

Fir Acres Writing Workshop 2024 Electives

Aamina Ahmad: *Screenwriting tools: the art of the scene.* In this generative workshop, we'll figure out how screenwriters draw us into the world of a story, how they breathe life into their characters, and how they make us feel as though we have lived through something deep and true—all within a matter of minutes. Together, we'll watch some short films, sketch out scenes, build characters through performance, and play with modes of visual storytelling and image systems. After playing, exploring, and experimenting, you can expect to collaboratively write and perform a scene, and get some hands-on experience in what it takes for the screenwriter to bring a scene to life.

Annelise Gelman: *The Playground.* Literature is art. The Playground is all about exploring “expanded poetics”—that is, the intersection of “literary” practice with image, sound, environment, and the body. With a focus on play and experimentation (and a healthy embracing of failure), we'll dive into collective and collaborative writing exercises, ekphrastic work, somatic rituals, and respond to the immediacies of this (social, ecological, political, emotional) moment in our lives. You don't need to self-identify as a “poet” to take this elective, but Expanded Poetics is an opportunity to explore with a focus on language as medium/material—less plot and character; more musicality and silence, texture and depth, shape and form. Expect to get your hands dirty and leave this workshop with a heap of brand-new work, a better understanding of your own voice and what excites you (and doesn't), and a more capacious approach to your creative process, grounded in fearlessness and interdisciplinarity.

Audrey Gutierrez: *Speculative Writing.* The purpose of speculative writing is to play with genre boundaries: to experiment with the ways we understand the world around us. In Speculative Writing, we'll examine stories and poetry that blend literary fiction with sci-fi and horror. For the first day of our elective, we'll focus on generating and learning about sci-fi, such as reading a story about bears learning how to build and enjoy fires, and a poem about a world where we're given only so many words to speak in a day. For our second day, we'll create and explore work that plays with horror, including a story on haunted houses and a poem on spirits. Exercises will be based on popular sci-fi and horror techniques.

Tramaine Suubi: *Loving.* In this elective course, we will explore nonfiction, fiction, and poetry through the words of women and femmes across age, race, ethnicity, nationality, class, and orientation. All the works we explore will be centered on divine, platonic, or romantic love. They will reflect on love in relation to the self and love in relation to the other. We will examine at least two nonfiction essays, two fictional short stories, and four poems. Each of us will write at least one piece of short nonfiction, fiction, and poetry on loving.

Josh Weil: *Dramatic Dialogue.* How does a writer craft dialogue that sounds real yet feels dramatic? And how can we use aspects of both to create conversations on the page simultaneously authentic and purposeful? In this course elective, we'll break down key elements of writing effective dialogue, not only honing our ear for accurate speech but exploring the ways a character's words can be an extension of an author's voice. Students will record overheard dialogue, then use that as a springboard into writing exercises, culminating in a piece of fiction that transforms the transcription into a fully shaped scene.