

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



Alumna Sigrid Nunez '75 Source: <https://imagine.public.prod.day.navigacloud.com/?mid=990E4420-5C0C-4A05-AEF8-263EB47196D1&type=preview&function=cover&height=609&width=800>

**COURSEBOOK
FALL 2024**

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, studying 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 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 21st, through Friday, November 29th. 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 Thursday, October 17th. 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 2024 [Registration Form](#). The CCC coordinators, Blue Kirkpatrick and Lydia DeFusto, will contact you by Saturday, October 19th, 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

GIVING AUTHORITY TO A CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE | Olivia "O.Sincere" Williams

Monday 9:00 am - 11:00 am, Dodge Hall 411

THE END | Emily Coit

Wednesday 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm, Dodge Hall 407

MONSTER OF THE WEEK | Cameron Demaree

Friday 3:10 pm - 5:10 pm, Dodge Hall 409

POETRY

NATURE POET IN NEW YORK | Meg Carter

Tuesday 7:15 pm - 9:15 pm, Dodge Hall 409

DAYDREAMING | Aoife Smith

Friday 10:00 am - 12:00 pm, Dodge Hall 407

NONFICTION

WRITING (ABOUT, ALONGSIDE, THROUGH) MEDIA | Esther Eunsuh Park

Tuesday 6:15 pm - 8:15 pm, Dodge Hall 403

CROSS-GENRE

A HOUSE IS NOT A HOME | Nailah Smith
Monday 3:10 pm - 5:10 pm, Dodge Hall 407

LET'S PLOT THAT BOOK! | Sammi Minion
Monday 6:15 pm - 8:15 pm, Zoom

THE FIRST SENTENCE | Baylina Pu
Wednesday 7:15 pm - 9:15 pm, Dodge Hall 407

MAKE IT MEMORABLE: THE SITUATION AND THE STORY |
Mădălina Telea Borteş
Friday 4:15 pm - 5:10 pm, Dodge Hall 407

FICTION

GIVING AUTHORITY TO A CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE

Olivia "O.Sincere" Williams

Monday 9:00 am-11:00 am

Dodge Hall 411

When we tell children to prepare for the "real world," we undermine their ability to interact with and understand what we consider "complex" and create a boundary between child and adult. But are children not already actively part of the "real world"? Many will experience poverty, war, trauma, and be susceptible to the scrutiny of divisive political rhetoric. Many have also experienced love, courage, and developed a sense of morality.

The literary canon provides numerous examples of child protagonists enacting "real world" characteristics of personhood. In this class, we will examine the ways in which the complexities of the "real world" actively take place in childhood and discuss the power and authority that can come from writing from a child's perspective.

Through writing exercises and discussion, we will attempt to answer questions such as: Why do writers use child narrators to discuss war and environmental change? What new knowledge can be gained when re-encountering childhood episodes? How do the implications of race, socioeconomic background, and culture inform the experience of a child protagonist? What did the monster under the bed or imaginary friend symbolize?

THE END

Emily Coit

Wednesday 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Dodge Hall 407

An unforgettable ending is an essential ingredient to a great short story. In this craft-based course, we will study widely different strategies that accomplished writers have used to create endings which leave an indelible impression on their readers. Then we will apply those strategies to our own work and see what happens. We will read.

We will analyze. We will write. On the first day we will vote to see if we want to incorporate a mini workshop component. The goal of this class is for students to walk away with a diverse array of strategies for how to cultivate unforgettable endings.

MONSTER OF THE WEEK

Cameron Demaree

Friday 3:10 pm - 5:10 pm

Dodge Hall 409

Do you like monsters? Do you like reading? Do you want to read more fiction about monsters? Then this course is for you!

Throughout this six-week course, we will engage with various texts that have to do with monsters. Texts will be short stories read in class and focus on stories from the last hundred years up to the present. Every week or so, we will shift focus to a new monster, giving the class a wide range of focus. We will also discuss the connotations and differences between monsters and magical creatures and how these creatures give us a glimpse into the hopes and fears of the cultures that made them.

Each week, we will focus on one monster or monster grouping (for example, AI and technological monsters merged into one class). We will study well-known examples of monsters in literature, analyze how they reflect the anxieties of their times, and consider how they may be used to reflect the anxieties of the current day. Students will have the opportunity to suggest specific monsters for discussion and exploration. Student interest will significantly influence which monsters we study.

In class, brief writing exercises will take place for students to practice writing their own monster stories. Those who wish will be asked to share so the class might benefit from micro-workshops as the semester progresses. Students will integrate what they have learned into their own stories, using their acquired knowledge to create a brand new monster or retell a story of an existing monster to reflect an anxiety or problem facing society.

POETRY

NATURE POET IN NEW YORK

Meg Carter

Tuesday 7:15 pm - 9:15 pm

Dodge Hall 409

“traffic jamming at / Columbus Circle—gray birds / fly south in silence” – Michael Castro

In this generative poetry course, we'll explore how poets engage with and write about nature in an urban landscape. We'll dive into Romanticism, eco-poetics, the necropastoral, and more. We'll read a range of poets (such as Ross Gay, Taneum Bambrick, and Juliana Spahr) whose work about the environment will inform our own poetic explorations into the intersections of nature and the city. In class, we'll experiment with writing urban nature poems through guided exercises and contemplate our connection to the earth as city-dwellers. There will be time at the end of each session to write, and students will be invited to share their work in class the following week. Together, we'll examine the animals and plants crawling in the periphery of city sidewalks, observe how the natural world and human-made world transform one another, and discover new ways of paying attention to nature. This course is open to anyone interested in poetry; no prior experience with writing poetry is required.

DAYDREAMING

Aoife Smith

Friday 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Dodge Hall 407

Do you want to talk about your dreams? Nightmares? Fantasies? This course might be for you! In this course we will explore poems that are concerned with dreams, or otherwise engaged in the act of dreaming. This course aims to surprise and inspire a deeper engagement with the subject of dreaming through weekly readings, group discussions, and response to generative writing prompts. We will examine what it can mean to dream while reading work by Paul Tran, Jenny Johnson, Oliver Baez Bendorf,

Andrea Abi-Karam, Franny Choi, June Jordan, and others. Together we'll consider how temporal location(s), ekphrasis, a variety of forms, and revenge poems can be understood as engaging with the act of dreaming. Students will reflect upon their desires and obsessions to write their own dream-poems and the class will make a collaborative dream-poem-zine during the last class. This course is open for everyone.

NONFICTION

WRITING (ABOUT, ALONGSIDE, THROUGH) MEDIA

Esther Eunsuh Park

Tuesday 6:15 pm - 8:15 pm

Dodge Hall 403

As writers of today aiming to pay thoughtful attention to both the world and the self, how ought we engage with the dizzying omnipresence of media: the tweeted and retweeted opinions, TikTok trends, YouTube video essays, and our sizable archive of photos, both private and public?

I do not believe shutting it all out is the answer. In this nonfiction seminar, we will rediscover the generative potential of writing about, alongside, and even through media. How can we create a resonant reading experience through multimedia storytelling? Can embracing “internet speak” produce a successful essay? How can we tell a story that is both personal and universal by examining our love or dislike for a piece of media?

We will write through unique in-class exercises and glean from readings by writers such as Leslie Jamison, Rayne Fisher-Quann, Hanif Abdurraqib, and Simon Wu. We will also work towards one final project, a 3-8 page essay draft that incorporates media in its content and/or form.

All Columbia community members are welcome to join—I wish to extend a special invite to those new to creative nonfiction. Weekly assignments will take no more than 30 minutes.

CROSS-GENRE

A HOUSE IS NOT A HOME

Nailah Smith

Monday 3:10 pm - 5:10 pm

Dodge Hall 407

For some people, home can be a physical place. For others, maybe it's a person, or a feeling. Either way, complicated thoughts and emotions can surround this idea of "home." If home is so difficult to define, how does one even begin to write about it? In this course, our goal is to capture that complexity in words. Whether in fiction, nonfiction, or poetry, we'll explore the concept of home through writing exercises and readings, with a focus on details that ground you in place, time, and feeling. We'll read work by authors such as Toni Morrison, Robin Wall Kimmerer and Sarah Broom to discover different ways home can be described, and how it can even begin to feel like a character itself. Any writing prompts given to be completed outside of class are entirely optional.

LET'S PLOT THAT BOOK!

Sammi Minion

Monday 6:15 pm - 8:15 pm

Zoom

Developing a novel can be, to say the least, daunting. From creating characters to generating a storyline, there are innumerable factors involved that a writer must tackle. So, where do you start? While the jury is still out on whether a novel truly "needs" a plot, this course can be a worthwhile place to start. From central conflict to micro subplots, we will comb through the different aspects of what constitutes a "plot" and how a writer can either further evolve their own plot draft or, for first-time novelists, form one from scratch. In our sessions we will also discuss conflict, character development, and mechanisms for using plot as a means to progress one's book. Students will learn techniques for building their own plots that a reader can connect to while still retaining authorial control and, by the end, produce their own draft of a novel plot. In the last few sessions we will workshop each other's plot outlines in class,

identifying both strengths and weaknesses through introspective review. All readings will be done in class, primarily highlighting articles from published authors on what it truly means to “plot” a novel and whether it is a necessary step in the writing process.

THE FIRST SENTENCE

Baylina Pu

Wednesday 7:15 pm - 9:15 pm

Dodge Hall 407

“First sentences are doors to worlds.” -Ursula K. Le Guin

That’s exactly what a first sentence does: It opens. It grabs. It lunges. Sometimes, it screams. In this course, we will uncover what makes a memorable first sentence that captures and holds captive the reader’s attention. Every story starts with a sentence, and every poem starts with a first line: a combination of words that casts a spell upon the reader.

In this class, you will be asked to notice phrases you encounter in your everyday life that glitter, that crackle, that feel charged with first-line energy. You’ll analyze what attracts you to a first sentence, whether it’s a compelling hook, beautiful language, a strong sense of voice, etc., and you’ll read examples of first sentences to learn what works and doesn’t work for you. This is a cross-genre seminar—this course can help you develop the first sentence of a story, the first line of a poem, the opening dialogue of a script, or even an opening line of a work in translation that allows the original work to sing.

We will be reading first sentences and excerpts by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Annie Dillard, Ha Jin, Barbara Kingsolver, and others. By the end of this course, you will have a bank of first sentences to draw from, a hall full of doors to expand into worlds.

MAKE IT MEMORABLE: THE SITUATION AND THE STORY

Mădălina Telea Borteș

Friday 4:15 pm - 5:10 pm

Dodge Hall 407

“Every work of literature has both a situation and a story. The situation is the context or circumstance, sometimes the plot; the story is the emotional experience that preoccupies the writer: the insight, the wisdom, the thing one has come to say.”
(Vivian Gornick in *The Situation and the Story*)

In this course we’ll draw on ideas from theater and fiction to prompt our exploration into situations and their stories. Through in-class exercises and close readings of photographs, poems, and short stories, we’ll dissect and analyze the mechanics of craft that expand a situation (e.g., a duck waddles into a grocery store) into a story (e.g., what will you make of that...or, rather, with that?). We’ll interweave the frameworks set forth by Anne Bogart, Vivian Gornick, and George Saunders into our study of poems by Louise Glück and Ilya Kaminsky and short stories by various authors, ranging from Zadie Smith to Samanta Schweblin, all the while asking how these authors effectively grow a story out of a simple situation, how they make the story feel propulsive, quiet, inevitable.

Expect to make progress on your own stories and sharpen your instinct for how you can use emotion, memory, empathy, and practical questions (where to start a story, what to include, what to omit), to create stories that stick with a reader long after the last word.