



Introduction to creative writing

Start date	28 June 2019	End date	30 June 2019
Venue	Madingley Hall Madingley Cambridge		
Tutor	Derek Niemann	Course code	1819NRX042

Director of ISP and LL Sarah Ormrod

For further information on this course, please contact the Lifelong Learning team Zara Kuckelhaus, Fleur Kerrecoe
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To book See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Derek Niemann is a freelance writer and editor specialising in natural history. In 2012, he interrupted a career writing about bees and butterflies to begin researching and writing a family history story that was published in 2015 as *A Nazi in the Family* (Short Books), based on the SS grandfather he never knew. His most recent non-fiction book *A Tale of Trees: The battle to save Britain's ancient woodland* was published in October 2016 (Short Books). Derek's other non-fiction title was *Birds in a Cage* (Short Books, 2011), telling the story of four Prisoner of War birdwatchers in World War II. Derek is a country diary columnist for the Guardian, and edits the magazine of the Small Woods Association. Formerly he was children's magazines editor for the RSPB (1998-2014) and has written a number of wildlife books for children.

Course programme

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	From a potato to an octopus. A worry-free guide to creative writing
22:00	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Whose story is it anyway? – finding your writing voice
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Building your world – mastering descriptive skills
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	Plotting the storyline – how to build your narrative
18:00 – 18:30	Free
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	Divertimento – an evening exercise playing with words
21:30	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Getting into character – how to handle personality
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Nuts and bolts – a round-up session in which we look at techniques for improving style and the all-important editing process.
12:45	Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

- 1 Help build a positive, joy-filled, fear-free approach to creative writing within a mutually supportive environment.
- 2 Enable participants to gain a broad understanding of the various techniques that lift dull prose off the page and make it zing.
- 3 Give students the confidence through stimulating practical exercises to stretch and develop their writing talents, both during the course and beyond.

Content:

The course sets out to cover some of the basic ingredients that make up creative writing in both fiction and non-fiction. These include description, character, plot structure and narrative voice. Students will be encouraged to share their work on the understanding that these are rough drafts and not polished perfection; and everyone can learn from everyone else. Though the emphasis will be on practical exercises and sheer enjoyment of writing, we'll also scrutinise and critique different types of published writing, gaining insights from an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses.

Presentation of the course:

The course will involve a range of practical exercises, study of both fiction and non-fiction, and a good deal of class discussion.

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

- 1 Students should complete the course having gained more confidence in their writing ability.
- 2 Participants should feel more comfortable in exercising their writing muscles in different ways.
3. Participants should leave the course with a desire to continue writing creatively beyond the confines of the classroom.

Reading and resources list

Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. Any essential reading is marked with an asterisk *

Author	Title	Publisher and date
King, Stephen	<i>On Writing</i>	Hodder & Stoughton (2000)
Elborough, Travis, Gordon, Helen, Guidone, Joey	<i>Being a Writer</i>	Frances Lincoln (2017)

Website addresses

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: 29 May 2019