



**Course Title:** Novel Writing: How to Start Your Novel and Keep It Going

**Course Code:** NVL 06

**Instructor:** Angela Pneuman

### **Class Sessions and Recording**

Meeting days and times: Wednesdays, 6:30-9:20 PM

Meeting location: On-Campus (details will be shared with registered students prior to first class meeting)

The class sessions will not be recorded.

### **Course Features:**

- Live session
  - Lecture, discussions, Q&A, in-class writing
  - Requires interaction and active participation
  - Guest speakers - possibly
- Assignments & Coursework
  - Students submit one large workshop piece for class and instructor feedback
  - Instructor will provide feedback on workshop and brief feedback on weekly assignments
- Instructor will hold office hours by appointment

### **Course Summary:**

Our course, “Novel Writing: How to Start Your Novel and Keep It Going,” is designed to help you launch a satisfying journey through your first draft of a novel. We’ll focus on writing the opening section, pages that have enough energy to motivate you go the distance. Does this mean that when you’ve finished your entire first draft the opening you’ve produced in this course will still work? Possibly. Possibly not. In fact, the end of your first draft may offer a whole new perspective on what the beginning needs. That’s where your revision process will kick in. But in this class, we’re focusing on the opening section of this very first effort, that exciting place for discovering your characters, their dramatic potential and the world they inhabit. These pages at this stage do the essential job of engaging *you*, the writer. These pages help you figure out the kind of material that will keep you vitally attentive for the long-haul, and this class will give you the opportunity to respond to all kinds of creative provocation. At the end of the course I’ll ask you to try your hand at projecting both an outline and a précis—a one-page narrative summary of what you imagine will happen in the rest of the book based on the dynamics you’ve put into play with your first pages. A précis is often what a potential agent or publisher requests to accompany a sample chapter or two.

Each week, short one- to two-page writing assignments will help you work with your own subject matter as you practice handling the elements of fiction. These assignments, as well

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as class discussion and instructor feedback, are designed to help you develop an opening section of your book for our class workshop.

*\*Please see course page for full description and additional details.*

### **Course Materials:**

*The Modern Library Writers' Workshop*, by Stephen Koch (available in print and electronically)

[https://www.amazon.com/Modern-Library-Writers-Workshop-Paperbacks/dp/0375755586/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1509465943&sr=1-1&keywords=modern+library+writer%27s+workshop](https://www.amazon.com/Modern-Library-Writers-Workshop-Paperbacks/dp/0375755586/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1509465943&sr=1-1&keywords=modern+library+writer%27s+workshop)

Instructor handouts and links, and the opening chapters of several novels, interviews and articles available online—often through the “look-inside” function of online booksellers.

### **Grade Options and Requirements:**

- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)
  - *All assignments will be graded on a completed / not completed basis*
    - 55% Satisfactory completion of five of ten weekly writing assignments and one 8- to 15-page opening section of your novel (2000 – 3750 words)
    - 45% Participation, to include in-class discussion and thoughtful feedback on classmates' workshop submission
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
  - A passing grade (for "Credit") = at least 70% of expectations accomplished
- 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.

*\*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.*

### **Tentative Weekly Outline:**

We'll focus on outside readings, discussion of the elements of fiction, and writing assignments that explore these elements and spark the creative process. The last seven weeks we'll also focus on workshop, reducing the number of outside readings and assignments in favor of focusing on classmates' writing. Workshops not only provide direct feedback on individual work, they also bring up helpful topics for all of us to think about while writing our own stories.

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**Week 1: The Creative Habit**

**Week 2: Character**

**Week 3: Point of View**

**Week 4: Conflict**

**Week 5: Place, Time, Culture, the Material World**

**Week 6: Dialogue and Narrative Pace**

**Week 7: Conflict, Tension, Plot, Stakes**

**Week 8: Time, Structure**

**Week 9: Picking up Threads, Opening up Your Pages**

**Week 10: Moving Forward**