Course Title: Becoming a High-Velocity Writer: National Novel Writing Month
Course Code: NVL 21
Instructor: Chris Baty

Course Summary:
For this class, students will write their own 50,000-word novel drafts. We'll spend the first few weeks planning our books, and then dive into a month of literary abandon on November 1. Students will leave class with a 50,000-word first draft and a reinvigorated sense of creative momentum.

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

Grade Options and Requirements:
- No Grade Requested (NGR)
  - This is the default option. Come to class and bash out your 50,000-word novel.
- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)
  - Come to class, participate in discussions, bash out your 50,000-word novel, and complete a 300- to 600-word supplemental writing assignment.
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
  - Come to class, participate in discussions, and bash out your 50,000-word novel.

*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:

Week One, September 28
WHAT HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO?
- Introduction and course goals
- Getting to know our noveling teammates
- NaNoWriMo: A brief history
- The curious benefits of cramming a novel into a month
- So what are we worried about?
- The Two Questions
- Magna Carta I and the kinds of stories we might write in November
Week Two, October 5
READYING YOUR LIFE FOR A MONTH OF LITERARY ABANDON
- What it takes to write 1,667 words a day
- Friends, family, and other noveling distractions
- A month without our inner editors
- Planning your writing schedule and incentives
- Setting up your writing space
- Writing tools
- Outlining: How much is necessary?
- The book we think we're writing, and the book we'll actually write
- Registering on NaNoWriMo.org and adding writing buddies

Week Three, October 12
MEETING OUR CHARACTERS
- Who are these people in your book, and what do they want from you?
- Exploring passions, pet peeves, guilty pleasures, weaknesses, secrets, etc.
- Character changes: Who are they now? Who might they become?
- Backstory: Plumbing your character's past
- Great antagonists (external and internal)

Week Four, October 19
NERDING OUT ON STORY STRUCTURE
- Why understanding story architecture is so helpful
- A primer on three-act structure
- The hero's journey
- Won't this result in miserably clichéd, predictable stories?

Week Five, October 26
FINAL PREP
- Deciding on point of view
- Honing our elevator pitches and writing our blurbs
- The power of tone
- Tips on making writing sessions fun and productive
- Momentum vs. speed
- NaNoWriMo write-ins happening in Palo Alto and beyond
- Things to know for the upcoming first week of NaNoWriMo

Week Six, November 2
AND WE'RE OFF!
- Public word-count check-in and treats
- Plot doctoring
- In-class writing sprints
- Confronting the urge to start over
- What to do if you're falling behind
- Things to know for the upcoming second week of NaNoWriMo
Week Seven, November 9
GETTING OVER THE WEEK-TWO WALL
- Public word-count check-in and treats
- Plot doctoring
- In-class writing sprints
- What to do when you want to quit
- Some thoughts on the 20,000s
- Jumpstarting stalled stories
- Handling character mutinies
- Things to know for the upcoming third week of NaNoWriMo

Week Eight, November 16
THE HOME STRETCH
- Public word-count check-in and treats
- Plot doctoring
- In-class writing sprints
- The magic of 35,000
- The home stretch
- Surviving Thanksgiving with your word-count intact
- Things to know for the upcoming fourth and final week of NaNoWriMo

Week Nine, November 30
THE LAST NIGHT
- Public word-count check-in and treats
- In-class writing sprints
- The home stretch

Week Ten, December 7
I WROTE A NOVEL! NOW WHAT?
- Novelist crowning ceremony, reading, and raucous party
- Revision tips
- Sleep