University Lecture Series (ULS)
Winter 2027 – February 4 to March 11, 2027

1. **Date: Thursday, February 4, 2027**
   Speaker: Kim Echlin

Brief Biography: Kim Echlin has a PhD in literature and teaches Creative Writing at the School for Continuing Studies. She is a novelist and translator, editor. She has written five novels. The Disappeared is translated into 20 languages and won the Barnes and Noble New Writing Award. Speak, Silence, about the International Criminal Court, won the City of Toronto Book award. Her new novel is about the first poet in Mesopotamia to sign her own name to her poetry and to stand up against empire.

Her nonfiction focuses on social justice, women's voices and freedom of expression. She has won the CBC Nonfiction Award and the Dalton Camp Award. Her new collection of essays, Tell Others, reflects on literature and witness.

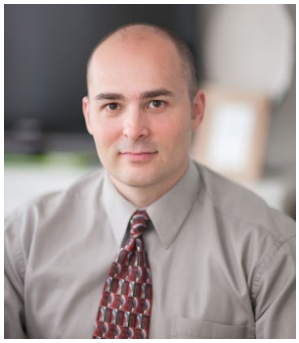
Kim is a board member of PEN International. All author proceeds from Tell Others are donated to PEN.

Lecture Title: Tell Others: Storytelling for a World in Turmoil

Lecture Description: Novelist Kim Echlin examines why we read and how we turn to literature to witness to the world. Drawing from her new collection of essays, Tell Others, she will explore in this lecture how reading literature resists silencing and repression with truth and imagination.

Echlin blends her lived experiences of work and research in many parts of the world—teaching in China, travelling in Cambodia, researching war crimes at The Hague, examining her own family's secrets—with the reading she loves. Whether we read in books clubs or alone or in classes, she will talk about how our reading is a way to share our engagement in the world and to make meaning from the stories that buried bones tell. She will tell stories about the writers she loves to think about how we make a difference for good in the world by reading, sharing our ideas, and allowing our imaginations to touch the imaginations of others.

2. **Date: Thursday, February 11, 2027**
   Speaker: Claudiu Popa



Brief Biography: Claudiu Popa is a cybersecurity, privacy, cyberfraud and AI-security specialist whose work focuses on a deceptively simple question: how do we know when information, technology and the people behind them deserve our trust? He is the founder of the Informatica Group of cybersecurity companies, including Datarisk Canada, and co-founder of the KnowledgeFlow Cybersafety Foundation, where his work supports practical digital-literacy and cybersafety education for communities across Canada.

His current research and explores AI-enabled fraud, synthetic identity, deepfakes, misinformation, influence operations and the increasingly difficult problem of distinguishing authentic evidence from convincing fabrication. His public talks are designed for non-technical audiences and use real examples to turn cyber risk into practical decisions people can make for themselves.

Lecture Title: Cybersecurity and AI in 2027: What Can We Trust?

Lecture Description: For most of human history, deception required effort. A convincing forgery took skill. An impersonator needed access. Propaganda needed printing presses, broadcasters or institutions capable of carrying the message. Technology changed everything. The telephone made a distant stranger sound close. Photography and video gave persuasive power to images. The Internet allowed rumours, scams and fabricated identities to travel around the world instantly. Now Artificial Intelligence can manufacture convincing voices, faces, documents, conversations and entire identities at extraordinary speed and scale. What happens when seeing is no longer believing, while simply distrusting everything becomes equally dangerous?

Learn practical ways to examine the source, context, evidence and motivation behind a claim; recognize common indicators of manipulation and impersonation; distinguish uncertainty from deception; verify important information through independent channels; and know when something suspicious should be challenged, reported or investigated further.

3. **Date: Thursday, February 18, 2027**
   Speaker: Jonathan Ullyot

Brief Biography: Jonathan Ullyot is a writer, scholar, and teacher of literature and philosophy. He earned his doctorate in Comparative Literature from the University of Chicago in 2010 and has since taught hundreds of courses in ancient and modern literature. He teaches the Shakespeare Online Deep Dive series for the Meighen Forum at the Stratford Festival, a program he developed, and his YouTube channel, **Jonathan Ullyot: The Literature Lab**, features hundreds of lectures and teaching videos on literature. His book, *The Medieval Presence in Modernism: The Quest to Fail*, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2016, followed by *Ezra Pound's Classical Sources*, published by Bloomsbury Academic in 2022. He is currently writing a book about Ed Dorn's *Gunslinger*.

Lecture Title: Troy, Rewritten: From Homer to Christopher Nolan

Lecture Description: Why does a story about the Trojan War, first told almost three thousand years ago, continue to fascinate us? This talk explores the Iliad and Odyssey, the world of Troy, and the long tradition of revising Homer—from Greek tragedy and Virgil to Shakespeare, modern translations, feminist retellings, and Christopher Nolan's new film The Odyssey. Along the way, we will consider how stories change as they move from one time and culture to another, and why we keep returning to Troy to tell them again.

4. **Date: Thursday, February 25, 2027**
   Speaker: Dr. Daniel J. Drucker

Brief Biography: Few Canadian scientists have had a greater impact on global health in recent decades than Dr. Daniel J. Drucker. Dr. Drucker is a physician-scientist whose pioneering research transformed the treatment of diabetes and obesity and has improved the lives of millions of people worldwide. His work led to the discovery and characterization of the gut hormone GLP-1, laying the scientific foundation for a new generation of medicines, including widely used therapies such as Ozempic. In addition to their impact on diabetes and obesity, GLP-1-based therapies are opening new avenues of research in areas such as cardiovascular disease, neurodegenerative disorders, and other chronic health conditions. Dr. Drucker's contributions have earned numerous international honours, including the Canada Gairdner International Award, the Wolf Prize in Medicine, induction into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame, recognition on Time

magazine's list of the 100 Most Influential People in 2024, and the 2025 Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences for the discovery and characterization of GLP-1 and its potential in treating diabetes and obesity. He is a Senior Investigator at the Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Research Institute, Sinai Health, and University Professor of Medicine at the University of Toronto.

Lecture Title: The Expanding Landscape of GLP-1 Medicines

Lecture Description: Elucidation of the wide-ranging effects of GLP-1, a naturally occurring gut hormone, has given rise to a series of powerful GLP-1 medicines, initially developed for people with type 2 diabetes and later for weight loss in people with overweight or obesity. In this lecture Dr. Drucker will review the evidence and mechanisms linking GLP-1-based medicines to improved heart and metabolic health — including reduced heart attacks, strokes, kidney disease, and liver disease — in people with type 2 diabetes and obesity. He will also highlight the future of GLP-1-based medicine, including new disease indications and greatly enhanced efficacy for treating type 2 diabetes. Next-generation GLP-1 medicines promise better glucose control, greater weight loss, reduced inflammation, and lower mortality — delivering major health benefits for people living with type 2 diabetes, obesity, and related cardiometabolic disorders.

5. **Date: Thursday, March 4, 2027**
   Speaker: TBA

6. **Date: Thursday, March 11, 2027**
   Alan Toff Art Lecture
   Speaker: Susan Dobson

Brief Biography: Susan Dobson is a photo-based artist who comes from a family of land developers. She spent many formative years living in Europe, visiting cities where post-war rebuilding and restoration were still underway. These experiences shaped her interest in the built environment, a subject that recurs throughout her photographs and public installations.

Dobson’s work has been exhibited internationally and is held in institutional collections, including the National Gallery of Canada. In 2019, she created a mural of construction debris that covered two stories of the south face of the University of Toronto’s Daniels Building for the CONTACT Photography Festival. She is a Professor in the School of Fine Art and Music at the University of Guelph and is represented by Michael Gibson Gallery.

Lecture Title: The Shape of the City: What Buildings Can Tell Us

Lecture Description: When you pass a construction site, have you ever wondered what was there before? Imagined how the new building might fit into the neighbourhood, or how it might affect traffic, walkability, and the character of the area? Perhaps even imagined living there?
In this lecture, Susan Dobson explores, through a discussion of her work, what the built environment can tell us about how we live and the choices we make, as well as the social, political, and environmental implications of urban planning. Dobson considers new construction, single-family homes, condominiums, commercial spaces, and interiors. She invites us to look more closely at how the built environment reflects our values and priorities, and to consider how, together, we might help shape the cities we call home.