

MA PROFESSIONAL WRITING AT FALMOUTH

I'D LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO WELCOME YOU TO MA PROFESSIONAL WRITING AT FALMOUTH. 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.

First week of term

Your first day of attendance will be **Monday 21 September 2015**. Please report to **Seminar 1, Daphne du Maurier Building, Penryn Campus** at **10am**. The MA tutors will be in the Stannary canteen from 9.30am if you wish to meet up there beforehand.

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 and timetable for the first semester.

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 Falmouth 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 in the list below.

MyTimetable

<https://mytimetable.falmouth.ac.uk/> available from 1 September 2015.

This is the link to MyTimetable, your online academic calendar which shows all scheduled learning activities and your course timetable. It will be available from 1 September 2015, however, timetables can be subject to change. To keep up to date, we recommend that you export the feed to your chosen device (mobile, tablet, laptop or desktop). Students will have access to their individual student timetables, where appropriate, once they have completed their online enrolment and IT induction.

Preparing for the 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 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 as many successful scripts and screenplays as you can. Many are available for free online. See the links on the British Film Institute website at bfi.org.uk. You should also be watching films, television dramas and online dramas. The broader your knowledge and understanding of films and television, the more it will inform your ability to write screenplays.

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
- The Media and Books sections of the Guardian, New York Times and Huffington Post:
www.guardian.co.uk/media
www.guardian.co.uk/books
www.nytimes.com/pages/books/index.html
www.huffingtonpost.com/books
- Books on the BBC www.bbc.co.uk/tv/seasons/books/
- Broadcast and/or Variety
- Industry publications such as *The Bookseller* and *Publishers Weekly* as often as possible. These may be available in your local library. Also look at www.brandrepublic.com for business writing news and www.mashable.com for social media news.
- <https://26.org.uk/> a lively network that brings together people who work with words for a living, as copywriters, web content managers, editors and in many other roles
- Our research portal <http://professionalwriting.falmouth.ac.uk/research/> contains links to useful books, sites and blogs
- Our book industry stories and course news. Follow us on Twitter @falwriting

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

Grammar and punctuation

Strunk, W. 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

Abbott, H.P., *Cambridge introduction to narrative*.

McDonald, P., *Storytelling: narratology for critics and creative writers*.

Stein, S., *Solutions for writers*.

Vogler, C., *The writer's journey*.

Yorke, J., *Into the woods: a five act journey into narrative*.

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

On the process of writing

Brande, D., *Becoming a writer*.

King, S., *On writing*.

Palumbo, D., *Writing from the inside out: transforming your psychological blocks to release the writer within*.

Inspiration: Writing what's around you

De Botton, A., *Essays in love*.

De Botton, A., *On seeing and noticing*.

O'Rourke, P. J., *Holidays in hell*.

Non-fiction

Look at the huge variety of non-fiction books there are available next time you go to a bookshop.

If you want suggestions to get you started, you can begin with:

Holmes, R., *Footsteps: the adventures of a romantic biographer*.

Winterson, J., *Why be happy when you could be normal?*

Business/editorial

Leith, S., *You talkin' to me?: rhetoric from Aristotle to Obama*.

Marr, A., *My trade: a short history of British journalism*.

Simmons, J., *We, Me, Them & It: the power of words in business*.

Try <https://26.org.uk/> an association of people who work as business writers – there is some interesting material here.

Publishing Information

All you need to know about publishing 2013 in a 40-minute video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-wosb9GPLE>

<http://www.lrb.co.uk/v31/n04/colin-robinson/diary>

Screenwriting

Spielberg, S., 1973. *Jaws*.

(U.S. For the hero's Journey and the three act structure.)

Vallee, J.M., 2013. *Dallas buyers club*.

(U.S. For developing and exploring theme.)

Almodovar, P., 2012. *The skin I live in*.

(Spain. For visual storytelling.)

Nakache, O. and Toledano, E., 2011. *The intouchables*

(France. For character-led drama.)

Leigh, M., 2011. *Topsy, turvy*.

(U.K. For setting.)

Wilder, B., 1958. *Some like it hot*.

(U.S. For dialogue.)

Wilder, B., 1944. *Double indemnity*.

(U.S. For genre.)

Wainright, S., 2014. *Happy valley*.

(U.K. For television drama.)

Fellini, F., 1950. *La dolce vita*.

(Italy. For playing with form and structure.)

Dardenne, J., 2014. *Two days, one night*.

(France. Character development and hero's journey.)

Further readings are available as scanned material online once you have started the course. You'll be given other recommended and essential readings as you progress.

Meanwhile, you should be reading as widely as possible in different forms and genres but particularly in the genre you are most interested in writing yourself.

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 the first week of the course, the further you will go during your time with us.

During the next few weeks 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 been made a conditional offer to study at Falmouth, your place is subject to meeting those conditions. If you have any questions, please contact Sarah Walker in Admissions on 01326 255852 or sarah.walker@falmouth.ac.uk

If you have any queries prior to enrolment, please contact Sarah Walker in Admissions or Jane Pugh in the Professional Writing office at jane.pugh@falmouth.ac.uk

Before term starts, do lots of reading. The course team is looking forward to meeting you in September.

Yours sincerely

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