

Writing with confidence

Credit / award	Non-accredited		
Start date	9 May 2016	End date	13 June 2016
Day and time	Monday at 7pm – 9pm	No of meetings	5
Venue	Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ		
Course Director	Dr Sarah Burton		
Fee	£150	Course code	1516NRW008
For further information on this course, please contact	Public Programmes 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		

Course Director biography

Sarah Burton is most fulfilled when combining writing with teaching in some form. She does not believe that creative writing can be taught in the conventional sense, but that it is possible to assist the developing writer to nurture and develop their own unique voice. She believes that talent is what the student brings to the table and the tutor's role is to recognise, challenge, nurture, chide, encourage, criticise, praise and advise (and possibly many other things) or generally bring to bear all his/her experience to help the student become the best writer he/she can be. She believes teaching and learning is a contract between promise and experience, depending on mutual respect and a shared delight in the possibilities of the written word.

Course syllabus

Aims

1. To promote understanding of the basic requisites of quality fiction;
2. To provide students with the literary 'tools' to improve the effectiveness of their writing;
3. To build confidence in the appropriation and deployment of these strategies.

Content

'Writing with confidence' aims to take the isolation and frustration out of creative writing, and inject enthusiasm and confidence in their place. The basic nuts and bolts of good fiction will be scrutinised, with attention to constructing a satisfying plot, writing believable characters, developing a narrative voice, creating effective dialogue, building atmosphere, sustaining tension and pace and, importantly, adopting useful strategies for self-editing. This short series of stimulating workshops will help students to engage with their own writing equipped with new perspectives, fresh ideas and the confidence to implement them with a renewed sense of purpose.

Session 1 (9 May): *Plot*

Identifying and mapping the story arc.

Session 2 (16 May): *Character*

Making characters three-dimensional.

Session 3 (23 May): *Finding the voice*

Developing a narrative voice and creating effective dialogue.

Session 4 (6 June): *Atmosphere and tension*

Creating and sustaining interest.

Session 5 (13 June): *Editing*

Developing an objective eye and implementing 'less is more'.

Presentation of the course

Structured questions and discussions during the sessions.

Interaction with students on VLE and by email outside sessions.

Outcomes

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to understand, and have some experience with:

1. how to create a satisfying plot;
2. how to write believable characters;
3. how to write and link effective dialogue;
4. how to keep a reader on board;
5. how to edit their own 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 and any fieldtrips and day-schools;
- (ii) participate actively in class.

Note 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: 26 April 2016