

**THE RAINIER WRITING WORKSHOP
MFA @ PLU
2017 RESIDENCY SCHEDULE**

In addition to attending all workshop sessions, each participant must take 16 credits during the residency. A one-session class counts for one credit; a double-session class counts for two credits. These count for one credit each: each morning talk, and each Grad Presentation. The “Art of the Book” counts for two credits. Everyone must take at least one class designated “Advance Reading.” Taking one session of a two-session class is allowed, but it’s a good idea to consult with the instructor beforehand, in case he/she finds it inadvisable to do so. The Grad Sessions are intended for graduates. The Pedagogy Sessions are for thesis-year participants and meet concurrently with the Mixed-Genre workshops. Students are expected to attend the afternoon Grad Readings and the evening faculty readings. Please note: as a courtesy to your peer students and the faculty, please arrive on time to all events and activities, especially workshops and classes!

FRIDAY, JULY 28

AUC 133 **4:30 GRADUATES’ READING: Jill McCabe Johnson ‘08, Warren Read ‘15**

Regency Room **6:30 DINNER**

Scan Center **8:00 FACULTY READINGS: David Allan Cates, Jenny Johnson**

SATURDAY, JULY 29

8:30 MORNING TALK:

Xavier 201

David Biespiel, *Never Change, Stay Foxy: Memory as the Yearbook of the Human Shadow*

How do you know your past is real? Answer: Check the scars. To write is to hope that you will become a memory, like an entry in a yearbook of the human shadow. Consider: Ask yourself, when was the last time you spoke to a childhood friend – with whom you might share many essential experiences, and whose very essence is still important in your memories – and asked them, “Hey, you’ll always be in my memory, but I’ve been wondering, how am I doing in your memory? I mean, how’s that long ago me doing inside your memory? That ex-me, that younger me, former me, that old, departed, bygone me? How am I doing inside your memory these days, the me you carry inside you?” This talk explores the things that have happened or you imagined happened – what’s the difference, I mean, c’mon! – and how we see them, don’t see them, can’t see them, and also write them. It explores vision and blindness, testaments of ambition, survival, and a general theory of oblivion. What are the conundrums you dance with when you are standing on one foot outside your memories? Your memories live like a small note written in pink ink in swirly cursive. Then they die. How you going to work with those bones as a writer?

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****1:30-2:45 CLASSES:****Admin 204A****Barrie Jean Borich/Rigoberto González, *"You Lookin' At Me?": On Repositioning the First Person Literary Gaze***

Our job as writers is to encounter, absorb, and reinvent for the page, but what then do we with the limits and implications of our perceptions? When does first person witness become judgment, appreciation become exoticism, empathy become assumption, activism become savior-ism? How can we embrace diversity and difference and write the world accurately—especially when writing from any sort of privilege, power, or what dominant cultures proclaim to be “normal”—while challenging assumption, avoiding trespass and eschewing “man/white/straight/rich/able-bodied/colonial/cis/etc.-powersplaining?” In this class poets and prose writers discuss the limitations and opportunities of the “I,” proposing strategies for approaching the first-person point of view and methods of upending the assumptive “gaze.” The goal is to interrogate how we discern the world, noticing and reconsidering our own positions in relation to our subjects with as much scrutiny as we bring to bear on the histories, bodies, and communities of our subjects. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required; Exercises.]

Admin 204B**David Allan Cates, *Stories of Reconciliation and Homecoming***

A close reading of three reconciliation stories—Amy Bloom, “Night Vision,” John Cheever, “Reunion,” Ethan Canin, “We are Nighttime Travelers,” and two homecoming stories, George Saunders, “Home,” Patrick Michael Finn, “Smokestack Polka.” Fire requires fuel, heat, and oxygen, but it’s still magic. Stories require structure and mechanics, but they’re still magic. We’ll look at how these five meet their structural and mechanical requirements, and marvel as they move toward their incandescent conclusions. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 208**Greg Glazner, *Poetry 101***

Fleshing out core concepts can reveal some of the rich attributes of poetry. It can also address a frustrating question that most poetry workshop participants have wanted to ask at some point or other: “What the heck are you talking about?” In this general overview, we will discuss concepts including tone, stance, voice, image, texture, music, rhythm, poetic lining, and white space. We will look at a diverse range of poem excerpts that help illuminate the concepts. A Q & A at the end of the course will provide an opportunity for participants to bring up additional poetic terms or concepts for discussion or clarification. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 210**Kent Meyers, *Fiction 101: Dreams and Obsessions***

A useful definition for a story is that it is a tension that develops and produces change—or a refusal to change—in a character or relationship. You might say that a tension drives a short story, or a set of

tensions drives a novel. But tensions themselves are based in desire: Character X wants something Character Y opposes, or Character Z wants something that can't be had. So stories, then, are about desire—the fulfilling-of or the failure-to-fulfill. But since stories are amplified and charged, mere desire isn't really enough; stories are about desire that rises to the level of dream or obsession—desire so significant that it charges someone's life, influences action, changes thought, emotion, and even perception, warps the character's world, slants and obscures it. If we understand how all this works in fiction, we have a framework by which to make sense of almost everything else that fiction consists of: character, metaphor and symbol, dialogue, voice, tone, irony. We will read stories that show these relationships, discuss how these relationships thread through the stories, and apply the ideas to our own work. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required; Exercises.]

3:00-4:15 CLASSES:

Admin 204A

Kevin Goodan, *Evolutions of the Sonnet*

In this class, we will investigate the somewhat spurious beginnings of this venerable and rascally form, and will track its mutations through time, finally catching up with the sonnet in its current multifarious manifestations. Students must acquire and read *Songs and Sonnets* by Paul Muldoon; additional handouts will be distributed during the class. [Two Sessions; Advance Reading.]

Admin 204B

Jenny Johnson, *Syntactic Time Travel*

The sentence can be a magical time machine capable of spatial leaps, freezing time (also known as "chronostasis"), coexisting in simultaneous realities, etc. In this class, we will look at five tactics for moving through time syntactically in poems and prose: 1. *The Slow Recall* in an excerpt from *H is for Hawk* by Helen MacDonald; 2. *Swift Leaping* in "Elegy with her Red-Tipped Fingers" by Tarfia Faizullah; 3. "I can't, even now, arrange it in the right order," also from *H is for Hawk*; 4. *Chronostasis* in "Two Bikers Embrace on Broad Street" by Ross Gay; 5. *The Seamless Leap Through Time Via a Single Sentence* in "Why Some Girls Love Horses" by Paisley Rekdal and "At the Grave of My Guardian Angel, St. Louis Cemetery, New Orleans" by Larry Levis. This two-part class will include a little grammar refresher, a rich discussion of examples, and a bunch of exercises to try during our time together or on your own. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required; Exercises.]

Admin 208

Rebecca McClanahan/Sherry Simpson, *The Need to Know: The Art of Creative Research in Nonfiction*

Research can inspire, inform, and enlarge nonfiction writing in surprising ways. This session will explore classic and innovative methods of finding and incorporating information into your writing without boring readers. In the first session, we'll expand the definition of research, survey innovative resources, and examine techniques used by writers of flash nonfiction, personal essays, memoirs, and narrative nonfiction. In the second session, we'll brainstorm approaches to your own work. Bring excerpts from drafts, raw research materials you wish to incorporate, ideas for projects, or particular writing challenges we can help you solve. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 210

Ann Pancake, *Depth Perception*

Have a character who won't let you into her head? One who fades into stereotype or formula no matter how often you revise? Do you have an idea for a story, but are uncertain how characters should carry that idea? Or, conversely, have characters, but no discernible plot? This class will explore strategies for creating and deepening characters, with an emphasis on a working writer's approach to supplement those tactics commonly suggested by craft books. We'll be doing some in-class writing, and you'll leave with a few exercises to experiment with at home. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required; Exercises.]

4:30 GRAD PRESENTATIONS:

- Admin 204A** **Colleen Rain, *Meet Me in the Shadows: Omission, Ambiguity, and the Other in Contemporary Poetry***
 Much like magical realism employed by colonized or culturally displaced fiction writers, omission and ambiguity are consistently favored devices by poets writing on the margins in the USA. We will look at the methods used by contemporary poets to describe the experience of the cognitive dissonance of living in a culture overlaid and dominated by another.
- Admin 204B** **Cindy Skaggs, *This Is My Circus; These Are my Monkeys: Writing Multi-Character Scenes in Fiction***
 A multiple character scene is one in which there are several individuals or groups interacting within a larger group. Writing a multiple-character scene such as Jane Austen's ballroom scene in *Pride and Prejudice* is like a three-ring circus. There are three simultaneous performances in three separate rings, and without a ringleader, the audience is unclear where to focus. The writer is the ringleader and responsible for successfully navigating the populated scene. In this presentation, we'll delve into the crowded scene to determine why these scenes increase tension, build suspense, create conflict, and change the direction of the story. Using examples from Ernest Hemingway, Virginia Woolf, and Jane Austen, we'll discuss and enumerate the necessary techniques used to craft a successful multiple-character scene so the reader doesn't get lost and close the book before it's finished.
- Regency Room** **6:15 DINNER**
- Scan Center** **7:30 FACULTY READINGS: Oliver de la Paz, Greg Glazner**

SUNDAY, JULY 30**8:30 MORNING TALK:**

- CK East Univ. Ctr.** **Fleda Brown, Oliver de la Paz, Greg Glazner, Ann Pancake, Lia Purpura, *Panel: Artists in a Time of Dissolution and Transformation***
 Here are some of the questions we want to consider: 1. If you find that your work has become "more political" since November, is that because you are pursuing a) new intensities in the kind of work you were already doing—and is that hard or easy and why?; b) new modes of writing; c) both "a" and "b"; or d) other? 2. As writers in this political/social emergency, our natural tendency is to contemplate what we can give. We want to consider also from the opposite direction—what we may be being asked to give up.

- Admin Rooms** **10:00 PRIMARY-GENRE WORKSHOPS**
- UC/Xavier Rooms** **10:00 THESIS MANUSCRIPT CRITIQUES**
- Commons** **12:00 LUNCH**
- UC 201** **12:00 FACULTY LUNCH MEETING**

1:30-2:45 CLASSES:

- Admin 204A **Borich/González, "You Lookin' At Me?" [Session 2]**
- Admin 204B **Cates, *Stories of Reconciliation and Homecoming* [Session 2]**
- Admin 208 **Glazner, *Poetry 101* [Session 2]**
- Admin 210 **Meyers, *Fiction 101* [Session 2]**

3:00-4:15 CLASSES:

- Admin 204A **Goodan, *Evolutions of the Sonnet* [Session 2]**
- Admin 204B **Johnson, *Syntactic Time Travel* [Session 2]**
- Admin 208 **McClanahan/Simpson, *The Need to Know* [Session 2]**
- Admin 210 **Pancake, *Depth Perception* [Session 2]**

4:30 GRAD PRESENTATIONS:

- Admin 204A **Lisa Connors, *Beyond Belief: Fantastic Narrators in Mythic Fiction***
Narrator options in fiction are almost limitless, particularly in works with mythic, magical, or fairytale elements. The narrator ultimately determines if the reader will deeply engage in this strange world and not only suspend disbelief for the duration of the story but emerge with the transformative question, "What if?" on their lips. Together we will explore some of the narrators of new myths and see what might be possible if you invite a fantastic creature to help tell one of your stories (or poems or essays)!
- Admin 204B **Molly Spencer, *Six and Rose: A Study of Form in Free Verse Poetry***
Since free verse became the norm in American poetry, a low-level anxiety about the unhinging of poetry from fixed forms and meter has dominated the poetics of form. Scholarship in this area has failed to provide a precise and practical definition of form in free verse poetry. This talk will survey the literature of the poetics of form in free verse, propose a definition for form in free verse poetry that is both rigorous and useful to the working poet, and examine and apply this definition through close readings of poems by contemporary American poets. Ultimately, this will lead us to consider the notion of poetry as a somatic art form, and of form as that which is felt in the body.

UC Patio **6:15 DINNER**

Scan Center **7:30 FACULTY READINGS: Rigoberto González, April Lawson**

The Cave **AFTER HOURS: The Cave @ the University Center**

MONDAY, JULY 31

8:30 MORNING TALK:

Xavier 201 **Marjorie Sandor, *D-r-sh me, Baby: What Ancient Rabbinical Practice Can Teach the Contemporary Writer***

Midrash, a centuries old intellectual activity, derives from the Hebrew root *d-r-sh*—to inquire, to search after. In this craft talk, I will explore the exciting generative potential in the two-thousand-year-old art of *reimagining* classical texts in order to uncover potential contemporary resonances. Using examples from contemporary poetry, fiction, and non-fiction, I will invite participants to consider how “drashing” a very old story might fuel our own 21st century creative explorations—and perhaps refresh the writing process itself.

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

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

Commons **12:00 LUNCH**

Big Lawn **12:30-1:15 TAI CHI 101 WITH SID OLUFS**

Tai Chi Chuan and Qigong are health related exercises created in China. They emphasize movement, meditation, and breathing as means of cultivating and enhancing the body’s internal energy. The gentle, slow, flowing movements can tone muscles, improve flexibility and balance, and nurture physical, emotional and mental well-being. These 45-minute lunch-time sessions are open to all, including beginners. Each session will be held from 12:30-1:15, on the Big Lawn in front of the Admin Building, on these dates: Monday, July 31; Tuesday, August 1; Thursday, August 3; and Friday, August 4. Participation in all the sessions is not required; attend the ones you’re able to go to.

1:30-2:45 CLASSES:

Admin 204A **Oliver de la Paz, *Visual Poetry and the Avant Garde***

We’ll be looking at newer works that utilize a wide assortment of visual components to compliment or corrupt the language of the poem. Among the works we will explore are Claudia Rankine’s *Don’t Let Me Be Lonely*, Philip B. Williams’ *Thief in the Interior*, Phil Metres’s *Sand Opera*, Douglas Kearney’s *The Black Automaton*, and Layli Long Soldier’s *Whereas*. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 204B **April Lawson, *Writing What You Wish You’d Written***

In this class, we’ll talk about writing original stories inspired by stories we love. In addition to our discussing how Rivka Galchen’s “The Lost Order” is both an echo of Haruki Murakami’s “The Wind-Up Bird and Tuesday’s Women” and very much its own thing, I will share some of my own experience of basing my story “The Way You Must Play Always” on Marjorie Sandor’s “Elegy for Miss Beagle.” [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 208 **Peggy Shumaker, *The Unpredictable Body***

We live in amazing containers. We exist as mysterious and complex organisms and systems. What happens when our bodies, trusty workhorses, do not function as we might like? We’ll look at writing in all genres that explores the human body as a way to think about the world, the body as a way to tap into our bewildering inner lives. Authors we’ll discuss include Eduardo Galeano, Lena Khalaf Tuffaha, Natasha Tretheway, Robin Coste Lewis, Deborah Miranda, Jericho Brown, Rigoberto

González, Ellen Bass, Mari l'Esperance, Stephen Dunn, Miroslav Holub, Brenda Miller, Eva Saulitis, Brenda Miller, Rebecca McClanahan, Jane Hirshfield, Robert Hass. [Two Sessions; Advance Reading.]

Admin 210

Jason Skipper, *How to Manipulate Space and Time*

In this class, we will explore different approaches to writing impactful setting. Broadly speaking, we will consider the ways that stories by James Joyce and Flannery O'Connor intersect ideology with region to capture the tensions of a particular era, and how this is happening in contemporary fiction. We will also look at ways authors use setting to develop characters, immerse readers in a character's experience, and develop subtext. This class will practice techniques used in other writers' work, and we will consider ways that writing and thinking about setting can benefit an author's day-to-day writing process. [Two Sessions; Exercises.]

3:00-4:15 CLASSES:

Admin 204A

Fleda Brown, *The Perpetually Pushing and Pulling Poem*

According to Randall Jarrell, "A successful poem starts from one position and ends at a very different one, often a contradictory or opposite one; yet there has been no break in the unity of the poem. This unity is generated by the tension set up between strongly differing forces, by the struggle of opposites." In this two-session class, we will go in search of the diverse tensions that make up a successful poem. Session I: Macro. We'll have a look at several poems, watching for the larger, structural tensions, those that involve meaning and the poet's way of moving through that meaning while maintaining tension. We'll look at where the tension lags, and why, and where it appears strongest, and why. Session 2: Micro. We'll think about the instresses, including musical structure: meter, stanza-form, rhyme, alliteration, and so on, looking for how these rub against each other to create tension. We won't bore ourselves by labeling sound devices. Instead, we'll focus on how they push against each other and pull toward each like rubber bands to create the energy of the poem. Bring a short poem of your own. We'll find time to look at a few of these. Prose writers should think of this course as a miniature version of what you're doing, also. Here's a chance to look at the myriad ways tension can be built other than through narrative suspense. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 204B

Rebecca McClanahan, *The Soul of Brevity: Concise Nonfiction in Various Forms*

Focuses on the subgenre of nonfiction sometimes referred to as "short shorts" or "flash nonfiction," a large and elastic subgenre that includes such forms as lyric essay, collage, meditation, memoir, narrative commentary, hypothesis, etc. This class involves close reading of model texts that employ various structures and literary techniques. [One Session; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 208

Scott Nadelson/Marjorie Sandor, *Fictionalizing History: Borrow the Facts, Imagine the Past*

When you choose to fictionalize something regarded as "fact," are you hijacking history for your own ends? Or amplifying it? Or both? This class will explore the motivations behind and methods of creating compelling fiction from historical subjects, with a particular attention to questions of authenticity and form. We will also consider whether "the past" is open territory for the fiction writer while "history" imposes certain constraints. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required; Exercises.]

Admin 210

Lia Purpura, *The Hateful and the Vexing*

In this class we will study and practice essays that stand "against" something. For example, Phillip Lopate's "Against Joie d' Vivre." We'll encounter issues of tricky tonalities, authority-claiming, rebellion, passionate disobedience, humor, and more. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required.]

4:30 GRAD PRESENTATIONS:

- Admin 204A** **Shannon Bates, *Et tu, Milky Way?: Landscape as Antagonist in Contemporary Fiction***
It is not uncommon for Setting to act as Character in fiction, but its nearly exclusive appearance in the role of the antagonist within this capacity is remarkable. In this session, we'll explore strong examples of Landscape as Antagonist in contemporary novels and short stories, with a focus on techniques used and how they are applied, as well as their effect. We'll also discuss the concept of Man vs. Nature as a reflection of the underlying battle of Man vs. Himself.
- Admin 204B** **Jonah Shallies, *Deadly Dancing: Explorations of the Relationship Between Music and Violence in Poetry***
Throughout the history of poetry there has been a strong link between music and violence. These two partners dance with each other in a trajectory toward imminent death. How can you effectively use music and violence within your poetry? We will look at how poets have used music and violence in their poetry. We will think about how lyricists compose, and how that can lead to poetic ideas. We will discuss and share on these topics. We will do a short exercise to practice. You will leave with a sense of how to creatively use music and violence within your own writing genre.
- Regency Room** **6:15 DINNER**
- Scan Center** **7:30 FACULTY READINGS: Brenda Miller, Jason Skipper**

TUESDAY, AUGUST 1**8:30 MORNING TALK:**

- Xavier 201** **Sherry Simpson, *Cross-Pollination: Coloring Outside the Lines (And Maybe Dispensing with Lines Altogether)***
You could describe cross-pollination as "creative borrowing." Maybe it's closer to "chindogu," the Japanese philosophy of recombined gadgets that "have the freedom to be (almost) useless." Or think of it as the Reese's Principle: you got peanut butter in my chocolate. This talk explores how writers intersect with other disciplines, other arts, and all kinds of media to create new hybrids, generate fresh ideas, see the world from a different vantage, and most radically of all, have fun.

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

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

Commons **12:00 LUNCH**

Big Lawn **12:30-1:15 TAI CHI 101**

12:00 MENTORSHIP PREFERENCE FORMS DUE FROM 1ST-YEARS AND 2ND-YEARS

1:30-2:45 CLASSES:

Admin 204A **De la Paz, *Visual Poetry* [Session 2]**

Admin 204B Lawson, *Writing What You Wish* [Session 2]

Admin 208 Shumaker, *The Unpredictable Body* [Session 2]

Admin 210 Skipper, *How to Manipulate Space* [Session 2]

3:00-4:15 CLASSES:

Admin 204A Brown, *The Perpetually Pushing* [Session 2]

Admin 208 Nadelson/Sandor, *Fictionalizing History* [Session 2]

Admin 210 Purpura, *The Hateful and the Vexing* [Session 2]

Admin 204B Jenny Johnson, *Troubling Forms*

We will consider techniques for troubling traditional poetic forms, by observing how a range of poets balance pattern beside disruption, rule-obedience alongside re-invention, and respond to various canons. We will keep in mind, too, the ways that formal experiments can further charge or embody content. [One Session; Handout Reading Required.]

4:30 GRAD PRESENTATIONS:

Admin 204A Mike Hunter, *Not Simply Black and White: A Comparison of Black and White Authors and Their Portrayals of African-Americans*

Who is qualified to write about black lives and the ongoing race problems in America? Does a white voice need extra bonafides or qualifications? Toni Morrison serves as our guide as we examine four books—two by white authors, two written by African-Americans—to determine whether talent trumps race, and if writing skills are enough to win the day. Since two of the books were written in 1992, we can also see if things have improved in the past 25 years, at least in the literary sense. When you go hunting for jive, you sometimes find the unexpected.

Admin 204B Jill Norton, *Short Story Cycles in Their Minds*

The story cycle form can lend itself especially well to opening the minds of readers. Its similarities with storytelling in the oral tradition account for some of the educative qualities it possesses, and characteristics of its modular form in general account for others. In this session, we'll delve into linked story collections that immerse readers in community, family, and individual experiences with which mainstream Americans are seldom familiar. We'll analyze the attributes of these story cycles that help them enlarge the readers' sensibilities and compare them to other literature that does the same.

Admin 208 Lena Khalaf Tuffaha, *Impulses for Writing Poetry in Expanded English*

When we write poems, we are reaching deep into our histories to capture human truths, placing a part of ourselves on the page. For some contemporary American poets, language does not merely define the sound but also the project of poetry. In this session will explore poems that alternately take language to task, use it as lens, shatter it, and remake it, poems that are engaged in a sustained conversation about language. We'll explore the impulses that drive poets to write in expanded English, and how they transform our language and, as such, affect our sense of self as readers.

5:30 MID-RESIDENCY BREAK BEGINS: DINNER ON YOUR OWN

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 2

Off Campus	<u>MORNING FIELD TRIP, 9AM-2PM: PIKE PLACE MARKET, SEATTLE</u>
Admin Rooms	<u>4:00-5:30 BUSINESS MEETINGS FOR COHORT GROUPS</u>
Admin 208	<i>Ann Pancake, Writing Critical Response Papers [Mandatory for Incoming Cohort]</i> This is a nuts-and-bolts class offering advice and strategies for writing the critical response papers: ideas for constructing reading lists; the differences between reading critically as a writer and reading critically as a scholar; general mentor expectations for response papers; common problems; and how to approach, specifically, the composition of the paper. Students will need to read beforehand a packet of sample response papers. [One Session; Handout Reading Required.]
Admin 210	Cohort 13 Meeting with Holly Hughes
Admin 212	Cohort 12 Meeting with Rick Barot
Regency Room	<u>6:15 DINNER</u>
Scan Center	<u>7:30 FACULTY READINGS: Barrie Jean Borich, Fleda Brown</u>
Scan Center	<u>8:30 FACULTY BOOK-SIGNING AND RECEPTION</u>

THURSDAY, AUGUST 3

8:30 MORNING TALK:

Xavier 201	<i>Kevin Clark, Can Offensive Writing be Good Writing?: On Freedom, Criticism, and Literary Aesthetics</i> Do we write with the same aesthetics with which we read? As serious literary authors, do we have the freedom to write <i>anything</i> we want to write? Should we? Do aesthetics make room for every point of view, including that which is offensive to us? Moreover, do aesthetics allow for an illogical stance? As readers, if we disagree with an author's point of view, do we thereby have to believe the writing is logically flawed—and thus poorly written? Or do aesthetics simply require that we employ form in an appealing manner? In June of 1988 I'd taught my last course as a lecturer before leaving UC Davis, when I confronted these problems, not in a theoretical way, but directly in a personally dramatic, professional context. In my talk, I will try to depict my writer's self in 1988 as opposed to my writer's self in 2017. I will draw conclusions—however provisional—about the liberty of all writers as well as the flux of personal and cultural values we writers might want to be aware of.
Admin Rooms	<u>10:00 MIXED-GENRE WORKSHOPS</u>

10:00 GRAD SESSION:**Admin 208****David Biespiel, *Follow Your Interests. Full Stop.***

Are you wondering what now? My experience and what I hope to discuss with you is how often writers with new MFAs feel that you have to stick to one thing—what you did during your MFA studies. As in: Got to go to the dance with what brought you, and all. Too often I hear from MFA graduates, here and elsewhere, who graduated a decade or more ago, that they're still writing a new draft of their thesis. People! You want to know how you deal with that syndrome? Want to know what you need to do about that? This is the session to find out.

10:00 PEDAGOGY SESSION:**Admin 210****Lia Purpura, *How to Run a Successful Workshop (For All Genres)***

Includes setting the tone, clarifying expectations, delivering procedures, producing written evaluations, guidelines on how to speak in class, various methodologies that privilege the work and not opinions/emotions.

Commons**12:00 LUNCH****Big Lawn****12:30-1:15 TAI CHI 101****Regency Room****12:00 GRADUATES & FACULTY LUNCH****1:30-4:00 CLASSES: [2-SESSION CLASSES]****Admin 204A****David Biespiel, *The Practice of Book Reviewing, or Don't Just Tell Your Spouse Your Big Fat Opinions about Books, Publish Them***

For many writers, reviewing books is the time-honored way to join the literary conversation of one's time. Cynthia Ozick's *Quarrel & Quandary*, William H. Gass' *Finding a Form*, John Updike's *Hugging the Shores*, Mario Vargas Llosa's *Making Waves* are fabulous books of criticism and reviewing that are essential to these writers' complete literary output. Same goes for Virginia Woolf and George Orwell and so many others. The very best book criticism is driven by metaphors and ideas and examples, not adjectives. This class focuses on why it's amazing to join the criticism culture as a writer, how to think and write about books from the point, not of judgment, but of thoughtfulness, as well as nuts and bolts about contacting and pitching review editors, selecting books, and (we'll practice) writing the review itself. [One Session for 2 Credits; Handout Reading Required; Exercises.]

Admin 204B**Barrie Jean Borich, *Time in Memoir***

All memoir is about time and all memoirists wrangle with the difference between writing about the past and the present. This class is both craft-based and conceptual, articulating the ways the writers of memoir, whatever the content of our stories, all work with the "now" and the "then" of the narrative arc—whether compressing, extending, or fragmenting time, whether braiding, collaging or sticking with chronology, whether using hours, days, months, or years as scaffolding, or interrogating time itself as subject. Because memoir is both narrative and reflective, the writer of memoir must be at once an historian of place and space, a curator of memory, and an architect of sequence. How does the memoirist encapsulate lifetimes and recreate spectacular hours, stretch time to create linkages between generations of oppression, pattern narration, and/or navigate the shifting citizenry of places? This course will examine how creative nonfiction writers manage time, manipulate time, and use time as a formal device in their memoirs and personal essays. [One Session for 2 Credits; Advance Reading.]

- Admin 208** **Camille Dungy, *Poetry for the Current Climate***
 As poets, it is sometimes hard to grapple with the world around us without our poems crumpling under the weight of our fears and frustrations. How can you continue to write in the face of catastrophic climate change, the trauma of the 6th extinction, unfettered resource extraction, police violence, human rights violations, and so much more? How can you NOT continue to write in the face of all this? As the poet and activist Audre Lorde asserts, "Your silence will not protect you." In this craft class, we will discuss poems that engage both the political and the aesthetic as we seek out ways to use poetry to compellingly and directly engage with political, environmental, socio-economic, and cultural topics that activate our day-to-day lives. [One Session for 2 Credits; Handout Reading Required.]
- Admin 210** **Kevin Goodan, *Writing the Contemporary Ekphrastic***
 We will look at, read, discuss, and experiment with contemporary methods of writing about, and to, other "genres" of art. Participants must acquire and read John Ashbery's *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* prior to the residency; additional readings will be distributed in class. [One Session for 2 Credits; Exercises; Advance Reading.]
- Admin 212** **Scott Nadelson, *The Drama of Seeing***
 The most dramatic moments in life aren't always those in which we actively participate; often enough it is what we witness that shocks, intrigues, or mystifies us, and ultimately changes our view of the world and of ourselves. In fiction, too, moments in which drama arises out of a character's observation of the forbidden, the mysterious, or the desired are often those that resonate most with both character and reader. In this class, we will look at moments of dramatic observation in stories by Ivan Turgenev, Eudora Welty, David Malouf, and Leonard Michaels, examining how such moments are structured, how they reveal or complicate character, and how they can impact a character's trajectory in a larger story. [One Session for 2 Credits; Exercises.]
- Xavier 201** **4:30-6:00 OUTSIDE EXPERIENCE PRESENTATION**
- UC Patio** **6:15 DINNER: MENTOR/MENTEES DINNER**
- Scan Center** **7:30 JUDITH KITCHEN VISITING WRITER READING: Camille Dungy**
- The Cave** **AFTER HOURS: The Cave @ the University Center**

<u>FRIDAY, AUGUST 4</u>

8:30 MORNING TALK:

- Xavier 201** **Kent Meyers, *Accessing Infinite Time by Staying in the Moment***
 A baseball game being broadcast on the radio is a spoken narrative that can be surprisingly sophisticated. Rather than slavishly attempting to tell everything happening on the field, broadcasters range in time and space, sometimes speaking of other games, sometimes of baseball history, sometimes of a player's personal struggles. Writers can take important lessons from this. When we are actually writing, we can become so caught up in what we have planned for our work that we fail to recognize openings into eternal time—a failure that impoverishes our work, our language, and our creative possibilities. I will use my own work to show where, in the process of

writing, I recognized some of these nodes and will also discuss the idea's application to poetry and non-fiction. The talk will encourage participants to narrow their gaze, stay more focused on their language-of-the-moment, and become more attentive to the unplanned-for riches of eternal time and its discursive connections.

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

10:00 GRAD SESSION:

Admin 208 **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.

10:00 PEDAGOGY SESSION:

Admin 210 **Greg Glazner, *Beginners Thrive on Structure***

It took me several years of teaching to realize that beginning writers not only do better work when there are some set parameters; they also tend to *like* writing from parameters better, at least early in a class, than they do writing without restrictions for a workshop. In our session, I will discuss ways of structuring a creative writing class that incorporates both craft assignments and workshop. And I will describe specific craft assignments that involve voice and diction, text and sub-text (these first two can also serve as in-class ice-breakers), point of view, and image. We will actually do one or more of the exercises in class, as time permits.

Commons **12:00 LUNCH**

Big Lawn **12:30-1:15 TAI CHI 101**

UC 201 **12:00 SECOND-YEARS LUNCH WITH RB**

1:30-4:00 CLASSES: [2-SESSION CLASSES]

Admin 204A **Kevin Clark/Greg Glazner, *Risk***

Brenda Hillman once suggested that nothing we write is good unless it embarrasses us on some level. That is, we must go to the end of the familiar path and step into the dark... Is she right? Is it true that good poetry writing requires taking a risk? Keeping in mind the crucial need for craft and control, we will hold a back-and-forth conversation with students about going where we've never gone before in our verse. Providing examples from several poets (who may include three or four of the following—Sylvia Plath, Rita Dove, Cathy Song, Yusef Komunyakaa, Carl Phillips, Arthur Sze, Dana Levin, etc.), we'll specifically cover three areas of literary risk: emotion, form, and stance. It may be quite challenging to address urgent political concerns in a poem. Even simply *writing* about politics can feel dangerous. Describing taboo behavior or subjects may induce embarrassment—as may admitting something potentially humiliating about one's life, or about that of a family member or a friend. We'll discuss how credibility of stance is key to political writing. We'll investigate how craft can leverage invention. Writing in a way that you've never tried may prove daring, because you

may initially find yourself without aesthetic bearing and worry that you will be the subject of criticism. But mustn't we risk invention in order to let new shapes, voices, and content enter our work? Ultimately, we'll talk about the joy of risk in our art and the way to build imaginary rooms in which we can fail and, with perseverance and a measure of luck, thrive. [One Session for 2 Credits.]

Admin 204B**Holly Hughes, *Take to the Road: On the Art of Walking & Writing***

In the tradition of the Japanese haiku poets, the English Romantic poets and the French flaneur, let's put on our walking shoes—and see what we find. In her book *Wanderlust, A History of Walking*, Rebecca Solnit links the rhythm of walking with the rhythm of thinking: “The rhythm of walking generates a kind of rhythm of thinking, and the passage through a landscape echoes or stimulates the passage through a series of thoughts.” We'll read classic essays and poems that explore the tradition of walking or use walking for inspiration, then look at how contemporary poets and essayists are riffing on this tradition. And, of course, we'll head outside, walk & write our own poems or essays. Come ready to explore the rich tradition of walking literature, from classic to contemporary. Advance reading will be provided; poets and prose writers welcome. [One Session for 2 Credits; Handout Reading Required; Exercises.]

Admin 208**Marjorie Sandor, *The Parrot in the Lavatory: The Art of Defamiliarization***

The art of “making the familiar strange” breathes life—and surprise—into our stories, poems, and essays. How might we recognize moments when we have relied on old habitual ways of seeing and saying, and failed to fully inhabit our characters and their physical spaces? Advance reading includes a short essay by early Russian critic Viktor Shklovsky, “Art as Technique,” (read this one first); “On Defamiliarization,” an essay by contemporary novelist and short story writer Charles Baxter; and the first chapter of Barbara Comyn's novel, *The Vet's Daughter*. In class, we'll discuss these and a few other short examples, and try some experiments of our own. [One Session for 2 Credits; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 210**Peggy Shumaker, *Speaking Truth to Power***

After the 2016 election, the editors of *Cutthroat*, A Journal of the Arts, immediately assembled *Truth to Power*, a special issue focused on antidotes to the rhetoric of hate and fear. During this session, we will discuss the concepts of literary advocacy, literary citizenship, and literary community. We will also look at specific pieces in the issue and talk about that estuary where art and political action mingle. Participants must acquire and read the special issue of *Cutthroat* prior to the residency. Contributors include Joy Harjo, Rita Dove, Wendell Berry, Elmaz Abinader, Marvin Bell, Nickole Brown, Pam Houston, Greg Glazner, Melissa Pritchard, Peggy Shumaker, Alison Hawthorne Deming, Alicia Ostriker, Patricia Smith, Martin Espada, and many others. Copies can be obtained directly from the *Cutthroat* website (<http://www.cutthroatmag.com/>) or at Amazon. [One Session for 2 Credits; Advance Reading.]

Admin 212**Sherry Simpson, *In the Beginning***

A good opening in any nonfiction piece performs several critical functions. For writers, crafting the right opening matters because it will determine the shape and direction of a piece. Readers expect openings that will seize their attention, introduce the writer's voice, signal the piece's intentions, and most importantly, be interesting and clear enough to persuade them to keep reading. We'll discuss approaches that serve the piece and satisfy those demanding readers. [One Session for 2 Credits; Handout Reading Required.]

4:00-5:00 MENTORSHIP MEETINGS AS NEEDED**Xavier 201**

5:00 GRAD READINGS: Lisa Connors, Jill Norton, Amy Poffenbarger, Colleen Rain, Molly Spencer

- Regency Room 6:15 DINNER
- Scan Center 7:30 FACULTY READINGS: David Biespiel, Ann Pancake
- The Cave AFTER HOURS: The Cave @ the University Center

<p><u>SATURDAY, AUGUST 5</u></p>

8:30 MORNING TALK:

- Xavier 201 **Brenda Miller, *The Fine Art of Containment in Creative Nonfiction***
 In this talk we'll explore the various ways writers "contain" their personal experience in order to create focus and meaning. But we may also look at work that refuses to be corralled and instead explodes in unpredictable ways.

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

10:00 GRAD SESSION:

- Admin 208 **Sherry Simpson, *Is It a Book or a Doorstop?***
 A thesis can be a portal to a writing career or a creative anchor holding you back. Now that you've spent all this time laboring over your work, how do you decide whether you should keep refining it or move on to something new? We'll discuss some of the questions, dilemmas, and opportunities that face all newly minted MFA students.

10:00 PEDAGOGY SESSION:

- Admin 210 **Jenny Johnson, *How to Build an Inclusive Community in Your Classroom***
 This practical session will offer a number of strategies for making students feel welcome, for building trust among peers when doing writing exercises, for shaking up the dynamics of who does or doesn't tend to participate, and for creating a classroom environment that is engaging, playful, and surprising. You will walk away not only having tried a few exercises, but also armed with a list of tactics to use in the classrooms or workshops that you teach or facilitate.

- Commons **12:00 LUNCH**

- UC 213 **12:00 FIRST-YEARS LUNCH WITH RB**

- UC 201 **12:00-6:00 SILENT AUCTION**

1:30-4:00 THE ART OF THE BOOK:

- Admin 204A ***The Noise of Time, Julian Barnes***
 Julian Barnes' 2016 novel *The Noise of Time* is based on the life of the Russian composer, Dmitri Shostakovich, who complied with the directives of the Soviet leadership during the Stalin era and wrote music to accord with the views of those in power. The novel neither condemns nor excuses Shostakovich, but powerfully shows what can happen to an artist when a culture turns anti-artistic

and anti-intellectual. The flip side is that the novel suggests why original art, freely created and arising from the artist's own vision, is important. As a work of literary craft, the novel is an interesting study in the ways it uses historical research and folklore, in the ways it condenses its narrative (it is only 200 pages long), in the ways it manages to imply the workings of vast and powerful forces while maintaining a focus on the individual, and in the suggestive ways it deals with back story and secondary characters. [Cates/Meyers]

Admin 204B

Runaway, Alice Munro

From the publisher: "This acclaimed, bestselling collection by Nobel Prize-winning author Alice Munro also contains the celebrated stories that inspired the Pedro Almodóvar film *Julieta*. *Runaway* is a book of extraordinary stories about love and its infinite betrayals and surprises, from the title story about a young woman who, though she thinks she wants to, is incapable of leaving her husband, to three stories about a woman named Juliet and the emotions that complicate the luster of her intimate relationships. In Munro's hands, the people she writes about—women of all ages and circumstances, and their friends, lovers, parents, and children—become as vivid as our own neighbors." In this class we will study the art of preparation, withholding, and creation of suspense in Munro's stories. How does Munro create such suspenseful and mysterious works that are at the same time so much more than mysteries and psychological thrillers—that contain always interesting plots but are never about the resolution of these plots and are rather driven by the questions they seem to be on the brink of asking? Also, if we have time, we will discuss how Pedro Almodovar in his film *Julieta* recreates the tensions in Munro's work. [Lawson]

Admin 208

Truth Serum, Bernard Cooper

Essayists are often likened to sprinters: we put all our effort into short pieces that deliver relatively quickly at the finish line. However, at some point, we're asked to become marathoners and go the distance to create a cohesive book. Bernard Cooper's *Truth Serum* provides an excellent model for how we can do both things at once. His essays form a spiral chronology, covering his boyhood and awakening sexual identity to living as a gay man in the early days of AIDS. We will examine the structures of individual pieces, and of the book itself, to discern how we can effectively link together discrete personal essays. We'll also analyze the idiosyncrasies of Cooper's writing voice with an eye to borrowing some techniques we might apply to our own work. [Miller]

Admin 210

Trace, Lauret Savoy

As a young girl Lauret Savoy felt a strong pull toward American environmental writing, and was certain of a relationship between the body she inhabited and the landscapes that made up her first impressions of self. Yet from the start she experienced a disconnect. How did her mixed-race ancestry fit into this discussion? Did the classic American environmental writers who led her to understand the falsity of lines between humans and places, consider her body, and the body of her multi-hued family, when theorizing on the ethics of place? When she discovered her father published a book about race around the same time as Aldo Leopold published his groundbreaking book about conservation she found herself facing an intolerable absence. As an American of African and Indigenous ancestry attuned to histories of racism and colonialism, as an earth scientist skilled at tracing geological backstory, and as a brown-skinned daughter of a black man often mistaken for white, she was compelled to trace the development of language, ideas, and earth elements that formed the foundations of the best and worst of America ideals. She writes: "Both Aldo Leopold and my father offered telling visions of American life at midcentury. *A Sand County Almanac* [Leopold] and *Alien Land* [her father's book] are inseparable in my thinking. Yet who else, then or now, would put these books on the same shelf?" In *Trace: Memory, History, Race, and the American Landscape* Savoy grapples with terrible history and difficult memory by melding memoir, lyric inquiry, and historical research, giving us a profound example of creative nonfiction that is both a quest for understanding and a deep remapping of the American origin story. [Borich]

Admin 212***Collected Poems, Lynda Hull***

Lynda Hull died tragically in an automobile accident in 1994, having published three remarkable books of poems. In the introduction to her *Collected Poems*, her husband, the poet David Wojahn, claims “music provides this poet with the space in which she addresses the vagaries of personal and public histories.” This class will be an interactive discussion of Hull’s methods and stance, focusing specifically on the relation between velocity, voice, sound, stanzaic arrangements – and, ultimately, intimacy between speaker and reader. As Yusef Komunyaaka said of her work: “Hull’s poetry...juxtaposes moments that allude to public history alongside private knowledge. Thus, each poem challenges and coaxes the reader into an act of participation.” Was she a romantic or a skeptic? Both? Do we observe her struggle from an aesthetic distance, or do we experience it intimately while reading? Since she was so often intrigued by the concept of *noir*, we’ll also ask about her existential point of view and whether her worldview influences the forms she chooses. Throughout our discussion, we’ll consider which of her tools we can best appropriate for our own poems. [Clark/De la Paz]

Admin 211A***[insert] boy, Danez Smith***

The response by African American poets to an alarming increase in cases across the country of racial profiling, police brutality, self-appointed vigilantism, and other prejudicial acts that have resulted in the deaths of young black men was particularly compelling in 2014, a year that closed with the birth of two important movements that dovetailed on social media: #BlackLivesMatter and #BlackPoetsSpeakOut. One of the most visible books of poetry that examined society’s fears and anxieties about black bodies was Claudia Rankine’s *Citizen: An American Lyric* (Graywolf Press), whose haunting cover of a floating hood was meant to invoke the memory of Trayvon Martin, a young black man fatally shot by a Neighborhood Watch volunteer who was eventually acquitted of second-degree murder and manslaughter charges. Though this case took place in 2012, it became a watershed moment in awakening people’s consciousness about a divided public opinion regarding institutional racism in the justice system. And each time a new name was added to that roster of killings committed with impunity, that divide only seemed to widen. The outraged response on the streets was expressed with mass protests, marches, and “die-ins” across the country, with a spectrum of ethnic and racial groups participating in solidarity not only in the United States but around the globe. The response on the page in American presses came across as timely. Besides Rankine’s *Citizen*, a few other noteworthy releases in 2014 included *Prelude to Bruise* (Coffee House Press), by Saeed Jones, *The New Testament* (Copper Canyon Press), by Jericho Brown, and *[insert] boy* (YesYes Books), by Danez Smith, the book that will be the focus of this discussion on the intersection of race, class, and sexuality. [González]

4:00-5:00 MENTORSHIP MEETINGS AS NEEDED**Xavier 201**

5:00 GRAD READINGS: Shannon Bates, Michael Hunter, Joe Johnson, Jonah Shallies, Cindy Skaggs

UC Patio

6:15 FINAL DINNER & AUCTION

SUNDAY, AUGUST 6

8:30 MORNING TALK:

Xavier 201

Rigoberto Gonzàlez, *Apocalyptic Clapback*

The German writer Bertolt Brecht wrote these now-famous lines: “During the dark times will there also be singing? Yes, there will be singing, about the dark times.” For those of us feeling the anxiety and heartbreak of the current Republican administration’s policies and executive actions, the dark times have indeed arrived. But so has resistance and it has manifested itself in a range of political engagement. This speech is like a State of the [Writers’] Union address because its aim is to uplift the spirits of writers who may find themselves at a loss for words or even doubting their roles as artist activists.

Admin Rooms

10:00 MIXED-GENRE WORKSHOPS

10:00 GRAD SESSION:

Admin 208

Brenda Miller, *The Writing Biz and You*

While the business aspects of writing can often seem like drudgery, with the right attitude you might find this process to be just as creative as writing itself. We will explore how to find your publishing niche so that your submissions can be targeted in the most effective way possible. We’ll also discuss the resources available to sustain and enhance your writing life, such as grants, conferences, fellowships and residencies. We’ll practice the art of describing your work in a way that will make it get noticed, and we’ll see how the submission process can be utilized as an effective tool for revision.

10:00 PEDAGOGY SESSION:

Admin 210

Rebecca McClanahan, *Teaching Nonfiction*

Introduces and explores major topics in teaching nonfiction, including identifying the course’s focus and structure, creating a common class language, deciding whether (and how) to use texts, establishing literary and privacy standards, and finding ways to keep yourself alive as a writer while you’re teaching.

Regency Room

12:00 GRADUATION LUNCH

1:00-3:00 MENTORSHIP MEETINGS AS NEEDED

Scan Center

4:00 GRAD READINGS: Greg Johnson, Lena Khalaf Tuffaha

Scan Center

4:30 GRADUATION CEREMONY & RECEPTION

MONDAY, AUGUST 7: DEPARTURE DAY