

Columbia Artist/Teachers (CA/T) INTRO PROGRAM – Spring 2008

For five years, Columbia Artist/Teachers (CA/T)-comprised of MFA students in the School of the Arts-has been offering short-term, noncredit writing classes to Columbia and Barnard students through the INTRO program. All students are welcome in these classes-whether you are a major (or prospectivemajor) looking for additional writing opportunities, or a student who has always wanted to try a writing course.

Please take a moment and look through the schedule of courses; if interested please contact Susannah Nevison at writingcats@gmail.com NO LATER than January 30th.

FIRST SESSION: Classes start Feb. 1 THROUGH Week of March 9-16:

Friday:

Fox Henry Frazier, Poetry: "Futzing With Form." Dodge rm 407 10-12
Tye Pemberton, Fiction: "Implications of Style." Dodge rm 407 12-2
Scott Webster, Film: "Intro to Screenwriting." Dodge rm 409 12-2

Saturday:

Kat Savino, Non-fiction: "Memoir." Dodge rm 407 11-1
Chris Kondrich, Poetry: "Poetry that Challenges Perceptions of Self."
Dodge rm 409 11-1
Quessa Robinson, Fiction: "Starting Your Novel." Dodge rm 407 2-4
Jeb Burt, Fiction: "Dramatic Fiction." Dodge rm 409 2-4

Monday:

Laura Zinn Fromm, Fiction/Non-fiction: "Exploration with Fiction and
Non-fiction forms." Dodge rm 411 5-7

SECOND SESSION: Week of March 23- 28 THROUGH Week of April 27-May 4

Friday:

Diana Lind, Fiction: "Influence." Dodge rm 407 10-12
Carla Blumenkranz, Fiction: "In the First Person." Dodge rm 407 12-2
Caroline Seklir, Fiction: "Schools of Fiction." Dodge rm 409 10-12
Brie Bousloagh "Underage Narrator"

Saturday:

Kristen O'Toole: "Fiction Basics." Dodge rm 411 11-1
Betsy Walters, Fiction: "Writing the Unreal: Imaginative Fiction."
Dodge rm 407 2-4

Emma Aarnes, Fiction: "Character Building." Dodge rm 409 2-4

*PLEASE SEE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR DETAILED COURSE DESCRIPTIONS!

CLASS DESCRIPTIONS: First Session

POETRY:

"Futzing with Form" Fox Henry Frazier

Student exposure to established forms and practice playing around and writing new forms. Introduction to ideas about new formalism and the way writers today are fracturing, playing with, messing up different "forms" of poetry; writing some "new formalist" types of poetry.

"Poetry that Challenges Our Perception of Self" Christopher Kondrich

This class will concentrate on poetry that uses language to better understand or to challenge our insights into the self, identity, the soul and the body. We will read and discuss poems by Robert Lowell, Fernando Pessoa, John Ashbery, Frank Bidart, Bill Knott, James Merrill, Mark Strand, Frederick Seidel and others, and also prose by Daniel Dennett, Douglas Hofstadter and other cognitive theorists. Our workshop will correspond to this ongoing investigation in an effort to expand our practice of poetry into a matter of inquiry into what we deem to be the self.

FICTION:

"Implications of Style" Tye Pemberton

This fiction workshop will be designed to explore the possibilities and traditions of each student's inherent sense of writing style. Students will share written work in an environment where the work will be discussed and critiqued by the class as a group, as well as in individual written comments given both by the instructor & the members of the class. Particular attention

will be given in class to the sentence-to-sentence and word-to-word choices made by students in their pieces, and the ways these choices relate to the reading experience and the meaning of the work. Short, in-class readings will be used to help color the discussions of style. In-class writing exercises may also be assigned.

“Starting Your Novel” Quressa Robinson

Each week will be devoted to some part of the novel writing process and will be supplemented with chapter excerpts from published novels. Depending on class size 2-6 students will be workshopped per week. Each student will work on starting the first chapter of a novel, and hopefully will be able to write chapters 2 and 3 during the course of class. Each class will begin and end with a writing assignment.

“Dramatic Fiction” Jeb Burt

This class is an exploration of character motivations and the ways in which conflict between opposing forces can propel a story, especially through active dialogue. We will look at masters of dramatic and comic dialogue, particularly Ernest Hemingway, Donald Barthelme, Flannery O'Connor, Richard Price, George Saunders and Victor LaValle; we'll study how these writers interweave compelling dialogue with descriptive exposition to create vivid characters and a sense of dramatic movement. We will also read excerpts of plays which demonstrate how dialogue can carry exceptional narrative density without the help of exposition.

NON-FICTION:

“Memoir” Kat Savino

The structure of the class will usually involve a brief in class reading, a structured period of writing from a prompt that comes out of the reading and then a chance for students to share work and respond to each other. I'd like to read a variety of authors: Clifford Chase, Esmeralda Santiago, Richard Rodriguez, Audre Lorde, Claudia Rankine. Emphasis will be on writing from student experience, turning the “stuff” of our lives into intriguing written works.

“Exploration with Fiction and Non-Fiction” Laura Zinn Fromm

In this fiction and creative non-fiction workshop, students may submit up to 20 pages of writing, three times per semester. We will spend most of the class discussing each other's work, and then spend about fifteen minutes at the end of each class discussing assigned, outside reading, designed to get us talking about some of the major components and hurdles involved in learning to write

fiction and non-fiction. The goal of this class is to write as well as we can, then make our writing better.

FILM:

“Introduction to Screenwriting” Scott Webster

An introduction to three-act structure, sequences, basic formatting, character development, and dialogue. Our goal is to have the first sequence (15 pages) of an original feature screenplay by the end of the session.

CLASS DESCRIPTIONS: Second Session (More to follow.)

FICTION:

“Underage Narrator” Brie Bouslagh

Excerpts and short stories told from the perspective of children, or teenagers, as a way into the world of the underage narrator. Readings might include *Cruddy* by Lynda Barry, *Youth in Revolt* by C.D. Payne, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer, *Ham on Rye* by Bukowski, among others. The work that will be submitted by students would not necessarily have to be writing that is in the same vein, but hopefully draw from, and work around a strong narrator. Focus on perspective of narrator, and how ideas such as honesty and innocence play into writing a distinctly “young” narrative voice.

“Influence” Diana Lind

Too rarely do writing classes explore the connection between old, classic short stories and contemporary authors. This class will look at modern masters of the short story and consider the author's influences. Examples might include: how Rick Moody was influenced by Angela Carter, Adam Haslett by Truman Capote, or Dave Eggers by Vladimir Nabokov. How Donald Barthelme mocks a J.D. Salinger story, or Joan Didion refutes Hemingway's legacy, or Junot Diaz copies Lorrie Moore's self-help form. The purpose of looking at modern writers' influences is to encourage students to look at the lineage of fiction and develop a greater theoretical basis for their own stories.

“In the First Person” Carla Blumenkranz

For the first-person narrator, the only way to explain him or herself may be to tell about everyone else. This workshop focuses on reading and writing short fiction from the first-person perspective. Reading includes short stories by Isaac to Babel, Grace Paley, and Leonard Michaels.

“Schools of Fiction” Caroline Seklir

A basic introduction to the schools of writing fiction while remaining focused on student generated work. Readings will be geared towards generating new writing through exposure to different styles. More information soon to follow.

“Writing the Unreal: Imaginative Fiction” Betsy Walters

As an introductory course, each class will incorporate the presentation and discussion of an element of fiction, such as character or setting, seen through the specific lens of building an unreal, magical or imaginative story. Prompted in-class exercises and assignments will allow students the opportunity to focus on the week’s topic. The rest of the class will work as a traditional workshop with scheduled discussion of student work. Weekly readings will come from the work of Aimee Bender, Judith Budnitz, Salvador Plascencia, A.S. Byatt, Angela Carter, Juilo Cortazar, and Robert Coover, among others.

“Character Building” Emma Aarnes

This class will focus on the various components involved in creating strong and convincing characters. Exploration of unfamiliar characters, secondary characters, unlikable characters and setting as character will be central class topics, supplemented by reading that illuminates difficult issues surrounding character building. As always, in class writing and workshopping of student work will be a key way to explore these issues in our own writing

“Fiction Basics” Kristen O’Toole

Come learn the basics of fiction writing through hands-on experience. Classes include in-class writing exercises that will focus on different aspects of fiction writing: character, voice, style etc. Students will bring in outside assignments and receive feedback from peers and the teacher—workshop may also be supplemented with light outside reading to draw attention to techniques being learned.