

GOTHAM



WRITERS

Writers

Stories. Everywhere.

Fall Classes 2016



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

Whether delving inside the truth of our everyday lives or letting us escape into an entertaining page-turner, fiction takes us through the “looking-glass” into a world that’s a curious mixture of real and made-up.

FICTION/NOVEL
CHILDREN’S BOOKS
SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY
MYSTERY
ROMANCE
COMICS & GRAPHIC NOVELS
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.

CREATIVE NONFICTION 101
MEMOIR
ESSAY & OPINION
PERSONAL ESSAY
ARTICLE
TRAVEL WRITING
FOOD WRITING



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.

WRITING SCRIPTS 101
SCREENWRITING
TV WRITING
PLAYWRITING
DOCUMENTARY FILM
SCRIPT ANALYSIS
VIDEO GAME WRITING
WEB SERIES



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
DIALOGUE
GRAMMAR: WRITE IT RIGHT!
THE WRITER’S MIND
THE EDITOR’S EYE
IN (VERSE): POETIC TECHNIQUES FOR NON-POETS
SOCIAL MEDIA



Professional Development

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. We also offer Corporate Classes.

BUSINESS WRITING
BLOG BASICS
BLOG WRITING
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
WRITE IT RIGHT!: GRAMMAR FOR TEENS



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
PRIVATE GRAMMAR SESSIONS
PRIVATE BUSINESS WRITING SESSION/CLASS
COLLEGE ESSAY COACHING
MFA APPLICATION ASSISTANCE
BLOG LAUNCH

Ways to Learn



In-person classes in NYC.

NYC CLASSES BEGIN THROUGHOUT SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, AND NOVEMBER. MANY OF THEM BEGIN THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 26.



Online classes draw together writers from across the globe.

ONLINE CLASSES BEGIN THROUGHOUT SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, AND JULY.

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, II, III.

\$425 — 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 (two hours for Business Writing); online, each session begins at the same time each week, and unfolds gradually all week long. (Timing and price is different for Business Writing.) All Level I.

\$315 — NYC
\$299 — Online

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. All Level I.

\$165

Intensives

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

\$125

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

Write Now

The most challenging part of writing is often just getting started—daring yourself into the wide-openness of the blank page. We invite you to do just that.

To help out, we present several “story starters” and some tantalizing blank space to write upon.

PRICK UP YOUR EARS

Eavesdrop on a real-life conversation. There might even be one happening right nearby. Try writing some of it down, either afterwards or while it’s happening. Examine the written version—absorbing the way people talk in real life. If you’re so inclined, try turning this into good story dialogue by shortening and sharpening, so the point of the scene comes through clearly and economically.

IT'S A VISUAL

Begin a story inspired by this painting.



Painting by Alexander Kukalo

COVER OR POSTER ART

Pretend you have a book coming out. Or a movie, play, or TV show about to debut. Conjure up a title. Then imagine the cover art or poster art for it. You might even sketch it out. It’s fine if you have nothing more than a vague idea at this point. Just focus on coming up with an interesting title and cool artwork. Who knows? You may be inspired to write that story.

Gotham Faculty

INSPIRATION FROM RESEARCH

Faculty Insight
BY KATHERINE TAYLOR

I had decided to throw the novel out. I'd struggled with it for four years. I had discarded an entire draft already, and the narrative seemed irretrievably lost. A hundred and forty pages was as far as the story would go. I'd begun not to care what happened to the characters, which is when you know a book is dead.

I phoned my editor to tell her. "I'm giving up," I said. "This is the one we lose."

She said no. The novel was under contract and already two years overdue. I had sold it based on one paragraph—a paragraph about a woman in New York who grew up on a peach farm. Over the years, peaches had evolved into grapes, and the daughter of this farming family narrated the novel from a cool, slightly closer distance—from Los Angeles. My editor insisted, "You need to get your protagonist involved in the story. You need to place her on the farm."

"That's not possible," I said. "I don't know anything about farming." I had read histories of grapes in California.

I had read textbooks on the different kinds of grapes, on how to grow a vine from seedling to maturity, on how wine is made. I had read all the books on Napa politics and the excellent books about the Mondavis and Gallos. I knew the nature of people, of parents and siblings, which I'd thought would be enough to get me through this account of a family struggling to keep their 4th generation ranch.

But I did not know, for example, how a farmer's daily routine would shift from January to July. I did not know, as I later would, that a big crop takes longer to ripen, or that in a surplus year, the large wineries tend to find reasons to downgrade your grapes, or that some varieties come off the vine in berries (merlot) and some in bunches (Ruby Reds). I didn't know that what a farmer does is drive around all day and look for problems, or that if you have 160 acres of grapes, you'll trap 94 coyotes in 30 days. I didn't know that when farmers speak of love, they speak of mergers, not marriages.

I told my editor, "I would

have to do so much research. It's insurmountable."

"Katherine," she said. "Do your research." The statement was so obvious it was humiliating. This is what writers do: they do their research.

I hung up the phone, got in my car, and drove directly from Hollywood to Fresno.

It was October, and the central valley was harvesting black grapes: Cabernet, Barbera, Ruby Reds. October weather in Los Angeles is brutal. We always forget this, but Octobers in Los Angeles have temperatures of 113 degrees. October is when air conditioners all over the city finally give up/give out. But fall in the central valley is one of the loveliest anywhere. Warm days shift into mild, chilly evenings. The air takes on that autumn smell: dying leaves and cut grass, the slight decay from dewy mornings and dry nights, a sweetness from the last of the Thompson seedless dehydrating in the sun.

From the car I phoned my father's golf friends: farmers,

farm brokers, wine guys. I phoned a woman I'd known as a child whose husband had, in the 1980s, been one of the largest producers of grapes in the world. There is no more magnanimous group than the farm people of Fresno. Everyone wanted to talk to me. Everyone wanted to help. "What do you want to know?" they kept asking.

I had been writing this book about a grape & peach enterprise for four years and I knew so little about the business that I didn't even know what I had come to learn. I didn't know that grapes are picked at night, that labor contractors take up to 40% of a worker's total wages, that all the picking is done by machines and that even if you own your own, there are never enough machines. I grew up in Fresno, and I didn't know that almond orchards smell like almonds.

In these small details, in the specifics of place and of an industry and of a disappearing lifestyle, the novel began to breathe. The characters became real to me as they had not been before, and I cared what happened to

them, and I knew—that first trip up for that first harvest in 2009—that the book was not dead.

Over the next four years, I went up during the fall. I rode around with my father's friends in their clean white pickups. I ate lunch at The Vineyard, which is where all the Fresno and Madera farmers eat lunch, and I eavesdropped. I made pals with a constant patron at the bar, a retired farm insurance salesman called Jim who shared with me the gossip of everyone who walked into room. I started reading the Western Farm Press Daily and I still do. I'm invested in the narrative.

This article first appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*.

SEE MORE FACULTY ARTICLES AND PROFILES ON OUR WEBSITE.



JON REINER

Faculty Profile
BY STEPH SPECTOR

Gotham Teacher Jon Reiner thinks some of the most interesting, worthwhile, and exciting things in his life have happened to him by accident.

Like almost having to die to get published.

One moment he was considering his grandmother's tuna fish recipe for lunch. The next Jon was doubled over, hit by a crippling episode triggered by Crohn's disease. The doctor's orders called for months without taking any food or drink by mouth.

In the hospital, Jon's *Esquire* editor Mark Warren

asked him to write a feature article about his prescribed deprivation. Jon submitted 15,000 words. About 10,000 too many. "That's okay," Mark reassured him. "You'll use it for the book."

That book is now a critically-acclaimed memoir called *The Man Who Couldn't Eat*, based on Jon's award-winning *Esquire* story.

Jon can eat now, but he continues to receive emails from readers all too familiar with the nothing-by-mouth regimen. They share their stories with him. Which is humbling. Jon says the upheaval and consequences they face are often extreme and make what he had to endure look like "a mosquito bite."

Still, Jon likes his memoir to be judged not by how sick he was, but by its literary merits. Like some of his favorite writers Ian McEwan, Jennifer Egan, and F. Scott Fitzgerald, Jon enjoys taking on the challenge of crafting perfect sentences. (Speaking of Fitzgerald, Jon rereads *The Great Gatsby* every summer, much to his wife's bewilderment.)

Two years after his memoir was published, opportunity struck Jon a second time. He had an idea for a documentary called *Tree Man* about the community of Christmas tree salesmen who trek to New York City every holiday season. And he knew just the right people to recruit to make it happen: fellow parents whose children, like his, went to PS 166.

They all had the types of professions that enabled them flexible schedules—writing, cinematography, editing, and the like. Jon and his cohorts had been

meeting afternoons on their kids' school playground for quite some time. "Over the years," Jon recalls, "we'd talk about how fun it would be to do a project together."

Unsurprisingly, they were game for *Tree Man*. "PS 166 Productions" successfully completed the documentary, an official selection of the 2015 Montreal World, DOC NYC, and St. Lawrence International Film Festivals. The film has been acquired for distribution this coming holiday season.

Jon usually finds a way to make the best of things. When he was terribly sick, things seemed hopeless. But he remembers asking himself, "Do you want to rise to the challenge? Or do you someday want to be 65 years old and say gee, I guess I never was a writer. I didn't want to face that. I wanted to rise to the challenge."

Student Voices

I signed with the agent of my dreams, and sold my first novel—the same novel that was conceptualized and refined in Gotham classes.

—Kristin Rockaway, author

The recognition from your peers creates a brotherhood of words that makes you feel like you actually belong in this realm.

—Anthony La Pira, office manager

I have always enjoyed writing, but I never had any focus. Now I feel like I am starting to find some direction.

—Arnold Rothenberg, police officer

Gotham Writers Workshop has rocked my world and transformed my life. I no longer blush when I tell people I am a writer.

—Michelle Wells, mom D16

I have never in my life enjoyed a course more.

—Barbara Weisman, food enthusiast

I have taken many writing courses over the past few years, but this is the first that has inspired me to write every single day.

—Lisa Benwitz, owner of court reporting firm

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? With food and drink involved?

Gotham Write-Ins are that place.

HERE'S WHAT HAPPENS: The teacher gives an interesting writing prompt. Everyone writes for a while. Then, those who want to read aloud their work. You take a break and socialize over refreshments. Then you go through the process one more time. Then you socialize a little more. It's two hours of writer's heaven.

You can sign up in advance or just drop in.

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

\$20 per session
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.

Fall Contest

Contest

Frightening First Line Contest

FRIGHTENING FIRST LINE CONTEST

Autumn is the season of rustling leaves, a chill in the air, and, of course, Halloween.

In that spirit, we invite you to create the first line of a frightening story. Just the first line. But we want that first line to be so intriguing or chilling or scary that it makes our skin tingle and our nerves twitch.

Whoever writes the first line that best accomplishes this goal will receive a free Gotham class of his or her choosing.

(You can actually use more than one sentence, but there is a limit of 31 words.)

Like many writers, Stephen King works tirelessly on his first lines, saying, "My first sentences stick with me. They were a doorway I went through."

As inspiration, here are some great first lines from frightening stories:

The seller of lightning rods arrived just ahead of the storm.
— *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, Ray Bradbury

Whether the dreams brought on the fever or the fever brought on the dreams Walter Gilman did not know.
— "The Dreams in the Witch House," H.P. Lovecraft.

The terror that would not end for another 28 years, if it ever did, began so far as I can know or tell, with a boat made from a sheet of newspaper floating down a gutter swollen with rain.
— *It*, Stephen King

When I think of my wife, I always think of her head.
— *Gone Girl*, Gillian Flynn

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

#stories everywhere

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 #stories everywhere. 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”:

SEPTEMBER

What happened in school today?

OCTOBER

An amazing sight

NOVEMBER

Breakup

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 #stories everywhere.

Here is a previous winner, using the theme “Saying Goodbye”

He caught their baby’s last breath in a jar & under a full moon, watched the tide take it out to sea.

By @imruthwalker

Everyone has a story. Especially you.

GOTHAMWRITERS.COM
212-974-8377