

GOTHAM  WRITERS

Write

Stories. Everywhere.

Fall Classes 2020



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-five years.

COVID-19 NOTE:

As of this printing, we don't know when it will be safe to hold classes in NYC. Until that time, we have plenty of classes Online and through Zoom videoconference. Check our website for the most current information.

Ways to Learn



In-person classes in NYC.

PENDING SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS



Online classes.

NOT TAKING PLACE IN REAL TIME



Zoom classes.

IN REAL TIME
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCING

Fall Classes begin throughout September, October, and November.
Registration fee for all classes: \$25 paid once per term.

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.

\$435 — NYC
\$409 — Online, Zoom

Intensives

These are fast and fun crash courses. The NYC version takes place in one seven-hour day. The Zoom version takes place in two three-hour sessions. The Online version takes place over three weeks.

\$165

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.

\$325 — NYC
\$309 — Online, Zoom

Just Write

A simple but so-essential new class. Do you find it hard to get yourself in a chair to write for a good stretch of time? If so, you're not alone. That's the beauty of Just Write. You gather with a group of writers once a week for three hours (for six weeks) and you...just write. You work on a project of your choosing, which can be any type of writing—novel, script, memoir, stand-up routine, etc. A teacher is present, offering brief features: words of wisdom, discussion, and intentions for the coming week.

\$185 — NYC

Selling Seminars

These courses emphasize the business side of writing. The Online version takes place over four weeks. The NYC version takes place as a One-day Intensive.

\$175

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
SCRIPTS IN FOCUS
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
PLOT
CHARACTER
DIALOGUE
GRAMMAR!
THE WRITER'S MIND
THE EDITOR'S EYE
IN(VERSE): POETIC TECHNIQUES FOR NON-POETS
SOCIAL MEDIA
PEN ON FIRE
JUST WRITE



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 ACTION: TEEN SCRIPT WRITING



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
QUERY LETTER COACHING
COLLEGE ESSAY COACHING
MFA APPLICATION ASSISTANCE
BLOG LAUNCH
BLOG BOOST
PODCAST LAUNCH
PROOFREADING
AGENT EVALUATION

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.

READY, SET, WRITE

Use this writing prompt as inspiration: *The only way out is through.*

Now write a story that springs from this prompt in some way. It can be true or made up. Prose, script, poem, whatever you like. The trick is not to think about it, but just dive in and start writing. Let the prompt lead you wherever it wants to. Often this “no thinking” approach to writing is the best way to tap your creativity. (This will give you a taste of what we do every Friday night at our Write-Ins.)

IT'S A VISUAL

Begin a story inspired by this photograph.



Photo by Nathan Anderson

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

HOW TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE QUERY (EXCERPT)

Faculty Insight
BY JOSH SIPP

Writing a novel is one thing. You set aside months, years of your life to flesh out characters, twist and bend the plot, build a world that is so believable that readers could practically live in it, and then you figure out a way to wrap it all up with a neat and tidy bow and type "The End."

But that isn't where it ends. Of course not. Then you have to edit. And edit. And edit. And then, because you're a good, responsible writer, edit some more.

Then, once you've finally got this packaged manuscript and you're ready to share it with the world you have to...query?

Few things in the literary world inspire more dread in the writer than querying. Whether it's writing the query, sending the query, or researching where to submit the query, it is a nightmare. It's what fear is made of. And it often seems downright impossible: "I just wrote 90,000 words of a densely layered mystery/thriller, and you want me to package it into a pithy pitch of no more than 300 words?"

It's not impossible, though. It's part of the process. And you have two choices. You can hate it, wish it didn't exist, and try to think of new, inventive ways to beat the system and make querying go obsolete;

or you can embrace the querying process and learn to love it. (Hint: Choose option two.)

If you do choose option two, you need to start with writing the query—and embracing that process from beginning to end.

A query letter does three things:

- It swiftly introduces you and your work to an agent.
- It showcases your professionalism and your understanding of the industry. (A rude or typo-ridden query letter results in a fast strike of a delete key, but your engaging and carefully crafted letter will reassure an agent that your work is worth their time and attention.)
- It allows an agent to see where your story fits in the current publishing landscape.

A query is a sales pitch. It sells your idea, your protagonist, your plot, and your professionalism, all in one tiny single-page letter. It's also an absolutely necessary part of the publishing process. If you don't respect the query letter, it shows agents that you don't respect their time—or the industry as a whole. And why on earth would an agent ever want to champion someone who doesn't respect them?

Love the query like you love the story
What makes you fall in love with a story? When you're at the bookstore looking for your next great read, you don't choose to buy a book because of the way the author weaves in alternating romantic relationships in the span of 472 pages. You don't fall in love with a story because the tension from the rising action in chapter one finally releases as the ultimate climax unveils a tightly wound plot of forgery and deception. These are things that heighten appreciation for a book once you've finished it, but what makes you love the story enough to give it a chance in the first place?

It's usually the neatly packaged concept found either on the back cover of paperbacks or in the jacket flaps of hardcovers...most of which are just slightly modified query letters.

Think of the query letter as you convincing a reader to read the book. You can't just say, "I worked very hard on this, so read it." In a world of a million books, you need to convince readers that you love your book in order to help them love your book.

Since you're convincing a reader to read your book in 300 words or less, you should probably focus on just the best parts, right? Those parts that made you fall in love with your story in the first place. And I do mean just the best parts. When you're trying to sell someone on a hamburger, you don't tell them about the lettuce. You tell them about the hearty 100% Angus beef, the lightly buttered pretzel bun made in-house, and the razzle-dazzle combination of melted cheeses that tantalizes the taste buds.

So when you write your query letter, ask yourself: Where's the beef? What was your primary drive for writing the story? What got you excited about it? What made you love it enough to spend so many months and years on it?

Because those elements will probably get the prospective reader excited as well. (It's not even a bad idea to write a "rough" query letter when you first have the idea for the book: when it's in its infant stages, you are still caught in that honeymoon phase with your story. You can always fix the query later to match your finished book, but why not make the most of that initial excitement right from the get-go?)

Start your description with that character who you love, the heart of your story (or the beef of your

hamburger). What does your dear protagonist want most in your story? Authors usually feel a lot of passion about their characters' passions, and this is absolutely your chance to let your own passion shine through. Embrace it. You're selling your creation, your character, to the public. That's pretty thrilling, isn't it? Imagine how much they will love this character just like you do.

Now you've got this character you adore, fighting for this cause you believe in, but dam it: Some annoying things are getting in the way. Obstacles in the story. Setbacks. The kinds of things that make the reader desperate to see the protagonist overcome. In the exact same way that the protagonist is often reflective of the author, so, too, are the obstacles. You picked them for a reason, so don't shy away from them as you introduce them: Your story would be nothing without its setbacks, so share them with pride in your query letter.

That's what experts always say, right? A good query shows the reader what the character wants and what gets in the way. But when you say it like that, it's dull: I want a cheeseburger with cheese and a bun.

So say it like you love it! Say it like this is the greatest cheeseburger you have ever had, and you can't wait for your friends to try it, too. In writing and in querying, how you say something is every bit as important as what you say.

—Theresa Lindsay, minister

Josh Sipp is Gotham's Director of Contests and Conferences

SEE MORE FACULTY ARTICLES AND PROFILES ON OUR WEBSITE.

Student Voices

A really fun, collaborative experience that encouraged stretching my boundaries as a writer and a reader.

—Jonathan Powell, physician

I loved the corp of writers. We became a family during one of the craziest times in history. Each had various tales to tell that helped us to learn what we've overcome.

—Theresa Lindsay, minister

I have never in my life enjoyed a course more.

—Barbara Weisman, food enthusiast

Many say that New York City is the center of the publishing world. Gotham enabled me to tap into the nutrients concentrated there, despite being thousands of miles away on the west coast. It connected me with like-minded people around the country and beyond. And I was stunned by the caliber of instruction.

—Stephen Kane, writer & software consultant



ANGIE CHATMAN

Faculty Profile
BY JANCIE CREANEY

"When you have the threat of imminent death," says Gotham teacher Angie Chatman, "you're like, all the things I promised myself that I would do, I better do them now. It's like a warning." Angie is familiar with the ways personal and global crises have the potential to alter the course of one's life and turn it toward art.

Originally from Chicago, Angie says she wasn't a writer as a kid. Being an artist didn't seem like a viable career path and eventually she pursued an MBA from the Sloan School at MIT. It wasn't until many years later, after the death of her brother, the birth of her daughter, and 9/11, that

she focused her sights on writing. Two truths became undeniable: life was too short, and, to set a good example for her children, she had no choice but to follow her dreams. So fifteen years after receiving an MBA, Angie pursued an MFA in Fiction and Creative Nonfiction from Queens University of Charlotte.

"You want your kids to be happy," says Angie. When her daughter chose to study filmmaking, Angie admits that she was apprehensive. "Oh my God! How is she going to eat?" she worried. "But I know I don't want her to waste the fifteen years I did, figuring out that this is what makes her happy."

Now Angie is working on a collection of short stories. As she writes, the through-line that connects the stories emerges piece by piece. "Writing is a puzzle," explains Angie. "And you don't have the box-top, so you have no idea what it's going to look like. That process of discovery is what is so wonderful about art."

As a mother of three, Angie values taking time for herself. Thanks to her own mother, who generously took the kids for a week every year when they were young, Angie could participate in a different writing conference each summer. Now, she attends as many as she can afford, either as a writer or teacher.

One such conference was HippoCamp, where Kelly Caldwell, Gotham's Dean of Faculty, enrolled in Angie's workshop on food writing.

After the conference, in a friendly email exchange, Angie told Kelly she'd love to teach for Gotham, to which Kelly replied, "We'd love to have you!" What's clear when talking to Angie is that she knows how to tell a story, and not just on paper. One summer, at the Community of Writers in California, Angie met a friend who got her into oral storytelling. "She really wanted to do The MOTH. She told me, 'Why don't you come with me to a class to learn how to pitch better?'"

Their teacher turned out to also be a producer at The MOTH. "She was like 'That's a fabulous story, come tell it.'" Soon after, Angie did. Since then, she has performed for StoryCollider, MassMouth, Tell-All Boston, and the television series Stories from the Stage.

When asked what drives her to continue writing the stories she wants to write, Angie tells a story:

"My husband and I were in a heated discussion, also known as a fight, and he stopped in the middle of it. 'Have you written anything lately?' I'm like, 'You know, that's the problem with you! You change the subject! What does my writing have to do with it?'"

And he said, 'You're happier when you're writing.'

So, that's it.

I'm happier when I'm writing."

Community

WRITE-INS (FREE)

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?

We offer free Write-Ins every Friday on Zoom, at 2 and 6:30 pm Eastern Time.

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. We take a break and socialize (bring refreshments). Then you go through the process one more time. It's writer's heaven.

You must sign up in advance. Spaces open every Thursday afternoon for the following day's Write-In.

EVERY FRIDAY ON ZOOM

2pm and 6:30pm Eastern Time
Free

See our website for details.

INSIDE WRITING TALK SHOW (FREE)

We offer a free talk show on Zoom, every Wednesday at 1 pm Eastern Time. It's called Inside Writing. Every episode, three fascinating people (host, agent, writer) discuss the inside scoop on publishing and writing, each episode focusing on a particular genre—memoir, novel, YA, SFF, etc. Audience members will be able to ask questions and pitch to agents afterwards on Twitter.

You must sign up in advance.

GOTHAM WRITERS CONFERENCE

We are thrilled to announce the second annual Gotham Writers Conference, this time taking place on Zoom.

October 16–18, 2020

HERE'S WHAT HAPPENS:

Days 1 & 2 feature Panels and Presentations. Day 3 is all about Pitching Roundtables, where pre-screened writers get to pitch their books to the agents at their table.

You must sign up in advance.

"Absolutely the best and most worthwhile conference I've ever attended!"
Brenna Layne, teacher

(Learn about the "Manuscript-to-Market" Fellowship, which includes free admission to the Conference, available to all people of color.)

gothamwriters.com/conference

FALL CONTEST

Back to School

"It's easier to floss with barbed wire than admit you like someone in middle school."

— Laurie Halse Anderson, *Speak*

"If I am ever told that I have one day to live, I will head straight to the hallowed halls of Winter Park High School, where a day has been known to last a thousand years."

— John Green, *Paper Towns*

Almost all of us can wander the hallways of our mind and find many memories from our days in school. There you'll see... Bright moments of glory, dark hours of despair. Beloved friends, reviled enemies. Skin-tingling excitement, crushing boredom. These memories helped make you what you are.

We invite you to share a memory about school in 20 words or fewer. Anything from a toddler class to a college experience. Whoever writes the memory we like best will win a Gotham class of their choosing.

Some examples from the Gotham staff:

Glueing seeds to a drawing of an apple in Grade 1, I thought, "Only tiny fingers can pick these up."
Janie Creaney

Fifth grade. Girl of my dreams: I gave her a ring to go steady. Two days later, she returned it.
Alex Steele

Friendship in middle school would've required a space in ourselves soft enough to be injured—so it was forbidden.
Justin Street

Being crowned beer pong champion didn't come with a fiefdom, but I found a queen.
Josh Sippie

For competition rules and online entry form,

— visit —

GOTHAMWRITERS.COM/SCHOOL

#GWstories 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 #GWstories 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

escape

OCTOBER

good deed

NOVEMBER

metamorphosis

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 25 words, with a max of 280 characters, including spaces and the hashtag #GWstories everywhere.

Everyone has a story. Especially you.

gothamwriters.com
212-974-8377

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