

# Optional Residency MFA Courses

## 2022 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).

Optional-Residency MFA courses are distinguished by a section number beginning with “D”. For example, CRWR 509-**001** is an on-campus section and CRWR 509-**D01** is a distance education section. If a course is offered in term 1 and term 2 with separate numbers you do not have to take both sections. Several other courses are two-term courses (501X for example) and for these you will be in the class from September to April.

### A Note on Optional-Residency Course Scheduling

All courses are held asynchronously. Students are expected to spend a total of 3 hours online participating each week. Class preparation, reading and writing time is not included in this number. The class runs across 27 hours to accommodate the schedules of students in different time zones. All classes run from 9:00AM Pacific time on day one to 12:00PM Pacific Time on day two.

To register, go to the [Student Service Centre](#). We recommend new students watch the help videos to learn how to create a worklist of courses in advance.

**Note: Courses highlighted in YELLOW either have no instructor attached yet, or are waiting for a potential description update from the instructor. We will update this document regularly.**

*Current as of June 7, 2022*

## Expanded Course Descriptions – 2022/23 Academic Year

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### **CRWR 501K D01 (term 1): Advanced Writing of Poetry I (3 credits)**

*Sarah Tsiang*

In this workshop-based course, students will produce new work, hone their editing skills, try different poetic forms, and rediscover their sense of play and wonder when it comes to words. We will have ongoing discussions that cover both the technical aspects of poetry and the emotional effect that great poetry produces. Assignments will include writing exercises, portfolios, and producing your own poetic form.

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### **CRWR 501M D01 (term 1): Advanced Writing of Poetry I (3 credits)**

*Susan Musgrave*

My aim is to help those who have grown up in fear and loathing of poetry attain a new perspective: "What they say "there are no words for"--that's what poetry is for." Emphasis on the music of the line, choosing a good title, why rhyme must include some element of surprise, traditional forms, Found poetry, Prose poetry, innovative poetry, ethics, the afterlife, truth, beauty – and, of course, the unspeakable. Deeply engaging discussion topics and instructive writing exercises.

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**CRWR 501L D02 (term 2): Advanced Writing of Poetry I (3 credits)**

*Instructor TBC*

Course Description TBC

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**CRWR 503K D01 (term 1): Advanced Writing for Children (3 credits)**

*Instructor TBC*

Course Description TBC

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**CRWR 503L D02 (term 2): Advanced Writing for Children (3 credits)**

*Instructor TBC*

Course Description TBC

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**CRWR 505K D01 Advanced Writing of Creative Non-Fiction I (3 credits term 1)**

*Mandy Catron*

In this course, we will focus on the fundamental techniques of Creative Nonfiction. For the first half of the semester, we will spend each week investigating a new element of craft together: through reading, discussion, lecture, and specific writing exercises. In the second half of the term, students will share and respond to one another's work through structured peer workshops. The course will be offered on Canvas in a fully asynchronous format.

You can think of our time together as an immersion into the craft of Creative Nonfiction. We will take risks, try new techniques, borrow from established writers, share our work, and experiment with everything from voice to style to structure. You'll finish this term with a polished essay draft and deeper insight into how form and content intersect in the genre.

This course welcomes those who are new to creative nonfiction as well as experienced CNF writers.

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## CRWR 505K D03 Advanced Writing of Creative Non-Fiction I (3 credits term 1)

*Lindsay Wong*

“How is it possible to bring order out of memory? I should like to begin at the beginning, patiently, like a weaver at his loom. I should like to say, ‘This is the place to start; there can be no other.’” Beryl Markham

“You own everything that happened to you. Tell your stories. If people wanted you to write warmly about them, they should have behaved better. ~[Anne Lamott](#)

“I believe that the memoir is the novel of the 21st century; it’s an amazing form that we haven’t even begun to tap...we’re just getting started figuring out what the rules are. ~[Susan Cheever](#)

Memoir is sometimes known as the ugly step-sister of fiction. It is a genre that confuses literary critics and has its practitioners swearing that they will never write another memoir as long as they live. Why is this genre so daunting to writers and so popular with readers?

In this creative nonfiction workshop, we will focus on drafting and revising powerful, moving, and engaging short form autobiographical pieces and/or chapters from long-form memoir projects. We will explore aspects of technique, structure, voice, and the creative process of crafting successful first-person narratives, including the use of scene-setting, retrospection, imagery, and humour. The course will include a brief historical overview of the genre, and we will discuss the ethics of memoir writing; the challenges and limitations of the form, including the responsibility of telling our versions of the truth. Students will learn to shape real-life events and distill memories into compelling narratives.

**Your work will form the primary texts for the course.** Excerpts from memoirs by excellent memoirists such as Terese-Marie Maihot, Jenny Heijun Wills, Antonio Michael Downing, Augusten Burroughs, Suzanne Calahan, Mary Karr, Yasuko Thanh, Dave Eggers et al, will be recommended for optional readings/weekly craft exercises. Students will be responsible for submitting a minimum of **two** workshop pieces (no more than 5,000 words each, 20 pages double space, size font 12) and providing thoughtful feedback on their peers' work.

Risk-taking and experimentation in your prose are encouraged. This workshop is for anyone who is interested in starting a memoir project or has written chapters/excerpts that they would like to workshop in a safe and supportive online learning environment. Depending on class interest/availability, there can be an option for synchronous Zoom group meetings to discuss issues of craft, pathways to publication, public recognition, libel, and the social and legal risks of publishing a successful memoir. There will also be ongoing opportunities to meet online one-on-one with your instructor to discuss your project and creative progress during the semester.

As this is an Opt-Res MFA workshop, students should be fairly independent, committed, and motivated to improve their craft. Late workshop submissions will NOT be workshopped.

**Prerequisites and Course Requirements:** This course is available to students registered in the Creative Writing MFA program. Graduate students may apply by submitting a 10 page (double-spaced) portfolio of creative nonfiction to [lindsay.wong@ubc.ca](mailto:lindsay.wong@ubc.ca). Please do not send academic papers, profiles, blog posts or magazine articles.

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**CRWR 505L D02 Advanced Writing of Creative Non-Fiction I (3 credits term 2)**

*Mandy Catron*

Course Description TBC

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**CRWR 505L D04 Advanced Writing of Creative Non-Fiction I (3 credits term 2)**

*Lindsay Wong*

“How is it possible to bring order out of memory? I should like to begin at the beginning, patiently, like a weaver at his loom. I should like to say, ‘This is the place to start; there can be no other.’” Beryl Markham

“You own everything that happened to you. Tell your stories. If people wanted you to write warmly about them, they should have behaved better. ~[Anne Lamott](#)

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**CRWR 506M D01: Advanced Writing of Drama for Screen (6 credits, term 1-2)**

*Sara Graefe*

*Tuesdays 9 am – Wednesdays noon*

In this advanced, online screenwriting workshop, we focus specifically on writing for film. We will explore techniques for creating, developing and writing a long-form screenplay, from initial pitch to treatment to draft. You 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, craft and business skills.

Filmmaking is a collaborative art involving other creatives, where the script serves as the blueprint for the finished film. In this course, you will be exploring and uncovering your own unique voice and sensibility as a screenwriter while also learning about North American film industry rules and conventions. You will complete this course with a sense of where your work fits in the marketplace, and with a set of professional skills to help you survive and thrive as a writer in this collaborative industry.

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**CRWR 507L D02 Advanced Writing of Drama for the Stage I (3 credits term 2)**

*Stephen Hunt*

Course Description TBC

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**CRWR 508K D01: Advanced Writing for Graphic Forms 1 (3 credits, term 1)**

*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 509K-D01 – Advanced Writing of Fiction (3 credits, term 1)**

*Maureen Medved*

Dream, make, destroy, discuss, and learn the magic of fiction writing.

This is a workshop for graduate writers of any combination of short and long fiction - short stories, micro or flash fiction, poetry/fiction hybrid, or chapters from a novel or novella.

The course will be mainly asynchronous with a weekly 27-hour workshop on Canvas. The rest of the week, you will produce your own fiction, read the scheduled writing of your cohort, and actively work through the weekly craft threads. We will explore fiction techniques as well as approaches to narrative and the process of writing (including revision) and examine issues of appropriation and literary citizenship. Excellent works of fiction and craft essays will be our texts, and we will discuss these in the context of our work in class. You will be asked to write your own tiny craft essay during this course and share it with your cohort. Students may be invited to attend Zoom sessions both in a group and one-on-one.

You are welcome to explore any form of fiction with the exception of formula or genre writing – romance, science fiction, crime, mystery – unless you spin the genre and make it new. The goal is to understand how to identify the strengths and challenges of your own work, so that you can return to your writing again and again with skill and confidence.

Repeat customers are welcome to join.

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### **CRWR 509K D03 (term 1): Advanced Writing of Fiction I (3 credits per term)**

*Nancy Lee*

In this online workshop, writers will experiment with craft and process to uncover the tools and approaches that best align with their own intentions for story-making in fiction. Our course offers three distinct opportunities for learning: exploration of craft concepts through our weekly Canvas modules and class Zoom discussions; a generative process through prompts, resources and guided self-reflection; and a writer-centred workshop. In addition, the instructor will meet with each writer to discuss their personal fiction writing goals. A peer response

framework ensures feedback will be productive, while a structured workshop format centres the writer's experience and authority and keeps discussion focused on the writer's most pressing concerns. During scheduled interactive Zoom Hangouts, we'll dig into technical challenges specific to student work, model texts, as well as craft and process questions arising from workshop. While the course workload will be manageable, a high level of engagement with weekly materials and submitted work is expected. This course is asynchronous with flexible participation options for the real-time Zoom hangouts.

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### **CRWR 509L-D02 (term 2): Advanced Writing of Fiction (3 credits)**

*Nancy Lee*

In this online workshop, writers will experiment with craft and process to uncover the tools and approaches that best align with their own intentions for story-making in fiction. Our course offers three distinct opportunities for learning: exploration of craft concepts through our weekly Canvas modules and class Zoom discussions; a generative process through prompts, resources and guided self-reflection; and a writer-centred workshop. In addition, the instructor will meet with each writer to discuss their personal fiction writing goals. A peer response framework ensures feedback will be productive, while a structured workshop format centres the writer's experience and authority and keeps discussion focused on the writer's most pressing concerns. During scheduled interactive Zoom Hangouts, we'll dig into technical challenges specific to student work, model texts, as well as craft and process questions arising from workshop. While the course workload will be manageable, a high level of engagement with weekly materials and submitted work is expected. This course is asynchronous with flexible participation options for the real-time Zoom hangouts.

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### **CRWR 509L-D04 – Advanced Writing of Fiction (3 credits, term 2)**

*Maureen Medved*

Dream, make, destroy, discuss, and learn the magic of fiction writing.

This is a workshop for graduate writers of any combination of short and long fiction - short stories, micro or flash fiction, poetry/fiction hybrid, or chapters from a novel or novella.

The course will be mainly asynchronous with a weekly 27-hour workshop on Canvas. The rest of the week, you will produce your own fiction, read the scheduled writing of your cohort, and actively work through the weekly craft threads. We will explore fiction techniques as well as approaches to narrative and the process of writing (including revision) and examine issues of appropriation and literary citizenship. Excellent works of fiction and craft essays will be our texts, and we will discuss these in the context of our work in class. You will be asked to write your own tiny craft essay during this course and share it with your cohort. Students may be invited to attend Zoom sessions both in a group and one-on-one.

You are welcome to explore any form of fiction with the exception of formula or genre writing – romance, science fiction, crime, mystery – unless you spin the genre and make it new. The goal is to understand how to identify the strengths and challenges of your own work, so that you can return to your writing again and again with skill and confidence.

Repeat customers are welcome to join.

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### **CRWR 514M D01- Advanced Writing for Television I (6 credits, term 1-2)**

*Zac Hug*

Part craft exploration and part workshop, this advanced class takes a strong look at creating serialized scripted television: from idea to development to outline to draft. Using a combination of lecture, workshop, television writer's room methodology, and quite a bit of writing time - students will create the world of their TV shows on three levels: series, season, and finally, a pilot. Term One will focus on the development and outline stage of television writing, while Term Two will focus on a first draft of a pilot episode, either a one-hour or a half hour with a detailed pitch document. Students will also screen various television shows and scenes that illustrate character development, projecting future story, tying theme to a plot, a dialogue workshop, and the advantages of a solid act out. *Please note that this course will be taught in Canvas.*

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### **CRWR 519K D01: Writing Speculative Fiction (3 credits, term 1)**

*Emily Pohl-Weary*

This workshop class focuses on writing speculative fiction, including fantasy, science fiction, folk tale retellings, magical realism, and horror. You'll write two new pieces and give detailed feedback to your peers. There is also an emphasis on a broad range of genre reading and discussion, and weekly genre-focused writing exercises.

In other words... get ready to read and write!

Speculative literature comes in many forms and is referred to by many names, but all of its sub-genres have their own histories, movements, and aesthetics. Urban fantasy series, epic wizard quests, and books about alien contact appeal to a vast range of both casual and sophisticated readers. Some consider these stories to be escapist fluff, and their knowledge is limited to work made palatable to a mass market. However, the strongest and most acclaimed authors writing literatures of the imaginary employ complex and rigorous techniques to call into question perception, reality, social expectations, patriarchal/colonial histories, and narrative truths.

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### **CRWR 530 D01: Preparation for a Career in Creative Writing (3 credits, term 2)**

*Instructor TBC*

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. There are four assignments over the term in addition to participation in weekly discussions: personal bio, literary CV, personal business plan, and text for your author website.

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## **CRWR 550K-D01 – Teaching Creative Writing (3 credits, term 2)**

*Bronwen Tate*

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 Saleeses, Liz Lerman, Paisley Rekdal, Carol Dweck, Felicia Rose Chavez, 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. The course will be held asynchronously via Canvas with a few optional synchronous small-group sessions and will be assessed on a Credit/No Credit basis.

*This course is open to on-campus and optional-residency students; 6 spaces have been reserved for each program. This course is not open to first year MFAs in order to prioritize students closer to the end of their degree.*

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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.