NOVEL WRITING:
ANSWERING THE TOP TEN QUESTIONS

Instructor:
Maria Hummel

Dates:
Saturdays, July 26 and August 2, 10am-4pm

Grade Options:
NGR (No Grade Requested): This is the default option, just show up for class
Requirements for Letter grade/Credit: Attendance, completion of homework, and thoughtful, positive participation each day

SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

Morning

1. What is novel design?
2. Is my novel idea-based or character-based?
3. Who or what is telling my story?

Lunch Break, 12:30pm

4. How do I create compelling characters?
5. How much of my plot should I map out before I start writing?
6. How do I handle backstory, i.e. all the events that take place before my book begins?

Homework:

1) Look at the dust-jackets or back covers of novels you admire and write your own 100-word cover copy. It can feel uncomfortable to sing your own praises at this point, so don’t worry so much about that. Concentrate instead on what plot element or character or aspect of your writing voice would hook your readers. Does your story have a mystery, an interesting setting, an unusual point of view, a famous historical person or event in it?
2) Expand one of your in-class writing exercises into 3-5 double-spaced pages.

Bring four copies of both to share with a feedback group on August 2.

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WEEK 2

Morning

   Dust-jacket and sample pages feedback session

    7. How do I keep readers engaged in my story?
    8. What are the seven unsinkable scenes?

Lunch Break, 12:30pm

Afternoon

    9. Novels can take forever. What happens if I lose steam?
    10. What makes a novel more likely to sell to a publisher?