

MFA in Creative Writing Course List - Spring 2026

All CWL courses are 4 credits unless noted otherwise.

All classes are In Person unless noted otherwise.

NB: Spring semester begins Monday, January 26. Last day of regularly scheduled classes is Saturday, May 9. The official end of term is Wednesday, May 20.

Registration begins Nov. 3, 2025 [Full Academic Calendar](#).

Course requests should be put through our online form.

MANHATTAN

CWL 510.S60 (55067): Writing the Fantastical - Marissa Levien

Thursdays. 6-8:50PM

What happens to a story when we leave realism behind? Do the same craft rules apply? What does it take to write a fantastical story and write it well? In this class we'll workshop two stories per student and read examples of short stories in many fantastical genres including horror, spec, sci-fi, magical realism, and fantasy. Authors will include Kelly Link, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Carmen Maria Machado, Octavia Butler, Arthur C. Clarke, Mariana Enriquez, and more.

CWL 535.S60 (55068): Writing in Multiple Genres: Humor Writing - Patricia Marx

Wednesdays. 6-8:50PM

- *"Humor is emotional chaos remembered in tranquility."*—James Thurber
- *"Comedy has to be based on truth. You take the truth and you put a little curlicue at the end."*—Sid Caesar
- *"Tragedy is when I cut my finger. Comedy is when you fall into an open sewer and die."*—Mel Brooks
- *"...An amateur thinks it's really funny if you dress a man up as an old lady, put him in a wheelchair, and give the wheelchair a push that sends it spinning down a slope towards a stone wall. For a pro, it's got to be a real old lady."*—Groucho Marx

- *“What is comedy? Comedy is the art of making people laugh without making them puke.” —Steve Martin*
- *“You know, crankiness is the essence of all comedy.”—Jerry Seinfeld*
- *“Analyzing humor is like dissecting a frog. Few people are interested and the frog dies of it.” —E.B. White*
- *“Patty Marx is the best teacher in the Creative Writing Program.”—Patricia Marx*

One of the above quotations is false. Find out which one in this humor-writing workshop, where you will read, listen to, and watch comedic samples from well-known and lesser-known humorists, and complete weekly writing assignments. Students already working on projects are welcome to develop them. You will learn a thing or two and you will have fun - or else!

CWL 560.S60 (53030): Topics in Literature for Writers: Long Form Fragmented Narrative- Robert Lopez
Wednesdays. 2:30-5:20PM

In this class we'll read and discuss fragmented/fractured long-form narrative in novels and creative nonfiction. We will examine how these writers employ form and challenge tradition and then we'll write our own pastiches based on these works. We'll read books by Renata Adler, Renee Gladman, Mary Robison, David Shields, Fernando Pessoa, Juan Rulfo, Elizabeth Hardwick, and others.

SOUTHAMPTON

CWL 510 S.01 (53573): Forms of Fiction: Advancing Fiction - Robert Reeves Tuesdays. 6-8:50 PM

This workshop welcomes creative writers with projects either well underway or just beginning—primarily in fiction, regardless of length, form, or genre, but also including work more broadly described as ‘narrative prose.’ In short: all storytellers are welcome.

Each week, we’ll workshop stories-in-progress, attuning ourselves as much as possible to each writer’s goals and intentions. Our focus will be thoughtful, constructive responses, aimed at helping each project move forward through a process of revision, always doing our utmost to evaluate the work on its own terms. For guidance and inspiration, we’ll read and discuss a wide range of fiction – some contemporary, some classic. Readings will include selections I assign as well as models suggested by workshop members. And finally, since writing is hard labor, we’ll do our best to have a little fun along the way.

CWL 520.S01 (55071): Forms of Poetry: Art of Voice; Or, The Great Southampton Poetry Voice-Off - Molly Gaudry Select Saturdays. 11AM-5PM

Meeting dates: Jan 31 (11:00-12:00 on Zoom), and in person on Feb 7, Feb 21, Mar 7, Mar 28, Apr 11, Apr 25, May 9.

Our Saturdays will begin with an open mic, during which you’ll share your Signature poem resulting from the previous meeting’s reading and homework. Then we’ll move into a timed Technical Challenge, for which you’ll produce a range of poetic forms, structures, and “movements.” We’ll break for lunch; then we’ll come back to discuss published collections and workshop your own Showstopper poems. While this class is designed for poets and the poetry-curious, prose writers may also benefit from studying voice-focused techniques and further expanding their range as writers. **Required Books:** Tony Hoagland’s *The Art of Voice: Poetic Principles and Practice*; Ross Gay’s *Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude*; Chen Chen’s *When I Grow Up I Wish to Be a List of Further Possibilities*; E. Briskin’s *Orange*; Claire Wahmanholm’s *Meltwater*.

CWL 580.S01 (55395): Practicum in Arts Administration: Murder We Wrote - Christian McLean

Tuesdays, 12:30-2:20pm (1-4 credits)

We're going to create a Murder Mystery and, in doing so, learn important skills in arts/event management. The course provides education in marketing, design and software that will boost your résumé and increase your workplace skill set. We'll examine work/volunteer opportunities in local arts organizations and you will design an MFA event from the ground up. Learn the basics of Photoshop, InDesign, Mailmerge, Google Docs/Sheets, Constant Contact. Completion of at least 6 program credits or permission of instructor required.

STONY BROOK MAIN CAMPUS

CWL 581.S01 (55351): Practicum in Teaching Writing - Christine Kitano

Thursdays. 9:30am to 12:20pm (3-credits)

This course is designed to prepare graduate students to teach undergraduate courses in creative writing. We will cover basic pedagogical models with special consideration to conducting a creative classroom in an academic setting. Course assignments will include class observations, sample teaching demonstrations, and work toward a teaching portfolio (teaching statement, sample syllabi) for future job applications. The course will also include a unit on teaching poetry to prepare students to teach the three-genre "Introduction to Creative Writing" (CWL 202) course at Stony Brook. Note that class meetings will be in-person on Stony Brook's main campus on Long Island. Successful completion of this course is required for all who plan on working as a Graduate Instructor or TA.

While the course will be based on main campus in Stony Brook, NY, we won't necessarily be meeting together every single week. There will be weeks when you will be observing other courses which means you'll have some flexibility in what day/time to be on campus. If you have questions or concerns, email me directly (christine.kitano@stonybrook.edu).

ONLINE

CWL 510.S30 (53596): Forms of Fiction: The Short Story - Amy Hempel Mondays. 6-8:50PM

We will use a range of narrative strategies to strengthen two stories by each student over the semester. The instructor will bring in one or two contemporary stories to read each week, stories that make successful use of these same strategies. These will include work by such writers as Joy Williams, Sherry Sonnet, Mary Robison, Davy Rothbart, Paulina Flores, Edward P. Jones, Nami Mun, Ayse Papatya Bucak, Manual Gonzales, and more Joy Williams.

CWL 682.S30 (53006): Practicum in Publishing and Editing: Reading Like a Book Editor - Alison Fairbrother Mondays. 11AM-1:50PM (1-4 credits)

This course is designed to give writers a strong foundational understanding of book publishing. What are editors looking for? How do I craft compelling query letters? Where does my novel fall on the literary-commercial spectrum? What does upmarket mean? This course will engage with these questions and more. We will learn how editors evaluate projects for acquisition, how they approach editing on the page, and how different stakeholders work together to bring a book from concept to marketplace. We will engage in real-world editorial decision making, using sample manuscripts from BookEnds. We'll hone our editing skills using sample novel drafts, and we'll practice crafting copy for our own works in progress, sharpening our ability to talk about our writing in formal pitches to agents and editors. While no writer should write toward the market, we can be savvy about the industry, understanding its trends, dynamics, and standards. Editors at major publishing houses will be visiting class throughout the semester.

THESIS

(1-6 credits)

53574 CWL 599 V01 Karen Bender

53572 CWL 599 V02 Magdalene Brandeis

53577 CWL 599 V03 Carla Caglioti

53578 CWL 599 V05 Amy Hempel

53579 CWL 599 V06 Kaylie Jones

53580 CWL 599 V07 Christine Kitano

53581CWL 599 V08 Matthew Klam

53582 CWL 599 V09 Robert Lopez

53583 CWL 599 V10 Patricia Marx

53584 CWL 599 V11Christian McLean

53586 CWL 599 V13 Susan Minot

53587 CWL 599 V14 Julie Sheehan

53588 CWL 599 V15 Molly Gaudry

53597 CWL 599 V16 Lou Ann Walker