

Exploring poetry

Start date	20 November 2016	Time	10:00 – 16:45
Venue	Madingley Hall Madingley Cambridge		
Tutor	Caron Freeborn Elizabeth Speller	Course code	1617NDX016

Director of Programmes Emma Jennings
Public Programme Coordinator, Clare Kerr
For further information on this course, please contact clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk or 01223 746237

To book See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biographies

Caron Freeborn was a mature student at Cambridge where she subsequently taught for 12 years, specializing in the Tragedy paper. She has been a Royal Literary Fund Fellow at Anglia Ruskin University and now teaches at ARU on both their BA and MA programmes in creative writing. Caron started her writing life as a novelist (Three Blind Mice, 2001; Prohibitions 2004) and is now a poet. Her first full collection of poetry, Georges Perec is my hero, came out in 2015.

Elizabeth Speller was an undergraduate and post graduate at Cambridge. She has taught at Bristol, Birmingham and Cambridge and was an Royal Literary Fund Fellow at Warwick University. She now teaches creative writing at Madingley Hall.

Elizabeth is an author of fiction, non-fiction, journalism and poetry. Her novel The Return of Captain John Emmett (Virago) was Orange book of the Month and among other awards, her poetry has been in second place for the Bridport Prize and was short listed for the Forward Prize.

Course programme

09:30	Terrace bar open for pre-course tea/coffee
10:00 – 11:15	Session 1 - Introducing ourselves and our aims. What is poetry? Warm up exercise: collaborative introductory poem.
11:15	Coffee
11:45 – 13:00	Session 2 - Finding the form. Organic verse invented. Where are the boundaries? Formal and free verse.
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:15	Session 3 - Sound and silence: 'Text says what it does not say.' Macherey
15:15	Tea
15:30 – 16:45	Session 4 - Writing a sonnet & Refining your work. Discussing it. Stage versus page (followed by: Open Mic)
16:45	Day-school ends

Course syllabus

*How you became a poet's a mystery!
Wherever did you get your talent from?*

*I say: I had two uncles, Joe and Harry-
one was a stammerer, the other dumb.*

Tony Harrison

Poetry is the one place where people can speak their original human mind. It is the outlet for people to say in public what is known in private.

Allen Ginsberg

Poetry has a unique ability to create intense images and to elicit powerful responses; it has a transforming potential, perhaps only shared by music, to change mood almost instantly. Is it this power that makes so many poets, uneasy at revealing their work and through it, their private selves?

Poetry is also a controversial form with both readers and writers (and good writers are invariably also readers) having strong views on what poetry should be. Should it rhyme? Should it follow an established formal style? Should each poem be free to find its own natural form. Is it better read on the page or from the stage?

In poetry writers often find a vocabulary and a form which is uniquely able to express. Extremes of human experience: loss, love, beauty, new landscapes. But can poetry escape nostalgia and the pastoral to also reflect and express these things in the mundane, bleaker or more conflicted areas of modern life? Can there be a sharp truth in shock of reality?

Aims:

To explore existing poetry and to consider new approaches to writing and expand existing skills.

Content:

This course welcomes experienced poets and those who want to write, or have perhaps written in private, but might draw strength and inspiration in a relaxed, exploration of possibilities. As poets ourselves, we are aware of how hard it can be to bring a single idea to fruition. We aim, as a group, to challenge, draw out, inspire and create new work, or refine an existing piece, or simply think through the range of what might be possible. The exact form of the day will depend on the participants. Coffee and tea breaks and a good lunch will provide the opportunity for informal discussion. Hand-outs of poems to be discussed will be provided. But mostly we are going to write.

Presentation of the course:

This will be achieved through a mixture of writing, discussion, music, images and looking at a few existing poems by established poets, class exercises and peer group feedback. We shall also have an open mic session at the end for those who enjoy reading their work aloud.

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

Understand both formal and informal conventions in poetry.

Work with enriched ideas of where to look for inspiration and how to take that on into words.

Produce a new poem, or edit and expand one that has already been started, or have a plan as to both a topic and an appropriate form for one.

Reading and resources list

Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Poetry:		
Astley, Neil,	<i>Staying Alive: Real Poems for Unreal Times</i>	Bloodaxe Books, 2002
Oswald, Alice	<i>Sleepwalk on the Severn</i>	Faber, 2009
Duffy, Carol Ann (ed)	<i>Answering Back: Living poets reply to the poetry of the past</i>	Picador, 2009
Harrison, Tony,	<i>Selected Poems,</i>	Penguin, 2012
Patterson, Don (ed)	<i>101 Sonnets Faber</i>	Faber, 2012
Commentary:		
Lerner, Ben,	<i>The Hatred of Poetry</i>	Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2016

Additional information

Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:
<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

Refreshments

Tea and coffee and lunch will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk or +44 (0)1223 746262.

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: 04 November 2016