

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 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,