

**THE RAINIER WRITING WORKSHOP
MFA @ PLU
2023 RESIDENCY SCHEDULE [FINAL]**

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 read before the residency. Students are required to attend the morning sessions specific to their cohorts—Workshops, Thesis Critique Sessions, Pedagogy Sessions, Grad Sessions. Students are also expected to attend the Grad Presentations, Grad Readings, and faculty/guest readings in the evenings. The Grad Sessions are for graduates only. The Pedagogy Sessions are for rising thesis-year students and meet concurrently with the Mixed-Genre workshops.

FRIDAY, JULY 14

CK West **6:30 DINNER**

Scan Center **8:00 OPENING REMARKS & FACULTY READINGS: Jenny Johnson, Matt Young**

SATURDAY, JULY 15

8:30 MORNING TALK:

Xavier 201

Barrie Jean Borich, *Explaining Ourselves to Ourselves*

We are all living and creating in times that have profoundly shifted, perhaps leading us to wonder how to create authentic work that speaks accurately to our locations and experiences of change. To do so, we have to write from both our authority and our poverty, asking the questions: How might we write from all our particular intersections? How does hybridity—our own and also that of the forms we write—push our content to shift? What is each our own unique position and what risks do our positions in the world allow us to take? How do we write nonfiction, fiction, poetry and all the slip-slides in-between in ways that don’t perform the expectation of others but instead attempt to convey where we do and do not stand in all the shifting and concentric circles of our living? In these ongoingly tumultuous times, how do we, through the work we make, successfully explain ourselves to ourselves?

Admin Rooms

10:00 PRIMARY-GENRE WORKSHOPS

10:00 GRAD SESSION:

Xavier 201

torrin a. greathouse, *Singing for Your Dinner: The Art of Public Performance*

Regardless of what genre(s) you write in, the ability to not just read, but perform your work aloud, is an invaluable tool. Being able to infuse clarity and emotion into your readings can have a profound effect on the reception of your work and even effect things like book sales and performance bookings.

In this session students will learn the basics of how to perform effectively, as well as tips and tricks on structuring a performance, balancing creative work and banter, and more.

Commons

12:00 LUNCH

1:30-2:45 CLASSES:

Admin 204A

Geffrey Davis & Jenny Johnson, *Movement in Poems: Control & Release*

Kinesis concerns the movement of an organism in response to a stimulus. Poems have their own relationship to kinesis, as they reckon with the limits of human expression. The turns in our poems always happen because of the energy we have harnessed, whether we are in control of those energies or not. Sometimes our poems turn for us, sometimes they turn on us. In this class, we'll study various forms of movement in poems, learning from craft essays by Marianne Boruch and Carl Phillips. We'll study the nuanced ways that poems not only turn, but also jump, leap, swerve, drop, stop, etc. We'll give language to these energetic shifts as we close read poems. We'll also offer writing exercises that invite you to experiment with movement in new ways in your own poems. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 204B

Scott Nadelson, *The Vignette Novel*

When I think about my experience as material for fiction, I often find myself struggling against the conventions of a single extended narrative arc. Life to me feels more like a series of moments, brief flashes of story that together may suggest a larger pattern or emotional journey. So I have found it particularly liberating as a writer to discover an alternative model for the novel in books written as series of vignettes: miniature narratives that may not stand on their own, but that in combination create a multi-faceted portrait of a character or relationship over time. In this class, we'll explore different aspects of the vignette form, thinking in particular about compression and elision, interstitial space, and framing, as well as craft elements that cross forms, such as point of view, dialogue, and efficient characterization. We'll read excerpts from some of my favorite vignette novels, including *Maud Martha* by Gwendolyn Brooks, *Mrs. Bridge* by Evan S. Connell, *The Summer Book* by Tove Jansson, and *Adventures with Julia* by Candace Denning, and we'll experiment with some initial vignettes of our own. [Two Sessions; Exercises; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 208

Matt Young, *Nonfiction Fundamentals*

Creative nonfiction is a genre buster, so this session is for any and all. Interested in the form or currently working within it? Come on in. Through a series of two sessions, we'll look at nonfiction through the specific lens of the flash creative nonfiction—a highly digestible but complicated and rich form. We will work to define and explore narrative structures, character development, setting, voice, point of view, imagery, and style. Additionally, we will explore individual and factual truth and their presentations in text. Through the analysis of published work, group discussions, and dynamic writing exercises, you could deepen your understanding of these craft concepts and hone your skills as a nonfiction writer. Most of all I hope this class will hype you up to break down those genre barriers that so often contribute to our inner critics. [Two Sessions; Exercises; Handout Reading Required.]

3:00-4:15 CLASSES:

Admin 204A

Jennifer Foerster, *Poetry Fundamentals*

This class will review the essential elements of poetic craft, while listening to and reading poems as our teachers. Looking at a number of poems from a diversity of authors, we will focus on figurative language, imagery, voice, syntax, sonics, line, and form, and study how these elements are engaged

in various poetic complexities. We will discuss the practice of harnessing these elements in our own writing and revision, as well as the critical practice of reading for and writing about poetic craft. [Two Sessions; Exercises; Advance Reading Required.]

Admin 204B

Renee Simms, *Fiction Fundamentals*

This course will go over the basics of creating compelling fiction by reading and discussing a number of stories and doing in-class exercises. [Two Sessions; Exercises; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 208

Justin St. Germain, *The Misfit Genre: Writing and Reading Literary Essays*

This class will focus on an often overlooked genre of writing, the literary essay. We'll discuss what that term means, why the genre is overlooked, and reasons why it shouldn't be—chief among them that it welcomes writers from other genres, and provides an opportunity to use the tools of those genres toward a different end. We'll talk about the role of truth in the essay form, the value of inquiry and discovery, and some examples of successful literary essays. [Two Sessions; Exercises; Handout Reading Required.]

4:30 GRAD PRESENTATIONS:

Admin 204A

Summer Christiansen, *Freedom in Form: How the Hermit Crab Essay Liberates the Writer*

The hermit crab essay is a term that was originally coined by Brenda Miller and Suzanne Paola in their craft book *Tell It Slant: Creating, Refining, and Publishing Creative Nonfiction*. It adopts an already existing form as a container, such as a list, directions, tarot card reading, real estate listing, etc. In this presentation, I will discuss how different authors utilize the Hermit Crab Essay as a vehicle for topics that might feel too difficult or traumatic to write about. I will include multiple writing exercises and tools you can take with you to help write your next essay.

Admin 204B

Bonita Lini Markowski, *Bearing the Unbearable: How Three Poets Create Formal and Psychic Spaces to Heal in Poetry*

Poets are master manipulators. Their poems can walk readers through a field of golden daffodils or down the streets of Chicago on fire having proffered something about the human condition or, at least, by making us feel deeply. Often, poets become healers by allowing the body and mind to gain distance from the lived experience or the living memoir—and they do so by leaving memory on the page. As Mark Doty confirms in *The Art of Description: World into Word*, “metaphor’s distancing aspect may allow us to speak freely” (Doty 80). Providing comfort, poems become places to express the inexpressible. This paper investigates how three poets, Julia Spicher Kasdorf, Patricia Smith, and Jericho Brown create safe spaces in their poems for themselves and their readers. These poets often write about horrific topics to understand themselves, the human condition, the violence itself. Accomplished poets like the three mentioned above will find ways to maneuver through the unbearable not merely with sentiment but with the tools at their disposal. These poets walk us through the “disorder,” putting it *in order* by writing about disturbing events, often presenting them in beautiful ways because, as we know, life is not black or white but black *and* white.

CK West

6:15 DINNER

Scan Center

7:30 FACULTY READINGS: Kelli Russell Agodon, April Ayers Lawson

SUNDAY, JULY 16

8:30 MORNING TALK:

Xavier 201

Scott Nadelson, *The Vulnerability of Outrage*

There's plenty of outrage to go around these days, and it's often the emotion at the forefront of our lives. But is it a useful one to explore in our stories, essays, or poems? I've heard other writers say that outrage is too flat an emotion to be the subject of or driving force behind art and literature, that it doesn't allow for enough nuance. I tended to agree, until a few years ago, when I viewed a career retrospective of artist Carolee Scheemann's work, and subsequently began noticing powerful moments of outrage in some favorite stories and novels. This talk will explore how outrage—and particularly acting on outrage—leads to vulnerability and gives writers access to complex emotions that might otherwise lay buried, and it will touch on work by Schneemann, Anton Chekhov, Edward P. Jones, and Asali Solomon.

Admin Rooms

10:00 PRIMARY-GENRE WORKSHOPS

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

Davis/Johnson, *Movement in Poems* [Session 2]

Admin 204B

Nadelson, *The Vignette Novel* [Session 2]

Admin 208

Young, *Nonfiction Fundamentals* [Session 2]

3:00-4:15 CLASSES:

Admin 204A

Foerster, *Poetry Fundamentals* [Session 2]

Admin 204B

Simms, *Fiction Fundamentals* [Session 2]

Admin 208

St. Germain, *The Misfit Genre* [Session 2]

4:30 GRAD PRESENTATIONS:

Admin 204A

Katie Duane, *Bridging the Distance: Reader-Narrator Connections in Creative Nonfiction*

Why do some narrators feel like they're alive on the page while others feel like remote figures in the distance? When or why might it matter how connected readers feel to our narrators? And, if we hope to create close connections between our narrators and readers, what can we do to allow such a relationship to unfold? Looking at works by Mark Doty, James Baldwin, Judith Kitchen, and Bernard Cooper, we will pay close attention to various narrator traits: vulnerability, accountability, consideration for readers, presence on the page, and awareness of distance (along with the ability to

close it), examining how these traits influence the reader-narrator connection. We'll also consider what Brenda Miller calls "allegiance to the artifact," and how and why this can engender a sense of closeness between the narrators we write and the readers who come to know them.

Admin 204B

David Taylor, *The Only Way Through: Transitions in Short Fiction*

In writing, transitions do a lot of work. They smooth the path between scenes and create coherence, drama, and sometimes suspense. As seams between exposition, dramatic moments, and narrative action, they help create a story's overall rhythm and character. In short fiction, they are essential to compression and drive. Although they may be just one or two words, transitions play a vital role in making understandable why the storyteller chose to pass over months or years, directing our attention to the next scene. We as readers may rely on the storyteller most in those moments. An effective transition can validate that trust, creating contrast and surprise at those thresholds. Sometimes even more than dialogue, transitions that open or conclude a scene can infuse a narrative presence, suspense, or humor. Through examples and exercises, we'll see how transitions affect a story's overall tone, structure, and impact.

UC Patio

6:15 DINNER

Scan Center

7:30 GUEST READING: Beth Nguyen

The Cave

AFTER HOURS: The Cave

MONDAY, JULY 17

8:30 MORNING TALK:

Xavier 201

Oliver de la Paz, torrin a. greathouse, Jenny Johnson, Brian Teare, *Embodied Prosody, Embodied Sentences: Coping Mechanisms*

"I cannot stress enough how much this mechanistic world," poet CAConrad writes, "has required me to FIND MY BODY...in order to find my poetry." Conrad's argument suggests that in the same way we can't take connection to our bodies for granted, we can't take connection to our writing for granted, and that to connect to our bodies enables a connection to our writing. This panel will explore four craft-based pathways to connecting our bodies and our lines, our sentences. torrin a. greathouse asks, "What tools can prosody provide us with for cultivating an embodied poetics of disability? And how might leaning into irregular prosodic constructions allow us to capture physical and mental experiences which sit outside of the cultural 'norm'" Jenny Johnson suggests "Prosody can be a space for listening and resisting. Prosody can be a space for wrestling with and wrestling off old scripts, and also for generating the new ones that we need." Oliver de la Paz argues that prose poems offer a specific vantage point for the "political" gesture of sentence making, while Brian Teare suggests that mining one's notebooks for a collage-based prose practice enables us to write surprising sentences more connected to our nervous systems. "That's all we have: each other," Bhanu Kapil writes, "the sentence and I. We cope."

Admin Rooms

10:00 PRIMARY-GENRE WORKSHOPS

Xavier/Admin

10:00 THESIS MANUSCRIPT CRITIQUES

Commons

12:00 LUNCH

1:30-2:45 CLASSES:**Admin 204A****Kelli Russell Agodon & torrin a. greathouse, *Writing from the Gallows: Utilizing Dark Humor in Your Work***

“There’s such a thing as gallows humor,” poet and satirist Alexandra Erin writes, “but are you the one on the gallows?” Dark humor in the hands of the wrong writer can be deeply harmful, but has the potential to be a liberatory tool in the hands of others. This class will explore the multifarious ways in which authors utilize gallows humor to question, critique, and upend the social conditions they are writing from within as well as offer entryways into our writing. We will examine a selection of work that uses humor this way and end the session with a short writing exercise to write from the gallows ourselves. [Two Sessions; Exercises; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 204B**Barrie Jean Borich & Brian Teare, *Voicing What Art Can’t Speak : Ekphrasis in Poetry and Nonfiction Prose***

“Ekphrasis,” writes the poet and critic Mónica de la Torre, “involves voicing what art can’t speak.” That’s one reason a writer might channel their relationship to another art into language: to give voice to another’s way of seeing, to render in language a visual or tactile or spatial sensibility. But there are myriad other reasons both poets and nonfiction prose writers turn to visual arts, which often articulate precisely that which *can’t* be voiced. In this short course we’ll explore how writers and artists pursue conversation across disciplines, how visual, filmic, and material forms offer writers new pathways into linguistic surprise, how other arts can mirror and situate and unsettle our identities, and how our obsessions, affinities, critiques, and pleasures are all heightened and complexified by our encounters with another art. [Two Sessions; Exercises; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 208**Sequoia Nagamatsu, *Understanding Narrative Structure through Film and Television***

In this session we will explore basic screenwriting models and strategies in order to better understand tools of plot and narrative arc that can help fiction writers build the basic architecture of their stories. In addition to this framework development, special attention will be paid to dialogue, scene setting, subtext, and how screenwriters and directors translate the interiority of characters onto screen (and how fiction writers can reverse engineer these moments to better understand when and how to develop characters). For this class we will study script excerpts (and associated) short story and/or novel scenes. Supplementary materials including scripts and other handouts regarding cinematic beats will be provided prior to the session. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required.]

3:00-4:15 CLASSES:**Admin 204A****Wendy Call, *Writing and Walking: Staying Present***

How can walking—or other easeful movement through space—nourish your writing? How can simply walking shape your awareness and refine your senses? This workshop is an invitation to develop a regular practice of contemplative walking / movement, to develop a sense of personal identity, community affiliation, and belonging as you explore various places, spaces, and experiences that are “offline” and outside the commodified landscape. During our first session, we will discuss essays and other short works on walking by Garnette Cadogan, Camille Dungy, Linda Hogan, Rebecca Solnit, Henry David Thoreau, and others. During our second session, we will go for a slow stroll—each of us alone, without looking at our phones, listening to music, sipping tea, or talking with others. (If walking is not easy for you, moving slowly through outdoor space in some other way is great, too.) We will give ourselves the gift of being alone: watching, listening, learning, perceiving, experiencing. After walking, we will write. [Two Sessions; Exercises; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 204B**Jennifer Foerster, *Mood, Music, and Meaning: Working with Meter in Poetry***

This craft class in prosody will focus on the question: how does meter “mean”? Meter is available to the poet as not only a technique or order, but also an element of the poem’s “meaning.” By reviewing examples of meter-driven poems, we will consider what is happening metrically in the poem and how this is significant to the poem as a whole. We will explore how various types of meter and metrical variation might support a poem’s mood, argument, or objective, while also considering the poem’s larger meter—its “form”—as an architecture within which sound and sense can be organized. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 208**Leila Renee, *Rendering Young Voices***

Chapter 19 of Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying* famously contains just five words—uttered from a grieving child: “My mother is a fish.” This childish observation has sparked ample analysis about the craft of depicting children’s (0-18) points-of-view in fiction. It begs the question: How do you write a young person’s POV in an authentic, engaging and dignified way? Since children lack direct access to traditional methods of writing and publishing, adults largely carry the responsibility of embodying their voices and perspectives. Writers thus have a duty to translate children’s thoughts, stories and experiences in gracious, yet honest manners that do not just “dumb down” the voice, but strategically grapple with perspective. Children’s POVs are significant because oftentimes they are matter-of-fact, they coyly subvert logic and they frequently veer into the surreal. In this class, we will read short stories that feature a young person’s point of view. Our goal is to deconstruct how writers strike the balance between authorial maturity and a child protagonist’s usually naive lens. Texts to be read prior to the class meetings include Gina Berriault’s “The Stone Boy”; Akhil Sharma’s “Surrounded by Sleep”; Souvankham Thammavongsa’s “How to Pronounce Knife” and Danielle Evans’ “Virgins.” Collectively, these stories showcase effective methods of voicing young protagonists and are excellent examples of how to do so using multiple narrative modes, including first person, third person, present and past tense. We will ultimately consider the mechanics of narrative distance and temporal framing to identify concrete tools we can use to convincingly render young points of view in our own work. Class will consist of literary analysis, group discussions and guided writing exercises. [Two Sessions; Handout Reading Required.]

4:30 GRAD PRESENTATIONS:**Admin 204A****Cynthia Lehew-Nehrbass, *On Writing Sentiment and Pathos***

In her collection of essays, *The Little Virtues*, Natalia Ginzburg warns of writing: “... there is a danger in grief just as there is a danger in happiness.” What is this danger? The slippery slope of sappiness, the drowning in despair—or both? And, poet Naja Marie Aidt admits the difficulty in writing the tragic loss of her son: “It’s not possible to write artistically about raw grief.” There is no universal equation for writing personal struggles, grief, loss, and trauma—only choices. In this session, we will look at memoir through the model of the rhetorical triangle to gain insight on how non-fiction authors shape their stories with craft and form choices. We will also visit our own writing and that of favorite authors. Does our/their story become a right triangle, a balanced isosceles, or a toppling obtuse—does it shift? No judgements will be made, just discovery of processes and techniques by which we might pen our own pathos onto the page. Note: If you can, please bring a page or two of your own writing, or that of a favorite author, to play with in class. Otherwise, excerpts of some of my favorites will be provided.

Admin 204B**Eva Smith Glynn, *Crossing into Transcendence: Evoking the Otherworldly in Fiction***

Transcendence. How and when does a piece of fiction transport its characters and the reader into a state of transcendence? As readers, we’ve all experienced it and we’re not alone in our bewilderment as to how it happens. But one thing is for sure: We know it when we *feel* it. Fiction writers seek transcendence in their work and for the audience reading the story. So, why not ask the big,

unwieldy question. What is transcendence in fiction? Is it divine? Catharsis? Access to the subconscious mind? A connection with a greater collective? Transformative growth? Magic? There is no single blueprint to define transcendence in fiction, but Isaac Babel, Deborah Eisenberg, Eudora Welty, and Alice Munro are seekers just like us. In this session we'll explore their ideas of transcendence and the textural strategies they use within their stories to achieve it. Our exploration will include how characters experience transcendence within the narrative and how these authors create a narrative atmosphere that manipulates the mental state of the reader. Specifically, we'll examine internal triggers and external catalysts that befall our protagonists and atmospheric tricks that affect the reader such as collective experience, mesmerization, invocation of the uncanny, and metaphorical defamiliarization.

CK West **6:15 DINNER**

Scan Center **7:30 GUEST READINGS: Rigoberto González, Leila Renee**

TUESDAY, JULY 18

8:30 MORNING TALK:

Xavier 201

Wendy Call, *What We Are Talking About When We Talk About "Sensory Writing"*

We experience the world through our senses, of course, and we're taught as writers to bring that embodied, sensory experience to the page. Though we still speak of "the five senses" described by Aristotle nearly 2,500 years ago, we now know that human perception is far more complex than sight & hearing & smell & taste & touch. Our "sense of touch," for example, is actually a range of neurological systems, including three—cutaneous, somatic, and visceral—just for the perception of physical pain. In all, our human bodies contain more than a dozen—perhaps *several* dozen—sensory systems through which we perceive the world around us, including air pressure and vibrations, movement, and spatial relationships. How we humans comprehend our sensory experience, and describe it to others, is also culturally specific. This lecture, which will include an interactive component, will survey some of the methods we can use to transform the sensory complexity of somatic experience into compelling literary work.

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

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 **Agodon/greathouse, *Utilizing Dark Humor* [Session 2]**

Admin 204B **Borich/Teare, *Ekphrasis* [Session 2]**

Admin 208 **Nagamatsu, *Narrative Structure* [Session 2]**

3:00-4:15 CLASSES:

- Admin 204A *Call, Writing and Walking* [Session 2]
- Admin 204B *Foerster, Meter in Poetry* [Session 2]
- Admin 208 *Renee, Young Voices* [Session 2]

4:30 GRAD PRESENTATIONS:

- Admin 204A **Javi Cain, *A Sense of Astonishment: Using Surprise to Engage Readers***
Poetry can surprise us in many ways. To the reader who has just discovered a favorite poet, poetry can astound in how immediately personal the poems feel, yet even seasoned poetry readers find themselves astonished when poetry pulls off some of its clever literary tricks. In this class we will explore some of the craft techniques poets use to introduce surprise. We will look at the poetry of W. S. Merwin, Natalie Diaz, Mark Doty, Natasha Trethewey and others to discover how each writer engages with elements of surprise. We will explore how writers employ metaphor, imagery, form, turns, lyricism and titles to create unique and surprising poems.
- Admin 204B **Hannah D. Markley, *Uncertain, Unknowable, Unfinished***
What questions do you carry? I carry questions about writing, faith, belonging, and love. Many days, I long for clear answers. But the questions I hold are not ones to be solved. Essayist and poet Judith Kitchen speaks to the fallacy of certainty in this way: "In writing, I can defeat myself with my certainties. I can shut doors without even knowing they are there." How do we keep ourselves open to the unknown? In this presentation, I will share how structural and linguistic choices in the work of Maggie Nelson, Sherry Simpson, and Abigail Thomas embrace and amplify the unsayable and unsolvable. We will also take stock of our questions and discuss writing prompts and frameworks that clarify and deepen questions in our writing.

5:30 MID-RESIDENCY BREAK BEGINS: DINNER ON YOUR OWN**WEDNESDAY, JULY 19**

- Admin Rooms **4:00-5:00 BUSINESS MEETINGS FOR 2ND YEAR & 3RD YEAR COHORT GROUPS**
- CK West **6:15 DINNER**
- Scan Center **7:30 ALUMNI & FACULTY READINGS: Oliver de la Paz, Lena Khalaf Tuffaha**
- Scan Center **8:30 BOOK-SIGNINGS & RECEPTION**

THURSDAY, JULY 20**8:30 MORNING TALK:**

- Xavier 201 **Sequoia Nagamatsu, *Exploring the Necessity and Utility of Writing about Climate Change***
This talk will explore the evolution and diversity of how writers have engaged with environmental

issues while unpacking the utility of such writing. Why write about climate change? Who are the audiences? Do we really expect people to change their behavior/attitudes after reading a novel, poem, or creative essay? Deconstructing specific examples ranging from JG Ballard to Annie Dillard to Kim Stanley Robinson, this talk will illustrate that such writing, while seeming to preach to the choir, is increasingly necessary regardless of genre/style as a reflection of our lived reality and the current human condition.

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 **Renee Simms, *The Pedagogy of Becoming***

In *The Art of Fiction*, John Gardner writes about personal traits of a beginning writer, like timidity, that can show up on the page. As a teacher, how do we encourage our students to be confident and daring artists? How might a student’s willingness to take risks be complicated by their subject matter, workshop protocol, or the vulnerability most students feel when receiving critical feedback? In this session we will talk about how to cultivate a pedagogy of self-reflection, self-work, and care through sustained revision, individual and collective feedback, close reading and listening skills. The main question we will consider is, How do we guide our students towards intellectual and emotional growth?

Commons **12:00 LUNCH**

CK West **12:00 GRADUATES & FACULTY LUNCH**

1:30-4:00 CLASSES:

Admin 204A **Barrie Jean Borich, *Curious Poses: Hybrid & Experimental Nonfiction***

What are the possibilities of hybrid and experimental prose forms and how do these curious poses, fragmented accumulations, and non-standard structures render what we can’t get to in linear

narratives? In this class we will explore segmented and collage-form memoir, various intersectional forms, nonfiction-fiction hybrids, borrowed-form essays, speculative nonfiction, and lyric micro-prose works. Our goal is to attempt nonfictional positions we may not have previously thought to consider and surprise ourselves into genre-bending configurations that refresh the ways we approach our memory-and/or-research-based essay, memoir, and/or documentary materials. [One Session for Two Credits. Exercises; Handout Reading Required.]

- Admin 204B** **torrin a. greathouse, *Persona as (Re)Possession***
 Though persona poetry is often a tool for poets to push outside of themselves and their poetic voice, it can also be a powerful tool for writing toward the self. The use of persona can open new avenues to exploring our subjectivity that more confessional work might, for any number of reasons, preclude. In this class, students will be reading works of persona poetry in which the persona serves as a lens through which the poet reflexively views themselves, discussing the differences in approach as opposed to more traditional persona poetry, and using what they learn to begin drafting poems in which the persona is a tool for reaching the self. [One Session for Two Credits; Exercises; Handout Reading Required.]
- Admin 208** **Rebecca McClanahan, *Creating Real-Life Characters in Nonfiction***
 Part of what draws a reader into a nonfiction work is knowing that flesh-and-blood people exist behind the words. However, real-life characters don't automatically spring to life on the page. How do memoirists, essayists, literary journalists, and other nonfiction writers work with factual material to create fully developed, three-dimensional characters? In this class, we will look closely at several literary models, complete in-class writing prompts, and discuss ways to incorporate character-building elements into our own nonfiction works. Readings will include brief selections from works of Ross Gay, Audre Lorde, Donald Morrill, Susan Orlean, Abigail Thomas, and Isabel Wilkerson. [One Session for Two Credits; Exercises; Handout Reading Required.]
- Admin 210** **Justin St. Germain, *True Crime 101***
 A concise overview of the most popular kinds of American storytelling: true crime. Students will read a few short examples and listen to at least one podcast episode in advance. We'll discuss the core characteristics and origins of the genre and its approach to craft, and read a few examples from its early years and its recent spike in popularity. [One Session for Two 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: Brenda Miller, Justin St. Germain**
- Scan Center** **SILENT AUCTION BEGINS, ENDS SATURDAY, JULY 22**

<u>FRIDAY, JULY 21</u>

8:30 MORNING TALK:

- Xavier 201** **Matt Young, *The Grayscale: Ethics and Critical Mechanisms for Writing the Morally Ambiguous***
 This talk explores the complex and compelling world of morally ambiguous characters. These are the characters, narrators, and speakers—fictional, nonfictional, or poetic—who exist in the gray area between collective norms of right and wrong, who make choices that challenge our moral compasses, and whose actions often leave us questioning our own beliefs and values. How do we write bad behavior without endorsement? Is it possible? And more importantly how might we remain critical without becoming didactic? Through guiding examples we'll delve into methods of craft like point of view, characterization, and narration while discussing the ethical and moral considerations that arise when writing these complex individuals.

Admin Rooms **10:00 MIXED-GENRE WORKSHOPS****10:00 GRAD SESSION:****Admin 208**

Sequoia Nagamatsu, *Developing Sincere Networks and Avoiding Transactional Relationships*
 Finding community after graduate school to support and affirm your creative life is not only healthy but crucial in maintaining an awareness of contemporary literature and the mechanics of the writing life. Sometimes newer writers lament that they would apply for an opportunity if they only knew someone who could write a recommendation. Or perhaps there might be a sense that the publishing industry is “rigged.” Certainly, some level of nepotism exists in any industry, but what might be perceived as nepotism might be the result of something any writer has control of: years of genuine community building and support. This session will explore ways which writers, no matter where they live or how distant they might seem from literary culture, can form genuine social and professional networks with the foremost focus of uplifting others and literary culture vs. a focus on one’s own work.

10:00 PEDAGOGY SESSION:**Admin 210**

Wendy Call, *The Interdisciplinary Writing Workshop*
 One beauty of creative writing is that it is, above all, an interdisciplinary endeavor. Though creative writing programs are often housed in English departments, what we do in the classroom shares at least as much with the pedagogies of visual / studio arts, anthropology, journalism, history and gender / race / intersectional studies, as it does with literary studies. As teachers of writing, we can strengthen our creative writing pedagogy —not to mention our writing—by borrowing from other disciplines. In this session, we’ll discuss how to become better teachers by looking at all aspects of our teaching through various disciplinary lenses.

Commons**12:00 LUNCH****UC 201****12:00 SECOND-YEARS LUNCH WITH RB****1:30-4:00 CLASSES:****Admin 204A**

Kelli Russell Agodon & Peggy Shumaker, *Geographies of the Land and of the Heart*
Our lives are rooted to place—we exist in relationship to other humans and to the natural world, writes Claudia Castro Luna, so how do we correspond with place in our poems? In this session, we will look at a diverse selection of poems rooted in place and explore how different poets use place to both ground and extend their poems in both physical place as well as emotional landscapes. Whether you live in an urban environment of skyscrapers or under a lush canopy of trees, location can inform your poems in distinct ways. We will end the session with a short writing exercise. [One Session for Two Credits; Exercises; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 204B

Kevin Clark, *A Wicked Pack of Cards: “The Waste Land” as Model and Influence*
 Since World War I has any other poem been as influential *and* controversial as T. S. Eliot’s “The Waste Land”? Uncountable poets have “borrowed” the poem’s methods, but many poets claim to write in opposition to its tropes. We will discuss how to access the poem without the difficulty some readers anticipate. After considering his notions about framing myths (such as The Fisher King) and his notion of the objective correlative, we’ll have an entertaining time breaking down and explicating the individual sections. Then we’ll examine poems by poets who were clearly influenced by methods originating in “The Waste Land.” Finally, we will ask ourselves if specific Eliotic techniques might be

useful in our own work, including borrowed structural patterns, enumerated sequences, allusion, fragmentation, multiple voices, multiple symbols, multiple voices, high and low diction, open closure, etc. [One Session for Two Credits; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 208

April Ayers Lawson, *Artful Elisions*

In this class, we'll look at narratives in which authors use what you could call sleight of hand, charged negative space, and unusual ways of driving stories forward to allow them to get away with leaving out what others usually need to include for a story to be effective. We'll look at two stories by writer-filmmaker Miranda July, whose screenwriting sensibility contributes to her handling of short fiction, and Hemingway's classics "Hills Like White Elephants" and "A Very Short Story" (the latter of which is only a page long but conveys the sense of an entire relationship). We're not talking minimalism exactly, but concerned with absence that doesn't *feel* like absence. For example, In July's "Birthmark" we never know what either character does for a living, but readers of the story don't usually notice or care. [One Session for Two Credits; Handout Reading Required.]

Admin 210

Brenda Miller, *Autobiography and Photography*

In this class we will study texts that use or refer to photographs to tell their stories. Sometimes the actual images are included as an integral part of the text, while sometimes the photographs remain hidden in the background. We will examine the relationship of text and image, as well as the way photos encourage interaction with the reader. To prepare, please read Judith Kitchen's book *Half in Shade*, and choose at least two chapters you would like us to discuss in class. What intrigues you about these chapters? How does Kitchen interact with the photos? How do *you* interact with the photos? Please also bring at least two photographs to work with in class; these can be family photographs or art photographs, preferably hard copies that we can pass around. [One Session for Two Credits; Advance Reading Required.]

4:00-6:00 MENTORSHIP MEETINGS AS NEEDED

CK West

6:15 DINNER

Scan Center

7:30 FACULTY READINGS: Scott Nadelson, Marjorie Sandor

The Cave

AFTER HOURS: The Cave

SATURDAY, JULY 22

8:30 MORNING TALK:

Xavier 201

Justin St. Germain, *Against Feedback*

This talk is an attempt to answer a question that's been bothering me for a long time: why is so much writing feedback bad? It's often ignorant, self-important, prescriptive, misguided, useless, or just plain stupid. So why should we listen to it? Why do we need it? Most workshops are based on feedback, so it must be good for *something*. But what? What does it even mean to give feedback on a draft? What kind of feedback should we be giving? What kinds are constructive, and for whom? How should the type or role of feedback change depending on the project or the draft? What's the difference between workshop feedback, mentor/mentee feedback, and editor feedback? And maybe most importantly, what should we *do* with all of it? I'll discuss a few specific examples of feedback from my own writing, teaching, and mentoring, as well as what those might teach us about how to approach receiving feedback on our work.

Admin Rooms **10:00 MIXED-GENRE WORKSHOPS****10:00 GRAD SESSION:****Admin 208****Kevin Clark & Renee Simms, *To Enter the Professional Fray: How, Where, and What to Publish***

At RWW most faculty acknowledge that efforts to publish are probably best delayed until later in one's writing study. We also recognize that most graduating writers are now eager to see their work in print. In this class, we'll hold an interactive discussion about the best psychological practice involved in approaching submissions. We'll review the nuts-and-bolts methods for organizing work for submission, composing cover letters, identifying print and online venues, and, eventually, book presses. In addition, we recognize that most writers ultimately produce work in multiple genres. To that end, we will discuss branching out into publishing beyond one's primary genre. Thus, we'll consider the professional dynamics involved in working on different combinations, say, of poetry, fiction, nonfiction, criticism, etc. We'll discuss the way these other forms of writing and publishing come about, and how they might loop back to feed the practice of the primary genre.

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 valuing differences, 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 strategies to use in the classrooms or workshops that you teach or facilitate. In advance, you'll need to read "Bonding Across Boundaries" by bell hooks from *Writing Beyond Race* and "An Invitation" by Paisley Rekdal from *Appropriate*, available on Soundings.

Commons**12:00 LUNCH****UC 201****12:00 FIRST-YEARS LUNCH WITH RB****1:30-4:00 THE ART OF THE BOOK:****Admin 204A****[F] *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, Jennifer Egan**

Jennifer Egan's Pulitzer Prize-winning work, *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, is a book about the unrelenting passage of time. It's composed of stories that can stand alone, but together make a unified narrative. The book has been called "shapeshifting," "undefinable," "groundbreaking." Critics often can't agree if it's a novel or a story collection. Egan herself has said she doesn't believe it to be either. In this session, we'll explore the novel's use of time, structure, character development, and point of view, and how Egan uses these elements to create a cohesive and emotionally resonant work. [Matt Young]

Admin 204B**[F] *Valentino and Sagittarius*, Natalia Ginzburg**

The great Italian writer Natalia Ginzburg—now in the midst of an English-language renaissance, with new translations of many of her books recently published by New Directions and NYRB Classics—is known for her spare, penetrating prose, her dry humor, and her exploration of the mundane and the domestic in the context of world-changing events. She is also a master of the novella, as evidenced by these two small perfect tales narrated by young women trying to make sense of their complicated and often deluded family members. In this Art of the Book session, we will consider the novella as form and what it offers writers who feel either constricted by the short story

or overwhelmed by the novel, as well as Ginzburg's use of the first person narrator as both witness of and participant in drama, with a particular focus on her attention to the nuances of tone. We'll also think about the relationship between comedy and pathos and the possibilities of creating complexity with seemingly simple language. [Scott Nadelson & Marjorie Sandor]

Admin 208

[NF] *The Book of Delights*, Ross Gay

In this collection of short diaristic prose works—a form the author calls essayettes or “little attempts”—poet and essayist Ross Gay has created a catalog of daily attentions that pays homage to the micro and magnificent experience of delight. Through this lyric accretion of days Ross practices intentional gratitude and wonderment, resulting in a literary accounting of micro pleasures and a treatise on the ways delight is made up of both joy and its opposite. *The Book of Delights* is about “sharing what we love, what we find beautiful, which is an ethics” (128). Students will explore the art of lyric attention, the structure of accumulation, writing prose like a poet, open and concrete explorations of theme, and working from experiential prompts. [Geffrey Davis & Barrie Jean Borich]

Admin 210

[NF] *Lost and Found: A Memoir*, by Kathryn Schultz

This memoir by Pulitzer-Prize winning author Kathryn Schultz deftly combines personal stories of grief and love with deep meditations on the meanings of the words “lost” and “found.” The section “Lost” focuses on the death of her father and subsequent grief; the section “Found” focuses on how she discovered her life partner at the same time. We will examine the structures of these sections and the book as a whole, and we'll marvel at her ability to combine intimate narrative and intellectual research in an engaging book-length memoir. [Brenda Miller]

Admin 212

[P] *How Not to Be Afraid of Everything*, Jane Wong

In Wong's second book, we enter the speaker's tale of immigration, work, and food, in a sensory cornucopia that is also filled with formal abundance. Wong tells the story of family and the past through extraordinarily inventive modes. The frontier is a character as are a slew of delicacies and ghosts. We will talk about the structure of this work and how Wong orchestrates all these dynamic voices into a vision that is an imaginative feast. [Kelli Russell Agodon & Oliver de la Paz]

4:00-5:00 MENTORSHIP MEETINGS AS NEEDED

Xavier 201

5:00 GRAD READINGS: Javi Cain, Summer Christiansen, Eva Smith Glynn, Hannah Markley, Bonnie Lini Markowski, Alexander Perry

CK West

6:15 DINNER

Scan Center

7:30 FACULTY READINGS: Kevin Clark, Rebecca McClanahan, Peggy Shumaker

Scan Center

SILENT AUCTION ENDS AT 8:30PM

SUNDAY, JULY 23

8:30 MORNING TALK:

Xavier 201

Kevin Clark, Geffrey Davis, Brenda Miller, Marjorie Sandor, *Passion, Practice, and Play: Avocation as Enrichment in the Writer's Life*

The late great saxophonist Wayne Shorter once said, “Don't throw away your childish dreams. You have to be strong enough to protect them.” Is there *something else* you love to do that has the potential

to inform and refresh your writing practice? Another form of art-making, or some other activity that engages your passionate attention and requires mental and physical discipline—but doesn't bring with it the attendant complications of professional aspirations? This panel will explore the myriad ways, from practical to spiritual, that embracing a sense of play and practice in another realm can refresh and unexpectedly feed our writing lives, and keep us connected to our earliest experiences of joy-in-making.

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 of 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, both 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

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!

CK West

12:00 GRADUATION LUNCH

1:00-3:00 MENTORSHIP MEETINGS AS NEEDED

Scan Center

4:00 GRAD READINGS: Katie Duane, Cindy Lehew-Nehrbass, David Taylor

Scan Center

4:40 GRADUATION CEREMONY & RECEPTION

MONDAY, JULY 24 DEPARTURE DAY