

A World of Words: Workshops for Writers

Start date Friday 14th October 2016 **End date** Sunday 16th October 2016

Venue Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge

Tutor Dr Sarah Burton **Course code** 1617NRX026
Ms Midge Gillies
Prof Jem Poster

Director of Programmes Emma Jennings
For further information on this course, please contact Public Programme Co-ordinator, Clare Kerr
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To book See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Sarah Burton's publications are diverse, including two critically acclaimed biographies, *Impostors: Six Kinds of Liar* (2000; translated into Korean, Japanese, Czech and Spanish) and *A Double Life: a Biography of Charles and Mary Lamb* (2003; shortlisted for the Mind Book of the Year award); a children's book, *The Miracle in Bethlehem: A Storyteller's Tale* (2008), and a page-to-stage guide, *How to Put on a Community Play* (2011). She also writes short stories and reviews fiction and non-fiction for *The Spectator* and other titles. Her spoof, *The Complete and Utter History of the World By Samuel Stewart, Aged 9*, was published by Short Books in 2013. She was Writer in Residence for the Hosking Houses Trust in 2009 and the historical novel which she began there, *H*, was shortlisted for the Lucy Cavendish Fiction Prize 2013. Sarah has also written and produced seven community plays, and is Course Director of the Master's programme in Creative Writing at the Institute of Continuing Education, University of Cambridge.

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 the author of *Writing Lives* (CUP, 2009) and co-author, with Sally Cline, of *Literary Non-Fiction: A Writers' & Artists' Companion* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015) She studied history at Girton College and has written for a range of national, international and regional newspapers and magazines. Her book about army wives from the Crimea to the present day will be published by Aurum this summer. She is Academic Director of Creative Writing at the University of Cambridge's Institute of Continuing Education.

Jem Poster worked as an archaeologist, surveying and excavating a range of sites on behalf of the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments, before taking up an administrative post with Cambridge University's Institute of Continuing Education in 1987. From 1993 to 2003 he was University Lecturer in Literature with Oxford University's Department for Continuing Education and a fellow of Kellogg College. From 2003 to 2012 he was Professor of Creative Writing at Aberystwyth University, and is now Emeritus Professor. He is the author of two novels, *Courting Shadows* (2002) and *Rifling Paradise* (2006), as well as a collection of poetry, *Brought to Light* (2001), and has recently completed volume 3 of the six-volume Oxford University Press *Edward Thomas: Prose Writings*. He has won prizes in major poetry competitions including first prize in both the Cardiff International Poetry Competition in 1995 and the Peterloo Poets Open Poetry Competition in 2001. He has been Chair of the editorial board of Wales's leading literary journal, *New Welsh Review*, and is currently Programme Advisor to the Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education's MSt in Creative Writing and Director of its International Summer Programme in Creative Writing; he is an Affiliated Lecturer of the Institute. He is Director of Academic Programmes for the Financial Times Oxford Literary Festival and in 2014 spent four months as Writer in Residence at Arizona State University.

Course programme

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00 Dinner

20:30 – 22:00 Session 1 - **Introductory session with all three tutors and all three groups (A, B & C).**

At 21:00 we will split into our three groups and have our first class.

Group A - Non-fiction I – *Finding Stories* - with Midge Gillies

Group B - Poetry I – *The Meaning of Poetry* - with Jem Poster

Group C - Fiction I – *Truths and Fictions* - with Sarah Burton

22:00 Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30 Breakfast

09:00 – 10:30 Session 2

Group A - Non-fiction II – *Telling Tales* - with Midge Gillies

Group B - Poetry II – *The Music of Poetry* - with Jem Poster

Group C - Fiction II – *Characters and Plots* - with Sarah Burton

10:30 Coffee

11:00 – 12:30 Session 3

Group A - Poetry I – *The Meaning of Poetry* - with Jem Poster

Group B - Fiction I – *Truths and Fictions* - with Sarah Burton

Group C - Non-fiction I – *Finding Stories* - with Midge Gillies

13:00 Lunch

14:30 – 16:00	Session 4 Group A - Poetry II – <i>The Music of Poetry</i> - with Jem Poster Group B - Fiction II – <i>Characters and Plots</i> - with Sarah Burton Group C - Non-fiction II – <i>Telling Tales</i> - with Midge Gillies
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	Session 5 Group A - Fiction I – <i>Truths and Fictions</i> - with Sarah Burton Group B - Non-fiction I – <i>Finding Stories</i> - with Midge Gillies Group C - Poetry I – <i>The Meaning of Poetry</i> - with Jem Poster
18:00 – 18:30	Free
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	Session 6 Optional informal session where tutors will read from and discuss their own current writing projects.
21:30	Terrace bar open for informal discussion
Sunday	
07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Session 7 Group A - Fiction II – <i>Characters and Plots</i> - with Sarah Burton Group B - Non-fiction II – <i>Telling Tales</i> - with Midge Gillies Group C - Poetry II – <i>The Music of Poetry</i> - with Jem Poster
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Session 8 <i>Drawing it all together</i> – all three groups will reform as one to reflect on the weekend's work and consider future directions.
12:45	Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

If you are seeking to regenerate, refresh and develop your writing skills, this brand new course offers classes across a range of genres with three specialist tutors. You will engage with fiction, non-fiction and poetry, gaining the opportunity both to build on familiar ground and to discover and explore new territories.

Aims:

To develop students' existing skills in familiar genres and to encourage students to engage and experiment with unfamiliar genres, enhancing their abilities and confidence as writers generally.

Content:

The great writer Italo Calvino believed that 'every field of writing cannot be indifferent to other fields' – this course is based on that idea: that every genre of writing can feed into and enrich other genres. Though you may not be a poet, experimenting with the form will help you think about precise and concise language and the 'music' of words – all assets in prose writing. The strategies we apply to writing fiction can help make our non-fiction just as engaging and surprising, and the challenges presented by non-fiction can enhance the way we approach story-telling generally.

This weekend course is designed to refresh writers' existing skills and explore and develop new ones by engaging with three major genres. A supportive and informal but focused approach is designed to embrace the needs of students of all abilities, providing stimulation for absolute beginners and experienced writers alike. Students will benefit from small group tuition for most classes (two classes in each of the three genres) as well as forming part of a larger community of writers at various points in the weekend. By the end of the course we aim for students to feel ready to re-engage with their own writing refreshed, reinvigorated and equipped with new skills and new ideas.

Presentation of the course:

Sarah, Midge and Jem are all practising writers and experienced tutors whose believe in getting the best out of their students by nurturing their own voices rather than imposing a style on them. Their classes typically include the sharing of stimulus material and structured discussion arising from it before moving on to exercises which enable the student to experiment with the strategies they have identified. Discussion and positive criticism is encouraged. Teaching methods are low-tech and all you will need in class are writing materials.

Outcomes:

By the end of the course students may be expected to have developed an understanding of and enhanced expertise in writing:

- fiction
- non-fiction
- poetry.

Reading and resources list

There are no set texts for the course, however in advance of the course students may be emailed some materials to read in preparation.

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: 09 September 2016