

GOTHAM  WRITERS

Write

Stories. Everywhere.

Winter 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 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 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

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.

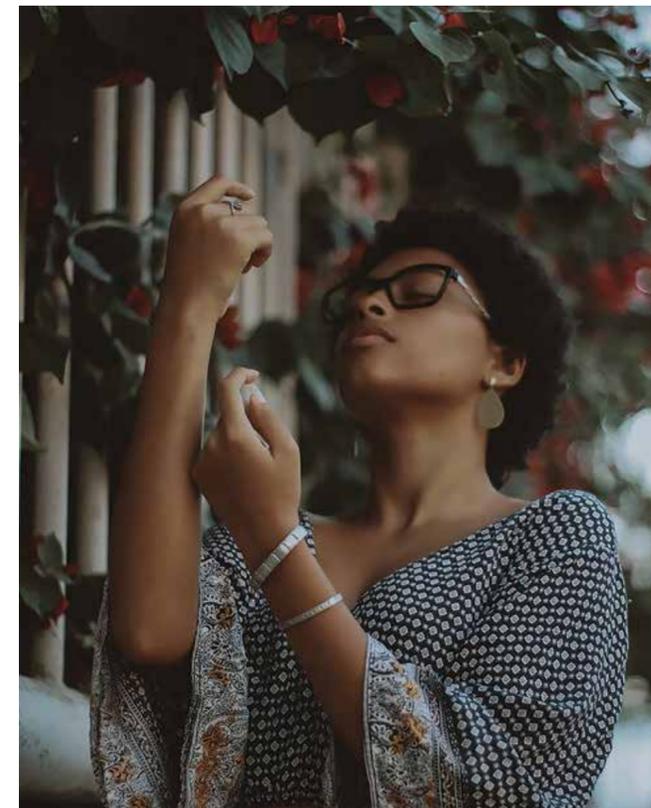


Photo by Caique Silva

JUST LIKE THAT SONG

Songs are evocative, triggering all kinds of emotions and memories. Start writing a story that's inspired by a song—perhaps one you recently heard or one that has special meaning for you. It might help to read the article about a song on the following page of this brochure.

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.)

Gotham Faculty

JUST MY IMAGINATION — AN APPRECIATION OF A GREAT SONG

Faculty Insight
BY TONY CONNIFF

I recently was invited to see the Broadway show about The Temptations, *Ain't Too Proud*. It was no surprise that there were a lot of great songs in it. Included was a favorite of mine (and many people): "Just My Imagination."

While enjoying this song, I was struck by the power of its story, relative to its Chorus. What a good example this song is of taking a wonderful Title and finding a strong position (in the Verses) from which to set it up... which to me is, once you've got your Title, the biggest lyric challenge.

Think about it...It's 1970. You're Motown songwriters Norman Whitfield and Barrett Strong. You have a Title you like—Just My Imagination. How will you approach it from the Verse?

Since it's a Motown song, it will almost definitely be some kind of love song, boy meets girl or vice versa (given the era). It could be an upbeat song about how "I used my imagination to bring us together." It could be about how "I'm with another girl, but in my

imagination I'm thinking of you." They could've gone in any number of different directions.

The approach lyricist Barrett Strong chose is beautiful and interesting. First Verse (opening the song):

Each day through my window I watch her as she passes by I say to myself you're such a lucky guy, To have a girl like her is truly a dream come true Out of all the fellows in the world she belongs to you

Then the Chorus turns everything around:

But it was Just My Imagination, (once again) Runnin' away with me. It was Just My Imagination Runnin' away with me.

We're inside the guy's head as he tells himself the story of the two of them together...a story that's pure fantasy.

Who hasn't done that? It's a bold choice that works brilliantly.

Whitfield's soulful arrangement is as much Brill Building/Atlantic Records of a few years earlier (records like *Spanish Harlem*) as it is Motown. But "Just My Imagination" takes bigger chances than those songs (not saying it's better...)

The chords are very simple and repetitive. But the melody is about as far as a pop song can get from being simple and repetitive.

Verse 2:

Soon we'll be married and raise a family A cozy little home out in the country with two children maybe three. I tell you I can visualize it all This couldn't be a dream for too real it all seems.

The melody and the scan of the lyric is different from that of Verse 1 (even some of the rhymes are in a different place). A very unusual move for a song of its time. Far from breaking the mood and the flow, though, they've only enhanced it with a melody that's even more dream-like than Verse 1's.

After Chorus 2 and a brief instrumental interlude...the song doesn't go a 3rd Verse...it doesn't go to another repeat of the Chorus. It doesn't even go to what I'd call a Bridge (which would imply a change of mood in some way).

Next the song goes to a whole new part...A painfully vulnerable and sad hymn-like section where the music and lyrics blend to bring the song to a climax that's all the more chilling for being so understated.

This section stays within the feeling of the rest of the song, but it digs even deeper.

Ev'ry night on my knees I pray Dear Lord, hear my plea Don't ever let another take her love from me Or I would surely die Her love is heavenly When her arms enfold me I hear a tender rhapsody But in reality

She doesn't even know me...

It was Just My Imagination...

Norman Whitfield was a great songwriter. Along with writing many hits with collaborators such as Eddie Holland, of Holland-Dozier-Holland (with whom he wrote "Ain't Too Proud To Beg," "I'm Losing You," and others), Whitfield paired with Barrett Strong to write monumental classics like "I Heard It Through The Grapevine," "I Wish It Would Rain," "Cloud Nine," "I Can't Get Next To You," "War," "Papa Was A Rolling Stone"... and "Just My Imagination." Yow!

"Just My Imagination" also reinforces a point I've made before: A strong and simple Chorus can buy a songwriter a lot of freedom in the other sections of the song.

Tony Conniff is a songwriter/composer/arranger/music producer who is something of an NYC fixture.

SEE MORE FACULTY ARTICLES AND PROFILES ON OUR WEBSITE.



LEIGH MICHAELS

Faculty Profile
BY BRITT GAMBINO

Gotham Romance Writing teacher Leigh Michaels wrote her first romance novel when she was fourteen-years-old. "What I knew about love and relationships back then could have fit on a postage stamp—and have room for the grocery list," she says. Today, Leigh has more than 35 million copies of her romance novels in print, in 120 countries, in 25 languages.

And yet, a reporter from her alma mater once asked Leigh if she considered writing romance novels a waste of her life and talents. (Leigh was an honors journalism student at Drake University.) Leigh responded, "I received a

letter from a hospice nurse about how she loved reading my books because they're a relief from what she does at work. Another woman who read my books while her father was dying in the hospital told me, 'It's like your arms came out and hugged me.' Another woman may be alive because she picked up one of my books—she realized she was being poisoned by the carbon monoxide from her furnace, like one of my heroines! So, no I don't consider it a waste of a life."

On a related note, even many readers of romance assume that because the novels are light and easy to read, they must be easy to write. But Leigh debunks that myth: "They're actually very tightly written. They're so focused on the hero and heroine, so there's no room for wandering off or secondary character subplots."

Furthermore, because romance is what Leigh calls "a very specific genre," it's important to learn the fundamentals of the craft. Some writers think that just because they understand the basics of fiction they'll be able to write a successful romance. Not necessarily. "The danger," Leigh says, "is that you can write something that falls in between a traditional literary novel and a romance novel and then it can't find a home anywhere."

In addition to her many novels, Leigh has written three books on craft: *On Writing Romance*, *Creating Romantic Characters*, and *Writing Between the Sexes*. The latter serves as a how-to guide using gender differences to create believable characters. "When we write, it's natural to do it from our own perspective," says Leigh, "so

we don't always write realistic men." (And she confirms this goes both ways—there are male writers out there writing unrealistic female characters as well.)

She even teaches seminars on gender differences, which, as Leigh describes it, is really an opportunity to talk about people—why we behave the way we do—and how to apply those behaviors to writing.

Leigh says she teaches for two reasons: to foster a writing community and to give back to newer writers. "When I started, there was no one out there to help me," Leigh explains. "When I submitted my first manuscript, I consulted *Writer's Market* [an annual directory for writers] and did what I thought I should do, but I sent all the wrong things. I feel an obligation to help others and let them know what they need to do. I learned how to do it the hard way."

More than thirty years since the publication of her first book, Leigh is churning out new stories—whether in the form of a traditional novel or short story e-book, set in contemporary America or the Regency period in England. She even participated in a fifteen-author box set called *Magical Weddings*.

"People think all romance novels are the same," Leigh says. "But every journey is different: the problems the characters overcome, the negotiations they make." And, she adds, "That happy ending has to be satisfying, convincing, and earned."

Student Voices

I wish I had taken this class years ago. I learned more than in all of the writing classes I took in college.

—Catherine Custard, riding instructor

Gotham Writers is an essential part of the New York experience.

—Wayne Taylor, retired

I'd like to thank you for getting me writing again. I've been staring at blank pages and blank screens for about two years.

—Faith Airey, doctor

Thank you Gotham Writers. You are the ultimate dream-makers.

—Tracy Stopler, author

An invaluable resource to any writer, professional or enthusiast, looking to hone their craft and meet like-minded individuals in the process.

—Tim McKirdy, freelance writer

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

Mistakes Were Made

The year 2020 reminds us of the phrase: Hindsight is 20/20. So we invite you to look back on your life and tell us about something that, in hindsight, you would have done differently.

Your story may involve something tragic or trivial, serious or silly. Any kind of mistake is welcome. (These things aren't always "mistakes," per se, so we're using the word broadly.)

The phrase "mistakes were made" is a devious use of the passive voice to deflect blame off the person making the statement, who is probably the maker of the mistakes. President Ulysses S. Grant used the phrase in 1876 in an address to Congress, and it's been a classic fallback for politicians ever since.

But you too have made mistakes and we want to hear about one of them—in 20 words or fewer.

The person who most impresses us with their mistake will win a Gotham class of their choosing.

As inspiration, here are a few examples:

Tight dress pants at Prom: if only I hadn't tried to do a split with the principal.
Mason Rowlee

A whirl of things seemed more important, so I didn't listen that day when my daughter most needed me.
Alvin Sarnoff

At 15, I killed a thing—the bunny I'd begged for that stunk up my room. Couldn't find the food.
Natalie Bevilacqua

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

#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

overstayed welcome

JANUARY

let it go

FEBRUARY

the state you're in

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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