

Creative writing: the art of editing

Date	10 th November, 2019	Time	10:00 – 16:45
Venue	Madingley Hall Madingley Cambridge		
Tutor	Menna van Praag	Course code	1920NDX206

Director of Academic Centres Dr Corinne Boz

For further information on this course, please contact Head of Academic Centre Administration
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Tutor biography

Menna van Praag has lived in Cambridge all her life, except when she defected to Oxford to study Modern History at Balliol College. Her first novella - an autobiographical tale about a waitress who aspires to be a writer - *Men, Money & Chocolate* has been translated into 26 languages. Her magical realism novels are all set among the colleges, cafes and bookshops of Cambridge. All titles are published by Allison and Busby: *The House at the End of Hope Street* (2014), *The Dress Shop of Dreams* (2015), *The Witches of Cambridge* (2016), *The Lost Art of Letter Writing* (2017) & *The Patron Saint of Lost Souls* (2018). Menna is currently working on her upcoming fantasy trilogy, *The Sisters Grimm*. The first book in the series will be published in 2020 by Transworld (UK) & HarperVoyager (US). She tutors students in creative writing at writing retreats and teaches workshops at book festivals internationally, also working freelance for institutions such as Hay House publishers & the School of Drama & the Creative Arts. She has been a guest tutor on the Creative Writing Certificate at Madingley Hall since 2013.

Course programme

09:30	Terrace bar open for pre-course tea/coffee
10:00 – 11:15	How to reduce your novel by 10% and why you should.
11:15	Coffee
11:45 – 13:00	Sharpening your scenes: what to cut and what to keep.
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:15	Session 3: Distilling from the general to the specific.
15:15	Tea
15:30 – 16:45	Are you ready to submit?
16:45	Day-school ends

Course syllabus

Aims:

The course aims to equip students with:

- an understanding of judicious editing – why brevity is usually (but not always) better
- an ability to distil their writing into its most brilliant essence
- the skills to edit their own writing as an editor/agent would.

Content:

Gone are the days when one could submit the first (or even fifth) draft of a manuscript to an agent or publisher and hope to be taken on purely on the basis of your excellent potential. Nowadays one must polish one's manuscript until it shines before daring to submit. So, if you've finished your first draft and want to prepare for publication, this workshop will give you the skills to edit your novel to the necessary standards.

In this day school we'll discuss the stories we're currently working on and talk about when might be the right time to edit – during the process of writing the first draft, or after. We'll consider the rules for excellent editing and start to develop the skills of professional editing in practical exercises. As a result of the day school students should feel confident about editing their own work. We'll also share effective strategies for submitting to agents once the editing process is complete.

Presentation of the course:

The course will include lectures, guided group discussions, activities based around text extracts and writing exercises. Classes are relaxed but focused. The atmosphere is supportive and designed to build confidence and develop skills through a combination of reading, discussions and practical exercises.

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

As a result of the course students should be able to:

- understand judicious editing – why brevity is usually (but not always) better
- distil their writing into its most brilliant essence
- edit their own writing as an editor/agent would

Reading and resources list

No preparatory reading is required. Extracts of texts will be provided in the class on the day. But, some knowledge of the following texts would enhance participants' experience of the course.

Author	Title	Publisher and date
King, Stephen	<i>On Writing</i>	Hodder & Stoughton (2000)
Blatt, Ben	<i>Nabokob's Favourite Word Is Mauve</i>	Simon & Schuster (2017)
Mittlemark, Howard and Sandra Newman	<i>How Not to Write a Novel</i>	Penguin (2009)
Strunk, William and E. B. White	<i>Elements of Style</i>	Grammer (2016)

Additional information

Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:
<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

Refreshments

Tea and coffee and lunch will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk or +44 (0)1223 746262.

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: 17 May 2019