Starting Your Mystery Novel (WRIT31401)
March 31, 2022–April 21, 2022
Online Thursdays 1:30-4:00 p.m. (CT)

Course Description

Whether you call them thrillers, cozies, noir, or detective crime stories, everyone loves a good mystery. Exploring the elements of craft through readings, writing, and peer feedback, students will craft the beginnings of a compelling story. This course is a jumpstart to writing a mystery novel in a fun, supportive environment, using prompts and workshop feedback to nudge writers forward. The class will cover the uses of plot, setting, tension, vivid characters, clues, red herrings, and point-of-view in mystery writing. Students need only have a willingness to tell a good story, share, explore, and discuss mysteries. Open to beginning and mid-range writers.

The goals of the course are for students to write the beginnings of a mystery novel, outline a draft plot, invent characters that jump off the page, explore the craft elements of mystery writing, edit their own writing, and give constructive feedback to peers.

Instructor Information

Name:  Marjorie Robertson
Email:  Robertson.marjorie@gmail.com
Or email through Canvas.

Marjorie Robertson, a graduate of the college of the University of Chicago, is an essayist, novelist, short story writer and multilingualist. In 2005, she received an MFA from George Mason University. She has taught writing at universities and colleges and been a manuscript development consultant through The Writer’s Center in Bethesda, MD. Her first novel, Bitters in the Honey, was a semifinalist in the 2014 William Faulkner-William Wisdom Writing Competition. Her short fiction has appeared in Grain Magazine, The Ekphrastic Review and The Santa Fe Writer’s Project. Her other interests include creating art + text and teaching writing.

Course Structure

This course will be delivered entirely online. Class sessions will occur on Zoom. Written communication, course materials, shared writing, and online discussions will occur on the web-based learning platform Canvas.
Resources

There is no textbook for this course. Reading and prompts will be provided to the class through links or PDFs. Materials and other resources can be found on our course page.

Accessing Zoom

- Click the Zoom - Professional Education link in the left-hand menu
- Click the Join button next to Zoom class link that will be in that window (if you are using Safari, you may need to click the "open in new window" link to reach it)
- Your Zoom class will begin

Tech Help (see our course page for links)

- Liberal Arts Remote Learning Resources Page
- UChicago Canvas Resources Site
- Canvas Help (available 24/7 via chat or phone 844.334.6803)
- Zoom Help Center
- Zoom Support (available 24/7 via chat or phone 1.888.799.9666 ext. 2; you may need to create a free account to use their support)