



Having fun with writing

Start date	21 Jun 2019	End date	23 Jun 2019
Venue	Madingley Hall Madingley Cambridge		
Tutor	Dr Sarah Burton	Course code	1819NRX040
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

Dr 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), a page-to-stage guide, *How to Put on a Community Play* (2011) and a spoof, *The Complete and Utter History of the World By Samuel Stewart, Aged 9* (2013). Sarah has also written and produced seven community plays. From 2013 to 2017 she was Course Director of ICE's Master's degree programme in Creative Writing; she continues to teach for the Institute and now also runs its Writers' Retreats.

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	Adding imagination to memory
22:00	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Getting to grips with genre
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Creating three-dimensional characters
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	Seducing – and keeping – your reader
18:00 – 18:30	Free
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	Making dialogue speak
21:30	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Creating a satisfying plot
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Common problems and useful tips
12:45	Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

- To take the stress and anxiety out of creative writing, emphasising the freedoms fiction provides
- To equip students with the basic literary strategies at their disposal and to view these as tools rather than rules

Content:

Students will have the opportunity to see how they have the basis for creative writing in material from their own lives and how they use their own experiences as a reference for creating fiction. They will begin to see genre not as a straightjacket but as an opportunity to find the right mode for the right story. They will learn the most effective ways to let a reader get to know a character and how to make dialogue do a lot of the work. There will also be attention paid to how to recruit a reader – and keep them on side – by shaping plots which mean there is always something at stake for someone the reader cares about. They will go home with many useful tips on how to establish and maintain a writing habit, if this is their objective, and how to deal with problems which arise in their own writing.

Presentation of the course:

Typical classes begin with a presentation by the tutor, group reading of a piece of writing, followed by class discussion before embarking on a writing exercise. There will also be group work. Classroom atmosphere is calm, good-natured, mutually supportive and generally tending towards building confidence and viewing creative writing as something that can delight the writer, as well as the reader.

Outcomes:

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

- Approach their own writing with a renewed sense of confidence
- Apply the literary strategies they have experimented with in class, at home, to the advantage of their writing
- Rediscover writing as a pleasurable and constructive activity

Reading and resources list

No preparation for the course is required, however it may whet your appetite for broadening your reading. An excellent way of covering a lot of ground in terms of different genres and styles in bite-size chunks is to read excellent flash fiction. The quantity of flash fiction available is vast and the overall standard is not high; I'm therefore recommending two collections I use a lot in my own teaching and which provide abundant food for thought about what writing can be.

Hazuka, Tom, Thomas, Denise, Thomas, James (eds), *Flash Fiction: 72 Very Short Stories* (New York: WW Norton, 1992).

Thomas, James, Shapard, Robert, Merrill, Christopher, *Flash Fiction International - Very Short Stories from Around the World*, (New York: W W Norton, 2015).

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