

MA Professional Writing

Congratulations on gaining a place on MA Professional Writing at University College Falmouth.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the course. The team is looking forward to spending the year with what promises to be a lively and stimulating group of students, which of course includes you!

Our first meeting will be on **Monday 3 October** at **9.30am**. Please come to **Kathmor House, Room E/F**, on the Woodlane Campus, Falmouth. This will be an opportunity to meet the course team and your fellow students, and we will also be giving you details of the course requirements.

During the first week, you will participate in a fairly intensive introduction to the course, with a group creative project that will provide a chance to get to know each other. After that we will work to the normal timetable.

On arrival you will be given a Student Handbook, which includes full details of all aspects of the course and UCF procedures, and a timetable of your lectures and seminars. The Handbook includes reading lists for each of the course's modules, but in the meantime you might like to do some reading in preparation for the coming year. You'll find some suggestions on the enclosed sheet.

Please take a look at <http://professionalwriting.falmouth.ac.uk> for some background information before term starts.

During the summer you will be emailed important information for new students. If you will be away, please ask someone else to check your emails regularly and reply on your behalf.

If you have any queries prior to enrolment, please contact Lucy Cooper in the Admissions Office on 01326 255851, email lucy.cooper@falmouth.ac.uk or contact me directly.

Have a wonderful summer. Do lots of reading. The course team is looking forward to meeting you in October.

Yours sincerely

Helen Shipman
Award Leader, MA Professional Writing
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Preparing for the MA Professional Writing course

Reading reflectively

It should go without saying, but you cannot hope to develop as a writer without reading both voraciously and reflectively.

If you're interested in a particular genre of fiction or non-fiction, we'd urge you to make sure that you've read work by a range of successful authors working in that area. You probably won't need us to tell you who these are, but if in doubt try browsing the 'Categories' section of www.amazon.co.uk. Of course, there's no need to limit your reading to bestsellers, but it's certainly useful to be aware of what publishers are likely to be looking out for.

If you're interested in writing for film and television, then you should be reading successful scripts and screenplays. Many are available for free online. See the links on the British Film Institute website at www.bfi.org.uk/gateway/categories/scripts/scriptwriting/online/

We'd strongly recommend that you start keeping a reading diary, if you're not already doing so. This is an excellent way to crystallise your thoughts about what works or doesn't work in a particular piece of writing in terms of story, structure, style, characterisation and so on. The point is not to write an exhaustive review of everything you read, but to jot down a few notes about what you see as the most interesting/successful/problematic aspects.

It's also a good idea to start building your knowledge and understanding of the media and publishing industries by reading a variety of print and online publications. Again, the exact nature of your reading will depend partly on your interests, but we would recommend that you try to take in:

- A quality newspaper every day
- A 'red-top' tabloid at least twice a week
- The Media and New Media sections of the Guardian on Monday
- The Guardian Review section on Saturday
- BBC Online (www.bbc.co.uk) – particularly the Entertainment and Magazine sections
- Industry publications such as Press Gazette, New Media Age, Broadcast and The Bookseller as often as possible. These may be available in your local library.

You will need the following texts for the beginning of the course:

Grammar and Punctuation

Strunk, William and White, E.B. *Elements of Style*

The Penguin Guide to Punctuation

You should also have a good dictionary (*Collins* or *Chambers*), and a thesaurus.

Preparation for Semester One

Vogler, Christopher. *The Writer's Journey*

Abbott, H.P. *Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*

Stein, Sol. *Solutions for Writers*

The following are not essential, but past students have found them interesting and useful:

King, Stephen. *On Writing*

Brande, Dorothea. *Becoming a Writer*

The more widely you read in different forms and genres, the better prepared you will be to benefit from the course.

Finally, and most importantly, think about what you would like to write. If you have a story, start developing it, if you have ideas for features think about how you might research them. If you have an area of expertise, think about how you might incorporate it into your work.

The faster you can hit the ground running in October, the further you will go during the year.