



Spring Writer's Conference

Saturday, April 18th, 2020

9:30 AM – 3:30 PM

featuring

Brenda Shaughnessy

and writing workshops in

✧ Poetry ✧ Fiction ✧ Script Writing ✧ Publishing ✧ Memoir ✧

To register, go directly to

<https://springwritersconference2020.eventbrite.com>

or for more information visit

www.wpunj.edu/writing

REGISTRATION INCLUDES

Light Breakfast, 9:30am -10:00 am

Plenary Reading with Brenda Shaughnessy, 10:00 am -11:15 am

One Morning Workshop, 11:30 am -12:45 pm

Full Buffet Lunch, 1:00 pm -2:00 pm

One Afternoon Workshop, 2:15 pm -3:30 pm

Tickets: Regular \$66. WPU Alumni \$55. WPU Graduate Students \$33. WPU Undergraduate Students \$22.

Late registration (after April 7th) is \$77, so please register early.

The Department of English at the William Paterson University of New Jersey is proud to continue its annual Spring Writer's Conference, which in the past has hosted such luminaries as Rick Moody, Paul Muldoon, Francine Prose, David Means, Terese Svoboda, Russell Banks, Alison Lurie, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Yusef Komunyakaa, Chang-Rae Lee, Kimiko Hahn, Sindiwe Magona, Anthony Swofford, Porochista Khakpour, and Luc Sante. Join us for a day of workshops and readings in fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, script writing, editing, and publishing. We welcome participation from scholars in all disciplines, creative writers of all stripes, professional editors, secondary-, middle-, and elementary-level educators, graduate and undergraduate students, and the general public—in short, anyone interested in reading, writing and literary pursuits. We offer Professional Development Hours to New Jersey Educators.

Keynote Speaker: Brenda Shaughnessy



on *Our Andromeda*: “it further establishes Shaughnessy’s particular genius, which is utterly poetic, but essayistic in scope, encompassing ideas about astronomy, illness, bodies, the family, ‘normalcy,’ home.”

— **Hilton Als, *New Yorker***

"Love is the fierce engine of this beautiful and necessary book of poems. Love is the high stakes, the whip of its power and grief and possibility for repair. Brenda Shaughnessy has brought her full self to bear in ‘Our Andromeda,’ and the result is a book that should be read now because it is a collection whose song will endure. "

— **The New York Times Book Review**

Brenda Shaughnessy is the author of five poetry collections, including *The Octopus Museum* (coming in March 2019 from Knopf); *So Much Synth* (2016, Copper Canyon Press); *Our Andromeda* (2012), which was a finalist for the Kingsley Tufts Award, The International

Griffin Prize, and the PEN Open Book Award. Her work has appeared in *Best American Poetry*, *Harpers*, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *O Magazine*, *Paris Review*, *Poetry Magazine*, and elsewhere. Recent collaborative projects include writing a libretto for a Mass commissioned by Trinity Church Wall Street for composer Paola Prestini, and a poem-essay for the exhibition catalog for Toba Khedoori’s solo retrospective show at LACMA. A 2013 Guggenheim Foundation Fellow, she is Associate Professor of English and Creative Writing at Rutgers University-Newark.

“Her work is known for its ability to twin opposites: her poems are both playful and erotic, lyrical and funny, formal and strange.”— **Poetry Foundation**

“Shaughnessy’s poems come often at a visible cost for poet and speaker alike: to describe the complexities, traumas and incompatibilities of queer inner life (as much as her familial one) amid the cold noisy backdrop of a busy world.”— **Adam Fitzgerald**

on *Human Dark with Sugar*: “Shaughnessy draws attention to the contradiction of being made up of so many parts while appearing to be one single body.” — **Cate Peebles**

Morning Workshops, 11:30AM-12:45PM

❖ **Naming the Nameless: A Poetry Workshop, with Brenda Shaughnessy.** Most of life's experiences transcend or defy explanation. "Poetry exists to give name to the nameless" (Audre Lorde). In this workshop, we'll explore poetic techniques, form, and function which can transform the real stuff of life (memory, personal history, grief, celebration, desire, trauma) and powerfully render unwieldy human experience in language. Craft workshop, lecture, and in-class writing.

❖ **Fiction Workshop, with Jenessa Abrams.** What constitutes a story? Does a story need to have a delineated beginning, middle and end? Our lived experiences often don't follow a linear pattern, so why do we assume our narratives should? In this workshop, we'll explore the use of storytelling as a means to promote healing. We'll begin by reading excerpts from short prose that use nontraditional literary strategies to examine human experiences. After discussing literary techniques within these works, members of the workshop will have an opportunity to write their own short prose. There will be a period of sharing and discussion following the writing exercise. **Jenessa Abrams** is a Norman Mailer Fiction Fellow and has been awarded fellowships and grants from the MacDowell Colony, the Ucross Foundation, the Vermont Studio Center and Columbia University, where she earned her MFA in fiction and literary translation. Her writing has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and published in *Tin House*, *Guernica*, *The Rumpus*, *BOMB Magazine* and elsewhere. Recently, she earned a subsequent graduate degree in Narrative Medicine at Columbia University. Currently, she teaches writing at Rutgers University.

❖ **Dramatic Writing as Therapy, with Yasmine Beverly Rana.** This is not a therapy session per say, but a workshop for the writer who is curious about utilizing monologue and dialogue in dramatic writing or prose fiction as a modality for exploration. Following brief writing activities, participants will have the time and space to create and share an early draft of their writing. Topics of discussion will include theatrical distancing, role-playing, and dramatic revising of experiences. **Yasmine Beverly Rana's** work was presented at the 2019 International Human Rights Arts Festival. India's National School of Drama in New Delhi produced *The War Zone is My Bed and Other Plays* (Francesca Primus Prize finalist). Awards: NJ Transit and NJ State Council on the Arts TRANSITIONAL Art Project (2019), New Jersey State Council on the Arts Award in Playwriting (2015), Walter E. Dakin Fellowship in Playwriting. Publications: *The Alabama Literary Review*, *Blackbird*, *The Contemporary European Idea*, *The Kenyon Review*, *TDR: The Drama Review*, *The Best Contemporary Monologues*, *The Best Stage Scenes*, and *The Best Men's and Women's Monologues*. The University of Chicago Press and Seagull Books "In Performance Series" published *The War Zone is My Bed and Other Plays*, an anthology of Yasmine's plays. An educator and drama therapist, Yasmine has worked in Bosnia, The Republic of Georgia, and Switzerland. She received her BFA and MFA in Dramatic Writing from NYU Tisch School of the Arts, her MA in Teaching from Fairleigh Dickinson University, and is a member of the Dramatists Guild of America.

❖ **Script-Writing Workshop, with Philip Cioffari.** A lecture/workshop in dramatic writing, for both stage and film. The focus will be on writing strong, compelling scenes. Students are encouraged to bring, for discussion, one or more of their original scenes for a play or movie. **Philip Cioffari's** latest novel is *If Anyone Asks, Say I Died from the Heartbreaking Blues*. His feature film, *Love in the Age of Dion*, which he wrote and directed, won Best Feature Film at the Long Island International Film Expo, and Best Director at the NY International Film & Video Festival, among many other film festival awards. His plays have been performed OFF and OFF-OFF Broadway. He is a member of the Playwrights/Directors unit of the Actors Studio.

Afternoon Workshops, 2:15PM–3:30PM

❖ **Memoir, with David Borkowski.** This workshop revolves around how to create drama and tension in memoir while remaining accountable to the truth. How can real experiences be turned into compelling storytelling? How much of our experience is recreated in its retelling? And if truths are subjective, which versions should we remain faithful to? In this workshop, we will explore such questions while drafting some creative nonfiction writing of our own. **David Borkowski** is Associate Professor of English at William Paterson University. He completed his Ph.D. at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Professor Borkowski's work has appeared in *Rhetoric Review* and *College Composition and Communication*. His first book was entitled *The Emergence of a New Rhetoric: A History of the Linguistic Reformation of American Culture*. The paperback edition of his last book, *A Shot Story: From Juvie to Ph.D.*, was recently issued in paperback by Gotham Press, an imprint of Fordham University Press. He is currently writing a historical novel, *The Dynamite Express*. It takes place in the American West in the 1890's, and deals with a labor dispute among silver miners and mine owners. Professor Borkowski teaches a range of writing and literature courses, at both the graduate and undergraduate level—The Victorian Novel, Global Literature, The Romantic Movement, Films & Literature, the Writing Capstone, Critical Writing, Biography & Autobiography, to name a few.

❖ **Flash Fiction, with Martha Witt.** In this workshop, we will discuss the opportunities and challenges that arise when writing a story under 1,000 words. We'll consider plot and character but also look at techniques for fine-tuning sentence-level issues such as diction, syntax, and rhythm. Through reading published flash fiction pieces and participating in generative exercises, writers should leave this workshop with a greater understanding of the genre's potential and one or more drafts of a flash fiction piece. Writers working in all lengths should benefit from a deep dive into story on the micro-level. **Martha Witt**, Professor of Creative Writing at William Paterson University, is the author of the novel *Broken as Things Are* (Holt, 2004 and Picador, 2005). Her short stories and flash fiction has appeared in journals such as *AGNI*, *Boulevard Magazine*, *One Story*, and *SmokeLong Quarterly*. She has been awarded residencies at the Yaddo artist colony, the Ragdale colony, the VCCA colony, and at the *Casa delle Traduzioni* in Rome, Italy. She is a recipient of a Thomas J. Watson Grant, a New York Times Fellowship, and a McCracken Fellowship. In collaboration with Mary Ann Frese Witt, she translated Luigi Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (Italice Press, 2013) and *Henry IV* (Italice, 2016), as well as Grazia Deledda's *Ivy* (Italice, 2019). Her translations of Giovanni Verga's *Rustic Chivalry* and Leo Ferrero's *Angelica* are forthcoming with Italice Press this year.

❖ **Submitting Poetry and Fiction to Literary Magazines...and Beyond, with Holly Day.** One of the easiest ways to break into publishing is by having individual poems and short stories published in literary magazines. In this workshop, we'll discuss where to find and decipher market listings for small press and university literary magazines, proper manuscript formatting for poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction, how to write a query letter to go with your submissions, and finally, how to submit your short works. We'll also discuss what your long-game plans are and how to achieve them, whether it's compiling your poetry or short stories into a full-length manuscript (and how and where to send it), traveling to universities and literary groups as a visiting poet, participating in conventions and how to get invited to do so, or setting up readings, book signings, and interviews. **Holly Day** teaches writers how to apply their skills to becoming working writers at the nationally-renown Loft Writing Center at the Open Book Collective in downtown Minneapolis. Her classes aim to teach the fundamentals a working writer needs to know about how to make a living as a freelancer, focusing on how to approach writing as a real job, with an emphasis on researching and reaching potential markets for one's writing, agent and publisher solicitation, and writing fiction and nonfiction book proposal packages. She has been offered (and has held) regular columns and editorial staff positions in many national magazines on a variety of subjects (including *GuitarOne*, *Music Alive!* and *Film Festival Today*), and had over a dozen books published by major and independent presses.

❖ **Poetry and Numerology, with Timothy Liu.** We will start by considering the significance of the numbers 1 through 9, how they impinge on the making of lines and stanzas, even sections of a long poem or a book of poems. We will then look at specific poetic examples before looking at how numbers are also used in occult systems like Astrology, Crystals, the I Ching, and the Tarot, considering how such noticings can serve as prompts for writing and rewriting practices. **Timothy Liu** is the author of twelve books of poems, most recently *Let It Ride*. A reader of occult esoterica, he lives in Manhattan and Woodstock, NY. www.timothyliu.net