

## A World of Words: Workshops for Writers

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<b>Start date</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2018	<b>End date</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2018
<b>Venue</b>	Madingley Hall Madingley Cambridge		
<b>Tutor</b>	Dr Sarah Burton  Prof Jem Poster  Elizabeth Speller	<b>Course code</b>	1718NRX052

**Interim Co-Directors of Public and Professional Programmes**

Dr Liz Morfoot  
Dr Tom Monie

**For further information on this course, please contact**

Public Programme Co-ordinator, Clare Kerr  
[clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk) or 01223 746237

**To book** See: [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk) or telephone 01223 746262

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### Tutor biography

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

**Elizabeth Speller** is a writer of fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Her novels, published in eight countries, include *The Return of Captain John Emmett* (Orange Book of the Month, Richard & Judy pick) and *At Break of Day* (CNY State One Read 2015 in the US). Her non-fiction includes *Following Hadrian* (Hodder/OUP US) and a memoir, *The Sunlight on the Garden* (Granta). She was short-listed for the Forward Prize for Poetry and provided the libretto for Michael Berkeley's work *Farewell*, written in memory of Sir Paul McCartney's wife Linda. Her journalism includes work for the Independent, the Financial Times, the TLS, and Vogue. She has taught at Cambridge, Bristol and Birmingham Universities. She was Royal Literary Fund Fellow at the University of Warwick and is currently completing a further novel for Virago. She teaches on the Certificate, Diploma and Masters programmes in Creative Writing at ICE.

**Jem Poster** worked as an archaeologist, surveying and excavating a range of sites on behalf of the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments, before taking up an administrative post with Cambridge University's Institute of Continuing Education in 1987. From 1993 to 2003 he was University Lecturer in Literature with Oxford University's Department for Continuing Education and a fellow of Kellogg College. From 2003 to 2012 he was Professor of Creative Writing at Aberystwyth University, and is now Emeritus Professor. He is the author of two novels, *Courting Shadows* (2002) and *Rifling Paradise* (2006), as well as a collection of poetry, *Brought to Light* (2001), and has recently completed volume 3 of the six-volume Oxford University Press *Edward Thomas: Prose Writings* (forthcoming 2018). He has won prizes in major poetry competitions including first prize in both the Cardiff International Poetry Competition in 1995 and the Peterloo Poets Open Poetry Competition in 2001. He has been Chair of the editorial board of Wales's leading literary journal, *New Welsh Review* and Programme Advisor to Cambridge University's MSt in Creative Writing; he is currently an Affiliated Lecturer of Cambridge University's Institute of Continuing Education, and Director of its Summer Programme in Creative Writing. He is Director of Academic Programmes for the Financial Times Oxford Literary Festival and in 2014 spent four months as Writer in Residence at Arizona State University.

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## Course programme

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### Friday

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

19:00 Dinner

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

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

**Group A - Non-fiction I – *Whose life is it?* - with Lizzie Speller**

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

**Group C - Fiction I – *Storytelling* - with Sarah Burton**

22:00 Terrace bar open for informal discussion

### Saturday

07:30 Breakfast

09:00 – 10:30 Session 2

**Group A - Non-fiction II – *True Stories* - with Lizzie Speller**

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

**Group C - Fiction II – *Voices* - with Sarah Burton**

10:30 Coffee

11:00 – 12:30 Session 3

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

**Group B - Fiction I – *Storytelling* - with Sarah Burton**

**Group C - Non-fiction I – *Whose life is it?* - with Lizzie Speller**

13:00 Lunch

14:30 – 16:00	Session 4  <b>Group A - Poetry II – <i>The Power of Poetry</i> - with Jem Poster</b>  <b>Group B - Fiction II – <i>Voices</i> - with Sarah Burton</b>  <b>Group C - Non-fiction II – <i>True Stories</i> - with Lizzie Speller</b>
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	Session 5  <b>Group A - Fiction I – <i>Storytelling</i> - with Sarah Burton</b>  <b>Group B - Non-fiction I – <i>Whose life is it?</i> - with Lizzie Speller</b>  <b>Group C - Poetry I – <i>The Sources of Poetry</i> - with Jem Poster</b>
18:00 – 18:30	Free
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	Session 6  <b>Optional informal session where tutors will read from and discuss their own current writing projects.</b>
21:30	Terrace bar open for informal discussion
<b>Sunday</b>	
07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Session 7  <b>Group A - Fiction II – <i>Voices</i> - with Sarah Burton</b>  <b>Group B - Non-fiction II – <i>True Stories</i> - with Lizzie Speller</b>  <b>Group C - Poetry II – <i>The Power of Poetry</i> - with Jem Poster</b>
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Session 8  <b><i>Drawing it all together</i> – all three groups will reform as one to reflect on the weekend’s work and consider future directions.</b>
12:45	Lunch

**The course will disperse after lunch**

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## Course syllabus

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

### **Aims:**

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

### **Content:**

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

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

### **Presentation of the course:**

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

### **Outcomes:**

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

- fiction
- non-fiction
- poetry.

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## Reading and resources list

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

**Note** Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

*Information correct as of:* 06 March 2018