



MARTHA'S

Institute of Creative Writing

VINEYARD

SUMMER WRITERS' CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Sunday, May 29th – Friday, June 3rd

Sunday, May 29th

5:00 pm to 6:00 pm	Opening Reception Check In & Drinks Welcome to the enchanting island of Martha's Vineyard. Take this hour to grab a drink, peruse the booktable, and introduce yourself to other writers!
6:00 pm to 7:00 pm	Welcome & Reading with Director, Alexander Weinstein Join Director Alexander Weinstein for the opening ceremonies of the MVICW Summer Writers' Conference. Alexander Weinstein will be opening the program with a reading from his short story collections.

Monday, May 30th

10:00 am to 12:00 pm	Opening Seminar: The Writer, The Slacker, & The Inner Critic As we grow as writers, both professionally and artistically, it's vital to continue to approach the page with a sense of play, curiosity, and wonder. We will discuss various ways to keep this sense of play alive in our writing. In turn we will look at the benefits of literary experiments, the art of taking risks, and explore the "big projects" we've been longing to tackle and how to bring them to the page successfully. This is a class for writers of all genres.
2:00 pm to 4:00 pm	<i>Choose between our fiction, poetry, or creative nonfiction seminars.</i>
Fiction	Writing Place with Tia Clark All stories take place somewhere, but setting is often viewed as a backdrop or an afterthought. In this generative session, we'll look at ways to make your setting feel as inevitable to the story as character, plot, dialogue, and the other elements that often get prioritized. We'll use examples from poetry and fiction to generate dynamic settings that make a story come to life.

Poetry	<p>Voices of the Poet with Christopher Citro</p> <p>In this generative poetry workshop we'll explore the craft element of voice--creating a sense of a living personality behind the words of a poem. We'll look at how voice can help us find our way into new poems, and how a well-crafted voice can help our writing come alive and leap from the page. We'll read poems by writers such as Donika Kelly, Patrick Rosal, Diane Seuss, and Camille T. Dungy, and examine the dazzling effects they achieve through voice. During our session we'll write new work using prompts I've created inspired by the poems we've read. And when our time together is over, you'll receive a packet of further poems and prompts to help you continue to be inspired by poetic voice, expanding and deepening your relationship with this vital aspect of contemporary creative writing!</p>
Creative Nonfiction	<p>The 1-Minute Memoir: Intro to Flash Nonfiction with Randi Beck</p> <p>In this workshop, we'll explore the increasingly popular world of "micro-memoir," very short, non-fiction pieces ranging from the hilarious to the heartbreaking. We'll read some examples of the genre and discuss how the short form can be used as a potent container for creative nonfiction, as well as the specific challenges it presents. From there we'll compose our own flash-nonfiction stories, which may become starters for longer pieces.</p>
6:00 pm to 7:00 pm	<p>Evening Readings: Tia Clark, Christopher Citro, & Randi Beck</p> <p>Join us for an intimate reading of new and published works by our Visiting Writers.</p>

Tuesday, May 31st

10:00 am to 12:00 pm	<p><i>Choose between our fiction, poetry, or creative nonfiction seminars.</i></p>
Fiction	<p>Speech and Silence: The Art of Dialogue with Samrat Upadhyay</p> <p>How your characters speak and what they say are crucial components of your fiction. Dialogue is integrally tied to character, but it can also be a powerful tool to add tension to scenes, to advance the plot, to provide subtext, and to accentuate themes. Perhaps even more important, what your characters don't say--what is suggested in the silences and the gaps and the empty spaces--can speak volumes for your fiction. In this session, through examples and exercises, we will learn to how create dialogue that will come alive on the page.</p>

Poetry	<p>Experimenting with Found Poems with Randi Beck</p> <p>Found poetry (poems made by rearranging scraps and fragments of the world around you) are an easy way to surprise yourself when you feel lost for inspiration. In this workshop, we will explore several found poem exercises and invent a few of our own. While playful in nature, these exercises often spark seriously great writing, and can be used anytime you need a mental break or a shift in perspective.</p>
Creative Nonfiction	<p>The Lyric Essay: An Introduction with Christopher Citro</p> <p>About this popular hybrid essay form, Deborah Tall and John D'Agata write, "[Lyric essays] forsake narrative line, discursive logic, and the art of persuasion in favor of idiosyncratic meditation.... The lyric essay partakes of the poem in its density and shapeliness, its distillation of ideas and musicality of language. It partakes of the essay in its weight, in its overt desire to engage with facts, melding its allegiance to the actual with its passion for imaginative form." In this class we'll explore as writers this experimental genre that combines the nonfiction nature of a personal essay with the lyric possibilities of poetry. We'll try out some exercises and prompts to get us along the exciting and playful path to creating our own lyric essay.</p>
2:00 pm to 4:00 pm	<i>Choose between our fiction, poetry, or creative nonfiction seminars.</i>
Fiction	<p>Pray tell: the beauty of the summary with Samrat Upadhyay</p> <p>Summaries often get a bad rap in fiction. Because they use the "telling" mode, as opposed to showing, they are often thought to be not the best way to tell your stories. But summaries, either of specific moments or of long stretches of time (even years), can help with pacing and provide a rhythm to your prose than might not be possible to do with scenes. Summaries can also be instrumental in imparting background information regarding history or politics or culture quickly and efficiently. In this session, through examples and exercises, we will learn to how write summaries that without losing sights of the details that are the backbone of good fiction.</p>
Poetry	<p>The Hidden Heart: A (Secret) Poem Workshop with Randi Beck</p> <p>This class is part poetry, part arts & crafts, and a tiny bit of magic. Our emphasis will be on how to write authentically, while playing with the elements of secrecy and revelation that poetry allows for. You'll be guided through a meditative poetry writing exercise, and these poems will become the main ingredient for your art projects. Everyone will leave with something they love, and all materials will be provided.</p>

Creative Nonfiction

The New Shell Game: An Intro to the Hermit Crab Essay with Christopher Citro

Like the feisty crustaceans after which they are named, hermit crab essays, in the words of Brenda Miller, "appropriate other forms of writing as an outer covering, to protect their soft, vulnerable underbelly." In this class we'll read samples of recent hermit crab essays—a hybrid form of the lyric essay which uses the shell of an existing kind of writing, such as a recipe or questionnaire. We'll gain an acquaintance with this popular new form of the personal essay, then use prompts drawn from our readings to inspire us in our own writing journey.

6:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Evening Readings: Samrat Upadhyay & Samantha Tetangco

Join us for an intimate reading of new and published works by our Visiting Writers.

Wednesday, June 1st

All Day

Manuscript Sessions & Island Exploration

If you registered with a manuscript session, you will meet with your instructor today. Otherwise, today is a day for relaxing, connecting with other writers, and exploring the island!

Thursday, June 2nd

10:00 am to 12:00 pm

Choose between our fiction, poetry, or specialty seminars.

Fiction

How to Mix Fiction & Politics with Samrat Upadhyay

In some literary circles "politics" is treated almost like a dirty word. Politics gets a bad rap because political literature can often come across as didactic, pedantic, perhaps with images of characters on a soapbox raging against the machine. Who, in their right minds, wants to read that? But done the right way, political literature can be subtle and nuanced, filled with great characterization and other ingredients we relish in powerful fiction, without sacrificing urgent themes regarding the human condition. In this session, we will explore craft considerations in writing fiction that's overtly (or even covertly) political.

Poetry

Poetry and Play with Samantha Tetangco

Tim Brown, in his 2008 TED Talk talks about the importance of play for the creative process. As he points out, children are more quickly and easily open to play, which makes them more open to new possibilities. Adults, on the other hand, become stuck in self-editing and are often hampered by fears of criticism and embarrassment about our work. In this generative workshop, we will seek to reignite our relationship to play through a series of exercises that will (hopefully) reconnect us to a more child-like poetic self.

Specialty	<p>Writing the Tarot with Tia Clark</p> <p>The Major Arcana of traditional tarot decks tells us of a Fool's Journey, from stepping out into a new world, to reaching satisfaction and completion. While used for divination and self-reflection, tarot cards can also be a useful tool for writing. Is your character being too much of a Hermit for anything exciting to happen? Does your plot need a Chariot to get it from point A to point B? In this session, we will use the tarot for in-class exercises to jump start our writing, and explore how it can be used outside of the class to facilitate the writing process.</p>
2:00 pm to 4:00 pm	<p><i>Choose between our fiction, poetry, or specialty seminars.</i></p>
Fiction	<p>Revision with Tia Clark</p> <p>We all know that great writing is rewriting, but for some of us, the revision process can feel like a slog. In this class, we'll look at ways to make revision feel like play, and some tricks to tap into the unexplored rooms of a story. Writers should bring a work in progress, particularly one that feels dull and lifeless, and we'll work to breathe life back into the draft with generative exercises and activities.</p>
Poetry	<p>Writing into Place with Samantha Tetangco</p> <p>Writing about place is more than writing details connected to one's setting. Like humans, places evolve over time and are layered with their own histories. Sometimes that history is physical or cultural, the shifting of tides or the evolution of a neighborhood. Other times the history is deeply personal and entrenched in memory. In this workshop, we will explore ways place can deepen our poems and offer additional insight into the self. Please wear your walking shoes and be prepared to write outdoors.</p>
Specialty	<p>Magical Worlds, Imaginative Realities & Invisible Cities with Alexander Weinstein</p> <p>In this class we will be exploring the wild and wonderful world known as Speculative Fiction. The genre of speculative fiction is a wide umbrella which can include stories that engage with elements of magical realism, sci-fi, fantasy, fairytale, and the gothic, while maintaining a foot in the traditional world of literary realism. We will discuss the genre, its strengths and pitfalls, and then dive into exploring the craft tools we have as writers to create magical worlds within our fiction.</p>
5:00 pm to 7:00 pm	<p>Evening Readings with Our Attendees</p> <p>This will be the first night in a two-night celebration for attendees to share their work with one another!</p>

Friday, June 3rd

10:00 am to 12:00 pm	The Intersections of Writing & Publishing with Samantha Tetangco <p>For writers, publication can be as exciting as it is anxiety-inducing. How do you know your work is ready to send out? How do you begin the submission process, and how do become friends with rejection? In this class, we will explore final-stage editing techniques and publication strategies (from literary magazines to book-length manuscripts). The course will center on the needs and questions of the participants, so please come with your pressing publication questions!</p>
2:00 pm to 4:00 pm	Panel Discussion: The Writer's Life <p>This panel discussion will address the joys and dilemmas of writing, along with the techniques the visiting writers use to pursue their profession. We will talk about what methods have worked for us in establishing a regular writing practice and how to remain inspired in one's daily life, followed by a Q&A with attendees.</p>
5:00 pm to 7:00 pm	Evening Readings with Our Attendees & Closing Celebration <p>The second night of our two-night celebration for attendees to share their work with one another!</p>