

Module	Creative Writing1
Course code	BACH-CW1
Credits	10
Important Notes	This is an elective module and runs subject to demand.
Allocation of marks	100% continuous assessment

Module aims and objectives

The module explores the nature of creativity itself and develops skills in the complementary processes of developing, structuring, editing and presenting texts in a variety of media. Learners develop knowledge of the terminology and tools required for script production in prose and in theatre, film and television drama. It enhances the learners' poetic writing skills. The module also imparts knowledge of the development of narrative through history, focussing especially on the modernist and post-modernist interrogation of narrative conventions.

Learners get to understand the principal elements of dramatic narrative: conflict, character, contrast, movement, theme, dialogue, description and narration and have an enhanced appreciation of their own creative process and of the need for precision in poetic writing. Learners develop skills in the medium, or mediums, best suited to their talents and interests.

The section on narrative history enables learners to place their own work, and the present narrative 'landscape', in an historical context. There is also a section on the business aspect of dealing with agents and publishers, and producers for work in film, TV and theatre.

Minimum intended module learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, the learner will be able to:

- (i) Structure and present prose (novels, short stories), screenplays and theatre scripts to a professional standard
- (ii) Analyse the development of narrative through history
- (iii) Recognise and reproduce narrative conventions
- (iv) Appreciate the complexities of creative processes
- (v) Identify the codes of a variety of genres as well as that of comedy
- (vi) Apply professional industry standards
- (vii) Display enhanced colour, vibrancy and precision in writing
- (viii) Exploit the rich potential of narrative
- (ix) Appreciate modern developments in poetry.

Module content, organisation and structure

Introduction, Narrative Arc

Tutor led session on the basic 'arc' structure of most narratives: exposition, conflict, climax, resolution, and conclusion. We look at this arc as it functions in specific films and stories. We also refer to narrative theory for definitions of some basic terms and concepts: narrative, story, plot, diegetic, and non-diegetic.

Practical Writing exercise – Hall of Memories

Point of View

1st Person – Central, Shadowy, Straightforward, Colourful,
Reliable, Unreliable, Rashomon Effect, Sequential Multiple Viewpoint,
Separate Multiple Viewpoint
2nd Person

3rd Person: Omniscient, Restricted/Limited

Free Indirect Style

Practical Writing exercise – using a distinctive 1st person voice.

Character and Characterisation

Tutor led session on character. Exploration of character arc and character indicators such as clothes, views, voice and opinions of others. Flat and Round characters (E M Forster) Outline and Shade. Is demography is destiny? (Auguste Comte?) Individual uniqueness in a world of 7 billion people? How to build convincing characters, looking, for example, at the solipsism of writers such as Tolstoy and Proust.

Practical Writing exercise – Two-character building exercises.

Dialogue

Tutor led session on the importance of dialogue for character delineation and plot development. The balance that must be struck between authenticity and the necessity for streamlining, examining how a number of writers have struck this balance. Trace the increased importance of the human voice in English literature from Huckleberry Finn to Butcher Boy to Precious.

Practical Dialogue writing exercise – The Other

Genres

Analysis of genres by Description and Function. Why certain genres are popular at a particular time; why others die. The ideological functions of popular genres.

Practical Writing exercise – Narrative arc exercise with genre (group exercise).

Writing for different media

Tutor led session on particular strengths of Prose, Film, Plays, and Radio. Adaptation from one media to another.

Practical Writing exercise – Adapt a short story for the theatre, looking at what is essential and non-essential, what to dramatize and what to narrate.

Comedy

Tutor led session on the origins and elements of comedy: Exaggeration, Repetition, Exaggeration, Stereotype, Complicated (arbitrary) plot, Blocking Character, Repressed Characters, Cruelty, Distance, Emphasis on body, Contrast, Thought Collision, Surprise, Set-ups and pay-offs The dispelling of illusion: character, movement and structure in comedy.

Practical Writing exercises: Analyse a humorous picture.

Respond to a comedy commission.

Film

Tutor led session on basic film structure and the importance of professional script presentation. Collage and editing, from Dickens to Eisenstein.

Practical Storyboarding exercise.

Writing exercise – write a treatment (outline). In groups learners do a film treatment for a modern adaptation of a Shakespeare play. They then 'pitch' their treatment to another group and, in turn, judge treatments pitched to them. As well as enhancing knowledge of film, this exercise develops requisite skills for telling stories, making them interesting and holding an audience's attention.

Language and Style

Tutor led session on rewriting and editing practices. An exploration of grammar, punctuation, layout and presentation as exemplars of professional standards and as aids to expression.

Practical Writing exercises – Punctuation and editing exercises.

Historical Perspectives

Tutor led session on the Greek origins of Western tragedy and comedy.

Major developments over time e.g. modernism, post-modernism, looking at political, technological and cultural imperatives and at developments in other artistic mediums, particularly painting. Specifically, we look at how perspective allowed artists to tell stories about the world from a seemingly objective observation point and at how this coalesced with the enlightenment, the industrial revolution and the rise of the bourgeoisie. We go on to examine the modernist dismantling of perspective (Cezanne to Cubism) and its post-modernist reassembly, exposed now as a mere convention devoid of its earlier authority. This focus on the visual arts is by way of tracing parallel developments in literature and drama.

Poetry and creativity

Tutor led session on creativity and the creative process.

Practical Writing exercise – poetry

Industry Practices

Tutor led session on how to approach publishers, producers, agents.

Practical Writing exercise – Covering letter and ‘personal brand’.