Office Hours: While I do not hold regular office hours for this course, I am happy to meet by appointment on Wednesdays before class meetings.

Textbook: The Paris Review Interviews, Vol. I & Vol. II. These collections derive from the original Paris Review interviews called “Writers at Work,” and are intended to provide students with a sense of the various narrative matters facing all writers, ranging from personal habits of composition to the overarching themes of a culture.

I will also distribute a suggested reading list during our first meeting on April 1st and students are encouraged to deepen their practical understanding of the novel as both a traditional and evolving narrative form.

Materials and/or Expenses: In addition to the books, Paris Review Interviews, there will be minimal printing expenses: when students schedule manuscripts for workshop discussion, they are asked to either print copies for each member of the class a week before that scheduled date, or make them available via email attachment in advance. Double-spaced required; double-sided just fine.

Requirements for Credit: Several grading options are available to students registered in the workshop. If students wish to receive credit for the course, and/or a letter grade, then they must attend most of the class meetings; present one to two chapters of a novel (length dependent), or one chapter and one revision; and participate regularly and respectfully in workshop discussions. Those choosing the no grade requested (NGR) option are not subject to attendance constraints; that being said, the workshop dynamic relies upon a consortium of voices working together toward a single goal—making our narratives the best that they can be. So, though not required of everyone, attendance with active participation is desired as part and parcel of being a solid citizen of the workshop community.

First Assignment:

Enrolled students should contact me via email to indicate whether or not they have work in progress that will be ready for discussion at the first class meeting on April 1st.

In addition, students are asked to arrive having read the interview with Truman Capote found in The Paris Review Interviews, Vol. I, as well as the two student manuscripts that will be available one week before class begins via email attachment. Please come to our first class meeting prepared to discuss these readings.
WEEKLY SCHEDULE AND OUTLINE:

* NOTE: Neither the subject of novel writing nor the dynamic of a writing workshop lends itself to a rigid schedule of topical presentations, since issues arise organically from the material under discussion week by week. Nevertheless, we will follow roughly the natural sequence involved in developing, composing, and editing a novel, something along the following lines:

WEEK 1 – April 1
- *Housekeeping*
  - Student sign up: manuscript presentation calendar
  - Handouts & explanations
  - Discussion of workshop protocol and dynamic
  - Guidelines for thinking and talking about works in progress
- *Brief Talk*
  - *Before you begin*
    - Fomenting ideas with imagination; the art of weaving autobiographical material into the fabric of fiction; truth vs. fact
    - Research, homework, and respectful preparedness
    - Organizing your material & notes
    - Good habits, good writing
- *Student manuscripts & discussions*
- *For next week: Read the interview with Hemingway from Volume I of The Paris Review*

WEEK 2 – April 8
- *Brief talk*
  - *Point of View*, the most important decision you will make
  - *Chapter One*
    - Brushing in a background
    - introducing characters
    - seeding conflict
    - initiating the fictional situation & early stages of plotting
- *Student manuscripts*
- *For next week: Read the interview with Robert Stone from Volume I of The Paris Review*

WEEK 3 – April 15
- *Brief talk*
  - *Composing the material*
    - dramatic scenes
    - narratively relevant description
    - experiential language & details vs. *telling* through summary & abstractions
    - more about causative plot elements and loading the spring
  - *Characterization & development* – breathing life into your players
- *Student manuscripts*
- *For next week: Read the interview with Faulkner from Volume II of The Paris Review*
WEEK 4 – April 22
• Brief talk
  – *Furnishing the House* – The narrative toolbox
    - Dialogue
    - Metaphor, simile, & symbolism
    - narrative voice & atmosphere
    - Necessary exposition & summary
    - Flashbacks and the informing past; backstories
    - The language of the senses
• Student manuscripts
• For next week: Read the interview with Eudora Welty from Volume II of *The Paris Review*

WEEK 5 – April 29
• Brief talk
  – *Narrative Architecture*
    - orchestrating content, scenes, backstories and anything else meant to enrich, expand, or explain the central narrative line
    - Pacing and dramatic syncopation
  – *Thematic considerations*
    - point, import, and organizing conceits
    - how a novel *means*
• Student manuscripts
• For next week: Read the interview with Alice Munro from Volume II of *The Paris Review*

WEEK 6 – May 6
• Q & A – *The road to publication*
  - final line editing
  - submissions, contests & awards
  - agents, presses and publishers
• Student manuscripts