



## SATURDAY ENRICHMENT SPRING 2019 (RE)WRITE!

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Location: Loew Hall 220

### Course Description

In this unusual creative writing class, we won't make up our own stories from nothing. Instead, while no one's looking, we'll steal some fictional and true stories that are already well known, pull them apart, and re-build them in new forms. Then we'll get out the red pen, pull our own drafts apart, and learn how professional editors turn drafts into polished texts.

I've worked as a journalist, editor, and novelist, so playing around with stories to explore their different possibilities is my work. I love helping new writers learn the process.

### Essential Questions

- Where do stories come from? What makes a good story irresistible?
- How do you, as a writer, choose a point of view?
- How do you turn a new point of view into a new story?

### Learning Outcomes

- *Students will understand* first, second, and (various kinds of) third person point of view, the role of editing, and the stages of the publishing process.
- *Students will create* new story ideas out of already-familiar ones, by switching point of view.
- *Students will use* quick draft-writing tricks and professional editing techniques to turn their ideas into finished text.

### Instructional Strategies

This will be a very hands- (or pens-) on class: we'll talk about what makes favorite stories work, read each other stories or parts of stories, brainstorm what different points of view there might be for the same situation, and do lots of solo quick-draft writing and collaborative second-draft writing, then practice our editing skills on both famous writers and our own writing. Each student will pick a story to re-imagine (with help from others) in a new form.

This class is not about Shakespeare, but we'll be taking note of two strange facts about him. This "most original of all writers" *stole all his plots!* And, instead of working alone, he *collaborated* heavily with other people through multiple drafts.

## Student assessment

There will be no *formal* assessment in this class. Students will be encouraged and expected to participate actively, share ideas, and help others. The goal (apart from having fun with words) is to build confidence, fluency, and sophistication in manipulating words for creative ends—and to do so, partly, by building confidence about how to help others reach those goals. Students will end the class not with a grade but with a short piece of creative work that has been “assessed” repeatedly at various stages by editors: that is, by the instructor and other students.

## Resources and Materials

Everyone should bring to class a couple of their favorite pens or pencils. If you’re already such an author that you have a favorite kind of notebook, bring one of those too, though I will supply you with the kind I like to use. (They’re a convenient medium size and have the useful feature of pages with perforated edges. But any spiral-bound notebook or even a regular composition book will work fine.) Otherwise, all you need is the desire to build a new world—and the desire to help others with their world-building.

## Tentative Course Schedule

| <b>Date</b>        | <b>Topic(s)</b>  | <b>In-Class Activities</b>  |
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| Week 1<br>April 6  | A Picture Tells a Thousand Stories: relating situation, character, point of view, and plot.                                | In this first class we’ll get to know each other—any writing we’ve done, our interests, and writing we dream of doing. Then we’ll do an exercise to generate as many new story ideas as there are people in the room, all from one simple source, and we’ll see what those ideas tell us about point of view. |
| Week 2<br>April 13 | How to Steal a Story: getting at the essence of a favorite story in its characters, main plot points, and point of view.   | We’ll describe / read aloud and otherwise share some favorite published stories, identify the point(s) of view and start brainstorming alternatives.  |
| Week 3<br>April 27 | Something New from Point of View.  | A deeper dive into empathy and POV options, with a group exercise to help everyone decide on a personal whole-new-story project.  |
| Week 4<br>May 4    | The Scary White Monster: switching off your internal editor, mastering fear of the blank page, and creating a first draft. | We’ll practice using prompts from a variety of sources to create new text quickly and fluently, using those techniques to outline our personal project.   |
| Week 5<br>May 11   | Meat on the Bones: making that sketch into a full draft.   | In this class we’ll use a lot of small-group work to help each other brainstorm the best ways to fill out our personal projects.  |
| Week 6<br>May 18   | Smoothing the Lumps: aka structural editing.   | We’ll step back and take a brief look at the whole process of book production, then introduce the role of the editor. We’ll try our hands at  |

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|                  |   | improving some famous writers, then help each other apply those lessons to our own projects.  |
| Week 7<br>June 1 | Smoother Still: copyediting and proofreading. | We'll go behind the scenes to look at a professional editor's comments on a published manuscript—one of mine.                           |
| Week 8<br>June 8 | Deadline! Final polishing and performance.    | It's always frantic at the end ... we'll be circulating quickly to offer (and get) help. We'll then finish with a storytelling session. |