



Stony Brook University

Spring 2020 Creative Writing Course Descriptions

If you've taken CWL 202, you can enroll in any of these 3-credit, 300-level poetry, fiction, scriptwriting and creative non-fiction workshops:

CWL 300 CREATIVE NON-FICTION

CWL 300.S02 #53108 The Self and The Story: Writing Multiple “Selves” in Creative Nonfiction, Carina Kohn

Tuesday 4:00-6:50PM

Imagine a revolving door that only you are allowed to walk through. Now imagine hundreds of versions of you, each different, entering and exiting through the door: You, with a hat. You, with blue hair, blond. You, as an expert in politics, or hang gliding! In this class, we will learn how to generate and regenerate “the self,” and find our stories to match. We will try out various forms in workshop, such as the personal, lyric, and research essay, as well as vignettes and short drafts for longer works. We will study multiple pieces from writers, pick out their personas, and engage in exercises that help us uncover the complexities and dualities that run within ourselves.

CWL 305 FICTION

CWL 305.S01 #53109 Dissecting Clichés, Genevieve Sly Crane

T/Th 2:30-3:50PM

The car accident. The spinster aunt. The narrator who recounts a recurring dream. For decades, writers have been told (obliquely or directly) to avoid employing a litany of clichés. This course will examine overused characterizations, plots, and themes to see if we can plunder anything useful from the banal. A heavy focus will be placed on the nature of hackneyed writing in modern short fiction. We will pay special attention to those who have managed to write their way out of the predictable. How did they manage it? What tricks can they teach us? Writers in this course will be expected to gorge on reading, workshop in earnest, and extend past their creative boundaries.

CWL 305.S02 #53110 Filling Your Craft Toolbox, Kaylie Jones

Thurs 4:00-6:50PM

This writing workshop will focus on aspects of craft, such as the importance of specific word choice, subtext, the use of imagery, how to write convincing dialog, building momentum, and the all-time most important tool of fiction writing — point of view. We will read several published stories that illustrate these specific aspects of writing, and the stories will be discussed in class. Writing prompts will be offered on a weekly basis, and your submissions (500 words max) will be workshopped in class.

CWL 305.S03 #53111 From Fact to Fiction, Sarah Stoss

Monday 4:00-6:50PM

“Truth is stranger than fiction,” or so they say. In fact, some of the best works of fiction have been inspired by true stories and events. In this course we’ll read some of those works, including *Women Talking* by Miriam Toews, *Salvage the Bones* by Jesmyn Ward, and *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr. While exploring the ways these authors use fact to create fiction, we too will write stories

that are grounded in truth and inspired by reality.

CWL 305.S04 #53112 Unreliable Narrator, Max Parker

Mon/Fri 1:00-2:20PM

Creative writing workshop in fiction, focusing on writing the unreliable narrator in contemporary psychological thrillers, as well as how the writer can employ unreliability as a tool to inform and propel their own mystery. Students will read *Gone Girl* and other contemporary thrillers that will be in conversation with each other throughout the semester. Class discussion and exercises will serve as a tool for students to write their own first and last chapters of a longer work, with chapter and plot outlining in between. This course is focused on voice, plot, and thoughtfulness in writing a longer work.

CWL 305.S05 #53118 Short Story, Amy Hempel

Tuesday 4:00-6:50PM

We will aim to amplify the idea of what a story can be, employing a range of narrative strategies, and reading stories and poems from contemporary writers who sound like no one else. Emphasis on use of place, work, logic, and, always, language. Short assignments in the beginning will spotlight ways to listen FOR stories, as Eudora Welty put it. We will talk about writing at the sentence level, and finding personal ways into the largest concerns. Students will write two stories and submit a revision of one of them.

CWL 305.S06 #56084 I'm a Stranger Here Myself: Exploring Character in Fantasy, Sci-Fi, and Other Genres, Valerie San Filippo

Tues/Thur 10:00-11:20AM

Writing genre fiction is a balancing act. The magic systems, cosmic hierarchies, and articulated astrophysics so beloved by readers are devilishly tricky to deploy without overwhelming our narratives. How, then, can we find equilibrium between the desire to worldbuild and the need to be understood? The answer lies in character. In this course, we will explore who inhabits our fictional worlds. We will uncover the hidden functions behind character tropes and archetypes. We will craft our own character-driven narratives, and workshop each other's stories. In doing so, we will discover how honoring our characters experiences can help heighten any and every story we write, regardless of genre.

CWL 310 POETRY

CWL 310.S01 #53113 Poetry, Cornelius Eady

Wed 4:00-6:50PM

Poetry is not a museum piece; it is a living, breathing and changeable art form, written by living, breathing and changeable human beings, and in my forms of poetry class the students will be able to not only walk their way through the various ways we make a poem, they will also be able to have first-hand knowledge with working poets to see the ways those rules are used (and broken) You will be doing three main things here: 1) writing and revising your own work (including exercises), 2) Doing close reading of the poems assigned. 3) Interviewing visiting poets about craft. In this course, you will not only get a general running sense of the craft of poetry, but how, through live interviews, (via SKYPE and in person) it is put to use by working, contemporary poets. The final in this workshop will be a chapbook of 10-12 of your best poems written and revised over the semester, with a short introduction written in the third person by the author, due the last day of class. It is basically a poetry course with a reading series attached. Come with a sense of play and adventure.

**CWL 310.S02 # 53114 Uninspired and Other Lies: Turning Experience Into Poetry, Grace Dilger
T/Th 1:00-2:20PM**

I'd like you to think of poetry like a pedestrian foot bridge over a highway. You stand on one side of the bridge. You are your inner life, your feelings, your soul if you will. The other side of the highway is the world we live in today, the world as it was yesterday, the world as it may be tomorrow. The bridge is poetry. The experience of walking that bridge, between these two worlds, is this class.

**CWL 310.S03 #56088 15 Ways Of Being In A Poetry Workshop, Miranda Beeson
Fri 10:00AM-12:50PM**

15 weeks. 15 (fun) poetic forms in depth. 15 approaches to the page. 15 ways of seeing. 15 ways of reading. 15 ways of listening. 15 ways of thinking. 15 ways of illuminating the world through words. We will read, write & workshop—in more than 15 ways!

CWL 315 SCRIPTWRITING

**CWL 315.S01# 53115 The Art of the Screenplay, Will Chandler
Wed 4:00-6:50PM**

All great screenplays share a compelling, well-told story. In this course, students will analyze films and read contemporary screenplays, deconstructing them in 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 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.

For Film 101 alumni, contact Karen Offitzer for permission to enroll.

**CWL 315.S03 #53116 TV Writing, Perry Blackshear
Thurs 4:00-6:50PM**

Students will develop an idea for a television series and write a complete pilot for their own original show. In class, we will investigate what stories are, why they matter, and how to make them better. Through application and practice, by the end of class, students will learn formatting, the invisible power of narrative representation, and the fundamentals of long-form dramatic structure. Students will work to develop their own vision for what kind of storyteller they want to be in an intensive, supportive workshop environment.

For Film 101 alumni, contact Karen Offitzer for permission to enroll.

CWL 320 INTERDISCIPLINARY ARTS

**CWL 320 Writing on Politics, Neal Gabler
Mon 4:00-6:50PM**

With a presidential election approaching, we are bound, if we can survive it, to be even more awash in politics. To deal with the overload, this course is designed to accomplish two ends, one about reading, the other about writing -- first, to familiarize students with great political writing in order for them to learn

from it substantively and thus inform their own political thinking; and second to learn from it technically and thus inform their own political writing in order for them to write intelligently and interestingly about politics. We will look at political opinion, political analysis, political biography and political history, and students will read from Norman Mailer, Joan Didion, Richard Ben Cramer, Rick Perlstein, and Robert Caro, among others, as well as contemporary Op-Ed columnists and journalists. Students will write papers that will test their powers of political analysis and expression as well as their ability to research and gather information as political reporters.

“READ LIKE A WRITER” COURSES

These are open to all comers. Expect creative writing assignments in response to lots of reading.

CWL 190 #53095 Intro to Contemporary Lit: Affairs to Remember, Genevieve Sly Crane

T/Th 1:00-2:20PM

You heard about your neighbors. You watched the paternity tests on Maury. You know too much about Beyoncé and Jay-Z’s love life. What compels us to watch the most common of domestic disasters? This course will give us the opportunity to rubberneck and understand why infidelity figures so prominently in our culture through the lens of modern fiction. We’ll pay a brief homage to literature’s most famous historical cheaters before delving into contemporary betrayals of the heart. Our reading and writing will give us the opportunity to specifically ask: Why do cheaters appeal to us? What are the gender-driven and cultural implications of the jezebel and the cad? Most importantly, how do we approach unfaithfulness in our own creative work without reducing our characters to jerks and victims?

Prerequisite: WRT 102

CWL 330 #53119 Fallen Women: *Anna Karenina* and *Madame Bovary*, Megan McAndrew

T/Th 11:30AM-12:50PM

Anna Karenina and Emma Bovary are often lumped together in the bestiary of the nineteenth century novel's great adulteresses, but as characters, they have little else in common. True, they both cheat on their husbands, and, spoiler alert, neither meets a happy end, but what can they teach us as writers? If we view them through the lens of character development, quite a bit. Tolstoy and Flaubert were masters of this art, and their techniques, which we will study in this class, remain just as relevant today. Please keep in mind that we will be reading approximately 100 pages a week.

CWL 340 # 55733 World Lit: The Old Testament, Paul Harding

T/Th 10:00-11:20AM

The Old Testament (or, with some differences, the Jewish Tanakh) is an anthology of writings ranging in genres from prose stories to historical chronicles, poetry to legal codes, song lyrics to folktales. Its meanings cohere within individual books and across the canon as a whole according to plot, character, and narrative, forming an entire cosmology. From Adam and Eve to Abraham, from Saul and King David to Isaiah and Ezekiel, from Ruth to long suffering Job, the Old Testament overflows with incredible personalities, incredible stories that are supreme models of narrative and poetic economy and artfulness. It is, in fact, the headwater of western art and literature. We will close read the Old Testament together as writers. We will look at it in the context of other so-called near eastern literatures and religions, by which it was influenced and against which it defined itself. We will read the Old Testament “as literature” simply because from no matter what religious or secular direction it is approached, it is literature, and the ways it works, the terms according to which it generates, preserves, and releases its meanings are literary.

INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE WRITING

CWL 202.S01	Paige Chadwick	M/W 8:30-9:50AM
CWL 202.S02	Rob Taylor	M/W 8:30-9:50AM
CWL 202.S03	Max Parker	M/W/F 10:00-11:53AM
CWL 202.S04	Grace Dilger	T/Th 2:30-3:50PM
CWL 202.S05	Alex Sniatkowski	M/Fri 1:00-2:20PM
CWL 202.S06	Quinn Adikes	T/Th 11:30-12:50
CWL 202.S07	Tyler Allen Penny	T/Th 8:30-9:50AM
CWL 202.S08	Carina Kohn	T/Th 8:30-9:50AM
CWL 202.S09	Jesi Halprin	T/Th 10:00-11:20AM
CWL 202.S10	Jillian LaRussa	T/Th 10:00-11:20AM
CWL 202.S11	Margot Hughes	T/Th 11:30-12:50PM
CWL 202 .S12	Valerie San Fillipo	T/Th 1:00-2:20PM

Creative writing workshop in multiple genres, from fiction to poetry to scriptwriting, intended to introduce students to the basic tools and terminology of the fine art of creative writing. Participants also read contemporary works, give a public reading, and attend Writers Speak, the Wednesday reading series, or an equivalent.

Interested in **playwriting**? Ken Weitzman is teaching a course in that. Talk to Megan McAndrew about getting it counted toward your CWL major or minor.