THE GREAT SMOKIES WRITING PROGRAM

The Community Writing Program of the University of North Carolina Asheville

WORKSHOPS IN POETRY & PROSE

Twenty Questions on Poetic Technique: The Journey of Writing
Tina Barr
(Lang 372, 2 credit hours) In-state tuition: $292.02

What is the difference between poetry and prose? How do I break my lines? How do I give my poems form? What is my “voice” and how do I find it? When and how do I submit my poems to journals? What is a chapbook? Those on the journey of writing will benefit from this workshop, during which we will examine the question of form (including received forms like the sestina, sonnet and villanelle), rhythm and the history of line breaks, revision and the challenge of developing an individual voice. We will read a wide range of poetry, from prose poem to language poem, in the work of living, breathing contemporary poets, including: Alice Friman, Cathy Smith Bowers, Morri Creech, Henri Cole, Brigit Pegeen Kelly, Yusef Komunyakaa, Matthea Harvey, Major Jackson, Shara McCallum, Gerald Stern, & Eleanor Wilner. Writers will engage in writing assignments.

Tina Barr’s latest book is Kaleidoscope. Her poetry was nominated for a 2014 Pushcart Prize and has been recently published in The Gettysburg Review, Brilliant Comers, Hotel America, Broad River Review, Gargoyle, Kestrel, Tar River Poetry, Town Creek Poetry and elsewhere. A book, The Gathering Eye, won the Tupelo Press Editor’s Award. She has won three chapbook awards as well as fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the Tennessee Arts Commission, the MacDowell Colony, and the Ucross Foundation.

Class meets Monday afternoons, 1:00-3:30pm at the Black Mountain Center for the Arts, 225 W. State Street, Black Mountain. 10-week class – starts September 14.

Can I Write a Poem About That? A Poetry Workshop
Kenneth Chamlee
(Lang 372, 2 credit hours) In-state tuition: $292.02

Think of something and write a poem about it. That bland directive is the daily challenge that hovers like a drone in poets’ minds. We will explore this challenge and its two facets—conception and conversion—by asking “How do I come up with a good idea?” and “How do I turn that into a meaningful poem?” Using a variety of fun techniques, we will look at some apparent and not-so-apparent sources for idea generation, search for connections that create surprise and resonance, and explore the best free verse options for realization. Each session will introduce a new method of discovery and development, but the focus will be on the poems that students create. This workshop class is appropriate for both beginning and experienced writers and will not require a text.

Kenneth Chamlee is Professor of English at Brevard College in North Carolina. His poems have appeared in The Asheville Poetry Review, The Cumberland Poetry Review, The Greensboro Review and many others. He won the GSU Review (Georgia State University) National Writing Award in Poetry, ByLine Magazine’s National Poetry Chapbook Competition (Absolute Faith, 1999), and the Longleaf Press Poetry Chapbook Competition (Logic of the Lost, 2001). In 2004 he won the Word Journal Poetry Prize and in 2009 he was a finalist in the Iowa Review Poetry Contest. His poems appeared in the 2007 and 2008 and 2015 editions of Kakalak: An Anthology of Carolina Poets. He is currently working on a biography in poems of the American landscape painter Albert Bierstadt.

Class meets Monday afternoons, 2:00:4-3:30pm at Trinity Presbyterian Church, 900 Blythe St, Hendersonville. 10-week class – starts September 14.

Organizing Your Writing Life
Patti Digh
(Lang 372, 2 credit hours) In-state tuition: $292.02

You’ve got pieces of writing everywhere. Index cards, computer files, handwritten notes. It’s overwhelming, and things are falling through the cracks. This 10-week intensive course is designed to help you create a functioning and sustainable organizing system for the writing work you are doing, whether a large book-length project, journaling, or shorter essays. Creating a system that works for you will eliminate the stress of “Where is that?” and allow you more time to focus on the writing itself. We’ll explore this issue not only through our exploration and implementation of organizational systems related to time, space, and paper/digital files, but also through writing to get to your root stories about what it is to be a writer. We will explore and learn how to open space for writing to occur by creating writing rituals and systems as well as investing in new stories of yourself as a writer.

Patti Digh is an essayist, memoirist, and award-winning blogger. She is the author of eight books, including Life is a Verb, a finalist for the national Books for a Better Life Award and a nominee for the Southern Independent Booksellers’ Association Book of the Year.

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Vicki Lane is the author of The Day of Small Things, as well as the Elizabeth Goodweather/ Full Circle Farm mystery series from Bantam Dell. (Signs in the Blood, Art’s Blood, Old Wounds, In a Dark Season, and Under the Skin). Vicki holds an MA in English from the University of South Florida and taught high school English at a prep school in Florida. She said goodbye to all this in 1975 and, seduced by The Whole Earth Catalog and Mother Earth News, moved with her husband to a mountain farm in Madison County where she learned how to milk cows and raise tobacco. In 2000, she remembered that she was an English major and decided to try her hand at a mystery novel. One brief class later and she was on her way. The suggested text is the highly acclaimed Don’t Sabotage Your Submission by career manuscript editor Chris Roerden (Bella Rosa books -ISBN 978-1-933523-31-6.)

Linda Lowery is an award-winning author of more than 60 fiction and nonfiction books for readers from preschool to middle grade. She has illustrated thirteen of her books, including Trick or Treat, It’s Halloween, a New York Times bestselling picture book. Before settling in Asheville, Ms. Lowery lived in Colorado, Wisconsin, New York, and San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. There she and her husband Richard Keep coauthored eight Mexican-themed books, one of which - the Chocolate Tree – was adapted into an interactive art installation in a 2014 Denver architectural project. Her work has been published by Random House, Scholastic, Houghton Mifflin, Peachtree and Lerner. Author visits have taken her to classrooms across the nation, and she has taught children’s book writing workshops in the U.S. and in Mexico. Her current project is a non-fiction middle-grade series about North American Indian Nations.

Writing the New Appalachia: Creative Nonfiction Workshop
Jennifer McGaha
(Lang 372, 2 credit hours) In-state tuition: $292.02

Much has been written about the old Appalachia, the one of homesteaders and moonshiners, of tobacco farmers and snake handling Pentecostals. But what of the new Appalachia? The influx of people from other regions? The literature? The music? The theatre? The rich culinary culture? The environmental movement? In what ways have we continued or returned to the traditions of our Appalachian forebears, and in what ways are we breaking from these traditions? This course is designed for newcomers to this area as well as longtime residents and natives. If you have lived here forever, or almost forever, you will discover new ways to reflect on the place you have long called home. If you are new to this area, you are sure to bring fresh insights and perspectives on what it means to be Appalachian. In this course, we will read work by Silas House, Jason Howard, Amy Clark, Chris Offutt, Sonja Livingston, and others. We will also complete prewriting exercises designed to evoke a sense of place, and each student will submit one story to be workshoped. The final class will include a group reading.

An Appalachian native, Jennifer McGaha lives with her husband, five dogs, twenty-something chickens, herd of milk goats, and one high-maintenance cat in a wooded hollow just outside of Asheville. Her essays, humor pieces, and creative nonfiction works have appeared in
Heart of the Story:
Writing for Children Fiction Workshop

Joy Neaves
(Lang 372, 2 credit hours) In-state tuition: $292.02

This writing workshop will help you discover storyboarding as a powerful tool for generating material or revising your work for young readers. With a special focus on point-of-view, we’ll learn about ways to develop dynamic characters and compelling plots. The supportive workshop atmosphere fosters the heart of the writer’s aims through mini-lectures, group discussion and critique. Emphasis will be placed on developing your ability to look at your own work critically. The instructor will provide individual feedback on writers’ work, and will address topics from aspects of craft to ways to approach editors and agents.

Joy Neaves has over fifteen years of experience as an editor of children’s picture books, poetry, middle grade, and young adult fiction, first from Front Street, an award-winning publisher of books for children and later at Boyds Mills Press. She is currently a freelance editor of children’s books at namelos. She is passionate in her approach to talking about both children’s literature and the craft of writing for children, and enjoys helping writers hone their work, with an eye toward publication. She has helped many writers see their books come to fruition.

Class meets Thursday evenings, 6:00-8:30pm at Grateful Steps, Inc., 159 S. Lexington Avenue, Asheville. 10-week class – starts September 17.

Not Like Me: Creating Fictional Characters
Who Do Not Share Your Race, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Etc.

Heather Newton
(Lang 372, 2 credit hours) In-state tuition: $292.02

This workshop begins with the premise that fiction writers can, and should, attempt to write characters who are not of the author’s race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc. It then explores how we can write such characters plausibly, with respect, and with an eye to our cultural blind spots. We will use readings, guest speakers, in-class writing exercises and critique of student work. Students should purchase the book Writing The Other: A Practical Approach, by Nisi Shawl and Cynthia Ward (Aqueduct Press) before the first class.

Heather Newton’s novel Under The Mercy Trees (HarperCollins 2011) won the 2011 Thomas Wolfe Memorial Literary Award, was chosen as a Great Group Reads Selection by the Women’s National Book Association and was named an "Okra Pick" by the Southern Independent Bookstore Alliance. Her short fiction has appeared in 27 Views of Asheville, The Drem, Crucible, Wellspring and elsewhere. She is a founding member of the Flatiron Writers, a writers’ collective dedicated to supporting its members and serving as a resource for the broader western North Carolina writing community.

Class meets Wednesday evenings, 6:00-8:30 p.m., at the Black Mountain Center for the Arts, 225 W. State Street, Black Mountain. 10-week class – starts September 16.

Thistles and Sharp Stones:
The Art of the Deep Image:
A Workshop in Writing Poetry, Prose Poems and Flash Fiction

Katherine Soniat
(Lang 372, 2 credit hours) In-state tuition: $292.02

In this workshop we will combine archetypal imagery with personal experience to discover new levels of imagination in your poetry and short fiction. Say, that poem within the poem. The nugget of writing that embodies the whole story (perhaps without beginning or end). The last three onion skins peeled away. Photography also will be used to catch the momentary strangeness of the world. Megan Sexton’s new prize-winning collection Swift Hour will guide our journey. Her poetry reveals the gemlike process of a kaleidoscope in (slow) motion. Perhaps, we will even approach Lorca’s duende, that visceral energy he said leaves its traces and fragrances in: “the hut, the wheel of a cart, the prickly beards of shepherds, a damp cupboard, and the lace-covered saints.” Join us to create from a source that lives and breathes in unexplored terrains. Waiting for you. New and experienced writers are welcome.

Katherine Soniat’s seventh collection, Bright Stranger, is forthcoming from Louisiana State University Press, spring 2016. The Suing Girl (LSU Press) was selected as Best Collection of 2011 by the Poetry Council of North Carolina. A chapbook, The Goodbye Animals, recently received the Turtle Island Quarterly Award. A Shared Life won The Iowa Prize for Poetry. Poems have appeared in World Poetry Portfolio #60, Hotel America, Threepenny Review, The Nation, storySouth, and Connotations Press. She was on the faculty at Virginia Tech, Hollins University, and teaches in the Great Smokies Writers Program at UNC Asheville.

Class meets Tuesday afternoons, 4:00-6:30pm at Yancey County Library, 321 School Circle, Burnsville. 10-week class – starts September 15.

The World According to You:
A Creative Nonfiction Workshop

Molly Walling
(Lang 372, 2 credit hours) In-state tuition: $292.02

The fourth genre, Creative Nonfiction, includes numerous subgenres such as letters, memoir, autobiography, personal essay, narrative or literary nonfiction and journalism. No matter the chosen format, you, the storyteller, will be developing an idea about how the world works. What’s the bigger picture? And why does it matter? In this class we’ll grapple with these and other questions, and we’ll experiment with form. Join me in a carefully structured collaborative
As my mentor, Philip Gerard, so eloquently wrote: “Creative nonfiction is the stories you find out, captured with a clear eye and an alert imagination, filtered through a mind passionate to know and tell, told accurately and with compelling grace.” Bring your passion. Bring your prose!

Molly Walling, author of Death in the Delta: Uncovering a Mississippi Family Secret, has been an educator for thirty-five years. She has taught at UNC Asheville, Mars Hill University, Virginia Highlands Community College, and King University. Her essays and articles have appeared in regional arts publications in Virginia and North Carolina. She has completed over half of the manuscript for her second book.

Class meets Thursday evenings, 6:00-8:30 p.m., at Spellbound Bookshop, 50 North Merrimon Avenue #107, Shops at Reynolds Village, Asheville. 10-week class – starts September 17.

Keeping Ourselves Company:
An Advanced Creative Prose Workshop
Tommy Hays

(Lang 473, 3 credit hours) In-state tuition: $438.03

This class is for advanced prose writers who have projects they are working on or who want to start something new in either fiction or creative nonfiction. Emphasis will be on reading and critiquing each other’s work. The instructor will respond at length to submissions. Instructor’s permission required for admittance. Applicants should contact Tommy Hays at hays@main.nc.us.

Tommy Hays’ first middle grade novel, What I Came to Tell You, is a 2015-16 Nominee for the North Carolina Young Adult Award and is a 2014 VOYA Top Shelf Pick for Middle School Fiction. It was chosen as an Okra Pick by the Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance (SIBA) and was included in the American Booksellers Association’s 2014 ABC Best Books for Children Catalog. His novel, The Pleasure Was Mine, was a Finalist for the SIBA Fiction Award and has been chosen for numerous community reads. His other novels are Sam’s Crossing and In the Family Way, chosen for the Book of the Month Club and winner of the Thomas Wolfe Memorial Literary Award. He directs the Great Smokies Writing Program and is Core Faculty for the Master of Liberal Arts and Sciences program at UNC Asheville. A member of the National Book Critics Circle, he received his BA in English from Furman University and graduated from the MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College.

Class meets Wednesday evenings, 6:00-8:30 p.m., at Asheville School, 360 Asheville School Rd, Asheville. 15-week class – starts August 26.

Prose Master Class
Elizabeth Lutyens

(Lang 473, 3 credit hours) In-state tuition: $438.03

The Prose Master Class is a next step for those who are looking for an intensive writing and critiquing experience. This small–group workshop is limited to experienced writers who are working on an ongoing project: a collection of essays or stories, a novel, a memoir. If the work is new, the writer should have at least sixty pages ready to submit for three critiques during the 15-week semester. This is a workshop for those who are committed to writing – not just to writing well, but also to writing a lot. An equally important commitment is that class members will give the best possible attention to the work of others. Each class begins with a craft session requiring outside reading, sometimes led by a student wishing to share his/her examination of an aspect of craft, or with a writing exercise to practice craft elements and inspire new approaches to ongoing projects.

Admission to the Master Class is by invitation and comes from Tommy Hays or the instructor, Elizabeth Lutyens, who has led this class for six years. Elizabeth is a graduate of the MFA in Writing Program at Warren Wilson College and is completing her own work: a novel set in Boston and the Port Royal islands of South Carolina during the early 1860s. She is Editor in Chief of The Great Smokies Review, the online literary magazine published by The Great Smokies Writing Program and UNC Asheville.

For more information about the Prose Master Class, contact Tommy Hays (hays@main.nc.us) or Elizabeth Lutyens (elutyens@gmail.com).

Class meets Tuesday evenings, 6:00-8:30 p.m., at Asheville School, 360 Asheville School Rd, Asheville. 15-week class – starts August 26.