

**THE RAINIER WRITING WORKSHOP**  
**MFA @ PLU**  
**2022 RESIDENCY SCHEDULE [JUNE DRAFT]**

For classes below with an “Advance Reading” or a “Handout Reading Required” designation, those readings can be accessed in the “Advance Readings and Handouts” page in the residency section of Soundings. Books for the “Art of the Book” sessions must be acquired and read prior to the residency. Students are required to attend the morning sessions specific to their cohorts—Workshops, Thesis Critique Sessions, Pedagogy Sessions, and Grad Sessions. Students are also expected to attend the Grad Presentations, Grad Readings, and the faculty readings. The Grad Sessions are for graduates only. The Pedagogy Sessions are for thesis-year students and meet concurrently with the Mixed-Genre workshops.

**FRIDAY, JULY 22**

**Regency Room**     **6:30 DINNER**

**Scan Center**     **8:00 FACULTY READINGS: Rebecca McClanahan, Brian Teare**

**SATURDAY, JULY 23**

**8:30 MORNING TALK:**

**Xavier 201**

**Scott Nadelson, *Awaiting Your Response: Writing (Into and Against) Silence***

In her book *Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work*, the Haitian-American writer Edwidge Danticat—paraphrasing both Albert Camus and Osip Mandelstam—argues that literature is a “revolt against silence” and functions as a kind of “disobedience” to systems of oppression that want to keep us quiet. To write is to raise a voice in opposition to silence, to drown it out with words containing beauty, pain, revelation, and complex truths, all of which threaten the status quo. One of our first aims as writers, then, is to recognize what silences we need to rebel against, where they creep into our lives, who imposes them, and when we impose them on ourselves. But in order to rebel against them, we also have to enact these silences on the page, make their presence felt. This talk will examine ways of exploring silence in narrative and how silence itself can become a form of resistance, with examples from the work of Candace Denning, Renee Simms, Cynthia Cruz, S. Yizhar, and Ted Chiang.

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

**10:00 GRAD SESSION:****Xavier 201****Sydney Elliott, *How to Present a Professional Reading of Your Work (Or: Here Comes Your Graduate Reading)***

If you are a writer, you almost certainly will be asked to give a reading at some point. For people who are completely confident about reading their work in front of peers, family, and strangers, readings are easy. For others, the thought of a public reading is a nightmare. Confident or cringing, this class will offer a solid approach in how to offer a reading that is professional, clear, well-thought-out, and does not leave you wrecked. (If you are an experienced reader, the class offers perspectives and tips that will enhance your presentation.) Prior to the class: Please choose ten minutes of your writing, that you think you will be reading. For prose writers, this is about 1,200 words. Prose writers: Consider using a short scene that stands well alone (plan on building in a short set-up description of the scene into your time requirement). Poets: Choose poems that hang well together in some way (aurally, thematically). Consider varying the lengths of the poems you will read.

**Commons****12:00 LUNCH****1:30-2:45 CLASSES:****Admin 204A****Suzanne Berne & Marjorie Sandor, *The Hungry I: First Person Narrators in Fiction***

What does your narrator *want*? Attention? Absolution? A sympathetic ear? In this course, we will explore the versatility and flexibility of first-person point of view—as well as some of its motivations—from the short story to the novel. On day one, we'll explore more familiar forms of first person, from innocent to retrospective, and on day two, we will move into more unusual forms, including plural first person, the speculative storyteller, and much more. We'll provide a range of short readings and creative exercises. [Two Sessions; Exercises; Handout Reading Required.]

**Admin 204B****Barrie Jean Borich & Brian Teare, *The Energy of the Small in Poetry and Nonfiction Prose***

We all have big ideas for our work, but often the only way to get started is through the smallest of the small. This class will explore the virtue and power of staying with the image, moment, utterance, musical phrase, or grammatical fragment that first draws you into the writing. The constraint of the small can lead to revelation. "He was little or nothing but life," Virginia Woolf writes of the creature that instigates her short essay, "The Death of the Moth." "...he was so small, and so simple a form of the energy that was rolling in at the open window and driving its way through so many narrow and intricate corridors in my own brain and in those of other human beings." We will also consider together the rewards of building out a longer piece from the small and apparently simple, and how from an initial discrete phrase or collision of syllables a whole textual world can unfold. Whether the tactile, the visual, or the sonic gets you going, whether it's activity, materiality, tonality, or locality that prompts your words, this session will focus on the filaments and simple forms of energy that drive their way through our minds and into charged and necessary writing. [Two Sessions; Exercises; Handout Reading Required.]

**Admin 208****Jenny Johnson, *Poetry Fundamentals***

In this class, you'll learn how to close read as poets do: insatiably curious about technique, hungry to understand how a memorable poem works, to learn what it's *doing*, so that you might learn how to do just that thing in your work. Together, we'll observe how craft and content engage one another. We'll attend to poetic elements, such as: form, line, syntax, sound, and imagery. You'll learn how to strategically approach Close Reading Papers during your mentorship year from a space of inquiry. We'll also make time for a few in-class writing exercises. [Two Sessions; Exercises; Handout Reading Required.]

**3:00-4:15 CLASSES:****Admin 204A****torrin a. greathouse, *Ekphrasis Against Art***

Historically, ekphrasis existed as a means for art to reach those who could not physically travel to see it, but has since expanded into a far more interpretive art. Despite the evolution of the form, however, ekphrastic works have still largely cleaved to the world of high art. How, then, does the form change when we begin to decouple it from a particular notion of the art object? Together we will explore the radical potential of ekphrasis when applied to a broad range of unconventional “art objects,” from music videos to sex toys to legal paperwork. [Two Sessions; Exercises; Handout Reading Required.]

**Admin 204B****Sequoia Nagamatsu, *Fiction Fundamentals***

This nuts and bolts session will explore the core elements of a story such as character, plot, and setting, and how these other elements work together through the building block of scene to create a story. Each session will comprise of a combination of lecture, reading discussion, and exercise and will culminate in strategies for how to transform story seeds, world/character sketches, and situational conceits into manageable and dynamic story outlines. [Two Sessions; Exercises; Handout Reading Required.]

**Admin 208****Justin St. Germain, *Nonfiction Fundamentals***

This class is designed to provide participants with an overview of fundamental elements of nonfiction craft. The first session will focus on craft elements nonfiction shares with fiction and poetry, such as narrative or lyric structures, setting, character, voice, point of view, and imagery. The second will focus more on aspects of craft distinct to nonfiction: use and acknowledgment of sources, approaches to factual truth, and structural considerations specific to truth-based stories. We will read published examples to illustrate craft concepts, and expand on those through group discussion and writing exercises. [Two Sessions; Exercises; Handout Reading Required.]

**4:30 GRAD PRESENTATIONS:****Admin 204A****Keats Chaves, *Building the Body of the Beast: The Integral Role of Foundational Structure in Prose***

When we think about narrative structure, it is often only as a synonym for “plot,” but in doing so, we completely overlook structure as an integral part of a narrative’s success. And while some structures are purely aesthetic, many are foundational—without them, the narrative cannot support itself, and is going to fail. In this session, we’ll look at a variety of foundational structures and how they work to create and sustain narrative integrity in the works of Iain M. Banks, Carmen Maria Machado, Tamsyn Muir, Brandon Sanderson, Emily Tesh, Jennifer Giesbrecht, and Terry Pratchett. To further explore structural possibilities, there will be a brainstorming session after the presentation. Also note that the example works used in the session are predominantly speculative fiction; however, the structural concepts being discussed are applicable to all genres.

**Admin 204B****Frances Howard-Snyder, *Cause and Effect in Fiction***

In *A Swim in the Pond in the Rain*, George Saunders, echoing Aristotle and E.M. Forster, writes, “There are two things that separate writers who go on to publish from those who don’t. First, a willingness to revise. Second, the extent to which the writer has learned to make causality.” While perhaps hyperbole, the idea that getting the causality right can make a story stronger, fascinates me. In my presentation I try to make sense of causality, especially causality in fiction, and apply this to three key aspects of the writer’s craft: plot, character development, and theme, as illustrated by Jane Austen’s *Persuasion*. This presentation will include a writing exercise.

**Admin 208****Aldric Ulep, *Lexicographical Poetics***

John Simpson, former chief editor of the Oxford English Dictionary, writes: "Language continually changes, and every change is a puzzle. The lexicographer is the historical word detective trying to identify and explain these puzzles." Behind every dictionary is a team of such historical word detectives who trace the evolution of language and its usage. Behind every poem is a poet deeply invested in the particular words the poem uses. Lexicographers and poets both pay particularly close attention to language; both are at their own sites of meaning-making. We will look at some of the way that poets can use dictionary-inspired techniques to their advantage and how these works reconsider what and how words mean. Examples may include poems by A. Van Jordan, Karen An-hwei Lee, and Solmaz Sharif, among others.

**Regency Room****6:15 DINNER****Scan Center****7:30 FACULTY READINGS: Suzanne Berne, Geffrey Davis**

<b><u>SUNDAY, JULY 24</u></b>
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**8:30 MORNING TALK:****Xavier 201****Brian Teare, *It's the End of the World & We Know It***

This talk introduces the audience to a broader definition of environmental writing, one that contextualizes encounters with "nature" within the social and historical as well as the ecological. Challenging the dualist model of nature as something that lies outside of culture, a social ecological approach asks us to think of and write about human experiences of climate crisis and the sixth extinction from a richly dimensional perspective that doesn't limit the meaning of environmental catastrophe to its effects on humans and the Global North. Focusing on the precarious embodiment that characterizes all life on Earth allows us to extend compassion, solidarity, identification, and cooperation to others, while also acknowledging that such precarity is unevenly experienced by human and more-than-human life because of societal, economic, and historical pressures.

**Admin Rooms****10:00 PRIMARY-GENRE WORKSHOPS****UC/Xavier/Admin****10:00 THESIS MANUSCRIPT CRITIQUES****Commons****12:00 LUNCH****UC 201****12:00 FACULTY LUNCH MEETING****1:30-2:45 CLASSES:****Admin 204A****Berne/Sandor, *The Hungry I* [Session 2]****Admin 204B****Borich/Teare, *The Energy of the Small* [Session 2]****Admin 208****Johnson, *Poetry Fundamentals* [Session 2]**

**3:00-4:15 CLASSES:**

- Admin 204A      *greathouse, Ekphrasis Against Art [Session 2]*
- Admin 204B      *Nagamatsu, Fiction Fundamentals [Session 2]*
- Admin 208        *St. Germain, Nonfiction Fundamentals [Session 2]*

**4:30 GRAD PRESENTATIONS:**

- Admin 204A      *Sarah Nystrom, Dazzling Gradually: Telling Truthful Stories with Creative Nonfiction*  
Emily Dickinson wrote, “Tell all the Truth but tell it slant.” But how can authors write engaging creative nonfiction (CNF) without sacrificing truthfulness? Balancing the *creative* portion with the *nonfiction* portion of CNF is nuanced. If one portion dominates, the piece becomes either fictitious or boring. In this session, we will fill our creative toolbox with tools from five craft element categories—Evidence, Form, Image, Self-Auditing, and Storytelling. Examples of authors who utilized these tools effectively and ethically will be shared, as will examples of authors who became unreliable narrators due to their misuse of these tools. Writing prompts for “writing the shadow” will be shared.
- Admin 204B      *Oscar White, Depicting Delirium: Disorientation, Consciousness, and Factuality in Psychological Fiction*  
Psychological fiction explores what a lot of readers are afraid to confront: themselves. This genre focuses primarily on the psyche of the work’s characters rather than the plot, and in some instances, the character’s mental and emotional journey is considered more significant than the plot itself. The writer’s job is to psychoanalyze their characters when they are placed in high-stress or disorienting scenes—scenes that represent the most trying aspects of the human experience. We will focus on these moments of delirium and the several writing techniques authors use to disorient, which will subsequently lead to a discussion on consciousness and factuality within our stories and the lives our characters.
- UC Patio        **6:15 DINNER**
- Scan Center     **7:30 FACULTY & ALUMNI READINGS: Barrie Jean Borich, Jasminne Mendez**
- The Cave        **AFTER HOURS: The Cave**

**MONDAY, JULY 25****8:30 MORNING TALK:**

- Xavier 201      *Kelli Russell Agodon, Wendy Call, Jenny Johnson, Renee Simms, Personal Geography: The Intersection Between Writing a Body & Writing Place*  
Writing about a body can be a way to reclaim power, wrestle with privilege, and value our differences. In this panel, four writers will explore how different literary genres approach writing about a body and how writing about a body intersects with writing about place. How do we write about pleasure or sexuality? How does geographical location or connection with nature come into play? (How) does the term “Mother Nature” reinforce the idea that both women and nature

can/should be subjugated? How do our various subject positions shape our relationships to the ecosystems we're a part of? We'll discuss the difficulties, successes, and vulnerabilities in regards to writing about body and place and how to bravely address these inner and outer landscapes.

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

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

**Commons**      **12:00 LUNCH**

**1:30-2:45 CLASSES:**

**Admin 204A**      **Wendy Call, *Just Who's Telling This (True) Story, Anyway?* Author, Narrator and I-character in Creative Nonfiction**

"In nonfiction, the narrator is the only thing you can make up," my first writing teacher told me. For a long time, that statement baffled me. Just who is (and *isn't*) that slim, upright pronoun poised on the page? That is one of the central questions of writing creative nonfiction. In this class, we delve into examples of first-person narrators from master nonfiction writers—discussing the differences between the person on the page (I-character), the storyteller (narrator), and the real-life author. We will look at the nonfiction narrators created by Zora Neale Hurston, Rubén Martínez, Alice Walker, and other authors in the creative nonfiction canon. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required.]

**Admin 204B**      **Geffrey Davis, *Poetic Imagery: Allure and Argument***

Li-Young Lee has described image as the "perfect marriage of thinking and feeling." According to Edward Hirsch, "Poetry engages our capacity to make mental pictures, but it also taps a place in our minds that has little to do with direct perceptions. [...] The term *imagination* originally meant the image-making faculty of the mind, and the sense of an image is thus buried in the very concept of imagination." For this session, we will discuss poems by writers like Jericho Brown, Emily Dickinson, Julia Spicher Kasdorf, and James Wright—poems that put on full display imagery's dynamic ability to attune us to our more timeless and ineffable subjects (love, loss, life, &c.). We will also try our hand in some generative exercises that connect what we've read to what we'll write. [Two Sessions; Exercises.]

**Admin 208**      **April Lawson, *But Nothing Really Happened: An Exploration of the Elusive in Fiction***

In this class we will take a look at ways in which writers make use of what does not happen—or, really, ways in which what does happen is too subtle/slippery/ambiguous to actually define. We're not talking passive, as in lack of action in a piece as a whole, but, for example, about charged spaces in which people seem to be about to have some significant exchange and then don't, characters who seem to be about to change and then narrowly avoid it, and stories that feel as if they are about something yet don't really seem to have a point. Stories by Haruki Murakami and Roberto Bolaño will be discussed. [Two Sessions; Exercises; Handout Reading Required.]

**3:00-4:15 CLASSES:**

**Admin 204A**      **Kelli Russell Agodon, *Let Me Live, Love, And Say It Well: The Work & Life of Sylvia Plath***

Sylvia Plath has captivated readers for decades; we will use her work to encourage our own poems, but also give a core understanding of her life. Designed for all levels of poets, this session will utilize different types of writing exercises and prompts, including working from Plath's artwork, to help you kickstart new poems. Whether you are a Plath expert or someone who has only skimmed *The Bell Jar*, you will leave with new insights into Plath and her work, as well as new drafts of your own

poems. Participants must acquire and read in advance the restored edition of *Ariel*. [Two Sessions; Exercises; Advance Reading Required; Handout Reading Required.]

**Admin 204B**

**Rebecca McClanahan & Renee Simms, *The Story (Memoir, Essay) Takes Its Place***

“You couldn’t write a story that happened nowhere,” Eudora Welty told an interviewer. “Time and place make the framework that any story’s built on.” Though many fiction writers understand the importance of setting, a sense of time and place also forms the framework for many works of nonfiction as well. This class focuses on essential elements of setting: how to establish and render settings with authentic and significant detail, weave descriptions of setting into narration and exposition, and use setting to discover and reveal theme and character. We will study brief literary examples and practice writing setting-based segments. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required.]

**Admin 208**

**Jason Skipper, *Let the World In***

Students of fiction writing—especially speculative fiction—often confine their characters’ ongoing problem, desires, and obstacles to the immediate world of the story, inadvertently ignoring the ongoing social, cultural, and political complexities working against the character before the occasion of the story begins, often fueling their motivations as well as obstacles in the narrative. Using the advance reading—including speculative, historical, science, and realist fiction—we will consider different approaches authors take to include and make central these complexities, focusing our class’s first day on stories that situate this aspect front and center and the second day on fiction that more subtly incorporates and works with this aspect of setting in the narrative. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required.]

**4:30 GRAD PRESENTATIONS:**

**Admin 204A**

**Betsy Porter, *Denial as a Driver in Short Fiction***

The depiction of lying in fiction gets a lot of attention. But often neglected is denial, the more extreme case of lying to oneself. The protagonist in denial at once knows and doesn’t know an unimaginable truth—they can’t bear to admit it. A man turns into a cockroach, but even the sight of his little waving legs can’t convince him that he’s a bug. Denial humanizes characters by exposing what they would never confess and don’t have the courage to face. In this session, we will mine the denial story for insights on how to depict complex mental states, how to keep raising the tension for a character who’s already in extremis, and how to advance the story when the protagonist is deeply opposed to change. Readings include passages from Kafka’s “The Metamorphosis,” Turgenev’s “First Love,” and Proulx’s “Brokeback Mountain.” Though it’s entirely optional, participants may get even more out of our discussion if they are able to read “Brokeback Mountain” in advance.

**Admin 204B**

**Stuart Rose, *Monsters! How to Find Them, Classify Them, and Create Them (In Fiction)***

In the introduction to the essay collection he edited, *The Monster Theory Reader*, Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock writes: “Like the monsters it theorizes, monster theory transgresses categorical boundaries, spreading out into different disciplines. This refusal to participate in the classificatory ‘order of things’ is true to monsters generally. They are disturbing hybrids who...resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration.” In this class we will attempt the impossible: to order monsters into different categories, to better understand them and potentially cross-breed them. Drawing on monsters from across literary history, from “The Epic of Gilgamesh” to Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* to Patrick Bateman in *American Psycho*, we will study the literary trend of making monsters more complex and sympathetic, with a dark monster within they are (usually) desperate to hide. This class is also meant to be generative: using the knowledge gained of monsters we will attempt to create our own monsters there in the classroom. For this we can use two time-tested methods: drawing upon a pressing social issue of the day, and taking something enduringly a part of our human culture and turning it upside down.

Regency Room 6:15 DINNER

Scan Center 7:30 FACULTY READINGS: torrin a. greathouse, Sequoia Nagamatsu

**TUESDAY, JULY 26**

**8:30 MORNING TALK:**

Xavier 201

**Kevin Clark, *Accident, Discovery, and the Origins of Style***

Poet Greg Orr asserts that “poets are born with a certain innate form-giving temperament that allows them to forge language into the convincing unities we call poems.” I contend that, while good writers may be born with such a temperament, most don’t immediately know how to convert temperament to art. Over time, many writers find their way into a style of writing that readers find distinguishing. That is, the writers find an exciting mode of expression that is different in some noticeable way than that of other writers. While it’s true that very few writers seem to be born with a differentiating habit of written speech, most begin by imitating their primary influences and then move toward a signature style. The question is: In what ways can we work toward our most authentic writing? Citing examples from poetry and fiction, I’ll review various paths students might take as they pursue their own identifiable style. These may include how to make use of (a) catalyzing events that take place in a writer’s *life* that can lead to new ways of writing, (b) discoveries during the act of writing that lead the work into unpredictably fertile areas, and (c) methods for revising that may push writers forward into unfamiliar but potentially rich pathways.

Admin Rooms 10:00 PRIMARY-GENRE WORKSHOPS

UC/Xavier/Admin 10:00 THESIS MANUSCRIPT CRITIQUES

Commons 12:00 LUNCH

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

**1:30-2:45 CLASSES:**

Admin 204A **Call, *Just Who’s Telling This* [Session 2]**

Admin 204B **Davis, *Poetic Imagery* [Session 2]**

Admin 208 **Lawson, *But Nothing Really Happened* [Session 2]**

**3:00-4:15 CLASSES:**

Admin 204A **Agodon, *Let Me Live* [Session 2]**

Admin 204B **McClanahan/Simms, *The Story* [Session 2]**

Admin 208 **Skipper, *Let the World In* [Session 2]**



**4:30 GRAD PRESENTATIONS:****Admin 204A****Paul Goudarzi-Fry, *Beat Poetry: Interpreting Violence and Intentionality in Poetry***

Violence can be as easy to recognize as it can be difficult to define. Marginalization, trauma, intangible loss—how can the subtleties of violence bring poems to life? In this session, our goal is to find ways that authors direct the reader towards deeper meaning in explicit violence, as well as implicit violence: the violence entwined in identity, repercussions, self-discovery, rebirth, eroticism, the unstatable. Moreover, we will examine the technique of camera work in poems and how visual direction impacts poetic meaning; what we observe and how we observe it change the nature of these transitive acts. Violence can shape goals, uncover truths, break barriers to desire, and create change in the most stubborn of impasses. We will be examining poems by Matthew Olzmann, Carl Phillips, D.A. Powell, and Brian Teare.

**Admin 204B****Rachel Sandell, *Finding Magic in Rocks: Exploring Isolation/Connection via Magical Objects in Fabulist Fiction***

Magical objects are all around us, from pop culture treasures to real-life artifacts, and the meaning we give to these objects tell us something important about ourselves. This session will explore the three ways that these magical objects affect characters in the world of fabulist fiction. We will explore isolation in Lesley Nneka Arimah's "Who Will Greet You at Home," connection in Brenda Peynado's "The Kite Maker," and duality in Ted Chiang's *Merchant and the Alchemist's Gate*, as well as briefly touch on other texts such as Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* and stories from Kelly Link, Aimee Bender, Leigh Bardugo, Carmen Maria Machado, and A.S. Byatt. This session will also include a quick activity/discussion on where to find these magical objects, what they mean to a character, and why knowing these details are important, hopefully providing an answer to the question: Where do we find magic and how does it change us?

**5:30 MID-RESIDENCY BREAK BEGINS: DINNER ON YOUR OWN****WEDNESDAY, JULY 27**

**Admin Rooms      4:00-5:30 BUSINESS MEETINGS FOR COHORT GROUPS**

**Regency Room      6:15 DINNER**

**Scan Center      7:30 FACULTY READINGS: Brenda Miller, Jane Wong**

**THURSDAY, JULY 28****8:30 MORNING TALK:****Xavier 201****Barrie Jean Borich, Geffrey Davis, Oliver de la Paz, Sequoia Nagamatsu, Jane Wong, *Breaking the Silence: New Pedagogies for the Workshop***

In recent years, books by Felicia Rose Chavez, Liz Lerman, David Mura, Matthew Saleses, and others have challenged teachers and students to re-examine the structures and values of the creative writing workshop. In this panel, five teachers will discuss the current re-evaluation and critique of what's

often thought of as the “Iowa Method,” and describe the new approaches they bring to the workshop. The panelists will also touch upon how literature can be taught to writers with an eye towards inclusivity and evolving discourses within the literary landscape.

## Admin Rooms

### 10:00 MIXED-GENRE WORKSHOPS

#### 10:00 GRAD SESSION:

## Admin 208

### **Kelli Russell Agodon & Jennifer Foerster, *Living Creative Writing in the World***

There are many ways of applying one’s skills as a writer/poet—and as a creative writing teacher—in settings outside the “Academy.” This session will focus on being a writer as a way of being in service, being in community, and, simply, being—as a citizen of humanity. We will discuss various ways our roles, passions, and identities as writers can be enacted, professionally and beyond-professionally. We will talk about a range of literary engagements, from working with presses, starting writing groups, retreats, or community workshops, applying your writerly skills and sensitivities to non-literary professions, and working in publishing, literary activism, or other artistic and socially engaged fields. Writing *does* matter and now, more than ever, writers are needed in the world.

#### 10:00 PEDAGOGY SESSION:

## Admin 210

### **Scott Nadelson, *Teaching Close Reading***

I find that the most important work I do as a teacher of undergraduates is to get students to slow down and closely consider the choices writers make at the level of the word, the line, the sentence. In this session, we’ll discuss strategies for helping students learn to read closely; we’ll look at examples and practice leading close-reading discussions.

## Commons

### 12:00 LUNCH

## Regency Room

### 12:00 GRADUATES & FACULTY LUNCH

#### 1:30-4:00 CLASSES:

## Admin 204A

### **Oliver de la Paz, *The Ode and the Elegy***

We will be reading and writing poems that mourn and poems that celebrate and the rhetorical and stylistic qualities that encompass these subjects. Among the works we will be exploring will be poems by Ross Gay, Gary Jackson, Aracelis Girmay, Lo Kwa Mei En, and others. [Two Sessions; Exercises; Handout Reading Required.]

## Admin 204B

### **Rebecca McClanahan, *The Story Unfolds: Plot, Pace, and Revelation in Narrative Nonfiction***

Creative nonfiction writers typically organize their material through a variety of formal structures. But stories are dynamic, not static, and successful storytelling requires more than an architectural schematic to bring it live. This class will explore how writers can infuse their stories with meaning and mystery by establishing scene and setting, pacing events, manipulating time, and choosing when and how to reveal information or withhold it. We’ll discuss several brief pieces to discover how the authors use these techniques and others to contour a story’s momentum. Then we’ll examine our own writing for opportunities to apply what we’ve learned. Bring a draft. [One Session for 2 Credits; Handout Reading Required.]

## Admin 208

### **Marjorie Sandor, *The Parrot in the Lavatory: the Art of Defamiliarization in Fiction and Nonfiction***

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, “Art as Technique,” by early Russian critic Viktor Shklovsky, an essay by contemporary novelist and short story writer Charlie 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**

**Brian Teare, *American Sonneteers: Coleman and Seuss***

There’s been a recent renaissance of the sonnet in the United States, in part influenced by Terrance Hayes’s advocacy of the trailblazing Los Angeles poet Wanda Coleman, who first proposed the “American Sonnet” as a jazz-based improvisation on the European form. But as often happens in patriarchal culture, Hayes’s own *American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin* has overshadowed Coleman’s radical Black feminist interventions into the sonnet. This session will focus first on Coleman’s 1994 chapbook, *American Sonnets*, before delving into a judicious selection from Diane Seuss’s memoir-in-verse, *frank*. Both Coleman and Seuss write sonnets from positions historically excluded from and unanticipated by the sonnet tradition itself: working class women, white and black, whose vexed relationship to men, sex, money, and fame turn traditional tropes of the sonnet inside-out. Their vexed relationships to power also inform their use of the form itself, whose rules they break and stretch and question out of necessity – how to make the little room of the sonnet large enough for those who have always been excluded from it? [One Session for 2 Credits; Handout Reading Required.]

**Xavier 201**

**4:30-5:30 OUTSIDE EXPERIENCE PRESENTATION**

**UC Patio**

**6:15 DINNER: MENTOR/MENTEES DINNER**

**Scan Center**

**7:30 FACULTY READINGS: Kevin Clark, Jennifer Foerster**

## **FRIDAY, JULY 29**

### **8:30 MORNING TALK:**

**Xavier 201**

**torrin a. greathouse, *Writing Traumatic Time***

Psychology tells us that experiences of trauma fundamentally alter our perception of time. As Dr. Robert Stolorow writes in *Psychology Today*, “Trauma so profoundly modifies the universal or shared structure of temporality, the traumatized person quite literally lives in another kind of reality.” To write traumatic time, regardless of genre, requires rethinking our approaches to narrative, structure, and form. Even on the level of syntax, we must consider the ways in which tense and POV can be used to radically shift a reader’s perception of time and embodiment via the speaker/narrator. This talk will explore the various formal and structural approaches for writing toward a sense of fragmentary, cyclical, traumatic time.

**Admin Rooms**

**10:00 MIXED-GENRE WORKSHOPS**

**10:00 GRAD SESSION:**

**Admin 208**

**Sequoia Nagamatsu, *Agents 101***

In this session we’ll discuss the role of agents and how to effectively query them. What does an agent do? How do you know you’re ready to reach out to one? Does my work even make sense for that

kind of representation? These questions and more will be explored, in addition to deconstructing the elements of an effective query letter, the one-sentence pitch, and synopsis.

**10:00 PEDAGOGY SESSION:**

**Admin 210**

**Justin St. Germain, *How to Give Useful Feedback on Works in Progress***

We've all probably been in a workshop that went poorly, and often it's because the feedback given isn't useful for the writer. This presentation will focus on how to give useful feedback, both written and verbal, for a prose work in progress. We'll discuss how to act as attentive and aware readers who can provide what writers usually need most: a clear, detailed sense of the reader's experience of the text. Rather than emphasizing prescriptive comments, we'll discuss how to provide descriptive feedback. That simple change makes a big difference, by positioning readers not as consumers whose desires must be met, but as a resource for the writer.

**Commons**

**12:00 LUNCH**

**UC 201**

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

**1:30-4:00 CLASSES:**

**Admin 204A**

**Barrie Jean Borich, *Nonfiction as Speculative Endeavor***

When does the "truth" of an essay or memoir rely on not only memories and facts but also what author Mary Cappello calls "speculative endeavor" and our engagement with "a tidal wave of strange imaginings"? How might nonfiction writers embrace imagination, fill the gaps in the historical record, employ the "perhaps," and add fabulation to the work of researching and remembering? Our session will explore this question with consideration of, and writing from, the work of nonfiction authors whose subjects are history, memory, and fact, but whose methods employ the imaginative nonfiction strategies of perhapsing, critical fabulation, and even phantasmal narration. [One Session for 2 Credits; Exercises; Handout Reading Required.]

**Admin 204B**

**Kevin Clark & Jennifer Foerster, *Poetry as Mystery, Poetry as Declamation***

We are at a crossroads. The strange implications of quantum mechanics, the mystery of dark matter and dark energy, and "the 'hard problem' of consciousness" remind us that existence may in some ways be an illimitable, mostly (but not entirely?) unknowable realm. At the same time, here in 2022, the need to address urgent social, political, and ecological realities—racism, homophobia, terrorism, war and widespread weaponry, environmental degradation, and other problems—presses upon us. How do poems navigate the need to acknowledge unknowingness and the mysterious on the one hand and the need for understanding, political reform, and action on the other? Can they? This class will consider the premise that poetry may fall into three broad "types": poems of *cosmic exploration*—poems that are principally about the mysterious nature of reality; poems of *didactic declamation*, especially those of *political assertion*; and poems that blend these two, encountering or holding the mysteries while simultaneously setting down a political point of view. With a number of poems as our guides, we will discuss these three types, asking: What is the poem of mystery, of cosmic exploration? Is writing towards this unknowingness contradictory to the purposeful engagement of socio-political concerns? On the level of craft, form, and stance, how might a poem do both? Instructors and students will have a highly interactive exchange concerning these issues as they are manifest in model poems. [One Session for 2 Credits; Handout Reading Required.]

<b>Admin 208</b>	<p><b>Brenda Miller, <i>Segmented, Fragmented, Braided, Collage, or Mosaic: Putting Together the Pieces in a Lyric Essay</i></b></p> <p>The fragmented or segmented essay is harder to pull off than it looks. How do you “stitch” the pieces together in a way that is satisfying? How do you incorporate other voices or tones for texture? How do you decide the right order? We’ll explore these questions in published work and your own writing. For the Advance Reading: Please pick up a copy of <i>A Harp in the Stars: An Anthology of Lyric Essays</i>, edited by Randon Billings Noble. You do NOT have to read this entire book, but please: 1) read the Introduction; 2) look through the main contents and choose at least one segmented or braided essay to study in-depth; 3) look through the craft essays and choose at least one to read carefully; and 4) look through the “Meditations” at the end and choose at least one quote that, to you, seems particularly apt. Ahead of our class, write down your thoughts about the pieces you chose for group discussion. Why did you choose these pieces? What do you learn about fragmented lyric essay forms from these authors? Also, please bring an essay of your own, single-sided, and a pair of scissors. [One Session for 2 Credits; Exercises; Advance Reading Required.]</p>
<b>Admin 210</b>	<p><b>Jason Skipper, <i>Writing Multiple Point of View Narratives</i></b></p> <p>This class will consider approaches and techniques for writing narratives through two or more points of view. Basing our conversation around the required advance readings, we will consider commonalities and differences between several authors’ approaches to writing these narratives—focusing mainly on narrative design, setting, imagery, and characters—so that multiple unique perspectives cohere and develop on the page over the course of the story’s trajectory. [One Session for 2 Credits; Exercises; Handout Reading Required.]</p> <p><b><u>4:00-5:00 MENTORSHIP MEETINGS AS NEEDED</u></b></p>
<b>Xavier 201</b>	<b><u>5:00 GRAD READINGS: Keats Chaves, Michael Gosalia, Paul Goudarzi-Fry, Frances Howard-Snyder, Betsy Porter</u></b>
<b>Regency Room</b>	<b><u>6:15 DINNER</u></b>
<b>Scan Center</b>	<b><u>7:30 KEEP A GREEN BOUGH READING: Kelli Russell Agodon, Wendy Call, Holly J. Hughes, Katie Humes, Tina Schumann</u></b>
<b>The Cave</b>	<b><u>AFTER HOURS: The Cave</u></b>

<p><b><u>SATURDAY, JULY 30</u></b></p>
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**8:30 MORNING TALK:**

<b>Xavier 201</b>	<p><b>Suzanne Berne, <i>Why Write a Novel, Why Read a Novel, Why Now</i></b></p> <p>Novels take a long time to write and often take quite a while to read. It can even take a while to explain what a novel is <i>about</i>. For the writer, a novel will likely involve years of work with no guarantee of readership. For a reader, hours that could be spent reading something—well, shorter. Why bother with the “baggy monsters,” as Henry James once called novels? And yet, in an era of fractured attention, the very inconvenience of this art form may offer critical opportunities for us all.</p>
<b>Admin Rooms</b>	<b><u>10:00 MIXED-GENRE WORKSHOPS</u></b>

**10:00 GRAD SESSION:****Admin 208****Justin St. Germain, *The Academic Job Market: A Crash Course***

This session is designed to demystify a process that it often seems like nobody fully understands: how to pursue an academic teaching job. We've probably all heard people complain about the process, but actual, practical advice is hard to find. And even if you can find it, even well intentioned and honest advice is often outdated, because the academic job market is constantly evolving. I've been on the market, on and off, for more than ten years, have applied to so many jobs I long ago stopped counting, and am currently a tenure-track professor in an MFA program; I've also seen the process from the other side, as a member of hiring committees. My hope is that you'll leave this session with a simple, practical plan for how to begin your job search.

**10:00 PEDAGOGY SESSION:****Admin 210****Geffrey Davis, *The Pedagogy of Emotions***

To help measure the somewhat arbitrary progression of craft and creative skill, our rubrics for evaluating the performance of creative writing students can diminish if not elide the emotional voyage of their education. Indeed, despite axioms that present compelling payoffs for a literary curriculum—"Learn how language and story shape the world!" "Refine the art of asking the right questions!" "Become a listener on whom nothing is lost!"—the sites and rigors involved (which might include interrogating cultural stereotypes, confessing fraught family histories, admitting partial understandings, confronting the palatability of our own storytelling, so on and so forth) seem necessarily ripe for feelings of deep discomfort. Even the positivity of small breakthroughs (celebration!) and large breakthroughs (sublime!) come with challenging emotional realities. Because learning impacts the lives of students, how might teachers balance their commitments to safety with their obligations to challenge? How do we cultivate a robust and evolving ethics of pedagogical dis/comfort? As teachers, how can we model the emotional-intellectual complexity of engaging the limits of our own knowledge and practice? Let's talk about it!

**Commons****12:00 LUNCH****UC 133****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*****Hamnet*, Maggie O'Farrell**

The main action of *Hamnet*, Maggie O'Farrell's award-winning 2020 novel, takes place over three days in August of 1596. But like Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, it creates an illusion of a whole domestic life of a family. At its heart is the transformation of grief into the making of art. Geraldine Brooks, in the *New York Times Book Review*, suggested that the book is, itself, "a master class" in bringing that story to life on the page. The lessons this book has to offer cut across all genres: O'Farrell's fluid and unobtrusive omniscient narration, and its variety of bridges between radically different characters, are two particularly rich craft-elements to observe and playfully emulate. Others include the creation of a multi-layered chronology, the creation of an ensemble cast with a center of gravity in one powerful historically-marginalized female figure, and diction and rhythmic sentence-level choices that immerse the reader in a distant historical moment and make it feel intimate and relevant to our lives today. O'Farrell submerges her historical research into a wealth of sensory, concrete language that never weighs the story down, but serves the rise and fall of action. We'll do some close reading on these and other craft-moves, and try some short exercises of our own in the

making of convincing omniscient narration, transitions, scene building, diction, and sensory detail—in the student’s genre of choice.

#### Admin 204B

##### ***Song of Solomon, Toni Morrison***

In a 2021 Morning Talk, Adrienne Harun spoke to us about the importance of a book’s architecture. In this class we investigate the intricate structure of Toni Morrison’s mythic novel *Song of Solomon*. Winner of a National Book Critics Circle Award, *Song of Solomon* has been referred to by several writers as The Great American Novel. How does Morrison communicate her book’s ideas through spatial references, backstory, and omniscient point of view? How does the novel place its historical events and use allusions to folklore and fairy tales? How might we structure our own work to best contain our subject matter? Written as one novel in a series of novels Morrison wrote about 20<sup>th</sup> century America, *Song of Solomon* demonstrates the possibilities of historical fiction and the relationship between the bones of a book and its thematic concerns.

#### Admin 208

##### ***Obit, Victoria Chang***

“Sadness is plural, but grief is singular” writes Victoria Chang, in her award-winning collection, *Obit*. After her mother died, Chang refused to write elegies. Rather, she distilled her grief during a feverish two weeks by writing scores of poetic obituaries for all she lost in the world. In a series of prose poems, Chang not only looks at grief, but explores other topics through this self-invented form. *Obit* is genius in how it surprises and turns topics on their head. How does one “write” in a singular form and keep the reader’s attention? How can a single form move your book forward and what challenges does this type of book face? Chang’s book not only creates a new “form,” but show us how keep the reader engaged. We will use the last part of the class to write our own “obit” poem.

#### Admin 210

##### ***Shirt in Heaven, Jean Valentine***

Jean Valentine was known for her minimalism, oblique precision, and fragmentary dreamscapes that touch the ineffable. Valentine was the author of 14 collections of poetry, including *Door in the Mountain: New and Collected Poems, 1965-2003*, winner of a National Book Award. *Shirt in Heaven* was her final published collection before her death in 2020 at the age of 86. While published in 2015, Valentine’s final collection offers a quiet and visionary address to the future, each poem a humble teacher for the thresholds we teeter on today. In this class we will look at Valentine’s concise and probing imagery, her unique way of constellating syntax, line, and time, the function of address, and her resonant endings. We will also make time for in-class writing sparked by Valentine’s—and your own—impressionistic dreamscapes. To prepare for this session, in addition to reading *Shirt in Heaven*, please make three drawings of three dreams you’ve had prior to residency. These drawings will be used to prompt writing (your interpretation of this is up to you—drawing skills not required).

#### Admin 212

##### ***Ma and Me: A Memoir, Putsata Reang***

This first memoir by Putsata Reang has earned rave reviews, including a starred review in *Publishers Weekly*, which noted: “Familial ties and the scars of war are exquisitely examined in this luminous debut . . . A nuanced mediation on love, identity, and belonging. This story of survival radiates with resilience and hope.” *Ma and Me* traces the Reang family’s departure from Cambodia—and escape from the Khmer Rouge killing fields—when the author was an infant, the family’s work in Oregon’s agricultural fields, and then a devastating rupture with her mother when the author came out as queer and married a woman. Our discussion will focus on how Reang faced PTSD induced by both childhood trauma and her war reporting in Afghanistan, which resurfaced during her writing process, managed ethical issues in telling family “secrets,” and distilled an enormously complex story into an extremely readable memoir. *Ma and Me* was chosen as FSG’s lead nonfiction title for the spring 2022 publishing season. Our discussion will also look at the media attention the book has received and how both book and author were “positioned” in the literary marketplace.

4:00-5:00 MENTORSHIP MEETINGS AS NEEDED

Xavier 201 5:00 GRAD READINGS: Stuart Rose, Rachel Sandell, Lynette Vialet, Oscar White, Garrett Willis

Scan Center 7:30 FACULTY & GUEST READINGS: Wendy Call, Putsata Reang

<u>SUNDAY, JULY 31</u>
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8:30 MORNING TALK:

Xavier 201 **Rebecca McClanahan, *Bewitched, Bothered, and Bewildered: Three Pathways to Our Deepest Work***  
Just as each writer's journey is as unique as their fingerprints, each creative engagement offers opportunities to deepen and complicate that journey. This talk explores three possible pathways into our work. We'll begin with those subjects and objects that bewitch—our original attractions, passions, obsessions, delights, our first and lasting loves. Then we'll move on through those that bother—that raise our hackles, disturb, vex, confuse or outrage us. Finally, we'll consider that which bewilders us, leading us into what may be our deepest work, those "pathless places" (as Samuel Johnson defined bewilderment) that "confound for want of a plain road."

Admin Rooms 10:00 MIXED-GENRE WORKSHOPS

10:00 GRAD SESSION:

Admin 208 **Jenny Johnson, *Perfectly Useless / Useful Concentration***  
"What one seems to want in art, in experiencing it, is the same thing that is necessary for its creation, a self-forgetful, perfectly useless concentration," Elizabeth Bishop wrote in a letter to Anne Stevenson. Showing up daily, touching the work, finding meaningful pockets of time to daydream, scheme, and scribble is much easier said than done in a culture that expects constant productivity. In this class, we'll discuss how to play in the margins of one's day, how to concentrate self-forgetfully, how to follow our noses as dogs do utterly sense-driven, how to write what we could vs. what we should. In other words, I'll offer a lot of suggestions for how to keep generating new work post-graduation in ways that reroute old habits of perception, feel sustainable, and spark joy.

10:00 PEDAGOGY SESSION:

Admin 210 **Wendy Call, *Teaching Revision***  
One of the most challenging aspects of the writing craft to teach—especially at the high school and undergraduate levels—is revision. At the same time, we like to say that "writing is rewriting." But what does that mean? The truth is that "revision" is not a practice, but a set of diverse practices that require different skill sets. (Witness the fact that the title "editor" encompasses at least six different jobs.) In this workshop, we'll break down those diverse practices and discuss effective ways to help students learn each of them. We'll also review key tools, publications, and resources that can help us better teach revision.

Regency Room 12:00 GRADUATION LUNCH

1:00-3:00 MENTORSHIP MEETINGS AS NEEDED



Scan Center      4:00 GRAD READINGS: Sarah Nystrom, Aldric Ulep

Scan Center      4:40 GRADUATION CEREMONY & RECEPTION

MONDAY, AUGUST 1: DEPARTURE DAY

## 2022-23 FLASH CLASSES, SEPTEMBER-MAY:

### **Kevin Clark, *Narrative Braiding in Poetry***

Virtually every poem has, at the least, a bare-bones plot. Some poems have two or more narrative threads running through them. While most poems typically establish a predominant narrative arc, they also contain additional narratives to establish greater complexity and resonance. *Braiding* is therefore a multi-story technique, in which the stories are woven together, each usually giving way back and forth to the other. (Braiding does not simply present individual stories, one after another, in a single poem.) While reading different styles of braided poems by different poets, we'll discuss: (1) how to transition back and forth between narrative threads, (2) how to establish distinctly different spatial and temporal realities for each, (3) how to use different narratives to create conflict and tension, and (4) how to use the multiple narratives to complicate and support the main theme of the poem.

### **Oliver de la Paz, *Prose Poems, Short Shorts, and Lyric Essays—Prose with a Punch***

In this course, we'll attempt to understand what is meant by the terms "Lyric Essay," "Short-Short," and "Prose Poem." Often, people suggest that writing in these shorter prose forms is liberating, but what exactly does that mean? Does the lack of line breaks serve a purpose or is it arbitrary for some prose poems? Does the shortness put a strain on the possibility of a narrative? Can a subject be fully explored in such short bursts? What is gained or lost with the addition of line breaks? These are some of the aesthetic ideas we will grapple with during this class as we read practitioners of the form as well as write in the "form" ourselves.

### **Jennifer Foerster, *Making the Transformative Image***

Ezra Pound writes in the Imagist Manifesto, "A Retrospect," "An 'Image' is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time." The class is based on the idea of "Image" as transformative, not static; as palimpsest, not picture; as instantaneous and fleeting, yet indelible. But how do we make this kind of image in poetry? This class will investigate what transformative imagery is and what it can do in a poem. We will read and discuss several poems that work with this kind of imagery while also playing with transformative imagery in our own writing. We will engage with several writing exercises to inspire and (hopefully!) surprise us.

### **torrin a. greathouse, *On Invention***

The poetry world is currently experiencing a formalist renaissance, with several major collections in received form, as well as a proliferation of invented poetic forms. In this class, we will be discussing invented forms by authors including Jericho Brown, Marwa Helal, George Abraham, and more. Students will also dive into the how and why of creating new poetic forms, before attempting to create their own.

### **April Lawson, *Third-Person Multiple POV in Short Fiction***

Though it tends to be a bad idea to have multiple POVs in short fiction—in fact, some of us have probably been warned away from it—when it works, it's phenomenal and leaves an impression. Having more than one POV in a story can create a sense of space, possibility, and safety (even at the darkest moments) that is usually only possible in film. If you are drawn to writing in ways that at their outset predict exceptionally low success rates, attempting a short story with multiple POVs may be for you! We'll look at a couple of genius works of multiple POV and analyze and discuss how they work. \*It is tricky to talk about Third-Person Multiple POV vs Omniscient POV; some of these pieces may technically be omniscient but *seem* more like Third-Person Multiple POV, and to distinguish TPM from "omniscient POV" we will go by Josip Novakovitch's distinction for it, which is that Third-Person Multiple is a "series of third-person limited POVs minus authorial intrusions."

### **Brenda Miller, *Wonders and Delights: Using Micro-Observations in Your Writing***

In this class we will study the work of Ross Gay and Aimee Nezhukumatathil as models for cultivating your observational skills to broaden the range of your writing.

**Aram Mrjoian, *Research in Creative Nonfiction***

In this 90-minute workshop, we'll discuss various examples of research-based published work (shared and read before class) that raise questions about research ethics, confirmation bias, and due diligence. After a lecture and discussion, we'll complete several exercises developed to help you think about your own research processes and areas for additional research on a work-in-progress. Students are encouraged to bring a work or excerpt of creative nonfiction of at least five pages to class that has (at least some, or some possible) researched elements.

**Scott Nadelson, *Power Shifts as an Engine of Drama***

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.

**Matt Young, *The End of a World***

This class will look at endings in short fiction and the multitudes they contain. Their paradoxical nature of inevitability and surprise. What makes them so difficult to nail down? Why do we often miss the mark completely or write beyond where a story should end? How might we work to craft satisfying endings? And what the hell is a satisfying ending anyway? We'll have some in-class reading and writing prompts during our meeting.