

In the picture – images and the craft of telling true stories

Credit / award	Non-accredited		
Start date	26 April 2017	End date	31 May 2017
Day and time	Wednesdays 19.00 – 21.00	No of meetings	5
Venue	Madingley Hall Madingley Cambridge		
Tutor	Midge Gillies	Course code	1617NWR006

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

Tutor biography

Midge Gillies is the author of eight non-fiction books, including biographies of the pioneering pilot, Amy Johnson and the Edwardian music hall star 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 and in *Army Wives* (Aurum Press, 2016) she looks at the role of the military spouse from Crimea to the present day. She is co-author, with Sally Cline, of *The Arvon Book of Literary Non-Fiction* (Bloomsbury in 2012). She studied history at Girton College and has written for a range of national, international and regional newspapers and magazines. She spent three years as Royal Literary Fund Fellow at Magdalene College, Cambridge and is the Institute's Academic Director for Creative Writing.

Course syllabus

Aims:

1. To encourage an appreciation of how images may be used as a way of informing and inspiring creative writing;
2. To identify some of the different types of illustrations and how they may be used by the writer;
3. To evaluate the benefits of some sources over others.

Content:

Photos, paintings and moving images can be a useful way of unlocking the past. They can spark the writer's imagination and offer clues about what our ancestor got up to. They can also become the story itself, or help us to find a way of telling that story.

This friendly and practical course will use images as a way of encouraging you to tell your own true story through a mixture of research and imagination. For a modern generation brought up in a highly visual age, this course will offer the chance to pause and reflect on how the image can help the writer.

Session 1 (26th April 2017): *Introduction: What are the dangers and delights of using images to help you write?*

The image has never been more important but how can we use it to strengthen the written word, rather than offering a pale substitute?

Session 2 (3rd May 2017): *Photos as a way of bringing the past to life.*

How can we make the most of photographic archives or family albums? What should we be aware of when we study an old photo? Can a photo help us to interpret both the past and present?

Session 3 (10th May 2017): *Maps.*

Maps offer another window into different worlds. How can they supplement our senses and help us to undertake what Antonia Fraser describes as "optical research"?

Session 4 (17th May 2017): *Paintings, sketches and doodlings.*

Not everyone can afford to have their portrait painted but we can all doodle or leave our mark in other ways.

Session 5 (31st May 2017): *The moving image*

Is the moving image more powerful than any other image? What does it tell us about how people interacted with their friends and fellows? Does it need more careful handling than other sources?

Presentation of the course:

This course aims to use images, and other illustrative sources, as a way of encouraging you to hone your descriptive and storytelling powers. Writing prompts, based on your own photo or other image, or one supplied by the tutor, will encourage you to start writing regularly or to continue with a project you have already begun. Each session will consist of guided discussion, group exercises and the chance to experiment with your writing in a safe and constructive environment.

The tutor will set short writing exercises and students will be encouraged to share their responses to these on the VLE. These are optional exercises but are a useful way to ease the student into a regular writing routine.

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

1. Show an awareness of how an image may be used to enhance a description of a person or place;
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the limitations of using one pictorial source rather than another;
3. Show knowledge of how the image itself may be “the story”.

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
Christiansen, Rupert	<i>I know you're going to be happy</i>	Short Books, 2013
Hoare, Philip	<i>Leviathan, or the whale</i>	Fourth Estate, 2009
Macintyre, Ben	<i>Operation Mincemeat, The True Spy Story That Changed the Course of World War II</i>	Bloomsbury, 2010

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: 19 December 2016