

Queen Mary Summer School
SUM503D Creative Writing Now
School of English and Drama

Course outline

Level: 5

Credits: 15 (Queen Mary credits)

Assessment: 3,000 words of Coursework (100%)

Course description:

This course explores contemporary examples and practices of creative fiction, nonfiction, and poetry and draws upon some of the formal and political motivations of contemporary English-language literature for its content. It is particularly suited to Summer School students looking to develop their creative voice independently and alongside their existing critical writing skills. It teaches students to explore distinct narrative and/or poetic voices and techniques and issue as well as learn from peer-feedback in workshop environments.

What makes great storytelling now, and what makes new narrative or poetic voices so distinctive? What is challenging about writing creatively in the present moment, and how do we understand what constitutes a story or a poetic form in our own writing?

This course draws on a range of contemporary literature in English and will give students the freedom and the tools to experiment with fiction, nonfiction or poetry, and to shape their own creative voices in the process. Using a combination of writing workshops and seminar-style discussion, we will address the ways contemporary literature reckons with a world in flux (BLM, #MeToo, climate change) and invents new, experimental ways to move beyond the boundaries of literary form. Writers we will look at include Claudia Rankine, Ocean Vuong, Victoria Adukwei Bulley, Patricia Lockwood, Sheila Heti, Diane Williams, Gwendoline Riley, and Natasha Brown.

The emphasis will be on developing the tools to give and receive constructive peer feedback with an effort to build craft alongside of — but separate from — the students' existing skills in analytical reading and writing. The course is assessed by coursework submission as well as feedback participation during the workshops.

Learning outcomes:

On completion of the module, students can expect to have acquired:

- a knowledge of narrative technique.
- a critical and practical understanding of imagery, structure, and form in relation to prose fiction, nonfiction, and/or poetry.
- an understanding of the contexts of writing in prose fiction, nonfiction, and poetry today.

You will be able to:

- Develop effective storytelling and poetic voices.
- Employ imagery and a variety of storytelling and poetic forms.
- Appraise the formal and structural elements of the text.
- Develop a sophisticated critical understanding of narrative and poetic technique.
- Acquire the ability to respond constructively and critically to creative work produced by peers.
- Express yourself with confidence in writing in a range of narrative, lyrical, and critical modes.

Approximate cost:

All reading material is provided digitally so you are not required to purchase any books.

Assessments:

The course assessments are not compulsory, however, if you wish to transfer credit for this course to your home university it is essential to complete the assignments.

3,000 words of Coursework (100%)

Preparation:

Before you arrive on campus, it is advised that you familiarise yourself with the course content before it begins. You will be given instructions for accessing our Virtual Learning Environment (QMplus) before you arrive on campus.

Teaching:

The course is taught in two two-hour sessions per day (10.00 - 12.00 and 13.00 - 15.00), held Monday to Thursday each week.

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| Session 1 | Introduction and the how-to of a creative writing workshop. |
| Session 2 | Case Study: Contemporary Prose Fiction |
| Session 3 | Workshop 1: Getting started |
| Session 4 | Case Study: Creative non-fiction |
| Session 5 | Case Study: Poetry now |
| Session 6 | Workshop 2: Work in Progress |
| Session 7 | Case Study: The Short Story |
| Session 8 | Guest speaker session/masterclass |
| Session 9 | Workshop 3: Review |
| Session 10 | Case Study: Hybrid prose and the essay |
| Session 11 | Workshop 4: Revising |
| Session 12 | Workshop 5: Next steps |

Please note that the information provided may be subject to change.