Creative Writing

Department Website: http://creativewriting.uchicago.edu

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 is committed to interdisciplinary inquiry, academic rigor, and study of the elements of creative writing that underlie all genres.

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 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 minor in English and Creative Writing, which is open to undergraduate students outside those two major programs. Students who do not wish to pursue a formal degree plan 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 graduate numbers and are 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 in fiction, poetry, or nonfiction.

The organization of the major recognizes the value of workshop courses but incorporates that model into a comprehensive educational architecture. The creative writing major 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. Students are prepared to succeed in a range of fields within the public and private sectors through a multi-faceted, forward-thinking pedagogy centered on peer critique and craft.

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 toward major requirements, but they offer an opportunity for students to consider 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

Fundamentals in Creative Writing 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 courses are restricted to students who have declared the major, as they 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 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; Hybrid: CRWR 20701 to CRWR 20799

Students in the major must take two technical seminars in their primary genre (fiction, poetry, or nonfiction); during some quarters, the program may also offer hybrid technical seminars. Majors may petition to substitute one technical seminar in their primary genre with a technical seminar in a different genre, or with a hybrid technical seminar. Students should reach out to the director of undergraduate studies or student affairs administrator with questions on this petition process or hybrid technical seminars.

The aim of technical 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." Technical seminars may also count as electives in the minor. Majors should take either a fundamentals 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; Hybrid: CRWR 27300 to 27499

Students in the major must complete three advanced workshops, at least two of which must be in the student's primary genre. Majors may petition to substitute one advanced workshop in their primary genre with a hybrid advanced workshop when applicable. Students should reach out to the director of undergraduate studies or student affairs administrator with questions on this petition process or hybrid advanced workshops.

The advanced workshop is a critical pedagogical instrument of creative writing as an academic discipline. Workshop practice relies on a mutual exchange and understanding dedicated to improving students' writing, rather than 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.

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 language and literature 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. The student affairs administrator provides majors the program's research background elective petition form. Students must send completed petition forms to the director of undergraduate studies for approval. Completed petition forms include the name and description of the course under consideration and a brief statement from the student on how said course informs their thesis work. Once petitions are approved by the director of undergraduate studies, majors must provide documentation of this degree progress to their academic advisors. 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 theses/projects throughout their fourth year. In Spring Quarter of the third year, students will be assigned a writing and research advisor who will mentor student reading and research throughout the completion of the creative writing thesis. Students, in conversation with the writing and research advisors, will complete a preliminary project proposal during the Spring Quarter of their third year. The preliminary proposal will then be submitted to the student affairs administrator.

Over the Summer Quarter students will craft a reading journal centered on a field list of readings; chosen texts will be based upon work, conversations, etc., students will have begun with their writing and research advisors. In Autumn Quarter, students and writing and research advisors will work together to adapt the reading journal into an annotated bibliography, a focus reading list, and a précis/project plan (summary of student writing plan and goals for the BA thesis/project).

In Winter Quarter, students will continue meeting with their writing and research advisor and must also enroll in the appropriate thesis/major projects workshop in their primary genre (CRWR 29200 Thesis/Major Projects: Fiction, CRWR 29300 Thesis/Major Projects: Poetry, CRWR 29400 Thesis/Major Projects: Nonfiction, or CRWR 29500 Thesis/Major Projects: Fiction/Nonfiction). The thesis/major projects workshop is mandatory and only offered during Winter Quarter.
Students are not automatically enrolled in a workshop; they must apply for a spot by the course application deadline set by the program. The instructor for the thesis/major projects workshop will also serve as the faculty advisor for the BA thesis. Students should be aware that because of the high number of students writing fiction for their BA thesis, students will not necessarily get their first choice of faculty advisor.

Students will work closely with their faculty advisor and peers in their thesis/major projects workshop and will receive course credit as well as a final grade for the course. In consultation with their faculty advisor and writing and research advisor, students will revise and submit a near-final draft of the BA thesis by the end of the second week of Spring Quarter. Students will submit the final version of their BA thesis to their writing and research advisor, 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 will award program honors based on their assessment of BA theses and the assessment of writing and research advisors. Students must complete all assignments set by writing and research advisors to be considered for honors. 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>Credit</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>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Units</strong></td>
<td><strong>1300</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 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. To declare the major and receive priority in application-based CRWR courses, students must meet with the director of undergraduate studies or student affairs administrator to file a major worksheet with the Program in Creative Writing. Declaration of the major will then be formalized through my.uchicago.edu (http://my.uchicago.edu/).

To join the major, students must officially declare via a worksheet on file with the program before the end of Autumn Quarter of the third year of study. Students will need to regularly provide documentation of any approvals for the major to their academic advisors.

**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 to meet a literature requirement.

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

Students who pursue a double major in creative writing and English language and literature, may count up to four courses towards both majors. These four courses 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 required research background electives should be taken outside of the Department of English Language and Literature.
English language and literature majors 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. Double majors must then count any eligible creative writing courses beyond the four-course cap towards their English language and literature major.

**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 pass/fail grading with consent of the 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fundamentals in Creative Writing</th>
<th>100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 17000 Fundamentals in Creative Writing: Literary Empathy</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical Seminars</th>
<th>200</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 20302 Technical Seminar in Poetry: Units of Composition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 20301 Technical Seminar in Poetry: Manifestos, Movements, Modes</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advanced Workshops</th>
<th>300</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 23113 Advanced Poetry Workshop: Waste, Surplus, Reuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 23100 Advanced Poetry Workshop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 10306 Beginning Poetry Workshop</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature Requirements</th>
<th>400</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 10403 Genre Fundamentals: Poetry: Rhythm and Myth *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 17515 Seventeenth-Century Verse **</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 22903 Literature of the City: Between Utopia and Dystopia, Design and Occupation ***</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 28614 Contemporary Latina/o Poetry</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Electives</th>
<th>200</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CMST 14503 Cinema in Theory and Practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTV 22502 Data and Algorithm in Art</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BA Workshop</th>
<th>100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 29300 Thesis/Major Projects: Poetry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Units                      | 1300 |

+ Beginning Workshop is eligible because it meets the conditions outlined in the program requirements (above).
* Satisfies literary genre requirement (LG)
** Satisfies pre-20th century literary requirement (LC)
*** Satisfies literary theory requirement (LT)

**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; these courses may include technical seminars or arts general education courses. General education courses cannot be used for the minor if they are already counted toward the general education requirement in the arts. In some cases, literature courses outside of English language and literature 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 academic advisor on the Consent to Complete a Minor Program (https://humanities-web.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/college-prod/s3fs-public/documents/Consent_Minor_Program.pdf) form, available from the College adviser or online, 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 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 double 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 pass/fail) and bear University of Chicago course numbers.

### SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MINOR PROGRAM IN ENGLISH AND CREATIVE WRITING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two CRWR workshop courses</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three CRWR or ENGL electives</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Thesis/Major Projects Workshop</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A portfolio of the student’s work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Units</strong></td>
<td><strong>600</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 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 a fundamentals course may count as well. The thesis/major projects workshop is mandatory for both minors and majors. Students should consult with their academic advisor 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</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 10206</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning Fiction Workshop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 22110</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Fiction Workshop: Exploring Your Boundaries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 10706</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Fiction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 16550</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shakespeare’s History Plays</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 24554</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mysticism and Modernity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRWR 29200</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis/Major Projects: Fiction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A portfolio of the student’s work (two short stories)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Units</strong></td>
<td><strong>600</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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, the minor, and the Creative Writing Option of the Master of Arts Program in the Humanities (MAFH). 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.

With the exception of Autumn Quarter, applications for consent-only courses must be received by the Friday of seventh week of each quarter. Below are the dates for the 2021–2022 academic year:

- Applications for Autumn Quarter: September, 3. 2021
- Winter Quarter: November 12, 2021
- Spring Quarter: February 18, 2022

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. They are 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 the creative writing minor’s elective requirements.

**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, in order to build a culture of exchange, and induct students into a reflection on practice that will service their artistic and professional development. They are 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 technical 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.
(Course Subtitle: Writing Identity) What is the role of the self in our writing? Are we known or made things, even to ourselves, in our work? This workshop focuses on writing and revising poems that capture the nuances of our often-intersectional identities, centering the questions: How is my work representative of me, and Who is the person represented in my work? Throughout the quarter, we will read, write, and discuss contemporary poems dealing with issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, and cultural background, etc., and develop strategies for addressing similar ideas in our own work. Throughout the quarter, you will learn through practice, writing drafts that engage with craft elements like imagery, form, rhythm, and voice. We will workshop these drafts as a class, building a supportive, process-oriented community that focuses on creative and critical feedback. By the end of the quarter, you will revise your work into a cumulative portfolio, and will be able to articulate your own work's place in the landscape of contemporary poetry. While fellow students' work will be the primary texts, other possible readings include work by Cortney Lamar Charleston, Su Cho, Tarfia Faizullah, Nikky Finney, Dorothy Chan, torrin a. greathouse, Jillian Weise, and others.
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.
(Course Subtitle: Narrative, Lyrical & Confessional Truths) Creative nonfiction is an often difficult to define genre. Frequently caught up in ontological and political controversies, and perpetually torn between allegiances to journalism, science, philosophy, and art. This course will serve as a brief introduction into the genre by focusing on its history, primary influences and some of the major subgenres which compose it today. From the lyrical, narrative and hybrid, to science writing, reportage, the memoir and even illustrated journalism straight from warzones. This will be accomplished through reading, lectures, discussions, and guided writing prompts.
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 10606. Beginning Translation Workshop. 100 Units.
This workshop will expose beginning translators to the fundamental issues and challenges of literary translation. Over the course of ten weeks, we will explore the various categories of decisions that translators routinely encounter when assigning an English to a literary text originally written in another language, including social register, dialect, and dialogue; cultural and historical contextual cues; sound patterns, meter and rhythm; humor and word play; stylistic constraints and genre conventions. Moreover, we will examine the range of strategies available to translators, including theoretical approaches to domesticating and foreignizing works of literature. Readings will combine literary texts (both written in and translated into English), craft essays, as well as a few foundational texts in the field of translation studies. Students will complete weekly writing exercises, building to the translation of either a short piece of fiction or selection of poems. To participate in this class, students should have intermediate proficiency in a foreign language.
Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Spring Winter
Prerequisite(s): Open bid through my.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory. To participate in this class, students should have intermediate proficiency in a foreign language. Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 30606

CRWR 12125. Reading as a Writer: From Page to Film. 100 Units.
We often say of film adaptations: it's not as good as the book. But what can we, as readers and writers, learn from that unsuccessful transition to the screen? And more intriguingly, what can we learn from the successful ones, the films that are just as good if not better than the original written work-or so vastly different that they become their own entity? In this class, we will be reading works of short fiction and also 'reading' their film adaptations, focusing on this relationship between storytelling on the page and storytelling on the screen and what is both lost and gained in that transition. If filmmaking requires a different language than fiction writing, a different approach to things like character, plot, atmosphere, even thematic development, what can we learn from that approach that we can apply to our own fiction, even if we have no interest in making films? We'll investigate this question in the work of writers like James Joyce, Andre Dubus, and Stephen King, and filmmakers like Hitchcock, Huston, and Wilder.
Instructor(s): Vu Tran Terms Offered: Spring
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 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. 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 12143. Reading as a Writer: Embodied Language. 100 Units.
This course studies how writers engage the senses to shape language into something actually felt and not just comprehended. We'll track the sensual life of words—what they do to the mouth, to the ear, their musical kinships with one another—and learn how these qualities combine to generate mood and atmosphere. Alongside writing that renders embodiment and the physical world, we'll read writing that makes abstraction feel concrete. Our reading will guide our ongoing inquiry into questions such as: what constitutes an image? How does writing enact feeling? How do the sensory elements of a piece intensify or erode or expand its subject, and to what end? Case studies may include poetry and prose by Bashō, Sei Shōnagon, Homer, John Keats, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Jean Toomer, D. H. Lawrence, Lorine Niedecker, Gwendolyn Brooks, James Baldwin, Sylvia Plath, Al, Elaine Scarry, Wanda Coleman, Toni Morrison, Hai-Dang Phan, Nathaniel Mackey, Durga Chew-Bose, Justin Torres, and Jenny Zhang. These writers will provide inspiration for your own creative experiments on the page. Students will be asked to lead one presentation during the quarter and to write short weekly pieces to extend the group discussion.

Instructor(s): Margaret Ross Terms Offered: Autumn Spring

CRWR 12144. Intro to Genres: Elegy. 100 Units.
How does language perform and represent mourning? How should writing commemorate the dead? Can an elegy address the full complexity of a person, resisting hagiography? We'll begin our investigation of elegy by looking briefly at its Classical origins, reading examples by Catullus, Sappho, and Ovid, among others, and considering the early life of elegy as a poetic form not necessarily related to death and lament. We'll then turn our attention toward a range of modern and contemporary interpretations of the elegy, spanning fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Readings may include works by Virginia Woolf, Paul Celan, Jamaica Kincaid, Raúl Zurita, Samuel Delany, Federico García Lorca, Allen Ginsberg, Brandon Shimoda, Alice Oswald, Isaac Babel, and Solmaz Sharif. As we read, we'll pay particular attention to literary structures and devices writers use to manifest absence and incarnate the dead in the body of a text. Students will be asked to lead one presentation and to write weekly creative and/or critical responses for group discussion.

Instructor(s): Margaret Ross Terms Offered: Winter

CRWR 12145. Reading as a Writer: Re-Vision. 100 Units.
To revise a piece of writing isn't merely to polish it. Revision is transformation and yields an alternate reality. A new view, a re-vision. This course will examine the radical potential of revision, drawing case studies from a range of writers such as Marguerite Duras, Jorge Luis Borges, Elizabeth Bishop, Dionne Brand, Li-Young Lee, Janet Malcolm, Lydia Davis, Terrance Hayes, Yi-yun Li, francine j. harris, Bhanu Kapil, Shane McCrae, and Chase Berggrun. We'll start by tracking compositional process, looking at brilliant and disastrous drafts to compare the aesthetic and political consequences of different choices on the page. We'll then study poems, essays, and stories that refute themselves and self-revise as they unfold, dramatizing mixed feelings and changing minds. We'll end by considering erasure poetry as a form of critical revision. Our conversations will inspire weekly writing exercises and invite you to experiment with various creative revision strategies. Students will be asked to lead one presentation and to share their writing for group discussion.

Instructor(s): Margaret Ross Terms Offered: Autumn Spring

CRWR 12146. London vs. Nature: Writing Utopia and Dystopia in the Urban Landscape [Creative Writing Arts Core: R. 100 Units.
In this Arts Core course, students will be introduced to a range of the utopian and dystopian fantasies that writers have produced in response to the metropolis of London as the imperial epicenter of manufactured ecologies, from the late nineteenth century through the present day. They will study early responses to modernism and modernization in the city by figures like William Blake, Frederick Engels, Henry James, Ezra Pound, and Virginia Woolf before moving on to contemporary writers such as R. Murray Schafer, who apprehends the city through “earwitnessing” of noise pollution, and Bhanu Kapil, who recalls the race riots of the 1970s against the backdrop of the Nestle factory on the site of King Henry VIII’s hunting grounds. Students will be exposed first-hand to how London is read by writers confronting planetary and political crisis through meetings with living publishers, authors, and art collectives like the Museum of Walking, grappling with the continual metamorphosis of the landscape—and through a sequence of on-site visits and psychogeographical experiments, they will have the opportunity to respond to the city in their own writing across a range of genres. (Arts Core)
CRWR 12148. Intro to Genres: Speculative Women. 100 Units.
Despite common misconceptions women have been at the forefront of the speculative genre from its earliest inceptions. Not merely defying the limitations and restraints of literature as defined by their contemporary society', but inventing whole worlds and genres which continue to influence writers and writing as a whole today. Mary Shelley’s 1818 publication of Frankenstein, to Virginia Woolf's 1928's publication of Orlando, and even Margaret Cavendish’s 1666’s novel, "The Description of a New World, Called The Blazing-World. This course will be a brief foray into the strange and yet familiar worlds of various women across the history of speculative writing. From Mary Shelley to Ursula K. Leguin, from Lady Cavendish to Margaret Atwood, from Alice Walker to Octavia E. Butler.

Instructor(s): Lina Ferreira Cabeza-Vanegas 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.
Note(s): Satisfies the College Arts/Music/Drama Core requirement.
Equivalent Course(s): GNSE 22148

CRWR 17003. Fundamentals in Creative Writing: Truth. 100 Units.
In this course students will study how writers define and make use of truth--whatever that is. In some cases it's the truth, singular; in others a truth, only one among many. Some writers tell it straight, others slant. Some, like Tim O'Brien, advocate story-truth, the idea that fiction tells deeper truths than facts. To get at the heart of these questions, participants will develop their own individual and collaborative creative responses to "the Paris of the Midwest."

Instructor(s): Dan Raeburn Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): This is class is restricted to students who have declared a major in Creative Writing. Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.

CRWR 17004. Fundamentals in Creative Writing: High School Reading. 100 Units.
We all know them-The Great Gatsby, The Lord of the Flies, The Bell Jar, and other books that seem to have been taught or read in every high school in the country since the dawn of time. In this cross-genre Fundamentals course, we'll re-examine these and works by the likes of Henry Miller, Sandra Cisneros, Allen Ginsberg, and Zora Neale Hurston. We'll think about the cultural history of what makes a classic high school read, about coming-
of-age stories, and what it means to be educated, enlightened, and/or entertained. We'll think, too, about how we learn to read, write, and speak back to texts as adults (whatever that means). You'll write creative exercises, critical responses, and a final paper on a work of your choosing.

Instructor(s): Will Boast Terms Offered: Autumn
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 17012. Fundamentals in Creative Writing: Creative Research/The Numinous Particulars. 100 Units.

According to Philip Gerard, "Creative research is both a process and a habit of mind, an alertness to the human story as it lurks in unlikely places." Creative writers may lean on research to sharpen the authenticity of their work; to liberate themselves from the confines of their personal experience; to mine existing stories and histories for details, plot, settings, characters; to generate new ideas and approaches to language, theme and story. The creative writer/researcher is on the hunt for the numinous particulars, the mysteries and human stories lurking in the finest grains of detail. In this course, we will explore the research methods used by creative writers and consider questions that range from the logistical (eg. How do I find what I need in an archive?) to the ethical (eg. How do I conscientiously write from a point of view outside my own experience?) to the aesthetic (eg. How do I incorporate all these researched details without waterlogging the poem/story/essay?). We will read poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction that relies heavily on research and hear from established writers about the challenges of conducting and writing from research. Assignments will include reading responses, creative writing and research exercises, short essays and presentations.

Instructor(s): Stephanie Soileau Terms Offered: Autumn
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 20221. 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/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 narrator 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: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.

Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40220

CRWR 20220. Technical Seminar in Fiction: Sentences. 100 Units.

Accuracy," according to Mexican novelist Yuri Herrera, "does not mean hitting something on the wall. Rather, one creates the target as the dart is thrown." Style, writers know, does not adorn stories; it builds them. In workshop, we may find it easier to discuss other things-we rightly speak of scenes, point of view, or plot—yet everything that happens in fiction still happens in sentences. In this seminar, we will explore the difficulties both of discussing sentence style and of developing it. After an introduction to some useful concepts in the history and description of sentences, we'll turn to reading and imitating noted stylists such as William Faulkner and Jamaica Kincaid, finding in each writer's sentences the grain of their politics, epistemology, and approach to story. And in the last part of the course students will submit their own exploration of sentence style, whether creative or analytic, to sharpen our knowledge of style's powers.

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

Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40221

CRWR 20221. Technical Seminar in Fiction: Detail. 100 Units.

John Gardner said that the writer's task is to create "a vivid and continuous fictional dream." This technical seminar will focus on the role of detail in maintaining this dream. In this course we will deconstruct and rebuild our understanding of concepts like simile, showing vs. telling, and symbolism, asking what these tools do and what purpose they serve. Drawing from fiction and essays from Ottessa Moshfegh, Barbara Comyns, Zadie Smith, and others, students will practice noticing, seeing anew, and finding fresh and unexpected ways of describing. We will also examine what is worthy of detail in the first place, how detail functions outside of traditional scene, and the merits and limits of specificity, mimesis, and verisimilitude. Finally we will consider what it means to travel across a landscape of vagueness and euphemism as we search for the quality of "thiness" that James Wood claims all great details possess. In addition to assigned readings, students will be responsible for reading responses, short craft analyses, vigorous class participation, and several creative exercises and peer critiques applying these lessons.
In her seminal essay "On Being Ill," Virginia Woolf writes, "Literature does its best to maintain that its concern is with the mind; that the body is a sheet of plain glass through which the soul looks straight and clear." On that end, we will study how and why writers implement flashbacks, flash forwards, memories, jump cuts, and repeating scenerios, among other techniques. We will look at both straightforwardly chronological and intuitively nonchronological timelines, and discuss how different temporal approaches create different stories. Readings may include works by Roberto Bolano, Lauren Groff, and William Maxwell. In addition, please come to class prepared to engage with creative exercises.

CRWR 20223. Technical Seminar in Fiction: Temporality. 100 Units.
Time is a created thing," according to Lao Tzu. In this course, we will look at how fiction writers "create" the sense of time in their stories, and how they grapple with temporality as an organizing narrative force. To that end, we will study how and why writers implement flashbacks, flash forwards, memories, jump cuts, and repeating scenerios, among other techniques. We will look at both straightforwardly chronological and intuitively nonchronological timelines, and discuss how different temporal approaches create different stories. Readings may include works by Roberto Bolano, Lauren Groff, and William Maxwell. In addition, please come to class prepared to engage with creative exercises.

Instructor(s): Benjamin Hoffman Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40222

CRWR 20224. Technical Seminar in Fiction: Narrative Tempo. 100 Units.
"At certain moments," writes Italo Calvino of his early literary efforts, "I felt that the entire world was turning into stone." Slowness and speed govern not just the experience of writing but also the texture of our fictional worlds. And this is something we can control. Sublimely slow writers like Sebald or Duras can make time melt; spritely magicians like Bulgakov and Rushdie seem to shuffle planes of reality with a snap of their fingers. This seminar gathers fictions that pulse on eclectic wavelengths, asking in each case how narrative tempo embodies a fiction's character. Our exercises will play with the dial of compositional speed, testing writing quick and slow; alternately, we'll try to recreate the effects of signature texts. Weekly creative and critical responses will culminate in a final creative / analytical 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 40223

CRWR 20226. Technical Seminar in Fiction: Beginnings. 100 Units.
This technical seminar will investigate the purposes and possibilities of beginnings in fiction. Students will read opening lines, paragraphs, pages, and occasionally chapters, from Aimee Bender, Miranda July, Dorthie Nors, Kobe Abe, and others, asking: what work do these beginnings do-and why, to what end? Of course, this means we will also read the stories that follow, to analyze these introductions in the framework of their narratives. How do openings guide—or mislead—the reader? How should they balance introduction and momentum? How do they orient us, not only to character, setting, and conflict, but also to elements like tone and sensibility, to a story's own sense of itself? What archetypes or common "moves" can we identify and use? What are the implications and meanings of beginnings—of starting in a particular place and way, when a story might very well start in any number of places? And how do such authorial decisions ripple through the story? Students will be responsible for reading responses, short craft analyses, vigorous class participation, and several creative exercises putting what they learn into practice.

Instructor(s): Benjamin Lytal Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 40224

CRWR 20227. Technical Seminar in Fiction: Reading and Writing the Body. 100 Units.
In her seminal essay "On Being Ill," Virginia Woolf writes, "Literature does its best to maintain that its concern is with the mind; that the body is a sheet of plain glass through which the soul looks straight and clear. […] On
the contrary, the very opposite is true. All day, all night the body intervenes.” This seminar will actively examine these bodily interventions in writing, and explore the merits of engaging deeply and precisely with the taboo subjects of sex, aging, illness, bodily change, and bodily difference. We will also discuss the concept of embodied writing—and the embodiment of physical experience through writing—using the body-centered prose of Bruno Schulz, Annie Ernaux, Rebecca Brown, Yasunari Kawabata, Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore, and other writers. Assignments will include short critical and creative responses, a presentation, and a critical essay.

Instructor(s): Meghan Lamb
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 20309

CRWR 20410. Technical Seminar in Nonfiction: Epistolary Form. 100 Units.
This reading and writing seminar will focus on works of literature that have found shape and substance via documents such as letters, diary entries, newspaper clippings, legal documents, medical records, and more. Students will analyze the causes and effects of the archival impulse on various craft elements, including: dramatic pacing, narrative persona, structure, and theme. Students will conduct independent research according to the genre of their choosing (from memoirs to novels and poems) and write short critical reading reports throughout the quarter. All the while, students will compose and/or compile their own archival materials for creative experiments that test the limits and possibilities of the craft.

Instructor(s): Dina Peone
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 20410

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 preparing 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. We will also have the opportunity to have conversations via Zoom with some of the translators we’ll be reading. 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
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu (include writing sample). Attendance on the first day is mandatory. 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.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 41502
CRWR 22110. Advanced Fiction Workshop: Exploring Your Boundaries. 100 Units.
What natural and artificial boundaries do we impose on ourselves as writers? Are those boundaries clarifying or limiting? How might we push beyond them to more effectively tell the stories we need to tell? This workshop-based course will focus on these questions and ask you to expand the formal and also emotional, thematic, and aesthetic possibilities in your fiction. To that end, we’ll read the work of writers who offer distinct visions of the world through innovative storytelling approaches, and we’ll examine how their risk-taking might be as personal as it is literary—an encouragement for you not necessarily to be “experimental” writers, but to explore more meaningful, honest, and expansive ways of telling your own stories. For the course, you will do writing exercises and weekly reading responses, as well as workshop one full-length story that attempts an approach in form or content that you have not tried before in your fiction.
Instructor(s): Ling Ma Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 42110

CRWR 22128. Advanced Fiction Workshop: Novel Writing, The First Chapters. 100 Units.
In this workshop-focused class we will focus on the early stages of both developing and writing a novel: choosing the POVs, establishing the setting, developing the main characters and the dynamics between them, setting up the conflicts and seeding the themes of book, etc. As a class we will read, break down and discuss the architecture of the openings of several published novels as you work on your own opening chapters, which will be workshopped during the course.
Instructor(s): Augustus Rose Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu (include writing sample).
Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 42128

CRWR 22133. Advanced Fiction Workshop: Writing the Uncanny. 100 Units.
Sigmund Freud defines "the uncanny" ("unheimlich") as something that unnerves us because it is both familiar and alien at the same time, the result of hidden anxieties and desires coming to the surface. In this advanced fiction workshop, we will explore how fiction writers use the uncanny to create suspense, lend their characters psychological depth, thrill and terrify their readers, and lay bare the darkest and most difficult human impulses. We will read and discuss fiction by writers like Shirley Jackson, Jamaica Kincaid, Octavia Butler, Kelly Link, Ben Okri, Haruki Murakami, and Victor Lavalle, drawing craft lessons from these writers to guide our own attempts at writing the uncanny. Much of our class time will be dedicated to evaluating student work and honing our skills of composition and critique. In addition to shorter writing exercises and "mini-workshops" throughout the quarter, every student will complete a full-length "uncanny" short story for workshop and compose critique letters for each of their peers. Students will be required to significantly revise their full-length short story by the end of the quarter.
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 42133

CRWR 22134. Advanced Fiction Workshop: Cultivating Trouble and Conflict. 100 Units.
If you want a compelling story, put your protagonist among the damned.” –Charles Baxter While crisis is to be avoided in life, when it comes to narrative, trouble is your friend. In this advanced workshop we’ll explore the complex ways writers create conflict in their stories, be it internal or external, spiritual or physical, romantic, financial or familial. We’ll read masters of the form like Edward P. Jones, George Saunders, ZZ Packer, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Yiyun Li, and discuss how they generate conflict that feels organic, character-driven, and inevitable. Weekly writing exercises will encourage you to take creative risks and hone new skills. Each student will workshop two stories, with strong emphasis on focused and productive peer critique and in-class commentary.
Instructor(s): Sharon Pomerantz Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 42134

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 Chiang, 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.
Creative Writing

Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 42142

CRWR 22146. Advanced Fiction Workshop: Disruption and Disorder. 100 Units.
This workshop-based course proceeds from the premise that disorder and disruption are fruitful aesthetics that might be applied to numerous elements of fiction to unlock new possibilities in our work. Students will seek to identify typical narrative conventions and lyrical patterns and then write away from them—or write over them, toward subversion, surprise, and perhaps even a productive anarchy. In the first half of the course, students will search for hidden structures in work by Mary Gaitskill, Dennis Johnson, Taeko Kono, A.M. Homes, Lydia Davis, and Diane Williams, examining the methods these writers use to lead readers to unexpected, original, and transgressive places. Students will complete several short creative exercises in which they practice disruption and disorder in plot, pace, dialogue, and syntax. In the second half of the course, students will workshop one story or excerpt and write thoughtful, constructive critiques of peer work. Revision is also a crucial component of this class, as it is an opportunity to radically warp and deviate from our prior visions. Throughout the quarter, we will attempt to interrupt and shake up our own inclinations as artists.
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 42146

CRWR 22147. Advanced Fiction Workshop: Dangerous Historical Fiction. 100 Units.
In this advanced fiction workshop, students will read and research “dangerous” and/or banned literature, and work to write short stories or chapters from longer works of fiction that address complex social, personal, and/or historical moments. What makes art dangerous? Banned books from Baldwin’s Go Tell it on the Mountain to Chopin’s The Awakening and Morrison’s Beloved will guide our conversation as we consider the crucial relationship between literature and context, writer and interlocutor, research and imagination. We will attend UChicago’s American premiere of the banned, never-before produced opera, Kormgold’s opera Die Kathrin in April 2022.*
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 42147

CRWR 22148. Advanced Fiction Workshop: Learning from Literature in Translation. 100 Units.
This class workshops original student fiction in the context of stimulating new work from outside English. Each week we will read a different author in translation and seek to define those technical qualities that make their fiction at once strange and instructive: jagged compression in Fleur Jaeggy, persona performance in Can Xue, improvisational procedure in César Aira. We’ll touch on different models of world literature-as markets, as centers and peripheries, as national traditions—and discuss questions of translation. Once during the quarter students will be asked to either translate a short passage from recent fiction in a language of their choice or to write a direct imitation of one of the translated authors we’ve read. While reading these authors and pondering the nature of cross-linguistic influence, you will write and workshop two original stories or novel chapters.
Instructor(s): Benjamin Lytal Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 42148

CRWR 22149. Advanced Fiction Workshop: Long Stories. 100 Units.
The advantage, the luxury, as well as the torment and responsibility of the novelist,” writes Henry James, “is that there is no limit to what he may attempt.” Writers interested in these torments and responsibilities can begin to experiment with long form in this workshop. Each student will compose a single long story of about forty pages. We’ll attend to the freshness of beginnings, the satisfactions (and compromises) of endings and, most acutely, to the crises of middles. A scaffolding of workshops, outlines, and conferences will support and structure your efforts. Along the way we’ll catalog the classic problems of long-form composition with examples from the likes of Alice Munro, Katherine Anne Porter, Franz Kafka, or John Keene.
Instructor(s): Benjamin Lytal Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 42149

CRWR 22150. Advanced Fiction Workshop: Radical Revision. 100 Units.
Like so many essential and life-sustaining processes—relationship maintenance, money management, digestion—revision is something we often talk about without “really” talking about it (to use the words of writer Matthew Salesses). Yet by refusing (or failing) to “really” talk about revision, writers deny themselves the opportunity to actively engage with the potentialities of their work: the different shapes, forms, and shifts it might take. In this class, we will demystify the revision process by analyzing the works of writers—such as Anna Kavan, Edwidge Danticat, and Suzanne Scanlon—who have pursued radical revisions to their projects, including expansions (short stories developed into novels), compressions (longer works condensed into shorter pieces), point of view changes, and dramatic stylistic transformations. With a combination of creative exercises and workshops, we will also work toward our own radical revisions.
CRWR 23113. Advanced Poetry Workshop: Waste, Surplus, Reuse. 100 Units.
What do poets do with surplus, with extras, leftovers, and other excesses of production? Is there a creative use to put them to? When viewed in the context of ecology and economy, what are the ethical dimensions of working with surplus? Or are there also ethics and aesthetics of the useless? With these guiding questions, this course will introduce students to methods for a creative approach to waste, and develop revision practices that draw on the reuse of material surplus. We will consider forms of excess (literary, artistic, economic, material, etc.) and their creative applications. We’ll examine diverse types of waste and things that “waste”, including literal trash, ruins, the body, time, the dream, and everyday texts (such as emails, text messages, rough drafts, conversations, and ephemeral media). Ultimately, this course will help students engage in the revision process. Reading may include A.R. Ammons’ Garbage, Eliot’s The Waste Land, Jen Bervin's Nets, Bernadette Mayer’s Midwinter Day, André Breton’s Mad Love, Joyelle McSweeney’s Dead Youth, or The Leaks, George Perec’s An Attempt at Exhausting a Place in Paris, and Shakespeare’s Sonnets.
Instructor(s): Nate 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 43113

CRWR 23123. Advanced Poetry Workshop: Form & Formlessness. 100 Units.
Wallace Stevens suggests that “The essential thing in form is to be free in whatever form is used.” How does form provide a kind of freedom for a poet? How does it manifest itself in a poem? Does it mean we have to follow prescribed rules, or is there a more intuitive approach? This course will give students a chance to try out a range of traditional and experimental forms, both as an attempt to improve as writers and in order to interrogate form and its other, what Bataille called the formless, or “unformed” (l’informe). We’ll explore traditional and contemporary takes on a variety of forms and modes, such as sonnets, odes, aphorisms, serial poems, and poetic collage. Readings may include a mix of poems and prose by Will Alexander, Joyelle McSweeney, Mark Leidner, Robert Hass, Aimé Césaire, Wallace Stevens, Dean Young, Yusef Komunyakaa, and Thylas Moss. Students should expect to write exercises, submit new poems, contribute feedback on peer work, write short response papers, and submit a final portfolio.
Instructor(s): Nathan Hoks Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu (include writing sample).
Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 43123

CRWR 23126. Advanced Poetry Workshop: Poetry and the Present Moment. 100 Units.
In this workshop we will tackle the problem of writing poetry in the present moment at a range of scales, thinking critically about our world’s obsession with the “contemporary.” At the grandest scale, we will ask what it means to write into the contemporary moment, one in which we seem to feel time fading with every status update and tweet, and one that demands embodied engagement-reading works that have been written recently, in dialogue with living authors. At the most intimate scale, we will consider how poetry can cultivate critical awareness of the present moment amidst forces that pull us with dopamine-induced promises and regrets into the future and past. How does poetry, with its odd ability to punctuate, syncopate, fragment, and suspend time, intervene in daily life and in the historical record? Authors for consideration will include Issa, Basho, Gertrude Stein, F.T. Marinetti, David Harvey, Cecilia Vicuna, Bernadette Mayer, Etel Adnan, Leslie Scalapino, Lyn Hejinian, Julie Patton, CA Conrad, Julian T. Brolaski, and Bhantu Kapil. Students will have the chance to experiment with different forms of attunement to the present, and will produce a daybook in tandem with a final “book” project that may take a range of forms.
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 43126

CRWR 23132. Advanced Poetry Workshop: Poets’ Prose. 100 Units.
Which one of us, in his moments of ambition, has not dreamed of the miracle of a poetic prose,” wrote Charles Baudelaire in Paris Spleen, “...supple enough and rugged enough to adapt itself to the lyrical impulses of the soul, the undulations of reverie, the jibes of conscience?” This genre-blurring workshop will explore elements of the history and practice of the prose poem, and other poems and texts that combine strategies, forms and gestures of prose (fiction, nonfiction, etc.) with those of poetry. We will also read texts that are difficult to classify in terms of genre. “Flash Fiction,” “Short Shorts,” the fable, the letter, the mini-essay, and the lyric essay will be examined, among others. We will discuss the literary usefulness (or lack of it) of genre and form labels. The class will be taught as a workshop: students will try their hand at writing in their choices of hybrid forms, and will be encouraged to experiment. Writers from all genres are welcome, as what we will be studying, discussing, and writing will involve the fruitful collision of literary genres.
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 43132

CRWR 23133. Advanced Poetry Workshop: Poets in Archives. 100 Units.
This course will examine how the historical archive can be a source for poetry writing, seeking to develop frameworks for interpreting the experiences that poets enact through archives. Deeper questions to be examined involve the relation between poetic form and historical knowledge; the relation between imagination and memory; between material histories and their inscription; between poets and their historical and biographical pasts; and between the critical and creative, the historical and biographical, and the exteriors and interiors of literature, history, myth, and politics. Because this is an advanced workshop, we will rely on mutual exchange dedicated to improving writing. Critique will therefore be our core activity, guided by our readings and professor instruction, but driven primarily by original student work and discussion.
Instructor(s): Edgar Garcia Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 43133

CRWR 24002. Advanced Nonfiction Workshop: Writing About the Arts. 100 Units.
This workshop will support students in developing useful practices and experimenting boldly. Working with recent technological transformations in the visual arts world, we'll be keeping art notebooks in different forms (by hand, photographs, blog, Instagram, collage). We'll begin with Walter Benjamin's classic essay about art and mechanical reproduction, and then work with some examples: 1. Virtually seen. Jennie C. Jones's show Constant Structure, hung at the Arts Club of Chicago via face time, with pamphlet-catalogue by poet and critic Fred Moten; 2. Unseen. Lori Waxman, long the art critic of the Chicago Tribune, and her pandemic 60 word / min art critic project in Newcity of art reviews for artists with canceled shows; 3. Explained / packaged. The Instagram feeds of museums; 4. Technological diary / memory methods. Looking back to T.J. Clarke's book of 2006 The Sight of Death: An Experiment in Art Writing, and to Teju Cole's Blind Spot, which uses his own photographs, and looking now at Instagram feeds of Cole and other art writers; 5. Collaborations. Artists working as collaborator-curators and self-interpreters, with reference to a recent Dawoud Bey show at the Art Institute and a Venice installation by Iris Kensmil and Remy Jungerman. Each class will begin with student-led observation. Students will visit, in-person or online, five installations / exhibitions / events, and be workshopped twice. Final work, revised essay and looking notebook.
Instructor(s): Rachel Cohen Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu (writing sample required). Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): ARTH 34002, ARTH 24002, CRWR 44002

CRWR 24009. Advanced Nonfiction Workshop: Writing Lives. 100 Units.
Certain lives catch and keep our attention - they seem magnetic, illustrative, confusing, broken off, revelatory. Sometimes we suspect that through studying a life we will be able to understand a scientific discovery, an artistic creation, a political issue or an historical period; sometimes we are drawn by the drama of the life the subject lived, or by the person's introspection or testimony. This is a course for students interested in writing lives - and might be of particular interest to a variety of students: creative writers from nonfiction, fiction, and playwriting with an interest in profiles, group portraits, documentary work, or historical meditation; graduate and undergraduate students of history, art, politics, medicine, or law who imagine one day writing a biography, or who are interested in oral history, portraits, medical narrative writing, testimony, case histories, or writing for general / magazine audiences. We'll work to learn methods and techniques of interviewing, quotation, portrayal and documentation from historians and journalists, and also from playwrights, psychoanalysts, documentary photographers and archivists. Students will write weekly exercises in a variety of forms, and will complete one longer essay to be workshopped in class and revised.
Instructor(s): Rachel Cohen Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Note(s): Full description at creativewriting.uchicago.edu
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 44009

CRWR 24012. Advanced Nonfiction Workshop: Writing the Narrative Nonfiction Feature. 100 Units.
In this writing workshop, students will go through all the stages of composing a narrative nonfiction feature story. After generating a few ideas that seem original, surprising in their approach, and appropriate in scope, we will write and re-write pitches, learning how to highlight the potential story in these ideas. After the class agrees to "assign" one of these features, each student will report, research and write a draft. The features will be workshopped in class, and students will go through an editorial process, polishing their stories through drafts and experimenting with style and form for a final assignment. Along the way, we will consider the mechanics, ethics and craft of this work as we read published nonfiction and talk to writers/reporters about their process. In the end, we should be able to put together a publication that contains all of these feature stories.
Instructor(s): Ben Austen Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Most introductions to creative nonfiction include one sections devoted to the strange and unwieldy—Ander Monson’s “I’ve Been Thinking About Snow” or a page or two of Anne Carson’s Nox. A brief foray into the metaphysical essay, the interactive essay, the performance essay and then back into the mainstream of creative nonfiction. This course, however, will be ignoring the mainstream entirely and, rather, will be devoted to the fringe, the strange and almost undefinable. From the performance essay to the video game essay, from the illustrated essay to the found essay and everything in between. This course will consist of experimental readings with accompanying writing prompts and in-class discussions, as well as dedicated workshops to each student’s own experimental creative nonfiction project.

Instructor(s): Lina Ferreira Cabeza-Vanegas
Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 44012

CRWR 24019. Advanced Nonfiction Workshop: Experimental Essay. 100 Units.

We live in an era marked by human-driven environmental change, an epoch distinguished not only by the reality of anthropogenic impacts, but of human witness. Never before, writes Elizabeth Rush, have humans been here to tell the story of collapse, extinction, adaptation, and memory. In this workshop, we will read and write eco-memoir, a hybrid form of literary nonfiction that blends the work of ecology, history, and personal narrative to understand more fully how memory is bound to ecosystems. Some might simply call this memoir, following J. Drew Lanham’s view that the writing of memoir is also the writing of environment. This course will ask how the memoirist looks at place, taking up W.G. Sebald’s thinking that places seem to “have some kind of memory, in that they activate memory in those who look at them.” Students will practice using the tenets of literary memoir-writing to engage with the theoretical frameworks of such environmental thinkers as Donna Haraway and Jedidiah Purdy. We will ask: to what extent is remembering a collective act? How might the eco-memoir represent the uneven consequences of ecological disruption? What narrative structures does the story of an ecosystem take? Students will write two-full length essays or memoir chapters. Readings will include texts by Kendra Atleeework, Elizabeth Bush, Linda Hogan, J. Drew Lanham, W.G. Sebald, and visiting writers.

Instructor(s): Kathleen Blackburn
Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 44019

CRWR 24020. Advanced Nonfiction Workshop: Writing the Eco-memoir. 100 Units.

This thesis workshop is for students writing a creative BA or MA thesis in nonfiction, as well as creative writing minors completing the portfolio. 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.

Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Note(s): Required for CW majors and MAPH CW Option students completing creative BA and MA theses in nonfiction and CW minors completing minor portfolios in nonfiction.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 49200

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

This thesis workshop is for students writing a creative BA or MA thesis in fiction, 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.

Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Note(s): Required for CW majors and MAPH CW Option students completing creative BA and MA theses in poetry and CW minors completing minor portfolios in poetry.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 49300

CRWR 29400. Thesis/Major Projects: Nonfiction. 100 Units.

This thesis workshop is for students writing a creative BA or MA thesis in nonfiction, as well as creative writing minors completing the portfolio. Student work 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): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Note(s): Required for CW majors and MAPH CW Option students completing creative BA and MA theses in nonfiction and CW minors completing minor portfolios in nonfiction.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 49400

CRWR 29500. Thesis/Major Projects: Fiction/Nonfiction. 100 Units.
This thesis workshop is for students writing a creative BA or MA thesis or minor portfolio in either fiction or nonfiction—or both. In other words, your project may take a number of forms: fiction only, nonfiction only, a short story and an essay, a novel chapter and a piece of narrative journalism, and so on. This course might be of special interest to those working on highly autobiographical pieces or incorporating substantial research into their creative process—fiction that hews close to fact, say, or nonfiction that leans heavily into storytelling. And/or it might be useful for those who want to pursue hybrid or between-genres projects or simply want to continue working in more than one form. We'll be open to many possibilities. It's not a prerequisite that you've taken both a fiction and creative nonfiction course previously, but it will nonetheless be quite helpful to have done so. Note, too, that this is the cumulative course in Creative Writing. There will still be room to explore and rethink (sometimes radically) the pieces you've drafted in previous classes, but please do come to our first session with a clear sense of what you want to work on over the quarter. Required for CW majors and MAPH CW Option students completing creative BA and MA theses in fiction or nonfiction and CW minors completing minor portfolios in fiction or nonfiction.
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required. Apply via creativewriting.uchicago.edu (in application please indicate experience in fiction & nonfiction and how this thesis workshop informs your own writing practice). Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 49500