



**UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE**

Institute of Continuing Education

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# **Undergraduate Certificate in Creative Writing: Fiction and Writing for Performance**

**2020 – 2021**

**Course code: 2021CCR100**

**COURSE GUIDE**

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Welcome to the **Undergraduate Certificate in Creative Writing: Fiction and Writing for Performance**, 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 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.

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

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 are likely to 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), "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.

**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."

**Charlot King** has worked in BBC Drama and is an experienced script editor in television and reader for the UK film industry, specialising in drama and comedy. She is a former TV producer in BBC national news, working for ten years in total for the BBC. She is author of the Cambridge Murder Mysteries series and has a fiction series called Animal Tales. Charlot used to lecture at Oxford University, and has a PhD from the University of Cambridge. She is a Darwin College alumna. Before this, Charlot worked for several charities in public affairs. A less known fact about Charlot is that she used to drive a boat for Greenpeace.

### Administrative staff

**Head of Academic Centre Administration:** Sarah Blakeney, Institute of Continuing Education, University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ, 01223 760865

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### Institute of Continuing Education

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.

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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 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 26 August 2020*

Syllabus for first unit  
Michaelmas term 2020

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## Introduction to creative writing

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<b>Start date</b>	20 October 2020	<b>End date</b>	15 December 2020
<b>Day</b>	Tuesdays and Saturdays	<b>Time</b>	Tuesdays 7.15 – 9.15pm
<b>Venue</b>	Remote delivery		
<b>Tutors</b>	Elizabeth Speller and Claire McGlasson	<b>No. of meetings</b>	9 evening classes plus 2 Saturday day-schools (7 November and 5 December 2020).  Saturdays 11am – 4pm (with break 1-2pm)

### 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

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 our guest speakers will also join us by video. There may be additional, pre-recorded presentations for you to watch between classes. All our tutors have experience of teaching remotely.

### Provisional lecture list

Session	Date	Content
Lecture 1	20 October 2020	Introduction to short fiction: identifying themes and structural possibilities
Lecture 2	27 October 2020	Developing your idea. Constructing character.
Lecture 3	3 November 2020	Point of view. Finding a narrative ‘voice’.
Saturday day-school (11am-1pm, 2-4pm)	7 November 2020	Writing dialogue
Lecture 4	10 November 2020	Creating a sense of time and place: descriptive writing.
Lecture 5	17 November 2020	Beginnings
Lecture 6	24 November 2020	Endings
Lecture 7	1 December 2020	Story Genres
Saturday day school (11am-1pm, 2-4pm)	5 December 2020	Workshopping
Lecture 8	8 December	Revising and editing
Lecture 9	15 December	What have we learned?

### 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;
- (ii) 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 to ensure it meets the learning outcomes of the unit.**

*Closing date for the submission of assignments: Wednesday 6 January 2021 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
Davis, Lydia	<i>Can't and Won't</i>	London: Penguin, 2015
Gebbie, Vanessa (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
Hensher, Philip	<i>The Penguin Book of the British Short Story: 2: From P.G. Wodehouse to Zadie Smith</i>	London: Penguin, 2015
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, Haruki	<i>Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman</i>	London: Vintage, 2007
Newland, C & Hershman, T (eds.)	<i>Writing Short Stories</i>	London: Bloomsbury, 2014
Strout, Elizabeth	<i>Olive Kitteridge</i>	London: Simon & Schuster, 2011

Other, individual, short stories will be posted online during the course.



Syllabus for second unit  
Lent term 2021

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## Approaches to long fiction

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<b>Start date</b>	5 January 2021	<b>End date</b>	9 March 2021
<b>Day</b>	Tuesdays and Saturdays	<b>Time</b>	Tuesdays 7.15 – 9.15pm
<b>Venue</b>	Remote delivery		
<b>Tutors</b>	Emily Winslow and Menna van Praag	<b>No. of meetings</b>	10 evening classes plus 2 Saturday day-schools (6 and 27 February 2021)  Saturdays 11am – 4pm (with break 1-2pm)

### 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

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 long 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. There may be additional, pre-recorded presentations for you to watch between classes. All our tutors have experience of teaching remotely.

## Provisional lecture list

Session	Date	Content
Lecture 1	5 January 2021	How to start: finding a central conflict that inspires you
Lecture 2	12 January 2021	Beginnings: hooking the reader
Lecture 3	19 January 2021	Point of view: finding a narrative voice
Lecture 4	26 January 2021	Style: the importance of rhythm
Lecture 5	2 February 2021	Setting: creating a sense of time and place
Saturday day-school (11am-1pm, 2-4pm)	6 February 2021	Practicalities of Publishing and the Writing Life
Lecture 6	9 February 2021	Effective descriptive writing
Lecture 7	16 February 2021	Dialogue: Your characters speak
Lecture 8	23 February 2021	Using the senses to give depth to your writing
Saturday day-school (11am-1pm, 2-4pm)	27 February 2021	Workshopping
Lecture 9	2 March	Structuring your plot: creating drama and maintaining suspense
Lecture 10	9 March 2021	Editing and revising: the importance of the 'blue pencil' in long form

### 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 contribute to discussion in class, participate in class exercises, prepare original work to share on the VLE, and comment on other students' contributions.

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 in advance to ensure it meets the learning outcomes of the unit.**

Closing date for the submission of assignments: **Wednesday 31 March 2021 by 12.00 BST\***

\*British Summer Time

## Reading and resource list

<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Publisher and date</b>
Bradbury, Ray	<i>Zen in the Art of Writing</i>	London: Harper Collins, 2015
Browne, R & King, D	<i>Self-Editing for Fiction Writers</i>	London: HarperCollins, 1993
Butler, Robert Olen	<i>From Where You Dream: The Process of Writing Fiction</i>	New York, Grove Press, 2005
Crichton, Michael	<i>Jurassic Park</i>	London: Arrow, 2015
Haddon, Mark	<i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time</i>	London: Vintage, 2004
King, Stephen	<i>On Writing: A Memoir of a Craft</i>	London: Hodder, 2012
Mittlemark, Howard & Newman, Sandra	<i>How Not to Write a Novel</i>	London: Penguin, 2008
Paver, Michelle	<i>Dark Matter</i>	London: Headline, 2002
Van Praag, Menna	<i>The House at the End of Hope Street</i>	London: Allison & Busby, 2015
Winslow, Emily	<i>Look for Her</i>	London: Allison & Busby, 2017

## Syllabus for third unit Easter term 2021

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# Writing for Performance

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<b>Start date</b>	6 April 2021	<b>End date</b>	11 May 2021
<b>Day</b>	Tuesdays and Saturdays	<b>Time</b>	Tuesdays 7.15 – 9.15pm
<b>Venue</b>	Remote delivery		
<b>Tutors</b>	Craig Baxter Charlot King	<b>No. of meetings</b>	6 evening classes plus 3 Saturday day-schools (10 and 17 April and 1 May 2021)  Saturdays 11am – 4pm (with break 1-2pm)

### 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

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. There may be additional, pre-recorded presentations for you to watch between classes. All our tutors have experience of teaching remotely.

## Provisional lecture list

Session	Date	Content
Lecture 1	6 April 2021	Introduction to writing for performance
Saturday school (11am-1pm, 2-4pm)	10 April 2021	Script formatting
Lecture 2	13 April 2021	Openings
Saturday school (11am-1pm, 2-4pm)	17 April 2021	Situations, agendas and scenes
Lecture 3	20 April 2021	Stories and characters
Lecture 4	27 April 2021	Plots
Saturday school (11am-1pm, 2-4pm)	1 May 2021	Dialogue
Lecture 5	4 May 2021	Devices
Lecture 6	11 May 2021	Round-up of term

### 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 to ensure it meets the learning outcomes of the unit.**

*Closing date for the submission of assignments: Friday 4 June 2021 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.

<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Publisher and date</b>
Dancyger, Ken & Cooper, Pat	<i>Writing the Short Film</i>	London: Routledge, 2012
Edgar, David	<i>How Plays Work</i>	Nick Hern, 2012
Egri, Lajos	<i>The Art of Dramatic Writing</i>	London: Simon & Schuster, 1960
Fraser Grace and Clare Bayley	<i>Playwriting: A Writers' and Artists' Companion</i>	Bloomsbury, 2016
Clare Grove and Stephen Wyatt	<i>So You Want To Write Radio Drama</i>	Nick Hern, 2013
<u>Jeffreys</u>	<i>Playwriting: Structure, Character, How and What to Write</i>	Nick Hern, 2019
Robert McKee	<i>Story: Substance, Structure, Style and the Principles of Screenwriting</i>	Harper Collins, 1997
Parker, Philip	<i>The Art and Science of Screenwriting</i>	Exeter: Intellect, 1998
Smith, Emma	<i>This is Shakespeare</i>	Pelican, 2019
Sue Teddern and Nick Warburton	<i>Writing for TV and Radio: A Writers' and Artists' Companion</i>	Bloomsbury, 2016
Waters, Steve	<i>The Secret Life of Plays</i>	Nick Hern, 2010

## TIMETABLE

### Michaelmas 2020: Introduction to creative writing

Lecture 1	20 October 2020
Lecture 2	27 October 2020
Lecture 3	3 November 2020
Saturday day-school	7 November 2020
Lecture 4	10 November 2020
Lecture 5	17 November 2020
Lecture 6	24 November 2020
Lecture 7	1 December 2020
Saturday day-school	5 December 2020
Lecture 8	8 December 2020
Lecture 9	15 December 2020

### Lent 2021: Approaches to Long Fiction

Lecture 1	5 January 2021
Lecture 2	12 January 2021
Lecture 3	19 January 2021
Lecture 4	26 January 2021
Lecture 5	2 February 2021
Saturday day-school	6 February 2021
Lecture 6	9 February 2021
Lecture 7	16 February 2021
Saturday day-school	27 February 2021
Lecture 8	23 February 2021
Lecture 9	2 March 2021
Lecture 10	9 March 2021

### Easter 2021: Writing for Performance

Lecture 1	6 April 2021
Saturday day-school	10 April 2021
Lecture 2	13 April 2021
Saturday day-school	17 April 2021
Lecture 3	20 April 2021
Lecture 4	27 April 2021
Saturday day-school	1 May 2021
Lecture 5	4 May 2021
Lecture 6	11 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.*

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