

**CA/T Community Classes (CCC)
Columbia Artist/Teacher
Writing Program, School of the Arts**



Alumna Claudia Rankine '93 *Source: <https://www.moca.org/program/reading-claudia-rankine>*

**COURSEBOOK
SPRING 2025**

CA/T appreciates the generosity of the Mark R. Robin Memorial Fund for Creative Writing

INFORMATION

CA/T Community Classes are free, non-credit creative writing seminars taught by MFA Writing Program students in Columbia University's School of the Arts. These classes in fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and cross-genre writing are designed to provide structured opportunities for students to write, to explore new approaches and forms, to discuss literature, and to receive feedback on their writing.

These courses are open to **all** current Columbia and Barnard students, staff, and affiliates, as well as all School of the Arts alumni.

Classes meet once weekly for five to six weeks, beginning on Monday, March 24th, through Friday, May 2nd. This semester, courses will be offered in-person in Columbia University's Dodge Hall and on Zoom.

HOW TO REGISTER:

Classes are first-come, first-served. You may register for up to two (2) CCC courses a semester. The registration period will close on Friday, March 21st. Classes that fill up will be specified as **waitlist only**.

To choose your classes, please fill out the Spring 2025 [Registration Form](#). The CCC coordinators, Blue Kirkpatrick and Lydia DeFusto, will contact you only if you have been assigned a class, or later if you are moved off a waitlist.

More information is also available at our website, <https://arts.columbia.edu/cat/CCC>.

If you have any further questions about registration, please email CCC coordinators, Blue Kirkpatrick and Lydia DeFusto, at soa-writing-ccc@columbia.edu. If your question pertains to a specific course, please reach out to the instructor.

COURSE LIST

FICTION

WRITING TO WRITE: ENGAGING WITH WEB FICTION | Savannah Carren

Tuesday 12:05 pm - 1:55 pm, Dodge Hall 409

FINDING YOUR STYLE | Emily Coit

Tuesday 12:05 pm - 1:55 pm, Dodge Hall 411

WRITING IN THE CLIMATE CRISES | George Cole

Tuesday 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm, Zoom

SHORT STORIES: WORKSHOP AND SUBMISSION STRATEGIES |

Sinclair Cabocel

Wednesday 12:05 pm - 1:55 pm, Dodge Hall 407

TURNING STRAW INTO GOLD: A GUIDE TO NOVEL REVISION | Lara Waas

Wednesday 12:05 pm - 1:55 pm, Dodge Hall 403

BREAKING DOWN PEDESTALS: GIVING PUBLISHED AUTHORS 'THE CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP TREATMENT' | Madeleine Joung

Wednesday 5:15 pm - 7:15 pm, Dodge Hall 512

THE ARTIST'S TOOLKIT: ANNOTATION / INNOVATION | Mădălina

Telea Borteş

Friday 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm, Dodge Hall 409

THE DREAMS OF URSULA K. LE GUIN | Jonah Wu

Friday 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm, Zoom

POETRY

MAKE IT NEW! | Ashni Mathuria
Wednesday 11:00 am - 1:00 pm, Dodge Hall 512

RADICAL POETICS OF THE CYBORG | Alicia Kwok
Friday 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm, Zoom

SAPPHO: THE MORTAL MUSE | Bems James
Friday 3:15 pm - 5:15 pm, Dodge Hall 407

NONFICTION

CREATIVE NONFICTION WORKSHOP | Blue Kirkpatrick
Saturday 12:30 pm - 2:30 pm, Dodge Hall 411

CROSS-GENRE

**BEYOND REALITY: SPECULATIVE LITERATURE AND POLITICAL
IMAGINATION IN LATIN AMERICA | Daniela Ordoñez Delgado**
Monday 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm, Zoom

**“MAKE THEM FEEL, FEEL, FEEL!” – WRITING URGENT, VISCERAL
PROSE | Britt Astrid Alphson**
Tuesday 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm, Zoom

MEMORY AND ITS DISCONTENTS | Andrew Joongi Lee
Friday 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm, Zoom

FICTION

WRITING TO WRITE: ENGAGING WITH WEB FICTION

Savannah Carren

Tuesday 12:05 pm - 1:55 pm

Dodge Hall 409

In late-stage capitalism, monetization can feel like everything - but what happened to having fun? In this six-week course, we will focus on ways to engage with extensive online communities of readers and writers through various forms of web fiction. Self-published web fiction offers a way for writers to get work in front of readers instantaneously. As a result, you can hone your craft, gain feedback from readers, and create purely for pleasure.

If you've ever stayed up until 4 A.M. writing fanfiction, reading a webcomic, or playing a visual novel, this class is for you. If you've never done any of those things, this class is especially for you.

In our first session, we will dabble in the history of serialized fiction. From there we will move on to learning from the experts by reading, watching, and playing the most popular (and underground) self-distributed works. In addition, we will learn how to use tools for creating web fiction, such as RPG makers, visual novel engines, art and animation programs, word-processing programs, and online tutorials.

Each class will have an exercise component in which students will be invited to create their own works to potentially publish online.

Writers of all experience levels are welcome! All outside readings/assignments will be optional. No artistic skill is required.

FINDING YOUR STYLE

Emily Coit

Tuesday 12:05 pm - 1:55 pm

Dodge Hall 411

Finding our styles takes time, experimentation and exposure. This class will feature a selection of short stories, novellas and novel excerpts that center on style-forward prose. Our discussions will help students isolate, examine and respond to how stylistic risk impacts the story as a whole. The readings might feature an unforgettable voice, daring syntax, strange form, or a complete omission of traditional POV. We will compare and contrast juxtaposing styles and students will be given time each class to write, taking similar risks as a way to expand their skill sets and get to know themselves better as storytellers. Writers who are interested in impossible structures, wacky form, and wild voices are encouraged to sign up! On the first day of class, we will vote on incorporating a workshop element into the course.

Featured readings will include: Fleur Jaeggy, Teju Cole, Aysegul Savas, John Edgar Wideman, Claire Keegan and others.

WRITING IN THE CLIMATE CRISES

George Cole

Tuesday 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Zoom

Hello! Our House is on fire—and it's really hard to talk about. It's even harder to write about. In this course we will discuss environmental literature and its relationship with the climate crises. Through exploring how others have navigated this existential threat to our planet, we will learn to better incorporate the subject into our own writing. After taking this course, students will be encouraged to write something that interprets their own relationship with climate change/environmental justice.

Readings may include writers such as Bill McKibben, Naomi Klein, Rachel Carson, Diane Cook, G.E Patterson, and Megan Mayhew-Bergman

The course will be part seminar and part generative writing workshop. Students will be expected to come to class with responses to the assigned reading. In the second half of the semester students will respond to each other's writing through our established environmental/critical lens.

SHORT STORIES: WORKSHOP AND SUBMISSION STRATEGIES

Sinclair Cabocel

Wednesday 12:05 pm - 1:55 pm

Dodge Hall 407

Short stories... Who has time for them? You do!

Short stories are an effective mechanism for practicing and honing one's fiction craft. Most, if not all, of the elements that make a good novel can be found in microcosm within the short story form—dialogue, plot, prose, character, promise-and-payoff, pacing and more. The short story's brevity has two advantages: drafting and revision are far more manageable than with a novel, and you'll have a far easier time browbeating friends, family, and academic peers into reading them!

This class will function as a casual workshop, prioritizing discussion—feedback letters and in-line notes will be recommended, but not mandatory. Participants should have a short story of no more than 5,000 words that they wish to submit for critique, prepared by the start of the course. Non-MFA students are warmly invited to participate.

Alongside the workshop component, the teacher will provide detailed guidance regarding the process of submitting short stories for publication.

TURNING STRAW INTO GOLD: A GUIDE TO NOVEL REVISION

Lara Waas

Wednesday 12:05 pm - 1:55 pm

Dodge Hall 403

Novels are monsters—unwieldy, sprawling, and often stitched together from pieces that don't quite fit. Unlike a short story, which you can hold in your mind all at once, a novel resists easy revision. Where do you even start? How do you shape something so massive into something cohesive? And just as importantly—when do you stop?

This course is all about shaping the first draft of your novel into something stronger, sharper, and more intentional. We'll break the revision process into manageable stages, from big-picture restructuring to deepening character arcs, tightening prose, and

making sure every scene earns its place. We'll explore techniques for seeing your own work with fresh eyes, getting the right kind of feedback, and knowing when it's time to let go. Whether you've completed a first draft or are still in the thick of writing and are looking forward to revision, this class is for writers at any stage of the novel-writing process.

Through mini-workshops, targeted exercises, and discussions of published works, you'll learn how to transform your draft into a novel that actually does what you want it to. Because—despite what fairy tales suggest—turning straw into gold isn't magic; it's revision.

BREAKING DOWN PEDESTALS: GIVING PUBLISHED AUTHORS 'THE CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP TREATMENT'

Madeleine Joung

Wednesday 5:15 pm - 7:15 pm

Dodge Hall 512

Each session of this course will be a 'workshop' of a published short story or excerpt from a published novel. Because even these pieces are, at their core, workshop material: creative writing that you can give feedback on.

Have you ever read an existing published story that everyone seems to revere, but secretly wish that you could give it feedback and the 'workshop treatment'? Have you ever felt like a privileged author really could have written his stories differently, with more consideration of perspectives from different cultures and genders? Or have you even ever just felt that a story didn't describe images vividly, or featured clunky dialogue?

No homework—everything will be read in-class. Come as you are!

Each session will be a 'workshop' of an external short story or novel excerpt. We'll turn the tables on traditional, often-taught creative writing lessons (e.g. "Hills Like White Elephants" and dialogue) and flip the script—reversing, inverting, and deconstructing the myths we've been taught. We'll put our 'workshop-style' feedback and critiques of 'traditional' texts in conversation with new, alternative texts from

other authors—for example, we'll consider how the types of party scenes often associated with *The Great Gatsby* are alternatively rendered with more nuance in excerpts of 2024/2025 new releases such as *Rental House* by Weike Wang and *Colored Television* by Danzy Senna. (We'll read these in-class—zero homework!)

We'll use these workshops to dismantle the idolization of the traditionally celebrated writers, debunking myths from—and giving our true and honest opinions on—authors like Ernest Hemingway or Philip Roth. In short, we'll create a space to take these authors off their pedestals and say what we really think. And then we'll refocus on newer voices, as with the list of new authors above.

Students will also be encouraged to use these workshops as a practice vehicle for commenting about a piece in the creative workshop format. This course will open up opportunities for students to feel comfortable, empowered, and free to expand their horizons, and express their opinions in a creative writing workshop setting. And this will go beyond just this course—all of this you'll be able to carry forward into other future classes, so that you can go on to participate deeply in any future workshop with more confidence.

THE ARTIST'S TOOLKIT: ANNOTATION / INNOVATION

Mădălina Telea Borteş

Friday 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Dodge Hall 409

In this hybrid seminar/workshop we'll develop a process of annotation that'll allow us to see craft in action.

We'll begin by reading a fictional text closely, very closely, marking it up with lines, symbols, and signposts until all of its component parts and networks are revealed. Then, we'll apply what we learned to our own work in progress.

Students will be invited to work on one story—either a short story or a portion of a novel—throughout this course and submit a short excerpt for workshop and revision.

Expect to sharpen your instinct for how you can employ strategic questions—where to start a story, what to include, what to expand, what to omit, how to manage narrative time—to create stories that feel propulsive, satisfying, inevitable, complex, and whatever else you’re aiming for.

THE DREAMS OF URSULA K. LE GUIN

Jonah Wu

Friday 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Zoom

What do we mean when we say, “art is always political?” How do we begin to write about political imaginations of the future? In this class, we will explore these questions through Ursula K. Le Guin’s stories and novels set in her Hainish universe, an astoundingly rich science fiction setting that meditates on multiplicities of human experience, anthropological encounters, and possibilities for a better world. As much as her stories explore the sociopolitical questions affecting our own world, they are also about the act of storytelling itself. Le Guin posits that the way we tell stories shapes the way we understand the world around us — and certainly her own work exemplifies that a story’s form is just as important as its content.

Le Guin’s words feel particularly timely in this moment, when we are at the crossroads of multiple political reckonings. What is the transformative power of a story — not just as an empathy simulator, but as a blueprint for the future, a challenge to the status quo, a catalyst for real world action? These aims are what Le Guin achieves best in her work — she teaches you how to see, think, and question. Best of all, she shows you how to imagine.

With Le Guin as our guide, we will be creating our own speculative stories that are carrier bags for our future possibilities. Together, we will be reading excerpts from some of her most notable Hainish novels (*The Left Hand of Darkness*, *The Dispossessed*, *The Telling*, and *The Word for World is Forest*), alongside several essays that introduce alternative methods of approaching speculative fiction. In-class writing exercises will provide a springboard for you to channel your own ideas and experiences into a piece of speculative work (whether that be prose or poetry), which you’ll be able to turn in as an optional final project.

Writers from every skill level and genre are welcome, and no prior knowledge of science/speculative fiction or Le Guin's works is necessary; in fact, Le Guin may be the perfect entry point for speculative fiction. By the end of the course, students will have a firm understanding of how Le Guin's work shapes her readers' imaginations, how to borrow those craft moves for our own work, and how to embark upon our own speculative journeys.

POETRY

MAKE IT NEW!

Ashni Mathuria

Wednesday 11:00 am - 1:00 pm

Dodge Hall 512

Make It New! is a novel, dynamic space in which we will confront any and all of the standard expectations of writing. Clichés have no place here (all except the adage “show not tell”). We will play with diction, form, and imagery, pulling inspiration from writers like Gertrude Stein, Sylvia Plath, and Frank O’Hara. Our goal is to generate fresh, innovative, and surprising content, and we will attempt this endeavor through various angles: toying with the thesaurus, entering an abstract realm of mental associations, breaking forms, and more. Through experimentation and play, discussion and analysis, and exploration and reflection, we will create striking and vibrant poems while developing attention to detail in language, structure, and form.

RADICAL POETICS OF THE CYBORG

Alicia Kwok

Friday 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Zoom

"By our strangeness we write our bodies into the future."

— Larissa Lai, *Salt Fish Girl*

The figure of the cyborg has accompanied us ever since we first began to imagine possible futures in our art and writing. As much as cyborgs, androids, and artificial intelligences (and more!) continue to loom as sources of deep anxiety and fear in our present cultural moment, they also invite us to interrogate our own assumptions about human subjectivity and wholeness. Who or what is included/excluded from the category of human? How should we differentiate between writing about and writing as cyborgs? How can we understand poetry itself as a cyborg genre, and how have poets evoked cyborgs in their work as symbols of resistance?

As originally defined by feminist scholar Donna Haraway in 1985, cyborg theory rejects essentialism and the notion of a fixed boundary between human/nonhuman or self/other. Haraway calls instead for a feminist theory that embraces rather than erases hybridity and intersectionality within the oppressed body. In this course, we will discuss this idea of the transgressive body and subject as cyborg, and explore critical interventions and responses from writers and theorists in disability studies, queer theory, and women of color feminism.

We will also read work by poets such as Aditi Machado, Ching-In Chen, Tracie Morris, Douglas Kearney, Franny Choi, and more. By examining how different poets have taken up the cyborg's radical potential in their work, we'll explore how radical politics and radical form can work together in exciting and novel ways. Thinking of poetry as a kind of cyborg genre, we will draw from our readings and discussions to experiment with writing our own cyborg poems that break form and evade categorization.

No prior knowledge of critical theory or poetry is necessary! New and experienced poets, science-fiction lovers and novices are all welcome.

SAPPHO: THE MORTAL MUSE

Bems James

Friday 3:15 pm - 5:15 pm

Dodge Hall 407

Who was Sappho? Why did Plato call her “the Tenth Muse?” Did she invent confessional poetry, queer yearning, and the guitar pick? All this and more!

This course will be centered around “If Not, Winter,” Anne Carson’s translations of Sappho, with an emphasis on what we, as modern writers, can learn from this ancient poet. Topics will include (but are not limited to) love, violence, desire, sexuality, mythology, religion, and their many intersections. To contextualize our reading, we’ll examine the traditions and cultures that influenced Sappho and her contemporaries. We’ll look at both modern and ancient writers in conversation with Sappho to develop a sense of her legacy. We’ll also discuss the impact and importance of her gender, both in her time and our own, as well as what her work means to those of us in the LGBTQIA+ community.

First and foremost, this class will be a space to explore and experiment with our writing. Students will participate in writing exercises, using Sappho to prompt our work. There will be opportunities for students to informally share their work with the class, but doing so won't be mandatory.

We may read excerpts of other ancient works in translation, as well as short essays about Sappho. No prior knowledge of Sappho, mythology, or any other ancient Mediterranean literature is necessary.

NONFICTION

CREATIVE NONFICTION WORKSHOP

Blue Kirkpatrick

Saturday 12:30 pm - 2:30 pm

Dodge Hall 411

Writing might begin in solitude, but it sharpens in conversation—with the page, with ourselves, and with others who care about the written word as much as we do. This five-week creative nonfiction workshop offers space for that conversation, where students can share work, exchange ideas, and build a community grounded in curiosity, generosity, and creative risk-taking. Each student will have the opportunity to workshop up to 15 pages of creative nonfiction—any form, style, or subject. Personal essays, lyric meditations, braided narratives, research-driven explorations, or pieces that blend genres are all welcome, as long as they’re rooted in the real. We’ll

workshop two writers per two-hour class period, with each student workshopped once during the course.

The value of the workshop lies as much in reading others' work as in sharing your own. Together, we will learn to read like a writer—closely, thoughtfully, and with an eye for both craft and heart. Between class meetings, students will read and annotate peers' submissions and write one-page feedback letters to each writer, offering insights that prioritize clarity, encouragement, and respect for each writer's vision. Together, we'll establish community agreements to cultivate an environment where risk-taking feels safe and critique feels constructive. We'll also explore the nuances of giving and receiving feedback—how to share observations without imposing, hear critique without losing your footing, and turn conversation into momentum. Whether you're refining an essay, pushing into new forms, or just trying to get words on the page, this workshop offers a collaborative space to challenge, inspire, and move your writing forward through the power of conversation.

CROSS-GENRE

BEYOND REALITY: SPECULATIVE LITERATURE AND POLITICAL IMAGINATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Daniela Ordoñez Delgado

Monday 6:30 pm-8:30 pm

Zoom

When the world feels too surreal, too cruel, or too unstable to understand, writers turn to dystopia, horror, and magical realism to reimagine it. Speculative fiction has long been a tool for making sense of chaotic, violent, and oppressive realities. From gothic terror to radical futures, speculative fiction questions power, exposes injustice, and offers new ways to think about resistance and survival.

Each week, we will explore how Latin American writers use speculative fiction—including magical realism, fantasy, dystopian fiction, and horror—to critique oppression, envision resistance, and explore alternative futures. We will read a short piece by a different author each session—including Mariana Enríquez, Rita Indiana, as

well as Gabriel García Márquez, Roque Salas Rivera, and others—and discuss how their work reflects and reimagines their sociopolitical contexts.

After discussion, we'll experiment with speculative techniques—worldbuilding, voice, allegory, uncanny transformations—through guided writing prompts designed to push the boundaries of reality. Students will have the opportunity to share their work in a supportive, informal setting. By the end of the course, each participant will have the chance to submit a short speculative piece (3 pages max) for feedback from the instructor.

“MAKE THEM FEEL, FEEL, FEEL!” – WRITING URGENT, VISCERAL PROSE

Britt Astrid Alphson

Tuesday 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Zoom

“Tell stories filled with FACTS. Make people touch and taste and KNOW. Make people FEEL! FEEL! FEEL!” – Octavia Butler

How can we make details in writing as granular and textured as possible? How can we, through these details, immerse readers fully into a scene — urging them to see anew, smell anew, hear anew? What makes a detail destabilize a reader; ground a reader; encourage a transcendence of sorts?

In this course, we will look at writers who render scenes in astonishing detail and identify their decisions (diction choice, bodily descriptions, etc.) We will learn the ways in which specificity banishes caricature; we will practice depicting people, places, and emotions in all their singularity and strangeness. We will also determine when obscuring details can be generative and exciting — how does ‘vagueness’ lend itself to portraiture through outline?

We will look at techniques wielded by authors such as Jeffrey Eugenides, James Baldwin, Kazuo Ishiguro, Claire Keegan, Nafissa Thompson-Spires, Anne Carson, Charles D'Ambrosio, and John Cheever.

There will be an optional workshop component to the course; students may submit their own short pieces to be discussed in a supportive container. Additionally, students will have in-class opportunities – in the form of writing exercises and free writes – to implement the techniques we learn in class into their own work.

MEMORY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Andrew Joongi Lee

Friday 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Zoom

“Memory is quite central for me. Part of it is that I like the actual texture of writing through memory.” – Kazuo Ishiguro

What do we remember in the act of remembering? Or, phrased another way, what things do we actually not remember? In many ways, navigating memory is no easy endeavor. There is so much scientific and philosophical literature about memory, regarding how it works and its unreliability (all of which we will explore, briefly), yet we also cannot deny the subjectivity of remembering. In this class we will explore how novelists such as Proust, Woolf, Ishiguro, and Sebald portray memories in unique ways, crafting acts of remembrance that are textured uniquely and that evoke atmospheres ranging from the nostalgic to the melancholic.

In the end, we will develop our own answers to the following questions. How might we go about exploring our own memories? How can we navigate around parts of our memories we do not remember? How do we write about these memories with authenticity and vividness, using memory’s unreliability not as a setback but as a force that propels our writing?

The class will center around in-class writing exercises and discussions of the above authors (and many others), crafting a narrative that explores memory in a way that is both informed and uniquely personal.