



Stony Brook University

Spring 2024 Creative Writing Courses

INTRO COURSES

CWL 190 Intro to Contemporary Lit # 54101

SBC: HUM

Fraught Families with Genevieve Crane

TU/TH 10:00-11:20PM

Oscar Wilde opined that “children begin by loving their parents; after a time they judge them; rarely, if ever, do they forgive them.” This course examines the literary appeal of dysfunctional families in our culture through multiple genres. We will analyze the many techniques writers use to approach generational rifts in modern literature, with special focus on parent/child relationships. Students are expected to read avidly, engage in class discussion of craft, and develop creative work with a focus on character complexity. Two-dimensional evil stepmothers need not apply.

Prerequisite or Corequisite: WRT 102

CWL 202 Intro to Creative Writing

SBC: ARTS

CWL 202.S01 #54102

M/W 8:30-9:50AM

CWL 202.S02 #54103

M/W 8:30-9:50AM

CWL 202.S03 #54104

M/W/F 10-10:55AM

CWL 202.S04 #54105

TU/TH 2:30-3:50PM

CWL 202.S05 #54106

M/F 1:00-2:20PM

CWL 202.S06 #54107

TU/TH 11:30-12:50PM

CWL 202.S07 #54108

TU/TH 8:30-9:50AM

CWL 202.S08 #54199

M/F 1:00-2:20PM

CWL 202.S09 #54109

TU/TH 10:00-11:20AM

CWL 202.S10 #54110

TU/TH 10:00-11:20AM

CWL 202.S11 #54111

TU/TH 11:30-12:50PM

CWL 202.S12 #54112

TU/TH 1:00-2:20PM

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 #54175

SBC: HFA+, WRD

Creative Memoir Writing and Craft with Robert Crace

TU/TH 11:30-12:50PM

Creative Memoir Writing and Craft: How do we transition from writing in order to process our lives to crafting realized works of art that express our experiences? When dealing with the emotional weight of writing memoir, bad craft habits can sneak into our work. In this class, we will look at craft tools, multiple forms, and a wide range of readings demonstrating ways to write compelling, creative memoir. We will practice writing traditional memoir scenes, flash, lyric, collage, and longform structure. We will also address important aspects of memoir writing like self-care, writing other peoples' memoirs, the differences between memoir and biography, and the function of memory. We will look at readings from Maxine Hong Kingston, Phoebe Robinson, Jo Ann Beard, Frank McCourt, Lidia Yuknavitch, and more.

CWL 300.S02 #54113

SBC: HFA+, WRD

Forms of Creative Nonfiction: *Veritas sequitur...* with LB Thompson

TU/TH 2:30-3:50PM

In this course, we will closely examine moments when we recognize, on the page and in our own experience, a Truth capable of extending beyond the self. 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. analysis and discussion of assigned contemporary nonfiction, imaginative literature, visual and performing arts, and stand-up comedy 3. constructive discussion of original student drafts, and 4. creation of collaborative hybrid pieces drawn from shared moments of recognition.

CWL 300.S03 #56233

SBC: HFA+, WRD

Forms of Creative Nonfiction: Writing from Life with Kaylie Jones

M 4:00-6:50PM

This creative-nonfiction writing workshop will be a safe and comfortable place to explore your life experiences. We will focus on aspects of craft: starting in the right place; word choice; subtext; the use of imagery; dialog; building momentum; and the most important tool of writing — point of view. Writing prompts will be offered on a weekly basis, and your submissions (500 words max) will be workshoped in class. You will have a chance to revise your favorite essays during the term.

CWL 305 FICTION

CWL 305.S01 #54114

SBC: HFA+, WRD

Forms of Fiction: Fireside Tales with LB Thompson

TU/TH 10:00-11:20PM

Together we will examine the ways fiction has been shaped across time and geography by taking a closer look at the structures of fables, parables, allegories, & fairy tales to reveal evidence of these forms in contemporary fiction as well as utilizing their fundamental shapes in our own original stories. During class, we'll practice writing from generative prompts, analyze assigned stories, and discuss our original drafts in progress with care and respect.

CWL 305.S02 #54115

SBC: HFA+, WRD

Looking at the World Sideways: Writing Experimental Forms with Marissa Levien

M/W 2:30-3:50PM

You've tried your hand at linear storytelling, you've heard about the three-act structure and the hero's journey. But what happens when you want to get weird? At its worst, experimental storytelling can feel like an exercise in indulgence, but at its best, it can crack open your imagination and show you truths that simply cannot be explained in a straightforward way. So how do you write the good stuff? That's what we're here to learn! In this course, we'll read a diverse variety of experimental works and then we'll experiment for ourselves, generating new writing and workshoping as we go, receiving feedback from our peers and honing our craft. Whatever your writing style, traditional or experimental, you'll find that your craft is bettered by writing outside the box. It helps to go a little mad sometimes.

CWL 305.S03 #54116

SBC: HFA+, WRD

Artful Science & Story Mechanics with Robert Crace

TU/TH: 1:00-2:20PM

This class will use science topics to creatively engage with our writing. How can science inform our art and vice versa? We will spend time connecting topics like physics and chemistry with story principles, craft tools, and form. While infusing our creativity with science, we will also look at the science present in writing. Story Mechanics translate craft techniques and reader response into analytical factors like Deus Ex Machina, Chekhov's Gun, and Rate of Revelation. We will learn how to use these scientific understandings of craft to elevate our writing. In this class, we will read works that utilize art and science by authors like Primo Levi, Alexis Pauline Gumbs, Lacy M. Johnson, and more.

CWL 305.S04 #54117

SBC: HFA+, WRD

Subculture Stories - The Worlds within our World with Sarah Azzara

M/W 2:30-3:50PM

Biker gangs, circus and stage performers, cult members, radicals, pickpockets, fans and stans,

fetish folk, rebellious youth, etc: Our world is brimming with these cultural microcosms, each of which has its own internal rules and logic. There is something inherently compelling about descending into these rabbit holes and meeting their distinctive inhabitants, peeking behind their closed doors and learning their secrets. How can stories of niche groups reveal the greater truths of our collective existence? In this class we will draw on our own human experience and do some deep dives into the mechanics of how these alternative cultures work in order to create original short fiction pieces. Through examining the work of established authors and workshopping new work generated for class, we will attempt to harness the reader's curiosity about fringe groups and deliver stories that echo beyond the boundaries of their inspiration.

CWL 305.S05 #54120

SBC: HFA+, WRTD

Flash Fiction and Nonfiction.... with Robert Lopez

M 2:30-5:20PM

Brevity is the soul of wit, so said Polonius. We will aim to write narratives that deliver an emotional impact inside very strict parameters. Every writer will come up with flash pieces of 300, 600, and 1000 words and we will see how much we can achieve within these constraints, which are often liberating. We'll read flash writers like Kim Chinquee, Kathy Fish, Jamaica Kincaid, Diane Williams, Abigail Thomas, Eula Biss, Justin Torres, and others.

CWL 305.S06 #54197

SBC: HFA+, WRTD

Making Point of View Work For You with Phoebe Phelps

M/F 1-2:20PM

Point of view is seemingly straightforward— first person or third person. Second person if you're feeling bold. However, one simple craft decision like this can have spiraling effects throughout the entire story. In this class we will analyze and pull apart the intricacies of point of view that often go overlooked, and how they can be used to manipulate a wide range of other key story elements. The Great Gatsby would be a very different story if it was from Gatsby's point of view. What do we gain or lose knowing that it is Nick, the neighbor, instead? What changes because of the ways he is telling us the story? Do we trust his version of things more— or less? We will read a wide variety of texts in this class, including Carmen Maria Machado, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Lorrie Moore. In some stories, the choices and effects of point of view are clearly experimental, while others are more traditional. The experimental stories will help us see the bounds of possibility. In the stories that seem unchanged by point of view, we'll discover the small ripples that often go unnoticed. In both cases, we will use these examples to learn how point of view can and has been used to inform narrative as a whole, and apply these concepts to how we craft our own work.

CWL 305.S07 #54198

SBC: HFA+, WRTD

Break My Heart and Sew It Back Together: Intimacy in Fiction with Casey Plett (listed as Athena Thiessen on SOLAR)

M/W 4:00-5:20PM

Intimacy can be the beating heart of meaningful, beautiful fiction. It can also be off-putting or wildly boring—in other words, it can be done quite poorly. How do we translate intimacy onto the page? How do we make sense of intimate writing that might bore one reader but break another's heart? In this class, we will read and discuss fiction that contains intimacy across the lines of friendship, romance, family, strangers, and beyond. There will also be writing assignments based on these questions.

CWL 305.S08 #56234

SBC: HFA+, WRD

Beginnings & Endings with Stephen Aubrey

TU/TH 11:30-12:50PM

What is it that draws us into a story? And what is it that makes us unable to forget one once we've put it down? Strong beginnings and endings are essential to any good piece of writing, but as anyone who has felt daunted by a blank page or at a loss for how to resolve a plotline will tell you, they're not easy. Moving beyond the simple "hook" and "twist," this workshop will explore a variety of strategies and structures for how to use first and final pages to create lasting impressions in our readers.

CWL 305.S09 #56787

SBC: HFA+, WRD

Monsters are People, Too with Scott Mackenzie

TU/TH 1-2:20PM

In this half reading/half writing class we will explore what monsters can teach us about being human. We will examine historical depictions of the monstrous from *The Odyssey*, to *Beowulf*, to *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. We'll also look at the monsters of contemporary authors like Marquez, Le Guinn, and Butler. We'll track how each author develops their monstrous characters. We will ask such questions as: what makes them monstrous? In what ways do they refract or even reflect that **which** is human? What is monstrous anyway? What is human? Can our characters be a little of both? We will complement this examination of texts with an exploration of our own. We will do in-class writing exercises that will help develop our monsters into full-fledged, complex characters: exercises that will aid in any character development. In the final 8 weeks, we'll workshop our own short stories, applying what we've learned through the writing and rewriting process.

CWL 310 POETRY

CWL 310.S01 #54118

SBC: HFA+, WRD

Forms of Poetry: Symmetry & Synthesis with LB Thompson

TU/TH: 4:00-5:20PM

We will plumb the echoes and shadows of received and unique verse forms by composing original poems as individuals and by working in collaboration with each other. This study of the genre is playful and serious simultaneously, exploring themes including metaphorical mapping, rhythm and cadence, rhetorical shape, epistolary verse, intertextuality and negative space,

performance poetry, book arts and printmaking, and more. Our work will be anchored in close readings of a wide range of canonical and contemporary poetic styles.

CWL 310.S02 #54119

SBC: HFA+, WRTD

The Sentence and the Prose Poem with Christine Kitano

M/W 2:30-3:50PM

In this course, we will focus on the expressive possibilities of the sentence. The first part of the semester will be dedicated to studying the sentence as both grammatical unit and aesthetic tool. Then, we'll see how to build prose poems by wielding syntax to further the imaginative vision. Many of us learned to write "by ear," so don't worry if you never learned to diagram a sentence or are unsure about the difference between a phrase and a clause. This course is designed for both grammar nerds and skeptics, and for both poets and prose writers. We can all benefit from deeper investigation into the structures of language as we continue to hone our craft.

CWL 310.S03 #54176

SBC: HFA+, WRTD

Questions of Travel with Julie Sheehan

TU 4:00-6:50PM

From Brazil to Bronzeville, from islands to ideals, this course is both a poetry-writing workshop and an exploration of setting and journey as poetic tropes in both contemporary practitioners and their antecedents. We will read eclectically: William Shakespeare, Gwendolyn Brooks, Elizabeth Bishop, Nate Marshall. We will investigate the settings around us. We will travel through food. And we will journey in our own poems through prompts in the spirit of the readings. With luck, we'll have a revelation or two, and, by semester's end, a clutch of new poems.

CWL 310.S04 #56784

SBC: HFA+, WRTD

Poetry Through the Movements with Matt Gustafson

M/W 2:30-3:50PM

A Black Mountain poet, a Modernist, and a Dadaist walk into a bar. The Black Mountain poet says "My hands are / shaking, there is / an insistent tremble / from the night's / drinking." The Modernist, looking at the Black Mountain poet with furrowed brow, says "I think we are in rats' alley / Where the dead men lost their bones." Yeah, I know, total buzzkill. The Dadaist, trying to save the outing, leans in, and with a brandish of their hand, says, "gadji beri bimba glandridi laula lonni cadori." The three look at each other for a moment. They burst out into laughter.

This class will be one of discovery, both in the historical scope of poetry, and its craft particulars. In looking at poetry through all of its various movements, you'll not only get a sense of poetic history and influences, but you'll also learn how to use poetic tools to forge a damn good poem. Whether a poetry fanatic or doubter, you should feel welcome to come along on this tour through the movements of poetry. It will be deep, it will be fun, and it will be worth it!

CWL 320 INTERDISCIPLINARY ARTS

CWL 320.S01 #54196

SBC: EXP+, WRD

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.

The class will be divided into three sections: An overview of editing and the publishing industry, followed by a workshop of student work, followed by a collaborative project in which we will publish that work together in our own zine.

**This course may not be repeated*

CWL 325 SCIENCE WRITING

CWL 325.S01 #54192

SBC: STAS, WRD

Conversations Between Art and Science with Rachita Ramya

TU/TH 10-11:20AM

A scientific mindset not only requires precision and technical skills but also innovation and artistry. Similarly, an artist's mindset demands not only creativity and innovation but also critical thinking and technical skills. This class aims to teach you how to seamlessly integrate both art and science into your writing. We will also explore how to harness Artificial Intelligence to enhance your writing, without compromising your unique voice or limiting creativity and originality. We will focus on research methods, including conducting a literature review, formulating research questions, and utilizing software like EndNote for managing references. In summary, this class will broaden your perspective on the convergence of science and art, encouraging you to view them not as separate domains but as interconnected disciplines.

Prerequisite: 1 SNW and 1 SBS; CWL 202

CWL 325.S02 #56786

SBC: STAS, WRD

"They Should Have Sent a Poet" with Barrett Lily

M/W 10-11:20AM

"They should have sent a poet." So says the scientist Ellie Arroway, protagonist of Carl Sagan's *Contact*, upon witnessing a cosmic phenomenon so startlingly beautiful that she lacks the words to describe it. Artistry has long been undervalued in the realm of the sciences—data is dispassionate, while art is often pure passion. After NASA successfully landed men on the moon, the writer Norman Mailer decried the lack of poetry, saying "An event that from the beginning of

time was meant to fill our spirits with wonder and inspiration has been reduced to technological egoism and running descriptions of moon rocks.” Our aim in this class is to attempt to set the record straight. We will read works across multiple genres, covering subject matter under the umbrella of science, such as physics, astronomy, biology, medicine, environmental science, mathematics, artificial intelligence, and more. All of which we will consider through the lens of creative writing, to hone our voices as writers so that we may create our own works of scientifically literate writing, bringing the beauty and intrigue of scientific concepts to the reader.

Prerequisite: 1 SNW and 1 SBS; CWL 202

CWL 330-340 “READ LIKE A WRITER” COURSES

CWL 330.S01 #56232

SBC: GLO, HFA+

What We Can Learn from Fairy Tales with Marissa Levien

M/W 4:00-5:20PM

Fairy tales and folk tales are some of the oldest storytelling forms. They exist with their own set of rules that can often feel strange to a modern reader: in fairy tales, characters exist as flat archetypes, logic is surreal, and setting is abstract. In short, they embody everything we've been told not to do in a contemporary writing workshop. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, these stories endure. In this class we'll delve into the roots of various European folktales and investigate how these stories have influenced other narratives, how they've evolved through the ages, and what we can take from them for our own writing. So go ahead, take a bite of that apple, prick your finger on a spindle, tumble into the unknown and see where your writing ends up!

CWL 335.S01 #54177

SBC: HFA+, USA

Nabokov's American Novels with Stephen Aubrey

TU/TH 1-2:20PM

“I am an American writer, born in Russia, educated in England, where I studied French literature before moving to Germany for fifteen years.” —Strong Opinions

Vladimir Nabokov's inimitable polymathic novels have left an indelible impression on American literature, but they are rarely thought of as “American” novels. In this course, we will read Nabokov's English language novels, investigate the dizzying webs of intertextuality we find within, and ask what it means to be an “American” writer in a global world.

FLM 215 SCRIPTWRITING, TVW 220 ADVANCED TV WRITING & FLM 310 STORY ANALYSIS FOR FILMMAKERS AND TV WRITERS

Creative Writing students interested in **Screenwriting (CWL 315)** can enroll in **FLM 215 Scriptwriting, TVW 220 Advanced TV Writing or FLM 310 Analysis for Filmmakers and**

TV Writers 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 SCRIPTWRITING: TWEET BY TWEET with Hoang-Vu Nguyen**

SBC: HFA+

FLM 215.01 #54168 W 4:00 - 6:50 PM

American writer Anne Lamott once recalled her ten-year-old brother bursting into tears after realizing that an extensive bird report he'd had three months to write was due the next day. Then her father sat down beside him and his unopened books on birds, whispering the magic words: "Bird by bird, buddy. Just take it bird by bird."

Writing 90 to 120+ pages of a feature script sounds daunting to any writer, rookies and veterans alike. One can choose to either painfully cry at the thought of doing it, or do it anyway, beat by beat, scene by scene, and empathetically cry with the characters and their stories along the way. This class aims to turn the former choice into the latter.

We'll take Anne Lamott's anecdotal approach and recontextualize it in our present-day digital culture. So instead of bird by bird, let's build our screenplays tweet by tweet, together. For the first half of the course, we'll bring an Intuitive Tweet(s) to every class that speaks to us as writers and walk out of it with a Cinematic Tweet(s) that speaks to the audience as well, through the craft of visual language, dramatic structure, characterization, and thematic arguments. For the second half of the course, we'll write and workshop the first act of our screenplays, informed by our tweets and strengthened by our critique circle's comments.

INSTRUCTOR BIO:

Hoang-Vu Nguyen (Vu, he/him) is a Fulbright scholar whose works have been showcased at film festivals in America, the Czech Republic, India, Italy, and Vietnam. He enjoys getting to know his students through their stories and helping them translate their vulnerability onto the page. In addition to being a filmmaker, Vu is also a creative director and children's author. Embracing the word "play" in "screenplay," he encourages you to try new things and make mistakes together, including using Twitter to plan your scripts!

****FLM 215 SCRIPT WRITING: Writing the TV Pilot with Greg Abbey**

SBC: HFA+

FLM 215.02 #56237 TU 11:30 - 2:20 PM

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.

INSTRUCTOR BIO:

Greg Abbey is a writer, actor and filmmaker. After studying acting at Rutgers Mason Gross School of the Arts, Greg moved to New York City where he has worked consistently in film, television and voice-over. He also has a production company through which he's written and directed numerous commercials, web series and short films. Greg just finished his MFA in

Television Writing from Stony Brook University and has had several of his scripts place in top contests including Slamdance, Austin Film Festival and Final Draft Big Break.

****FLM 215 SCRIPT WRITING For Film with Liza J. Renzulli SBC: HFA+**

FLM 215.03 #54169 F 10:00 - 12:50 PM

This course will see students complete the first draft of a screenplay. Through viewing films and reading screenplays we will examine topics such as story concepts, character development, narrative arcs, set pieces, structure, dialogue, exposition, scene dynamics, subtext, and conflict. Concurrently, we will work on ideating a concept, finding narrative and character arcs, and deeply outlining our features. In the second half of the class we will focus on writing our features and workshopping the scripts of our peers. We will also work on busting writer's block and the feeling of stuck-ness. By the end of the course, you will have written the first draft of a screenplay!

INSTRUCTOR BIO:

*Liza Renzulli is a writer, director, and editor who has been working in film in various capacities for 10 years. She has produced two feature films, written and directed several short films and two seasons of a web series, and edited for MTV, Comedy Central, Animal Planet, and PBS. She is currently a thesis student in the SUNY Stony Brook / Killer Films MFA program. Her most recent short film *A Lot of You Are Asking* played at several film festivals in 2023. She is a recipient of the New York Women in Film and Television 2023 scholarship.*

****TVW 220 Advanced TV Writing with Dave Chan SBC: HFA+, WRTD**

TVW 220.01 #54190 M 11:00 - 1:50 PM

Adapting content from one medium to another is very much an art by itself. In this course, you will workshop material you previously created—feature or short script/film, web series, play, novel, short story, essay, poem, etc.—and adapt it into a television series. What elements of your original story would make it a compelling episodic program? Television is the "little big screen" and though it follows the same principles of traditional storytelling, there are nuances that make this format entirely unique. At the successful completion of this course, you will write at least a Teaser and Three Acts of a TV pilot script adapted from your own original work in a different medium.

FLM 310 Story Analysis for Filmmakers and TV Writers with Will Chandler

SBC: HFA+

FLM 310.01 #54174 M 2:30-5:20PM

Every future screenwriter, director and creative producer needs to know how to identify the dramatic elements of Story. This course will teach students the skills one needs in the world of visual storytelling/filmmaking - whether as a screenwriter, a spec reader or as an assistant to a producer/production company, studio or streaming platform. Students will learn how to read, deconstruct and evaluate screenplays and short stories by identifying their elements and writing cogent analyses of the material. Participants will leave prepared to answer the question every future screenwriter, director and creative producer must know: Is this material a film, a limited series or something else? Is it a Recommend or a Pass - and Why? Students will read both produced and unproduced screenplays as well as short stories. They will synopsize the material

and write comments that evaluate the key dramatic elements: concept, characters, conflict, dialogue, theme and structure. Students will also develop an original project and write a story treatment that engages the audience and helps them “see” what this would look like as a film or limited series.