

CA/T Community Classes (CCC)

Creative Writing | Columbia University



Alumna Claudia Rankine '93, from *The Paris Review*

COURSEBOOK

Fall 2023

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, studying fiction, non-fiction, 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 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, October 30th, through Sunday, December 3rd. This semester, all courses will be offered in-person, in Columbia University's Dodge Hall.

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, October 27th. Classes are capped at 12 students. Those that fill up will be specified as **waitlist only**.

To choose your classes, please fill out the [Fall 2023 Registration Form](#). The CCC coordinator, Alexandra Banach, will contact you by Friday, October 27th, 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 coordinator, Alexandra Banach, at soa-writing-ccc@columbia.edu. If your question pertains to a specific course, please reach out to the instructor.

COURSE LIST

FICTION

WORLDBUILDERS WORKSHOP | Robert Gold

Mon. 6:45pm - 8:45pm Dodge Hall 407

FICTION WORKSHOP | Deya Luna

Tues. 6:30pm-8:30pm Dodge Hall 413

FANFIC 101 | Emani Lesane

Wed. 4:00pm-6:00pm Dodge Hall 512

POETRY

BEING IMMATURE | Addison Schoeman

Mon. 6:30pm-8:30pm Dodge Hall 411

Approaching the Image: Hybrid Books of Poetry and Art | Sophia Mautz

Fri. 3:10pm - 5:10pm Dodge Hall 409

NON - FICTION

Writing the City | Sofia Rodrigues Bolina

Tues. 7:30pm-9:30pm Dodge Hall 407

CROSS-GENRE

HOOKED: HOW TO WRITE A GRIPPING OPENING | Ade Khan

Thurs. 7:00pm-9:00pm Dodge Hall 409

FICTION

WORLDBUILDERS' WORKSHOP

Building Comprehensive Science Fiction & Fantasy Universes

Robert Gold

Mon. 6:45pm-8:45pm (no class on November 20th for Thanksgiving Recess)

Dates: October 30th - December 3rd

Dodge Hall 407

What does the map of your fictional world look like? Does it exist in an ancient kingdom that resembles the Edo period of Ancient Japan? Are there rivers near your ancient kingdom? And if there are rivers, has your kingdom developed a maritime economy? Is there a merchant class or a criminal class of pirates who often pillage this kingdom?

What planets exist in your world? What species exist on your planets? What year is it in your universe? Does your universe use the same Julian calendar that we use on Earth? Does Earth even exist in your universe? If this is in the far-future, what religions still exist in your universe?

Through our 6-week course, we will build our own science fiction and fantasy universes, fleshing out the technology, fashion, government structures—and more—of your world!

Texts may include: Octavia Butler, Frank Herbert, Danielle Paige, Ursula Le Guin, J.K. Rowling, Ted Chiang, Michael Crichton, Sofia Samatar, Orson Scott Card, Andre Alexis, Walter Mosley, Ling Ma, Dan Wells, and others. We will also be looking at clips from film and television, which can serve as guides and inspiration to building comprehensive worlds.

FANFIC 101

A collaborative seminar dedicated to the art of fanfiction

Emani Lesane

Wed. 4:00pm-6:00pm (no class November 22th for Thanksgiving Recess)

Dates: October 30th - December 3rd

Dodge Hall 512

I just read a 40k word fic... isn't that technically a book?

I wrote about The Mandalorian as my next door neighbor... am I an author?

What if I want to turn my fic into a novel?

How can I write these characters into that world?

Let's talk about it! In this collaborative seminar, students will:

- Examine the different facets of fanfiction and evaluate its place in the literary canon
- Assess key components and how to use these skills to compose new, varying works
- Compare and contrast writing platforms (Tumblr, Wattpad, Ao3, etc.)
- Identify the importance of this specific subgenre to readers and writers alike

We will be reading excerpts from a range of authors who started as fanfiction writers, such as Rainbow Rowell, EL James, Casey McQuiston, and John Milton. There will also be excerpts from articles and nonfiction authors, as well as a “fanfic flight,” consisting of fanfiction from various fandoms and tags. The first half of each session will be dedicated to reading and discussing text and craft, with the following half being dedicated to generative writing and exercises. This class is for the superfan, the dabbler, and the curious! There will be opportunities for any students who wish to share their work and to give and receive feedback.

FICTION WORKSHOP

Deya Luna

Tues. 6:30pm-8:30pm (no class November 21st for Thanksgiving Recess)

Dates: October 30th - December 3rd

Dodge Hall 413

“And why don't you write? Write! Writing is for you, you are for you; your body is yours, take it.” - Hélène Cixous

This fiction workshop is open to writers of all levels of experience who'd like to give and receive feedback in a rigorous yet encouraging environment. Opening exercises will invite students to discuss their writerly histories and influences. We'll also practice by workshopping a few published stories together.

After the first class, students will take turns submitting works of approximately 5-15 pages. Students will also be asked to annotate each writer's manuscript, and write a 1-page critical response to the writer. During discussions, we'll approach work with curiosity, analyzing each

submission on its own terms and dissecting the technical elements of craft — all with the aim of leaving the writer motivated to keep going.

POETRY

BEING IMMATURE

Addison Schoeman

Mon. 6:30pm-8:30pm (no class November 20th for Thanksgiving Recess)

Dates: October 30th - December 3rd

Dodge Hall 411

“Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal” — T.S. Eliot

It's no secret that many great artists get their start imitating on a precise, scrupulous level the styles of their favorite forebears. In fact, the very first poem in the oeuvre of John Keats is titled, simply, “Imitation of Spenser,” and is composed in the style and form of *The Faerie Queene*! Most of the time, imitation is an exercise in analysis and meticulous craft; and sometimes, what begins as imitation can become an entirely new, original style. This class will attempt to provide the analytical skills required of mastering imitative creativity, such that, by the end, we are able to move from analysis and imitation to outright theft. Maybe. I'm skeptical of Mr. Eliot's ideas, and we'll talk a lot about this purported divide throughout the class.

Possible candidates for cribbing include the likes of Emily Dickinson and John Keats (which means we'll talk cursorily about rhyme and meter), Wallace Stevens, Lucille Clifton, A. R. Ammons, Sylvia Plath, and Emily Skillings, among many others. Homework will consist of composing, weekly, an imitation of one of the poems we talk about in class. Maybe once or twice, an additional, longer poem will be assigned to read before the subsequent class. That's all! There will be a no-pressure opportunity to verbally share your work at the beginning of each class, and to talk about your process.

Let's get immature!

APPROACHING THE IMAGE: HYBRID BOOKS OF POETRY & ART

Sophia Mautz

Fri. 3:10pm-5:10pm (no class November 24th for Thanksgiving Recess)

Dates: October 30th - December 3rd

Dodge Hall 409

Poetry and art has always been a fruitful pairing: from William Blake's illustrated books to the New York Times' "A Picture and a Poem" series, people sense a dialogue between visual and poetic images. Recent publications of poetry have increasingly become hybrid books, from Paisley Rekdal's *WEST: A Translation*, to Anthony Cody's *Borderland Apocrypha*, to Forrest Gander's *Knot*. Notably, many BIPOC poets are turning to this hybrid form in their work.

In this generative seminar, we will explore the intersections of visual art and poetry. We'll examine the difference between ekphrasis and hybridity, from early examples to contemporary ones. We'll also look at the reverse, of visual artists interested in poetry: Blaise Cendrars, Cy Twombly, Joan Mitchell, Judy Chicago, and more. We'll ask: what are the different techniques each medium uses to generate an image? Are there any limitations to hybrid work; when does the poem rely too much on the visual image to import meaning rather than generating it through language? As we become an increasingly visual culture, we'll investigate how to engage other senses and bring them into our experience of literature and art. How, if at all, is hybridity related to identity? Authors include Renee Gladman, John Berger, Alison C. Rollins, Don Mee Choi, Anne Carson, and others. We'll revel in the gorgeous and mysterious gulf between art and language, and work together to begin to articulate what exactly makes that gulf flow.

NON - FICTION

WRITING THE CITY

Sofia Rodrigues Bolina

Tues. 7:30pm-9:30pm (no class November 21st for Academic Holiday)

Dates: October 30th - December 3rd

Dodge Hall 407

In this seminar, we'll engage with and think through writing about the urban space: what are the different ways we can look at the city? How can we portray it? What are the strategies we can use to do so? What kind of materials can be integrated into our writing about the city?

Each week, we'll read and discuss excerpts from authors like Clarice Lispector, Zadie Smith, Christopher Isherwood, Valeria Luiselli, Aisha Sabatini Sloan, Annie Ernaux. We'll consider the city through an intersectional lens, and practice writing from different perspectives with the help of short weekly prompts.

CROSS-GENRE

HOOKED: HOW TO WRITE A GRIPPING OPENING

Ade Khan

Thurs. 7:00pm-9:00pm (no class November 23rd for Thanksgiving Recess)

Dates: October 30th - December 3rd

Room 409

Often, the most difficult part—for the writer and reader—is the daunting task of the first few pages. Although it is hard to enter the blank space and begin writing, it is just as hard to embark upon the monumental task of turning beyond the first page as a reader. How do we, as writers, engage the reader in the opening pages, the first few words, maybe the very initial image we create?

In this course, our objective is to figure out how to craft an effective opening for a project—be it a novel, an essay, or a short story. We will build to the task of writing our own openings by answering the following to the best of our ability:

1. What constitutes an opening?
2. What makes an opening engaging?
3. What tools are helpful when composing an opening?
4. How important is the first sentence?
5. How can we make beginning a new project less daunting?

To answer these questions, we will turn to authors such as Toni Morrison, Joan Didion, José Esteban Muñoz, Zadie Smith, and Albert Camus. Each class we will read a different opening and analyze it together. This course will be discussion-driven, so we will learn a lot from each other. We will do fun and short exercises in class. The only and final assignment will be an opening for whatever project you want to pursue. By the end of our time together, your story will have only just begun!