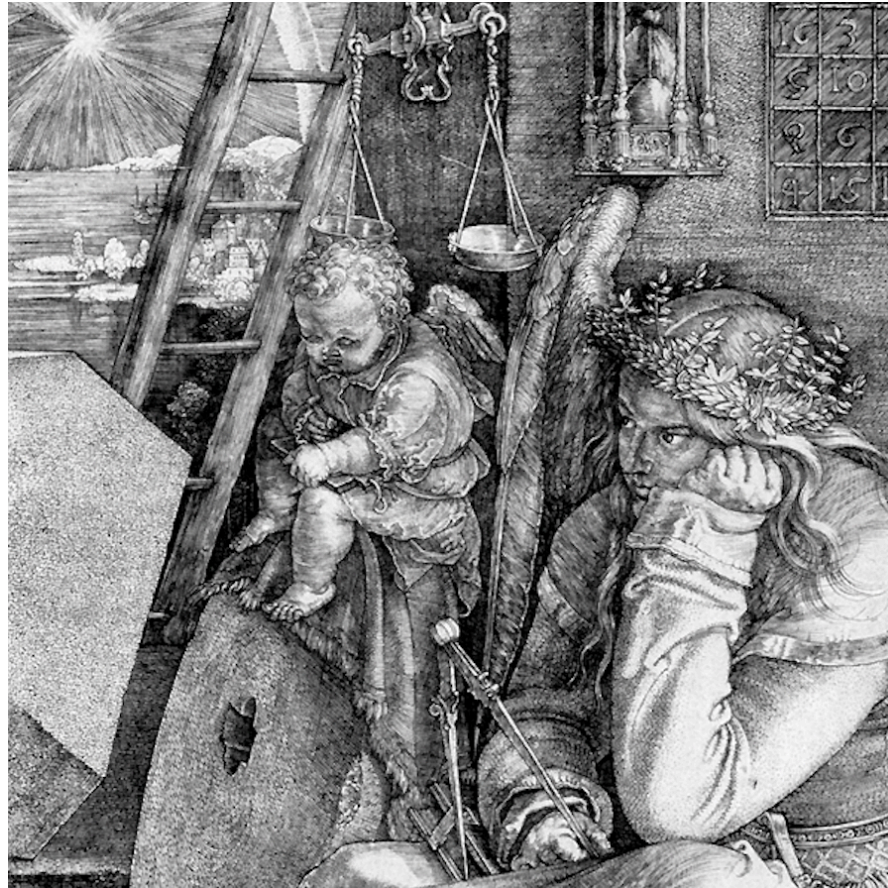


COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS | WRITING

FALL 2018



COURSEBOOK

WORKSHOPS SEMINARS LECTURES MASTER CLASSES

Updated: August 6, 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF COURSES BY DAY AND TIME

WORKSHOPS	1
SEMINARS	2
LECTURES	5
MASTER CLASSES	6

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

SEMINARS	7
Special Projects Workshop	28
Translation Workshops	29
LECTURES	30
MASTER CLASSES	33

WORKSHOPS

FICTION – OPEN (6 points)

Rivka Galchen

Mon., 10am-1pm

Sam Lipsyte

Mon., 12:05pm-3:05pm

Joshua Furst

Mon., 3:10pm-6:10pm

Victor LaValle

Tue., 1:05pm-4:05pm

Ben Marcus

Tue., 1:05pm-4:05pm

Heidi Julavits

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

Deborah Eisenberg

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

Christine Schutt

Wed., 3:40pm-6:40pm

James Cañón

Thu., 10am-1pm

Paul Beatty

Thu., 1:05pm-4:05pm

Nicholas Christopher

Thu., 2:10pm-5:10pm

Elissa Schappell

Thu., 5:15pm-8:15pm

Anelise Chen

Fri., 10am-1pm

POETRY – OPEN (6 points)

Michael Dickman

Tue., 11:05am-2:05pm

Dorothea Lasky

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

Shane McCrae

Wed., 10:30am-1:30pm

Timothy Donnelly

Thu., 4:30pm-7:30pm

Aracelis Girmay

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

NONFICTION – OPEN (6 points)

Michelle Orange

Mon., 11am-2pm

Brenda Wineapple

Mon., 1:05pm-4:05pm

Jennifer Percy

Tue., 5:10pm-8:10pm

Michael Greenberg

Wed., 3:40pm-6:40pm

NONFICTION – THESIS (9 points)

Second-Years only

Leslie Jamison

Mon., 10am-1pm

Phillip Lopate

Mon., 1:05pm-4:05pm

Lis Harris

Tue., 1:05pm-4:05pm

Richard Locke

Tue., 2:10pm-5:10pm

Margo Jefferson

Wed., 10:30am-1:30pm

SEMINARS

—MONDAY—

Jen George (FI)

Vision, Fantasy, and Intuition in Text & Art
Mon., 10am-12pm

Ben Marcus (FI)

The State of the Art
Mon., 12:05pm-2:05pm

Monica Youn (PO)

Word as Medium:
Contemporary Poetic Craft
Mon., 2:10pm-4:10pm

Rivka Galchen (FI)

The Magic Pebble: Re-Reading
Children's Literature as a Writer
Mon., 4:10pm-6:10pm

Erroll McDonald (FI)

William Faulkner and World Fiction
Mon., 4:10pm-6:10pm

Ben Metcalf (FI)

The Paragraph as Art Form
Mon., 4:10pm-6:10pm

Deborah Eisenberg (FI)

Studies in Short Fiction
Mon., 5:10pm-7:10pm

Wendy S. Walters (NF)

Nonfiction and/as Design
Mon., 6:15pm-8:15

—TUESDAY—

Lis Harris (NF)

Family Matters
Tue., 10am-12pm

Brigid Hughes (CG)

Editing and the Writer
Tue., 10am-12pm

Maria Venegas (NF)

Country of Immigrants
Tue., 10am-12pm

Monica Ferrell (CG)

Word and Image: Reading and Writing
Contemporary Poetry for Prose Writers
Tue., 11am-1pm

Phillip Lopate (NF)

Studies in the Essay
Tue., 12:05pm-2:05pm

Leslie Jamison (NF)

Illness, Injury, Intimacy, and Ecstasy:
Writing the Body
Tue., 2:10pm-4:10pm

Michael F. Moore (CG, TR)

Literary Translation Workshop
Tue., 4:15pm-6:45pm

Alan Gilbert (CG)

The Art of the Review
Tue., 5:15pm-7:15pm

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

Seminars and translation workshops are 3 points.

SEMINARS (cont'd.)

—WEDNESDAY—

Keri Bertino (CG)

The Writer as Teacher

Wed., 10am-1pm

Lara Vapnyar (FI)

Building a Scene

Wed., 10am-12pm

Deborah Paredez (CG)

Witness, Record, Document:

Poetry and Testimony

Wed., 10:10am-12pm

Paul Beatty (FI)

Mapping Los Angeles:

Creating Place and Space

Wed., 12:05pm-2:05pm

Ross Simonini (CG)

Sound and Narrative

Wed., 1:05pm-3:05pm

Binnie Kirshenbaum (FI)

Construction / Creation

Wed., 1:35pm-3:35pm

Gideon Lewis-Kraus (NF)

Reporting Non-News

Wed., 1:35pm-3:35pm

Susan Bernofsky (CG, TR)

Women of the World

Wed., 2:10pm-4pm

Timothy Donnelly (PO)

The Elegy

Wed., 3:10pm-5:10pm

Joshua Furst (FI)

Narrative Design

Wed., 4pm-6pm

Elissa Schappell (FI)

Ways of Showing (and Telling)

Wed., 4pm-6pm

Elizabeth Greenwood (NF)

Truths and Facts:

Creative License in Nonfiction

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

SEMINARS (cont'd.)

—THURSDAY—

Susan Bernofsky (CG, TR)

Literary Translation Workshop
Thu., 11am-1:30pm

Nicholas Christopher (CG)

Travellers' Tales:
Poets & Novelists on the Road
Thu., 11am-1pm

Nalini Jones (FI)

Myth & the Art of Storytelling
Thu., 12:05pm-2:05pm

B.K. Fischer (CG)

Comma Sutra:
Grammar, Syntax, and Praxis
Thu., 2:10pm-4:10pm

Matvei Yankelevich (CG, TR)

Creative (Mis)Translation
Thu., 4:10pm-6:10pm

Hilton Als (CG)

Trauma and Its Discontents
Thu., 4:30pm-6:30pm

Mark Doten (FI)

Queer Form
Thu., 6:15pm-8:15pm

—FRIDAY—

Farnoosh Fathi (PO)

Reading & the Revolution
Fri., 12:05pm-2:05pm

Rebecca Godfrey (FI)

Anti-Heroines
Fri., 12:05pm-2:05pm

LECTURES

—MONDAY—

Alice Quinn

Getting Started & Keeping Going

(3 points)

Mon., 6:40pm-8:40pm

—WEDNESDAY—

Lee Siegel

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

(3 points)

Wed., 1:35pm-3:35pm

—THURSDAY—

Richard Locke

Twentieth-Century Literary Nonfiction

(3 points)

Thu., 2:10pm-4:10pm

MASTER CLASSES

—MONDAY—

Lauren Grodstein

Plot (1.5 points)

Mon., 6:15pm-8:15pm

Sept. 17-Oct. 22

—TUESDAY—

Richard Howard

The Richard Howard Hours (1.5 points)

Tue., 4:10pm-6:10pm

I. Sept. 11-Oct. 16

II. Oct. 23-Dec. 4, no class Nov. 6

James Wood

Fictional Technique in Novellas and
Short Stories (1 point)

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

Oct. 9-Oct. 30

Joseph O'Neill

The Political Imagination (1.5 points)

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

Oct. 23-Dec. 4, no class Nov. 6

Jesse Sheidlower

Defining the Dictionary (1.5 points)

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

Sept. 25-Oct. 30

Matthew Burgess

Serious Play: Teaching Imaginative Writing
to Young People (1.5 points)

Tue., 6:50pm-8:50pm

Sept. 25-Oct. 30

—WEDNESDAY—

Saïd Sayrafiezadeh

Hyper Vivid Prose (1 point)

Wed., 1:05pm-3:05pm

Sept. 19-Oct. 10

Rachel Aviv

I Have an Idea (1 point)

Wed., 3:40pm-5:40pm

Oct. 3-Oct. 24

—THURSDAY—

Meghan Daum

What's Problematic?: Reading Fearlessly,
Writing Dangerously (1.5 points)

Thu., 10am-12pm

Oct. 4-Nov. 8

Anna Moschovakis

Between Reality, Allegory, and Invention:
Naming and Its Discontents (1 point)

Thu., 10am-12pm

Nov. 8-Dec. 6 (no class Nov. 22)

Susan Hartman

Writing About Communities (1.5 points)

Thu., 11am-1pm

Sept. 27-Nov. 1

Ru Freeman

Perspective in the Literature of Conflict
(1.5 points)

Thu., 5:15pm-7:15pm

Sept. 20-Oct. 25

Kate Bolick

Personal Anthropology: Reporting in the
First Person (1.5 points)

Thu., 5:15pm-7:15pm

Oct. 25-Dec. 6, no class Nov. 22

—FRIDAY—

Cynthia Cruz

The Archive as Resistance (1.5 points)

Fri., 10am-12pm

Sept. 21-Oct. 26

Sandra Smith

Writing and Translating Dialogue (1.5 points)

Fri., 11am-1pm

Oct. 26-Dec. 7, no class Nov. 23

—TWO CLASSES PER WEEK—

Leonard Schwartz

Literary Art and the Language of Philosophy
(1.5 points)

Tue. & Thu., 10am-12pm

Tue., Sept. 4- Thu., Sept. 20

SEMINARS

Hilton Als

Trauma and Its Discontents

(CROSS-GENRE)

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

In recent years the word trauma has come to encompass a number of troubling experiences, ranging from the personal to the political. In this course we will examine the literature, art, and films that describe traumatic experiences, and, sometimes, recovery. What, if anything, separates group trauma from individual trauma? Is there a difference between racial and sexual trauma? What defines torture, and personal heartbreak? In addition to looking at the work of Goya, Diane Arbus, and a number of artists who deal with these themes, we will read a wide range of writers on the subject, including H.D.'s groundbreaking "Letter to Freud" and Franz Fanon's "Black Skin, White Masks," to Lucy Greeley's "Autobiography of a Face," Elaine Scarry's "The Body in Pain," Jane Kramer's "Neo-Nazis: A Chaos in the Head," and Mark Danner's "Abu Ghraib: The Hidden Story."

Paul Beatty

Mapping Los Angeles: Creating Place and Space

(FICTION)

Wed., 12:05pm-2:05pm

Writing, just like navigating L.A., is all a matter of cartography. One challenge is that the city is so fluid, ethnically and geographically, that it's impossible to draw a complete map. Reading L.A. can be frustrating. It's like the authors arrived in the city, after having made transcontinental drives, using only half a treasure map and an 1803 map of the Louisiana Purchase. The only landmarks are the beach, the palm trees, and the Hollywood Sign; everything else is a giant swath of unexplored urban sprawl simply labeled "Spanish Territory." Even the Thomas Guide, the quintessential L.A. mapping system, was intentionally sprinkled with fake streets and destinations. This class will explore L.A. in ways familiar and unfamiliar, using the city as a site of departure and cartography as a methodological opening, we will aim to map our own narratives, examine how places come to be, and investigate ways to make space. Readings will include Chester Himes, Wanda Coleman, Karen Tei Yamashita, Gina Sykes, John Fante, Christopher Isherwood, and Brett Easton Ellis. Students will have to make two short presentations and write a short paper.

Susan Bernofsky

Women of the World

(CROSS-GENRE, TRANSLATION)

Wed., 2:10pm-4pm

Ten years ago, the secretary of the Nobel Prize for Literature jury criticized the United States as being “too isolated, too insular,” saying we “don’t translate enough and don’t really participate in the big dialogue of literature.” This course is designed to imagine what the “big dialogue” of international writing looks like in 2018 by examining some of the most widely discussed and prize-winning international books by women to come out in English over the past several years. We’ll look for common conversational threads among these works (friendship, estrangement, and exile in particular), but will be reading above all for what we can learn from the artistry of each of these celebrated authors. We’ll also be investigating their reception in the U.S., asking what happens when works are imported into a new cultural context and new set of conversations, including the debates surrounding the translations of several of these works.

Readings are variable but might include:

Svetlana Alexievich, *Second-Hand Time*, trans. Bela Shayevich
Leïla Slimani, *The Perfect Nanny*, trans. Sam Taylor
Scholastique Mukasonga, *Our Lady of the Nile*, trans. Melanie Mauthner
Marie Vieux-Chauvet, *Dance on the Volcano*, trans. Kaiama Glover
Han Yujoo, *The Impossible Fairy Tale*, trans. Janet Hong
Han Kang, *The Vegetarian*, trans. Deborah Smith
Valeria Luiselli, *The Story of My Teeth*, trans. Christina MacSweeney
Elena Ferrante, *My Beautiful Friend*, trans. Ann Goldstein
Yoko Tawada, *Memoirs of a Polar Bear*, trans. Susan Bernofsky
Jenny Erpenbeck, *Go, Went, Gone*, trans. Susan Bernofsky
Amanda Michalopoulou, *Why I Killed my Best Friend*, trans. Karen Emmerich
Nathalie Léger, *Suite for Barbara Loden*, trans. Natasha Lehrer and Cécile Menon
Ludmilla Petrushevskaya, *There Once Lived a Woman Who Tried to Kill Her Neighbor’s Baby*, trans. Keith Gessen and Anna Summers
Minae Mizumura, *Inheritance from Mother*, trans. Juliet Winters Carpenter
Igiaba Scego, *Adua*, trans. Jamie Richards
Négar Djavadi, *Disoriental*, trans. Tina Kover

Keri Bertino

The Writer as Teacher

(CROSS-GENRE)

Wed., 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 it be taught?” and “Is it possible to teach English [/writing] 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, multiple intelligences, creativity, and growth mindset), creating classroom communities, exercise and course development, responding to student writing, the workshop, and exploration of varied sites of creative writing. We'll also take up broader questions of the role of the artist and teacher in communities, issues of professionalization, and the way that practices of teaching and writing fortify and inform one another.

In this part-seminar, part-practicum course, students design course descriptions and goals, and create and present both writing exercises and sample lessons, in addition to other readings, responses, and assignments.

Nicholas Christopher

Travellers' Tales: Poets & Novelists on the Road

(CROSS-GENRE)

Thu., 11am-1pm

This seminar will focus on travel writings by poets and novelists that reflect how their worldly journeys fed into and often mirrored their artistic lives. We will examine how the geography of the imagination meshes vitally with the geography of the world at large.

Readings:

In Patagonia, Bruce Chatwin
Black Lamb and Grey Falcon (selections), Rebecca West
The Narrow Road to the Deep North, Bashô
An African in Greenland, Tété-Michel Kpomassie
Running in the Family, Michael Ondaatje
The Coldest Winter, Paula Fox
The Voices of Marrakesh, Elias Canetti
The Colossus of Maroussi, Henry Miller
Etruscan Places, D.H. Lawrence
Journey to the Land of the Flies, Aldo Buzzi
Mayan Letters, Charles Olson
Mani, Patrick Leigh Fermor
The Snow Leopard, Peter Matthiessen
My Journey to Lhasa, Alexandra David-Neel

Timothy Donnelly

The Elegy

(POETRY)

Wed., 3:10pm-5:10pm

To commemorate the dead and to lament their loss are among the most ancient and defining tasks of the poet. In our study of the elegy from its Classical origins (Theocritus, Bion, Moschus, Catullus, Ovid) through the Middle Ages (Chaucer, the Pearl poet) and into modernity and the present day, we will discuss evolving attitudes toward death and the poetic techniques that appear to have evolved in response to them. We will consider how socially determined codes—linguistic, poetical, religious, cultural—seem at once to trouble the individual work of mourning even as they provide a framework with which to make it possible. Primary readings will range from canonical examples of the genre (Milton’s “Lycidas,” Shelley’s “Adonais,” Tennyson’s *In Memoriam*) to works that dramatize the difficulty of mourning and its representation (Mallarmé’s *For Anatole’s Tomb*, selected poems by Paul Celan and other Holocaust survivors). As we establish an understanding of the elegy’s generic boundaries we will also find ourselves confronted by works that confuse or strain against them: Is the medieval masterpiece *Pearl* an elegy, an allegory, a dream-vision, or some combination of the three? How does approaching Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* as an elegy, as she proposed one might, affect one’s reading of it? Insofar as the work of the elegy is, in its broadest terms, the fabrication of a textual surrogate for what isn’t there, we will consider the possibility that all writing is, at root, elegiac. Other primary texts on the syllabus are likely to include work by Roland Barthes, Gwendolyn Brooks, Anne Carson, Emily Dickinson, Allen Ginsberg, Thomas Hardy, David Jones, Federico García Lorca, Toni Morrison, Rainer Maria Rilke, Edgar Allen Poe, Auguste Villiers de l’Isle-Adam, William Wordsworth, and others. Key critical readings will include Freud’s “Mourning and Melancholia,” Jacques Lacan’s “The Mirror Stage...,” Peter Sacks’s *The English Elegy*, and Giorgio Agamben’s *Stanzas*. Each student will give a brief presentation on one of the texts and submit throughout the term a total of 12-15 pages of poetry and/or prose provoked or informed by our readings and discussions.

Mark Doten

Queer Form

(FICTION)

Thu., 6:15pm-8:15pm

What is queer about form? In what sense can we speak of a queer form? How do we as fiction writers write queerly? In this class we will read LGBTQ literature and queer theory in order to explore strategies for writing outside, or against, or differently from conventional literary forms. We will consider queerness as identity, as desire, as a mode of time, and as a failure of signification. Can a novel by a queer writer still be queer if it only involves non-queer characters? Can non-queer writers write queer forms (and how does that work, and why, and under what circumstances)? Is *queer* useful as a verb—can we queer metaphors, landscapes, opening paragraphs, the depiction of thought on the page? We will think about

what queerness means in relation to questions of craft (including conventional ideas of structure, story, and character), not to produce a new set of normative rules, but as part of an encounter with a heterogeneous mixture of texts that will offer tool kits, provocations, burrows, irritants—grist for your own queer fictions. Readings will include works by Herman Melville, John Keene, Maggie Nelson, Virginia Woolf, Garth Greenwell, Imogen Binnie, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Dennis Cooper, Franz Kafka, A.M. Homes, Alexander Chee, Judith Butler, Jack Halberstam, José Esteban Muñoz, Qiu Miaojin, Charlie Jane Anders, and Carmen Maria Machado.

Deborah Eisenberg

Studies in Short Fiction

(FICTION)

Mon., 5:10pm-7:10pm

There's no better instrument than fiction to explore the complex relationships between individuals and their contexts, and we'll be reading outstanding pieces of fiction whose characters are enmeshed, for the most part, in intense or unstable societal situations. The focus of the discussions will be aesthetic considerations, rather than historical, biographical, or theoretical ones.

We'll attempt to describe the essence of each piece—a discussion that implicitly raises the question of why the piece is more compelling or vital than another piece that could be described in a similar way—and we'll look closely at how the piece builds into something unique and superb.

Readings will include one short novel but otherwise will consist of stories. I will expect students to have read each story a few times before the class in which it is to be discussed, so that we can all be intimately familiar with it before we talk about it, and I will require short (one-page) written responses to most of the readings.

Much of the work is likely to be familiar to students—for example James Joyce's "The Dead," James Baldwin's "Sonny's Blues," and Franz Kafka's "In the Penal Colony." Detailed discussion is a priority and we'll proceed—sometimes very—slowly, but I hope we'll also be able look at stories by Gregor von Rezzori, Isaac Babel, Katherine Anne Porter, Felisberto Hernandez, Sergio Ramirez, Mavis Gallant, Varlan Shalamov, Eileen Chang, and/or others. The short novel is by Ivan Turgenev.

If you find a slow pace frustrating or if your objective is to read a great deal, this course would probably be a very poor fit for you.

Farnoosh Fathi

Reading & the Revolution

(POETRY)

Fri., 12:05pm-2:05pm

“To understand oneself requires patience, tolerant awareness; the self is a book of many volumes, which you cannot read in a day, but when once you begin to read, you must read every word, every sentence, every paragraph for in them are the intimations of the whole. The beginning of it is the ending of it. If you know how to read, supreme wisdom is to be found.”

— J. Krishnamurti

The project of this seminar is to transcribe our contents (our thoughts, feelings, experiences of fear, love, being, and so on) directly and indiscriminately as a means of expression of immediate revolution. This reading of ourselves—or, as Gertrude Stein calls it, listening while talking to one’s self—is about committing to the work of becoming and coming to know, rather than relegating our understanding of consciousness to total mystery. Each class will function as an extended meditation to support this work.

Activities will include: prayer journals; *memento mori* journals; asemic writing; “via negativa” writing and apophatic thinking exercises; working with questions in the manner of koan study; scream painting; choral writing; meditations on art and silence and new assignments that develop more spontaneously from our course’s context. Activities students find most productive will be explored more deeply as part of their final “continuity piece.”

Readings feature a variety of writings describing the revolution in terms of a non-dualistic consciousness, the role of eros, of education, of prayer, and of understanding root causes of violence within and without. These include Meister Eckhart’s writing on “The Godhead,” Eihei Dogen’s “Time-Being” and “Mountains and Rivers”; excerpts from Teresa of Avila’s *Interior Castle*; Joan Murray’s erotic architecture poetry; Dylan Thomas’s also erotic poems; Ety Hillesum’s journals, Miklós Radnóti’s *Postcards* and poems by the Karmel sisters written from concentration camps; J. Krishnamurti’s “Living in an Insane World” and *Freedom from the Known*; Stein’s writings exploring attention as erotic and revolutionary; Kafka’s *Parables and Paradoxes*; Sister Wendy Beckett on prayer, silence, faith, and love; James Baldwin’s “A Talk to Teachers”; Simone Weil’s essays on attention and excerpts from *The Iliad or a Poem of Force* and *On the Abolition of All Political Parties*; Audre Lorde’s “The Uses of the Erotic”; Thomas Merton’s *On Living and Loving*; bell hooks’s *All About Love*; Clarice Lispector’s *Água Viva*; and assorted gathas, sutras, canticles and poems by women anchorites, adepts, beguines, and the anonymous. This literature serves as a springboard for the experiential study of attention and revolution that is the core of our course and is not meant to shortcut your understanding but to support its cultivation.

Monica Ferrell

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

(CROSS-GENRE)

Tue., 11am-1pm

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, Olena Kalaytiak Davis, Shane McCrae, Cynthia Cruz, and Morgan Parker.

B.K. Fischer

The Comma Sutra: Grammar, Syntax, and Praxis

(CROSS-GENRE)

Thu., 2:10pm-4:10pm

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 laws 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 practices in poetry and prose, including patterns of syntax, parataxis and hypotaxis, the subjunctive, deixis and subjectivity, voice, vernaculars, rhythm, pitch, and tempo. Our analysis of grammar will dovetail with theoretical perspectives beyond subject and predicate, drawing insights from ethics, feminist linguistics, gaze theory, racial politics and aesthetics, and media studies. We will dissect and revel in sentences by Cornelius Eady, Henry James, Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner, Marilynne Robinson, Emily Dickinson, Lydia Davis, William Carlos Williams, Richard Howard, Jorie Graham, Claudia Rankine, Taiye Selasi, and Vampire Weekend among other examples, and read essays by Nietzsche, 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 elements, and a final paper of approximately five pages. The course also includes editorial support for your own sentences—during class and in conferences—as well as ongoing “sentence labs” that will help you refine and develop the grammatical and syntactic strategies in your own work.

Joshua Furst

Narrative Design

(FICTION)

Wed., 4pm-6pm

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, beginning with the simplest of structures—single scene, third person—and moving over the course of the semester toward more complex and innovative structures. 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: Ann Beatty, Raymond Carver, Grace Paley, Richard Yeats, Jane Bowles, Franz Kafka, John Barth, Samuel Beckett, J.M. Coetzee, Angela Carter, David Foster Wallace, and Julio Cortazar.

Rivka Galchen

The Magic Pebble: Re-Reading Children’s Literature as a Writer

(FICTION)

Mon, 4:10pm-6:10pm

The Quest. The Riddle. The Transformation. The Magic Object. The Dark Wood. In this seminar we will look closely at children’s literature, reading for tropes and techniques that we might incorporate into our own work for the not so young. We’ll pay special attention to defamiliarization, repetition, and reversal, as well as the peculiar importance of nonsense and excess. The seminar will not focus on writing literature for children, but instead on reading deeply into another genre in order to return, hopefully changed, to our own.

Readings will include Carlos Collodi's *Pinocchio*, Grimm's *Fairy Tales*, Wu Cheng-En's *Journey to the West* and Norman Lindsey's *The Magic Pudding*. We will also look at texts, such as *The Odyssey* by Homer, that are not generally considered to be for young readers.

Jen George

Vision, Fantasy, and Intuition in Text and Art

(FICTION)

Mon., 10am-12pm

How do writers and artists access, intuit, practice, and perform their visions and fantasies through their work? How do we, as witnesses and participants, receive the dreams, ideas, and information contained in the work we're engaged with, and how does the way we engage influence and impact our own work? In this seminar, we'll explore the magic and ecstasy of vision through experimental, absurd, mystical, and fantastical texts and visual works that utilize the subconscious, personal, perverse, amateur, spiritual, sublime, erotic, ridiculous, hubristic, playful, weird, and grotesque in the creation of innovative and/or singular works/worlds. We'll look into how the reception of and reaction to textual, sculptural, and visual work is transmuted into the propulsive urge to generate one's own work and how the practice of being in active conversation with other work broadens the possibilities of what we ourselves can make. We'll focus on the language of the worlds in the work we're involved with to generate class discussion, abandoning our sharper critical minds so that we may become more familiar with the rich space of intuition and chance from which all artists create.

You'll be asked to keep a dream record and view, read, and write responses to the work you're experiencing from a highly subjective viewpoint. In and outside of class you'll perform experiments and exercises, inspired by our readings, that are designed to move past points of artistic discomfort and control, making your own texts or objects that are free from preconceived expectations and ideas of necessity. You will develop one text-based exercise or experiment, to be performed by all students either individually or collectively, that is generated by a reading/author/artist of your choosing.

We may read/look at work from Jack Spicer, Clarice Lispector, Leonora Carrington, John Cage, Kathy Acker, Joanne Kyger, Ariana Reines, Simone Weil, Jane Bowles, Bernadette Corporation, Kafka, Alfred Starr Hamilton, Marguerite Duras, Robert Wasler, Sun Ra, Jonas Menkas, Diane di Prima, Ira Cohen, Danielle Dutton, Carl Jung, Carol Rama, Mike Kelley, Genesis P-Orridge, Eva Hesse, Matthew Barney, Maria Lassnig, Alice Neel, Kara Walker, James Lee Byars, and Paul McCarthy, along with excerpts from various religious, esoteric, philosophical, and instructional texts. Readings may bend and vary depending on needs, interests, and direction of the class.

Alan Gilbert

The Art of the Review

(CROSS-GENRE)

Tue., 5:15pm-7:15pm

This cross-genre craft seminar is designed to provide students with intensive instruction and practice in the art of reviewing works of literature as well as other arts and also to deepen their appreciation of the review as a varied and complex literary genre. The course's objectives are threefold: to read closely and analyze a selection of exemplary reviews, both canonical and more recent; to hone students' critical skills, familiarize them with relevant terms and techniques, and to encourage them to experiment with different approaches to the review as a distinct artistic writing practice; and, lastly, to compose and revise, on average, three full-length reviews: two at 1500 words in length, one at 3000.

Readings are likely to include reviews by such critics as Hilton Als, Gloria Anzaldúa, Charles Baudelaire, Robert Christgau, John D'Agata, Sasha Frere-Jones, Mary Gaitskill, bell hooks, Pauline Kael, Rosalind Krauss, Zadie Smith, Greg Tate, Helen Vendler, Ellen Willis, James Woods, and John Yau. Students will be required to submit a brief application for the course that will ask them to state, in part, what works they hope to review—literary, musical, cinematic, theatrical, fine arts, etc.—and also to provide a proposed list of any primary and secondary works they plan to consult in preparation for writing their reviews.

Students enrolled in the course will meet as a group for a total of six times throughout the term (four meetings at the start of the term, two at the end), and in between, they will meet at least three times one-on-one with the instructor who will critique their written work and provide ongoing insight and guidance. The class will meet again as a group two times at the end of the term in order for students to critique each other's finished drafts and to reflect on their experiences.

Maximum capacity: 8

Rebecca Godfrey

Anti-Heroines

(FICTION)

Fri., 12:05pm-2:05pm

In this seminar, we'll look closely at a range of authors who have created female characters who are ruthless, cruel, and violent. We'll explore how these unruly characters disrupt conventional notions of femininity, as well as the story itself. We'll discuss the ways complex anti-heroines, whether central or peripheral, can complicate and enrich narrative. The course will focus particularly on characterization, language, and voice in both contemporary and classic works. The anti-heroines discussed will often be wayward or unwanted: "fallen" women, hustlers, recluses, grifters, eccentrics, and terrorists.

Readings will include:

Emily Bronte, *Wuthering Heights*
Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*
Nella Larsen, *Passing*
Marguerite Duras, *The Ravishing of Lol Stein*
Elizabeth Smart, *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept*
Natsuo Kirino, *Out*
Philip Roth, *American Pastoral*
Eileen Myles, *Inferno (A Poet's Novel)*
Elena Ferrante, *The Days of Abandonment*
Zadie Smith, *NW*
Jenny Offill, *Dept. of Speculation*
Ottessa Moshfegh, *Eileen*

Elizabeth Greenwood

Truths and Facts: Creative License in Nonfiction

(NONFICTION)

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

“Sometimes the facts don’t tell the truth.”
—Joseph Mitchell

“You don’t remember something? Write fiction.”
—Mary Karr

As writers of literary nonfiction, we seek to articulate the truth about people, personal experiences, and events. But how do those pesky facts figure in? Demarcating the boundaries of reasonable artistic license is an ongoing debate between writers, editors, fact-checkers, and audiences. Can changing chronologies and details help the writer arrive at a “deeper truth?” Or are the facts intractable? Where do we draw the line between fabrication and artistry? Is there any merit to what Werner Herzog deems “the ecstatic truth?” Do different rules apply for writing memoir versus writing reported essays and articles? Just how experimental can we be while upholding the mantle of nonfiction? What are the implications in our “alternative facts/fake news” moment? In this class, we will read works that take different approaches at mining toward the truth and weigh the merits of distinct points of view on the debate.

Assigned texts include: *The Art of Memoir* by Mary Karr, *Lying* by Lauren Slater, *The Lifespan of a Fact* by John D’Agata, *Up in the Old Hotel* by Joseph Mitchell, *The Silent Woman* by Janet Malcolm, documentaries by Werner Herzog, *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote, *True Story* by Michael Finkel, *The Trouble with Reality* by Brooke Gladstone, and more.

Lis Harris

Family Matters

(NONFICTION)

Tue., 10am-12pm

This course is an exploration of a wide spectrum of literary approaches to writing about the people who gave you life and then made it glorious or a living hell—and about those who huddled alongside in the primal pack. We will closely examine some of the aesthetic, ethical, and research issues that arise from writing about family as well as the novelistic, meditative, and lyric strategies that can expand this subject's breadth and depth. Authors—of nonfiction and fiction—whose work we will read include Mary McCarthy (*Memories of a Catholic Girlhood*), Philip Roth (*Patrimony*), William Maxwell (*So Long, See You Tomorrow*), Colette (*My Mother's House, Sido*), Tobias Wolff (*This Boy's Life*), Paula Fox (*Borrowed Finery*), Per Petterson (*Out Stealing Horses*), Michael Ondaatje (*Running In the Family*), Vladimir Nabokov (*Speak, Memory*), Adrian Nicole LeBlanc (*Random Family*) and Jo Ann Beard (*The Fourth State of Matter*).

Week 1	First class	
Week 2	Jane Austen	<i>Persuasion</i>
Week 3	Mary McCarthy	<i>Memories of a Catholic Girlhood</i>
Week 4	Philip Roth	<i>Patrimony</i>
Week 5	Colette	<i>My Mother's House, Sido</i> (excerpts)
	Vladimir Nabokov	"Mademoiselle," from <i>Speak, Memory</i>
Week 6	William Maxwell	<i>So Long, See You Tomorrow</i>
Week 7	Tobias Wolff	<i>This Boy's Life</i>
Week 8	Geoffrey Wolff	<i>The Duke of Deception</i>
Week 9	ACADEMIC HOLIDAY — Election Day	
Week 10	Eric Liu	<i>The Accidental Asian</i> (excerpt)
	Jo Ann Beard	<i>The Fourth State of Matter</i> (excerpt)
Week 11	Paula Fox	<i>Borrowed Finery</i>
Week 12	Per Petterson	<i>Out Stealing Horses</i>
Week 13	Michael Ondaatje	<i>Running in the Family</i>
Week 14	Adrian Nicole LeBlanc	<i>Random Family</i>

Brigid Hughes

Editing and the Writer

(CROSS-GENRE)

Tue., 10am-12pm

This course will examine the past, present, and future of literary magazines, from the perspectives of both the editor and the writer. We will analyze specific issues by magazines such as *The Paris Review*, *Granta*, *Monkey Business*, *Noon*, *Evergreen Review*, *Callaloo*, *TriQuarterly*, and others. We will discuss the elements that distinguish a magazine, including unifying themes, layout and design, and criteria for the selection process. The editorial relationships between known editors and writers will also be examined. Assignments will include exercises

in editing, graphics selection, and assessing work from various sources. By the end of the seminar you will develop a mission statement and create a sample issue. This seminar is designed for writers who are interested in the editorial side of publishing, and how editor-writer relationships would shape their work.

Leslie Jamison

Illness, Injury, Intimacy, and Ecstasy:

Writing the Body

(NONFICTION)

Tue., 2:10pm-4:10pm

This class will look at how writing documents and manifests 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 can these lofty questions help us think about “trivial” genres in new ways? (Think: food writing, sports writing, sex writing, misery porn.) How and when does the body carry political implications? Does it ever *not*? How can we think about 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? We’ll use four major nodes of experience—illness, injury, intimacy, and ecstasy—to think about ways in which the body rises into prominence or becomes undeniable in moments of pain and pleasure. We’ll read prose by Virginia Woolf, Elaine Scarry, Susan Sontag, Anuk Arudpragasam, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Andre Dubus, Lucy Grealy, Hilton Als, Scott Korb, David Foster Wallace, and William Faulkner; and poetry by Claudia Rankine, Kiki Petrosino, Jenny Zhang, Roger Reeves, C.A. Conrad, Frank Bidart, and Walt Whitman.

Nalini Jones

Myth & the Art of Storytelling

(FICTION)

Thu., 12:05pm-2:05pm

We’ll begin with a brief discussion of Greek mythology and ancient literature, discussing myths that continue to shape cultural ideas about love, war, family, sacrifice, politics, friendship, punishment, honor, and storytelling itself. Then we’ll explore some of the ways those stories and archetypes have been reconsidered in contemporary literature. At least one class meeting will be conducted at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Students can choose poetry or fiction for in-class writing exercises, although the culminating creative assignment will be fiction. Readings will include poems, novels, and short fiction from among the following authors: Margaret Atwood, John Banville, A. P. Bucak, Anne Carson, Carol Ann Duffy, Louise Gluck, Annabel Lyon, Zachary Mason, William Maxwell, Helen Oyeyemi, Z.Z. Packer, Rainer Marie Rilke, William Saroyan, Jim Shepard, A. E. Stallings, John Updike, Barry Unsworth, and Eudora Welty.

Binnie Kirshenbaum

Construction / Creation

(FICTION)

Wed., 1:35pm-3:35pm

“Necessity is the mother of invention.”
—Plato

“I never set out to be weird.”
—Frank Zappa

Most experiments fail or, even worse, produce results that are banal. But those experiments that do succeed have brought us the likes of James Joyce and penicillin. Altered narrative forms and innovative structures, such as playful framing devices, atypical design or layout, graphics, intertextual references, fractured pages, discretionary borrowing and so on, can add layers of texture and complexity to a work of literature. When use of an unorthodox technique results in a unified creation, the author’s intent is furthered, meaning is expanded and the reader’s experience is enriched. But how do we know when a divergent structure or a foreign resource is intrinsic and organic to the work? When is it just a gimmick? Do we ask: What’s with the blurry photographs? Did the typesetter goof? Footnotes, footnotes, and still more footnotes? What’s with the footnotes? In this seminar (with a workshop component) we will aim to discover how, through successful innovation, the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts. We are going to examine a variety of literary inventions /re-inventions of composition and structure to study how technique informs content and *vice versa*. We will discuss how, why, and when a new technique is a necessity to the work. We will ask: Does the treatment arise from the need for it? Does function dictate form? Does content dictate structure? Or, are form and function symbiotic? Are we talking about the chicken and the egg?

We will be reading works, and excerpts, by authors such as Anne Carson, Aleksandar Hemon, Lorrie Moore, Sheila Heti, Justin Torres, J.M. Coetzee, Roland Barthes, David Foster Wallace, Marjane Satrapi, Primo Levi, Christian Bok, Roz Chast, Bram Stoker, Gretchen Henderson, Julio Cortazar, among others, including medieval texts.

There will be in-class writing exercises. The last quarter of the semester will be reserved for workshopping.

Gideon Lewis-Kraus

Reporting Non-News

(NONFICTION)

Wed., 1:35pm-3:35pm

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., 12:05pm-2:05pm

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.

Ben Marcus

The State of the Art

(FICTION)

Mon., 12:05pm-2:05pm

This seminar will look at where the short story has been, what it is now, and where it might be going. What will the short story be like in fifty years? In what ways has the short story today progressed from short stories of the 1960s? In other words, how does this strange, flexible, vital form change, and how can we relate these changes to the development of our own fiction?

This, then, is as much a course about the progress and future of a literary art form as it is about the way our own work changes over time.

We will examine the subtle ways the short story reflects, if not the news of the day, then the literary styles and values that circulate and influence us more discretely, and in looking speculatively into the future of the art form, we will assess our own ambitions as writers: where are we taking our own work, how are we responding to the challenges of the present historical moment, literary or otherwise, and how might we advance, or otherwise put our stamp on, this form?

Our readings will be wide ranging. We will look at influential short stories from the past, compelling models from today, along with some intriguing stories that might be lesser known. We will also read some literary position papers and manifestos in order to get a sense of how writers and critics have articulated a variety of literary value systems.

Students will engage in discussion, and, most importantly, work on aspects of their craft in several writing exercises throughout the semester.

Erroll McDonald

William Faulkner and World Fiction

(FICTION)

Mon., 4:10pm-6:10pm

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 (3-5 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 12-15 page final exercise in imitation of any writer covered during the semester.

Ben Metcalf

¶ or . . . The Paragraph as Art Form

(FICTION)

Mon., 4:10pm-6:10pm

This fall seminar will consider the paragraph not merely as a convention of the printed page by which the eye and mind are afforded a rest now and then, or as a mirror (and remnant) in prose of the stanza, but as a worthy form unto itself, the mastery of which is a proud and noble craft.

We will dissect, refigure, and discuss some of the greatest paragraphs ever devised in order to see what makes them tick: In what sense is the paragraph a container for, and a cementer of, meaning? What movement, semantic and aesthetic, can be detected from phrase to phrase and from sentence to sentence? How, grammatically speaking, is this movement effected? How does word choice lend to that movement or stop it dead? How does the writer's sentence rhythm contribute to, or create tension with, the paragraph's overall movement? Does there exist certain paragraph-making "styles" that may be or must be considered independent of the writer's voice? The transition sentence: blessing or curse?

To what extent may the great paragraph stand alone? To what extent *must* it stand alone? We will consider some paragraphs in relation to their neighbors; others we will consider as stand-alone poems. Along the way we will make an intensive study of voice and of irony. We will be looking especially at what choices can be said to "belong" to the voice and what credit (or blame) accrues instead, and only, to the author. Humor will, of necessity, be discussed, as will the poetic forms. The course will treat the history of the form, from stanza through Homeric set-piece to the modern paragraph, but it will concentrate largely on close reading. And fun!

With selections from Enheduanna, Sappho, *The Iliad*, *Beowulf*, Geoffrey Chaucer, the King James Bible, the Koran, Queen Elizabeth, Wm. Shakespeare, Virginia Woolf, Jonathan Swift, Thomas Carlyle, Jonathan Edwards, E. A. Poe, W.E.B. Du Bois, Lydia Davis, Donald Barthelme, Cardinal Newman, Kazuo Ishiguro, Annie Dillard, William H. Gass, Annie Proulx, Cormac McCarthy, Susan Sontag, Vladimir Nabokov, Emily Brontë, Edith Wharton, Jamaica Kincaid, Henry James, Joan Didion, Eudora Welty, Allen Ginsberg, Robert Penn Warren, Henry Adams, Walt Whitman, Clarice Lispector, Abraham Lincoln, James Baldwin, Fran Lebowitz, L.Q.C. Lamar, James Polk, Amiri Baraka, Max Beerbohm, Flannery O'Connor, James Agee, Nadine Gordimer, Margaret Atwood, Paul West, J. L. Borges, Sylvia Plath, Hayden Caruth, Paul Metcalf, Dagoberto Gilb, Gertrude Stein, Charles Portis, Saki, James Joyce, Michael Ondaatje, Franz Kafka, Diane Williams, Charles Baudelaire, John Ruskin, Ursula K. LeGuin, Henry Green, and many others.

Deborah Paredez

Witness, Record, Document: Poetry and Testimony

(CROSS-GENRE)

Wed., 10:10am-12pm

This seminar takes up the terms witness, record, and document as nouns and verbs. What is poetry of witness? Documentary poetry? Poetry as (revisionist) historical record? What labor and what ethical, political, and aesthetic considerations are required of poets who endeavor to witness, record, or document historical events or moments of trauma? How is this approach to poetry informed by or contributing to feminist theories, aesthetic innovation, and revisionist approaches to official histories? Course materials include: 1) essays that explore the poetics and politics of “poetry of witness” or “documentary poetry”; 2) a range of contemporary American poetry that has been classified as or has productively challenged these categories; 3) and audio, video, and photographic projects on which poets have collaborated. Our encounters with this work will be guided by and grounded in conversations about ideas of “truth,” “text,” the power relations of “documentation,” and issues of language and representation in poetry. We will also critically examine the formal (rhyme, rhythm, diction, form, genre, point of view, imagery, etc.) and philosophical components and interventions of the work we study and create.

This is an undergraduate seminar open to graduate MFA students.

Elissa Schappell

Ways of Showing (and Telling)

(FICTION)

Wed., 4pm-6pm

In this class we will be exploring the ways writers have integrated visual elements—such as photographs, paintings, lists, maps—into their texts in order to illuminate, expand, and subvert the narrative. The class will be provocative and creative, drawing from a number of literary sources as well the visual arts. We will explore in our own writing new ways of seeing our source material. By cross-pollinating in-class writing exercises designed for creating short and flash fiction, with a collection of curated images, formal or foraged, we will create work that shows and tell our stories. We will examine a range of influential image-embedded texts, including the work of W.G. Sebald, Ann Carson, Virginia Woolf, John Berger, Charlotte Salomon, and Teju Cole, as well as original source material including prison logs, self-help manuals and cookbooks. By the end of the semester each student will have created their own unique chapbook of hybrid texts and images.

Ross Simonini

Sound and Narrative

(CROSS-GENRE)

Wed., 1:05pm-3:05pm

Story emerges from sound. Around the fire, stories were heard—not read. A series of noises (footsteps, laughing, gunshot) tells its own story and music gives us narrative through beats, melodies, and sometimes, pitched language. Once, radio was the popular storytelling method, and now, with the advent of podcasts, we are experiencing a renaissance of narrative audio, and new forms for writers to explore. This lab will focus on experiments in sonic and spoken communication. We will discuss and utilize, through creative assignments, the language of sound-based media, including podcasts, film, sound art, music, radio dramas, audiobooks, and field recordings. Some questions we'll address include: What can sound do that text alone cannot? Is music truly an international language? Why don't we write like we speak? Each lab will be dedicated in part to live experimentation; students will come to class with materials to create new sound-based forms, using simple computer applications and basic recording techniques. Students will conduct these weekly experiments overseen by the instructor, after which the results will be presented, critiqued, and discussed.

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, dialogue. We will study how to write sex scenes, death scenes, party scenes, battle scenes, nature scenes. The readings will include Tolstoy, Ferrante, Bolano, Proulx, Munro, Waters, and Wallace.

Maria Venegas

Country of Immigrants

(NONFICTION)

Tue., 10am-12pm

As the debate over immigration floods the airwaves, the depictions of immigrants often lead to misconceptions or to what Chimamanda Adichie has referred to as “The danger of the single story.” This seminar will explore the contributions immigrants have made to American literature in the modern era and how their stories have illuminated the challenges of diversity. We will analyze fiction, memoir, and poetry beginning with classic American immigrant narratives then migrating to contemporary works. Authors to be discussed include Anzia

Yeziarska, Frank McCourt, Jamaica Kincaid, Daniel Alarcón, Amy Tan, Colm Tóibín, Chimamanda Adichie, Teju Cole, Jhumpa Lahiri, Javier Zamora, Junot Díaz, and others. All texts will be approached through a comparative lens examining the perspectives these diverse voices present and how they resonate, collide and overlap. Using these narratives as inspiration for our own writing; the semester will conclude with the creation of a work of fiction or nonfiction that is centered around the immigrant experience.

Wendy S. Walters

Nonfiction and/as Design

(NONFICTION)

Mon., 6:15pm-8:15pm

Design is the plan of construction for a process or object that serves a function, or appears to be of measurable use. This class will observe the relationship between nonfiction writing and design to uncover the ways truth appears to be told and retold. We will consider writing that engages both design principles and thinking as a set of values that determine how voice, narrative, history, objects, and formal convictions shape accounts of experience. The texts will engage narrative, poetic, and philosophical impulses and may include work by Adler, Shahn, Dondis, Griffin, Cage, Bachelard, Sudjic, LeCorbusier, Wright, Bachelor, Edelkoort. We will also open space for artists whose work confirms the text is a site of iterative practice and dynamic invention.

Matvei Yankelevich

Creative (Mis)Translation

(CROSS-GENRE, TRANSLATION)

Thu., 4:10pm-6:10pm

This course will explore the generative aspects of translation and “mis-translation”: how translating opens up new reserves of language for us to mine; how it loosens our grip on our own “voice” and lets in others; and conversely, how our own language affects our encounter with a foreign or faraway voice. We’ll look for ways to open up our own writing in and through translation by recuperating volition and agency in the encounter with the authority(ies) of “original” texts and uncovering inherited biases and hidden prejudices permeating our attitude toward the foreign, its untranslatables and universals. Reading for the course will include: Jack Spicer’s “versions” of Lorca; David Cameron’s and Brandon Brown’s “bad” translations of Baudelaire; Sawako Nakayasu’s “collaboration” with Chika Sagawa; palimpsest and erasure in Jen Bervin’s encounter with Shakespeare; appropriative transformations by Layli Long Soldier and M. Nourbese Philip; Christian Hawkey’s seances with Trakl; Ezra Pound’s Chinese stylizations; Jonathan Stalling’s “Yingelishi”; Raymond Queneau’s experiments in paraphrase; English-to-English translations such as Paul Legault’s Emily Dickinson; David Melnik’s homophonic *Iliad*; Anna Moschovakis’s translation-as-response; and more. Through these readings, we’ll acquaint ourselves with several procedural strategies (homophonic, Oulipian, computer-generated, etc.), perform some translation

exercises along similar lines, and invent our own. In order to examine the ways that translators are called upon to make crucial aesthetic and political choices, we will read some “straight” translations that approach complex issues of dialect, neologism, historical context, and invented language, including Erín Moure’s recent translation of the novel *Paraguayan Sea* by Wilson Bueno and Emily Wilson’s new translation of Homer’s *Odyssey*. Because translation is at once a process, a procedure, and a metaphor, we’ll consider a handful of writers’ meditations on translation (Joyelle McSweeney, Johannes Göransson, Rosmarie Waldrop) and a few important theoretical essays (Benjamin, de Campos, Glissant, Schleiermacher). In assigned and in-class writing, we will experiment with a variety of methods of “mistranslation.” ***Knowledge of a foreign language is not required.***

Monica Youn

Word as Medium: Contemporary Poetic Craft

(POETRY)

Mon., 2:10pm-4:10pm

A word is more than a container for meaning, the way that paint is more than a delivery system for color, and a musical instrument is more than an “instrumental” mechanism for generating pitch. This class will call attention to the non-semantic aspects of language as a medium for poetry: sonics, etymology, visual aspects, etc. Starting from the basic building block of the poem—the individual word or sound, and moving incrementally through different units of the poem—line, stanza, structure—students will hone and sharpen their poetic craft through an intensive focus on language as a medium—the stuff out of which poems are constructed. We will devote special attention to the ways in which poetry can participate in the characteristic techniques of other art forms and genres. Topics will include: sonic repetition (phonetic, lexical, and modular), “crypt words” and etymology, disjunction and increment, hypotaxis and parataxis, compression and expansion, etc. Readings will include handouts as well as individual volumes by poets including Harryette Mullen, Rae Armantrout, Robin Coste Lewis, Solmaz Sharif, Sandra Lim, Natalie Scinters-Zapico, Patricia Smith, Bernadette Mayer, D.A. Powell, and others. In addition to in-class generative exercises, students will give class presentations on individual poems.

SPECIAL PROJECTS WORKSHOP

Alan Felsenthal

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

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 Workshops 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 Workshops 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 workshops 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.

LITERARY TRANSLATION WORKSHOPS

SECTION 1: Susan Bernofsky

Thu., 11am-1:30pm

SECTION 2: Michael F. Moore

Tue., 4:15pm-6:45pm

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. It is 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

Richard Locke

Twentieth-Century Literary Nonfiction

Thu., 2:10pm-4:10pm

This course is a survey of criticism, reportage, polemics, memoirs, and meditations from the 1920's to the present that explores the variety and flexibility of nonfiction styles and genres.

The reading will include:

The Edmund Wilson Reader, ed. Lewis M. Dabney (DaCapo)
The Common Reader: First Series, Annotated Edition, Virginia Woolf (Harcourt)
A Room of One's Own, Annotated Edition, Virginia Woolf (Harcourt)
Homage to Catalonia, George Orwell (Harcourt)
Goodbye to Berlin, Christopher Isherwood (New Directions)
Survival in Auschwitz, Primo Levi (Touchstone/S&S)
Speak, Memory, Vladimir Nabokov (Vintage)
Essays of E.B. White (Harper)
Up in the Old Hotel, Joseph Mitchell (Vintage)
We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live, Joan Didion (Everyman)
Literary Occasions, V.S. Naipaul (Vintage)
The Woman Warrior, Maxine Hong Kingston (Vintage)
The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat, Oliver Sacks (Touchstone/S &S)
The Rings of Saturn, W.G. Sebald (New Directions)

Alice Quinn

Getting Started & Keeping Going

Mon., 6:40pm-8:40pm

For many years, I worked as an editor at Alfred A. Knopf, Publishers (1976-1986) and *The New Yorker* (1987-2007), and now for many years, I've been the executive director of the Poetry Society of America. I've worked with hundreds of poets, from Amy Clampitt, Seamus Heaney, Jack Gilbert, Rita Dove, Henri Cole, and Czeslaw Milosz to Carl Phillips, Major Jackson, Jean Valentine, Louise Gluck, Vijay Seshadri, and David Woo—we published 2500 poems at *The New Yorker* in my time—and with many distinguished fiction writers, from Jane Smiley, Lorrie Moore, Rick Moody, Robert Stone, Sapphire, and Alice Munro to Deborah Eisenberg, Tobias Wolfe, and Steven Millhauser. I also had the privilege of working with critics Joan Acocella and Anthony Lane, among others. At the Poetry Society of America, in

the last fifteen years, we've launched sixty careers in poetry in our award-winning Chapbook Fellowship Program. Writing has been at the center of my life since I discovered reading, and most of my heroes are writers.

In this class, we'll read the work of many of the writers with whom I worked and talk about their special qualities. We'll also have guest writers who will share their experiences in the field and at the desk and explore favorite aspects of writing by their heroes.

Among them:

Dennis Nurkse, author of more than eight collections of poems from Knopf, including *The Fall* (2003), *The Border Kingdom* (2008), *A Night in Brooklyn* (2012), and the recent *Love in the Last Days: After Tristan and Iseult*, also Poet Laureate of Brooklyn, from 1996 to 2001.

Susan Choi, author of four novels including the Pulitzer finalist *American Woman* (1987) the PEN/Faulkner finalist *A Person of Interest* (2008), and *My Education* (2013), winner of the inaugural PEN/W.G. Sebald Award for a Fiction Writer in Mid-career (2010).

Harold Schechter, world famous crime historian and novelist, editor of the Library of America's *True Crime: An American Anthology*, author of more than a dozen books, including *Depraved: The Definitive True Story of H.H. Holmes. Whose Grotesque Crimes Shattered Turn-of-the-Century Chicago* and *Fatal: The Poisonous Life of a Female Serial Killer*.

Esther Lin, Columbia MFA graduate, author of the PSA Chapbook, *The Ghost Wife* (2018) and current Stegner Fellow

Edward Hirsch, MacArthur Fellow and author of nine books of poems, including two National Book Critics' Circle Award-winning collections, his debut, *For the Sleepwalkers*, (1981) and *Wild Gratitude* (1981), *The Living Fire: New and Selected Poems, 1972-2010*, and *Gabriele*, and four collections of essays. He is also President of the Guggenheim Foundation.

Carol Becker, author of the memoir, *Losing Helen*, Dean of the School of the Arts, Columbia University.

Atsuro Riley, author of the debut collection *Romey's Order*, winner of the Kate Tufts Award and a Giles Whiting Award.

Linda Villarosa, journalist, author of the article and forthcoming book, "Why America's Black Mothers and Babies are in a Life-or-Death Crisis" (N.Y. Times Magazine, April 11, 2018) and "America's Hidden HIV Epidemic," and the young adult novel, *The Terrible Day*, former executive editor of *Essence* Magazine and director, undergraduate journalism program at City College.

Lee Siegel

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

Wed., 1:35pm-3:35pm

Acknowledging the artifice in 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, 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). We might take up Capote's *In Cold Blood*, the great granddaddy of so many. Then it's on to Frederick Exley's *A Fan's Notes*, Philip Roth's *The Counterlife*, Dave Eggers' *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*, 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 three contemporary masters of The Big Blur: Sheila Heti, Rachel Cusk, Ben Lerner. 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.

MASTER CLASSES

Rachel Aviv

I Have an Idea

4 classes (1 point) / Oct. 3-Oct. 24

Wed., 3:40pm-5:40pm

This master class will explore that component of the writing process that occurs before writing even begins: coming up with an idea. What constitutes a good idea? How do we come up with them? Why? We devote so much attention to refining the words once they are already on the page, but we often put less thought into deciding whether and why a particular idea deserves words in the first place. This class will look at how different nonfiction writers come up with their ideas and make a case to readers (and themselves) that their ideas have relevance and meaning.

Readings:

Lives Other Than My Own by Emmanuel Carrère

“Ghosts of the Tsunami” by Richard Lloyd Perry and “Structure” by John McPhee

“41 False Starts” and “Iphigenia in Forest Hills” by Janet Malcolm

The Unwomanly Face of War by Svetlana Alexievich

Kate Bolick

Personal Anthropology: Reporting in the First Person

Six classes (1.5 points) / Oct. 25-Dec. 6

Thu., 5:15pm-7:15pm

note: no class Nov. 22

At its best, first-person journalism about topics of broad concern can be electrifying, rousing readers to see their own surroundings anew; done poorly, it's boring. In this six-week master class, students will read and analyze superior examples of the form, and explore reporting and historical-research strategies for connecting personal experience to larger ideas in the arts, politics, and more. Readings will include essays by great American practitioners past and present, including James Baldwin, Merle Miller, Ellen Willis, Joan Didion, Richard Rodriguez, Mary Gaitskill, and Barbara Ehrenreich, among others.

Matthew Burgess

Serious Play: Teaching Imaginative Writing to Young People

Six classes (1.5 points) / Sept. 25-Oct. 30

Tue., 6:50pm-8:50pm

This master class is designed for writers of all genres who are interested in sharing their love of writing with young people. Children understand that writing is a magical power, and they take pleasure in learning how to do it. But by the time they turn up in high school or college-level composition classes, many have decided that writing is a painful, if necessary chore. One of the aims of the writer-teacher is to reverse this trend by creating classroom environments in which students (re)discover the creative, expressive, and intellectual potential of language. The point is not to follow rules, avoid mistakes, and fill pages with sentences that hold little or no personal meaning. On the contrary, writing is an act of the mind and the imagination, and it can draw us out of ourselves in ways that are surprising, challenging, even *fun*. In addition to exploring pedagogical theories, we will examine concrete strategies for designing and leading imaginative writing workshops with students. Play is a central theme, one we will regard as a “serious” pedagogical tool and guiding principal, and class meetings will involve frequent low-stakes, in-class writing experiments. Readings will include works by Kenneth Koch, Bernadette Mayer, Paulo Freire, Joe Brainard, Corita Kent, Pablo Neruda, Lucille Clifton, Frank O’Hara, Grace Paley, Dorothea Lasky, and others. One of the goals for this six-week course is that all participants will feel equipped—and excited—to adapt what they’ve learned and apply it in a variety of educational contexts.

Cynthia Cruz

The Archive as Resistance

Six classes (1.5 points) / Sept. 21-Oct. 26

Fri., 10am-12pm

This craft-oriented master class will serve as a laboratory for utilizing personal archives in the making of our poems. We will examine and follow the example of works that incorporate archival material from the visual arts, experimental film, and contemporary poetry in order to facilitate two profound actions. First, by engaging highly particularized material from our immediate (or adjacent) experiences, we will add texture and dimension to our work, resisting the impulse to flatten or otherwise simplify the inherent complexities of our lives. Second, with a nod to Lacan’s statement that trauma occurs when there is an encounter with that which defies signification, we will deploy our collected matter as an idiom for what we have not yet been unable to find a language for, one that is able to speak of fragmented and/or otherwise non-articulable experience without sacrificing any of its content or discounting its validity and power. Some of the texts we will be discussing include work by Jane Jin Kaisen and Sky Hopinka; Josephine Meckseper, Dieter Roth, Mark Bradford, Sean Bonney, Allison Benis White, Dionne Brand, Bhanu Kapil, Dawn Lundy Martin; excerpts from Laura Oldfield Ford’s zine *Savage Messiah* and Mark Fisher’s *Ghosts of My Life*.

Meghan Daum

What's Problematic?: Reading Fearlessly, Writing Dangerously

Six classes (1.5 points) / Oct. 4-Nov. 8

Thu., 10am-12pm

These days, there's little in the way of public expression that hasn't been deemed "problematic," in some sense, by someone. But anything that is interesting and thought-provoking is also going to push buttons, challenge assumptions and even cause occasional discomfort, particularly around issues pertaining to race, gender, sexuality, and social politics. In this six-week master class, students will test the boundaries of their own writing by reading a variety of 20th- and 21st-century nonfiction texts that represent careful thought on the part of their authors yet might stir debate or even distress among some contemporary audiences. Authors may include Mary Gaitskill, Christopher Hitchens, David Rakoff, Sallie Tisdale, Thomas Chatterton Williams and Wesley Yang among others.

Ru Freeman

Perspective in the Literature of Conflict

Six classes (1.5 points) / Sept. 20-Oct. 25

Thu., 5:15pm-7:15pm

This is a class where we analyze authorial choices in setting forth novels that pertain to countries in conflict, whether fictional or real. Reading for this class would be organized around three common themes in narratives of war: revolution, borders, and exile. We will look at works written in English and those offered in translation, looking at the extent to which the political space occupied by a writer might inform the work, and to what extent distance from place might change the tenor of a story. We will interrogate the texts for the story within the story, as well as the craft choices that have been made so as to provide an adequate vehicle to convey the complexity of political struggles.

Readings will include excerpts from texts dealing with revolution, colonialism, occupation, resistance, partition and borders, authoritarianism, and imaginary landscapes of turmoil, set in parts of the Middle East including Egypt, Algeria, Palestine, Israel, Pakistan, India, Mexico, Honduras, and Poland.

The City Always Wins, by Omar Hamilton

The Queue, by Basma Abdel Aziz

Children of the New World: A Novel of the Algerian War, Assia Djébar, translated from the French by Marjolijn de Jager

Train to Pakistan, by Kushwant Singh

Mornings in Jenin, by Susan Abulhawa

To the End of the Land, David Grossman

Signs Preceding the End of the World, by Yuri Herrera, translated from the Spanish by Lisa Dillman

Enrique's Journey, by Sonia Nazario
Flaw, by Magdalena Tulli, translated from the Polish by Bill Johnston

Lauren Grodstein

Plot

Six classes (1.5 points) / Sept. 17-Oct. 22 Mon., 6:15pm-8:15pm

Many authors find, counter-intuitively, that plot is the most challenging part of creating fiction: it's easy to make up the people, but hard to figure out what to do with them. This is true even though plot is the most elemental part of storytelling, the thing we use when we relay gossip to our friends, tell our partners about our day, or explain the world to our children. This master class will help writers find the tools they need to create compelling plot. Students will examine both commercial and literary fiction, examining the mechanics of action and the way that authors build sympathy for their characters and suspense about what's going to happen to them next. Students will also find the connecting points between character, voice, and plot, and consider the way these crucial elements of fiction relate to one another.

Susan Hartman

Writing About Communities

Six classes (1.5 points) / Sept. 27-Nov. 1 Thu., 11am-1pm

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 Bronx salsa bar where veterans hang out; a storefront church in Brownsville; a flamenco troupe on the Upper West Side; a midtown support group for transgender teens. We'll discuss: How do you gain access to a closely-knit community? How do you establish trust? How do you ask difficult questions? We'll look at selected readings by journalists and authors, including N.R. Kleinfield, Vivian Gornick, Matthew Desmond, Rachel Aviv, and Joseph Mitchell. By the last class, students will have completed a feature-length story.

Richard Howard

The Richard Howard Hours

Six classes (1.5 points) / I. Sept. 11-Oct. 16 Tue., 4:10pm-6:10pm
II. Oct. 23-Dec. 4
note: no class Nov. 6

This master class will be conducted as two six-week sections that can be enrolled in individually for 1.5 credits. Each section will focus on readings from mid-20th to 21st-century American poets. Poets may include Donald Justice, Grace Schulman, J.D. McClatchy, Marianne Moore, Ed Field, and Marie Ponsot. Each student will, in addition to the readings and class discussions, undertake with Prof. Howard individualized one-on-one tutorials centered on their own poems. The course is limited to six students per section. Students are welcome to sign up for either of the sections, or for both, if there are seats available. Students who participated in last year's master class are welcome to enroll.

Anna Moschovakis

Between Reality, Allegory, and Invention: Naming and Its Discontents

Four classes (1 point) / Nov. 8-Dec. 6 Thu., 10am-12pm
note: no class Nov. 22

What are the effects—ethical, aesthetic, rhetorical, social—of the decisions we make about how clearly to identify names, dates, historical events, and places that figure in our imaginative writing? When is it important to tie a piece of writing to a “real” place and time? When is the omission, substitution, or deliberate confusion of identifying details a more powerful choice (and, in situations where for political or ethical reasons it's the only choice, how can it best be deployed)? We'll look at examples written in English and in translation—focusing on the beginnings of pieces, where the rules of engagement are often established—and think through the choices made by their authors, whether they fall on an extreme end of the continuum or somewhere in the middle. Readings will include works by Gwendolyn Brooks, Monique Wittig, Renee Gladman, Alice Notley, Youssef Rakha, Aglaja Veteranyi, and Valeria Luiselli.

Assignments will involve writing prompts related to the readings; by the course's end, students should have the beginning of a new piece that engages these questions.

Joseph O'Neill

The Political Imagination

Six classes (1.5 points) / Oct. 23-Dec. 4

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

note: no class Nov. 6

This seems like a good time to think about political writing: how may such things as resistance, protest, ideological intervention, indoctrination, and political critique inhabit a work of fiction? Can fiction—or imaginative nonfiction—participate in the events of the day? What sort of artistic activity can respond to the facts of power? We'll be investigating these and many other urgent questions through a reading of "The Drapier's Letters" by Jonathan Swift; "Castle Rackrent" by Maria Edgworth; "The Autobiography of Malcolm X" by Malcolm X/Alex Haley; "The Pet" by Nadine Gordimer; "Distant Star" by Roberto Bolaño; and "Elephant" by Raymond Carver. Students will be asked to write a (very) short fiction that engages with contemporary political realities.

Saïd Sayrafiezadeh

Hyper Vivid Prose

Four classes (1 point) / Sept. 19-Oct. 10

Wed., 1:05pm-3:05pm

In this class we will explore techniques that maximize the visual impact of our prose and increase our awareness of the "blindness" of the reader. One of the fundamental things about the relationship between author and reader is that both must bring something to the experience in order to make for an effective story. On the one side, a reader must make an effort in order to be able to "see" what is being portrayed on the page, and on the other, the writer must work to "show". And yet, how is this actually accomplished? If it's not possible for an author to capture, for instance, every single detail of the living room—the way a camera would—or of a character's face, or of a skyline, then what details must be included? Or perhaps more importantly, what details must be left out?

Toward this end, we will examine the "black marks" on the page as well as the white space in which utter silence, colorlessness and absence of detail exist. We will look at a wide range of genres, mediums, and objects, including graphic memoir (Marjane Satrapi), prose memoir (J.M. Coetzee), short story (ZZ Packer), short story (Lydia Davis), script (Spike Lee), various drawings, photographs, and, yes, even strangers on the street. There will be short writing exercises each week (to be completed outside of the classroom and discussed inside), with the ultimate goal of training our eye to be as perceptive as the camera and as discerning as the poet's.

Leonard Schwartz

Literary Art and the Language of Philosophy

Six classes (1.5 points) / Tue., Sept. 4–Thu., Sept. 20 Tue. & Thu., 10am–12pm

note: this course meets twice a week for three weeks

From Heraclitus to Nietzsche to 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 language as commonly conceived. From Sappho to Proust, Artaud or Pound, 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 to our writing, be it poetry 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, as well as modern and contemporary texts by Wallace Stevens, Pound, Italian writer Roberto Calasso, and Danish poet Inger Christenson. Always, the question is: how does the language of philosophy, once broached, add something to our range as writers?

Jesse Sheidlower

Defining the Dictionary

Six classes (1.5 points) / Sept. 25–Oct. 30 Tue., 6:30pm–8:30pm

While people know that you use “the dictionary” to find out what words mean, rather few know how dictionaries 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 other 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 the evidence of real language are beneficial for all writers, not just for would-be dictionary editors (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 to different audiences.

Sandra Smith

Writing and Translating Dialogue

Six classes (1.5 points) / Oct. 26-Dec. 7 Fri., 11am-1pm
note: no class Nov. 23

This master class is geared toward both translators and fiction writers in general who wish to practice advanced techniques in writing and/or translating dialogue.

To this end, we will read, discuss, and write a variety of dialogues, analyzing and practicing how the various aspects of dialogue come together. Some possible topics for discussion include: Colloquial language (including slang), cultural and social class markers, romantic/sexual dialogues, period dialogue, writing in foreign accents and local dialects, dialogue written from various perspectives, soliloquies, and internal dialogues (free indirect speech).

People in different languages and cultures converse in unique ways, giving both translators and authors a lot to consider in their attempts to recreate tone and function while incorporating cultural references that may be unfamiliar to English language readers. Learning to take all these elements into account while still producing lively and engaging dialogue (or dour and cynical dialogue!) is a crucial part of a writer's education.

Over six weeks, participants will produce original dialogues based on “literal” English versions from a number of selected passages by foreign authors writing in a variety of languages. Most importantly, participants will also be encouraged to raise challenging issues from their own work for class discussion.

Questions to be considered include:

- How can we identify and create or replicate a character's “tone of voice”?
- How do translators deal with linguistic differences that have no equivalent in English (e.g., familiar and formal modes of address like *tu* and *vous*)?
- How to work with social and cultural issues in translation that may have been understood as “neutral” at the time of writing in the writer's milieu but now appear problematic in certain ways (sexist, racist, etc.)?
- How should we approach “dated” or period language? Are modernized translations desirable or a “betrayal” of the original text?

Please note: No knowledge of any foreign language is required for participation.

James Wood

Fictional Technique in Novellas and Short Stories

Four classes (1 point) / Oct. 9-Oct. 30

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

In this class we will examine fictional technique in four short texts by Saul Bellow, Muriel Spark, Penelope Fitzgerald, 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*

Penelope Fitzgerald, *The Blue Flower*

Lydia Davis, *Collected Stories*