

<b>Module</b>	Creative Writing 2
<b>Course code</b>	BACMH-CW2
<b>Credits</b>	10
<b>Allocation of marks</b>	100% Continuous Assessment

### **Module aims and objectives**

The aims and objectives of the module are to explore how narrative functions in society and how function relates to structure. It gives learners an enhanced understanding of the elements of narrative, allowing them to practise their own writing skills to an advanced level. The module gives learners the opportunity to speak articulately about their own writing and to critique the writing of others. It helps learners to become familiar with their own creative process, and to enhance poetic writing skills. The module provides learners with knowledge of the development of narrative through history, focussing especially on the modernist and post-modernist interrogation of narrative conventions.

Learners understand the principal elements of dramatic narrative: conflict, character, contrast, movement, theme, dialogue, description and narration. The integrated approach of the course allows people to develop skills in the medium, or mediums, best suited to their talents, be it prose (short stories, novels), film, theatre or poetry. Just as different mediums require separate skills, individual genres such as crime, romance, fantasy and film-noir have their own imperatives, as have the categories of comedy writing and children's writing. The emphasis is on enabling learners to fashion vibrant, individual writing styles.

Writers can enhance the narrative options available to them by learning from – rather than inadvertently repeating – previous discoveries. For this reason we look at significant turning points in literary history and at styles ranging from modernism to magic realism. There is a special section on the business 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) Demonstrate deep understanding of the structure of stories and how they function in society
- (ii) Structure and present prose (novels, short stories), screenplays and theatre scripts to a professional standard
- (iii) Articulate constructive critiques (oral and written) in peer workshops.
- (iv) Analyse the development of narrative through history.
- (v) Write fiction in a more precise, nuanced, disciplined, and productive manner.
- (vi) Recognise and reproduce narrative conventions
- (vii) Appreciate the complexities of their own creative processes
- (viii) Identify the codes of a variety of genres as well as that of comedy
- (ix) Display enhanced colour, vibrancy and precision in writing
- (x) Discuss the need for precision in poetic language and have an enhanced ability to express themselves in poetry.

## Module content, organisation and structure

### Introduction to Course

#### The Why of Stories

Tutor led session on a history of storytelling. *Introduction* to terms Mythos, Logos, Origins of Comedy and Tragedy, Renaissance, Enlightenment, Modernism, Post-modernism.

Read relevant (why we tell stories) excerpts from “Homo Sapiens” by Yuval Noah Harari and “Into the Woods” by John Yorke.

**Practical:** - In groups learners discuss what they we read/watch.

What stories they want to tell and why?

*Learners list:*

Happy memory/Unhappy memory

Someone they love/someone they hate

Something they love/something they hate

A personal regret

A personal success

An issue they feel strongly about

Free form writing exercise using one or more of the above as subject

## Structure

Tutor led session on structure. Basic narrative arc and more complex plot structures.

**Practical:** Read a story – in groups discover and discuss its structure, especially in relation to Freytag Pyramid/Narrative Arc/or other narrative theories.

Why did the author write the story? (Relating back to previous class)

Exercise – Take the free form exercise of the previous week, or another of the listed ideas, and map out a structure for it. Tell other learners your ideas.

## Elements of Stories

Tutor led session on the elements of story

**Practical:** Read or watch a specific short story or short film. In groups, using Hervé Corvellec's 2006 "Elements of Narrative" discern and discuss its Character/Dialogue/Point of View/Theme/Setting/Plot – difference between plot and story/Tone/Symbolism

Exercise – write a summary of how you deal with the narrative elements in the story you structured in the previous week. Discuss with other learners. What would happen if you change point of view, for instance.

## Character

Tutor led session on character

What is meant by character in narrative writing?

What do we mean by character in life?

The difference between personality and character.

Flat characters and round characters

The difference between interpretation and impersonation in performance, and in writing.

Observing when people consciously or unconsciously **express** what they feel/think and when the consciously or unconsciously **signal** what the feel/think.

Practical Exercise – Hall of Characters. Write a diary entry of a fictional character. Write a series of diary entries of one of the characters in the story you have been working on

## Performance and Dialogue

Tutor led session on dialogue and the increasing importance of voice in literature. The difference between dramatization and narration

Practical - Script a scene from a story you have been working on, or use an existing story, even, for example, a fairy-tale like Hansel and Gretel.

Give script to other learners to perform. Direct the performers.

### **Themes and Tragedy**

Tutor led session on theme as moral vision.

**Right Versus Right** – Hegelian concept of tragedy

Out of the **quarrel** with others we make rhetoric; out of the **quarrel** with **ourselves** we make poetry.'  
– Yeats William Butler

Practical Exercise – take a story, for example Little Red Riding Hood.

Give it modern setting. Give antagonist's POV. Make antagonist sympathetic. Little Red Riding Hood, privileged, property owner etc. Wolf is one of the dispossessed. Writing as an exploration of moral landscape and ambiguity.

### **Comedy**

Tutor led session on comedy, its origins and elements.

Elements: Exaggeration, Repetition, Character or characters with one exaggerated/repeated trait , Stereotype, Complicated (arbitrary) plot, Blocking Character, Repressed Characters, Cruelty , Unreality', Distance, Emphasis on body, Contrast, Thought Collision, Surprise , Set-ups and pay-offs. Character, movement and structure in comedy.

Practical - Ideas for comedies.

Respond to a comedy commission.

### **Narrative Genres**

Tutor led session on genre. Types of genre. Elements of genre. Characteristics and imperative of Series, Serial, One-off drama. Genre and the zeitgeist.

Practical - Write the rules of the fictional world of the previous week's story.

Using this or an existing story, do character bible/treatment for series and serial. (Do the characters develop from episode to episode?)

### **Visual Storytelling**

Tutor led session on visual storytelling in film, TV, Video. Focus on collage, editing, parallel composition, screenplay format.

Practical - Learners storyboard a scene from one of the stories they have done in class.

In groups, learners do a film treatment for a story. 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.

They then discuss how they would promote and market the finished film.

### **The Creative Process - Poetry**

Tutor led session on the creative process and the constructive tension between creativity and control. Storytelling and the need to order inchoate experience.

Practical - *Your bad writer* – list the things your bad writer is/does

Clichéd? / Sentimental? / Po-faced? / Conventional?...

*Your good writer* – list the things your good writer does

How is writing like building a house

#### *Poetry*

Bring in and present a favourite poem or poet

#### *List:*

Someone you love/someone you hate

Something you dislike about someone you love

Favourite food/least favourite food (why? Is there a story attached?)

Favourite swear word

Favourite time of day/least favourite time of day

Favourite time of year/least favourite time of year

Special memory

Favourite colour

A texture you love/a texture you dislike

Write a poem including at least two of the above

Share your poem with others/get feedback

Do you want to make any edits/improvements to poem?

## **Narrative in Context**

Tutor led session on 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.

Parallels between perspective and omniscient narrator.

Practical - Tell, or demonstrate how you would tell, one of the stories you worked on in class using a modern social media. How would a new method of telling influence/change the structure of your story?

## **Publishing and Production Industries**

Tutor led session on approaching, publishers, producers, agents.

Practical - Write a covering letter to a publisher/producer/agent for one of your stories

## **Reading lists and other information resources**

### **Primary reading:**

Atwood, M. (2002) *Negotiating with the Dead*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Barry, P. (2002) *Beginning Theory*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Butler A, M. & Ford, B. (2003). *Postmodernism*. London: Pocketbook Essentials.

Costello, J. (2002) *How to Write a Screenplay*. London: Pocketbook Essentials.

Goldberg, N. (1990) *Wild Mind*. London: Bantam New Age Books.

Joyce, J. (1994). *Dubliners*. London: Wordsworth.

Kearney, R (2002). *On Stories*. London: Routledge.

King, S (2002) *On Writing*, London: New English Library.

Lodge, D. (1992). *The Art of Fiction*. London: Penguin.

Nichols, I. & William (2002) *Shakespeare*. London: Pocketbook Essentials.

Truby, J. (2008) *The Anatomy of Story*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. New York.

Truss, L. (2003) *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*. London: Profile Books.

Ramet, A. (2003) *Creative Writing*. How to Books.

Strunk, W. & White, E.B. (1999) *Elements of Style*. London: Allyn & Bacon.

York, J. (2014) *Into the Woods*. London, Penguin.

Woods, J. (2008) *How Fiction Works*. London, Jonathan Cape