

# CREATIVE WRITING



The Creative Writing Program at the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities, developed by professional writers, is intensive and highly challenging to ensure talent development and productivity. Students concentrate on sound writing techniques in fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, and screenwriting. The goal of the Creative Writing Program is to recruit and mentor the finest young writers in South Carolina. How? By offering them a creative, supportive atmosphere and a course of study supervised by practicing, published writers.

Throughout the school year, students benefit from interaction with distinguished visiting writers like Oscar-winning screenwriter John Patrick Shanley, Susan Orlean, Ada Limón and Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Jorie Graham. Students attend numerous readings and performances at nearby universities, colleges and local theatres. They also read from their own work twice yearly and have the opportunity to be published in the school-sponsored literary magazine, *Litmus*.

## ADMISSION

Rising juniors are admitted to this two-year program on the basis of their writing samples, reading background, commitment to revision, openness to critique, grades and personal interview.

## COURSES

All classes are limited to 12-15 students and meet daily for three hours.

### Honors Fiction I

This course is a rigorous introduction to the craft of fiction writing. There is heavy emphasis on both reading and writing; we cannot learn how to write without reading closely and effectively. So this is a course designed to make students good readers as well as good writers. Through reading the stories of Richard Ford, Anne Beattie, Raymond Carver, Amy Hempel, Sherman Alexie, and many others, students will learn the craft of the traditional, realistic short story and the many variations of it that exist. Students will be expected to write at least three "realistic" stories, which will be workshopped by their peers and their teacher.

### Honors Fiction II

This course develops and expands the craft of fiction writing. Like the first course, reading in order to become a better writer is emphasized, but this time the course

will push into new territory. Where Fiction I emphasized the traditional, realistic short story, Fiction II will explore writers that push traditional boundaries and aim to create a different, if still realistically-based, form. Students in this course will write three longer stories in which they will be asked, in some small way, to challenge a notion of traditional narrative, while still maintaining necessities of realistic conflict, action, setting, characterization, etc. Readings will include work by David Foster Wallace, Aimee Bender, Donald Barthelme, A.M. Homes, and newer writers like Tao Lin and Catherine Lacey.

### Honors Poetry I

This course is designed to explore the art of writing poetry, focusing on craft elements most relevant to modern and contemporary work: poetic diction, rhythm, composition and linguistic choreography, symbol, tone, meaning and idea. This introductory class also includes a historical survey of American poetry from 1855-1955, extensive reading, and weekly workshop. Students are exposed to the works of Mark Doty, Terrance Hayes, Ross Gay, Matthea Harvey, Rose McLarney, Richard Hugo, Robert Hass, Mary Oliver, A. Van Jordan, and Nikky Finney.

### Honors Poetry II

Students continue to explore voice, tone, and form. We read the work of contemporary poets relevant to the craft needs of each poet, paying keen attention to the honing of musical and formal elements. This course includes workshop, publication preparedness, extensive reading, and the development of a final, polished portfolio of work. Students read Ocean Vuong, Airea D. Matthews, Angel Nafis, Nate Marshall, Danniell Schoonebeek, Aimee Nezhukumatathil, and Ed Skoog.

### Honors Creative Nonfiction I

This course focuses on self-discovery and includes portraits, encounters and memoirs, along with the more traditional personal essay. Works read and discussed include selections by Chuck Klosterman, Annie Dillard, David Sedaris, Joan Didion, Tracy Kidder and Ian Frazier.

### Honors Creative Nonfiction II

A continuation of Creative Nonfiction I, this course pays close attention to voice, style and tone. There is also a focus on the extended essay, with an emphasis on revision. Students read, analyze and interpret contemporary essayists such as Susan Orlean, John McPhee and Bruce Chatwin, among others.

## Honors Screenwriting I

Students discover what it means to write for film, with an emphasis on developing an original idea they can expand into a full-length script. In addition to learning the process of screenwriting and the structure of a typical script, students will read and analyze screenplays by writers such as William Goldman, Alan Ball, Robert Benton and Bo Goldman.

## Media Writing

Personal websites and forums are most conducive to an audience when they are instructional, focused, and entertaining. Many writers use them as a basis to gather both audience and material for future publication. In this class each student will propose and conduct a project that allows him or her a forum for research and discovery. We constantly challenge students, in any writing class, to strengthen and cultivate their voices. What their websites do is give them an opportunity to gear their focus to personal interest – anything from kayaking to Sherlock Holmes, from politics to pop culture. Students engage both personal experience and research while developing a better understanding of professional and artistic conversation via the internet.

## FACULTY AND GUESTS

**Scott Gould**, *Department Chair, Creative Nonfiction and Screenwriting*

Scott Gould's work has appeared in *Kenyon Review*, *Carolina Quarterly*, *New Madrid Journal*, *The Bitter Southerner*, *Black Warrior Review*, *Eclectica*, *The Raleigh Review*, *Pembroke Magazine*, *New Ohio Review*, *New Stories from the South*, and *New Southern Harmonies*, among others. In 2010, he was awarded the Ovation Inspired Teaching Award for the second time and was named the national Literary Arts Educator of the Year by YoungArts/NFAA. In 2013, he wrote the pilot script for the new television series, *Rockin' a Hard Place*. He is a two-time winner of the Artist Fellowship in Prose from the South Carolina Arts Commission and a past winner of the Fiction Fellowship from the South Carolina Academy of Authors. His collection of stories, *Strangers to Temptation*, was published by Hub City Press in June 2017.

**Alan Rossi**, *Fiction*

Alan Rossi's stories have appeared or will appear in *Granta*, *The Atlantic*, *New England Review*, *The Missouri Review*, *Fiction*, *The Florida Review*, and many other journals. His fiction has won an AWP Intro-Journal Prize, been included in *Wigleaf's Top Fifty Very Short Stories*, and was a finalist

for *Best of the Net*. He is the recipient of a Pushcart Prize for the story "Unmoving Like a Mighty River Stilled." He has a PhD from Southern Mississippi's Center for Writers. His debut novel, *Mountain Road, Late at Night*, will be published in early 2020.

**Mamie Morgan**, *Poetry and Media Writing*

Mamie Morgan completed her BA in English and Religious Studies from Wofford College before earning an MFA in Poetry from UNC-Wilmington. Her work has appeared in *Smartish Pace*, *The Oxford American*, *Cimarron Review*, *Carolina Quarterly*, *The Greensboro Review*, *Inkwell*, *TOWN*, *edible Upcountry*, *Muzzle*, *Four Way Review*, and elsewhere. She has been named a Surdna Teaching Fellow and a Presidential Teacher in the Arts. 2018 marks her fourteenth year teaching at the Governor's School.

## GUESTS

The roster of visiting writers includes John Patrick Shanley, Ron Rash, Sharon Olds, Susan Orlean, Charles Baxter, Jorie Graham, A. Van Jordan, David Shields, Daniel Wallace, Rebecca McClanahan, Curtis Sittenfeld, Alan Lightman, Jane Allison, Lauren Groff, Ellen Bryant Voigt, Abigail Thomas, and Ada Limón.

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Governor's School creative writers are consistently recognized with prestigious national awards. These accolades include:

- 9 U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts.
- 12 national Scholastic Gold Portfolio Awards. (Each recipient received \$10,000 in unrestricted scholarship funds as well as an invitation to read at New York's Carnegie Hall.)
- 32 national finalists in the YoungArts writing competition.
- First place in the Patricia Grodd Poetry Prize for Young Writers, sponsored by *The Kenyon Review*.
- First place in the Bennington Young Writers Competition.
- First place in the *Southern Voices* competition.

Creative writing students have received acceptance and scholarships to attend colleges and universities across the country, including Princeton University, Kenyon College, NYU, Wofford College, University of Virginia, Bennington College, Furman University, University of South Carolina Honors College, Brown University, University of Southern California, among many others.