Course Title: Jumpstart Your Children’s Book
Course Code: CW 10
Instructors: Elissa Haden Guest & Lynn E. Hazen
Course Schedule: 3 Saturdays: November 6, 13 and 20, 2021, 9:30 am - 12:45 pm

Grade Options:
- No Grade Requested (NGR): This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC): Attend all 3 class sessions.
- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass): Attend all 3 class sessions, participate, and write.

*Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.

Required Text(s): none

Recommended Text(s):
Everything Sad is Untrue (a true story) by Daniel Nayeri Levine
The Suitcase by Chris Naylor-Ballesteros
Children’s Picture Books: The Art of Visual Storytelling by Martin Salisbury and Morag Styles
The Writers Guide to Crafting Stories for Children by Nancy Lamb

An extended bibliography will be provided in class

Tentative Weekly Outline:

Week 1 - Saturday, November 6, 2021
- Introduction to universal themes in children’s and young adult books
- Writing exercises to mine childhood memories
- Sharing Nayeri and Naylor-Ballesteros’ passages to highlight craft techniques
- Discovering your own voice
- Breakout out groups
- Q & A

Week 2 - Saturday, November 13, 2021
- Developing engaging characters
- Building scenes with conflict and tension
- New and expanded in-depth writing exercises
- Creating a believable world—Setting
• Breakout out groups
• Q & A

Week 3 - Saturday, November 20, 2021
• Specific topics of student interest
• Breakout out groups
• Q & A and strategies for the creative life

Course Summary: In this course students will learn how to tap into their own children’s book “muse” and discover the unexpected. Through in-class writing prompts, students will explore their own childhood memories, bring elusive ideas to the surface, develop interesting characters, conflicts, and settings, and capture fresh scenes on the page. We will read and discuss books such as Daniel Nayeri’s Everything Sad is Untrue: (a true story) and children’s books both classic and new, highlighting successful craft techniques. Diving into their own stories both in class and between the sessions, students will leave the course energized with new material and a creative plan for propelling their children’s or young adult stories forward. Practical tips about the world of children’s book publishing will also be addressed with plenty of time for Q & A. Students will have the opportunity to share their writing in breakout groups. This course is open to aspiring as well as experienced writers.

Lynn E. Hazen, Author
Lynn Hazen is the author of the young adult novel Shifty, which was named to VOYA’s Top Shelf Fiction and was a Smithsonian Notable Book for Children. Her other books include Mermaid Mary Margaret, Cinder Rabbit, The Amazing Trail of Seymour Snail, and Buzz Bumble to the Rescue.

Elissa Haden Guest, Author
Elissa Haden Guest’s most recent picture book is Baby Builders. Her ten-book early reader series, Iris and Walter, includes five Junior Library Guild Selections, an ALA Notable Children’s Book, and a PEN Center USA West Literary Award.