



Fiction in all its forms:

**UEA Creative Writing
Summer School**

**Course Handbook
4 - 18 July 2027**

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This Course Handbook was developed in September 2026 and is intended to give an indication of the programme contents and structure. Specific details and arrangements are subject to change and will be finalised at the discretion of the UEA module convenors and the UEA Summer University team.

Course overview

Fiction in all its forms: UEA Creative Writing Summer School

Credit Value:

10 UCU (equivalent to 5 ECTS)

Course Level:

Undergraduate

Period:

Summer (two-week course)

Course Dates:

Sunday 4 July – Sunday 18 July 2027

Module Convenors:

Dr Birgit Breidenbach, Lecturer in Literature and Philosophy in the School of Literature, Drama and Creative Writing

Dr Tom Roebuck, Associate Professor in the School of Literature, Drama and Creative Writing

Programme Administrative Support:

UEA Summer University team
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See a sample programme schedule here



Course description

UEA is recognised today as the home of Creative Writing across the globe. We were the first to teach the subject in Europe more than 50 years ago when our first student was Ian McEwan, who went on to win the Booker Prize and become one of Britain's most well-known authors. Since then, we have trained countless award-winning writers, including Sir Kazuo Ishiguro, the 2017 Nobel Laureate for Literature. Although we teach all forms of writing, it is fiction especially which we have defined over the last 50 years. This course therefore gives an opportunity for undergraduate students to experience our Creative Writing workshops and pedagogy while gaining skills in writing the form with which UEA is most associated.

Fiction is ever-expanding as a form, encompassing new possibilities all the time. Today, indeed, the boundary between fiction and non-fiction is becoming blurred. Fiction now takes inspiration from personal memoir or essay, and those forms are inspired by the structures and genres of fiction in turn. One of the areas in which fiction and non-fiction meet most energetically is in place writing – the heart of this Summer School. Place is imbued with memory and imagination; it is fraught with questions of ownership, access, and power; it embodies histories both recent and ancient; and the writing of place is given added urgency in the era of Climate Crisis. You will leave the Summer School not only a more confident writer in general, but with a particular flair for taking inspiration from places.

UEA, Norwich and Norfolk are also the ideal places to inspire your writing. UEA is set in an iconic brutalist campus, an intellectual and architectural feat that continues to provoke and prompt thinking. The course guides you through campus and the surrounding areas on a journey of creative practice. Our Sainsbury Centre Art Gallery is one of the first buildings designed by Lord Norman Foster, now Britain's most famous living architect. The Sainsbury Centre is redefining how art is presented and curated, earning a reputation as 'Britain's most radical museum.' You'll also visit our renowned British Archive for Contemporary Writing, which is home to a fascinating and diverse array of writers' archives (ranging from Nobel Prize Winning novelist Doris Lessing's, to the archive of Lee Child, celebrated British thriller writer), and is actively rethinking what an 'archive' of the contemporary world should look like. Beyond campus, you'll explore Norwich, England's second city until the Industrial Revolution, replete with rich historic architecture and heritage. It is also a UNESCO City of Literature – the first in England – in recognition of Norwich's remarkable contribution to world literature, beginning in the fourteenth century when Julian of Norwich became the first woman to write a book in English.

You will come away from the course a more confident fiction writer all around; more aware of how to give feedback in the workshop; and more alive to the nuances and writerly potential of places in particular.

Mode of learning	Hours	Credits
Pre-reading (before the course begins)	30 h	3
Seminars, workshops and lectures	26.5 h	2.65
Self-directed writing sessions	12.5 h	1.25
Summative assessment	6 h	0.6
Site-specific research and discovery sessions	15 h	1.5
Homework	10 h	1
Total	100 h	10



*This Summer School is estimated to be 10 credits in a UK context. The breakdown demonstrates approximate study hours for each mode of learning, although actual programme split may differ.

Modes of delivery

Writing workshops

A core element of the course, workshops are an opportunity for you to write, share and receive feedback on your writing, and give feedback on your peers' work.

Seminars

Led by a UEA tutor, these are discussion sessions designed to focus on key critical issues; you will likely read short texts in these classes to prompt and deepen discussion.

Keynote lectures

Designed to provoke thought and conversation, you'll hear from experts at UEA or in the writing industry. These are designed to give you tools for reflection on your own work and help to put it in a wider and deeper context. You will hear about topics ranging from Norwich as a site of literary inspiration to the way in which AI is reshaping fiction.

Self-directed writing sessions

Opportunities for you to make progress on your own writing. You can share and discuss work in collaborative spaces if you choose.

Site-specific research and discovery sessions

Guided visits to key sites (visits may include the British Archive for Contemporary Writing, Sainsbury Centre, Norwich, or Holkham Estate) that will provide inspiration for your writing, include prompts to make the most of on-site research, and show you how to see the world as a writer.

Summative assessment

The final day of the Summer School, devoted to presenting your work and hearing that of others.



Assessment

The course is assessed using a combination of formative and summative work.

During the course, you will be asked to produce four pieces of writing in response to the following challenges:

- A story set in/about Norwich (fiction) - c.500-750 words.
- Response to an archival document or documents in the British Archive for Contemporary Writing - c.500 words.
- Respond to an object in the Sainsbury Centre (fiction or non-fiction) - c.500-750 words.
- An observational piece based on course field trip e.g. to the Holkham Estate (fiction or non-fiction) - c.500-750 words.

Formative assessment

The purpose of formative work is to assist students in developing an understanding of learning outcomes and ideas for the summative assessment. Formative assessment of your work in progress will happen in the workshop sessions. You will be asked to share your writing and each member of the group will have the chance to give feedback; the seminar tutor will lead the discussion and also contribute their own feedback. In turn, you will give feedback on other writers' work in your group. This meticulous process of reciprocal feedback is a vital part of the creative workshop environment. It develops not only your own skills as a writer, but also your ability as an editor – to practice the art of constructive critique.

Summative assessment

For your summative assessment, you will be asked to select one of your submissions and polish/edit it to your satisfaction. You will submit this piece together with a short reflective introduction, which comments on the piece's genesis, form and intentions, and indicates how you have responded to feedback. At the end of the Summer School, there will be an opportunity to perform your chosen piece out loud to your peers and academic experts. This finale event will constitute a celebration of the new writing produced by this Summer School. Your final grade will be based on your submitted work and its reflective introduction.



Assessment criteria*

- › Confidence in handling the **formal conventions of your chosen fictional form**, whether that is characterisation, structure, setting, narrative voice or description.
- › Understanding of the **contemporary potential of fiction**, including how fiction blurs into memoir and other non-fiction forms.
- › **Ability to take inspiration from an object, place or setting**, and in some respect to give voice to it in your writing.
- › Ability to **reflect on your own writing**, including its inspiration and form, and how you have responded to feedback.
- › Confidence in the **uniqueness of your own developing voice** as a writer.

*Criteria are not equally weighted – overall mark rests on the academic judgement in balancing these various criteria.



Skills for the storyteller

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- **Employ craft skills** in both fiction and non-fiction, including characterisation, setting, structure, narrative voice and descriptive language.
- **Experiment with different genres and forms**, producing short creative pieces in fiction (e.g. short stories, novel openings) and non-fiction (e.g. memoir, personal essay or place writing).
- **Generate and develop original ideas** using prompts, exercises, and guided workshops to begin drafting work.
- **Revise and edit creative writing** with attention to clarity, structure and style, informed by feedback from peers and tutors.
- **Engage in constructive workshop discussion**, offering and receiving feedback with respect, thoughtfulness and attention to craft.
- **Reflect critically on your own creative practice**, identifying strengths, areas for development and possible next steps as a writer.
- **Develop confidence as a writer and reader** through sharing work in supportive peer groups and end-of-course readings.
- **Produce a small portfolio of work-in-progress** (fiction or non-fiction) demonstrating experimentation, development and awareness of your own emerging voice as a writer.

Core reading list

- Chapter 2 from **The Art of Writing Fiction by Andrew Cowan** – observation exercises
- George Saunders, **A Swim in a Pond in the Rain** – analysis of the short story form
- From **Lit Reactor**, '**How to Write a Short Story: A Writer's Ultimate Guide**' – instruction on the short story form
- James Wood, **How Fiction Works** – extracts on narration and point of view
- Vivian Gornick, **The Situation and the Story** – creative non-fiction as form
- Noreen Masud, **Flat Places** – extract on the relationship between inner and outer landscapes, between place and subject

This is a **sample** of some of the key reading of the course. It will be suggested that you complete much of this key reading as background before you arrive. A dossier of writing inspired by your locality will be shared for study during the course to offer short extracts that you can engage with during class sessions or reflect on in your own time. Some of this may be set for 'Homework' reading or for study during Self-Directed Writing Sessions.



Our 2026 Summer School students said:

"I got to look at the world through purely a writing lens for two weeks and got to put everything else aside."

–Sophia, United States

"I feel more confident as a writer and improved my creative writing skills."

–Zixuan, China

"The connection to people from all around the world was a real benefit, the exchange with everyone was great! It made the Summer School even greater!"

–Giana, Germany

"It's not an over-statement to say these two weeks have changed my writing life forever."

–Jo, United Kingdom

"Thank you so much for this opportunity. It was a life-changing experience!"

–Annabella, Czechia

"I aimed to gain more confidence in my writing and meet other writers. These objectives were achieved fully and successfully."

–Lukas, Switzerland

"I loved this course. This was a wonderful experience, one of the best of my life so far. I have received such inspiration for my writing, and I feel inspired and capable to do more travelling in the future."

–Peyton, United States

Fiction in all its forms:

UEA Creative Writing Summer School 2026



100%

agreed that the programme
made them a **more**
confident writer

**Inspiring
Creative
Engaging**

are the **top three**
words used to describe
the programme



83%

would **strongly recommend**
this programme to others -
100% would recommend it

Campus

With iconic architecture and award-winning parkland, UEA campus is a diverse and inspiring place to both live and study. Set within 320 acres of natural parkland and the UEA Broad, the campus offers relaxing places to study and socialise.



Campus highlights

- › **Campus library** with 24/7 access, and home to the **British Archive of Contemporary Writing**
- › Award-winning **Sportspark** sports facility with an Olympic-sized pool, fitness centre, sports courts, climbing wall and more
- › The **Sainsbury Centre** art gallery and museum, a unique cultural space that uses art to connect people, ideas and cultures from around the world.





Where will you stay?

Your own **private en-suite room** in **on campus student accommodation** – a comfortable space to relax and recharge

Access to a shared kitchen that naturally brings people together

What's included?

- › All bills (WiFi, water, gas & electricity)
- › Bedding
- › Towels
- › Cooking equipment and utensils
- › Kitchen appliances (fridge/freezer, oven/microwave)



Stress-free living at UEA

Accommodation

Food

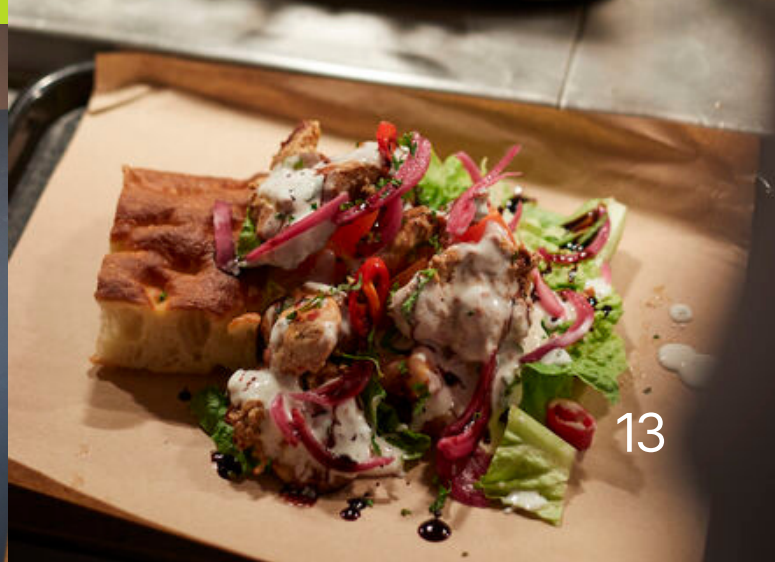
Included meals:

- **Breakfast:** Monday – Sunday
- **Lunch:** Monday – Friday

You'll enjoy the convenience of delicious meals served on campus, while still having time to explore the flavours of the city or cook with your new flatmates back in your accommodation.

What about dinner?

- Explore restaurants in the city
- Buy dinner at one of the UEA catering outlets
- Order in from apps like **Deliveroo**, **UberEats** or **JustEat** 
- Cook with your new flatmates: buy groceries from UEA Shop (campus) or local supermarkets such as Tesco Fiveways (a short walk from campus)





Outside of the taught programme, you'll take part in a range of inclusive social and cultural excursions and activities, designed to give you time to relax between classes and socialise with other participants. These offer a great opportunity to enhance your experience of the region and enjoy British culture.

Additional optional activities may also be available for purchase.

- **Welcome event to introduce you to your course**
- **Tour of UEA's beautiful campus**
- **Guided walk in the lively city of Norwich**
- **Farewell event to summarise and celebrate your learning outcomes**
- **Ice breakers**
- **Trivia night**
- **Board games night**



Social activities

City of Stories

We are located in the city of Norwich, also known as the **City of Stories**. As England's first **UNESCO City of Literature**, where better to spend two weeks immersed in Creative Writing?



From Julian of Norwich to Margaret Atwood, Norwich has centuries of literary history. The UEA Creative Writing Summer School is your opportunity to be a part of it.

Besides a thriving arts scene, Norwich is a beautiful medieval city packed with independent businesses to explore.





What to do in Norwich & Norfolk?

- › **Spot seals** in their natural habitat along the Norfolk Coast Protected Landscape, or visit one of the county's many beautiful **nature reserves**.
- › Visit one of the UK's picturesque country estates like **Blickling Estate** or **Royal Sandringham House**.
- › Explore a classic British seaside town like **Cromer**, **Sheringham** or **Wells-next-the-Sea**: enjoy fish and chips on the beach, have an ice cream on the pier or try your luck in the arcade.
- › Visit **Norwich Castle** and **Norwich Cathedral**, both built in the 11th century.
- › Go shopping along medieval cobbled streets in **the Lanes**, or browse one of the largest and oldest **open-air markets** in the country.



Activities listed are intended as inspiration for things to do in Norwich and Norfolk. Some may be included as part of the programme, other activities may be available to purchase, or can be explored independently during your free time.



Norwich city centre
20 minutes



The beach
40 minutes



London
2 hours



Amsterdam
1 hour



Cambridge
90 minutes





The course is designed for undergraduate degree level in the UK.

This means we would usually expect students to have undertaken some prior introduction to composition/writing, but this is not an essential prerequisite; on a course like this, students may discover new skills, perhaps having never been exposed to this kind of writing opportunity.

Many students taking the course will be majoring in the Arts and Humanities, but this is not an essential prerequisite. Our Master's programmes often see writers from a hugely diverse array of backgrounds, and this disciplinary diversity can greatly enrich a workshop conversation.

Although this is pitched at undergraduate level in the UK, we anticipate Final Year students specialising in writing or the creative arts will still be able to gain a huge amount from the course. They will be exposed to a host of new inspirations and benefit from the unrivalled training on offer in UEA's Creative Writing workshops.

English language proficiency requirements

We accept a wide range of English language qualifications equivalent to IELTS Academic minimum overall band score of 6.5 with minimum of 6.0 in each component.

Am I eligible?

How to apply

We welcome applications from individuals from all backgrounds with an interest in developing their knowledge and understanding of creative writing. In your application, we'll ask a few simple questions to help us better understand your writing experience and your motivations for joining the programme. We want to get to know you as a writer – but don't worry, there's no single "right" way to write your application.

You may like to reference:



Your writing experience: any relevant education, workshops, courses, personal projects or independent writing



Your motivations: why this programme appeals to you and what you hope to gain from the experience



Your interests as a writer: genres, themes, or ideas you're currently exploring or would like to explore



Your connection to place: if relevant, how landscapes, cities or environments inspire you or your writing

**Visit our website to apply for the
UEA Summer University 2027!**



Application deadline:

**Friday, 30 April 2027
23:59 BST**

Once you have submitted your application, our Summer University applicant review team will assess it and follow up to confirm if you have been offered a place on the programme. If your application is successful, we'll ask you to pay a non-refundable deposit of £350 within **seven days** of receiving your offer to secure your place on the course. If we need to clarify anything about your eligibility, we'll be in touch during the review process.

Contact us



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**Original
By Nature**