

Teaching at the Loft

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The Loft's Commitment to Equity and Antiracism



The Loft's ongoing commitment to being an antiracist organization means that everyone within the Loft community—staff, board, teaching artists, students, audience members, and other program participants—share the responsibility of cultivating an equitable classroom, conference, festival, and event learning environment. We ask that every Loft community member help to create spaces that reflect our shared antiracist and equity-based values, as articulated in our [values statement on equity and antiracism](#), in our [antiracism commitment](#), and in our [code of conduct](#). If you have questions or concerns about taking on this shared responsibility while a teaching artist at the Loft, please reach out to the Loft's education director at edu@loft.org.

Resources for creating an equitable, inclusive, and antiracist classroom:

The Loft offers ongoing learning and support sessions; please watch for information in the monthly teaching artist newsletter or contact the education director at edu@loft.org for more information. Some examples of our professional development training include:

Adapting Our Teaching Habits and Tools for the Antiracist Creative Writing Classroom

Disrupting Biased Student Behavior

More coming soon!

Further resources:

Books

How to Be An Anti-Racist by Ibram X. Kendi

A Good Time for the Truth, edited by Sun Yung Shin

Craft in the Real World by Matthew Salesses

The Anti-Racist Writing Workshop: How to Decolonize the Creative Classroom by Felicia Rose Chavez

Appropriate: A Provocation by Paisley Rekdal



Online Learning Resources:

For an idea of how the Loft continues to build knowledge and capacity on this, please visit [Team Dynamics.com](https://www.teamdynamics.com) and [IDIInventory.com](https://www.idinventory.com)

National SEED Project (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity)

ASDICircle.org

These are just a few of the many resources available on creating an inclusive learning environment in your classroom; if you are unsure of how to do this or don't understand how to articulate how your lesson plan and teaching strategies will create this kind of environment in your classroom, feel free to connect with the Loft's education director before you propose your class (jdodgson@loft.org).

Proposing a Class at the Loft

The Loft is always seeking great talent to teach our classes! We have three class periods each year. We plan them out in advance to give them adequate outreach and registration time. Upcoming proposal dates are listed [on the Loft website](#) and are subject to change.

What We're Looking For

Teaching writers from all walks of life, who provide many different perspectives on approach to teaching craft, the writing life, the (self- or traditional) publishing experience, etc. Representation in race, gender, age, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, and ability all are important at the Loft.

We're looking for diverse and inclusive reading lists and approaches to teaching craft and workshopping. We're looking for teaching artists from diverse cultural backgrounds across genres with inclusive, equitable, and antiracist values. We want teaching artists who are able (and excited!) to navigate challenging conversations about craft, identity, and culture while respecting each of their students' lived experiences. Proposals that include the names of two to four writers or books likely to be read or studied as examples of writing craft are considered stronger proposals than those without. Students often like to know who/what they'll be studying.

Advanced degrees (MFAs, MAs), a publication record, or extensive teaching experience are not required to teach, though please reference them in your proposal if you have them, as they can certainly be valuable.



A strong, considered statement on how your class and teaching style will align with the Loft's goal to be an equitable, inclusive, and antiracist organization is important.

Please note: Summer youth has a much earlier deadline because parents plan out summers far in advance, and we try to meet that interest earlier.

Please read the information below carefully before you submit your proposal.

The Loft offers creative writing classes through four programs:

- Adult in-person classes (including classes at Open Book and Loft Around Town)
- Online classes for adults and teens, both live meeting format (Zoom based) and flex schedule (using Wet Ink, with no live meetings)
- Youth in-person classes (including teen classes)
- Bring the Loft to You (BTLTY), a customized learning opportunities created for community orgs, other nonprofits, for-profit businesses, individuals, etc; the Loft hires teaching artists to teach creative writing

For all adult and youth classes, in-person and online, except for BTLTY, you will need to submit your proposal through Submittable. Please use the online submission portal even if you are proposing a repeat of an existing class.

Loft Themes

The Loft offers thematic programming during our fall and winter/spring terms. More information can be found about the current theme in the proposal form, when it goes live on the website during the proposal period.

The bulk of our classes do not need to be about this theme; indeed, the "theme" that ties our classes together is instruction on writing craft and avenues to publishing creative writing. We'll likely run between two to four theme-based classes each term, in addition to all the other classes. However, if you would like to propose a class exploring the theme of the term and have questions, please let us know. Those classes will be highlighted in the quarterly and included in thematic marketing. These themes strive to connect Loft programming across the organization by exploring common subject matter.

What You'll Need to Propose a Class

Submitting a Class Proposal



Submissions are accepted online via Submittable during our open submission periods, which you can find on our [Work With Us page](#). Feel free to contact the education director with ideas before writing a full proposal.

You will need:

- A class title, short description (50 words max) and long description (200 words max)
- The class duration and preferred dates
- The class genre and level (see loft.org/classes for current categories)

For new classes you will also need:

- A list of goals for the class
- A schedule outlining each session or week's goals, topics, or focus
- An example of a typical session/week's activities or a general description of how each session or week will run
- A sample writing activity (optional)
- Required or recommended reading (optional)
- A teaching artist bio (required) and photo (optional)

New teaching artists and teaching artists who have not taught for the Loft in the last five years will also need:

- A resume or CV (PDF)
- Two references

Please do not propose the same class for both the online and in-person format; choose which option you'd like to teach, using the guidelines listed for what each program is looking for in terms of class proposals. If you have questions after reading the "What we're looking for" section of this page, please contact the individual program managers directly.

- Adult learning, both online and in-person: Jennifer Dodgson, Loft education director; jdodgson@loft.org
- Youth Learning, Bring the Loft to You opportunities: Lucia LoTempio, youth program manager, llotempio@loft.org

More about teaching at the Loft:

How teaching artists are compensated for teaching at the Loft:

- Teaching artists are paid \$6.50 per student per contact hour in the classroom.
- We require a minimum number of students enrolled to run a class (7, though teaching artists have the option of teaching if the class gets to 6 or even 5 students); our maximum is traditionally 17 for multi-week classes and 30 for single or double



session classes. Lower maximums can be arranged directly with the education director when scheduling classes. If we do not reach the minimum number of enrollment about 5–7 days before the class is set to start, it is canceled, and the teaching artist receives no compensation. Teaching artists are generally paid on the first Friday after their final class meeting. If teaching longer sessions, such as 12- or 8-week classes, payment happens twice; once at the midway point, once after the final class.

- Examples of payment:

For a 12-week class, 2 hours each week, with minimum enrollment (7): $\$6.50 \times 7 \text{ students} \times 24 \text{ contact hours} = \$1,092$ (approx. \$45.50 per hour)

For a 12-week class, 2 hours each week, with maximum enrollment (17 people for multi-week classes): \$2,652 (approx \$110.50 per hour)

For a single-session 4-hour class with minimum enrollment: \$182 (approx. \$45.50 per hour)

For a single-session 4-hour class with maximum enrollment (30 people for single sessions): \$780 (approx. \$195 per hour)

Tuition alone does not cover the cost of the Loft's sliding-fee classes, which are made possible, in part, through grants and individual donations. Please consider becoming a member of the Loft (membership is not required to teach at the Loft).

Course Cancellation Due to Low Enrollment

If the minimum enrollment is not achieved (typically seven students, though teaching artists have the option to run a class with five or six students), the class is canceled, typically five business days before the first scheduled class meeting, and no payment for teaching is issued. To help avoid this scenario, please be active partners with the Loft in promoting your class via your website, to your mailing list, and other networks.

Teaching Artist Discount for Loft Classes

Teaching artists get 60% off the list price of a standard Loft class.

- 1) Please register through the education line at 612-379-8999; you can not access the discount by registering at loft.org.
- 2) Please register only yourself; family members and friends are not eligible for the teaching artist discount (unfortunately, this means we can't extend this discount to youth programs for the children of teaching artists).



3) Teaching artists may use this discount only for standard tuition based classes; the discount does not apply to Wordsmith conference registration, Wordsmith classes, the Poetry Apprenticeship, the Novel or CNF/Memoir Writing Project, Wordplay tickets, or events.

4) Please be a current Loft teaching artist. Current means within the last year or you are confirmed to teach in an upcoming term.

Competition

When you teach an in-person class for the Loft Literary Center, you agree to not teach similar classes elsewhere during the same time frame your class is scheduled at the Loft. Why? Because it makes it very difficult for the Loft to be able to market and promote your class as a unique offering—especially if it is offered somewhere else in the same format, with the same content and class title, at a different price point. Help us help you promote your class by keeping the content unique to the Loft within the same time frame. This policy does not apply to any online classes you may teach for the Loft at the same time or to classes elsewhere that are not related to the one(s) you are teaching for the Loft.

However, if you're teaching the same content online for the Loft as you are for other writing orgs, please be mindful of how this is likely to affect our ability to promote your class as a unique offering (again, especially if price points for the same class are wildly different across organizations). It's best to stagger online content offered at the Loft so it is not directly competing with other online opportunities you may be teaching.

Required Texts & Handouts

You cannot require students to purchase books you have written. Required texts should be few in number and readily available online, in bookstores, and in libraries. You may link to external resources or upload files for students to read online. Remember, the Loft is NOT an academic institution but a community arts organization. Classes often do best when reading material is provided via excerpts, links, PDFs, or other readily available and accessible resources.

Challenging Students

Teaching artists should take time to manage challenging students as soon as possible, before the challenging behavior has a chance to take root and affect other students. Consider contacting a student privately (via email, or if in-person, take them aside to talk privately out of earshot of other students) to guide their behavior in a way that is more constructive for the class as a whole. If the student continues to behave in a disrespectful or disruptive manner in a Zoom classroom, online chat, or a physical classroom space or posts inflammatory or offensive content online or sends it via email, contact the education director for help before dealing directly with the student.



Removing Disruptive Students

Either the Loft or a Loft teaching artist may remove a student from class for being disruptive, abusive, disrespectful, or for interfering with healthy classroom dynamics. However, teaching artists may not remove a student from class without first contacting the education office to ask for assistance in attempting to resolve an issue. If a student is abusive, disrespectful, or interfering with healthy classroom dynamics in any way, contact the education office to have a student removed from class; do not remove a student from class without first contacting the education director.

Mental Health Issues for Students

Loft classes are meant to provide instruction on the art and craft of creative writing; a forum for generating and sharing new work; a place to create community for writers and readers; and a way to engage in lively discussions that challenge, inform, and encourage critical thinking.

Much of the writing done in Loft classes can be of a very personal nature, and passionate, troubling, or even traumatic feelings can surface about a given topic. It is important to respect these feelings, whether they surface for you or a student. It is also important to understand that neither Loft classes nor Loft teaching artists are qualified or able to provide mental health help of any kind. While the Loft encourages empathy and understanding for any student feeling challenged or traumatized by class content, students need to ensure they have mental health support in place to work through any issues that may arise over the course of their enrollment; class meetings are not meant to provide therapy, mental health guidance or support, or a forum to work through individual or family traumas.

If a student needs mental health support because of some issues their writing—or the writing of a fellow student—has brought to the surface, please connect them with some of the following resources. Please do not attempt to resolve mental health issues for students in or out of class; keep class time focused on issues of writing craft.

Mental Health Emergency

When a severe disturbance of mood or thinking threatens a person's safety, call Hennepin County's Community Outreach for Psychiatric Emergencies (COPE) at 612-596-1223. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, COPE professionals are dispatched to people in severe distress to handle the immediate crisis and provide clinical assessment.

As of 2020, 988 is also a resource for people experiencing a mental health crisis. 988 is the product of the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020, a federal law aimed at



creating an easy to remember, easy to access pathway to mental health care when people need it most.

You can also call 911 if there is an immediate physical danger to any person.

Additional mental health resources:

Tubman.org: affordable mental health help

[Minnesota Mental Health Clinics](#): teleservice for mental health

[Mental Health Minnesota](#): free mental health help, crisis support, helpline

[National Alliance of Mental Illness](#): adult mental health support

Supervision and Performance Review

Loft Education Staff may enter your class website to evaluate the class or to help students with technological issues.

Student Registration

Registration is handled exclusively by Loft staff. Teaching artists must direct any student questions regarding registration, transfers, and refunds to Loft staff. Loft staff will enroll students in your class, and they will receive a confirmation letter with class details via email immediately. Teaching artists will be provided with a roster of registered students and will direct any persons who attend your first class meeting but have not registered to do so immediately at the Loft.

Teaching artists should not attempt to enroll or disenroll any student from a class without going through the education office.

Copyright Policy

Loft teaching artists are expected to understand and comply with laws regarding the use of copyright-protected material in their classes. For example, you should not make digital copies of entire texts and share with your class for free, though you may copy short excerpts and provide attribution. When possible, you are encouraged to link to stories and articles instead of posting directly to your website or Google Classroom.

Policy on Controlled Substances

The policy on controlled substances also applies to teaching artists who are interacting with students in and out of classrooms.



About Teaching at the Loft

Since 1974, the Loft has been the place where writers learn from writers. Thousands of students, age six and up, enroll in Loft classes every year. Our teaching artists play a key role in fulfilling our mission to advance the artistic development of writers, foster a thriving literary community, and inspire a passion for literature.

Loft teaching artists propose classes and sessions that they design themselves, based on their passion, expertise, experience, and credentials. You'll find all our current requests for proposals listed above. We offer classes in poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, as well as children's and young adult literature, creative process, and career and publishing. We also invite proposals for screenwriting, blogging, spoken word, graphic and comic book storytelling, 'zines, magazine writing, new media, and humor writing, among many others. Classes may range from general overviews of a genre (e.g., Fiction for Beginners), to a specific focus (e.g., Writing the Video Game Narrative), to topical themes (e.g., Essays on Nature). Classes may also focus on categories of a genre (e.g. mystery, romance, thriller, fantasy, horror, and science fiction). We also offer classes on seeking publication and classes designed to start and sustain the writing process.

We understand that not all great writers are great teachers, and not all great teachers are published writers. When reviewing class proposals, we prioritize writers who:

- have experience teaching creative writing enrichment classes to adult learners (or appropriate age range for youth classes),
- have the highest Loft student ratings for effectiveness and mastery of content. (For writers who are new to the Loft, strong references and teaching experience are prioritized.)

For intermediate and advanced classes, we further prioritize:

- Teaching artists with publication credits and/or who have been honored for their work with awards or grants. While we are **not** a publish-or-perish organization, we do know from student evaluations that many intermediate and advanced student writers look for teaching artists who have successfully published in the genre they are pursuing, and whose work has been acknowledged with awards and grants.

Teaching artists who do not also serve on the Loft staff or board of directors are eligible for Loft grants and competitions. All current Loft teaching artists are invited to periodic in-services on issues related to the teaching of creative writing, as well as craft talks by visiting writers serving as mentors in the Loft's Mentor Series.



Loft Code of Conduct

The Loft is committed to providing a harassment-free space for all students, conference attendees, staff members, volunteers, and program participants regardless of gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, physical ability, appearance, race, ethnicity, age, religion, class, or identity. We expect participants to treat each other with respect in all interactions.

Harassment could include:

- Deliberate intimidation
- Repeated disruption of classes, lectures, or discussions
- Unwelcome physical contact
- Unwelcome sexual attention
- Verbal comments or displayed images that harmfully reinforce structures of oppression
- Written contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, invitations
- Verbal contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes about gender-specific traits, sexual propositions
- Visual contact, such as leering or staring at another's body, gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures
- Continuing to express sexual or social interest after being informed directly that the interest is unwelcome
- Using sexual behavior to control, influence or affect the career, salary or work environment of another

Harassment does not include respectful disagreement or critique in good faith. Reading and writing, by their nature, include exposure to controversial, challenging, and sometimes offensive language.

Anyone asked to stop harassing behavior is expected to comply immediately. Those violating these expectations may be expelled at the discretion of Loft staff.

If you are experiencing harassing behavior, report it to a staff member or teaching artist as soon as possible. All incidents will be brought to the Loft's executive director. She will follow the Loft's harassment protocol which may include removing an offender from a program without a refund, reimbursement, or pay.

Loft Harassment Protocol

All complaints of sexual harassment and retaliation for reporting or participating in an investigation will be directed to the executive director either in writing or by requesting an individual interview. If the executive director is the subject of the complaint, the chair of the



Board of Directors must be notified. All complaints shall be handled as confidentially as possible. The complaints will be promptly reviewed and resolved.

When the ED receives a complaint, she will take the following steps:

1. Interview people involved as well as any witnesses
2. Ask any employee/volunteer/program participant found to have violated this policy to immediately stop the offending behavior
3. Respect issues of confidentiality and due process
4. Follow appropriate disciplinary action including warnings, reprimands, suspension, discharge, removal from event without refund, reimbursement, or pay according to the findings of the complaint research
5. Involve the police when necessary or requested
6. If sexual harassment has occurred, hold the harasser legally liable for their actions under state or federal anti-discrimination laws or in separate legal actions

Any program participant/staff/volunteer/contractor bringing a sexual harassment complaint or assisting in investigating such a complaint will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment or discriminated against or discharged because of the complaint. Complaints of such retaliation will be promptly investigated.

Loft Teaching Artist/Student Grievances

If a Loft teaching artist has a grievance with a Loft student:

If it is appropriate to do so and the teaching artist feels comfortable, a grievance can be addressed directly with their student. Grievances appropriate for the teaching artist to address directly with their student can include (but are not limited to):

- Interpersonal conflicts or differences
- Challenging classroom behavior, including the student monopolizing discussion time, the student being overbearing, or the student engaging in any behavior that affects the learning environment in a negative way for other students
- Lack of understanding in how to appropriately critique the work of fellow students
- Scents worn by the student that are too strong
- An inability to hear or understand the materials being shared by the student

More serious grievances that occur, such as discrimination, sexual harassment, unwanted attention (sexual or otherwise), verbal abuse, inappropriate behavior, inappropriate material brought to class, failure to engage with the material in an appropriate or respectful way, or anything else deemed more serious by the teaching artist, can be



reported directly to the education director. An email is preferable or a written account of what has transpired.

When a complaint is made, or when a teaching artist is seeking help from the education director in resolving conflict, they will:

- Interview people involved as well as any witnesses
- Ask any student found to have violated any policy to immediately stop the offending behavior
- Respect issues of confidentiality and due process
- Follow appropriate disciplinary action including warnings, reprimands, suspension, discharge, removal from class without refund, or reimbursement according to the findings of the complaint research

When a **formal grievance** about a student is received by the education director from a teaching artist, they will take the following steps. A formal grievance should be stated as such to the education director, preferably in writing via email or through a direct request in conversation.

- Immediately inform the Loft's executive director, who then takes over the process to interview people involved as well as any witnesses.

If a Loft student has a grievance with a Loft teaching artist:

If it is appropriate to do so and the student feels comfortable, a grievance can be addressed directly with the teaching artist. Grievances appropriate for the student to address directly with their teaching artist can include (but are not limited to):

- Interpersonal conflicts or differences
- A desire for more instruction on specific aspects of craft
- A desire for more time to write in class
- Frustration at falling behind on class topics
- More help understanding the materials presented
- An inability to hear or understand the materials being presented

More serious grievances, such as discrimination, sexual harassment, unwanted attention (sexual or otherwise), verbal abuse, inappropriate behavior, inappropriate materials presented in class, failure to adequately teach the material, or anything else deemed more serious by the student, can be reported directly to the education director. Again, an email or another written account of what has transpired is preferable.

When a complaint is made, or when a student is seeking help from the education director in resolving conflict, they will:

- Interview people involved as well as any witnesses



- Ask any teaching artist found to have violated any policy to immediately stop the offending behavior
- Respect issues of confidentiality and due process
- Follow appropriate disciplinary action including warnings, reprimands, suspension, discharge, removal from class without refund, reimbursement, or pay according to the findings of the complaint research

When a **formal grievance** about a teaching artist is received by the education director from a student, they will take the following steps. A formal grievance should be stated as such to the education director, preferably in writing via email, or through a direct request in conversation.

- Immediately inform the Loft's executive director, who then takes over the process to interview people involved as well as any witnesses.

If a Loft student has a grievance with a fellow Loft student:

If it is appropriate to do so and the student feels comfortable, a grievance can be addressed directly with their fellow student, with or without their teaching artist present. Grievances appropriate for the student to address directly with another student can include (but are not limited to):

- Interpersonal conflicts or differences
- Hurt feelings or concern arising from a writing critique or other interaction
- Scents worn by the student that are too strong
- An inability to hear or understand the materials being presented by the student
- Distractions caused by the student in class, including but not limited to activities as varied as eating in class, talking over other students, speaking too loudly or too softly, or other common and non-threatening behavior

More serious grievances that occur student to student, such as discrimination, sexual harassment, unwanted attention (sexual or otherwise), verbal abuse, inappropriate behavior, inappropriate material brought to class, failure to engage with the material in an appropriate or respectful way, or anything else deemed more serious by the student, can be reported directly to the education director. An email or other written account of what has transpired is preferred.

When a complaint is made, or when a student is seeking help from the education director in resolving conflict, they will:

- Interview people involved as well as any witnesses
- Ask any student found to have violated any policy to immediately stop the offending behavior
- Respect issues of confidentiality and due process



- Follow appropriate disciplinary action including warnings, reprimands, suspension, discharge, removal from class without refund, reimbursement, or pay according to the findings of the complaint research

When a **formal grievance** about a student is received by the education director from a student, they will take the following steps. A formal grievance should be stated as such to the education director, preferably in writing via email, or through a direct request in conversation.

- Immediately inform the Loft's executive director, who then takes over the process to interview people involved as well as any witnesses.

Reference Guide and Policies for Loft Teaching Artists

About the Loft's Education Program

Thousands of people of all ages, backgrounds, and interests enroll at the Loft each year. Among our educational offerings:

- Classes for adults (at Open Book, Loft Around Town sites, and online)
- Classes for young writers, ages 6–17
- First Pages, free 90-minute creative writing labs for adults and young writers offered at libraries throughout the west metro through our partnership with Hennepin County Library
- Off-site residencies, called Bring the Loft to You, in which the Loft can send creative writers into schools, libraries, and organizations to offer writing classes in any genre
- Manuscript Critique & Coaching Program, where writers work online and in-depth with an experienced Teaching Artist to achieve their writing goals
- Writers' conferences offer writers one weekend of focused on a particular genre (e.g., Wordsmith)
- Our year long writing projects: Poetry-, Novel-, and Memoir Writing Projects

About Loft Adult Students

Expect a wide age range in adult classes—from young adults to senior citizens. Some students may be hobbyists with no interest in publication while others have published extensively and/or hope to be published. Adult students are largely working full-time or are retirees. Some will have very limited time to work on their writing outside the classroom, while others may have ample time. As an arts enrichment organization, our students do not receive grades or credit towards a degree.



Educational offerings for adults are tailored to writers at all levels of development, including:

- Absolute beginners. These students are interested in writing but may be reluctant to describe themselves as writers and may view themselves as not ready to take a class. In addition to teaching the basics, making these students feel at home at the Loft is a priority.
- Beginners. These students are ready to take the leap into creative writing and are eager to learn the basics. Providing them with the fundamental building blocks of creative writing is a priority. Some may be reluctant to share work in a classroom setting but may also crave some feedback on their writing.
- Intermediate. These students have learned the basics and want to take their writing to the next level. Students may be interested in improving earlier works or trying their hand at new works that build upon their understanding of the basics. Most want feedback on their writing.
- Advanced. These writers expect thorough and constructive review of their work, along with strategies for revision. Review of a writing sample may be required before enrolling.

For the majority of classes, students self-select their level. Teaching artists must be prepared for a variety of skill levels in open enrollment classes.

About Young Writers

Young students include motivated writers who are passionate about their art, as well as reluctant readers and writers who may lack confidence in their abilities. Classes are offered by age range, typically (but not exclusively):

- Ages 6–8
- Ages 9–11
- Ages 12–14
- Ages 13–17
- Ages 15–17

Teaching artists tailor their content to the students' age and developmental level.

Teaching at the Loft

Teaching artists play a key role in fulfilling our mission to advance the artistic development of writers, foster a thriving literary community, and inspire a passion for literature.

Teaching Artists are Independent Contractors

As an independent contractor, please note that the Loft does not make deductions from



your compensation for taxes. We'll provide you with IRS Form 1099 at the beginning of each calendar year. You'll need to indemnify the Loft against adverse rulings by any taxing authority as a result of the consulting contract or in the event that you fail to qualify as an independent contractor for tax purposes.

Online Teaching Opportunities - Zoom or WetInk

What is the Loft Looking for in an Online Teaching Artist?

Online teaching artists can live anywhere and do not need to have online teaching experience (though it helps)!

Submitting a Class Proposal

Submissions are accepted online throughout the year. You can find current and future proposal periods on our [Work With Us page](#). Feel free to contact the online education manager with ideas before writing a full proposal.

Competition

When you teach a class online for the Loft Literary Center, you agree to not teach similar online classes from the start date until six months following the end date of the class. This policy does not apply to any face-to-face versions you may teach or to online classes not related to the one(s) you are teaching for the Loft.

Student Registration

Registration is handled exclusively by Loft staff. Teaching artists must direct any student questions regarding registration, transfers, and refunds to Loft staff. Loft staff will enroll students in your class and disseminate their login information and passwords when the class is ready to begin. Teaching artists will be provided with a roster of registered students and will direct any persons who attend your first class meeting but have not registered to do so immediately at the Loft.

Course Cancellation Due to Low Enrollment

If the minimum enrollment is not achieved, the class is canceled, typically five business days before the first scheduled class meeting. To help avoid this scenario, please promote your class on your website, to your mailing list, and other networks.

Working Online

The Loft uses Zoom and Google Classroom for Online - Live classes, which have live, real time meetings each week; WetInk for asynchronous (flex schedule) classes that have no live meeting components. We've prepared training documentation for teaching artists new to



using this technology; learning needs to be fairly self directed, but links to free training videos are provided, and Loft staff is available for questions.

When teaching online, please ensure you have a working computer or laptop with up to date software (needed to download Zoom), camera, speaker, and microphone features, a Gmail account (free) if you're planning to use Google Classroom to enhance learning, and at least a working knowledge of basic computer skills, Zoom, Google Classroom, or WetInk. You may call the education office at 612-379-8999 or email the education director (jdodgson@loft.org) to request the training materials before submitting a class proposal if that is helpful.

Expectations for Online Teachers

There is an expectation that each online teaching artist will:

1. In addition to leading the live meeting each week (unless it's an asynchronous class in Wet Ink), be a real and visible presence every week, posting regular links, comments, PDF's, assignments, etc in Google Classroom (if you choose to use it), responding to discussion posts, and sharing their experience with students.
2. Provide ample opportunities for students to interact with one another within the Zoom classroom. You may use the small group function, or simply make time to ensure discussion and interaction happens during your live Zoom meetings, rather than using 100% of the time to lecture.

In short, it is our belief that a high-quality class experience results from a strong sense of community and reciprocity, whether those classes are face to face or online. During the class you should plan on spending two hours a week interacting with students in live chats and/or asynchronous forums (Google Classroom or WetInk).

Please keep in mind that class preparation is also a large part of all classes, whether live online Zoom based or in-person classes, or asynchronous/WetInk.

Required Texts & Handouts

You may not require students to purchase books you have written. Required texts should be few in number and readily available online, in bookstores, and in libraries. You may link to external resources or upload files for students to read online. Remember, the Loft is NOT an academic institution, but a community arts organization.

Challenging Students

Online teaching artists should take the same approach in dealing with challenging students:

Take time to manage challenging students as soon as possible, before the challenging behavior has a chance to take root and affect other students. Consider contacting a



student privately (via email or chat) to guide their behavior in a way that is more constructive for the class as a whole. If the student posts disruptive or inflammatory posts in the online class website, contact the online education manager before deleting content or suspending students. If the student continues to behave in a disrespectful or disruptive manner in a Zoom classroom, online chat, or in a physical classroom space, or posts inflammatory or offensive posts online or sends it via email, contact the education director for help before dealing directly with the student further.

Supervision and Performance Review

Loft education staff may enter your class website to evaluate the class or to help students with technological issues.

Student Privacy

Loft teaching artists are expected to respect the privacy of their online students. This includes sharing names and contact information (including email addresses) of any participant with anyone without express permission and re-posting of discussions, chats, or creative writing by any student without permission. This also includes sharing access to the class website with anyone who is not registered, though you may work with Loft education staff to make short-term access available to a guest who helps to attain the goals of the class (e.g., an author or editor may do a Q&A with your students). Teaching artists should also keep students mindful and respectful of one another's privacy.

Copyright Policy

Loft teaching artists are expected to understand and comply with laws regarding the use of copyright-protected material in their classes. For example, you should not make digital copies of entire texts and share with your class for free, though you may copy short excerpts and provide with attribution. When possible, you are encouraged to link to stories and articles instead of posting directly to your website.

Policy on Controlled Substances

The policy on controlled substances also applies to teaching artists who are interacting with students online.

Teaching Opportunities in the Loft's Young Writers' Program

Writers, teachers, and artists who are enthusiastic about nurturing the creative writing life of young people ages 6–17 are invited to submit class proposals to the Loft's Program Manager, Lucia LoTempio, at llotempio@loft.org. The proposal period for summer youth is



generally October 1–December 1 of each year; exact dates are posted on the Work with Us page of the Loft’s website each fall.

The summer session (four to five weeks in July) is the biggest term of the year for children and teens, with the most classes offered and therefore the most opportunity for teaching. Classes generally are not scheduled during the month of September in the fall term or during the months of January and February in the winter term. Fall and spring terms are typically curated by the program coordinator and culled from classes that have done well during the summer term, though if you are interested in teaching a youth class in non-summer months, please do propose a class.

The general range of classes scheduled is listed below, but if you feel your class warrants a different time frame, put it on your proposal and it will be considered.

- One week classes (Monday–Friday) in the summer
- Single or double session classes (Saturdays only, fall and winter/spring, NO SATURDAY classes in the summer)

For summer classes, each class is three hours and takes place for one week, Monday–Friday, either:

- 9 a.m.–12 p.m.
- 1–4 p.m.

For fall and spring classes, each class is a single session, half day Saturday option, either:

- 9 a.m.–12 p.m.
- 1–4 p.m.

Most Loft policies for adult education apply to the Young Writers’ Program as well (teaching artist pay rate, cancellation of class due to low enrollment policy, etc.), but there are many exceptions and additions meant to serve the different needs of a youth population. For more information, or if you have questions, please consult the youth RFP, available on the Loft’s website during the proposal period, or contact the program coordinator (llotempio@loft.org) to receive a copy.

Teaching Artist Compensation

Classes

In-person and online, Zoom-based (live meeting) classes: you’ll be paid \$6.50 per student per contact hour based on enrollment for your second class meeting (students may drop the class during the first week). See page one of this reference guide for more detailed information.



A note about payment for online classes that are asynchronous using Wet Ink (no live meetings): you'll be paid \$13 per student per week of class based on enrollment for your second week of class (students may drop the class during the first week). Asynchronous classes are considered equivalent to live classes with two-hour meetings each week.

For both in-person and online classes: You'll receive total payment after class completion for single- and double-session classes and classes of six weeks or less. In general, two payments are made for classes of eight weeks or more.

Other Education Programs

Bring the Loft to You/contracted classes and residencies: Compensation may vary by contract. Contact Lucia LoTempio at llotempio@loft.org.

Writers' conferences: Compensation may vary, depending upon whether the conference is supported by a grant, sponsorship, or by tuition alone. Contact the education director Jennifer Dodgson at jdodgson@loft.org.

Teaching Artist Enrichment Opportunities

As independent contractors, teaching artists who are not members of the Loft Board of Directors or staff are eligible for Loft grants and competitions (eligibility guidelines vary by program), including:

- McKnight Artists Fellowships for Writers
- Minnesota Emerging Writers' Grant
- Mentor Series in Poetry and Creative Prose
- Spoken Word Immersion Fellowship for artists of color and Indigenous artists.

Loft teaching artists are eligible for:

- The Loft Excellence in Teaching Fellowship. Fellows receive one week at the Madeline Island School for the Arts to work on a writing project of their choice.
- A 60% discount on Loft classes; call the education office to register (612-379-8999); please see the paragraph further above for more detailed information.

Marketing Your Class

What we do:

- Host tables at events throughout the year to promote classes and conferences.
- Issue the Loft newsletter to more than 10,000 recipients twice a month.
- Continually update and refresh our website, which attracts 20,000 unique visitors each month. Our blog receives over 9,000 page views per month.
- Promote themes and classes via social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).



- Advertise in local publications (all classes) and select national publications (online classes).
- Advertise via digital networks such as Star Tribune Ad Advantage, Google Ads, Facebook.
- Work with Belmont Partners (PR firm) to pitch earned/traditional media stories about Loft offerings.

We consider Loft teaching artists as partners in our marketing and outreach for classes; we can always use your help with the following:

- Take advantage of social media networks to promote your class.
- Post news of your class on your website.
- Promote your class to your email lists.
- Submit ideas for our blog or for a written or recorded interview to Savannah Brooks at sbrooks@loft.org.

A GUIDE TO CLASS TITLES AND DESCRIPTIONS

Some Tips & Trends

There are a number of trends that we at the Loft have noticed over the years. But they are just that, trends. On many occasions, the Loft has been successful in taking a chance on a unique offering that may not follow any of the tips listed below. We will continue to take those chances, so nothing here is meant to be gospel. That said, when we compare class titles and descriptions of classes that run with high enrollment versus classes that get canceled, some trends emerge, including:

- Simple beats complicated.
- Clever is good, but only if it doesn't obscure meaning.
- If titles are confusing, all else is pretty much lost. Imaginative titles are preferable to vanilla ones, but only if they still get the point of the class across. If a potential student has to read your class description to understand what the class is about, our experience is that they will just skip the description and move on. Try to come up with a playful, genius, imaginative title, but if in doubt, straightforward titles like "Concepts of Fiction" do quite well.
- Avoid academic jargon.
- Form should follow function (i.e. if your class is on flash fiction, your description should be brief).

The One Rule



Many of the trends above could be debated. But there is one hard and fast rule to writing class titles and descriptions. If you walk away with nothing else, please keep this in mind the next time you are writing class titles and descriptions:

A title and class description must tell a potential student the specific things that they will get out of your class.

This means more than saying, "In this class, we'll revise each other's work." It means saying something like: "By the end of this class, you'll have developed a toolbox of tactics to help you feel less daunted by the blank page and more confident in revising your own work."

It is particularly helpful to point out aspects of the class that a potential student might carry with them beyond the class.

One of the main reasons students tell us they come to the Loft is because it is a transformational experience, an investment in themselves. You've done your job if you help a potential student understand why your class might make that happen for them.

An Example

The General Details

Genre: Multigenre

Level: Open to all levels

Topics/Themes: Writing prompts across genres leading to sharing and revising of work.

Length/Format: In-person, six sessions

Take 1 (too basic)

Revising Work

In this class, you will generate new work each week. Then we'll share it together and revise it. Come prepared to respond to each other's work and explore.

Take 2 (too much)

The Frog in the Water: Finding New Ways to Understand Your Surroundings

We all know the metaphor of the frog that won't leap out of water as the temperature rises, and writing carries some of the same perils. Metaphor may be a great place to start, but what comes next? The key to new work is to take risks, so we'll find our expressive range together, but be sure to leap out of the pot if it gets too hot.

Take 3 (just right)

The Art of Revision



Do you start a lot of work, but abandon it after several attempts? Why do other writers seem to know how to revise their work when you just seem to be guessing? What's the difference between revision and tinkering? Starting with a guided prompt, we'll share work and get busy revising together. By the end of this class you'll have developed a toolbox of tactics to help you feel less daunted by the blank page and more confident in revising your own work.

A note about changes to class titles and descriptions, at the Loft's discretion

The Loft works very hard to ensure our classes run every term, rather than cancel due to low enrollment. This work includes the many things we do every day from a marketing and communications perspective (social media, promotions, and many other things, all listed in the Quick Reference Guide for Teaching Artists), as well as our close attention to details around how class content is communicated to and received by students. There are several key things that we know from experience about titles and descriptions. Class titles that either need extra explanation or titles that aren't as active and student-centered in their appeal tend to do far worse in terms of enrollment and cancellation. We know that students read and skim class titles, so a title needs to convey a sense of them actively engaged with their work.

In order to be successful, a class needs to be active, participatory, and able to engage curious minds. It makes sense, then, that class titles and descriptions convey this sense of active participation, so that someone who was skimming along reading titles and wanted a more active experience (our students do for the most part) might actually look down to the description. People generally read the titles and skim the descriptions, if they read them at all, so it is generally our class titles that need to do the work of getting the attention of readers right off the bat.

If the Loft team that puts together a class term (Education and Marketing/Communications) doesn't feel a class title or description aptly achieves these goals, we will work to tweak, change, and edit them, using your full descriptions as a guide. We ultimately only have a few days to edit and prepare about a hundred class titles for publication, so we don't have time to consult with every teaching artist before making these changes. While our team is sorry in advance if you don't agree with any changes or the reasons behind them, we hope you'll acknowledge the hard work that goes into ensuring that every class put on the schedule is a success, and understand our reasons for sometimes needing to make changes to class titles and descriptions. If not, our team understands your need to reconsider submitting a class proposal at this time.

Jennifer Dodgson
Director of Education

Chris Jones
Director of Marketing and Communications



Location & Parking

The Loft is located in the Open Book building, 1011 Washington Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55415. Exit Interstate 35W at Washington Avenue. From Saint Paul, exit Interstate 94 at 5th Street. From the northwest, exit Interstate 94 at 4th Street. Free parking is available in the Open Book parking lot, but it is often difficult to find a spot. Parking is also available at local lots and ramps and at parking meters near Open Book.

Loft Classrooms & Equipment

Equipment	Availability
Assistive Listening	All classrooms at Open Book.
Clock	All classrooms at Open Book.
Dry-Erase Board	All classrooms at Open Book.
Flip Chart & Markers	Available upon request for Open Book classrooms and off-site classes.
LCD Displays	Available in all five classrooms at Open Book. If your assigned classroom does not have an installed display, the Loft may be able to provide a laptop projector. If you plan on using a Macbook or mobile device with these technologies, please bring your own dongle as necessary. Please test compatibility prior to your class meeting.
Outlets	A limited number are in each Open Book classroom. Please encourage students to fully charge their laptops before class.
Wireless Connection	All Open Book classrooms are WiFi-equipped. Connect to the Open Book network by entering the password: openbook.

PLEASE NOTE: Open Book classrooms are not equipped with phones. You may wish to bring your cell phone to class for use in case of an emergency. A security officer is also on duty weekday evenings and Saturdays.

Please let us know about classroom issues (temperature, noise, equipment, cleanliness). If you are teaching off-site: We'll let you know about the equipment and resources available.

Reminder of Important Policies to Be Aware Of



The Loft reserves the right to refuse registration and/or remove a student from any class, conference, reading, or event for any reason, with or without a full or partial refund, including for (but not limited to) disruptive, inappropriate, or disrespectful behavior towards a teaching artist, Loft or Open Book staff, or a fellow student.

Please do not remove a student, or request that staff remove a student, from your class without first contacting the program manager or the education director to discuss the issue.

Student Registration

The Loft manages all aspects of student registration. Please direct any questions regarding registration to Loft staff, and we'll take care of it. You'll be provided with a student roster. Please direct any persons who do not appear on your roster to the education office so we may register them.

Class Texts and Handouts

Please make sure your required texts are readily available online, in bookstores, and in libraries. College textbooks are often too expensive for Loft students and may not be a good fit for enrichment classes. When you select texts, please keep in mind that some students may have limited time available for readings and assignments outside the classroom.

Often teaching artists prefer distributing hand-outs in class versus requiring students to acquire their own copies of books. Copy fees for hand-outs are not included in tuition; students pay you directly during class. Please be sure to bring enough hand-outs for your students. Emergency copies may be made at the Loft for 10 cents per copy. Please also consider keeping things digital—provide links to readings, PDF's, google docs, etc.—in order to save trees and minimize cost for everyone.

You may not require students to purchase books you have written unless your book is an instructional text on the content you'll be teaching. Please let us know when you propose your class that you want to assign an instructional text that you have written.

Feel free to use your own work to illustrate a lesson, but please do not use class time to promote sales of your books, and don't sell your books to students during class.

Controlled Substances

Alcohol and other drugs are prohibited.



Class Cancellations:

Due to Low Enrollment

If five or six students are enrolled, you may choose to teach the class (please be aware that there may be additional drops prior to your second class meeting). If less than five-six students are enrolled, the class is canceled, typically three to five business days before the first scheduled class meeting, and no payment for teaching is issued.

Class Cancellation Due to Weather

.....are very rare. The Loft follows the lead of surrounding universities (Metro State, University of Minnesota) regarding class cancellations due to weather. If concerned, please call us at 612-379-8999. We'll announce cancellations via an email, on our website, and on our phone line. Though we appreciate you making every effort to teach your class, the Loft would never force you to teach if you feel unsafe driving in; please express that concern to education staff. If we're open for classes but you're concerned about road safety, we can cancel the class and notify your students. However, we rarely, if ever, reschedule due to weather cancellations.

Class Cancellation by Teaching Artist

Please do not cancel or reschedule your class once it has been confirmed. If you must cancel or reschedule due to illness or emergency, please contact the education office (edu@loft.org or 612-379-8999). We'll inform your students and work with you to schedule a make-up class.

Please do not arrange for a substitute to teach your class without consulting Loft staff. If you cancel a scheduled class you have agreed to teach or fail to show-up for your class, you will be ineligible to teach at the Loft in the future.

Criminal Background Check

We conduct a criminal background check on anyone who will work with minors or vulnerable adults.

Promotion of Non-Loft Programs and Services

Many teaching artists also offer private services, and many teach at other organizations. We're happy to include your website address in your teaching artist bio. Feel free to respond to student inquiries about your services and other classes, but please do not use class time to promote your services, books, or classes you teach privately or at other organizations.



Sexual Harassment

Prohibited sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact (physical, verbal, and written communications) that has sexual overtones. Please see the Loft's code of conduct policy earlier in this guide for more details.

Teaching Suggestions and Ideas from Staff and Your Fellow Teaching Artists

Challenging Students

You'll find that students are motivated, respectful, and occasionally a bit shy. At times, however, one student may dominate the class discussion or provide unconstructive feedback to other students. If possible, talk to the student privately, letting him or her know that you need their help to encourage other students to participate in discussions and/or to encourage students with constructive feedback. During class, let the student know you'd like to hear from other students. Ask all students to take a turn at being the first to respond to a question. If the student continues to be disruptive, please contact Loft staff with your concerns.

Preparation of class materials, from lesson plans to readings, *before* the first class meeting, is key to ensuring a successful class experience. Many students want and appreciate a syllabus.

First Class Meeting

Before you leave for class:

1. Double-check that you have enough copies of student handouts.
2. If collecting copy fees, bring enough single bills to make change.
3. Check that your cell phone and laptop are fully charged.
4. Budget plenty of time to arrive in time for your class. Parking can be a challenge, and traffic along Washington Avenue can be significantly delayed during rush hour.

Once you arrive at the Loft:

1. Check your Loft mailbox outside our office for your class roster, class announcements, and any late-breaking news. Check your box each week before class.
2. Please let Loft education staff know that you have arrived to teach your class.

Once you arrive in your classroom:

1. Take attendance to ensure all students have registered. If you have unregistered students, direct them to the Loft education office so they may register.



2. Provide a brief introduction to the Loft (sample introduction will be in your mailbox).
3. Note upcoming Loft events of interest (notices will be in your mailbox).
4. For multi-week classes, ask your students to briefly introduce themselves and describe at least one goal they have for the class. Consider an ice-breaker exercise.
5. For brief, single-session classes—which have a maximum enrollment of 30 students—it may take too much time to have students introduce themselves.

Workshopping

Occasionally, students contact us with concerns about their workshop experience. Most concerns are about time management and facilitation. At a recent in-service on workshopping, teaching artists shared their best practices, including:

- Clear guidelines, presented in advance and in writing, with opportunity for students to ask questions before the first workshop.
- Hands-on facilitation that keeps the workshop positive, constructive, and encouraging of writers' works-in-progress. If workshopping in small groups, a keen eye and ear for the tone and focus of the groups' discussions.
- Equal time for all works-in-progress.
- Questions that are specific and discussion focused.
- Feedback that helps writers decide how to shape the piece going forward, understanding that they make all the final decisions about their work.
- All writing is understood to be a work-in-progress.
- Feedback is focused on the work, not the person who wrote it.
- Discussions are centered on craft, not on discussing the validity of the experiences being written about

We ask all teaching artists to:

- Carefully develop your workshop process,
- Clearly explain the process to students (with written guidelines and time for students to ask questions),
- Keep the discussion focused, equitable, and constructive,
- Understand the different perspectives, cultural experiences, and personal and community beliefs students bring to the process; encourage students to understand how these differences enhance and inform the writing and workshopping process
- Be in control of the discussion, and
- Ensure that each student's work-in-progress gets equal time.

In Case of Emergency

Disturbances in building or parking lot:

1. Call 911 and report location: 1011 Washington Avenue South, Minneapolis.
2. DO NOT get involved.



3. If you are able, move students to a safe area, away from disturbance.
4. Stay calm and try to calm students.
5. Note as many details about the disturbance as you can.

Elevator Emergency

If you are trapped in the elevator:

1. Pick up the phone in the elevator. You will be immediately connected to Minnesota Elevator's answering service.
2. Provide the building location: Open Book, 1011 Washington Avenue South, Minneapolis.
3. Inform them you are stuck in the elevator.
4. A technician will be dispatched immediately.
5. DO NOT attempt to free yourself.

Fire Procedures

If you discover a fire, call 911:

1. Provide building address: 1011 Washington Avenue South, Minneapolis.
2. Provide floor number and location of the fire.
3. Provide any other details.
4. If it is safe to do so, stay on the line until the 911 operator ends the call.

Evacuate the building by stairways, do NOT use the elevator. Have students assist any students with limited mobility. Close classroom door as you leave. If heavy smoke is present, stay near the floor where the air is better. Take short breaths and breathe through your nose. Do NOT try to fight the fire yourself.

Intruders

1. Note the location and description of intruder(s) and/or suspect vehicles.
2. Call 911 and report location: 1011 Washington Avenue South, Minneapolis.
3. Call security guard during evenings/weekends at 612-715-1662.
4. DO NOT attempt to confront or detain intruders.

Medical Emergency

If a student is injured or becomes ill:

1. Call 911.
2. Provide the following information:
 - Open Book, 1011 Washington Avenue South, Minneapolis.
 - Floor number and classroom number.
 - Type of injury or description of illness, if known.
 - Student's present condition.
 - Stay on the line until the 911 operator ends the call.



DO NOT move the injured person, unless their location is causing more harm, but try to make them comfortable.

If possible, have a student meet the emergency crew at the front door of the building to quickly direct them to the injured person. First Aid Kits are located in the following areas:

- First floor in coffee shop.
- Second floor in the Target Performance Hall sound booth and in Loft offices.
- Basement next to shower room door by the vending machines.

Open Book Building Security

A security guard is on duty in the Open Book building and parking lot at the following times:

Monday–Thursday 7–11 p.m.

Friday 6–10 p.m.

Saturday 8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

Sunday 8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

The on-duty security guard’s cell phone number is 612-751-1662.

Power Outage

Key building lights will run on emergency power.

1. Call property management office at 612-338-2828.
2. Raise the blinds to let in outside light.
3. If you are instructed to evacuate, follow the lit emergency exit signs. Have students assist students with limited mobility.
4. Do not let your students congregate in the lobby or literary commons.

Tornado Warning/Severe Weather Procedures

A public warning will be announced over the radio, TV, and/or by five-minute steady blasts of the sirens by the Civil Defense Warning System. Actions to take:

1. Stay away from exterior windows and the perimeter of the building.
2. Take your students to the basement of the building, accessible by the internal stairwell (not the main stairwell in the lobby).
3. Do NOT use the elevator—have your students assist any students with limited mobility.
4. Once in the basement, have students protect themselves by putting their heads as close to their laps as possible, or have them kneel to protect their heads.
5. Remain in the basement until the All Clear has been issued by the National Weather Service.
6. If the building sustains damages, and/or you and/or a student is injured call 911.