



Writing non-fiction: bringing the past to life

Credit / award	Non-accredited		
Start date	5 May 2016	End date	2 June 2016
Day and time	Thursday at 2pm – 4pm	No of meetings	5
Venue	Maddingley Hall, Maddingley, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ		
Course Director	Midge Gillies		
Fee	£150	Course code	1516NWR014
For further information on this course, please contact	Public Programme Co-ordinator, Clare Kerr clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk or 01223 746237		
To book	See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262		

Tutor Biography

Midge Gillies is the author of seven non-fiction books, including biographies of Amy Johnson and Marie Lloyd. In *The Barbed-Wire University* (Aurum Press, 2011) she explores what it was really like to be an Allied Prisoner of War in the Second World War. She is co-author, with Sally Cline, of *Literary Non-Fiction: A Writers' & Artists' Companion* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015); Aurum Press will publish her book about army wives in August 2016. She studied history at Girton College and has written for a range of national, international and regional newspapers and magazines. Until recently she was the Royal Literary Fund Fellow at Magdalene College, Cambridge. She teaches on the Institute's Undergraduate Certificates and Diplomas in Creative Writing.

Course syllabus

Aims

1. To encourage and develop participants' skill in writing about the past.
2. To identify any difficulties and to find possible solutions;
3. To give participants a springboard from which to continue their writing after the course.

Content

"The past" might be your grandfather's experience of the Great War, the secret life of your house or your parents' early years as newcomers to post-war Britain. Whether you're just starting out or have already begun writing, this course will help you to think more deeply about the past and the most compelling way to present it to your reader.

Workshops will give you the chance to experiment with your own writing and boost your confidence in a friendly and supportive atmosphere. We will look at how you can make research work for you, the use of imagination in non-fiction and how to sustain your writing momentum.

Session 1 (5 May): *Is the past a different country?*

How to make it less foreign to your readers

Session 2 (12 May): *Research*

Making facts work for you.

Session 3 (19 May): *Structure*

Keeping on top of your story.

Session 4 (26 May): *Imagination*

Its uses in non-fiction.

Session 5 (2 June): *Keeping the momentum going*

Routine, revision and rewriting.

Presentation of the course

Structured questions and discussions during the sessions.

Interaction between students and with the tutor via the VLE. There will be the chance to share your writing with other members of the group via the VLE.

Outcomes

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

1. demonstrate knowledge of how to find out more about a period of history;
2. show an awareness of how the author's imagination may be put to good use in writing non-fiction;
3. show knowledge of the ways in which authors have structured their work.

Student participation

All students are expected to take an active part in this university-level course. Therefore, all students will be expected to:

- (i) attend at least two-thirds of the classes;
- (ii) participate actively in class.

Reading and resources list

Author	Title	Publisher and date
CLINE, Sally and GILLIES, Midge	Literary Non-Fiction: A Writers' & Artists' Companion	Bloomsbury Academic 2015
GILLIES, Midge	<i>Writing Lives: Literary Biography (Cambridge Contexts in Literature)</i>	Cambridge University Press 2009
SLATER, Nigel	<i>Toast, The Story of a Boy's Hunger</i>	Harper Perennial 2004
KING, Stephen	<i>On Writing, A Memoir of the Craft</i>	New English Library, Hodder & Stoughton 2000

Additional reading: *As wide a range of non-fiction, for example, biography, memoir, travel, nature and history, as possible*

Special offer: Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 11 April 2016