

THE RAINIER WRITING WORKSHOP
MFA @ PLU
2014 RESIDENCY SCHEDULE

In addition to attending all workshop sessions, each participant is required to take 16 credits during the residency. A one-session class counts for one credit, a double-session class counts for two credits, a three-session class counts for three credits. These count for one credit each: each morning talk and lecture; the Art of the Book class; each Grad Presentation. To receive credits for a multi-session class, all the sessions must be attended. Everyone must take at least one class designated "Advance Reading." The Grad Sessions are for intended for graduates, but others may attend on a non-credit basis. The Pedagogy Sessions are intended for thesis-year participants. Participants are expected to attend the Grad Readings and the evening faculty readings.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 3

GBC **4:30 GRADUATES' READING: Kelli Russell Agodon '07, Lisa Ohlen Harris '11**

Regency Room **6:30 DINNER**

Scan Center **8:00 FACULTY READINGS: David Biespiel, David Cates**

MONDAY, AUGUST 4

8:30 MORNING TALK:

Xavier 201 **Barrie Jean Borich, *The Truth***

Most writers say they write some form of "the truth." What's the difference then between rendering actuality in nonfiction and the ways fiction and poetry also grapple with what we mean when we say a work "tells the truth"? Is truth and truthiness really what distinguishes nonfiction from fiction and if so, then what do we do with the poem? What is the ring of truth, what is its variation and range, and how do we recognize its sound?

Admin Rooms **10:00 PRIMARY-GENRE WORKSHOPS**

10:00 GRAD SESSION:

Xavier 201 **Katrina Hays, *How to Offer a Graduate Reading***

The graduate readings are offered as a way to share the writing you have created over the past three years with everyone in the program. How excellent, right? Well.... For people who are completely confident about reading their work in front of their peers, the reading is easy. For others, it can feel like an approaching nightmare train on the tracks of potential embarrassment, doom and destruction. This class will offer a basic approach in how to offer a graduate reading that is professional, clear, well-thought-out, and does not leave you a wrecked puddle on the floor. After the class, each

graduate will be able to schedule a 30-minute private practice session with Katrina in Xavier Hall prior to her or his reading.

Commons

12:00 LUNCH

1:30 GRAD SESSION:

Admin 209

Jim Heynen, *Life Beyond The Blank Page: Why We Need to be Obsessed with Something Besides Our Own Writing*

Teaching and writing go hand-in-hand for many people, and, indeed, many of our graduates already are teachers or hope to become teachers with their MFA degrees. I'd like to make a case for alternative obsessions, even if one is also a teacher/writer. Indeed, those other obsessions are often the material for our writing.

1:30 CLASSES:

Admin 210

Linda Bierds, *Master Class in Poetry*

In each of our three sessions together we'll focus on a different topic: 1) lineation, syntax, and patterns of thought; 2) structuring free verse and working against form; 3) the lyrical narrative. Along the way we'll look at poems by masters such as W. C. Williams and Randall Jarrell, as well as work by a number of younger poets, including James Haug, Leslie Harrison, and Mary Graham. [Three Sessions; For 1st- and 2nd-Year Poetry Participants.]

Admin 211A

Fleda Brown, *The Long and Short of It: Whitman and Dickinson as Models*

What does the tendency to want to sprawl all over the page say about our intentions? What does the tendency to want to be elliptical and terse say about what we mean to mean? Is meaning *changed by* form or is it *made out of* form? We'll look closely at parts of *Song of Myself* as well as select Dickinson poems as models as we think about these questions of artistic control. For the second session, you should bring a couple of your own poems for us to consider: does this way of expressing seem organic to the tone, to the material? What if Whitman wrote this? What if Dickinson did? What would change? [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 212

David Cates, *First Chapters*

We'll examine the first chapters of novels and see how they set the geography of the world, physical and emotional and metaphysical, and present a dramatic situation that is big enough to power a novel. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 211B

Brenda Miller, *Dear Sugar: Examining Intimate Form in Creative Nonfiction*

Using the book *Tiny Beautiful Things: Advice on Love and Life from Dear Sugar*, we will examine how this particular form gives rise to intimacies and revelation. How do the personae of both the advice columnist and the one seeking advice enable storytelling? How might we transfer this idea of persona into other forms of creative nonfiction? What is it about the letter form that allows for intimacy? [Two Sessions; Advance Reading; Exercises.]

Admin 204A

Sherry Simpson, *New Directions in Nature Writing*

Nature writing is moving beyond celebratory walks in the woods, easy insights, or solemn epiphanies. By expanding definitions of nature and wilderness, we'll identify unexpected subjects and explore fresh approaches to discovering and writing about the natural world. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required; Exercises.]

3:00 CLASSES:

- Admin 210** **Suzanne Berne/Marjorie Sandor, *Nothing Can Happen Nowhere: Why Setting Matters in Fiction***
“Nothing can happen nowhere,” notes the novelist Elizabeth Bowen. “The locale of the happening always colours the happening, and often, to a degree, shapes it.” In this two-session course, we will examine Eudora Welty’s “A Worn Path” and John Cheever’s “Good-Bye, My Brother” as we discuss how setting not only provides a place for action to happen, but becomes, quite often, the story itself. Practically speaking, having your characters interact with their location is an essential way to show what’s going on in a story rather than telling us. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required.]
- Admin 212** **Barrie Jean Borich, *Forms of Nonfiction***
We will read, discuss and write across the diverse sub-genres of contemporary creative nonfiction, including the lyric essay, the personal essay, literary reportage, the nonfiction short, literary memoir, graphic memoir, and hybrid forms. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required; Exercises.]
- Admin 211A** **Stephen Corey, *The Villanelle: What, Why, How, When, and When Not***
I’m not a formalist but I love the villanelle. We will look at some classics and some non-classics of the form as it has been deployed in English, and we will do some in-class exercises/attempts. (Our focus on this particular form will not keep us from finding ways to apply the discussion to other forms as well.) Participants are invited to bring along to class a few copies of one or two of their own favorite villanelles. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required.]
- Admin 204A** **Gary Ferguson, *Writing from the Inside: The Personal Essay***
The first part of our class focuses on four essential “mechanical” issues especially important to personal essay: setting, transition, tone, and pace. Next, we’ll explore a powerful writing tool called dramatic device—a kind of blueprint for effective storytelling, used since ancient times. While the mechanical issues mentioned above allow a writer to find and strengthen her voice, dramatic device lets her shape her story into a powerful narrative thread, pulling the reader from first paragraph to final sentence. The class itself will consist of a mix of exercises, lecture, and in-class readings. [Two Sessions; Exercises.]
- Admin 209** **Ann Pancake, *Dialogue Nuts and Bolts***
Contrary to popular assumption, dialogue is not just talk transcribed. In this class we’ll cover common missteps in the writing of dialogue—like “the invisible scene,” the smuggling in of expository material, and empty dialogue—as well as approaches and tactics that will help you make the very most of your dialogue. You’ll need to bring a story or essay you’ve written where you feel your dialogue could use a tune-up, and you’ll need to read in advance and bring to class the Hemingway story “Hills Like White Elephants.” I’ll provide take-home exercises that can help you generate and hone dialogue. [One Session; Handout Reading Required.]

4:30 GRAD PRESENTATIONS:

- Admin 204A** **Tom Cantwell, *Roles of Nature in Writing***
Unless nature is your exclusive subject, you’ll have to consider how it affects the humans who interact with it in your writing. I studied the short fiction of Rick Bass and came up with five ways that nature impacts his characters. These methods should apply to any genre. I’ll share examples from Bass’s stories as well as my own, and leave time for participants to explore nature in their own writing.
- Admin 210** **Tom James, *Can the Third-Person Narrator Also Be a Character?***
Exploring texts by writers who have made significant contributions to a new movement in the

direction away from the conventional thinking about the third-person narrator, we arrive at a point where the fine line between narrator and character is, at the least, blurred, and in a best-case scenario, non-existent. That a third-person narrator is, in fact, a character who is—albeit with no overt relationships within the story—integral to the structure nonetheless, forces the reader to accept an even greater release of suspension of disbelief. The reward for the reader is the opportunity to stand with a narrator in the midst of a story unfolding in front of them.

Admin 212 **Kate Wallop, *How to Map Reader Response to Your (Potentially Scandalous) Memoir: Mary Karr's Framework of Response Is Our Guide***

Each one of us has a story, the tale of how we lived and what we learned. What stops many of us from telling it? This question has answers as individual as we are. Together we'll identify what we fear most from our readers, especially those we care about. Next, we'll identify how Karr's first words create an actual roadmap for responding, without judgment, to each of her three memoirs. Maybe her strategies for guiding reader response will work for you too—?

Regency Room **6:15 DINNER**

Scan Center **7:30 FACULTY READINGS: Lola Haskins, Sherry Simpson**

NPCC **AFTER HOURS: NORTHERN PACIFIC COFFEE COMPANY**

TUESDAY, AUGUST 5

8:30 MORNING TALK:

Xavier 201 **Rick Barot, *The Authentic Voice***

The qualities that make a voice a voice can be vexingly hard to describe when a reader encounters this voice in a piece of writing. The reader *knows* when that authenticity is there, or the reader intuits when it's *not* fully there. In this talk, we'll look at pieces of fiction and poetry and notice the technical moves that the writers make to convince the reader of that authenticity.

Admin Rooms **10:00 PRIMARY-GENRE WORKSHOPS**

UC Rooms **10:00 THESIS MANUSCRIPT CRITIQUES**

Commons **12:00 LUNCH**

1:30 GRAD SESSION:

Admin 209 **Scott Nadelson, *Life as an Adjunct Instructor: A Cautionary Tale***

Teaching is a wonderful profession, and for writers finishing an MFA, seeking teaching appointments at the college level is an attractive possibility: there's the flexible schedule that allows time for writing, there's the built-in community, there's the opportunity to share your passion with eager young minds. But in an age when most institutions of higher learning are depending more and more on part-time and contingent faculty, there are also major risks in choosing that path. I'll share my experience teaching as an adjunct for more than ten years before landing a tenure-track position, discussing the pleasures and pitfalls of the adjunct life, and will answer questions about how to find teaching positions, how to keep them, and how to avoid getting trapped in a cycle of exploitation.

1:30 CLASSES:

- Admin 210 Bierds, *Master Class in Poetry* [Session 2]
- Admin 211A Brown, *The Long and Short of It: Whitman and Dickinson as Models* [Session 2]
- Admin 212 Cates, *First Chapters* [Session 2]
- Admin 211B Miller, *Dear Sugar: Examining Intimate Form in Creative Nonfiction* [Session 2]
- Admin 204A Simpson, *New Directions in Nature Writing* [Session 2]

3:00 CLASSES:

- Admin 211B Peggy Shumaker, *Line/Sentence/Stanza*
A skilled poet is always aware of how tension and music flow in each line. The finest poets work with other relationships as well: between line and sentence, and between sentence and stanza. We'll look at poems that create multiple meanings and nuances, set tone, and alter pacing and rhythm by careful use of lines, sentences, and stanzas. We'll look at the effects of end stopped and enjambed lines, and will consider the tool of multiple-stanza sentences. [One Session.]
- Admin 210 Berne/Sandor, *Nothing Can Happen Nowhere: Why Setting Matters in Fiction* [Session 2]
- Admin 212 Borich, *Forms of Nonfiction* [Session 2]
- Admin 211A Corey, *The Villanelle: What, Why, How, When, and When Not* [Session 2]
- Admin 204A Ferguson, *Writing from the Inside: The Personal Essay* [Session 2]

4:30 GRAD PRESENTATIONS:

- Admin 210 Angela Allen, *The Big Merge: Poetry and Photography Come Together—Or Don't Quite*
Poems and photos can be kindred arts, and in meeting on the page, can create works bigger and better than each art form. We'll take a look at several collections and see how photos and poems fuse—or don't quite. C.D. Wright, Robinson Jeffers, and Paul Muldoon are among poets who partner with visual artists to create collections using different collaborative approaches. We'll do an exercise to see how you might make a tuneful fusion with your own writing and a piece of photography.
- Admin 212 David Hebestreit, *White Space*
This class will explore white space's function and intent. That is, it (the class) will delve into our reactions to the absence of words and sound. We will discuss with what humans tend to fill those silences, as well as how writers use white space to amplify meaning. Using specific examples from best-selling creative nonfiction and memoir, we will see how writers use white space to create suspense, allow for the interpolation of private experience, and offer moments for reader entry and exit. In a nutshell, we will look at what is left unsaid and how white space acts as a structural option.
- Admin 204A Meagan Macvie, *I'm Just Being Myselfie*
So maybe they can be a bit self-focused, but young adult characters are exciting to read and write because 1) teens DO stuff, 2) they care passionately about RIGHT NOW THIS MINUTE, and 3) they have magical transcendent super powers. "A first kiss," writes author Eliot Schrefer, "has as much to do with the knee-shaking discovery that we exist in a shared universe as it does with the fear of

locked braces.” Written well, first-person teen voices are highly idiosyncratic, yet completely relatable. In this presentation, we’ll look at ways young narrators come alive on the page without coming off like posers.

Admin 204B

Karin Rosman, *Tainted Omniscience, Tainted Characters*

In *How Fiction Works*, James Wood remarked, “So-called omniscience is almost impossible. As soon as someone tells a story about a character, narrative seems to want to bend itself around that character, wants to merge with that character, to take on his or her way of thinking and speaking.” Together we will look at how omniscience is rarely neutral but inflected. We will also look at how some writers use narrative distance to mimic omniscience. We will also look carefully at moments when a writer changes point of view to determine whether or not it is a change in point of view or a shift in narrative distance.

UC Patio

6:15 DINNER

Scan Center

7:30 FACULTY READINGS: Kevin Clark, Lia Purpura

NPCC

AFTER HOURS: NPCC

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6

8:30 MORNING TALK:

Xavier 201

Rebecca McClanahan, *Art-I-Fact: The Triumvirate of Family History Memoir (with Suggestions for Achieving a Balance of Power)*

When you write a family history memoir, your primary allegiance is not to the research itself (fact) but rather to the deeper story discovered *through* the research (art), a story that in some way connects to your own (I). In this craft reading, we’ll look how these three elements collided during the researching and writing of *The Tribal Knot: A Memoir of Family, Community, and a Century of Change*.

Admin Rooms

10:00 PRIMARY-GENRE WORKSHOPS

UC Rooms

10:00 THESIS MANUSCRIPT CRITIQUES

Commons

12:00 LUNCH

Red Square

11:30-1:00 BERRY FESTIVAL: Live Music & Free Blueberry Desserts

1:30 GRAD SESSION:

Admin 209

Adrienne Harun, *Goodbye to All That: Striking Out on Your Own After the MFA*

An MFA program may provide a kind of cocoon of intense discussion and support. It may also be a time of great experimentation, a wonderful oasis in a writing career when one can try anything without worry of a larger audience. And then you graduate, and you’re off in the world, alone at your desk or surrounded by only a few steadfast writing companions. You may have developed your own voice. You also may still be hearing the multitudinous echoes of every workshop comment you’ve ever received. Regardless of how secure you feel as you leave a program, you’re entering a new stage as a writer, one in which you alone must call the shots. More than ever, you will need healthy doses of self-reliance and discipline and enduring belief. In this discussion

session, we'll talk about a few continuing sources of potential support—for example, residencies and conferences—but mostly I'd like to address your ideas of what life as a working writer might look like and offer a few strategies for moving on into a writing life without the structure of a mentorship or constant community feedback.

1:30 CLASSES:

Admin 211A

David Biespiel, *Four Great American Poems: Close Readings*

We'll take two days to look closely at four poems in terms of structure (style, narrative arc, lyric intensity, metaphor) and insight (context, content, argument, and transformation). Because by looking deeply into great poetry, we can find habits and frames of reference and aspects of mind and thinking that can impact your own writing in profound ways. Read closely to write more confidently. The poems include: "For the Union Dead" by Robert Lowell. "Roosters" by Elizabeth Bishop. "Directive" by Robert Frost. "Love Calls Us to the Things of the World" by Richard Wilbur. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 204A

Rebecca McClanahan, *Shaping the Raw Material of Family History*

Whether you've inherited boxes of letters, photos, artifacts, and documents, or only a few stories passed down to you, this multi-genre workshop will help you begin to shape the raw material of family history into an engaging and artful text. Specific topics include selecting and arranging details, fleshing out characters, providing historical or cultural context, employing multiple rhetorical structures, and discovering themes and patterns of meaning. We will be doing brief exercises, but class would not entail advance reading. [Two Sessions; Exercises.]

Admin 211B

Jim Heynen, *Short-Form Prose Options: From the Tall Tale to the Lyrical Prose Poem*

The first session will work from the oral tradition(s) as a model: the tall tale, the fable, etc.; the second session will look at everything else. [Two Sessions; Exercises.]

Admin 212

Scott Nadelson, *Power Shifts as Dramatic Engine*

An imbalance of power between two or more characters immediately brings tension into a story, and drama often hinges on the movement of that power as it shifts from character to character. We'll look at the way writers use shifts in power to drive dramatic scene, with a particular focus on dialogue, action, and character perception. [Two Sessions; Exercises.]

Admin 210

Bierds, *Master Class in Poetry* [Session 3]

3:00 CLASSES:

Admin 204A

Suzanne Berne/Peggy Shumaker, *Constructing a Manuscript*

Ready to shape and refine your book-length manuscript? This session will offer guiding principles you might find useful. Using examples from poetry, prose, and mixed-genre books, we'll discuss specific ways writers have organized their material. We'll also talk about the effects that different kinds of organization can produce. Questions and discussion are welcome. Handouts provided in class. [One Session.]

Admin 211B

Mary Clearman Blew, *The Half-Known World in Nonfiction*

In his craft book *The Half-Known World*, fiction writer Robert Boswell makes a case counter to the conventional wisdom that a fiction writer must know every detail of his or her fictional world. But what about the world of the nonfiction writer? Is it by definition half-known? What insight can the fiction writer offer the nonfiction writer to deepen interest in his or her crafted world? Posted on the RWW website for discussion of the differences and similarities of the fiction writer's and the

nonfiction writer's tasks will be "The Half-Known World," a chapter from Boswell's book; an early draft of an unpublished short story, "I, Zombie," by my friend Jeff P. Jones; and an unpublished late draft of an essay, "Being Jewish (Sort of) in the West," by my friend Joy Passanante. [One Session; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 211A

Greg Glazner, *Some Kinds of "Music" in Poetry*

When we think of "music" in poetry, we often think of assonance, consonance, alliteration, and meter. In addition to these kinds of music, there are many more, as exemplified by poets as diverse as Walt Whitman, Frank O'Hara, C.D. Wright, Carl Phillips, and many others. We'll take a look at how "music" operates in a diverse group of poets, with an eye to expanding the range of ways to think about the term. [Two Sessions; Exercises.]

Admin 204B

Lia Purpura, *Writing Against: Tackling the Hateful and Vexing*

The essay that vehemently counters, or focuses on something that irks, offers a number of inherent challenges not for the faint of heart: you seek passion but not rant; you want to avoid coming off as narrow-minded, defensive, uptight—but you have a definitive (and likely nuanced) perspective to assert. You want readers to see and feel exactly what you find vexing, so as to move the unconvinced as well as align with those who share your perspective (and all without either evangelizing or representing a party line!) This class will take an in-depth look at various problems encountered when writing about the irksome and vexing, and offer practical solutions for prose writers seeking to shape and control their stance towards the (often quirky) issues they feel strongly about. [One Session; Handout Reading Required; Exercises.]

Admin 209

Ann Pancake, *Writing the Critical Response Paper*

Drawing on input from mentors across the program, this class provides advice and strategies for writing the critical response papers: ideas for constructing reading lists; what mentors expect in the responses; common problems; and how to approach, specifically, the composition of the paper. Students will need to read beforehand a packet of sample response papers. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required; Strongly Encouraged for 1st-Year Participants.]

4:30 GRAD PRESENTATIONS:

Admin 204A

Kari Fisher, *Saving Room for Dessert: A Survival Guide for Teaching the Bread-and-Butter Courses*

We'll talk through those freshman comp/developmental writing/and other (aka bread-and-butter) classes that we as creative writers often "get stuck" teaching. I'll also be bringing handouts and resources that I wish I'd had when I started teaching adults 23 years ago.

Admin 204B

Michele Flom, *What We Don't Talk About: Raymond Carver's Understated Backstory*

Although Carver's themes were distinctly his own, it's no secret that he embraced Hemingway's theory of omission. In this presentation, we'll look at three of Carver's short stories to see how he effectively employs minimal backstory to both build emotionally complex characters, and to propel his narratives toward resolution.

Admin 210

Jennie Goode, *Against Idling: Engaging the Personal and the Political in the Essay*

Somewhere in the space between memoir and polemic falls a kind of essay that addresses a political issue through the lens of personal experience. Although these essays may persuade or provoke, their writers often engage less in argument than in what Leslie Jamison calls "productive uncertainty." In foregrounding struggle and discovery, these essayists make room for readers to struggle too. We'll examine how a few specific writers employ persona, form, tone, and language in essays that bring together the personal and the political.

Admin 212

Joycelyn Trigg, *Seeing Things*

Your mind is a museum housing a permanent exhibition of “abiding images” (term coined by Cathy Smith Bowers). When we write about those mental snapshots of memory, is the process anything like writing about external images like paintings and photographs (“ekphrasis”)? The poem generally cited as the first ekphrasis, a passage of *The Iliad* describing Achilles’s shield, is after all about an imagined work. Considering the question will help us think about the poet as observer, the various ways poets use images, memory and imagination as artist, and how a deeper understanding of ekphrastic writing can inform our writing about vivid visual memories.

Regency Room

6:15 DINNER

Scan Center

7:30 FACULTY READINGS: Linda Bierds, Barrie Jean Borich

GBC

AFTER HOURS: GARFIELD BOOK COMPANY SIGNINGS

THURSDAY, AUGUST 7

8:30 MORNING TALK:

Xavier 201

Brenda Miller, *Lions and Tigers and Bears, Oh My: A Case Against Courage in Creative Nonfiction*

In this talk, based on an article Brenda published in “The Writer’s Chronicle,” we’ll explore how our definition of “courage” might shift when translating experience into artifact. What do we mean when we say an essay or memoir is “brave”? Is courage necessary when writing personal work, or does it actually get in the way?

Admin Rooms

10:00 PRIMARY-GENRE WORKSHOPS

UC Rooms

10:00 THESIS MANUSCRIPT CRITIQUES

Commons

12:00 LUNCH

Regency Room

12:00 GRADUATES & FACULTY LUNCH

1:30 GRAD SESSION:

Admin 209

Suzanne Berne, *The Art and Maintenance of Literary Friendships*

Friendships with other writers can be enormously sustaining, both during times of frustration and periods of success. Writers can inspire and encourage each other, empathize with each other, share practical advice and, most of all, keep each other company. But how to cultivate literary friendships? And once they are cultivated, how to make sure they flourish?

1:30 CLASSES:

Admin 204B

Kevin Goodan, *Ekphrasis: Engaging Other Modes of Creativity in Our Writing*

In this action-packed class we will look closely at the ways other writers (such as William Carlos Williams, Sharon Olds) have incorporated the idea of *ekphrasis* into their works. We will also make our own forays into this wild territory by viewing the works of such artists as Henry Darger, Gerhard Richter, Sally Mann, and others. [One Session; Handout Reading Required.]

- Admin 211A **Biespiel, *Four Great American Poems: Close Readings* [Session 2]**
- Admin 204A **McClanahan, *Shaping the Raw Material of Family History* [Session 2]**
- Admin 211B **Heynen, *Short-Form Prose Options: From the Tall Tale to the Lyrical Prose Poem* [Session 2]**
- Admin 212 **Nadelson, *Power Shifts as Dramatic Engine* [Session 2]**

3:00 CLASSES:

- Admin 204A **David Cates, *Where's the Body?***
 We'll look at good scenes in novels and stories and examine how the writers keep the narrative focused and the reader clear by never forgetting where the bodies are. Our bodies are how we are connected to the physical world, and it is through the body that we experience time and place, which are the medium of stories. [One Session.]
- Admin 212 **Lola Haskins, *How to Give a Knockout Reading***
 What to choose, what to read in what order, how not to come across as someone from an MFA program, how to keep your listeners awake and other audience-related courtesies. Includes practice, so bring a poem to read. [One Session; Exercises.]
- Admin 210 **Brenda Miller, *Writing in the Midst of Chaos***
 Too often, our writing lives take a back seat to other responsibilities that appear more pressing. It can be difficult to access the creative space in the chaos of everyday life. So where better to practice focusing the mind and body than in the midst of a Rainier Writing Workshop Residency? In this workshop, you will receive guidance and practices that enable us to validate our writing lives, even in circumstances where this life gets reduced to a few minutes a week. We will do some simple focusing practices that heighten concentration and provide ways to relax when feeling stressed. Wear comfortable clothes. [One Session.]
- Admin 211A **Glazner, *Some Kinds of "Music" in Poetry* [Session 2]**
- Admin 209 **Pancake, *Writing the Critical Response Paper* [Session 2]**
- Xavier 201 **4:45 GRAD READINGS: Kari Fisher, Ela Harrison, Tom James, Meagan Macvie, Sydney Purdy**
- MID-RESIDENCY BREAK BEGINS: DINNER ON YOUR OWN**
- Amphitheater **JAZZ UNDER THE STARS, 7-9PM**

<u>FRIDAY, AUGUST 8</u>

- Off Campus **MORNING FIELD TRIPS: MT. RAINIER & PIKE PLACE MARKET, SEATTLE**
- Admin Rooms **3:00 BUSINESS MEETINGS FOR COHORT GROUPS**
- Xavier 201 **4:45 GRAD READINGS: Angela Allen, Michele Flom, David Hebestreit, Christine Lamb Parker, Karin Rosman, Joycelyn Trigg**

Regency Room 6:15 DINNER

Scan Center 7:30 FACULTY READINGS: Fleda Brown, Adrienne Harun

Amphitheater 9:00 OPEN MIC UNDER THE STARS

SATURDAY, AUGUST 9

8:30 MORNING TALK:

Xavier 201

Greg Glazner, *Who Are You to Be Teaching 20th Century African-American Poetry?*

This question never left my mind in the class last fall, not for a minute. I had three answers: a) an experienced poet, editor, and teacher of 20th century poetry, somebody knowledgeable about the poets we were reading, b) somebody knowledgeable of and wowed by the blues and jazz music I brought in to inform the poetry, and c) a white man teaching, among other things, the history of the violent, systematic oppression of blacks by whites. That last answer, one that kept me awake at night, led to some insights about the complex relationships between art and identity.

Admin Rooms

10:00 MIXED-GENRE WORKSHOPS

10:00 GRAD SESSION:

Admin 209

Kevin Clark/Marjorie Sandor, *Sailing or Career Impedimenta: The Post-MFA Life*

While students are at RWW, your focus is rightly on craft and the writing life. It's been your experience to examine various styles and forms, to consider more than one genre, to reorganize your personal lives around the commitment to being a working writer. While you certainly want to see your work in print, for the most part you've explored your own imagination without the trepidation attendant on sending out your poems, stories and essays. But now that the apprentice stage at PLU is coming to a close, you may be asking yourself, "How do I find the mettle to sustain this life on my own and the balance to make it all work for the long term?" In effect, you're asking how to find the balance between writing, publishing, and living. You're asking yourself how to find the time and the mettle to enjoy the writer's life without constantly worrying about publishing "success." To help consider these questions, Kevin and Marjorie will host an interactive exchange, taking turns leading discussion and responding to each other while encouraging questions and comments from students. Drawing from various founts of wisdom ranging from the painter Pierre Bonnard to PLU's own writers, Marjorie will offer some suggestions for keeping the habit of writing alive and well after the MFA. We'll talk about productive forms of imitation, working profitably with our own eccentric habits, and discuss strategies for both fresh invention and revision. Citing stories of writerly impediments and heroic (or perhaps just persevering) authors who keep on keeping on, Kevin will offer *bon mots* on the transformative pleasures that writing offers as post-graduate motivation, various ways for continuing a career as a publishing writer, and the options for dealing with time pressures, money, and other priorities. [Two Sessions.]

10:00 PEDAGOGY SESSION:

Admin 212

Jim Heynen, *The Alternative Workshop Format*

Instead of the standard workshop approach in which the instructor and other workshop members critique and make revision suggestions while the author listens, in this workshop we will interview the story, poem, or essay, and let it answer for itself. (Yes, the participants—and maybe the

author—will have to role-play and pretend to be the work being discussed.) Sample questions might include: “Who are you?” “When people look at you, what feature are you most proud of?” “If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?” “Who would you like to be compared to?” “What was your greatest challenge in becoming what you are today?” “If you could start all over, would you do anything different?” “If you had to gain a few pounds, where would you want to put them on?” “If you had to lose a few pounds, where would you want to lose them?” This process should be interesting and fun—especially if different workshop participants answering for the work on the table answer the same question differently. We’ll need a few volunteer short submissions in any genre. After interviewing the works, we’ll let the author judge whether this approach was helpful.

Commons

12:00 LUNCH

UC 201

12:00 COHORT 11 LUNCH WITH RB

1:30-4:15 THE ART OF THE BOOK:

Admin 212

Adrienne Harun & Marjorie Sandor: *Housekeeping*, Marilynne Robinson

Robinson’s lyrical novel about two sisters in the tiny Montana mountain town of Fingerbone is now considered a modern classic, but in many ways, the novel is a throwback to the nineteenth century. Rich in description, dense, thoughtful language, and meditative thought, the story of the novel should, by rights, merely swirl seductively in place. And yet, there’s a real story here, a compelling narrative propelled by character *and* language *and* somewhat magically by the power of stillness and contemplation. In this discussion, we might look at how a situation becomes a story through character development. We might also consider the role of stillness and meditation in an emerging plot. And we might also spend time untwining Robinson’s use of both the uncanny and the spiritual in shaping and motivating character.

Admin 210

John Holman: *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, Jennifer Egan

A Visit from the Goon Squad is fiction of the story-cycle genre, yet marketed as a novel by its publisher. It concerns the lives of two main characters, Sasha and Bennie, and their various companions over roughly a 35-year period, from 1979 into our future, featuring their roles in the music industry. Composed of thirteen discrete stories (many of which were published separately in magazines and journals), the book has a collage effect, the sum greater than the totality of its parts. It achieves its effect with varying points of view, varying narrative forms, and by moving both backward and forward in time. Time, in fact, is its central theme.

Admin 204A

Peggy Shumaker & Sherry Simpson: *Ordinary Wolves*, Seth Kantner; *Blonde Indian*, Ernestine Hayes

Kantner alternates chapters of narrative with brief lyrical passages focusing on wolves. The material is about 98% drawn from his life experiences, but he chooses to frame the story as fiction. We could talk about using techniques from all genres in one book. We could discuss how a writer can introduce the uninitiated to a landscape they’ll never see. (The book is set in the far north, above the Arctic Circle.) We could talk about racism, about cultural upheavals, about rapid change in traditional cultures. We could talk about how to write honestly about a place (Alaska) that’s been badly represented in popular culture. We will compare and contrast this book with Ernestine Hayes’ *Blonde Indian*, which intersperses the lyric structure of the memoir with short stories revolving around a single character. The two books are mirror images in a way, each describing culture, racism, and landscape from the respective points of view of a white person and a Native person, each of whom is both insider and outsider. [Participants must read both books.]

Admin 204B	<p>Barrie Jean Borich: <i>The Chronology of Water</i>, Lidia Yuknavitch</p> <p>This book, which the author calls an anti-memoir, is about familial abuse, the female body, bisexual identity and choosing against the norm, and provides instruction in fragmented and image-driven structure as well as offering a good example of sexually frank work that both writes from the body and resists the redemption narrative arc of conventional memoir.</p>
Admin 209	<p>Kent Meyers & Lia Purpura: <i>The Gift</i>, Lewis Hyde</p> <p>Lewis Hyde's <i>The Gift</i> examines art and literature in terms of two powerful definitions of "gift" — talent and the requisite work needed to develop it; and art as a gift to a community. Hyde's book is unique — artistic in and of itself, an example of the finest non-fiction — it is also a book about art's place as a gift in a culture dominated by markets. As an example of the art of the book, <i>The Gift</i> shows how research, criticism, and personal meditation can be artistically blended. In addition, Hyde's subject is one that all artists and writers struggle with: how to live as artists, sustaining a vision of art-as-gift. Without a sense of the broader cultural issues in play, it is easy to assume our struggles are personal flaws or weaknesses of character. Unless we all get clear about the often-demoralizing cultural and market forces we're up against, it's difficult to argue for the importance of art, and for the time, space, and funding required to sustain our own creative efforts. Hyde addresses these issues in revelatory and artistic ways, demonstrating not only how to write lucidly about complex cultural issues but also how to live as artists in a culture that can seem indifferent to our efforts.</p>
Admin 211A	<p>Kevin Clark & Greg Glazner: <i>Elegy</i>, Larry Levis</p> <p>We will discuss key thematic and structural aspects of Levis' famous book <i>Elegy</i>, in which he reimagines the classic elegy. The classic elegy is a poem of mourning for the deceased, inevitably accompanied by a comforting principle of some kind. In the twentieth century it remained a poem of mourning for the deceased <i>but</i> it expanded to include mourning for a lost way of life or a lost way of being. In Levis' book, the elegy is about both, and yet in many of his poems the elegy also leaves out the comforting principle — unless one assumes that the writing is so beautiful that the pleasure in reading the poem(s) serves as comfort. We may ask: Is his turn from such a principle a second expansion of the term "elegy"? Of immediate correlative interest are stance, voice, and range of imagination. (The latter is, for many of us, Levis's hallmark). We will also look at the play of shorter and longer poems as well as the overall structure of the collection. Since the collection was put together posthumously by Phillip Levine and David St. John, the book's structure is a particularly meaty subject for discussion.</p>
Admin 211B	<p>David Biespiel: <i>Death of a Naturalist</i>, Seamus Heaney</p> <p>In just some three-dozen poems, the Irish poet's first book defines childhood experience as the root of adult identity. Questions for study include: the pressures on a first book of poems from subject to ordering; use of recurring motifs and forms; aspects of family and relationships; the idea of landscape as a characterization of the inner life of the poet; the lyric poem as a means to define self and national identity; the art of poetry as both inheritance and new vision.</p>
Xavier 201	<p><u>4:45 GRAD READINGS</u>: Brooke Callen, Tom Cantwell, Jennie Goode, Jennifer Imsande, Jeffrey Mix, Kate Wallop</p>
UC Patio	<p><u>6:15 DINNER</u></p>
Scan Center	<p><u>7:30 FACULTY READINGS</u>: Holly Hughes, C. Dale Young</p>
NPCC	<p><u>AFTER HOURS: NPCC</u></p>

SUNDAY, AUGUST 10

Xavier 201 **9:00 STANLEY LINDBERG AWARD CEREMONY**

Admin Rooms **10:00 MIXED-GENRE WORKSHOPS**

10:00 GRAD SESSION:

Admin 209 **Clark/Sandor, *Sailing or Career Impedimenta: The Post-MFA Life* [Session 2]**

10:00 PEDAGOGY SESSION:

Admin 212 **Kent Meyers, *Class Structures/Effective Syllabi***

A bad syllabus can lead you to inadvertently take on your students' emotions and problems and leave you feeling guilty and drained. This class will discuss how to structure an effective class and establish its workings in ways that pre-empt students' subversive tendencies. We will clarify the difference between a grade and a credit, discuss effective attendance policies, make-up work, informal writing, preventing plagiarism, allowing re-writing, and enhancing students' sense of responsibility for the class and their own actions.

Regency Room **12:00 GRADUATION LUNCH**

1:30 CLASSES:

Admin 204A **David Huddle, *Master Class in Fiction: The Sustained Attention of Edward P. Jones***

In our first session we'll discuss *Lost in the City*, and in the second we'll look at *All Aunt Hagar's Children*. Since both story collections explore the lives of African-American residents of Washington, D. C., we'll be looking at similarities and differences between the two collections. But more specifically we'll be considering the nature of the subject matter that has held the author's attention for a couple of decades, and we'll be looking for insight that Jones's writing might offer us about our own choices of what to write about. Participants are encouraged to bring both texts with them to both classes. Discussion of *Lost in the City* will focus on "The Night Rhonda Ferguson Was Killed," "Young Lions," "The Store," and "Marie." Discussion of *All Aunt Hagar's Children* will focus on "Old Boys, Old Girls," "All Aunt Hagar's Children," "Common Law," and "Tapestry." [Two Sessions; Advance Reading.]

Admin 204B **Dinah Lenney, *Master Class in Nonfiction: Writing about Writing (about Writing): A Workshop in Nonfiction and Potentially Hybrid Forms***

Day One: We'll frankly examine our narrative navels: our inclination to indulge on the page in an expression of writerly urges, reasons, justifications; the potentially rich and exciting relationship between art and artifice (and its usefulness to nonfiction writers in particular); the way meta-writing informs and transforms the nature of whatever we're writing about. Day Two: We'll continue the conversation and workshop our own efforts. Hand-outs/in-class reading may include stand-alone essays and/or excerpts from work by Michael Martone, Ron Carlson, Dinty Moore, Jill Talbot, Alison Bechdel, Wayne Koestenbaum, Ali Smith, Hilton Als, Bernard Cooper, Patricia Hampl, Joan Wickersham, Lorrie Moore, Rainer Maria Rilke, Michael Kimmelman, Zadie Smith, Jamaica Kincaid and others. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required; Exercises.]

Admin 211A

Mary Clearman Blew, *Structuring Full-Length Nonfiction*

We will read a full-length nonfiction book, Andre Dubus III's *Townie*, in advance and discuss a number of craft related issues. How does the full-length nonfiction book differ from a linked collection of essays? To what extent is the full-length nonfiction book patterned after the novel? Does the nonfiction book require differences from fiction in characterization and details of setting? What about the "plot" of the nonfiction book? The story arc? Given that the material is nonfiction; i.e., uninvented, how can plot and story arc be imposed upon it? [One Session; Advance Reading.]

Admin 211B

Kathleen Flenniken, *The Form that Fits: The Poetic Potential of Poetic Forms*

We will look at tailoring poetic form—both visual and structural—to content. We'll explore the ways nonce/open forms can convey information and emphasize a message, and free up our words from some of their mundane tasks. I turned to form again and again in my book *Plume* in order to help tell the story of Hanford; it's become a critical tool in my tool box. [One Session.]

Admin 210

John Holman, *Free Indirect Discourse / Subjective Third-Person Narration*

The class will examine several examples of free indirect discourse, a narrative technique that Gustave Flaubert is credited for developing for the depiction of characters in *Madame Bovary* and other works. We will use hand-outs and PDFs of excerpts from Flaubert, Chekhov, and contemporary writers, and look at other ways writers achieve "subjective third person narration." We will practice the techniques in class. [One Session; Exercises.]

Admin 212

Holly Hughes, *The Practice of Poetry*

In one of her essays on poetry, Jane Hirshfield writes that poetry is an act of attentiveness, of learning to see clearly, to be in the world with the full range of our perceptions. This act of paying attention moves us more deeply into our own lives and into the world, so that writing poetry itself becomes both a form of practice and of witness. We'll look at poems that reveal this attentiveness, then write our own poems, focusing on careful seeing and effective use of concrete details. If possible, we'll move outdoors for writing practice, which may include sitting in silence as a way to move into deeper connection with our own lives and the natural world. No meditation experience necessary; readings will be provided. Wear comfortable clothes. [One Session; Handout Reading Required.]

Scan Center

4:00 GRADUATION CEREMONY & RECEPTION

DINNER ON YOUR OWN

MONDAY, AUGUST 11

8:30 MORNING TALK:

Xavier 201

Kevin Goodan, *Going Wrong*

So, you think you've found your "voice," your way forward with your "work," and have defined the way you engage your creative space, but there is something that keeps percolating up from the sub-conscious, something completely antithetical to how you perceive yourself as a writer. Do you engage this dark murmur, or tamp it back down with vehemence, and keep on keeping on? In this talk we will look at what can happen when one drops the "writerly façade" and explores the emanations of a deeper, chaotic creative flow.

Admin Rooms

10:00 MIXED-GENRE WORKSHOPS

10:00 PEDAGOGY SESSION:

Admin 212

Sherry Simpson, *Making the Grade*

Evaluating creative work by writing students is never easy. Do we assign grades based on talent, effort, or some mysterious algorithm combining both? Are we grading their progress or ours? How can we make the process of grading educational rather than merely judgmental? This is a conversation about methods of assessing creative writing that are useful for teachers and students alike.

1:30 CLASSES:

Admin 210

David Biespiel, *Turning the Tables: You Be the Poetry Editor*

In this exercise class, you'll be presented with several poems already written and published. But you will not know the names of the poets. Working as an editorial board, you will discuss each poem's merits and then determine which poem or poems should be accepted for our make-believe magazine. The discussion about which poems rise to the surface and which do not and why—as well as how the virtues and vices of personal taste, on the one hand, and the virtues and vices of comparative analysis, on the other hand—make for a riveting and illuminating workshop that will forever help you understand both how what you are submitting to magazines affects editors and the context from which editors perceive what you are submitting affects their decisions, too. [One Session; Exercises.]

Admin 211A

Fleda Brown, *The Motion of Memoir*

Time makes the story. The story is nothing but time, the way it appears to meander, bend back, jolt forward. How can we use those movements to advantage as we tell a story that may seem to unroll from our mind in a linear way? And why would we want to? We will look at samples of memoirs at crucial points of change, to see how others have done it. Bring a few pages of your own memoir-in-progress, if you have it, and we'll look at how you might use some of these techniques. Or we'll develop new work in class trying some of the moves we've looked at. [One Session; Exercises.]

Admin 209

Adrienne Harun, *Narrative Architecture: Building Meaning Through Form*

The structure or form of a story may emerge effortlessly from content. (Oh, lucky day!) More often, we struggle a little to find the right shape for the overall story and, not incidentally, for each movement within the story. The most useful and intriguing structures create and direct meaning, but even if we are not fully conscious of choosing a form, even if it seems our stories have shape-by-default, that structure is important. It may work for or against content and inform the reader's reactions in ways we might not anticipate. So, it behooves the writer to approach the great tool of narrative structure with care and exhilaration. In this class, we'll borrow heavily from the field of architecture itself to look at a few familiar elements—for example, entrances, exits, the role of the processional, and uses of ornament—as well as basic design theories, and we'll consider how we might translate those architectural basics into structural tools for fiction-writing. [One Session; Exercises.]

Admin 211B

Lola Haskins, *The Art of Assemblage: How to Organize a Poetry Ms.*

Several approaches will be presented; some counter-intuitive suggestions included at no extra charge. [One Session.]

Admin 204A

Huddle, *Master Class in Fiction* [Session 2]

Admin 204B

Lenney, *Master Class in Nonfiction* [Session 2]

Scan Center 3:30-5:30 OUTSIDE EXPERIENCE PRESENTATION

Regency Room 6:15 DINNER

Scan Center 7:30 FACULTY READINGS: David Huddle, Dinah Lenney

NPCC AFTER HOURS: NPCC

TUESDAY, AUGUST 12

8:30 MORNING TALK:

Xavier 201 **Kent Meyers, *Creative Enigmas***
When we are engaged in a creative process, actions that seem common-sensical can be the wrong ones, and counter-intuitive behaviors can be the right ones. This is a talk about some of those enigmas: inefficiency is efficiency; emotion is time; avoiding a problem is the way to attack it; finishing is the way to begin.

Admin Rooms 10:00 MIXED-GENRE WORKSHOPS

10:00 PEDAGOGY SESSION:

Admin 212 **Kevin Clark, *Beyond Doing No Harm: Teaching the Student Writer Self-Efficacy***
We all know that the good workshop teaches us how to read and write well. But underlying these two primary functions should be both short term and long term goals: Preparing writers to go home and write without the inspiration that the immediate presence of the group can offer *as well as* preparing writers to go on and write on their own after the workshop is finished. In effect, a good creative writing teacher should be modeling how one becomes a disciplined writer who can face the blank page or the first (and needy) draft day after day—and enjoy the process. In this class we will discuss ways in which creative writing instructors can encourage what is often called “self-efficacy” or “self-regulation” in writing. “Self-regulation” refers to self-initiated thoughts, feelings, and actions that writers use to attain various literary goals, including improving their writing skills as well as enhancing the quality of the text they create. Pedagogically, it is the concept that links inspiration and method, and it requires modeling.

Regency Room 12:00 LUNCH

2:00 MENTOR MEETINGS

UC Patio 6:15 FINAL DINNER & AUCTION

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13

DEPARTURE DAY