

GOTHAM  WRITERS

Write

Stories. Everywhere.

Spring 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.

Ways to Learn



In-person classes in NYC.

NYC CLASSES BEGIN THROUGHOUT MARCH, APRIL, AND MAY.
MANY OF THEM BEGIN THE WEEK OF APRIL 6.



Online classes draw together writers from across the globe.

ONLINE CLASSES BEGIN THROUGHOUT
MARCH, APRIL, AND MAY.

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

10-Week Workshops

These classes use a combination of lectures, exercises, and workshoping (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

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

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.

\$175

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.

\$165

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

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



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.

IT'S A VISUAL

Begin a story inspired by this photograph.

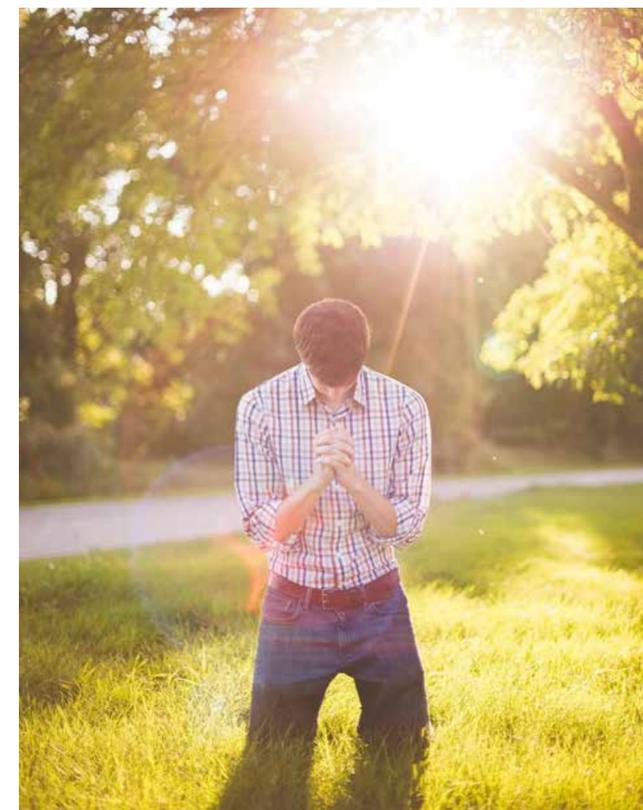


Photo by Ben White

WHAT CAN YOU TELL US?

On the following page, you'll see advice on how to publish an article or essay. What could you write a brilliant article or essay on? What do you know well or want to learn more about? What could you really shed light on? It could be anything from climate change to cat-sitting. Make a list of ten ideas. Then, if you're inspired, pick one and take a shot at it.

READY, SET, WRITE

Use this writing prompt as inspiration: *the waiting is killing me*

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.)

Gotham Faculty

FOUR STEPS TO PUBLISHING ARTICLES AND ESSAYS

Faculty Insight
BY MELISSA PETRO

Having worked as a full-time freelance writer for just shy of a decade, I often find friends reach out to ask me how I do it, hoping that they, too, can get published.

A part of me wants to take umbrage—after all, you wouldn't presume that just anyone could become a plumber or reach out to a dentist friend and expect them to direct message you everything they know about root canals. At the same time, I know my editors are just as interested in your personal journeys, passions, and opinions as they are in mine. And maybe they're more interested in your story, because you've never told it before (whereas, like most writers with a beat, I'm a whiz at spinning the same narrative or making similar arguments every opportunity that I can).

To publish short nonfiction essays and articles online or in print, you need only follow a few basic steps—and they're the same steps whether you're a seasoned professional or a total newbie. Those of us who publish often take these same steps again and again.

1. Do your research

The first step is to acquaint yourself with the market. There are literally hundreds of places that want your writing. Familiarize yourself with what's out there. Publications open and close quite frequently, so stay up to date. Read, read, read. Follow other writers and editors on social media. On Twitter, search the phrase "pitch me" to find editors seeking stories. There's also a site called pitchwhiz.com that curates editors' calls for pitches.

Learn the difference between a service piece and a feature, a personal essay and a reported piece framed by your personal experience. You don't have to know all the lingo, but you do need to know what kind of writing various publications generally publish...although knowing the lingo will help when it comes to pitching your idea (more on that in a sec).

2. Make a love connection

Sometimes you have a completed essay or an idea for a piece that you're eager to write. Find the right publication for that idea. Other times, we start with the publication in mind. Peruse the site. As you read, ask yourself: What do I have to contribute to the conversation? What hasn't already been said?

You wouldn't try to sell a steamy personal essay about the time you inadvertently attended a sex party to *Real Simple*. But that idea may be just right for *Cosmopolitan* or *Vice*. Similarly, you'd skip *Playboy* if you were looking to place a breezy service piece on caring for antique dinnerware or a fiery op-ed on the importance of physical education classes in school. Few ideas are inherently good or bad—it's all about finding a good fit.

3. Make Contact

Once you've matched the perfect idea with the perfect publication, it's time to pitch. A pitch or query letter is composed of three basic sections: a lede or introduction, "the what," and your credentials as a writer and/or on the subject you're pitching.

Let's break that down further:

A lede is the start of your pitch. Maybe you start the pitch the same way you start the essay. If it's a personal essay, that may be an anecdote. Lure us in with the inciting incident or an otherwise dramatic moment lifted from the story. Or maybe you'll lede with a newspaper, something currently being talked about in the news. Explain clearly and concisely what's going on (hyperlink it to a timely article). Answer a question: Why now?

The next section is "the what"—a paragraph or two that succinctly describes to the editor exactly what you're offering, i.e. "I'd love to write a 1,200-word reported essay about the housing crisis in New York, and how poor and working class people like myself are being pushed out of the city we call home. Framed by my personal experience, the essay will explore how services in place to help people with rent fail to..." and so on.

If there's a story with a beginning, middle, and end, spell that out. Explain the ending—avoid sentiments like "find out what happens when..." Instead, tell the editor what happens when. No cliffhangers. End this section with a sentence like, "Ultimately, readers need to know [what]." Tell us what your argument is. Tell us why the story matters. (If you didn't lede with a newspaper and there is one, you might mention it here.)

The last section is a paragraph on your credentials as a writer and/or on the subject that you're writing about. Why are you the perfect person to write this story? Answer this question here. If you've published similar writing before, send the editor links, often called clips. If you don't have clips, that's OK. Hopefully the story idea is unique enough—and you've proven yourself to be the right person to write it—that they'll take a chance.

4. Hit send and follow up

Publications don't make it hard to find editors' contact information—so long as you've done your homework, they really do want your pitches. Go to the publication's website and look for a section entitled "contact us," "write for us," "submission guidelines," or something similar. If the submission guidelines ask you to do something other than what I'm telling you to do here, follow that editor's instructions instead of mine (duh). Sometimes, for example, an editor will ask you to send a piece "on spec." This means they only consider completed drafts rather than pitches. It's up to you if you want to write an essay for them without the promise that they'll publish it.

Few ideas are inherently good or bad—it's all about finding a good fit.

After you've sent off your pitch, a couple things might happen. You might get an email back along the lines of, "I love this idea! It's perfect." Awesome, that means you've just scored an assignment. Other times, an editor might get back to you with a "maybe" response. Maybe they need to clear it with the editor above them. Or they might have questions. They may suggest a different angle or in some other way change your idea. The editor might take a while to respond, they might not respond at all, or you might get a rejection.

If you get a yes, excellent! From here, make sure you clarify the deadline (that's when the editor expects you to turn in the story), and confirm your rate (that's how much money the publication is paying you for your services). A rate for any given assignment can be anything from 0 dollars to thousands of dollars. Check out the site whopayswriters.com for an idea of how rates vary.

If the editor doesn't respond to your pitch, follow up in a week or so. And if the answer is no, do not despair! Seasoned writers like myself get lots and lots of rejections.

The truth is that publishing short nonfiction is a lot less about talent than it is tenacity: If there's any secret to becoming a published writer, it is learning to weather the rejections and silences.

Repeat the steps until you get your yes.

Melissa Petro is a freelance writer whose articles and essays you will see all over the internet.

SEE MORE FACULTY ARTICLES AND PROFILES ON OUR WEBSITE.

Student Voices

The teacher is amazing. My work with her has led to several publishing credits and a much greater understanding and mastery of the craft.

—Randall Brown, English teacher

Eye-opening. Addictive, in a very healthy way. Life-changing.

—Dina Shalaby, senior research analyst

I learned the power of starting. The schedule of submissions made me start, and wow—I finished two short stories in ten weeks.

—Suzanne O'Donnell, actor

A writing course with Gotham is the best gift I could have bought for myself.

—Mandakini Arora, historian

I loved this class. For a very reasonable price, I got structure from an experienced professional, as well as support from my peers.

—Tulasi Payne, writer



BEN OBLER

Faculty Profile
BY JOSH SIPP

Someone has to write all those interesting facts about emperor penguins in your grade school text books, and for a while, that someone was Ben Oblor. Ben's been cozied up with the writing world for his entire life, whether he was

writing those factoids in the education side of publishing, or writing his novel *Javascotia*, or writing the closed captioning for movies. "I've managed to be connected to words in a lot of different ways," Ben says.

It started as it did for so many young writers—in high school, writing poetry in a spiral notebook that no one else was allowed to see. Even before that though, he was reading stories in his spare time outside of school. But he hit his stride in college, when he started to be impacted by such short story writers as Willa Cather, Donald Barthelme, and all the books he picked off of his dad's shelf at home. His dad, who conveniently taught high school English.

This naturally transitioned into a college education that could only unveil one possible career path—writing.

When his short story "Who The Blind" found a home in a small Minneapolis publication called *The Slate*, Ben found a key piece of his writing methodology—absorption. This time, it was absorbing all those short stories from John Cheever that he'd been reading since he was a kid.

"I tell my students it's kind of okay to emulate what the other people did while you're still trying to figure out what you're doing."

After working full time in a bookstore while simultaneously trying to establish himself as a writer, Ben wanted dedicated time for his writing, and decided to pursue his MFA at the University of Glasgow. "I never felt like I had enough time to write," Ben says.

Even when Ben did figure out what he was doing, his creative-thesis-turned-published-novel *Javascotia* took on a whole new beginning after reading *Purple America* by Rick Moody. Ben continued to practice what he preached, absorbing reading to benefit his own writing.

Looking back at his path to where he is now, between his father's occupation, the content of his bookshelf, the journey that led him to Scotland and the multiple steps along the way, there's no way to avoid the simple truth about his career in the writing world:

"Maybe I was destined and didn't even know it."

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.

SPRING CONTEST

The Mother of All Contests



Mother. It's a word that's bound to evoke emotions in anyone.

In honor of Mother's Day and Sunnie Miller (see right), we invite you to write a story about a mother—your mother, a mother you know, or even being a mother. Instead of a mere tribute, try to tell a story, something that captures the drama and experience of motherhood. And if you want to show a mother in an unfavorable light, well, we won't tell her. Your story can be no longer than 29 words.

The person who most moves us with their mother story will win a Gotham class of their choosing.

As inspiration, here are a few examples:

My mother spent her nights carefully tracing every wound in the scriptures of the Vedas; each prayer a suture that she knew would only fall apart the next day.
Sakshi Kumar

Mother was a witch. She conjured stories and bowls of soup. She could disappear at the snap of her fingers, and on my eleventh birthday, she did just that.
Emma Stephenson

"I've got a knife!" is one of my mom's favorite phrases. A warning given in response to our shouting. We'd either have to shut up or fear being stabbed.
Mary Kate Johnson

This contest honors Sunnie Miller—the mother of Dana Miller (Gotham's dean of students). Born in 1929, Sunnie passed away in 2019 just shy of turning 90. Sunnie was like a mother to the Gotham family, as well as a great raconteur and the classiest woman in Manhattan. Among her many accomplishments: she was a copy chief at *Seventeen* magazine, she wrote an episode of the popular mystery TV series *Danger*, and she won a regional Emmy for the children's musical *Sneakers*. Sunnie cannot be replaced, but she will be long remembered.

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

#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:

MARCH

I dare you

APRIL

rejuvenation

MAY

otherworldly

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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