The Program in Creative Writing takes a comprehensive approach to the study of contemporary literature, criticism, and theory from a writer’s perspective. In our courses, students work with established poets and prose writers to explore the fundamental practices of creative writing. The program’s commitment to interdisciplinary work and academic rigor, coupled with an emphasis on teaching the elements of creative writing that underlie all genres, accounts for the program’s vitality and explains why Creative Writing at the University of Chicago is currently the largest initiative in the humanities for the College.

The Program in Creative Writing offers workshops and seminars in poetry, fiction, and nonfiction, as well as an increasing number of translation workshops. The major seminars—including the Technical Seminars and Fundamentals in Creative Writing—are designed to build a critical and aesthetic foundation for students working in each genre. Students can pursue their creative writing interests within the formal requirements of the major or through a joint minor in English and Creative Writing, which is open to students outside those two major programs. Students who do not wish to pursue a formal program in Creative Writing will have access to courses that satisfy the general education requirement in the arts and open-entry ‘beginning’ workshops. They may also apply for advanced workshop courses. Our workshops and technical seminars are cross-listed with a graduate number and open to students in the graduate and professional schools.

**Major in Creative Writing**

Students who graduate with a bachelor of arts in Creative Writing will be skilled writers in a major literary genre and have a theoretically informed understanding of the aesthetic, historical, social, and political context of a range of contemporary writing. Students in the major will focus their studies on a primary genre chosen from fiction, poetry, and nonfiction.

The organization of the major recognizes the value of workshop courses, but incorporates that model into a broader education that furthers students’ knowledge of historical and contemporary literary practice, introduces them to aesthetic and literary theory, sharpens their critical attention, and fosters their creative enthusiasm. Valuable experience with peer criticism, which comes from the skills central to creative writing pedagogy, will prepare students for success in a range of fields in the public and private sectors.

**Program Requirements**

The Program in Creative Writing requires a total of 13 courses and the completion of a BA thesis, as described below. Students planning to complete the major must meet with the Director of Undergraduate Studies or the Student Affairs Administrator to file a major worksheet by the end of Autumn Quarter of their third year.

Students contemplating a major or minor in Creative Writing may choose to take one or two Creative Writing courses toward the general education requirement in the arts. These courses will not count towards major requirements, but they offer an opportunity for students to test out the program while satisfying a general education requirement. See Enrolling in Creative Writing Courses for additional details.

**One (1) Fundamentals in Creative Writing Course**

CRWR 17000 to CRWR 17999

The Fundamentals in Creative Writing course is a cross-genre, one-quarter seminar taken by all students in the major. Every section of the course focuses on a current debate relevant to all forms of literary practice, such as mimesis, empathy, and testimony. This course introduces students to a group of core texts from each major literary genre. Fundamentals in Creative Writing is restricted to students who have declared the major, as it aims to develop cohort solidarity, promote a culture of articulate exchange, and induct students into a reflection on practice that will serve their artistic and professional development. Majors should take either a Fundamentals in Creative Writing or Technical Seminar course before applying to Advanced Workshops. This prerequisite does not apply to minors applying to workshops.

**Two (2) Technical Seminars**

Fiction: CRWR 20200 to CRWR 20299; Poetry: CRWR 20301 to CRWR 20399; Nonfiction: CRWR 20400 to CRWR 20499

Students in the major must take two technical seminars in their primary genre of fiction, poetry, or nonfiction. The aim of the seminars is to expand students’ technical resources through analysis of contemporary literature and practice-based training in elements of craft. Students submit papers that address technical questions, chiefly with reference to contemporary texts. For example, poetry students may write on “the line,” where fiction students write on “point of view.” In some cases, a student can count a technical seminar in a genre outside of the student’s primary genre towards the major requirements. These courses may also count as electives in the minor. Majors should take either a Fundamentals in Creative Writing or Technical Seminar course before applying to Advanced Workshops. This prerequisite does not apply to minors applying to workshops.

**Three (3) Advanced Workshops**
Fiction: CRWR 22100 to CRWR 22299; Poetry: CRWR 23100 to CRWR 23299; Nonfiction: CRWR 24001 to CRWR 24199

Students in the major must complete three Advanced Workshops, at least two of which must be in the student's primary genre. The Advanced Workshop is the characteristic pedagogical instrument of creative writing as an academic discipline. Workshop practice relies on an understanding of support that is dedicated to improving students' writing, not unconditional approval. Critique is the core value and activity of the workshop, and students will practice it under the guidance of the workshop instructor. Although Advanced Workshops begin with attention to exemplary texts, they typically focus on original student work.

Credit for a Beginning Workshop: Students who have completed a Beginning Workshop in their primary genre with a grade of B+ or above may count this course as one of the required Advanced Workshops. Because students must take at least two Advanced Workshops in their primary genre, those students choosing to count a Beginning Workshop towards the major will not be able to count an Advanced Workshop from a non-primary genre towards the degree. Beginning Workshops offered by other institutions will not count towards the major. Beginning Workshops are open to all students during pre-registration.

Four (4) Literature Requirements

Creative Writing majors are required to take four literature courses offered by other departments. These courses can be focused on the literature of any language, but one must focus on the student's primary genre; one must center on literary theory; one must involve the study of literature written before the twentieth century; and the final one can be any general literature course.

The literary genre course should serve as an introduction to key texts and debates in the history of the student's chosen genre. This requirement can be met by an English course or a comparable course in another department. Courses such as ENGL 10403 (http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/search/?P=ENGL%2010403/) Genre Fundamentals: Poetry: Rhythm and Myth, CMST 27207 Film Criticism, or ENGL 11004 (http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/search/?P=ENGL%2011004/) History of the Novel may be eligible.

The Director of Undergraduate Studies will offer guidance and approve all qualifying courses. Specific courses that satisfy the distribution element of this requirement will be listed at creativewriting.uchicago.edu (http://creativewriting.uchicago.edu/). A literature course can potentially satisfy more than one requirement, e.g., both theory and literary genre, but a student can only use the course to fulfill one of the requirements.

Two (2) Research Background Electives

Students should take two courses outside of the Program in Creative Writing to support their thesis projects. Depending on a student's interests, elective courses can be offered by programs ranging from Cinema and Media Studies to Biological Sciences. In cases where a Creative Writing translation workshop relates to a student's thesis, one of these workshops may also be approved as a Research Background Elective. Research Background Electives courses must be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies, and the student must provide documentation of these approvals to the College adviser. Students may not use the same course to fulfill a Research Background Elective and a Literature Requirement at the same time.

BA THESIS AND WORKSHOP

Students work on their BA Projects throughout their fourth year. In Spring Quarter of the third year, students will submit a signed BA proposal form to the Student Affairs Administrator. During Summer Quarter, students are responsible for completing independent reading and research related to their proposed project.

Early in Autumn Quarter of their fourth year, students will be assigned a graduate student preceptor, who will lead a series of mandatory colloquia over the course of the quarter. In Winter Quarter, students will continue meeting with the graduate preceptor and must also enroll in the appropriate Thesis/Major Projects Workshop in their genre (CRWR 29200 Thesis/Major Projects: Fiction, CRWR 29300 Thesis/Major Projects: Poetry, or CRWR 29400 Thesis/Major Projects: Nonfiction). The Thesis/Major Projects Workshop is mandatory.

Students are not automatically enrolled in a workshop; they must receive the consent of the workshop instructor, who will also serve as the faculty advisor for their BA Project. Students should be aware that because of the high number of students writing fiction for their BA Projects, students will not necessarily get their first choice of workshop instructor and faculty advisor.

Students will work closely with their faculty advisor and peers in the workshops, and will receive course credit as well as a final grade for the workshop. In consultation with their faculty advisor and graduate preceptor, students will revise and submit a near-final draft of the BA Project by the end of the second week of Spring Quarter. Students will submit the final version of their BA Project to their preceptor, faculty advisor, Student Affairs Administrator, and the Director of Undergraduate Studies by the beginning of the fifth week of Spring Quarter.

Students graduating in other quarters must consult with the Director of Undergraduate Studies about an appropriate timeline before the end of Autumn Quarter of their third year.
**PROGRAM HONORS**

The faculty in the Program in Creative Writing will award program honors based on their assessment of the BA theses, with input from graduate student preceptors. To be eligible, students must have a major GPA of at least 3.6 and overall GPA of 3.25. Honors will be awarded only to exceptional projects from a given cohort.

**SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One (1) Fundamentals in Creative Writing Course *</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two (2) Technical Seminars (in the student’s primary genre) **</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three (3) Advanced Workshops (at least two in the student’s primary genre) ***</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four (4) Literature Requirements</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two (2) Research Background Electives</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One (1) BA Workshop, chosen from:</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 29200 Thesis/Major Projects: Fiction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 29300 Thesis/Major Projects: Poetry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 29400 Thesis/Major Projects: Nonfiction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Units: 1300

* CRWR 17000 to CRWR 17999. Majors should plan to take either a Fundamentals in Creative Writing or Technical Seminar course before applying to Advanced Workshops.

** Technical Seminars in Fiction: CRWR 20200 to CRWR 20299; Poetry: CRWR 20301 to CRWR 20399; Nonfiction: CRWR 20400 to CRWR 20499

*** Advanced Workshops in Fiction: CRWR 22100 to CRWR 22299; Poetry: CRWR 23100 to CRWR 23299; Nonfiction: 24001 to CRWR 24199. Beginning Workshops may count as the third workshop if they meet the stipulations listed under the Program Requirements.

**ADVISING**

Students considering the major should meet with the Director of Undergraduate Studies or Student Affairs Administrator as early as possible to discuss program requirements and individual plans of study. Declaration of the major must be formalized through my.uchicago.edu (http://my.uchicago.edu/), but students must have also started a major worksheet with the Director of Undergraduate Studies in order to receive priority in application-based CRWR courses.

The student’s final major program must be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies or Student Affairs Administrator by Autumn Quarter of the third year. Students will need to regularly provide documentation of any approvals for the major to their College advisers.

Graduate student preceptor support will be available to students while they write BA theses and minor portfolios during their final year of study, and faculty instructors will serve as thesis advisors for the students in their winter workshops.

**COURSES OUTSIDE THE DEPARTMENT TAKEN FOR PROGRAM CREDIT**

Students double majoring in Creative Writing and another major (with the exception of English Language and Literature) can count a maximum of three courses towards both majors (pending approval from both departments). Ordinarily, two of these courses will be Research Background Electives. Substitutions for a further course will be subject to approval, but students may not substitute non-literature courses for the Literature Requirement.

**DOUBLE MAJORS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE AND CREATIVE WRITING**

When students choose a double major in Creative Writing and English Language and Literature, they may count only up to four courses towards both majors. These four courses will typically include the four Literature requirements, but in some cases one of the slots might be filled by a Creative Writing course (with Director of Undergraduate Studies approval). However, the two Research Background Electives required for the Creative Writing major should be taken outside of the Department of English Language and Literature.

Students who are pursuing only the English Language and Literature major may count up to four Creative Writing courses towards the major in English as electives without a petition. However, when students are pursuing a double major in English Language and Literature and Creative Writing, they must observe the shared four-course maximum, so any eligible Creative Writing courses beyond this cap must be counted towards English only.

**GRADING**

Students in the program must receive quality grades (not Pass/Fail) in all courses counting toward the major or minor. Non-majors and non-minors may take Creative Writing courses for P/F grading with consent of instructor. Students must request this consent by the end of week three of the quarter; otherwise Pass/Fail must be approved by the Program Director.
## Sample Plan of Study for the Major

### Fundamentals in Creative Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 17000</td>
<td>Fundamentals in Creative Writing: Literary Empathy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Technical Seminars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 20302</td>
<td>Technical Seminar in Poetry: Units of Composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 20301</td>
<td>Technical Seminar in Poetry: Manifestos, Movements, Modes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Advanced Workshops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 23113</td>
<td>Advanced Poetry Workshop: Waste, Surplus, Reuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 23100</td>
<td>Advanced Poetry Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 10306</td>
<td>Beginning Poetry Workshop +</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Literature Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 10403</td>
<td>Genre Fundamentals: Poetry: Rhythm and Myth *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 17515</td>
<td>Seventeenth-Century Verse **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 22903</td>
<td>Literature of the City: Between Utopia and Dystopia, Design and Occupation ***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 28614</td>
<td>Contemporary Latina/o Poetry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Research Electives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CMST 14503</td>
<td>Cinema in Theory and Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTV 22502</td>
<td>Data and Algorithm in Art</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BA Workshop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 29300</td>
<td>Thesis/Major Projects: Poetry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Total Units

- **1300**

---

* Beginning Workshop is eligible because it met the conditions outlined in the Program Requirements (above).

* Satisfies literary genre requirement

** Satisfies period requirement (pre-20th century)

*** Satisfies theory requirement

## Minor in English and Creative Writing

Students who are not English Language and Literature or Creative Writing majors may complete a minor in English and Creative Writing. The minor requires six courses plus a portfolio of creative work. At least two of the required courses must be Creative Writing workshop courses, with at least one being an Advanced Workshop. Three of the remaining required courses may be taken in either the Department of English Language and Literature or the Program in Creative Writing. This may include Technical Seminars or general education courses, as long as they are not already counted toward the general education requirement in the arts. In some cases, literature courses outside of English and Creative Writing may count towards the minor, subject to the Director of Undergraduate Studies’ approval.

Students who elect the minor program in English and Creative Writing must meet with the Student Affairs Administrator for Creative Writing before the end of Spring Quarter of their third year to declare their intention to complete the minor. Students choose courses in consultation with the administrator. The administrator’s approval for the minor program should be submitted to a student’s College adviser by the deadline above.

In addition, students must enroll in one of the following workshops offered during the Winter Quarter: CRWR 29200 Thesis/Major Projects: Fiction; CRWR 29300 Thesis/Major Projects: Poetry; CRWR 29400 Thesis/Major Projects: Nonfiction.

Finally, students must submit a portfolio of their work (e.g., a selection of poems, one or two short stories or chapters from a novel, two or three nonfiction pieces) to the Student Affairs Administrator by the end of fifth week in their graduating quarter. Students will work with a graduate student preceptor to compile and refine their final portfolios.

Students completing the minor will be given enrollment preference for Advanced Workshops and Thesis/Major Projects Workshops, and some priority for technical seminars. They must follow all relevant admission procedures described at the Creative Writing (https://creativewriting.uchicago.edu/) website. For details, see Enrolling in Creative Writing Courses.

Courses in the minor (1) may not be doubly counted with the student’s major(s) or with other minors and (2) may not be counted toward general education requirements. Courses in the minor must be taken for quality grades (not P/F), and at least half of the requirements for the minor must be met by registering for courses bearing University of Chicago course numbers.
**SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MINOR PROGRAM IN ENGLISH AND CREATIVE WRITING**

Two CRWR workshop courses * 200
Three CRWR or ENGL electives ** 300
One Thesis/Major Projects Workshop *** 100
A portfolio of the student’s work

Total Units 600

* At least one must be an Advanced Workshop.
** Exceptions are subject to the Director of Undergraduate Studies’ approval.

**MINOR TO MAJOR AND MAJOR TO MINOR**

Student circumstances change, and a transfer between the major and minor programs may be desirable to students who begin a course of study in either program. Workshop courses (including Beginning Workshops) and one Technical Seminar may count towards the minor, and in exceptional circumstances Fundamentals in Creative Writing may count as well. The Thesis/Major Projects Workshop is mandatory for both minors and majors. Students should consult with their College adviser if considering such a transfer and must update their planned program of study with the Student Affairs Administrator or Director of Undergraduate Studies in Creative Writing.

**SAMPLE PLAN OF STUDY FOR THE MINOR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 10200</td>
<td>Beginning Fiction Workshop</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 22110</td>
<td>Advanced Fiction Workshop: Exploring Your Boundaries</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 16500</td>
<td>Shakespeare I: Histories and Comedies</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 10706</td>
<td>Introduction to Fiction</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 24526</td>
<td>Forms of Autobiography in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 29200</td>
<td>Thesis/Major Projects: Fiction</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A portfolio of the student’s work (two short stories)

Total Units 600

**ENROLLING IN CREATIVE WRITING COURSES**

General education courses and Beginning Workshops are open to all students via the standard pre-registration process. Other courses require consent, and some may require submission of work for evaluation. Our consent-based courses prioritize students in the major, minor, and the Creative Writing Option of the Master of Arts Program in the Humanities (MAPH). Note: Students who have not yet met with the Director of Undergraduate Studies or Student Affairs Administrator to begin a worksheet are not considered formally declared and therefore are not guaranteed priority in course enrollment.

Applications for consent-only courses **must** be received by the Friday of seventh week in each quarter, listed below:

- Autumn Quarter, November 13, 2020
- Winter Quarter, February 19, 2021
- Spring Quarter, May 14, 2021

For more information on Creative Writing courses and opportunities, visit the Creative Writing (https://creativewriting.uchicago.edu/) website.

**Creative Writing courses for the general education requirement in the arts**

These multi-genre courses are introductions to topics in creative writing and satisfy the general education requirement in the arts in the College. General education courses are generally taught under two headings — ‘Reading as a Writer’ and ‘Intro to Genres’ — and will feature class critiques of students’ creative work. Open to all undergraduate students during pre-registration. These courses do not count towards the major in Creative Writing, but students may use these courses to satisfy their general education requirement in the arts.

**Beginning Workshops**

These courses are intended for students who may or may not have writing experience, but are interested in gaining experience in a particular genre. Courses will focus on the fundamentals of craft and feature workshops of student writing. Open to all undergraduate students during pre-registration.
**Fundamentals of Creative Writing Courses**

These courses focus on a current debate relevant to all forms of literary practice and aim to develop cohort solidarity, promote a culture of exchange, and induct students into a reflection on practice that will service their artistic and professional development. Open to declared majors only, except in circumstances approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Majors should take either a Fundamentals course or a Technical Seminar before applying to Advanced Workshops. Students apply to take the course by submitting a course application form, found at creativewriting.uchicago.edu (http://creativewriting.uchicago.edu/).

**Technical Seminars**

The aim of the seminars is to expand students’ technical resources through analysis of contemporary literature and practice-based training in elements of craft. Priority is given to declared majors first, then minors and students in the MAPH Creative Writing Option. Majors should take either a Fundamentals course or a Technical Seminar course before applying to Advanced Workshops. Students apply to take the course by submitting a course application form, found at creativewriting.uchicago.edu (http://creativewriting.uchicago.edu/).

**Advanced Workshops**

These workshops are intended for students with substantive writing experience in a particular genre. Advanced workshops will focus on class critiques of student writing with accompanying readings from exemplary literary texts. Priority is given to students in the major, minor, or the MAPH Creative Writing Option. Majors should take either a Fundamentals course or a Technical Seminar course before applying to Advanced Workshops. Students apply to take the course by submitting a course application form, found at creativewriting.uchicago.edu (http://creativewriting.uchicago.edu/). A writing sample in the genre of the relevant course is required for faculty review. Specific submission requirements appear in the course descriptions.

**Thesis/Major Projects**

This course will revolve around workshops of student writing and concentrate on the larger form students have chosen for their creative thesis. Priority is given to students in the major, minor, or the MAPH Creative Writing Option. Students apply to take the course by submitting a course application form, found at creativewriting.uchicago.edu (http://creativewriting.uchicago.edu/). A writing sample in the genre of the relevant course is required for faculty review. Specific submission requirements appear in the course descriptions.

**Faculty and Visiting Lecturers**

For a current listing of Creative Writing faculty, visit the Creative Writing (https://creativewriting.uchicago.edu/people/) website.

**Creative Writing Courses**

**CRWR 10206. Beginning Fiction Workshop. 100 Units.**

NOTE: This is a sample course description; section descriptions vary. Please visit creativewriting.uchicago.edu for current quarter descriptions by section. Fiction writing is part magic and part mechanics. This course will pay homage to the magic but concentrate on how a story is built: the architecture of structure, the mechanisms of character development, the fluid dynamics of dialogue. We’ll take a close look at some of the building blocks that make up fiction writing: character, dialogue, plot, point of view, and setting. We’ll also read and discuss a variety of short stories, always with an eye to craft and to what you, as writers, can steal for your own work. That’s right, steal. Much of this course is devoted to learning how to steal the tools of great fiction writing, then to using those tools to realize your own vision. You’ll write extensively in and out of class, from weekly reading responses to writing exercises that build toward a polished piece of work. Finally, you will write a complete draft and one extensive revision of a short story or novel chapter. The last third of the course will be devoted to student workshops, where each student will turn in a draft of a story or chapter to be read and critiqued by the whole class.

Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Autumn Spring Winter

Prerequisite(s): Attendance on the first day is mandatory.

Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 30206
CRWR 10306. Beginning Poetry Workshop. 100 Units.
At its root, the verb compose means to ‘put together,’ so in this course we will explore poetic composition as the practice of putting words together in ways that help us compose, discompose, and recompose parts of our lives. Our basic premise will be that poetry offers useful forms of attention and construction, so that to write is to observe the world and to fashion ways of living in it. We will pay particular attention to some fundamental elements of poetic composition—sound, diction, syntax, line, stanza, image—and to the skills of observation, memory, and revision. To guide our own writing practices, we will study intensively the work of four poets from last hundred years—William Carlos Williams, Lorine Niedecker, Gwendolyn Brooks, and James Schuyler—as well as a supplemental selection of contemporary poetry. Regular reading assignments will be paired with regular exploratory writing exercises; remote learning activities will include live Zoom discussions and writing workshops, Canvas discussions, and collaborative online writing and editing exercises.
Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Autumn Spring Winter
Prerequisite(s): Open bid through my.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is necessary.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 30306

CRWR 10406. Beginning Nonfiction Workshop. 100 Units.
NOTE: This is a sample course description; section descriptions vary. Please visit creativewriting.uchicago.edu for current quarter descriptions by section. A personal essay can employ a chain of events, but it’s essentially a train of thought. Like thought, it’s protean, able to take any shape and yet remain an essay. In this workshop you’ll write two drafts of your own essay, or attempt, at the form, while line editing and critiquing your classmates’ attempts. You’ll also do close readings, starting with ‘Why I Write,’ by George Orwell, and ‘Why I Write,’ by Joan Didion. Then James Baldwin’s ‘Autobiographical Notes.’ Once we’ve had a taste of the present we’ll go back four thousand years to the essay’s beginnings in Babylon, following its evolution in Greece and Rome-Heracitus, Plutarch, Seneca-then Europe: Montaigne, Max Beerbohm, Walter Benjamin, and Natalia Ginzburg, returning to contemporary English-language writers, including Adrienne Rich and Margaret Atwood, ending with Didion’s ‘Goodbye to All That,’ paired with Eula Biss’s contemporary cover version, also titled ‘Goodbye to All That.’
Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Autumn Spring Winter
Prerequisite(s): Open bid through my.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 30406

CRWR 12106. Intro to Genres: Science Fiction. 100 Units.
A monolith manifests in orbit around Jupiter, emitting a signal. A beacon? A man spontaneously discovers the ability to teleport. A drug trip?! Among popular genres, science fiction is the riskiest conceptually and among the trickiest to master. The difference between an amazing idea and a rotten story is often slim. What makes good sci-fi work? And how best to write it? Let’s put on our gravity boots and solar visors and see what we can discover. In this course, you’ll read some novels (by Frank Herbert, Alfred Bester, and Ursula K. LeGuin), poetry (by Andrew Joron), a graphic novel (by Chris Ware), and screenplays (by Damon Lindelof, and Stanley Kubrick & Arthur C. Clarke). And all the while, you’ll try your hand at bending each other’s minds with your own science fiction.
Instructor(s): Peter O’Leary Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Open bid through my.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory. Note(s): This course meets the general education requirement in the arts.

CRWR 12107. Reading as a Writer: Crime and Story. 100 Units.
If prostitution is the earliest profession, then crime is probably the earliest narrative engine. Crime has forever been a driving force behind story, a vehicle not only of plot but of human psychology, social exploration, philosophical investigation, and just plain old suspense. There’s something about the darker side of human nature that invites explorations of characters pushed to their extremes. Through analyzing the writing techniques and processes such as point of view, scene, setting, voice, detail, irony, perspective, narrative structure and research methodologies of such writers and poets as Raymond Chandler, Patricia Highsmith, Walter Mosley, Joyce Carol Oats, Denis Johnson, Carolyn Forché, CK Williams, Ai, Jo Ann Beard, Joan Didion, and Richard Price among others, students will examine how elements of crime in story can be transformed beyond simple genre. By examining writers’ choices, students will explore how they may use these techniques to develop such mechanics of writing as point of view, poetics, dramatic movement and narrative structure in their own work. Students will turn in weekly reading responses and a final paper.
Instructor(s): Augustus Rose Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Open bid through classes.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory. Note(s): This course meets the general education requirement in the arts.
CRWR 12109. Introduction to Genres: Wizards. 100 Units.
Do you believe in wizards? Are you a wizard? Then pack up your talismans, fetishes, and gamelans into the mysterious little satchel you carry at your side and get ready for some incantatory magic. We will investigate the figure of the wizard as an archetype, a literary symbol, a vehicle for fantasy, and as a commanding reality, while considering such things as A Wizard of Earthsea, The figure of Merlin, The Teachings of Don Juan, The Teachings of Ogotemmeli, Harry Potter, Aleister Crowley, the poetry of W. B. Yeats, Nathaniel Mackey, Jay Wright, and Ronald Johnson, as well as some other things too secret to reveal at present, including the nature of esotericism.
Instructor(s): Peter O’Leary Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Open bid through classes.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Note(s): This course meets the general education requirement in the arts.

CRWR 12112. Reading as a Writer: Chicago ‘City on the Remake’ 100 Units.
This course invites writers to reconsider the influence of Chicago’s public spaces on genre and artistic form. How does one tell a ‘Chicago story?’ Is the ‘City on the Re-Make’ best told in prose or poem? Is there a clear boundary between the city’s South and North Sides? Is there a ‘Chicago epic?’ Working through these questions, students will analyze and explore Chicago writers’ work in fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction. Students will then develop their own creative responses, building connections to adopted critical approaches. To these ends, we will examine work by writers including Nelson Algren, Elizabeth Hatmaker, Aleksandar Hemon, and Margo Jefferson, as well as the city’s rich legacies in documentary film, the visual arts, and music.
Instructor(s): Garin Cycholl Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Open bid through classes.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
This course meets the general education requirement in the arts.

CRWR 12117. Intro to Genres: Division and Western. 100 Units.
This course explores literary responses to Chicago’s boundaries and sites of contention through fiction, drama, poetry, and literary journalism. We’ll examine work by writers and artists including Saul Bellow, Lorraine Hansberry, Nate Marshall, Bruce Norris, and Studs Terkel. How does one map the city’s conflicts along zoning ordinances, street corners, playgrounds, and rumors? What histories undergird the city’s racelines? In exploring these aspects of the city, where does a writer draw the boundary between fiction and nonfiction, between verse and prose? Engaging these larger questions, participants will develop their own individual and collaborative creative responses to ‘the city in a garden.’
Instructor(s): Garin Cycholl Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Open bid through my.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory. Satisfies the College Arts/Music/Drama Core requirement.

CRWR 12121. Intro to Genres: Writing the Visual Arts. 100 Units.
How might language render visual experience? How do verbal representations diverge from visual representations? How might writing help us see art in new ways? How might art objects compel our writing into new forms? With these questions in mind, we will read poems and essays by a variety of writers, visit several of Chicago’s excellent museums, and conduct regular writing experiments. Writers studied may include Berger, Williams, Auden, Barthes, Schuyler, Guest, O’Hara, Waldrop, Swensen, Gander, Young, and Cole. Artists studied may include Breughel, Magritte, Cornell, Twombly, Mann, Kentridge, and Basquiat.
Instructor(s): Patrick Morrissey Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Open bid through my.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Note(s): This course meets the general education requirement in the arts. Equivalent Course(s): ARTV 20500

CRWR 12123. Reading as a Writer: Ecopoetics: Literature & Ecology. 100 Units.
This course will introduce students to recent debates in the environmental humanities while exposing them to a range of works spanning fiction, documentary prose, poetry, and film that engage what has come to be called the Anthropocene era (despite substantive challenges to the term that we will address). We will read foundational texts in environmental perception and activism (John Ruskin’s ‘Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century’ and Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring) in dialogue with modernist work surrounding urban landscapes (William Carlos Williams’s Paterson). We will then open onto a wide range of contemporary texts that engage the natural and constructed environment in crisis. Students will be asked to conduct fieldwork on an environmental theme of their choosing (climate change, petrol economies, watershed issues, air quality, pandemics and the management of wild animals, species extinction, etc.) and to produce a portfolio of short creative pieces in response to an issue or debate that interests them.
Instructor(s): Jennifer Scappettone Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Open bid through my.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory. Contact the instructor for a spot on the waiting list. Course requires consent after add/drop begins; contact the instructor for a spot in the class or on the waiting list.
CRWR 12127. Reading as a Writer: Hallucinations. 100 Units.
In this course we ask: How is historical material made—figured/disfigured by loss, desire, violence, suffering, exhaustion, death; by restlessness and the unbearable, abyssal, vertigo of living inside time? Where is the aperture of experience? The apparitions, which partition night, its many voices, bodies which are forgotten, and then remembered, why? What is the time of writing, of reading? This course goes a little back and a little forward between the two world wars, hoping to track an itinerary of history material, its incandescence, between situations of mourning and mystical experience. Students will be asked to keep a reading notebook as well as to produce weekly creative responses for class discussion.
Instructor(s): Lynn Xu Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Open bid through my.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory. Satisfies the College Arts/Music/Drama Core requirement.

CRWR 12128. Reading as a Writer: The Sea. 100 Units.
What is the temporality of the sea? Its consciousness? Where does it begin? Or end? In this course, we will consider the sea both as a figure in our literary, critical, visual, political, historical, and ecological imaginations, as well as a body in itself, iridescent and gleaming at the end of the world. We will look at practices of burial at sea, the infamous ‘wine dark sea’ of Homer, the Middle Passage, the hold and wake of the ship, necropolitics, the concept of sovereignty and bare life, stowaway and asylum seekers, piracy and floating armories, ecocentricism, the post-human and alien worlds of our oceanic origins, the moon . . . and so on. Students will be asked to keep a reading notebook as well as to produce weekly creative responses for class discussion. ‘And as you read /the sea is turning /its dark pages /turning /its dark pages’ (Denise Levertov, from To The Reader).
Instructor(s): Lynn Xu Terms Offered: Autumn Spring
Prerequisite(s): Open bid through my.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory. Satisfies the College Arts/Music/Drama Core requirement.

CRWR 12129. Reading as a Writer: Questions of Travel. 100 Units.
Travel narratives remain a perennial tool for looking outward and understanding places and cultures unlike our own. We’ll look at both historical and contemporary accounts of time abroad and explore how technological advances in communication and increasingly cheap and easy travel may be changing this most enduring of forms. Travel writing has often gone hand in hand with imperial and neo-imperial projects, but more and more the global ‘south’ visits the global ‘north.’ We’ll read poetry, fiction, and nonfiction by writers like Graham Greene, Elizabeth Bishop, George Orwell, Tayeb Salih, George Saunders, James Baldwin, and Natalia Ginzburg. We’ll also consider journalistic accounts by Ted Conover, Katherine Boo, and Evan Osnos, as well as documentary films by Ai Weiwei and Joshua Oppenheimer. Students will write short responses over the quarter and synthesize our texts, along with a text of their choosing, into a culminating critical paper.
Instructor(s): William Boast Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Open bid through my.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory. Satisfies the College Arts/Music/Drama Core requirement.

CRWR 12136. Reading as a Writer: Adaptation as Form. 100 Units.
The main goal of this course will be to understand the reasons, traditions and methods behind the practice of literary adaptations. From Joyce Carol Oates’s ‘Blue Bearded Lover,’ to Anne Sexton’s ‘Cinderella,’ to Angela Carter’s ‘Wolf-Alice’ and Marina Carr’s ‘By the Bog of Cats,’ there are stories that continue to resonate through the centuries, and others that are made to resonate through the labor of new story tellers. Each text will be explored both independently and within the context of its adaptive genealogy. Students will be expected to read each text carefully, come prepared to actively participate in class discussion and respond to both academic and creative writing prompts based on assigned texts and class lecture.
Instructor(s): Lina Ferreira Cabeza-Vanegas Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Open bid through my.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory. Satisfies the College Arts/Music/Drama Core requirement.

CRWR 12138. Intro to Genres: Evil Incarnate. 100 Units.
Some of the most compelling pieces of writing across all genre deal with, and often feature, deeply problematic central adversarial characters without which the poem, story, or essay would have no forward motion, and no cause to exist. From Capote’s In Cold Blood to Milton’s Paradise Lost, from Bulgakov’s Master and Margarita to Arendt’s Eichmann in Jerusalem and Sabato’s The Tunnel, literature returns again and again to the question of evil and the concept of opposition. This course is designed to explore this question alongside authors who have devoted themselves to understanding the role of evil in literature; its necessity, its appeal, its frivolity and its betrayal. The course will be divided into three section, each section devoted to a specific genre during which two to three texts will be explored, discussed and analyzed in class, and at the end of which one brief analysis paper will be due. One creative piece, in any of the three major genres, exploring the said topic will be due at the end of the course.
Instructor(s): Lina Ferreira Cabeza-Vanegas Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Open bid through my.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory. Contact the instructor for a spot on the waiting list. Course requires consent after add/drop begins; contact the instructor for a spot in the class or on the waiting list.
Note(s): Satisfies the College Arts/Music/Drama Core requirement.
CRWR 12139. Reading as a Writer: The Love Story and Its Tropes. 100 Units.
In this course, we will embark on a contemporary survey of the dazzling assortment of stories about love (or its mirages), from its indoctrinations, blindings, and inevitable misgivings. We will read works on this subject by fiction writers, memoirists, and poets, including Kristen Dombek, Lisa Carver, and Garth Greenwell. Of course, no contemporary survey would be complete without considering Candace Bushnell’s original ‘Sex and the City’ columns, the surprisingly nihilistic vignettes that inadvertently spawned the consumerist fantasy of single-life romance. Expect to engage with creative assignments, and to participate in workshop sessions.
Instructor(s): Ling Ma Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Open bid through my.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory. Course requires consent after add/drop begins; contact the instructor for a spot on the waiting list. Course requires consent after add/drop begins; contact the instructor for a spot on the waiting list.
Note(s): Satisfies the College Arts/Music/Drama Core requirement.

CRWR 12140. Reading as a Writer: Writing War. 100 Units.
In the aftermath of war, we attempt to make sense of the senseless. We grapple with the pieces, we organize, we mold, and we give shape to the shapeless. In this course, using the Nigeria-Biafra War as a case study, we’ll investigate the practices that constitute authorship of war. We’ll read works by writers of the war generation, like Ken Saro-wiwa, as well as those who have inherited it, like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. We’ll identify and study their methods for reconstructing the past-lived experiences, research, and the imagination. We’ll consider the ethics of leaps of the imagination as we read works of realism alongside the speculative, like Nnedi Okorafor’s AfricanFuturist comic book take LaGuardia. We’ll study narratives like Chinelo Okparanta’s queer coming-of-age story Under the Udala Trees to consider what it means to depart from the national narrative in order to recover silenced or erased voices. In critical papers, we’ll analyze how genre, form, and media inform these works. Using the questions, techniques, and practices we identify, you’ll be asked to write and research narratives using a real war as its basis.
Instructor(s): Julie Iromuanya Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Open bid through my.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory. Contact the instructor for a spot on the waiting list. Course requires consent after add/drop begins; contact the instructor for a spot in the class or on the waiting list.
Note(s): Satisfies the College Arts/Music/Drama Core requirement.

CRWR 12141. Intro to Genres: Drawing on Graphic Novels. 100 Units.
Like film, comics are a language, and there’s much to be learned from studying them, even if we have no intention of ‘writing’ them. Comics tell two or more stories simultaneously, one via image, the other via text, and these parallel stories can not only complement but also contradict one another, creating subtexts and effects that words alone can’t. Or can they? Our goal will be to draw, both literally and metaphorically, on the structures and techniques of the form. While it’s aimed at the aspiring graphic novelist (or graphic essayist, or poet), it’s equally appropriate for those of us who work strictly with words. What comics techniques can any artist emulate, approximate, or otherwise aspire to, and how can these lead us to a deeper understanding of the possibilities of point of view, tone, structure and style? We’ll learn the basics of the medium via Ivan Brunetti’s book Cartooning: Philosophy and Practice, as well as Syllabus, by Lynda Barry. Readings include the scholar David Kunzle on the origins of the form, the first avant-garde of George Herriman, Frank King, and Lyonel Feininger, finishing with contemporaries like Joe Sacco, Chris Ware, and Alison Bechdel. Assignments include weekly creative and critical assignments, culminating in a final portfolio and paper.
Instructor(s): Ling Ma Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Open bid through my.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory. Course requires consent after add/drop begins; contact the instructor for a spot in the class or on the waiting list.

CRWR 12142. Reading as a Writer: Voices From the Edge. 100 Units.
When we think of groups that are othered, who and what do we mean? Is the other always defined against hegemonic ideas of race, gender, sexuality, and class? Can we understand American othering outside of post-colonialism? In this seminar, we will read works that investigates othering—which is to say, who and what constitutes an othered literary voice, the ways writers contend with that othering in their work, and the cultural and political forces that push an othered voice to ‘the edge’ of the mainstream. To give a sense of the breadth of othering in literature, we will take a multi-ethnic/cultural/gender and multi-genre approach to our study, examining texts of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry from Black, Asian, Native American, Latinx, and queer writers. That list will include Natalie Diaz, Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah, Ocean Vuong, Audre Lorde. We will work to deepen our facility with the skills needed to critique the ideas in the texts and also situate them in their cultural context. In addition, we will discuss how othering has produced eloquent literary voices and the particular aspects of a given writer’s eloquence. During the semester, you will engage in rigorous inquiry, prompted informal writing, and formal writing in the form of response-papers and short creative assignment accompanied by a critical reflection.
Instructor(s): Mitchell Jackson Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Open bid through my.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory. Course requires consent after add/drop begins; contact the instructor for a spot in the class or on the waiting list.
Note(s): Satisfies the College Arts/Music/Drama Core requirement.
CRWR 17000. Fundamentals in Creative Writing: Literary Empathy. 100 Units.
In this fundamentals course, students will investigate the complicated relationship between writers, fictional characters, and readers, toward determining what place literary empathy has in our conversation about contemporary literature. James Baldwin once observed that, "You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, or who had ever been alive." We will use weekly reading assignments including fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction to ask questions about what Virginia Woolf described as the 'elimination of the ego' and 'perpetual union with another mind' that take place when we read. Students will write critical responses, creative exercises, and a final paper on a topic to be approved by the instructor. Readings include Baldwin, Bishop, Beard, Carson, Walcott, and Woolf.
Instructor(s): Rachel DeWoskin
Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Students apply for consent by filling out the CW Seminar Consent Form on creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Students must meet the course application deadline specified on the website. This course is open only to students who have declared the Major in Creative Writing. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.

CRWR 17001. Fundamentals in Creative Writing: Testimony. 100 Units.
To give testimony is to bear witness and to provide evidence. To give testimony is also to draw the reader or listener into an individual point of view. In this course, we will study the first-person voice in various forms of personal testimony. Drawing from a mix of memoirs, personal essays, letters, fiction, and other first-person narratives, we will analyze the techniques and rhetorical devices used by writers, standup comedians, memoirists in transporting the listener or reader into unknowable, unfamiliar experiences. Expect to engage with texts by authors such as Franz Kafka, Patricia Lockwood, Richard Pryor, and William Maxwell. We will compose our own personal writings through creative exercises. A critical paper is also due.
Instructor(s): Ling Ma
Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Students apply for consent by filling out the application form on creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Students must meet the course application deadline specified on the website. This course is open only to students who have declared the Major in Creative Writing. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 37001

CRWR 17006. Fundamentals in Creative Writing: The Fantastical Element. 100 Units.
From the short stories of Karen Russell to the conjectures of Danny Glover’s TV show Atlanta, many contemporary writers of speculative craft often introduce fantastical elements into otherwise ordinary narratives set in everyday reality. In this course, we will examine the fantastical element, its typical characteristics, and what it’s trying to do by puncturing the veil of the realism. As a craft course, we will look at how the fantastical element is often implemented, and how the narrative absorbs it or attempts to resolve it. In the process, we will try our hand at writing speculative narratives, along with critical papers on technique. Readings will include poetry, fiction, and nonfiction by authors such as Rachel Ingalls, Carmen Maria Machado, Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah, and more.
Instructor(s): Ling Ma
Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory. This is class is restricted to students who have declared a major in Creative Writing.

CRWR 17007. Fundamentals in Creative Writing: The Grammar of Narrative. 100 Units.
Storytelling goes nearly as far back as human consciousness, while the ways in which we tell stories has been expanding ever since. This class will look at several different forms of narrative-fiction, creative non-fiction, narrative poetry, and film-and explore the ‘grammar’ of these different genres, what they share and where they differ and how their particular strengths influence the ways in which they most effectively communicate. How does film (a visual medium) tell a story differently than does fiction (which asks us to project our own imagined version of the story), differently than creative non-fiction, (which must always rely on facts), differently than poetry (which condenses the story to its essences)? How do these different genres and mediums influence the stories they tell and the effects they achieve? Readings will include primary texts as well as critical and fundamentals texts in each genre. Students will complete weekly reading responses, as well as creative exercises.
A paper focusing on a specific element derived from the class will be due at the end of the course.
Instructor(s): Augustus Rose
Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Students must be a declared Creative Writing major to enroll. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
CRWR 17008. Fundamentals in Creative Writing: The Art of Dialogue. 100 Units.
How do you write silence? What is subtext? What is the structure of a joke? Dialogue is one of the most important elements of fiction because of its dynamism. It can, among other effects, reveal character, advance plot, and escalate tension. In this seminar, we will read work that inspires, informs, and expands our understanding of the definition and usages of dialogue. We will read exemplars of fiction, nonfiction, drama, poetry, as well as watch film—all with the objective of discovering the aspects that make the dialogue (or written speech) in each text effective. The class will include work by Grace Paley, Ernest Hemingway, August Wilson, Toni Cade Bambara, Junot Díaz, Joan Didion, Teyumblr Jess, and Sally Rooney. We will discuss stylistic elements of the work, its ideas, and attempt to situate it in its cultural context. Class sessions will consist of informal writing, discussion, and lecture. Coursework includes two short creative assignments (with a critical component), questions for discussion, and informal writing.
Instructor(s): Mitchell Jackson Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Students must be a declared Creative Writing major to enroll. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.

CRWR 17009. Fundamentals in Creative Writing: Speaking Silence. 100 Units.
Silence is pouring into the play like water into a sinking ship,’ wrote Beckett of the role of silence in his elegiac masterpiece, Waiting for Godot. There is the silence of speechlessness, the silence of reticence, the silence of listening, the many silences of history - both personal and geopolitical - and beneath them all there is the silence we break when we’re born and to which we return when we die. This class will make a study of silence across a range of literary genres and styles, with the aim of amplifying what silence contains. From stage directions to erasure, from lineation to fragmentation to use of white space, typography, and images, we will examine an assortment of strategies writers like John Cage, Samuel Beckett, Anne Carson, Charles Reznikoff, M Nourbese Philips, W.G. Sebald, and John Keene have deployed in their engagement with silence. Class time will consist of discussions, in-class exercises, and occasional sharing of new work. A final critical paper of 15-20 pages will allow for creativity.
Instructor(s): Suzanne Buffam Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Students must be a declared Creative Writing major to enroll. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.

CRWR 17010. Fundamentals in Creative Writing: What is Character? 100 Units.
What is character? And what is a character? How we answer these two questions depends not only on the genre we’re writing in, but also on the kind of writer and person we are. Which is also to say that tackling these questions requires a look within ourselves, a confrontation with who we think we are and how we think we see the world around us, even when our characters are nothing like us. In this Fundamentals course, we’ll look at the range of ways that ‘character’ can be seen and constructed—the different technical, aesthetic, and even philosophical approaches to characterization. How does characterization in a poem differ from characterization in a story, or in an essay, play, or memoir? What ultimately makes for a compelling and memorable character? Beyond actual human beings, what does it mean for an idea to be a character, or a city to be one, or the very work itself? Our reading material will include poetry, fiction, and essays, and our assignments will include reading responses, creative writing exercises, short essays, and presentations.
Instructor(s): Vu Tran Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Students must be a declared Creative Writing major to enroll. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.

CRWR 18200. Poetry and the Human III. 100 Units.
This spring-quarter Arts course is related to the Humanities course ‘Poetry and the Human’ and is intended as a potential sequel to its first two quarters, but can also be taken as a freestanding course. Through a combination of seminar discussions and creative writing workshop sessions, it focuses upon creative practice (form, flow, and voice) as way of approaching many of the questions raised over the Autumn and Winter terms. It considers the role of poetry in different traditions (Japanese, English, Persian, etc.) from aesthetic, philosophical, and performative angles. Students in the Poetry and the Human sequence (HUMA) will have priority registration for this course; other students may register for any remaining seats.
Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): This course meets the general education requirement in the arts.

CRWR 20200. Technical Seminar in Fiction: Characterization. 100 Units.
This reading and writing seminar will acquaint students with one of the essential tools of fiction writers: characterization. We will read primary texts by authors including Baldwin, Flaubert, Munro, and Wharton, as well as critical work by Danticat, Forester, and Vargas Llosa, toward exploring how some of literature’s most famous characters are rendered. How do writers of fiction create contexts in which characters must struggle, and how does each character’s conflicts reveal his or her nature? Students will complete both creative and analytical writing exercises, reading responses, and a paper that focuses on characterization in a work of fiction.
Instructor(s): Rachel DeWoskin Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Students apply for consent by filling out the CW Seminar Consent Form on creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Students must meet the course application deadline specified on the website.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40200
CRWR 20201. Technical Seminar in Fiction: Auto Fiction, Essayism, Truth. 100 Units.

This inter-genre readings course will be of special interest to student writers interested in both fiction and creative nonfiction. We’ll look at hybrid works by W.G. Sebald, Teju Cole, Rachel Cusk, and Shelia Heti and also consider writers like Kathryn Harrison, Tobias Wolff, and Gregor von Rezzori, who have addressed the same subjects in both fiction and nonfiction. Finally, we’ll dip into Robert Musil’s notion of ‘essayism’ as a modern mode of thought and the recent debate over the ‘lyric essay.’ We’ll also look at journalistic and/or documentary works by Werner Herzog, Truman Capote, Tom Bissell, Katherine Boo, and Ryszard Kapuściński. By exploring the interestingly smudged line between factual and fictional texts, we’ll interrogate both genre categories and ways of perceiving and presenting what’s true.

Instructor(s): Augustus Rose Terms Offered: Winter

Prerequisite(s): Students apply for consent by filling out the CW Seminar Consent Form on creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Students must meet the course application deadline specified on the website. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.

Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 20206

CRWR 20203. Technical Seminar in Fiction: Research and World-Building. 100 Units.

Writing fiction is in large part a matter of convincing world-building, no matter what genre you write in. And convincing world-building is about creating a seamless reality within the elements of that world: from character dynamics, to setting, to social systems, and even the story or novel’s conceptual conceit. And whether it be within a genre of realism, historical fiction, or science fiction, building a convincing world takes a good deal of research. So while we look closely at the tools and methods of successful world-building, we will also dig into the process of research. From how and where to mine the right details, to what to look for. We will also focus on how research can make a fertile ground for harvesting ideas and even story. Students will read various works of long and short fiction with an eye to its world-building, as well as critical and craft texts. They will write short weekly reading responses and some creative exercises as well. Each student will also be expected to make a brief presentation and turn in a final paper for the class.

Instructor(s): Augustus Rose Terms Offered: Winter

Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.

Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 20203

CRWR 20206. Technical Seminar in Fiction: Setting (Beyond) the Stage. 100 Units.

This technical seminar course will look at fiction and some film to explore the use and function of setting in narrative works. We will consider its uses beyond simply as a tool in world-building or backdrop creation, looking into how it informs character, defines perspective, affects mood, pushes plot, and even makes us see the world differently. Students will read various works of long and short fiction with an eye to their use of setting, as well as critical and craft texts. They will write short weekly reading responses and some creative exercises as well. Each student will also be expected to make a brief presentation and turn in a final paper for the class.

Instructor(s): Augustus Rose Terms Offered: Winter

Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu (include writing sample). Attendance on the first day is mandatory.

Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 20206

CRWR 20210. Technical Seminar in Fiction: Understanding Point-of-View. 100 Units.

TBD

Instructor(s): Will Boast Terms Offered: Winter

Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.

Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 20210

CRWR 20211. Technical Seminar in Fiction: The Dilemma. 100 Units.

Some of the most compelling works of fiction are built around moral, social, and psychological dilemmas. Characters are set loose in a dark woods of ambiguity and conflicting values, where they reveal themselves (and their/our humanity) through the decisions they make, the actions they undertake. Such stories present a dramatized prism of arguments and resist easy ‘lessons.’ Rather, they end with a question mark that invites conversation between reader and narrative long after the story has ended. The challenge for writers, of course, is to avoid polemic, instead exploring this moral, social, and psychological terrain in a way that is even-handed and flows organically out of character. In this technical seminar, we will read fiction (by writers like James Alan McPherson, Graham Greene, Tayari Jones, and Cynthia Ozick, among others) that centers on an uneasy choice between moral positions. We will examine how the dilemma shapes conflict and plot, and, perhaps most important, how the writer invites the reader to get lost in a dark woods alongside the story’s characters. The emphasis of this course will be on critical writing, but students will also have opportunities to write creative responses to the readings and experiment with the craft techniques we discuss.

Instructor(s): Stephanie Soileau Terms Offered: Autumn

Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.

Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40211
CRWR 20212. Technical Seminar in Fiction: Literary Digressions. 100 Units.
In this technical seminar, we will set about exploding the traditional 'rules' of fiction craft in order to broaden our grasp of intention and technique. Each week, using Charles Baxter's Burning Down the House as our textbook, we will focus on a nontraditional approach to a craft element (e.g., anti-epiphanic endings, counterpointed characters, rhyming action, etc.). We will analyze the fictional element in an assigned short story and write a short craft analysis, meditating on both the risk and payoff of these literary digressions. Then we'll experiment with the technique in a short writing exercise. Although this is not a formal workshop, we will share and receive feedback in brief '10 Minute Workshops.' The end of the semester will culminate in a portfolio of exercises and techniques.
Instructor(s): Julie Iromuanya
Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40212

CRWR 20213. Technical Seminar in Fiction: Writing Autobiographically. 100 Units.
Many if not most writers draw on their own lives. Transforming the raw stuff of experience, personal and/or family history, and intimate expertise is not, of course, as straightforward as it might seem. Does writing autobiographically necessarily equal 'confession'? Or are there other ways of writing the self? Where exactly is the line between personal essay/memoir and autobiographical fiction? What pact do we form with the reader when the material is explicitly close to our own lives? What pact do we have with ourselves and the real people we write about? Readings will include works by Sylvia Plath, Leslie Feinberg, Kathryn Harrison, Akhil Sharma, Michael Cunningham, Ralph Ellison, and St. Augustine. Critical responses and creative exercises alike will help you understand the nuances, challenges, and pleasures of writing autobiographically.
Instructor(s): Will Boast
Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40213

CRWR 20214. Technical Seminar in Fiction: Writers in Conversation. 100 Units.
Whenever we write stories, we are in conversation with other writers, living or dead. Sometimes that conversation is quiet and intimate - a matter of subtle influence, much as we take on unconsciously the diction and cadences of admired mentors and beloved friends. Other times, the conversation is boisterous, a meeting of minds, a deepening of our collective discourse. Still other times, the conversation gets heated. We feel the need to set the record straight, give voice to a neglected or misrepresented character, vindicate a monster or indict a hero. In this technical seminar, we will read writers responding to other writers-Victor Lavalle & H.P. Lovecraft, Haruki Murakami & Franz Kafka, Doris Lessing & Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Joyce Carol Oates & James Joyce, among others-and examine how these writers retell, modernize, and comment upon influential stories, making the stories their own while incorporating familiar elements. The emphasis of this course will be on critical writing, but students will also have opportunities to write creative responses to the readings and experiment with the craft techniques we discuss.
Instructor(s): Stephanie Soileau
Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40214

CRWR 20215. Technical Seminar in Fiction: The Mechanics and Aesthetics of Plot. 100 Units.
What is plot-beyond the dramatic events that take place in a work of fiction? Why is it important-beyond engaging us in what happens to a story's characters? Can plot be just as consequential to character-driven, aesthetic-driven, or idea-driven fiction as it is to fiction that privileges incident and action? And what exactly do we mean when we label stories in this fashion? This technical seminar will examine these questions and the many others that concern this crucial but often underrated element of craft. We will begin with the basic mechanics of plot and work towards a deeper understanding of all its effects on a narrative, whether they be dramatic, formal, characterological, even philosophical. Most importantly, we will try to apply these lessons to our own work, no matter the label we assign to our narrative and aesthetic interests. The course will include writing exercises, weekly reading responses, presentations, and a final essay.
Instructor(s): Vu Tran
Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40215
CRWR 20302. Technical Seminar in Poetry: Units of Composition. 100 Units.
This course aims to investigate, through a range of readings and writing exercises, various units of composition and the ways that they interact with each other in poems. We will study and imitate traditional formal approaches, such as the poetic foot, meter, caesuras, sprung rhythm, rhymed stanzas, and refrains. We also will study and imitate modernist and contemporary ‘units,’ such as the word (approached, for example, etymologically or connotatively), the free verse line, the variable foot, vers libre, serial form, the sentence (the ‘new’ sentence, but also modulations of basic syntax), the paragraph, the page, and forms of call and response. This reading intensive course will draw from a selection of mostly modern and contemporary poetry, poetics, and criticism. Students will be expected to submit weekly technical exercises, complete several short critical responses, write a longer essay, and submit a final portfolio of revised material.
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40302

CRWR 20305. Technical Seminar in Poetry: Imagery and Description. 100 Units.
This technical seminar explores different theoretical and practical approaches to imagery and description in poetry. To begin with, we’ll try to distinguish between the two terms, to the extent necessary and possible. Then we will examine and practice writing radically different approaches to image making and description (e.g. synesthetic, collaged, surrealist, eco-poetic, abstract, juxtapositional, haiku, etc.). Along the way, we’ll consider theories about the rhetorical functions of imagery and description in the poetic text. Although this course focuses on poetry, it is certainly relevant to prose writers interested in the role of descriptive detail in literary writing, and for comparison we will examine famous examples of description in works of fiction. Students should plan to submit a weekly exercises, write a critical essay, and give a class presentation.
Instructor(s): Nathan Hoks Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40305

CRWR 20307. Technical Seminar in Poetry: Line, Stanza, Syntax, Form. 100 Units.
From the fragmented to the recurrent, from the recurrent to the intricate, from the precise to the vernacular, from the vernacular to the artificial; we’ll discuss the why, the how, and the effects of a few of the possible forms and devices of poetry.
Instructor(s): John Wilkinson Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40307

CRWR 20308. Technical Seminar in Poetry: Serious Goofballs, or Humor in Poetry. 100 Units.
Poetry writing is often undertaken with solemnity, but perhaps we’ve been approaching it all wrong. What if we read Prufrock as stand-up comedy? Dickinson as a dark humorist? Stein as a prankster? Along with rethinking the daring but subtle humor of a few classic poets, this course will trace specific kinds of comedic moves in contemporary poetry. We’ll try to understand the maneuvers that make for varieties of humor, such as absurdity, irony, satire, parody, ridicule, and dark humor. Readings may include work by John Ashbery, Sylvia Plath, Russel Edson, Bernadette Mayer, Dorothea Lasky, James Tate, Dean Young, Mary Ruefle, Wendy Xu, Anne Carson, and Kenneth Koch. Students should expect to complete a series of writing exercises, give a presentation, and write a final essay. All while smiling.
Instructor(s): Nathan Hoks Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40308

CRWR 20401. Technical Seminar in Nonfiction: The Synecdoche. 100 Units.
Every writer of personal nonfiction knows that ultimately the story isn’t about them: it’s about something larger, perhaps universal, and their personal story is merely a means to that end. The key to this paradox is the synecdoche, or the part that stands for the whole. It’s the grain of sand that contains the universe, the one story that by implication tells other peoples’ stories. When Anne Fadiman told the story of a Hmong immigrant to the United States, she told a larger story about immigration in general. So did Joan Didion, in Where I Was From; by telling the story of her family, she told the story of California, and by telling the story of California she told the story of the West and thus of America. Rian Malan did the same in My Traitor’s Heart: by telling the story of his family he told the story of Apartheid, and thus of South Africa, and of our segregated world. Through weekly exercises and analytic essays you’ll see how these and other writers locate the universal in their particulars, and you’ll apply their examples to your own work.
Instructor(s): Dan Raeburn Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40401
CRWR 20404. Technical Seminar in Nonfiction: Forms of the Essay. 100 Units.
The essay, derived from the French term essayer meaning ‘to try’ or ‘to attempt,’ is not only a beloved sub-genre of creative nonfiction, but a form that yields many kinds of stories, thus many kinds of structures. Araceli Arroyo writes that the essay can ‘reach its height in the form of a lyric, expand in digression, coil into a list, delve into memoir, or spring into the spire of the question itself all with grace and unexhausted energy.’ In this course, we will analyze the essay’s continuum, marked by traditional, linear narratives on one end, and at the other, everything else. In our class, we will investigate the relationship between content and form. What does it mean to be scene-driven? What happens when a narrative abandons chronology and event, propelled instead by language and image? What is gained through gaps and white space? You will leave this class with a strong grasp of content’s relationship to form, prepared to participate effectively in creative writing workshops. You will also create a portfolio of short writings that can be expanded into longer pieces. Readings will include: Nox by Anne Carson; A Bestiary by Lily Hoang; Tell Me How It Ends: An Essay in Forty Questions by Valeria Luiselli; Citizen: An American Lyric by Claudia Rankine; Essayists on the Essay edited by Ned Stuckey-French
Instructor(s): Kathleen Blackburn Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40404

CRWR 20405. Technical Seminar in Nonfiction: Narrative Pacing. 100 Units.
The goal of this course will be to understand the methods and mechanisms of effective narrative pacing in creative nonfiction by carefully dissecting a variety of texts, ranging from Woolf’s ‘The Death of the Moth,’ to Solzhenit︠s︠yn’s The Gulag Archipelago, and Bechdel’s Fun Home. Students will be expected to actively participate in class discussion, read from a broad assorted of texts, and complete a series of corresponding creative writing prompts testing the principles discussed in class.
Instructor(s): Lina Ferreira Cabeza-Vanegas Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40405

CRWR 20406. Technical Seminar in Nonfiction: Autopsy of a Scene. 100 Units.
Few elements in literature are as effective in constructing both lyric and narrative arcs that capture the attention and imagination of a reader as well crafted scenes. The creation of the illusion of movement, time and rich sensory experiences is by no means an easy task, however, and it must take into consideration pacing, punctuation, spatial references and white space among a vicissitude of other components. In addition, each genre has a different tolerance for and use of the scene itself. Nonfiction brings the added difficulty of much needed research, and the distortion of memory, while poetry thrives on limitations that seem to counter the organic development of a scene, while fiction can be easily overwhelmed by the apparent limits of its limitlessness.
This course is intended to address these questions through a series of readings, lectures and writing prompts designed to dissect the matter at hand and equip the writer with the necessary tools to build a well-paced and effective scene.
Instructor(s): Lina Maria Ferreira Cabeza-Vanegas Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40406

CRWR 20407. Technical Seminar in Nonfiction: Characters and Your Character. 100 Units.
The art of nonfiction is sometimes described as the art of leaving things out, and nowhere is this more pronounced and problematic than in capturing character. The way you characterize people, places, and things ultimately says as much about you, the author, as it does about what you’re characterizing, and the goal of this class is to teach you to do so economically yet accurately, or at least fairly. Not reductively. We’ll start with the surface: with the eccentricities, tics, and quirks that make someone who they are, or appear to be. How to capture these oddities without sliding into caricature? Writers often default to physical description, but we’ll devote as much or more effort to the verbal, i.e., to exercises in dialogue, whose true power is not to convey information but character. We’ll also practice writing in body language, which is equally revealing of mien, demeanor, and underlying motivation. Beneath it all lies what we call ‘true character’: the values, morals, and ideals evident in deeds, facts, and what we might call properties, the essential characteristics of a culture, city, or place. Our weekly reading and writing assignments and exercises will culminate in a creative portfolio and a final essay, as well as the skills you’ll need to take workshops.
Instructor(s): Dan Raeburn Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40407
CRWR 21500. Advanced Translation Workshop: Prose Style. 100 Units.
Purple, lean, evocative, muscular, literary, exuberant, lucid, stilted, economical. These are all labels that critics and reviewers have used to characterize prose styles that call attention to themselves in distinct ways. Of course, what constitutes style not only changes over time, but also means different things in different literary traditions. How, then, do translators carry style over from one language and cultural milieu to another? And to what extent does style structure storytelling? We will explore these questions by reading a variety of modern and contemporary stylists who either write in English or translate into English, paying special attention to what stylistic devices are at work and what their implications are for narration, characterization, and world building. Further, we’ll examine the range of choices that each writer and translator makes when constituting and reconstituting style, on a lexical, tonal, and syntactic scale. By pairing readings with generative exercises in stylistics and constrained writing, we will build toward the translation of a short work of contemporary fiction into English. To participate in this workshop, students should be able to comfortably read a literary text in a foreign language.
Instructor(s): Julie Iromuanya Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 41500

CRWR 21502. Advanced Translation Workshop. 100 Units.
All writing is revision, and this holds true for the practice of literary translation as well. We will critique each other’s longer manuscripts-in-progress of prose, poetry, or drama, and examine various revision techniques—from the line-by-line approach of Lydia Davis, to the ‘driving-in-the-dark’ model of Peter Constantine, and several approaches in between. We will consider questions of different reading audiences while manuscripts for submission for publication, along with the contextualization of the work with a translator’s preface or afterword. Our efforts will culminate in not only an advanced-stage manuscript, but also with various strategies in hand to use for future projects. Students who wish to take this workshop should have at least an intermediate proficiency in a foreign language and already be working on a longer translation project.
Instructor(s): Jason Grunebaum Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 41502

CRWR 20204. Technical Seminar in Fiction: The First-Person Voice. 100 Units.
As readers, we can all sense when the narrator doesn’t seem convincing. What makes a first-person voice seem ‘real’ to readers? How does this voice naturally move - whether in moments of boredom, of distress, of passion? Ultimately, what we’re asking as writers is, How can interiority be achieved within this point-of-view? In this reading course, we will examine the first-person voice in contemporary fiction by authors such as Samantha Hunt, Ben Lerner, Carmen Maria Machado - always with a craft-specific eye on how we can fine-tune our own narrators’ voices. Expect to write both critical papers and creative works.
Instructor(s): Ling Ma Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40204

CRWR 20216. Technical Seminar in Fiction: Perspective. 100 Units.
Who (or what) tells a story might be the most important decision a writer makes. The narrator of a work of fiction will tell the story from a particular point in time, will have particular biases, agendas, frames of reference, lexicon, insights, and history. And all of those factors contribute to their perspective-in fact, a story’s narrative could be understood as the delivery of the narrator’s perspective to the reader. In this seminar, we will examine perspective in works of fiction, with an eye towards discovering the elements that comprise a given perspective and also what we might learn as writers from the work. Along with the reading material, assignments will include reading responses, creative writing exercises, and presentations.
Instructor(s): Mitchell Jackson Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40216

CRWR 20217. Technical Seminar in Fiction: Elements of Style. 100 Units.
What we call style is more than literary flourish. Control of a story begins with a writer’s characteristic approach to the line. Style dictates and shapes immersive and impactful worlds of our creation. It’s also indicative of a work’s larger themes, philosophies, and aesthetic sensibility. In this class, we’ll examine fiction by wordsmiths such as James Baldwin, Gabriel Garcia Márquez, Toni Morrison, and Marguerite Duras in order to contemplate the influence that elements such as diction, syntax, rhythm, and punctuation have on a writer’s style.
Instructor(s): Julie Iromuanya Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40217
CRWR 22110. Advanced Fiction Workshop: Exploring Your Boundaries. 100 Units.
This advanced fiction workshop is for students who have taken Beginning or Intermediate Fiction Writing and produced a body of work, large or small, that reflects their developing aesthetic. Our workshops will focus on the fundamentals of craft like language, voice, and plot and character development, but with an eye also on expanding the formal possibilities in our storytelling. To that end, we'll examine the work of writers (Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortazar, Donald Barthelme, David Foster Wallace, Alice Munro, Tim O'Brien, et al.) who experiment with form, who unroll the rules of the 'well-made story' and reconfigure it in order to present their unique vision of the world—an encouragement for you not necessarily to be 'experimental' writers, but to explore more meaningful, memorable, and perhaps innovative ways of telling your own stories.
Instructor(s): Vu Tran Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 42110

CRWR 22113. Advanced Fiction Workshop: The Love Story. 100 Units.
This advanced fiction workshop will examine the ways we write about love in fiction: romantic love, familial love, unconventional love, etc. Our basis will be the notion that love is ultimately self-knowledge, which lies at the core of all great fiction, and like self-knowledge it involves an endless and inexhaustible act of seeking. We will read and discuss stories centered on the topic of love, this act of seeking, and we will do writing exercises that help us write compellingly, convincingly, and unsentimentally about deeply sentimental things. Every student will also complete and workshop a full-length story that explores the idea of love on some level. They will additionally write a significant revision of this story, which they will either present for a second workshop or turn in at the end of the quarter. Please expect a rigorous but constructive workshop environment where being a critic and an editor is as essential as being a writer.
Instructor(s): Vu Tran Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Submit writing sample via www.creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 42113

CRWR 22119. Advanced Fiction Workshop: Music in Fiction and Improvised Composition. 100 Units.
This workshop-based course is suitable for any student wishing to refine and expand their understanding of how fiction gets made, and will be of particular interest to those exploring new stylistic possibilities or working in both the disciplines of prose writing and music. We'll look at the Modernists' experiments with refrain, repetition, and pure verbal music, their attempts 'to find out what's behind things,' as Woolf put it. They will also look at the burgeoning field of rhythmology, and use it as a bridge to examine how music also borrows from fiction, through storytelling in song and a guest lecture from a Pulitzer-Prize-nominated composer.
Instructor(s): Will Boast Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 42119

CRWR 22121. Advanced Fiction Workshop: Young Adult Literature. 100 Units.
The books and stories we read as teenagers are often some of the most influential in developing our tastes as adult readers and writers of fiction. In this advanced workshop course, we'll discuss the genre of young adult literature through evaluation of your own writing: what are its defining characteristics, and what's the difference between writing for a young adult audience versus writing books and stories about teenagers but designed for adult readers? Students should be working on book-length projects involving teenaged protagonists, no matter the intended audience; please come to the first session with either work to submit or a sense of when you'd be able to sign up for a slot. We'll spend most of our time evaluating student work, learning how to become both generous and rigorous critics, and we'll also talk about the books that influenced us the most as young adult readers and the books we're reading today, from contemporary writers like John Green and Rainbow Rowell to classic authors like S. E. Hinton and Madeleine L'Engle. Students will read at least one or two novels during the quarter as well.
Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 42121
CRWR 22131. Advanced Fiction Workshop: Migration Stories. 100 Units.
In this advanced fiction workshop, students will read and write stories of migration. We will use research and imagination to construct narratives about the ways in which human beings move across time and place, and to work on creating characters who are forged and reforged by their cultural, linguistic, and familial contexts (both familiar and unfamiliar). Historical research will be a key component. Half of each class meeting will be devoted to the careful consideration of student work. Readings include fiction by Edwidge Danticat, Gish Jen, Chang Rae Lee, Jamaica Kincaid, Akhil Sharma, and Gene Luen Yang.
Instructor(s): Rachel DeWoskin Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 42131

CRWR 22132. Advanced Fiction Workshop: Strange Magic in Short Fiction. 100 Units.
In this workshop-based course we’ll investigate how strangeness and magic function in short fiction. We’ll read stories by Edgar Allen Poe and Vladimir Nabokov, as well as from contemporary writers like Kelly Link, Carmen Maria Machado, Aimee Bender, Alice Sola Kim, Ludmilla Petrushevskaya, and Stephen Millhauser, examining how these authors portray the fantastical and impossible. We’ll also read excerpts from essays by Viktor Shklovsky, Sigmund Freud, and Charles Baxter, exploring concepts such as defamiliarization, verisimilitude, and the uncanny. We will contemplate how magical realism and surrealism differ from sci-fi and fantasy genre writing, and ask how we, as writers, can make the quotidian seem extraordinary and the improbable seem inevitable, and to what end? Students will complete several short creative exercises and two short stories that utilize magic or strange effects. Students will also be expected to write thoughtful, constructive critiques of peer work. Throughout the course, we’ll consider how the expectations of literary fiction might constrain such narratives, and how we can engage with and transcend these archetypes.
Instructor(s): Benjamin Hoffman Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 42132

CRWR 22136. Advanced Fiction Workshop: Writing Social Change. 100 Units.
In this course, we will examine character-driven novels about worlds in the midst, on the brink, or during the aftermath of social change. We’ll observe the strategies that authors deploy to construct a compelling and immersive world, and we’ll catalog the methods they use to alter social systems and social order. Who has power and who doesn’t? How is power maintained and how is it subverted? How does the human spirit engage with a world beyond its comprehension? And how do authors, using characters as the vehicle, illuminate larger thematic and moral questions? This class will concentrate on longer works (novels, novellas, and novels-in-stories), and we will workshop the first 30-40 pages of your manuscript, focusing in particular on its promises and possibilities. The end goal is for you to leave the class with the beginning of your novel, a synopsis, a chapter outline, and a plan for how to proceed with your project.
Instructor(s): Julie Iromuanya Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 42136

CRWR 22137. Advanced Fiction Workshop: The College Novel (& Story) 100 Units.
In this advanced fiction workshop, we will examine and write narratives set at college, the so-called campus and varsity novels (and, in our case, short stories). We will try to capture the attendant promise and uncertainty of life on the cusp of adulthood, asking what it means to come of age, to age, to experiment, and possibly, to regress. We’ll attempt to veer away from cultural cliché and caricature to portray the truth of life on campus and come to grips with the way you live right now, as we consider what it means-to borrow the title of one novel-to make our home among strangers. Students will read published works and submit two stories or novel excerpts for workshops. Please expect a rigorous but constructive workshop environment where being a critic and an editor is essential.
Instructor(s): Ben Hoffman Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 42137

CRWR 22138. Advanced Fiction Workshop: The Short Story Collection. 100 Units.
In this course, we will not only explore how stories function individually, but also how they can come together in a collection to form a coherent and unified story or experience. Please come prepared to read and discuss published story collections, focusing in particular on the formal and thematic ties of discrete narratives. With this in mind, we will also workshop two to three of your own short stories. By the end of the course, you will have written the first three stories of your collection and developed a plan for how to proceed with the project.
Instructor(s): Julie Iromuanya Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 44138
CRWR 22139. Advanced Fiction Workshop: Home. 100 Units.
Where's your home? Why is that home? The great Toni Morrison writes, 'Home is memory and companions
and/or friends who share the same memory.' In this advanced fiction workshop, we will write and read work
that explores aspects of home: landscape, people, language, history, customs, memories, etc. The first few weeks
we will read and discuss exemplary short stories and novel excerpts from writers including Edward P. Jones,
Flannery O'Connor, Junot Diaz, and Jesmyn Ward. In later weeks, each workshop member will write and submit
one full-length story or stand-alone chapter for workshop and either a second story or stand-alone chapter
or significant revision of the first story. While each submission will receive holistic feedback, we will also pay
particular attention to the aspects of home explored in each submission. Furthermore, will also work to deepen
the skills necessary to revise your work and to critique the work of others. The course will include writing
exercises to assist in exploring a range of strategies, impulses, and ideas.
Instructor(s): Mitchell S. Jackson Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day
is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 42139

CRWR 22140. Advanced Fiction Workshop: Killing Cliché 100 Units.
It's long been said that there are no new stories, only new ways of telling old ones, but how do writers reengage
familiar genres, plots, and themes without being redundant? This course will confront the literary cliché at all
levels, from the trappings of genre to predictable turns of plot to the subtly undermining forces of mundane
language. We will consider not only how stories can fall victim to cliché but also how they may benefit from
calling on recognizable content for the sake of efficiency, familiarity, or homage. Through an array of readings
that represent unique concepts and styles as well as more conventional narratives we will examine how
published writers embrace or subvert cliché through story craft. Meanwhile, student fiction will be discussed
throughout the term in a supportive workshop atmosphere that will aim not to expose clichés in peer work, but
to consider how an author can find balance between the familiar and the unfamiliar, between the predictable and
the unpredictable in order to maximize a story's effect. Students will submit two stories to workshop and will be
asked to write critiques of all peer work.
Instructor(s): Baird Harper Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day
is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 42140

CRWR 22141. Advanced Fiction Workshop: First-Generation Stories. 100 Units.
TBD
Instructor(s): Will Boast Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day
is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 42141

CRWR 22142. Advanced Fiction Workshop: The Fantastical. 100 Units.
From the short stories of George Saunders to the TV show Atlanta, speculative fiction often introduces the
fantastical into narratives seemingly set in everyday reality. This workshop will focus on the fantastical in
contemporary literature, and the logistical issues and questions that commonly arise around it. We will look at
the role of fantastical in puncturing the veil of 'realism.' What is the fantastical doing that can't be done through
other narrative modes? How does the narrative metabolize this disruption? How should the fantastical be
tempered by the mundane? Students for this course should not only have an interest in speculative fiction, but
should have already made some efforts within this mode. Note that this course does not focus exclusively on
fantasy or science fiction, though there may be some genre overlap. Readings will include works by Rachel
Ingalls, Ted Chang, Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah, and more.
Instructor(s): Ling Ma Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day
is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 42142

CRWR 22143. Advanced Fiction Workshop: Plot. 100 Units.
Students will write and turn in two full-length stories or novel chapters for this workshop-based class. The class
will pay special attention to plot: what it is, what the specific engines are that drive it, how it's connected to such
other elements as character, setting, and dialogue. In addition to submitting and reading for workshop, expect to
read and discuss at least one novel and a selection of short stories.
Instructor(s): Augustus Rose Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day
is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 42143
CRWR 23110. Advanced Poetry Workshop: The Long Poem. 100 Units.
This advanced writing workshop will explore the many ways in which poets since antiquity have approached the idea of ‘the long poem.’ In a world of ever-decreasing attention spans, we’ll begin by considering what might motivate such a work today, and will read a wide range of contemporary texts, from linked sequences, to ‘middle-distance’ or multi-part poems, to book- (or books-) length projects, that offer a rich variety of responses. Over the course of the quarter, students will conceive and develop a sustained poetic project that extends beyond the parameters of the conventional ‘lyric’ poem. In addition to students’ original work, primary texts to be considered may include excerpts from Homer's Iliad, H.D.'s Helen in Egypt, Anne Carson’s ‘Glass Essay,’ Robin Coste Lewis’ ‘Voyage of the Sable Venus,’ Alice Oswald’s Memorial, Inger Christenson’s Alphabet, and A.R. Ammon’s Garbage.
Instructor(s): Suzanne Buffam Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Submit writing sample via www.creativewriting.uchicago.edu.
Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 43110

CRWR 23119. Advanced Poetry Workshop: Poetry Of & Off the Page. 100 Units.
Is there a place for poetry in a society in which reading has been declared dead—where at the very least, reading threatens to be eclipsed by scanning? In this workshop/laboratory, we will explore material whose response is a delicious yes-poetry that revels in charging the confines of the page and book. Exposure to an archive of modernist and contemporary visual and sound poetry, artists’ books, contemporary installation and performance works, and relevant theories of media dislodgment will help us compose our own answers to the (old) question: what forms are poems obliged or inspired to take as language goes viral, in the face of total information, digitization, and post-literary culture? Readings and viewings in 20th- and 21st-century poetry and poetics, visits to local writing-arts collections, and class visits by local artists will help us generate our own works, which will be workshoped together. Students will complete weekly assignments across media, and engage with the writing of their peers formally, while working toward a culminating piece in a medium of their choice: this final piece can take the form of a chapbook, performance, installation, or other pertinent channel.
Instructor(s): Jennifer Scappettone Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 43119

CRWR 23127. Advanced Poetry Workshop: Make It Old. 100 Units.
Poetry after Modernism has been shaped by Ezra Pound’s directive to ‘Make it new.’ Yet Pound himself derived this slogan from the most ancient of sources—an inscription on the washbasin of the first Shang dynasty king Ch’eng T’ang (1766-1753 BC). In this advanced poetry workshop, we will study some of the ways that contemporary poets revisit ancient texts from various cultures in order to open up new aesthetic and historical dimensions in our own poetry. Students will enjoy considerable freedom in how they conceive of their own poetry’s relationship to diverse histories; from one week to the next, they may choose to write in a historical genre or form (the Latin hexameter, the Japanese haibun), in response to some ancient work (the Sundiata epic of old Mali, the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead), or they may invent their own ways to ‘make it old.’ Texts may include Armand Schwerner’s The Tablets, Anne Carson’s Autobiography of Red, Aga Shahid Ali’s Call Me Ishmael Tonight, Christopher Logue’s War Music, and Cecilia Vicuña’s New and Selected Poems, to name only a few possibilities.
Instructor(s): Srikanth Reddy Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 43127

CRWR 23128. Advanced Poetry Workshop: Apocalyptic Poetry. 100 Units.
It’s clear, increasingly, that we live in a time of imperiling crisis-political, ecological, even religious. Apocalypse is one of the genres poets use to make moral claims on the present, as well as to envision the nature of reality to come. Apocalypse also refers to vision, to a way of seeing that is both allegorical and incendiary. How, within the realms and forms of the contemporary poetic imagination, can you persuasively engage apocalypse? In this workshop, students will approach your own apocalyptic claims with those of some visionary masters in hand, including Emily Dickinson, Robert Lax, Fanny Howe, Pam Rehm, Adonis, Lawrence Joseph, Brian Teare, Autumn Richardson, Tim Lilburn, and Richard Skelton. Forms, language, and vision will absorb our study with a focus on visualizing and sharing your own apocalyptic poetry.
Instructor(s): Peter O’Leary Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 43128
CRWR 23129. Advanced Poetry Workshop: Radical Recycling. 100 Units.
In this advance poetry workshop we will turn from the Romantic notion of poetry as 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling…recollected in tranquility' towards a postmodern practice of radical recycling in response to global crisis. We will resurrect, excavate, interrogate, pilfer from, and otherwise raid a variety of archives, as a means of artistic engagement with the circulating materials of civic life. We will study examples of literary works whose principal technique is one of scavenging among such nonliterary sources as court transcripts, weather reports, grammar lessons, a war criminal's memoirs, and the dictionary itself, to create fresh encounters with language. Texts to be studied will include Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s Dickey, Robin Coste Lewis’ Voyage of the Sable Venus, Charles Reznikoff’s Testimony, Lisa Robertson’s The Weather, C.D. Wright’s One Big Self, and M. Nourbese Phillips’ Zong, among others. Students will spend the quarter seeking out and assembling their own archives, and experimenting on the page with acts of salvage. Because this is a workshop, a large part of every class will be devoted to discussions of students' original work.
Instructor(s): Suzanne Buffam Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 43129

CRWR 23130. Advanced Poetry Workshop: Intertext. 100 Units.
Might there be a kind of poem that is a parasite latched on to a host body? This poetry workshop invites students to read and write poetry that, either overtly or subtly, engages with other texts. We’ll examine ways that poems create these intertextual relationships (e.g. quoting, alluding, echoing, stealing, sampling, imitating, translating…) and test out these methods in our own writing. Students should expect to engage with the basic question of how their work relates to other texts. Expect to read a substantial amount of work by modern and contemporary poets, submit new original poems for workshop, complete intertextual writing exercises, keep a reading journal, write critical responses to the readings and peers' work, and submit a final portfolio. A substantial amount of class time will be spent workshopping student work.
Instructor(s): Nathan Hoks Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 43130

CRWR 24004. Advanced Nonfiction Workshop: Writing in Crisis. 100 Units.
In this course, we’ll work to write about people and communities who are in crisis, on the verge of crisis, or looking back at crisis. We’ll discuss reporting, interviewing, oral history, historical research, working from photography and video, and the ethical situation of the writer. We’ll read works by writers such as Liu Xiaobo, Elena Poniatowska, Claudia Rankine, Rebecca Solnit, Edwidge Danticat, Ryszard Kapuscinski, Philip Gourevitch, Arundhati Roy, Leslie Marmon Silko, Rachel Carson, and Ta-Nehisi Coates, on subjects including migration, exile, prison, totalitarian regimes, dissidence, questions of reparation and reconciliation after systematic violence, and environmental activism. Students will undertake significant research and produce a substantial essay to be workshopped in class.
Instructor(s): Rachel Cohen Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Submit writing sample via www.creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 44004

CRWR 24007. Advanced Nonfiction Workshop: Long-form Journalism. 100 Units.
This workshop-based nonfiction course is suitable for any student who wants to work on long-form (1500 words and up) journalistic projects. To supplement our workshop submissions, we’ll look at a variety of texts touching on (and often combining) reporting on political, cultural, and environmental subjects. We’ll consider interviewing techniques and profile writing, as well works concerned with travel (of the non-touristic kind), sports, crime, politics, and the arts. We’ll read pieces by the likes of Katherine Boo, Eula Biss, Matthew Power, Ryszard Kapuchinski, Rivka Galchen, Jia Tolentino, Ted Conover, Alex Mar, and Ta-Nehisi Coates. The emphasis of the course will be on written narrative journalism, but other approaches and mediums will be welcomed. Ideally, students will come into the course with projects already in mind, but we will also work on developing stories and pitches and talk about navigating the print, online, and new media landscapes.
Instructor(s): Will Boast Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 44007
CRWR 24013. Advanced Nonfiction Workshop: The Great American Essay. 100 Units.
This course aims to expand the writers' understanding of the genre and broaden their skillset by reading, discussing, responding to and challenging the notion of one cohesive and unquestionable nonfiction canon as we examine the birth and evolution of the cisatlantic essay in all its forms. From the Popol Vuh to the political mural, from the manifesto to the Facebook post, from Tecayehuatzin's elegy for the city that fell to the Spaniards in 1524 to Torrey Peters Facebook elegy for all the transgender people who fell prey to violence and indifference in 2016. Examining the development of the essay within the contained cisatlantic space will allow for, not merely, a focused dissection of what are sometimes termed the foundational elements of the genre, but also a close examination of the development of a literary identity throughout the Americas, and of the concept of Americanness throughout the cisatlantic canon. What did literary nonfiction mean to the earliest American literature? What does 'America' mean to essayists writing at the borders of countries, and the edges of society? What makes the great American essay great and what American? Students will be expected to read and discuss a broad array of cisatlantic nonfiction, respond to prompts crafted around these readings, and then to make their own contribution to this strange and defiant corner of the literary world.
Instructor(s): Lina Ferreira Cabeza-Vanegas Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 44013

CRWR 24014. Advanced Nonfiction Workshop: The Performative Essay. 100 Units.
The advantage of working within a non-genre is best understood as a spatial metaphor: the house of fiction has kicked us out, but so what? That only means we are free to roam a limitless landscape, mingling with other genres and establishing new traditions. In recent years publishers have begun to recognize that nonfiction writers are necessarily hybrid creatures, and as a result we are witnessing an explosion of exciting books that challenge our impulse to categorize literature. To name a few pioneers: Claudia Rankine, Joe Wenderoth, Anne Carson, Solmaz Sharif, and Jenny Boully. In this course, students will close read a variety of works that dissolve the lines between poetry and prose and visual art, exploring what is becoming known as 'the performative essay.' Our aim will be simple: to playfully experiment with innovative sources of narrative momentum each week, and to share our original hybrid works for energetic workshop discussions. A revision of the workshop essay, along with a critical essay on a reading of your choosing, will be turned in at the end of the quarter.
Instructor(s): Dina Peone Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 44014

CRWR 24015. Advanced Nonfiction Workshop: Inventing the Essay. 100 Units.
The essay is being radically invented, again, as new forms and technologies emerge day by day. In this workshop, students will help to build a curriculum of exciting new creations - podcasts, graphic essays, video essays, online formats following swipes or links, Instagram essays, photoessays, and also conceptual timebound essays like experiences, walks, and installations. Students will be free to create and be workshopped in any of these forms as well as in works of print on paper. We'll explore these new forms side by side with some great inventors in the history of the form: Valeria Luiselli, James Baldwin, Virginia Woolf, Michel de Montaigne, and Shen Gua (sometimes rendered Shen Kuo). We'll be looking to see how new forms and new technologies grow up together, giving a historical background by looking at moveable type and encyclopedism in Shen Gua's thought, the printing press and Montaigne, the relationship of diaries, letters, and essays in Woolf, the long form magazine piece of the 1960s and James Baldwin, internet research and Luiselli's Tell Me How It Ends. Students will be workshopped twice, and revise their work of the quarter for a final project.
Instructor(s): Rachel Cohen Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 44015
CRWR 24016. Advanced Nonfiction Workshop: Other People’s Stories. 100 Units.

Between the autopsical facts of science writing and the adaptations, novelizations and based-on-true-story stories, lies a very specific type of writing. The creative nonfiction exploration of the recounted lives of others. From Solzhenitsyn’s ‘Gulag Archipelago,’ to Brian Doyle’s ‘Thirsty for the Joy,’ from John Hershey’s ‘Hiroshima’ and Art Spiegelman’s ‘Mouse’ to Rebecca Skloot’s ‘The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks,’ the world of nonfiction writing is rife with second, third and four hand stories in which the essayist must learn to negotiate the researched history of people and places, with the imagined mind of these people moving across equally imaginary spaces. How do we believably and respectfully tell others’ stories? How do we learn to find them? How do we draw these stories out, jot them down? How do we know when to make them our own and when to leave them in the liminal space of another’s inaccessible and inimitable experience? Where is the line between imaginative nonfiction and imaginary tales? This course is designed to tackle these specific questions through workshops of student work, writing prompts and guided discussions of assigned texts that attempt to unravel this very matter through numerous and varied approaches.

Instructor(s): Lina Ferreira Cabeza-Vanegas Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 44016

CRWR 24017. Advanced Nonfiction Workshop: Culpability & Accusation. 100 Units.

Fiction writers say ‘If there’s no trouble, there’s no story’—an easier adage without the presumption of truth. This class will consider techniques for rendering ‘trouble’ in narrative nonfiction. How can we write about the wrongs of others—and the wrongs we ourselves have committed—in a way that makes for a compelling story and an ultimately likeable narrator? What makes a rendering of hate, abuse, indifference, ingratitude, or jealousy compelling or empathetic in the end? What techniques—of persona, characterization, humor, pacing, or form—might help us write honestly and generously at the same time? And when generosity is not our aim, what other vehicles of connection are available to us? Readings may include essays by Jo Ann Beard, Richard Rodriguez, Shalom Auslander, Jesmyn Ward, Bret Lott, Albert Goldbarth, and Ocean Vuong.

Instructor(s): Tina Post Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 44017

CRWR 29200. Thesis/Major Projects: Fiction. 100 Units.

This advanced fiction course is for BA and MA students writing a creative thesis or any advanced student working on a major fiction project. It is primarily a workshop, so please come to our first class with your project in progress (a story collection, a novel, or a novella), ready for you to discuss and to submit some part of for critique. As in any writing workshop, we will stress the fundamentals of craft like language, voice, and plot and character development, with an eye also on how to shape your work for the longer form you have chosen. And as a supplement to our workshops, we will have brief student presentations on the writing life: our literary influences, potential avenues towards publication, etc.

Instructor(s): Vu Tran, Rachel DeWoskin, Ling Ma, Augustus Rose, Julie Iromuanya, Stephanie Soileau Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Required for students working on BA or MA thesis in fiction, as well as students completing a minor portfolio in fiction. Instructor consent required. Submit writing sample via www.creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Note(s): Instructor consent required. Submit writing sample via www.creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 49200

CRWR 29300. Thesis/Major Projects: Poetry. 100 Units.

This course is an advanced seminar intended primarily for students writing a Creative BA or MA thesis, as well as Creative Writing Minors completing the portfolio. Because it is a thesis seminar, the course will focus on various ways of organizing larger poetic ‘projects.’ We will consider the poetic sequence, the chapbook, and the poetry collection as ways of extending the practice of poetry beyond the individual lyric text. We will also problematize the notion of broad poetic ‘projects,’ considering the consequences of imposing a predetermined conceptual framework on the elusive, spontaneous, and subversive act of lyric writing. Because this class is designed as a poetry workshop, your fellow students’ work will be the primary text over the course of the quarter.

Instructor(s): Srikanth Reddy Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Required for students working on a BA or MA thesis in poetry, as well as students completing a minor portfolio in poetry.
Note(s): Instructor consent required. Submit writing sample via www.creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 49300
CRWR 29400. Thesis/Major Projects: Nonfiction. 100 Units.
This course is for students writing a creative BA or MA thesis in nonfiction, as well as Creative Writing Minors completing the portfolio. If space allows I’ll also admit those who are working on a long piece of nonfiction on their own. It can be an extended essay, memoir, travelogue, literary journalism, or an interrelated collection thereof. It’s a workshop, so come to the first day of class with your work underway and ready to submit. You’ll edit your classmates’ writing as diligently as you edit your own. I focus on editing because writing is, in essence, rewriting. Only by learning to edit other people’s work will you gradually acquire the objectivity you need to skillfully edit your own. You’ll profit not only from the advice you receive, but from the advice you learn to give. I will teach you to teach each other and thus yourselves, preparing you for the real life of the writer outside the academy.

Instructor(s): Dan Raeburn; Lina Ferreira Cabeza-Vanegas Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Required for students working on the BA/MA thesis in creative nonfiction, as well as Creative Writing Minors completing the portfolio in nonfiction. Instructor consent required. Submit writing sample via www.creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Note(s): Instructor consent required. Submit writing sample via www.creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 49400