



WRITING THE CITY - CWRT 3317 CAPA LONDON PROGRAM

Course Description

The course explores the craft of creative writing in relation to the city, and explores the particular challenges of writing about place. We will examine different aspects of the city in relation to London narratives including the river, travel, urban spaces, solitude, ethnicity, particular boroughs and characters (both fictional and real) as well as making use of practical exercises and field work.

Course Aims

This practice-based course aims to provide a theoretical and practical platform to enable you to develop your understanding of London, utilize the city within your own creative writing, and develop an understanding of the potential of place within narrative, including travel writing, prose fiction, poetry and film. Through extensive reading and writing practice including re-writing, and an overview of various styles and narrative devices, you will develop your grasp of literary technique and explore and improve your own writing. The course seeks to enable students to 'write the city' for themselves. You will explore the concept of the 'global city', and the urban environment in which you find yourself. You will explore the diversity of the city and observe the way in which people interact with one another so that you can use your observations as the basis for character studies within your own writing.

Requirements and Prerequisites

There are no specific prerequisites for this course other than a desire to write and to improve your writing. Bring a notebook and something to write with other than a laptop or ipad. Eg a note book and a pen!

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- a) Identify and utilize various writing styles and narrative devices and locate and critically evaluate different types of writing about the city of London;
- b) Communicate effectively about your own writing and provide constructive feedback to others in the class about their writing.
- c) Diversity: You should have gained a deeper understanding of the diverse nature and population of the city of London. Students will be able to describe, interpret, and respect the differences within their student community and between their home country and the host country.
- d) You will improve your own creative writing and editorial skills.
- e) Globalization: Students will be able to recognize, describe, and interpret examples of the impact of globalization in the urban environment.
- f) Urban environments: Students will be able to explore and analyze the spaces they inhabit and reflect on differences and similarities between their home and host environments.
- g) Social dynamics: Students will be able to understand concepts of, and implications of, the realities of power, privilege, and inequality in urban environments.

Developmental Outcomes

Students should demonstrate: responsibility & accountability, independence & interdependence, goal orientation, self-confidence, resilience, appreciation of differences. They will learn to communicate their ideas and research findings in both written and oral forms. They will learn to express themselves accurately as writers and as orators. They will develop and hone their editorial skills both in terms of their own work and that of their peers. Vocational writers will build on and develop their understanding of their medium as both writers of prose and as poets. Non-vocational writers will acquire the skill-set of the writer and be able to apply the lessons learned to their own areas of expertise. Both vocational and non-vocational writers alike will

acquire the ability to receive, interpret, and articulate information and ideas effectively and to understand the concept of empathy. Global Perspective: Students will be equipped with the skills required to live and work in an interdependent world through forming an understanding of connections between one's own life and those of people across the globe. Cultural Awareness: The understanding of oneself, others and the ability to embrace and appreciate diverse and complex perspectives, values, and beliefs are key skills for the writer.

Class Methodology

Lecture, workshop, discussion, use of film, group work, fieldwork, class exercises, student oral presentation, weekly writing assignments and analysis of published London authors' work.

Field Components

CAPA provides the unique opportunity to learn about the city through direct, guided experience. Participation in field activities for this course is required. You will actively explore the Global City in which you are currently living. Furthermore, you will have the chance to collect useful information that will be an invaluable resource for the essays/papers/projects assigned in this course.

The assigned field component(s) are:

- 1) An exploration of the River Thames and its literature as the river runs through the square mile that constitutes the historic City of London.
 - 2) A tour of the East End of London with particular attention to the landscape inhabited by the notorious Kray twins, Jack the Ripper, Spring-Heeled Jack and more, and an exploration of the myths that have grown up around these characters.
 - 3) A psycho-geographical exploration of the landscape of J M Barrie's Peter Pan.
- Students are also strongly encouraged to participate in co-curricular program activities, that compliment the field trips. I strongly recommend a trip to Shakespeare's Globe theatre where for £5 you can watch great theatre as a grounding!

Assessment/Grading Policy

| Descriptor | Alpha | UK | US | GPA |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| Excellent | A | 75+ | 93+ | 4.0 |
| | A- | 70-74 | 90-92 | 3.7 |
| Good | B+ | 66-69 | 87-89 | 3.3 |
| | B | 63-65 | 83-86 | 3.0 |
| | B- | 60-62 | 80-82 | 2.7 |
| Average | C+ | 56-59 | 77-79 | 2.3 |
| | C | 53-55 | 73-76 | 2.0 |
| Below Average / Poor | C- | 50-52 | 70-72 | 1.7 |
| | D+ | 46-49 | 67-69 | 1.3 |
| | D | 40-45 | 60-66 | 0.7 |
| | | | | 1.0 |
| Fail | F | <40 | <60 | 0 |

Grade Breakdown and Assessment of Learning Outcomes

| Assessment Task | Grade % | Learning Outcomes | Due Date |
|--|---------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Class participation including small group discussions, class exercises and fieldwork/notes. | 10% | a, b, c, d, e, f, g | Weekly |
| Class presentation (P1) 10 minute presentation to the class of a poem or short essay written in response to matching a piece of literature with a place in London and a description of your process. | 20% | b, c, d, e, f, g | Classes 1 to 11 |
| 1500 a short story inspired by an address in London. (A1) | 25% | a, c, d, e, f, g | Classes 3,7 |
| 1500 short story – fiction or life writing (travelogue, memoir or science writing) on a subject of your choice (A2) | 25% | a, c, d, | Classes 5,9 |
| 1000 word self-reflective essay (A3) | 20% | A, b, c, d, e, f, g | Class 11 |

Field work:

You are encouraged to make observational notes based on your field studies for your own use.

P1. Poem/Presentation

Identify a place in London, and a poem or other piece of writing associated with it, and briefly analyse this piece of writing, not necessarily in the sense of literary criticism, but rather to identify the links, both emotional and physical, between the place/location and the work itself, and the differences you find in them.

eg. The description of the River Thames at the beginning of Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad, and the Thames as you find it today. You will, therefore, need to visit the place, preferably at the same time of day as the piece is set.

Then write a poem inspired by this place and / or process. You will share this poem, and the work/place that inspired it with your classmates, in a presentation in Week 6. (Feel free to use photographs, maps, etc. in your presentation).

The reason the assignment appears first is because the sooner you identify your source place/material the easier it will be!

You will be graded according to both the written work 10% and your engagement with the process 10%.

Written assignments in detail:

A1 - 1500 word SHORT STORY INSPIRED BY AN ADDRESS IN LONDON OR A CHARACTER AT THAT ADDRESS. Eg. 221B Baker Street, The Globe Theatre. This can be a work of life writing, memoir, fiction, travelogue – the choice is yours. This assignment will be handed in to be critiqued and subsequently rewritten, before being graded. I will not grade the original submission, although I will give you notes. The grade will be based on your final submission.

A2 - 1500 word short story fiction/life writing inspired by the city of London but otherwise the subject is yours to choose. This is an opportunity for you to explore an aspect of the city that interests you. You may want to write a historical piece, a contemporary short story or piece of travel writing, a story inspired by the Underground tunnels or an object in the V&A Museum. You will have plenty of time to decide on your subject – ask for guidance if this level of freedom seems daunting.

A3 - 1000 word self-reflective essay. This is an opportunity for you to examine how far you have travelled since leaving the United States – emotionally, literally, metaphorically – and is delivered in your last week.

Work is graded according to the following criteria:

- 1) Your use of language; whether it's crisp and new or tired and second hand.
- 2) Style: the originality, and authenticity, of your voice.
- 3) Your understanding of, and success in, inhabiting your chosen form, the genre (what kind of writing is it?)
- 4) Your content, its originality, relationship to the brief.
- 5) Your awareness of your reader.
- 6) Presentation – punctuation, spelling, grammar, your use of conventions for dialogue, paragraph breaks etc.

Please submit all work in a user-friendly font, size 12, double-spaced, or 1.5 spaced, so that I can annotate your script before returning it. Please include the WORD COUNT. I will allow a 10% margin in word count after which you will be penalised. A PAPER COPY PLEASE, OR EMAIL IT TO ME. FINAL SUBMISSION VIA CANVAS.

Please submit work ON TIME. Late work will be penalised by 10% and a further 10% each week it is late. If you require an extension then contact me to arrange this at least two days in advance of the delivery date.

Dress Code: NB Please dress appropriately for field trips eg comfortable walking shoes and protection against cold and / or rain - an umbrella is strongly recommended! We will be outside for up to three hours and it can be chilly and wet!

Course Materials: the means with which to write! Please obtain two notebooks: one that you will use throughout the course for classwork, and one to use as a journal. Learn not to rely on electronic devices, they are too full of temptations for the writer!

Required Readings:

Class handouts.

ONE book from the following OR a London narrative of your choice from which you will produce the first of your 1500 word assignments (A1).

Recommended Reading(s):

Dreams of Leaving by Rupert Thomson.
Capital by John Lanchester
Rodinsky's Room by Rachel Lichtenstein and Iain Sinclair
Up The Junction by Nell Dunn
NW by Zadie Smith
The End of the Affair by Graham Greene
Mrs Dalloway by Virginia Woolf
Hawksmoor by Peter Ackroyd
Londonstani by Gautam Malkani
The Scholar by Courttia Newland
Brick Lane by Monica Ali
The Long Firm by Jake Arnott
Clay by Melissa Harrison
A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens

Recommended Textbooks for the course:

The Art of Writing Fiction by Andrew Cowan (Primary text)
Steering the Craft by Ursula K Le Guin
The Art of Fiction by John Gardner
How Fiction Works by James Wood
Writing Down the Bones by Natalie Goldberg
The Creative Writing Coursebook Edited by Julia Bell and Paul Magrs
The Elements of Style by Strunk and White

Weekly Course Schedule

N.B. Field studies and activities may be subject to change

Class 1

Lesson 1: INTRODUCTION

Meeting time and venue: Richmond Room, CAPA

In-class activity: Go through course syllabus. Discussion about the importance of keeping notebooks and/or journals.

Screening: My Fair Lady (Part 1) 85 mins.

Out-of-class activity: Read handout.

Readings: Cowan, A. The Art of Writing Fiction, Chapter 2.

Assignments: Begin to keep a regular notebook. Start work on your first short story (A1).

Notes: Start to think about your presentation (P1) – begin to identify a place and a piece of writing associated with that place.

Class 2

Lesson Number 2

Meeting time and venue: Richmond Room, CAPA

In-class activity: My Fair Lady (Part 2) Discussion and analysis of the structure of Shaw's screenplay based on the 'Architecture of Action' attributed to Ed Stern. Conversation about first drafts.

Out-of-class activity:

Read handouts: Norbury, K. adapted from Stern, E. (2019) *The Architecture of Action*

Pohl and Vardy (eds) Rupert Thomson: Critical Essays, Forword.

Recommended reading: Cowan, A. The Art of Writing Fiction: Chapter 9 'Middles, Ends, Beginnings: Structure'.

Assignments: Keep notebook. Work on the first draft of A1.

Class 3

Lesson Number 3

Meeting time and venue: Covent Garden Tube station 12:30.

In-class activity: Field trip: walk from Covent Garden along the River Thames as far as Tower Bridge. This is an approximately two mile walk. We remember that the city of London has been and continues to be the location for thousands of literary works. Start to close the gap between preconceived ideas about the city as we find it in literature and as it appears before us.

Out-of-class activity: Write up field notes of your thoughts regarding the river, original observations that you have made on the day (up to 500 words) focusing on the information from all your senses, not just sight, and bring them to the next class.

Readings: Dickens, C. *Night Walks*, Graeme, K. *Wind in the Willows*, Conrad, J., *Heart of Darkness*.

Notes: PLEASE DRESS APPROPRIATELY FOR THE WEATHER! If the weather forecast is very poor I may switch the classes so please check your emails!

Assignment: Hand in a paper copy of A1, D1 (Assignment One, Draft 1).

Class 4

Lesson Number 4

Meeting time and venue: CAPA

In-class activity: Exploring points of view. Deciding on who narrates a given story, and from what position, in terms of both time and space, is one of the first decisions the writer must make. We will do a number of exercises that explore this concept.

Peer review workshop (1) looking at the first draft of A1. We will aim to talk about the work of up to three people each week using the current works in progress.

Out-of-class activity: Notebooks.

Readings: Deane, S. *Reading in the Dark, 'Feet'*. Thomson, R. *Dreams of Leaving* pp 177-179.

Class 5

Lesson Number 5

Meeting time and venue: CAPA

In-class activity: Workshop (2)

Show Don't Tell: We will explore the concept of expressing ideas in concrete, rather than abstract, terms.

We will explore this concept and also recap last week's work on 'points of view' by watching act one of Ep.

One of the BBC's adaptation of Sherlock Holmes.

Out-of-class activity: Notebooks!

Readings: Macfarlane, R. *The Old Ways, Prologue*.

O'Connor, F. 'A Stroke of Fortune'.

Assignments: I will give you notes on A1. Hand in A2, D1.

Class 6

Lesson Number 6

Meeting time and venue: CAPA

In-class activity: Workshop (3)

Visiting writer Dan Richards (TBC) will talk to us about his writing process in relation to his own body of work.

Out-of-class activity: Notebooks!

Readings: Richards, D. *Climbing Days* p.

Assignments: You should by now have settled on the place and work of literature for your presentation. Ask me if you need help with this.

Class 7

Lesson Number 8

Meeting time and venue: CAPA

In-class activity: (Workshop 4) The workshop will form the first part of the class.

FIELD TRIP: The second part of the class will be spent at the Victoria and Albert Museum (a ten minute walk away) on a field trip. Bring notebooks and pens as we will be observing, with great respect for their privacy, the people who have come to the museum. We will be using these observations as the basis for character sketches next week. NB Write what you SEE, HEAR, SMELL not what you imagine or speculate. Think rather that you are a detective or undercover police officer. Make notes that will bring your observations back to you factually when you re-read them!

Out-of-class activity: Notebooks.

Readings: TBC

Assignments: Final draft of A1 due today via Turnitin.

Class 8

Lesson Number 9

Meeting time and venue: CAPA

In-class activity: Workshop 5. Bring your notes made in the museum with you to the classroom. Be prepared to read these out in class. I will then give you 20 questions based on Andrew Cowan's exercise with which we will begin the transition from observed life writing to fictionalized character. At this point you may speculate all you wish about your characters!

Out-of-class activity: Notebooks!

Readings: Norbury K adaptation of Cowan, A., '20 Questions'

Assignments: I will give you notes on A2, D1.

Class 9

Lesson Number 9

Meeting time and venue: Whitechapel Tube station, 12:30 – the field trips over the next two days are to extend your knowledge of the relationship between legend/myth/text and place in London, and therefore to give you inspiration and guidance for your presentations next week.

In-class activity: Field Trip to the East End. We will meet East End writer and historian John Bennett who will take us on a tour of the neighborhood frequented by the Kray twins, Jack the Ripper and more. The purpose of this trip is to observe the way in which legends and mythologies spring up so that real people transcend their histories to become semi-mythological characters.

Out-of-class activity: Keep notebooks.

Readings: find and watch youtube footage of Ronnie and / or Reggie Kray's funerals.

Assignments: A2 Final Draft due today via Turnitin.

Class 10

Lesson Number 10

Meeting time and venue: Bayswater Tube Station, 8:30

In-class activity: Field Trip. We will visit Kensington Gardens as a psycho-geographic exercise and compare chapter 1 of J.M. Barrie's 'Peter Pan In Kensington Gardens' with the gardens as we find them today. This will be a very different experience to that of the East End field trip earlier in the semester, where the landscape had been devastated by a combination of bombing and slum clearance. We will also be comparing one of the wealthiest with one of the most disadvantaged parts of the city.

Out-of-class activity: Prepare for your presentation next week!

Reading: Barrie, J.M. Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens, Chapter 1.

Class 11

Lesson Number 11

Meeting time and venue: CAPA

In-class activity: Class presentations, P1. A ten to fifteen minute presentation, including your own poem, that compares a place you have found within London with a work of literature associated with it. You will have written a poem that is born out of this experience, and your presentation can be about your process in writing this poem, or the insight you gained into your chosen writer, or the place, or a combination of all three. Please bring a hard copy of the poem with you on the day, or email it to me. You may use maps, photographs, music, but please don't make a film instead of a presentation! It must be live! Please submit your poem via Turnitin.

Class 12

Lesson Number 12

Meeting time and venue: CAPA

In-class activity: Exercises in listening and the importance of punctuation.

Screening: PRIDE – a discussion about the potential inherent in comedic writing for exploring difficult political, social and cultural subject areas.

Readings: from Shakespeare (you'll find out on the day!)

Assignments: TURN IN YOUR LAST ASSIGNMENT, a 1000 word self-reflective essay that looks back at your experience of the last twelve weeks, via Turnitin.

Attendance, Participation & Student Responsibilities

Attendance: CAPA has a mandatory attendance policy. Attendance is taken at the beginning of every class. The first time a student has an unexcused absence for a class, their grade will not be impacted. The second time a student has an unexcused absence in that class, it will result in a 3 percent reduction of the final grade (for example: an A- [92] will become a B+ [89]). The student will be placed on academic probation at this time. Three unexcused absences per class will result in failure of the course. A pattern of three absences in more than one course will result in dismissal from the program. If a student arrives late for a scheduled class, it is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor to ensure that they are added to the class register for the session.

Excused Absences: Absences are only excused for medical reasons, for a family emergency or for a religious holiday. To request an excused absence, students must contact excused.absence@capa.org ahead of time and provide evidence (e.g. a doctor's note) of the reason for their absence, otherwise the absence will not be excused. Even if the student knows the absence will not be excused, the student should still contact CAPA to inform CAPA they will not be in class. In addition to contacting excused.absence@capa.org, it is the responsibility of the student to contact their instructor and make up any missed assignments.

Class Participation: Students are expected to participate in all classes and to participate actively and critically in class discussions, and the participation portion of the class will be graded accordingly. Students must read assigned reading BEFORE the class and arrive at the session on time. Participation is a vital part of students' grade: students are expected to participate in class and in online forums and discussions in a critical and evaluative manner; to interact with the faculty and fellow students with respect and tolerance; and to actively engage in discussion. Derogatory or inflammatory comments about the cultures, perspectives or attitudes of others will not be tolerated.

Academic Accommodations: Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability should contact the instructor and/or the Director of Academic Affairs privately to discuss their specific needs. Students requesting accommodations must have their home institution's Disabilities Services or an appropriate licensed professional or healthcare provider submit official documentation directly to CAPA in a timely manner outlining their specific needs. If the documentation is submitted by a provider other than the home institution's Disabilities Services, it must be someone familiar with the history and functional limitations of the student's disability (not a relative or family member of the student). Any required accommodations will be approved by CAPA's Vice President for Academic Affairs, in consultation with relevant Academic Directors, before being relayed to faculty. Any student who requires an accommodation based on official documentation should also discuss their needs directly with their instructor.

Academic Integrity: A high level of responsibility and academic honesty is expected. Because the value of an academic course depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in their scholastic work and class behavior. Plagiarism, self-plagiarism and cheating can result in dismissal from the program. Self-plagiarism, copying an assignment entirely or partially to submit to a different class in an attempt to receive credit twice for one piece of work is unacceptable and considered cheating by duplication. Students risk receiving a "0" for any assignments in which they have duplicated their own work. All substantial writing assignments will be run through the plagiarism checking software Turnitin when submitted via CANVAS. See CAPA's Academic Standards and Policies for more information and resources on plagiarism.

Sexual Misconduct, Required Reporting, and Title IX: CAPA: The Global Education Network is committed to encouraging a safe and healthy environment at our CAPA centers. This commitment includes the understanding of, and applicable adherence to, the guidelines outlined in Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX necessitates that US universities provide equity in all educational programs and activities without sex discrimination. CAPA understands the implications of Title IX compliance for our institutional partners and thus endeavors to support this compliance as a vital aspect of partnership. The safety and security of all students during a program is a matter of crucial importance to CAPA. To facilitate this, CAPA encourages students to openly disclose any and all information that is Title IX relevant so that CAPA staff can provide support and connect students with appropriate resources. Because students may not understand the implications of Title IX abroad, CAPA will work to advise students about the resources available through Title IX and explain the importance of compliance in Title IX reporting. CAPA will work to build student confidence in CAPA's status as a mandated reporter by outlining the advantage of disclosure for the student, reassuring them that any information disclosed will not be used in an inappropriate manner, and stressing that individuals will only be informed on a need-to-know basis.

Use of Electronic Equipment in Class: All devices such as laptops, i-pods, i-pads, netbooks, notebooks and tablets, smartphones, cell phones, etc. are NOT allowed unless students have express permission from the faculty, or they have been instructed to do so. If students require an accommodation to use any type of electronic equipment, they must inform the Director of Academic Affairs at the beginning of term.

Use of Electronic Translators: In language courses students are NOT allowed to use electronic translators for writing texts in the target language: those submitting compositions and texts of whatever kind translated in such a fashion will receive a "0" (F) grade for the course.

Late Submission: Late submission of papers, projects, journal entries, pieces of homework and portfolios is only permitted with prior approval. A request for an extension must be made to the relevant faculty member no later than two days prior to the due date. Late submission without prior approval will result in a 3 percent per day deduction of the final grade. In either case, work cannot be submitted after feedback has been provided to the rest of the class on the relevant assessment or one week after the due date whichever comes first, after which point a grade of "0" (F) will be given for the assessment.

Behavior during Examinations: During examinations, students must do their own work. Unless specifically instructed by the lecturer or instructor, talking during an exam is not permitted, and students may not access online resources of any kind, compare papers, copy from others, or collaborate in any way. Any failure to abide by examination rules will result in failure of the exam and may lead to failure of the course and disciplinary action.