



Course Title: Novel III: Subtext, Theme, and Language

Course Code: OWC 305 C

Instructor: Malena Watrous

Course Summary:

This section of Novel III is for students who feel behind in generating pages and want a quarter in which to do a lot of active writing rather than workshopping. Our emphasis will be on producing pages. To that end, every student will be required to submit 500-1,000 words of their novel every week. In weeks 8-10, the maximum will go up to 2000, so that everyone who wants to may finish having written an additional 10,000 (approximately 40 pages) of their novels. While there will be required reading on craft, we will *not* read and analyze a novel as a group activity. Instead, the majority of student time will be spent writing and, in small groups, responding to the work of other students. We will also have a live writing zoom session each week, for those who benefit from accountability and would like to show up and write together. In addition, each week we will discuss a different craft topic, such as character development; action and reflection; time progression; theme; and subtext.

Grade Options and Requirements:

- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)
 - Students will be required to submit at least 500 new words (scenes, chapters, or partial scenes or chapters) per week.
 - Students must also participate in weekly discussions and/or Zoom sessions.
 - Students must provide a paragraph of feedback on time to other members of their small group, each week.

Required Books/Materials:

- *The Complete Handbook of Novel Writing; Interviews and Articles, 3rd Edition*; multiple authors.
- *The Art of Subtext*; Charles Baxter.
- Online Articles; multiple authors.

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions
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Tentative Zoom Schedule*:

Thursdays at 12 pm Pacific Time.

**Please note that the Zoom schedule is subject to change. I will also hold an optional 20 minute zoom or phone conference with each student, to be arranged at our mutual convenience, at any point in the quarter.*

Tentative Weekly Outline:

Week 1: Describe Your Novel

Reading: "Fire Up Your Fiction" by Donald Maas; *Complete Handbook of Novel Writing*, pp. 34-37.
Writing: Describe your novel

Week 2: Your Character's Journey

Reading: "Character Study" by Alice Hoffman; *Complete Handbook of Novel Writing*, pp. 80-82;
"How to Stretch Your Character," by David Corbett, pp. 90-97;
"Status," by Steven James, pp. 106-113.
Supplemental reading: All the remaining essays in "Best-selling Advice: Characters," *Complete Handbook of Novel Writing*, pp. 80-119.
Exercise: Chart / write a list of emotional plot points (the protagonist's emotional journey)
Write: 500-1,000 words of your manuscript

Week 3: Writing to the Midpoint

Reading: "The Hero's Journey" by Paula Munier, *Complete Handbook of Novel Writing*, pp. 41-46;
"The Two Pillars of Novel Structure," by James Scott Bell, *Complete Handbook of Novel Writing*, pp. 47-52.
Exercise: Write a scene list of your manuscript (including scenes you haven't yet written)
Write: 500-1,000 words of your manuscript

Week 4: Driving Your Story Forward

Reading: "The Essential Endgame Structure" by Larry Brooks, *Complete Handbook of Novel Writing*, pp. 59-64;
Interview with Khaled Hosseini, "Moving Mountains," *Complete Handbook of Novel Writing*, pp. 437-444.
Exercise: Find 86% mark; revise your scene list
Write: 500-1,000 words of your manuscript

Week 5: Scene versus Summary

Reading: "Creating a Scene," *The Art of Subtext* pp. 115-142.
Write: 500-1,000 words of your manuscript

Week 6: Time Progression; Crowding and Leaping

Reading:

<https://www.janefriedman.com/time-shifts/>

<https://www.aliventures.com/handling-time-in-fiction/>

<https://lookihaveopinions.wordpress.com/2013/09/02/on-crowding-and-leaping-in-fiction-writing/>

<https://www.fimfiction.net/blog/195625/craft-crowding-and-leaping-focus-and-trajectory>

Write: 500 words of your manuscript PER DAY, for a total of 2500 words.

Week 7: Layering Information into Your Story

Reading: "Weaving in a Seamless Backstory," by Karen Dionne, *Complete Handbook of Novel Writing*, pp. 53-58.

Write: 500-1,000 words of your manuscript

Week 8: Subtext

Reading: Read: "Digging the Subterranean," *The Art of Subtext* pp. 33-61.

Write: 500-2,000 words of your manuscript

Week 9: Themes and Through-lines

Reading: "Transform your Novel into a Symphony" by Elizabeth Sims, *Complete Handbook of Novel Writing*, pp. 122-128;

"Something to Say: Weaving Theme into Your Novel," by Donald Maas, *Complete Handbook of Novel Writing*, pp. 129-134.

Write: 500-2,000 words of your manuscript

Week 10: Inspiration and Perspiration

Reading: "Break the Blocks to Creative Flow" by Jordan Rosenfeld, *Complete Handbook of Novel Writing*, pp. 177-183;

"Your Revision Checklist" by Josip Novakovich, *Complete Handbook of Novel Writing*, pp. 230-237.

Write: 500-2,000 words of your manuscript