Course Title: What Comes Next? Pushing Your Novel to the Midpoint and Beyond
Course Code: NVL 28 W
Instructor: Angela Pneuman

Course Summary:
Starting a novel is an exciting venture, full of discovery. Pushing past the beginning pages is equally exciting—this stage involves exploring your characters-in-conflict, building your plot and subplots from the information you've introduced, working with structural elements, recognizing and enhancing themes, and much more. In this class we’ll take a look at three contemporary published novels and several excerpts, paying careful attention to what happens at the midpoint of these works. We'll also read briefly from essays and interviews to find out what novelists have to say about the satisfying effort of managing the challenges of midpoint drafts. Class discussion and short weekly writing assignments will encourage you to work with your own material, helping you open it up, push it forward, and maintain the momentum it takes to see the project through. You'll also have the opportunity to submit a section of your book for class workshop and receive helpful peer and instructor review. This class is for any writer who has launched a novel and wants to keep it moving forward.

Weekly short one- to two-page writing assignments, class discussion and instructor feedback are all designed to help you develop a section from the middle of your book (this might also be a section that comes late in the beginning—we’re flexible!) for our class workshop.

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

Course Materials:

The Modern Library Writer's Workshop, Stephen Koch
http://www.amazon.com/The-Modern-Library-Writers-Workshop/dp/0375755586/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1353012569&sr=8-1&keywords=modern+library+writer%27s+workshop

Disgrace, J.M. Coetzee

Buddha in the Attic, Julie Otsuka
https://www.amazon.com/Buddha-Attic-Pen-Faulkner-Award/dp/0307744426/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1477333212&sr=8-1&keywords=buddha+in+the+attic

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions
365 Lasuen St. Stanford, CA 94305
continuingstudies@stanford.edu
650-725-2650
In the Woods, Tana French
https://www.amazon.com/Woods-Tana-French/dp/0143113496/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1477333283&sr=8-1&keywords=in+the+woods+tana+french

Possible essays, interviews, novel excerpts to be provided by me.

Grade Options and Requirements:

• Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)
  o All assignments will be graded on a completed / not completed basis
    o 65% Satisfactory completion of five of ten weekly writing assignments and one 10- to 15-page mid-section of your novel
    o 35% Participation, to include in-class discussion and mandatory thoughtful written feedback on classmates’ workshop submission

• Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
  o A passing grade (for “Credit”) = at least 70% of expectations accomplished

• No Grade Requested (NGR)
  o 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 explore outside readings, discuss the elements of fiction especially relevant to the midpoints of longer projects, and work with 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.

This syllabus is still very much in progress and subject to change.

Week 1: The Creative Habit, and Getting to Know You and Your Novel-in-Progress

Week 2: Narrative Structure

Week 3: Point of View: Interiority/Exteriority

Week 4: Conflict, Intensity, Stakes

Week 5: Scenes, Sections, Tools

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Week 6: Writing Discomfort

Week 7: Subplot, Minor Characters

Week 8: Discover Meaning (Themes that rise to the surface)

Week 9: Picking up Threads, Opening up Your Pages

Week 10: Casting Forward