

**2021 English Studies (Virtual) Summer Camp for High School Students  
Session Descriptions**

**Instructional Sessions:**

**MONDAY**

**10 am**

***Multi Genre Creative Writing Workshop***

In this craft workshop we will start by thinking small – about the things and objects that center our creative works. Through a combination of reading and writing exercise students will develop craft techniques that can strengthen creative writing across genre.

**11am**

***Tricksters and Storytellers: Comics Texts by Indigenous Authors***

Contemporary Native American and indigenous authors and artists are creating wonderful comics and graphic novels, drawing on a variety of inspirations: postmodern American literature; contemporary popular comics; modern painting; traditional tales and characters; tribal histories; and oral literatures. In this session, we will look at the ways different contemporary Native and indigenous creators combine these elements into a literature that respects traditional cultures and, at the same time, is relevant to today's readers.

**1 pm**

***Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Dragon***

Your character walks into a cave and finds a chained, fire-breathing dragon. What do they do? Do they laugh, do they run, do they free the poor captive dragon, or prepare to battle it? How a character acts and reacts depends on their body, mind, history, skills, and personality. Using the character templates of *Dungeons and Dragons* we can learn how to build strong, complex characters that are true to themselves and feel real in the worlds we create for them.

**2pm**

***The Song of Your Life***

Think about sharing your personal philosophy in a new way, as you use your favorite song to help write about who you are and what you think, value, and believe. You'll learn how to develop an argument in your writing, while sharing what matters to you.

**TUESDAY**

**10am**

***Seeing Skillfully: Analyzing Photographs & Music Videos***

In this session students will learn some skills for visual analysis by studying famous photographs and contemporary music videos. Learn about how the decisions artists and directors make in terms of camera shots/angles, framing, and arrangement can have a major impact on how we interpret themes, characters, and relationships. attention to close specific details within a scene, depict certain relationships between characters, and many other important aspects

**11am**

***Finding Your Poetic Voice***

Social media has made poetry more popular than ever, and there's no better art form for expressing yourself. This workshop will teach you tips and tricks to make your poetry more powerful, more musical, and more of a showcase for the voice that only you possess.

**1pm**

***A Brief Introduction to Sketch Comedy***

Want to flex your funny bone? In this hour-long session, you'll be introduced to a basic template for sketch writing. (Think *SNL*, *Portlandia*, or *Key and Peele*.) In addition to exploring a few different genres and features of comedic writing, we'll collaborate on some short sketches and learn how to shine a spotlight on the absurdity of everyday situations, contexts, and characters."

**2pm**

***The Life and Craft of Emily Dickinson***

In both her life and work, Emily Dickinson evoked vast universes from small spaces. We will look at some of her poems in an effort to understand how she did it.

**WEDNESDAY**

**10am**

***And Now for Something Completely Different: Collage Writing***

In this session, we'll discuss the art and artifice of writing a collage, a non-fiction genre that is loose, open, and associational. We will look at a few sample collages and consider how we want to craft our own. The second part of the session will involve brainstorming and sharing drafts of collages that try to achieve this ideal from Roman rhetoric: *Ars est celare artem*.

**11am**

***Much Ado about Nothing and Gender: Shakespeare at Play in Early Modern Culture***

*'Would it not grieve a woman to be overmastered with a piece of valiant dust? To make an account of her life to a clod of wayward marl?'* – Beatrice

Marriage is a business proposition in the early modern world. In this play, Shakespeare explores the price of propriety and the rocky path of true love, posing the always-interesting question: what might love look like between particularly prickly, jaded equals? [http://shakespeare.mit.edu/much\\_ado/full.html](http://shakespeare.mit.edu/much_ado/full.html)

**1pm**

***Heteronormativity in Literary Works***

*Romeo & Juliet*, *The Great Gatsby*, *The Crucible*, *Hamlet*, *Cather in the Rye* what do these things have in common besides for being often studied literary works from the canon? They, like many classic and contemporary texts, include narratives that normalize heterosexuality (romantic relationships between people of the opposite sex). In this session students will spot patterns common in literature and the ways they may have been taught to read and think "heteronormatively." Students will also get the chance to engage with some excerpts from books that actively work to resist this.

**2pm**

***Let's Talk Shop (Fan-Fiction Edition)!***

Those of us who write fic are faced with unique (sometimes frustrating, sometimes fun) challenges for how to put our own spin on our favorite stories and characters. How do we interpret "canon"? How do we decide what to keep, cut, or change in our adaptations? Why do we write fic anyway? In this session, we'll discuss these questions and more before a small workshop of excerpts from your own fics! Come prepared with a portion of 250 words or less that you'd like to share/receive feedback on.

**THURSDAY**

**10am**

***"My Heart Stopped": Using Imagery to Avoid Platitudes and Clichés in Creative Writing***

We all have a desire to communicate in ways that help us connect with others, but we often fall into the trap of using platitudes and clichés to convey significant emotions and experiences. We tend to lean on these common phrases because they can illustrate communal understanding; in creative writing, though, they fall flat and often cheapen what a writer is trying to express. In this session, we'll address this common clutch in creative writing by exploring ways to compose such evasive things like feelings and memories without depending on clichés and platitudes.

**11am – Dagni Bredeesen**

***What's so dreadful about Victorian Penny Dreadfuls?***

The years dating from 1840 through the end of the nineteenth century in Great Britain saw the achievement of near universal literacy rates, which in turn generated a huge demand for and the production of reading material. Then, as now, fiction proved to be among the most popular kinds of literature, especially serialized stories that had new installments coming out every week. Such stories were called variously "Penny Bloods," "Penny Dreadfuls," "Penny Horribles" and "Penny Awfuls." Critics decried these narratives because of their addictive quality, referring to such stories as "weekly doses of pen poison" and "pernicious trash." In this session we will examine the rise of cheap popular print that occurred during the reign of Queen Victoria and consider what made these narratives so compelling to contemporary readers (as well as why they might hold interest for us!).

**1pm – Letitia Moffitt**

***A Novel Idea***

So you have an idea for a novel. Wonderful! Now what? Now -- you write. During this session you will begin crafting the first chapter of your novel. You'll also get ideas and tools for how to keep going beyond Chapter 1 all the way to "The End." Let's write some books!

**2pm – Sarah Aten**

***Let's Kill Hitler: Using the Process of Prediction to Understand How the Past Creates the Future.***

Students will create a timeline of Hitler's life and determine the best time in which to eliminate Hitler without totally altering the future. This will be harder than we like to think! Students can then use this to reimagine the future by changing other events or creating time-travel based science fiction.

## **Evening Recreation Sessions:**

### **MONDAY (7-9pm)**

#### ***Film Viewing & Discussion: Frozen 2 & Ecocriticism in Animated Film***

You're probably familiar with Disney's *Frozen* franchise but you may never have thought about the cultural commentary embedded within those popular children's films. Join us for a viewing of Disney's *Frozen 2* and a follow-up discussion on the ways in which the film engages with important themes concerning environmental justice.

### **TUESDAY (7-9pm)**

#### ***Film Viewing & Discussion: Trust & Hollywood's Representations of Teenage Girlhood***

At this session we will discuss the work of American independent director, Hal Hartley. We will watch Hartley's *Trust* (1990), a quirky take on the romantic comedy (rom-com) genre. In *Trust*, we will follow high school senior Maria as she deals with an awful boyfriend, a dysfunctional family life, and a new friendship that makes her question the meaning of trust. Through Maria's trials, Hartley explores suburban America with a satiric eye and asks, "What would happen if a movie took the character of a teen-age girl seriously?"

### **WEDNESDAY (7-9pm)**

#### ***Alumni Open Mic Night***

The EIU English Camp has been lucky to have hundreds of talented students attend throughout the years. Hear former and returning campers share some of their creative works (poems, fiction/non-fiction excerpts, songs, etc.). Feeling brave? Existing campers can feel free to bring some of their own creative work to share as well as time allows.

### **THURSDAY (7-9pm)**

#### ***Film Viewing & Discussion: V for Vendetta, Dystopian Narratives & Social Protest***

The year of 2020 will be remembered for many things, most notably, the pandemic. But in the midst of the health crisis, it was also a year that sparked the most wide-spread in-person and online protests to date. In this session we will view the adaptation of the graphic novel, *V for Vendetta*, which tackles timeless themes of social unrest and political protest. Stay for the discussion where we'll talk about the appeal of dystopian narratives and how this film, released years ago, related so our current cultural climate.