Course Title: The Craft of Fiction: Character and Plot  
Course Code: WSP 171  
Instructor: Ellen Sussman

Course Description:

This one-day workshop will examine the basic skills for writing stories and novels. We will focus on character development and plot as the most important elements in storytelling. Through in-class exercises, students will learn how to develop well-rounded characters, how to find a character arc within the story structure, and how to challenge their characters. We will explore two different plot structures—the plot pyramid and the three-act structure popular in screenwriting. Students will build stories in both formats and learn how to adapt these concepts for their own projects. We will also look at point of view, dialogue, and descriptive writing, and we will explore the creative process from first draft to polished story or novel. By the end of the day, students will have created the bare bones of a new short story, one that they might choose to develop using the skills they have acquired. This workshop is suitable for beginners as well as those who have been writing for some time but want to take a hard look at the foundation of craft.

Grade Options and Requirements:

No Grade Requested (NGR): This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received. Due to its short format, this workshop may not be taken for Credit or a Letter Grade.

Schedule:

Morning session
Discussion and in-class exercises to explore character development and plot.

Afternoon session
Discussion and in-class exercises to explore point of view, setting and rewriting. Discussion of writing discipline and work habits.