Spring 2020

Coursebook

Workshops  Seminars  Lectures  Master Classes

Updated Feb. 21, 2020
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# WORKSHOPS

## FICTION- THESIS (9 points)

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<td>Paul Beatty</td>
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<td>Anelise Chen</td>
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## FICTION- OPEN (6 points)

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<td>Rachel Sherman</td>
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<td>Joshua Furst</td>
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<td>Sarah Gerard</td>
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<td>Elissa Schappell</td>
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<td>Monique Truong</td>
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<td>Lauren Grodstein</td>
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## NONFICTION- OPEN (6 points)

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<tr>
<td>Leslie Jamison</td>
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POETRY- THESIS (9 points)

Alan Gilbert  
Tue., 6pm-9pm

Shane McCrae  
Wed., 9:30am-12:30pm

Timothy Donnelly  
Wed., 2pm-5pm

Dorothea Lasky  
Thurs., 5:30pm-8:30pm

POETRY- OPEN (6 points)

Deborah Paredez  
Wed., 9:30-12:30pm

Mark Bibbins  
Wed., 2pm-5pm

Lynn Xu  
Fri., 10am-1pm
SEMINARS

—MONDAY—

Rivka Galchen (FI)
Comedy and Calamity
Mon., 10am-12pm

Shane McCrae (PO)
The Period Style
Mon., 10am-12pm

Rob Spillman (FI)
Establishing Authority
Mon., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Kimberly Traube (CG)
Writers You Should Know More About
Mon., 1:30pm-3:30pm

Erroll McDonald (FI)
The Peripheral Writer
Mon., 3:50pm-5:50pm

Joshua Furst (FI)
Sum of Its Parts: Short Story Collections
Mon., 3:50pm-5:50pm

Ira Silverberg (CG)
Culture Wars: Transgressive Literature of the Late Twentieth Century
Mon., 6pm-8pm

Brenda Wineapple (NF)
Turn Every Page: Adventures in the Art of Research
Mon., 6pm-8pm

Anaïs Duplan (PO)
Reading the Reader: The Intermingled Lives of Poetry & Scholarship
Mon., 6:30pm-8:30pm

—TUESDAY—

Monica Ferrell (CG)
The Art of Lying: A Cross-Genre Workshop in Fiction
Tues., 10am-12pm

Ruth Franklin (NF)
Writing Other People’s Lives
Tues., 10am-12pm

Yardenne Greenspan (CG, TR)
Literary Translation Workshop
Tues., 10am-12:30pm

Richard Locke (NF)
Going to Extremes
Tues., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Phillip Lopate (NF)
The City in Literature
Tues., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Monica Youn (PO)
Race, Identity, and Experimentation
Tues., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Richard Ford (FI)
Being Smart on the Page
Tues., 3:50pm-5:50pm

Matvei Yankelevich (CG)
The New Art of Making Books
Tues., 3:50pm-6:20pm

Thom Donovan (CG)
Special Projects Workshop
Tues., 6:30pm-9:30pm

Daphne Merkin (NF)
The Critic’s Eye
Tues., 6:30pm-8:30pm

Seminars and translation workshops are 3 points. Special Projects Workshop is 6 points.

(FI) = Fiction (NF) = Nonfiction (PO) = Poetry (CG) = Cross-Genre (TR) = Translation
—WEDNESDAY—

Xiaolu Guo (FI)
Writing in a Second Language
Wed., 10am-12pm

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

Margo Jefferson (NF)
Cultural Memoir
Wed., 2pm-4pm

Alan Ziegler (CG)
Writer as Teacher
Wed., 2pm-4:45pm

Hilton Als (CG)
Black Male
Wed., 5:15pm-7:15pm

—THURSDAY—

Lynn Melnick (PO)
Feminist Poetry
Thurs., 10am-1pm

Lynn Steger Strong (FI)
The Anti-Social Novel
Thurs., 11am-1pm

Keri Bertino (FI)
Polyphonic Novels
Thurs., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Eli Gottlieb (FI)
Charting the Disturbance: Representations of Madness in Modern Literature
Thurs., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Katrina Dodson (CG, TR)
Word for Word: Translation Workshop
Thurs., 3:50pm-6:20pm

B.K. Fischer (CG)
Comma Sutra: Grammar, Syntax and Praxis
Thurs., 3:50pm-5:50pm

Ben Marcus (FI)
State of the Art: The Future of the Short Story
Thurs., 6:30-8:30

—FRIDAY—

Katrine Øgaard Jensen (TR)
Science Fiction Poetics
Fri., 10am-12pm

Hilton Als (NF)
Wright/Baldwin
Fri., 2pm-4pm

Joshua Edwards (PO)
English-Language International Poetry and Publishing Cultures
Fri., 2pm-4pm

Seminars and translation workshops are 3 points. (FI) = Fiction (NF) = Nonfiction (PO) = Poetry (CG) = Cross-Genre (TR) = Translation
LECTURES

—TUESDAY—
Wendy S. Walters
International Nonfiction
3:50-5:50pm

—WEDNESDAY—
Alice Quinn
The Beauty and Power of the Sentence in Prose and Poetry
5:15pm-7:15pm

—THURSDAY—
Richard Locke
Beyond Category: A Survey of Fiction
1:10pm-3:10pm
MASTER CLASSES

—MONDAY—

Peg Boyers
Throwing Our Voices: Translation and Ventriloquism for Vampires and Writers
Mon., 2pm-4pm
3/23/20-4/13/20

—TUESDAY—

Nicholas Delbanco
Strategies in Prose
Tues., 10am-12pm
3/24/20-4/28/20

Amy Grace Loyd
The Editing Cycle
Tues., 6pm-8pm
3/24/20-4/28/20

—WEDNESDAY—

Jason Gots
Narrative Podcasting
Wed., 10am-12pm
1/29/20-3/4/20

Jon Cotner
Walking
Wed., 10am-12pm
3/25/20-4/29/20

Benjamin Taylor
Inner Life and How to Reveal It
Wed., 2pm-4pm
3/25/20-4/29/20

Kate Bolick
Personal Anthropology: Reporting in the First Person
Wed., 5:15pm-7:15pm
1/29/20-3/4/20

Dan Kois
Magazine Writing
Wed., 5:15pm-7:15pm
2/5/20-3/11/20

Madhu Kaza
Kitchen Table Translation
Wed., 5:15pm-7:15pm
3/25/20-4/29/20

—THURSDAY—

Jaime Green
The Book-Length Essay
Thurs., 10am-12pm
3/26/20-4/30/20
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<td>(Soma)tic Poetry Rituals</td>
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<td>Revise Like an Editor</td>
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<td>Gabe Hudson</td>
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<td>Rebecca Godfrey</td>
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<td>Fri., 2pm</td>
<td>Etymology for the Loquacious, the Curious, and the Word-Shy</td>
<td>Judith Hall</td>
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In 1994, the Whitney Museum of American Art sponsored a landmark exhibition: “Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art.” Curated by Thelma Golden, now the Director and Chief Curator at the Studio Museum in Harlem, the show exposed a number of viewers to that complex, troubling figure in American art and literature: the black male.

As the catalogue’s editor, I was very moved to discover, while reading and working on the essays, all this diversity within the diversity. The cultural critic Greg Tate on black genius, bell hooks on feminism vis a vis the black male, Elizabeth Alexander on Rodney King, and Golden herself on her professional and personal relationship to black masculinity—all important, vibrant voices that contributed to, and changed, the ways in which we looked and did not look at maleness, race, fraternity, fracture.

In “Black Male,” we will examine this figure as he’s presented in fiction, non-fiction, poetry, theatre, film, and art. What is it about his “Africanist presence,” as Toni Morrison has it, that troubles, disturbs, frustrates, and enlightens when it comes to America in general and American literature and art in particular? Is he an “invisible man,” or symbolic of violence? Invented, or free? What do the deaths of Eric Garner, Trayvon Martin, and the irresistible rise of Barack Obama and near-iconic status of civil rights activist John Lewis tell us about the society that alternately nurtured and killed these men and others?

In this course, we will deal with the short fiction and non-fiction of Richard Wright and James Baldwin. Following their first meetings in the early nineteen-forties, Wright was a mentor to the younger writer who, eventually, considered him a complicated and troubling ally. While both men put race and relationships at the center of their work, we will analyze how those subjects not only informed their world view, but their personal lives as well.

Classroom discussion is key. There will be three papers assigned.

What does it mean to de-center narrative authority—in the novel, in the world? As readers and citizens, how do we respond to the richness and tension that inevitably arises from multiple perspectives? As writers, how do we conjure and orchestrate voices that resonate, harmonize, and clash with one another? And what are the opportunities and responsibilities we face in
representing voices and perspectives close to and far from our own? In this course on polyphonic novels, we’ll engage with these questions and many others, through particular examination of point-of-view, voice, structure, and thematic development in texts with multiple perspectives. Our readings may include:


Alongside our exploration of polyphony in texts, we’ll also experiment with polyphony in the classroom. The course will incorporate the voices of guest speakers from the fields such as theater, music and installation art, of writers and teachers engaged in questions of representation in fiction, as well as authors whose work we’ll study. Students should anticipate a particularly active and varied responsibility in shaping weekly class meetings—for example, by introducing additional texts and voices that will enrich and complicate our discussions, by explaining individual approaches to our reading, or by orchestrating brief small-group activities that help us dive more deeply (and playfully) into the questions at hand. Throughout, students will craft their own creative work using multiple voices or perspectives, and reflect on their authorial choices.

Anaïs Duplan

**Reading the Reader: The Intermingled Lives of Poetry & Scholarship**

Mon., 6:30pm-8:30pm

The reader—a collection of photocopied pages that have been bound together—is a standard object of academic study. Pages from disparate texts are removed from their original contexts and juxtaposed with other texts from a range of authors, eras, and perspectives. Together, these disparate voices purport to elaborate on a given object of study, e.g. “Digital media usage in the 21st century” or “the concept of Afro-Asian unity in the Black British feminist movement.” Standard as it is, we can consider the reader as a product of scholarly collage, itself a creative act.

Revolving around Adam Pendleton’s Black Dada Reader, which combines the words of Ad Reinhardt, William Pope.L, Adrienne Edwards, Gertrude Stein, Sun Ra, LeRoi Jones, and W.E.B. DuBois, this course considers the poetic implications of cutting-up, compilation, and juxtaposition. Furthermore, it deliberately conflates academic study with artistic production, as does Pendleton’s Reader, troubling notions of production: where does production occur? How do we know? What are the ‘products’ of study? How do poems emanate from—and become sites of—study? In addition to reading the Reader and the poetry of Fred Moten, Harryette Mullen, Norman Pritchard, Myung Mi Kim, and others, participants will be tasked with continually contributing photocopied materials to a growing, group library and toward the completion of individual experimental research projects.
Joshua Edwards

**English-Language International Poetry and Publishing Cultures**

Fri., 2pm-4pm

***POETRY***

There has been much discussion in the U.S. literary community in the past decade about the sad fact that less than 3% of books published in the United States are translations (the percentage for literature in translation is closer to 1%), but little has been made of the increasing nationalism of U.S. poetry and the barriers that keep poetries separated by borders, despite passageways of the internet and international friendships. In this course we’ll set out to investigate contemporary poetry by English-language (and multi-language) writers who are not known in the United States. Students will begin with anthologies and historical studies, and then do intensive research in order to deepen our knowledge of the poetry communities of Jamaica, New Zealand, Canada, Nigeria, Belize, Singapore, India, South Africa, Australia, the UK, Ireland, and elsewhere, with the goal of finding a living poet yet unknown to readers in the United States, in order to publish a full-length collection of their work with Canarium Books. Besides students’ research projects and presentations, we’ll also read work by poets who have challenged notions of poetic nationality and discuss how innovations of form, politics, and subjectivity travel and transform. In addition, our inquiries will hope to shed light on how lasting communities form in concert with small presses, political movements, schools, emerging publishing technologies, and so on.

Monica Ferrell

**The Art of Lying: A Cross-Genre Workshop in Fiction**

Tues., 10am-12pm

***CROSS-GENRE***

This is a workshop-format course in the reading and writing of fiction for poets and nonfiction writers who are interested in developing their skills in a second genre. Every week we will investigate a different aspect of craft, including how to establish authority and credibility, narrative voice, vividness, recurring imagery, character and plot, and structure from a fiction writer’s perspective. We will begin the semester by investigating how authors choose to open novels and stories, how one can get a story to move forward, and how sonic patterning operates in various prose works. We will read short fiction by Kate Braverman, Denis Johnson, Clarice Lispector, Carmen Maria Machado, Daniyal Mueenuddin, and George Saunders, among others, as well as two novels, the Lydia Davis translation of Gustave Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* and Ben Lerner’s *Leaving the Atocha Station*. Along the way, we will write three of our own stories—a flash fiction, a shorter story, and a longer story—all of which will come up for workshop. **This course is open to Nonfiction and Poetry students only.**

B.K. Fischer

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

Thurs., 3:50pm-5:50pm

***CROSS-GENRE***

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 principles 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 practice in poetry and prose, including patterns of syntax, point of view, polysemy, closure, disjunction, the non sequitur, parataxis and hypotaxis, deixis, the subjunctive, vernaculars, and code-switching. Our analysis of grammar will dovetail with theoretical perspectives beyond subject and predicate, drawing insights from linguistics, cultural studies, feminist theory, race theory, ethics, activist politics, aesthetics, and media studies. We will dissect and revel in sentences by Virginia Woolf, Claudia Rankine, Henry James, Nathaniel Mackey, Marilynne Robinson, Emily Dickinson, Teju Cole, Jorie Graham, Taiye Selasi, Layli Long Soldier, and Vampire Weekend, among many other writers, and read essays by Nietzsche, M. NourbeSe Philip, Cecilia Vicuña, Gloria Anzaldúa, Hélène Cixous, Giorgio Agamben, Lyn Hejinian, and others. Taking the form of a sūtra—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 (or any non-linguistic) elements, and a final paper of approximately five pages.

Richard Ford

**Being Smart on the Page**

**FICTION**

This seminar is a reading course in which we’ll look at (mostly) novels and stories—but some practical critical-essays, too—and try to identify in this work opportunities seized for creating new intelligence. The premise is that readers (me, in particular) come to imaginative literature to encounter new intelligence, and that fiction performs this seeming magic using all of its formal features. The hope is that writers in the course will be moved to create new intelligence in their own work.

Ruth Franklin

**Writing Other People’s Lives**

**NONFICTION**

As writers, we’re often told to draw from our own experience. But the practice of getting inside another person’s head—and the radical empathy generated by trying to see the world from a perspective different from ours—can be invaluable. In this course, we’ll dig deep into the ethics and the practice of writing the lives of others, in forms such as biography, memoir, and profile. Topics will range from the practical—identifying sources, refining interview techniques, analyzing structure—to the philosophical. Who decides whose lives are worth writing about, and how have the criteria that inform those decisions changed over time? What should be taken into consideration when writing about the living or when dealing with a subject’s family members? What makes us imagine that we can ever know what goes on in someone else’s mind, anyway? Readings will include works by Robert Caro, Carolyn Heilbrun, Janet Malcolm, Saidiya Hartman, James Atlas, and other contemporary practitioners and analysts of biography.
How can a collection of stories cohere into more than the sum of its parts? The best story collections are more than simply collections of stories.

Writers who have dedicated any portion of their attention to writing short stories eventually arrives at a moment when they wonder, is this a book? Sometimes this question is answered by the simple fact that the writer has accumulated enough stories to justify lassoing them together. But the best story collections strive for something more than this. They build relationships and arcs of experience for the reader out of their seemingly randomly connected parts. They create a larger unity.

In this course, we will look at the variety of tactics writers have used to create unity in their story collections. We’ll study examples of collections built around place, milieu, character, conceit, idea, theme, and combinations of more than one of these aspects of fiction. We’ll explore the ways that aesthetic relationships develop from story to story within single collections and the ways that writers can sometimes use contrasting storytelling techniques to arrive at broad and sometimes surprising connections.

Students will explore, both in writing and classroom conversation, their ideas for unified collections of their own.

Readings may include, Bruno Schultz, Isaac Babel, Ernest Hemmingway, Mary McCarthy, Italo Calvino, Grace Paley, Toni Cade Bambara, Denis Johnson, JM Coetzee, and more.

Eugene Ionesco said, “I never understood the difference between the comic and the tragic… when I thought I’d written a comedy, people cried, and when I thought I’d written a tragedy, people laughed.” This course will investigate the relationship between laughter and lament, between the madcap and the mournful. How is it that Muriel Spark’s The Girls of Slender Means reads at once as a caper and a concatenation of brutalities? In what ways are The Good Soldier Svejk by Jaroslav Hasek and Catch-22 By Joseph Heller among the most honest novels about war?

What connects a comic “turn” and the turn we catch sight of in the etymology of “adversity” (from adversus “turned against”)? Why does Kafka make us laugh? Why has that laughter so often been overlooked?

In considering novels, essays, poems, stories and plays that embody the special relationship of the comic to the catastrophic, we will examine the various ways in which comedy functions as a strategy for survival, and we will also think about when and why a comic view might be excluded.
Eli Gottlieb
Charting the Disturbance: Representations of Madness in Modern Literature
Thurs., 1:10pm-3:10pm
FICTION

This is a seminar designed to shed light on modern literature that is either explicitly inspired by madness or purports to speak in the voice of madness itself. A subject like this is rich in cultural implications and we will inevitably discuss the ways in which the definition of madness has changed over time. Mainly, however, we will dig into the means by which madness is embodied in literature and will do by focusing on fiction rather than memoir or poetry. In the process, we will attempt to supply answers to the questions: how can the sober sequence of grammar and word choice summon the wild darkness of extreme mental conditions? And how can narrative represent a state of mind which so often exists out of time and plunged in chaos? Emphasis will always be on the technical means that great authors use to achieve their effects. The seminar will be highly interactive and course readings may include excerpts and short stories from the works of Toni Morrison, Thomas Bernhard, Jeanette Winterson, Yiyun Li, Sylvia Plath, Jean Rhys, Binnie Kirshenbaum, Elena Ferrante, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Ian McEwan, and Oyinkan Braithwaite. A short analytical essay or creative exercise will be required at the end of the semester.

Xiaolu Guo
Writing in a Second Language
Wed., 10am-12pm
FICTION

This course focuses on the work of authors writing in a second language as part of migrant literature. We will look at authors who express themselves in a non-native tongue and thus in a hybrid voice, such as Joseph Conrad, Eva Hoffman, Gao Xinjian, Ha Jin, Aleksandar Hemon, Elif Shafak, and more. I will also use my own writing, after leaving China, as an instance of adopting English as a mode of expression. Through this course we will explore questions such as: After exile and migration, how does a writer continue to survive with intellectual and emotional integrity? How do writers construct a language hybrid, creating a literary terrain of their own? What’s the relationship between a writer’s first and second language?

The final weeks of the course will be devoted to students’ practice in their own languages (either their first, second or third language).

For each class session, students are required to do a close reading of selected pieces beforehand and then to participate in discussion on the chosen material. The first assignment will be a short (3-5 pages) exploration of double identity and hybridity in a chosen author’s work. The next assignment will focus on your own writing explorations (3-5 pages), in which you can draw on your own particular cultural or ethnic background, sub-cultural connections, generational differences, or use of different linguistic skills. For the final project (5-10 pages), you will reflect on the course and produce a piece of creative writing, either fiction or nonfiction. Students will be evaluated on the basis of their written work, class participation and discussion.

REQUIRED READINGS:
Lost in Translation by Eva Hoffman, Borderlands by Gloria Anzaldúa, The Woman Warrior by Maxine Hong Kingston, The Writer as Migrant by Ha Jin, The Lazarus Project by

Margo Jefferson  
**Cultural Memoir**  
Wed., 2pm-4pm  
NONFICTION

This course will look at works that explore the spaces between what we call the personal and what we call the cultural and social. How do we examine ourselves through historical movements and art forms, through landscapes and artifacts, even through ephemera? How do we probe the relations between our private and public selves? How do we shift from being central narrators and personae to being impersonal observers, listeners, curators? The syllabus will include memoirs, essays, experimental criticism, and fiction.

Richard Locke  
**Going to Extremes**  
Tues., 1:10pm-3:10pm  
NONFICTION

These eleven books imitate, appropriate, crossbreed, and deploy a great variety of literary forms. In addition to narrative design, character development, and patterns of metaphor and imagery, they draw on memoir, personal essay, travel writing, profile, polemic, meditation, reportage, biography, history, and literary and cultural commentary. They conspicuously exult in the flexibility of fiction and nonfiction since the turn of the 20th century. Most are also obsessed with history – intensely responsive to the contentious interaction of past and present, tradition and innovation — and often set a character on a quest that is both desperately personal and culturally combative.


Phillip Lopate  
**The City in Literature**  
Tues., 1:10pm-3:10pm  
NONFICTION

This seminar will surround the ways that writers try to convey the vitality and pulse, the highs and lows of city life. We will read urban sketches, diaries, poems and short stories; delve into walk literature, profiles of ordinary city-dwellers, the rhythm of a neighborhood in a single day; explore interiors such as bars, theaters, subways, opium dens, hotels, and tail foreign visitors writing ambivalent travel pieces. While the main focus will be New York City, there will also be excursions to London, Paris, Berlin, and Tokyo.
Some of the authors you may expect to appear on the syllabus include:


Ben Marcus

**State of the Art: The Future of the Short Story**

**FICTION**

Thurs., 6:30-8:30

This craft seminar will consider where the short story has been, what it is now, and where it might be going. What will the short story be like in fifty years? In what ways has the short story today progressed from short stories of the past? In other words, how does this strange, flexible, vital form change, and how can we relate these changes to the development of our own fiction?

This, then, is as much a course about the progress and future of a literary art form as it is about the way our own work changes over time and how we might take a more deliberate role in that growth.

We will examine the subtle ways the short story reflects, if not the news of the day, then the literary styles and values that circulate and influence us more subtly, and in speculating about the future of the art form, we will assess our own ambitions as writers: where are we taking our own work, how are we responding to the challenges of the present historical moment, literary or otherwise, and how might we advance, or otherwise put our stamp on, this form?

Our readings will cover a broad range of aesthetic approaches. We will look at influential short stories from the past few decades, compelling models from today, along with some stories that will be published during the semester—simply to take the most current pulse of the art form. We also may read some literary position papers and manifestos in order to get a sense of how writers and critics have articulated a variety of literary value systems.

Students will engage in discussion, and, most importantly, work on aspects of their craft in several writing exercises throughout the semester.

Here’s a partial list of the writers we may read this term: NoViolet Bulawayo, Carmen Maria Machado, Miranda July, Bryan Washington, Zadie Smith, Charles Yu, Ottessa Moshfegh, Jen George, Jesse Ball, Kazuo Ishiguro, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Yiyun Li, Deborah Eisenberg, Lydia Davis, Said Sayrafiezadeh, Jesse Ball, Joy Williams, Lucy Corin, George Saunders, Sam Lipsyte, Chinelo Okparanta, Denis Johnson, Catherine Lacy, Wells Tower, Lorrie Moore, Rachel Glaser, Rebecca Curtis, Rivka Galchen, Greg Jackson, Emma Cline, Justin Torres, Deb Olin Unferth, Kelly Link, Alice Munro, Karen Russell, Helen DeWitt, Etgar Keret, Ted Chiang, Alice Sola Kim, Helen Oyeyemi, Yoko Ogowa, and Dorthe Nors.
Shane McCrae

The Period Style
Mon., 10am-12pm

What makes us what we are as poets? How much do we choose, and how much is chosen for us? Is self-expression self-determined, or is each of us trammeled by the period in which we express ourselves? And does—and if so, to what extent—what makes us what we are change over time? In this seminar/workshop we will read and discuss our way through 20th-century American poetry, decade by decade, starting in the 1900s and ending in the 2000s, in an effort to determine the most important aspects of the dominant poetic style of each decade. Students will be required to submit a poem each week in the style of the decade under consideration.

Over the course of the semester, we will read poems by Elizabeth Alexander, Lucille Clifton, Rita Dove, Paul Dunbar, H.D., Marosa di Giorgio, Jean Garrigue, Cathy Park Hong, Susan Howe, Kim Hyesoon, Amy Lowell, Marianne Moore, Lorine Niedecker, Carl Phillips, Sylvia Plath, Priscilla Sneff, Trumbull Stickney, Sara Teasdale, Dunstan Thompson, Jean Toomer, and others. And by the end of the semester every one of those names will mean something to you, and you will have written poems in styles that speak to theirs.

Erroll McDonald

The Peripheral Writer
Mon., 3:50pm-5:50pm

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.

Lynn Melnick
**Feminist Poetry**
Thurs., 10am-12pm
POETRY

Intended for all genders, this class will focus on feminist poetry: what it is, where it’s been, and what’s next. We will begin with proto-feminist poets like Phillis Wheatley, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Christina Rosetti, and move on to works by poets writing in the decades before second-wave feminism such as Gertrude Stein, Alice Moore Dunbar-Nelson, Edna St. Vincent Millay, H.D., Sylvia Plath, and Gwendolyn Brooks. We’ll look at second wave poets like Audre Lorde, Adrienne Rich, June Jordan, and Ai, and continue with the third wave poets such as Lorna Dee Cervantes, Marilyn Chin, Joy Harjo, Danielle Pafunda, and Carmen Giménez Smith. Finally, we’ll read an array of emerging feminist voices, including Tarfia Faizullah, Cathy Linh Che, Chase Berggrun, and Vanessa Angélica Villarreal. As we dive into the poetry we will also consider key political and cultural movements surrounding women and feminism that influenced the poets writing in their eras.

Each week, students will be expected to write a poem based on a prompt inspired by the week’s reading; a poetry portfolio of these revised assignments will be due at the end of the semester.

Daphne Merkin
**The Critic’s Eye**
Tues., 6:30pm-8:30pm
NONFICTION

In an age where tweets and quickie reviews stand in for serious reactions to books, literary culture is in crying need of sustained and reflective criticism. As Theodor W. Adorno wrote, “Culture is only true when implicitly critical, and the mind which forgets this revenges itself in the critics it breeds. Criticism in an indispensable element of culture.” Although it is often seen as a secondary practice, literary criticism is in fact an art as much as other kinds of writing and requires a lot of practice and skill to master. This course will devote itself to developing and instilling precisely such a response to various assigned readings. We will focus on books and essays by critics such as Eric Auerbach (MIMESIS), Frank Kermode, Vladimir Nabokov, and Cynthia Ozick and on novels such as Virginia Woolf’s *To The Lighthouse*, Ford Maddox Ford’s *The Good Soldier*, and Joan Didion’s *Play It As It Lays*. We will also read one or two memoirs and a selection of poetry. Students will be asked to write a piece of sustained criticism of their own in response to one of the readings, which we will discuss in class.

Katrine Øgaard Jensen
**Science Fiction Poetics**
Fri., 10am-12pm
TRANSLATION, CROSS-GENRE

If you wish to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first invent the universe.
—Carl Sagan
Science fiction is the literature of the human species encountering change. It is the literature of the Other, of philosophy and ideas, of innovation and experimentation. This seminar will examine how poets and writers from around the world have imagined alternate realities and futures, linguistic inventions, and new poetic expressions inspired by science. We will discuss what these imaginings might tell us about the cultural and political presents in which they were conceived, as well as what the extreme conditions offered by science fiction might teach us about writing into the unknown.

Topics will include astroecology and apocalyptic eco-poetics, extraterrestrial aphrodites, monstrous and pregnant bodyscapes, cyborgs and multispecies speculations, indigenous aliens, space exploration and colonization, future creoles and the evolution of language, biopoetics and crystalline formations, immortal texts, illuminated codices, and global futurisms—from the European Futurists of the early 20th century to Afropfuturism, as well as recent figurations such as Gulf Futurism and Islamofuturism.


Ira Silverberg
**Culture Wars: Transgressive Literature of the late Twentieth-Century**
Mon., 6pm-8pm

Beginning with the premise that the margins of our culture define the mainstream rather than the reverse, this forum surveys mid to late twentieth-century writers who challenged the status quo to catch up. With a particular emphasis on American writers such as Kathy Acker, William Burroughs, Sapphire, Hubert Selby, and Valerie Solanas, most of the assigned texts are driven by voice—the voice of the outsider. Many of the books, including novels, memoirs, and stage work; some formally adventurous or “experimental,” are written by those who have lived on the edge—junkies, prostitutes, criminals, victims of abuse; or Queer before it was spelled with a capital Q. While the label “other” is usually based on ethnicity, sexual and/or gender identification, sexual “deviance,” mental health; or politics; those labeled as such evolve as the society does.

Many are “mainstreamed” as their once “marginalized” voices are heard, published, and validated. Some springboard to a place of privilege and centrality in a culture that once eschewed and victimized them. So what does “marginal” or “outsider” mean today? This is the quest here. Students will be required to write one paper and present multimedia biographical portraits of the writers studied to the class.

Rob Spillman
**Establishing Authority**
Mon., 1:10pm-3:10pm
From the first sentence, we know if we are in confident, capable hands. The best writers establish authority immediately. By authority I mean that there is a clear sense of control, and that this confidence is earned with particular language, tone, detail, cadence, and, most importantly, by creating urgency, a simple question of “why should I keep reading?”

Take the opening of Jim Shepard’s story “Boys Town”: “Here’s the story of my life: whatever I did wasn’t good enough, anything I figured out I figured out too late, and whenever I tried to help I made things worse.” Immediately we realize that this is a masterful writer using words as a weapon, that each word is placed exactly where it is intended, that the rhythms speak to a musicality that is in concert with the narrator and the action. We are propelled sentence to sentence by this musicality and we want to know more about the narrator and why he considers himself such a fatalistic mess.

No matter the form or genre; first, second, or third person; past or present; speculative or hyper-realistic; fiction, poetry, or nonfiction; establishing authority is the first and most important task of the writer. We will look at numerous first pages across forms, including work from Karen Russell, Jesmyn Ward, Joe Wenderoth, Lydia Davis, and dozens more. We’ll also take a close look at the entirety of Robert Stone’s story “Helping,” paying attention to how Stone’s strong beginning establishes authority and how every detail of this passage pays off throughout the story.

We will look at mostly successful and some unsuccessful openings, and analyze how the author has or hasn’t firmly captivated the reader.

The seminar will include workshopping openings from students, close reading of openings across genres and forms, exercises, and revisions. With the close readings, we will subject the texts to the same cold reading standard I have at Tin House, where we received upwards of 20,000 submissions a year.

Homework will also include students bringing in successful openings, from the famous to the newly discovered.

Lynn Steger Strong
The Anti-Social Novel
Thurs., 11am-1pm
FICTION

In her article in the New York Times, entitled “Have You Read any Anti-Social Novels Lately,” Megan O’Grady poses the question, “Collectively, we’ve written and read so much about ourselves, it bears asking what we’ve learned from our long period of reflection and self-searching. What good has it done us, all this thinking?” She goes on to describe this idea of the Anti-Social Novel (a wholly made-up term) as follows, “This new, less dilatory mode doesn’t ask to be understood, but haunts us with a bleakly dead-on, diffident humor about the pain of being alive. It doesn’t perambulate, but plummets with the graceful inevitability of a shot bird. It features characters, mostly women clinging to the edge of the map, who fail to act in their own best interests, who don’t have the kind of self-belief that would allow them to find grandeur in their private struggles.” The idea that all the navel gazing of the contemporary novel has gotten us exactly nowhere is not new.

In her 2008 essay about Joseph O’Neil’s Netherland (an exceedingly inward looking book) and Tom McCarthy’s Remainder (a book that does not look inside the narrator nearly at all), Zadie Smith suggests that the future of the novel might involve books that look as much at the larger
systems and structures that define and control our interiority as they do our hearts and minds. In this class, we will consider books that re-define and upend the primacy of interiority: what do feelings matter if you’re imprisoned during the Second World War? What is intellectual acuity worth in the face of extreme climate change? How are systems as much the creators of our wants and needs as they are the result?

We’ll read books from various countries, written under various systems of governance and belief, in order to consider not just the systems under which we currently live, but how humans more broadly have been informed and controlled and overcome by factors beyond their control, and what literature’s role in that has been and might become.

Readings include: *Incidents in The Life of a Slave Girl*, Harriet Jacobs; *Pesthouse*, Jim Crace; *The Time of the Doves*, Merce Rodoreda; *Kaddish For an Unborn Child*, Imré Kertész; *My Year of Rest and Relaxation*, Otessa Mosfegh; *Remainder*, Tom McCarthy; *The Mars Room*, Rachel Kushner; *The Periodic Table of the Elements*, Primo Levi; *The Vegetarian*, Han Kang; *Parable of the Sower*, Octavia Butler; *Skylark*, Deszlo Kosztolanyi; *Preparation for the Next Life*, Atticus Lish; *The Magic Mountain*, Thomas Mann; Listen: “Evening at the Talkhouse,” Wallace Shawn

Kimberly Traube
**Writers You Should Know More About**

Mon., 1:30pm-3:30pm  CROSS-GENRE

These six authors, from Colombia (Mutis), Cuba (Montero; Alberto), Guatemala (Monterroso), Peru (Roncagliolo), and Spain (Ríos), all expatriates, are well known and highly respected in many parts of the world, but not in the United States. The aim of this course is to introduce you to representative works in the hope that you will continue to explore their writing. Eight of the books are novellas; one is a collection of short stories; three are novels.

There are three required papers, three pages each. Late papers are not accepted. As you know, attendance is mandatory. Active participation in class discussions is expected.

Lara Vapnyar
**Architecture of a Story**

Wed., 10am-12pm  FICTION

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.

Brenda Wineapple
**Turn Every Page: Adventures in the Art of Research**
Mon., 6pm-8pm

This hybrid seminar (seminar/workshop) provides an introduction to the research methods practiced by nonfiction, fiction, and poetry writers who incorporate historical, documentary, or other primary and secondary materials into their work. We discuss public, archival and electronic sources (where to find them, what to do with them) as well as reportorial and other techniques for gathering, organizing, filing, synthesizing, and ultimately using such material— and the actual ethics involved in finding, reporting, and using. We begin with an overview of method and technique, answering how we imagine what materials or sources we need, how we go about locating them, what we do with the material we discover and how we evaluate it; we do so with readings from such authors as Janet Malcolm, Arlette Farge, John McPhee, and Robert Caro. We’ll apply their means and methods directly to our work, which we’ll be discussing in workshop format, to see how best to integrate our findings and our response to these findings into our stories.

Matvei Yankelevich
**The New Art of Making Books**
Tues., 3:50pm-6:20pm

In 1975, in a manifesto titled “The New Art of Making Books,” Ulises Carrión suggested that rather than making texts, “the writer makes books” and “assumes the responsibility for the whole process.” This course takes up that challenge, focusing on the book’s potential (and phenomenology) as an art object and—simultaneously—as a container of and vessel for literary texts. To that end, we will investigate both practical and theoretical aspects of the invention, design, and the making of books, with special emphasis on issues of book structure, editorial practice, DIY production tactics, divergent histories, distribution strategies, and the social nature of the small press endeavor.

To provide context for our investigation and our own book-making endeavors, we will survey the history of the artist’s book, and the literary artist’s book in particular, beginning with the illustrated books of William Blake and William Morris, the livre d’artiste tradition, and the avant-garde book from Blaise Cendrars and Sonia Delaunay’s Prose of the Trans-Siberian to Russian Futurist pamphlets.

Twenty-first-century experimentation in literary form will also be considered, with particular focus on visual writing (from Bob Brown to Gabriel Pomerand and Letrisme), “asemic writing” (Henri Michaux, Mirtha Dermisache), typographic experimentation (Concrete Poetry), appropriation strategies (from Bern Porter’s Founds to Heimrad Bäcker’s documentary poetics), and the departure of the text from the book (Alan Kaprow’s happenings, Ian Hamilton Finlay’s poetry garden, Lev Rubinstein’s library cards).

The work of contemporary artists/writers (Johanna Drucker, Tom Phillips, Jen Bervin, David Abel), theorists of the artist’s book (Ulises Carrión, Simon Cutts, Clive Philpot), and literary
artist’s book publishers (from Something Else Press to Coracle, Granary, and Siglio) will provide an important backdrop for our conversations and class projects. Topics of reading and discussion will include: the democratization of art in the era of (and after) Ed Ruscha’s “democratic multiple”; DIY literary culture (zines, small presses, etc.); the role of the book-object in modern art practice; the sociality of little magazines and chapbook presses; the place of the book in the digital age.

Students will be given a grounding in book-making craft and assigned a variety of projects that involve both research and original writing, and the formulation of aesthetic vision and editorial practice. In addition to slide lectures, practicums, and discussions of the readings, we will use class time to invite guest speakers (writers, book artists, artist’s book publishers, book-arts collectives) and to take field trips to museums, libraries, and book-arts organizations.

Monica Youn

**Race, Identity, and Experimentation**

Tues., 1:10pm-3:10pm    POETRY

This seminar explores the linkage between racial identity and poetic innovation in work by contemporary poets of color. Practitioners and critics of self-designated experimental or avant-garde poetry in modern and contemporary America have often defined these practices as “impersonal,” “against expression” or “post-identity.” This approach has often tended to exclude or downplay poems that engage issues of racial identity. This course explores works in which poets of color have treated racial identity as a means to destabilize literary ideals of beauty, mastery and the autonomy of the poetic text while at the same time engaging in groundbreaking poetic practices that subvert externally or internally constructed conceptions of identity or authenticity. Texts will include books of poems by Bhanu Kapil, Layli Long Soldier, and Harryette Mullen as well as excerpts from critical texts. Each student will offer several in-class presentations that will focus on the interface between racial identity and literary craft techniques, as well as several poems.

Alan Ziegler

**Writer as Teacher**

Wed., 2pm-4:45pm    CROSS-GENRE

Writer as Teacher is a hybrid course: part seminar and part practicum. We will discuss the role 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 and running workshops; 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 one or two visits from exemplary practitioners of the art and craft of teaching. In the third class-hour, we will replicate classroom situations in small groups; on any given Wednesday, we may use none, some, or all of the third hour. A wide variety of reading material will be handed out, much of which will be used as “background” material and not discussed specifically in class. There will be several short, practical written assignments and presentations. Each student will design (with the option to teach) a mini-course (4-6 sessions) as part of the CA/T Community Classes (CCC) offering.
Special Projects Workshop

Thom Donovan
Tues., 6:30pm-9:30pm

This six-point workshop is designed to provide students with the opportunity and instructional support to develop significant text-based works outside the constraints of genre-specific workshops. While existing Fiction, Nonfiction, and Poetry workshops offer some flexibility in the kinds of work that students are allowed to submit within their genre, the Special Projects Workshop will accommodate new kinds and categories of work by offering an environment with no predetermined generic boundaries or expectations. These projects might include, but are not limited to, verse essays and other cross-genre projects, prose or verse sequences, conceptual projects, works in hybrid forms, procedural and experimental texts, text-based art objects, or any number of other projects that might be best supported, for whatever reason (including special research or production needs), by a balance of vibrant group critique, intensive one-on-one mentorship, and self-guided research and composition.

Unlike most traditional workshops, the Special Projects Workshop will assist students in developing and refining project proposals for their work; these proposals will include a detailed project description that features a rationale, a production schedule, and a bibliography of related reading, viewing, or listening (if applicable). The workshop will ideally bring together students from all three concentrations and facilitate a level of cross-generic conversation—from conception through execution and reception—traditionally not possible within the context of genre-specific workshops.

Students enrolled in a Special Projects Workshop will meet as a group six times throughout the term (four meetings at the start of the term, two at the end) with three or more conferences with the instructor and/or in smaller, focused groups paced out in between. To be considered for the class, students must submit to the department an application no more than three pages in length consisting of the components mentioned above. The application will also be expected to address why the proposed work would be best achieved in the context of a Special Projects Workshop rather than in that of a traditional genre-specific workshop.
Translation Workshops

Katrina Dodson

**Word for Word Translation Workshop**
Thurs., 3:50pm-6:20pm

Word for Word is an initiative in collaborative translation housed within the Writing Program’s joint course of study Literary Translation at Columbia (LTAC). The program pairs School of the Arts students with peer writers in foreign-language MFA programs to translate one another’s work. Its purpose is not only to provide emerging translators with experience and a global network, but also to encourage writers to engage with their own language in a new and deeper way through the medium of literary translation and the experience of cross-cultural collaboration. Additional application information is available in the Writing Program Office and will be distributed to the program via email.

Yardenne Greenspan

**Literary Translation Workshop**
Tues., 10am-12:30pm

This workshop is open to students translating from all languages at all levels, from novice to experienced, and within or across all genres: fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. It is designed to introduce or help refine the tools necessary to be an active and engaged translator as well as a rigorous reader of translated literary works, to hone your editing skills across literary genres, and to demonstrate how the art and craft of literary translation can expand your practice as a writer. We will have lively discussions about the role of the translator today, with special attention to translation practice as it intersects with questions of race, migration, and national scripts of exclusion/belonging.

Participants may come with a project already in mind, or may work with the instructor and the group to select projects early on that will be workshopped over the course of the term. The focus will be on close examinations of nuances of style and voice, linguistic play, and methods of representing linguistic and literary innovation in English while actively considering the nature and sociopolitical context of “the original.”

Fluency in a language other than English is not required. A good reading knowledge of a second language is desirable, but students with basic second-language skills who are interested in understanding translation processes and how translation can enhance the craft of writing are also encouraged to register—and to continue improving their second-language skills. Ideally, we will have a group that is committed to examining translation as a tool to dig deeper as a writer, and where notions of expertise and/or mastery are secondary to the willingness to explore and experiment. Readings in translation theory and methodology will be assigned throughout the term based on the different languages and interests students bring to class and the nature of the projects in the group.
Richard Locke

**Beyond Category: A Survey of Fiction**
Thurs., 1:10pm-3:10pm

A survey of stories and novels written since the 1880’s that demonstrate the energy, variety, strengths, and limitations of different kinds of literary fiction in ways that elude such familiar critical categories as realism, modernism, and postmodernism. 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 portray 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 fourteen writers changed the form of fiction in ways that still matter. This is a selection of strong writers—not a canon.


Alice Quinn

**The Beauty and Power of the Sentence in Prose and Poetry**
Wed., 5:15pm-7:15pm

In this class we will explore the syntactic glory of sentence structure and composition in the work of James Baldwin and George Herbert, Henry James and Emily Dickinson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman, Robert Frost, Lucille Clifton, and more. With our guests, we will study the work of authors whose sentences they love and learn about their own approach to this core element of writing.

Previous guests to this class have included the journalists and critics Dwight Garner, Hilton Als, and Linda Villarosa; essayists Emily Bernard and Wendy Walters; poets Rowan Ricardo Phillips, Atsuro Riley, Linda Gregerson, and Evie Schockley; novelists Jesse Browner, Scott Spencer, Sonya Chung, and Susan Choi. Requirements are two short papers and (if possible) the memorization of forty lines of poetry.

Wendy S. Walters

**International Nonfiction**
Tues., 3:50pm-5:50pm

A survey of books highlighting mostly recent works in nonfiction/creative nonfiction from around the world. We will consider the changing definitions of traditional and creative nonfiction and look at natural intersections with fiction and poetry. Discussions will engage
questions of form and narrative, worldview, and opportunities for original storytelling.

Reading assignments will include complete works from the following:

*Notes to Self*, Emilie Pine (IRL); *The Hate Race*, Maxine Beneba Clark (AUS); *Cockroaches*, Scholastique Muskong (Rwanda/FRA); *A Mind Spread Out on the Ground*, Alicia Elliot (Tuscarora/CAN); *When Death Takes Something You Give it Back*, Naja Marie Aidt (SWED); *Farthest Field*, Ragu Karnand (IND); *Can You Tolerate This?* Ashleigh Young (NZ); *The Lonely City*, Olivia Laing (UK); *The Return: Fathers, Sons and the Land in Between*, Hisham Matar (UK/LIB); *Older Sister Not Necessarily Related*, Jenny Heijun Wills (CAN); *Underground: The Tokyo Gas Attack and the Japanese Psyche*, Haruki Murakami (JAP); *The Collector of Leftover Souls: Field Notes on Brazil’s Everyday Insurrections* by Eliane Brum (BRA)
MASTER CLASSES

Corinna Barsan
Revised Like an Editor
Fri., 2pm-4pm Feb. 7 - Mar. 13  1.5 credits

The revision process is one of the most challenging aspects of writing and one of the most important in the evolution of your work. In this six-week intensive master class, we will take an editor’s perspective on polishing your writing. The class is structured as a mini-workshop and we will devote our time to peer reading and critique with an emphasis on elements of developmental editing as well as line editing. We will look at the big picture as well as the details. Sentence-by-sentence, paragraph-by-paragraph, we will sharpen your tools for revision by focusing on refinement of style, building structure and flow, establishing characters, and tuning in to intention.

Over the course of the class, writers will submit pages that have been previously workshopped and revised. Close 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. Please note, this class is only open to 2nd year Fiction students.

Kate Bolick
Personal Anthropology: Reporting in the First Person
Wed., 5:15pm-7:15pm Jan. 29 - Mar. 4  1.5 credits

At its best, first-person journalism about topics of broad concern can be electrifying, rousing readers to see their own surroundings anew; done poorly, it’s boring. In this six-week master class, students will read and analyze superior examples of the form, and generate ways to connect their own personal experience to larger ideas in the arts, politics, and more. Technical and professional aspects will also be addressed: How to develop reporting and research strategies, pitch stories for publication, and create relationships with editors (among other concerns). Readings include essays by great American practitioners, past and present, including James Baldwin, Merle Miller, Ellen Willis, Joan Didion, Richard Rodriguez, Mary Gaitskill, and Barbara Ehrenreich, among others.

Peg Boyers
Throwing Our Voices: Translation and Ventriloquism for Vampires and Writers
Mon., 2pm-4pm  Mar. 23 – Apr. 13  1 credit

We all have the experience of being ‘stuck’ in our own voices and experience. This is a four-week course in how one can use the practice of translation to strengthen and renew one’s own voice, by immersing oneself in the voices of others. Translation will be engaged in, not as a pure enterprise in the service of someone else’s art, but selfishly, as the practice of throwing our voices to new places by following the paths of writers who have come before us. Thus, vampirically, we will hope to refresh our poetic life-blood, our diction, as well as our familiar frame of reference by swallowing whole that of others and by making of that ingestion something new.
Borges, Achebe, Neruda, Vuyelwa Maluleke, Kundera, Baudelaire, and Celan will be among the writers we consider and translate—first, literally and then more freely.

As students progress through the course they will be employing the practice of ‘translation’ in order to appropriate material for use in their own work. Cultural and gender lines as well as language barriers will be crossed in order to find unfamiliar terrain on which to set up shop. Various genres—drama, fiction, non-fiction, film, poetry—will be raided as well for the purposes of pushing students’ work to new places. This is not a course in the theory of translation but rather in its practice for a specific use. The course will be conducted as a workshop in which students will be expected to produce new work for each class.

CAConrad
(Soma)tic Poetry Rituals
Fri., 10am-12pm Jan. 31 – Mar. 6 1.5 credits

CAConrad has successfully used (Soma)tic poetry rituals to overcome depression after the murder of their boyfriend Earth. They have also created writing rituals using the night sky to design homemade star constellations, another ritual to experience what the impact of hearing the word “drone” has on the human body, and many others from talking with trees, ghosts, translating Shakespeare’s sonnets with crystals, and coping with the destroyed wilderness of our planet.

We will build a “progressive fixed time” ritual together, meaning create it progressively through the semester, each week adding a new ingredient while fixing the duration from the start. We will also discuss the importance of keeping our creative skills sharpened and how to collaborate with artists from other disciplines beyond the idea and practice of ekphrastic poetry.

We will also collectively create personalized (Soma)tic poetry rituals for each participant. We will focus on writing in our lives just as they are, not so much making space for art but seeing how poetry is waiting inside what we already do to be able to live in this world. Seeing the creative viability in everything around us in the every day, wherever we are, that is where the real magic lives!

Jon Cotner
Walking
Wed., 10am-12pm Mar. 23 – May 4 1.5 credits

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 students to make brief weekly “studies”—lyric poems, prose poems, hybrid experiments, or multimedia pieces—based on their walks. We’ll read depictions of walking from various poets, with forays into philosophy, history, urban planning, and visual art. Authors include Diogenes, Matsuo Bashō, Kobayashi Issa, Charles Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin, Walt Whitman, Jane Jacobs, James Schuyler, Rebecca Solnit, and Thich Nhat Hanh. Occasionally we’ll walk together. An important point of the course is to develop mobile forms of writing. How can writing emerge from, and
Nicholas Delbanco

**Strategies in Prose**

Tues., 10am-12pm  
Mar. 23 – May 4  
1.5 credits

Strategies in Prose is a detailed exploration of craft, the craft of our four exemplars—which will imply a special way of reading them and delimited problems they pose. Instead of asking, what does Hemingway mean, we’ll talk of what means he deploys; instead of discussing Woolf as an incipient suicide, we’ll talk of Mrs. Ramsay’s death in a parenthesis.

To attempt a comprehensive reading of any of these authors in a six-week span is foolish; to attempt to comprehend the way they marshal metaphor or use subordinate clauses is possible, perhaps. We will do writing exercises in their several styles. The article of faith on which this class is based is that imitation is not merely sincere flattery, but also a good way to grow.

*A Farewell to Arms*, Ernest Hemingway; *The Good Soldier*, Ford Madox Ford; *To The Lighthouse*, Virginia Woolf; *As I Lay Dying*, William Faulkner

Jean Murley and Philip Eil

**Writing The Darkness: How to Tell Powerful—and Ethical—Stories about Crime, Trauma, and Injustice**

Fri., 10am-12pm  
Mar. 28 – May 2  
1.5 credits

We are living in dark times. Mass shootings and mass incarceration. Epidemics of overdose, suicide, and sexual assault. Political corruption on a mind-boggling scale. There are countless important true stories to be told in all of this darkness. But how, exactly, do you write well—and ethically—about such difficult and sensitive subjects? This course will equip students with both the aesthetic tools and the ethical framework to approach difficult material with tact, professionalism, and narrative skill. Over the course of six units—covering crime, injustice, sexual assault, mental health, substance abuse, and political corruption—we will address questions of audience, tone, ethics, reporting logistics, structure, style, and the role of the writer, in order to understand best practices for writing about various kinds of dark subject matter.

During the course, students will read landmark nonfiction texts that probe darkness in memorable ways, such as William Styron’s memoir *Darkness Visible* and Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah’s Pulitzer-winning *GQ* story “A Most American Terrorist: The Making of Dylann Roof.” Students will also discuss ethics-focused texts, like the Society of Professional Journalist’s Code of Ethics and the *Columbia Journalism Review*’s report on *Rolling Stone*’s UVA-campus-rape-story debacle. Writing assignments will include creative experiments with dark subject matter and critical analysis of recent news coverage. By the end of the course, students will feel empowered to approach the most vexing subject matter and produce compelling, compassionate, accurate, and ethically sound stories.
Rebecca Godfrey  
**Crime Scenes**  
Fri., 2pm-4pm Mar. 27 – May 1  1.5 credits

From *Crime and Punishment* to *Serial*, crime stories have long captured the public imagination. In this class, we’ll look closely at how violent acts and actors can be transformed into literature. How do crimes – and the mysteries surrounding them – propel a narrative? How can tragedy reveal unexpected truths about our characters? What artistic and ethical issues arise when we portray criminals and their victims? How can rote procedural elements – evidence, investigation, confession, alibi – be employed as dramatic device? And how do we avoid the lurid and sensational in our scenes of the darkest desires and low.

Throughout the class, students will investigate and research a true crime, while also transforming this crime into a fictional narrative. Readings to include excerpts from Truman Capote, Joan Didion, Raymond Chandler, Toni Morrison, Maggie Nelson, Jesmyn Ward, Denis Johnson, and Megan Abbott.

Jason Gots  
**Narrative Podcasting**  
Wed., 10am-12pm Jan. 29 – Mar. 4  1.5 credits

It’s been less than five years since *Serial’s* first season sent everyone scrambling to figure out what exactly a podcast was and how to listen to one. Since then, podcasting has morphed from a fringe basement hobby into the stuff of venture capitalists’ dreams. Somewhere in the middle lies great audio storytelling and the rise of narrative podcasts, some fiction, some non—some totally DIY, others highly produced by the likes of Marvel and Gimlet Media. This masterclass will immerse you in the best of all these worlds and teach you how to write and produce compelling audio stories.

The class will give you an overview of the state of the podcasting industry today with special attention to audio storytelling—from scripted, ongoing fiction podcasts like *The Orbiting Human Circus of the Air* to narrative nonfiction shows like Jonathan Goldstein’s *Heavyweight*. You’ll learn from the work and insights of some of today’s most talented writers and producers what’s involved in world, story, and character building for audio. And you’ll put this knowledge to work, producing and workshopping a narrative audio piece of your own. You will finish the class with a strong, hands-on, foundational understanding of audio storytelling.

Jaime Green  
**The Book-Length Essay**  
Thurs., 10am-12pm Mar. 26 – Apr. 30  1.5 credits

Too often we think of the essay as a form determined by brevity, when instead it is a genre determined by action: investigation, inquiry, reminiscence, juxtaposition, interrogation, contradiction, etc. etc. etc. A book-length essay is no oxymoron, then, but it is a fertile site for investigating what an essay can do and, more importantly: how.

This course will use four book-length essays as objects of analysis through which to investigate: How does an essay work? How is that extended to support the length and scope of
a book-length project? Whether an essay is argumentative, narrative, or inquisitive, its structure is not driven by chronology but by language and thought, and that structure becomes just as crucial a tool in an essay’s unfolding as its ideas—what deliberate choices lurk beneath a seemingly intuitive, associative structure? How does a writer craft a curious, naive, or conflicted narrator while maintaining control of their work (or: how do you ask a question you’ve already found the answer to)? We will seek concrete answers, which students will be able to apply to future reading, teaching, and writing.

Judith Hall

**Etymology for the Loquacious, the Curious, and the Word-Shy**

Fri., 2pm-4pm

Mar. 27 – May 1

1.5 credits

This class offers etymology as a resource for writing. Language, as Gertrude Stein noted, is an “intellectual recreation”, and etymology provides commentary on each word, its origin, and various thoughts at play in sounds – as when, for example, a word’s origins mock others with a shared beginning; or when history is said to throw into relief a moment now.

Each human puts a tongue into the available words. Which words are your kinds of words? Will the most useful words be the most enduring? Must words considered merely marvelous – a pleasure to say and know – become useless? Arcane? Extinct? Questions like these undergird any working vocabulary and then a writer’s style.

Readings on etymology and around it, poems mostly, will enrich our discussions. A required intermittent laboratory component, wherein experiments are conducted with words on paper and in the air, is included in the class. The goal of written assignments is to practice thinking about word choices. Bring paper to the first class. And a pen.

Gabe Hudson

**Weird Fiction as a Political Tool**

Fri., 2pm-4pm

Jan. 31 – Mar. 6

1.5 credits

Chatbots spew hate speech, refugee children kept in cages, African-Americans routinely shot by police officers—welcome to our national horror show. This course is designed to empower writers’ imaginative storytelling prowess so they might better engage with our political moment. We’ll investigate how fiction writers can employ genre tropes and the narrative strategies of weird fiction to smuggle ideas into the culture. We’ll look to the examples of Octavia E. Butler, Ursula K. Le Guin, Franz Kafka, George Orwell, and Rod Serling’s TV show *The Twilight Zone*, among others.

Madhu Kaza

**Kitchen Table Translation: Cross-language Experiments for Writers**

Wed., 5:15pm-7:15pm

Mar. 25 – Apr. 29

1.5 credits

Quiet as it’s kept, translation is always already with us. Regardless of our identification as multilingual, bilingual, monolingual, or something in between, as writers we access multiple
languages whether it be through reading texts in translation, through navigation of the different languages of home, community, public and professional life, or through the different registers of multiple Englishes that surround us. Some writers actively work in literary translation and some experience translation all the time in the cultural difference of their names, bodies, accents, movements and daily lives.

This class invites writers to read and write across languages to think through how we might channel translation through our own particular locations and dislocations in language to serve our stories, poems, essays and our selves. We’ll pay particular attention to how immigrant, diasporic, indigenous, and poc writers have used translation and cross-language experimentation to claim space for new kinds of stories and ideas, and to sharpen their sensitivities to language. We will read translations and original writing by writers including Youmna Chlala, Don Mee Choi, Dagmawi Woubshet, John Keene, Eiko Otake, Katrina Dodson and others. We will also examine the activist translation projects of organizations such as Antena, Jalada Africa, and The Transborder Immigrant Tool and collaborate on cross-language experiments of our own. Note: Knowledge of a second language is not required for this class.

Dan Kois
Magazine Writing
Wed., 5:15pm-7:15pm 
Feb. 3 – Mar. 10 1.5 credits

How do you write a piece that strikes a chord? You know the feeling, when you read something that rings within you that chime that says, Oh! Sometimes those pieces go viral or get anthologized or make a writer’s career. Sometimes they just deliver that moment for a handful of passionate readers who will never forget it. So how do you write a personal essay, a humor piece, a dispatch, a critical analysis that does that? How do you find the right subject, and talk to the right people, and think of the right angle, and deliver the right voice in the right publication at the right time? In this master class, we’ll read exemplary contemporary magazine stories, perfectly of the moment yet exploring some timeless truth, revelatory but not exploitative, sharp but not cruel (unless someone really deserves it). We’ll look at these stories from the writer’s perspective: How do they work? What moves did the writers make? What risks did they take? We’ll look at them from the editor’s, often with help from the editors themselves: How were they conceived? How did they evolve? How were they published? And we’ll listen for the chord each one strikes, and think about how to find that in our own work.

Amy Grace Loyd
The Editing Cycle
Tues., 6pm-8pm 
Mar. 24 – Apr. 28 1.5 credits

This course will help students embrace the necessity and inevitability of rewriting and editing and look at strategies to give the creative writer the distance needed to look at his/her/their work as a reader might, to assess the work’s intentions and how these (i.e., voice, point of view, style, pacing, tense, character development, etc.) are – or are not yet – achieved on the page. This step – of clarification and definition – is crucial to prepare writers to collaborate with professional editors, providing a foundation from which a writer can better respond to an editor’s queries. We’ll discuss excerpts from published work and how each piece succeeds or fails in conveying its intentions; read and refer to pieces on revision and editing; and cover
common writing errors and editing basics. Importantly, we’ll read student work and unpack that common (and uncommonly hard-to-accomplish) advice: write hot, revise cool. We’ll also confront the realities of collaborating with professionals who edit for a range of venues and audiences and during in-class visits learn how these variables impact these editors’ expectations of submitted work from a work-in-progress to a publishable product.

Michael Scott Moore
**Writing The Enemy**
Fri., 10am-12pm  
Mar. 27 – May 1  
1.5 credits

We’ll read first-person nonfiction, and some fiction, to examine how a writer can deal with characters who are emotional, social, cultural, or downright life-threatening enemies. Some readings are paired around themes: the Vietnam War, the Barbary Pirate era, race, or family. All authors approach their themes from radically different, and in some cases inimical, points of view. We’ll consider the challenge of writing about intense topics when the moral divide looks insurmountable; we’ll also discuss the idea of freedom from “self,” in writing and in life, and study responsible approaches to a foreign culture.

Benjamin Taylor
**Inner Life and How To Reveal It**
Wed., 2pm-4pm  
Mar. 25 – Apr. 29  
1.5 credits

We read in order not to be confined to the self nature has assigned us; we read to make prolonged and intimate contact with other inner lives. Day to day we are largely opaque to each other. What life hides, writing broadcasts. Novels and stories exist to reveal other people’s secrets, what’s really going on in the deep recesses. Our course will focus on the endless varieties of inner experience and how outer life disguises, but also intimates, the fortress of secrets within.

Readings as follows:

Students are asked read A Passage to India prior to the first class and to submit a story, novel-chapter, or memoir at our final meeting. Plan to turn in about five thousand words.