



Stony Brook University

Fall 2023 Creative Writing Courses

INTRO COURSES

CWL 190 Intro to Contemporary Lit #93990
The New Sci-Fi Cannon with Marissa Levien
M/W 2:30-3:50PM

SBC: HUM

If you're a fan of science fiction, you might be familiar with authors such as Arthur C. Clarke, Octavia Butler, or Ray Bradbury. But what are new writers doing these days to further the form? In this class we'll read works of contemporary science fiction that play with classic genre conventions while also focusing on prose, character, and other hallmarks of great literature. We will also have a chance to speak with the authors themselves and ask them questions about their writing process. This is a literature class for writers, where we will take apart these books, see how they work, and see how they can influence our own writing in turn. Come prepared to read, write, and be transported.

Prerequisite or Corequisite: WRT 102

CWL 202 Intro to Creative Writing

SBC: ARTS

CWL 202.S01 #93991

M/W 8:30-9:50AM

CWL 202.S03 #93992

M/W/F 10-10:55AM

CWL 202.S04 #93993

M/W/F 11-11:55AM

CWL 202.S05 #93994

M/F 1:00-2:20PM

CWL 202.S07 #93995

M/W 2:30-3:50PM

CWL 202.S08 #93996

TU/TH 8:30-9:50AM

CWL 202.S09 #94093

TU/TH 11:30AM-12:50PM

CWL 202.S10 #93997

TU/TH 10-11:20AM

CWL 202.S11 #93998

TU/TH 10-11:20AM

CWL 202.S12 #93999

TU/TH 1-2:20PM

CWL 202.S13 #94000

TU/TH 4-5:20PM

CWL 202.S14 #94001

TU/TH 5:30-6:50PM

CWL 202.S15 #94004

TU/TH 11:30AM-12:50PM

CWL 202.S16 #94060

TU/TH 4-5:20PM

CWL 202.S17 #94061

M/W 2:30-3:50PM

WRITING WORKSHOPS (CWL 300-325)

If you've taken CWL 202, you can enroll in any of these 3-credit, 300-level poetry, fiction, scriptwriting and creative nonfiction workshops. Creative writing workshop in multiple genres, from fiction to poetry to scriptwriting, intended to introduce students to tools and terminology of the fine art of creative writing.

CWL 300 CREATIVE NON-FICTION

CWL 300.S01 #94002

SBC: HFA+, WRTD

Flash NonFiction with Robert Crace

TU/TH 2:30-3:50PM

Creative Flash Nonfiction can create razor sharp beauty by applying nuanced approaches to craft tools. When you're tasked to create meaning, story, and message in 750 words or less, what do you do? You zero in. What is the most crucial moment in your story? What is the essential essence of your message? Do you have a favorite detail in your piece? What if that detail is the story? Asking these questions and practicing this distilled medium can help us when our longer projects get too expansive or wander around, searching for meaning. Flash Nonfiction requires a keen wielding of craft principles like structure, figurative language, and voice. By practicing this focused form, we might be able to rethink our larger writing not as sprawling journeys of expression, but orchestrated moments that use this exacting style of writing. In this course, you'll write Flash Nonfiction, practice in-class exercises, and read works by Abigail Thomas, Dinty Moore, Aimee Nezhukumatathil, Mary Kim Arnold, Claudia Rankine, Amy Hempel, Ross Gay, and more.

CWL 300.S02 #94003

SBC: HFA+, WRTD

The Literary Essay with Derek McGown

F 9-11:50AM

The essay as a literary genre emerges in Western literature during the Renaissance; incredibly, it is more popular today than ever, found in a multiplicity of styles and forms. Its constant, however, across time and practice remains that writing can be an act of discovery, an opportunity for the essayist to say something they have never before thought of saying. Our reading and writing focus will be on the most prevalent types published today, including the narrative memoir, the personal essay, and the lyric essay—of both shorter and longer length. This is a reading intensive course, working from anthologies and (many) handouts, engaging in close-readings and in-class discussion of primarily contemporary essays. We will study the craft and techniques of these essays, then look to employ them in our own essays, written across the semester. Please Note: this course does not follow the typical five-paragraph theme/essay with which you may be most familiar. Rather, we will engage in the original sense of “essaying”—

trying out ideas and attitudes, writing out of a condition of uncertainty, of not-knowing, setting out on a journey with no fixed destination yet arriving at some imagined truth about oneself and the world.

CWL 300.S03 #94110

SBC: HFA+, WRTD

Hybrid Techniques in Prose with LB Thompson

TU/TH 4-5:20PM

Students will engage in four kinds of activities in this study of the genre of creative nonfiction: 1. generative in-class writing designed to cultivate particular techniques 2. close readings of assigned contemporary literature and art 3. the constructive discussion of original student drafts, and 4. the creation of collaborative pieces. The themes and strategies we will explore include personal narrative, profile/biography, investigative prose, writing about/from art and music, hybrid forms, artists' books, metaphors of translation, social commentary, brevity, crafting transitions, and weaving contextual details.

CWL 305 FICTION

CWL 305.S01 #94005

SBC: HFA+, WRTD

Fiction Gym with Christian McLean

TH 5:30-8:20PM

Athletes don't just play in the games. They practice. They practice ten times more per week than they compete. They do drills. They build muscles and stamina so when they are in the game, they know how to respond in any situation. That's the premise of this course. For some reason, writers think we can just open a blank page and write a story. No practice. No warm-ups. No drills. What happens? We fall back on inherent ability: we write every story in the same tense or through the same point of view, because it is what we know. Through exercises, lots of them, we are going to become well-rounded writers. We won't rely on the inherent skills we have, but strengthen our weaknesses. We'll practice. We'll do metaphorical laps and push-ups. We'll do fiction burpees and mountain climbers. In the end, we'll be clean, mean, writing machines.

CWL 305.S02 #94006

SBC: HFA+, WRTD

The Art of Literary Snark: Cattiness as Criticism with Sarah Azzara

TU/TH 11:30AM-12:50PM

Some of our most enduring and beloved literary works maintain their hold on audiences through the power of wit. For centuries, fiction writers have used humor as a tool to point out the foibles of the society in which they lived. Snarkiness provides writers with a means to delight readers while raising questions about problematic social norms. This course will examine some of the great masters of snark and focus on how we can sharpen the blades of our own wit as we craft new short fiction works.

CWL 305.S03 #94007

SBC: HFA+, WRTD

Cultivating Style and Authority in Prose Fiction with Robert Lopez

M 1-3:50PM

In this class we'll concentrate on cultivating our own individual style, while also examining what should be important on the page, what we can do that is unique to us. How do we know which stories are ours to tell? Writing fiction is about risking form and emotion. We will read and talk about work where writers demonstrate authority right from the first sentence.

CWL 305.S04 #94008

SBC: HFA+, WRTD

Pieces of the Writing Engine with Marissa Levien

M 4:00-6:50PM

Writing means editing. Once you write a piece, you have to see what works and what doesn't in order to guide your story to its best self. One of the most useful tools a writer has in this process is a workshop. In this class we will read classmates' works of fiction and provide constructive feedback, looking at the writing with an eye towards learning what makes a story truly effective. We will also study the craft of writing, looking at individual aspects such as Prose, Character, Description, Dialogue, and Pace, to see how all these parts come together to form a working engine with drive and momentum. Each story is different in how it compels us to read, so we will treat each story as unique-- no blanket rules, just what works for each piece in turn. That is the beauty of workshop: you will receive individualized attention on what works for *you* as a writer, and we will all learn from each other.

CWL 305.S06 #94030

SBC: HFA+, WRTD

It's Nice to Tell a Good Story, But It's So Much Better to Tell It Beautifully with Joe Levens

F 1-3:50PM

Many of the world's greatest fiction writers started out by having short stories published in literary or genre magazines. You will be no different! This class will cover elements and techniques to make your fiction shine and worthy of publication in reputable places. We will primarily cover contemporary literary short story writing, though writing in genres will be allowed. The majority of the class will be in the form of fiction workshops, where, in a friendly and cordial setting, you will be critiquing your colleagues' work, and hear what your colleagues have to say about your own. Then it's on to polishing it, submitting it, getting the acceptance letter, and putting together the invite list for the book launch party.

CWL 305.S07 #94096
Revision with Robert Crace
TU/TH 1-2:20PM

SBC: HFA+, WRD

Revision requires us to be brave and curious—to play with our art like it’s Play-Doh. But messing with our hard-earned expressions like they’re stretchable goo can be overwhelming. In this class, we will practice revision methods until a sense of craft confidence solidifies. We will discuss everything from broad psychological inhibitors to line-level craft techniques and practice revision ideas through in-class writing games and assignments. Revising works best when we form personalized approaches because techniques that work for some may not work for others, and tactics that work for one project may not work for the next. By attempting a wide range of revision methods, you’ll be able to deepen and personalize your own approach to reworking your art.

CWL 305.S08 #94111
Small Starts and Big Visions with Joseph Labriola
M/W 2:30-3:50PM

SBC: HFA+, WRD

Fiction comes in many forms. Throughout human history, people have crafted, shared, and reveled in stories that seek to illuminate our collective experience. But what is the origin of a “good” story? In our class, we’ll start small by examining the various styles and functions of short stories, exploring elements of craft through readings and workshopping our own writing. How do you move from the kernel of an idea into a full-blooming tale? How do you know when enough is enough? And what about revision? We’ll cover all this and more, while also considering how, when, and why such works may serve as the starting point for even longer pieces.

CWL 305.S09 #96723
Forms of Fiction with Barrett Lily
TU/TH 2:30-3:50PM

SBC: HFA+, WRD

One of the toughest tasks in writing engaging fiction is making choices that will surprise and delight the reader on both the plot and the sentence level. From twist endings to fanciful figurative language, we’ll look at an array of short fiction—stories that demonstrate the aspirational quality of being unpredictable. We’ll also do a good bit of generative writing exercises to help you get loose of the sort of “automatic” mode we sometimes slip into when writing. Finally, you’ll produce two stories of your own to be submitted for a workshop, where we’ll put our heads together and see what we can do to move our own writing in the direction of the stories that keep us guessing long after we’ve read them to the end.

CWL 310 POETRY

CWL 310.S01 #94029

SBC: HFA+, WRTD

Sound with Julie Sheehan

M 4-6:50PM

In this prosody workshop, we'll make a joyful noise, studying the capacity English has to produce sound and practicing these formal elements in our own poetry. We'll learn to detect the rhythms of our accentual-syllabic language and make meter out of it. We'll wield forms of repetition like refrain and other sound effects like rhyme. We'll experiment with various stanza shapes and forms. We'll also look at how these sounds emerged from an oral tradition, a tradition that continues to thrive today. We will take the opportunity to listen as well as write, to rely on and hone our ear, just as poets have for centuries.

CWL 310.S02 #94010

SBC: HFA+, WRTD

Building and Breaking: Form to Free Verse with Christine Kitano

TU 4-6:50PM

In this class we'll study traditional forms from around the world (including the sonnet, the ghazal, and the haibun) with an ear toward thinking about how to translate these forms into contemporary free verse poetry. The first half of the semester will provide a deep study of formal traditions; the second half of the semester will provide a deep study of contemporary free verse and an examination of how it both builds on and breaks free of formal traditions. We'll read some history, some criticism, and lots of poetry. Class assignments will be both critical and creative.

CWL 310.S03 #94012

SBC: HFA+, WRTD

Mirror, Mirror with LB Thompson

TU/TH 5:30-6:50PM

Many poetic forms are designed around repetitions of sounds, images, and ideas. We will explore the echoes and shadows of received and unique forms as we read and write together. Students will compose original poems as individuals and in collaboration with each other. Our work will be anchored in close readings of a wide range of poetic styles on the following themes: mirroring, portraiture, negative space and subtext, framing artifacts, brevity, intertextuality, and counterpoint.

CWL 315 FORMS OF SCRIPTWRITING

CWL 315.S01 #306856

Investigative Theater with Stephen Aubrey

TU/TH 11:30AM-12:50PM

It is said that truth is stranger than fiction, and in recent years, it's also made for interesting experiments in American drama. Investigative theater (also sometimes called "documentary theater," "theater of witness" or "theater of fact," depending on who you're asking) uses stories about real people and events as the source material for performance. In this course, we will study a variety of different dramatic narratives based on investigative theater techniques as well as engaging in creative research to create our own work based on field work, interviews, and archival sources. No prior playwriting experience required--just a healthy curiosity and/or an inexplicable desire to explore the subjectivity of truth.

****FLM 215 Scriptwriting and TVW 221 The Writers Room will count as Writing Workshops for CWL majors and minors. See below for these course descriptions.**

CWL 320 INTERDISCIPLINARY ARTS

CWL 320.S01 #94011

SBC: EXP+, WRTD

Literary Publishing Practicum with Casey Plett (listed as Athena Thiessen on SOLAR)

M/W 2:30-3:50PM

A one-two punch for students interested in learning about the publishing world, from both a writer and a publisher's point of view. Students will workshop published work, assess pieces submitted for publication, learn basic mechanics and terminology of the book industry, receive an intro to pitching and publicity, and in general attain a deeper knowledge of how one shepherds literature into the world. The class will culminate in a small group publication project. This is an ideal course for students seeking a foundational knowledge of the publishing industry, particularly when applying for internships, as well as any writer wishing to broaden their working knowledge of what happens after a piece of writing is accepted.

****This course may not be repeated***

CWL 325 SCIENCE WRITING

CWL 325.S01 #93177

SBC: STAS, WRTD

The Animal "I am" with LB Thompson

TU/TH 11:30AM-12:50PM

In this course, we will read works in a variety of genres exploring what it means to be part of the

natural world. We will also consider research strategies for creative pieces with sound underpinnings in the sciences. Some of the themes and techniques we'll study include perception, illness, ecology, lexical entries, and using natural forms to shape narrative or verse.

CWL 330-340 "READ LIKE A WRITER" COURSES

CWL 335 American Lit #94112

SBC: USA, HFA+

Children's Lit with Emma Walton Hamilton

ONLINE Asynchronous

Most of us can think of the book that changed our lives - the one that turned our world upside down, showed us we weren't alone, made us a reader. For many of us, that book was one we read as a child or a teenager. Childhood and young adulthood are unique transitional stages of development with major physical, intellectual and emotional changes. They are times of tension, of questions, of defining ourselves in relationship to the world around us. By addressing these issues head on, children's literature is uniquely valuable and relevant to the lives of its readers.

The CWL 335.01 Topics in American Literature: Children's Lit course is a survey of the four principal forms that comprise children's literature: picture book, chapter book, middle grade and young adult (YA). The focus is on children's and young adult literature as meaningful and respected genres within the publishing industry and in the library, educational and book-selling community, and the craft elements, standards and objectives of each form. Topics covered for each form include basic history, current events, craft elements, and industry standards. Coursework includes readings for each form, book presentations, quizzes and engagement in the online group discussion forum.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Despite being delivered in asynchronous online format, this is a rigorous course of study with a substantial workload. Students looking for an easy A or who are merely interested in fulfilling a requirement are strongly encouraged to choose a different course. In addition, the course requires excellent time management skills. Please plan accordingly.

**This course may not be repeated*

CWL 340 #96726

SBC: GLO, HFA+

Big Ideas, Short Stories with Stephen Aubrey

TU/TH 10-11:20AM

We turn to fiction for many things: complex characters, compelling plots, rich language. But stories are also capable of dramatizing and interrogating complex concepts and thought experiments from philosophy, the sciences, and other dark arts not normally within the scope of the literature class. In this course, we will explore how fiction can help readers understand and contextualize big ideas, explaining why something like the tenuous concept of free will actually matters to our everyday lives. Though literature of ideas is often the domain of speculative fiction, we will look at authors across a variety of genres and styles who are grappling with the baffling realities of quantum physics, the thorniest of ethical quagmires, and a myriad of other brain-melting notions sure to keep us up at night.

FLM 215 SCRIPTWRITING & TVW 221 THE WRITERS ROOM

Creative Writing students interested in **Screenwriting (CWL 315)** can enroll in **FLM 215 Scriptwriting** or **TVW 221 The Writers Room** in lieu of, or in addition to, CWL 315. To get permission to enroll and to count these FLM/TVW writing workshops toward the creative writing major or minor, contact Liz McRae. (Elizabeth.McRae@stonybrook.edu).

FLM 215.S01 #94062

SBC: HFA+

The Art of the Screenplay with Will Chandler

W 4-6:50PM

All great screenplays share a compelling, well-told story. In this course, students will analyze films and read contemporary screenplays, deconstructing them to learn why they work so well. Students will leave understanding the construction of story, the value of juxtaposing scenes, the power of the visual image, the importance of the underlying theme, the need for conflict and the development of compelling, layered characters and their dialogue. Students will be guided through the process of developing their own stories and will leave with a screenplay outline, a three-act story arc and a completed first act of their own script. Repeatable to a maximum of 6 credits as the topic changes.

Prerequisite: FLM 101 or CWL 202 with permission

FLM 215.S02 #94063

SBC: HFA+

Intro to TV Writing with Greg Abbey

TH 5:30-8:20PM

Students will learn the craft of television writing through developing their idea for a pilot, analyzing produced television shows and scripts, and critique of fellow classmate's work. Working from the ground up, you'll begin by creating a series concept that has both a powerful emotional core and a story engine that can sustain multiple seasons. Next, students create stories for their pilot episode and then move on to outlining scripts and writing scenes with dialogue, working toward their finished pilot script. Paired with one-on-one conference advisement every other week.

Prerequisite: FLM 101 or CWL 202 with permission

FLM 215.S03 #94063

SBC: HFA+

Intro to TV Writing with Anna Zabel

TU 10AM-12:50PM

An introduction to writing for television in a supportive and creative workshop environment. In this course, students will develop an idea for and write a complete draft of an original half-hour

TV pilot. Throughout the semester, students will learn the fundamentals of TV writing by analyzing and breaking down the scripts and pilot episodes of some of our favorite shows and then using this knowledge to thoughtfully create their own work. This class will study the fundamentals of narrative story: examining plot, character, conflict, structure, story engine, and world. Once students have a basic understanding of these story elements, they will begin writing their pilots, act by act. Each week, students will be presenting work in class and their classmates will be expected to provide thoughtful and respectful feedback. Over the course of the semester, as they develop their pilots, students will work to discover their unique points of view and storytelling styles. This course is as much about finding your voice and passion as a writer as it is about developing a pilot.

Prerequisite: FLM 101 or CWL 202 with permission

TVW 221.S01 #94109

SBC: HFA+, WRTD

The Writers Room | Dave Chan

M 5:30-8:20PM

How do you create a compelling season of television? In this course, we will break one season of a television series and its episodes. Television is the "little big screen" and though it follows the same principles of traditional storytelling, there are nuances that make this medium entirely unique. After successful completion of this course, you will understand the process of breaking episodes of a season, character/story arcs, and write at least one episode.

Prerequisite: TVW 220, or FLM 101 or CWL 202 with permission.