Poet Sheryl St. Germain and novelist James Wilcox will visit Southeastern as the English Department Featured Writers for Fall 2010, on October 13-14 and October 28, respectively. Wilcox and St. Germain will lead students in discussion of the Department’s Common Read texts, St. Germain’s — “Navigating Disaster,” and poems from Let It Be a Dark Roux, and Wilcox’s Modern Baptists.

Sheryl St. Germain, Wednesday, October 13, 7 p.m., Reading, Q & A, Student Union Theater; Thursday, October 14, 9:30 a.m., Q & A for students studying St. Germain in class, D Vickers 210; 2 p.m., Discussion, primarily for English and LAS majors, Writing Center (D Vickers 383).

An alumnus of SLU and the University of Texas, Sheryl St. Germain directs the creative writing program at Chatham University. Her books of poetry include Going Home, The Mask of Medusa, Making Bread at Midnight, How Heavy the Breath of God, The Journals of Scheherazade, and, most recently, Let It Be a Dark Roux. She has also published a book of translations of the Cajun poet Jean Arceneaux, Je Suis Cadien, and a book of lyric essays, Swamp Songs: The Making of an Unruly Woman. Her poetry has received several awards, including two NEA Fellowships, an NEH Fellowship, the Dobie-Paisano Fellowship, the Ki Davis Award from the Aspen Writers Foundation, and the William Faulkner Award for the personal essay.

About Let It Be a Dark Roux — — Sheryl St. Germain’s poetry is filled with sensual delight, with the enjoyment of good food, good company, and good music. While she travels the world, St. Germain returns again and again to her native New Orleans, to the bonds of family and the forces of nature that break through and spill over human walls and barriers. In Let it Be a Dark Roux, St. Germain teaches us how to embrace all the currents of life—its pleasures, its sorrows, its inevitable challenge to step out into the street and take up the dance once more. — Editorial Review From Mary Swander
James Wilcox, Thursday, October 28, 9:30 a.m., Q & A for students studying Wilcox in class, D. Vickers 210; 2 p.m., Discussion, primarily for English and LAS majors, Writing Center (D. Vickers 383); 7 p.m., Reading, Q & A, Student Union Theater (open to public)

Born in Hammond, James Wilcox attended Yale University, where he studied creative writing with Robert Penn Warren. After working at Random House and Doubleday in New York, he went on to write nine novels, which include Modern Baptists and Hunk City. His short stories have appeared in The New Yorker and Avenue. In 1986, he was the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and in 2007 was awarded an ATLAS grant. Currently director of creative writing at Louisiana State University, Wilcox is MacCurdy Distinguished Professor of English. About Modern Baptists – James Wilcox’s Modern Baptists is a comedic novel set in Tula Springs, Louisiana, rife with dysfunctional characters. Bobby Pickens, assistant manager of Sonny Boy Bargain Store, and his brother F.X., recently released from Angola Prison, become entangled in romances with Burma, Toinette, and Donna Lee. Mistaken identities, assault and battery, degeneracy charges, and a nervous breakdown culminate on Christmas Eve in a cabin on a poisoned swamp.