



## **CERTIFICATE IN CRIME WRITING**

**(1 year, part-time course)**

**Awarded by West Dean College**

**Course Tutor(s): Tutors: Elly Griffiths and Lesley Thomson**

This course in Crime Writing is delivered in three weekend course units, with self-directed study and a final submission of 5000 words fiction. It is delivered by two of the country's best and most successful writers of crime fiction, Domenica De Rosa (Elly Griffiths) and Lesley Thomson.

The course seeks to bring together all the key components of good crime writing into one continuing programme and to offer an insight into the writers' toolkit necessary for developing skills and building your confidence.

Each weekend unit will be based in the inspirational environment of West Dean College's historic rooms. It is aimed at writers who wish to commit to an extended programme of study without having to make a significant time commitment and who will benefit from a cohesive course that offers focus on the key elements of successful crime writing. It also offers a potential pathway to those interested in applying for the College's Higher Education programmes in Writing and Publishing.

### **AIMS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

To introduce you to the key skills and knowledge that underpins successful crime writing. These will include the organisational skills required for plotting, character development and narrative technique. It will also introduce you to constructive and focused critical reflection of your work and support the development of rewriting/drafting skills.

#### **SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

The course will offer a stimulating and varied learning environment to enable writers to develop their skills around voice, style, point of view, pacing and prose. Writing exercises will be used along with discussion, textual analysis and a review of the 'golden rules of crime writing'.

It will facilitate constructive critical thinking/reflection and cover editing, dialogue, suspense, and narrative drive: key skills in successful crime writing.

#### **CONTEXTUAL AND CRITICAL STUDIES**

The course will offer insight into the traditions, theory and responsibilities of the crime writer. Enable you to make clear authorial and editorial choices about your developing work.

#### **ESSAY/FINAL WRITING**

After the final unit, students will submit the first 5000 words of a piece of fiction they have developed for feedback from the programme tutors two months after the final Unit.

## COURSE TUTORS

ELLY GRIFFITHS wrote four novels under her own name, Domenica de Rosa before turning to crime with *The Crossing Places*, the first novel featuring forensic archaeologist Dr Ruth Galloway. *The Crossing Places* won the Mary Higgins Clark award and five novels in the series have been shortlisted for the Theakstons Crime Novel of the Year. The Locked Room (Ruth #14) was number one on the *Sunday Times* bestseller list. Elly also writes the *Brighton Mysteries*, set in the theatrical world of the 1950s. In 2016 Elly was awarded the CWA Dagger in the Library for her body of work. Her first standalone mystery, *The Stranger Diaries*, won the 2020 Edgar award for Best Crime Novel. The second, *The Postscript Murders*, was shortlisted for the CWA Gold Dagger. Elly also writes a children's mystery series, *A Girl Called Justice*. Elly teaches on the creative writing MA at West Dean College and on the crime-writing MSt at Madingley Hall, University of Cambridge.

LESLEY THOMSON'S first novel *Seven Miles From Sydney*, (ed: Jeanette Winterson) was one of London's City Limit's Books of the Year in 1987.

*A Kind of Vanishing* won the 2010 People's Book Prize. In 2013 *The Detective's Daughter* was Amazon UK's long running #1 and *The Detective's Daughter* series has sold 850K copies. Stella Darnell is 'one of the most original characters in British Crime Fiction' *Sunday Times*. *The Playground Murders*, (2019) is as 'compelling as its predecessors ... A white-knuckle read' A.N Wilson, *The Tablet*. Lesley's standalone *Death of a Mermaid* (2020) is described by William Shaw as 'a brilliant tale of dark secrets ... like nothing else you'll read this year.' According to the *Sunday Times* *The Companion* is 'very creepy and very funny.' As well as workshops for several crime festivals, for the past decade, Lesley has run writing courses at the South Bank Centre, Sussex University and Brighton's Creative Writing School. *The Companion* came out in June 2022 and *The Mystery of Yew Tree House* due in September 2023.

GRAHAM BARTLETT was a UK police officer for thirty years, where he rose to become a senior detective and Brighton and Hove's police commander. Since retiring, he has become a police procedural and crime advisor helping around sixty authors and TV writers (including Peter James, Mark Billingham, Elly Griffiths and Dorothy Koomson) achieve authenticity alongside their drama. Graham runs a series of highly popular and successful online crime courses and is a best-selling crime writer, of *Death Comes Knocking* and *Babes in the Wood*. He has a crime novel in the pipeline. Graham will join Lesley and Domenica as a guest tutor on Unit 3.

## PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

This course is designed for writers who want an extended and cohesive course on crime writing. It offers a deeper and broader raft of teaching designed to enable the student to take on a piece of longer fiction. At the end of the third unit students will be asked to submit the first 5000 words of a Work In Progress for marking and feedback from the tutors.

### **Unit 1: Character and Point of View. Tutors: Lesley Thomson and Domenica De Rosa (Elly Griffiths)**

12-14 January 2024, Weekend Intermediate SWE13106

The first unit will include:

- An introduction to crime fiction
- What is a 'detective'
- How to build a character
- Group work – scene construction
- Point of View – understanding and experimenting with point of view (POV)

**Unit 2: Plot and Place. Tutor: Tutors: Lesley Thomson and Domenica De Rosa (Elly Griffiths)**

26-28 April 2024, Weekend Intermediate SWE13319

This second unit will include:

- The rules of Crime Fiction
- Understanding environment (using the grounds of West Dean)
- Building on weekend one – character and plot
- Plot as a magic trick

**Unit 3: Writing Your Book. Tutors: Lesley Thomson and Domenica de Rosa (Elly Griffiths) with Graham Bartlett**

8-10 November 2024, Weekend Intermediate SWE13529

The third and final unit will include:

- The NEW ten rules of Crime Writing in the modern world
- Suspense
- Dialogue
- Pacing
- A session working with an expert detective on establishing and understanding the crime scene.

## COMPLETION

On successful completion students will receive a Certificate of Completion and be offered an interview for the MA in Creative Writing and Publishing should they want to continue their studies and project. The MA is set up to facilitate the production of a completed novel.

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- A commitment to attending all three units on the dates given
- Some experience of writing or attending a short writing programme
- An interest in and awareness of the crime writing genre.

For standard [Terms and Conditions please visit our website](#), specific Terms and Conditions include a commitment to attend all three weekend course dates listed and no alternative course date can be offered for any that you are unable to attend. Therefore no refund can be made for the course fee for any weekend you are unable to attend.

## PLEASE BRING:

Your usual writing equipment, notebook and pen, and/or laptop.

## COURSE FEES

**The course fees are payable in advance of study.**

**Course fee:** £1044 (non-residential, payable in one instalment covering all three units – payable by 17 November 2023).

Accommodation for a weekend course, including dinner and breakfast, is currently available from £213 (single occupancy). Please see accommodation costs on our website – or in the printed brochure, specific to the dates of each unit.

For further queries about the course, please contact:

[Bookingsoffice@westdean.ac.uk](mailto:Bookingsoffice@westdean.ac.uk)

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