

Fall 2019 Course Descriptions

Scroll down for “Read like a writer” and Intro course descriptions. If you’ve taken CWL 202, you can enroll in any of these 3-credit, 300-level poetry, fiction, scriptwriting and creative non-fiction workshops:

CWL 300 CREATIVE NON-FICTION

300.S01 (93146) We 4:00-6:50PM with Jillian LaRussa, *The Story of You*

Get excited, because this course is about your favorite thing in the entire world: you. Together, through the study of vignettes, memoir, personal essay, and investigative research, you will unpack the narrative that is yourself. How do you write the story that doesn’t always belong to you? How do you share your unique perspective and captivate your audience? Everyone has a story to tell, and in this class, we will constantly be reexamining our own work and reshaping the way it is written. We will grant ourselves the tools to dig into our own minds and pull out nuggets of truth, whether universal or just unique to us.

300.S02 (93147) TuTh 10:00-11:20PM with Stephanie Osmani, *The Art of Writing Your Memories*

Through readings, discussions, and the submission of original works, students will examine what it means to be human through the most common and relatable tropes of creative nonfiction: love, grief, loss, sexuality, gender, trauma, familial history, and more. Students will learn the ins and outs of various types of creative nonfiction—from personal essay, memoir, flash nonfiction, the journal, and more—and be able to identify and employ key literary elements that make nonfiction successful in their own works.

CWL 305 FICTION

305.S01 (93149) Tu 4:00-6:50PM with Amy Hempel, *Short Story*

We will aim to amplify the idea of what a story can be, employing a range of narrative strategies, and reading stories and poems from contemporary writers who sound like no one else. Emphasis on use of place, work, logic, and, always, language. Short assignments in the beginning will spotlight ways to listen FOR stories, as Eudora Welty put it. We will talk about writing at the sentence level, and finding personal ways into the largest concerns. Students will write two stories and submit a revision of one of them.

305.S02 (93150) TuTh 11:30-12:50PM with Valerie San Filippo, *Surrealism, Magical Realism, and the Fiction of Altered Perceptions*

Fiction is about telling the truth, but what happens when the truth is too strange to be believed? What happens when what’s conceivably “real” doesn’t get to the heart of the matter? Surrealism, Magical Realism, and other fantastical/speculative genres abandon plausibility for the sake of emotional honesty. By crafting stories in these genres, we decolonize our minds of the concept of absolute reality, and let our imaginations speak. Throughout this course we will write narratives which, in questioning reality, find truth. We will explore the written works of rebellious artists,

marginalized communities, and altered states of consciousness. We will workshop, read, and explore our own definitions of what constitutes realism in fiction.

305.S03 (93151) TuTh 2:30-3:50PM with Megan McAndrew, *The Art of Revision*

We talk about it all the time, but what do we actually mean? In this hands-on workshop, we will demystify the arduous but necessary process of revising, editing and rewriting. This class will be most helpful to students working (or stuck) on a longer writing project. Highly recommended for BFA candidates and CWL Minors.

305.S04 (93152) Mo 4:00-6:50PM with Jordan Blue, *Writing Magic Worlds and Distant Futures*

With distance we can write about the things that plague our “real” world in a new light, in a more honest, exploratory way. *What if* a disease destroys humanity’s ability to reproduce, *what if* humans encounter an alien race so different we cannot help but hate them. *What if* is the anthem of the Sci-fi Fantasy writer. It guides us to situations impossible in our reality, and once there, allows us to pose challenges otherwise unreachable, and explore the human condition in a whole new way. In this class we will be discussing some difficult topics in writing, such as violence, abuse, and even genocide and we will be approaching these topics with the utmost respect and consideration

305.S05 (93153) Th 4:00-6:50PM with Christian McLean, *Fiction Gym*

Think of this class as cross-training for writers. It is designed around exercises to foster more dynamic writing by making you strengthen areas you’ve avoided. Through structured class assignments you will even work fiction muscles you never knew existed. In the end, you’ll be a tighter, stronger writer.

305.S06 (95427) MoWe 10:00-11:20am with Max Parker, *The Gone Girl Phenomenon: The Unreliable Narrator in Contemporary Psychological Thrillers*

In this class we will focus on craft discussion and the art of imitation toward the end goal of writing our own unreliable narrators across a sustained, semester-long project. We will use popular contemporary novels to open up and explore the art of writing and revealing the unreliable narrator, all while also informing the plot of the unsolved. What has happened? Who is to be believed? What does the reader know and when? You will answer all these questions (and more!) in your own writing exercises and final project. Your final project will be a completed first and last chapter of a longer work, along with a plotted body of the work, which will include components such as red herrings, changes in form, and revelations, amongst other traditions of the genre. The goal of this class is not to leave with a completed novel, but rather the tools to complete one in an organized and informed fashion if you so wish. Throughout the course, we will also be workshoping your chapters and plot-work to strengthen your logic, flow, and tension.

CWL 310 POETRY 310.S01 (93154) Th 4:00-6:50PM with Cornelius Eady,

Poetry

Study of the genre through readings, discussion and regular submission of original work. Course explores methods for expressing the human condition made available through poetry, with examples from the tradition of such tools as metaphor and image, sound, line, form, and juxtaposition. Areas of study include Powers of Poetry, Bright Containers: Form & Meter, and Methods & Madness, a study of the philosophical vs. visionary strains in poetry. Course may be repeated as the topic changes.

310.S02 (93155) TuTh 1:00-2:20PM with Julie Sheehan, *Sound*

The formal elements in poetry are primarily products of the sounds our language produces. Let's dive into prosody, our word for the study of these sounds, then practice by making some joyful noises of our own. We'll work with the rhythms of our accentual-syllabic language to make meters, with forms of repetition like refrain, with other sound effects like rhyme, and with various stanza shapes and forms. We'll also each research and present the history, evolution and context of a form in order to understand how the conventions of prosody have shaped English-language expressions of consciousness. We will not always be distributing paper copies of our poems to the other participants in this workshop, but will frequently take the opportunity to listen, to rely on and hone our ear, just as poets have for centuries .

310.S03 (93161) TuTh 11:30-12:50PM with Carina Kohn, *Poetry Around the World*

In this class we will read poetry that was initially written in another language.

We will get our hands dirty with words—mix, recite, compare, and borrow.

We will dive into language, play with poetic devices such as meter, rhythm, word choice, and forms of sound.

We will write our own poems, workshop together, and learn to enjoy poetry for the sake of it— as something beautiful.

310.S04 (95426) Mo 4:00-6:50PM with Star Black, *Ekphrastics: Writing from Art and Photography*
Writing from works of art is called “ekphrastic” writing. We will spend time exploring the current art exhibitions at Stony Brook, and, also, visual art and photography in art books. We will write various forms of poetry or short prose pieces, inspired by individual works of art that each student chooses to write about. Students will document the works of art they select with their cell phones and also create their own cell phone photographs to write about. We will write from art on location. A final illustrated paper, containing each student's original writing during this course, will be due on the last day of class.

CWL 315 SCRIPTWRITING 315.S01 (93156) MoWe 2:30-3:50PM with

Vivien Jastrzebski: TV Writing

This tv writing workshop will cover the differences required between a spec (an episode for an existing television show that is “speculative”) versus an original concept pilot. Participants will be guided on what shows are valid to spec given the current television climate. Important script writing themes that will be explored are: character's want, internal and external obstacles, tone, POV, character folly, action, and repeatable story engine. Participants will get the chance to write in a tone and genre of their own personal preference. Emphasis will be placed on understanding the emotional trajectory of a character's journey that will guide the exciting process from teaser to the final act.

315.S03 (93157) Th 4:00-6:50PM with Will Chandler: Screenwriting

All great screenplays share a compelling, well-told story. In this course, students will analyze films and read contemporary screenplays, deconstructing them in order to learn why they work so well. Students will leave understanding the construction of story, the value of juxtaposing scenes, the

power of the visual image, the importance of underlying theme and the development of compelling, layered characters and their dialogue. Students will be guided through the process of developing their own stories and will leave with a screenplay treatment and a completed first act of their own script.

CWL 320 INTERDISCIPLINARY ARTS

320.S01 (93158) Tu 4:00-6:50PM with Cornelius Eady

Regular submission, discussion, and analysis of students' work in conjunction with active engagement with the world beyond the page in order to explore methods for expressing the human condition not available through study in a single genre. Areas of interdisciplinary involvement include writing across genres (Writing Nature); production of the written word (Poetry Bookmaking, Performing & Production); and partnering to write (Endangered Languages: Poetry & the Oral Tradition, Documentary Screenwriting in a Sustainable World, and Testimony in Creative Nonfiction). Students may repeat this course as the topic changes.

"READ LIKE A WRITER" COURSES

190.S01 Intro Contemporary Lit (93131) TuTh 10:00-11:20AM with Julie Sheehan, *Whatever Happened to Genre?*

Justice Potter Stewart's famous observation about pornography—you can't define it, but you know it when you see it—applies equally to our fuzzy notions of literary genre. We believe that we can tell when we're reading poetry instead of fiction, a novella and not an essay, "creative" writing and not journalism. But can we? Somewhere along the way, genres began to lose their sharp boundaries, or maybe their boundaries were never that sharp to begin with. Let's read a few examples of writers who've staked their reputations in the gray zone where "poetry," "fiction," and "essay" don't quite make sense. Something wonderful and unclassifiable is going on. Can it continue as our categorical ideas of genre loosen up? How much do genre distinctions matter, even in more conventional works? And why has the blurring of genre become so widely practiced among contemporary authors?

250.S01 Join the Conversation (95428) TuTh 11:30-12:50PM with Megan McAndrew (for majors only)

A craft course with substantial reading component. This class explores enduring tropes in literature across time and cultures, introducing students to the idea that writing is a live and ever evolving, and thus ever significant medium. By taking contemporary works and tracing them back to their origins, students learn to place the work of various writers, including their own, in a meaningful literary continuum. Sequences might include Ovid to Kafka to Francine Prose;

Shakespeare to Angela Carter or Jane Smiley; Beowulf to Grendell; The Tempest to Brave New World; Charlotte Bronte to Jean Rhys; Sophocles to Anne Carson.

330.01 European Lit (93159) TuTh 2:30-3:50PM with Paul Harding, *SHAKESPEARE*

We will give close readings to 6 of William Shakespeare's later plays. The plays will be considered in their historical and religious contexts, their place in the emergence of modern literary English, but most of all for their sheer artistry. We will read as *writers* studying a master. (Shakespeare is, after all, perhaps the greatest of writers, even though everyone says he is.) Included will be, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Antony & Cleopatra*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*. We will also look at excerpts from other period works such as William Tyndale's English translations of the Bible, John Foxe's *Acts & Monuments*, and Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*.

335.01 American Lit (93169) TuTh 1:00-2:20PM with Genevieve Crane, *American Phantoms*

There are no white sheets or rattling chains here. Instead, the dead gossip about their neighbors, dirty their hosts' living room furniture, run up the phone bill, and interfere on date night. Their messages are sometimes silly, often oblique, and frequently painful, forcing the living to address the things they would rather leave buried. This course encourages critical reading and creative writing with the occasional gnashing of teeth. Participants will be encouraged to examine what it means to be haunted in the present day. Ultimately, does it benefit us to conquer our own phantoms? Or is it better for us to give them a seat at our table?

INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE WRITING

202.S01 (93132) MoWe 8:30-9:50AM with TBD

202.S02 (93133) MoWe 8:30-9:50AM with TBD

202.S03 (93134) MoWeFr 10:00-10:53AM with TBD

202.S04 (93135) MoWeFr 11:00-11:53AM with TBD

202.S05 (93136) MoFr 1:00-2:20PM with Sarah Stoss

202.S06 (93137) MoFr 1:00-2:20PM with TBD

202.S07 (93138) MoWe 2:30-3:50PM with TBD

202.S08 (93139) TuTh 8:30-9:50AM with TBD

202.S09 (93140) TuTh 8:30-9:50AM with TBD

202.S10 (93141) TuTh 10:00-11:20AM with TBD

202.S11 (93142) TuTh 10:00-11:20AM with TBD

202.S12 (93143) TuTh 1:00-2:20PM with Grace Dilger

202.S13 (93144) TuTh 2:30-3:50PM with TBD

202.S14 (93145) TuTh 4:00-5:20PM with TBD

202.S14 (93148) TuTh 11:30-12:50PM with TBD