



CLASSES

Star Coulbrooke

Poetry as Passion Put to Use

“I love thee with the passion put to use/ In my old griefs, and with my childhood’s faith,” so says Elizabeth Barrett Browning, in counting the ways she loved. Poetry can give voice to emotions and memories when our minds seem devoid of words. This workshop will put passion to use through prompts that furnish a vocabulary for drawing from prior experiences, to direct old sensations into new, surprising responses.

Jennifer Sinor

The View From the I-Now Platform: The Importance of Musing in Memoir

Memoir shares many similarities with both fiction and other subgenres of creative nonfiction in terms of craft technique. Memoirists create characters, rely on scene and summary to control pacing, and turn detail into metaphor. But memoir distinguishes itself as a genre primarily by its reliance on the musing or reflective voice. In this interactive conversation, we will consider the role musing plays in memoir and how writers use the reflective voice as a way to drive toward the deeper subject of a piece.

Shanan Ballam

Elegant Solutions: Writing About Difficult Subject Matter

In mathematics, “elegant solution” refers to a solution that solves the problem in the simplest and most effective manner. As artists, we are forced to confront problems ranging from minor to massive every time we face the page. One common problem is honestly facing difficult subject matter, such as loss of a loved one. How do we write about things that hurt us? In this workshop I will share the problems I have encountered when writing about difficult subject matter and the elegant solutions I have found to solve those problems.

Subtle Beauty: Using Poetic Devices in Prose

In this workshop we will learn about and practice common poetic sound devices such as anaphora, alliteration, and consonance. We will also discuss connotation—the images and feelings surrounding words—and generate metaphors and similes. We’ll examine the ways all of these devices can expand and complicate our prose, deepening our connection with our readers.

Brock Dethier

Using Great Poems as Springboards to Our Own

One great poem often inspires another. We will use poems from William Carlos Williams, Robert Hayden, and Wisława Szymborska to explore a variety of ways that reading a poem can move us to create our own. Come prepared to write!

The Importance of Writing Badly

The fear of writing badly paralyzes many writers or keeps them glued to safe, familiar ground. My title—borrowed from my friend Bruce Ballenger—is somewhat facetious. We won’t be writing bad love poetry or stories that start “It was a dark and stormy night.” We will be exploring ways to quiet the inner critic (just for now), produce more writing, and reduce writing anxiety. Come prepared to write!

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Celebrating Family by Turning Experience Into Art

Be ready to write about your own family, as we explore techniques to get you started and to focus on making art out of family stories and characters. I'll read a poem or two from my chapbook, *Ancestor Worship*, to spark ideas. Consider making a list of family members or events before you come. We won't focus specifically on family secrets, but they, too, sometimes make good reading.

Russ Beck

Naked-Lady Intros

Russ has reviewed enough publications and judged enough contests to know that most essays or short stories are put down and never picked up again after the first paragraph. It's not nice. It's not fair. But, it's very true. In *Naked-Lady Intros* author and teacher Russ Beck discusses how to write those very important first few sentences.

Russ Winn

Poetry and Place

What does the idea of home mean to you? How do we best hold on to the memories of the places we've been? In this class we will explore place not only as a specific time and location, but also as a means of identity through beauty. Your instructor will lead you through several readings, a discussion, and some writing exercises. Bring a notebook and a pen!

Siân Griffiths

Bring Your Characters to Life!

No one sets out to write flat characters, but how exactly do we turn a few paragraphs of type into people who live in our readers' imaginations? In this session, we will explore techniques that bring life to your characters, such as voice, action, and external description. We'll re-examine what we mean by "consistency" and "stereotype," hopefully complicating these ideas so that we can create round, believable characters to populate our work.

Laying Out the Welcome Mat: Your Fiction's First Page

The first few paragraphs of a novel or story carry a tremendous burden. They must establish voice, setting, character, and often conflict. It's been said that they create the rules by which the fiction will work, establishing a contract with the reader. Looking at examples, we will examine how the first page does this vital work, collecting strategies to apply to our own writing.

Johnny Worthen

Writing to theme

Raise your work to literary levels by consciously incorporating themes. Learn how to identify what you're trying to say and actively nurture the subtler but greater questions you're addressing. Enhance your writing with symbols as signposts, layers of grays and depths of meaning. Give the literary critics something to enjoy.

We'll also consider the therapeutic qualities of writing and ask the author to consciously incorporate ideas of theme into their work, exploring the human condition through parallel plots, symbols, conflict, and alternative points of view to address lingering questions and personal issues.

From the lighthouse of intent, to hard questions, symbols, subplots and echoes, the class will encourage the writer to plumb the depths of meaning, bleed a little and create multiple strands of meaning in their work.

The Faceted Book

A presentation about those elements of narrative fiction that lend depth, value and resonance to writing. Every story has some, the best have many. We'll learn how to identify which elements to include in your story. Subplots

and multiple stories, arcs, settings, themes, novelties, information and more. A little foresight, a touch of research and a clear goal can nurture the muse to bring out the strength of the form.

Writers will be challenged to expand their fiction into elements beyond mere story and character. Emphasis will be placed on theme as well as history, education and entertainment qualities. Examples and techniques will be offered to help shape niches and expand any story into new areas of interest.

Emily Wheeler

To Agent or Not to Agent

With the many paths to publishing available today, authors may wonder what agents do and if they need one. This panel of successful agented and non-agented authors will discuss when an agent can help you with your publishing goals and when you might want to set out on your own.

Write from the Source: Research for your Writing

So, you want to write about Regency England, forensics, or space travel in the near future, but you're not a PhD in the field. Where do you get started? Do you research before or after you start your project? And when do you decide you've done enough research? Join us to discuss research techniques and resources for writers.

Chadd VanZanten

The One Thing

As writers, we often compare our work to visual arts like oil painting and water color. We claim our writing is art, but instead of using paint and palette, we work in words and chapters. But the medium of the writer is not words. It's something else entirely, and it's the one thing that practically every single piece of successful writing contains. Find out what it is in a lively, discussion-based seminar with essayist and editor Chadd VanZanten.

The Story is Already There

Because of the constraints of truth and accuracy, essay writing and creative non-fiction are often thought of as mysterious and even alchemistic. How do we create compelling narrative arcs and vivid characters when we're limited to the events and people that life presents us? In this workshop-seminar with essayist and editor Chadd VanZanten, you'll learn that creative non-fiction is a matter of reduction, not creation. Stories are already everywhere—creative non-fiction is the way we bring them to light.

Cami Checkettes

Indie Publishing—are you ready to take the leap?

Want to compare paychecks?

Self-publishing gives authors freedom, control, and financial compensation, but is it right for you? Cami Checkettes will share her journey over the past fifteen years from traditionally published to self-published—the trials, the risks, and the rewards. She'd also love to answer any questions you have about self-publishing, marketing, editors, cover artists, how she deals with curly hair, etc.

Eric Bishop

Outlining a Blockbuster Novel

Blockbuster novels contain certain elements; there's a science to it. Join Eric Bishop as he relates the lessons learned while outlining his next novel with Writers House founder, Al Zuckerman.

Felicia Rose

Heresy: Questioning Assumptions about the Craft of Literary Nonfiction

How did the notion of ‘show, don’t tell’ evolve? Should we heed it in literary nonfiction?

Is it good practice to limit expression of abstract thought? How can we engage with contradiction? What is the function of the double perspective? How can we evaluate the quality of a writer’s reflections? This workshop will address these and related questions through a discussion of excerpts from various works of literary nonfiction.

Jeremy Gohier

Stories Made of Glass: Writing Literature in any Genre

No matter what you write or how you write it, every word you put to paper (or screen) is part of a larger conversation. Some stories are opaque, only revealing the entertaining conversations on the surface. Others act as lenses, through which we can examine more literary conversations. Come learn how to make your stories more transparent revealing their literary potential whether you write speculative fiction, poetry, romance, or any other genre. We’ll take a good look at how to make deliberate contributions to the conversations you are writing in by exploring the motivations behind your characters’ actions, understanding the relationship between your subject and your audience, and using the power of abstraction to engage your readers and invite them to contribute to the conversation as well.

Mechelle Morrison

Talking YA

Authentic dialogue is always a challenge—and doubly so when writing for the YA crowd. In this workshop we’ll explore what makes dialogue resonate and how tech, slang, and swearing define the current teenage tribe. You’ll have opportunity to share your work, so bring an especially beloved (or troublesome) dialogue-rich passage from your WIP.

Tim Tabet

Sex and Violence, an Adventure in Choreography

Sex scenes and action sequences are more similar than they are different. After all, both involve high tension, various bodily fluids, and they both tend to end in a mess. This class will focus on how to impact your reader with each of these scenes, explore how the two types of scenes are similar, how they are different, and what each scene needs to succeed.