

49 WRITERS, INC.

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INSTRUCTOR GUIDELINES

2020-2021

Instructional Philosophy: Some say good writing can't be taught. We disagree. Instruction alone won't make you a great writer, but it will take you a good long way in that direction. At the heart of our mission is a firm commitment to instruction that encourages students from a variety of backgrounds and experiences to become more thoughtful, proficient, and prolific as they explore their passion for the written word. We offer affordable workshops and courses—free of the academic constraints of credit hours and grading—for both emerging and established writers. We offer no easy answers; our aim is to delve deep into the mysteries of language, discovery and expression with teaching that is both student-centered and well-structured around meaningful outcomes. We also believe that good teaching, like good writing, develops through a life-long process of learning that includes evaluating our work, sharing ideas, and stretching ourselves—sometimes beyond our comfort zone.

Course offerings and scheduling: We offer a variety of instructional options in our fall and spring terms. Registration for the fall term begins in August; the term runs mid-September to mid-December. Registration for the spring term begins in December; the term runs mid-January to mid-May.

Our course offerings typically fit into one of three categories: **elements** courses that are generally 6 to 8 hours long; genre-based **workshops** that typically run 12 hours; and **special topics** that are normally covered in a single session of 2 or 3 hours. Evening and weekend scheduling is a top priority, and our students tend to prefer classes that last less than four weeks. Limited scope workshops with one or two sessions have been filling up fastest and are the easiest to schedule.

Elements courses include cross-genre topics like character, voice, narrative structure, point of view, description, beginnings, revision, and narrative time. Workshops are by genre, alternating between fundamentals workshops for emerging writers (Fundamentals of Fiction, for example) and workshops exploring advanced techniques (such as Advanced Poetry Techniques). In workshops, students draft and revise within their genres. While critiques by instructors and classmates may be part of the workshop content, we encourage instructors to consider the limitations of MFA-style “workshopping” as the sole instructional technique.

While we hope all of our courses are feisty and fun, our special topics courses are intended to be especially so, with an exploratory bent. Though the time frame is short, we applaud instructors who incorporate some real writing into their special topics instruction.

We strive to balance our course offerings each term with regard to length, type, and genre. As to genre, we give priority to fiction, non-fiction, essays, poetry, and screenwriting.

We also try to balance course offerings geographically, so will consider proposals for classes in any Alaskan community where our members reside, and are especially interested classes that can be repeated in more than one community.

Proposing a course: Prospective instructors should submit their proposals online using our Course Proposal Form. We will consider proposals at any time for our Fall or Spring sessions, but are most likely to accept Fall proposals if received before July 15, and are most likely to accept Spring proposals if received before November 15.

What we do for instructors: Schedule. Provide classroom space, including screen and LCD projector and wireless Internet connection, in most cases. Publicize (typically, to our membership, to our statewide mailing list, through term flyers, through our blog, word of mouth, and in local media calendars). Offer help and feedback with course planning as needed. Handle all aspects of student registration and payment. Provide a roster with email addresses for you to contact students prior to the start of class. Provide forms for evaluation and feedback. Pay our instructors within two weeks of course completion.

What instructors do for us: Provide a course description, resume or CV, one-paragraph bio, photo, and syllabus. Sign required paperwork: a memorandum of understanding and a W-9 for IRS 1099 reporting. Spread the word on courses however and wherever they can. Submit a guest post to the 49 Writers blog to promote the class (30 days in advance if requesting a specific date, so we can work into the blog schedule). Prep (including handouts if needed), show up (early to set up tables, chairs, etc.) and engage with students. Help us keep building our reputation as one of the best statewide resources for writing instruction.

Course & Membership Fees: Member fees for our courses are approximately \$17.50 per hour of instruction. Fees for non-members are slightly higher. The basic 49 Writers membership fee is \$49 a year.

Instructor pay & status: While we're a non-profit operating on a slim budget, we believe in paying instructors as well as we can, given the market and our overhead costs. At this time, that's about \$9 per student per hour. For instance, an instructor teaching a 6-hour workshop with 10 students would earn \$540. If an instructor travels from out of town to teach with us, we can discuss how to cover additional costs, such as increasing the hourly rate or timing the class with travel already planned.

Our instructors are independent contractors, responsible for paying all required taxes to the IRS. We require completion and receipt of an IRS Form W-9 before we can issue payments for instruction, a blank copy of which we will provide. We'll also provide an IRS-1099 form for tax purposes at the end of the year.

Minimum and maximum enrollment: Typically we look for six students minimum and twelve students maximum in a given course, but we can make exceptions with the instructor's approval based on final registration levels 3-5 days in advance.

Age level: If you're open to high school students in your course, please let us know.

Scheduling: Courses do well on Saturdays and weeknights (excluding Fridays)—we try to schedule a mix so students have plenty of options to fit with their schedules.

Facilities and online Zoom offerings during the Covid-19 pandemic: Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, we used classroom space at various facilities throughout the state, most notably the Anchorage Community House in Anchorage and the JAHC in Juneau. In-person classes and events are indefinitely on hold during the pandemic, and Fall and Spring classes for the 2020-2021 season will be held through the Zoom online platform. Decisions about whether the instructor or 49 Writers will host the Zoom sessions will be made on a case-by-case basis. Instructors willing to host their classes on their own Zoom account will receive additional compensation of \$10 per hour of Zoom-based instruction.

Cancellations: If a course is cancelled due to insufficient enrollment, instructors do not receive pay. Instructors who are forced to cancel a course session or sessions due to circumstances beyond their control should notify us (info@49writers.org) immediately. If a course is rescheduled, students may opt to attend rescheduled sessions or request prorated refunds; to accommodate refunds, instructor pay will be likewise prorated.

A student who is unable to attend a course may send a substitute student after notifying 49 Writers, who will notify you. Though not required, we encourage instructors to

contact students who've missed sessions and to offer any handouts or assignments to help them catch up.