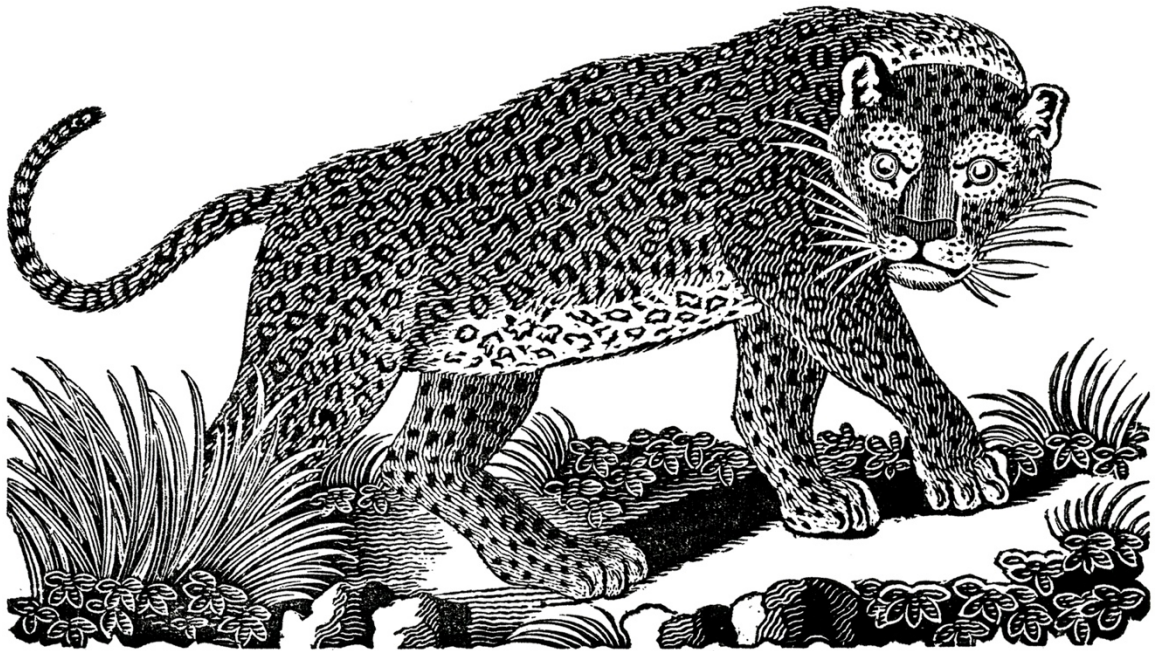


COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL
OF THE **ARTS | WRITING**

FALL 2022



COURSEBOOK

Workshops ■ Seminars ■ Lectures ■ Master Classes

Updated: August 25, 2022

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WORKSHOPS

FICTION – OPEN (6 points)

Rivka Galchen

Mon., 10am-1pm

Heidi Julavits

Mon., 1:10pm-4:10pm

Sam Lipsyte

Mon., 1:10pm-4:10pm

Matthew Salesses

Tue., 10am-1pm

Adam Wilson

Tue., 1:10pm-4:10pm

Rachel Sherman

Thu., 10am-1pm

Eli Gottlieb

Thu., 1:10pm-4:10pm

Maisy Card

Thu., 5:30pm-8:30pm

Megha Majumdar

Fri., 10am-1pm

Lincoln Michel

Fri., 1:10pm-4:10pm

NONFICTION – OPEN (6 points)

Kate Zambreno

Tue., 10am-1pm

Michelle Orange

Tue., 1:10pm-4:10pm

Ruth Franklin

Thu., 10am-1pm

Hasanthika Sirisena

Fri., 10am-1pm

NONFICTION – THESIS (9 points)

Second-Years only

Phillip Lopate

Mon., 10am-1pm

Leslie Jamison

Mon., 1:10pm-4:10pm

Brenda Wineapple

Mon., 1:10pm-4:10pm

Wendy S. Walters

Tue., 10am-1pm

Lis Harris

Tue., 1:10pm-4:10pm

POETRY – OPEN (6 points)

Asiya Wadud

Mon., 4:15pm-7:15pm

Lynn Xu

Tue., 3:30pm-6:30pm

Emily Skillings

Wed., 4:05pm-7:05pm

Shane McCrae

Thu., 10am-1pm

Mark Bibbins

Thu., 1:10-4:10pm

Timothy Donnelly

Thu., 4:15pm-7:15pm

SEMINARS

Seminars and translation workshops
are 3 points.

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

—MONDAY—

Joanna Hershon (FI)
Embodying Intimacy
Mon., 10am-12pm

Gideon Lewis-Kraus (NF)
Reporting Non-News
Mon., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Joshua Furst (FI)
Narrative Design
Mon., 4:15pm-6:15pm

Rivka Galchen (FI)
Comedy and Calamity
Mon., 4:15pm-6:15pm

Erroll McDonald (FI)
William Faulkner and World Fiction
Mon., 4:15pm-6:15pm

—TUESDAY—

Shane McCrae (PO)
A Secret History: Other American Poets
Tue., 10am-12pm

Monica Ferrell (CG)
*Word and Image: Reading and Writing
Contemporary Poetry for Prose Writers*
Tue., 10am-12pm

Philip Lopate (NF)
Studies in the Essay
Tue., 10am-12pm

Nicole Krauss (FI)
On Force: 12 Short Novels
Tue., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Timothy Donnelly (PO)
The Sublime
Tue., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Leslie Jamison (NF)
Writing the Body
Tue., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Matvei Yankelevich (TR)
*Creative (Mis)translations and Radical
Derivations*
Tue., 4:15pm-6:15pm

Alan Gilbert (CG)
Writing and Reading Across Genre(s)
Tue., 4:15pm-6:15pm

Binnie Kirshenbaum (FI)
Writers Writing About Writers
Tue., 4:15pm-6:15pm

B.K. Fischer (CG)
*The Comma Sutra: Grammar, Syntax, and
Praxis*
Tue., 4:15pm-6:15pm

—WEDNESDAY—

Dorothea Lasky (PO)

*Unleashing The Poetic Demon: Seminar for
1st Year Poets*
Wed., 10am-12pm

Natasha Wimmer (TR)

Translation Workshop
Wed., 10am-12:30pm

Nalini Jones (FI)

Myth & the Art of Storytelling
Wed., 10am-12pm

Wendy S. Walters (NF)

The Brilliant Voice
Wed., 10am-12pm

Lara Vapnyar (FI)

Building a Scene
Wed., 10am-12pm

Margo Jefferson (NF)

Arts Writing, Life Writing
Wed., 2pm-4pm

James Cañón (FI)

*Link 'Em Up! Bridging the Boundary
Between Short Stories and Novels*
Wed., 2pm-4pm

Deborah Paredez & Saidiya Hartman (PO)

Radical Composition
Wed., 2pm-4pm

Nicola Goldberg (FI)

The Novella
Wed., 2pm-4pm

Hilton Als (CG)

Baldwin
Wed., 4:30pm-6:30pm

—THURSDAY—

Susan Bernofsky (TR)

Translation Workshop
Thu., 10am-12:30pm

Keri Bertino (CG)

The Writer as Teacher
Thu., 10am-1pm

CANCELLED - Alice Quinn (PO)

*The Poems and Prose of Three 20th C.
American Masters: Robert Frost, Elizabeth
Bishop, and Gwendolyn Brooks*
Thu., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Susan Hartman (NF)

Writing About Communities
Thu., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Brigid Hughes (CG)

Editing and the Writer
Thu., 4:15pm-6:15pm

Katrina Dodson (TR)

Essay as Portraiture
Thu., 4:15pm-6:15pm

—FRIDAY—

Jeremy Tiang (TR)

Translation Workshop
Fri., 1:10pm-3:40pm

Hilton Als (NF)

*Sister Outsider: Women Writing Memoir
and Criticism*
Fri., 2pm-4pm

LECTURES

—WEDNESDAY—

Mark Wunderlich (PO)
Reading Rainer Maria Rilke
Wed., 2pm-4pm

—THURSDAY—

Lee Siegel (FI)
*The Big Blur: Writing in the Space
Between Art and Life*
Thu., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Benjamin Taylor (NF)
Other People's Secrets
Thu., 4:15pm-6:15pm

MASTER CLASSES

—MONDAY—

Meghan McDowell

Latin American Horror in Translation
(1.5 points)

Mon., 10am-12pm
Nov. 7 – Dec. 12

Edwin Torres

Brainlingo: Writing the Voice of the Body
(1.5 points)

Mon., 10am-12pm
Oct. 24 – Nov. 28

Wes Enzinna

Breaking Into Magazines (1.5 points)
Mon., 6:30pm-8:30pm
Oct. 24 – Nov. 28

—TUESDAY—

Jesse Sheidlower

Defining the Dictionary (1.5 points)
Tue., 6:30pm-8:30pm
Sep. 13 – Oct. 18

Jay Desphande

First Books of Poems,
Then and Now (1.5 points)
Tue., 1:10pm-3:10pm
Oct. 25 – Nov. 29

James Wood

Fictional Technique in Novellas
and Short Stories (1 point)
Tue., 3:30pm-5:30pm
Nov. 8 – Dec. 6

—WEDNESDAY—

Anne Paxton

Pandemic Pandemonium:
The personal and political
chaos of COVID (1.5 points)
Wed., 10:00pm-12:00pm
Sep. 14 – Oct. 19

—WEDNESDAY—

Piotr Orlov

An Open Window on the World:
Writing About Music (1.5 points)
Wed., 4:30pm-6:30pm
Sep. 14 – Oct. 19

Dinitia Smith

Fiction and Memory (1.5 points)
Wed., 4:30pm-6:30pm
Oct. 26 – Dec. 7

—THURSDAY—

Leonard Schwartz

Literary Art and the Language
of Philosophy (1.5 points)
Thu., 3:20pm-5:20pm
Sept. 8 – Oct. 13

Joss Lake

Creating New Worlds
in Writing and VR (1.5 points)
Thu., 6:30pm-8:30pm
Oct. 27 – Dec. 8

—FRIDAY—

Melissa Smith

Art Criticism Now:
Shaping the Culture (1.5 points)
Mon., 10am-12pm
Sept. 16 – Oct. 21

Tony Tulathimutte

FORM ETC (1.5 points)
Fri., 1:10pm-3:10pm
Sept. 16 – Oct. 21

Jason Gots

Narrative Podcasting (1.5 points)
Fri., 10:00pm-12:00pm
Oct. 28 – Dec. 9

SEMINARS

Hilton Als

Baldwin

(CROSS-GENRE)

Wed., 4:30pm-6:30pm

This course will not only examine Baldwin's seminal works as a fiction writer, essayist, and playwright, we will also discuss passages from the Bible, and writers, ranging from Dostoevsky and Henry James to Richard Wright and Malcolm X, who had an influence on the artist's way of thinking and seeing. Writing assignments will include critical work, memoir, and a fictional exercise or two

Course is limited to 15 students. Candidates will be selected from work they submit beforehand. It can be in any genre, but is limited to five pages. The deadline for all submissions is August 15th.

Hilton Als

Sister Outsider: Women Writing Memoir and Criticism

(NONFICTION)

Fri., 2pm-4pm

Here we will read seminal writers, including Mary Wollsenkraft, Marianne Moore, Gwendolyn Brooks, Elizabeth Hardwick, Janet Malcolm, and Audre Lorde, who often combined both genres in their work, thereby creating forms all their own that continue to have a great influence on today's authors and thinkers. Writing assignments will include critical and autobiographical work.

Course is limited to 15 students. Candidates will be selected from work they submit beforehand.

Keri Bertino

The Writer as Teacher

(CROSS-GENRE)

Thu., 10am-1pm

This class, for students with an interest in teaching creative writing in any setting, takes as a starting point two foundational questions of writing pedagogy: "Can writing be taught?" and "Is it possible to teach English so that people stop killing each other?" Together, we'll develop more (and more-nuanced) inquiries in response to these questions, and seek to answer them through our exploration of the theories, practices, and contexts of teaching creative writing. Primary topics include fundamentals of both general and writing pedagogy (including process, creativity, and growth mindset), assignment and course design, creating classroom communities, responding to student

writing, the workshop, and exploration of varied sites of creative writing both in-person and online. We'll also take up broader questions of the role of the artist and teacher in communities, issues of professionalization, and the ways that practices of teaching and writing inform and fortify one another.

James Cañón

Link 'Em Up! Bridging the Boundary Between Short Stories and Novels

(FICTION)

Wed., 2pm-4pm

Is it a collection of short stories? Is it a novel? Actually, it's both! This seminar will focus on highly acclaimed short story cycles, or collections of linked stories, or novels-in-stories, or composite novels — call them by whatever name you like — those books made up of individual narratives that stand alone as short stories, with all the intensity that the form entails, but are connected so the book achieves an aggregate, novelistic force, a collection that adds up to something even more compelling than the power of its component parts. We'll look at works by Jamaica Kincaid, Sherwood Anderson, Julia Álvarez, Daniyal Mueenuddin, Mia Alvar, Edward P. Jones, Mavis Gallant, and Nam Le, among others. We'll explore organizing around place, character, theme, and event. We'll look at using repetition of landscape and objects to maximize emotional impact. We'll delve into long and short timeframes — how one approaches writing a multi-generational linked cycle versus a cycle of stories that occurs in a day. We'll focus on the importance of plot: how throughlines and lines of tension function in both individual stories and through a linked collection. Lastly, we'll consider connection and disconnection in relation to broader questions of identity and community.

Katrina Dodson

Essay As Portraiture

(TRANSLATION, CROSS-GENRE)

Thu., 4:15pm-6:15pm

In this course, we will roam and range over the transnational contours of the essay-portrait, a roving form that mingles the personal with the analytical, aiming to capture the essence of its subject with no claim to documentary or historical exhaustiveness. Our point of departure will be Montaigne's *essais* as experiments in thinking offered up as an ongoing self-portrait. We will consider works that map elements of the essay and portraiture, by Theodor Adorno, John Berger, and Gertrude Stein, and connect visual art to writing technique, from ekphrasis and Stein's poem-portraits, to Roland Barthes on photography. Discussions will focus on questions of representation and structure: To what extent does the essay project its author over the subject? What intimacies and obsessions motivate the text and how do they open onto broader social and historical concerns? What are the organizing principles of this non-linear, associative, fragmentary form? We will also sound out the boundaries of genre, asking what distinguishes (self) portraiture from (auto) biography and where essay bleeds into something else.

Translation will be a major through line: we will pay close attention to how translators complicate and replicate the author/subject relationship, compare translations of iconic texts, and consider translation itself as a mode of portraiture, thinking alongside Kate Briggs's *This Little Art*, Alejandro Zambra's "Translating a Person," portraits of Clarice Lispector, and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's image-text collage, *Dictee*. Readings will also include shorter sketches and book-length essays about individuals—such as James Baldwin on Norman Mailer and Nathalie Léger's *Suite For Barbara Loden*—as well as portraits of public spaces and milieus, including Sei Shonagon on 11th-century Japanese court life and Baudelaire on Parisian flânerie. Other portraitists may include: Svetlana Alexievich, Natalia Ginzburg, Fleur Jaeggy, John Keene, Valeria Luiselli, Maggie Nelson, Marcel Schwob, and W.G. Sebald.

Timothy Donnelly

The Sublime

(POETRY)

Tue., 1:10pm-3:10pm

One grows used to the weather,
The landscape and that;
And the sublime comes down
To the spirit itself,

The spirit and space,
The empty spirit
In vacant space.

—Wallace Stevens, from "The American Sublime"

Discussions of the sublime often start etymologically, observing that the word "sublime" derives from the Latin preposition *sub*, meaning (here) "up to," and the Latin noun *limen*, meaning "lintel" or "threshold." The sublime experience, then, transports us up to the threshold—to the limits of our perception, fathoming, language, and selves. As an aesthetic concept, the sublime pertains not to objects *per se* but more properly to that state of mind provoked in us when contemplating certain objects, specifically those that possess qualities of greatness, power, vastness, obscurity, magnificence, magnitude, difficulty and so forth. The sublime has been referred to as "an agreeable kind of horror" (Joseph Addison), "the paradoxical experience of being at once overwhelmed and exalted" (Robert Doran), and "the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling" (Edmund Burke). This course will make a study of that emotion. It will entail an investigation of the centrality of the sublime in European cultural discourse from the late Renaissance through the 18th century (Milton, Kant, Macpherson, Schiller, Burke) and into Romanticism (Goethe, Coleridge, Wordsworth, the Shelleys), as well as a mapping of its crucial relationships to ideas of the beautiful, the ineffable, the irrational, trauma, the abyss, the numinous, mysticism, ecstasy, the uncanny, hyperobjects, and the other. We will consider the place of sublimity in key classical texts (Homer, Pindar, Longinus) and in medieval poetry (Dante, "The Ruin"), illuminated manuscripts, and

architecture, as well as in examples of non-Western poetry and aesthetic philosophy (Nagarjuna, Guo Xi, Motokiyo). The second half of the semester will focus on the sublime's complex resurfacings in modernity and postmodernity, including the "sublime uprising" of "The Rite of Spring" by Stravinsky and Najinsky, Beckett's *The Unnamable*, Philip's *Zong!*, von Trier's *Melancholia*, Christensen's alphabet, Graham's *Fast*, and Peele's *Us*, as well as in the writing of Kristeva, Jameson, Danto, Žižek, and others. We will also consider artworks by Goya, Martin, Turner, Fuseli, Friedrich, Whistler, Klint, Newman, Rothko, Kiefer, Weiwei, McQueen, and Steyerl. Interrogations of the gender and racial biases of the sublime will be made by Freeman and Armstrong, and we will also explore Ngai's concept of "stuplimity"—defined as "the aesthetic experience in which astonishment is paradoxically united with boredom"—Brady's pioneering work on the place of the sublime in environmental thought, and work in rooted in notions of the "technological sublime." Each week's readings will include a selection of modern and contemporary poems through which the sublime might be felt. Each student will submit a brief mid-term and a final assignment of creative work related to the readings and discussion as well as provide a brief presentation on one of the topics of our study at some point during the semester. Detailed reading list TBD.

Monica Ferrell

Word and Image: Reading and Writing Contemporary Poetry for Prose Writers

(CROSS-GENRE)

Tue, 10am-12pm

Open to Fiction and Nonfiction students only. This is a workshop-format course in the reading and writing of poetry for students of fiction and creative nonfiction. With a focus on contemporary poetry, we will discuss various approaches to how to read a poem, and examine a range of aesthetics including modernism, formalism, confessional writing, the New York School, and hybridity. We will also discuss free and formal verse, the prose poem, and the lyric essay. Topics explored will include music and sound, word choice, imagery, line-break and stanza-break, repetition, syntax, silence and the unsaid, and poetic closure. We will attempt to write a new poem each week, as we consider work by such authors as Wallace Stevens, John Berryman, Sylvia Plath, John Ashbery, Claudia Rankine, Inger Christensen, Terrance Hayes, Cynthia Cruz, and Safiya Sinclair.

B.K. Fischer

The Comma Sutra: Grammar, Syntax, and Praxis

(CROSS-GENRE)

Tue., 4:15pm-6:15pm

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 sutra—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.

Joshua Furst

Narrative Design

(FICTION)

Mon., 4:15pm-6:15pm

The same basic plot points—boy meets girl, someone's been murdered—can be used in a myriad of ways to create a plethora of different stories. Because fiction is comprised of numerous elements—not just plot, but also character, scene, time, structure, voice, style, etc.—its overall effect is derived from how the writer has intentionally organized these elements to create a specific experience for the reader. And the narrative design—the controls the writer places on the story, the expectations the writer generates in the reader, and the patterns the writer utilizes as the story progresses—is one of the defining ways that a writer makes the story his or her own.

In this class we'll look at the narrative design of stories. We'll focus on how the formal choices the author makes install constraints on what can and cannot be done in the story as well as the way these choices lead to opportunities and possibilities for the text. We'll explore how differing narrative tactics can generate energy in the text, engagement in the reader, and how in the most masterful work, the narrative design rises from the simple organization of story to become a contributing element in conveying the story's meaning.

Students will be asked to write one short piece of fiction of their own that utilizes an innovative narrative design to achieve its goals.

Readings may include: James Baldwin, Richard Yeats, Susan Sontag, Franz Kafka, John Barth, Samuel Beckett, JM Coetzee, Nathaniel West, David Foster Wallace, Katherine Anne Porter, William Vollmann, etc.

Rivka Galchen

Comedy and Calamity

(FICTION, CROSS-GENRE)

Mon., 4:15pm-6:15pm

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.

Alan Gilbert

Writing and Reading Across Genre(s)

(CROSS-GENRE)

Tue., 4:15pm-6:15pm

This seminar with a workshop component will focus on individual authors who write across genres: poets who write fiction, novelists who write poetry, and poets and novelists who write nonfiction. As writers, readers, and teachers, we will aim to make the readings relevant to our own engagements with other genres. Examples in fiction, poetry, and nonfiction will be taken from the modernist era, including work by Djuna Barnes, Samuel Beckett, Gwendolyn Brooks, Aimé Césaire, H. D., Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, James Joyce, Federico García Lorca, Mina Loy, Muriel Rukeyser, Gertrude Stein, Jean Toomer, César Vallejo, Oscar Wilde, Virginia Woolf, and more. We will examine how these authors transmitted techniques and ideas across their writings in different genres. We will also write our own versions of passages from the readings and discuss how we might give ourselves permission to write in other genres. The final assignment is a portfolio of creative work.

Nicola Goldberg

The Novella

(FICTION)

Wed., 2:00pm-4:00pm

This course will provide an overview of the novella and is aimed at students who are interested in writing their own. We will break down the novella into its different elements, such as protagonist, plot, voice, and setting. The class will include generative writing exercises tied to each book on the syllabus. Our primary focus will be crafting stories on a sentence-by-sentence level. We will read several examples of the genre, including works by Amy Hempel, Thomas Pynchon, Qui Miaojin, James Baldwin, Jade Sharma, and Katherine Faw.

Susan Hartman

Writing About Communities

(NONFICTION)

Thu., 1:10pm-3:10pm

In this class, students will learn feature writing techniques—how to interview, report on and structure a story--as they explore a small community outside campus. New York City can be seen as a galaxy of tiny communities: a group of domino players, a butcher shop, a street vendor who repairs watches. We will discuss: How do you gain access to a closely-knit community? How do you establish trust? How do you ask difficult questions? And how do you report during a pandemic?

We will look at selected readings by veteran journalists and authors. Our definition of community will be broad: We will read about communities shaped by danger, by altruism, and by loneliness. Students will learn how to find a sharp focus--an invisible thread--for their own reported piece. By the last class, students will have completed a draft of a feature story. (Word length depends on scope; 1200 word max.)

Joanna Hershon

Embodying Intimacy

(FICTION)

Mon., 10am-12pm

Have you received feedback to “Just go there,” with your erotic scenes in fiction but you feel daunted, embarrassed and/or uncomfortable? Have you had feedback that the friends/parents/children in your scenes don’t feel wholly alive? In this class, we will break down why intimacy works on the page, and commit to exploring this tricky craft component. We’ll learn how to embody our specific characters’ erotic drives without being cheesy or trite. We’ll break down what makes intimate bonds--between parents and children, between friends, between lovers— memorable. The readings will include work by Edith Wharton, Michael Cunningham, Susan Choi, Elena Ferrante, Elizabeth Strout, Scott Spencer, Jamie Quatro, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Garth Greenwell. We’ll also do plenty of writing, while working through our various stumbling blocks and curiosities.

Brigid Hughes

Editing and the Writer

(CROSS-GENRE)

Thu., 4:15pm-6:15pm

The course will examine the role of the editor in the literary ecosystem. We will look at the editor's role in particular in the context of literary magazines—examining their past, present, and possibilities for the future, from the perspectives of both the editor and the writer.

We will analyze specific issues of magazines, and together read and discuss specific pieces in the context of the editor-writer relationship. We will discuss the elements that distinguish a magazine, including unifying themes, mission, and criteria for the selection process. The editorial relationships between known editors and writers will also be examined. Assignments will include exercises in all aspects of editing. By the end of the seminar, you will develop a mission statement and create a sample issue. This course is designed for writers who are interested in the editorial side of publishing, and how editor-writer relationships shape work.

Leslie Jamison

Writing the Body

(NONFICTION)

Tue., 1:10pm-3:10pm

This class will explore how writing documents the electric relationship between bodily experience and consciousness. How are sensation and emotion connected? How is this connection made uneasy? Ruptured? Turned glorious? How is “the self” contoured—literally and otherwise—by its physical vessel? How and when does the body carry political implications? Does it ever not? (Spoiler: I think it always does.) How can we approach these questions about bodily experience as questions of craft: How do we shape the physical worlds of our writing, and the bodily lives of our written citizens? How can the senses—all the information we gather through the condition of embodiment—become an infinite resource for our language? How can the senses urge us toward particularity, and help us capture it?

For example: How can the texture of sensory experience animate the abstractions of the previous paragraph? Which is to say, perhaps at the core of this course is not the question of how to understand the relationship between bodily experience and consciousness, but the question, What did you eat for breakfast this morning? Or, what did your street smell like last night when you took your dog for a walk? Or, what did your street smell like to your DOG last night when you took him for a walk? Or, why did Susan Sontag feel like her life as a writer truly began the first time she had an orgasm with a female lover? Maybe all of these questions are simply ways of animating those opening questions about the relationship between body and consciousness and how we might—as writers—draw from our bodies to make our art.

We'll use four major nodes of experience—illness, intimacy, injury and pleasure—to think about ways in which the body rises into prominence or becomes undeniable in moments of pain and

delight. Readings will include nonfiction, fiction, and poetry, encompassing work by Virginia Woolf, Audre Lord, Danez Smith, Kaveh Akbar, Ross Gay, Susan Sontag, Terese Marie Mailhot, Kristen Dombek, Maggie Nelson, Claudia Rankine, Kiki Petrosino, Joanna Hevda, and Frank Bidart. We'll also be engaging with two fall 2022 exhibitions: Doreen Lynette Garner's "Revolted" (New Museum) and Virgil Abloh's "Figures of Speech" (Brooklyn Museum).

Margo Jefferson

Arts Writing, Life Writing

(NONFICTION)

Wed., 2pm-4pm

How does our analysis and interpretation of literature, film, music, dance or visual art intersect with the materials of memoir: personal histories; emotional convictions and ambiguities; self-examination and confession? We'll study writers who explore these intersections in many ways including: Carmen Maria Machado, Natalie Leger, Hanif Abdurraqib, Zadie Smith, Cathy Park Hong, Italo Calvino, Teju Cole, Eileen Myles, Darryl Pinckney, Yiyun Li, Kate Zambreno, Wayne Koestenbaum, Renee Gladman and Rachel Eisendrath.

Nalini Jones

Myth & the Art of Storytelling

(FICTION)

Wed., 10am-12pm

A seminar focused on pieces of contemporary literature that reconsider the stories and archetypes of Greek mythology. The course will begin with a brief discussion of myth and ancient Greek theater before we move to contemporary fiction as a way to explore ideas about love, war, family, sacrifice, politics, friendship, punishment, honor, the situation of women, and storytelling itself. Readings will include poems, novels, and short fiction, as well as one ancient Greek play. The culminating assignment will be a work of original fiction. If possible, one class session will be held in the Greek wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Binnie Kirshenbaum

Writers Writing About Writers

(FICTION)

Tue., 4:15pm-6:15pm

Writers who write about writers can easily bring on the worst kind of literary miscarriage; everybody knows that. Start a story off with "Craig crushed out his cigarette and lunged for his typewriter," and there isn't an editor in the United States who'll feel like reading the next sentence.

...But you'll have to be patient because there's going to be a writer in it [this story]. I won't call him "Craig," and I can guarantee that he won't get away with being the only Sensitive Person" among the characters, but we're going to be stuck with him....and you better count on his being as awkward and obtrusive as writers nearly always are, in fiction or in life."

--Richard Yates

For this seminar, we'll be reading novels, short stories, non-fiction, and poetry in which characters and first-person narrators are writers. How does their profession define them, influence their behavior, inform their lives, come to bear on their relationships, and affect and create the content of the work? How do authors avoid the pitfalls of self-protection, self-indulgence, grandiosity, cliché, romanticizing what is not romantic, and the tedium when writing about characters who spend their days alone tapping at a keyboard? What happens when these characters go out into the world? Is their lens sharper? Are they more judgmental? Are they more honest or more compassionate or more cruel than other characters? Are their perspectives, observations, opinions, etc. shaped or influenced by their profession? We will be discussing the variety of ways in which the authors employed writers as characters to embody a spectrum of the human condition including their experiences of love, loathing, family, politics, society, sorrow, alienation, loneliness, and disdain. Particular attention will be paid to the narrative voices, word choices, and the original and innovative ways that these authors have chosen to present these characters, and how their being writers shaped and informed the work.

A partial reading list includes Roberto Bolano, Lorrie Moore, John Keene, Philip Roth, Mona Van Duyn, Javier Marais, Tash Aw, Anton Chekov, Jamaica Kincaid, Grace Paley, and Richard Yates.

There is a workshop component to this seminar.

*Authors like cats because they are such quiet, lovable, wise creatures, and cats like authors for the same reason.

--Robertson Davies

Writers Are Dangerous People

--Nikita Gill

Nicole Krauss

On Force: 12 Short Novels

(FICTION)

Tue., 1:10pm-3:10pm

In this class we will look at novels whose economy belies their force, whose fuse burns immediate, hot, and bright. How do these writers achieve their intensity, their revelations and transformations, with such explosive force in so few pages?

While this is a class about economy and restraint, it is (as all literature classes must be) also about the larger question of what gives a work its aesthetic force. How does this piece of literature work on us? What moves us about it, and why? How does it achieve its sense of "aliveness"? And when it

gives us, in the words of D.H. Lawrence, “a new access of life,” how did it deliver that access? What makes the author’s voice or vision original? Where the work succeeds, how does it succeed, and where it fails, how does it fail? Can failure, itself, be valuable in a work of literature? What is valuable in a work of literature—valuable in a universal sense, and valuable to each of us alone? And what, really, are we doing when we are trying to write? These are the questions we’ll be holding in mind as we read these brilliant short novels.

Reading will include:

Sweet Days of Discipline, Fleur Jaeggy
By Night in Chile, Roberto Bolaño
The Old Child, Jenny Erpenbeck
An Episode in the Life of a Landscape Painter, César Aira
Garden, Ashes, Danilo Kis
A Cup of Rage, Raduan Nassar
Sleepless Nights, Elizabeth Hardwick
Life & times of Michael K, J.M. Coetzee
The Loser, Thomas Bernhard
The Lost Daughter, Elena Ferrante
The Passion According to GH, Clarice Lispector
The Fall, Albert Camus

Dorothea Lasky

Unleashing The Poetic Demon: Seminar for 1st Year Poets

(POETRY) Wed., 10am-12pm

Note: Class is not required but is strongly encouraged for 1st-year Poets.

In this seminar for first year poets, we will explore the idea of the poetic demon and what makes the poems that we love to read and write so captivating. In thinking about the poetic demon, we will consider the multifaceted relationship that exists between poet, poem, poetic demon, and audience. We will discuss how this dynamic is developed in the space of a poem and how we might, as poets, establish our own relationships with our readers and to poetry itself. The course reader will be co-created with the class participants and will include poems that they have chosen to share. In addition, we will read poems by: Myung Mi Kim, Cecilia Vicuña, William Blake, John Keats, Sylvia Plath, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Kamilah Aisha Moon, Bernadette Mayer, Langston Hughes, Wanda Coleman, Miyó Vestrini, Bhanu Kapil, Douglas Kearney, Kazim Ali, Emily Dickinson, CA Conrad, and Terence Hayes. Assignments will include: keeping up a reading journal, weekly readings and discussions, mid-term critical paper, and a final creative manuscript.

Gideon Lewis-Kraus

Reporting Non-News

(NONFICTION)

Mon., 1:10-3:10pm

This seminar looks at information-gathering for writers, with particular emphasis on non-news—that is, information that cannot exclusively or interestingly be gathered inside one’s house, via email, or over the telephone. It examines attitudes about and practices of reporting in light of the assumption that what people say and do explicitly is not necessarily of greater relevance than how they said or did it, what they were wearing at the time, what the weather was like that day, and how the listener happened to feel about what was said or done. The class will dwell on actual information-gathering skills—which approaches tend to yield greater or lesser quantities of the varieties of useful information—but will (for the most part) reject the following ideas: that reporting and writing are distinct rather than interrelated elements of the process; that reportorial skills are innate, or are trade secrets, or can be dismissed as “mere” practical techniques of no use to the pure of heart; and that reporting for memoir or first-person rumination or fiction is somehow different in kind from reporting more traditional magazine stories. Readings will in turn be drawn from contemporary feature journalism, sociology, fiction, and possibly poetry, and may or may not include such writers as Grace Paley, Larissa MacFarquhar, Howard S. Becker, Janet Malcolm, Jia Tolentino, Ben Lerner, Nikole Hannah-Jones, Anne Carson, Katherine Boo, Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah, Kenneth Tynan, Elif Batuman, Rachel Aviv, and Tracy Kidder.

Phillip Lopate

Studies in the Essay

(NONFICTION)

Tue., 10am-12pm

We will be examining the development of the essay form, through the great line of essayists in the English language. Starting in eighteenth-century England, with Francis Bacon, Samuel Johnson, Jonathan Swift, Addison & Steele, through the great nineteenth-century practitioners, William Hazlitt, Charles Lamb, R. L. Stevenson, Thomas De Quincey, and John Ruskin, and the twentieth-century masters, such as Max Beerbohm, G.K. Chesterton, Virginia Woolf, and George Orwell, then hopping over the Atlantic to Washington Irving, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, H. L. Mencken, James Thurber, E.B. White, Mary McCarthy, James Baldwin, and M.F.K. Fisher. We will be looking at how the same writers handle personal and impersonal essays, memoir pieces, and literary criticism, to investigate the techniques of narrative structure and suspense in essays, and how the mysterious projection of authorial personality traverses any and all situations.

Shane McCrae

A Secret History: Other American Poets

(POETRY)

Tue., 10am-12pm

Winfield Townley Scott got a biography—*Poet in America*, published just four years after his death—which is always difficult for even the most famous poets to manage. Léonie Adams was the Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress, preceded immediately by Robert Lowell and followed immediately by Elizabeth Bishop. Robert Francis was, according to Donald Hall (admittedly himself inching toward oblivion), “better (say) than John Berryman or Robert Penn Warren or Delmore Schwartz or A. R. Ammons.” Russell Atkins achieved the both impressive and dubious honor of a having a volume in the Unsung Masters series dedicated to his work *while he was still alive*. And he’s still alive. But you didn’t know that. And I had to check.

In this seminar, we will read and discuss poets who are not often, if ever, read and discussed in seminars. And we’ll try to figure why some poets get famous—I mean, you know, *poetry famous*—and others don’t. The history of poetry in any country is the history of that country’s poets. But the two or three or, rarely, four poets we remember from each generation aren’t enough to keep a country’s poetry alive and moving forward. In this seminar, we will discover the hidden poets who have kept American poetry alive.

Erroll McDonald

William Faulkner and World Fiction

(FICTION)

Mon., 4:15pm-6:15pm

Nobel Prize winner Gabriel Garcia Marquez unabashedly claims William Faulkner as “my master,” says that “Faulkner is present in all the novels of Latin America,” and mischievously insists that “*The Hamlet* is the best South American novel ever written.” Since the 1950s, other major writers from around the world have similarly trumpeted the crucial influence of Faulkner on their writing. Why? What about Faulkner excited their imagination and inspired their work, allowing them to achieve their own singularities? This course aims to elucidate not only Faulkner’s formal inventions and literary techniques but his social and moral concerns, so as to examine how they inform such writers as Patrick Chamoiseau (Martinique), Gabriel Garcia Marquez (Colombia), Antonio Lobo Antunes (Portugal), Toni Morrison (United States), Juan Rulfo (Mexico), and Kateb Yacine (Algeria).

Among the works we will read are: Faulkner’s *Absalom, Absalom!*, *As I Lay Dying*, *Light in August*, *Sanctuary*, and *The Sound and the Fury*; Chamoiseau’s *Solibo Magnificent*; Garcia Marquez’s *The Autumn of the Patriarch*; Lobo Antunes’s *Act of the Damned*; Morrison’s *Beloved*; Rulfo’s *Pedro Paramo*; and Yacine’s *Nedjma*. The course will conclude with a reading of selections from *Faulkner, Mississippi*, meditations upon the writer by Martinican poet and critic Edouard Glissant.

The course requirements are: a short (three-to-five-page) piece of literary criticism on a clearly defined topic to be determined in consultation with the instructor—this essay will be orally presented to the class—and a twelve-to-fifteen-page final exercise in imitation of any writer covered during the semester.

Deborah Paredez and Saidiya Hartman

Radical Composition

(POETRY)

Wed., 2pm-4pm

This combination seminar-workshop course invites its participants to study and to produce works of radical composition. How do critical questions shape and engender new modalities of writing? How have writers radically challenged notions of genre, disciplinary frames, representational possibilities, and reading practices? What techniques have they deployed or disregarded and what other mediums have they drawn from to produce these works? How have these works produced radical new forms of knowledge, documentation, or the book-as-object? *This is an undergraduate seminar open to graduate MFA students.*

Alice Quinn

The Poems and Prose of Three 20th C. American Masters: Robert Frost, Elizabeth Bishop, and Gwendolyn Brooks

(POETRY)

Thu., 1:10pm-3:10pm

We will explore the poems and prose of these three extraordinary poets, each a master of form, and read superb essays about their work by others. Writing students will be asked mid-term to make a selection of work by one of the three, 75-100 pages and to write an appreciative introduction of four or five pages to it. The second assignment will be to write a review of a book about the work of one of the three, a book whose perspective and conclusions will be imagined and argued for or against in your piece as an exercise in writing a review of a biographical or critical work for *The New Yorker*, *The New York Review of Books*, the *Boston Review*, the *Believer*, or any periodical or journal of your choice.

Lara Vapnyar

Building a Scene

(FICTION)

Wed., 10am-12pm

Individual scenes are important building blocks of any prose narrative, yet the craft of designing a scene is often neglected by aspiring writers. In this class we will study all the aspects of designing a successful scene: setting, inner plot, inner structure, spotlight on the characters, P.O.V., choreography of physical movement, and dialogue. We will study how to write sex scenes, death scenes, party scenes, battle scenes, and nature scenes. The readings will include Tolstoy, Ferrante, Bolano, Proulx, Munro, Waters, and Wallace.

Wendy S. Walters

The Brilliant Voice

(NONFICTION)

Wed., 10am-12pm

A writer's voice is their signature. It helps define their body of work while modulating to accommodate a variety of formal ambitions. While the writer's voice is not fixed, its evolution over time can help to affirm the relationship between diverse critical and creative investments. Through reading and writing exercises, we will attempt to decipher the way that voice represents (or fails to represent) an identity or persona. We will also consider the way a writer's voice makes visible a unique world of possible intersections. Over the course of the semester, students will practice techniques to help to develop their comfort and trust in their own voice. Readings will engage works from a variety of genres including creative nonfiction, fiction, history and poetry and may include writing by John McPhee, Emily Bernard, Jorge Luis Boreas, John Milton, Margo Jefferson, Alexander Chee, Lydia Davis, William Hazlitt, Natalie Diaz, and Maria Tumarkin.

Matvei Yankelevich

Creative (Mis)translations & Radical Derivations

(TRANSLATION)

Tue., 4:15pm-6:15pm

Leave equivalency, fidelity, originality, an untranslatability at the door, as we enter a world where literature is turned upside-down. Here the old dream of word-for-word equivalency between languages, the chaste vow to respect the inviolable authority of the author, and the sacred belief in the hierarchical order of original and translation will be hung out to dry. Here we go out of bounds and offsidelines to explore the generative "mis-translation," scandalous paraphrase, treacherous imitation and further misdeeds of the pen in their confrontations with the literature that writes us.

In this course, we'll poke holes in grand theories that circumscribe, quantify, and corral translation into servile submission. Through inspired interpretive and creative approaches that destabilize "original" texts and conquer canonic works, we will push back the limits imposed by "the task of the translator" and "translation proper." We'll harness translation's power to open new reserves of language, loosen our grip on our own voice to let in others, and unmask our own inherent biases in the encounter with foreign and faraway literature. Through radical rewritings and abject deviations we will recuperate volition and agency in the encounter with the authority of originals and examine the complicated politics of transgressive translation practices.

Through readings — which may include US-Americanizations of Lorca (by Jack Spicer), of Tsvetaeva (by Jean Valentine), of Mandelstam (by Christian Wiman); homophonic translations from the Zukofskys' Catullus to Melnick's *Iliad*; the bad-boy Baudelaire in David Cameron's *Flowers of Bad* and Brandon Brown's *Flowering Mall*; Sawako Nakayasu's "collaboration" with Chika Sagawa; Jen Bervin's palimpsest over Shakespeare; appropriative transformations by Layli Long Soldier and M. NourbeSe Philip; Christian Hawkey's seances with Trakl; Ezra Pound's stylizations of Chinese poetry; Jonathan Stalling's "Yinglishi"; Paul Legault's necrophiliac Emily Dickinson; Mónica de la

Torre's "repetitions" — we'll acquaint ourselves with several procedural strategies (homophonic, Oulipian, computer-generated, etc.), perform some experiments along similar lines, and invent our own. To examine aesthetic and political underpinnings of translators' choices, we will read translations that approach issues of dialect, neologism, historical context, and invented language, and think through the translator's task alongside writers such as Walter Benjamin, Kate Briggs, Haroldo de Campos, Édouard Glissant, Johannes Göransson, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and Rosmarie Waldrop.

*This course is for writers of all concentrations and descriptions.
Knowledge of a foreign language is not required.*

LITERARY TRANSLATION WORKSHOP

Susan Bernofsky

Thu., 10am-12:30pm

Jeremy Tiang

Fri., 1:10pm-3:40pm

Natasha Wimmer

Wed., 10am-12:30pm

These workshops are open to students translating from all languages at all levels, from novice to experienced, and within or across all genres: fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. They are 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.

LECTURES

Lee Siegel

The Big Blur: Writing in the Space Between Art and Life

Thu., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Acknowledging the artifice of both art and life has been a rich vein in fiction. But now some of our most original writers are exploring not just the boundaries of fiction and reality--that goes back to Robbe-Grillet and the *nouveau roman* and, further, to *Tristram Shandy*--but the evolution of social life itself into some kind of hybrid animal of fact, art-making, fantasy, lies and self-deceit.

This is hardly brand new. Movies like *Synecdoche, Being John Malkovich*, and *Birdman* have been exploring this terrain for years. And far beyond the screen and the page, openly fraudulent performances of authenticity are either being embraced as the real thing, or welcomed as assaults on realities that many people find intolerable. Behold our political life.

On the page, fiction blurring fiction and nonfiction has a long history, and in this course we will take a look at the antecedents of what you might call today's neo-realist-postmodernists. We might touch on the *roman à clef*, that mixing of art and real life that now seems almost quaint, and then a memoir or two that is consciously a composite of what really happened and what didn't happen, and then a couple of novels that are frankly works of autobiography. After that, things get more complicated.

Authors and works might include Mary McCarthy's *Memoirs of a Catholic Girlhood* (fiction disguised as memoir), followed by Elizabeth Hardwick's *Sleepless Nights* (memoir disguised as fiction). Frederick Exley's *A Fan's Notes* and Philip Roth's *The Counterlife* are possibilities. We will take up Richard Wright's *Black Boy* and Capote's *In Cold Blood*, the great granddaddy of so many. Then it's on to Norman Mailer's *Armies of the Night*, Dave Eggers' *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*, Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, the trying yet delicious Knausgaard, and the delicious yet sometimes trying riddle of Elena Ferrante (the more anonymous she remains, the more her fiction seems a revelation of her identity). We will conclude with two contemporary masters of The Big Blur: Sheila Heti, and Rachel Cusk. In their work, shifting boundaries of the real and the not, un-, sur- or unreal are no longer the stuff of a meditation on the nature of literary art. These writers are portraying the way we live now.

One five-to-ten page paper is required. The paper may be a critical response to works we have read, or it could be an example of The Big Blur itself—either an excerpt from a future, or imaginary, novel, or a self-contained piece of creative writing in the style of a novel that purposefully plays with levels of fact and fiction, art and actuality.

Benjamin Taylor

Other People's Secrets

Thu., 4:15pm-6:15pm

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; but what life hides, writing broadcasts. Novels and stories, memoirs and personal essays, plays and poems 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 psychology — the fortress of secrets — becomes behavior. Readings as follows:

Black Boy (Richard Wright)
Father and Son (Edmund Gosse)
The Professor's House (Willa Cather)
To the Lighthouse (Virginia Woolf)
"A Sketch of the Past" and "Old Bloomsbury" (Virginia Woolf)
A Cab at the Door (V. S. Pritchett)
Memories of a Catholic Girlhood (Mary McCarthy)
How I Grew (Mary McCarthy)
Intellectual Memoirs (Mary McCarthy)
Mrs. Bridge (Evan Connell)
Mr. Bridge (Evan Connell)
The Duke of Deception (Geoffrey Wolff)
This Boy's Life (Tobias Wolff)
Patrimony (Philip Roth)

Prior to the first class please read *Black Boy*.

Mark Wunderlich

Reading Rainer Maria Rilke

Wed., 2pm-4pm

Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926) is probably the most widely-read German-language poet of our century. With multiple translations into English, and available in dozens of languages, a handful of his poems have shaped how we read and think about poems. Rilke was also a genius of the aphoristic admonishment, a writer of thousands of letters, the author of an expressionist novel, and the accidental author of a runaway best-seller—a sentimental work of poetic prose lifted from his juvenalia—that went with thousands of German and Austrian soldiers to the front during the First World War.

In this course, we will look at the breadth of Rilke's poetic achievements, from his early religious poems, to his novel *The Notebooks of M.L. Brigg*, to the transcendent *New Poems*, and finally his Modernist masterpiece *The Duino Elegies*, with its accompanying poems *The Sonnets to Orpheus*. We will read closely, and attend to the work of reading comparative translations and spend a good deal of time placing this work in context of its time and place—a world that was polyglot, multicultural, European—but which gave way to the poison of nationalism and the destruction of war.

In addition to our work of careful reading, we will also write poems and pieces of short prose that echo the strategies Rilke deployed (the “posthumous voice,” the vivid object, the ekphrastic reverie), and we will conduct some of that work at the great museums of New York (Museum of Modern Art, The Cloisters, the Neue Galerie). There we will observe and write together and alone as the exemplars of “neighboring solitudes” Rilke described. Students will complete a midterm and a final portfolio of work, read, converse and write. All reading will be in English and all reading will be works of translation with bilingual texts when readily available.

SPECIAL PROJECTS WORKSHOP

Thom Donovan

Tue., 6:30pm-9:30pm

Open to 2nd-year students only. 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.

MASTER CLASSES

Jay Deshpande

First Books of Poems, Then and Now

6 sessions, 1.5 points

Tue., 1:10pm-3:10pm
(Dates: Oct. 25 - Nov. 29)

In any poet's career, the first book is both a station and a passage: it's something to achieve and something to get through. This course will provide a short but immersive exploration of first collections, considering the genres and architectures of the debut. To map the changing functions of first books through the decades, we will read collections in pairs: Seamus Heaney and Safiya Sinclair, Jorie Graham and Solmaz Sharif, Brigit Pegeen Kelly and Derrick Austin, James Schuyler and Tommy Pico. As we investigate influence and audience, students will also write new poems, testing how they might introduce their work to a larger world.

Wes Enzinna

Breaking Into Magazines

6 sessions, 1.5 points

Mon., 6:30pm-8:30pm
(Dates: Oct. 24 - Nov. 28)

This master class will immerse students in the world of longform journalism, teaching them how to combine reporting and research with scene-writing and carefully crafted prose. My initial idea for the course was a simple one: I learned to write professionally—that is, I learned about narrative, structure, character, voice, and all of the other elements that go into a publishable work of nonfiction—by writing for specific magazines, mastering the conventions demanded by each. What makes a great pitch for the New York Times Magazine? What makes a New Yorker feature different from a Harper's feature? By examining how editors at various publications work with writers to shape articles, this course will give students the building blocks necessary to produce high-quality longform writing, whether they aspire to write investigations, creative nonfiction, or memoir/personal essays. Students will pitch article ideas, report stories, write on deadline, and be edited rigorously. They will learn about ledes, "billboard" paragraphs, story vs. topic, and paradox as key tools in the longform journalist's toolbox. Editors at Harper's, GQ, and The New York Times will visit the class to share lessons from their work and tips for aspiring writers. By the end of the course, students will have a fully developed, polished, and workshopped story idea ready to send to the magazine of their choice.

Jason Gots

Narrative Podcasting

6 sessions, 1.5 points

Fri., 10:00am-12:00pm

(Dates: Oct. 28 - Dec. 9, no class Nov. 25)

It's been eight 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 grown 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, translating your writer's voice into a new medium.

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 *Welcome to Night Vale* to narrative nonfiction shows like Jonathan Goldstein's *Heavynweight*. 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.

Joss Lake

Creating New Worlds in Writing and VR

6 sessions, 1.5 points

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

(Dates: Oct. 27 - Dec. 8, no class Nov. 24)

In this 6-week course, students will engage with speculative fiction through reading writers such as N.K. Jemisin as well as creating their own speculative fiction world in writing and in VR. By moving back and forth between text and VR, students will get to immerse in their invented spaces in new ways and share these spaces with more ease. No background in VR technology is required and CUIT will be providing support. VR headsets will be provided. This class is designed as a "laboratory" where we will explore the VR medium and its effects on our creative process. Students will be expected to craft a world, planet, landscape, city, etc. in both VR and in writing and to share this work.

Megan McDowell

Latin American Horror in Translation

6 sessions, 1.5 points

Mon., 10:00am-12:00pm
(Dates: Nov. 7 - Dec. 12)

Latin American horror is having a moment, with writers like Mariana Enriquez and Samanta Schweblin, two of the most exciting authors publishing today, striking a nerve among an English-speaking readership. This class will look at works of horror translated from Spanish with a view to breaking down the strategies these writers—and their translators—employ to get under their readers' skin.

Jacques Derrida once said, “We are what haunts us.” A horror writer locates the “phobic pressure points” of a culture and presses on them, forcing us to confront our fears and maybe learn a little something in the process. But how does horror work on a structural level, and how does it work in a specifically Latin American context? In this seminar, we will examine the traditions that have led us to this moment in contemporary horror, tracing the legacy of the English-language Gothic tradition and its permutations in Latin America. (Shirley Jackson’s *The Haunting of Hill House* will be an important point of reference.) We will also examine the strategies translators of contemporary horror narratives can employ to convey and inspire visceral emotions like terror, horror, and disgust, keeping in mind that a translator is responsible for conveying not only rhythm, tone, and multiplicity of meaning in a text but also for guiding readers through a world where they may not recognize cultural markers. Through readings, class discussions, and written responses, we will explore these works and their translations with the goal of developing strategies that will be of use in future writing or translation projects in various genres. Readings to be drawn from translated works by Schweblin (*Fever Dream*, *Little Eyes*), Enriquez (*Things we Lost in the Fire*, *Dangers of Smoking in Bed*, and *Our Share of Night*), Monica Ojeda (*Jawbone*), Fernanda Melchor (*Hurricane Season*), and Agustina Bazterrica (*Tender is the Flesh*), as well as other contextualizing texts from both the Spanish and English traditions. No knowledge of a language other than English required.

Piotr Orlov

An Open Window on the World: Writing About Music

6 sessions, 1.5 points

Wed., 4:30pm-6:30pm
(Dates: Sep. 14 - Oct. 19)

In recent decades, writing about music has dovetailed with the conventions of “music criticism.” The practice has encompassed reviewing recordings and, at times, live performances, profiling, and interviewing musicians, and tracking trends in popular sounds — mostly contemporary, but at times historical. Music has always been a mercurial, multivalent art — able to convey both broad ideas and micro narratives, while simultaneously triggering manifold senses of its practitioners, consumers and innocently bystanding musickers. This masterclass will engage with great writing about music from near and seemingly far-off sources. We will pursue, read, and discuss work that emanates from non-

traditional music criticism and journalism, fiction and creative non-fiction, essays, poems, public talks. We will engage work that uses music as a muse and as a lens on society; that hears key metaphors and the future of language in it; that understands listening as a central device to our comprehension of the world; and that regards gathering around it as one of humanity's crucial social ceremonial rites. We will practice how to translate the skills of listening to and researching music into clear strategies for writing about it.

Anne Paxton

Pandemic Pandemonium: the personal and political chaos of COVID

6 sessions, 1.5 points

Wed., 10:00am-12:00pm
(Dates: Sep. 14 - Oct. 19)

Epidemics are among the most dramatic events in the human experience, causing great social disruption and upheaval. The COVID 19 pandemic is no exception. The past two years of COVID evoked feelings of fear and powerlessness in many, while others found the epidemic personally transformative as they reassessed their life's purpose and experimented with new modes of living and working. The pandemic revealed fault lines in American society relating to political power, social injustice, and people's understanding of religion, mortality, science, and the limits of public policy.

In this 1.5 credit Master Class, students will have an opportunity to process aspects of the COVID epidemic through their writing. Students may write works of observation and reportage, personal narrative, and/or persuasive science writing for the general public. Our readings will cover the confusion of the early months of the pandemic, COVID and social justice (incarceration, politically-motivated misinformation, vaccine hesitancy, and resistance to masking), and the range of emotions provoked by the pandemic: anxiety and grief, adaptation and thriving.

Leonard Schwartz

Literary Art and the Language of Philosophy

6 sessions, 1.5 points

Thu., 3:20pm-5:20pm
(Dates: Sep. 8 - Oct. 13)

From Heraclitus to Maurice Blanchot, philosophers have sought to speak as poets, that is, to create a language in order to speak of that which seems to lie beyond the possibilities of expression. From Sappho to Proust poets and fiction writers have engaged in epistemological inquiry and posed metaphysical questions, while delving into questions of narrative, time, image, perception, and the depiction of thought. To what extent can the language of philosophy offer an expressive register for our writing, be it poetry, creative non-fiction or fiction? By locating the central metaphors behind apparently rational arguments, and by asserting that poems and stories have cognitive and epistemic value, this master class seeks to broaden our sense of what is possible in writing. Readings will be drawn from the fragments of Heraclitus and Sappho and the verse forms of Ibn Arabi, from modern and contemporary writers like Ezra Pound, Fanny Howe, and Danish poet Inger

Christenson, and from the notebooks of philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Always, the question is: how does the language of philosophy, once engaged with, add something to our range as writers?

Jesse Sheidlower

Defining the Dictionary

6 sessions, 1.5 points

Tue., 6:30pm-8:30pm
(Dates: Sep. 13 - Oct. 18)

While people know that you use the dictionary to find out what words mean, rather few know how dictionaries actually make their decisions. Indeed, the very idea of “the dictionary”—as if there is a single one, which perfectly reflects the reality of language—exemplifies this problem.

In this class, we will explore the history of English dictionaries, from the short glossaries of the early seventeenth century; through Samuel Johnson’s magisterial 1755 work, which established the idea of literary excellence as the main criterion of language use; to the Oxford English Dictionary’s scholarly and historical approach; to current dictionaries and online language resources, which use computational analyses of billions of words to determine how the language is actually used.

We will also explore how and why the meanings and usages of words change over time, and how dictionaries monitor these changes. Why do some words become obsolete, while others suddenly become popular? How are decisions made about the treatment of “problematic” words, e.g., obscenity or racial terms? Why are some words or meanings regarded as “ungrammatical,” and how does this vary across different styles of writing?

The skills required to analyze and describe the evidence of real language are beneficial for all writers, not just for the would-be dictionary editor (a job that is increasingly rare, as the availability of good dictionaries online forces cutbacks or closures at traditional reference publishers). We will engage in various practical exercises for studying the meaning of words—comparing definitions in existing dictionaries, writing our own definitions for new words, using basic computational techniques to inform our suspicions about language use. In the end we will not only have a better idea of how we ourselves understand the language, but also how to make our own intended meanings clear—and appropriate—to different audiences.

Dinitia Smith

Fiction and Memory

6 sessions, 1.5 points

Wed., 4:30pm-6:30pm
(Dates: Oct. 26 - Dec. 7, no class Nov. 23)

This course examines the ways in which memory is incorporated into fictional narratives. The boundary between the fictive and the remembered is amorphous; all fiction, it has been argued, is in some way autobiographical. The writer takes fragment of his or her life, slivers of dreams, bits of experience, merging them into a whole.

The course will include readings which tease the boundaries between fact and fiction, excerpts from Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, Richard Wright's *Black Boy*, Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street*, Jeanette Winterston's *Oranges are the Only Fruit*, and *Shuggie Bain* by Douglas Stuart.

The emphasis is on craft. Weekly prompts for short pieces will focus on how memory is assimilated into stories, why senses such as taste, smell, images of place, the hearing of music, evoke memories which evolve into fiction, and perhaps inspire students in their own work.

Melissa Smith

Art Criticism Now: Shaping the Culture

6 sessions, 1.5 points

Fri., 10:00am-12:00pm
(Dates: Sep. 16 - Oct. 21)

An essential part of studying arts writing is understanding how much the field has changed over the years. For a long time, art reviews predominated. In this masterclass, we will study how the field has evolved since then. Following a series of major shifts within the mainstream art and media industries, people began to embrace a broader definition of art criticism. Writing about the arts means much more now than churning out exhibition reviews. After identifying critical voices within the field, such as notable historians and critics including Clement Greenberg, Harold Rosenberg, Kellie Jones, and Linda Nochlin, the primary focus of this master class will be contemporary work. We'll examine how today's outlets cover the arts, along with reading essays and features by major contributors to them, like Roberta Smith, Carolina A. Miranda, Holland Cotter, Peter Schjeldahl, Zadie Smith, and others. The class will conclude with students producing a long-form piece about a solo or group artist show of your choosing, within which you'll be asked to reference what puts you in a unique position to explain why the artist(s) and/or the work "matters" now.

Edwin Torres

Brainlingo: Writing the Voice of the Body

6 sessions, 1.5 points

Mon., 10am-12pm
(Dates: Oct. 24 - Nov. 28)

Poets are creatures of awareness, receptive beings that embody transition. Part of allowing the creative process its chance to amaze us, is to encourage that trigger into amazement. To align our natural tri-lingual voice, our *speaking-seeing-hearing* voice, with the human complexities that define us. These six weeks will be structured as a creative laboratory, integrating poetry with movement, sound, and visual art, to expand our communication by exercising the languages inside us. Tectonic fractures, Anne Hamilton, morning songs and butoh, are some of the directions we'll cover. Work will be created, discarded, renewed to explore the sensory edges that embody transformative writing, where the creative process can begin.

Tony Tulathimutte

FORM ETC.

6 sessions, 1.5 points

Fri., 1:10pm-3:30pm
(Dates: Sep. 16 - Oct. 21)

Donuts, diamonds, stories: form somehow adds nothing and defines everything. What does a reader need to know, and when? How do beginnings establish a reader's expectations, and how are those expectations satisfied by the end? How can a story's shape convey its themes and subject? What makes a scene a scene, and when should you dramatize, summarize, or skip? These are questions of form that nerds like me enjoy teaching.

The class is structured by length. We'll begin with close readings of sentences and passages, and expand from there. We'll discuss the elasticity of time, such that an entire life can be narrated in two pages (Robert Coover's "Going for a Beer"), or a moment can expand to fill a whole book (Nicholson Baker's *The Mezzanine*). Plot and structure are formal considerations too. We'll see how the constraints of Carmen Maria Machado's "Especially Heinous" are used to expand, rather than limit, the story's direction, even when the form is itself is rigid or trite. Also discussed: the use of form not just for revision, but for generating ideas and suggesting ways forward. Also I should mention that this is kind of a Trojan Horse class to teach whatever you're interested in, like career stuff. Very loose, very chill.

James Wood

Fictional Technique in Novellas and Short Stories

4 sessions, 1 point

Tue., 3:30pm-5:30pm
(Dates: Nov. 8 - Dec. 6, no class Nov. 22)

In this class we will examine fictional technique in four short texts by Saul Bellow, Muriel Spark, Akhil Sharma, and Lydia Davis. We shall be examining characterization, realism, style, and form, and reflecting on a century of fictional experiment.

Texts:

Saul Bellow, *Collected Stories*

Muriel Spark, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*

Akhil Sharma, *Family Life*

Lydia Davis, *Collected Stories*