



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

Institute of Continuing Education

---

**Undergraduate Diploma in Creative  
Writing: Advanced Fiction and Writing for  
Performance**

**2020 – 2021**

**Course code: 2021DCR100**

**COURSE GUIDE**

---

Welcome to the **Undergraduate Diploma in Creative Writing: Advanced Fiction and Writing for Performance**, a University of Cambridge award offered by the Institute of Continuing Education (ICE). The Diploma is taught and awarded at FHEQ level 5 (i.e. second-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 guide.

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;
2. develop students' critical skills in assessing the work of published authors and their own writing;
3. provide opportunities for students to experiment with their own work and to build their confidence;
4. extend students' knowledge of the transferability of techniques between different genres;
5. encourage students to contextualise their writing within a variety of traditions and genres;
6. provide opportunities for progression to further study in the area of creative writing.

### 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 learning<sup>1</sup>. 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.

<sup>1</sup> 'Academic credit in higher education in England – an introduction'. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2009

### Teaching staff

#### Course Director

**Elizabeth Speller** has a Cambridge MA and MPhil. Her work includes *The Return of Captain John Emmett* (Virago, 2011, Orange Book of the Month) and *At Break of Day* (Virago, 2014, CNY State One Read 2015). Her non-fiction includes *Following Hadrian* (Hodder/OUP, 2003) and a memoir, *The Sunlight on the Garden* (Granta, 2007). 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.

## Tutors

The course will be taught by a team of experienced tutors with teaching and research interests in diverse areas of critical and creative work. The most up-to-date lecture list for each unit including any guest lecturers will be published in the course's Virtual Learning Environment. Tutors on this course will likely include:

**Craig Baxter** 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), 'Somnolouquy' (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.

**Rick Harvey** is a screenwriter, story design consultant, lecturer and mentor. Since gaining an MA Screenwriting & Research qualification from the London College of Communication in 2001, he has storylined for *Family Affairs* (Talkback Thames/Channel 5), developed projects for Hewland International and Frenzy Films, written a slate of short films and "spec" features, mentored on First Light, Media Box and BFI projects and written and developed feature screenplays for EON Productions. He was trained by the UK Film Council to devise, develop and deliver industry-standard courses on screenwriting and cross-platform story design, and he lectures regularly on various aspects of the writing process. Rick is currently adapting one of his screenplays, *Shadowplay*, into a six-part serial for TV, writing and developing an interactive conspiracy Thriller, *Heretic[s]* for TELL/Settle Stories, and working as a module leader/mentor at Raindance and as a mentor for BCre8ive.

**Claire McGlasson** is an author and journalist whose debut novel *The Rapture* (Faber and Faber), inspired by the true story of an Edwardian cult of women, was a Sunday Times Book of the Year. She reports for *ITV News*, appears on programmes such as *BBC 4's Front Row*, is a regular chair and guest at literary festivals and writes articles for publications including *The Guardian* and *The Big Issue*. She is currently writing her second novel for Faber.

**Menna van Praag** was born in Cambridge and studied Modern History at Balliol College, Oxford. She's the author of five magical realism novels: *The House at the End of Hope Street* (2013), *The Dress Shop of Dreams* (2015), *The Witches of Cambridge* (2016), *The Lost Art of Letter Writing* (2017), *The Patron Saint of Lost Souls* (2019) all set in Cambridge. Her first novella *Men, Money & Chocolate* was translated into 26 languages. The first instalment of her fantasy trilogy, *The Sisters Grimm*, was published in 2020. She's a Creative Writing tutor who teaches for institutions including ICE, Hay House Publishers and The Cambridge School of Drama & the Creative Arts. She's also worked as a script reader and editor for BBC Wales, BBC Films and Box TV and for The Wylie Literary Agency.

**Emily Winslow** is the author of a series of Cambridge-set crime novels: *The Whole World* (Allison & Busby, 2013), *The Start of Everything* (Allison & Busby, 2013), *The Red House* (Allison & Busby, 2015), and *Look For Her* (Allison & Busby, 2017). 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* (William Morrow, 2016), which has been called “powerfully redemptive” (Publishers Weekly) 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:** Sarah Blakeney, Institute of Continuing Education, University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ, 01223 760865

**Academic Centre Co-ordinator:** Lisa Hitch, Institute of Continuing Education, University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ, 01223 746212

**Academic Centre Administrator:** TBC, Institute of Continuing Education, University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ, 01223 761278,

Email: [creativewriting@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:creativewriting@ice.cam.ac.uk)

### Venue

The Institute of Continuing Education’s administrative headquarters are at Madingley Hall, an elegant country house built in the 16th century and set in gardens of about seven acres, designed in the 18th century by Capability Brown. Please visit [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk) and [www.madingleyhall.co.uk](http://www.madingleyhall.co.uk) for further information.

### Contact details of ICE

Institute of Continuing Education  
University of Cambridge  
Madingley Hall  
Madingley  
Cambridge  
CB23 8AQ  
T: 01223 746222  
[www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk)  
[ug-awards@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:ug-awards@ice.cam.ac.uk)

*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 20/21 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 July 2020*

Syllabus for first unit  
Michaelmas term 2020

---

# Introduction to Fiction

---

<b>Start date</b>	19 October 2020	<b>End date</b>	14 December 2020
<b>Day</b>	Mondays and Saturdays	<b>Time</b>	7.15pm -9.15pm Mondays
<b>Venue</b>	Remote delivery		
<b>Tutors</b>	Elizabeth Speller Claire McGlasson	<b>No of meetings</b>	9 evening classes plus 2 Saturday day-schools (14 November and 12 December 2020).  Saturdays 11am – 4pm (with break 1-2pm)

## Aims

- To expand students' knowledge of different approaches to writing prose fiction in order to inform their own choices and augment their technical skills.
- To explore what a writer can learn from the works of very different authors and from several periods by analysing a range of novels, or extracts from fiction.
- To encourage confidence in experimentation and the development of strategies to meet potential technical challenges in creative work.

## Content

This course assumes some experience of writing and basic writing skills and a reasonable breadth of reading. The course will focus on novels and short stories to help students develop a lively and original style. Fiction writing is a craft which brings together the psychology and creative experience of each individual with a range of techniques and approaches that can be taught, and also amplified by critical reading. The course will include mini lectures, writing tasks, discussions about homework and workshops, where students' work can be explored in smaller groups.

Seminar style exploration of individual topics usually fill the morning sessions, with writing exercises and discussion of individual experiences in creative writing. In the afternoon we shall discuss the set books for the day and, on some days, have a visiting speaker.

Classes will build on the foundation of students' existing writing skills to explore more complex techniques for identifying a potential story: choosing its form, and establishing its unique voice, creating a coherent sense of time and place, keeping dramatic control, and creating pace, conflict, mood. This includes drawing on a wider creative imagination, including music, sound and art.

### Presentation of the unit

This unit will be taught through a series of informal seminars. You will use close reading, discussion and practical writing exercises to explore different approaches to fiction. Each class is designed to expose you to new ideas or techniques and to encourage you to experiment in a relaxed, supportive and friendly atmosphere. There will also be the chance to share work on the class's password-protected Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

All teaching will be carried out remotely. We will "meet" via live video conferencing and guest speakers will also join us by video, usually from their home or office. There may be additional, pre-recorded presentations for you to watch between classes. All our tutors have experience of teaching remotely.

### Provisional lecture list

Date	Session	Indicative content
Lecture 1	19 October, 2020	Introduction and meeting each other. What to expect and how the journey starts.
Lecture 2	26 October 2020	What's the idea? What kind of story can it tell? Read in advance <i>Olive Kitteridge</i> by Elizabeth Strout.
Lecture 3	2 November 2020	Plot and story. What's the difference?
Lecture 4	9 November 2020	Characters who live in the imagination
Saturday day school (11am-1pm, 2-4pm)	14 November 2020	Words to say it: dialogue Workshop
Lecture 5	16 November 2020	Brushstrokes: setting the scene Read in advance <i>This Isn't the Sort of Thing that Happens to Someone Like You</i> by Jon McGregor
Lecture 6	23 November 2020	Authenticity : making fiction feel like reality. Do we write about what we know or what we imagine?
Lecture 7	30 November 2020	Flash fiction and short fiction
Lecture 8	7 December 2020	From the first idea to the bookshop shelf: getting published
Saturday day school (11am-1pm, 2-4pm)	12 December 2020	Historical fiction. Read in advance: <i>The Murder of Harriet Monckton</i> by Elizabeth Haynes and <i>Silk</i> by Alessandro Barrico. Workshopping.

Lecture 9	14 December 2020	The last chapter: what have we learned; where do we go next?
-----------	------------------	--

### Learning Outcomes

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

- (i) show an awareness of how to structure and develop an extended piece of prose;
- (ii) develop skills to create a sense of place and/or time;
- (iii) assess the merits of different ideas and treatments for a fictional narrative;
- (iv) demonstrate an understanding of the link between different creative forms and ideas and how aspects of them may be used within their work.

### Student Assessment

As this is a Diploma course, equivalent at least to second-year undergraduate standard, students are required to carry out tasks between day-schools to make the most of the course. These tasks include reading books relevant to ideas to be explored in the following day-school and completing written exercises or small pieces of research. The best writers of fiction read widely and critically and although it may not be possible to obtain or read all the books suggested before each class, it is essential to read at least one.

All students are encouraged to maintain a private journal or commentary on their own writing and thoughts throughout the course. Although this will not be marked it will provide a useful resource when the student plans their critical commentary (see below).

Most seminars will encourage discussion and students should expect to contribute to these and it is hoped they will be willing to show or read out examples of their own writing.

The end-of-term assignment will be made up of two elements:

1. A creative piece of writing of between 2,500 and 3,000 words, **the title of which must be agreed with the tutor to ensure it meets the learning outcomes of the unit.** The assignment may be a chapter or section of a work of fiction, or a short story or other single piece of fiction writing. It must be an original piece of work and, ideally, developed in response to issues explored in the course.

Assignment length: 2,500- 3,000 words. Weighting: 80% of unit grade.

2. A critical commentary on the creative work submitted by the student for this module. This will give the student the opportunity to reflect on the choices made when writing their creative piece and help them to understand the process of writing. By writing the commentary the student will have a clearer idea of the extent to which they achieved what they set out to achieve and how they have been influenced by other writers. Advice about how to write a successful critical commentary will be offered during the course.

Assignment length: 1,500 words. Weighting: 20% of unit grade.

*Closing date for the submission of assignments:*

**Wednesday 6 January 2021 by 12.00 noon GMT\***

\*Greenwich Mean Time

### Reading and resource list

As fiction writers the ideal is to read as many novels as possible from all periods; ones using a wide variety of literary techniques to tell many different and diverse stories. Some may

delight you, some irritate you, some simply not work. I hope you will read most, or even all, the books on this bibliography. Books marked with an asterisk are essential reading.

<b>Editor</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Publisher and date</b>
Al Aswany, Alaa	<i>The Yacoubian Building</i>	London: Harper Perennial, 2007
Atkinson, Kate	<i>Behind the Scenes in the Museum*</i>	London: Black Swan, 1996
Barrico, Alessandro	<i>Silk*</i>	London: Canongate, 2006
Bennett, Alan	<i>The Uncommon Reader</i>	London: Contraband, 2015
Burns, Anna	<i>Milkman</i>	London: Faber, 2018
Daniel, Defoe	<i>Journal of the Plague Year</i>	London: Penguin Classics, 2006
Gibbons, Stella	<i>Cold Comfort Farm</i>	London: Penguin, 2006
Greenberg-Jephcott, Kellie	<i>Swan Song</i>	London: Windmill Books, 2019
Haynes, Elizabeth	<i>The Murder of Harriet Monckton*</i>	London: Myriad, 2019
Kingsolver, Barbara	<i>Unsheltered</i>	London: Faber, 2019
Lanchester, John	<i>Capital</i>	London: Faber, 2013
McGlasson, Claire	<i>Rapture</i>	London: Faber, 2020
Owens, Delia	<i>Where the Crawdads Sing</i>	London: Corsair, 2019
Parnell, Edward	<i>Ghostland: In Search of a Haunted Country</i>	London: William Collins, 2020
Paver, Michelle	<i>Dark Story</i>	London: Orion, 2010
Porter, Max	<i>Lanny</i>	London: Faber, 2020
Powers, Richard	<i>The Overstory</i>	London: Vintage, 2019



Robertson, Robin	<i>The Long Take</i>	London: Picador, 2019
Shafak, Elif	<i>10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World</i>	London: Penguin, 2019
Saunders, George	<i>Lincoln in the Bardo</i>	London: Random House, 2017
Shelley, Mary	<i>Frankenstein or, the Modern Prometheus</i>	London: Riverhead Books, 2017
Strout, Elizabeth	<i>Olive Kitteridge*</i>	London: Simon and Schuster, 2011
Swift, Graham	<i>Waterland</i>	London: Picador, 2010
Thomas, Bev	<i>A Good Enough Mother</i>	London: Faber, 2020
Towles, Amir	<i>A Gentleman in Moscow</i>	London: Hutchinson, 2015
Whitehead, Colson	<i>The Underground Railway</i>	London: Doubleday 2016
Woolf, Virginia	<i>Mrs Dalloway</i>	London: Wordsworth editions, 1996

Short stories:

Editor	Title	Publisher and date
Hensher, Philip	<i>The Penguin Book of the British Short Story: 2: From P.G. Wodehouse to Zadie Smith</i>	London: Penguin, 2015
Oyememi, Helen	<i>What is Not Yours is Not Yours</i>	London: Picador, 2017
McGregor, Jon	<i>This Isn't the Sort of Thing That Happens to Someone Like You*</i>	London: Bloomsbury, 2013

\* indicates required reading

Suggested additional reading to support themes in the course or students' specific interests:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/mar/04/elizabeth-strout-my-writing-day>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/feb/04/john-burnside-writing-day-ashland-and-vine>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/dec/10/my-writing-day-sarah-perry>

<http://www.ibtimes.com/breaking-bad-color-theory-subtle-symbolism-meanings-behind-colors-amcs-hit-series-1411632>

Syllabus for second unit  
Lent term 2021

---

# Crime and Fantasy Writing

---

<b>Start date</b>	4 January 2021	<b>End date</b>	8 March 2021
<b>Day</b>	Mondays and Saturdays	<b>Time</b>	7.15pm – 9.15pm Mondays
<b>Venue</b>	Remote delivery		
<b>Tutor</b>	Emily Winslow Menna van Praag	<b>No of meetings</b>	10 evening classes plus 2 Saturday day-schools (23 January and 20 February 2021).  Saturdays 11am – 4pm (with break 1-2pm)

## Aims

- Introduce students to the breadth of both crime and fantasy fiction, and to the universal writing skills underpinning both, encouraging them to use these skills in furthering their own writing.
- Analyse works from a broad spectrum of both genres, from the classic 'whodunit' to the psychologically nuanced 'whydunit'; from 'the chosen one' to magical realism.
- Examine the potential for both genres to explore social, political, and psychological issues, and to encourage students to make their own experiments with the form.

## Content

### Crime, with Emily Winslow

'An inspector calls...': the classical whodunit and so much more.

Crime narratives aren't limited to the investigative; they can focus on detectives, villains, victims, and others, and aren't limited to murder. We'll look at examples of the detective-as-hero, the varied forms a detective figure can take, and consider the myriad of other kinds of stories that can be told through the lens of crime.

We'll look at how point of view affects plot, at the breadth of possible structural options, and examine a range of storyteller perspectives—from the old-fashioned omniscient narrator to more modern 'unreliable narrators', as well as the comparative advantages of first versus third person point of view.

### Fantasy, with Menna Van Praag

"From the Fantastic to the Fantastical - the depth and breadth of Fantasy Fiction"

There are many rooms in the wild and wonderful houses of speculative fiction: high and low, urban, magical realism, portal, supernatural... And fantasy elements can be effectively

utilised in all other genres to makes for original and high-concept fiction. We will explore straight fantasy and cross-over fantasy and look at the rules that must be adhered to and those that can and should be broken.

We'll look at subverting the tropes of speculative fiction. Does all fantasy fiction centre around "The Chosen One"? We will explore the challenges to creating original protagonists (and antagonists) Examples of duologies, trilogies and stand-alone novels will be examined. We will consider ways of concluding your story so that it is satisfying, both for author and reader.

### **Presentation of the unit**

This unit will be taught through a series of informal seminars. You will use close reading, discussion and practical writing exercises to explore different approaches to crime and fantasy. Each class is designed to expose you to new ideas or techniques and to encourage you to experiment in a relaxed, supportive and friendly atmosphere. There will also be the chance to share work on the class's password-protected Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

All teaching will be carried out remotely. We will "meet" via live video conferencing and sessions will be recorded and stored on the VLE so that you can watch them if you miss a class or want to refresh your memory. All our tutors have experience of teaching remotely.

### **Provisional lecture list**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Session</b>	<b>Indicative content</b>
Lecture 1	4 January 2021	Introduction to crime fiction
Lecture 2	11 January 2021	Different kinds of detectives
Lecture 3	18 January 2021	Points of view other than the detective
Saturday day-school (11am-1pm, 2-4pm)	23 January 2021	Book discussion, guest speaker.
Lecture 4	25 January 2021	Plotting boldly
Lecture 5	1 February 2021	Finding your voice, finding your reader
Lecture 6	8 February 2021	Introduction to fantasy writing
Lecture 7	15 February 2021	Tropes and how to subvert them
Saturday day-school (11am-1pm,-2-4pm)	20 February 2021	Book discussions, guest speaker. workshoping.
Lecture 8	22 February 2021	Cross-overs
Lecture 9	1 March 2021	Duologies, trilogies and stand-alone novels
Lecture 10	8 March 2021	The satisfying ending.

### **Learning Outcomes**

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

- i) Show an understanding of the strategies within crime and fantasy;
- ii) Demonstrate that they can employ these strategies effectively in their own writing and
- iii) Analyse how the essential storytelling dynamics in crime and fantasy writing are present at some level in all fiction.

### **Student assessment**

As this is a Diploma course, equivalent at least to second-year undergraduate standard, students are required to carry out tasks between day-schools to make the most of the course. These tasks include reading books relevant to ideas to be explored in the following day-school and completing written exercises or small pieces of research.

All students are encouraged to maintain a private journal or commentary on their own writing and thoughts throughout the course. Although this will not be marked it should provide a useful resource when the student plans their critical commentary (see below). Most seminars will encourage discussion and students should expect to contribute to these and it is hoped they will be willing to show or read out examples of their own writing in a workshop situation.

The end-of-term assignment will be made up of two elements:

1. A creative piece of writing of between 2,500 and 3,000 words, the title of which **must be agreed in advance with the tutor to ensure it meets the learning outcomes of the unit**. The assignment may be **crime or fantasy**, a chapter from **a novel** or true crime book, or a short story. It must be an original piece of work and, ideally, developed in response to issues explored in the course.

Assignment length: 2,500- 3,000 words. Weighting: 80% of unit grade.

2. A critical commentary on the creative work submitted by the student for this module. This will give the student the opportunity to reflect on the choices made when writing their creative piece and help them to understand the process of writing. By writing the commentary the student will have a clearer idea of the extent to which they achieved what they set out to achieve and how they have been influenced by other writers. Advice about how to write a successful critical commentary will be offered during the course.

Assignment length: 1,500 words. Weighting: 20% of unit grade.

Closing date for the submission of assignments:

**Wednesday 31 March 2021 by 12.00 BST\***

\*British Summer Time

Please note that not every learning outcome will apply to **both** the creative assignment and the critical commentary.

## Reading and resource list

Editor	Title	Publisher and date
Busby, Sian	<i>The Cruel Mother</i>	London: Short Books, 2013
Chandler, Raymond	<i>The Big Sleep*</i>	London: Penguin, 1939
Christie, Agatha	<i>The Murder at the Vicarage*</i>	London: Harper Collins, 1930
Flynn, Gillian	<i>Gone Girl*</i>	London: W&N, 2014
Gaiman, Neil	<i>Stardust*</i>	London: Headline, 1999
Gaiman, Neil	<i>The Graveyard Book*</i>	London: Bloomsbury, 2009
Highsmith, Patricia	<i>Plotting and Writing Suspense Fiction</i>	London: Sphere, 2019
Hughes, Dorothy B	<i>In a Lonely Place*</i>	London: Penguin Classics, 2010
Larson, Erik	<i>Devil in the White City</i>	London: Bantam, 2004
McCarthy, Cormac	<i>No Country for Old Men*</i>	London: Picador, 2008
Miller, Madeline	<i>Circe*</i>	London: Bloomsbury, 2018
Morgenstern, Erin	<i>The Night Circus*</i>	London: Harvill Secker, 2011
Niffenegger, Audrey	<i>The Time Traveler's Wife*</i>	New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2003
Oates, Joyce Carol	<i>Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?*</i>	New York: W. W. Norton & Company; Reissue edition, 2012
O'Brien, Tim	<i>In the Lake of the Woods*</i>	London: Fourth Estate (reprint), 2015
Rendell, Ruth	<i>Heartstones</i>	London: Arrow, 1991

Rule, Ann	<i>Small Sacrifices</i>	London: Signet, 1987
Rule, Ann	<i>The Stranger Beside Me</i>	London: Sphere, 1994
Shapiro, B A	<i>The Art Forger</i>	New York: Algonquin Books, 2013
Tolkien, JRR	<i>The Hobbit*</i>	London: Harper Collins, 2013

\* indicates required reading. Students will be advised which texts to read for specific classes.

## Syllabus for third unit Easter term 2021

---

# Writing for Performance

---

<b>Start date</b>	5 April 2021	<b>End date</b>	15 May 2021
<b>Day</b>	Mondays and Saturdays	<b>Time</b>	7.15pm – 9.15pm Mondays
<b>Venue</b>	Remote delivery		
<b>Tutor</b>	Craig Baxter Rick Harvey	<b>No of meetings</b>	6 evening classes plus 3 Saturday day-schools (17 April and 8 and 15 May 2021).  Saturdays 11am – 4pm (with break 1-2pm)

### Aims

This unit aims to:

- introduce students to the techniques required to write for screen, radio, theatre and other platforms;
- encourage students to apply, and to experiment with, these techniques and strategies to further their own writing;
- explore strategies for students to develop their own short-form dramatic scripts;
- enable students to appraise and assess aesthetic and practical issues of adapting work for a performance-based medium.

### Content

The term “performance-based medium” encompasses a broad range of writing from traditional formats, such as film, TV, radio and the stage, to more recent platforms such as interactive stories, video games and web series. This unit will introduce students to the different conventions involved in writing for each. Students will discuss the pros and cons of each medium and how the same story may be interpreted in different ways. Examples taken from stage, screen, radio and new media works will be used to highlight and examine the techniques used by writers, and students will be encouraged to experiment with these in their own work. We will discuss the importance of theme, character, form and dialogue, to explore imaginative ways of transferring from a textual to a performance medium. This may involve changing aspects of the original text, such as point of view, thematic focus, number and nature of characters, location, period, etc. Students will be given the opportunity to develop an original short-form work or adapt an existing work from a textual medium (i.e. short story, poem, or monologue) to a performance-based one.



## Presentation of the unit

This unit will be taught through a series of informal seminars. You will use close reading, discussion and practical writing exercises to explore different approaches to writing for performance. Each class is designed to expose you to new ideas or techniques and to encourage you to experiment in a relaxed, supportive and friendly atmosphere. There will also be the chance to share work on the class's password-protected Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

All teaching will be carried out remotely. We will "meet" via live video conferencing and guest speakers will also join us by video, usually from their home or office. There may be additional, pre-recorded presentations for you to watch between classes. All our tutors have experience of teaching remotely.

## Provisional lecture list

Date	Session	Indicative content
Lecture 1	5 April 2021	Introduction to writing for performance
Lecture 2	12 April 2021	Writing for the Screen
Day school Saturday day-school (11am-1pm, 2-4pm)	17 April 2021	Short films: theme, character as story (creating a three-dimensional protagonist) and genre as tools
Lecture 3	19 April 2021	Writing for radio: how it's different
Lecture 4	26 April 2021	Writing for radio: from page to set
Lecture 5	3 May 2021	Writing for the theatre: the nuts and bolts
Saturday day-school (11am-1pm, 2-4pm)	8 May 2021	The relationship between writer, performer and audience
Lecture 6	10 May 2021	Writing for TV and Adaptation
Saturday day-school (11am-1pm, 2-4pm)	15 May 2021	Writing for TV: from pitch to pilot

## Learning Outcomes

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

- (i) demonstrate an understanding of the demands of writing for the stage, screen or radio;
- (ii) show understanding of the techniques and strategies for creating original work or adapting work for a performance-based medium;
- (iii) experiment with and apply techniques and strategies for writing for performance to further their own writing;

- (iv) Show awareness of aesthetic and practical issues in choosing material for a performance-based medium.

### Student assessment

As this is a Diploma course, equivalent at least to second-year undergraduate standard, students are required to carry out tasks between day-schools to make the most of the course. These tasks include reading books or scripts relevant to ideas to be explored in the following day-school and completing written exercises or small pieces of research. All students are encouraged to maintain a private journal or commentary on their own writing and thoughts throughout the course. Although this will not be marked it should provide a useful resource when the student plans their critical commentary (see below). Most seminars will encourage discussion and students should expect to contribute to these and it is hoped they will be willing to show or read out examples of their own writing in a workshop. The end-of-term assignment will be made up of two elements:

1. An adaptation, or an original work, of between 2,500 and 3,000 words (or the equivalent, appropriate to the form), written by the student, the title of which **must be agreed in advance with the tutor to ensure it meets the learning outcomes of the unit**. The assignment may take the form of a short radio play, stage play, screenplay, interactive story etc., or constitute the opening / first act, or section, of a longer work.

Assignment length: 2,500-3,000 words (or the equivalent, appropriate to the form).  
Weighting: 80% of unit grade.

2. A critical commentary on the creative work submitted by the student for this module. This will give the student the opportunity to reflect on the choices made when writing their creative piece and help them to understand the process of writing. By writing the commentary the student will have a clearer idea of the extent to which they achieved what they set out to achieve and how they have been influenced by other practitioners. Advice about how to write a successful critical commentary will be offered during the course.

Assignment length: 1,500 words. Weighting: 20% of unit grade.

Please note that not every learning outcome will apply to both the creative assignment and the critical commentary.

*Closing date for the submission of assignments:*

**Friday 4 June 2021 by 12.00 noon BST\***

\*British Summer Time

### Reading and resource list

Editor	Title	Publisher and date
Barber, Lynne	<i>An Education</i>	London: Penguin, 2009
Chekhov, Anton	<i>On the Harmfulness of Tobacco*</i>	Various publishers, 1886

Chekhov, Anton	<i>The Bear*</i>	Various publishers, 1886
Chekhov, Anton	<i>The Proposal*</i>	Various publishers, 1886
Egri, Lajos	<i>The Art of Dramatic Writing</i>	London: Simon & Schuster, 1960
Frensham, Raymond	<i>Teach yourself Screenwriting</i>	London: National Textbook Company, 1997
Grace, Fraser & Byley, Clare	<i>Playwriting (Writers' and Artists' Companions)</i>	London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015
Grove, Claire & Wyatt, Stephen	<i>So you want to write Radio Drama?</i>	London: Nick Hern Books, 2013
Handler Miller, Carolyn	<i>Digital Storytelling: A Creators' Guide to Interactive Entertainment</i>	London: Focal Press, 2014
Jeffreys, Stephen	<i>Playwriting</i>	London: Nick Hern Books, 2019
Krevolin, Richard	<i>How to Adapt Anything Into a Screenplay</i>	Wiley, 2003
McKee, Robert	<i>Story: Style, Structure, Substance, and the Principles of Screenwriting</i>	London: Methuen Publishing, 1998
Parker, Philip	<i>The Art &amp; Science of Screenwriting</i>	Intellect, 1998
Pratten, Robert	<i>Getting Started in Transmedia Storytelling: A Practical Guide for Beginners</i>	London: CreateSpace, 2015
Seeger, Linda	<i>The Art of Adaptation: Turning Fact and Fiction Into Films</i>	New York: Henry Holt & Co, 1992
Teddern, Sue & Warburton, Nick	<i>Writing for TV and Radio (Writers' and Artists' Companions)</i>	London: Bloomsbury, Academic, 2015
Waters, Steve	<i>The Secret Life of Plays</i>	London: Nick Hern Books, 2010
Yorke, John	<i>Into the Wood</i>	London: Penguin, 2013

\* indicates required reading. Students will be told which of these texts should be read for specific classes.

## TIMETABLE

### ***Michaelmas 2020: Introduction to fiction***

Lecture 1	19 October 2020
Lecture 2	26 October 2020
Lecture 3	2 November 2020
Lecture 4	9 November 2020
Saturday day-school	14 November 2020
Lecture 5	16 November 2020
Lecture 6	23 November 2020
Lecture 7	30 November 2020
Lecture 8	7 December 2020
Saturday day-school	12 December 2020
Lecture 9	14 December 2020

### ***Lent 2021: Crime and Fantasy Writing***

Lecture 1	4 January 2021
Lecture 2	11 January 2021
Lecture 3	18 January 2021
Saturday day-school	23 January 2021
Lecture 4	25 January 2021
Lecture 5	1 February 2021
Lecture 6	8 February 2021
Lecture 7	15 February 2021
Saturday day-school	20 February 2021
Lecture 8	22 February 2021
Lecture 9	1 March 2021
Lecture 10	9 March 2021

### ***Easter 2021: Writing for Performance***

Lecture 1	5 April 2021
Lecture 2	12 April 2021
Saturday day-school	17 April 2021
Lecture 3	19 April 2021
Lecture 4	26 April 2021
Lecture 5	3 May 2021
Saturday day-school	8 May 2021
Lecture 6	10 May 2021
Saturday day-school	15 May 2021

**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.*

University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education, Madingley Hall, Cambridge, CB23 8AQTel 01223 746222  
www.ice.cam.ac.uk