



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**

Institute of Continuing Education

Undergraduate Diploma in Creative Writing I

2017 – 2018

Course code: 1718DCR501

COURSE GUIDE

Welcome to the **Undergraduate Diploma in Creative Writing I**, a University of Cambridge award offered by the Institute of Continuing Education (ICE). The Certificate is taught and awarded at FHEQ level 5 (i.e. second-year undergraduate level) and attracts 60 credits. The award is completed in one academic year. For further information about academic credit please see our website: <http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/studying-with-us/information-for-students/qualifications-that-we-offer>.

The course offers three termly units and a syllabus and reading and resource list for each of these units are included in this course specification.

The programme aims to:

1. introduce students to a wide range of different literary genres and styles in order to stimulate and develop their own creative writing;
2. develop students' critical skills in assessing the work of published authors and their own writing;
3. provide opportunities for students to experiment with their own work and to build their confidence;
4. extend students' knowledge of the transferability of techniques between different genres;
5. encourage students to contextualise their writing within a variety of traditions and genres;
6. provide opportunities for progression to further study in the area of creative writing.

Transferable skills for further study and employability

- The capacity for independent thought and judgement
- The development of independent learning, study and time management skills
- The deployment of skills in critical reasoning
- The development of competence in using IT to support one's work
- The ability to work with others, productively and equitably
- The qualities necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility and the demonstration of high levels of motivation and personal commitment through part-time study

Study hours

The award of academic credit is a means of quantifying and recognising learning and within the UK, one credit notionally represents 10 hours of learning¹. Each of the units in this course attracts 20 credits so students should expect to need to study for approximately 200 hours in total to complete each unit successfully. However, it is recognised that students study at different paces and use a variety of approaches, so this is a recommendation, rather than a hard-and-fast calculation.

¹ 'Academic credit in higher education in England – an introduction'. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2009

Teaching staff

Course Director

Midge Gillies

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 Crimea to the present day was published in August 2016. For three years she was Royal Literary Fund Fellow at Magdalene College, Cambridge.

Tutors

Elizabeth Speller

Elizabeth Speller has a Cambridge MA and MPhil. Her work includes *The Return of Captain John Emmett* (Orange Book of the Month) and *At Break of Day* (CNY State One Read 2015). Her non-fiction includes *Following Hadrian* (Hodder/OUP) and a memoir, *The Sunlight on the Garden* (Granta). She was short-listed for the Forward Prize for Poetry in 2009 and provided the libretto for Michael Berkeley's work *Farewell*, written in memory of Sir Paul McCartney's wife Linda. Journalism includes *The Independent*, the *Financial Times*, the *TLS*, and *Vogue*. She has taught at Cambridge, Bristol and Birmingham Universities and the U3A and her local poetry and novel workshops draw participants from diverse backgrounds and a range of experience. She was Royal Literary Fund Fellow at the University of Warwick and is currently completing a further novel for Virago.

Adam Mars-Jones

Adam Mars-Jones studied at Trinity Hall, Cambridge and then taught Creative Writing at the University of Virginia. He was film critic for *The Independent* between 1986 and 1997 and for *The Times* between 1998 and 2000. He is an occasional contributor to *The Guardian* and the *Times Literary Supplement*, and a regular reviewer for *The Observer*. He was selected by Granta as one of its 20 "Best of British Young Novelists" in both 1983 and 1993. His fiction includes the collections of short stories, *Lantern Lecture* (1981), his first book, winner of a Somerset Maugham Award; *Monopolies of Loss* (1992); and *The Darker Proof: Stories from a Crisis* (1987), co-written with Edmund White. Adam's first novel, *The Waters of Thirst*, was published in 1993. Since then he has published another two novels *Pilcrow* (2008) and *Cedilla* (2011), which form the first two parts of a projected trilogy. *Blind Bitter Happiness* (1997), a collection of essays, includes "Venus Envy", originally published as a pamphlet in the CounterBlasts series in 1990. His essay 'Noriko Smiling' (2011) discusses the film *Late Spring* directed by Yasujiro Ozu. In 2015 he published the autobiographic *Kid Gloves: A Voyage Round My Father* about his relationship with his father. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

Dr Kelly Grovier

Dr Kelly Grovier's book on contemporary art, *100 Works Of Art That Will Define Our Age*, has been described as 'a major addition to the literature of art criticism and philosophy' (*Library Journal*) and 'the book that generated most debate this year' (*The Daily Telegraph*). It was named one of the best books of the year by *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Huffington Post*, *The Independent*, *Metro* and *Time Out*.

His history of London's notorious Newgate Prison, *The Gaol*, was selected as 'Book of the Week' by BBC Radio 4 and serialized on-air over five days. He is the author of three collections of poetry, including *The Lantern Cage*, and has been described by reviewers as "a poet of both truth and beauty" (*TLS*) and 'a kind of William Blake for the twenty-first century' (*Planet* magazine).

Kelly was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area. He was educated at UCLA and Oxford University, where he earned his doctorate as a Marshall Scholar. He is a regular contributor on art to the *TLS* and co-founder of the scholarly journal, *European Romantic Review*. He currently lives in Ireland.

Administrative staff

Academic Programme Manager: Katherine Roddwell, Institute of Continuing Education, University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ, 01223 746223, katherine.roddwell@ice.cam.ac.uk

Programme Administrator: Lisa Hitch, Institute of Continuing Education, University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ, 01223 746212, lisa.hitch@ice.cam.ac.uk

Venue

Madingley Hall is an historic Tudor mansion on the outskirts of Cambridge with one of the finest gardens in the region and will be the venue for your classes unless otherwise specified.

The Hall is situated in the village of Madingley, three miles west of Cambridge with easy access from the M11 and the A14. Full directions are given on our website at www.ice.cam.ac.uk/directions.

Workshops are held at Madingley Hall, which has a variety of teaching rooms ranging from the newly refurbished Courtyard Suite to rooms in the historic Hall. Workshops may be scheduled in different teaching rooms each term.

Contact details of ICE

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Cambridge
CB23 8AQ
T: 01223 746222
www.ice.cam.ac.uk
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Please also refer to the 'information for students' section on our website <http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/studying-with-us/information-for-students> and the 17/18 Student Handbook for further information and guidance relating to all aspects of the course including study skills, assignments, assessment and moderation. The Course Information and Help and Guidance section of the ICE VLE will also contain valuable information specific to your course.

Information correct as at 14 September 2017

Syllabus for first unit
Michaelmas term 2017

Advanced Fiction

Start date	7 October 2017	End date	9 December 2017
Day	Saturday	Time	10.00am – 5.00pm
Venue	Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ		
Tutor	Elizabeth Speller	No of meetings	4 Saturday day-schools on 7 October, 28 October, 18 November and 9 December 2017

Aims

- To expand students' knowledge of different approaches to writing prose fiction in order to inform their own choices and augment their technical skills.
- Analyse a range of novels to explore what a writer can learn from works by very different authors and from several periods.
- Encourage confidence in experimentation and the development of strategies to meet potential creative challenges in students' work.

Content

This course will focus on novels, novellas, and, to a lesser extent, short stories and flash fiction, in helping students develop a lively and original fiction-writing style.

Fiction writing is a craft which brings together the psychology and creative experience of an individual and broader techniques and approaches that can be taught, and also amplified by critical reading. For this reason, the course will include mini lectures, writing tasks, discussions about the work and impact of established authors in the morning sessions, and writing exercises and topics that challenge wider imagination, including music, sound, art and nature, in the afternoon.

Classes will build on the foundation of students' existing writing skills to explore more complex techniques for identifying a potential story: choosing its form, and establishing its unique voice, creating a coherent sense of time and place, keeping dramatic control, and creating pace, conflict, mood.

Presentation of the unit

This unit will offer informal, collaborative, tutor-led workshops and seminar/discussions in the practical techniques of advanced fiction-writing. In considering already-published novels, in discussion, exercises, and tutorial and peer feedback, students will be able to extend their existing skills in identifying and resolving the technical and practical challenges presented by the art of fiction. There will be opportunities for productive peer feedback in classes, in workshops, and in the Virtual Learning Environment.

Provisional lecture list

Date	Session	Indicative content
Saturday 7 October 2017	<p>Day-school one: Why Fiction?</p> <p>Please read in advance: Kate Atkinson, <i>Behind the Scenes at the Museum</i> and Elizabeth Strout, <i>Anything is Possible</i></p>	<p>Why might an author choose fiction to explore an idea rather than, say, creative non-fiction or poetry? What motivates a writer to create a web of lies or affirm, through fiction, an essential truth? Where are the boundaries? What are the disciplines and skills needed to write <i>and keep on writing</i>? Finally: who are we writing for?</p> <p>Dialogue is a crucial (and often problematic) aspect in most novels. We will explore how to make dialogue work, to avoid potential pitfalls, and make choices in presentation of dialogue on the page.</p> <p>How can dialect, non-standard speech or the speech of those for whom English is not their mother tongue - or dialogue between two characters of different backgrounds and range of vocabulary, be handled without becoming caricature?</p> <p>'We know what a person thinks not by what he tells us he thinks, but by his actions' — Isaac Bashevis Singer. How does this transfer to fiction?</p> <p>Sound and silence. How can we build a soundscape? How do we put silence into words? How might it look on the page, or exist within dialogue?</p>
Saturday 28 October 2017	<p>Day-school two: Creating Worlds</p> <p>Please read in advance: Kevin Brockmeier, <i>The Brief History of the Dead</i></p>	<p>We will consider the world of novels, temporal and spatial: the past, the present or other worlds that may, or may not, share some resemblance to our own.</p> <p>We will discuss Science Fiction, fantasy, the fictional diary, the imaginary biography, fake reportage and the epistolary novel, even e-mail exchanges, as well as fictional accounts of actual historical characters or events.</p>

		<p>We will consider prototypes: fairy tales, myths and folk tales from <i>The Odyssey</i> to the Brothers Grimm. Are there any new stories to be told or merely new ways to tell them? Can we learn from film or theatre? What can we use to inspire us: objects, music, seasons, photographs, a story read in a newspaper?</p> <p>Guest novelist. TBA</p>
<p>Saturday 18 November 2018</p>	<p>Day-school three: New Viewpoints</p> <p>Please read in advance: Matthew Kneale, <i>English Passengers</i></p>	<p>A novel can have multiple points of view or just one. This choice will have a strong influence on the sort of book it will be. Do we choose, for example, an omniscient narrator, an unreliable narrator, or the interesting restrictions of the first person narration? The class will look at the advantages and disadvantages of writing in either first person or third person and how many storylines or voices can be managed within a novel.</p> <p>Characters lie at the core of fiction but they can be a curse or a perplexity to the author. Are writers led by characters or do they lead them? We shall also look at how characters can be fleshed out, how to make readers love or hate them and become engaged with their fate. Also, how can writers deal with real, historic characters, where known events are a starting point for a novel.</p> <p>Speaking in images. We will look at text, typography, imagery and movement. What can they teach us about writing for visual effect and relationships between different forms of creativity?</p> <p>Guest novelist. TBA</p>
<p>Saturday 9 December 2017</p>	<p>Day-school four: Turning the page</p> <p>Please read in advance: William Golding, <i>The Lord of the Flies</i></p>	<p>The clichés ‘unputdownable’ or a ‘good read’ do, despite the clumsiness of the words, define a dynamic and compelling engagement with the reader of some books. In this session we will deal with some of the</p>

		<p>components of that dynamic, for example: creating narrative pace, building emotional tension, and jeopardy — the power that drives a plot. We will discuss the above tactics in the context of flash fiction and short stories.</p> <p>Why is violence so hard to write and often so hard to read and, yet, in crime fiction so popular? How can writers describe and use colour? We will look at paintings, read some outstanding but very different extracts from novels and poetry, and observe how colour works as a narrative device.</p> <p>There will be the chance to workshop work written during this term.</p>
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Learning Outcomes

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

- (i) show an awareness of how to structure and develop an extended piece of prose;
- (ii) develop skills to create a sense of place and/or time;
- (iii) assess the merits of different ideas and treatments for a fictional narrative;
- (iv) demonstrate an understanding of the link between different creative forms and ideas and how aspects of them may be used within their work.

Student assessment

As this is a Diploma course, equivalent at least to second-year undergraduate standard, students are required to carry out tasks between day-schools to make the most of the course. These tasks include reading books relevant to ideas to be explored in the following day-school and completing written exercises or small pieces of research. The best writers of fiction read widely and critically and although it may not be possible to obtain or read all the books suggested before each class, it is **essential** to read at least one.

All students are encouraged to maintain a private journal or commentary on their own writing and thoughts throughout the course. Although this will not be marked it will provide a useful resource when the student plans their critical commentary (see below).

Most seminars will encourage discussion and students should expect to contribute to these and it is hoped they will be willing to show or read out examples of their own writing.

The end-of-term assignment will be made up of two elements:

1. A creative piece of writing of between 2,500 and 3,000 words, **the title of which must be agreed with the tutor**. The assignment may be a chapter or section of a work of fiction, or a short story or other single piece of fiction writing. It must be an original piece of work and, ideally, developed in response to issues explored in the course.

Assignment length: 2,500- 3,000 words. Weighting: 80% of unit grade.

2. A critical commentary on the creative work submitted by the student for this module. This will give the student the opportunity to reflect on the choices made when writing their creative piece and help them to understand the process of writing. By writing the commentary the student will have a clearer idea of the extent to which they achieved what they set out to achieve and how they have been influenced by other writers. Advice about how to write a successful critical commentary will be offered during the course.

Assignment length: 1,500 words. Weighting: 20% of unit grade.

Closing date for the submission of assignments: Monday 8 January 2018 by 12.00 noon GMT*

*Greenwich Mean Time

Reading and resource list

The books in this bibliography reveal many very different approaches to the writing of fiction. The more you can read of these novels the better but the starred titles are strongly recommended, not necessarily because they are best, but because they illustrate a variety of literary strategies.

Editor	Title	Publisher and date
Atkinson, K	<i>Behind the Scenes in the Museum*</i>	London: Black Swan 1996
Brockmeier, Kevin	<i>The Brief History of the Dead</i>	London: John Murray, 2007
Cunningham, Michael	<i>The Hours</i>	London: Fourth Estate, 1999
Daniel, Defoe	<i>Journal of the Plague Year</i>	London: Penguin Classics, 2006
Dawson, Jill	<i>The Crime Writer</i>	London: Sceptre, 2006
Donoghue, Emma	<i>Room</i>	London: Picador, 2011
Golding, W	<i>Lord of the Flies</i>	London: Faber & Faber, 1954
Harries, Jane	<i>The Observations</i>	London: Faber, 2007
Jacobson, Howard	<i>Shylock is my Name</i>	London: Hogarth, 2016
Kneale, Matthew	<i>The English Passengers</i>	London: Penguin, 2001
MacEwan, Ian	<i>Sweet Tooth</i>	London: Vintage, 2013

Saunders, G	<i>Lincoln in the Bardo</i>	London: Random House, 2017
Speller, Elizabeth	<i>At Break of Day</i>	London: Virago, 2014
Strout, E	<i>Anything is Possible</i>	London: Viking 2017
Swift, Graham	<i>Waterland</i>	London: William Heinemann, 1983
Water, S	<i>The Paying Guests</i>	London: Virago 2015
Woolf, Virginia	<i>Mrs Dalloway</i>	Wordsworth editions, 1996

Short stories:

Editor	Title	Publisher and date
Lahiri, J	<i>Interpreter of Maladies</i>	London: Flamingo, 2000
McGregor, Jon	<i>This Isn't the Sort of Thing That Happens to Someone Like You</i>	London: Bloomsbury, 2013
Miller, David (ed)	<i>That Glimpse of Truth: The 100 Finest Short Stories Ever Written</i>	London: Head of Zeus, 2014
Saunders, George	<i>Tenth of December</i>	London: Bloomsbury, 2014
Terry, Philip (ed)	<i>Ovid Metamorphosed</i>	London: Chatto and Windus, 2000

Suggested additional reading to support themes in the course or students' specific interests:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/mar/04/elizabeth-strout-my-writing-day>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/feb/04/john-burnside-writing-day-ashland-and-vine>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/dec/10/my-writing-day-sarah-perry>

<http://www.ibtimes.com/breaking-bad-color-theory-subtle-symbolism-meanings-behind-colors-amcs-hit-series-1411632>

Syllabus for second unit
Lent term 2018

Advanced Non-Fiction

Start date	13 January 2018	End date	24 March 2018
Day	Saturday	Time	10.00am – 5.00pm
Venue	Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ		
Tutor	Midge Gillies Adam Mars-Jones	No of meetings	4 Saturday day-schools on 13 January, 10 February, 3 March and 24 March 2018

Aims

- To introduce students to a range of different types of non-fiction;
- To analyse various techniques used in non-fiction and how these may be used in other forms of writing;
- To encourage students to experiment with their own writing;
- To identify ways in which a student's own writing is part of a literary tradition.

Content

The term “non-fiction” can cover a broad range of writing from biography and memoir, travel writing and history to writing about nature and science. This unit will examine the traditions behind non-fiction and more recent developments. It will look at how published authors have approached their subject and, in many cases, produced what is sometimes referred to as “creative non-fiction”. We will examine the part played by the publishing world, and literary fashion, in promoting this form and other hybrids, or “genre-bending”, works.

Different examples of non-fiction will be used to examine the techniques used by writers, and students will be encouraged to experiment with these in their own work. The group will look at various approaches to structure and how traditions may be adapted to accommodate pace, drama, description, characterisation and humour.

The unit will examine the relationship between writer and subject, and the role ethics plays in non-fiction – particularly within research and family history. We will look at ways of establishing a writing routine and becoming an effective editor.

Presentation of the unit

The unit will take a practical approach to writing. It will aim to demystify the techniques and tools associated with non-fiction and encourage students to feel more confident about their own writing voice.

Students will discuss different techniques in seminars and experiment with their own writing through a range of exercises. They will also be given the chance to workshop their writing in the constructive and supportive environment of the Saturday schools.

Provisional lecture list

Date	Session	Indicative content
Saturday 13 January 2018	<p>Day-school one: Story and Place (Midge Gillies)</p> <p>Please read in advance, <i>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</i> by Rebecca Skloot</p>	<p>What is the best way to start a work of non-fiction? How can the writer of non-fiction paint the picture; does the maxim 'show don't tell' work as well in non-fiction? Which techniques help to keep non-fiction vibrant? What makes non-fiction creative? What is the story - or stories? The writer of non-fiction has to decide how they will tell that story and, if there is more than one story, how they will 'braid' different narratives and themes. We will discuss how published authors have achieved this.</p> <p>This day-school will provide practical advice on interviewing technique in preparation for the second day school. Starting to build a cast list and structure. Where can the writer of non-fiction look for inspiration? What do you do with missing people or people who live too long?</p>
Saturday 10 February 2018	<p>Day-school two: Research and people (Midge Gillies)</p> <p>Please read in advance: <i>Chernobyl Prayer: A Chronicle of the Future</i> by Svetlana Alexievich.</p>	<p>Guided tour of American Cemetery (to be confirmed).</p> <p>What is research and how has it changed over the years? How do you keep track of your discoveries and make sure research enhances your writing? What part should the chase play in your writing? How do you incorporate a sense of time without turning your writing into a history lesson? When should research end? Where does memory, personal testimony and illustrations fit into the writer's toolkit? How can an author be fair without being dull? What about 'kinetic research': going up in a biplane if you want to write about a pilot, learning to weave if that is what your subject did?</p> <p>Guest speaker.</p>
Saturday 3 March 2018	<p>Day-school three: Writing Memoir (Adam Mars-Jones)</p> <p>Please read in advance <i>Maggie & Me</i> by Damian</p>	<p>Whose life is it anyway? What are the particular ethical issues connected with life writing and are they different from the challenges faced by the writer of fiction? We will focus on exercises designed to make students consider</p>

	Barr	<p>their own life as memoir and the extent to which the writer of memoir must respect the time frame in which he or she is writing. We will also consider whether a writer can ever be too young to write a memoir.</p> <p>Who has the last word when it comes to writing memoir? To what extent can parties – other than the author – have a chance to ‘put the record straight’?</p>
Saturday 24 March 2018	<p>Day-school four: Keeping the momentum going (Midge Gillies)</p> <p>Please read in advance <i>H is for Hawk</i> by Helen Macdonald</p>	<p>How can you revive a flagging story, resuscitate a weak character or reinvigorate a lacklustre setting? The use of quotations and dialogue; what is the point of both? How far can you invent, or use your imagination?</p> <p>Students will be offered a chance to workshop assignments written between dayschools. How do you revise your work and fold in extra details and developments – even at the last moment? When is it time to let go of a project? What makes a good non-fiction ending?</p>

Learning Outcomes

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

- (i) demonstrate knowledge of at least one literary technique, such as description, the use of pace or humour in a piece of non-fiction;
- (ii) show awareness of the importance of a compelling structure in non-fiction;
- (iii) identify whether research is necessary and, if it is, demonstrate how they have carried out that research.

Student assessment

As this is a Diploma course, equivalent at least to second-year undergraduate standard, students are required to carry out tasks between day-schools to make the most of the course. These tasks include reading books relevant to ideas to be explored in the following day-school and completing written exercises or small pieces of research.

All students are encouraged to maintain a private journal or commentary on their own writing and thoughts throughout the course. Although this will not be marked it will provide a useful resource when the student plans their critical commentary (see below).

Most seminars will encourage discussion and students should expect to contribute to these and it is hoped they will be willing to show or read out examples of their own writing.

The end-of-term assignment will be made up of two elements:

1. A creative piece of writing of between 2,500 and 3,000 words, **the title of which must be agreed with the tutor**. The assignment may be a chapter or section of a work of

non-fiction, for example part of a memoir or biography, a piece of narrative history or writing about nature or landscape. It must be an original piece of work and, ideally, developed in response to issues explored in the course.

Assignment length: 2,500- 3,000 words. Weighting: 80% of unit grade.

2. A critical commentary on the creative work submitted by the student for this module. This will give the student the opportunity to reflect on the choices made when writing their creative piece and help them to understand the process of writing. By writing the commentary the student will have a clearer idea of the extent to which they achieved what they set out to achieve and how they have been influenced by other writers. Advice about how to write a successful critical commentary will be offered during the course.

Assignment length: 1,500 words. Weighting: 20% of unit grade.

Please note that not every learning outcome will apply to **both** the creative assignment and the critical commentary.

*Closing date for the submission of assignments: Monday 16 April 2018 by 12.00 noon BST**

*British Summer Time

Reading and resource list

Editor	Title	Publisher and date
Alexievich, Svetlana	<i>Chernobyl Prayer: A Chronicle of the Future*</i>	London: Penguin Classics, 2016
Barr, Damian	<i>Maggie & Me*</i>	London: Bloomsbury, 2014
Blackburn, J	<i>Threads: The Delicate Life of John Craske</i>	London: Vintage 2017
Berendt, John	<i>Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil</i>	London: Sceptre, 2009
Bostridge, Mark	<i>Lives for Sale, Biographers' Tales</i>	London: Continuum, 2004
Capote, Truman	<i>In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder and its Consequences</i>	London: Penguin Modern Classics, 2000
Cline, Sally & Gillies, Midge	<i>Literary Non-Fiction: A Writers' & Artists' Companion</i>	London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012
De Waal, Edmund	<i>The Hare with Amber Eyes: A Hidden Inheritance</i>	London: Vintage, 2011
Fiennes, William	<i>The Music Room</i>	London: Picador, 2010

Gillies, Midge	<i>Writing Lives: Literary Biography</i>	Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009
Hoare, Philip	<i>Leviathan, or the whale</i>	London: Fourth Estate, 2009
Holroyd, Michael	<i>Works on Paper: The Craft of Biography & Autobiography</i>	London: Little Brown, 2002
King, Stephen	<i>On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft</i>	London: Hodder Paperbacks, 2012
Lee, Laurie	<i>As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning</i>	London: Penguin Classics, 2014
Macdonald, Helen	<i>H is for Hawk*</i>	London: Jonathan Cape, 2014
Macfarlane, Robert	<i>The Old Ways: A Journey on Foot</i>	London: Penguin, 2013
Malcolm, Janet	<i>The Silent Woman: Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes</i>	London: Granta, 2012
Mars-Jones, Adam	<i>Kid Gloves: A Voyage Round My Father</i>	London: Penguin, 2016
Masters, Alexander	<i>Stuart, A Life Backwards</i>	London: Fourth Estate, 2006
Niemann, Derek	<i>The Nazi in the Family: The Hidden Story of an SS Family in Wartime</i>	London: Short Books, 2015
Sage, Lorna	<i>Bad Blood: A Memoir</i>	London: Fourth Estate, 2001
Scurr, Ruth	<i>John Aubrey, My Life</i>	London: Vintage, 2016
Shapiro, James	<i>1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare</i>	London: Faber and Faber, 2006
Skloot, Rebecca	<i>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*</i>	London: Pan, 2011
Tomalin, Claire	<i>The Invisible Woman: The Story of Nelly Ternan and Charles Dickens*</i>	London: Penguin, 2014

* indicates required reading

Syllabus for third unit
Easter term 2018

Painting Words

Start date	14 April 2018	End date	7 July 2018
Day	Saturday	Time	10.00am – 5.00pm
Venue	Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ		
Tutor	Dr Kelly Grovier	No of meetings	4 Saturday day-schools on 14 April, 19 May, 16 June and 7 July 2018

Aims

- To introduce students to the tradition of writing inspired by visual art (or what is known as “*ekphrasis*”);
- To familiarize students with the themes, forms, and techniques of that tradition by exploring key examples of *ekphrasis* in the history of literature - from antiquity to the present day;
- To encourage experimentation with the conventions of *ekphrastic* writing;
- To discuss work generated by students and how it conforms or challenges the tradition of responding to works of visual art.

Content

Ever since Homer described in rich and imaginative detail the intricate contours of Achilles’s shield in his epic poem *The Iliad*, writers have been fascinated by the process of converting objects of visual art into language. The translation of images into words (or what is known as “*ekphrasis*”) has yielded some of the greatest and most loved works in world literature, inspiring everyone from Socrates to Seamus Heaney, John Keats to W H Auden, Charlotte Brontë to Rilke.

But what makes a successful *ekphrastic* text? Focusing on notable examples of *ekphrasis* from antiquity to the present, this unit will explore the history and evolution of word-and-image in world literature in order to isolate key themes, forms, and techniques. In doing so, the unit will endeavour to inspire students to experiment with the conventions of writing about objects of visual art in both prose and poetry.

Following an introductory session intended to provide an overview of the topic, each seminar and workshop will be devoted to a different genre of visual expression. These sessions will explore, in turn, sculpture, portraiture (and self-portraiture), landscapes and interiors, and modern art movements since the late nineteenth century.

Presentation of the unit

This unit will rely on student involvement both in discussing indicative examples of *ekphrastic* writing, as well as in undertaking creative exercises designed to explore how the techniques and concepts gleaned from these examples can invigorate one’s own writing.

Inherently visual in its emphasis, the unit will encourage debate in seminars and workshops about the success of a given text in converting the contours of a work of art into language. Relevant texts will either be provided or assigned beforehand and the artworks to which they correspond will either be reproduced as projections within a session, or will be visited nearby. Writing workshops will provide students with an opportunity to develop and discuss their own original approaches to *ekphrastic* writing.

Provisional lecture list

Date	Session	Indicative content
Saturday 14 April 2018	<p>Day-school one: Framing Words: An introduction to the language of <i>Ekphrasis</i></p> <p>Please read in advance: <i>Writing for Art: The Aesthetics of Ekphrasis</i> by Stephen Cheeke as well as verse and prose extracts distributed by the tutor.</p>	<p>Where are the boundaries that separate one type of artistic expression from another? We will explore the fascinating creative plane on which visual and verbal art meet and will examine some key examples of the tradition of <i>ekphrastic</i> writing in world culture from classicism to the present day.</p> <p>What makes an <i>ekphrastic</i> text compelling? We will seek to identify crucial aspects of successful prose and poetic examples of <i>ekphrastic</i> writing. Emphasis will be on the role of painting, generally, in invigorating the imagination of writers.</p> <p>How do you transition the mind from looking passively at a work of art to engaging imaginatively with it as a writer keen to transform its visual qualities into verbal ones? This session will take students outside the seminar room to explore the visual resources nearby in order to find a suitable subject for <i>ekphrastic</i> contemplation. Practical advice about how one begins the process of converting a visual object into words will be on offer.</p> <p>Students will begin practising and auditioning their own <i>ekphrastic</i> phrases and sketching out the shape of a poem or prose piece in which <i>ekphrasis</i> plays a crucial role. Participants will be encouraged to share their experiments and to discuss their initial experience with the form.</p>

<p>Saturday 19 May 2018</p>	<p>Day-school two: Sculpting Words</p> <p>Please read in advance: <i>Poems About Sculpture</i>, ed. Robert Pinsky as well as verse and prose extracts distributed by the tutor.</p>	<p>This day-school will seek to broaden the appreciation of <i>ekphrasis's</i> potential beyond two-dimensional painterly works to sculptural objects and will investigate how engaging with three-dimensional objects poses unique opportunities, obligations, and challenges. Students will be given the chance to discuss relevant examples from texts read in advance of the session.</p> <p>Students will have the opportunity to share and discuss creative experiments composed since the last day-school.</p> <p>Taking advantage of the sculptural treasures to which Cambridge is home, we will search out a range of three-dimensional objects to scrutinize them for their potential as <i>ekphrastic</i> subjects.</p> <p>In the light of our conversations about the unique nature of sculptural <i>ekphrasis</i>, students will be given the chance to experiment with the genre themselves, responding to a choice of prompts provided by the tutor. Before concluding the day-school, participants will have the opportunity to share and discuss their ideas and to audition drafts and phrases.</p>
<p>Saturday 16 June 2018</p>	<p>Day-school three: Face Time and Place Time</p> <p>Please read in advance: <i>Lines of Vision</i> by Janet McClean as well as verse and prose extracts distributed by the tutor.</p>	<p>The history of art is the history of faces. But why are we drawn to the countenances of strangers? This day-school will explore the power of portraiture and self-portraiture and how to translate the visual gaze into words.</p> <p>With reference back to the reading undertaken since the last day-school, we will share and discuss creative work generated by the writing task set when we last met.</p> <p>The power of landscapes, seascapes, and domestic interiors lies in the visionary ability to convey how places far removed from the experience of an observer felt. We will explore effective strategies for translating the tactics available to a visual artist into words.</p>

		<p>Following a day spent scrutinizing faces and places, students will be invited to experiment with the techniques and concepts introduced and to share the results.</p>
Saturday 7 July 2018	<p>Day-school four: Photo Finish</p> <p>Please read in advance: <i>I Spy Pinhole Eye</i> by Philip Gross as well as verse and prose extracts distributed by the tutor.</p>	<p>The rise of photography at the end of the 19th century not only introduced a new genre of visual expression, it triggered a revolution in how artists perceive their role as image makers. The ensuing century and a half has seen a ceaseless succession of movements and -isms. But what has been the knock-on effect of this endless upheaval on writers who derive their inspiration from visual objects? We will explore the unique challenges that <i>photo-ekphrasis</i> poses.</p> <p>A session will be devoted to discussing key aspects of the reading undertaken since the previous day-school and to sharing and workshopping creative pieces composed in the intervening weeks.</p> <p>Forced to reinvent the role of the visual artist, Modern Art and its innovative aesthetic techniques require a reassessment too of the relationship between an art work and an <i>ekphrastic</i> text. We will investigate how the priorities of different movements -- from Impressionism to Cubism, Expressionism to Minimalism -- have influenced the way <i>ekphrastic</i> writers have approached their texts.</p> <p>Exercises devised for our last workshop together will provide students with an opportunity to bring together many of the concepts, techniques and themes discussed in the unit.</p>

Learning Outcomes

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

- (i) show awareness of some of the elements of *ekphrasis*;
- (ii) demonstrate knowledge of several key examples of the tradition of literature inspired by works of visual art;
- (iii) explain how writers have engaged with at least one mode of *ekphrasis*, whether in relation to portraiture, sculpture, landscapes, interiors, photography or a movement of Modern Art.

Student assessment

As this is a Diploma course, equivalent at least to second-year undergraduate standard, students will be expected to read recommended texts in advance of each day-school. They will also be encouraged to undertake creative writing exercises at prescribed moments during the day-schools and between them.

All students are encouraged to maintain a private journal or commentary on their own writing and thoughts throughout the course. Although this will not be marked it will provide a useful resource when the student plans their critical commentary (see below).

The end-of-term assignment will be made up of two elements:

1. **Creative Assignment.** Students will be expected to submit **either** a creative writing portfolio comprised of poems or short prose pieces, **or** a combination of the two or a portfolio only of prose writing or one single piece of prose. **The assignment must be agreed in advance with the tutor.**

The prose assignment must be no longer than 3,000 words. In a portfolio that consists partly or entirely of poems, each poem must be at least 14 lines in length and will be considered the equivalent of 400 prose words. Portfolios consisting partly or entirely of poems should be (after calculating for the equivalency of 400-words-per-poem) no more than 3,000 words. In other words, a portfolio could either consist entirely of 7 poems (and their drafts), which would equate to 2,800 words. Alternatively, a portfolio could consist of a 2,200-word prose piece plus 2 poems (800 words), which would equate to 3,000 words for the entire portfolio (i.e. 2,000 + 2x400).

If the creative assignment includes poetry, it must be accompanied by at least two earlier drafts, demonstrating how advice received by the tutor and peers in workshop has helped shape the poem.

Weighting: 80% of unit grade.

2. **Critical commentary.** This will give the student the opportunity to reflect on the choices made when writing their creative assignment and help them to understand the process of writing. By writing the commentary the student will have a clearer idea of the extent to which they achieved what they set out to achieve and how they have been influenced by other writers.

Advice about how to write a critical commentary will be offered during the course.

Assignment length: 1,500 words. Weighting: 20% of unit grade.

*Closing date for the submission of assignments: Monday 30 July 2017 by 12.00 noon BST**

*British Summer Time

Reading and resource list

Editor	Title	Publisher and date
Cheeke, Stephen	<i>Writing for Art: The Aesthetics of Ekphrasis*</i>	Manchester University Press, 2010
Gross, Philip	<i>I Spy Pinhole Eye*</i>	Cinnamon, 2010
Heffernan, James	<i>Museum of words: the poetics of ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery</i>	Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1993
Krieger, Murray	<i>Ekphrasis: The Illusion of the Natural Sign</i>	Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992
Lowery, Owen	<i>Rego Retold: Poems in Response to Works by Paula Rego</i>	Carcanet Press, 2015
McClellan, Janet	<i>Lines of Vision*</i>	Thames and Hudson, 2014
Mitchell, W J T	<i>Iconology: image, text, ideology</i>	Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986
Petit, Pascale	<i>What the Water Gave Me: Poems after Frida Kahlo</i>	Seren, 2010
Pinsky, Robert (ed)	<i>Poems about Sculpture*</i>	Everyman, 2016

* indicates required reading

JSTOR articles:

Alpers, S. (1960). Ekphrasis and Aesthetic Attitudes in Vasari's Lives. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 23(3/4), 190-215. doi:1. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/750591>

Bridge, H. (2004). Rilke and the Modern Portrait. *The Modern Language Review*, 99(3), 681-695. doi:1. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3738995>

Corn, A. (1999). SEEING ALL THE VERMEERS. *Poetry*, 175(1), 25-30. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23068550>

Cunningham, V. (2007). Why Ekphrasis? *Classical Philology*, 102(1), 57-71. doi:1. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/521132>

Davidson, M. (1983). Ekphrasis and the Postmodern Painter Poem. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 42(1), 69-79. doi:1. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/429948>

- Goldhill, S. (2007). What Is Ekphrasis For? *Classical Philology*, 102(1), 1-19. doi:1. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/521129>
- Heffernan, James A. W. (1991). Ekphrasis and Representation. *New Literary History*, 22(2), 297-316. doi:1. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/469040>
- Hofmann, K. (2006). Keats's Ode to a Grecian Urn. *Studies in Romanticism*, 45(2), 251-284. doi:1. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25602046>
- Kurman, G. (1974). Ecphrasis in Epic Poetry. *Comparative Literature*, 26(1), 1-13. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org.queens.ezp1.qub.ac.uk/stable/1769671>
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- Meek, R. (2006). Ekphrasis in "The Rape of Lucrece" and "The Winter's Tale" *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 46(2), 389-414. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3844648>
- Rischin, A. (1996). Beside the Reclining Statue: Ekphrasis, Narrative, and Desire in Middlemarch. *PMLA*, 111(5), 1121-1132. doi:1. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/463154>
- Scott, G. (1990). Beautiful Ruins: The Elgin Marbles Sonnet in Its Historical and Generic Contexts. *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 39, 123-150. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30210308>
- Starzyk, L. (2002). "Tristram and Iseult": Arnold's Ekphrastic Experiment. *Victorian Review*, 28(1), 25-46. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27793481>
- Steadman, J. (1998). Image-Making in the Verbal and Visual Arts: A Renaissance Obsession. *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 61(1), 53-80. doi:1. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3817622>

TIMETABLE

Michaelmas 2017: **Advanced Fiction**

Day-school 1	7 October 2017
Day-school 2	28 October 2017
Day-school 3	18 November 2017
Day-school 4	9 December 2017

Lent 2018: **Advanced Non-Fiction**

Day-school 1	13 January 2018
Day-school 2	10 February 2018
Day-school 3	3 March 2018
Day-school 4	24 March 2018

Easter 2018: **Painting Words**

Day-school 1	14 April 2018
Day-school 2	19 May 2018
Day-school 3	16 June 2018
Day-school 4	7 July 2018

Assignment submission dates are normally 3 weeks after final teaching session of term.

Whilst every effort is made to avoid changes to this programme, published details may be altered without notice at any time. The Institute reserves the right to withdraw or amend any part of this programme without prior notice.

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