

Spring 2025 Creative Writing Topics

INTRO COURSES

CWL 190.S01 #56266 SBC: HUM Intro to Contemporary Lit: Contemporary Literature Meets Literary History with Molly Gaudry

TU/TH 9:30-10:50 AM

This course surveys major themes found in literary movements throughout history—but through the lens of contemporary literature. For example, we'll begin with Lesley Nneka Arimah's "The Future Looks Good" and analyze how its themes of individual, nation, and home echo those from ancient epic poetry. During Gothic week, we'll examine themes of gender and power, horror, and fear of the other in Manuel Gonzales's "The Miniature Wife," about a husband who accidentally shrinks his wife and imprisons her in a dollhouse (or tries to, anyway). This semester, we'll discover how contemporary fiction, poetry, and nonfiction updates and revitalizes themes from our literary past, making them relevant for 21st century readers. There will be a midterm and a final.

Prerequisite or Corequisite: WRT 102

CWL 190.S02 #58357 SBC: HUM Intro to Contemporary Lit: The Writer's Practice with Christine Kitano TU/TH 12:30-1:50 PM

The only way to become a writer is to read, to read widely, and to read with a mercenary eye toward how to steal and synthesize the tools and techniques of other writers. In this class, we'll read a range of contemporary texts from the 20th and 21st centuries, including works in translation as well as American work. As we survey the field of contemporary literature, we'll learn how to learn from the readings. Whether it's science fiction or a lyric novella, a memoir or a prose poem, writers must learn how to recognize and synthesize multiple storytelling techniques. Through weekly writing prompts and technical drills, students will practice identifying and developing their skills with a range of tools, including point-of-view, imagery, psychic distance, rhythm, dialogue, and so on.

Prerequisite or Corequisite: WRT 102

CWL 202 Intro to Creative Writing CWL 202.S01 #56267 CWL 202.S02 #56268 CWL 202.S03 #56269 CWL 202.S04 #56270 CWL 202.S06 #56271 CWL 202.S06 #56272 CWL 202.S07 #56273 CWL 202.S08 #56310 CWL 202.S09 #56274 CWL 202.S10 #56275 CWL 202.S11 #56276 CWL 202.S12 #56277

SBC: ARTS

M/W 9:30 AM - 10:50AM M/W 11:00 AM - 12:20 PM W 3:30 PM - 6:20 PM M/W 3:30 PM - 4:50 PM M/W 3:30 PM - 4:50 PM W 6:30 PM - 9:20 PM TU/TH 9:30 AM - 10:50 AM TU/TH 9:30 AM - 10:50 AM TU/TH 11:00 AM- 12:20 PM TU/TH 12:30 PM - 1:50 PM TU/TH 2:00 PM - 3:20 PM TU/TH 2:00 PM - 3:20 PM

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, science writing, publishing and creative nonfiction workshops. Creative writing workshops in multiple genres are intended to introduce students to tools and terminology of the fine art of creative writing.

CWL 300 CREATIVE NON-FICTION

CWL 300.S01 #56296 SBC: HFA+, WRTD Forms of Creative Nonfiction: Filling Your Craft Toolbox with Kaylie Jones M 3:30 PM - 6:20 PM

This creative-nonfiction writing workshop will be a safe and comfortable place to explore your life experiences in writing. We will focus on aspects of craft, such as the importance of word choice, subtext, the use of imagery, dialog, building momentum, and the most important tool of writing — point of view. We will read some published essays that illustrate these specific aspects of writing, and the essays 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. You will have a chance to revise your favorite essays during the term.

CWL 300.S02 #56278 SBC Forms of Creative Nonfiction: Hybrid Memoir with Molly Gaudry TU/TH: 11:00 AM - 12:20 PM

In this course, we will study contemporary hybrid memoirs that make use of a variety of forms. As this course privileges generation over revision (at least 50 pages by the end of the semester), there are no formal workshops, but students will have time in class to share pages-in-progress and receive regular feedback throughout the semester. Possible texts include: Jami Nakamura Lin's The Night Parade: A Speculative Memoir; Nikki Grimes's Ordinary Hazards, a YA memoir in verse; E. Briskin's Orange, a non-confirming memoir(?) in verse/fragments; Aimee Nezhukumatathil's World of Wonders, a memoir in nature-themed essays with illustrations; Jackson Bliss's Dream Pop Origami, a choose-your-own-adventure memoir in essays.

CWL 300.S03 #56313 SBC: HFA+, WRTD Forms of Creative Nonfiction: I'm Obsessed! with Sarah Azzara TU/TH 2:00 PM - 3:20 PM

As writers, do we find our subjects, or do our subjects find us? Through readings, exercises, and writing assignments in memoir, personal essay, opinion essay, and braided essay, this course will allow us to indulge in our obsessions. From moments in our personal lives to events and phenomena in the outside world, we'll dive deep into that which haunts us to discover the most effective ways of bringing those obsessions, be they strange, silly, scary, or sobering, onto the page and into the mind of the reader.

CWL 305 FICTION

CWL 305.S01 #56279 SBC: HFA+, WRTD Forms of Fiction: Lashed to the Masthead with Genevieve Crane TU/TH 9:30 AM - 10:50 AM

Bomb Magazine "encourage[s] submissions of adventurous work." One Story coyly asks for "stories that leave readers feeling satisfied." The New Yorker seeks a type of story so specific that Jonathan Franzen lampooned the format in its own pages. Nearly every literary magazine will ask serious aspiring fiction writers to read their most recent publication to get a sense of "who they are." It's time to do the dirty work! In this course, we will read hot-off-the-presses fiction. We will dissect mastheads. We will study the editors' own work. We will ponder over rejection letters. Most importantly, we will workshop stories with the goal of publication. This course is ideal for writers who have already written five or more short stories prior to the course.

CWL 305.S02 #56280SBC: HFA+, WRTDForms of Fiction: Beyond Fan Fiction: Exploring Intertextuality in Creative Writingwith Jennifer EpsteinTU/TH 11:00 AM - 12:20 PM

Fan fiction isn't new. Long before Twilight inspired Fifty Shades of Grey, writers were riffing on each other's stories-in fact, Twilight itself was influenced by Wuthering Heights. Intertextual fiction-writing that responds to or transforms an existing narrative-has been around at least since Virgil reimagined Homer's epics in The Aeneid. In this workshop, we'll explore just what it is that makes writing stories around other stories so compelling. We'll consider how Jean Rhys, in Wide Sargasso Sea, gives Jane Eyre's "madwoman in the attic" her own voice and story, how Laila Lalami uses A Thousand and One Nights as a starting point in Preludes and Nocturnes, and how Helen Oyeyemi reimagines Snow White to explore race, colorism, and identity in Boy, Snow, Bird. We'll discuss our own favorite books, and why we think they're our favorites, and how to write our way into them through in-class prompts, reflections, and our own intertextual short stories. Maybe we'll even take Wuthering Heights (already reworked into a terrific 80's Kate Bush song), recast it with a broody high-schooler and a vegetarian vampire, and then recast that with a bookish virgin and a broody billionaire with a taste for whips. (Though actually, we won't-that's been done.) Best of all, we'll dive so deeply into the stories that intrigue us that we'll inhabit their worlds for a while, finding ways to make them truly our own.

CWL 305.S03 #56281 **SBC: HFA+, WRTD** Forms of Fiction: Back to the Future: Moving in Time with Bobby Crace TU/TH 3:30 PM - 4:50 PM

From literal time travel to multiple literary timelines, fiction writers can have challenging responsibilities when moving in time. Should your backstory be the main story? Are your shifts to a future timeline distinctive? Do your time-traveling characters have enough space to settle into each setting? In this class, we will explore questions like these and practice artful ways to move in time. The goal is to develop your own skill set when writing through time to provide dimension, perspective, and depth to your stories. Along with full class workshops, we will study works by time-shifting artists like Charles Yu, Jesmyn Ward, Kurt Vonnegut, Jo Ann Beard, and more.

CWL 305.S04 #56282 Forms of Fiction: Revision Quest with Bobby Crace TU/TH 2:00 PM - 3:20 PM

The topic of revision has many negative associations. Sure, revising can be a slog. Sure, we might pull at a thread and rip out the magic and art we love in our drafts. But what if we took a step back and played some games? Let's suspend this idea that revision is a linear progression of polishing raw work into plateable presentations. What if our revision approach was based in craft prompts where the only goal is to learn more about our stories, our characters, our tonalities? Let's practice using this exploratory approach to revision so that we can remain creatively engaged through the stress of tampering with our work. Revision exercises will be based on different craft concepts. Exercises will include: Fix an AI story; Write a scene where your character surprises everyone, including the author; Write a scene that won't make it into your story; Explore a cataclysmic plot option... But the most ambitious exercise designed to demystify revision will be that each student's workshop piece will be partially revised by everyone else in the class. What is it like to revise another's piece? What do you learn when the

stakes of authorship are removed? Can you apply those lessons to your own writing? What do you learn about your story when you see it go through the creative filter of 15 other students? We may always be prone to that linear, polish approach when revising, but the goal of this class is to practice incorporating more imagination in hopes that we get the most of what might be the writing medium's most distinctive superpower.

CWL 305.S05 #56285 SBC: HFA+, WRTD Forms of Fiction: How to Write the Epistolary Novel with Patrica Marx W 3:30-6:20

The following text message exchange is between an administrator at the Stony Brook Program in Creative Writing and Literature (heretofore, SB) and Patricia Marx, aka Patty, who will be teaching How to Write an Epistolary Novel in the spring of 2025.

STONY BROOK: Patricia, did you get our email saying you have to turn in our syllabus by tomorrow?

PATTY: Yikes. Syllabus?

SB: Yes, for the course you're teaching on the epistolary novel.

PATTY: Great idea! Epistolary novels are about how we know things, right?

SB: That's epistemology. Epistolary novels are books told through a series of letters or other documents (newspaper clippings, court records, medical reports, diary entries, etc) Typically, there is a back and forth of letters between two or more characters.

PATTY: Like what we're doing right now. Can we get this published? Then we can have a book party.

SB: Epistolary novels are novel-length. Maybe you could turn these texts into a few epistolary haiku. Back to your class.

PATTY: If you insist. The class is a workshop. Students will divide into pairs, and each pair will write an epistolary novel over the course of the semester. Pairs will regularly share their installments with the class, who will then tear them apart – I mean offer constructive criticism. There will be frequent in-class exercises that help students develop a premise, create characters, come up with a structure, etc.

SB: How will grades be determined?

PATTY: Students will be graded according to how much they like me. I mean based on in-class assignments, participation, and the final project.

READING LIST:

We will read the Amazon free sample or equivalent (e.g. free Gutenberg ebooks) from some but hardly all of the following writers: Sei Shōnogon, Tobias Smollet, Jane Austen, Bram Stoker, Alice Walker, Mark Dunn, Dodie Smith, Aravind Adiga, Gary Shteyngart, and Jennifer Egan **Hey, What's the Point of This Class? (I mean besides to have more fun than you've ever had in your life)** Over the course of the semester, you'll hone your skills at creating and developing characters with distinctive voices, backstories, motivations, and goals. You will also have a better understanding of how characters interact with each other, sometimes in synch, often at odds. Finally, you will become better at building a story – moving the plot, deepening the characters, creating intrigue.

CWL 305.S06 #56308 Forms of Fiction: Character with Jenny Davis M/W 11:00 AM - 12:20 PM

Characters are the beating hearts of stories. Getting to know the people who populate our fiction -- who they are, what they care about, and how they talk -- powers plot, shapes structure, and ultimately unmasks meaning. In this workshop, we'll explore how to create and reveal compelling characters, with the larger goals of crafting dynamic voices, devising coherent points of view, and producing gripping plots. By reading and discussing published work, as well as regularly responding to prompts and generating original work, we will daydream up unforgettable characters, listen to them talk to each other, and ultimately practice committing them to the page.

CWL 305.S07 #56309 SBC: HFA+, WRTD Forms of Fiction: How and Why: Workshopping Short Fiction with Marissa Levien M/W 2:00 PM - 3:20 PM

So you wrote a short story, now what? In this class, we will read and critique one another's works of short fiction with an eye towards learning what makes a short story truly effective. Short fiction can be about anything, can come in many forms, in many genres. The best workshops are accepting of all types of work, because the most constructive analysis of a story lies not in what the story is, but *how* it is written, and *why* a certain piece of writing connects with a reader. Once you figure out the how and the why of a story, you have the building blocks you need to make it something truly engrossing.

CWL 305.S08 #56314 SBC: HFA+, WRTD Forms of Fiction: The Intriguing Beginning and the Impactful Ending with Robert Lopez M 3:30 PM - 6:20 PM

How stories begin is always a critical element of a short fiction, perhaps the most critical. How they end is always as important, as well. In this class we'll examine various entry points into a story, finding the unexpected way in, through a back or side door and how this sets us on the path toward the end. The beginning of a story makes certain promises and sets expectations. We'll discuss various beginnings and find strategies to fulfill these expectations and confound them by what we've established in the opening. We'll read stories each week that accomplish this and use these as models for our own short fiction. Let's pay attention to how writers arrest our attention and create conflict right from the opening line and how they use this narrative strategy as the way out of a story.

CWL 305.S09 #56334 Forms of Fiction M/F 2:00 PM - 3:20 PM

Study of the genre through readings, discussion and regular submission of original work. Course explores methods for expressing the human condition made available through fiction, with

SBC: HFA+, WRTD

examples from the tradition that illustrate point of view, character development, dialogue, plot, setting, theme, motif, and other elements. Areas of study include Short Story, Novella, The Popular Novel, Graphic Novels and Writing Funny.

CWL 310 POETRY

CWL 310.S01 #56283 SBC: HFA+, WRTD Forms of Poetry Art and Craft of Poetry with Christine Kitano TU/TH 11:00 AM - 12:20 PM

This course will involve weekly readings of poems selected as examples of particular poetic techniques: image, diction, tone, rhythm, and so on. Students will respond to these examples with prompt-driven creative exercises as well as brief critical essays and presentations. Class periods will be spent in a combination of craft lectures and discussions, close readings, in-class writing exercises, and the occasional workshop. Though poets of all skill levels are welcome, this course is designed for newer poets and the poetry-curious.

CWL 310.S02 #56284

Forms of Poetry: Conception + Construction in Poetry with LB Thompson M/W 2:00 PM - 3:20 PM

In this study of the genre of poetry, students will generate in-class writing designed to cultivate particular techniques, read and consider contemporary poems and works of art, engage in constructive discussion of original drafts in progress, and create collaborative pieces together. The themes and strategies we will pursue include: perception, inquiry, mapping, artifact, scale, received poetic forms, rhetorical shapes, negation, and metaphor. Emphasis will be on process as we advance from the concept phase to the polished construction of a sequence of original poems. *Prerequisite*:CWL 202

CWL 310.S03 #56297 Forms of Poetry: World Poetry with Derek McKown TU/TH 12:30 PM - 1:50 PM

"It is a test...that genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood."

-T. S. Eliot, Dante (1929).

In this course we will examine 20th & 21st-century international poetry in translation by poets from around the world to approach an understanding of how voices and experiences resonate and individuate cross-culturally, and how our own social, political, and cultural locations influence our readings of this poetry. We will investigate such themes as violence, war, tradition, nationhood, alienation, racism, imprisonment, exile, love, and beauty. We will also consider the ways in which translation affects both the transliteration of texts and their interpretations by non-native speakers by questioning what is lost and what is gained in the process of linguistic exchange. What are the boundaries and borders of poetry? Of language?

SBC: HFA+, WRTD

CWL 310.S04 #56332 Forms of Poetry: Intertextuality + Utterance in Poetry with LB Thompson M/W 9:30 AM - 10:50 AM

In this study of the genre of poetry, students will generate in-class writing designed to cultivate particular techniques, read and consider contemporary poems and works of art, engage in constructive discussion of original drafts in progress, and create collaborative pieces together. Prompts and assignments will include creating and reading intertextual poems, such as golden shovels, a form invented by Terrance Hayes, allowing the deeper exploration of a source lyric. Other forms we will explore include collage poems, hybrid works, book arts, and expressive redactions. The course atmosphere is playful and serious at the same time, which John Dewey reminds us is the ideal frame of mind.

CWL 320 INTERDISCIPLINARY ARTS

CWL 320.S01 #56307 **Publishing Practicum with Jenny Davis** M/W 2:00 PM - 3:20 PM

Regular submission, discussion, and analysis of students' work in conjunction with active engagement with the world beyond the page in order to explore methods for expressing the human condition not available through study in a single genre. Areas of interdisciplinary involvement include writing across genres (Writing Nature); production of the written word (Poetry Bookmaking, Performing & Production); and partnering to write (Endangered Languages: Poetry & the Oral Tradition, Documentary Screenwriting in a Sustainable World, and Testimony in Creative Nonfiction). Students may repeat this course as the genre and topic in the humanities change.

*This course may not be repeated

CWL 325 SCIENCE WRITING

CWL 325.S01 #56306 **SBC: STAS, WRTD** Forms of Science Writing: Integral Function in the Universe with Mira Dougherty-Johnson M/W 11:00 AM -12:20 PM

I live on Earth at present, and I don't know what I am. I know that I am not a category. I am not a thing — a noun. I seem to be a verb, an evolutionary process – an integral

SBC: EXP+, WRTD

function of the universe.

- R. Buckminster Fuller

In their methods and approaches, science and writing ask us to observe and then to make sense of our observations. Through the process of inquiry, both science and writing require us to pay careful attention, to make conjectures, to test our ideas, and to reimagine what we think we already know. In this course, we will read in a variety of genres to explore what it means to exist as "a verb, an evolutionary process." We will also consider research strategies for creative pieces with sound underpinnings in the sciences. Some of the themes and strategies we will study together include perception, curiosity, illness, healing, ecology, astronomy, and genetics. *Prerequisite: 1 SNW and 1 SBS; CWL 202*

CWL 325.S02 #56333 Forms of Science Writing: Story Lab with Bobby Crace TU/TH 11:00 AM -12:20 PM

This class will use science topics as a portal to creatively engage in 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 can translate craft techniques and reader response into analytical factors like Deus Ex Machina, Rate of Revelation, Chekhov's Gun, and more. These scientific understandings of craft can inform our approach to fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and journalistic science writing. We will read works that utilize art and science by authors like Primo Levi, Alexis Pauline Gumbs, Lacy M. Johnson, Lauren Redniss, Robert Powers, James Trefil, Michael Summers, and more.

SBC: STAS, WRTD

Prerequisite: 1 SNW and 1 SBS; CWL 202

CWL 330-340 "READ LIKE A WRITER" COURSES

CWL 335.01 #56298 SBC: HFA+, USA Topics in American Lit for Writers: 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 Prerequisite:* **1 HUM course**

CWL 340.01 58347 SBC: HFA+, GLO Topics in World Lit for Writers: Speculative Fiction Around the World with Marissa Levien M/W 3:30 PM -4:50 PM

What is Speculative Fiction, exactly? Is it Sci-Fi? Is it Literature? There are a lot of definitions out there. Sci-Fi luminary Robert Heinlein defined it as "narratives concerned not so much with science or technology as with human actions in response to a new situation created by science or technology, speculative fiction highlights a human rather than technological problem." In this class, we will read speculative fiction from around the world, and even write some of our own. The best way to become a better writer is to become a better reader, so we will take apart these stories like the parts of an engine, see how they work, and see what we can learn from them in our own.

FLM 215 SCRIPTWRITING FOR FILM, TVW 220 ADVANCED TV WRITING & FLM 310 STORY ANALYSIS FOR FILMMAKERS & TV WRITERS FLM 203 PODCASTING

Creative Writing students interested in Scriptwriting (CWL 315) can also enroll in FLM 215 Scriptwriting for Film and TV if they've completed CWL 202. To get permission to enroll and count this towards the creative writing major or minor, contact Liz McRae (Elizabeth.McRae@stonybrook.edu).

FLM 215 Scriptwriting for Film and TV

SBC: HFA+

Study and practice of scriptwriting for film and television through readings, screenings, discussions and regular submission of original work. Repeatable to a maximum of 6 credits as the topic changes.

Prerequisite: FLM 101 or CWL 202

FLM 215.802 #56317 - TU 12:30 PM - 3:20 PM FLM 215.803 #56290 - TH 12:30 PM - 3:20 PM

TVW 220.S01 #56305 Advanced TV Writing: Writing the Comedy Pilot with Dave Chan SBC: HFA+, WRTD M 5-7:50PM

What makes us want to binge-watch a hilarious TV comedy? In this class, students will study successful comedy series throughout the decades and write their own comedy pilot script while honing their unique comedic voices. Lectures will include investigations into the mechanics of joke writing, sketch writing, and web series creation. After successful completion of this course, students will have completed *at least* an Outline, Teaser, Act One, and Act Two of a TV comedy pilot script, whether it's lowbrow or elevated. Let's bring the funny!

Prerequisite: FLM 215 or CWL 315

Creative writing majors may enroll in TVW 220 if you've completed FLM 215 or CWL 315, which will satisfy a workshop requirement. Contact Liz McRae (Elizabeth.McRae@stonybrook.edu) for permission and to apply this towards the creative

writing major or minor.

FLM 310.01 #56295

Story Analysis for Filmmakers & TV Writers with Will Chandler SBC: HFA+

TU 12:30-3:20PM

If you're going to be involved with filmmaking or television, you'll need 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 - whether as a screenwriter, a story analyst or as an assistant to a producer at a 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?

Prerequisite: FLM 102; one 200 level or higher FLM or Equivalent; CWL 202 -

Contact Liz McRae (<u>Elizabeth.McRae@stonybrook.edu</u>) for permission and to apply this towards the creative writing major or minor.

FLM 203 Podcasting: Audio Storytelling Skills for Filmmakers with Kathleen Russo SBC: SPK

FLM 203.01 #56321 M 3:30PM - 6:20 PM FLM 203.02 #58397 TU 9:30AM-12:20 PM

Podcasting is the next step in the technological liberation of storytelling via digital means. It is a companion and complement to video and filmmaking. In this introductory course, you will learn how to craft your own podcast—visualizing your stories with audio only—and present it to the world. You'll gain experience in writing for sound, interviewing styles and techniques, recording & editing basics, pitching ideas, marketing, branding, distribution, monetization and more. The focus is on learning and developing new storytelling and entrepreneurial skills, and strengthening oral communication and presenting skills by researching, writing and presenting proposals and pitches and participating in the evaluation of peer oral presentations of researched proposals and pitches.

No prerequisite