The purpose of this conference is to highlight and enhance the contributions that humanities education makes to personal well being, responsible citizenship, and social justice.

Why the Humanities:
Answers from the Cognitive and Neurosciences

July 9-12, 2015
Kent State Hotel and Conference Center
Recent studies in the cognitive and neurosciences indicate how humanities education can develop certain key cognitive and emotional capabilities that are essential not only for personal well being but also for responsible citizenship and social justice.

This conference will demonstrate how engagement with the humanities can develop capabilities such as the following:

- **Empathy**, the ability to feel what others are feeling
- **Mind Reading**, the ability to understand the thoughts and intentions of others
- **Metacognition**, the ability to monitor and regulate one's own perceptions and judgments of others
- **Bias Correction**, the ability to compensate for distortions in one's judgments of others
- **Self-knowledge**, the ability to recognize troublesome traits or motives in oneself
- **Self-other overlap recognition**, the ability to apprehend similarities between oneself and others who appear very different from oneself
- **Moral Judgment**, the ability to form accurate and fair assessments of oneself and of others
Conference Schedule

Thursday, July 9, 2015

4:30-6:00  Registration

5:30-6:00  Welcome and Opening Remarks

6:00-7:00  Plenary Session

“Neither Immersion nor Distraction: How We Engage the Arts”
Gabrielle Starr, Professor of English and Sheryl Kushner Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, New York University

7:00-9:00  Reception

Friday, July 10, 2015

7:30-9:00  Breakfast Buffet and Registration

9:00-10:15  Concurrent Sessions

A. Teacher Workshop: “Encouraging Empathy through Immersion Reading”
Suzanne Keen, Professor of English and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Washington and Lee University

B. Developing Key Cognitive Capabilities through Literary Study
1. “Great Expectations and the Prospective Brain,” Maria K. Bachman

C. Promoting Peace and Justice in History and Economics Courses
1. “Historical Perspective and Empathy in the Undergraduate History Classroom,” Elizabeth Smith-Pryor
3. “A Role for the Humanities in Economics Courses and Discourses,” Eric Touya

10:15-10:30  Break

10:30-11:30  Plenary Session

“Indirect Communication: Artistic Literature as a Social Influence that Enables People to Be Themselves”
Keith Oatley, Professor of Psychology and Human Development, University of Toronto

11:30-12:00  Break
## Conference Schedule

### Friday, July 10, 2015 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session/Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:00-1:00</td>
<td><strong>Plenary Session</strong>&lt;br&gt;“Life and Reading: Wayfinding Cognition, Cultural Evolution, and Literary Processing”&lt;br&gt;Nancy Easterlin, Research Professor of English, University of New Orleans</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00-2:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:15-3:30</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30-4:30</td>
<td><strong>Plenary Session</strong>&lt;br&gt;“Literature and Theory of Mind: Reading Habits and Moral Judgments”&lt;br&gt;David Comer Kidd, PhD Candidate, The New School</td>
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<td>4:30-5:00</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00-6:00</td>
<td><strong>Plenary Session</strong>&lt;br&gt;“Empathy and Immersion Reading”&lt;br&gt;Suzanne Keen, Professor of English and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Washington and Lee University</td>
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<td>6:00-7:30</td>
<td>Reception</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:45-8:00</td>
<td>Guided Tour of May 4 Memorial and Visitors Center</td>
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## Conference Schedule

### Saturday, July 11, 2015

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<td>7:30-9:00</td>
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<td>9:00-10:15</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A. Teacher Workshop: “Experience, Narration, Analysis: Gwendolyn Brooks's ‘The rites for Cousin Vit’”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nancy Easterlin, Research Professor of English, University of New Orleans</td>
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<td>B. Promoting Empathy and Solidarity through Writing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1. “Prompting Student Empathy: Content, Relations, and Writing Pedagogy,” Eric Leake</td>
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<td>2. “Writing and Culture: A Sociolinguistic Approach to Embracing the 'We',' Mica Hall</td>
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<td>C. Transforming Ableist Cognition through Disability Studies in Literature</td>
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<td>1. “A Cognitive Approach to Blindness and Life-Writing,” René Harrison</td>
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<td>10:30-11:30</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Theory of Mind In the Classroom”</td>
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<td>Lisa Zunshine, Bush-Holbrook Professor of English, University of Kentucky</td>
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<td>“Approaching Literature Scientifically: Is It Still Literary?”</td>
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<td>David Miall, Professor Emeritus of English and Film Studies, University of Alberta</td>
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<td>2:00-3:15</td>
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<td>A. Teacher Workshop: “Reading to Live Many Lives and to Understand Other Minds,”</td>
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<td>Keith Oatley, Professor of Psychology and Human Development, University of Toronto</td>
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<td>B. Promoting Solidarity through the Humanities</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. “Addressing the Humanistic Needs of Teacher Candidates: Helping the Teacher Help the Student,” Rebecca Chism</td>
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<td>2. “Solidarity: A Key Word in Allende’s Social Experiment,” Amado J. Lascar</td>
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<td>C. Moral Development through the Humanities</td>
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Conference Schedule

Saturday, July 11, 2015 (continued)

3:15-3:30 Break

3:30-4:30 Plenary Session
“Social Perspective-Taking”
Hunter Gehlbach, Associate Professor of Education, Harvard University

4:30-5:00 Break

5:00-6:00 Plenary Session
“Interdisciplinary Research and the Value of Literary Study: Neuroscience and the Humanities”
Natalie Phillips, Assistant Professor of English, Purdue University

6:00-7:00 Reception

7:00 Banquet
“Advancing the Humanities with the Cognitive and Neurosciences”
Mark Bracher, Professor of English, Kent State University

Sunday, July 12, 2015

7:30-9:00 Breakfast Buffet

9:00-10:15 Concurrent Sessions

David Miall, Professor Emeritus of English and Film Studies, University of Alberta

B. Developing the Cognitive Bases for Social Justice in Literature Classes
2. “Understanding the Native American Experience: Correcting Faulty Person-Schemas,” Dustin Horner

C. Fostering Critical Thinking through the Humanities
1. “Empathy’s Contribution to Critical Thinking,” Kevin Cutright
Conference Schedule

Sunday, July 12, 2015 (continued)

10:15-10:30  Break
10:30-11:30  Plenary Session
             “Science of Storytelling”
             Frederick Luis Aldama, Arts and Humanities Distinguished Professor of English and
             University Distinguished Scholar, The Ohio State University
11:30-12:00  Moving Forward: Open Discussion
12:00-1:00   Box Lunch
Featured Speakers

Frederick Luis Aldama  
*Arts & Humanities Distinguished Professor at Ohio State University*

He is the author of many books, including *Why the Humanities Matter*, that explore literature and culture from a cognitive perspective.

Nancy Easterlin  
*Research Professor of English at New Orleans University*

She is the author of several books, including *A Biocultural Approach to Literary Theory and Interpretation*, employing cognitive and neuroscience in the analysis of literature.

Hunter Gehlbach  
*Associate Professor of Education at Harvard University*

The author of numerous articles, he is an expert on the crucial social-cognition capability of perspective taking, on pedagogical strategies for developing it, and on designing questionnaires to measure this and other capabilities of social cognition.

Suzanne Keen  
*Professor of English and Dean at Washington and Lee University*

She has conducted empirical research on how reading novels can activate and enhance empathy, sympathy, and other emotions and is the author of *Empathy and the Novel*, several other books, and numerous articles.
David Comer Kidd
*PhD Candidate in Psychology at The New School for Social Research*

His dissertation, the results of which were published last fall in a widely read and discussed article in *Science*, found that reading literary texts enhances people's ability to infer other people's mental states.

David Miall
*Professor of English at the University of Alberta*

He has conducted numerous empirical studies of literary reception and is the author of *Literary Reading: Empirical and Theoretical Studies*, in which he explains how reading literature can change readers' capabilities and habits of cognition and feeling.

Keith Oatley
*Novelist and Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the University of Toronto*

Among his many publications is *Such Stuff as Dreams: The Psychology of Fiction*, in which he offers empirically based explanations of how reading literature can increase empathy and other elements of emotional intelligence.

Natalie Phillips
*Assistant Professor of English at Michigan State University*

She is co-founder of the Digital Humanities and Literary Cognition Lab, which uses neuroscientific tools, such as fMRI and eye tracking, to explore the cognitive dynamics of literary reading.
Featured Speakers

G. Gabrielle Starr  
*Professor of English and Dean at New York University*

She pursues research in neuroaesthetics, a relatively new field of inquiry that uses the tools of cognitive neuroscience to explore the contours of aesthetic experience. Her most recent book is *Feeling Beauty: The Neuroscience of Aesthetic Experience*.

Lisa Zunshine  
*Bush-Holbrook Professor of English at the University of Kentucky*

She is the author of many articles and books, including *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel*, which explains how specific literary passages induce and possibly train readers to infer others’ mental states.
This conference is made possible, in part, by the Ohio Humanities, a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this conference do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Generous support is also being provided by Kent State University’s College of Arts & Sciences, College of Education, Health, and Human Services, the departments of English, History, Modern and Classical Language Studies, Philosophy, Psychology, and Sociology, and the Institute for Applied Linguistics.