Their blend of cutting-edge thought, admirable self-possession, and good-humored patience never ceases to stimulate and amaze our arts and humanities faculty.

Berkeley's interdisciplinary graduate humanities community is one of the strengths of the campus. It draws alumni and postdocs to our midst, and it sets us apart from most other institutions.

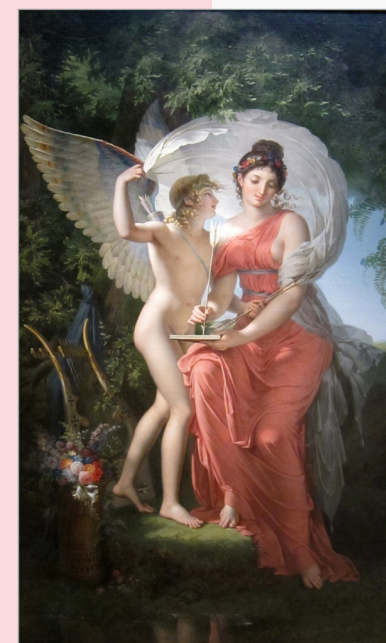
But problems abound. A combination of recent developments — technological change, political idiocy, shifting societal priorities — has led to a worsening of the academic job market for humanists over the past several years. Students who once secured academic employment easily now find a different reality.

In recent years, the campus has developed programs to train graduate students for careers that build on humanities training beyond the traditional tenure track. The Townsend Center has been pleased to contribute to these

efforts by offering career networking workshops, public speaking courses, and our Summer Writing Institute, which trains graduate students to become expert teachers of writing — a skill they can practice in many different educational settings.

Berkeley's professional responsibility is to support our humanities graduate students in the pursuit of their ambitions. Providing this support is also part of our larger moral responsibility to the culture. At a moment when advanced training (also known as "expertise") in any field is under fire across the political spectrum, the voice of the well-trained, articulate specialist is a rare commodity.

It is the Townsend Center's privilege to help cultivate and nurture those voices. They renew our culture.



**Erato, Muse of Love Poetry**  
Charles Meynier, oil on canvas, 1800  
Cleveland Museum of Art

**Timothy Hampton**

Aldo Scaglione and Marie M. Burns Distinguished Professor of Comparative Literature and French

AVENALI LECTURE  
JILL LEPORE

# The End of Knowledge

FROM FACTS TO DATA



AVENALI LECTURE

**The End of Knowledge  
From Facts to Data**

5 PM, Wednesday, February 19, 2020

Maude Fife Room, 315 Wheeler Hall

**Jill Lepore in Conversation  
with Cathryn Carson**

5 PM, Thursday, February 20, 2020

Geballe Room, 220 Stephens Hall

the early suffragist movement on the creation of the female superhero. In *These Truths* — a magisterial account of American history from the 16th to 21st centuries, named one of the top ten nonfiction books of the decade by *Time* magazine — she exposes the significance of slavery by tracing it to the very heart of American history and identity.

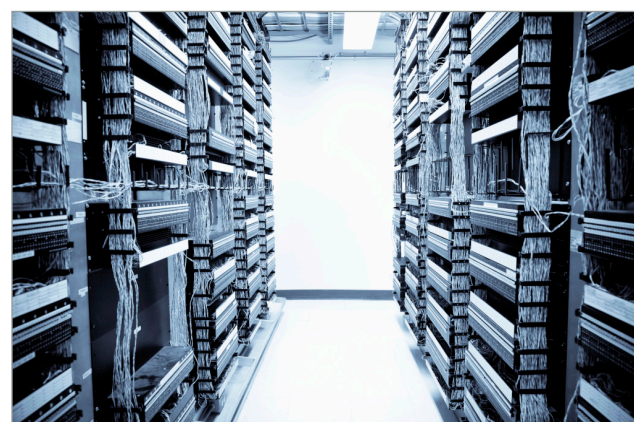
In her Avenali Lecture, “The End of Knowledge: From Facts to Data,” Lepore traces the shifting form and purpose of elemental units of knowledge. Situating the current crisis over the “death of the fact” within a long historical arc, she argues that facts were replaced by numbers which have since been replaced by data — with consequences not only for how we know what we know, but for how we form (or dismantle) political communities.

During her visit, Lepore also engages in conversation with **Cathryn Carson**, the Thomas M. Siebel Presidential Chair in the History of Science at UC Berkeley.

**H**ISTORIAN **JILL LEPORE** is the 2019-20 Avenali Chair in the Humanities. She is the David Woods Kemper '41 Professor of American History at Harvard University and a staff writer at the *New Yorker*.

Lepore won the prestigious Bancroft Prize for her first book, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity*, and “has been virtually unstoppable ever since,” writes Daniel Immerwahr in the *Nation*. “Her colleagues in Harvard’s history department have written an average of three scholarly books apiece; she has written eleven. She’s also cofounded a journal, coauthored a novel, and served on the staff of the *New Yorker*, for which she has written more than 100 pieces on topics ranging from Frankenstein to management theory.”

Lepore is an engaging storyteller with a particular interest in absences and forgotten debates in the historical record. In *The Secret History of Wonder Woman*, she unearths the influence of feminism and



THINKING ABOUT COMPOSITION

4 PM, Wednesday, March 11, 2020

Geballe Room, 220 Stephens Hall

**C**OMMON TO MOST creative undertakings, composition is where artistic or intellectual inspiration runs up against the everyday struggle of making. In the third of a series of conversations, the Townsend Center brings together a diverse group of master practitioners to reflect on the act of putting things together.

Visual artist **Michael Hall**, assistant professor of art at Cal State East Bay, had a solo exhibition at the Townsend Center in 2018. His paintings and participatory works engage with his family’s military background.

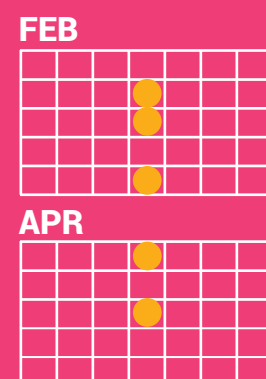
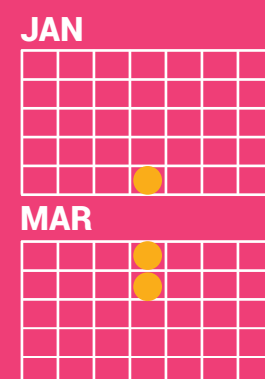
Scholar and dancer **SanSan Kwan** (Theater, Dance & Performance Studies) is the author of *Kinesthetic City: Dance and Movement in Chinese Urban Spaces* and a performer with choreographer Lenora Lee.

Musician and composer **Dean Wareham** has performed with the seminal bands Galaxie 500, Luna, and Dean & Britta. He is the author of the memoir *Black Postcards*.

# BERK ELEY BOOK CHATS

Celebrating Recent Work of UC Berkeley Faculty

12–1 pm, Wednesdays, 220 Stephens



## SPRING 2020

**JAN 29**

**Anne Walsh** ART PRACTICE  
**Hello Leonora, Soy Anne Walsh**

**FEB 5**

**Abigail De Kosnik** TDPS & **Keith Feldman** ETHNIC STUDIES  
**#identity: Hashtagging Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Nation**

**FEB 12**

**Leslie Kurke** CLASSICS & COMP LIT  
**Pindar, Song, and Space: Towards a Lyric Archaeology**

**FEB 26**

**Beth Piatote** ETHNIC STUDIES  
**The Beadworkers: Stories**

**MAR 4**

**Catherine Flynn** ENGLISH  
**James Joyce and the Matter of Paris**

**MAR 11**

**Ian Duncan** ENGLISH  
**Human Forms: The Novel in the Age of Evolution**

**APR 1**

**Ellen Oliensis** CLASSICS & COMP LIT  
**Loving Writing / Ovid's Amores**

**APR 15**

**Ken Light** JOURNALISM  
**Midnight la Frontera**

# Joyce Carol Oates

## in Conversation on the Art of Writing

ART OF WRITING



**J** OYCE CAROL OATES, author of over seventy works of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, is the Roger S. Berlind '52 Professor Emerita of the Humanities at Princeton University and has taught as a visiting professor of English at UC Berkeley. She is a recipient of the National Humanities Medal, the Carl Sandburg Award for Lifetime Achievement, and the Jerusalem Prize.

The author's oeuvre confronts questions of interiority and violence, American history, and female experience, and it employs a stunningly wide range of genres. The novel *Blonde*, a finalist for the National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize, tells a semi-fictional tale of Marilyn Monroe's iconic rise to fame. One of the author's most celebrated and haunting short stories, "Where are You Going, Where Have You Been?" confronts sexual awakening and murder in middle America.

Oates, who joined the Princeton faculty in 1978, is a celebrated teacher whose guidance has helped many undergraduates become published authors. "Writing and teaching," she notes, "have always been, for me, so richly rewarding that I don't think of them as work in the usual sense of the word."

Her teaching has recently extended into the online realm with a course on the art of the short story. Modeled on the author's writing workshops at Princeton, the course traverses questions of structure and form, drafting and revising, as well as how to mine personal experience for writerly inspiration.

Oates is in conversation with poet **John Shoptaw** (English, UC Berkeley).

### JOYCE CAROL OATES

#### in Conversation on the Art of Writing

Wednesday, March 18, 2020 | 5 pm  
Morrison Room, 101 Doe Library

The Art of Writing lecture features a major author reflecting on the craft of writing. Art of Writing receives support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and private donors.



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## SPRING 2020 DEADLINES

February 7, 2020

**Conference & Lecture Grants**  
**Public Speaking for Graduate Students**

March 20, 2020

**Daniel E Koshland Jr Art of Teaching**  
**Writing Fellowships**

April 24, 2020

**Working Groups**

May 1, 2020

**Conference & Lecture Grants**

[townsendcenter.berkeley.edu/deadlines](http://townsendcenter.berkeley.edu/deadlines)