CREATIVE WRITING

Undergraduate Creative Writing Program Office: 609 Kent; 212-854-3774
http://arts.columbia.edu/writing/undergraduate

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The Creative Writing Program in The School of the Arts combines intensive writing workshops with seminars that study literature from a writer’s perspective. Students develop and hone their literary technique in workshops. The seminars (which explore literary technique and history) broaden their sense of possibility by exposing them to various ways that language has been used to make art. Related courses are drawn from departments such as English, comparative literature and society, philosophy, history, and anthropology, among others.

Students consult with faculty advisers to determine the related courses that best inform their creative work. The creative writing major is by application only. For details, see the Creative Writing website: http://arts.columbia.edu/writing/undergraduate/.

Professors
Margo L. Jefferson
Benjamin Marcus
Alan Ziegler

Associate Professors
Susan Bernofsky
Timothy Donnelly
Heidi Julavits
Dorothea Lasky
Victor LaValle
Sam Lipsyte
Deborah Paredez

Assistant Professors
Anelise Chen
Shane McCrae
Ben Metcalf
Lynn Xu

Adjunct Professors
Jon Cotner
Alexander Dimitrov
Joseph Fasano
Crystal Hana Kim
Hilary Leichter
Daniel Magariel
Melody Nixon
John Vincler
David Wallace
Samantha Zighelboim

Graduate Faculty Fellows

Major in Creative Writing

The major in creative writing requires a minimum of 36 points: five workshops, four seminars, and three related courses.

Workshop Curriculum (15 points)

Students in the workshops produce original works of fiction, poetry, or nonfiction, and submit them to their classmates and instructor for a close critical analysis. Workshop critiques (which include detailed written reports and thorough line-edits) assess the mechanics and merits of the writing pieces. Individual instructor conferences distill the critiques into a direct plan of action to improve the work. Student writers develop by practicing the craft under the diligent critical attention of their peers and instructor, which guides them toward new levels of creative endeavor.

Creative writing majors select 15 points within the division in the following courses. One workshop must be in a genre other than the primary focus. For instance, a fiction writer might take four fiction workshops and one poetry workshop.

Beginning Workshop
Designed for students who have little or no previous experience writing literary texts in a particular genre.

WRIT UN1100 Beginning Fiction Workshop
WRIT UN1200 Beginning Nonfiction Workshop
WRIT UN1300 Beginning Poetry Workshop

Intermediate Workshop
Permission required. Admission by writing sample. Enrollment limited to 15. Course may be repeated in fulfillment of the major.

WRIT UN2100 Intermediate Fiction Workshop
WRIT UN2200 Intermediate Nonfiction Workshop
WRIT UN2300 Intermediate Poetry Workshop

Advanced Workshop
Permission required. Admission by writing sample. Enrollment limited to 15. Course may be repeated in fulfillment of the major.

WRIT UN3100 Advanced Fiction Workshop
WRIT UN3200 Advanced Nonfiction Workshop
WRIT UN3300 Advanced Poetry Workshop

Senior Creative Writing Workshop
Seniors who are creative writing majors are given priority. Enrollment limited to 12, by instructor's permission. The senior workshop offers students the opportunity to work exclusively with classmates who are at the same high level of accomplishment in the major. This course is only offered by graduate faculty professors.
Seminar Curriculum (12 points)
The creative writing seminars form the intellectual ballast of our program. Our seminars offer a close examination of literary techniques such as plot, point of view, tone, and voice. They seek to inform and inspire students by exposing them to a wide variety of approaches in their chosen genre. Our curriculum, via these seminars, actively responds not only to historical literary concerns, but to contemporary ones as well. Extensive readings are required, along with short critical papers and/or creative exercises. By closely analyzing diverse works of literature and participating in roundtable discussions, writers build the resources necessary to produce their own accomplished creative work.

Creative writing majors select 12 points within the division. Any 4 seminars will fulfill the requirement, no matter the student’s chosen genre concentration. Below is a sampling of our seminars. The list of seminars currently being offered can be found in the ‘Courses’ section.

These seminars offer close examination of literary techniques such as plot, point of view, tone, suspense, and narrative voice. Extensive readings are required, along with creative exercises.

Fiction Workshops
WRIT UN1100 Beginning Fiction Workshop. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required.
The beginning workshop in fiction is designed for students with little or no experience writing literary texts in fiction. Students are introduced to a range of technical and imaginative concerns through exercises and discussions, and they eventually produce their own writing for the critical analysis of the class. The focus of the course is on the rudiments of voice, character, setting, point of view, plot, and lyrical use of language. Students will begin to develop the critical skills that will allow them to read like writers and understand, on a technical level, how accomplished creative writing is produced. Outside readings of a wide range of fiction supplement and inform the exercises and longer written projects.

WRIT UN2100 Intermediate Fiction Workshop. 3 points.
Prerequisites: The department’s permission required through writing sample. Please go to 609 Kent for submission schedule and registration guidelines or see http://www.arts.columbia.edu/writing/undergraduate. Intermediate workshops are for students with some experience with creative writing, and whose prior work merits admission to the class (as judged by the professor). Intermediate workshops present a higher creative standard than beginning workshops, and increased expectations to produce finished work. By the end of the semester, each student will have produced at least seventy pages of original fiction. Students are additionally expected to write extensive critiques of the work of their peers.

Related Courses (9 points)
Drawn from various departments, these courses provide concentrated intellectual and creative stimulation, as well as exposure to ideas that enrich students’ artistic instincts. Courses may be different for each student writer. Students should consult with faculty advisers to determine the related courses that best inform their creative work.
WRIT UN3100 Advanced Fiction Workshop. 3 points.
Prerequisites: The department’s permission required through writing sample. Please go to 609 Kent for submission schedule and registration guidelines or see http://www.arts.columbia.edu/writing/undergraduate. Building on the work of the Intermediate Workshop, Advanced Workshops are reserved for the most accomplished creative writing students. A significant body of writing must be produced and revised. Particular attention will be paid to the components of fiction: voice, perspective, characterization, and form. Students will be expected to finish several short stories, executing a total artistic vision on a piece of writing. The critical focus of the class will include an examination of endings and formal wholeness, sustaining narrative arcs, compelling a reader's interest for the duration of the text, and generating a sense of urgency and drama in the work.

WRIT UN3101 Senior Fiction Workshop. 4 points.
Prerequisites: The department’s permission required through writing sample. Please go to 609 Kent for submission schedule and registration guidelines or see http://www.arts.columbia.edu/writing/undergraduate. Seniors who are majors in creative writing are given priority for this course. Enrollment is limited, and is by permission of the professor. The senior workshop offers students the opportunity to work exclusively with classmates who are at the same high level of accomplishment in the major. Students in the senior workshops will produce and revise a new and substantial body of work. In-class critiques and conferences with the professor will be tailored to needs of each student.

Fiction Seminars
WRIT UN2110 Fiction Seminar: Approaches to the Short Story. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required. The modern short story has gone through many transformations, and the innovations of its practitioners have often pointed the way for prose fiction as a whole. The short story has been seized upon and refreshed by diverse cultures and aesthetic affiliations, so that perhaps the only stable definition of the form remains the famous one advanced by Poe, one of its early masters, as a work of fiction that can be read in one sitting. Still, common elements of the form have emerged over the last century and this course will study them, including Point of View, Plot, Character, Setting, and Theme. John Hawkes once famously called these last four elements the ‘enemies of the novel,’ and many short story writers have seen them as hindrances as well. Hawkes later recanted, though some writers would still agree with his earlier assessment, and this course will examine the successful strategies of great writers across the spectrum of short story practice, from traditional approaches to more radical solutions, keeping in mind how one period’s revolution - Hemingway, for example - becomes a later era’s mainstream or ‘common-sense’ storytelling mode. By reading the work of major writers from a writer’s perspective, we will examine the myriad techniques employed for what is finally a common goal: to make readers feel. Short writing exercises will help us explore the exhilarating subtleties of these elements and how the effects created by their manipulation or even outright absence power our most compelling fictions.

WRIT UN3120 Fiction Seminar: The Craft Of Writing Dialogue. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Departmental approval NOT required. Whether texting, chatting, conversing, speechifying, recounting, confiding, gossiping, tweeting, praying, interviewing, exhorting, pitching, scheming, lecturing, nagging or begging, humans love to talk, and readers love narratives that contain dialogue. Good dialogue makes characters and scenes feel real and alive. Great dialogue reveals characters’ fears, desires and quirks, forwards the narrative’s plot and dramatic tension, and often contains subtext. In this course, we'll read different kinds of novels and stories -- from noir to horror to sci-fi to realistic drama to comic romp -- that implement various types of dialogue effectively, and we'll study how to do it. We'll read essays by masters that explain techniques for writing great dialogue, and we'll practice writing different styles of dialogue ourselves. Coursework will consist of reading, in-class exercises, and two short creative assignments.
WRIT UN3126 Animal Tales. 3 points.

"We polish an animal mirror to look for ourselves." — Donna Haraway

In the last several decades, Animal Studies has emerged as a robust interdisciplinary field that once again seeks to engage with "the question of the animal," as Derrida puts it. In this course, we will look at works of cultural production that explore the myriad relationships between humans and nonhuman animals. We will read stories that dissolve the barrier between the domestic and the wild. We will read stories about animal-animal hybrids. We will read stories from an animal's-eye-view, imagining the world as an animal might: as a worm digging through the dirt toward an imagined utopia, as an elephant seeking vengeance against poachers, as a cultivated monkey exhausted by the cruelty of human society.

As the popular post-humanist scholar Donna Haraway puts it: We polish an animal mirror to look at ourselves. What can animals teach us about ourselves, and more importantly, what can animals teach us about how to survive our own nature? In the midst of this sixth extinction, animals are disappearing at a rapid rate due to human activity. Will it still be possible to cohabit peacefully, ecologically, with one another? By imagining the private lives of animals and writing stories from their perspective, can we still intervene and cultivate the necessary cross-species connections that will carry us into a more just and entwined future?

WRIT UN3127 Time Moves Both Ways. 3 points.

What is time travel, really? We can use a machine or walk through a secret door. Take a pill or fall asleep and wake up in the future. But when we talk about magic machines and slipstreams and Rip Van Wrinkle, we are also talking about memory, chronology, and narrative. In this seminar, we will approach time travel as a way of understanding 'the Fourth Dimension' in fiction. Readings will range from the speculative to the realism of timelines, flashbacks, and shifts in perspective. Coursework will include short, bi-weekly writing assignments, a completed short story, and a time inflected adaptation.

Nonfiction Workshops

WRIT UN1200 Beginning Nonfiction Workshop. 3 points.

Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required.

The beginning workshop in nonfiction is designed for students with little or no experience in writing literary nonfiction. Students are introduced to a range of technical and imaginative concerns through exercises and discussions, and they eventually submit their own writing for the critical analysis of the class. Outside readings supplement and inform the exercises and longer written projects.

WRIT UN2200 Intermediate Nonfiction Workshop. 3 points.

Prerequisites: The department’s permission required through writing sample. Please go to 609 Kent for submission schedule and registration guidelines or see http://www.arts.columbia.edu/writing/undergraduate.

The intermediate workshop in nonfiction is designed for students with some experience in writing literary nonfiction. Intermediate workshops present a higher creative standard than beginning workshops and an expectation that students will produce finished work. Outside readings supplement and inform the exercises and longer written projects. By the end of the semester, students will have produced thirty to forty pages of original work in at least two traditions of literary nonfiction.

WRIT UN3200 Advanced Nonfiction Workshop. 3 points.

Prerequisites: The department’s permission required through writing sample. Please go to 609 Kent for submission schedule and registration guidelines or see http://www.arts.columbia.edu/writing/undergraduate.

Advanced Nonfiction Workshop is for students with significant narrative and/or critical experience. Students will produce original literary nonfiction for the workshop, with an added focus on developing a distinctive voice and approach.

WRIT UN3201 Senior Nonfiction Workshop. 4 points.

Prerequisites: The department’s permission required through writing sample. Please go to 609 Kent for submission schedule and registration guidelines or see http://www.arts.columbia.edu/writing/undergraduate.

Senior Nonfiction Workshop

Nonfiction Seminars

WRIT UN2211 Nonfiction Seminar: Traditions in Nonfiction. 3 points.

Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required.

The seminar provides exposure to the varieties of nonfiction with readings in its principal genres: reportage, criticism and commentary, biography and history, and memoir and the personal essay. A highly plastic medium, nonfiction allows authors to portray real events and experiences through narrative, analysis, polemic or any combination thereof. Free to invent everything but the facts, great practitioners of nonfiction are faithful to reality while writing with a voice and a vision distinctively their own. To show how nonfiction is conceived and constructed, class discussions will emphasize the relationship of content to form and style, techniques for creating plot and character under the factual constraints imposed by nonfiction, the defining characteristics of each author’s voice, the author’s subjectivity and presence, the role of imagination and emotion, the uses of humor, and the importance of speculation and attitude. Written assignments will be opportunities to experiment in several nonfiction genres and styles.

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**Course Offerings**

**WRIT UN1200 Beginning Nonfiction Workshop.**

- **Fall 2020**: WRIT 1200 Course Number 001/12908 Section/Call Number 001/12908 Times/Location M 10:10am - 12:00pm Online Only Instructor Vera Carothers Points 3 Enrollment 11/15

- **Fall 2020**: WRIT 1200 Course Number 002/12909 Section/Call Number 002/12909 Times/Location Th 4:10pm - 6:00pm Online Only Instructor Aaron Newman Points 3 Enrollment 7/15

**WRIT UN2200 Intermediate Nonfiction Workshop.**

- **Fall 2020**: WRIT 2200 Course Number 001/12914 Section/Call Number 001/12914 Times/Location Th 2:10pm - 4:00pm Online Only Instructor John Vincler Points 3 Enrollment 0/15

**WRIT UN3200 Advanced Nonfiction Workshop.**

- **Fall 2020**: WRIT 3200 Course Number 001/12919 Section/Call Number 001/12919 Times/Location W 6:10pm - 8:00pm Online Only Instructor Melody Nixon Points 3 Enrollment 0/15

**WRIT UN3201 Senior Nonfiction Workshop.**

- **Fall 2020**: WRIT 3201 Course Number 001/12920 Section/Call Number 001/12920 Times/Location Th 2:10pm - 4:00pm Online Only Instructor Vera Carothers Points 3 Enrollment 17/15

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WRIT UN3210 Nonfiction Seminar: The Modern Arts Writer. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required.
We will examine the lineaments of critical writing. A critic blends the subjective and objective in complex ways. A critic must know the history of an artifact, its past, while placing it on the contemporary landscape and contemplating its future. A single essay will analyze, argue, describe, reflect, and interpret. And, since examining a work of art also means examining oneself, the task includes a willingness to probe one’s own assumptions. The best critics are engaged in a conversation – a dialogue, a debate – with changing standards of taste, with their audience, with their own convictions and emotions. The best criticism is part of a larger cultural conversation. It spurs readers to ask questions rather than accept answers about art and society. We will read essays that consider six art forms: literature; film; music (classical, jazz and popular); theatre and performance; visual art; and dance. At the term’s end, students will consider essays that examine cultural boundaries and divisions: the negotiations between popular and high art; the aesthetic of cruelty; the post-modern blurring of and between artist, critic and fan. The reading list will include such writers as Virginia Woolf, George Orwell, Elizabeth Hardwick (literature); James Agee, Manny Farber, Zadie Smith (film); G.B. Shaw, Willa Cather, Ralph Ellison, Lester Bangs, Ellen Willis (music); Eric Bentley, Mary McCarthy, C.L.R. James (theatre); Leo Steinberg, Frank O’Hara, Ada Louise Huxtable, Maggie Nelson (visual art); Edwin Denby, Arlene Croce, Elizabeth Kendall, Mindy Allov (dance); Susan Sontag, Anthony Heilbut, John Jeremiah Sullivan (cultural criticism).

WRIT UN3219 Writing as Collecting. 3 points.
In Writing as Collecting we will examine how the concept of collecting provides a way to think through writing. We will read writing based from art, archives, and other collections, from antiquity to the contemporary, from the commonplace to the rarified. While our focus will be on works of nonfiction, we will also take forays into fiction, poetry, visual art, and the cinematic essay. Students will present on specific objects or collections, and two classes will take place in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library (located on the 6th floor of Butler Library): the first as an introduction and orientation to the collections with a discussion of how research can feed creative writing, and, the second, for an in-class exercise in writing creatively about a specific object or collection (a book, manuscript, archival box, etc.). Students will be encouraged to write about their own collections and to use the many public (or private) collections found throughout the city of New York.

WRIT UN3221 Auto-Writing the Self. 3 points.
I’m beginning to realize that taking the self out of our essays is a form of repression,’ writes Kate Zambreno in Heroines, ‘there is nothing objective about the experience of confronting and engaging with literature.’ From autobiography to autofiction, and autoethnography to autotheory, the subjective self in literature has become a literary obsession, feminist device, and cultural touchstone in the US this decade, bringing with it cultural cachet and new publishing categories in commercial and academic venues. But the auto’s literary roots extend back through 16th century France to 10th century Japan to 4th century Numidia, and beyond—and they radiate outward to encompass trans poetics, Black Studies, psychology, and ethnography.

In this course we’ll confront directly the subjective self in a range of U.S. and international literary and theory works. We’ll review the audacity of self-assertion from Montaigne’s 16th-century efforts to Roland Barthes’ postmodern innovation in Roland Barthes, and the politics of auto from Christina Crosby’s self-imaging in A Body. Undone to Audre Lorde’s subversion of discourses of ‘theory’ in Zami. We’ll seek to ask: What does the grappling with the self indicate about a society’s political, cultural, and literary concerns? Is our present-day obsession with personal narrative individualist self-indulgence, or an historical mode of inquiry with subversive power? We’ll conduct a sustained inquiry into the auto’s aesthetic, political, and rhetorical forms, while allowing ourselves to be moved creatively by the transgressions of genre conventions and philosophical discourses that auto-work precipitates.

The course will be conducted seminar style and we’ll consider our guiding questions through classroom discussion and writing exercises based on close readings as well as selections from interviews, criticism, and response articles. Based on an understanding of the form developed over the course of the seminar, participants will be asked to produce creative responses to course readings, which we will workshop in the second half of the semester. The final project will be an extended meditation on the auto through creative, critical, or hybrid critical-creative entry points.

Poetry Workshops

WRIT UN1300 Beginning Poetry Workshop. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required.
The beginning poetry workshop is designed for students who have a serious interest in poetry writing but who lack a significant background in the rudiments of the craft and/or have had little or no previous poetry workshop experience. Students will be assigned weekly writing exercises emphasizing such aspects of verse composition as the poetic line, the image, rhyme and other sound devices, verse forms, repetition, tone, irony, and others. Students will also read an extensive variety of exemplary work in verse, submit brief critical analyses of poems, and critique each other’s original work.

Fall 2020: WRIT UN1300

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WRIT UN2300 Intermediate Poetry Workshop. 3 points.
Prerequisites: The department's permission required through writing sample. Please go to 609 Kent for submission schedule and registration guidelines or see http://www.arts.columbia.edu/writing/undergraduate.
Intermediate poetry workshops are for students with some prior instruction in the rudiments of poetry writing and prior workshop experience. Intermediate poetry workshops pose greater challenges to students and maintain higher critical standards than beginning workshops. Students will be instructed in more complex aspects of the craft, including the poetic persona, the prose poem, the collage, open-field composition, and others. They will also be assigned more challenging verse forms such as the villanelle and also non-European verse forms such as the pantoum. They will read extensively, submit brief critical analyses, and put their instruction into regular practice by composing original work that will be critiqued by their peers. By the end of the semester each student will have assembled a substantial portfolio of finished work.

WRIT UN3300 Advanced Poetry Workshop. 3 points.
Prerequisites: The department's permission required through writing sample. Please go to 609 Kent for submission schedule and registration guidelines or see http://www.arts.columbia.edu/writing/undergraduate.
This poetry workshop is reserved for accomplished poetry writers and maintains the highest level of creative and critical expectations. Students will be encouraged to develop their strengths and to cultivate a distinctive poetic vision and voice but must also demonstrate a willingness to contribute to students and maintain higher critical standards than beginning workshops. Students will be instructed in more complex aspects of the craft, including the poetic persona, the prose poem, the collage, open-field composition, and others. They will also be assigned more challenging verse forms such as the villanelle and also non-European verse forms such as the pantoum. They will read extensively, submit brief critical analyses, and put their instruction into regular practice by composing original work that will be critiqued by their peers. By the end of the semester each student will have assembled a substantial portfolio of finished work.

WRIT UN3315 Poetry Seminar: Poetic Meter And Form. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required.
The avenues of poetic tradition open to today's poets are more numerous, more invigorating, and perhaps even more baffling than ever before. The routes we chose for our writing lead to destinations of our own making, and we take them at our own risk—necessarily so, as the pursuit of poetry asks of each of us to light a pilgrim's candle and follow it into the moors and lowlands, through wastes and prairies, crossing waters as we go. Go after the marshlights, the will-o'-wisp who call to you in a voice you've longed for your whole life. These routes have been forged by those who came before you, but for that reason, none of them can hope to keep you on it entirely. You must take your steps away, brick by brick, heading confidently into the hinterland of your own distinct achievement.

WRIT 3315 Poetry Seminar: Poetic Meter And Form. 3 points.
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The avenues of poetic tradition open to today's poets are more numerous, more invigorating, and perhaps even more baffling than ever before. The routes we chose for our writing lead to destinations of our own making, and we take them at our own risk—necessarily so, as the pursuit of poetry asks of each of us to light a pilgrim's candle and follow it into the moors and lowlands, through wastes and prairies, crossing waters as we go. Go after the marshlights, the will-o'-wisp who call to you in a voice you've longed for your whole life. These routes have been forged by those who came before you, but for that reason, none of them can hope to keep you on it entirely. You must take your steps away, brick by brick, heading confidently into the hinterland of your own distinct achievement.

WRIT UN2311 Poetry Seminar: Traditions in Poetry. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required.
The avenues of poetic tradition open to today's poets are more numerous, more invigorating, and perhaps even more baffling than ever before. The routes we chose for our writing lead to destinations of our own making, and we take them at our own risk—necessarily so, as the pursuit of poetry asks of each of us to light a pilgrim's candle and follow it into the moors and lowlands, through wastes and prairies, crossing waters as we go. Go after the marshlights, the will-o'-wisp who call to you in a voice you've longed for your whole life. These routes have been forged by those who came before you, but for that reason, none of them can hope to keep you on it entirely. You must take your steps away, brick by brick, heading confidently into the hinterland of your own distinct achievement.

Poetry Seminars
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The avenues of poetic tradition open to today's poets are more numerous, more invigorating, and perhaps even more baffling than ever before. The routes we chose for our writing lead to destinations of our own making, and we take them at our own risk—necessarily so, as the pursuit of poetry asks of each of us to light a pilgrim's candle and follow it into the moors and lowlands, through wastes and prairies, crossing waters as we go. Go after the marshlights, the will-o'-wisp who call to you in a voice you've longed for your whole life. These routes have been forged by those who came before you, but for that reason, none of them can hope to keep you on it entirely. You must take your steps away, brick by brick, heading confidently into the hinterland of your own distinct achievement.

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Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required.
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WRIT 3316 West to East: The San Francisco Renaissance and the New York School in American Poetry. 3 points.
This course examines two central movements in post World War II American poetry, The San Francisco Renaissance and The New York School, and uncovers their aesthetic impacts on language and cultural production, as well as the relationship to ‘the city’ as a defining agent in the poetic imagination.

Cross Genre Seminars
WRIT 3014 Cross Genre Seminar: Structure and Style. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required.
This seminar explores fiction, nonfiction, poetry and drama as related disciplines. While each genre has its particular opportunities and demands, all can utilize such devices as narrative, dialogue, imagery, and description (scenes, objects, and thought processes). Through a wide variety of readings and writing exercises, we will examine and explore approaches to language, ways of telling a story (linear and nonlinear), and how pieces are constructed. Some student work will be briefly workshopped.

WRIT 3016 Cross Genre Seminar: Walking. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required.
As Walter Benjamin notes in The Arcades Project: ‘Basic to flanerie, among other things, is the idea that the fruits of idleness are more precious than the fruits of labor. The flaneur, as is well known, makes ‘studies’. ’ This course will encourage you to make ‘studies’ – poems, essays, stories, or multimedia pieces – based on your walks. We will read depictions of walking from multiple disciplines, including philosophy, poetry, history, religion, visual art, and urban planning. Occasionally we will walk together. An important point of the course is to develop mobile forms of writing. How can writing emerge from, and document, a walk’s encounters, observations, and reflections? What advantages does mobility bring to our work? Each week you will write a short piece (1-3 pages) that engages your walks while responding to close readings of the assigned material.

WRIT 3017 Incarcerated Yet Inspired: Exploring Criminal Justice Through Creative Writing. 3 points.
Welcome to the Incarcerated Yet Inspired, a cross-genre, creative writing seminar. Over the course of this semester, we will conduct a close reading of literary works that are based on the lives of individuals who have been ostracized, incarcerated, and isolated from their communities. While some of the writers we will study have been personally affected by the criminal justice system, others have drawn upon their research, observations, and experiences working in prisons to tell a compelling story. Through our weekly analysis and discussion, we will explore the thematic elements and artistic choices each writer employs in their work. We will also challenge our existing thoughts about prisons as an institution and develop a better understanding of how the prism of art and justice can be valuable to you as writers.

WRIT 3018 Inhabiting Form: Writing the Body. 3 points.
The body is our most immediate encounter with the world, the vessel through which we experience our entire lives: pleasure, pain, beauty, horror, limitation, freedom, fragility and empowerment. In this course, we will pursue critical and creative inquiries into invocations and manifestations of the body in multiple genres of literature and in several capacities. We will look at how writers make space for—or take up space with—bodies in their work.

The etymology of the word “text” is from the Latin textus, meaning “tissue.” Along these lines, we will consider the text itself as a body. Discussions around body politics, race, gender, ability, illness, death, metamorphosis, monstrosity and pleasure will be parallel to the consideration of how a text might function itself as a body in space and time. We will consider such questions as: What is the connective tissue of a story or a poem? What is the nervous system of a lyric essay? How is formal constraint similar to societal ideals about beauty and acceptability of certain bodies? How do words and language function at the cellular level to build the body of a text? How can we make room to honor, in our writing, bodies that have otherwise been marginalized?

We will also consider non-human bodies (animals & organisms) and embodiments of the supernatural (ghosts, gods & specters) in our inquiries. Students will process and explore these ideas in both creative and analytical writings throughout the semester, deepening their understanding of embodiment both on and off the page.

WRIT 4310 Poetry Seminar - Witness, Record, Document: Poetry & Testimony. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required.
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.