

COURSE TITLE: FOR THE LOVE OF WRITING

NO. OF CREDITS: 6 QUARTER CREDITS
[semester equivalent = 4.00 credits]

WA CLOCK HRS: 60
OREGON PDUs: 60
PENNSYLVANIA ACT 48: 60

INSTRUCTOR: Sara Sebastian
sebastiansarapdx@gmail.com

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Nationwide, only a quarter of 8th and 12th graders are proficient in writing compared to nearly three-quarters who are proficient in reading (NAEP). It's time to change that.

It is through our experience of being a student that we are better able to empower our own. Join this class to reconnect with writing! In a fun and supportive environment, you will write informal and formal pieces, demystify the writing and editing process, and take numerous activities into your classroom to reignite the passion for writing. A nourishing and transformative course for any educator (you don't have to be an English teacher!) in grades 6-12.

There are two choice books that you will be required to read. One is for storytelling & craft, and the other is for creativity. A provided list for each assignment is available.

Get your colleagues or friends together and take this course as a group!

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Upon completion of this course, participants will have:

- ? Learned various strategies to make writing engaging and enjoyable
- ? Made informed editing choices by honing their drafting and revision process
- ? Applied concrete steps for increased creativity and self-compassion
- ? Submitted a piece of their writing to a literary journal or website
- ? Created an engaging unit with at least three new writing lessons to use in their classroom

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Completion of all specified assignments is required for issuance of hours or credit. The Heritage Institute does not award partial credit.

The use of artificial intelligence is not permitted. Assignment responses found to be generated by AI will not be accepted.

HOURS EARNED:

Completing the basic assignments (Section A. Information Acquisition) for this course automatically earns participants their choice of CEUs (Continuing Education Units), Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, or Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours. The Heritage Institute offers CEUs and is an approved provider of Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, and Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours.

UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT INFORMATION

REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

Continuing Education Quarter credits are awarded by Antioch University Seattle (AUS). AUS requires 75% or better for credit at the 400 level and 85% or better to issue credit at the 500 level. These criteria refer both to the amount and quality of work submitted.

1. Completion of Information Acquisition assignments 30%
 2. Completion of Learning Application assignments 40%
 3. Completion of Integration Paper assignment 30%
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CREDIT/NO CREDIT (No Letter Grades or Numeric Equivalents on Transcripts)

Antioch University Seattle (AUS) Continuing Education Quarter credit is offered on a Credit/No Credit basis; neither letter grades nor numeric equivalents are on a transcript. 400 level credit is equal to a "C" or better, 500 level credit is equal to a "B" or better. This information is on the back of the transcript.

AUS Continuing Education quarter credits may or may not be accepted into degree programs. Prior to registering, determine with your district personnel, department head, or state education office the acceptability of these credits for your purpose.

ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

REQUIRED TEXT

Choose **one** of the following books on creativity:

- ? Creative Quest by QuestLove (288 pages)
- ? Big Magic by Elizabeth Gilbert (304 pages)
- ? The Artist's Way by Julia Cameron (235 pages)
- ? The Creative Act by Rick Rubin (432 pages)
- ? The War of Art by Steven Pressfield (190 pages)

AND

You may pick **one** of the books below or another based on storytelling or writing craft:

- ? Storycraft by Jack Hart (259 pages)
- ? Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within by Natalie Goldberg (198 pages)
- ? On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft by Stephen King (320 pages)
- ? The Art of Memoir by Mary Karr (256 pages)
- ? Interviewing: The Oregon Method by Peter Laufer (400 pages)
- ? The Magic Words by Joseph Fasano (192 pages)

Bring a blank journal.

None. All reading is online.

MATERIALS FEE

None.

ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR HOURS OR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

A. INFORMATION ACQUISITION

Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. Feel free to read and respond to others' comments.

Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

Assignment #1: Introduction

Hello and welcome to For the Love of Writing! Please watch this short introductory video.

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/M-18VGcaWxc?si=I1vTvVwAaH-qagKG>

Briefly introduce yourself (200-300 words), including your professional situation, reasons for being interested in this course, what you expect to gain from taking this course, and your experience with the writing and publishing process. Also, include any book (fiction/nonfiction), article, essay, or other form of writing you would like to publish.

Respond to one of the participants taking this course in the Group Forum.

Assignment #2: Quickwrite Prompts

Did you know that there are thousands of writing prompts in your classroom, just waiting to be discovered? You will learn where to find them and why Quickwrites are important.

- Download and read this Google doc on [Quickwrite Prompt Strategies + Examples](#) to spark your creative thinking and begin the writing process.
- Set your timer for 7 minutes and write quickly using one of the prompts you reviewed. Important: I recommend giving your students just two prompt options. (Grammar, spelling, handwriting, and syntax are not important here. The objective is to get your thoughts down on paper.)
- Take a photo of your writing (if you wrote by hand).

Post a photo of your Quickwrite (or simply copy and paste the text) to the Group Forum.

Assignment #3: Providing Feedback

Receiving and providing quality feedback is a necessary part of the writing process. It helps build a sense of community and makes everyone better writers.

Read the article on [Providing Feedback to Writers](#).

- Using some of the above techniques for giving feedback, do so for at least one of the participants in the Group Forum in Assignment #2.
- Copy the feedback you gave in assignment #2 and post it to this assignment (#3).
- Please try to follow the 3:1 rule—giving 3 compliments for every critique.

Post your response.

Assignment #4: Improved Writing Fluency via Journaling

There are several reasons why writing by hand is important; one is to increase fluency.

Read the articles below:

- [Three Ways That Handwriting With a Pen Positively Affects Your Brain](#).
- [Why Does Writing by Hand Promote Better and Faster Learning?](#)

Read the article [Julia Cameron Wants You To Do Your Morning Pages](#) (if you are able to access it) or you can watch this [Morning Pages video](#) from Julia Cameron's website. on the importance of journaling each morning.

- For the next seven days, keep a journal; follow one of the following [formats for journaling](#).
- At the end of the week, write a reflection titled "Weekly Check-Up" and answer the following questions:

- a) Were you successful in maintaining your journal writing each day?
- b) Have you noticed a difference in your attitude or how you interact with others or the world?
- c) Reflecting on your journaling, did you learn anything new about yourself this week?

Post your response.

Assignment #5: Write a Literary Analysis Paragraph + Give Feedback

Literary Analysis can be fun. Think color-coding and arguing about whether dogs are better than cats!

- Read this introduction from Purdue University, [What Makes A Good Literature Paper](#), that gives some thesis statement examples.

- Download a copy of this Google Doc on [Literary Analysis](#). Keep this document in your toolbox to use as a handout for your classroom! Make a copy if you wish to edit it, though you must keep my copyright at the bottom of each page.
- Join [Narrative](#), a free online site that promotes literature and supports and encourages teachers and students to develop a love of reading and writing.
- Read [Love Language, A Short Short Story](#), by Kate Baldwin, published in Narrative. (This short story is also considered flash fiction.)
- Write a thesis statement and then one literary analysis paragraph of 200-300 words on “Love Language”.

Post your response in the Group Forum, and give feedback to one of the participant’s posting on “Love Language.”

Assignment #6: Play. It’s Why You’re in Education...Right?

Read the article [Play Doesn’t End With Childhood: Why Adults Need Recess Too](#), by Sami Yenigun.

Listen to the Podcast. You’re [Never Too Old to Play](#) with Dr. Sanjay Gupta.

In a 300-400 word paper, answer the following questions:

- What do you think are some not-so-obvious reasons we, as adults, typically shy away from play? Use evidence from both resources to support your theory.
- What are the different types of play that Dr. Stuart Brown describes?
- How do you plan on incorporating more play into your life? What are some ways you might do so?
- What do you think about what Dr. Stuart Brown said about blending work and play?
- What are the top three compelling reasons for you to include more play in your life?
- How can you add play to your classroom?
- What are elements of your personality that are playful?

Post your response.

Assignment #7: Storytelling Craft

Further your knowledge of the craft by reading from some of the experts. Check out a book on writing or storytelling craft from the library and write a reflection of 400-500 words.

Answer these questions:

- What were three misconceptions about writing or storytelling you had before reading this book?
- Describe three new craft/storytelling techniques and how you will use them in your upcoming assignment on flash fiction. OR if the book you chose focuses on nonfiction writing, describe three new craft/storytelling techniques and how you would use them in a creative nonfiction essay.

Here is a list of suggested books on writing or storytelling craft: (You could choose another if you wish based on storytelling or writing.)

- Storycraft by Jack Hart (259 pages)
- Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within by Natalie Goldberg (198 pages)
- On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft by Stephen King (320 pages)
- The Art of Memoir by Mary Karr (256 pages)
- Interviewing: The Oregon Method by Peter Laufer (400 pages)

Post your response.

Assignment #8: Flash Fiction

Explore fiction in a flash! Make a story come alive with dialogue and blocking.

Read [What is Flash Fiction?](#) by Moriah Richard and [Woman to Woman](#) by Honorée Fanonne Jeffers.

Write your own flash fiction of 350-400 words! Be sure to include these elements:

- Dialogue
- Blocking (what a character does when or in-between speaking)
- These words: “the librarian kept” or “her/his/their chest lifted.”
- A title

Post your response in the Group Forum, and give feedback to at least one participant’s flash fiction.

Assignment #9: Self-Compassion to Reflect and Grow

Writers (and educators) need to set aside their inner critic, be compassionate with themselves, and take time for reflection.

Erin Treat is the guiding teacher at Vallecitos Retreat Center in New Mexico. She gave this talk to a group of educators on a mindfulness retreat. Listen to Erin's [Dharma Talk on Self-Compassion](#), 46 minutes. (I would do this when you have no plans afterward and are in a comfortable and safe space.)

- Read the article [Why Self-Compassion Works Better Than Self-Esteem](#) by Olga Khazan.
 - Write a reflection of at least 300 words, answering the following questions by incorporating what you've learned from the previous two resources.
1. What are three ways you can practice self-compassion?
 2. What was a sentence (or two) from Dharma Talk on Self-Compassion that spoke to you? How will you nurture this part of you?
 3. Write about a recent time you were self-compassionate.
 4. What are the differences between self-compassion and self-esteem? Do you think this will shift your mindset, or has it already?
 5. How can you model self-compassion in the classroom?
 6. How does greater self-compassion allow for creativity to blossom?

Post your response.

Assignment #10: Creativity

Not only have I enjoyed these books, but I've been able to overcome blockages in order to realize my full creative potential. Read a book on creativity and write a 400-500-word reflection.

Include the following:

- How do you define creativity?
- Do you think you are creative? Why?
- How do your beliefs and those of the author relate in regards to creativity?
- In what ways will you think about life differently from reading this book?
- A ten-step plan outlining what someone could do to increase their creativity.

List of some creative books: (Please pick one of these)

- Creative Quest by QuestLove (288 pages)
- Big Magic by Elizabeth Gilbert (304 pages)
- The Artist's Way by Julia Cameron (235 pages)
- The Creative Act by Rick Rubin (432 pages)
- The War of Art by Steven Pressfield (190 pages)

Post your response.

Assignment #11: Writing Groups for Students

Giving students time for a high-stakes task is always a good idea!

- Read the [Google doc](#) on creating Writing Groups in your classroom. (Make a copy to edit the document if you want to use it in your classroom, maintaining my copyright.)
 - Review the ["Press, Address, Bless"](#) feedback methods Google Slides (you can use it in your classroom)
 - Write a 300-400 word reflection on writing groups. Include the following:
1. Why would you incorporate this into your classroom?
 2. How would you incorporate this into your classroom?
 3. Would you make any changes to the format you selected?
 4. What questions do you have?
 5. What potential issues do you see happening? Can you think of any solutions?

Post your response.

Assignment #12: Revising & Editing

Getting a first draft down is just the first step!

- Read the article [How to Edit Your Own Writing](#) by George Wylesol. If you are not able to access this article, you can instead read [How to Self Edit](#) by MasterClass.
(To add a counterpoint to the article: On rare occasions, I have found that the first draft of something really can shine.)
- Listen to this podcast; [Have you ridden an acoustic bike lately?](#) from 9:00-18:00 (Grammar Girl Episode 940) as the host reads

Susan Herman's "tight writing" segment.

- Download the [Editor's Checklist](#) and keep it as part of your toolkit.
- Pick a piece to edit and write 300 words on your process from the previous two resources.
- For further knowledge: I recommend the book *Mechanically Inclined* by Jeff Anderson for anyone who wants to continue writing and especially to all of those who are English teachers!

Post your response.

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

B. LEARNING APPLICATION

In this section, you will apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you do not have a classroom available to you, please contact the instructor for course modifications. Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. Feel free to read and respond to others' comments. Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

Assignment #13: Write a Review

To write a review on a "fun" topic, the writer must go through the same process as if this were literature analysis: experience the work (of art, a meal, a video game), take notes, make a claim, and support it.

- Read the overview and Related Lesson Plan in this article [Analyzing Arts, Criticizing Culture: Writing reviews With The New York Times](#).
- Read two reviews from two different categories, such as: book, restaurant, album, movie, museum exhibit, performance, or game. One of the categories must be the same in which you intend to write your own review, so that you can read an exemplary text. For example, if I wanted to write a movie review, one of the two reviews I'd read would have to be a movie review.
- Write one review in 350-450 words, using this [rubric](#) from The New York Times for guidance.
- Download this [worksheet](#) from the New York Times to discuss reviews in your classroom.

Post your response in the Group Forum, and give feedback to one person's review.

Assignment #14: 100-Word Memoir — Create Seven Drafts + A Lesson Plan

I got this brilliant idea, the 100-word memoir, from the teacher and author Kelly Gallagher, though I created the seven-draft process. Gallagher wasn't the only one to come up with a 100-word story, however. The New York Times has published many Tiny Love Stories that are wonderful exemplars for you and your students.

Complete the following:

- Read this [PDF](#) of 100-word narratives from Teaching With 'Tiny Love Stories.'
- Your task is to write a 100-word memoir based on one important moment in your life and then create seven drafts using the instructions and examples from this Google document [100-Word Memoir, Seven Drafts](#).
- You will share this on the Group Forum, so you must be comfortable sharing it.
- Share your finished 100-word memoir in the Group Forum.

AND

Create a lesson utilizing the 100-word memoir for your class and share it in the Group Forum.

- Here is a [Lesson Plan](#) you could modify or be inspired by. Or, you may use [THI's lesson template](#).

Post your response in the Group Forum, and give feedback to one person's 100-word memoir + lesson plan.

Assignment #15: Lesson Plan

Complete one of the following options:

Option A)

Adapt/create a unit consisting of at least two lessons reflecting what you've learned in this course, with appropriate discussion strategies.

- Before implementing, create a pre-survey for your students about their confidence and enjoyment in writing.
- Implement your lessons with students in your classroom.
- Use your own template (or the standard [lesson planning template](#).)
- Implement your lessons with students in your classroom.
- Write a 400-500 word analysis of the data, including charts, and commentary on what worked well and what could be improved.
- Include any student feedback or noteworthy student products.
- Submit your unit plan to your instructor via the lesson tab.
- Share what you've learned with other teachers taking our courses by checking the [lesson library](#) box when you submit your lesson.

OR

Option B)

Use this option if you do not have a classroom or students available.

Adapt/create an article of at least three lessons to reflect what you've learned in this course. (Do not implement it.)

- Please refer to the guidelines for our blog [What Works: Teaching at its Best](#) prior to writing your article.
- When you submit your article to your instructor, please email a copy to Renee Leon (renee@hol.edu), the THI blog curator.
- Please indicate whether or not you are OK with having your article considered for publishing on our website.
- Submit your article to your instructor via the Response field and the modified lesson via Submit Lesson.
- As you submit your article, consider sharing it with other teachers taking our courses by checking the [lesson library](#) box.

Post your response.

Assignment #16: (500 Level ONLY) If You Never Try, You'll Never Know

Submit your work for a chance to be published!

- Read the article "[To succeed as an author, change your view of the competition](#)," about how to shift your mindset from competition to collaboration.
- Read the article "[When Famous Writers Got Rejected](#)" for motivation and to remember that every rejection is proof you are trying.
- Write a 100-200 word reflection on why the above resources can inspire writing and other aspects of your life.
- Make a spreadsheet. Check out this [Writing Submissions Example](#). Here is a [template](#) you can use. Make a copy of it to edit.
- Here is a [list](#) of some places you can submit. Before submitting anywhere, read some of the journal/website to see if your work would be a good fit.
- Create a [Submittable account](#) (free) and do more research on where you'd like to submit. (Some submissions are free, and some cost a few dollars for a reading fee.)
- Submit one piece of your writing to at least three publications!

Post your reflection and spreadsheet.

Assignment #17: (500 Level ONLY) Find Places for Students to Submit

Complete the following:

Read this article, [Out of the Classroom and Into the World: 70-Plus Places to Publish Teenage Writing and Art](#), for ideas on places/contests for your students to submit. The article forgot to mention [Narrative Magazine](#), which has a yearly high school contest.

- Make any necessary changes to this [Writing Submission Template – Student Version](#) (Make a copy to edit.)
- Share your edited spreadsheet with your students so they can submit their writing to be published.
- Be encouraging and give class time for students to submit their work (if applicable).
- Write a 200-word reflection on how this process went with your students by answering the following questions:
- What are some new things you learned about your students?
- Were there any students who surprised you, and in what way?
- Did this activity make you rethink other aspects of the classroom or your teaching?

AND

Create a PowerPoint or Google Slides presentation (minimum of 8 slides) with resources and instructions for teachers on steps their students can take to submit their work to be published.

Post in the response box.

C. INTEGRATION PAPER

SELF REFLECTION & INTEGRATION PAPER

(Please do not write this paper until you've completed all of your other assignments)

Write a 400-500 word Integration Paper answering these 5 questions:

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
4. How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned?

INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS ON YOUR WORK:

Instructors will comment on each assignment. If you do not hear from the instructor within a few days of posting your assignment, please get in touch with them immediately.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:

Sara Sebastian, M.A.T., is a teacher, writer, and entrepreneur. She has taught at a middle school in Portland, Oregon where she was awarded Teacher of the Year and at an IB school in Mexico City where she was the English Chair, redesigning curriculum for three grades. She holds two bachelor's degrees (History and Journalism) from the University of Oregon and a Master's in Teaching from Concordia University Portland. In January 2024, she was the featured poet for Slamlandia at Literary Arts. In the same month, she published her first book of poems, *We Call So Many Feelings Love*. Recently, one of her poems appeared in *The Magic Words* by Joseph Fasano. Find her at sarasebastian.co

BIBLIOGRAPHY

FOR THE LOVE OF WRITING

- Cameron, Julia, *The Artist's Way 30th Anniversary Edition*, TarcherPerigee, 2016, paperback, 272 pages, ISBN-13: 978-0143129257. While this book is designed as a guidebook for a self-paced, 12-week course, one could read the book first and do the course later (or not at all). I read the book over twelve weeks, participating in the course. I did the morning pages, Artist dates, weekly tasks, and check-ups. I got to know myself in a new way, and I was an open person to begin with!
- Fasano, Joseph, *The Magic Words*, TarcherPerigee, 2024, paperback, 192 pages, ISBN-13: 9780593716878. This book came into my life in the most exciting way—I submitted a poem, using Fasano's prompt, and it was selected to appear in the book. As a poet and English teacher, I was thrilled this book exists. Besides my own poetry packets I've developed, this book is the best introductory vehicle to teach poetry to people of all ages.
- Gallagher, Kelly, *In the Best Interest of Students: Staying True to What Works in the ELA Classroom*, Stenhouse Publishers, 2015, paperback, 238 pages, ISBN-13: 978-1-6253-1044-6. My copy looks like it's gone through to the moon and back! Gallagher helped me dramatically improve how I teach ELA and encouraged my own creativity, too. This book will help English teachers get out of their comfort zone while providing seamless lessons on how to get there. In addition to this book, he has co-authored a book with educator Penny Little titled *180 Days: Two Teachers and the Quest to Engage and Empower Adolescents* that I highly recommend, too.
- Narrative Magazine
<https://www.narrativemagazine.com/>
This literary organization has made a big impact in my classes. From reading the winners of the annual high school narrative competition, to shaping my poetry units, Narrative is a classic standby that is free to use for all.
- Questlove, *Creative Quest*, Ecco, 2018, hardcover, 288 pages, ISBN-10: 0062670557. When reading this book, I felt like Questlove gave me the ultimate spa day: nourishing my whole creative mind, body, and spirit—getting into crannies I didn't even know were holding me back! It's one of my most recommended books.
- Submittable
<https://www.submittable.com/>
This secret tool that all writers somehow know about has been discovered! Most publications and literary journals use Submittable for writing submissions. It's a great way to keep track of your writing life and find new places to publish your work.

- The New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/>

The New York Times has countless models for our students, not to mention dozens of lesson plans on their Learning Network. Tiny Love Stories help students choose the best 100 words for their memoir, and writing contests keep students engaged.