

**Being Present, Listening Deep and Inviting New Realms:
Novel-Writing as Creative Ritual and Practice**

2025 Year-Long Fiction Writing Project

The Loft Literary Center

Project Leader: Junauda Petrus | junaudapetrus@gmail.com

Saturdays 2-4 PM CT & Thursdays 6-9 PM CST | Zoom

[Cohort Dates](#)

Project Description: Your novel is a journey of self discovery, creative research, story channeling and communing with the souls of the realm you are bringing into tangible, literary existence. It is written while living and being present to your life and the ways that the novel is singing through your existence. Writing a novel is very emotionally and creatively athletic, and takes the time it takes. Novel writing because of their length and depth invites us to commune and live with mysterious realms within and beyond us. In this class, you will be supported in creating a life that allows the novel you want to write to flow and hum within you and then on to the page.

Over the course of the next calendar year, we'll write seriously, we'll read like scholars, we'll meet best selling authors, luminaries in publishing, and distinguished booksellers and local literary agents. But most importantly, we'll develop the resources and relationships to move ahead with a writing life once the course is finished. This online cohort will meet via Zoom for all cohort meetings for the entire year.

Course books:

- for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf by Ntozake Shange

Visiting Writers and Publishing Professionals:

- Carvell Wallace
- Candice Iloh
- Shannon Gibney
- Alexis De Veaux
- Sharon Bridgforth
- Joseph Earl Thomas
- Andrew Carr, Editor

Course meetings:

This class will meet bi-weekly with additional Saturdays for eight weeks in the summer. This class will meet during two twelve-week terms, one in the fall and one in the winter/spring. Each class meeting will be organized and disciplined, and each participant will be asked to participate fully. The class simply won't work without everyone's engagement.

Our work will range over several topics. To begin, we'll focus on how fiction and its various elements work in concert. We'll also consider the architecture of our projects and begin to work immediately on putting plans into place. The main focus of the course will be workshop-based, but we'll also read and study a series of novels. The authors of most of these assigned readings will join us for in-class discussions.

During the summer months, we'll focus mainly on the work of writing. In the fall term, we'll begin by focusing on writing, workshoping, and revision, but we'll also move more directly into discussions about the business of writing and publishing. For these purposes, we'll be visited by several industry professionals.

Workshop. The workshops will follow the traditional model. Each student will submit two excerpts for revision during each twelve-week term. Excerpts must be single-sided, double-spaced, in 12-point font, paginated, and not exceed 25 pages. Students will be expected to provide paper copies of their manuscripts for each member of the workshop. Manuscripts will be disseminated the week prior to the scheduled workshop. If a student is absent from class, it is their responsibility to go to The Loft to pick up a copy of the workshop stories for the following class meeting. Extra copies of manuscripts will be left in the instructor's mailbox outside The Loft offices.

Visiting authors and publishing professionals. As stated, several distinguished guests will visit us during the course of the year. The purpose of these visits is to introduce students to enduring works of fiction, the people who wrote them, and the sorts of people who help bring them to the world. These meetings will be largely informal, and include ample opportunity to interact with and ask questions of the guests.

Instructor consultations. Each student will be asked to meet individually with the instructor regularly during the course. Meetings will be scheduled as follows: two meetings during winter/spring term, one meeting during the summer, two meetings during the fall/winter term, and one meeting after the course to discuss

final submissions. The first of these meetings should take place during the first three weeks of the first twelve-week term. The purposes for these meetings will be wide-ranging, but their primary function is to discuss plans and courses of action for the aspiring novelists.

Final manuscript consultation. At the end of the course, students will be expected to submit their final and complete manuscript. The instructor will read each submission and provide a written critique of each novel. The instructor will also conduct a final consultation with each student to present them with the critique. These consultations will extend into June 2026.

PLEASE NOTE: final manuscripts must be properly formatted and bound. Single-sided, double-spaced manuscripts only. Pages must be numbered. Only manuscripts turned in to the instructor on the last day of class will be read for the final consultation. That is to say, it is the responsibility of the student to finish their manuscript by the final class meeting. If a student fails to complete it, the instructor will only read what has been submitted on the final day of class. Please also note that ENROLLING IN THIS COURSE DOES NOT ENSURE PUBLICATION OF YOUR NOVEL.

Communal Writing Space: Online cohorts have their virtual classroom available to them via Zoom for the duration of their year. These spaces are available for Year-Long Writing participants to utilize at any time for writing and discussion space outside of group cohort meetings. There may be opportunities for in-person gatherings.

THE COURSE SYLLABUS

Summer Term 2025

Thursdays 6-9 PM CST

Saturdays 2-4 PM CST

Year-Long Writing Project Orientation: Wednesday, June 3, 2025 | 6–7:30 p.m
(tentative plan is for all cohorts join and we'll do breakout rooms for each cohort to meet one another)

Saturday, June 7, 2025

Thursday, June 12, 2025

Thursday, June 19, 2025
Skip July 3 (office closed)
Thursday, July 10, 2025
Saturday, July 12, 2025
Thursday, July 24, 2025
Thursday, August 14, 2025
Saturday, August 16, 2025

Fall Term 2025 | 6-9 CST

Thursday, September 18, 2025
Thursday, September 25, 2025
Thursday, October 2, 2025
Thursday, October 9, 2025
Thursday, October 16, 2025
Thursday, October 23, 2025
Thursday, October 30, 2025
Thursday, November 6, 2025
Thursday, November 13, 2025
Thursday, November 20, 2025
Skip Nov. 27th (no class that week)
Thursday, December 4, 2025
Thursday, December 11, 2025

Winter Term 2025 | 6-9 PM CST

Thursday, January 30, 2025
Thursday, February 6, 2025
Thursday, February 13, 2025
Thursday, February 20, 2025
Thursday, February 27, 2025
Thursday, March 6, 2025
Thursday, March 13, 2025
Thursday, March 20, 2025
Thursday, March 27, 2025
Thursday, April 3, 2025

Thursday, April 10, 2025

Thursday, April 17, 2025