



2024 Class Descriptions

All classes run one hour on EOU's campus (classrooms still to be assigned). No advanced work is necessary; only paper and pencil is suggested. [Public registration is via this link.](#)

Four pre-con classes will be available for individual registration, each for \$20:

Monday, July 15, 3:30-4:30 pm: "Writing Covid (or any collective societal experience) in Short Fiction" with Claire Boyles

In this community class, we will mine excerpts from short stories by Gish Jen, SJ Sindu, and T. Cooper for insight into how to integrate real-life societal events like the Covid pandemic into short fiction. We will consider questions such as how closely (or not) plot relies on setting and how the external conflict shapes (or doesn't) the emotional arcs of the characters, among others. Finally, we will complete and share some generative writing.

Claire Boyles (MFA faculty) is a Whiting Award winner and the author of the collection *Site Fidelity*, which won the 2022 High Plains Book Award for Short Stories. She lives in Colorado.

Tuesday, July 16, 3:30-4:30 pm: "Writing Interiority: Getting the minds of your characters on the page" with Molly Reid

Most fiction writers are told to prioritize showing over telling: Immerse the reader in scene and sensory detail. Give the reader physical clues to interpret the emotions the characters are

experiencing. But one of the greatest pleasures of fiction is the access it gives us to characters' interior states—in all their rich, often contradictory complexity. In this workshop, we'll talk about a couple different strategies writers can use to get this interiority onto the page without sacrificing scene or action. We'll look at a couple examples and experiment with some of these strategies ourselves—bring paper/pen or laptop!

Molly Reid (MFA faculty) is the author of *The Rapture Index: A Suburban Bestiary*, winner of the BOA Short Fiction Prize and longlisted for the 2020 PEN America/Robert W. Bingham Prize for Debut Fiction. She lives in Portland.

Wednesday, July 17, 3:30-4:30 pm: “In the Archive with Beer & Skittles: The Pleasure & Joy of Research” with Melissa Mattheson

This class will explore how you can incorporate research into your creative works, examining the role of digital tools, academic libraries & databases, AI, unique facts, and the incorporation of theory and other's ideas into your prose and poetry. Bring an artifact with you—a map, a memo, a report, a photograph, an academic book from the library, a letter, etc.—for a fun generative writing exercise.

Melissa Matthewson (MFA faculty) is the author of *Tracing the Desire Line: A Memoir in Essays*, which was a finalist of the Oregon Book Award in creative nonfiction. She lives in Medford.

Thursday, July 18, 3:30-4:30 pm: “Landscapes of Family and Kinship” with Megan Kruse

In this class, we will consider the role of family and kinship in character-driven fiction. Using excerpts from Miriam Toews, Justin Torres, and Kali Fajardo-Anstine, we will explore the ways that our family identities can drive narrative and create emotional resonance. Finally, we'll identify liminal memories and use them to generate new fiction.

Megan Kruse (MFA Faculty) is a National Book Award 5-Under-35 Winner and the author of *Call Me Home*, which won a Pacific Northwest Book Award. She lives in Olympia, WA.

The following nine classes on Friday and Saturday, July 19-20, are options available only as part of a single \$85 registration for the New Nature Writing Conference.

Friday, July 19, 1:15-2:15 pm: “Writing the Climate Crisis” with Christopher Kondrich

As the violences of climate change continue unabated and unmitigated, in ways seen and unseen, it is a vital task of a writer to document, witness, and respond. From work that seeks to stir readers to political action to work that bears witness to what is being destroyed, all responses are urgently needed. This open-genre workshop will provide writers with a series of four generative frameworks with which to tackle this important undertaking in their work: (1) Writing to Heighten Scientific Literacy, (2) Writing to Humanize Environmental Issues, (3) Grappling With the Underlying Cultural Narratives, and (4) Writing Against Eco-Anxiety.

Christopher Kondrich (MFA faculty) is the author of *Valuing*, a winner of the National Poetry Series and a *Library Journal* Best Poetry Book of 2019. He is also the co-editor of the forthcoming *Creature Conserve: Writers Respond to the Science of Animal Conservation*. He lives in Maryland.

Friday, July 19, 1:15-2:15 pm: “Layers of Landscape: Harnessing the Power of Place” with Joe Wilkins

Though we live in a world chock full of chain restaurants and department stores, on-screen communications, and cross-country airplane travel, we ignore the power of place at our own psychological and, increasingly, physical peril. Truly, place and landscape are active forces in all our lives. They shape and reshape us; they offer us foundation and refuge; they challenge us to be good citizens of our biotic and built communities. In life and in writing, we ought to be aware of this; we ought to try to understand and harness the power of place.

Joe Wilkins (MFA Faculty) is the author most recently of the novel *The Entire Sky*, to be released this July. He is also the author of the novel, *Fall Back Down When I Die*; the memoir *The Mountains and the Fathers*; and four collections of poetry. He lives in McMinnville and also teaches at Linfield University.

Friday, July 19, 2:20-3:20 pm: "Practical Tips for Writing Multiple Points of View" with Ash Davidson

What does this character want and why? What aren't they telling us? What ghosts and past experiences are influencing their actions today? In this class, we'll explore how writing from multiple POVs can deepen characterization, advance plot, and lead to unexpected revelations for reader and writer alike. We'll focus on practical techniques for writing multiple POVs, and how they open up hidden doors just when you think you've reached a dead-end. Participants should consider reading the short story, "A Wilderness Station," by Alice Munro in preparation.

Ash Davidson is the author of the national bestseller *Damnation Spring*. She lives in Flagstaff, Arizona.

Friday, July 19, 2:20-3:20 pm: "No Ideas But in Things': Writing the Physical World" with Jaclyn Moyer

Physical descriptions are essential components of nearly all writing. But these details—the worn spot in the kitchen floor, the old oak behind the barn, the scent of smoke in the evening air—are not merely backdrop, instead they imbue a story (or poem or essay) with meaning. In this craft class, open to all genres, we'll look closely at a variety of works to explore how physical descriptions function—what makes a particular description effective? How can detail reveal a character's interiority, develop a narrator's voice, build tension, or create an emotional tenor?— and practice writing relevant and precise physical descriptions to elevate our own work.

Jaclyn Moyer is the author of *On Gold Hill: A Personal History of Wheat, Farming, and Family from Punjab to California*. Her nonfiction has appeared in *The Atlantic*, *High Country News*, *Orion*, *Guernica*, *Ninth Letter* and elsewhere. Originally from northern California's Sierra Foothills, she lives in Corvallis.

Saturday, July 20, 8-9 am (outside on campus): "Spark Birds and Migratory Legends" with Laura Da'

Birds are creatures of alchemical nature, beings of the sky, ground, and water. Migration, adaptation, and perception are imperatives that we share with our fellow creatures, and writers have long looked to the skies for glints of possibility and models of innovation. This community class offering embraces bird watching as an act of individual observation and an invitation to mutual curiosity and creativity. All genres and writing levels are warmly welcomed to read, speak, observe, and write together about birds.

Laura Da' (MFA faculty) is the author of the collections *Instruments of the True Measure*, winner of a Washington State Book Award, and *Tributaries*, winner of the 2016 American Book Award. A member of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe, she lives in Newcastle, Washington.

Saturday, 10 am: “Writing About Sound, Writing With Sound” with David George Haskell

Sound’s textures and layers reveal stories that the other senses cannot perceive. We will use practices of attentive listening that draw these stories into awareness and then explore ways of bringing sonic experience to the page. The written word is a crystallization of sound and so we’ll also discuss how to honor and elevate the sonic qualities of our writing.

David George Haskell’s latest book, *Sounds Wild and Broken*, explores the story of sound on Earth and was a finalist for the 2023 Pulitzer Prize in Nonfiction and the PEN E. O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award. His previous books are *The Forest Unseen* and *The Songs of Trees*. He is a professor at the University of the South in Sewanee, TN.

Saturday, 10 am: “Chimeric Writing, Lichen Architectures: Writing about that which resists language” with Callum Angus

How do you write about that which resists language? What is the quietest voice you can hear? Can you resuscitate a sound which has been drowned out? We won’t follow a straight line in our efforts to inconspicuously sidle up to what translator and writer Daniela Cascella calls “chimeric writing.” Chimeric writing cannot be approached directly. It is eternally circling a subject, a writer, a memory without getting too close; it finds value and meaning in the oblique approach; chimeric writing can be a means of avoiding detection, of speaking the unspeakable, and resisting definitions of identity. In this workshop, I will share from my experiments in

writing with lichen to tap into a chimeric practice. We'll experiment with meditations and nonhuman languages in an effort to understand what chimeric writing can do for each of us.

Callum Angus is a trans writer and editor and the author of the story collection *A Natural History of Transition*, which was a finalist for a Lambda Literary Award in Transgender Fiction, the Edmund White Award for Debut Fiction, and an Oregon Book Award/Ken Kesey Award in Fiction. He lives in Portland.

**Saturday, 2:15 pm: “Centering Nature: Poetry in the Persona of the Non-Human”
with Paul Hlava Ceballos**

Can we write about our relationship with the natural world without relying on our human perspective? Of the many ways we may de-center ourselves, the use of persona is unique in how it can turn its gaze back on us. The persona poem allows us to think, and feel, outside of ourselves, and may allow us to access sentiment and language we would not expect from our own voices. This is especially helpful for generating new material, or thinking about a larger project in a different light. In this generative workshop, we will read and discuss examples of persona poems in the voices of non-human speakers in order to spark our own writing.

Paul Hlava Ceballos is the author of *banana []*, winner of the AWP Donald Hall Prize for Poetry and the Poetry Society of America's Norma Farber First Book Award, and a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Kate Tufts Discovery Award. He lives in Seattle.

Saturday: 2:15 pm: “Writing the Animal—Both Self and Other” with Erica Berry

“The first symbols were animals,” wrote art critic John Berger. How and why do we write about non-human animals, and how might our writing about them bend as we consider not only our own era of mass extinction and global warming, but our own positionally as animals ourselves? In this workshop, we'll look to nonfiction from authors like Sabrina Imbler and Aimee Nezhukumatathil as we explore how to look to science, observation, and literature to tell intimate stories about nonhumans—while also shedding light on the contours of our own emotional interiors. No familiarity with science writing or memoir writing needed.

Erica Berry's nonfiction debut, *Wolfish: Wolf, Self, and the Stories We Tell About Fear*, won the Oregon Book Award for creative nonfiction and was shortlisted for a Pacific Northwest Book Award. She lives in Portland.