



ALMA COLLEGE

Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing

Summer Residency

August 19, 2025-August 28, 2025

University of Oxford
St. Hugh's College
Oxford, England

WORKSHOP LOCATIONS

| <i>Workshop</i> | <i>Location</i> | <i>Genre</i> | <i>Faculty</i> |
|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Workshop I | J.R.R. Tolkien Room | Fiction | S. Kirk Walsh |
| Workshop II | Virginia Woolf Room | Creative Nonfiction/Poetry | Jim Daniels |

PROGRAM DIRECTOR – SOPHFRONIA SCOTT

General Office Hours: Email scotts@alma.edu for an appointment.

Program Notes

ST. HUGH'S COLLEGE CHECK-IN PROCEDURE: When you arrive in Oxford please make your way to St Hugh's College, St Margaret's Road, Oxford (10 minutes by taxi from train or bus station). Head to the Porter's Lodge – they will be expecting you. **Check in time is from 2 pm.**

The address is: **St Hugh's College, St Margaret's Rd, Oxford OX2 6LE**

<https://www.st-hughs.ox.ac.uk/>

You can reach Janet Simmonds, if necessary, at:

janet@grand-tourist.com

[+44 7590 990 160](tel:+447590990160) (what's app)

FACULTY: Please arrange to connect with your assigned faculty advisor virtually or in person during the residency to complete your study plan.

VIDEO LECTURES: Four faculty lectures will be delivered via Zoom video. Two of the lectures will be LIVE (Matthew Gavin Frank's and Leslie Contreras Schwartz's) and two will be pre-recorded (Karen Bender's and Shonda Buchanan's). The recorded lectures will be available in the residency folder in our SharePoint site to be viewed on your own. If you have questions about the material, you may email Karen (benderke@alma.edu) and Shonda (buchananst@alma.edu) directly.

GRADUATE ASSISTANT: Joy Bilbey MFA '23 will be available to assist with tech, announcements, communications with housing staff for room questions or needs, and general support throughout the residency.

NAME TAGS: Please wear your Alma name tags during the residency.

BOOKSTORE ORDERS: If you would like to support Alma's local independent bookstore, Ballyhoo Books and Brew, books may be ordered via Ballyhoo's site on [bookshop.org](https://bookshop.org/shop/ballyhoo_books). https://bookshop.org/shop/ballyhoo_books. Note: Some authors will bring copies of their books and will sell copies for signing.

STUDENT READINGS: The residency schedule features an evening of student readings which will take place in the J.R.R. Tolkien Room. Please sign up at the student meeting on the evening of August 19. If you would like to volunteer to emcee the readings, mention this at the meeting.

OPEN TIME: There is space built into the schedule for personal writing time and study plan meetings with your faculty advisor. It may be used at your discretion. These meetings can also take place during mealtimes.

SPECIAL ACTIVITY: We encourage your participation in scheduled outdoor activities, but they are not required. No expertise is necessary but do use your discretion in terms of your health and capabilities. This time may also be used as personal writing time.

PRINTING/COPIES: If you require copies of handouts or other materials, **please print at home and bring them with you or view documents in the [MFA SharePoint site](#).**

Residency Schedule

Tuesday, August 19, 2025 (Arrival Day)

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| 2:00 pm | Check In. See details in program notes. |
| 5:00 pm | Student Meeting. J.R.R. Tolkien Room. |
| 7:00 pm | Light Supper. St. Hugh's Dining Room. |
| During the residency | Students Note: <i>If you have completed a term and have not had an end-of-term phone conference with your adviser, please schedule 30 minutes with your advisor to do so.</i> |

Wednesday, August 20

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| 7:45 am | Breakfast. St. Hugh's Dining Room. |
| 9:30 am to 10:45 am | Orientation and Oxford Introduction. J.R.R. Tolkien Room. |
| 11 am to 12:15pm | LECTURE: Jim Daniels, "Working Across Genres: Turning Poetry and Prose into Scripts, Turning Scripts into Films." J.R.R. Tolkien Room. |
| 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm | Lunch. St. Hugh's Dining Room. |
| 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm | WORKSHOP 1 (see locations on page 1). |
| 4:00 pm | Tea Break |
| 5 pm to 6pm | LECTURE: Matthew Gavin Frank, " <i>The Inadequate Container: Making Discoveries When Content Bursts the Confines of Its Form.</i> " J.R.R. Tolkien Room. LIVE VIDEO. |
| 6:15 pm to 7:00 pm | VISITING WRITER READING: Nancy Campbell, poet and nonfiction writer. "Life in the microchasm: in the margins of Oxford and other orbits" Introduction by Calius Lewis. J.R.R. Tolkien Room. |
| 7:00 pm | Welcome Dinner. St. Hugh's Dining Room |

Thursday, August 21

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| 7:45 am | Breakfast. St. Hugh's Dining Room. |
| 9:30 am to 10:30 am | VISITING WRITER LECTURE: Nancy Campbell, " <i>Hunger Stones and Ice Cores: Or Words Writ on Water in a Changing Climate.</i> " J.R.R. Tolkien Room. |
| 10:45 am to 12:00 pm | LECTURE: S. Kirk Walsh, "Mrs. Dalloway: <i>What We Can Learn from Virginia Woolf & Her Masterpiece.</i> " J.R.R. Tolkien Room. |

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| 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm | Lunch. St. Hugh's Dining Room. |
| 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm | WORKSHOP 2. |
| 4:30 pm | Travel to Broad Street, Oxford. 25 mins walk or 15 mins on bus. |
| 5:15 pm | Assemble outside Old Divinity School for tour of The Bodleian Library . Out of hours visit – just for us - includes Duke Humphry's Library and Radcliffe Camera. |
| 7:30 pm | Refreshments at the local pub included this evening. |

Friday, August 22 – Walking Tour of Oxford and Afternoon Punting Party

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| 7:45 am | Breakfast. St. Hugh's Dining Room. |
| 9:00 am | Assemble at Porter's Lodge, St Hugh's for walking tour of Central Oxford. |
| 11:30 am | Free time in Oxford to explore and lunch on your own. Optional bike ride with Lucy Simmonds. |
| 4:30 pm | Meet at St Hugh's for our afternoon treat – a punting party on the River Cherwell. |
| 6:30 pm | Traditional Pub Supper |
| 9:00 pm | Return to St. Hugh's |

Saturday, August 23

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| 7:45 am | Breakfast. St. Hugh's Dining Room. |
| 9:30 am to 10:30 am | STUDENT LECTURE: Lori Phillips, <i>"Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire: The Boundaries and Transparency Where Truth and Invention Can Meld to Create Alchemy of Story in Creative Nonfiction."</i> J.R.R. Tolkien Room. |
| 11:00 am to 12:15 pm | VISITING WRITER LECTURE: Alis Hawkins. <i>"An Array of Oxford Inspirations."</i> J.R.R. Tolkien Room. |
| 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm | Lunch. St. Hugh's Dining Room. |
| 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm | WORKSHOP 3. |
| 4pm | Tea Break. |
| 5 pm to 6pm | LECTURE: Leslie Contreras Schwartz, <i>"I was born with a knife in one hand and a wound in the other." : Poetry as an Act of Survival.</i> J.R.R. Tolkien Room. LIVE VIDEO. |

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| 6:15 pm to 7:00 pm | FACULTY READINGS: Jim Daniels, creative nonfiction, introduced by Katherina Thomas. S. Kirk Walsh, fiction, introduced by D’Juanna Lester. J.R.R. Tolkien Room. |
| 7:00 pm | Dinner. St. Hugh’s Dining Room. |

Sunday, August 24

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| 7:45 am | Breakfast. St. Hugh’s Dining Room. |
| 9:30 am to 10:30 am | STUDENT LECTURE: D’Juanna Lester, <i>“Eras of Escapism: How Popular Romantic Period Pieces Influence Modern Culture and My Romantasy Storytelling.”</i> J.R.R. Tolkien Room. |
| 11:00 am to 12:15 pm | VISITING EDITOR LECTURE: Meredith Benson, <i>“From Manuscript to Marketplace: Breaking into Publishing.”</i> J.R.R. Tolkien Room. |
| 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm | Lunch. St. Hugh’s Dining Room. |
| 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm | WORKSHOP 4. |
| 4:00 pm | Tea Break. |
| 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm | LECTURE: Dhonielle Clayton. <i>“The Alchemy of Story — Balancing Entertainment and Truth in Commercial Fiction.”</i> J.R.R. Tolkien Room. |
| 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm | GRADUATE ASSISTANT AND FACULTY READINGS: Joy Bilbey MFA ’23, fiction, and Dhonielle Clayton, fiction, introduced by Gretchen Vogt. J.R.R. Tolkien Room. |
| 7:30 pm | Free evening, dinner on your own. |

Monday, August 25 – Full Day Excursion to Cotswold and Blenheim Palace

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| 7:45 am | Breakfast. St. Hugh’s Dining Room. |
| 9:00 am | Assemble at Porter’s Lodge for 9:15 am Departure. |
| 5:00 pm | Return transport to St. Hugh’s. |
| 7:00 pm | Dinner. St. Hugh’s Dining Room |
| 8:00 pm | Student Readings. J.R.R. Tolkien Room. |

Tuesday, August 26

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| 7:45 am | Breakfast. St. Hugh’s Dining Room. |
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| 9:30 am to 10:45 am | Lecture: Joey Meyer. <i>"The Hero Needs a New Journey: Harnessing Human Superpowers to Create Meaningful Art in the Age of AI"</i> J.R.R. Tolkien Room. |
| 11:00 am to 12:45 pm | Lecture: Sunny Singh. "Beyond the Metaphor: Decolonizing Our Creative Praxis." VISITING WRITER READING: Sunny Singh, fiction. Introduced by Sarah Carroll. J.R.R. Tolkien Room. |
| 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm | Lunch. St. Hugh's Dining Room. |
| 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm | WORKSHOP 5. |
| 4:00 pm | Tea Break. |
| 5:00 pm onwards | "After the Residency" Student Meeting. J.R.R. Tolkien Room. Free Evening. Dinner on your own. |

Wednesday, August 27 (Degree Ceremony)

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| 7:45 am | Breakfast. St. Hugh's Dining Room. |
| 9:00 am | Assemble in J.R.R. Tolkien Room for announcements and reminders. |
| 10 am to 12 pm | WORKSHOP 6. |
| 12pm to 2:30 pm | Lunch on your own. |
| 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm | GRADUATE READINGS: Sarah Carroll-Fiction, Calius Lewis-Poetry, Katherina Thomas-Creative Nonfiction, and Kayla Williams (via Zoom)-Fiction. J.R.R. Tolkien Room. |
| 5:00 pm | MFA Degree Ceremony. |
| 6:30 pm | Celebratory Drinks Party. |
| 7:00 pm | Farewell Dinner. St. Hugh's Dining Room. |

Thursday, August 28 (Departure Day)

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| 7:45 am | Breakfast. St. Hugh's Dining Room. |
| 10:00 am | Check Out and Departures. |
| 10:00 am | Lake District and Scotland add-on trip departing. |

SEMESTER STUDY PLANS MUST BE TURNED IN VIA CANVAS BY
SEPTEMBER 1.

RESIDENCY JOURNALS MUST BE COMPLETED IN CANVAS BY
SEPTEMBER 8.

See you next winter!

January 7, 2026-January 17, 2026
Alma, Michigan

MFA Faculty in Residence

Jim Daniels, a 1978 graduate of Alma College, has authored 28 collections of poetry, six collections of fiction and four produced screenplays. He has also edited or coedited six anthologies of writing. His first work of nonfiction, *An Ignorance of Trees*, is out this month. Daniels is a recipient of two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and two from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. His books have won three Michigan Notable Book Awards, the Brittingham Prize for Poetry, the Blue Lynx Prize for Poetry, the Tillie Olsen Creative Writing Award, the Milton Kessler Award, and three Gold Medals in the Independent Publisher Book Awards, among others, and his films have won many awards in film festivals around the world. His work has been published in *The Best American Poetry* and *Pushcart Prize* volumes. He has read his poetry on Garrison Keillor's "Prairie Home Companion," and his poems have been frequently featured on Keillor's "Writer's Almanac." During his long career, he has warmed up for singer-songwriter Lucinda Williams at the Three Rivers Arts Festival, had his poem "Factory Love" displayed on a race car, and sent poetry to the moon in 2021 as part of the Moon Arts Project.

S. Kirk Walsh is a novelist, an editor and a teacher based in Austin, Texas. Her debut novel, *The Elephant of Belfast*, inspired by true events that took place in Belfast, Northern Ireland, during World War II, was published by Counterpoint Press in April. Now in its fourth printing, the novel has generated praise from *The New Yorker*, *The Christian Science Monitor* and others, as well as being selected for several top reading lists. It was published as "The Zookeeper of Belfast" by Hodder/Hachette (the UK, the Commonwealth and Ireland) in April 2021 (and forthcoming in December 2021). The novel will be translated for foreign editions in Romania, Norway and Iran. Walsh is now working on a second novel inspired by events that took place in Detroit during the 1930s and 1940s. Over the years, her fiction, essays and book reviews have been published in the *New York Times Book Review*, the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *Story Quarterly*, *Guernica*, *Longreads*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Los*

Angeles Review of Books, among others. She has been a resident at Ucross, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Ragdale and Yaddo.

Dhonielle Clayton is a New York Times bestselling author of The Conjureverse series, The Belles series, Shattered Midnight, co-author of Blackout, Whiteout, The Rumor Game, and of the Tiny Pretty Things duology, a Netflix original series. She hails from the Washington, D.C. suburbs on the Maryland side. She taught secondary school for several years and is a former elementary and middle school librarian. She is COO of the non-profit We Need Diverse Books. She is the President and founder of Cake Creative and Electric Postcard Entertainment, IP story companies creating diverse books for all ages. She's an avid traveler, and always on the hunt for magic and mischief.

Guest Speakers

Meredith Benson – Visiting Editor

Lecture: August 24, 11:00 am (6:00 am Eastern)

Meredith studied Theology at Durham University, where she studied the philosophy of freedom of speech. She developed a deep commitment to enabling people to tell their stories. She now works as a Senior Editor in the audio division at Penguin Random House. Before that Meredith worked at Bloomsbury. Meredith publishes audiobooks across genres from prolific authors such as Zadie Smith, Robert Harris, Marlon James, Jon Ronson, Lisa Jewell and Taylor Jenkins Reid. These varied books suit her eclectic reading tastes, but she has a soft spot for romcoms from the likes of Emily Henry. Meredith is passionate about the written word and how the modern reader consumes books (both through reading and listening).

Nancy Campbell – Visiting Writer

Reading: August 20, 6:15 pm (1:15pm Eastern)

Lecture: August 21, 9:30 am (4:30 am Eastern)

Nancy Campbell is an award-winning writer, poet, and artist whose work explores the intersections of nature, language, and climate. She is the author of several acclaimed books including *The Library of Ice: Readings from a Cold Climate*, *Fifty Words for Snow*, and *Thunderstone: A True Story of Losing One Home and Discovering Another*, which was shortlisted for the 2022 Barbillion Prize. She has held residencies with institutions across the globe, including the British Library, the Wordsworth Trust, and remote Arctic research stations. Her writing is known for its lyrical beauty and depth of insight, drawing from both personal experience and meticulous research. In addition to her literary work, Nancy engages in visual art and letterpress printing, often weaving traditional techniques into her creative practice. She brings to the Oxford Residency a unique voice that reflects on how we live with and write about environmental change, personal transformation, and the power of place.

Nicholas Edwards – Visiting Scholar

Degree Ceremony Speaker: August 27, 5:00 pm (Noon Eastern)

A graduate of Queen's College, Oxford (1985), Nick holds a master's degree in medicine and trained as a hospital doctor in Cardiology, General Surgery, and Emergency Medicine, among other fields. He later transitioned into business consulting, where he has spent decades leading global transformation and innovation initiatives particularly within healthcare and the pharmaceutical industry. With a long-standing interest in Artificial Intelligence and its applications in medical science, Nick has played a pivotal role in helping University of Oxford academics bridge the gap between the academic and business worlds. His multi-disciplinary approach has inspired innovation across sectors and supported the translation of research into real-world impact. Nick is an Associate Fellow of Green Templeton College, Oxford, where he is an active member of the Senior Common Room and a regular contributor to college life. Known for his clarity, wit, and engaging presence as a speaker, he brings a rare ability to make complex ideas accessible and relevant. His unique career path and deep ties to Oxford make him an ideal figure to help us reflect on our own journeys as writers, thinkers, and creators.

Alis Hawkins – Visiting Writer

Lecture: August 23, 11:00 am (6 am Eastern)

Alis Hawkins grew up on a small farm in west Wales and now lives on the Welsh-English border. A graduate of Corpus Christi College, Oxford (1981), where she studied English Language and Literature, Alis is an accomplished crime and mystery novelist with a passion for historical fiction and untold stories. She is the author of the acclaimed Teifi Valley Coroner series, which follows partially-sighted ex-barrister Harry Probert-Lloyd through 19th-century Wales. The series has twice been shortlisted for the CWA Historical Dagger. Her latest series, the Oxford Mysteries, is set in Victorian Oxford during the rise of women's colleges. Its debut, *A Bitter Remedy*, was shortlisted for the 2024 CWA Historical Dagger and longlisted for the CWA Gold Dagger. Alis is a founding member of the Welsh crime writers' collective Crime Cymru, the inaugural chair of the Crime Cymru Festival, and a dedicated mentor and tutor for emerging writers through Literature Wales.

Sunny Singh – Visiting Writer

Lecture and Reading: August 26, 11:00 am (6 am Eastern)

Sunny Singh is a writer, novelist, public intellectual, and a champion for decolonization and inclusion across all aspects of society. She is the author of three critically acclaimed novels, *Hotel Arcadia*, *With Krishna's Eyes*, and *Nani's Book of Suicides*, as well as the recent, *A Bollywood State of Mind: A Journey into the World's Biggest Cinema*. August 2025 saw the publication of her new short story collection, *Refuge: Stories of War (and Love)*. In 2017 she launched the celebrated Jhalak Prize for literature by writers of color. She is also a founder of the Jhalak Foundation that focuses on a range of literary, artistic and literacy initiatives in the UK and beyond. Sunny lives in London where she is Professor of Creative Writing and Inclusion in the Arts at the London Metropolitan University.

Joey Meyer MFA '24 – Visiting MFA Alumni

Lecture: August 26, 9:30 am (4:30 am Eastern)

Joey Lamson Meyer is a neurodivergent writer and journalist living with his partner and two cats in Durham, North Carolina. He holds a BA in Creative Writing from Susquehanna University, and an MFA in Creative Writing from Alma College, where he completed a dual concentration in Fiction and Creative Nonfiction. Joey's creative work can be found across the internet and in print from publications such as *Aquila Review*, *Half and One Journal*, and *Past-Ten*. His journalism has appeared in *BVB-Buzz*, and *Fear the Wall*, and he offers regular commentary on the Dortmund Dispatch podcast. Joey is also Co-Founder, Fiction, and Creative Nonfiction Editor for the brand-new Literary Journal, *The Long & the Short of It*. Joey, along with his Co-Founders (Mary Bishop MFA '25, Cash Whitney MFA '24, & Joshua Zeitler MFA '24) have recently been awarded a Residency from Write On, Door County to grow their fledgling journal into an established literary experience. When Joey's not writing fantastical fiction, he can be found with his eyes glued to a book, immersed in a fantasy RPG, lost in the woods playing disc golf, watching Borussia Dortmund, or contemplating the meaning of life with his cats, Ghost and Princess Zelda.



Faculty and Visiting Speakers Lecture List

Lecture handouts and resource materials will be posted on the MFA SharePoint Site as they become available.

<https://almacollege.sharepoint.com/sites/AlmaCollegeMFA>

“The Alchemy of Story — Balancing Entertainment and Truth in Commercial Fiction”

Dhonielle Clayton

What is the role of the storyteller? Purely an instrument of entertainment or a vehicle for truth ... or both? In this lecture, we will look at the ingredients of commercially successful fiction for all ages, drilling down on the big idea, the zeitgeist, vivid plots, dynamic characters, electrifying worlds and emotional fat. Through analyzing how writers develop their unique story alchemistries, we will discuss how one can begin to develop their own.

“I was born with a knife in one hand and a wound in the other.”: Poetry as an Act of Survival

Leslie Contreras Schwartz [VIA LIVE ZOOM]

In Gregory Orr’s craft book, *A Primer for Poets & Readers of Poetry*, he argues that poetry is an act of survival, survival of the individual self and the emotional self. “Writing often reveals us to ourselves, lets us name what’s important to us and what has been silent or silenced inside us,” he writes. In this lecture, we will look closely at poets who write about individual experience as a way to grapple with persistence, as a way to move forward and interrogate the questions about what it means to be on this planet. We will examine poems by Diane Seuss, Rosebud Ben Oni, Matthew Olzmann, and others and how poets use individual experience, play with language and form, and draw from the raw material of living to create works of art.

“Working Across Genres: Turning Poetry and Prose into Scripts, Turning Scripts into Films”

Jim Daniels

This lecture will examine the challenges of writing and working across genres and art forms. It will focus on the process of turning a poem into a screenplay, then into a short film. The presentation will include a reading of the poem and the showing of the short film followed by a discussion of the changes that were made and why. Students should obtain a greater awareness of the techniques used in poetry and prose writing and how they compare to the techniques used in screenwriting and filmmaking. In addition, we will touch on some of the

differences between working on your own as a writer and working as part of a larger group of artists from multiple genres. Also, students should gain some understanding of the overall process of making an independent movie from scratch—financing, collaboration, and all of the small details that go into doing it yourself so that if they have an interest in adapting any of their poems, stories, or essays into film, they will have an idea of where and how to start.

**“The Inadequate Container: Making Discoveries When Content Bursts the
Confines of Its Form”**

Matthew Gavin Frank [VIA LIVE ZOOM]

There’s a long tradition of essayists shoehorning various subject matter into a particular received form (this can be just about anything: from the form of a syllabus, to a series of postcards). Much of the electricity in this sort of essay should be generated in the collision between the form and the content (which may be deliciously mismatched). Ideally, the form will refresh/re-see/enliven the content, and vice versa. Oftentimes, in essays such as this, the “container” (or form) proves to be an inadequate container for the content, and so the content therefore becomes wonderfully contorted, sometimes cracking the container, and occasionally spills its bounds, rushes over, and discovers something new about itself. In this lecture, we will discuss various ways of subverting one’s initial engagement of a subject, and we will review various examples of such formal experimentation, from those launched and performed by the Oulipo collective in 1960s France, to contemporary “updaters” of such essayistic experimentation, as Carmen Maria Machado, Jenny Boully, and Judith Schalansky.

“*Mrs. Dalloway*: What We Can Learn from Virginia Woolf & Her Masterpiece”
S. Kirk Walsh

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the publication of Virginia Woolf’s classic masterpiece, *Mrs. Dalloway*. With this close reading of this novel, Kirk will explore different elements of craft—character development, interiority, setting, use of time, and pacing—and how these techniques can be applied to different genres of writing (with a focus on fiction). Also, she will discuss contemporary novels and authors (such as Dinaw Mengestu, Rita Bullwinkel, and Miranda July)—and how their recent novels are in conversation with these narratives. In preparation for this lecture, please read (or re-read) *Mrs. Dalloway* prior to the Oxford residency. In addition, be prepared to share thoughts and reflections about your own reading of *Mrs. Dalloway* and how this classic novel might be in conversation with your own writing. Lastly, some of the lecture will be informed by *The Annotated Mrs. Dalloway* by Merve Emre, a popular critic and former scholar at Oxford (and the British version was published by the University of Oxford).

**“From Manuscript to Marketplace: Breaking into Publishing”
Meredith Benson**

In this lecture, Meredith will cover the overall purpose of a publisher and the different paths to getting published, including working with agents, approaching publishers directly, and self-publishing. She'll also talk about how to prepare a strong book proposal for agents, what happens during acquisitions meetings, and what publishers are generally looking for. She also plans to cover what to expect throughout the publishing process, including audio and rights, and what comes after publication.

**“Hunger Stones and Ice Cores: Or Words Writ on Water in a Changing Climate”
Nancy Campbell**

A reflection on the challenges faced by writers engaged with place and the environment in the Anthropocene. Nancy will draw from her ten-year creative response to the polar regions (which received the Ness Award), as well as Indigenous Greenlandic texts, medieval inscriptions on river stones, nuclear semiotics, and NASA's Golden Records.

**“An Array of Oxford Inspirations”
Alis Hawkins**

Alis will offer insights into crafting historical crime fiction, writing place and character with authenticity, and navigating the evolving landscape of contemporary publishing.

**“The Hero Needs a New Journey:
Harnessing Human Superpowers to Create Meaningful Art in the Age of AI”
Joey Meyer**

Once a subject reserved for Science Fiction, Artificial Intelligence has become one of the most relevant topics in modern society. AI proliferation has begun changing professional landscapes including the arts, now bleeding into visual art, music, and even Creative Writing. Yet there is one thing AI is not: Human.

In this lecture, we will discuss the current (and likely future) AI capabilities as they pertain to Creative Writing, and what techniques we can utilize to create writing which is uniquely human. We will break down the classical “Hero's Journey,” discussing why it has lasting power, and why this is the perfect time for breaking the formula. We will examine how we can engage senses, emotions, and experimentation in writing, while interrogating the question of what it means to create human art. We will finish this lecture with a writing prompt, where you will have the opportunity to engage your many senses beyond sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell, perhaps engaging your readers in new and exciting ways.

To assist in broadening our creative perspectives, this lecture will be influenced by authors such as Diane Ackerman, Nancer Ballard, Charles Baxter, Peter Brooks, Joseph Campbell, Anthony

Doerr, Melissa Febos, Matthew Gavin Frank, Benjamin Labatut, Ethan Mollick, Emily Nussbaum, Jeff Vandermeer, Jenny Slate, and Taylor Swift, among others.

“Beyond the Metaphor: Decolonizing Our Creative Praxis”
Prof. Sunny Singh

In *Playing in the Dark* (1992), Toni Morrison compares whiteness to a fishbowl, where the glass remains invisible while our attention is focused on the sparkling fish, plants, decorations, debris and detritus and even the water bubbles. But the fishbowl isn't only built by artists, writers, 'creatives' but rather built, sustained and nurtured by a vast apparatus of the creative industries which are, unsurprisingly, part of a much larger superstructure that bell hooks describes as "imperialist white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy".

This talk examines the impact of this invisible superstructure on writers, our creative output and its impact in turn, and on the wider culture and society. It questions our ideals of 'artistic merit,' noting that this has more to do with who and what are seen to belong, are deemed acceptable and valuable. It also reflects on the impact of this invisibly determined 'merit' and the consequences for our worldviews, ideas, creative production and the creative imagination itself.

“Show and Tell: Using Summary and Scene in Narrative”
Karen E. Bender [RECORDED LECTURE]

How does a reader participate in a story or memoir? A reader enters a story and learns information different ways—through summary and scene. What are some different strategies for using summary and scene? Discussing works by Tillie Olsen, Jamaica Kincaid, Jhumpa Lahiri, Edward P. Jones, Ernest Hemingway, J.D Salinger and Octavia Butler, this lecture will show you how writers incorporate scene and summary into their narratives and give you ideas as to how to use them in your own work.

“Writing the Muse: How Nina Simone's Life Became Historical Poetry”
Shonda Buchanan [RECORDED LECTURE]

Once you find your muse (or your muse finds you), how do you write about them? That fascinating historical figure you've never met, or a deceased grandmother whose letters you found in an attic, or food (Neruda), or an unknowing genius who helps concoct the atomic bomb, or a Greek poet from antiquity (*Sappho*), or a subversive political figure whom you decide to write poems of compassion about to maintain your own sense of humanity. Writing about one's muse puts the writer in the position of researcher, biographer and interpreter all at once. This talk, **Writing the Muse: How Nina Simone's Life Became Historical Poetry** will explore how I turned my adoration of the singer/songwriter and Civil Rights activist into poems, and how writers can craft the life of a forgotten or under appreciated public figure like Nina Simone—or an unlanguageed landscape or endangered species—into the sole theme of a book from multifaceted perspectives that bring them back to life in a way that readers can see them through a new, significant light.

Student Lecture List

“Eras of Escapism: How Popular Romantic Period Pieces Influence Modern Culture and My Romantasy Storytelling”

D’Juanna Lester

This lecture dives into period dramas from the Regency Era in London, England. The lecture’s purpose is to answer the question of the influence of romantic period dramas on modern romantic storytelling, including my own. The thesis focuses on the duality between popular romantic story elements and social norms of the time, specifically how they affected women. The main focus will be ballroom scenes and their impact on romantic writing across books, films, and various forms of media.

“Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire: The Boundaries and Transparency Where Truth and Invention Can Meld to Create Alchemy of Story in Creative Nonfiction”

Lori Phillips

What is truth? What is “creative” nonfiction? How can nonfiction writers tell the truest stories when they may not have all the details, especially when they are relying on potentially faulty personal recollection or the memories of others? Memory is a slippery fish whose scales may change colors depending on the time and angle which you view it. Stretching the truth may be a temptation for a writer when they need to bridge a path from A to B. What acknowledgement of truth detours does a writer owe a reader, if any? “Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire...” contemplates these questions and explores the different techniques a collection of nonfiction writers—mostly memoirists— have used to creatively and seamlessly present their truth to the world.