

# UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

## CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM

### Summer Styles Edition

Each year, many of our students explore opportunities outside of the classroom to enrich and inform their writing life. Towards that end, the UHCWP recently created a CWP Fellowship Fund to support students' research, and help cover costs for workshops, seminars and conferences. As the fall application deadline for this year's fellowships approaches, we asked some of our students—most of whom received CWP funding—to share their experiences from this past summer.



Laura Biagi (MFA, 2020)

I attended the Appalachian Writers' Workshop this July in Hindman, Kentucky. I was eager to attend because I'm setting part of my novel in the Appalachian region of Kentucky, and, while I'm from Kentucky, I'm less familiar with the Appalachian part of the state. I studied novel writing with Kayla Rae Whitaker, where we focused on generative writing exercises and revising our novels. It was excellent, as were the incredible conference readings and phenomenal conversations I had with other writers—everyone was so talented, and the experience left me full of inspiration for my work!



Theodora Bishop (PhD, 2022)

For the month of June, I studied Italian and worked on two writing projects while living in Rome. I spent the fifth and final week of my time in Italy touring the southern coast (Amalfi, Positano, Sorrento), which also ended up being influential on my work. By living with an Italian family and taking daily language classes at Scuola Leonardo da Vinci, I was able to gain reading knowledge of Italian, to deeply familiarize myself with Italy (particularly Rome) and its culture/history, and to continue working on projects I intend to complete during my time at UH.



Will Burns (PhD, 2019)

I attended the Tin House's Summer Workshop for novel writing, because I thought it would be useful in finishing up my second draft, which will comprise the creative portion of my dissertation. Also, I thought it would be a good idea to bump elbows with agents and editors. The readings and craft talks were consistently amazing, and I always left them feeling inspired. Ben Percy did a great talk on what we can learn from comic books, Tommy Pico and Danez Smith gave stellar readings, Melissa Febos made us all feel less weird about writing sex scenes, Randa Jarrar completely changed the way I view BDSM and its relation to writing, and the UH faculty (Boz, Toni, and Lacy) were wonderful.



Chelsea DesAutels (MFA, 2019)

In June I traveled to Squaw Valley, California, to attend Community of Writers. I wanted a generative environment (so I could finish fleshing out my manuscript), and it was exactly that. Workshops were led by Sharon Olds, Robert Hass, Evie Shockley, Dean Young, Monica de la Torre, and Kazim Ali. Each day, every participant brought a poem they'd written in the last 24 hours. It was exciting, supportive, and super productive. Plus, we got to hang out in strange 1970s ski lodges. One had teddy bears on swings suspended from the ceiling. I'm still thinking about that.



Josh Dewain Foster (PhD, 2019)

Georgia Pearle and I traveled throughout the Intermountain West this summer writing, hiking, and conducting elaborate, antiquated character studies. Jackson Hole, WY, July 2018.



Joshua Gottlieb-Miller (PhD, 2021)

This June I traveled to the National Yiddish Book Center (NYBC) for its annual week-long writing conference, Tent, which had offered me a spot in its poetry workshop, led by Lisa Olstein. Though Tent offers a workshop and seminar setting for writers interested in Jewish literature, it is open to writers of all backgrounds, not only writers of Jewish religious or ethnic background. For writers with Jewish heritage or religious affiliation, Tent is an easy program to recommend. I would also recommend Tent to non-Jewish writers, ideally those intrigued to study Jewish literature...or traditions of religious writing or questions of assimilation. Much of the discussion of what makes a “Jewish” writer revolved around questions of assimilation and “passing.” For those writers who consider the history of their ethnicity in America as having an aspirational relationship to whiteness (as I do with Jewishness), Tent might prove of special interest.



Niki Herd (PhD, 2021)

I attended the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference in Vermont this summer and had the opportunity to work with Daisy Fried (workshop leader) on new poems from my manuscript. The place was magical, the weather lovely (in the 70s), the folks there lovelier. The picture is from the Gala Reception with prose writers Nick Robinson and Renee Sims.



Robbie Howell (PhD, 2022)

From July 17-29 I was a Tennessee Williams Scholar at the Sewanee Writers’ Conference, where I workshoped short stories with Michael Knight, one of my favorite short story writers. During downtime from the wonderful and enlightening workshops, readings, and craft talks, I mostly hiked, swam, and sat on porches. (Sewanee is a great place to be outside.) I also played in the Narrative vs. Lyricism pick-up basketball game. My team—Narrative, natch—won handily.



Justin Jannise (PhD, 2022)

I attended the The Robert Frost Place Advanced Poetry Seminars in Franconia, New Hampshire. During a week in late July / early August, I worked with poets Eduardo C. Corral, Martha Collins, and Patrick Donnelly. I attended workshops, craft talks, and poetry readings at the famed Robert Frost farm house. Highlights included: seeing bears digging through the trash at a gas station, snooping through Robert Frost’s old medicine cabinet, and making many wonderful new friends.



Brendan Stephens (PhD, 2022)

In July, I studied with Wells Tower at the Tin House Summer Workshop in order to put the finishing touches on a short story. While at Tin House, beyond the workshop and fantastic craft lectures, I had the opportunity to meet amazing writers from all over the world.

Should you have queries or wish to support the cwp: [cwp@uh.edu](mailto:cwp@uh.edu)