

GOTHAM  WRITERS

# Write

**Stories. Everywhere.**

Winter Classes 2019

# 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 DECEMBER, JANUARY, AND FEBRUARY.  
MANY OF THEM BEGIN THE WEEK OF JANUARY 7.



## Online classes draw together writers from across the globe.

ONLINE CLASSES BEGIN THROUGHOUT  
DECEMBER, JANUARY, AND FEBRUARY.

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

### 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.

\$150

# 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  
CHARACTER  
DIALOGUE  
GRAMMAR!  
THE WRITER'S MIND  
THE EDITOR'S EYE  
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  
COVER LETTER COACHING  
COLLEGE ESSAY COACHING  
MFA APPLICATION ASSISTANCE  
BLOG LAUNCH  
BLOG BOOST  
PODCAST LAUNCH  
PROOFREADING

# Write Now

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**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: *emergency*

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 Ye Fung Tchen

## HISTORIC STORIES

The hottest show on Broadway is, of course, *Hamilton*—a rap musical about Alexander Hamilton, the first Secretary of the Treasury. History is a wonderful source for stories. Come up with an idea for a story (movie, play, novel, etc.) based on something in history, which can be as recent as the 2000 presidential election or as far back as the days of Ancient Egypt. To make things interesting, look for an unlikely idea, like the career of the first Secretary of the Treasury.

# 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 when 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 what this man looked like stayed in my mind, preoccupying me, and I thought, All right, all I have to do is transfer 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.)

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 have been exposed, as a child, to Hindi. Happily, Rosetta Stone was having a sale on its Hindi lessons. (Had they 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 lal 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.

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? What gestures would he use? What sort of man is considered handsome?

The final big issue I threw myself into was religion and here I stuck to something I knew. I made him Christian. I did consider, for a few moments, making him Hindu, but thought that if on top of everything else, if I had to study the Hindu religion, I wouldn't be done writing this book for a decade. Also I wanted to explore the ways being a Christian affected him, as an Indian. I've always been curious about missionaries, which is how Kamal comes to be the son of one.

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.

Susan Breen is the author of the novel *The Fiction Class* and the *Maggie Dove* mystery series.

SEE MORE FACULTY ARTICLES AND PROFILES ON OUR WEBSITE.

he realized that writing was his main priority, he said. "I would have been too young to remember."

While Ian did have early aspirations of being a musician, those quickly faded when he fell in love with the romanticized dream of being a writer. He was already writing for his high school paper when he visited Key West, where he saw Ernest Hemingway's house and the massive library therein. And just like that, he started chasing the dream.

When he went to college in San Diego, it was more of the same: writing for the paper, freelancing, and doing the most-writerly thing that someone who has always loved writing could do—writing. A whole week after graduating college, he landed at a local newspaper in San Diego covering the spectrum of local news. While he was indeed writing, Ian knew that he wanted to move more towards the intersection of his two lifelong passions—music and writing.

It didn't take long. Ian started working as the music editor of *San Francisco Daily*, where he spent his time going to concerts and hanging with musicians. A job that seemed perfect to him, but, in the end, wasn't.

"It was a terrible job; I don't know why anyone would want it," he said. He wanted to do

something more serious, and with fewer deadlines. Something geared more towards, well, writing. Serious writing. And, of course, music too. Dead set on pursuing something more "writerly," he moved to New York to obtain his MFA from Columbia University with the goal of writing a book.

Naturally, it had to be about music, but he wanted it to be a story too. He became obsessed with the "one-eyed, nearly deaf" Leo Fender, the forefather of Fender guitars, and the budding rivalry that developed between him and Les Paul, both of whom now have their names engraved on guitars around the world.

Three years of writing and research later, *The Birth of Loud* is set for release (January 2019).

Ian has never stopped writing, and it doesn't seem likely that he ever will. "I'm interested in everything," he said, when asked how he can write about such a wide array of musical topics. "A lot of music writers want to write about hip-hop or country. I've found it hard to specialize in anything."

And as for his own musical endeavors, Ian wanted to be clear about something: "I'm a much better writer than guitarist."

# 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

**Motivating, encouraging, and inspiring.**

—Yulia Vasiltsova, photographer

**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 is an essential part of the New York experience.**

—Wayne Taylor, retired

**The best teaching technique I have encountered since I came to America.**

—Ekaterina Svetova, graphic designer



IAN PORT

Faculty Profile  
BY JOSH SIPPIC

Ian S. Port has only ever known two things: writing and music. But even now, Ian considers guitar his indulgent hobby, whereas writing is his profession.

"I approach everything as a writer," he said.

This has been the case for so long, that when asked if he had that 'epiphany' moment when

# 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.

## WINTER CONTEST

# Past-Year Memoir

We invite you to look back at 2018 and write about it.

Specifically, we want you to tell us a true story from your life in 2018...in only 18 words.

We want a personal story from your life, which can be hilarious, heartbreaking, puzzling, uplifting, or just plain strange. Look for something intriguing, perhaps something with emotional or intellectual resonance. It's fine if you want to include current events from the year, as long as it's mostly about you, or how you feel about it.

Whoever writes the 18-word memoir that most captivates us will win a free Gotham class of his or her choosing.

As inspiration, here are some of our best entries from last year's version, which only allowed 17 words:

Unemployment, day forty: I'm savoring blueberry pancakes and cinnamon coffee while watching Comey testify. He's unemployed, too.  
*Alison Prelusky*  
*Lindenhurst, NY*

We stood in the yard smoking cigars while fireworks laced with Tio's ashes burst over the neighborhood.  
*Amelia Rodriguez*  
*Hamilton, NJ*

As the floodwaters rose, I hotfooted it to the supermarket for emergency wine. It was closed. Disaster!  
*Nicola Moses*  
*Limavady, United Kingdom*

For competition rules and online entry form,  
— visit —  
[GOTHAMWRITERS.COM/PASTYEAR](http://GOTHAMWRITERS.COM/PASTYEAR)

# #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:

DECEMBER

photo album

JANUARY

slippery slope

FEBRUARY

first encounter

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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