

# On-Campus MFA Courses

## 2019 Winter

Please note that the [UBC Course Schedule](#) is the definitive list of courses available. Be sure to select the correct term when viewing, as it defaults to the current term (in summer it will show summer courses rather than fall/winter courses).

On-Campus courses and Optional-Residency courses share the same course numbers, but all sections of the on-campus courses are distinguished by a section number beginning with “0”. For example, CRWR 509-**001** is an on-campus section while CRWR 509-**D01** is a distance education section. Please be aware of this when you are creating your course lists in the [Student Service Centre](#) so you don’t inadvertently select the wrong course.

### Expanded Course Descriptions – 2019/20 Academic Year

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#### **CRWR 501V-001 – Advanced Writing of Poetry (3 credits, term 1)**

*Sheryda Warrener*

Through encounters with various contemporary styles and aesthetics, this workshop aims to expand notions of what shapes and modes are available to us when we set out to make poems. Students will prioritize generating new drafts, as well as critical and creative responses to close readings of peer work and supplementary materials ranging across the lyric tradition. A portfolio of 8 – 10 poems at various stages of the draft process is the hard target for the semester; experiential goals include developing a shared language around the tactics poems have at their disposal (such as: turns, leaps, disorientation as a means of connection). A range of alternative approaches to the traditional workshop model will be offered, with emphasis placed on how close reading informs a dedicated practice.

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#### **CRWR 501W-002 – Advanced Writing of Poetry (3 credits, term 2)**

*Ian Williams*

This graduate course takes the workshop beyond a place for editorial feedback and instead locates it as a place of production, exploration, and experiment. Its primary goal is to strengthen capacities essential to the creation of poetry, those of perception, emotion, analysis, truth, and courage, while improving technique. In order to accomplish these goals, a number of artistic and personal interventions will be necessary. There are exercises that may be demanding in ways that are unfamiliar to academic settings, and while you can always opt out without retribution, I encourage you to engage with difficulty while the opportunity is present in the safety of our community. Poetry is a record of those engagements.

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#### **CRWR 502W-001 – Advanced Writing for New Media: Podcasting (3 credits, term 2)**

*Bryan Wade*

Writers in this mixed graduate/undergraduate workshop who are undertaking this course as an introduction to podcasting will learn about formatting, dialogue, character development, plot and the importance of sound effects and music for this genre. They will be expected to complete several short assignments and for the final project to develop and complete two ten to fifteen minute scripts or produce a short ten minute feature or dramatic piece.

They will be expected to research and provide feedback to the class about the recent following audio podcast series and/or shows: *Chatterbox Audio Theater*, *S-Town*, *The Kitchen Sisters*, *The Truth (Radiotopia)*, *Blood-Culture*, *Homecoming*, and *The Unexplainable Disappearance of Mars Patel*. Regular attendance and participation in the workshop are essential for it to succeed.

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**CRWR 503V-001 (term 1) / CRWR 503W-002 (term 2) – Advanced Writing for Children (3 credits per term)**

*Emily Pohl-Weary*

This is a workshop-based course on writing for middle-grade (MG) and young adults (YA). You are free to write for 10-year-olds through to older teens (18/19 years old). Some of the most exciting books today are written for these age groups. They are among the bestselling in bookstores, and they tend to be fast-paced, adventurous, playful, and unpretentious. Great examples combine unique narrative voice, strong plotting, massive amounts of dramatic tension, and compelling characters grappling with personal issues. More and more authors are cracking open the expected “rules” about what’s allowed in MG/YA novels and tackling difficult and/or ground-breaking subject matter. Together we will explore the weird and wonderful world of writing for young readers, question the parameters of its sub-genres, and develop our own writerly voices. We will also consider what sets YA apart from writing for adults or children and discuss advanced writing techniques.

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**CRWR 505V-001 – Advanced Writing of Creative Nonfiction (3 credits, term 1)**

*Kevin Chong*

An advanced workshop in the writing of creative nonfiction. In this workshop, we will be looking at various sub-genres of CNF, including memoir, lyric essay, literary journalism, and personal essay through a selected reading list. Students will be expected to submit one shorter piece of autobiographical writing (1200-1600 words) with the "Modern Love" or "Facts and Arguments" columns as models and one longer personal or lyric essay (2000-3000 words). Both pieces must have a beginning, middle, and end. Additionally, one rewrite is expected in the term.

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**CRWR 505W-002 – Advanced Writing of Creative Nonfiction (3 credits, term 2)**

*Carol Shaben*

This workshop aims to ignite your passion for writing powerful true stories. Through craft discussions and assigned readings, we’ll explore creative nonfiction forms including memoir, essay, profile, and literary journalism, and review the techniques that bring nonfiction to life: openings, structure, tone, voice, point of view, and endings. We’ll also discuss essential elements of artful nonfiction such as curiosity, research and reporting, and shaping facts into compelling narratives. This workshop is generative, inclusive, and responsive, encouraging

writers to take risks, experiment, and have fun. You will submit one memoir or personal essay and a second work of nonfiction.

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### **CRWR 506X-001 – Advanced Writing of Drama for Screen (6 credits)**

*Sara Graefe*

This advanced screenwriting workshop focuses specifically on writing for film. Many fiction writers take this workshop to help them with dialogue and story structure. Students will explore techniques of creating, developing and writing a long-form screenplay, from initial pitch to treatment to draft. Students will work on the first draft of a new feature-length project (90-120 minutes) over the fall and winter terms. Original stories only please; no adaptations, as this goes beyond the scope of the course. We will also screen movies and examine screenwriting structure, formatting and craft, working from the age-old adage that a writer must first know the rules in order to break them.

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### **CRWR 507X-001 – Advanced Writing of Drama for the Stage (6 credits)**

*Bryan Wade*

Writers in this mixed graduate/undergraduate workshop are welcome to write one-act plays or develop the first draft of an original full-length stage play.

We will work on story, plot, dialogue, character development, theme and many other elements involved in the stage play form. In the workshop productive feedback and the exchange of ideas are encouraged. Stage plays (or excerpts) are read out loud, allowing enough time for discussion.

As part of the course, writers are **required** to submit a short play (ten to fifteen minutes long) for the Brave New Play Rites festival. Now in its 33rd year, Brave New Play Rites showcases new student plays in a series of staged readings and full productions. The festival is held annually in March in a theatre venue off-campus. Please note that only ten plays are given *live* productions; there is an adjudication process in November of the fall term.

Overall, a minimum of eighty (80) pages should be completed. Grades will be based on your written work and your attendance, active participation and the quality of the critical feedback you give to your writing classmates

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### **CRWR 508W-001 – Advanced Writing for Graphic Forms (3 credits, term 2)**

*Sarah Leavitt*

This course is designed to give students a strong foundation in comics creation. Because it is a small workshop class, assignments can be modified as needed for students who are already familiar with comics theory and craft. Through readings, class discussion, exercises and workshops, students will:

- Acquire an understanding of the elements of comics writing, drawing, composition, etc and how they work together;
- Learn about the history and present practice of comics, and be exposed to a wide range of comics by diverse cartoonists;

- Become familiar with key theoretical approaches to the form and acquire tools to analyze their own and others' work;
- Write and draw their own short comics.

Students who have taken the course previously or who are already experienced at creating comics will have the opportunity to further hone their skills and work on ongoing longer projects during the class. Students who are new to comics can find it intimidating, particularly if they don't think of themselves as "good artists." In comics class, we build a respectful atmosphere in which students can both support and challenge each other, with thoughtful analysis and honest feedback on the part of readers, and openness and determined effort on the part of the writer/cartoonist.

You do have to draw your own comics for this class. BUT I'm not concerned with whether you can or "can't" draw, and it doesn't matter how much experience you have as a cartoonist. The focus for this class is building coherent, compelling narratives with comics and the goal is to push yourself to improve your own work, in your own style, starting where you are right now.

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### **CRWR 509V-001 – Advanced Writing of Fiction (3 credits, term 1)**

*Alix Ohlin*

In this workshop, we'll come together as a community of writers to support one another, to listen, and to find ways to take risks, dream big, and stay playful. We'll help each other refine our ideas, and work to cross that always-difficult divide between our goals for the work and the execution of it. The class will include substantial conversations about craft and assigned readings—both fiction and essays about writing. Among the many things we're likely to discuss are: structure, point of view, beginnings and endings; techniques to develop and deepen characterization; the management of mood, tone, and voice; the crucial machinery of plot and the moments in which we might, just as crucially, dispense with it; the establishment and maintenance of narrative and stylistic urgency; the pleasures of genre; and the joys of working at the sentence level to make beautiful and moving prose. At the heart of the class, always, will be your own writing and your ambitions for it.

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### **CRWR 509V-003 – Advanced Writing of Fiction (3 credits, term 1)**

*Annabel Lyon*

The purpose of this course is to get students thinking about the novel thesis from the beginning of their degree and to give them a jump-start on the writing of the thesis.

This will not be a typical workshop. Students will be graded on attendance/participation, occasional in-class presentations, and assignments handed to the instructor only. Students will also be expected to meet individually with the instructor throughout the term. The course will consist of three over-arching sections: Getting Started, Writing the Draft, and Revision. Assigned reading will consist primarily of thesis novels published by graduates of our program. Guests will include fiction thesis advisors in the program, giving students a chance to get to know them.

This course is intended for students at the beginning of their MFA program who intend to write a novel as their thesis but have not yet begun working with their thesis advisor. Students will complete substantial writing assignments with the goal of getting them started early on their thesis projects.

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**CRWR 509W-002 – Advanced Writing of Fiction (3 credits, term 2)**

*Keith Maillard*

The purpose of this workshop is to help students write excellent fiction. Many fiction workshops move toward polished final draft too quickly and encourage feedback that is largely editorial. We will not do that. We will explore the writing of fiction anywhere on a spectrum from the exploratory stage to polished final draft.

Editorial feedback is not appropriate for story ideas in their earliest stages when they are often incoherent, vague, and fragile. Feedback at this stage should be designed to encourage the author and spark creativity. Early drafts will take shape only gradually, and students will be encouraged to resubmit them, often in entirely new drafts, until they begin to cohere. This method cannot work effectively unless the workshop environment is warm, supportive, and safe, so I encourage a non-competitive and collaborative approach.

Workshop members need to engage with the story as it is emerging rather than talking about the story they would write if they were writing it. A response to a story should always begin with a description of it as it stands: how it is built, how it is working technically, how it fits into the ongoing development of fictional genres, what other voices are in dialogue with it. Because we will have real authors in the room (as opposed to the “implied” authors sometimes studied in the English Department), we will ask them about their intentions. We will not favour any genre over another.

As a story moves closer to completion, higher degrees of editorial feedback become appropriate. During the course of the workshop, students will be required to bring at least one of their stories to final draft or close to it.

Because he has had an enormous impact upon how I write and teach fiction, I will, from time to time, mention the great Russian theorist, M. M. Bakhtin, but I will expect no one to read him. I will also often discuss the three-act structure employed by screenwriters.

Don't worry about your grade. If you are passionately interested in your own writing, you will get a good grade.

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**CRWR 509W-004 – Advanced Writing of Fiction (3 credits, term 2)**

*John Vigna*

This 3-credit workshop will focus on deep revision (process, technique and practice) in your work and will accommodate all forms of adult fiction writing. Class will consist of short craft lectures and group discussion about the various aspects of writing and the sustained writing life. The primary topic will be the techniques and tools of revision. We'll focus on structure,

point of view, character, prose style, voice, image patterns, transitions, place & setting, facility of exposition, scene vs summary, dialogue, best & worst use of description, beginnings, endings, use & misuse of flashbacks & dreams.

The goal is for each writer to push themselves out of their comfort zones by looking deeply at their own work and taking risks in style, theme, subject, etc, while working toward their own artistic intention. You will submit at least one substantial revision of a story either workshopped or discussed in consultation with the instructor. This is a writing, reading and discussion intensive course.

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**CRWR 514V-001 – Advanced Writing for Television (3 credits, term 1)**

*Linda Svendsen*

**Fleabag, Kim's Convenience, BoJack Horseman, Atlanta, GLOW, Barry, Jann:** Peak TV's parade of unique and diverse half-hours continues. In this workshop focused upon the half-hour series, writers will create a concept, outline/beat sheet, first draft of an original pilot, and loglines for further episodes in the first season. Be prepared to collaborate and story edit in writers' rooms and to independently watch, deconstruct, and journal a series, as well as read produced scripts.

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**CRWR 514W-002 – Advanced Writing for Television (3 credits, term 2)**

*Linda Svendsen*

**The Handmaid's Tale, Blackstone, This is Us, Better Call Saul, Pose:** one-hour TV series challenge the intimacy and scope of the novel. In this intensive workshop focused upon one-hour series, writers will create a concept, outline/beat sheet, first draft of an original pilot, and loglines for further episodes in the first season. Be prepared to collaborate and story edit in writers' rooms and to independently watch, deconstruct, and journal a series, as well as read produced scripts.

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**CRWR 530-001 (term 1) – Preparation for a Career in Writing (3 credits)**

*Kevin Chong*

In this undergrad/grad class, we will learn about the realities of furthering and maintaining a writing practice. Lectures will be interspersed with guest speakers—writers who have taken different paths on their careers, and have found different ways to make a living. We will be looking at the nitty gritty of the writing life, including book proposals, grant applications, agent queries. But we will also discuss more intangible ingredients of a writing career, like using social media and informal networking, and coping strategies for balancing financial necessity with your writing needs. Assignments include writing a career plan and proposal and conducting an interview with an established writer for Nineteen Questions ([nineteenquestions.com](http://nineteenquestions.com)).

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**CRWR 550V-D01 – Teaching Creative Writing (3 credits, Term 1)**

Nancy Lee

*Tuesday 9AM – Wednesday 12PM PST*

This hands-on practical course introduces students to the rewards and potential challenges of teaching creative writing. As a foundation, we explore the fundamentals of teaching writing and

the practices of planning, programming and performance necessary to thrive and inspire as a creative writing instructor in a variety of settings: continuing education, college and university, and specialized workshops for specific groups. We will examine our philosophies and theories around creative writing pedagogy and familiarize ourselves with a variety of teaching methodologies, including: working with writing exercises, workshopping creative work, developing course reading lists, and guiding students through creative process. Other topics include the perils of workshop, how to support diversity in the classroom, how to mediate sensitive topics and deal with difficult classroom situations, and finally, how to find work. Students will leave the course with a concrete set of teaching tools including a teaching philosophy, course outline, syllabus and a bank of writing exercises.

**Note:** this course is held online and is open to on-campus and online students; 6 spaces have been reserved for each program. We do not recommend new students take this course – students closer to the end of their degree have priority.

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### **CRWR 570V-001 – Advanced Special Projects in Creative Writing: “Craft” (3 credits, term 1)**

*Keith Maillard*

Ours is a multi-genre program, and this is the only course we offer in which all genres are considered. You may submit in any genre and may even submit pieces that defy genre definition. This is a workshop in which to try new things—to be inventive, experimental, and daring—but you will not be forced to be experimental, and if you wish to submit in the traditional genres, that's okay too, and many students in the past have done exactly that. Here is the perfect chance to consider genres that are not your specialty. If, for instance, you have never written a poem in your life, you will still need to consider poetry because poems will be submitted, but there will certainly be poets in the workshop and you will learn from them. By the end of the year you might want to write a poem yourself. The same goes for any other genre.

In previous workshops students have submitted short stories, novel outlines and chapters, poems, song lyrics, scenes from stage plays or screen plays, comic book scripts, young adult fiction, research-driven non-fiction, personal essays, and memoirs. They have also submitted drawn comics, sound pieces, blog posts, website designs, scripts for mixed media, and mash-ups between narrative prose and photography. We once spent an hour walking in circles around the big tables in the seminar room staring at the poems laid out there, each of us deciding the best order for a sequence. What it comes down to is this: if you're working on something that excites you, no matter what it is, bring it in and let us see it.

This workshop is called 'craft' because it's about making things well. The idea that brings it all together is a simple one: all genres inform each other.

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#### **Enrolment Note**

We use the UBC enrolment system through the [Student Service Centre](#) for all workshop enrolment. Thesis enrolment must be carried out directly through the program support, Alexandra Tsardidis, with the prior permission of your thesis advisor.