ALL STUDENTS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SEMINARS AND BEGINNING WORKSHOPS, THOUGH SPACE IS LIMITED. IF THE CLASS IS FULL, ADD YOUR NAME TO THE SSOL WAITLIST AND ATTEND THE FIRST DAY.

STUDENTS MAY TAKE ONLY ONE WORKSHOP PER SEMESTER AND TWO SEMINARS PER SEMESTER.

INTERMEDIATE, ADVANCED & SENIOR WORKSHOPS REQUIRE A WRITING SAMPLE. PLEASE VISIT OUR 609 KENT OFFICE OR OUR WEBSITE AT HTTP://ARTS.COLUMBIA.EDU/WRITING/UNDERGRADUATE FOR INFORMATION ON REGISTRATION PROCEDURES.

BEGINNING WORKSHOPS

WRIT UN 1100  BEGINNING FICTION WORKSHOP

The beginning workshop in fiction is designed for students who have little or no previous experience writing literary texts in fiction. Students are introduced to a range of technical and imaginative concerns through creative exercises and discussions, and eventually produce their own writing for the critical analysis of the class. The focus of the course is on the rudiments of voice, character, setting, point of view, plot, and the lyrical use of language. Students will begin to develop the critical skills that will allow them to read like writers and understand, on a technical level, how accomplished creative writing is produced. Outside readings of a wide range of fiction supplement and inform the exercises and longer written projects.

Instructors
Sec 01 Philip Anderson
Sec 02 Claire Carusillo
Sec 03 Jarrod Harrison
Sec 04 Brian Huselton

WRIT UN 1200  BEGINNING NONFICTION WORKSHOP

The beginning workshop in nonfiction is designed for students with little or no experience in writing literary nonfiction. Students are introduced to a range of technical and imaginative concerns through exercises and discussions, and they eventually submit their own writing for the critical analysis of the class. Outside readings supplement and inform the exercises and longer written projects.

Instructors
Sec 01 Laura J. Palmer
Sec 02 Heather Radke

WRIT UN 1300  BEGINNING POETRY WORKSHOP

The beginning poetry workshop is designed for students who have a serious interest in poetry writing but who lack a significant background in the rudiments of the craft and/or have had little or no previous poetry workshop experience. Students will be assigned weekly writing exercises emphasizing such aspects of verse composition as the poetic line, the image, rhyme and other sound devices, verse forms, repetition, tone, irony, and others. Students will also read an extensive variety of exemplary work in verse, submit brief critical analyses of poems, and critique each other's original work.

Instructor
Sec 01 Gabriela Garcia
Sec 02 Cyree Johnson
INTERMEDIATE WORKSHOPS

WRIT UN 2100  Intermediate Fiction Workshop

Intermediate workshops are for students with some experience with creative writing, and whose prior work merits admission to the class (as judged by the professor). Intermediate workshops present a higher creative standard than beginning workshops, and increased expectations to produce finished work. By the end of the semester, each student will have produced at least seventy pages of original fiction. Students are additionally expected to write extensive critiques of the work of their peers.

Instructors
Sec 01  Diane Cook
Sec 02  Heidi Julavits

WRIT UN 2200  Intermediate Nonfiction Workshop

The intermediate workshop in nonfiction is designed for students with some experience in writing literary nonfiction. Intermediate workshops present a higher creative standard than beginning workshops and an expectation that students will produce finished work. Outside readings supplement and inform the exercises and longer written projects. By the end of the semester, students will have produced thirty to forty pages of original work in at least two traditions of literary nonfiction.

Instructor
Sec 01  Sarah Broom

WRIT UN 2300  Intermediate Poetry Workshop

Intermediate poetry workshops are for students with some prior instruction in the rudiments of poetry writing and prior poetry workshop experience. Intermediate poetry workshops pose greater challenges to students and maintain higher critical standards than beginning workshops. Students will be instructed in more complex aspects of the craft, including the poetic persona, the prose poem, the collage, open-field composition, and others. They will also be assigned more challenging verse forms such as the villanelle and also non-European verse forms such as the pantoum. They will read extensively, submit brief critical analyses, and put their instruction into regular practice by composing original work that will be critiqued by their peers. By the end of the semester each student will have assembled a substantial portfolio of finished work.

Instructor
Sec 01  Anaïs Duplan

ADVANCED WORKSHOPS

WRIT UN 3100  Advanced Fiction Workshop

Building on the work of the Intermediate Workshop, Advanced Workshops are reserved for the most accomplished creative writing students. A significant body of writing must be produced and revised. Particular attention will be paid to the components of fiction: voice, perspective, characterization, and form. Students will be expected to finish several short stories, executing a total artistic vision on a piece of writing. The critical focus of the class will include an examination of endings and formal wholeness, sustaining narrative arcs, compelling a reader's interest for the duration of the text, and generating a sense of urgency and drama in the work.

Instructors
Sec 01  Alexandra Kleeman
Sec 02  Ben Metcalf
WRIT UN 3200  Advanced Nonfiction Workshop

Advanced Nonfiction Workshop is for students with significant narrative and/or critical experience. Students will produce original literary nonfiction for the workshop, with an added focus on developing a distinctive voice and approach.

Instructor
Section 01  Kate Zambreno

WRIT UN 3300  Advanced Poetry Workshop

This poetry workshop is reserved for accomplished poetry writers and maintains the highest level of creative and critical expectations. Students will be encouraged to develop their strengths and to cultivate a distinctive poetic vision and voice but must also demonstrate a willingness to broaden their range and experiment with new forms and notions of the poem. A portfolio of poetry will be written and revised with the critical input of the instructor and the workshop.

Instructor
Section 01  Shane McCrae

SENIOR WORKSHOPS

WRIT UN 3101  Senior Fiction Workshop

Seniors who are majors in creative writing are given priority for this course. Enrollment is limited, and is by permission of the professor. The senior workshop offers students the opportunity to work exclusively with classmates who are at the same high level of accomplishment in the major. Students in the senior workshops will produce and revise a new and substantial body of work. In-class critiques and conferences with the professor will be tailored to needs of each student.

Instructor
Sec 01  Victor LaValle

SEMINARS

WRIT UN 2110  Approaches To The Short Story

The modern short story has gone through many transformations, and the innovations of its practitioners have often pointed the way for prose fiction as a whole. The short story has been seized upon and refreshed by diverse cultures and aesthetic affiliations, so that perhaps the only stable definition of the form remains the famous one advanced by Poe, one of its early masters, as a work of fiction that can be read in one sitting. Still, common elements of the form have emerged over the last century and this course will study them, including point of view, plot, character, setting and theme. John Hawkes once famously called these last four elements the “enemies of the novel,” and many short story writers have seen them as hindrances as well. Hawkes later recanted, though some writers would still agree with his earlier assessment, and this course will examine the successful strategies of great writers across the spectrum of short story practice, from traditional approaches to more radical solutions, keeping in mind how one period’s revolution—Hemingway, for example—becomes a later era’s mainstream or “commonsense” storytelling mode. By reading the work of major writers from a writer’s perspective, we will examine the myriad techniques employed for what is finally a common goal: to make readers feel. Short writing exercises will help us explore the exhilarating subtleties of these elements and how the effects created by their manipulation or even outright absence power our most compelling fictions.

Instructor
Sec 01  Hermione Hoby
WRIT UN 3117  The Here & Now: A Craft Class on Getting Inside Time

In this course, we will read a wide variety of short fiction that concerns itself with the clarification and magnification of particular moments of being. An emphasis will be placed on how these writers notice things that others might overlook—the small, the peculiar, the unexpected—and then how they transform these seemingly modest things with the force of their attention. Our goal will be to proceed through these stories at the level of the sentence. Why this adverb? Why this adjective? Why this sudden flaring into image? Why this quiet pulling back? Much of our discussion will center on why a specific (and at times mysterious-seeming) choice has been made by an author. But we will also from time to time broaden our focus to encompass larger philosophical concerns that are triggered by these questions of craft. We will talk about the science of attention, false and true lyricism, “the discipline of rightness” (as Wallace Stevens once described it) and why it is that feeling so often precedes form. We will not spend very much time exploring the thematic concerns of these stories. Nor will we speak in great detail about whether we find contained within them sympathetic or unsympathetic characters. Instead, the aim of this class will be to analyze the formal elements of fiction with an eye towards refining our own prose styles and towards saying more clearly how it happened that a given text did or did not move us.

Instructor
Lynn Strong

WRIT UN 3119  What Happened Was: Approaches to Plot and Dramatic Structure

Typically, the word "plot" produces either anxiety in writers or a sense of overconfidence. Must a story or a novel have one? When is a plot a plot and not just a series of random events, connected by too much willfulness on the part of the author? How much should coincidence come to bear when designing a plot? Should an overreliance on plot deem a work to be classified as “genre writing” rather than a work of literature? And how, within this context, does one understand F. Scott Fitzgerald’s famous claim that “character is plot, plot is character”? This class will attempt to answer these questions by examining the mechanics of plot, and how a machine can become an art form. The syllabus will include a variety of fictional works ranging the murder mystery to the so-called plotless novel. In-class discussions and writing assignments will focus on the strategies these different novels and stories deploy as a way to understand structure, sustain dramatic irony, and make use of dramatic tension. Readings may also include essays on plot by writers such as E. M. Forster, Elizabeth Bowen, Milan Kundera, and Charles Baxter, among others.

Instructor
Anelise Chen

WRIT UN 3120  The Craft of Writing Dialogue

Whether texting, chatting, conversing, speechifying, recounting, confiding, gossiping, tweeting, praying, interviewing, exhorting, pitching, scheming, lecturing, nagging or begging, humans love to talk, and readers love narratives that contain dialogue. Good dialogue makes characters and scenes feel real and alive. Great dialogue reveals characters’ fears, desires and quirks, forwards the narrative’s plot and dramatic tension, and it often contains subtext. In this course, we’ll read different kinds of novels and stories—from noir to horror to sci-fi to realistic drama to comic romp—that implement various types of dialogue effectively, and we’ll study how they do it. We’ll read essays by masters that explain techniques for writing great dialogue, and we’ll practice writing different styles of dialogue ourselves. Coursework will consist of reading, in-class exercises, and two short creative assignments.

Instructor
Mitchell Jackson
WRIT UN 2211 Traditions In Nonfiction

The seminar provides exposure to the varieties of nonfiction with readings in its principal genres: reportage, criticism and commentary, biography and history, and memoir and the personal essay. A highly plastic medium, nonfiction allows authors to portray real events and experiences through narrative, analysis, polemic or any combination thereof. Free to invent everything but the facts, great practitioners of nonfiction are faithful to reality while writing with a voice and a vision distinctively their own. To show how nonfiction is conceived and constructed, class discussions will emphasize the relationship of content to form and style, techniques for creating plot and character under the factual constraints imposed by nonfiction, the defining characteristics of each author's voice, the author's subjectivity and presence, the role of imagination and emotion, the uses of humor, and the importance of speculation and attitude. Written assignments will be opportunities to experiment in several nonfiction genres and styles.

Instructor
Mark Rozzo

WRIT UN 3210 The Modern Arts Writer

This course will examine the lineaments of critical writing. A critic blends the subjective and objective in complex ways. A critic must know the history of an artwork, (its past), while placing it on the contemporary landscape and contemplating its future. A single essay will analyze, argue, describe, reflect and interpret. And, since examining a work of art also means examining oneself, the task includes a willingness to probe one’s own assumptions and biases. The best critics are engaged in a conversation -- a dialogue, a debate --with changing standards of taste, with their audience, with their own convictions and emotions. The best criticism is part of a larger cultural conversation. It spurs readers to ask questions rather than accept answers about art and society.

We will read essays that consider six art forms: literature; film; music (classical, jazz and popular); theater and performance; visual art; and dance. At the term’s end, students will consider essays that examine cultural boundaries and divisions: the negotiations between popular and high art; the aesthetic of cruelty; the post-modern blurring of and between artist, critic and fan. The reading list will include such writers as Virginia Woolf, George Orwell, Elizabeth Hardwick, Roland Barthes, (literature); James Agee, Manny Farber, Pauline Kael, Zadie Smith (film); G.B. Shaw, Willa Cather, Ralph Ellison, Gerald Early, Lester Bangs, Ellen Willis (music); Eric Bentley, Mary McCarthy, C.L.R. James (theater); Leo Steinberg, Frank O’Hara, Ada Louise Huxtable, Maggie Nelson (visual art); Edwin Denby, Arlene Croce, Elizabeth Kendall, Mindy Aloff (dance); Susan Sontag, Anthony Heilbut, John Jeremiah Sullivan (cultural criticism)

Instructor
Margo Jefferson

WRIT UN 3219 Writing As Collecting

In Writing as Collecting we will examine how the concept of collecting provides a way to think through writing. We will read writing based from art, archives, and other collections, from antiquity to the contemporary, from the commonplace to the rarified. We will consider how writers have written distinctively through a collecting impulse or about specific collections. While our focus will be on works of nonfiction, we will also take forays into fiction, poetry, visual art, and the cinematic essay. Students will present on specific objects or collections, and two classes will take place in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library (located on the 6th floor of Butler Library): the first as an introduction and orientation to the collections with a discussion of how research can feed creative writing, and, the second, for an in-class exercise in writing creatively about an specific object or collection (a book, manuscript, archival box, etc.). Students will be encouraged to write about their own collections and to use the many public (or private) collections found throughout the city of New York.

Instructor
John Vincler
WRIT UN 2311 Traditions in Poetry

"Any fool can get into an ocean/ But it takes a Goddess/ To get out of one." --Jack Spicer

Lyric poetry in contemporary practice continues to draw upon and modify its ancient sources, as well as Renaissance, Romantic and Modernist traditions. In this seminar, we will explore the creation of the voice of the poem, the wild lyrical I, through closely reading female poets from antiquity to present day, beginning with Anne Carson’s translations of Sappho, If Not Winter, all the way up to present avatars and noted stylists such as Mary Jo Bang (Elegy), Tracy K. Smith (Life on Mars), Bernadette Mayer (New Directions Reader), Eileen Myles (Not Me), Maggie Nelson (Bluets) and others. The identity of the poetic speaker remains a tension of revelation and concealment, the inescapable ties to memory and experience as one mode of the lyric, the dramatic tropes of mask and persona as another, though not a necessarily contradictory tendency. Students will be asked to hear a range of current and classic women poets deploying, constructing and annihilating the self: the sonnets of Queen Elizabeth and the American beginnings of Anne Bradstreet; the emergence in the 19th century of iconic and radicalizing female presences: Emily Bronte, Emily Dickinson, Christina Rossetti, Elizabeth Barrett Browning; and the predominance of 20th century masters who re-invented the English-language lyric as much as they inherited: Louise Bogan, Gwendolyn Brooks, H.D., Marianne Moore, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Laura Riding, and Gertrude Stein.

As background, students will read prose works (epistolary writing, journals and diaries, classic essays as well as prose poetry), which may contextualize women’s desire and its reception in public and private space: the religious mysticism of Sor Juana and Catherine di Sienna, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Dorothy Wordsworth’s journals, Emily Dickinson’s letters, and select passages from Virginia Woolf’s criticism and novels. Students will be expected to keep their own reading diary or write letters in response to class readings, as well as select a classic and contemporary female poet for semester-long research. Additional course handouts will be organized by particular groupings of interest to our study of desire & identity, voice & witness: Confessional poetry (Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton), Cave Canem poets (Harryette Mullen and Natasha Tretheway), New York School (Alice Notley and Hannah Weiner), as well as additional contemporary poets (Lynn Melnick and Matthea Harvey).

Instructor
Sec 01 Dorothea “Dottie” Lasky

WRIT UN 3315 Poetic Meter and Form

This course will investigate the uses of rhythmic order and disorder in English-language poetry, with a particular emphasis on ‘formal’ elements in ‘free’ verse. Through a close analysis of poems, we’ll examine the possibilities of qualitative meter, and students will write original creative work within (and in response to) various formal traditions. Analytical texts and poetic manifestoes will accompany our reading of exemplary poems.

Each week, we’ll study interesting examples of metrical writing, and I’ll ask you to write in response to those examples. Our topics will include stress meter, syllable-stress meter, double and triple meters, rising and falling rhythms, promotion, demotion, inversion, elision, and foot scansion. Our study will include a great range of pre-modern and modern writers, from Keats to W. D. Snodgrass, Shakespeare to Denise Levertov, Blake to James Dickey, Whitman to Louise Gluck, etc. As writers, we’ll always be thinking about how the formal choices of a poem are appropriate or inappropriate for the poem’s content. We’ll also read prose by poets describing their metrical craft.

Instructor
Joseph Fasano
WRIT UN 3014  Structure & Style

This seminar explores fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama, as related disciplines. While each genre has its particular opportunities and demands, all can utilize such devices as narrative, dialogue, imagery, and description (scenes, objects, and thought processes). Through a wide variety of readings and writing exercises, we will examine and explore approaches to language, ways of telling a story (linear and nonlinear), and how pieces are constructed. Some student work will be briefly workshopped.

Instructor
Sec 01  Alan Ziegler

WRIT UN 3016  Walking

As Walter Benjamin notes in The Arcades Project: “Basic to flânerie, among other things, is the idea that the fruits of idleness are more precious than the fruits of labor. The flâneur, as is well known, makes ‘studies’.” This course will encourage you to make “studies” – poems, essays, stories, or multimedia pieces – based on your walks. We will read depictions of walking from multiple disciplines, including philosophy, poetry, history, religion, visual art, and urban planning. Occasionally we will walk together. An important point of the course is to develop mobile forms of writing. How can writing emerge from, and document, a walk’s encounters, observations, and reflections? What advantages does mobility bring to our work? Each week you will write a short piece (1-3 pages) that engages your walks while responding to close readings of the assigned material.

Instructor
Sec 01  Jon Cotner

WRIT GU 4015  Women of the World

"Open to juniors and seniors by permission of the instructor - email Prof. Susan Bernofsky (sb3270@columbia.edu) a writing sample (in any genre) and a note explaining your interest in the course material.

Ten years ago, the secretary of the Nobel Prize for Literature jury criticized the United States as being “too isolated, too insular,” saying we “don't translate enough and don't really participate in the big dialogue of literature.” This course is designed to imagine what the “big dialogue” of international writing looks like in 2018 by examining some of the most widely discussed and prize-winning international books by women to come out in English over the past several years. We’ll look for common conversational threads among these works (friendship, estrangement, and exile in particular), but will be reading above all for what we can learn from the artistry of each of these celebrated authors. We’ll also be investigating their reception in the U.S., asking what happens when works are imported into a new cultural context and new set of conversations, including the debates surrounding the translations of several of these works.

Instructor
Susan Bernofsky

WRIT GU 4310  Witness, Record, Document: Poetry and Testimony

This seminar takes up the terms witness, record, and document as nouns and verbs. What is poetry of witness? Documentary poetry? Poetry as (revisionist) historical record? What labor and what ethical, political, and aesthetic considerations are required of poets who endeavor to witness, record, or document historical events or moments of trauma? How is this approach to poetry informed by or contributing to feminist theories, aesthetic innovation, and revisionist approaches to official histories? Course materials include: 1) essays that explore the poetics and politics of "poetry of witness" or "documentary poetry"; 2) a range of contemporary American poetry that has been classified as or has productively challenged these
categories; 3) and audio, video, and photographic projects on which poets have collaborated. Our encounters with this work will be guided by and grounded in conversations about ideas of "truth," "text," the power relations of "documentation," and issues of language and representation in poetry. We will also critically examine the formal (rhyme, rhythm, diction, form, genre, point of view, imagery, etc.) and philosophical components and interventions of the work we study and create.

Instructor
Deborah Paredez