Whether you have a finished draft of your novel and are ready to revise, or need to finish writing new material, this course will give you 10 weeks to get your book into shape before you hand it off to your One-on-One instructor. There are no novels or excerpts to read, and less emphasis on weekly writing exercises and assignments. Our main focus is to allow you to make as much progress as possible and offer **practical tips** to help you reach your goals. Our text is meant for you to use as a review and reference for what you’ve already learned in the program, and as a guideline as you write new material and/or redraft and revise older material.

This course also focuses heavily on access to the instructor. I’ll be acting as a project manager and cheerleader to keep you on track and help you get where you need to go, and also as a manuscript consultant (which I do professionally in my private practice) who will read a total of 15,000 words from your novel (approximately 50 double-spaced pages) and give you practical, detailed written feedback. You’ll also have the opportunity to share synopses, outlines, storyboards and/or scene lists so I (and your fellow students) can get a feel for your entire novel and help you with the overall big picture and brainstorming any areas where you might feel stuck.

**Small Critique Groups**

At the end of Week Two, the class will be split into small critique groups (about 3 members each). Members will exchange significant chunks of their manuscripts throughout the rest of the quarter. The **minimum** amount read by each member will be 50 double-spaced pages (approximately 15,000 words) over 10 weeks—hopefully more. Each group will agree on the schedule and deadlines in the spirit of helping each other accomplish goals and I can step in to facilitate if necessary. Group members can give feedback and communicate by using their group’s Discussion Board thread and also by other means (e.g., Word track changes, Zoom chat, telephone, email, etc.) if agreed to by the group. **And, if you want to work with additional critique partners from students outside your group, you are free to set that up in a way that will be mutually beneficial.**
Weekly Discussion Points & Writing Exercises

Each week I’ll provide three to four discussion threads, including those where you’ll be able to discuss what you’ve accomplished for the week as well as craft issues, sharing tips and tricks on time management, writing tools, brainstorming, etc.

There will also be optional writing exercises on various aspects of revision where you can learn by using sections from your own novel.

I will also be posting links to articles, blogs, videos, etc. and other topics that pertain to good work habits, how to keep inspired, revision tips, author interviews, etc., etc.

Workload and Course Requirements

To receive an “A” in this course you’ll need to:

Weeks One and Two:

Mandatory Writing Assignments:

~ Write a brief blurb (synopsis) of your novel
~ Post the first 500 words of your novel
~ Post your Action Plan for the quarter
~ Post your Novel Outline or Scene List
~ Respond to at least 2 of your fellow students’ writing assignments

Week Six:

~ Post your Mid-Point Action Plan

Week Ten:

~ Post your Writing Accomplishments for the Quarter

Weeks Three through Ten:

~ Read and digest the week’s lecture. Many lectures include a practical “Quick and Dirty Checklist” to aid you in your revision.

~ Turn in pages for feedback to your critique group, read pages from members and give feedback, meeting the mutually agreed upon deadlines and page counts over the ten weeks of the course.

~ Participate on the Discussion Board on at least two other topics per week, as a response to a colleague, or a question, comment, tip,
recommendation, etc. While you’ll be spending a lot of your time working independently on your novel, I do need to “see your face” on the Discussion Board. PARTICIPATION IS KEY IN GETTING A TOP GRADE: I NEVER GRADE ON A STUDENT’S WRITING.

~ Hand in 15,000 (50 pages) words from your novel to me on the agreed upon deadline. (These can be in chunks of two or three, if necessary).

THE REST OF THE TIME IS FOR YOU TO WORK ON YOUR NOVEL.

Chat:

I’ll be hosting an optional 45-minute Zoom chat per week starting during Week Two, and one optional 20-minute private phone conference per student over the course of the quarter. I am also available by email and, of course, on the Discussion Board. I advise you to take advantage of the access you’ll have and pick my brain about specifics on your novel, craft, writing life issues, etc. I’m here to offer my sincere help so you can avoid making the same mistakes I did when I first tackled writing a novel, and assist you in preparing your manuscript so that your One-on-One experience will be as satisfying and productive as possible.

Lecture Schedule:

Week One – The Art of Revision

Week Two – Revising Your Novel’s Opening: Does Your Story Start in the Right Place?

Week Three – Looking at Your Story’s Point of View: Does it Work?

Week Four – Dialogue: Is It Moving Your Story Forward?

Week Five – Scene vs. Summary: Do You Have Too Much Exposition? Do All Your Scenes Contain Dramatic Tension?

Week Six – Structure and Pacing: Are You Keeping Your Reader Interested?

Week Seven – Tips for Strengthening Voice and Style

Week Eight – Development of Your Novel’s Theme

Week Nine – Self-Editing Tips and Tricks

Week Ten – The End

(Note: The course will remain available online for two weeks after the end date.)
Reference Text:
Revision and Self-Editing for Publication by James Scott Bell
ISBN-10: 1599637065