

Abstract 1C

## **A Postgraduate-led Teaching Initiative: Undergraduate Creative Writing Workshops at University of Glasgow**

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This paper describes the development of a series of creative writing workshops organised and implemented by postgraduate members of Glasgow University's Creative Writing Programme. In the past, the University has offered such workshops to undergraduates in all departments and colleges, but funding sources have vanished in recent years, and so did the workshops. Inspired by high student demand, successful efforts were made to reinstate them.

Despite two years 'off', demand had only strengthened. An advertisement was sent to all undergraduates in the University; applicants were asked to submit a writing sample and a short explanation of why they were interested in taking this non-credit, entirely extra-curricular course. Within 24 hours, 50 responses were received; within two weeks, we were able to schedule seven weekly classes, four run by Creative Writing MFA students and three run by Creative Writing PhD students.

All planning, organisation, teaching time and assessment is unpaid and led by postgraduate students. In addition to weekly two-hour teaching sessions, the instructors will perform various self-assessment exercises: each will observe a peer's class, and be observed in turn; Dr Reeder will observe all sections once. Weekly verbal student feedback will be complemented by more extensive written feedback gathered in the final class.

Instructors will gain useful, transferable skills: in addition to sharpening teaching skills, planning for the 8-week course is largely up to them, with feedback regarding their choices to be discussed in post-teaching meetings. Class preparation, gathering student feedback and scheduling is therefore their responsibility, preparing them for career demands. The work students do in these workshops brings benefits that can be carried over into their own, varied disciplines – students will be committing to extra-curricular activities, balancing workshop demands with other university work, finding ways to take their creative growth into their other (academic) writing, and stretching their understanding of what 'creative' writing means. They will also benefit from being part of a writing/student community that brings them into contact with individuals and writing practice they might not otherwise encounter in their university career, thus widening the breadth of their undergraduate learning experience.

This presentation will illustrate the overall development of the endeavour, the response it was met with, evidence of success and reasoned plans for future workshops. Drawing on recorded feedback from students and teachers, the presentation aims to sketch the reason for the popularity of these workshops

across campus, the method of planning the workshops and implementing teaching, and the benefits of providing such a high-demand learning setting.