

# On-Campus MFA Courses

## 2020 Winter

All Creative Writing Courses will be **online** in term 1, 2020. Instructors are currently working on how best to meet student needs, and determining whether online courses will be synchronous (i.e., “real time”), asynchronous, or a combination of the two. These details will be posted in the individual course notes in the online schedule as they become available. The course descriptions below will be updated as faculty determine the best methods of instruction for their particular course.

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 509A-001 is an on-campus section while CRWR 509A-D01 is an Optional-Residency 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.

### Basic Course Listing – 2020/21 Academic Year

**NOTE:** *course descriptions will be updated as faculty determine the features for online delivery of their courses.*

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

*Billy-Ray Belcourt*

This is a course that attends to both craft and criticism as they pertain to contemporary poetry. We will begin from the presupposition, following Ben Lerner, that there is a “tremendous social stake” to the making and study of poetry, and that, because of this, form, theme, and optic elucidate key aspects of the conditions of personhood and art-making in late modernity. The course will be held online, using a combination of synchronous (live via Zoom) and asynchronous activities and assignments, though some students may choose/need to remain asynchronous throughout the term. Students will be assessed three ways: 1) students will deliver a 30-minute presentation on an assigned text with a critical eye to the poet’s arguments and aesthetic/political concerns (this will be delivered live for those for whom that is possible and submitted digitally on Canvas otherwise); 2) a poetry diary/notebook that will be submitted to the instructor twice; and 3) participation in low stakes assignments submitted via Canvas and

in discussion threads carried out on Canvas. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

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

*Bronwen Tate*

Course description to come. Scheduled day/time: Wednesday 10am-12pm.

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**CRWR 502B-002 – Advanced Writing for New Media: Podcasting (3 credits, term 2)**

*Bryan Wade*

A mixed graduate/undergraduate workshop - introduction to podcasting.

Course description to come. Scheduled day/time: Wednesday 3pm-5pm.

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**CRWR 503A-001 (term 1) – Advanced Writing for Children (3 credits, term 1)**

*Alison Acheson*

This is a comprehensive workshop in writing for children and young people, and will include work for multiple forms and age-groups, from picturebooks and early readers to middle-grade and YA novels, depending on the interests of the group. I will post information about genres, so that apprenticing-writers have tools to talk about forms/genres in which they do not write. You will be able to work in the area/s you want, and explore others as your curiosity is piqued. You will be submitting 2-3 pieces each, depending on length/form.

This workshop is set for 10-12 a.m. Wednesdays. However, given the COVID situation and the possibility of writers in different time zones, it will be a text-based course, with a 26 hour time frame for each “workshop” session. Each student will have 7 days to review their peer’s work (submitted one full week ahead), and the written feedback for your workshop-mate’s work must be posted by 10 a.m. PST, followed by 26 hours (“workshop” time, plus 24 hours) to post comments that will form discussion around the feedback. I expect a minimum of 3 thoughtful comments for each workshop piece, in addition to written feedback. (Brief and “echoing” comments won’t count toward this—more on this in initial class.) Those who are posting new work for the following week will post by noon on Wednesday (also PST). (You can post earlier if noon is your midnight, or some other inconvenient time.)

As a group we will explore the possibilities of having monthly zoom social sessions, possibly “open-mic.” We will discuss. But know that this will be a text-based workshop, working within Canvas. While so much communication happens via body language and facial expression and tone of voice, it is my experience—teaching online—that a text-based workshop really sharpens communication skills for a writer...*as a writer.*

Golden-rule applies, and feedback guidelines and give-and-take—mostly give!—is fully shared and discussed during the opening class time. I look forward to working with you and exploring the world of writing for young people.

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

*Carol Shaben*

This course aims to ignite your passion for writing powerful true stories. Through readings, synchronous and asynchronous online discussions, small group exercises, craft talks and workshopping, we'll explore creative nonfiction forms focusing on the subgenres of memoir, personal essay, and literary journalism. We'll also explore literary techniques that bring nonfiction to life and discuss the role of ethics and research.

This class is generative and interactive, encouraging students to take risks, experiment, and expand their sense of play and possibility in nonfiction. You will workshop two nonfiction submissions in a collegial, supportive setting. The first submission will be a memoir or personal essay drawn from experience and/or observations of the world around you and the second will be a more research-intensive work of creative nonfiction. You will also submit a rewrite of one of the above assignments over the course of the term.

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

*Instructor TBA*

Course description to come. Scheduled day/time: Friday 1pm-3pm.

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**CRWR 506A-001 – Advanced Writing of Drama for Screen (3 credits, term 1)**

*Sharon McGowan*

Students in this workshop will write feature-length scripts, limited mini-series scripts or short film scripts. The goal is to help each student reach their full potential in their work.

We loosely follow the industry model so all projects, whatever length, begin with a pitch which also serves as an outline. The class then workshops an outline for all scripts before moving to a detailed treatment (a scene by scene prose version describing your screen story in the active voice) and sample scenes or a full screenplay for short films.

This workshop is designed to dovetail with CRWR 506B, offered in Term Two, where students begin with a detailed treatment and advance to drafts of Acts 1 and 2 of a longer piece.

Students from this workshop have gone on to make films. Many fiction writers take this workshop to help them with story structure and dramatic writing. Experienced industry screenwriters have also taken this course to receive critiques and support with their more personal projects.

In the workshop we encourage an exchange of ideas. We work on story, plot, dialogue, character, theme and many more elements of the screenplay form. We also discuss the process of connecting with the film industry and getting a screenplay produced.

We workshop two pieces a week, sometimes three, if they are short. The goal is to workshop each project two times per term after the initial pitches. There is a minimum page count of 30 pages a semester that must be submitted (re-writes are counted as 2 pages for 1 page). There is a maximum submission total of 60 pages per student per term. If a student wishes to submit more pages, they must have the approval of the class and written instructor permission two weeks in advance.

*For Term 1, this course will run as a text-based asynchronous workshop on Canvas Wednesday 9AM-Thursday 12 Noon with a synchronous screenplay reading component on Collaborate Ultra on some Wednesdays from 3-4PM PST. Screenplay readings will be recorded for students who cannot attend in real time.*

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### **CRWR 506B-002 – Advanced Writing of Drama for Screen (3 credits, term 2)**

*Martin Kinch*

Students in this workshop will write feature-length scripts or limited mini-series scripts. The goal is to help each student reach their full potential in their work.

This is an advanced workshop, designed to go immediately into a draft of Acts 1 and 2 of writing a screenplay. To fully benefit from this course, it is recommended that students take 506A in Term One to develop a treatment (a scene by scene prose version of their screen story told in the active voice) for the screenplay they plan to work on.

Students from this workshop have gone on to make films. Many fiction writers take this workshop to help them with story structure and dramatic writing. Experienced industry screenwriters have also taken this course to receive critiques and support with their more personal projects.

In the workshop we encourage an exchange of ideas. We work on story, plot, dialogue, character, theme and many more elements of the screenplay form. We also discuss the process of connecting with the film industry and getting a screenplay produced.

We workshop two pieces a week, sometimes three, if they are short. The goal is to workshop each project two times per term. There is a minimum page count of 30 pages a semester that must be submitted (re-writes are counted as 2 pages for 1 page). There is a maximum

submission total of 60 pages per student per term. If a student wishes to submit more pages, they must have the approval of the class and written instructor permission two weeks in advance.

*For Term 2, this course will run as a text-based asynchronous workshop on Canvas Wednesday 9AM-Thursday 12 Noon with a synchronous screenplay reading component on Collaborate Ultra on some Wednesdays from 3-4PM PST. Screenplay readings will be recorded for students who cannot attend in real time.*

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### **CRWR 507C-001 – Advanced Writing of Drama for the Stage (6 credits, two terms)**

*Bryan Wade*

Students in this mixed graduate/undergraduate writing of drama for the stage 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.

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 35th 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.

Term 1, this course will run as a text-based asynchronous workshop on Canvas Wednesday-Thursday, with a synchronous play reading component on Collaborate Ultra. Play readings will be recorded for students who cannot attend in real time. Term 2 to be confirmed.

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### **CRWR 508B-002 – Advanced Writing for Graphic Forms (3 credits, term 2)**

*Sarah Leavitt*

What are comics and how do they work? How do you make a good comic? In this class we'll examine the building blocks of comics (words and image combinations, panel and page composition, and more) and practice the skills needed to create clear, compelling, memorable comics. By the end of the term, you'll be a more insightful comics reader and a more skillful comics maker. This course involves not only workshops, but also readings, discussions and exercises. No drawing skills or experience are required. (Fact: You can make great comics even

if you “can’t draw.”) That being said, you do need to draw your comics in this course, so you should be open to experimenting with and developing your drawing skills.

It’s very important to me that this class is both a safe place for playing and experimenting and also an environment in which students are encouraged to challenge themselves, take risks and push their work further. Students at all levels of skill and experience have produced excellent comics in this class, and many have continued to make comics after completing the course. Even if you don’t intend to continue making comics after this class, students often find that the skills learned in comics class help them with their work in other forms. Students who plan in future to write comics scripts for others to draw will gain insights into the writing process from the experience of drawing.

Note: If you’re taking the course for the second time, or if you’re already an experienced cartoonist, I’ve included alternatives for assignments you may have done before. If you’re working on a longer project or have a particular aspect of comics you want to work on this term, let me know; I want to make sure the class works for you. If you’re new, don’t worry – you’ll fit right in. Everyone is welcome in comics class, whether new or returning.

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

*Alix Ohlin*

In this class, we’ll come together as a community to read, write, explore, dream, and play with short stories. 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. There will be some workshopping, but the emphasis of the class will be on generating new work, experimenting, establishing a vocabulary for what we are trying to achieve, and taking risks as artists. Most of the class discussion will be asynchronous and text-based. There will be an optional Zoom meeting during the scheduled class time, with craft lectures and writing activities (recorded for viewing by anyone who can’t make the synchronous time).

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

*John Vigna*

This 3-credit online grad fiction course will focus on generative writing, experimenting broadly with form and technique. Discussions will focus on advanced topics in craft, technique and aesthetic. An emphasis will be placed on asking questions of one’s own and one’s peer work to

get at the story the writer is working towards, to deepen and layer it. The goal is for each writer to push themselves out of their comfort zones by looking at their own work and taking risks in style, theme, subject, etc, while working next level toward their own artistic intention. Students will write and receive peer feedback on two stories. There will be a mixture of synchronous and asynchronous interaction, but the finer details of this will be determined by a discussion with the class at the start of the term.

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

*Alix Ohlin*

Course description to come. Scheduled day/time: Wednesday 1pm-3pm.

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

*John Vigna*

Course description to come. Scheduled day/time: Wednesday 1pm-3pm.

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**CRWR 511A-001 – Advanced Writing for Lyric Forms (3 credits, term 1)**

*Tariq Hussain*

In this class students will explore the craft of songwriting through a variety of methods from participating in creative exercises to personal practice. Students will be challenged to look deeply at the work of professionals through readings, close listenings, and podcasts, and to go deep with their own work as well. Students will create, share and discuss their songs with the goal of helping each other create more effective work and will be encouraged to take risks while still holding true to their artistic vision. Audio recordings are required for submissions, however knowledge of recording software—though an asset—is not a requirement. This course will consist of a blend of synchronous and asynchronous content, however any synchronous content will also be made available asynchronously for those unable to participate in real time.

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

*Linda Svendsen*

**Synchronous:** Friday, Sept 11, 2020 – Friday, Nov 27, 2020, 1-3 pm Pacific Standard Time

**Online (asynchronous) screening costs: up to \$25 TOTAL** for specific shows on iTunes, Apple, or free trials on Amazon Prime, CBC Gem. Let the instructor know if this cost presents a challenge.

Class will be held on **Zoom**, UBC and FIPPA compliant, and currently the industry-standard for TV writers' rooms and academic film programs. It will not be necessary to download the Zoom app—students will be invited by email ten minutes before the synchronous session. Sessions will not be recorded; if a student does not choose to share their video image or prefers to be muted, it may be possible to work-around with Zoom chat (in lieu of your audio feedback). All means necessary to protect privacy will be taken while also striving to build the community and trust of a writer's room. A working microphone and web camera are essential, as is decent bandwidth. Advance notice is essential for closed-captioning. Breaks will be provided during our class time.

The purpose of the workshop is to create your own original half-hour TV series concept and pilot script, via three peer and instructor reviewed assignments: Assignment #1 Concept, Assignment #2 pilot beat sheet (brief outline), and Assignment #3 draft pilot script. Concurrently, your peer review reflections and contributions in the writers' room group/s will build your TV story editing prowess. Essentially, while you are creating a brand-new TV series, you're also a creative producer/story editor on eleven other series. While the class is not prescriptive, per se, the mission of a writer's room is to creatively and speculatively engage, to bring your years of TV-series chops to the table, to brainstorm, to ask "what if?" while always striving to bolster the creator/writer's vision.

**Canvas course site:** the course is built upon 3 modules (concept, beat sheet, pilot script) and is front-loaded with dramaturgical grids, rubrics for each assignment, readings on structure, and articles re issues in TV (including #metoo, BIPOC, "old-school" dramaturgical templates) and genre-hybrid pilot scripts. Each of the weekly readings and any pilot screenings will be attached to the modules and assigned weekly. **If we experience any insurmountable technological challenges on Zoom, the class will move to Discussion or Collaborate Ultra on our Canvas home.**

Participation: written feedback prior to the workshop discussion and verbal peer review feedback and breakout (synchronous) writers' rooms

Office hours: I'll be story conferencing with you individually by appointment many times throughout the term. [Linda.svendsen@ubc.ca](mailto:Linda.svendsen@ubc.ca)

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

*Linda Svendsen*

Workshop focused on one-hour TV series. Course description to come. Scheduled day/time: Friday 1pm-3pm.

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### **CRWR 519-002 – Writing Speculative Fiction (3 credits, term 2)**

*Emily Pohl-Weary*

Course description to come. Scheduled day/time: Wednesday 10am-12pm.



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

*Doretta Lau*

How do you build a sustainable career as a writer? This course covers the basics of book publishing, print and online publication, screen, as well as branding and marketing, promotion, grants, residencies, entrepreneurship, and self-care. As you complete each assignment, you will hone the skills necessary to handle the business side of your writing career. The main text is *The Business of Being a Writer* by Jane Friedman, with additional materials to be posted on Canvas. The class will be asynchronous (modules to be posted on Mondays), with an optional component to meet on Zoom for live discussion weekly on Wednesdays at 10am Pacific Time.

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**CRWR 550B-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 numbered as an Optional-Residency course and is taught asynchronously over a 27 hour period. It 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 570A-001 – Advanced Special Projects in Creative Writing: “Craft” (3 credits, term 1)**

*Keith Maillard*

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. 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 here is a chance to consider genres that are not your specialty. 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, creative non-fiction, personal essays, and memoirs. They have also submitted drawn comics, sound pieces, performance pieces, blog posts, website designs, scripts for games, scripts for mixed media, and mash-ups between narrative prose and photography. 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.

Because this workshop relies heavily upon dialogue, this is a synchronous course; that is, it is in “real time.” Students should download Skype and make sure that it is working properly for them.

Students considering taking this course and wishing to discuss it with me can contact me at [maillard@mail.ubc.ca](mailto:maillard@mail.ubc.ca)

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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.