



# **South Gate** Creative Writing School

The art and business of storytelling



## **Learning Objectives**



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## Overall Objectives

### Duration of Education

4 years, 8 semesters of 20-22 Weeks each for a total of 6716 hours (or the equivalent of 240 ECTS).

The academic year at South Gate Creative Writing School (SGS) begins in late August and concludes in the middle of June. The education is designed as a full-time study for a total of 1936 contact hours and 4780 student work hours (or the equivalent of 240 ECTS) over four academic years (of eight semesters, 20-22 weeks each, 840 hours per semester).

A typical week consists of core courses, reading, writing, mandatory class time, workshops/masterclasses/clubs, and author platform management. Core courses go from 10:15 to 14:15 with masterclasses, workshops, and clubs usually happening later in the day.

- Six core courses (12 hours)
- Reading Primary texts (12 hours)
- Writing assignments (12 hours)
- Workshops/masterclasses/clubs (4-6 hours)

After classes conclude for the semester, students use the remaining weeks to finalize their academic projects and submit them for their exams.

\*See attached spreadsheet “Quantification of Student Workload by Semester”

## Knowledge, Skills, and Competencies

South Gate Creative Writing School provides aspiring authors with a practical education in the art and business of storytelling for modern media. Our program is designed to foster the mastery of popular genres, develop students’ unique voices, and teach the skills necessary to become successful working writers. Upon completion of the program, graduates will have achieved the following learning outcomes:

### Knowledge

1. Understand the historical, cultural, and social contexts of various writing traditions, genres, and trends.
2. Demonstrate familiarity with the works of prominent authors and literary movements.
3. Comprehend the principles of narrative structure, character development, and world-building.
4. Recognize the distinct features of different media forms, including novels, film, television, stage, and gaming.
5. Practical knowledge of how to write within a wide variety of genres.
6. Applying creative knowledge to develop and innovate within different genres and traditions.



7. Gain insights into the business aspects of the literary world, such as author platforms, publishing, and grant applications.
8. Understand how to promote one's author brand to both publishing houses and the public at large.
9. Understand how to market creative works within larger creative industries.
10. Use of different creative and academic approaches and methodologies within creative writing and communication more broadly.
11. Identify and adapt the most effective techniques for creative writing purposes.

## **Skills**

1. Produce original and engaging written works in various forms, genres, and media.
2. Apply effective writing techniques and strategies to convey meaning and engage readers.
3. Edit and revise written work with attention to clarity, coherence, and style.
4. Conduct research and synthesize information to inform and enrich creative writing projects.
5. Collaborate with others in workshops, group projects, and peer review processes to enhance writing and critical analysis.
6. Employ creative practices for problem-solving, both in creative projects but also in other work situations, such as teaching, presentations, and marketing.
7. Build and maintain an active author brand.
8. Establish an author-based business, including a professional business plan.
9. Able to develop business plans for creative industries.
10. Ability to stay current in the constantly changing creative industries, such as adapting one's business plan and exploring new, relevant social media opportunities.
11. Communicate effectively and innovatively for all demographics.
12. Produce and engage with creative communication strategies in a variety of contexts, including but not limited to cultural and aesthetic industries.
13. Communicate ideas across disciplines both to peers and non-specialists.
14. Understand and employ appropriate creative and academic writing techniques to solve cultural and creative challenges.
15. Employ appropriate critical theories to revise the graduate's writings, as well as that of others.

## **Competencies**

1. Adapt to the demands of various writing projects and professional settings by demonstrating versatility and resilience.
2. Continuously be able to develop and maintain state-of-the-art knowledge of the publishing and creative writing world.
3. Adapt to the changing demands of the publishing world and industry, including self-publishing and alternative means of publishing (crowdfunding, etc.).
4. Learn time management techniques to meet deadlines.
5. Communicate ideas and feedback effectively, both in writing and oral presentations.



6. Learn ethical and professional conduct in the creative writing industry.
7. Capable of managing and participating in large-scale transmedia projects.
8. Collaborate in complex creative processes, such as writing rooms, ghostwriting, and work-for-hire projects.
9. Engage in lifelong learning and professional development to stay current with industry trends and best practices.

## **Class Learning Objectives**

The South Gate Creative Writing School program features theme-driven semesters, focusing on genres such as Science Fiction and Fantasy, Romance, Mystery and Crime, Seriality and Transmedia, The Gothic, Narrative Complexity, Fairy Tales, and Literary Realism. Students engage with industry-spanning courses and electives, covering various aspects of the literary world, including books and novels, film and television, stage, and gaming. The program's innovative curriculum and unique approach to combining the art and business of storytelling prepare students for success in a diverse range of career opportunities within the creative writing industry.

South Gate Creative Writing School takes an unusual and innovative approach to its teaching structure and the way student cohorts flow through the program. All students participate in the semester's genre focus, sharing classes to foster intellectual debate across the years and to have as wide engagement as possible, allowing for peer learning, one of the most crucial aspects to make the student milieu flourish, both academically and socially. Since genres intersect and intertwine but do not build on each other, such an unusual teaching structure is possible.

The other classes are where progression across the education's four years is ensured. Students follow their year or a smaller grouping, depending on the class. Progression is and should be most pronounced in the Practicum classes, where students work on their writing, as well as one-on-one supervision that takes place for third-year students and up.



## **Seminar & Genre**

Seminar and Genre courses are taught back-to-back. In Seminar, students study notable writers within the semester's genre, and learn the historical, social, and cultural context of the genre's evolution over time. A series of lectures explores the intricacies of how war, politics, religion, art, and societal expectations have influenced the genre and its literature. In Genre, students read and discuss primary texts from the semester's canon of literature, diving into a specific sub-genre by reading an assigned text, dissecting its plot, characters, dialogue and description while researching the author's backstory and how their work has been received by the public and adapted over time.

### **Seminar & Genre: Science Fiction & Fantasy**

- a. Learn the various traditions of science fiction and fantasy, including but not limited to space opera, sword and sorcery, hard science fiction, epic fantasy, New Wave science fiction, cyberpunk, contemporary fantasy, slipstream and new weird, and Afrofuturism.
- b. Understand the intertwined history of science fiction and fantasy, and why they have grown apart, only to possibly merge again.
- c. Recognize and identify story and world interactions in terms of immersive, portal, liminal, and intrusive worlds.
- d. Develop the ability to identify moments of cognitive estrangement and its effects on the given story.
- e. Develop the ability to further your knowledge of science fiction and fantasy, especially any preferred subgenres.

### **Seminar & Genre: Romance**

- a. Learn the various traditions of the romance genre from 1740- 21st Century, including, but not limited to: Victorian, Regency, Courtship, Suspense, Partner Violence, Supernatural, Erotica, and Best Sellers.
- b. Understand the genre's scope to uncover the virtues of the genre hidden from mainstream literary culture.
- c. Research the history and evolution of the genre from The Neoclassical Era, Romantic Period, Victorian, Edwardian, Georgian, Modern, Post-Modern, to Contemporary.
- d. Develop the ability to continue your awareness of the Romance tradition.

### **Seminar & Genre: Mystery & Crime**

- a. Learn the various traditions of the Mystery genre from Biblical stories through the 21st Century and the broadening of the genre to The Gothic.
- b. Discuss the conventions that adhered to and rebelled against the "hardboiled" genre.
- c. Understand Todorov's identification of the two orders of story, inquest and crime, as equivalents to the Russian formalist distinction between *sjuzet* and *fabula*.
- d. Develop the ability to pursue your own continued education in the Mystery and Crime tradition.



### **Seminar & Genre: Seriality & Transmedia**

- a. Learn the various logics of expansive storytelling across platforms and media, alongside recognizing the difference and distinction between platform and media.
- b. Understand and recognize the similarities and differences between transmedia concepts such as repetition, variation, extensions, expansions, drillability, spreadability, continuity, multiplicity, immersion, and extractability.
- c. Be conversant in the different ways that fan cultures engage with transmedia franchises and how fan cultures add to the circulation of franchise culture.
- d. Know how to continue developing one's awareness of transmedia franchises and storyworld universes.

### **Seminar & Genre: The Gothic & Horror**

- a. Learn the origins of Gothic literature and horror fiction from 1794 through the 21st Century.
- b. Recognize the distinction between the Gothic, neoclassicism, and Romanticism in a historical context, and also a literary historical and aesthetic context.
- c. Learn the rise of the Gothic and its transition into the horror genre, and how both traditions are a reaction against Enlightenment and Western rationalities.
- d. Develop the ability to pursue your own continued education in the Gothic and horror tradition.

### **Seminar & Genre: Narrative Complexity**

- a. Understand the myriad of ways that narrative can be written in non-traditional ways, including multiple plots, multiple protagonists, varying degrees of reliability in narration, playing with time chronology, nonhuman narrators, and more.
- b. Learn to recognize and engage academically with narratively complex techniques.
- c. Understand and discuss post-humanities and post-textualities.
- d. Develop the ability to pursue your own continued education in the narrative complexity tradition.

### **Seminar & Genre: Children's Literature**

- a. Explore the ways in which folklorists and theorists have defined the genre.
- b. Engage with the major ideological controversies that have shaped the genre.
- c. Experiment with forms of children's literature within your writing.
- d. Discuss the history of banned children's books.
- e. Develop the ability to pursue a continued education in the children's literature tradition.



## **Seminar & Genre: Literary Realism**

- a. Learn and understand the various traditions of Literary Realism and its historical context; the history of this tradition and when Literary Realism sheds Romanticism; and theoretical approaches to various forms of Literary Realism and how to apply them to your analysis of primary texts.
- b. Understand the complexities of The Genre Approach to Literary Realism.
- c. Understand the historical overview of Literary Realism and its bifurcation from the romantic novel.
- d. Understand the postmodern in literature.
- e. Develop the ability to pursue your own continued education in the Literary Realism tradition.



## **Toolbox**

Toolbox courses aim to develop the craft of writing. Students study components of successful narratology and how to improve, and learn plot paradigms and story structures, as well as how to build unforgettable characters and worlds. Students learn to use the Principle of Antagonism, how to write dialogue, and how to create tension at the sentence level, amongst other tools.

## **How to Write and Publish Science Fiction and Fantasy (SFF)**

- a. Learn an overview of writing and publishing SFF: SFF genres, Story Ideas, Story Structure, Character Development, World-building, Writing Habits, Dialogue and Voice, Writing the Other, Revision, Business, and Publishing.
- b. Write ten original SFF short stories from scratch and prepare them for publication such as editing and revision, researching markets, writing a query, etc.
- c. Learn the various tropes and motifs of writing within the science fiction and fantasy genres.

## **Creating Unforgettable Characters**

- a. Discuss and describe what goes into vivid, strong, multidimensional characters
- b. Develop several texts exhibiting the creation of multiple character types, including nine weekly character case studies, nine weekly writing exercises, one original character case, and five revised drafts of writing exercises.
- c. Introduce the psychology of reader emotion about fictional characters.
- d. Explore techniques for manipulating narrative voice.
- e. Explore how AI is affecting the distance between person and character.

## **How to Write Mystery & Crime**

- a. Understand the various subgenres of the Mystery/Crime genre.
- b. Write ten original short stories based on writing prompts and the weekly subgenres being studied.
- c. Collaboratively develop an interactive project for a community (or alternate audience).
4. Learn how to research and find markets and publication opportunities through traditional and indie paths.

## **Transmedia Writers Room**

- a. Collaboratively develop a three-part TV mini-series based on a public-domain short story
- b. Develop a treatment collaboratively that includes a logline, world description, a central message or theme, a character sketch for main characters, one-page episode outlines providing the A, B, and C storylines, and main character arcs.

## **Writing Gothic and Horror**

- a. Understand how to recognize and write the tropes of gothic horror while blending them with romance, horror, and thriller genres.



- b. Write ten original short stories that build on each lesson's understanding of gothic elements and subgenres.
- c. Study form, setting, and character

### **Writing Children's Literature**

- a. Discover how to work with and within received story forms such as myth, fairy tale, fable, picture book, early readers, middle-grade, and young adult.
- b. Write ten original short stories (picture book, early reader, middle-grade, or YA) that build on each lesson's understanding of the elements in children's literature and its subgenres.
- c. Learn the formal elements of children's books

### **Story Structure Architect**

- a. Master story structure models for characters, plots, and complication motifs, along with guidelines for combining them to create unique short stories, novels, scripts, or plays.
- b. Select character journeys and create conflicts.
- c. Devise subplots and plan dramatic situations.

### **Mapping Out the Novel or Screenplay**

- a. Outline a novel or Screenplay, break it into scenes, write a Treatment and a Synopsis of the story, and incorporate various toolbox techniques from previous semesters.
- b. Learn how outlining will help you develop character arcs, plot, subplots, conflict, backstory, and symbolism.
- c. Learn how to write a 1-2 sentence premise that conveys the characters, setting, and central plot conflict, first generally and then in the most specific way possible.



## **Practicum**

This course is a forum where student work generates feedback from classmates and the instructor. It uses a "fly on the wall" approach in which the writer can only listen to how an audience might read their text. By teaching students to give supportive and motivational feedback, this environment fosters safety and encouragement so the student and their work can flourish.

### **Semester 1: Student Writing Workshop**

- a. Write and workshop a minimum of two short stories or chapters.
- b. Give feedback specific to the genre you are studying and have completed.
- c. Read and give feedback on your classmates' texts.
- d. Learn proper email etiquette and formatting for sending your feedback. This includes an appropriate subject line, how to write the body of the email, and how to set up your signature.

### **Semester 2: Student Writing Workshop**

- a. Write five short stories and have them workshopped, then incorporate feedback into a final draft that is ready for submission.
- b. Give feedback specific to the genre you are studying and have completed.
- c. Develop a writing schedule that allows you to "knock out" short stories, flash fiction, poetry, and shorter texts like scenes and chapters to ensure you avoid writer's block and have a constant rotation of short story submissions.

### **Semester 3: Student Writing Workshop**

- a. Produce and revise five short stories in the genres and subgenres of the semester.
- b. Give feedback specific to the genre you are studying and have completed.
- c. Continue to learn how to give coherent, structured, useful feedback on the works of others.

### **Semester 4: Student Writing Workshop**

- a. Produce and revise five texts in the genres and subgenres of the semester.
- b. Give feedback specific to the genres you have studied in this and previous semesters.
- c. Continue to learn how to discern the needs of the text and implement suggestions to develop a polished draft.

### **Semester 5: Student Writing Workshop**

- a. Produce five original texts that have not been workshopped before and which are part of a larger feature-length project. This will help you learn how to develop them into your bachelor's project.
- b. Give feedback specific to genres you have studied in this and previous semesters.
- c. Be able to respond professionally to the questions about the texts posed by the authors.



### **Semester 6: Pre-Senior Preparation Workshop**

- a. Begin outlining and mapping out a rough draft of your senior project, including an outline, synopsis, treatment, and a list of competitive titles.
- b. Submit approximately a third of what will become your senior project. You can submit up to 100 pages for a novel, 40 pages for a screenplay, in three submissions, over the course of the semester.

### **Semester 7: Senior Practicum**

- a. Finalize a minimum of a rough draft of your full manuscript.
- b. Read your classmates' full manuscripts.
- c. Give feedback specific to genres you have studied this semester and previous semesters.

### **Semester 8: Senior Practicum**

- a. Incorporate, at minimum, one round of edits to your manuscript.
- b. Those who are ready, can begin the querying process.
- c. Give feedback specific to the genre you have studied in this semester and previous semesters.



## **Business**

South Gate's unique approach provides an understanding of the literary business in order to help students become artist-entrepreneurs. Students learn how to build a branded author platform and to write articles, blogs, and reviews. Students learn how to produce business plans, proposals, and grant applications, and how to query agents and read contracts.

### **Semester 1: Creating an Author Platform**

- a. Understand what an “Author Platform” means, what it entails, its necessity in today’s literary marketplace, and how to use it for your future success.
- b. Define the Principles of Platform—analyze and incorporate them into your platform.
- c. Develop and build your brand identity.

### **Semester 2: Publishing Short Stories**

- a. Write five short stories, five query letters, create an evolving submissions calendar, an updated social media spreadsheet, an updated CV, and begin sending their refined work to markets for publication.
- b. Learn more about grammar rules and how to implement them in polishing your texts, for example: correcting sentence fragments, comma splices, coordination and subordination, consistency, clarity, precision, verb choice, correcting subject-verb alignment, and more.
- c. Learn how to research and identify prospective publishers for your genre of short stories.

### **Semester 3: Building Your Empire: How to Write a Business Plan**

- a. Learn about the components of a Business Plan and how you can make it unique to your entrepreneurial goals.
- b. Produce an optimal business plan that fits your definition of success.
- c. Consider marketing, financial, operations, HR, legal, and risk elements to running a successful business.

### **Semester 4: Author Finances**

- a. Establish and begin to work with a professional budget.
- b. Become educated about streams of revenue for writers.
- c. Explore assumptions about finances in the writer’s life.
- d. Make informed decisions about making a living as a writer.
- e. Begin identifying as a business person.

### **Semester 5: Project Management**

- a. Learn everything you need to know to successfully manage projects from start to finish.
- b. Work as a team to develop a project idea, write a proposal and budget, and submit it for funding opportunities.
- c. Identify a project manager’s role.



## **Semester 6: Transmedia Marketing**

- a. Integrate storytelling and marketing content creation across multiple media platforms to harness the power of the audience to shape and promote your story.
- b. Learn how to give a Production Pitch for an overall TV Miniseries project.
- c. Develop a Marketing Plan for a TV Miniseries.
- d. Create and maintain a Story Bible.

## **Semester 7: Writing Reviews**

- a. Understand why book reviews and other reviews like theater reviews, script coverage, film review, etc. are important to the literary community.
- b. Learn the various forms of book reviews and how to write them.
- c. Learn about markets actively looking to publish your reviews, and get your reviews published.

## **Semester 8: Children's Literature and Illustration Markets**

- a. Learn about the broad landscape of children's literature and illustrator's markets.
- b. Define Age-Level Indexes: Picture Books, Early Readers, Middle-Grade, and Young Adult.
- c. Understand platform, blogging, and funding opportunities for children's literature.
- d. Learn about diversity in publishing and how to write about diversity.
- e. Create a submission package and research potential markets to submit your children's literature project(s) to.



## Literary Analysis

Literary analysis courses teach students how to evaluate and abstract literature through established forms of criticism. Students build a collection of lenses like formalism, feminism, and Marxism, and contemporary forms like love and ideology, animals, eco, the uncanny, and queer to analyze primary texts read in their Genre courses.

### **Semester 1: Literary Analysis I: Rhetoric and Composition**

- a. Understand the difference between Academic Writing and other forms of writing such as, Creative Writing, Business Writing, and Technical Writing.
- b. Understand the various rhetorical modes so you can choose how to present your argument depending on content, audience, and purpose.
- c. Learn the art of rhetoric and develop the ability to persuade or influence your audience by implementing figures of speech and compositional techniques.
- d. Learn academic research skills and how to develop a research plan.

### **Semester 2: Literary Analysis II: Close Reading**

- a. Refresh your knowledge of the process of writing research papers.
- b. Learn the latest scholarship on recent and rapidly evolving critical theories and apply it to a close reading of a primary text.
- c. Write four academic close readings of a poem, fiction, screenplay/film, and dramatic passage/scene.

### **Semester 3: Literary Analysis III: The History of Literary Criticism**

- a. Learn the history of literary criticism, including the different schools and their purpose. For example: New Criticisms, Formalisms, Reader Response, Structuralism, Marxism, Feminism, Poststructuralism, Postcolonialism, and Queer.
- b. Write one academic paper or several shorter response papers that include a reflection on the interpretation you have chosen to analyze for each text.
- c. Understand why literature must be theorized.

### **Semester 4: Literary Analysis IV: Contemporary Literary Criticism**

- a. Learn new critical concepts for literary study, including Love and Ideology, The Uncanny and Ghosts, Eco and Animals, Character and Voice, Suspense and Secrets, Body and Mutant, Laughter and The Tragic, Desire and Queer, Pleasure and Wounds, Feelings and Me.
- b. Write a 7-10 page paper based on one of the approaches discussed in class. You must choose one of the genre texts to work on.
- c. Understand how a conceptual approach differs from a school of thought.