WHAT IS A WORKSHOP?

Although Creative Writing classes at Douglas include discussions of published work as well as craft lectures, the courses are built around the standard writing workshop model. A workshop is not an academic lecture; instead, it’s a group session, led by an instructor, that focuses on student writing. Here, in a hands-on learning approach, students critique each other’s work, discussing areas of strength and making constructive suggestions about aspects of writing that could be improved upon, all in a supportive environment. Students learn to articulate their response to writing in a way that is useful for both the person whose work is being critiqued and the person who makes the comments.

Creative Writing classrooms reflect the diversity of the College and the community. Out of respect for your peers, certain, especially graphic, treatments of sex, race and violence may be considered inappropriate for discussion in the classroom. If you have any doubts about whether or not your material is appropriate, check with your instructor before submitting it.
CRWR courses transfer to universities and other colleges in the province. For details, check the BC Transfer Guide at www.bccat.bc.ca. An Academic Advisor can provide you with complete details. See elsewhere in this handbook for information on the Associate of Arts Degree with a focus on Creative Writing.

In order to enroll in a Creative Writing course, students must meet the admission standards as spelled out by the Douglas College Registrar. For individual course prerequisites please see course listings.

To foster student success, the Creative Writing faculty recommends that students register for no more than two Creative Writing courses per term.

Individual instructors will provide students with course outlines at the beginning of each course.

This handbook is meant to be suggestive only. Course offerings may change throughout the year. Please note that during the Summer and Fall 2020 semesters, courses will be held online. Stay tuned to the College’s announcements regarding Winter 2021 courses.

CRWR 1101: INTRODUCTION TO WRITING POETRY
(3 CREDITS)

This course concentrates exclusively on the process of writing poetry. It includes instruction in the methods of recognizing and writing poems. The student is introduced to a range of poetic forms through the study of traditional and modern texts. Poetry written by the students will be read and discussed by the instructor and students in a workshop environment. Please note that Douglas College poetry workshops require writing for the published page, not performance poetry, spoken word or song lyrics.

Prerequisite: See Assessment Information listed under the Faculty of Language, Literature and Performing Arts in the Douglas College Calendar.

Offered: Fall, Winter and Summer
CRWR 1102: INTRODUCTION TO WRITING
PLAYS
(3 CREDITS)

This course concentrates exclusively on the process of writing stage plays. It includes instruction in play mechanics, dramatic structure, character development, action and dialogue in the writing of drama. Student plays will be read and discussed in the workshop, and several scripts will receive rehearsed, in-class readings by Douglas College Theatre students.

Prerequisite: See Assessment Information listed under the Faculty of Language, Literature and Performing Arts in the Douglas College Calendar.

Offered: Fall

CRWR 1103: INTRODUCTION TO WRITING
FICTION
(3 CREDITS)

This course concentrates exclusively on the process of writing fiction. It includes instruction in form, structure and style. A range of narrative styles will be discussed through a study of various fiction texts. Fiction produced by the students will be read and discussed by the instructor and students in a workshop environment.

Prerequisite: See Assessment Information listed under the Faculty of Language, Literature and Performing Arts in the Douglas College Calendar.

Offered: Fall, Winter and Summer

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There’s no lies in fiction.
-Lee Maracle
CRWR 1104: INTRODUCTION TO WRITING CHILDREN’S LITERATURE  
(3 CREDITS)

This course introduces students to writing for children and young adults. It includes instruction in writing in a variety of genres, with appropriate structures and styles for various age groups. We focus on creating appealing characters and stories, and on using language in a way that will engage young readers. While students will read published works of children’s literature, the emphasis is on student work, which is discussed in a workshop.

Prerequisite: See Assessment Information listed under the Faculty of Language, Literature and Performing Arts in the Douglas College Calendar.

Offered: TBA.

CRWR 1202: PERSONAL NARRATIVE  
(3 CREDITS)

This course concentrates on writing based on personal experience. Students develop an awareness of both self and the creative process by shaping biographical material into readable narratives. Instruction in a workshop format will focus on techniques needed to produce such forms as creative non-fiction, fiction and poetry.

Prerequisite: See Assessment Information listed under the Faculty of Language, Literature and Performing Arts in the Douglas College Calendar.

Offered: Fall, Winter and Summer

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*When I write non-fiction and memoir, I allow myself to be completely open. I believe when we’re talking to each other and we’re telling each other stories, we owe each other the truth*.  
—Richard Wagamese
CRWR 1234: WRITING SONG LYRICS  
(3 CREDITS)

This course concentrates on the process of writing song lyrics. Students learn key aspects of the craft, including song structure, rhyme, and various literary devices, plus the integration of lyrics with musical elements such as melody and meter. Viewing songwriting through a historical lens, students develop an appreciation for a range of genres by analyzing published works. Songs written by students are critiqued by the instructor and students in a supportive workshop environment. Musical ability is recommended in this course, as simple recorded versions of the students’ songs are required.

Offered: Summer

CRWR 2200: WRITING FOR FILM  
(3 CREDITS)

Screenwriting requires a flair for dialogue, a familiarity with the film media, and an ability to work with life experience in a visual way. In this course, students will study the art of writing dialogue as well as the technique of structuring a three-act film script. Students will learn to work with an industry standard format for screenwriting. The course will include instruction on: the pitch, outline, scenes and a half-hour script. Films will be screened in class, however, the emphasis will be on student scripts which will be read and discussed in a workshop setting.

Prerequisite: A grade of B in CRWR 1102, 1103, 1202 or permission of the instructor.

Offered: Winter
CRWR 2201: ADVANCED POETRY  
*(3 CREDITS)*

This course concentrates on writing poems, on developing the writer’s voice and craft in these poems, and on deepening the understanding of prosody. It includes instruction in writing poetry and developing one’s own style, while exposing students to a variety of poetic forms and devices. The student is expected to master specific forms; these forms and other poems will be read and discussed by the instructor and students in a workshop format. It is recommended, but not required, that students enroll in English 1114 (Introduction to Poetry) before or while taking CRWR 2201.

Prerequisite: A grade of B in CRWR 1101 or permission of the instructor.

Offered: Winter

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"A POET IS, BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE, A PERSON WHO IS PASSIONATELY IN LOVE WITH LANGUAGE."

- W.H. AUDEN

CRWR 2202: MEMOIR WRITING  
*(3 CREDITS)*

This advanced workshop-based course concentrates on the process of writing memoirs. It is a second-level course designed primarily for students who have taken CRWR 1202 (Personal Narrative) and wish to further explore their creative writing in this genre. Students will craft and shape an extended narrative built on significant episodes and themes from their personal experience. Each student will be required to write several chapters of a memoir during the course. By reading and discussing contemporary texts, students will also be introduced to a wide array of narrative approaches and techniques used in memoir writing, particularly those related to form and structure.

Prerequisite: A grade of B in CRWR 1202 or permission of the instructor.

Offered: Fall and/or Winter
CRWR 2203: SPECULATIVE FICTION
(3 CREDITS)

This course focuses on the process of writing in the genre of speculative fiction (including science-fiction, fantasy, horror, and a range of sub-genres). It includes instruction in the use of compositional elements such as imagery, point-of-view, characterization, dialogue, setting and structure as they specifically relate to speculative fiction. Students will learn to utilize allegory, symbolism, extended metaphor and other literary devices frequently found in speculative fiction to further their creative intentions. The course will introduce students to a range of published speculative fiction, but the emphasis will be on student work, discussed in a workshop.

Prerequisite: A grade of B in CRWR 1103 or satisfactory result on College Writing Assessment (or substitution/equivalent as stated in College Calendar) plus instructor permission.

Offered: Fall and Winter

CRWR 2350: WRITING SHORT FICTION
(3 CREDITS)

This course concentrates solely on the process of writing short fiction. It includes instruction in the methods of beginning, sustaining, closing, revising and evaluating a short story. The student is introduced to a wide range of narrative approaches and techniques through the study of both traditional and contemporary texts.

Prerequisite: A grade of B in CRWR 1103 or permission of the instructor.

Offered: Winter

I want the reader to feel something is astonishing. Not the ‘what happens,’ but the way everything happens.

-Alice Munro
Elaine Ávila’s plays are produced in Panamá City, Sintra, Pico, Costa Rica, Paris, London, New York, Lisbon, Australia, Los Angeles, Edmonton, Vancouver and Victoria, and include *Jane Austen, Action Figure* (Best New Play, Festival de los Cocos); *Lieutenant Nun* (Best New Play, Victoria Critics Circle); *Kitimat* (Mellon Foundation Commission); *Fado: the Saddest Music in the World* (Named Top Latinx Plays in U.S, Sure Fire List in Canada, Best Musical); and *Café a Brasileira* (Best Play, Disquiet International, Lisbon). Her plays are available from NoPassport Press and upcoming from Talon Books and Tagus Press/UMassDartmouth. Her poems will be published by Letras Lavadas books in Portugal. Her nonfiction is published by York University Press, Routledge, Theatre Communications Group, Smith and Kraus, *EnRoute, Howlround, Canadian Theatre Review, American Theater, Portuguese American Review, Lusitania, Contemporary Theatre Review* and *Café Onda*. She is the co-founder of the International Climate Change Theatre Action, involving 50 playwrights, 200 venues and 12,000 audience members worldwide. She is the Fulbright Scholar to the Azores and lives in New Westminster.

**Teaches CRWR 1102, 1202 & 2200**

Elizabeth Bachinsky is the author of five collections of poetry, *Curio* (BookThug, 2005), *Home of Sudden Service* (Nightwood Editions, 2006), *God of Missed Connections* (Nightwood Editions, 2009), *I Don’t Feel So Good* (BookThug, 2012) and *The Hottest Summer in Recorded History* (Nightwood Editions, 2013). Her poetry has been nominated for awards including the Governor General’s Award for Poetry, the Pat Lowther Award, the Kobzar Award, the George Ryga Award for Social Awareness in BC Literature and has appeared in literary journals, anthologies and on film around the world. Her poem “Wolf Lake” is a favourite of Poetry in Voice, Canada’s national poetry recitation competition for youth and her collection *God of Missed Connections* was adapted for stage by the Electric Company. Elizabeth has taught at UBC, UBCO, The Sage Hill Writing Experience and other schools and is a past editor of *EVENT* magazine and *PRISM international*.

**Teaches CRWR 1101, 1103, 1202 & 2201**
Shashi Bhat’s stories have appeared in *The Malahat Review, The New Quarterly, The Dalhousie Review, Grain, PRISM international, Best Canadian Stories 2018, Journey Prize Stories 24 and 30* and other publications. She was the winner of the 2018 Journey Prize, and a 2018 National Magazine Award finalist for fiction. She is a two-time Pushcart Prize nominee, and in 2010, she was a finalist for the Bronwen Wallace Award. Shashi has two books forthcoming from McClelland & Stewart/Penguin Random House Canada: a novel titled *The Most Precious Substance on Earth*, and a collection of short stories. Her debut novel, *The Family Took Shape* (Cormorant, 2013), was a finalist for the Thomas Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award. Shashi has taught creative writing at Dalhousie University and The Johns Hopkins University, where she received her MFA in fiction. She is the editor of *EVENT* magazine.

**Teaches CRWR 1101, 1103, 1202 & 2350**

Wayde Compton has written five books and has edited two literary anthologies. His collection of short stories, *The Outer Harbour*, won the City of Vancouver Book Award in 2015, and he won a National Magazine Award for Fiction in 2011. His work has been a finalist for two other City of Vancouver Book Awards as well as the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize. In 2006 Compton co-founded Commodore Books, western Canada’s first Black Canadian literary press. Compton has been writer-in-residence at Simon Fraser University, Green College at the University of British Columbia, and the Vancouver Public Library. From 2012-18, he administered the Creative Writing Program in Continuing Studies at SFU, including the award-winning Writer’s Studio. His latest book, a fantasy graphic novel for young adults, illustrated by April dela Noche Milne, was called “touching allegory of the unexpected and burdensome trials of migration” in a starred Kirkus review.

**Teaches CRWR 1101, 1103, 1202, 2201, 2202, 2203 & 2350**

Teaches CRWR 1101, 1103, 1202, 2201, 2202, 2203 & 2350

Rick Maddocks’s collection of linked stories, *Sputnik Diner*, was published by Knopf/Vintage Canada. He received his MFA in Creative Writing from UBC. His work has appeared in numerous magazines and anthologies. Rick is also a singer/songwriter and has several albums. His experimental opera, *The Meal*, premiered at the PuSh Festival in 2011 and was restaged in 2012 at Pacific Theatre. His interdisciplinary project, Sun Belt, launched the book/album/performance project *Cabalcor* in 2015. His album, *Songs from the Black Sand*, will be released in late 2020.

Teaches CRWR 1103, 1202, 1234 & 2350
LEARNING OUTCOMES
FOR CREATIVE WRITING STUDENTS

As you successfully complete Creative Writing courses, you will be able to:

1. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in written works.
2. Write a variety of creative work that meets specific standards.
3. Give and receive constructive criticism regarding written work.
4. Identify material from your own experiences to make your writing more authentic.
5. Revise your writing in order to improve it.
6. Develop time management skills to help you set and meet deadlines.
7. Demonstrate respectful conduct that is appropriate for the harmonious and optimum functioning of a small group.

GRADES

In Creative Writing, letter grades reflect the following:

A+/A/A-
Excellent: The use of language is pleasing and vigorous. The writing invites reading; the work is well-crafted and grammatically flawless. The author is perceptive.

B+
Very good: The use of language is generally correct. There may be a need for further editing in the presentation of the work (style, voice, characterization, plot, point of view) or in the language (diction, grammar, usage, spelling, punctuation). But the writing is involving.

B
Good: The author has created a manuscript with substantial content and without any serious errors in tone or narration. Problems with creative shaping and delivery may occur, and there may be a further need for learning the mechanics of language use, but generally the problems do not interfere with the reader’s appreciation of the work.

B-
Manuscripts with repeated errors in grammar, usage or punctuation will result in a grade of no higher than B-regardless of the proficiency and imagination demonstrated in the creative aspects of the work. On the other hand, manuscripts with no problems in grammar, usage or
punctuation may not receive a grade higher than B- if they fail to demonstrate an understanding of the challenges (of style or voice, for example) involved in writing in the genre.

**C+**
Satisfactory: This writing shows constrained use of language (either in the creative shaping and delivery of content or in repeated errors in grammar, punctuation, diction and usage), and the treatment of the material has not resulted in sufficient depth. The writing is potentially interesting, and a revision may improve the manuscript.

**C/C-**
Below average: The writing is difficult to read because of inappropriate delivery or repeated grammatical errors or both; furthermore, the idea may not be appropriate for the form.

**P**
Marginal: The writing suffers from many problems of style and grammar; the writing may not be idiomatically acceptable.

**F**
Fail: The author fails to understand the nature of creative writing.

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**ASSOCIATE OF ARTS DEGREE WITH SPECIALIZATION IN CREATIVE WRITING**

Douglas College offers an Associate of Arts Degree with a specialization in Creative Writing. The student who wishes to specialize in Creative Writing will have to take six Creative Writing courses as well as fulfill the general requirements for the Associate of Arts Degree as follows:

1. Six credits in first year English—these could include a Creative Writing course on top of the 18 credits in CRWR required, as noted above.

2. Eighteen credits in first year Arts other than English, of which six shall be in the Social Sciences, six in the Humanities. No more than six credits shall be in any one subject area.

3. Eighteen credits of second year Arts in two or more subject areas.


5. Nine elective semester credits of first or second year courses.

A list of Creative Writing courses and other relevant courses may be obtained from the CRWR Department. Students who graduate with an Associate of Arts Degree (CRWR) will understand the basics of and have had the opportunity
to practise writing poetry, plays, fiction, writing for children and personal narrative. They may have further specialized in one of the genres by taking two of the following advanced courses: short fiction, advanced poetry writing, memoir, speculative fiction, advanced playwriting, and screenwriting. Learning through writing workshops will have given students practice in developing the critical skills essential for revising their own work, and the interpersonal skills necessary for participating in upper level and graduate level workshops in university.

For more information on the Associate of Arts Degrees (CRWR) please see an Academic Advisor or talk to a Creative Writing instructor.

"Literature is a beautiful thing... I think of language like a material, like a metal or a mineral, that I’ve been able to and lucky to have to shape what I am seeing."

- Dionne Brand

STUDY ABROAD

During the past several Summer semesters, Douglas College Creative Writing students participated in study abroad programs taught at University of Wales Trinity St. David and in Scotland. Any future opportunities for similar programs will be announced by your instructors and through the regular means of advertising (e.g. posters and the College website).

UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY ST. DAVID

Douglas College has established an agreement for our Associate of Arts graduates in Creative Writing to complete an undergraduate degree in Creative Writing at University of Wales Trinity St. David. Although admission will be determined partly by portfolio, successful applicants would be admitted into the final year of a three-year BA Honours degree in creative writing. Students interested in pursuing this possibility would need to take at least two literature courses as part of their associate degree.

For more information, contact Elizabeth Bachinsky at bachinskye@douglascollege.ca.
PROGRAMS, PUBLICATIONS & READINGS

PEARLS

Each year, the Creative Writing Department publishes Pearls, an anthology of the best student writing. Submissions in all genres are solicited by instructors during the fall, winter and summer terms for publication the following March. The Pearls launch celebrates our talented students with an evening of readings.

POEM OF THE MONTH

Each month, the Creative Writing Department displays posters of exceptional poetry written by Douglas College students. Poems for Poem of the Month are selected by a committee of instructors. The Poem of the Month competition is open to all students at Douglas College.

WRITERS UNPLUGGED

Creative Writing students, especially those pursuing an Associate of Arts Degree, can meet fellow students and share work in any genre at the Writers Unplugged evening. Students will have the opportunity to read their work at the open mic, and a guest writer will be invited to talk about the writing process. Don’t be shy; come meet, mingle and talk about writing.

INDIGENOUS WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE

In 2019, the Department introduced the Indigenous Writer-in-Residence Program. The esteemed writer interacts with the community through public presentations and events, consultations with students, class visits, and a reading and/or craft talk at the annual Indigenous Voices program hosted by EVENT Magazine and Douglas College’s Aboriginal Student Services.

LITERATURE ALIVE

In the Winter term, the Creative Writing Department presents a reading and panel discussion event featuring a variety of Canadian writers. This program is free and open to the public. Watch for posters around the College announcing this year’s event.

Note: In 2020-2021, due to the COVID19 pandemic, the listed programming may be adapted as virtual events.


-GEORGE ELLIOTT CLARKE
THE MAURICE HODGSON CREATIVE WRITING AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Students may apply for the award that commemorates the late Maurice Hodgson, who taught at Douglas College for 20 years and inaugurated many of the Creative Writing courses and projects.

To be eligible for the award, a student must have completed a minimum of two Creative Writing courses at Douglas College and be enrolled in a third in the Winter 2020 semester. One of these must be an advanced-level course (CRWR 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203 or 2350). In addition, the applicant must have maintained a B average or a minimum GPA of at least 3.0, have satisfied all graduation requirements for the Associate of Arts Creative Writing Degree, or be enrolled in a minimum of three (3) credits in their final semester of the Associate of Arts Creative Writing Degree.

The deadline for applications is January 30, 2021. Applications may be submitted anytime during the year, via email to the Department Chair, up until the closing date. The results will be announced at the launch of Pearls in March 2020. The application should include a 500-word letter explaining how writing matters in the applicant’s life, a transcript confirming eligibility (as per the above-listed criteria), and a portfolio of selected work (maximum 30 pages—double-spaced for prose), including original stories, poems and/or plays, and revised versions. The applicant, upon completion of the two-year writing program at Douglas College, must plan to enroll in an undergraduate Creative Writing degree program at any post-secondary institution.

THE GAIL FRASER SCHOLARSHIP FOR LITERARY STUDIES

This scholarship was established in 2011 in memory of Douglas College English instructor Gail Fraser. Gail’s family wished to support students who followed a similar path to Gail, “a real scholar with a keen mind.”

Eligible applicants must meet the following criteria: A minimum GPA of 3.5; completion of an Associate of Arts degree (or 60-credit diploma equivalent) with a specialization in English or Creative Writing or an Associate of Arts degree without specialization but including a combined minimum of six English and/or Creative Writing courses; and acceptance as a transfer student from Douglas into a Bachelor of Arts program in English or Bachelor of Fine Arts Program in Creative Writing. Preference will be given to a student transferring into the English (BA) or Creative Writing (BFA) programs at the University of British Columbia.

To apply, please download the application form from the LLPA Student Awards, Prizes, Bursaries and Scholarships page on the Douglas College website and follow submission instructions. Include with your application a copy of your Douglas College transcripts and a written reflection, 1000 to 1500 words in length, addressing the role and importance of literature in your education and/or life, as well as in your future study plans. The application deadline is April 30, 2021.
The Creative Writing Department is home to *EVENT*, one of Canada's top literary magazines. Founded in 1971, the magazine prints the very best in new poetry and prose, including fiction, poetry, non-fiction and reviews.

*EVENT* is published three times a year and contains over 100 pages of intelligent, compelling, fresh writing, publishing both accessible and challenging work from across Canada and around the world.

*EVENT* holds Canada’s longest-running non-fiction essay contest. Other highlights include an annual issue featuring “Notes on Writing”—brief, personal insights into the process by an eclectic mix of Canadian writers. The pages of *EVENT* are housed in an elegant wraparound cover showcasing the work of BC photographers, and commissioned illustrations accompany the writing.

After appearing in *EVENT*, writers have received recognition from the Journey Prize, the National Magazine Awards, the Western Magazine Awards, the Pushcart Prize, *Best Canadian Stories* and *Best Canadian Poetry*. Many of Canada’s most distinguished writers have appeared in *EVENT* both before and after they gained national or international recognition.

For more information, visit:

[eventmagazine.ca](http://www.eventmagazine.ca)
The book in your mind will always be better than what you write. But it’s not real until you write it down.

-Will Ferguson