



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Institute of Continuing Education

Undergraduate Certificate in Creative Writing: Fiction and Writing for Performance

2019 – 2020

Course code: 1920CCR107

COURSE GUIDE

Welcome to the **Undergraduate Certificate in Creative Writing: Fiction and Writing for Performance (formerly Undergraduate Certificate 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 4 (i.e. first-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 skills;
2. provide opportunities for students to experiment with their own writing;
3. introduce students to the possibilities of transferring techniques between different genres;
4. build students' confidence by demystifying the art of writing and encouraging students to establish their own working routine;
5. encourage students to contextualise their writing within a variety of traditions and genres.

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

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.

Tutors

Craig Baxter

Craig is a dramatist writing primarily for the stage but also for screen and radio. Most recently: Trumpington Voices (community verbatim play), The Little Big Band (musical book, Netherhall School), Eight Days That Made Rome (Channel 5), Lady Anna: All at Sea (Cambridge Arts Theatre, Bath Theatre Royal and Number One Tour), Pictures of You (Cambridge Science Festival), The Man Who Walked Through Walls (Perse Girls), Somniloquy (Hotbed Festival, Soho Theatre), Let Newton Be! (Faraday Institute, Cambridge, El Paso), Re:Design (Darwin Correspondence Project, Madrid, Berlin, Istanbul), Like Confessing a Murder (BBC Radio 3), Monogamy (Riverside Studies, BBC Radio 4). His play The Altruists won the fourth international Stage Script Competition for Best New Play About Science or Technology.

Emily Winslow

Emily Winslow is an American living in Cambridge. She's written a series of Cambridge-set crime novels (*The Whole World*, *The Start of Everything*, *The Red House*, and, in 2018, *Still Life* about which *The Washington Post* has written: "[Winslow is] brilliant at portraying the ragged fragments of these lives). What emerges isn't a single killer with motive and means, but a tangle of stories crossing and colliding, stray intersections of incidents and accidents, misunderstandings and misreadings, all thanks to the myopia of individual perspectives and the self-centeredness of individual desires." She is also the author of the memoir *Jane Doe January*, which has been called "powerfully redemptive" (and "potently rendered" (Kirkus). She's written personal essays for *The Guardian* and *The New York Times*, and for six years was a logic puzzle designer for *Games* magazine in the US.

Administrative staff

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

Academic Centre Co-ordinator: Lisa Hitch, Institute of Continuing Education, University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ, 01223 746212, lisa.hitch@ice.cam.ac.uk

Academic Centre Administrator: Olivia Desborough, Institute of Continuing Education, University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ, 01223 761278, olivia.desborough@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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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 18/19 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 01 May 2019

Syllabus for first unit
Michaelmas term 2019

Introduction to creative writing

Start date	1 October 2019	End date	10 December 2019
Day	Tuesday	Time	7.15pm – 9.15pm
Venue	Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ		
Tutor	Elizabeth Speller	No of meetings	10 evening classes plus 2 Saturday day-schools (9 November and 30 November 2019)

Aims

- To introduce students to the contrasting yet complementary disciplines of short and long form fiction.
- To foster an understanding of the literary tools available to the fiction writer with particular reference to short form fiction.
- To help students to apply, and experiment with, these strategies in their own writing.

Content

This unit will begin by asking what may seem obvious questions, such as: what is the purpose of fiction? Why has it endured as such a popular medium? What is the relationship between plot and character? What makes a story compelling? What do readers look for when they open the pages of a novel or short story? What is the nature of the hunger that we, as writers, seek to satisfy? What makes an idea ripe for expression as prose fiction, rather than the subject of a play or a poem or a song? Where do we draw the line (if we draw a line at all) between prose and poetry, prose and drama? If a picture is worth a thousand words, why do we need fiction at all?

We will then turn to the main focus for this term: short fiction and will consider what, apart from length, are the defining characteristics of the short story. Areas covered will include: theme, plot, narrative voice, characterisation, determining and evoking a sense of time and place, tension/drama, dialogue, arresting openings and releasing endings, editing. A consideration of all these aspects, as well as informing our understanding of how short stories work, provide an introduction to writing longer fiction. Building students' confidence as writers will be a key consideration in this, the first unit of the Certificate.

Presentation of the unit

Classes will generally begin with a presentation by the tutor and may be followed by collective reading of a relevant text, followed by group discussion. Students will then be presented with a writing challenge (sometimes in groups, sometimes as individuals) which encourages them to apply a literary strategy they have observed in the piece under scrutiny to their own work. Classes are structured and demanding and the aims of the challenges are clear, but the atmosphere is informal, supportive and encouraging of experimentation.

Provisional weekly lecture list

Session	Date	Indicative content
Lecture 1	1 October 2019	Introduction to short fiction: identifying themes
Lecture 2	8 October 2019	Developing your idea. Constructing character.
Lecture 3	15 October 2019	Point of view. Finding a narrative 'voice'.
<i>Half-term break</i>	<i>22 October 2019</i>	<i>No class</i>
Lecture 4	29 October 2019	Writing dialogue: making your characters speak.
Lecture 5	5 November 2019	Creating a sense of time and place: descriptive writing.
Saturday day-school	9 November 2019	Guest speaker
Lecture 6	12 November 2019	Structuring your plot: creating drama and sustaining suspense.
Lecture 7	19 November 2019	Beginnings and endings: getting the reader's attention.
Lecture 8	26 November 2019	Story genres
Saturday day-school	30 November 2019	Guest speaker
Lecture 9	3 December 2019	Editing and revising.
Lecture 10	10 December 2019	From short form to long form – what are the differences?

Learning Outcomes

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

- (i) identify key elements in how successful short stories are created;
- (ii) demonstrate the ability to deploy literary techniques to create appropriate effects;
- (iii) apply the strategies they have observed in action to their own writing of short fiction.

Student assessment

Students will be expected to submit one or more pieces of short fiction totalling between 3,000 – 4,000 words. This must be the student's own original work and the subject, direction and context of the assignment **must be agreed in advance with the tutor.**

Closing date for the submission of assignments: Tuesday 7 January 2020 by 12.00 noon GMT*

*Greenwich Mean Time

Reading and resource list

The following are all texts which will be discussed during the course of the unit. They serve as an introduction to a variety of styles of short fiction, classic and contemporary. It is recommended that students should explore the list as widely as possible, but they are not expected to have read every one. Extracts from other works will be distributed in advance of each seminar.

Editor	Title	Publisher and date
Byatt, S	<i>The Oxford Book of English Short Stories</i>	Oxford: OUP, 1998
Davis, Lydia	<i>Can't and Won't</i>	London: Penguin, 2015
Gebbie, V (ed.)	<i>Short Circuit: A Guide to the Art of the Short Story</i>	London: Salt, 2013
Hall, Sarah	<i>Madame Zero</i>	London: Faber & Faber, 2017
Highsmith, P	<i>Eleven</i>	London: Bloomsbury, 2007
McGregor, Jon	<i>This Isn't the Sort of Thing that Happens to Someone Like You</i>	London: Bloomsbury, 2012
Miller, D (ed.)	<i>That Glimpse of Truth: the 100 Finest Short Stories Ever Written</i>	London: Head of Zeus, 2017
Murakami, H	<i>Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman</i>	London: Vintage, 2007
Newland, C & Hershman, T (eds.)	<i>Writing Short Stories</i>	London: Bloomsbury, 2014
Strout, E	<i>Olive Kitteridge</i>	London: Simon & Schuster, 2011

Syllabus for second unit
Lent term 2020

Approaches to long fiction

Start date	14 January 2020	End date	24 March 2020
Day	Tuesday	Time	7.15pm – 9.15pm
Venue	Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ		
Tutor	Emily Winslow	No of meetings	10 evening classes plus 2 Saturday day-schools (15 February and 21 March 2020)

Aims

- To introduce students to the techniques of writing longer fiction and to enable them to use these skills in furthering their own writing;
- To explore variety within the novel form, and to consider different kinds of innovation and experimentation;
- To examine the potential for fiction to explore social, political, and psychological issues.

Content

The aim of this unit is to introduce students to the challenges of writing longer fiction. The novel will be the main focus of this, although the novella and long short story will also be considered. Students will be invited to explore a range of works that reflect different aspects of these forms. The course will introduce techniques which could apply equally to both the 'literary' novel and the more 'popular' variety. These will include: researching and structuring a story; determining time and place; inventing convincing characters; conveying point of view; using dialogue effectively; describing different geographical and historical settings; sustaining suspense and creating drama; writing arresting openings, and providing satisfying conclusions. There will be an emphasis overall on ways of using language effectively, and on developing an individual writing style.

Presentation of the unit

Students will be asked to read selected works in advance, for discussion in class. Homework will be set based on the particular topic for each week's class.

Each class will begin with a brief presentation of that week's topic by the tutor, and will involve discussion and analysis of this in relation to the set text, followed by in-class exercises. Each class is designed to expose the student to new ideas or techniques and to encourage them to experiment in a relaxed, supportive and friendly atmosphere. There will also be the chance to share work on the class's Virtual Learning Environment.

Provisional weekly lecture list

Session	Date	Indicative content
Lecture 1	14 January 2020	How to begin – planning or exploring? Finding a central conflict that inspires you.
Lecture 2	21 January 2020	Developing characters through which to tell your story
Lecture 3	28 January 2020	Point of view. Finding a narrative voice.
Lecture 4	4 February 2020	Writing dialogue: making your characters speak.
Lecture 5	11 February 2020	Creating a sense of time and place: effective descriptive writing.
Saturday day-school	15 February 2020	
<i>Half-term break</i>	<i>18 February 2020</i>	<i>No class</i>
Lecture 6	25 February 2020	Structuring your plot. Creating drama and sustaining suspense.
Lecture 7	3 March 2020	Minor characters and sub-plots – how important are these?
Lecture 8	10 March 2020	Beginnings and endings: how to get your reader's attention – and keep it.
Lecture 9	17 March 2020	Editing and revising – the importance of the 'blue pencil'.
Saturday day-school	21 March 2020	
Lecture 10	24 March 2020	What kind of novels get published, and why? Considering different genres.

Learning Outcomes

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

- (i) identify key techniques in writing fiction;
- (ii) demonstrate the ability to employ these techniques effectively in their own writing;
- (iii) apply the strategies they have observed in action to their own fiction writing.

Student assessment

Students will be expected to read the specified texts, contribute to the discussion in class, participate in class exercises and prepare original work in advance of the seminar.

In addition, students will be expected to submit a 3,000 – 4,000 word first chapter of a novel, relating to a genre of their choice. **Students must discuss and agree the title with the tutor beforehand.** The submission may be a self-contained story, or a chapter from a novel.

*Closing date for the submission of assignments: Tuesday 14 April 2020 by 12.00 BST**

*British Summer Time

Reading and resource list

Your enjoyment of the course and progress on it will be greatly enhanced by reading as many of the texts as possible. If you are short of time please, at least, read the starred books.

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Browne, R & King, D	<i>Self-Editing for Fiction Writers</i>	London: HarperCollins, 1993
Crichton, Michael	<i>Jurassic Park</i>	Arrow, 2015
Haddon, Mark	<i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time</i>	London: Vintage, 2004
King, S	<i>On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft</i>	London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1999
Lamott, A	<i>Bird by Bird: Introductions on Writing and Life</i>	New York: Anchor, 1994
Paver, Michael	<i>Dark Matter</i>	London: Orion, 2011
Schwarz, C	<i>All is Vanity</i>	London: Headline, 2002
Tartt, D	<i>The Secret History</i>	London: Penguin, 1992
Van Praag, Menna	<i>The House at the End of Hope Street</i>	London: Allison & Busby, 2015
Winslow, Emily	<i>The Start of Everything</i>	London: Allison & Busby, 2013

Syllabus for third unit Easter term 2020

Writing for performance

Start date	21 April 2020	End date	30 June 2020
Day	Tuesday	Time	7.15pm – 9.15pm
Venue	Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ		
Tutor	Craig Baxter	No of meetings	10 evening classes plus 2 Saturday day-schools (2 May and 27 June 2020)

Aims

- To introduce students to the techniques of writing for performance;
- To foster an understanding of the dramatic tools available to the writer, with particular reference to writing for the screen;
- To enable students to apply, and to experiment with these techniques and dramatic tools to further their own writing.

Content

The aim of this unit is introduce students to the “nuts and bolts” of writing for performance. Writing for the screen will be the main focus, although developing work for stage and radio will also be considered. Students will be exposed to a range of texts that explore and reflect different aspects of the writing process across the different platforms. The course will introduce techniques that can be applied to the development of a short performance piece regardless of form, genre or platform. These will include: researching and generating ideas; developing stories through character; identifying and developing universal and specific themes; writing character-centred dialogue; evoking a sense of time and place; creating audience engagement; creating and sustaining tension and conflict. A consideration and exploration of these and other aspects of the writing process will serve as an introduction to writing for performance.

Presentation of the unit

Each class will begin with a brief presentation or micro-lecture on that week’s focal topic by the tutor. This will be followed by one or more of the following: a collective viewing / reading / analysis of a supporting text (critical or filmic); group discussion; an in-class (individual or small group) writing exercise; a review of work-in-progress.

Homework will be set based on the focal topic for that particular week to enable the student to develop his/her own writing for performance project across the unit. Students will be encouraged to share their work on the class’s Virtual Learning Environment.

Provisional weekly lecture list

Session	Date	Content
Lecture 1	21 April 2020	Essential elements of writing for performance – History of writing for performance
Lecture 2	28 April 2020	Elements of dramatic stories – Ideas, premises, concepts
Saturday day-school	2 May 2020	Special topic. Guest speaker to be confirmed
Lecture 3	5 May 2020	Character-based stories? – Character types
Lecture 4	12 May 2020	Script formats – Openings
Lecture 5	19 May 2020	Stories vs plots
<i>Half-term break</i>	<i>26 May 2020</i>	<i>No class</i>
Lecture 6	2 June 2020	Scenes, situations and character agendas
Lecture 7	9 June 2020	Writing dialogue
Lecture 8	16 June 2020	Dramatic devices
Lecture 9	23 June 2020	Redrafting
Saturday day-school	27 June 2020	Special topic. Guest speaker to be confirmed
Lecture 10	30 June 2020	Putting it all together! An opportunity to review / workshop work-in progress

Learning Outcomes

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

- (i) identify key elements / techniques in writing for performance (screen, stage, or radio);
- (ii) demonstrate the ability to employ these elements / techniques effectively in their own writing;
- (iii) analyse the effectiveness of these elements / techniques in their own writing and the writing of others.

Student assessment

Students will be expected to read and view the specified texts, contribute to class discussion, participate in class exercises and prepare original work in advance of the seminar / workshop.

In addition, students will be expected to submit a short screenplay OR stage play OR radio play in a genre of their choice. The word length should be 3,000-4,000 words or equivalent, appropriate to the form. **This must be the student's own original work and the subject, genre and platform must be agreed in advance with the tutor.**

Students are expected to submit their assignments online and feedback on assignments is delivered online.

Closing date for the submission of assignments: Tuesday 21 July 2020 by 12.00 noon BST*

* British Summer Time

Reading and resource list

Reading is an important part of the course and of becoming a good writer. No one book is compulsory but students are urged to read as widely as possible.

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Cowgill, Linda J	<i>Writing Short Films: Structure and content for Screenwriters</i>	Lone Eagle, 2005
Dancyger, Ken & Cooper, Pat	<i>Writing the Short Film</i>	Focal Press, 1994
Egri, Lajos	<i>The Art of Dramatic Writing</i>	Simon & Schuster, 1960
Fountain, Tim	<i>So You Want to Be a Playwright?: How to Write a Play and Get It Produced</i>	Nick Hern Books, 2007
MacLoughlin, Sean	<i>Writing for Radio: 2nd edition: How to Write Plays, Features and Short Stories That Get You on Air (Successful writing).</i>	How to Books, 2001
Parker, Philip	<i>The Art and Science of Screenwriting</i>	Intellect, 1998
SEAM (Shared Experience Art Machine)	<i>Story Design: Storyteller's Handbook for Writers and Dream Merchants</i>	SEAM, 2012
Yorke, John	<i>Into the Woods</i>	Penguin, 2013

TIMETABLE

Michaelmas 2019: Introduction to creative writing

Lecture 1	1 October 2019
Lecture 2	8 October 2019
Lecture 3	15 October 2019
<i>Half-term break</i>	<i>22 October 2019</i>
Lecture 4	29 October 2019
Lecture 5	5 November 2019
Saturday day-school	9 November 2019
Lecture 6	12 November 2019
Lecture 7	19 November 2019
Lecture 8	26 November 2019
Saturday day-school	30 November 2019
Lecture 9	3 December 2019
Lecture 10	10 December 2019

Lent 2020: Approaches to long fiction

Lecture 1	14 January 2020
Lecture 2	21 January 2020
Lecture 3	28 January 2020
Lecture 4	4 February 2020
Lecture 5	11 February 2020
Saturday day-school	15 February 2020
<i>Half-term break</i>	<i>18 February 2020</i>
Lecture 6	25 February 2020
Lecture 7	3 March 2020
Lecture 8	10 March 2020
Lecture 9	17 March 2020
Saturday day-school	21 March 2020
Lecture 10	24 March 2020

Easter 2020: Writing for performance

Lecture 1	21 April 2020
Lecture 2	28 April 2020
Saturday day-school	2 May 2020
Lecture 3	5 May 2020
Lecture 4	12 May 2020
Lecture 5	19 May 2020
<i>Half-term break</i>	<i>26 May 2020</i>
Lecture 6	2 June 2020
Lecture 7	9 June 2020
Lecture 8	16 June 2020
Lecture 9	23 June 2020
Saturday day-school	27 June 2020
Lecture 10	30 June 2020

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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