

Year-Long Writing Project FAQs for 2021

Is there payment assistance, or a scholarship available? The Loft is pleased to be able to offer two different payment plans for all writing projects, as well as one scholarship for each writing project genre. You may, of course, also simply pay in full at the time of registration.

The first payment plan option is available when you purchase your place in the program online at loft.org; simply select the Sezzle payment method and your payment will be divided into 4 interest free payments over 6 weeks; 25% today, followed by 3 more payments of approximately 25% of the balance due each time until it is paid off.

What is Sezzle? Sezzle is a third party payment processing platform that securely processes and manages payments, interest free, over a period of 6 weeks.

The second payment plan option is a year long, monthly option; \$3500 is due at the time of registration, which includes a nonrefundable \$500 deposit. 12 monthly payments of \$300 will be made January-December 2021 via a credit card number given to the Loft at the time of registration. Credit card must have an expiration date beyond December, 2021. Total tuition for the program on the payment plan is **\$7100. You must call** the education office at 612-379-8999 for this payment plan. It can not be arranged on the website, nor can it happen in person (due to COVID19) at this time.

And finally, we are able to offer a scholarship to each of the Poetry-, Novel-, and CNF/Memoir Writing Projects, for a total of 3 scholarships offered each year. An application is required; for details, and to apply, please see the writing project scholarship page at loft.org.

What about refunds? There is a **nonrefundable** \$500 deposit required **at the time of registration.**

Either \$7000 (total payment) or \$3500 (payment plan) is due in full at the time of registration; or 25% if you sign up with the Sezzle payment plan.

If you decide not to participate once registered, you may notify the education department by calling 612-379-8999 no later than 5pm Friday December 11, 2020

to receive a full refund minus the \$500 deposit (\$6500 for those who paid in full, or \$3000 for those who opted for the payment plan).

If you choose not to participate and notify the education department of your intention to drop after 5 p.m. on Friday December 11, 2020 through 6 p.m. on the first date of your first meeting (varies by project, but generally February 2 or 4, 2021) you will receive a 50% refund: \$3500 total refunded for those who paid in full Or 12 automatic payments of \$300 totalling \$3600 are stopped and the initial \$3500 payment is kept by the Loft for those who registered on the payment plan option.

All registration dates/times, refund dates/deadlines, and meeting times for any writing project/apprenticeship are scheduled to take place in U.S. Central/Minneapolis time zones.

A fee of \$50 will be assessed for each occurrence of a return of payment for insufficient funds.

There are no refunds once the first session has started; no exceptions. There is no prorated tuition for anyone not wishing or unable to attend any events related to their writing project, either planned events or unplanned special opportunities, the final reading, all 4 one to one sessions, or for missed class sessions.

There are no refunds or credits for future writing project or apprenticeship programs for in-person programming that have to transition to online meetings due to **COVID19** global health pandemic developments, or other unforeseeable events beyond the Loft's control. Decisions like this are based on the health and safety of all Loft students, teaching artists, staff, and community members. We strongly believe that although the experience becomes different, the quality of the programming offered remains the same.

How much do I need to have spent writing already? If you're considering one of the year-long writing projects, you ought to have spent countless hours working on your craft. Though there's no clear definition of what "countless hours" means, the best qualified candidates will likely have written many short stories, or creative nonfiction pieces, given writing a novel, poetry collection, or memoir serious consideration and/or effort, and of course have spent years of their life reading. **HOWEVER**, there are those rare exceptions of writers who have not spent years honing their craft who would still be a good fit for this endeavor. If you have

questions about your ability, please contact the teaching artist or The Loft for advice.

How much commitment is required? By far the most important quality of the prospective student is this: How hard are you willing to work? If the answer to this question is: As hard as I have to in order to finish a collection of poetry, a novel, or a memoir in the next year, then you're probably a good candidate.

How will the variances in abilities in the class be accounted for? What if I'm by far the best or worst writer to sign up, won't that put me at an advantage or disadvantage? As in any writing workshop environment, there are going to be students who are further advanced or more naturally gifted than others. This is inevitable. But one of the great gifts of the workshop environment is that there's room for everyone. In fact, having writers with a range of skill and experience actually *enhances* the workshop by making it more dynamic. Don't worry about being the best or worst writer. Everyone will be treated with the same respect and given the same attention as everyone else.

How much time should I plan on spending on this program? Most everyone in this program will be balancing many aspects of life: work, family, hobbies, travel...everyone's busy. And the prospect of enrolling in such a time consuming program can naturally seem daunting. It's not possible to precisely say how much time will be required of each student; people write and read at much different levels and speeds. But here's roughly what you can expect in terms of page production, first as writing, then as reading.

● ***Writing:*** In order to complete work, students should be willing to commit to writing many pages—roughly 300 pages for a novel, roughly 250 pages for a memoir, roughly 48-75 pages for a poetry collection. This means students should expect to write about ten to fifteen pages of their novel or memoir per week, so that in 30 weeks, the student will have a first draft, one that can be revised and edited over the last 20 weeks of the year. Poetry collections average about 1-3 poems, or pages, per week. You will rework your stories or poems again and again, to make them the best they can be, and you will grow as a writer in the process.

● ***Reading*** We'll be reading about 4 novels or memoirs over the course of the program, or 5 collections of poetry. Most of the novels are relatively short. On top of the novels/memoirs/(or) poetry collections we'll read, we'll also be reading each other's work. **On average, expect to be asked to read between 2 and 5 hours**

per week over the course of the Poetry Apprenticeship, or The Novel,- or CNF/Memoir Writing Project.

What if I've already written a poetry collection, novel or memoir, and would like to have it workshopped? Will this class still work for me? Yes. Though not necessary, having part or all of a collection, novel, or memoir completed at the time the program commences is fine. There will be plenty of opportunity to learn from your classmates, visiting writers and publishing professionals, and your teaching artist.

I write genre fiction, is The Novel Writing Project still a good fit for me? Again, yes. Though most of our reading will focus on literary fiction, we'll discuss other genres as well.

This sounds like a major commitment. Will The Loft or the teaching artist ensure publication of my poetry collection, novel, or memoir at the end of it? It is an enormous commitment, and it shouldn't be entered lightly. But there's no such thing as a guarantee in this business, and so of course neither The Loft nor the teaching artist will ensure publication. We will, however, commit to arming you with the knowledge of how to navigate the publishing world once your project is complete. We will also commit to a dogged curriculum in the craft of writing. If you commit in turn, when you are finished with this program, you will be world's wiser in the art and craft of writing, and ready to take your poetry collection, novel, or memoir to market.

It sounds like the Loft is offering both an in-person version of The Novel Writing Project and The CNF/Memoir Writing Project, as well as one that meets only online; are they different programs? Should I sign up for both? You should sign up for only one version of the genre you'd like to pursue (either the in-person OR the online Novel or CNF/Memoir Writing Project). Both the in-person program and the online program will offer the same content and teaching mentor; the only difference is that the in-person program will of course meet in person at the Loft for every meeting, including the one to one mentor meetings with Peter or Nicole. The in-person program is most ideal for those who live in or near Minneapolis/St. Paul, or those who can drive into the city regularly for weekly meetings throughout the year. The online program will meet live each week in a Zoom classroom, which is of course available to and best suited to those living outside of the Twin Cities metro area. For the online program, no in-person meetings will be required to take place. You should have high speed internet access and an up to date computer with camera and microphone features in order to get the most out of the online

program; the Loft is not able to provide internet or computer technology to students, nor are we able to provide technology assistance.

What is the time zone in which any live, online class content takes place? All meeting times for any writing project/apprenticeship are scheduled to take place in Us Central/Minneapolis time zones.

Is it possible the COVID19 pandemic could affect programming? Yes, it's certainly possible, and it is very important to understand, that if you sign up for the in-person program, future developments in the COVID19 pandemic may affect the Loft's ability to hold in-person meetings in 2021. In 2020, we had to transition all in-person meetings to a virtual, video conference based format. This is certainly possible for 2021, pending developments beyond the Loft's, or anyone's, control. Please keep this in mind as you decide whether you'd like to participate in any writing project programming for 2021, as we are unable to offer refunds or credits if forced to move Loft programming online for the safety of students, teaching artists, staff, and community members. For this reason, high speed internet access, as well as a laptop or computer, are advised for anyone signing up for the in-person program, should the need arise to transition quickly to an online format. If there are questions or concerns about this, or questions about how the transition from in-person meetings to online meetings went for the 2020 cohorts, please connect with the Loft's education director at jdodgson@loft.org **before** registering.

If in-person cohorts are able to meet at the Loft in Open Book this winter/spring, how will the Loft ensure it is safe to do so? The Loft will implement protocols in line with recommended local and national guidelines, from the CDC to the WHO to federal and state guidelines and mandates. This may include requiring all students and teaching artists to wear masks during all class meetings; limiting the number of people able to be in a classroom at one time; requiring seating around tables at safe distances apart; a focused and thorough cleaning protocol before and after each class meeting; and hand sanitizer and masks available in each classroom. As information has thus far proved to be constantly evolving, the Loft will provide the most up to date plans and protocols as the writing project February start dates approach.

When will a decision be made about whether or not in-person cohorts will, in fact, be able to meet in-person at the Loft, or if they'll need to move forward as online programming? We'll do our best to make timely and informed decisions about

in-person programming. Pandemic developments are constantly evolving, and we want to ensure we move forward with the most reliable, up to date information possible, without causing disruption to the student experience. We'll do our best to make concrete decisions within very fluid circumstances, always with the health, safety, and well being of our student and teaching artist community front and center.

For context, decisions about spring programming were made immediately for the safety of Loft students, teaching artists, and staff, on March 12, for March 16 start dates, with little disruption to the student experience. Summer programming decisions were made in May/June, again with a fair amount of ease, and decisions about fall were made in July. We hope the evolving nature of the pandemic we find ourselves in will become more stable late in the year, and we'll be able to make informed decisions with the information that is available to us then.

It sounds like there is no online version of The Poetry Apprenticeship - why is this?

There will be only one version of The Poetry Apprenticeship for 2021. It is planned as an in-person program, with class and one to one mentor meetings happening in-person in the Twin Cities metro area, as long as it is safe to do so. We may expand into regular virtual programming for 2022 and beyond. For now, though, because it has been reimagined and restructured slightly for 2021, with teaching mentor and student feedback, it will remain in-person only.

However, please note, **if you sign up for the in-person Poetry Apprenticeship, future developments in the COVID19 pandemic may affect the Loft's ability to hold in-person meetings in 2021; if this happens, The 2021 Poetry Apprenticeship will become an online cohort.** In 2020, we had to transition all in-person writing project meetings to a virtual, video conference based format, which has been very well received by participants. Please keep this in mind as you decide whether you'd like to participate in The Poetry Apprenticeship for 2021, as we are unable to offer refunds or credits if forced to move Loft programming online for the safety of students, teaching artists, staff, and community members. **For this reason, high speed internet access, as well as a laptop or computer, are strongly advised for anyone signing up for the in-person program,** should the need arise to transition quickly to an online format.

Who's teaching these programs, and what credentials do they have?

Peter Geye (Novel Writing Project) is a dedicated teacher and writer. He has an MFA from the University of New Orleans and a PhD from Western Michigan

University, where he taught creative writing and was editor of Third Coast. He's a regular book reviewer for the Minneapolis Star Tribune and the San Francisco Chronicle. He has published three novels, most recently a book entitled *Wintering* (Knopf, 2016). His new novel, also from Knopf, is forthcoming in 2020.

Nicole Helget (Memoir/Creative Nonfiction Writing Project) is the author of a memoir, *The Summer of Ordinary Ways* (Borealis Books), two novels, *The Turtle Catcher* and *Stillwater* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), and three middle-grade novels, *Horse Camp*, co-authored with Nate LeBoutiller (Egmont), *Wonder at the Edge of the World*, and the forthcoming *Fern's Grove* (Little, Brown and Company). Helget was selected as a Barnes and Nobles "Discover Great New Writers" and "Featured Authors," and has starred reviews from *Booklist* and *Publisher's Weekly*. Her work has earned the Tamarack Award and Speakeasy Prize, as well as Midwest Selections Pick, several Minnesota Book Award nominations, and two Minnesota State Arts Board grants. Featured reviews have appeared in *People* magazine and "Weekend Edition" on National Public Radio. She works and lives in St. Peter, MN, with her family.

Gretchen Marquette (The Poetry Apprenticeship) earned her MFA in poetry from Hamline University, where she served as the assistant poetry editor for *Water~Stone Review*. Her work has appeared in *Harper's*, *Tin House*, *Poetry*, the *Paris Review*, and other places. Her first book, *May Day*, was released by Graywolf Press in 2016, and was nominated for a Minnesota Book Award. Gretchen has twice served as a first reader for The National Poetry Series, screening over a thousand manuscripts and selecting a small number to be passed on to final judges. She lives in the Powderhorn neighborhood in South Minneapolis, and teaches at various colleges and universities in the Twin Cities.