



## University of Iowa Dublin Summer Writing Workshop 2019

### Instructor

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Office, M-W, 1:00-2:00 or by appt.

### Course Time and Location:

University College Dublin  
Belfield Dublin 4

M-W 10:00-12:00

**Course Description:** This intensive writing workshop focuses on literary nonfiction, exploring the ways in which the contemporary essay has answered question of voice, scene, point of view, style and theme. Readings will be drawn from pieces of contemporary nonfiction and Joyce's *Dubliners*. These will serve as the basis for discussing the art and craft of creative prose. They will also offer us springboards for our own writing. Because we are visitors in Ireland, we will focus on creative writing about place, as well as non-fiction techniques for travel narratives and personal essays on the kinds of "difference" such journeys and dislocations incite in the writer, as well as those unexpected responses and interactions the writer inspires in the people he/she meets who call Dublin home.

**Required Texts:** Miller, *Tell it Slant: Creating, Refining and Publishing Creative Nonfiction* (2012), James Joyce, *Dubliners* (1920) Penguin.

**Online selections from:** James Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son* (1955); Joan Didion, *Salvador* (1984) and *Slouching Toward Bethlehem* (1968); Bruce Chatwin, *In Patagonia* (1977); Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* (2000); Lauren Quinn, "Mr. Nhem's Genocide Camera" (2014); Paul Salopek, "Out of Eden Walk" (ongoing); Caryl Phillips, *Atlantic Sound* (2000)

### Schedule of Class Meetings and Assignments

#### Week 1: Arrivals

M: Introductions to each other and to workshopping. Reading: Miller, "The Workshop."

T: Activating the senses. On Writing: Miller, "Taking Place." Didion, from *Salvador* (online) Flashwriting prompt 1: noting and remembering.

W: A sense of place. Kincaid, from *A Small Place* (online); Quinn, from *The Believer* (online). In class writing: place memory. Writing prompt 1 (due for Monday workshop)

#### Week 2: Observation

M: Workshop: Memory, Sense, Place

T: Scene and Exposition (Selections from *Dubliners*). Salopek, *Out of Eden Walk* (Online). Flashwriting prompt: the street

W: Selections from *Dubliners* ("Little Cloud," "A Painful Case", and ".pdf, "Joyce Place"). In class writing: your street. Writing Prompt 2 (Scene and exposition" (due for Monday)

### **Week 3: Process**

M: Workshop

T: Contexts: History and Research. Excerpts from Phillips, *Atlantic Sound*; Chatwin, *In Patagonia* (online).  
Flashwriting prompt: the museum

W:

Writer's Retreat Prompt: Essaying (due Saturday of the Writer's Retreat)

Writing Prompt 3 ("Process") due Monday. Eavan Boland, Object Lessons (Online)

### **June 22-24 (Writers' Retreat)**

### **Week 4: Voice**

M: Workshop

T: Baldwin, "Stranger in the Village" (online)

W: Writing Prompt 4 ("Voice") due Monday.

### **Week 5: Back to Basics**

M: Workshop

T: Miller, "The Basics of Good Writing in any form" (online)

W: Developing Characters. Complete draft due Saturday.

### **Week 6: Envoy**

M: Workshop

T: Workshop

W: Workshop

### **Final Project due Friday, July 12.**

**Session Details:** Class meets three times a week. The workshop lasts two hours with a brief break and will include craft-based discussions of readings as well as student work. Students will read other class members work with attention, give short written and verbal assessment of all work, and be prepared both to give and receive constructive criticism. The syllabus may change to reflect new events and opportunities, so always stay abreast of the ICON website for the latest version and other announcements.

**Discussion:** Each student will upload comments on all workshop writing in their groups and on course readings as assigned by the instructor.

**Flashwriting prompts:** To make the most of our time in Dublin, I will assign regular "flashwriting" prompts. These will require you to visit a specific location and make notes, which will then be the basis for extemporaneous in class writing the following day.

**Writing Prompts 1-4:** On Wednesdays, students will be assigned a prompt for a short (500 word) piece of writing to be completed and posted to ICON by the following Sunday morning. These will be the basis for our workshops, and can build toward the final project. They should be written specifically for this class (no recycling).

**Portfolio:** You will gather your short writing assignments (flashwriting responses and writing prompts 1-4) into a portfolio for part of your final grade. This portfolio should include a brief reflection (1 page) on what you achieved and learned through these pieces of writing. The reflection can highlight works of which you are particularly proud, works that caused you extra struggle, or works that you identify as turning points in your writing or technique.

**Creative essay project:** This final project should be an eight-paged (double spaced), polished and thoughtful work of narrative prose that reflects some aspect of your time and experience in Ireland. We will workshop drafts of these pieces intensively during the final week, and a polished, revised version will be submitted on Friday of that week.

**Attendance:** You are required to attend every class and all excursions. Illnesses or emergencies are the only excused absences. Having more than one excused absence, and any unexcused ones at all, will result in a lowered final grade.

**Participation:** Come to each class having read the day's assignment; be prepared to listen, ask questions, and help make sense of the readings. Workshop is a no phone zone and I consider paying attention to your phone instead of your peers to be equivalent to an unexcused absence.

**Excursions:** Excursions in and beyond Dublin may be integrated into our schedule as time allows. A complete itinerary will be shared with participants within a few weeks of departure to Ireland.

**Grading:** Students are graded on their writing, their responses to peer work, and their participation in the workshop. Attendance at all workshops is mandatory and absence as well as lateness is considered when the grade is assigned. Failing to submit a paper may result in an F grade. I grade work based not only on quality, but also on effort and improvement that shows the conscious application of workshop advice, attention to technique, and creative revision. Grading percentages: final project 60%; portfolio 20%; participation 20%