



Institute of Continuing Education

Undergraduate Diploma in Creative Writing II

2017 – 2018

Course code: 1718DCR401

COURSE GUIDE

Welcome to the **Undergraduate Diploma in Creative Writing II**, 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

Academic 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.

Elly Griffiths

Elly Griffiths is a bestselling crime writer and winner of the 2016 Crime Writers' Association's "Dagger in the Library" award. She is an Associate Lecturer at West Dean College in Sussex.

Rick Harvey

Rick Harvey is a screenwriter, story design consultant, lecturer and mentor. Since gaining an MA Screenwriting & Research qualification from the London College of Communication in 2001, he has storylined for *Family Affairs* (Talkback Thames/Channel 5), developed projects for Hewland International and Frenzy Films, written a slate of short films and "spec" features, mentored on First Light, Media Box and BFI projects and written and developed feature screenplays for EON Productions. He was trained by the UK Film Council to devise, develop and deliver industry-standard courses on screenwriting and cross-platform story design, and he lectures regularly on various aspects of the writing process. Rick is currently adapting one of his screenplays, *Shadowplay*, into a six-part serial for TV, writing and developing an interactive conspiracy Thriller, *Heretic[s]* for TELL/Settle Stories, and working as a module leader/mentor at Raindance and as a mentor for BCre8ive.

Sue Teddern

Sue Teddern's many radio dramas include five series of soloparentpals.com, two series of *The Charm Factory*, *In Mates* and *Sad Girl*. Her first scriptwriting credit was for *The Archers* and she was on the writing team of *Westway*, the BBC World Service serial. Her television credits include *Birds of a Feather*, *Bosom Pals*, *Happy Together* and *Homefront*, an ITV drama series about army families which she created and co-wrote. She is an experienced lecturer in creative writing. A 'graduate' of the Arvon Foundation, she has co-tutored courses

at all their centres and served on their management council for seven years. She has lectured in screenwriting, radio drama and sitcom at Central School of Speech and Drama, UEA, City University and Norwich University College of the Arts. She was screenwriter-in-residence at the University of Exeter from 2002 to 2007 and taught the MA module 'Developing the Feature Screenplay'. She has been a Royal Literary Fund Fellow at the universities of Essex, East Anglia and Sussex and is now a RLF Advisory Fellow. Sue has co-written *Writing for TV and Radio: a writers' and artists' companion* (Bloomsbury, 2015) with Nick Warburton.

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

Institute of Continuing Education
University of Cambridge
Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge
CB23 8AQ
T: 01223 746222
www.ice.cam.ac.uk
ug-awards@ice.cam.ac.uk

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 03 October 2017

Syllabus for first unit
Michaelmas term 2017

Advanced Historical Fiction

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|-----------------------|--|
| Start date | 8 October 2017 | End date | 10 December 2017 |
| Day | Sunday | Time | 10.00am – 5.00pm |
| Venue | Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ | | |
| Tutor | Elizabeth Speller | No of meetings | 4 day-schools on 8 October, 29 October, 19 November and 10 December 2017 |

Aims

- To analyse how past worlds are re-created, persuasively, in words;
- To extend the student's existing creative writing ability and imagination;
- To examine the wide range of possible treatments and the technical challenges specific to this genre and of sub-genres within it, such as historical crime and alternative history;
- To understand where to find the appropriate resources and requirements for research when writing historical fiction.

Content

The historian, at the most basic level, seeks to answer the question, "What happened?" By contrast, the writer of historical fiction seeks to explain, "What was it like?" A spirit of place is crucial to successful historical fiction, where that place is temporal as well as geographical. We shall consider how that landscape of the imagination can be delivered and explore such questions as: how can a writer achieve authentic-sounding vocabulary and speech?

Research can be an invaluable resource and a terrible diversion. The unit will address such issues as: how can a novelist know where to go and when to stop; can the past be re-written in a way that is not pastiche, but fresh and new; why might historical fiction be attractive to a 21st-century writer; should it, or can it, reveal something about contemporary concerns?

Presentation of the unit

Creative writing is as much a craft to be developed as it is a subject to be taught, and practice and experimentation are central to this unit. The Undergraduate Diploma in Creative Writing assumes some pre-existing knowledge of how fiction is constructed. This unit develops those basic skills and works towards the more complex and technically challenging approach to writing historical fiction.

The collective writing experience shared by Diploma students means there can be group discussion both in class and in the Virtual Learning Environment about areas of difficulty or ways to resolve these. It is expected that students will read fairly extensively and consider the methods, and their relative success, employed by various established authors, to bring the past to life.

Some sessions will concern practical issues, including the resources, limits and diversions of research or the difficulties in creating plausible dialogue set in a distant era. Other exercises may be more abstract: stretching the imagination or reflecting individual students' relationships with their work back to them. Images, film, music and sound may all be included. Guest tutors will focus on specific ideas or techniques within their own area of expertise.

Provisional course structure

| Date | Session | Indicative content |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Sunday 8 October 2017 | Day-school one Please read the following before the first class: Graeme Burnett Macrae, <i>His Bloody Project</i> | What is Historical Fiction? What are its chronological limits? Why might it be attractive to modern writers and readers? The case of Daniel Defoe's <i>Journal of the Plague Year</i> : History or Fiction? How much research is necessary, or even desirable, in order to write historical fiction? What kind of knowledge helps a writer make the past live? Plot first or history first? Illustrating history in small details and light touches. Learning from other creative forms. |
| Sunday 29 October 2017 | Day-school two Please read the following in advance of the class: <i>Arthur and George</i> by Julian Barnes | What different issues arise in novels where history provides a rich background to a totally fictitious story and fiction which purports to be truth? How can we keep up the pace, provide tension and not be bogged down in background? Would it be possible to write a historical short story? Where are the boundaries between History and Historical Fiction? Visit to The Fitzwilliam Museum (TBC) |
| Sunday 19 November 2017 | Day-school three Please read the following in advance: <i>Pure</i> by Andrew Miller and <i>Burial Rites</i> by Hannah Kent | A powerful sense of place and time is central to fiction set in the past. Sometimes the most powerful of all is in the things that were taken for granted at the time in which a novel was set. This session will look at sound, smell, taste, texture, darkness and light, ephemera, communication, weather, distance and dirt. Speech, emotions and their expression, desire, class, dress, social behaviour and conventions, seductive flaw: each can hold a key to creating gripping historical characters with whom readers can engage and empathise. Alternative history, historical crime fiction, Gothic novels, historical fiction |

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| | | for children. Guest lecturer (TBC). |
| Sunday 10 December 2017 | Day-school four Please read the following in advance: George Saunders, <i>Lincoln in the Bardo</i> | Historical fiction is the past seen through the prism of our own day, yet (usually) the reader must feel as if they inhabit it. Trusting the reader: how can historical information be conveyed subtly; what are the pitfalls? Challenges specific to the genre: dialogue, anachronisms, archaisms, and plain mistakes. How can attitudes (sometimes unacceptable) of a different era be conveyed? What do we do when we reach a dead end, become disheartened, or have no sense of an aspect of our project? A chance to explore students' own work, plus a look at novels in which real characters feature or which focus on a real events. |

Learning Outcomes

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

- (i) show awareness of when research is appropriate for creating historical fiction, as opposed to popular history, and avoiding the trap of delivering a lecture rather than an engrossing piece of fiction;
- (ii) demonstrate the ability to create a strong sense of historical place and move confidently within it;
- (iii) show evidence of having acquired a range of skills that are specific to writing fiction set in the past.

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 should 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 in a workshop situation.

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 work of fiction, or a short story or other single piece of fiction writing set in the past. 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 the 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

If possible, please also read "What writers really do when they write" by George Saunders, author of *Lincoln in the Bardo*, in *The Guardian* 4 March 2017, before the first day school. (Available online at www.theguardian.com/books/2017/mar/04/what-writers-really-do-when-they-write)

| Editor | Title | Publisher and date |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Barnes, Julian | <i>Arthur and George*</i> | Jonathan Cape, 2005 |
| Boyd, W | <i>An Ice-Cream War</i> | Hamish Hamilton 1982 |
| Byatt, A S | <i>Possession</i> | Chatto and Windus, 1990 |
| Carey, Peter | <i>Jack Maggs</i> | Faber and Faber, 1997 |
| Defoe, Daniel | <i>Journal of the Plague Year</i> | Oxford World Classics 2010 (originally published 1722) |
| Hollinghurst, Alan | <i>A Stranger's Child*</i> | Picador, 2011 |
| Kent, Hannah | <i>Burial Rites*</i> | Picador, 2014 |
| Mackay, Shena | <i>The Orchard on Fire*</i> | William Heinemann, 1996 |
| Macrae Burnett, George | <i>His Bloody Project*</i> | Contraband, 2015 |
| Mantel, Hilary | <i>Bring up the Bodies</i> | Fourth Estate, 2012 |
| Mason, Daniel | <i>The Piano Tuner</i> | Picador, 2011 |

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| Miller, Andrew | <i>Pure</i> * | Hodder and Stoughton, 2011 |
| Mukherjee, Abir | <i>A Rising Man</i> * | Harvill and Secker, 2016 |
| Ondaatje, Michael | <i>The English Patient</i> | Everyman, 2011 |
| Rhys, Jean | <i>Wild Sargasso Sea</i> * | Penguin Modern Classics, 2000 |
| Sansom, C J | <i>Dark Fire</i> | Pan, new edition, 2015 |
| Saunders, G | <i>Lincoln in the Bardo</i> * | Random House, 2017 |
| Shepherd, Lloyd | <i>The English Monster</i> * | Simon and Schuster, 2012 |
| Spufford, F | <i>Golden Hill</i> | Faber and Faber, 2016 |
| Tremain, R | <i>Restoration</i> | Pan Books, 1990 |
| Waters, Sarah | <i>The Paying Guests</i> | Virago, 2014 |
| Winterson, Jeanette | <i>The Daylight Gate</i> | Hammer, 2012 |

* indicates required reading

Other Resources

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

<http://victorianweb.org>

<https://newrepublic.com/article/128877/can-historical-novel-also-serious-literature>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2010/jun/22/sharon-dogar-annexed>

Syllabus for second unit
Lent term 2018

Advanced Crime Writing

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|-----------------------|---|
| Start date | 14 January 2018 | End date | 25 March 2018 |
| Day | Sunday | Time | 10.00am – 5.00pm |
| Venue | Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ | | |
| Tutor | Elly Griffiths | No of meetings | 4 day-schools on 14 January, 11 February, 4 March and 25 March 2018 |

Aims

- Introduce students to the techniques of writing crime fiction, and to enable them to use these skills in furthering their own writing;
- Explore the varieties of sub-genres within the form, through reading and analysing works from across the range of crime fiction and non-fiction - from those of the “Golden Age” to those of the more contemporary “Scandi Noir”;
- Examine the potential for crime fiction to explore social, political, and psychological issues, and to encourage students to make their own experiments with the form.

Content

The literary traditions of the detective story will be considered as background for more contemporary developments in the genre, such as the recent interest in Scandinavian police procedurals. The course will introduce techniques that could apply equally to both the “literary” detective story and the more “popular” variety. These will include: researching and structuring a story; determining time and place; inventing convincing characters; using dialogue effectively; describing different geographical and historical settings; creating drama and sustaining suspense; writing arresting openings, and providing satisfying conclusions. There will be an emphasis overall on ways of using language effectively, and on developing an individual style. The unit will consider what sets crime writing apart from other forms of fiction and the features of true crime.

Presentation of the unit

Students will be asked to read selected works in advance, and will be expected to take part in class discussion and writing exercises. Through close reading and guidance from the tutors and visiting speakers, students will analyse the methods, and their relative success, employed by various established authors. Guest tutors will focus on specific ideas or techniques within their own area of expertise. There will be the chance to share writing on the VLE and by classroom workshopping.

Provisional course structure

| Date | Session | Indicative content |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Sunday 14 January 2018 | <p>Day-school one - 'Something nasty in the woodshed': the charm of the rural murder (Rural Noir)</p> <p>Please read in advance: <i>The Murder of Roger Ackroyd</i> by Agatha Christie and <i>The Madman of Bergerac</i> by Georges Simenon.</p> | <p>A brief history of the genre, covering some of its literary antecedents, and considering the perennial appeal of the murder mystery.</p> <p>Would a story work just as well in an urban setting as in a rural one - or are there reasons for choosing the latter over the former? We will consider some types of "rural noir" - from the "country house" murder of the 1930s to later examples of the "village murder", focusing on ways of creating and building atmosphere through descriptive writing.</p> <p>In the detective story, as in most fiction, the central character is key. We will look at some famous examples of the detective-as-hero (and heroine), from Lord Peter Wimsey to D.I. John Rebus, analysing what makes these characters so compelling to the reader.</p> <p>The opening page is, arguably, the most important page in the story, because it is this that will determine if your reader reads on... We will look at a range of arresting openings to crime novels, considering how the author succeeds in getting our attention - and whetting our appetite for what is to come.</p> |
| Sunday 11 February 2018 | <p>Day-School Two – "Down these mean streets..." Why an urban setting provides the perfect backdrop for murder.</p> <p>Please read in advance: <i>The Big Sleep</i> by Raymond Chandler and <i>Dead Souls</i> by Ian Rankin.</p> | <p>We will look at a selection of "Urban Noir" novels, considering how effectively their setting enhances mood, and increases suspense.</p> <p>Structuring your plot: twists, turns and impactful endings - how to keep your reader on the edge of his or her seat from page one. We will analyse some famous scenarios from crime fiction, and look at ways of achieving similar effects in our own writing.</p> <p>Arguably the most crucial element in any crime story, good dialogue needs to do it all: show character, convey information, maintain pace, and enhance suspense. We will focus on ways of making dialogue work - and of keeping your reader gripped.</p> |

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| | | Guest speaker (TBC). |
| Sunday 11 March 2018 | <p>Day-School Three – “The ice was here, the ice was there, the ice was all around...” Why ‘Scandi-Noir’ enthral readers worldwide</p> <p>Please read in advance: <i>The Man Who Smiled</i> by Henning Mankell and <i>The Snowman</i> by Jo Nesbo</p> | <p>We will look at examples of the contemporary Scandinavian police procedural, considering why this genre continues to grip readers’ imagination, both on the page and in TV adaptations of novels by Norwegian, Swedish, Danish and Finnish authors.</p> <p>Opportunity to workshop a piece written earlier in the unit</p> <p>A detective novel, like any work of fiction, can have multiple points of view - or just one. We will examine ways in which altering point of view can make a difference, considering various kinds of narrative device - such as the omniscient narrator, the unreliable narrator, and the advantages or otherwise of first person as opposed to third person narration</p> <p>We will consider ways of concluding your story so that is satisfying, both for author and reader. Examples of “open” and “closed” endings will be looked at, in order to show how this can vary, even in a form as driven by the solving of puzzles and tying-up of loose ends as the detective story.</p> |
| Sunday 25 March 2018 | <p>Day-School Four – True Crime</p> <p>Please read in advance <i>In Cold Blood</i> by Truman Capote.</p> | <p>From Charles Dickens to the podcast, <i>Serial</i>, true crime continues to fascinate us. This seminar will look at the roots of true crime and why it continues to appeal.</p> <p>Where to find a compelling true crime story and how to tell it.</p> <p>Structure and depth in true crime. How to tell a true crime story without appearing voyeuristic.</p> <p>Guest lecturer: What crime writers get wrong.</p> |

Learning Outcomes

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

- (i) show an understanding of the strategies within genre fiction by which the reader's interest can be sustained through creating suspense, and maintaining narrative pace;
- (ii) demonstrate that they can employ these strategies effectively in their own writing;
- (iii) analyse genre fiction in a broader context, both in relation to the mass-market and to more literary types of fiction.

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 should 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 in a workshop situation.

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 from a crime novel or true crime book, or a short story. 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 16 April 2018 by 12.00 noon BST***

*British Summer Time

Reading and resource list

| Editor | Title | Publisher and date |
|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Allingham, Margery | <i>Hide My Eyes</i> | Vintage, 1958 |
| Blake, Nicholas | <i>The Beast Must Die</i> | Vintage, 1938 |
| Cain, James M | <i>Double Indemnity</i> | Orion, 1936 |

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Camilleri, Andrea | <i>The Age of Doubt</i> | Picador, 2008 |
| Capote, Truman | <i>In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder and Its Consequences*</i> | Penguin Modern Classics, 2000 |
| Carré, John Le | <i>The Spy Who Came In From the Cold</i> | Gollancz, 1963 |
| Chandler, Raymond | <i>The Big Sleep*</i> | Penguin, 1939 |
| Christie, Agatha | <i>The Murder of Roger Ackroyd</i> | Penguin, 1926 |
| Christie, Agatha | <i>The Murder at the Vicarage*</i> | Harper Collins, 1930 |
| Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan | <i>A Study in Scarlet and The Sign of the Four</i> | Wordsworth Classics, 1887 |
| Greene, Graham | <i>Brighton Rock</i> | Penguin, 1938 |
| Koning, A C | <i>Game of Chance</i> | Arbuthnot, 2015 |
| Lackberg, Camilla | <i>The Ice Princess</i> | Harper, 2009 |
| Leon, Donna | <i>Death at La Fenice</i> | Arrow, 1992 |
| Malcolm, Janet | <i>The Journalist and the Murderer*</i> | Granta, 2012 |
| Mankell, Henning | <i>The Man Who Smiled*</i> | Vintage, 2005 |
| Nesbo, Jo | <i>The Snow Man*</i> | Vintage, 2014 |
| Rankin, Ian | <i>Dead Souls*</i> | Orion, 1999 |
| Runcie, James | <i>Sidney Chambers and The Shadow of Death</i> | Bloomsbury, 2012 |
| Sayers, Dorothy L | <i>Murder Must Advertise</i> | Hodder, 1933 |
| Simenon, Georges | <i>The Madman of Bergerac*</i> | Penguin, 1932 |
| Summerscale, Kate | <i>The Suspicions of Mr Whicher: Or the Murder at Road Hill House</i> | Bloomsbury, 2009 |

* indicates required reading

Syllabus for third unit
Easter term 2018

Advanced Writing for Performance

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|-----------------------|--|
| Start date | 15 April 2018 | End date | 8 July 2018 |
| Day | Sunday | Time | 10.00am – 5.00pm |
| Venue | Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ | | |
| Tutor | Rick Harvey Sue Teddern | No of meetings | 4 day-schools on 15 April, 20 May, 17 June and 8 July 2018 |

Aims

This unit aims to:

- introduce students to the techniques required to write for screen, radio and theatre;
- explore strategies for adapting existing material for a performance-based medium;
- encourage students to apply, and to experiment with, these techniques and strategies to further their own writing;
- enable students to appraise and assess aesthetic and practical issues of adapting work for a performance-based medium.

Content

The term “performance-based medium” encompasses a broad range of writing from traditional formats, such as film, TV, radio and the stage, to more recent platforms such as interactive stories, video games and web series. This unit will introduce students to the different conventions involved in writing for each. Students will discuss the pros and cons of each medium and how the same story may be interpreted in different ways.

Examples taken from stage, screen, radio and new media works will be used to highlight and examine the techniques used by writers, and students will be encouraged to experiment with these in their own work.

We will discuss the importance of theme, character, form and dialogue, to explore imaginative ways of transferring from a textual to a performance medium. This may involve changing aspects of the original text, such as point-of-view, thematic focus, number and nature of characters, location, period, etc.

Students will be given the opportunity to adapt an existing work from a textual medium (i.e. short story, poem, or monologue) to a performance-based one.

Presentation of the unit

The unit will take a practical approach to writing for performance and adaptation. It will aim to demystify the techniques and tools associated with both and encourage students to experiment with developing their ideas and work across different platforms.

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.

As each form of writing for performance has its own conventions, students will be given extra resources – in the form of reading and links to useful sites to complement classroom learning.

Provisional course structure

| Date | Session | Indicative content |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Sunday 15 April 2018 | <p>Day-School One – Introduction to Writing for Performance and Adaptation (Rick Harvey)</p> <p>Please read in advance <i>An Education</i> screenplay and the extract from the memoir on which the screenplay is based (links to be provided).</p> | <p>Making movies has become big business, but short films can also be artistically satisfying for both filmmaker and audience. This seminar will give an overview of the screenwriting process and the essential elements of a screenplay. We will discuss the importance of theme, character as story (creating a three-dimensional protagonist) and genre as a developmental tool.</p> <p>We will examine the process and produce of adaptation. We will discuss why adaptations are popular with commissioners and producers and look at three types of adaption: reconstruction; poetic-reimagining; self-aware deconstruction. We will, briefly, consider the main factors in deciding whether to adapt a work for the screen, the stage and radio.</p> <p>Students will have the opportunity to “pitch”, test, and discuss an idea for a film or potential material for an adaptation project</p> <p>Guest speaker: Craig Baxter, Writing for the Stage.</p> |
| Sunday 20 May 2018 | Day-School Two – Writing for Radio: Stories in Sound (Sue Teddern) | <p>We will discuss what we listen to - and when, where and why we listen. We will discuss painting pictures in sound: how we hear, how we write and what makes the radio experience different to film, theatre, TV and books. Why would a writer choose radio: some practical, creative and commercial considerations?</p> <p>We will workshop ideas that best suit the 45-minute afternoon drama slot, still regarded as the most accessible for writers new to radio. Our ideas must celebrate and fully utilise the</p> |

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| | | <p>format and explore all the creative possibilities, in order to draw listeners in and make them stop cooking or stay in the car to catch the climax.</p> <p>How does the writer introduce and establish characters on radio without any visual clues. How do we “hear” body language, facial expressions, new jeans, scuffed shoes, red lipstick etc? We will also look at the three-act structure; plots and sub-plots; twists, turns, set-ups and surprises.</p> <p>We will examine how radio dialogue differs from TV and film; how scene setting, location, physicality and background sounds can add colour, provide back-story and establish mood. We will also look at common mistakes: over-explaining; too many two-hander scenes; unnecessary narration; too much “tell” and not enough “show”. When is your script ready to submit? What should be on your checklist?</p> |
| Sunday 17 June 2018 | <p>Day-School Three – Writing for TV: Visual Reality (Sue Teddern)</p> <p>Please read in advance: two selected TV scripts (tbc) from the BBC writersroom archive.</p> | <p>We will discuss what we watch; what makes compelling “telly” and why. Advice will be given on understanding different channels, audiences, slots, genres and styles and how <u>you</u> fit in as a writer. What are the pleasures and the pain of writing for TV?</p> <p>New-to-TV writers rarely sell a series or snap up a big commission. It is more likely that they will submit a “spec script” that shows promise and opens doors. How can you assess the market and write something that will generate interest and kick-start your TV career?</p> <p>We will break down a successful TV episode to see how it was constructed; identifying A, B and C plots; assessing the story engine; analysing why it worked and/or critiquing why it didn’t. We will examine how to plot a 30-min sitcom and 60-min TV episode.</p> <p>We will look at understanding the script development process. You will learn how to become your own script editor and apply techniques and strategies for re-energising the next draft or starting again with fresh ideas</p> |

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| | | and a different approach. |
| Sunday 8 July 2018 | Day-School Four – An Introduction to Multi-platform storytelling. (Rick Harvey) | <p>We will begin by defining “multi-platform storytelling”. We will assess the creative perspective versus the business perspective and look at new options. Students will identify the key differences between multi-platform storytelling and conventional storytelling and the essential components of a Dramatic World.</p> <p>In this session we will take a case study to examine the route from the genesis of an idea, researching the Dramatic World, writing the introduction, developing the characters, devising multiple storylines and identifying a target audience, through to determining platforms and creating a “mood board”.</p> <p>We will look at the opportunities and practicalities for new writers. Using the website, BCre8ive as an example, we will discuss aspects such as developing a pitch and forming a team.</p> <p>Students will be offered the opportunity to pitch, test, and discuss potential ideas for a Dramatic World.</p> |

Learning Outcomes

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

- (i) demonstrate an understanding of the demands of writing for the stage, screen or radio;
- (ii) show understanding of the techniques and strategies for adapting work for a performance-based medium;
- (iii) experiment with and apply techniques and strategies for adaption or writing for performance to further their own writing;
- (iv) Show awareness of aesthetic and practical issues in choosing material for a performance-based medium.

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 or scripts 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 should 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 in a workshop.

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

1. An adaptation, or an original work, of between 2,500 and 3,000 words (or the equivalent, appropriate to the form), written by the student, **the title of which must be agreed with the tutor**. The assignment may take the form of a short radio play, stage play, screenplay, interactive story etc., or constitute the opening / first act, or section, of a longer work.

Assignment length: 2,500- 3,000 words (or the equivalent, appropriate to the form).
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 practitioners. 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 30 July 2018 by 12.00 noon BST**

*British Summer Time

Reading and resource list

| Editor | Title | Publisher and date |
|------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Barber, Lynne | <i>An Education</i> | Penguin |
| Bartlett, Mike | <i>Doctor Foster: the scripts</i> | Nick Hern Books, 2016 |
| Egri, Lajos | <i>The Art of Dramatic Writing</i> | Simon & Schuster, 1960 |
| Frensham, Raymond | <i>Teach yourself Screenwriting</i> | National Textbook Company, 1997 |
| Grace, Fraser & Byley, Clare | <i>Playwriting (Writers' and Artists' Companions)</i> | Bloomsbury Academic, 2015 |
| Handler Miller, Carolyn | <i>Digital Storytelling: A Creators' Guide to Interactive Entertainment</i> | Focal Press, 2014 |
| Krevolin, Richard | <i>How to Adapt Anything Into a Screenplay</i> | Wiley, 2003 |
| McKee, Robert | <i>Story: Style, Structure, Substance, and the Principles of Screenwriting</i> | Methuen Publishing, 1998 |

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| Naylor, Hattie | <i>Ivan and the Dogs</i> | Methuen, 2010 |
| Parker, Philip | <i>The Art & Science of Screenwriting</i> | Intellect, 1998 |
| Pratten, Rober | <i>Getting Started in Transmedia Storytelling: A Practical Guide for Beginners</i> | CreateSpace, 2015 |
| Rosenthal, Jack | <i>The Chain; The Knowledge; Ready when you are, Mr McGill</i> | Faber & Faber, 1987 |
| Seeger, Linda | <i>The Art of Adaptation: Turning Fact and Fiction Into Films</i> | Henry Holt & Co, 1992 |
| Sorkin, Aaron | <i>The West Wing Script Book</i> | Newmarket Shooting Script, 2002 |
| Teddern, Sue & Warburton, Nick | <i>Writing for TV and Radion (Writers' and Artists' Companions)</i> | Bloomsbury Academic, 2015 |
| Waters, Steve | <i>The Secret Life of Plays</i> | Nick Hern Books, 2010 |
| Yorke, John | <i>Into the Woods</i> | Penguin, 2013 |

TIMETABLE

Michaelmas 2017: Advanced Historical Fiction

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| Day-school 1 | 8 October 2017 |
| Day-school 2 | 29 October 2017 |
| Day-school 3 | 19 November 2017 |
| Day-school 4 | 10 December 2017 |

Lent 2018: Advanced Crime Writing

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| Day-school 1 | 14 January 2018 |
| Day-school 2 | 11 February 2018 |
| Day-school 3 | 4 March 2018 |
| Day-school 4 | 25 March 2018 |

Easter 2018: Advanced Writing for Performance

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| Day-school 1 | 15 April 2018 |
| Day-school 2 | 20 May 2018 |
| Day-school 3 | 17 June 2018 |
| Day-school 4 | 8 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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