

# On-Campus MFA Courses

## 2021 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 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 – 2021/22 Academic Year

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

*Billy-Ray Belcourt*

In this course, we will examine and experiment with various practices of “poetic inquiry.” By poetic inquiry, I don’t mean simply the writing of poems (though that’s naturally included), but more expansively the ways we read, think, research, write, and be in the world that are resonant with some kind of lyrical value. Of particular interest will be the study of archives, inventories, and glossaries; we will also discuss friendship, love, protest, and politics. Texts may include Dionne Brand’s *THE BLUE CLERK*, Roland Barthes’ *MOURNING DIARY*, and Jordan Abel’s *NISHGA*, among others. Students will be expected to write letters, poems, ars poetica, journal entries, and other hybridic forms.

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

*Sheryda Warrenner*

In this course, we will explore the complex and nuanced relationships between poems in a sequence, series, or cycle. To accompany this exploration, we’ll perform close readings of contemporary poets working in sequential modes: Arthur Sze, Jenny Xie, Cathy Park Hong, Diane Seuss, Mary Ruefle, Hannah Sullivan, Renee Gladman, Lisa Robertson, Suzanne Buffam, Francine J. Harris, Mark Bibbins, Etel Adnan, Sally Wen Mao, Tommy Pico, Ross Gay, Hoa Nguyen, Morgan Parker, Kate Durbin, Victoria Chang, and more. Together, we will re-imagine the workshop as an atelier, where writing emerges from rigorous experimentation and through the process of artistic inquiry. The pre-writing and generative writing activities, as well as your individual creative research, will lead naturally to a final collection of eight to ten poems unified by subject, mode, and/or form.

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

*Bryan Wade*

Writers in this mixed graduate/undergraduate workshop who participate in this introduction to writing for podcasting course will learn about formatting, dialogue, character development, world building, 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. They will also have the option to produce a short ten-minute feature or dramatic piece.

Writers will also be expected to research and provide feedback to the class about recent fictional (aka dramatic) series: *Homecoming*, *The Unexplainable Disappearance of Mars Patel*, *The Truth (Radiotopia)*, *Wolf 359*, *Blackout*, *We're Alive: Goldrush*, *The Rest is Electric*, *Limetown*, *Carrier*, *Six Minutes*, *The Magnus Archives* and recent feature series: *Serial*, *You're Wrong About*, *In the Dark* and *Beyond Reasonable Doubt?* As well as stellar producers such as *The Kitchen Sisters*.

Regular attendance and participation in the workshop are essential for it to succeed.

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**CRWR 503G 002 Advanced Writing for Middle-Grade and Young Adults (3 credits, term 2)**

*Emily Pohl-Weary*

Middle-grade (MG) and young adult (YA) novels are the focus of this class. They tend to be adventurous, playful, unpretentious, and reflect the critical issues of our time. Together, we'll explore the weird and wonderful world of writing for young readers, the changing industry, audience expectations, parameters of sub-genres, and advanced writing techniques.

Recently, authors have cracked open the rules about what's allowed in YA and MG by tackling ground-breaking subject matter, such as entrenched racism, sexual assault, social inequities, and gender binaries. Great examples combine strong characters, a unique narrative voice, tight plotting, and dramatic tension.

During the term, students will read examples of MG/YA from different decades, critique each other's writing, do a presentation on the craft choices made in a recent novel, and participate in weekly craft-focused discussions. Writing expectations include: two substantial pieces of writing (15 pages each, double-spaced, 12pt font) and a short piece of experimental writing (5 pages, double-spaced, 12pt font).

This class will use a hybrid format, with readings and some discussions taking place on Canvas. Safety permitted, we will meet weekly in person.

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

*Timothy Taylor*

This once-weekly in person course is designed to develop your skills as a creative nonfiction (CNF) writer. Through readings, presentations, writing assignments, and peer review workshops, we'll be looking at practical techniques and approaches to bringing your true stories to life: voice and point of view, narrative structure, and the tactical use of scene, character, dialogue and other elements of story telling. We'll also cover some of the most useful tools that a CNF writer can have at their disposal including approaches to observation, note taking, and interviewing.

CNF is a very broad and inclusive area, covering everything from fact-driven investigative journalism to lyrical forms that owe more to poetry than prose. Diversity of voice is central to CNF as I teach it, and as I have practiced it over 30 years. This value will be reflected in the readings we do together and the way workshops are run. My CNF workshops are editorial board simulations. Students pick a "real world" publication where they imagine their piece running. The workshop participants then play the role of that publication's editorial board who, having commissioned the piece in question, are now refining and readying it for readers. I stress the word *simulation*. Publication is not a course requirement, though I'm pleased to say that many students do. The Ed Board Sim approach is designed instead to focus discussion, as well as to give all workshop participants a common objective.

Over the course of the term, students will write a piece of personal journalism and a profile of a person unrelated to the writer. Each of these should be around 3,000 words. Students are also expected to rewrite one of the first two assignments and submit the rewrite to me in the last week of classes as a third assignment.

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**CRWR 505G-002 – Advanced Writing of Creative Nonfiction (3 credits, term 2) Cross-listed with JRNL 520E 002**

*Carol Shaben / Farah Nosh*

Brought together by their similar approach to storytelling, this first-time course by writer Carol Shaben and photographer Farah Nosh focuses on breaking away from the constraints of hard journalism and the time pressures imposed by the news cycle, and delves into how to tell powerful true stories through conscious listening, human connection and the artistry of words and images. We will discuss essential elements of literary and visual journalism such as curiosity, ethical considerations, and shaping facts into compelling narratives. This workshop is generative, encouraging students to take risks and experiment. The intent is to create timeless, intimate, deep narratives that reveal larger truths about individuals and life. This course is intended for students who have a sound technical foundation in photography and advanced writing skills.

**Pen:** This component will combine journalistic adherence to fact with literary techniques including POV, voice, scene and summary, characterization, structure, dialogue, language, and style. Students will also learn research and reportage techniques including observation, immersion and interviewing.

**Lens:** This component will create confidence in approaching and executing deep photography narratives. Emphasis will be on approach and ethics, creative ways to visually translate written narratives, pushing through personal limitations, and how to access and create an emotive quality within photography.

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

*Martin Kinch*

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.

Term 1. We loosely follow the industry model, so all projects, whatever length, begin with a pitch. 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.

Term 2. Students will advance to drafts of Acts 1 and 2 of a longer piece.

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 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.

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.

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

*Martin Kinch*

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.

Term 1. We loosely follow the industry model, so all projects, whatever length, begin with a pitch. 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.

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

*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 36th 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 508G-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 (text 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 509F 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 class will also focus on discussion of process and practice, experimentation, establishing a vocabulary for writerly goals, and taking risks as artists.

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

*John Vigna*

Generative Mentorship Lab in Fiction. This 3-credit on campus/in-class grad fiction course will focus on generative writing, experimenting broadly with form and technique. We will meet as a group once a week and engage in discussions focused on advanced topics on process, craft, technique and aesthetic. We will also meet one-on-one several times during the semester. An emphasis will be placed on asking questions of one’s own work to get at the story you are working towards, to deepen and layer it. The goal is for each of you to push yourselves out of your comfort zones by looking at your own work and taking risks in style, theme, subject, etc, while working next level toward your own artistic intention. There will be weekly writing experiments, close reading reflections and at least one short story submission. There will be

minimal workshopping in this course (sharing of your work with peers for discussion), instead the focus will be on generating material that will culminate in one- or two-story submissions.

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

*John Vigna*

Revision Strategies and Techniques. This 3-credit on campus/in-class grad fiction course will focus on deep revision (process, technique and practice) and will accommodate all forms of adult fiction writing. Our weekly discussions will consist of craft talks and various aspects of writing and the sustained writing life. We'll focus on structure, point of view, character, prose style, voice, image patterns, transitions, place and setting, facility of exposition, scene vs summary, dialogue, best & worst use of description, beginnings and endings, use and misuse of flashbacks & dreams. The goal is for each writer to work at the edge of their competency by looking deeply at their own work and taking risks in style, theme, subject, etc, while working toward their own artistic intention. Students will complete writing experiments and submit at least one story and one deep revision. There will some workshopping in the second half of the course.

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

*Timothy Taylor*

This once weekly in person workshop is about shaping effective short works of fiction. Our work together will involved in depth discussions of craft as well as assigned readings of both works of fiction and essays about writing. These craft-oriented discussions will largely arise out of our weekly peer review workshops, where specific stories submitted by students will serve as the starting point for broader conversations about structure, point of view, beginnings and endings, character, scene, tone, and a wide range of other storytelling elements. All of these discussions will be oriented to helping students towards a deeper appreciation of the short story form and ultimately towards the creation of beautiful and moving prose. Over the course of the term, students will write and workshop two short stories for the first two assignments. For the third assignments students can either submit a third short story or a rewrite of one of the first two. My fiction workshops are founded crucially on the embrace and celebration of diverse voices, and the encouragement of a team mentality among all workshop participants. Bring your creativity, your imagination. Bring yourself. And prepare to be encouraged and supported in your fiction projects.

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**CRWR 511G 002 – Advanced Writing for Lyric Forms (3 credits, term 2)**

*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, podcasts, and to go deep within 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 along with lyric sheets, however knowledge of recording software (DAWs) such as Audacity, GarageBand, Ableton Live, etc.—though an asset!—is not a requirement. Included will be some instruction on digital recording techniques should there be student interest. This course will take place in real time, face-to-face in one weekly three-hour workshop session which students are required to attend. Participation and discussion as well as maintaining an environment of support and mutual respect is key to the success of this course as students will be participating in a genre that is more perforative in nature than some others, and perhaps extra challenging if students haven't tried it before. This should not be seen as a deterrent for anyone who's new to songwriting, however, but rather as an invitation to try something fun, exciting, and challenging.

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

*Linda Svendsen*

Synchronous: Friday, Sept 10, 2021 – Friday, December 3, 1-3 pm Pacific

Class will be held on **Zoom**.

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.

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

*Linda Svendsen*

**Synchronous:** Fridays, 1-3

Class will be held on **Zoom**.

Prerequisite: None but it is advised that writers take CRWR 514 – Term 1, Advanced Writing for Television: The Half-Hour Series Pilot or have previously taken a screenwriting class.

The purpose of the workshop is to create your own original one-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.

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Participation: written feedback prior to the workshop discussion and verbal peer review feedback within the larger writers' room or smaller breakout rooms

Office hours: I'll be story conferencing with you individually twice during the term  
[Linda.svendsen@ubc.ca](mailto:Linda.svendsen@ubc.ca)

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

*Doretta Lau*

Course description to come.

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

*Bronwen Tate*

*Tuesday 9AM – Wednesday 12PM PST*

In this hands-on course, students will design, try out, and reflect on assignments and lesson plans for a prospective creative writing class. Drawing on perspectives from writers, teachers, and education scholars including Mathew Salesses, Liz Lerman, Paisley Rekdal, Carol Dweck and

James Lang, we'll think together about how to teach each part of the writing process. We will explore strategies for inclusive teaching and weigh the benefits of various workshop structures, and as well digging into thorny issues like how to handle challenging classroom dynamics and how to grade creative work.

Throughout the course, we'll keep the student experience at the heart of our inquiry, and consider how our teaching goals and methods might vary depending on different formats (small workshop or large lecture, in-person or online) and contexts (university, public library, private workshop, prison, or community center). Students will support one another in developing a teaching persona and practice informed by scholarship on teaching and learning and enriched by individual experiences, strengths, and commitments. This course is open to students in both the Optional-Residency and On-Campus MFA streams. Students who have completed their first year of the MFA will receive priority. The course will be held asynchronously via Canvas with a few optional synchronous small-group sessions.

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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.