

Basement Writing Workshop Fall Catalogue

Memoir Writing Class

Instructor: Kerry Cohen

Cost: \$375

Register before 8/15: \$320

9/13 - 11/19

This is a course for anyone who has a personal story pressing beneath his/her skin, the story that's dying to be told. You might not know where to begin; you might have some of it written; you might even have the whole thing written. Whatever you have done or not done, you want to learn more about how to shape it, how to make it a page-turner, and how to be true to what you want to say. If you've never taken a memoir writing course, this course is perfect for you. If you need a refresher, this course is perfect for you too. We will discuss the character's core desire and motivation, building tension, how to handle issues of truth, and much more. Also, throughout, we'll discuss all those other issues that come up when we write memoir - fears about hurting people, how to handle memory, etc. By the end of our time together, you will be well on your way to completing the memoir you've long wanted to write.

Kerry Cohen is the author of *Loose Girl: A Memoir of Promiscuity* and three young adult novels. Her essays have been featured in the New York Times Modern Love series, The Washington Post, Brevity, Babble, Best Sex Writing 2010, and many other journals and anthologies. She has taught writing for 15 years, most recently through Gotham Writers' Workshops and UCLA.

Fiction Writing Class

Instructor: James Bernard Frost

Cost: \$375

Register before 8/15: \$320

9/13 - 11/19

You want to write fiction, but where do you fit? With the publishing world in turmoil, fiction is getting harder and harder to sell. Maybe the personal story you want to tell is better told as memoir, or your brilliant ideas more suitable for cyberpunk. Rather than focus on the minutiae of writing-character and plot and line edits-this class is designed to help students see the bigger picture: What are you already good at? How can you succeed? We'll take your stories and tell you whose work it reminds us of, then we'll point to lit journals, big publishers, and indie houses accepting your sort of writing. Should you be writing a literary novel? Or should you be writing a thriller?

James Bernard Frost is the author of the novel *World Leader Pretend* published by St. Martin's Press, and the award-winning travel guide *The Artichoke Trail*. He has taught at the Writing Salon and Santa Fe Community College. He holds an MFA in Creative

Writing from the University of San Francisco. When he's not writing, he's running this workshop.

Comedy Writing Class

Instructor: G. Xavier Robillard

Cost: \$375

Register before 8/15: \$320

9/13 - 11/19

A lot of aspiring humorists find that their great notion dies with the premise. How do you move an hysterical concept into a worthwhile story? Can you string a bunch of jokes into something larger? The class is meant for writers interested in comedy, but will also help fiction and non-fiction writers goose their tales with a little extra funny. Whether you're interested in writing humorous fiction, sketch comedy or comic essays, this class will help you with pace, where to find some great sources for new material and locating the best markets to showcase your work. We'll look at similarities across media and discuss how comedy works differently from blog to radio to novels. Along the way we'll analyze material by the masters: work from stand-up comics, sketch comedy, fiction writers and memoirists.

G. Xavier Robillard has written and performed comedy in a variety of settings and media. He's a long-time contributor for McSweeney's Internet Tendency and has written for Cracked.com and NPR. He covered the 2008 Presidential campaign for Comedy Central and writes a regular web column at alldaycoffee.net. His non-fiction has appeared most recently in Postroad and Asylum.com. His novel Captain Freedom was published by Harper Collins in 2009. In his spare time he programs man-eating robots.

Genre Writing Class

Instructor: Shanna Germain

Cost: \$375

Register before 8/15: \$320

9/13 - 11/19

You love the language of literary novels, but the sleepy plots zombify your brain. Page-turners keep you reading, but not even Dr. Frankenstein could zap life into characters that cliched. You know you can do better, creating a thrilling masterpiece full of real characters, moving motivations and plot manipulations. If you've ever wanted to write a "better" thriller, murder mystery, erotic novel, fantasy treatise or science fiction story, this class will help you find your way. We'll break down the conventions of genre writing, explore ways to generate unique ideas, and then learn how to turn those ideas into solid stories through memorable characters, gripping plots and dynamic dialogue.

Shanna Germain is the author of her own life, a mash-up monstrosity called "I Write Good Stuff." She has published more than a hundred stories in places like Absinthe

Literary Review, Best American Erotica, Best Lesbian Romance, Blood Fruit: Queer Horror, Hint Fiction and Pank magazine. As a teacher, she will make you write. Then, she will make you kill your babies. Then, you will write better.

Freelance Magazine Writing

Instructor: Anna Sachse

Cost: \$375

Register before 8/15: \$320

9/13 - 11/19

Have a brilliant idea for an article on the privatization of the space industry, or sex-for-weight-loss, or cooking with nutritional yeast? Or maybe you'd like to get paid to travel, eat five-star meals, or test \$400 lotions? Welcome to the world of freelance writing. This class will teach you: how to generate unique ideas and find good sources; how to find the right outlet; how to write a proper pitch, send it to the right person, and follow up; how to write the story; how to deal with editors and edits; what you can expect in terms of pay; and how to become a business. It will also provide insider tips from actual magazine editors, as well as cover fun stuff like how to deal with rejection. Magazines receive piles of pitches every day--this class will teach you how to give yours a fighting chance.

Anna Sachse is clearly a product of the ADD Generation: as a full-time freelance writer, she's covered travel, health, beauty, home decor, gardening, food, booze, medical marijuana, Hollywood, and more. In addition to writing syndicated weekly mind/body and bridal content, her work has appeared in The L.A. Times Magazine, McSweeney's, Virtuoso Life, BoxOffice, Portland Monthly, Seattle Metropolitan Bride & Groom and numerous other publications. She has a Masters of Professional Writing from the University of Southern California.

Rock and Roll Writing Class

Instructor: Arthur Edwards

Cost: \$375

Register before 8/15: \$320

10/4 - 12/17

Consider the rock and roll writing section of your local bookstore. How big is it? Where is it located in the store? How does it compare to other genres? It's strange how slim the pickings can be when you consider the amount of people who love rock music, buy records, go to concerts, and harbor hopes of one day being rock stars themselves. Our class will explore the current state of rock lit and discuss what we as writers can do about it. Come prepared to write about your rock and roll experiences--why your characters love the music they love, what happens backstage or on the tour bus, what it feels like to play in your band...or jam along with your iPod--and learn ways to make your prose the kind that could inspire a rock lit revolution.

The co-founder and former bass player of the Refreshments, **Art Edwards** has published two rock novels, *Ghost Notes* and *Stuck Outside of Phoenix*. *Ghost Notes* won the 2009 PODBRAM Award for best work of contemporary fiction. *Stuck Outside of Phoenix* was nominated for the Star Program. He blogs regularly on topics ranging from Marcel Proust to Judas Priest, while finishing his third novel, *Good Night to the Rock 'n' Roll Era*.