

Certificate in Crime Writing

Programme Specification and Unit Descriptors

Awarded by West Dean
1 years, part-time



Programme Specification

The Certificate in Crime Writing course is delivered in three weekend course units spread across the year, self-directed study and a final submission of 5,000 words.

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 writer's 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 Creative Writing and Publishing.

Aims

- Introduction
 - To develop the key skills and knowledge that underpin successful crime writing. These will include the organisation 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 explore 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 feedback on work in progress, and cover editing, dialogue, suspense and research: 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, and will enable you to make clear authorial and editorial choices about your developing work.



Unit Descriptors

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

- What is crime fiction?
- Who is a 'detective'?
- Meet your characters
- Group work - dialogue
- Capturing the zeitgeist
- Point of View - whose crime is it anyway?
- A piece of work to develop for Unit 2

Pre-course preparation:

In advance of the first weekend, please would you read (and bring with you) *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* by Agatha Christie. We will discuss it on Friday. Please also read *Brighton Rock* by Graham Greene and *Sharp Objects* by Gillian Flynn (please bring these texts with you also).

On Friday evening, during introductions, the tutors will ask you to consider these questions for discussion on the first evening:

- Why have you chosen to do the certificate?
- Tell us a crime novel that has inspired you and why
- What do you want to get from this weekend?
- We will build a fiction list over the three weekends

Unit 2: Plot and Place

- The old and new rules of Crime Fiction
- A sense of place (using the grounds of West Dean)
- Building on weekend one - character arcs
- Plotting murder
- A chance to share your work
- Feedback session on your writing
- Understanding and writing a crime scene and murder investigation, with former detective, Graham Bartlett

Pre-course preparation:

Please complete the work set at the end of Unit 1 and bring your writing with you. There will be an opportunity to share or read aloud for those you wish to do so.



Unit 3: Writing Your Book

- Suspense
- Pacing
- Editing and rewriting
- Research and sourcing experts
- Writing a pitch

Final writing

On the completion of the course, you will submit the first 5,000 words of a piece you have developed on the programme.

Completion

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

Please see the [website](#) for details on entry requirements, fees and how to apply.