

The Bill Tuttle Distinguished Lecture in American Studies for 2016 is scheduled for Thursday, October 13, at 3:30 in Woodruff Auditorium.

This year's Tuttle Lecturer is Kevin Young, who is the Charles Howard Candler Professor of Creative Writing and English and the Curator of Literary Collections and the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library at Emory University. While an undergraduate at Harvard University, Kevin studied with the Nobel-Prize winning poet Seamus Heaney, and while there he became a member of the Dark Room Collective, a community of African American writers. Later, as a Wallace Stegner Fellow at Stanford University, he studied with Denise Levertov. Kevin, who was awarded the Master of Fine Arts from Brown University, has been deeply influenced by the poets Langston Hughes, John Berryman, and Emily Dickinson and by the artist Jean-Michel Basquiat.

Kevin is the author of eleven books of poetry and prose, including most recently Blue Laws: Selected and Uncollected Poems 1995-2015 (Knopf, 2016). His Book of Hours (Knopf, 2014) is the winner of the Lenore Marshall Prize for Poetry from the Academy of American Poets. Among Kevin's other books are Ardency: A Chronicle of the Amistad Rebels (Knopf, 2011), For the Confederate Dead (Knopf, 2008), Dear Darkness (Knopf, 2008), Black Maria (Knopf, 2005), and To Repel Ghosts (Zoland Books, 2001). His collection Jelly Roll: a blues (Knopf, 2003) was a finalist for the National Book Award. And his poetry has appeared in such journals as The New Yorker and The Paris Review. "Perhaps the most noticeable characteristic of [Kevin] Young's work..." the critic Amy Guth has written, "is the musical quality so fundamentally ingrained and supplied to each piece."

Kevin has also excelled in nonfiction writing. His book The Grey Album: On the Blackness of Blackness (Graywolf, 2012) won the Graywolf Press Nonfiction Prize; it was also named a New York Times Notable Book for 2012 and was a finalist for the 2013 National Book Critics Circle Award for criticism. In addition, he is the editor of several collections, including The Collected Poems of Lucille Clifton (BOA Editions, 2012), The Hungry Ear: Poems of Food and Drink (Bloomsbury, 2012), Jazz Poems (Knopf, 2006), Blues Poems (Everyman's Library Pocket Poets, 2003), and Giant Steps: The New Generation of African American Writers (HarperCollins, 2000).

Kevin Young has received numerous awards and fellowships, including a Guggenheim Fellowship and an NEA Literature Fellowship in Poetry, and, in 2016, he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.