

GOTHAM



WRITERS

in
write

Stories. Everywhere.

Winter Glasses 2015



Everyone has a Story

WE WANT YOURS.

Gotham Writers Workshop is a creative home in New York City and online where writers develop their craft and come together in the spirit of discovery and fellowship. We've been teaching creative writing to students since 1993.

We believe that everyone has a story to tell. Indeed, many stories. Keep your eyes and mind open and you will find them everywhere. And we can help you tell your stories better.

Whether you're a new writer looking to explore, or an experienced writer looking to strengthen your skills, our classes will help you reach your goals—through clear instruction on elements of craft, critique in a safe environment, and a structured process that keeps your work on track.

We also teach **Business Writing**, with the same verve and expertise we bring to our creative writing courses.

We strive to give each student the best possible learning experience. Class size is strictly limited so you never get lost in a crowd. And our instructors are consistently excellent—working writers who are as skilled at teaching as they are at writing.

We are invested in helping students find the writing class that is most appropriate for their particular needs. Explore our website, and feel free to discuss options via email or phone.

Thousands of people have been enriched by the Gotham experience. It's why we've been around for over twenty years.

Courses



Fiction

With only words and the reader's imagination, a work of fiction can sail across the world in pursuit of a whale or zero in on a few minutes in line at the local bank, luring us into a story that feels real.

FICTION/NOVEL
CHILDREN'S BOOKS
SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY
MYSTERY
ROMANCE
READING FICTION



Nonfiction

Whether it's an experience found in your kitchen or halfway around the world, whether it's an idea you can't forget or a conversation with a fascinating person, sometimes the most intriguing stories are true.

FICTION/NOVEL
CHILDREN'S BOOKS
SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY
MYSTERY
ROMANCE
READING FICTION



Scriptwriting

We all like to be entertained, whether it's watching a performance live on stage or flickering on a screen. Here's where you learn to write the material that holds those audiences in thrall.

SCREENWRITING
TV WRITING
PLAYWRITING
DOCUMENTARY FILM
SCRIPT ANALYSIS



Comedy, Poetry & Song

Send words soaring in the lyricism of poetry or song. Or get people high on laughter through stand-up comedy or humorous prose.

POETRY
SONGWRITING
HUMOR WRITING
STAND-UP COMEDY



Essentials

Creative Writing 101 is an ideal starting point for writers, to test the waters or wash off the rust. The other courses here focus on crucial aspects of the writing craft, useful for all types of writing.

CREATIVE WRITING 101
CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT
DIALOGUE WRITING
WRITE IT RIGHT! (GRAMMAR)
THE WRITER'S MIND
THE EDITOR'S EYE
IN (VERSE): POETIC TECHNIQUES FOR
NON-POETS
PROMPTA-THON
ONLINE VIDEO
SOCIAL MEDIA
YOGA FOR WRITERS



Professional Development

If you want to be taken seriously, these courses sharpen your skills in the workplace, or help you build a platform as a writer, or guide you through the tricky task of publishing your work.

BUSINESS WRITING
HOW TO BLOG
HOW TO GET PUBLISHED
NONFICTION BOOK PROPOSAL
HIT SEND: PUBLISHING SHORT NONFICTION



Teen Classes

Pressure-free, creativity-stretching, not-like-school courses for writers ages 13-17. Useful for expanding your talent or gaining skills bound to help with essays and schoolwork.

UNBOUND: CREATIVE WRITING
TRUE STORY: CREATIVE NONFICTION



One-on-One

It's wonderful to learn in a group setting, but sometimes one-on-one is the right match. You may want a private class, or "doctoring" on a specific project, or a professional mentor to guide you, or one of our specialty arrangements.

DOCTORING—BOOK/STORY/SCRIPT
MENTORSHIPS
PRIVATE SESSIONS AND CLASSES
COLLEGE ESSAY COACHING
MFA APPLICATION ASSISTANCE
BLOG LAUNCH

Ways to Learn



In-person classes in NYC.

NYC CLASSES BEGIN THROUGHOUT
DECEMBER, JANUARY, AND FEBRUARY.
MANY OF THEM BEGIN THE
WEEK OF JANUARY 12.



Online classes draw together writers from across the globe.

ONLINE CLASSES BEGIN THROUGHOUT
DECEMBER, JANUARY, AND FEBRUARY.



10-Week Workshops

These classes use a combination of lectures, exercises, and workshopping (critiquing of student projects). In New York City, they meet for three hours per week; online, each session begins at the same time each week, and unfolds gradually all week long. Available in Level I, Level II, and, periodically, Level III.

\$420 — NYC
\$399 — Online

6-Week Classes

These classes let students explore a variety of forms and concepts in a low-pressure manner, through a combination of lectures and exercises. In New York City, they meet for three hours per week each week, and unfolds gradually all week long. Available in Level I, Level II, and, periodically, Level III. \$299

Selling Seminars

These courses emphasize the business side of writing. The New York City versions take place over two three-hour sessions. The online versions take place over four weeks.

\$159

Intensives

In NYC, these are seven-hour crash courses, taking place all in one-day. The online versions take place over three weeks.

\$125

Registration fee for all classes:
\$25 paid once per term.

**"If you want
to change
the world..."**



**...pick up
your pen
and write."**

—Martin Luther
16th century monk and professor

Gotham Faculty

WRITING WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW

Faculty Insight

BY SUSAN BREEN

I consider myself an autobiographical fiction writer. My protagonists tend to be middle-aged white women, like me. They grapple with subjects close to my own experience, such as the challenges of teaching a fiction class in Manhattan. Or struggling in a relationship with a mother when anger gets in the way. I've found power in writing about what I know, because I have something to say about it. The well does not run dry. Usually.

But when I began work on my new novel, I found myself stymied. Specifically, I needed my protagonist to fall in love, but no candidates came to mind. I'd been successful with my romantic hero in *The Fiction Class*, but didn't want to restrict my literary career to women loving unreliable, charming men. I needed to find someone else, someone different, for my protagonist to fall in love with, and for me to fall in love with too, because that's how it seems to work. So I wandered the streets of New York, considering likely prospects. I found a bunch of glossy, good-looking men in suits, but I needed someone who came with a story. If I was going to spend 300 pages with this man, he had to be interesting.

Then, I needed to have surgery. It was fine, it all came out right, but before I went under I happened to look up at the anesthesiologist, an attractive Indian man with an

authoritative demeanor, and I thought, *Hmm. He would work.* Then I became unconscious. When I came to, the image of this man looked like stayed in my mind, preoccupying me, and I thought, *All right, all I have to do is transfigure this man into my novel. How difficult can it be to create an Indian character?*

Three years later, I can answer that question: It's complicated.

The size of the challenge became clear the moment I had to pick the character's name. If I were writing about an American man, I would know intuitively that naming someone Burt would conjure up a very different image in the reader's mind than if I'd named him Sydney. I would understand the nuances of class and region associated with the name. But with an Indian man, I was stuck. Of course, the simple thing would have been to ask an Indian friend to give me a good name, but I worried if I delegated too much to friends, I'd lose control of the character. I wanted to figure it out myself.

Where to begin?

I turned to novels, because I believe that people are never so truthful as when they write fiction. (No disrespect meant to memoir writers, whom I love, for other reasons.) So I went to the library and began reading through novels

written by Indian men. There were the big names, of course: Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh and Vikram Seth. But I stumbled on many more obscure ones too. As I read, I began to get a sense of some of the issues an Indian man might be thinking about: family, honor, caste, community. Reading fiction gave me a vocabulary.

I decided my character would be from northwestern India. Men from the Punjab state were often referred to as the New Yorkers of India: strong, aggressive, arrogant. As a New Yorker myself, I felt I could relate.

Then, I began reading histories of India. I wanted to get a sense of what my character would know, in a very basic sense. For example, I know George Washington was our first President. What might Kamal know (because I had decided to name my character Kamal Kapur) that would be so basic he wouldn't even need to think about it? He would know about the Taj Mahal, and he would probably know that it was built around the same time as the Pilgrims stumbled upon Plymouth Rock. This would be a source of pride to him. He might even boast about it, a bit, in conversation with my protagonist, Tilda Banks, a white, middle-aged memoir coach. (All right, I didn't move too far away from home with that character.).

By this point, I was beginning to get a real sense of who Kamal was. I really wanted to go to India, and hope to do that soon, but meanwhile, I discovered something else exciting: Bollywood. Movies tell a lot about what a culture values. Think of all those independent cowboys in American movies. Watching Bollywood gave me a richer sense of how an Indian man might see the world. How might he act on a date? How would he move?

Then I decided to tackle language. Kamal is fluent in English; although born in India, he lives and works in Hempstead, New York. Yet, I felt sure he'd been exposed, as a child, to Hindi. Happily, Rosetta Stone was having a sale on its Hindi lessons. (Had he been having a sale on Marathi, he might have spoken that.) I didn't expect to become fluent, and, in fact, after two years of concentrated study, the only thing I can say in Hindi, with anything like authority is, "I have a red dog." *Mere khota lat hai.*

But I was curious about the patterns of Kamal's speech. Someone who grew up speaking Hindi would shape his sentences in a particular way. I thought. In fact, sentences in Hindi are structured in a subject-object-verb way. So, what in English might be, "I need money," would become in Hindi, "I money need." When angry or upset, Kamal reverts to that way of speaking.

So, here he is: Kamal Kapur, born in 1970, in Ludhiana, which is the Punjab region of India. Son of a father who died young of a heart attack and a woman who went on to become a missionary. A lithe, good-looking man with the dimples of Bollywood star Shahrukh Khan. A little vain. Serious about his hair. A man who enjoys people and works in investor relations, who could have been a doctor but devoted himself to his daughter instead. And yes, dear reader, I love him.

This article first appeared at [ComposeJournal.com](#). Susan Breen is the author of the novel *The Fiction Class*. SEE MORE FACULTY ARTICLES AND PROFILES ON OUR WEBSITE.



TONY CONNIFF

Faculty Profile

BY BRITT GAMBINO

Gotham Songwriting teacher Tony Conniff has been playing the bass guitar since he was a teenager—when his band's bass player got busted for smoking pot and his parents forced him to leave. Tony was "deputized" to take over. "It found me," Tony says,

soon finding a natural aptitude for bass guitar.

Tony is a self-taught musician, with a workshop here and a lesson there, which he acknowledges comes with both advantages and disadvantages. "I grew up in New York and made all of my mistakes in public—on the biggest stage in the world," he says. "On the flip side, you learn in the pressure cooker that is New York, which is good. You can really test yourself." And even without formal training, Tony has worked in multiple industries—theater, television, and film. Whether in the orchestra pit at a Broadway musical or scoring a special for A&E or a film, Tony has done it all.

To get involved in music in a larger way than "just being one of the musicians," Tony fulfilled his ambition to become a producer. He and a friend started a production company, bought an eight-track recorder, and began recording themselves. Later, Tony got his own studio where he's been playing, recording, and producing music for more than twenty years now.

As a freelance producer, Tony has worked with a variety of artists, including spoken word poet Alix Olson. He collaborated with her on the album *Built Like That* both as a producer and songwriter. Known for her outspoken and uncompromising political beliefs, Olson is sometimes perceived as an "angry" artist, but Tony calls her one of the sweetest people he's ever met. In fact, Tony once said he hoped his daughter would grow up to be like her. "And in a weird way, it worked out," he says. "My daughter is actually a socially conscious person and works as a social worker."

Student Voices

"I can honestly say that with the help I received from Gotham, I've sharpened my voice, improved my craft, and am now living my dream."

—Susan Liwanag, designer/writer

"An amazing learning environment."

—Jeff Vande Zande, community college professor

"A very eye-opening experience that has allowed me to realize that there are other ways of looking at the world and in-turn taking those perceptions and writing something about them."

—Stephanie Eilebrecht, data entry specialist

"It was an absolute thrill and quite inspirational."

—Elise Brancheau, opera singer

"The best writing class I've ever taken. Sign up now, like right now, before it fills up and you get waitlisted."

—Edward McNamara, chef

"You meet people of all ages, all walks of life from all over the world. The course is rich not only because of the excellent instructors, but because of the fellow students."

—Kay Berryman, retired

CONTACT@GOTHAMWRITERS.COM

212-974-8377

Community

Write-Ins

Do you wish there was a place you could go for writing inspiration and practice? Where you could hang out with other writers? Without needing to make a long-term commitment or spend a lot of money?

Gotham Write-Ins are that place.

HERE'S WHAT HAPPENS: The teacher gives an interesting writing prompt. Everyone writes for a while. Those who want to read aloud their work. We take a break and socialize over refreshments. Then we repeat the process. No pressure. Just free-wheeling creativity.

You can sign up in advance or just drop in.

FRIDAY EVENINGS IN MANHATTAN
6:30–8:30pm

SATURDAY AFTERNOONS IN BROOKLYN
12:00–2:00pm

\$20 per session
\$45/3-session package

See our website for details.

Free Events

We do free classes and other fun things around New York City—at bookstores, bars, Bryant Park, etc. It's our way of showcasing what we do and getting to know you. See our website for upcoming events.

Write Now

THE 91-WORD MEMOIR WRITING CONTEST

Contest

The 91-Word Memoir Writing Contest

THE INSPIRATION: This annual contest celebrates longtime Gotham student and writer Norma Crosier who died a few days short of her 91st birthday.

THE CHALLENGE: Tell a story from your life in 91 words or fewer.

THE PRIZE: The winner gets a free Gotham class.

TO GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE,
HERE IS LAST YEAR'S WINNER:

"Truck-Stop Gift Shop"
When I was six, I stood in a truck-stop gift shop staring at Land of Lincoln ashtrays. Waylon Jennings crackled from an AM radio, and I smelled biscuits baking. The door abruptly opened, and the shop filled with diesel fumes and cigarette smoke trailed by one of the men that my mother considered a gentleman caller, 70s trucker-style. She would disappear into the darkness with him, and I would stare at collectible spoons with handles in the shape of Illinois.

—Virginia Catalano,
New York, New York

For competition rules and online entry form,
— visit —
GOTHAMWRITERS.COM/91CONTEST

Story Starters

MAKE LISTS

You have far more story material inside your mind than you are aware of. A great way to locate potential story ideas is to make lists. Try it. You'll be amazed at what you find. For example...

MAKE A LIST OF:

- 5 OR MORE topics that you're an expert at.
- 5 OR MORE people that you have crushed on.
- 5 OR MORE places about which you feel trepidation.
- 5 OR MORE personal moments of triumph.
- 5 OR MORE things you would never tell anyone.



#storieseverywhere

Stories are, truly, everywhere—every place you look, everyone you meet, everything you experience. Every day is filled with hundreds of potential stories awaiting your imagination and craft.

Each month we invite you to post a story on Twitter at #storieseverywhere. Your stories (which can be true or made up) will be inspired by what you see, know, or do, and they should relate in some way to these monthly “themes”:

DECEMBER

Someone you recently met.

JANUARY

Tough choice.

FEBRUARY

Through a window.

At the end of each month, we will pick our favorite and reward that person with a free Gotham writing class.

Your story must be no longer than 140 characters, including spaces and the hashtag #storieseverywhere. Like this:

The pastor's daughter made me meet her in the church basement. There was no light but she told me where to duck. #storieseverywhere

(by Tami Absi)

Everyone has a story. Especially you.

GOTHAMWRITERS.COM

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