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# WORKSHOPS (6 - 9 points)

## FICTION – OPEN (6 points)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Time</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lynn Steger Strong</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>10am-1pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Harvkey</td>
<td>Tue.</td>
<td>10am-1pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yelena Akhtiorskaya</td>
<td>Tue.</td>
<td>1:30pm-4:30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heidi Julavits</td>
<td>Tue.</td>
<td>3:10pm-6:10pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eli Gottlieb</td>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>12:45pm-3:45pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Cañón</td>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>3:10pm-6:10pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mia Alvar</td>
<td>Thu.</td>
<td>3:10pm-6:10pm</td>
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## FICTION – THESIS (9 points)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
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<th>Time</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sam Lipsyte</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>12:05pm-3:05pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor LaValle (Tuesday WS)</td>
<td>Tue.</td>
<td>10am-1pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victor LaValle (Wednesday WS)</td>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>12:05pm-3:05pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elissa Schappell</td>
<td>Wed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Binnie Kirshenbaum</td>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>3:10pm-6:10pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gary Shteyngart</td>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>3:50pm-6:50pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joshua Furst</td>
<td>Thu.</td>
<td>11am-2pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Metcalf</td>
<td>Thu.</td>
<td>4:30pm-7:30pm</td>
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## NONFICTION – OPEN (6 points)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Days</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phillip Lopate</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenda Wineapple</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>1:05pm-4:05pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin Taylor</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>3:10pm-6:10pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leslie Jamison</td>
<td>Tue.</td>
<td>10am-1pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lis Harris</td>
<td>Tue.</td>
<td>1:05pm-4:05pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Locke</td>
<td>Tue.</td>
<td>2:00pm-5:20pm</td>
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## NONFICTION – THESIS (9 points)*

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dorothea Lasky</td>
<td>Wed.</td>
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## POETRY – OPEN (6 points)

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Richard Howard</td>
<td>Tue.</td>
<td>4pm-7pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timothy Donnelly</td>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>3:10pm-6:10pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Bibbins</td>
<td>Thu.</td>
<td>1:35pm-4:35pm</td>
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## POETRY – THESIS (9 points)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Time</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timothy Donnelly</td>
<td>Tue.</td>
<td>4:30pm-8:30pm</td>
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</table>

*Second-Years only
SEMINARS (3 points)

--- MONDAY ---

Tan Lin (PO)
Experimental Poetry: An Investigation
   Monday, 10:50am-12:50pm

Ben Marcus (FI)
Technologies of Heartbreak
   Monday, 11am-1pm

Rivka Galchen (NF)
Scientists and Writers on Writing about Science
   Monday, 4:10pm-6:10pm

Alan Gilbert (PO)
   Monday, 4:10pm-6:10pm

Erroll McDonald (FI)
The Peripheral Writer
   Monday, 4:10pm-6:10pm

Paul La Farge (FI)
Truth and Consequences
   Monday, 6:15pm-8:15pm

Ben Metcalf (FI)
An Earnest Look at Irony
   Monday, 6:15pm-8:15pm

--- TUESDAY ---

Lis Harris (NF)
Profiles
   Tuesday, 10am-12pm

Jay Deshpande (PO)
Turning, Leaping, Digressing: Toward a Poet’s Taxonomy of Moves
   Tuesday, 1:05pm-3:05pm

Richard Ford (FI)
Reading Personal Memoirs
   Tuesday, 2:30pm-4:30pm

Leslie Jamison (NF)
Case Studies in Intimacy: Siblings and Friends
   Tuesday, 4:10pm-6:10pm

Gary Shteyngart (FI)
The Hysterical Male
   Tuesday, 4:35pm-6:35pm

James Lasdun (FI)
Writing on Writing
   Tuesday, 5:25pm-7:25pm

Mark Doten (FI)
Novel, Data, and Other Totalizing Machines
   Tuesday, 6:15pm-8:15pm

(FI) = Fiction
(NF) = Nonfiction
(PO) = Poetry
(CG) = Cross-Genre
(TR) = Translation
SEMINARS (cont’d.)

——WEDNESDAY——

Brigid Hughes (CG)
Editing and the Writer
  Wednesday, 10am-12pm

Margo Jefferson (NF)
Varieties of Cultural Criticism
  Wednesday, 10am-12pm

Deborah Paredez (CG)
Writing the War
  Wednesday, 10:10am-12pm

Lara Vapnyar (FI)
Architecture of a Story
  Wednesday, 10am-12pm

Alan Ziegler (CG)
The Writer as Teacher
  Wednesday, 12:05pm-3:05pm

Alyson Waters (TR)
Literary Translation Workshop
  Wednesday, 4:10pm-6:40pm

——THURSDAY——

Tash Aw (FI)
Fiction in a Time of Change
  Thursday, 11am-1pm

Susan Bernofsky (TR)
Word for Word Workshop
  Thursday, 11am-1:30pm

B.K. Fischer (CG)
The Comma Sutra: Grammar, Syntax, and Praxis
  Thursday, 12:05pm-2:05pm

Elissa Schappell (FI)
What’s Your Point?
  Thursday, 2:10pm-4:10pm

Hilton Als (NF)
Black Male: Investigations Into the Black Male Body
  Thursday, 4:40pm-6:40pm

Edith Grossman (CG, TR)
The Place of Our Discontent
  Thursday, 4:40pm-6:40pm

——FRIDAY——

Eliza Griswold (NF)
The Essentials of Literary Reportage:
  Reporting and Research 101
  Friday, 10am-12pm

Rebecca Godfrey (FI)
Anti-Heroines
  Friday, 1pm-3pm
LECTURES (3 points)

—— MONDAY ——

Lee Siegel
The Picaresque Novel, Then and Now
Monday, 1:15pm-3:15pm

Alice Quinn
The Ineffable
Monday, 6:30pm-8:30pm

—— TUESDAY ——

Phillip Lopate
Columbia Lions
Tuesday, 12:15pm-2:15pm

—— THURSDAY ——

Richard Locke
Beyond Category: A Survey of Fiction
Thursday, 2:20pm-4:20pm
MASTER CLASSES (1 – 1.5 points)

— MONDAY —

Stacy Schiff
Points of Entry (1 point)

*Monday, 10am-12pm*

Mar. 20 - Apr. 17 (no class Apr. 3)

Ira Silverberg
The Beats at Columbia (1.5 points)

*Monday, 6:15pm-8:15pm*

Jan. 30 - Mar. 6

Keri Bertino
Teaching Academic Writing (1.5 points)

*Monday, 6:15pm-8:15pm*

Mar. 20 - Apr. 24

— TUESDAY —

Sigrid Nunez
Reality Fiction (1.5 points)

*Tuesday, 10am-12pm*

Mar. 21 - Apr. 25

Lauren Grodstein
Plot (1.5 points)

*Tuesday, 6:15pm-8:15pm*

Jan. 17 - Feb. 21

Antonio Prata
Crônica (1 point)

*Tuesday, 6:15pm-8:15pm*

Apr. 4 - Apr. 25

Mitchell Jackson
Voice in the Personal Essay (1.5 points)

*Tuesday, 6:20pm-8:20pm*

Jan. 24 - Mar. 7 (no class Feb. 7)

Alba Arikha
Displacement (1 point)

*Tuesday, 6:20pm-8:20pm*

Apr. 4 - Apr. 25

— WEDNESDAY —

Matvei Yankelevich
Creative (Mis)Translation (1.5 points)

*Wednesday, 10am-12pm*

Feb. 1 - Mar. 8

Gillian Linden
Uneasy for a Time: The Fiction of Interference (1.5 points)

*Wednesday, 10am-12pm*

Mar. 22 - Apr. 26

— THURSDAY —

Corinna Barsan
Revise Like An Editor (1.5 points)

*Thursday, 6:15pm-8:45pm*

Feb. 2 - Mar. 9

Joseph O’Neill
The Political Imagination (1.5 points)

*Thursday, 6:45pm-8:45pm*

Feb. 2 - Mar. 9

Kamilah Aisha Moon
The Elegy as Protest Poem (1.5 points)

*Thursday, 6:45pm-8:45pm*

Mar. 23 - Apr. 27

— FRIDAY —

Chris Bannon
Hearing Voices (1.5 points)

*Friday, 10am-12pm*

Mar. 24 - Apr. 28

CA Conrad
(Soma)tic Poetry Rituals (1.5 points)

*Friday, 1pm-3pm*

Jan. 20 - Feb. 24

Farnoosh Fathi
Attention at Its Highest Form Is the Same Thing as Prayer (1.5 points)

*Friday, 1pm-3pm*

Mar. 24 - Apr. 28
Hilton Als

Black Male: Investigations Into the Black Male Body
(NONFICTION) Thursday, 4:40pm-6:40pm

This course is a survey of nonfiction writing that centers on and analyzes through memoirs, speeches, critical essays, and occasional fiction and poetry, various American authors’ relationship to black American maleness and the questions it continues to provoke in the national consciousness. Texts range from The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano (1789) to James Weldon Johnson’s Black Manhattan (1930) through excerpts from Richard Wright’s Black Boy (1945), William Styron’s The Confessions of Nat Turner (1967) and Ta-Nehisi Coates’ Between the World and Me (2015). Assignments range from memoirs to critical essays and nonfiction reports related to the subject.

Tash Aw

Fiction in a Time of Change
(FICTION) Thursday, 11am-1pm

How can fiction capture the turbulence of our times? Can the world of fiction make sense of the complex causes of anger arising from socio-political change? Whether in Revolutionary China or rural France today, fiction writers have attempted to depict the individual struggling to understand social change and carve out their place in a world of shifting boundaries. We will be looking at how writers from different times and places have reacted to upheaval in different ways—from humor to thinly-veiled autobiography—and examining the space where storytelling and political intent intertwine. We shall also be thinking about how the socio-historical circumstances of those writers influence their respective styles, and hope to gain clues as to how the specifics of each of our backgrounds might speak to our writing. One creative piece of 3,000 words—reflecting the issues arising from our reading—is required at the end of the semester. Writers we shall be reading include: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, James Baldwin, Albert Camus, Violette Leduc, Lao She, Édouard Louis, Lu Xun, Ma Jian, Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Tayeb Salih, Ayu Utami, Alice Walker, Yu Hua, Zhang Ailing, and Émile Zola.
In workshop and in conversation, we often describe a poem by its form and formal conventions—the sonnet, the tercet, the rhythm and rhyme—but things get murkier when it comes to a poem’s rhetorical involutions. This is because we lack a shared language for that set of choices that fall between the orbs of form and content. In this space of poetic structure, we encounter moves like the turn, the leap, the digression, and a host of other such tactics poems have at their disposal. This seminar will develop a set of working definitions for those tactics. Students might be familiar with some of them already, but by locating and naming them together, we will steer towards a common language that can benefit each of us as writers, readers, and workshoppers. Each meeting (or so) will focus on a different move. We will study poems ranging across the lyric tradition, including work by Rae Armantrout, Robert Bly, Andrew Durbin, Tarfia Faizullah, Jorie Graham, Jack Gilbert, Louise Glück, Stanley Kunitz, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Robyn Schiff. Students will submit weekly exercises and a final sheaf of poems in which they implement the full range of techniques.

Mark Doten

**Novel, Data, and Other Totalizing Machines**

*(FICTION) Tuesday, 6:15pm-8:15pm*

Google’s stated mission is to organize the world’s information and make it universally useful. The phrasing here is both benign and comforting: everyone gets access to everything, and it will be useful. But information is partial, contradictory, contested, overwhelming in volume, and valuable. From Sumerian pictographic writing to Gutenberg’s press to early mainframe computers to the iPhone and the digital cloud, information is transformed into a technology of power and control: it shapes the way we live and think. The novel has an affinity to these systems of information. As Mikhail Bakhtin has noted, the novel brings in many voices, many forms, many types of information into its “heteroglossia.” This seminar interrogates the intersection and boundary between the novel and information. A novel on a bookshelf (or in a warehouse, or on a Kindle) and a cluster of data points about an individual consumer sitting on Amazon’s cloud servers are not the same, surely: but what is the difference? Our devices can be feedback mechanisms for sleep, steps-taken, heart-health, self-expression; and at the same time, organizations from Amazon to the NSA use the same devices to assemble massive banks of data on all of
us, data which is aggregated, sliced, repackaged, submitted as evidence, sold. Self-care and self-expression today sit uneasily alongside feelings of paranoia from continuous surveillance and paralysis at overwhelming information flows. How do we deal with this in our work? What does it mean to be a fiction writer in a time when each of us generates—and moves through—a quiet (and at times not so quiet) storm of data every day that we're alive?

This seminar will include a variety of texts that deal with the present and the past, focusing on totalizing forms of information and power. Readings will include 12th-century proto-novel Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān; fiction from Melville and Shelley; Kafka's The Trial; and contemporary fiction (and a bit of poetry) by writers such as Ted Chiang, Dennis Cooper, Thomas Pynchon, and Ana Shirinyan. We will also read nonfiction from George Lukács, Walter Benjamin, and Rebecca Solnit, among others.

Fiction (and two poems):
- Chiang, Ted. Stories of Your Life and Others
- Cooper, Dennis. God, Jr.
- Eliot, George. From Middlemarch: “The Key To All Mythologies”
- Kafka, Franz. The Trial
- Le Guin, Ursula K., “Texts”
- McCarthy, Tom. Satin Island
- Melville, “The Paradise of the Bachelors and the Tartarus of the Maids”;
  and an excerpt from The Confidence-Man
- Pynchon, Thomas. Bleeding Edge
- Rankine, Claudia. Citizen
- Shelley, Mary. Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus
- Shirinyan, Ana. “Your Country Is Great”
- Tiptree, Jr., James. “Slow Music”
- Ibn Tufail, Hayy ibn Yaqẓān
- Wallace, David Foster: “My Appearance,” “Death Is not the End,” “The Devil is a Busy Man,” and “Good Old Neon”

Nonfiction:
- Bush, Vannevar. “As We May Think”
- Darling, Jesse. “Arcades, Mall Rats, and Tumblr Thugs”
- Edwards, Paul. From The Closed World
- Jameson, Frederick. From The Geopolitical Aesthetic
- Lukács, George. From The Theory of the Novel
- Marcuse, Herbert. From One Dimensional Man
- Morozov, Evgeny. “The Death of the Cyberflâneur”
- Solnit, Rebecca. “The Garden of Merging Paths”
- Walker, Rob. “Pokemon Go in the Lower Ninth Ward”

Film:
- Coppola, Francis Ford. The Conversation
B. K. Fischer

**The Comma Sutra: Grammar, Syntax, and Praxis**

(CROSS-GENRE)  
Thursday, 12:05pm-2:05pm

This course aims to convince the skeptic that even if Gertrude Stein was mistaken in saying "I really do not know that anything has ever been more exciting than diagramming sentences," grammar is at least the second most fulfilling human pursuit. Fundamental to our exploration will be a study of grammatical terminology and laws as an anatomy lab for language—a method for exposing its inner workings, mechanisms, and connective tissues to understand more fully its capacities and effects. This technical scrutiny will give rise to discussion of a variety of topics relevant to creative practices in poetry and prose, including patterns of syntax, parataxis and hypotaxis, the subjunctive, deixis and subjectivity, voice, vernaculars, rhythm, pitch, and tempo. Our analysis of grammar will dovetail with theoretical perspectives beyond subject and predicate, drawing insights from ethics, feminist linguistics, gaze theory, racial politics and aesthetics, and media studies. We will dissect and revel in sentences by Cornelius Eady, Henry James, Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner, Marilynne Robinson, Emily Dickinson, Lydia Davis, William Carlos Williams, Richard Howard, Jorie Graham, Claudia Rankine, Taiye Selasi, and Vampire Weekend among other examples, and read essays by Nietzsche, Hélène Cixous, Giorgio Agamben, Lyn Hejinian, and others. Taking the form of a sutra—texts threaded together to build a working manual—the course will focus in every class on how grammatical ideas are vital to writing praxis. Participants will write seven one-page responses to extend the seminar’s conversation, one of which must include graphic or visual elements, and a final paper of approximately five pages. The course also includes editorial support for your own sentences—during class and in conferences—as well as ongoing “sentence labs” that will help you refine and develop the grammatical and syntactic strategies in your own work.

Richard Ford

**Reading Personal Memoirs**  
(FICTION)  
Tuesday, 2:30pm-4:30pm

A seminar dedicated to reading several personal memoirs—most of them about death (...to guarantee a sense of importance)—with a focus on identifying writerly strategies for making memoirs both vivid, truthful and usefully interesting for a reader. There will be seven primary texts, one per two weeks. Authors will be Joan Didion, Joyce Carol Oates, Donald Hall, Julian Barnes, Blake Morrison, and others. There will be some secondary reading. The course will also require several short, weekly writing opportunities, and one longer writing opportunity at the semester’s end. *Second-year students will be given preference for this seminar.*
Rivka Galchen

**Scientists and Writers on Writing about Science**

(NONFICTION)  
*Monday, 4:10pm-6:10pm*

In the 17th century, Sir Thomas Browne, the son of a silk merchant, wrote essays on unicorn horns, doxa, whales, and the discovery of some buried bronze age urns; those writings remain among the most beautiful thinking of our age. What can we as writers learn from writings about science, done both by amateurs and professionals? In what ways, and why, might we incorporate the vocabulary and habits of scientific thinking into literary forms? Why does some technical information act as a magnet for emotion? Why is the chapter on the taxonomy of whales in *Moby Dick* among the most moving, and most charming chapters in the book? When scientific terms or explanations appear in a more literary form, do they feel like an intrusion of the real or of the imaginary, and why? We will keep these and other questions in mind as we look at a mix of old and new texts. Most texts will be nonfiction, but we will also look at some poetry and fiction. Among the writers whose work will be considered are: Plutarch, W.G. Sebald, James Gleick, Lauren Redniss, Rebecca Solnit, Annie Dillard, Robert Burton, Sigmund Freud, Elizabeth Kolbert, Daniel Paul Schreber, Nicanor Parra, Francis Ponge and Lewis Carroll.

Alan Gilbert


(POETRY)  
*Monday, 4:10pm-6:10pm*

This class will examine some of the major poets and literary movements of the second half of the twentieth century: from Robert Lowell to Sylvia Plath, from Elizabeth Bishop to Robert Hayden, from Charles Olson to Adrienne Rich, from Anne Sexton to The Notorious B.I.G., from Frank O’Hara to Audre Lorde, and more. We will also read non-Anglophone poets such as Paul Celan, Ingeborg Bachmann, and Octavio Paz. In attempting to gain a broad overview of the second half of the twentieth century, we will discuss these writers against the background of literary debates of the period, as well as the historical and political conditions influencing both poets and poetics. We will also aim to connect the authors and issues discussed with our own poetry and current moment.
Rebecca Godfrey

**Anti-Heroines**

(FICTION)  
*Friday, 1pm-3pm*

Literature by women is often dismissed as “chick lit” or sentimental, yet a range of authors have created female characters who are ruthless, cruel, and violent. We’ll explore how these unruly characters disrupt conventional notions of femininity, as well as the story itself. We’ll discuss the ways complex anti-heroines, whether central or peripheral, can complicate and enrich narrative. The course will focus particularly on characterization, language, and voice in both contemporary and classic works. The anti-heroines discussed will often be wayward or unwanted: “fallen” women, hustlers, recluses, grifters, eccentrics, and terrorists.

Readings will include:

- Emily Bronte, *Wuthering Heights*
- Jean Rhys, *The Wide Sargasso Sea*
- Nella Larsen, *Passing*
- Marguerite Duras, *The Ravishing of Lol Stein*
- Elizabeth Smart, *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept*
- Natsuo Kirino, *Out*
- Philip Roth, *American Pastoral*
- Eileen Myles, *Inferno (A Poet’s Novel)*
- Elena Ferrante, *The Days of Abandonment*
- Chinamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah*
- Jenny Offill, *Dept. of Speculation*

Eliza Griswold

**The Essentials of Literary Reportage: Reporting and Research 101**

(NONFICTION)  
*Friday, 10am-12pm*

This seminar will lead students through the basic and essential skills of reporting and researching long form nonfiction. From conducting an interview, to finding sources, to the ethics and tools required in reporting abroad, this course is designed to teach students the practical means of writing and reporting. The class will be divided into two sections, each meeting every other week, in order to complete reporting and research assignments. We’ll be reading short texts from George Orwell to George Packer, but really, this is a research skills class rather than a literary seminar. From filing Freedom of Information Requests, to handling intimate sources (friends and family members), to conducting effective interviews, this is a how-to class that will
tackle challenging ethical and practical conundrums that every literary reporter confronts.

Edith Grossman

**The Place of Our Discontent: Latin American Literature in Translation**

(CROSS-GENRE, TRANSLATION)  
*Thursday, 4:40pm-6:40pm*

The course proposes an exploration of the presence of place and the importance of the geographical, historical, and cultural environment in short stories, novellas, and novels written by Latin Americans. In most realist, or semi-realist, or neo-realist narratives, of course, place has a significant role to play. The question here is how that role is envisioned and developed in modern fiction from Latin America. Keep in mind that every author on the reading list, except one, spent or has spent years in exile.

**Introduction**
- Álvaro Mutis (Colombia/Mexico), *Maqroll: Three Novellas*
- Augusto Monterroso (Guatemala/Mexico), *Complete Works and Other Stories*
- Mayra Montero (Cuba/Puerto Rico), *The Messenger*
- Santiago Roncagliolo (Peru/Spain), *Red April*
- Mario Vargas Llosa (Peru/Spain/England), *Death in the Andes*
- Gabriel García Márquez (Colombia/Mexico), *Strange Pilgrims*
- Eliseo Alberto (Cuba/Mexico), *Caracol Beach*
- Carlos Fuentes (Mexico), *Happy Families*

**Conclusion**

Each student is responsible for one oral presentation and two short papers (3-5 pages each). Assignments must be submitted on time.

Lis Harris

**Profiles**

(NONFICTION)  
*Tuesday, 10am-12pm*

One of the few forms of literary nonfiction available to serious writers that is still welcome in the magazine world, the profile form provides an opportunity to lavish attention both on the breadth of the profile subject’s life and on the profession, métier, or culture that is always the profile’s second subject. We will examine exemplary profiles by masters of the form, including A.J. Liebling, Joe Mitchell, Kenneth Tynan, and Lillian Ross, and identify the qualities their essays, as well as
more recent pieces, have in comMonday The authors we study will be used as models for one profile submission at the end of the semester. The course will emphasize selection, interview, and research techniques and affords a rare opportunity to explore an off-campus reported subject in depth. The problems and process of each student’s work-in-progress will be discussed weekly.

Brigid Hughes

**Editing and the Writer**

(CROSS-GENRE)  
*Wednesday, 10am-12pm*

This course will examine the past, present, and future of literary magazines, from the perspectives of both the editor and the writer. We will analyze specific issues by magazines such as *The Paris Review, Granta, Monkey Business, Noon, Evergreen Review, Callaloo, Triquarterly,* and others. We will discuss the elements that distinguish a magazine, including unifying themes, layout and design, and criteria for the selection process. The editorial relationships between known editors and writers will also be examined. Assignments will include exercises in editing, graphics selection, and assessing work from various sources. By the end of the seminar you will develop a mission statement and create a sample issue. This seminar is designed for writers who are interested in the editorial side of publishing, and how editor-writer relationships would shape their work.

Leslie Jamison

**Case Studies in Intimacy: Siblings and Friends**

(NONFICTION)  
*Tuesday, 4:10pm-6:10pm*

The literature of intimacy often skews toward romantic love and parental bonds, but this course will examine two kinds of intimacy that feel more rare and often more elusive in their evocation: siblinghood and friendship. We’ll look at various portraits of these deeply familiar but less-rendered intimacies—how they bring together closeness and distance and friction—and examine how complicated their depiction can become. What can literary portraits of these intimacies teach us about bringing the experience of intimacy—more broadly imagined—to the page? How does intimacy, for both siblings and friends, involve a sense of alienation and difference alongside a sense of shared experience or shared roots? Though a large portion of the reading will be fiction—including works by James Baldwin, William Faulkner, Arundhati Roy, Sheila Heti, and Hanya Yanagihara—we’ll also read nonfiction by Charles D’Ambrosio, John Edgar Wideman, Maggie Nelson, and Ann Patchett, as well as poetry by the brothers Dickman (Matthew and Michael), a poetic collaboration
between two friends, and a selection of letters and poems by Elizabeth Bishop and Robert Lowell.

Margo Jefferson

Varieties of Cultural Criticism

(NONFICTION) Wednesday, 10am-12pm

This course will focus on criticism that takes a particular subject—an art form, an idea, a controversy—and moves, by degrees or by strategic leaps, to broader implications and questions. In cultural criticism the journey matters as much as the arrival. We will begin with the arts and move from there to work in which writers probe the boundaries between art, sociology, politics, and autobiography. We will look at the formal, intellectual and emotional possibilities of criticism: the strategies critics use to establish yet question authority; construct arguments while posing questions; balance description and judgment. Appreciation, ambivalence, and polemic all go into the mix. So do pleasure and imagination. The 20th- and 21st-century writers to be studied will include Italo Calvino, Clarice Lispector, Richard Rodriguez, Maggie Nelson, Adrienne Kennedy, and Teju Cole.

Paul La Farge

Truth and Consequences

(FICTION) Monday, 6:15pm-8:15pm

What can’t a fiction writer make up? This class will look at works which transgress what we think of as the boundaries of fiction: authors who have falsified their own identities (Pessoa’s heteronyms, Laura Alpert writing as J.T. LeRoy, Clifford Irving writing as Howard Hughes, and many others), relied on imaginary sources (Michael Chabon, writing about a neighbor who may or may not have survived the Holocaust, e.g.), allowed philosophical concerns to intrude blatantly into the world of their stories (think about Philip K. Dick’s massive Exegesis), and in other ways called into question the merit of their work as fiction, and/or its authority as anything else. We’ll talk about why fiction writers choose to get mixed up with extra-literary “truth,” and what sort of consequences this has in (and for) their work.

We’ll read works by Fernando Pessoa, Gertrude Stein, Philip Roth, Philip K. Dick, Michael Chabon, J.M. Coetzee, Roberto Bolaño, J.T. LeRoy, and others. There will be two written assignments, which may be critical or creative, in response to the themes and questions of the class.
James Lasdun

**Writing on Writing**

(FICTION)  
*Tuesday, 5:25pm-7:25pm*

This is intended as a practical workshop/seminar for students interested in writing book reviews, literary essays, cultural criticism, profiles, and other kinds of nonfiction based primarily on literary subject matter. In each class we will look closely at one or two contemporary or classic works of criticism, analyzing them in terms of voice, tone, structure, and general approach to the challenge of making a relatively short appraisal of a work of art be at once provocative, engaging, and responsible. We will then look equally closely at work by students. Depending on numbers, each student will be required to produce four or more pieces of one to two thousand words each over the semester. Some will be in response to a specific assignment, others will be open.

Writers whose work we’ll examine will include at least some of the following, and almost certainly many others: Thomas de Quincey, Virginia Woolf, Vladimir Nabokov, James Wood, Randall Jarrell, Joseph Brodsky, Joan Didion, Hilton Als, Michael Hofmann, Elizabeth Bishop, Susan Sontag, James Baldwin, Angela Carter, D.H. Lawrence, V.S. Naipaul, Martin Amis, Salman Rushdie, Rebecca Solnit.

Tan Lin

**Experimental Poetry: An Investigation**

(POETRY)  
*Monday, 10:50am-12:50pm*

What makes poetry experimental? Why do people make it? This seminar will look for answers to those questions by examining a broad historical survey of work generally regarded as experimental (from the Latin *experior*, “to test” or “to try”), beginning with 19th- and early 20th-century breakthroughs and continuing into contemporary practices and media-centric platforms. We will consider closely one of the more salient developments of literary production in our period: the development of a literary and cultural avant-garde that took as its starting point an explicitly experimental approach to writing and art making, an approach that remains foundational for much of today’s cultural and aesthetic practices. Students will study form-breaking modernist writers, mathematically grounded work centered in the Oulipo movement, the indeterminate and aleatoric compositional techniques of John Cage and David Antin, as well as contemporary (1990 and onwards) experimental poetic practices, with particular emphasis on the present moment of digital and electronic modes of writing, Conceptual poetry, ambient literature, Alt-Lit, and Flarf. Students will read poetry by Jack Spicer, John Ashbery, Frank Lima, Hannah Weiner, Charles Bernstein, Fred Moten, Lyn Hejinian, Maggie O’Sullivan, Leslie Scalapino, John Yau, Roy Fisher, Clark Coolidge, Christopher Dewdney, Claudia Rankine, Pamela
Lu, C.A. Conrad, Ted Greenwald, Harryette Mullen, Aaron Kunin, Renee Gladman, Tao Lin, Geraldine Kim, Ed Steck, Sam Riviere, and Sawako Nakayasu. At the end of this course, students will have read and taken part in poetic writing experiments associated with an emerging, postwar literary canon that has been variously described as “avant,” “post-avant,” “L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E-based,” and, more generally, “postmodern,” as well as written critically about several course themes.

Ben Marcus

**Technologies of Heartbreak**

*(FICTION)*  
*Monday, 11am-1pm*

This seminar will examine how emotion is created in fiction, the various ways readers are captured and made to care about a story. Emotional effects—sympathy, sorrow, desire, empathy, fascination, grief, repulsion—will be considered as techniques of language, triggered through strategies of the classic writerly tools: perspective, voice, and the representation of time, among many other techniques. How can a sentence, a phrase, a paragraph cause us to feel things? What is it to care about a character or the progress of a story, and how was that care installed in us? What are the various kinds and sequences of sentences that, when placed in a narrative, can produce emotional engagement in a reader? The focus will be various rhetorical techniques writers have used to impart feeling, among them: concealment, indirection, revelation, understatement, confession, flat affect, irony, direct address, hyperbole, repetition, sentimentality, elusiveness, and sincerity. Our readings will consist primarily of contemporary short stories across a wide aesthetic range.

Erroll McDonald

**The Peripheral Writer**

*(FICTION)*  
*Monday, 4:10pm-6:10pm*

What is literature’s global economy of prestige and what are its inequalities? Which is to say, where, how, why, and by whom is universal literary value conferred? If you are a writer from, say, Cape Verde, Romania, New Zealand, Jamaica, Algeria, Ethiopia, or even parts of the American South or Midwest—places whose literary traditions are deemed peripheral by the centers of consecration (Paris, New York, London, Barcelona, Rome, Frankfurt), what are the singular vicissitudes you must face, what literary norms at home or abroad must you either embrace or breach, to achieve international renown?
This course offers close readings of works in English or translation by 20th-century writers from around the world who were once marginalized but are now considered central to literary enterprise. The authors and books considered are likely to be:

- *The Loser*, Thomas Bernhard (Austria)
- *Pedro Paramo*, Juan Rulfo (Mexico)
- *Solibo Magnifique*, Patrick Chamoiseau (Martinique)
- *The Blind Owl*, Sadegh Hedayat (Iran)
- *The Sound and the Fury*, William Faulkner (New Albany, Mississippi)
- *Ferdydurke*, Witold Gombrowicz (Poland)
- *The Passion According to G.H.*, Clarice Lispector (Ukraine, Brazil)
- *The Box Man*, Kobo Abe (Japan)
- *A Bend in the River*, V.S. Naipaul (Trinidad and Tobago)
- *My Name is Red*, Orhan Pamuk (Turkey)
- *The Ten Thousand Things*, Maria Dermout (Dutch West Indies)
- *Broken Glass*, Alain Mabanckou (Republic of the Congo)

While the course aims to identify and examine their singularity of achievement by way of assimilation or differentiation, it is chiefly concerned with similarities and dissimilarities of narrative structure and strategy, language and syntax, imagery, time and place, and character development.

The course requirements are: a short (3-5 pages) piece of literary criticism on a clearly defined topic to be determined in consultation with the instructor—which will be orally presented to the class—and a 12-15 page final exercise in imitation of any writer covered during the semester.

**Ben Metcalf**

**An Earnest Look at Irony**

**(FICTION) Monday, 6:15pm-8:15pm**

In this seminar, we will discuss works by several accomplished writers of fiction, and a few crackerjack poets, in order to determine what, precisely, we mean when we talk about irony on the page and what, precisely, we mean when we talk about earnestness. How are these very different effects (and affects) achieved? What are their benefits to the student author? What pitfalls, perceived or otherwise, attend the allure of each? What is the relationship of humor to earnestness, and of seriousness to irony? Is the absence of irony really the same thing as earnestness? Does the absence of earnestness somehow necessitate irony?
With an eye toward technique, we will explore these and further issues among the sentences and strategies of those who fall all along, though often refuse to stay put on, the earnest-ironic continuum. Students will be expected to write two short-short (2- to 5-page) stories throughout the semester, exploring for themselves this treacherous but eminently skiable slope.

With readings from Walter Abish, Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones), John Cheever, James Thurber, Raymond Carver, Veronica Geng, Donald Barthelme, Mark Twain, T. S. Eliot, Robert Frost, Vladimir Nabokov, Stevie Smith, Herman Melville, Samuel Beckett, James Baldwin, Brendan Behan, James Joyce, Anthony Burgess, Alice Munro, Zadie Smith, William Trevor, Cormac McCarthy, Flannery O’Connor, Max Beerbohm, Margaret Atwood, Padgett Powell, Saki, W.E.B. Du Bois, Arthur Miller, Bruce Chatwin, David Foster Wallace, Paul West, J. M. Coetzee, Katherine Anne Porter, and others.

As this class will be substituting for Paul Beatty’s satire seminar, we will also take the opportunity to discuss satire and its relationship to irony.

Deborah Paredez

Writing the War

(CROSS-GENRE) 

Wednesday, 10:10am-12pm

What, how, and to what ends have we written creatively about war and violence? How have literary ideas of genre and point of view and voice as well as cultural ideas of gender and nation and citizenship been shaped and challenged by writing about war, violence, and/or trauma? This course considers a range of genres—poetry, fiction and plays—from a range of perspectives—veterans, victims of war crimes and other forms of violence and trauma, anti-war activists, children of war and domestic violence survivors—within the capacious category of war literature.

Preliminary Reading List:

* Trojan Women, Euripides
* Mrs. Dalloway, Virginia Woolf
* The Things They Carried, Tim O'Brien
* The Country Between Us, Carolyn Forche
* Dein Cai Dao, Yusef Komunyakaa
* Clamor, Elyse Fenton
* Yellow Birds, Kevin Powers
* Here, Bullet, Brian Turner
* Look, Sholmaz Sharif
* Seam, Tarfia Faizullah
* The Sympathizer, Viet Thanh Nguyen
* Black Watch, Gregory Burke
Elissa Schappell

**What’s Your Point?**

*(FICTION)  Thursday, 2:10pm-4:10pm*

Narrative point of view is, simply put, the lens through which the reader experiences the story. In this seminar we will be focusing on the wide range of lenses available to writers of fiction—including the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, Omniscient, Collective, and Contagion. We will look at the way the masters use point of view to create tension, emotion, distance, intimacy, and authority. In addition to critical analysis of text we will also be doing in-class exercises that will allow you to experiment with varying points of view. For example, writing from the p.o.v. of an all-knowing-all-seeing-God, a synth-pop boy band, a dog. Yes, a dog. If you can’t see yourself getting into the head of a dog, I see you being much happier in another class. Texts will include work by Jorge Luis Borges, Virginia Woolf, Daphne du Maurier, John Kennedy Toole, Lorrie Moore, Junot Diaz, Jane Austen, Margaret Atwood, Kate Walbert, Jonathan Swift, Kazuo Ishiguro, Joshua Ferris, and more.

Gary Shteyngart

**The Hysterical Male**

*(FICTION)  Tuesday, 4:35pm-6:35pm*

The 20th century has been a complete disaster and the 21st century will likely be even worse. In response to the hopelessness of the human condition in general, and the prospects for the North American and British male in particular, the contemporary male novelist has been howling angrily for quite some time. This course will examine some of the results, from Roth’s Portnoy and Bellow’s Herzog to Martin Amis’s John Self, taking side trips into the unreliable insanity of Nabokov’s Charles Kinbote. What gives vitality to the male hysterical hero? How should humor be balanced with pathos? Why are so many protagonists (and authors) of Jewish or Anglo extraction? How have early male hysterics given rise to the “hysterical realism” as outlined by critic James Wood? Is the shouting, sweaty male the perfect representation of our disastrous times, or is a dose of sane introspection needed to make sense of the world around us? How does the change from early to late hysterical novels reflect our progress from an entirely male-dominated world to a mostly male-dominated one? Do we still need to be reading this stuff?
Lara Vapnyar

**Architecture of a Story**

*(FICTION)*

**Wednesday, 10am-12pm**

We will start the class with the analysis of this famous quote by Alice Munro:

“A story is not like a road to follow... it’s more like a house. You go inside and stay there for a while, wandering back and forth and settling where you like and discovering how the room and corridors relate to each other, how the world outside is altered by being viewed from these windows.”

We will discuss what it is about a story that makes it “more like a house,” and which elements of the story could be considered windows, rooms, or corridors. Then we will examine all the significant types of structure, from traditional to experimental, and study how to determine which structure to choose for a particular type of a narrative.

The readings will include short stories and novels by Alice Munro, Jorge Luis Borges, Vladimir Nabokov, James Baldwin, Margaret Atwood, Ryunosuke Akutagawa, Jennifer Egan, and Elena Ferrante.

Alan Ziegler

**The Writer as Teacher**

*(CROSS-GENRE)*

**Wednesday, 12:05pm-3:05pm**

This is a hybrid course: part seminar and part practicum. We will cover an overview of research into the writing process and the place of the writer in the classroom, and address the pedagogical and editorial skills utilized in eliciting and responding to creative writing including: creating and presenting writing assignments; designing workshops; and presiding over group critiques and individual conferences. We will discuss the teaching of creative writing at all levels (primary and secondary schools, undergraduate and graduate programs), and there will be visits from exemplary practitioners of the art and craft of teaching. In the third hour, we will replicate classroom situations in small groups and individual presentations. (On any given class day, we may use none, some, or all of the third hour.) A wide variety of reading material will be handed out. There will be several short, practical papers (including informal responses to the readings). Attendance and punctuality are essential, as is active participation in class discussions and groups.
Susan Bernofsky

**Word for Word Workshop**

*Thursday, 11am-1:30pm*

The Word for Word workshop offers students the chance to engage in a project of mutual collaborative translation with a partner selected specifically for each student from a French, German, Italian, Portuguese, or Spanish language MFA program. (All participants must know one of these languages at the intermediate level or better.) Over the course of the semester, students will translate short works of fiction, nonfiction, or poetry by their partners while their own work is being translated in the opposite direction. Regular conversations between the partners about the work-in-progress will take place via email and/or video conferencing. Reading assignments and introductory exercises will prepare for and support this work, logs detailing the process of collaboration will be discussed in class, and multiple drafts of the translations will be workshopped. At the end of the semester, participants may compete for a limited number of travel grants to facilitate a visit to the partner’s home country.

Prior translation experience is not required, and students need not be pursuing the LTAC joint course of study. The workshop is designed to serve as an introduction to literary translation and to provide a framework for and coaching through the process of working with an exchange partner. Anyone interested in working in close collaboration with another writer and curious about the ways in which translating and being translated can enrich his or her own writing is encouraged to apply.

Exchange partners this year will come from one of the following institutions: University of Paris XIII (France); Deutsches Literaturinstitut Leipzig (Germany); Scuola Holden, Turin (Italy); Instituto Vera Cruz (Brazil); and NYU’s Creative Writing in Spanish MFA program.

**Note:** Enrollment in this course is by application only. Students will be selected primarily on the basis of the quality of the writing sample they submit for faculty evaluation, with translation experience and skills a secondary consideration. Application instructions will be emailed by Clarence Coo; complete applications must be received by **Wednesday, November 9**. Students will be informed whether they have been accepted into the workshop with their course assignments on November 28.
Alyson Waters

**Literary Translation Workshop**

*Wednesday, 4:10pm-6:40pm*

This workshop is open to students translating from all languages at all levels, from novice to experienced, and in all genres: fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. It is designed to give you or help you refine the tools necessary to be a good translator as well as a good reader of translated literary works, to improve your editing skills in English, and to demonstrate how the art and craft of literary translation can impact your own work as a writer.

Participants may come with a project already in mind, or may work with the instructor to select projects early on that will be workshopped over the course of the term. The focus will be on nuances of style and voice, linguistic play, and methods of representing and producing linguistic and literary innovation in English while remaining “true” to the original. We will have fascinating and heated discussions about what that means!

A good reading knowledge of a second language is desirable, but students with basic second-language skills who are interested in understanding the translation process and the impact it can have on their own writing are also encouraged to register (and to continue improving their second-language skills!) Readings in translation theory and methodology will be assigned throughout the term based on the different languages students bring to class and on their previous readings.
Richard Locke

**Beyond Category: A Survey of Fiction**

*Thu., 2:20pm-4:20pm*

A survey of stories and novels written since the 1880s that demonstrate the energy, variety, strengths, and limitations of different kinds of literary fiction in ways that elude such familiar critical categories as realistic, modernist, and postmodernist. Most of these works are marked by a spirited if often troubling interpenetration of private and public, past and present, and high and low rhetoric. Their forms and themes offer many different kinds of intense self-interrogation driven by narrative circumstances, and many exhibit the self-conscious play with literary conventions and genres that produces a fiction of artifice, anxiety, and artful dodging. These writers changed the form of fiction in ways that still matter.

- Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (Harcourt)
- Samuel Beckett, *The Complete Short Prose* (Grove)
- Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (Vintage)
- Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita* (Vintage)
- Donald Barthelme, *Sixty Stories* (Penguin)
- Grace Paley, *The Collected Stories* (FSG)
- Penelope Fitzgerald, *The Gate of Angels* (Mariner)
- Marguerite Duras, *The Lover* (Harper)
- Gabriel García Márquez, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (Vintage)
- Ben Okri, selections from *Stars of the New Curfew* (Penguin)
Phillip Lopate  

**Columbia Lions**  

*Tuesday, 12:15pm-2:15pm*

This lecture course will give students a chance to hear and engage with some of the premier writers and scholars in the various departments of Columbia and Barnard beyond the School of the Arts. Conversations with these eminent guests, led by Phillip Lopate and opened to questions from the class, will focus on readings assigned from their books. The invited guests will be drawn from the following pool: Nicholas Lemann, Mary Gordon, James Shapiro, Orhan Pamuk, Simon Schama, Lynn Garafola, Eric Foner, Stuart Firestein, Brian Greene, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Colm Toibin, Elizabeth Alexander, Alexander Stille, Edward Mendelson, and Adam Kirsch.

Alice Quinn  

**The Ineffable**  

*Monday, 6:30pm-8:30pm*

Why do lines from poems, scenes from novels, a tone of voice or inquiry from a favorite essay become part of our inner lives, haunting us in good ways, returning to us unbidden or available to us to ponder at will? Of course, this is the magic of very good writing, the result of dedication, high ideals, and hard work. We will read the work of our guests and also literature they recommend that has had this effect on them. So far, we will welcome to class three novelists, three poets, a playwright, and an essayist. They are:

- Sonya Chung
- Colm Toibin
- Wendy S. Walters
- Jesse Browner
- Grace Bonner
- Sarah Ruhl
- Atsuro Riley
- Dennis Nurkse

With more to come.
Originating in 16th-century Spain, the picaresque novel consists of a protagonist who passes through a series of adventures that expose the nature of his or her society, as well as the social and psychological nature of the people he or she encounters. Unlike the coming-of-age novel, the picaresque protagonist undergoes no process of development, and reaches no self-awareness at the end. He or she remains fluid, passing through one isolated event after another, and reflecting on events rather than learning from them. The picaresque hero is, in the words of the British philosopher Galen Strawson, an Episodic rather than a Diachronic. Diachronics believe that each person’s identity remains stable and that each life follows a coherent arc to a significant conclusion. Episodics believe that people change from event to event, from circumstance to circumstance, and that no life adds up to a stable meaning.

In this class we will study the different ways in which picaresque fictions weave a tale without telling a story. We will discuss whether the episodic vision of life as a tale told by an idiot, signifying nothing, is closer to reality than the narrative vision of life as a meaningful story with an orderly beginning, middle and end. Maybe so, maybe not. We will meet The Adventurer and The Flaneur—a keenly observant wanderer through the city—discuss the concept of “transcendence downwards”—disgrace and disbasement yield the biggest truths—and explore the limits of literary art itself. Sartre once said that the fundamental dilemma facing writers is that you cannot reflect on an event and live through it at the same time. The picaresque style presents heroes who, instead of making sense of events, have the dubious, sometimes painful, and always revelatory gift of allowing events to make sense of them.

Examples may include excerpts from or whole works by Apuleius, Cervantes, Defoe, Twain, Melville, Gogol, Kafka, Gide, Henry Miller, Ralph Ellison, Salinger, Mary McCarthy, Kerouac, Saul Bellow, Elizabeth Hardwick, and Knausgaard—with very brief excerpts from the essay “The Adventurer” by the sociologist Georg Simmel, from Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin on the flaneur, and from Sartre thinking through his elegant French dilemma in his own philosophical-picaresque novel, Nausea. Our starting point will be Strawson’s famous essay “Against Narrative,” in which he argues that human existence is essentially episodic—that is to say, essentially picaresque.

One 5-to-10-page paper responding to one or more of the works we have read is required. If students prefer, they may choose instead to write a creative work of similar length inspired by the picaresque style.
Alba Arikha

**Displacement**

*4 sessions (1 point) / Apr. 4 - Apr. 25  Tue., 6:20pm-8:20pm*

The philosopher Emil Cioran once said: I inhabit a language rather than a country. What is the language of displacement and is there more than one? How does displacement translate into words?

In this four-week class we will be looking at nonfiction and fiction narrative and studying the conflict between belonging and displacement, identity and loss. We will examine the overlapping of worlds and the voice it can produce, the straddling of past and present. We will look at the work of writers such as Edmund de Waal (*The Hare with Amber Eyes*), Eva Hoffman (*Lost in Translation*), Primo Levi (*Moments of Reprieve*), W.G. Sebald (*The Emigrants*), Jhumpa Lahiri (*Unaccustomed Earth*), Jeanette Winterson (*Why be happy when you can be normal*), and Nathalie Sarraute (*Childhood*).

Two written assignments inspired by the theme of displacement will be required.

Chris Bannon

**Hearing Voices**

*6 sessions (1.5 points) / Mar. 24 - Apr. 28  Fri., 10am-12pm*

In this class, led by a 25-year radio and podcasting veteran, students will use audio recordings to analyze and create specific character voices. Each week, we’ll listen to anonymous voices from various sources—historic sound archives, radio, recorded live performances, and podcasts—and break down each speaker’s essential character as it’s revealed in speech. Students will use the set of characteristics we develop from that analysis to create a new fictional character each week, and we’ll do close readings of each other’s work as well.
Corinna Barsan

**Revise Like An Editor**

*6 sessions (1.5 points) / Feb. 2 - Mar. 9  Thu., 6:15pm-8:45pm*

The revision process is one of the most important and challenging aspects of writing. In this six-week intensive master class, we will take an editor’s perspective on polishing your work. The class will be structured as a mini-workshop and we will devote most of our time to peer reading and critique with an emphasis on elements of developmental editing as well as line editing. Over the course of the semester, students will submit pages that have been previously workshopped and revised at least once. We will focus on refinement of style, structure, and content. Sentence-by-sentence, paragraph-by-paragraph, we will sharpen your tools for revision. Strong editorial feedback will be shared to help each writer shape and strengthen the material. Additional light reading will be assigned for class discussion but mostly we will concentrate on student work.

Keri Bertino

**Teaching Academic Writing**

*6 sessions (1.5 points) / Mar. 20 - Apr. 24  Monday, 6:15pm-8:15pm*

This class introduces contexts, theories, and practices of teaching college-level writing, with an emphasis on serving diverse student populations. Primary topics include fundamentals of both general and writing pedagogy, assignment and course development, responding to student writing, and exploration of the institutional sites of undergraduate writing. We will take up questions of language and power, the overlaps (and disjunctions) between pedagogies of creative and academic writing, and professionalization in the context of labor conditions.

Some of the concepts that will guide our work include: performances of understanding, backwards planning, scaffolding, transfer, low- and high-stakes writing, writer- and reader-based prose, higher- and lower-order concerns, source use, rhetorical moves, peer review, radical revision, multilingual writing, sentence-level correctness, and rubrics.

Regular reading, research and writing assignments—such as designing writing prompts, responding to sample student essays, constructing syllabus units, and drafting/revising statements of teaching philosophy—will encourage participants to critically reflect on their teaching values and assemble materials that may be used in job applications.
CA Conrad

(Soma)tic Poetry Rituals & Spiritual Crisis

6 sessions (1.5 points) / Jan. 20 - Feb. 24  Fri., 1pm-3pm

In this master class we will work together to construct (Soma)tic poetry rituals that create an “extreme present” for our writing, spaces where we get to focus on nothing but the hidden poems already existing in the world where we stand. As the great poet Alice Notley says, “Poetry’s so common hardly anyone can find it.” (Soma)tic rituals have been used to investigate weekly oil consumption from food purchases, to experience the impact that hearing the word “drone” has on the human body, and to facilitate talking with trees, ghosts, and coping with the destroyed wilderness of our planet. These rituals and their resulting poems will help us see the creative viability in everything around us and help us put an end to our alienation from our planet as well as from one another and ourselves. We will also build individualized rituals for each student in the class to see how writing can be a more integral part of our lives. 95% of poets stop writing due to stress and responsibilities and (Soma)tic rituals show us how to always build bridges back to our creative tools. Creative people are survivors and we will examine the important role of artists for the future health and happiness of our species.

Farnoosh Fathi

Attention at Its Highest Form Is the Same Thing as Prayer

6 sessions (1.5 points) / Mar. 24 - Apr. 28  Fri., 1pm-3pm

What is attention? How do we create it? What does the language of your highest attention look like? What kinds of attention support, or obstruct, your process? In this course we will consider poetry as a meditative art. We will study and create attention with the goal of seeing how it, rather than forced determination toward a particular outcome, can be the real work of writing. To that end, we’ll incorporate practices that deepen our poems, drawing on Hui Neng’s Platform Sutra, Flannery O’Connor’s A Prayer Journal and exercises by Corita Kent. Each class will begin and end with meditative practices—meditative reading, walking, calligraphy, asemic writing, koan cases—and will include writing exercises, discussions of readings, writings and process, culminating in the 1st Wendy Biennial (a performance of our creative work, inspired by Sister Wendy Beckett). Readings will include gathas, canticles and poems by anchorites, Zoroastrians and the anonymous; Rilke, Mistral, Follain, Thomas, Starr Hamilton, Sepehri, and von Bingen; excerpts from Stein’s Stanzas in Meditation and Shantideva’s Bodhicaryavatara; and short selections from Woolf’s The Waves, Beckett’s Texts for Nothing, Lispector’s Agua Viva, Teresa of Avila’s Interior Castle, and Weil’s Gravity and Grace. Kiku Christina Lehnherr, priest and teacher at the San
Francisco Zen Center, will visit via Skype to contribute to our discussion of the complementary practices of Zen and making poems.

Lauren Grodstein

**Plot**

6 sessions (1.5 points) / Jan. 17 - Feb. 21  
*Tue., 6:15pm-8:15pm*

Many authors find, counter-intuitively, that plot is the most challenging part of creating fiction: it’s easy to make up the people, but hard to figure out what to do with them. This is true even though plot is the most elemental part of storytelling, the thing we use when we relay gossip to our friends, tell our partners about our day, or explain the world to our children. This master class will help writers find the tools they need to create compelling plot. Students will study both commercial and literary fiction, examining the mechanics of action and the way that authors build sympathy for their characters and suspense about what’s going to happen to them next. Students will also find the connecting points between character, voice, and plot, and consider the way these crucial elements of fiction relate to one another.

Mitchell Jackson

**Voice in the Personal Essay**

6 sessions (1.5 points) / Jan. 24 - Mar. 7  
*Tue., 6:20pm-8:20pm*  
(no class Feb. 7)

Indeed an essayist’s ideas are tantamount to the power of their work, but ideas alone seldom make writing indelible to readers. Remarkable essays, while evincing an original idea, intelligent reasoning, and felicitous structure are also delivered in such a way that like Susan Sontag’s definition of style, they preserve the works of the mind against oblivion. This voice, or authorial personality, is omnipresent in the telling.

A writer’s voice is made up of qualities that include diction, syntax, sentence length, sentence rhythm, sound, and repetition. Furthermore, many striking voices are developed by a writer’s resistance to the restrictions of power that manifest in the form of literary convention and what can be likened to what critic Harold Bloom explained as the anxiety of influence. This resistance can be viewed as a protest against power structures, which is why we will also examine the ways in which a writer’s voice might be a response to historical influences.

We will examine essays from writers including Joan Didion, John Edgar Wideman, Kiese Laymon, Junot Diaz, David Foster Wallace, and Renata Adler. We will complete short in-class writing and produce one longer essay.
Gillian Linden

**Uneasy for a Time: The Fiction of Interference**

6 sessions (1.5 points) / Mar. 22 - Apr. 26  
*Wed., 10am-12pm*

“Tom wanted to see if his own wild shot would find its mark, and make Jonathan Trevanny, who Tom sensed was priggish and self-righteous, uneasy for a time.”

- *Ripley's Game*

In this class we’ll read books in which characters meddle in the lives of strangers. We’ll look at the relationships that grow out of such interference—the intimacy between people whose connections develop and are sustained by something other than familial ties or romantic love. Some of the relationships might approach something like a friendship, but where this is true the friendship is fraught, strained, eroticized, and, to borrow Ripley’s word, *uneasy*. We’ll examine this uneasiness as though it were a setting, which, in one sense, it is. It forms a backdrop—the atmosphere in which the story unfolds.

The reading will include Patricia Highsmith’s *Ripley’s Game*, Elena Ferrante’s *The Lost Daughter*, and L.P. Hartley’s *The Go-Between*, as well as stories by Lucia Berlin and Robert Aickman. Participants will be asked to create their own scenes and stories involving characters who were recently strangers, and this work will be part of class discussion.

Kamilah Aisha Moon

**The Elegy as Protest Poem**

6 sessions (1.5 points) / Mar. 23 - Apr. 27  
*Thu., 6:45pm-8:45pm*

How do poets and other artists begin to articulate loss, outrage, and grief on a grand scale, distilling universal connections that transcend customs and belief systems? This seminar is an overview of poetry that responds to public tragedy: we will discuss approaches, ethical considerations, and craft choices poets make when responding to various kinds of events (acts of war, gun violence, police brutality, natural disaster, etc.) through art. We will examine poems that employ strategies across aesthetics and poetic impulses, discussing their merits and flaws, as well as the impact poets may have on public consciousness and conscience. These explorations will also entail writing prompts and sharing work in progress as we grapple with some of the most pressing issues of our time. Readings will include work by Lucille Clifton, Ross Gay, Jericho Brown, Alicia Ostriker, Matthew Olzmann, Martin Espada, Bob Hicok, Patricia Smith, Randall Mann, Jack Gilbert, Wisława Szymborska, Tamiko Beyer, and others.
Sigrid Nunez

**Reality Fiction**

6 sessions (1.5 points) / Mar. 21 - Apr. 25   *Tue., 10am-12pm*

Some of the most original fiction being written today is by writers who have become dissatisfied with the novel form and with the conventions of traditional realism such as plot, character, dialogue, and narrative development. For these writers the identity of the writer is always central, and the ideal is a kind of literature that draws meaning not from the telling of any invented story but rather from a voice: the voice of your own personality, in the words of Karl Ove Knausgaard, a life, a face, a gaze you could meet. Readings will include works by Knausgaard, Ben Lerner, Renata Adler, J. M. Coetzee, Edouard Levé, and Chris Kraus.

The written assignment, due at the end of the course, will be in the form of a reader’s journal consisting of brief (1-2 pages) individual reflections on each text.

Joseph O’Neill

**The Political Imagination**

6 sessions (1.5 points) / Feb. 2 - Mar. 9   *Thu., 6:45pm-8:45pm*

This seems like a good time to think about political writing: how may such things as resistance, protest, ideological intervention, indoctrination, and political critique inhabit a work of fiction? Can fiction—or imaginative nonfiction—participate in the events of the day? What sort of artistic activity can respond to the facts of power? We’ll be investigating these and many other urgent questions through a reading of: *The Drapier’s Letters*, by Jonathan Swift; *Castle Rackrent*, by Maria Edgeworth; *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, by Malcolm X/Alex Haley; *The Pet*, by Nadine Gordimer; *Distant Star*, by Roberto Bolaño; and *Elephant*, by Raymond Carver. Students will be asked to write a (very) short fiction that engages with contemporary political realities.

Antonio Prata

**Crônica**

4 sessions (1 point) / Apr. 4 - Apr. 25   *Tue., 6:15pm-8:15pm*

*Crônica* in Spanish, or *crônica* in Portuguese is a literary genre as ubiquitous as it is hard to define. Published every morning in newspapers and magazines all over the world, but especially in Latin America, these short prose texts may vary from anecdote to prose poem, from political satire to love stories. Like The New Yorker’s “Shouts and Murmurs” column, crônicas present a colorful miscellany of literary
offerings in which the big picture can sometimes be revealed by focusing intently on the momentary: Gabriel García Márquez writes about the Cuban revolution’s attempt to produce its own homegrown communist Coca-Cola, Mark Twain explains to his contemporaries how to use an amazing new invention, the telephone, and Clarice Lispector tells of her first terrifying encounter with eternity—while chewing a piece of gum. Many of Latin America’s most notable authors used the crônica as a place to experiment with language and push the boundaries of traditional narrative, unwittingly chronicling their age and its discontents.

In our four classes, we will study this wide-ranging genre in its most striking manifestations and investigate the ways in which the crônica opens up possibilities for artistic expression different from those in other forms of storytelling. Students will be asked to write crônicas of their own. Readings (all in English) to include Gabriel García Márquez, Julio Cortázar, Mark Twain, Etgar Keret, Bill Bryson, Rubem Braga, and Machado de Assis.

Stacy Schiff

**Points of Entry**

4 sessions (1 point) / Mar. 20 - Apr. 17
(no class Apr. 3)

**Monday, 10am-12pm**

Where to begin? At the outset of any longform piece the only thing more daunting than the mass of material is the reader’s slight attention. It’s all about first impressions: in a few crucial paragraphs, the writer sets pace, color, mood. Will her reader swipe right or left? For that matter, will the writer get where she wants to go? Might the story extend differently if unwound from a different angle? We’ll look closely at quiet and high-decibel openings, the head-on and the oblique. Are the early pages meant to stand in for the whole, distill the whole, or frame the whole? How to collar the reader without assaulting her? Is it more effective to start with drama or to edge toward it? We will examine some counterintuitive approaches, among them Nabokov’s biography of Gogol and Richard Holmes’s of Richard Savage, lives which open with their subject’s death (a gambit that Holmes exploits to open a fictional obituary of his nonfictional subject), as well as a self-conscious beginning (Hermione Lee’s *Virginia Woolf*); a set piece (Edmund Morris’s *Theodore Rex*); and a high-wire act of a prologue (Don Delillo’s *Underworld*). In the assignment we attempt alternate routes into our material, to identify how opening gambits define, organize, and introduce expectations for the pages to follow. Readings will also include chapters from Justin Kaplan, V.S. Pritchett, and Janet Malcolm.
Ira Silverberg

The Beats at Columbia

6 sessions (1.5 points) / Jan. 30 - Mar. 6  Monday, 6:15pm-8:15pm

The infamous troika—Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, and William S. Burroughs—were affiliated with Columbia University and its environs.

Beginning with the early collaborative work of Jack Kerouac and William S. Burroughs, *And The Hippos Were Boiled in Their Tanks*, through the film *Kill Your Darlings* that brought the scene to the screen, this course explores their time here and the community and movement known as “The Beats.”

Using primary texts, film (in a variety of forms including features and television interviews), spoken word recordings, and Steven Watson’s *The Birth Of The Beat Generation*, *The Beats at Columbia* will look at the aesthetic and political influence of this prescient post-war group of writers.

Matvei Yankelevich

Creative (Mis)Translation

6 sessions (1.5 points) / Feb. 1 - Mar. 8  Wed., 10am-12pm

Translation is at once a process, a procedure, and a metaphor. The practice of translation brings out our hidden prejudices, our ingrained biases; notions of the literary text that we take for granted come to the foreground and call on us to make crucial choices. The problems of translation translate over to the writing of fiction and poetry. By recuperating volition in the encounter with the authority(ies) present in any given text, the writer finds openings in and through translation. In this course, we’ll explore the generative aspects of translation and mis-translation: how translating might open up new reserves of language for us to mine; how it might loosen our grip on our own voice and let in others; and conversely, how our own language might affect our encounter with a foreign or faraway voice.

The reading for the course will include creative uses of translation (David Cameron’s bad translations of Baudelaire, erasure as translation in Jen Bervin’s reworking of Shakespeare, Christian Hawkey’s conversations with Trakl, Ivan Blatny’s multi-lingual poems); Paul Legault’s English-to-English translation of Emily Dickinson; a handful of writers’ meditations on translation (Pound, Nabokov, Göransson); and a few essays on the theory of translation (Schleiermacher, Benjamin). Through these readings, students will become acquainted with several procedural strategies (homophonic, Oulipian, computer-generated, etc.), and perform some translation exercises along similar lines. Assignments will be focused on short texts or excerpts, no more than a page long. Knowledge of a foreign language is not required.