Saturday, August 1st

Opening Remarks
Join MFA Coordinator Anthony D’Aries in kicking off our virtual residency!

Graduate Student Reading
Recent MFA graduates Ivette Arce (YA) and Briana McGuckin (Gothic Fiction) will share their work. Introductions by MFA mentors Karen Romano Young and A.B. Westrick.

Sunday, August 2nd

9:00am – 11:00am
New Student Orientation
All new students are required to attend this session. We’ll discuss the MFA curriculum, syllabi development, the mentor/mentee relationship, residency expectations, and more! MFA faculty are welcome to join this session, too.

Noon – 1:00pm
Lunch with Alumni – Lisa Peterson
Each day, students and faculty are welcome to join this optional one-hour lunch session, which will feature some of our program’s alumni. These sessions are casual, so feel free to drop in at any time.

2:00pm – 4:00pm
Online Multi-Genre Workshop Orientation
All students enrolled in a multi-genre workshop for the fall are required to attend this session. We will discuss course expectations, assignments, and due dates. There will be plenty of time for students to ask questions.

Lisa N. Peterson is an award-winning writer, podcast host, and journalist. Born in Sleepy Hollow, New York, she pens stories about true crime, dogs, and horses. Her weekly newspaper column for The Newtown Bee is archived at her blog www.lisaunleashed.com. Early in her journalism career, she worked as a staff reporter covering the criminal justice system at several Connecticut newspapers. Peterson is a recognized expert for her investigative journalism on the woodchipper murder case and has appeared on Crime Stories, Mansions & Murders, and Science of Crime. She is currently working on a true-crime memoir, The Look-Back Window, about the disappearance of Regina Brown in 1987 and her own experiences as a crime victim survivor. Peterson has an MFA in Creative and Professional Writing from Western Connecticut State University, is a member of the Hudson Valley Writers Center, and the Dog Writer’s Association of America. She lives in Newtown, Connecticut with her husband, her horse, and her two hounds. Contact her at www.lisanpeterson.com.
Evening Sessions

A Stranger's Journey
David Mura
Novelist, memoirist, poet, and performance artist, David Mura, will speak on his book, *A Stranger's Journey: Race, Identity & Narrative Craft in Writing*. He will explore the two major themes of the book, first, how the issues of race and identity have become central to the teaching and craft of creative writing, and secondly, how to apply the basic structures and techniques of narrative craft in fiction and memoir.

The Writing Life
Katey Schultz
In this compilation of video and audio clips, author Katey Schultz explores the craft of flash fiction, moving from short prose to novel-length work, and developing and sustaining a healthy and productive writing practice.

Monday, August 3rd

9:00am – 11:00am
What is Voice?
A.B. Westrick
We often hear literary agents say they're “looking for voice” but when asked to elaborate, they can't quite define what they mean. "I'll know it when I see it," they tell us. In this workshop we'll listen to a variety of voices and discuss the difference between narrative voice and an author's voice. We'll experiment with literary voices to learn which ones strain our throats and which go down like honey—which sound forced and which feel genuine. Come with the opening of a work in progress or an idea for a new project and be ready to play. The more you recognize the tones and textures in a voice, the better you'll be able to "find" your own.

Noon – 1:00pm
Lunch with Alumni – Mattea Heller McGill
Each day, students and faculty are welcome to join this optional one-hour lunch session, which will feature some of our program's alumni. These sessions are casual, so feel free to drop in at any time.

Monday, August 3rd (Continued)

The Art of the Pitch
Erik Ofgang
Students will learn the basic format of a professional freelance magazine and newspaper pitch and strategies for finding publications to pitch and contacts within these publications. They should come with an idea and be ready to research and develop that idea as part of the workshop. In addition to formating these pitches the workshop will touch upon pitching Op-Ed topics related to their thesis projects.

Evening Sessions

Baron Wormser
Acclaimed novelist, poet, and memoirist, Baron Wormser, will read from and discuss his new novel, *Songs from a Voice*.

Graduate Student Readings
Recent MFA graduates Kate Katcher (playwriting) and Brendan Dyer (fiction) will share their work.

Tuesday, August 4th

9:00am – 11:00am
Mastering Plot Twists
Jane Cleland
The stories that keep people on the edge of their seats and up all night, from memoirs to thrillers and from stage plays to screenplays, are filled with unexpected twists and turns. By integrating plot twists, plot reversals, and moments of heightened danger (TRDs) at tactically sound moments, your stories will captivate readers with their I-can't-wait-to-see-what-happens-next unpredictability. When your plot twists come at the right moments, your pace will be quicker and the action more focused, and these are the nuanced, multifaceted books that sell, and that find a devoted readership.

Noon – 1:00pm
Lunch with Alumni – John Bonanni
Each day, students and faculty are welcome to join this optional one-hour lunch session, which will feature some of our program's alumni. These sessions are casual, so feel free to drop in at any time.

John Bonanni
spent a career in theatre management as a stage manager on Broadway, a production supervisor for Madison Square Garden concerts and events at Radio City Music Hall and served as the executive producer of the Radio City Christmas Spectacular. His articles have appeared in *Adelaide Magazine, Poor Yorick Journal, San Antonio Review*, and *Raven's Perch*.
Tuesday, August 4th (Continued)

2:00pm – 4:00pm
How to Start Your Own Writing Workshop for Fun and (Non) Profit
*Matthew Quinn Martin*

Drawing from over two decades of experience (man, am I old) as a workshop creator and organizer, as well as the co-founder and former artistic director of a nonprofit organization, this workshop has been designed to equip participants with all they need to start their own successful, nonprofit writing workshop, either in their community or (in these perilous, plague-ridden times) online.

The first section will focus on the nuts and bolts of what it takes to put together a writing workshop, and who to recruit as to best serve the target demographic. In addition, it will cover what it means to be “nonprofit,” how to create and maintain a 501(c) (3) organization (or partner with an existing one), and what resources are available to nonprofit organizations specifically.

In the second section, the group will work together, using all of this information, to create a “model” workshop (think “Bandersnatch” but without anybody jumping off a balcony...I hope). This will not only allow for practical implementation of the covered concepts, but to bolster the community and collaborative atmosphere that is key to any effective workshop, and, above all, to have fun.

Evening Session

*Sarah Darer Littman in Conversation with A.K. Small*

*A.K. Small’s* debut novel, *Bright Burning Stars*, was published by Algonquin Young Readers in May 2019. It was one of BN Teens Most Anticipated Books of 2019 and the cover was revealed at EW.com. It received a starred Kirkus Review and was a recommended read in the August issue of *Cosmopolitan*. In addition to *Bright Burning Stars*, A.K. Small’s second novel, *Feather Girl*, is due to be released Fall 2021.

*Sarah Darer Littman* is the critically acclaimed author of Young Adult novels, *Anything But Okay, In Case You Missed It, Backlash* (Winner of the Iowa Teen Book Award and the Grand Canyon Reader Award) *Want to Go Private?, Life, After and Purge*, and middle grade novels, *Taming of the Shoe, Fairest of Them All, Charmed, I’m Sure and Confessions of a Closet Catholic*, winner of the Sydney Taylor Book Award. As well as writing novels, Sarah is an instructor in the Writing Department at Western Connecticut State University and teaches creative writing at the Yale Summer Writers’ Conference. She is also an award-winning opinion columnist. Sarah lives in Connecticut with her family and two dogs, in a house that never seems to have enough bookshelves.

Wednesday, August 5th

9:00am – 11:00am
Nonprofit Writing Essentials: A Few Simple Necessities for Big Impact
*Gretchen Weerheim*

You’re looking to snag a job in a nonprofit. You want to make a difference in these challenging times. You just saw a position for a communications director. Perfect, right? But what you might not realize is that you’re going to need top writing skills, and not those that make for a great wonderful novel, but for crisp, clean, concise copy. That means using a minimum of words for maximum impact.

Clean, crisp, concise copy for what? What am I expected to write? And for who?

Learn all about it in Nonprofit Writing Essentials, a hands-on workshop that’ll teach you the absolute basics for nonprofit external communications. In this workshop, you’ll learn how to write a nonprofit mission, an effective press release, composing copy for Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (and which one to use and why) and online media calendars. You’ll be shown how less is more and what details are most important.

Nonprofit Writing Essentials also demonstrates how all this material ties together and can be used on a website. This workshop is for those who may choose a career in nonprofit or business communications. There will be some prework as well as classroom writing.

PREWORK

1) Identify a nonprofit where you’d like to work. It can be fictional. Write a brief paragraph about the cause it supports – two, three sentences at most.

2) Bring a 35-word complete description of an event that this nonprofit would host – this includes event title, date, location, fee, and details.

Noon – 1:00pm
*Lunch with Alumni – Melissa Johnson*

Each day, students and faculty are welcome to join this optional one-hour lunch session, which will feature some of our program’s alumni. These sessions are casual, so feel free to drop in at any time.

*Melissa Johnson* graduated from the MFA program at WCSU in 2018. Her genres were literary journalism and poetry, with a poetry thesis relating to the 88 constellations. She learned astrophotography for her enrichment project. She has worked in many capacities at *The Day* newspaper in New London since 2006 and as an adjunct professor at Mitchell College in New London since January 2019. She lives with her husband and their Chinese exchange student in Waterford.
Wednesday, August 5th (Continued)

2:00pm – 4:00pm
Author Interviewer for a Day
Daniel Asa Rose

Have you ever dreamed of interviewing your favorite authors? Having a witty conversation with T. C. Boyle, or a profound one with Toni Morrison? In this afternoon seminar, we’ll listen to former WCSU MFA writer-in-residence Daniel Asa Rose as he talks about what he looks for to make a dynamic interview. As former interviewer for the Washington Post book review and contributor to lots of other magazines and literary journals, Daniel will lead a discussion about such issues as being fair to the interviewee and, at the same time, making your questions as interesting as they can be. Can we throw in a little Attitude, too, without being snarky? Hopefully we’ll even get to try our hand at interviewing each other to see what sort of mischief we can get ourselves into. Should be fun.

Evening Sessions

Daniel Asa Rose

Extra, extra! Building on his afternoon workshop, Daniel Asa Rose will read from some of the more illustrious (notorious? hilarious?) interviews he’s conducted over the years with the likes of Frank McCourt, Paul Theroux, Annie Dillard, Edwidge Danticat, Anne Lamott, Billy Collins, and Norman Mailer. (The interview with Mailer was actually the last one he ever gave.) We’ll listen to real life examples of how the interviewer can be negative without being rude, or genuinely impressed without being fawning. Come one, come all!

Amy Alvarez

Amy M. Alvarez is a poet, educator, and scholar. Her work focuses on race, ethnicity, gender, regionality, nationality, borderless-ness, and systemic injustice/social justice. Her poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in Crazyhorse, The Missouri Review, Alaska Quarterly Review, PRISM International, Rattle, Sugar House Review, and elsewhere. She is both a CantoMundo and a VONA Fellow. Amy was born and raised in Queens, New York to a Jamaican mother and Puerto Rican father. She has taught English, History, and Humanities at public high schools in the Bronx, New York and in Boston, Massachusetts. She now lives in Morgantown, West Virginia and teaches writing at West Virginia University.

www.amymalvarez.com

Thursday, August 6th

9:00am – 11:00am
Literary Citizenship & Book Tour Basics
Katey Schultz

In this two-hour class, Katey Schultz will present the concept of literary citizenship and provide examples of what that looks like both in person (bookstores, events) and online (virtual book clubs, social media). Once we’ve covered the basics, we’ll have a free-for-all Q&A covering a range of topics and concerns provoked by your responses to the two prerequisite handouts.

Prerequisite: Fill out the provided worksheet titled “How to Have Conversations You Care About” and read the “Lit Cit Social Media” PDF. Come prepared with questions about how to work with bookstores, publicists, marketing firms, or book clubs, as well as any concerns you might have about the financial pros and cons of authorship and promotions.

Noon – 1:00pm

Each day, students and faculty are welcome to join this optional one-hour lunch session, which will feature some of our program’s alumni. These sessions are casual, so feel free to drop in at any time. This particular session will include an overview of our Dublin Residency.

Jessica McCadden received her B.S. from Boston University where she studied film and television. She went on to work as a writer and producer at NBC, TV Land, and Nickelodeon, where she was nominated for a Daytime Emmy Award. She is also one of the authors of The Great CT Caper, a serialized mystery story for young people and has worked as an adjunct professor of English Literature and Writing. In addition, Jessica earned a Marketing Certificate from NYU and an MFA in Creative & Professional Writing from Western Connecticut State University. Jessica currently resides in Virginia and works as a Creative Strategist at Capital One. She loves brunch, skiing in warm weather, and spoiling the end of mysteries.

Amy Alvarez

Amy M. Alvarez is a poet, educator, and scholar. Her work focuses on race, ethnicity, gender, regionality, nationality, borderless-ness, and systemic injustice/social justice. Her poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in Crazyhorse, The Missouri Review, Alaska Quarterly Review, PRISM International, Rattle, Sugar House Review, and elsewhere. She is both a CantoMundo and a VONA Fellow. Amy was born and raised in Queens, New York to a Jamaican mother and Puerto Rican father. She has taught English, History, and Humanities at public high schools in the Bronx, New York and in Boston, Massachusetts. She now lives in Morgantown, West Virginia and teaches writing at West Virginia University.

www.amymalvarez.com
Thursday, August 6th (Continued)

2:00pm – 4:00pm

Get a Job: The Anatomy of Professional Writing Careers

Jane Cleland

The three highest-paying and most in-demand career paths under the umbrella of “Professional Writing” are Technical Writing; Social Media content development; and Science, Healthcare, & Medical Writing. In this workshop, we’ll discuss what the work entails, how much you’ll earn, what the short- and long-term career path looks like, and what it takes to get a job in each of these disciplines.

We’ll also review how these job-hunting principles apply to other Professional Writing career options such as: Travel Writing; Marketing and Advertising, Copywriting, Corporate Communications, and Public Relations & Publicity.

You’ll take away specific tactics to carry out information interviews, locate and evaluate internship possibilities, tweak your résumé to fit job openings, nail video, phone and in-person interviews, and develop a personalized plan of action.

Evening Sessions

6:00pm

Pre-Contest Social

Come hang out with your fellow writers and unwind after an exciting and productive residency! This casual session is open to all. We’ll begin at 6:00 pm, and our annual Flash Prose Contest will follow at 7:00 pm. All students and faculty are welcome to sign up and read a flash piece (no longer than 750 words).

7:00pm

Flash Prose Contest

It wouldn’t be a WCSU residency without our annual Flash Prose Contest! Email Anthony D’Aries by Wednesday evening to sign up. Pieces must be 750 words or shorter. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place prizes (not to mention bragging rights) will be awarded.

Ivette Arce is a YA author from Waterbury, CT. In 2014, her short story, “Vanna White,” was published on Mash Stories and created into a podcast. A member of the YA panel for WCSU’s MFA 2014 Houseaonic Book Awards, she graduated with an MFA in Creative and Professional Writing in 2020. Currently, Ivette is finalizing her debut YA novel, Spellbound, which showcases strong female leads, POC protagonists, and magic. In her free time, Ivette enjoys reading, reality TV, and obsessing over her family’s goddess-like Chihuahua runt, Penny.

Jane K. Cleland writes the multiple award-winning and IMBA bestselling and long-running Josie Prescott Antiques Mystery series, all published by St. Martin’s Minotaur and Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine. Jane’s bestseller about the craft of writing, Mastering Suspense, Structure & Plot, from Writer’s Digest Books, won the Agatha Award for Best Nonfiction 2016. Next up is Mastering Plot Twists, also from Writer’s Digest Books. She also writes articles for Writer’s Digest Magazine. She is a member of the full time faculty at Lehman College, where she is also the director of the Program for Professional Communications. More information is available at www.janecleland.com. Jane Cleland specializes in crime fiction, popular fiction, cozies, traditional mysteries, nonfiction, proposal writing, professional communications, technical writing, and corporate communications.

Anthony D’Aries is the author of The Language of Men: A Memoir (Hudson Whitman Press, 2012), which received the PEN/New England Discovery Prize and Foreword’s Memoir-of-the-Year Award. His essays have appeared in Boston Magazine, Solstice, The Good Men Project, Shelf Awareness, Memoir Magazine, The Literary Review, and have been finalists for Fourth Genre’s Michael Steinberg Essay Prize and the Diana Wood’s Memorial Creative Nonfiction Award. In 2011, Anthony was selected as Randolph College’s Emerging Writer-in-Residence. He has served on the board of PEN/New England as a member of the Freedom-to-Write Committee, leading writing workshops in prisons, shelters, hospitals, and residential care facilities, and co-chairing the inaugural PEN Writing and Trauma Conference. Anthony received the 2014-15 Writers’ Room of Boston’s fellowship in nonfiction. In 2016, he was selected as the Lighthouse Writers Workshop’s Fort Lyon writer in residence, where he taught writing workshops for homeless veterans. He currently directs the low-residency MFA in Creative and Professional Writing at Western Connecticut State University.

Actor, writer, director and teacher, Kate Katcher debuted on Broadway opposite Zero Mostel in Fiddler On the Roof when he took her hands in his and said, “You’re going to be fine.” It was a miraculous moment as the nerves melted away and she walked out onto the Wintergarden stage as Tzeitel. The recognition of character as the cornerstone of any performance has stayed with her throughout her career, whether instructing her students at the University of Bridgeport and Western CT State University, creating characters for her plays or directing other actors. In her capacity as Artistic Director of the Stray Kats Theatre Company in Newtown, CT, she gets to do it all.
Daniel Asa Rose is a former Writer in Residence in the MFA program and current MFA mentor. He is the author, most recently, of the world's first (dark) comedy about medical tourism, “LARRY'S KIDNEY: Being the True Story of How I Found Myself in China With my Black Sheep Cousin and his Mail-Order Bride, Skirting the Law to Get Him a Transplant … and Save His Life.” An NEA Literary Fellow, Daniel’s first short story was accepted by The New Yorker when he was 27, and he won an O. Henry Prize and two Pen Fiction Awards for the other stories in his first collection, “SMALL FAMILY WITH ROOSTER.” His first novel, “FLIPPING FOR IT,” a black comedy about divorce from the man’s point of view, was a New York Times New and Noteworthy Paperback. In 2002 he published “HIDING PLACES: A Father and his Sons Retrace Their Family’s Escape From the Holocaust” – a saga that intertwines a taut current-day search for the hiding places that saved his family in World War II with memories of the author's own hiding places growing up in WASP 1950s Connecticut. He has served as editor for The Reading Room, arts & culture editor of the Forward newspaper, travel columnist for Esquire magazine, humor writer for GQ, essayist for The New York Times Magazine, book reviewer for The New York Observer and New York Magazine, and food critic for the past 20 pounds.

Katey Schultz is the author of Flashes of War, which the Daily Beast praised as an “ambitious and fearless” collection and Still Come Home (novel), both published by Loyola University Maryland. Honors for her work include the Linda Flowers Literary Award, the Doris Betts Fiction Prize, IndieFab Book of the Year, a Gold Medal from the Military Writers Society of America, four Pushcart nominations, and writing fellowships in eight states. In 2009, she founded Maximum Impact, a mentoring service that provides transformative online curricula for writers. Her mentorship model has been featured on CNBC and the What Works Network, and has seen its participants publish countless books and works of prose. Katey is a graduate of the Pacific University MFA in Writing program and recipient of writing grants from North Carolina’s regional and state arts councils. She lives in Celo, NC with her husband and young son. Learn more at www.kateyschultz.com.

Matthew Quinn Martin was born in Allentown, Pennsylvania and raised in New Haven, Connecticut. It wasn’t until he moved to Manhattan that he realized he was a writer. He is the author of the Nightlife series (Pocket Star/Simon & Schuster) as well as the writer of the original script for Slingshot (Bold/Weinstein Co.)…and some other stuff. He lives on a small island off the North Atlantic coast of the United States where it gets quiet in the winter…perhaps too quiet.

David Mura is a writer, memoirist, poet and performance artist who brings a unique perspective to our multi-racial and multi-cultural society. A third-generation Japanese-American, he has written intimately about his life as a man of color and the connections between race, sexuality and history. In public appearances interweaving poetry, performance and personal testament, he provides powerful insights into the racial issues facing America today. Mura’s memoirs, poems essays, plays and performances have won wide critical praise and numerous awards. Their topics range from contemporary Japan to the legacy of the internment camps and the history of Japanese Americans to critical explorations of an increasingly diverse America. He gives presentations at educational institutions, businesses and other organizations throughout the country.

Briana Una McGuckin writes gothic romance and fantasy fiction. Her work appears in the Not All Monsters women's horror anthology (Rooster Republic), The Arcanist, Breath & Shadow, and Hides the Dark Tower (Pole-to-Pole Publishing). She has an MFA from Western Connecticut State University. She also has cerebral palsy, two husbands, and a most excellent life. She talks about all these things on Twitter @BrianaUna, or check out her blog: www.moonmissives.com.

Erik Ofgang is the senior writer at Connecticut Magazine, author of “Buzzed: Where to Enjoy the Best Craft Beverages in New England,” and “Gillette Castle: A History.” His next book is under contract with Penguin Random House. In addition he has written for the Associated Press, Thrillist and Tablet Magazine. A graduate of this MFA program, he was Poor Yorick’s first editor. Erik Ofgang specializes in journalism, literary nonfiction, literary journalism, and PR writing.
Gretchen Weerheim has been involved in the performing arts for more years than she cares to admit. It all started when she began to train for opera as a teen. While at Hofstra University, she got her degree in music business. Then she produced shows for the Met Opera Guild that taught everybody how wonderful and accessible opera is. For her contributions to this field, she was awarded a fellowship to teach her craft at the University of Dortmund in 2002. For her second act, she served as an educator for several local museums, including the Historical Society of Rockland County, the Harness Racing Museum and the Neversink Valley Museum, where she also became its executive director. In 2009 she was awarded a Greater Hudson Heritage Network's Award for Excellence. Now in her third act, Gretchen is a science fiction writer and is represented by Marisa Corvisiero at Corvisiero Literary Agency in New York.

A. B. (Anne Bryan) Westrick is the author of Brotherhood (Viking/Penguin Random House 2013), a YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults pick, and winner of the Jefferson Cup, Housatonic, Jane Addams Honor, and NCSS Notable Trade Book Awards. Westrick has been a teacher, paralegal, literacy volunteer, administrator, and coach for teams from Odyssey of the Mind to the Reading Olympics. A graduate of Stanford University and Yale Divinity School, she holds an MFA in writing from Vermont College of Fine Arts and blogs monthly about the craft of writing. She and her family live near Richmond, VA. www.abwestrick.com/ Anne Westrick specializes in many areas of fiction such as YA, children’s, historical, literary, and thriller.

Baron Wormser is the author of nine books of poetry and a poetry chapbook. He is the co-author of two books about teaching poetry and the author of a memoir along with a book of short stories, two novels and a book of biographical essays. He is the Founding Director of the Frost Place Conference on Poetry and Teaching in Franconia, New Hampshire and has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, Bread Loaf and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. He served as poet laureate of Maine from 2000 to 2005 and received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from the University of Maine at Augusta in 2005. His novel about a character based on Bob Dylan and entitled Songs from a Voice was published in April, 2020.

Karen Romano Young is a science writer, children’s author and illustrator. She has been involved with books and writing for as long as she can remember. The author of more than twenty books, including novels, nonfiction, and graphic novels, Karen has taken her work to the top of the world — the Arctic Ocean — and the bottom of the ocean — in a submarine. Recent work includes writing and drawing aboard an icebreaker, creating Humanimal Doodles — a science comic, and the children’s book Doodlebug: A Novel in Doodles.
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Opening Remarks
Graduate Student Reading
WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY’S MFA IN CREATIVE AND PROFESSIONAL WRITING
2020 VIRTUAL SUMMER RESIDENCY

Write On!