

**WIU Writing Festival 2020
Workshop Descriptions**

SESSION 1: (10:00-10:50)

Supporting Your Interpretations: Writing an Argument Essay: Learn how to construct an essay that develops and supports an argument about the meaning of a text. We will practice with the two creation stories in Genesis 1-3, asking whether these stories support a view of gender equality or inequality. (Dr. Amy Carr, Religious Studies) **Algonquin Room**

Things I Believe to Be True: Students will participate in an interactive writing workshop that will introduce them to the art of interviewing, listening, and note taking. These skills are the basic tools of Anthropology. As we explore what we believe, we learn how to organize complex concepts into concise pieces of writing that convey important anthropological concepts about life as humans. (Dr. Heather McIlvaine-Newsad, Anthropology) **Board Room**

A Spectacle and Nothing Strange: Surreal and Experimental Techniques: This workshop will concentrate on techniques developed by modernists, surrealists, and postmodernists to reveal hidden dimensions of everyday language by thinking about words as games and dreams. In our workshop, we will practice their techniques to create writing in which, as Gertrude Stein puts it, all is not ordinary, not unordered in not resembling. The difference is spreading. (Dr. David Banash, English) **Springfield Room**

'It Was a Dark and Stormy Night': Writing Your Own Gothic Story: Although Edgar Allan Poe would satirize these words made famous by English novelist Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Gothic tropes appear in much of our nation's founding literature and endure in popular narratives today. After a brief discussion of the power of Gothic techniques in Poe's writing, students will brainstorm an outline for their own Gothic short story. (Dr. Tim Helwig, English) **Cardinal/Oak Room**

Connecting Past and Now: How to Write a Newspaper Op-Ed Using History: See examples of op-eds written by historians (kind of like history essays, but snappier), brainstorm how past events shape today's news, and try drafting an op-ed yourself. (Dr. Tim Roberts, History) **Fox Room**

Be a History Detective!: We are going to use Nazi propaganda materials directed at German children to find out more about the manipulative power of propaganda. We will investigate texts and images, search for clues to unlock the overt and hidden messages of our documents, and create a brief analytical report of our findings. (Dr. Ute Chamberlin, History) **Vandalia Room**

Framing Our World Through Graphics: Students will see how three different authors have used graphics to lead readers into an understanding of their world. Students will then participate in drafting an opening sequence to their own story and sharing that with others. No drawing skills needed (stick figures will work just fine). (Dr. Marjorie Allison, English) **Kaskaskia Room**

SESSION 2 (11:00-11:50)

Are There Really Different Sizes of Infinity? Prove It!: In this workshop you will learn to write beautiful mathematical proofs that explore different sizes of infinity. No prior knowledge will be necessary, and all are welcome! (Dr. Doug LaFontain, Mathematics) **Algonquin Room**

Writing Democracy: This workshop will explore one of the most difficult aspects of democracy: the deep disagreements between citizens that often seem insurmountable. We will think about how to productively engage with others through a writing activity that will put participants in dialogue with the people they disagree with the most. (Drs. Erin Taylor and Keith Bockelman, Political Science) **Fox Room**

Getting Started on a Story: One of the most difficult parts of writing a story is getting started. Sometimes the best way to get started is confine yourself to a kind of box--and then figure your way out of the box. For example, the story must start with a character losing some particular thing, something small enough to fit in someone's palm--no matter what kind of story it ultimately turns out to be. It could be a love story, a story about vampires, a story about baseball, about the passage to adulthood, a war story, it must start with losing a small object, which then leads to the rest of the story. You can also do something like this with images. That's what we are going to do.

Bring two images. The images need to be physical, i.e. not images stored on a phone. So, if the images are ones you made, please get them printed. Or the images found online (again printed), images cut out of magazines, newspapers, etc.) At least one of the images must contain no people. In the workshop, we will randomly share these images with one another. Students will contribute their images to a common pool of images. Then each student will receive two images out of the pool. Next, students will be asked to write a brief narrative that connects the two images. Tell a story that tells a reader how what is viewed in image A leads to Image B. If we have time, we will reshuffle the images and hand them out again and try to connect a third image to the first two. We hopefully will come up with the frameworks to build some good stories (Dr. Bill Thompson, English) **Board Room**

"My Life is like...": Forrest Gump's mother believed that life is like a box of chocolates. Come share your view of life (and maybe eat some chocolate!) (Ms. Kathleen O'Donnell-Brown, English) **Springfield Room**

Writing About Art: How do artists write about art? What does it mean to write like an artist? This session will examine arts writing as well as creating art. (Mr. Tyler Hennings, Art Gallery) **University Art Gallery**

Writing in the Margins of Scriptures: A Religious Studies Sampler. In the field of Religious Studies, students work with the sacred texts of a variety of faiths, analyzing them from the perspectives of both believers and outsiders to the tradition. This workshop will give you the opportunity to write "in the margins" of the scriptures from different religions. (Dr. Betsy Perabo, Religious Studies) **Cardinal/Oak Room**

Running the Shadows: Using RPG Worlds to Work on Fiction Character Development and Understand Discourse Communities: In this workshop, students will create a fully developed character with a background storyline within the futuristic, science-fantasy role-playing world of Shadowrun. Once characters are created, we'll work together on developing an opening scene where the characters meet. We will also talk about what a discourse community is, and the elements that shape writing and communication in a given community. (Dr. Amy Patrick Mossman, English) **Vandalia Room**

SESSION 3 (1:00-1:50)

Writing Haiku. First, we'll look at a small collection of haiku, some translated from the Japanese and some written in English. Poems of interest to students will be discussed. The simple rules of haiku composition will be set forth, and students will write his or her own original haiku. Students willing to share, are invited to, but students are not required to publicly present their own work. (Dr. Merrill Cole, English) **Algonquin Room**

Who Stole the Cheese? Writing Your Own Short Mystery. In this workshop, students will read and work to solve several short mysteries before turning their hands to writing their own mysteries. (Dr. Magdelyn Helwig, English) **Board Room**

Conflicting Facts: Can This Be Me?. Do you sometimes feel like you have parts of your life that just don't make sense? Do you like country and rap? The Cubs and The Cardinals? In this workshop we'll look at connections in our life that might not seem to connect at all. (Dr. Bill Knox, English) **Vandalia Room**

The Stories We Don't Tell, But the World Needs. In this session, we'll investigate the stories we are often too shy, fearful, or uncertain about to place on a page. What stories do we hear, read, and watch that are repeated over and over again? How do our own stories mirror or diverge from them? What stories are missing in our contemporary world that only you can tell? How do we go toward what we instinctively shy away from? How do we dance toward uncertainty? How do we write fearlessly? Join me in journeying as intrepid explorers, life archeologists, and investigative writers of flash fiction and creative nonfiction. (Ms. Barb Lawhorn, English) **Fox Room**

Who Can Understand These Instructions?: Writing for Games. This workshop will focus on reading and writing instructions for short abstract games. We will begin with a simple game and explore the challenges and opportunities of writing instructions. In groups, students will then have an opportunity to make a short game and write instructions for it. Groups will then switch with another group and play their game using those newly written instructions. (Dr. Chris Morrow, English) **Springfield Room**

Writing for Change in the Gym. High School students have long expressed their frustrations with traditional physical education curriculum and instruction that favors competitive, highly skilled students in defiance of standards, policies, and guidelines of state and national governing bodies. True change to achieve PE curriculum and instruction that benefits all students will require a grassroots effort from physical education primary stakeholders - students. Social change has come from many writing genres; essay, fiction, rhetorical, etc. This session will provide information about quality physical education and ideas for how to use writing to achieve social change in the gym. (Dr. Ritchie Gabbei, Kinesiology) **Cardinal/Oak Room**