

The University at Buffalo Humanities Institute (HI) presents the first annual

Buffalo Humanities Festival

Friday September 26 and Saturday September 27, 2014

Festival theme: “Migration Nation: Moving Stories”

How did we get here? The Buffalo Humanities Festival will use migration stories to help answer that deceptively simple question. In literature, history, art, and music, people have explored what it means to uproot oneself and cross borders. Today, conversations about migration and immigration too frequently reach an ideological impasse. The festival – a day and a half of talks, discussions, and performances – will go beyond the buzzwords to investigate the human dimension of migration.

UB is collaborating with Western New York universities and cultural institutions to make the Festival happen. Partners include Buffalo State College, Canisius College, Niagara University, SUNY-Fredonia, the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, and the Burchfield Penney Art Center.

The Festival will begin with a talk and book signing by the celebrated satirist Gary Shteyngart on the evening of Friday the 26th in the Albright-Knox auditorium. The author of three novels including *Absurdistan* and the recent memoir *Little Failure*, Shteyngart explores the contemporary immigrant experience using razor-sharp dark humor.

On Saturday the 27th, the Festival continues with a full day of events at the Burchfield Penney and Buffalo State’s Rockwell Hall. Saturday will be highlighted by a series of talks, conversations, and roundtables, led by faculty from local universities and other experts. The talks will be designed from the ground up with the public in mind and will feature multimedia presentations, slides, and discussions. Each time slot will have several presentations going at once, so attendees can choose the option that most appeals to them.

In addition to the talks, the venues will feature exhibitions of books, emerging technologies in the digital humanities, and artwork. Between presentations and outside the venue, attendees will be able to enjoy the festival trappings Buffalonians love, including food trucks and live music.

The humanities festival model began with the extraordinarily popular Chicago Humanities Festival, which has grown from a modest affair in 1990 into an annual ten-day extravaganza of ideas, learning, and fun. This model has been successfully imitated by mid-sized cities such as St. Louis, Louisville, and Iowa City. The time has come for Buffalo to launch its own humanities festival.

For more information, please contact Erik R. Seeman, Director of UB’s Humanities Institute: <seeman@buffalo.edu>