

2017 ANWA Writers Conference Class Descriptions

(subject to change)

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14th

Workshop Day

(pre-registration required)

1:00 p.m.–2:00 p.m. If Your Dreams Don't Scare You, They Aren't Big Enough with *Joshua Perkey*

You'd love to write a bestseller. You'd love to see the checks rolling in. You'd love to just finish that next draft! Or find a way to manage family, work, service, and your writing career. But it's so hard to get it all together because, well, success is kinda scary. Right? And there's just so much pulling at you—well, it can all wait, can't it? NOPE! Not for you. The secret to time management isn't managing time. It's managing the way you see YOU. First you'll unravel how your perceptions of what you can become are either holding you back or creating doorways to success. Then you'll learn how to smash that perception right out of the way—because if you aren't really living up to your dreams, maybe it's time to dream a little bigger.

2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m. The Editor Is In with *Lisa Mangum*

In this 2-hour, live editing demonstration, Managing Editor Lisa Mangum will work through a manuscript, discussing both content and copy editing corrections that need to be made, as well as pointing out the changes she DOESN'T make.

4:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m. Writing Sprints

4:30 p.m.–6:00 p.m. Break

6:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m. First Pages Critique Camp

This is a great opportunity to get new eyes on your manuscript in a small, intensive group setting. You will bring your first five pages to share and exchange critiques with others who write in your same genre. Each table will be led by a published author who will guide the discussion and give professional feedback.

8:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m. Pitch Session Bootcamp with *Caitie Flum and Lisa Rodgers*

Want to know how to better pitch your book to agents, editors, and readers? Join us for some live pitch sessions with our guest agents and find out what to expect in a pitch session and learn expert tips on how to craft and improve your pitch/back cover blurb.

9:00 p.m.–10:00 p.m. Speed Pitching

Practice makes perfect. Now that you have an awesome pitch, stay for a fun, fast-paced speed pitching extravaganza and get that pitch perfect! Come with your elevator pitch prepared and let's ride!

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15th

Breakout #1

9:15 a.m.–10:05 a.m.

A Mind in Charge: Fictional Voice and a Writer's Confidence by *Julie Berry*

What is fictional “voice,” anyway? It’s a metaphor for something else, but what? Style? Tone? Dialogue? Characterization? A way with words? It’s none of those things exactly, yet they all overlap with voice. The metaphor suggests that, as with vocal talent, a strong literary voice may simply be something a lucky few are born with, and something that can’t be taught. In this session keynote speaker Julie Berry will argue that voice is confidence, and that we should set aside the vocal metaphor and focus on how we as writers can explore the consciousness behind each story, develop it thoroughly, and follow it boldly toward each story’s compelling, unique fingerprint. (Uh-oh. More metaphors.)

Love it or Leave it: A Critiquing Guide by *Kaylee Baldwin*

A critiquing guide. We’ll talk about critiquing techniques and pitfalls, how to tell a good critique from a bad one, how to be the most amazing critique partner in the world, and how to make sure the critiques you ask for are exactly what you need.

The Plot Fix: Crafting a Page-turner by *Tamara Passey*

Learn secrets to plotting and pacing so your readers will leave reviews like “I couldn’t put the book down!” or “I stayed up all night to finish.” Techniques for every author, traditionally published or indie. Helpful strategies to determine or fix the direction of your story so you can keep your reader engaged from cover to cover.

INTENSIVE: Write a Memorable Memoir by *Kathy Gordon* (Pre-registration required, 15 attendee cap)

Learn in an intimate setting the key components to making your memoir memorable.

Breakout #2

10:15 a.m.–11:05 a.m.

Scene Structure: What it Takes to Make Your Writing Work All Novel Long.

by *Janette Rallison*

A successful book needs more than just a good plot. Your story needs to work on a micro-level too. Come learn how to avoid common pitfalls such as sagging middles, unclear reactions, and low conflict. Janette will be drawing on Jack Bickham's acclaimed book *Scene and Sequel* to teach these vital writing principles.

Overcoming Writer's Block by *Traci Abramson*

Are you waiting for your muse to show up before you sit down at your computer and discover your story? Are you convinced that if you only had more time you could finally finish that novel? Is writer’s block getting in your way? Come discover tips and tools you can use to set a schedule, make goals, and meet those deadlines, whether they’re self-imposed or publisher driven, and still remember there is life away from your keyboard.

The Three Knows and the Three No-nos by *Chris Schoebinger*

Before sending your manuscript to a publisher there are specific things every writer should know and do and some things you should not do. Learn what acquisitions editors expect and learn the essentials of a query letter, the pitch, and keys of finding the right publisher as well as the things you're doing that create barriers from getting published.

It's a BIG Deal to Write for Little People by *Ann Acton*

We will explore writing for children from both a publishing perspective and an early childhood development perspective. We'll touch on some of the components and criteria for children's books, and how they effect the little people we write for.

Breakout #3

1:00 p.m.– 1:50 p.m.

INTENSIVE: Deep Characterization by *Sarah M. Eden* (2-hour Intensive)

Characterization is more than a list of physical traits and basic information. Deeply developed characters add layers to conflicts, increase a story's stakes, and create emotional resonance. But how, as authors, do we take our characterization to that next level? This interactive class will cover:

- Choosing and answering character questions
- Identifying multiple layers of character needs and goals
- Connecting characterization to conflicts, obstacles, and consequences
- Utilizing characterization to give a story staying power

They Want Me to Write a What? by *Lisa Mangum*

You've finished your book. Now comes the hard part: summing your entire novel up in just a few words. Daunting? Yes. Impossible? No. Come and learn the different levels of pitching and writing hooks, back cover copy, summaries, and synopses from Lisa Mangum, Managing Editor at Shadow Mountain.

Don't Break the Piggy Bank: Professional Indie Publishing on a Budget by *Catherine Jones Payne*: Quill Pen Editorial

Professional book production is expensive—often, traditional publishers will spend five digits making a book beautiful. For most indies, this is prohibitively expensive, but we've all seen the slush pile of self-published books that scream "amateur." What's an indie to do? We have great news: a smaller budget doesn't mean you can't produce a good book. In this workshop, you'll learn the hacks to saving money on production so you can be proud of your book without breaking the bank.

Writing Neurodiverse Characters by *Elizabeth Dorothy*

Are you writing a character with autism spectrum disorder, mental illness, OCD, or other neurological difference or disability? Find out what common tropes to avoid, where to find resources, and how to be authentic and true to your character's experience. We'll also review current books that do a great job tackling neurodiversity.

Breakout #4

2:00 p.m.– 2:50 p.m.

INTENSIVE: Deep Characterization (continued) by *Sarah M. Eden* (2-hour Intensive)

Query Letters That Shine by *Caitie Flum*

Learn the ins and outs of writing a query letter that will catch agent's eyes.

Mystery with a Kiss, a Detective, or a Mistborn? By *Rachelle Christensen*

The best novels all contain a bit of mystery, and the best mysteries have a story hidden among the clues. It might be a romance, escape from Armageddon, or living with mermaids, but the element of mystery is what hooks the reader.

Learn how you can utilize mystery and suspense within any genre of novel, including ways to drop clues for your reader without them realizing it's a clue. Rachelle will share methods for creating twists in the plot line that readers love without suspension of disbelief, and how to create a multi-layered mystery that won't let your reader turn off the light.

Understanding Your Contract by *Heather B. Moore*

Heather has published with three traditional publishers, and she owns the indie publishing company, Mirror Press. Understanding your contract will save you from headaches down the road as you're developing your writing career. Know the ins and outs of publishing contracts, what you can and can't negotiate, and when to turn down an offer.

Breakout #5

3:00 p.m.– 3:50 p.m.

It Came From the Slush Pile by *Dennis Gaunt*

The slush pile can be a scary place, both for readers and reviewers. You never know what may be lurking therein. Avoid making the kinds of mistakes that will get your story tossed out. Come learn from a 16 year veteran of the slushpile what will get your manuscript noticed for the right reasons.

Worldbuilding 201 by *Steven Bohls*

It's easy to get caught up in magic of raucous worldbuilding where maple-bacon donuts fall from the sky. But does the ubiquitous presence of delicious, free pastries have larger-scale implications? Worldwide diabetes influx? Out-of-control wild animal population growth? Major economic shifts in the sugar and health industries? Massive sewer system blockages? Oh, my...

Learn why it's important to build a kingdom from a commoner's perspective, and not always from a king's.

Articles, Blogs & Book Reviews, Oh My! by *Wendy Jessen*

If you've thought about writing articles, doing guest blog posts, starting a regular blog, or looking to do paid book reviews (or reviews for fun or as a blog), you'll want this class.

This presentation will teach you how to engage your target audience using interesting content, different writing tones, and readability. Also, learn to create simple graphics to go with your post—great for sharing on social media.

INTENSIVE: Back of the Book Blurbs by *Lisa Rodgers* (Pre-registration required, 15 attendee cap)

So you've written a book. That's wonderful! Now comes the hard part: writing the blurb on the back of the book. The back of the book blurb can be a deal maker or breaker. Join me as I discuss the essential elements to include and avoid to create an eye-catching blurb that will turn casual perusers into loyal readers. I will use popular blurb that work as well as looking at a few of the class attendee's. Bring your own blurb, a red pen, and an open mind.

Breakout #6

4:00 p.m.– 4:50 p.m.

The Inbox: First Pages Panel with *Caiti Flumi, Lisa Rodgers, Chris Schoebinger and, Kathy Gordon*

Ever wondered what agents and editors might be thinking as they read through their submission inbox? During this panel, anonymous attendee first page submissions will be read aloud and receive immediate feedback from our panel of visiting agents and editors.

Diving Deep into Point of View by *Rebecca Blevins*

What is it about some books that pull you in so far that before you know it, you hear birds chirping and discover you've been up all night? The answer lies in how to effectively use a deep point of view. We'll study examples of this technique from popular books, then we'll discuss varying levels of shallow (toe dipping) to medium (wading) to deep (sitting in a hot tub) POV and apply them in a short workshop. Get ready for some hands-on fun!

Capturing Your Middle Grade Audience by *Shelby Brown*

The middle grade audience is unique. Come and learn who they are, what they want, and how to give it to them. From capturing their amazing imaginations in your writing to delivering excellent school assemblies.

Writing Realistic Teen Fiction by *Kate Watson*

As a full-on grown-up with a mortgage and dental plan, it can be hard to remember what it feels like to be a teenager. It can be equally hard to respect that teenagers' problems are, in fact, real problems. Whether your teen protagonist is worried about finding a date to prom or finding the key to saving a galaxy, authenticity is imperative in connecting with a teenage audience. In this class, we will focus on how characterization, experience, and emotion matter when writing realistic teens throughout YA fiction.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16th

Breakout #7

9:30 a.m.–10:20 a.m.

How to Get Beyond the Quest in SpecFic by *Lisa Rodgers*

Writing great Speculative Fiction, the literary frontier. These are the aspirations of my class attendees. Our fifty-minute mission: to explore what makes great new worlds, to seek out deeper character motivations and new civilizations, to boldly go where great writers have gone before. There's more to great SpecFic than spaceships, time travel, or wild imaginative elements. Great specific has real characters and worlds your reader cares about. Join me and learn ways to dig deeper into character motivations and/or worldbuilding and work within those constraints.

Show AND Tell by *Steven Bobls*

As writers, we're told to always, 'show,' instead of 'tell.' My orthodontist once told me to 'always' wear the corrective rubber bands with my braces. So, I always did. And then I overcorrected my teeth. He later told me he hadn't really meant 'always,' but most kids barely wore them at all, and so that's why he'd said it that way. Show vs. tell is the same principle. In this class, learn when to show and when to tell, and why the best stories need a bit of both.

INTENSIVE: Indie Publishing by *Heather B. Moore* (2-hour Intensive)

Are you cut out for Indie publishing? Are you considering Indie publishing? Learn what it takes to be your own publisher.

INTENSIVE: So You Think You Can Pitch? by *Chris Schoebinger* (Pre-registration required, 15 attendee cap)

Members of this class are invited to give individual pitches in this workshop setting. Come prepared to share your best pitches to the publisher of Shadow Mountain and get on-the-spot critique. You'll also learn from listening in on the critique of others. If you want to hear what a publisher thinks and what a publisher is looking for in every pitch, this is a must-attend class. Thick skin required. :)

Breakout #8

10:30 a.m.–11:20 a.m.

Authentic Emotion: How Writing from Inside the Body Pulls the Reader into Your Character's Wants, Needs, and Suffering by *Julie Berry*

Readers of fiction want to be led on a journey, to share an experience, and most of all, to feel something. The opportunity to feel empathy for a character, and to vicariously share in their dangers, wonders, and passions is the promise of great fiction. What, then, is the difference between writing that grabs our hearts (or our stomachs, or our nerves) and writing that puts us to sleep? In this session keynote speaker Julie Berry will explore the mind/body tension as it plays out in literary craft, and share techniques for recognizing and revising those spots in our prose where the analytical brain takes over at the expense of the visceral body. We like to think of ourselves as minds, but dramatic, exciting, and heart-wrenching stories are usually the result of thinking of ourselves as animals. Come learn how to join the menagerie!

Creating Believable Dialogue by *Traci Abramson*

Tired of he said, she said? Prepare to breathe new life into your writing by revealing your characters' true identities through their words and actions. Learn how to create realistic dialogue to enrich your characters and discover their individual voices. This class will also explore how effective dialogue tags can help move your story forward.

INTENSIVE: Indie Publishing (continued) by *Heather B. Moore* (2-hour Intensive)

INTENSIVE: Hooks and Comps by *Caitie Flum* (Pre-registration required, 15 attendee cap)

Get up close and personal with agent Caitie Flum as she talks about what makes a great hook and/or comp. Bring in your hooks and/or comps for group discussions on how to improve them.

Breakout #9
1:00 p.m.–1:50 p.m.

They Want Me to Write a What? by *Lisa Mangum*

You've finished your book. Now comes the hard part: summing your entire novel up in just a few words. Daunting? Yes. Impossible? No. Come and learn the different levels of pitching and writing hooks, back cover copy, summaries, and synopses from Lisa Mangum, Managing Editor at Shadow Mountain.

To Infinity & Beyond! by *Rebecca Blevins*

From Toy Story to Finding Dory, Disney Pixar movies appeal to a wide audience and pack an emotional punch. In this class we'll analyze several Pixar films and discover what drives their popularity, then learn how to take those effects from the screen and apply them to writing in any genre. If you're looking for ways to add depth and meaning to your prose, this class is for you.

Putting the Inspiration in Inspirational Nonfiction by *Wendy Jessen*

What is inspirational nonfiction? Do I have an inspiring message I could share? Where do I even start? If you've thought about writing nonfiction that inspires people to grow, change, or simply get through their own life trials, then this class is for you. We'll go over what it is and a simple way to get started. And, help you brainstorm how YOU can be the inspiration for others. We'll also talk about how to develop the ever-important platform for nonfiction.

Typesetting: A Beginner's Guide by *Kate Stradling*

In a digital age, the hallowed art of typesetting is easier than ever. Learn the basics of type features, formatting, and the step-by-step process you need to transform your Word manuscript into a beautiful, ready-for-print book PDF.

Breakout #10
2:00 p.m.–2:50 p.m.

Capturing Teen Voice by *Kate Watson*

When it comes to writing, voice is essential. When it comes to writing for teens, voice is everything. Voice goes beyond slang or dialogue; it is the soul of a novel, that unique essence that makes a story work. Yet capturing a distinct, real teen voice can be harder than capturing wild Pokémon. In this class, debut YA author Kate Watson will share techniques to help participants find their inner teenager. The class will examine passages from successful YA novels and practice looking at everyday situations through a Snapchat filter. Participants will leave this interactive class with a YA voice strong enough to annoy your little brother and get you grounded, all at once.

Deep Editing by *Kathy Gordon*

Learn the deeper do's and don'ts when editing your manuscript. Bring your comma splices and questions!

Put Some Ha-Ha into Your Ho-Hum Manuscript by *Shelly Brown*

Learn from comedian and author, Shelly Brown, how to turn the humor up a few notches no matter what kind of a story you are trying to tell.

Avoiding IRS Audits, Jail Time & Unnecessary CPAs by *Chris Morris*

Most writers don't exactly get excited about taxes or accounting. Actually, it probably stresses you out...but it doesn't have to. This workshop will cover the following topics:

- *What you can and cannot write off
- *When it makes sense to hire a CPA
- *When you have a business, not just a hobby
- *Why you might be flagged for an audit, and how to avoid it

There will also be time for questions. When is the last time a CPA gave you an open forum to help you out, at no cost?

Breakout #11
3:30 p.m.—4:20 p.m.

Writing Romance that Readers Love by *Sarah M. Eden & Janette Rallison*

Romance is more than just girl meets boy. For a romance novel to work, a writer needs to understand what plot points to hit and how to tap into readers' expectations and vicarious desires. Join two seasoned authors as they teach the do's and don'ts of romance novels.

Don't Fill Your Plot holes with Sand by *Rachelle Christensen*

From a reformed pantsier, Rachelle shares with you tips on outlining to make the most of your writing time. Don't write yourself into a corner, write yourself into an engaging plot that will keep your reader speeding through the pages! Rachelle shows how even a loose outline can strengthen your story and how outlining can infuse new energy into your writing.

Personality, Percentiles, and Pathways: The 3 Pillars of an Author Platform (and How to Build One) by *Rebecca Irvine*

Ah, the (dreaded) author platform. Take the fear out and put the confidence in creating your platform as you learn about the 3 pillars of an author platform: Personality- developing a brand or niche as an author; Percentiles- discovering who your readers are through research; and Pathways- exploring various methods available to reach out to audience members/readers.

INTENSIVE: The Three-draft Writer by *Marsba Ward* (2-hour Intensive)

Write clean initial drafts--plus a couple of touch ups--to be more productive and to find the joy in writing once again, by trusting your creative voice, writing into the void, and using Heinlein's Rules. Bring your laptops. We're going to write!

Breakout #12

4:30 p.m.–5:20 p.m.

Debut Author Panel: Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda with *Kate Watson, Steven Bohls, Shelly, Brown, and Ann Acton*

Come, ask questions, and learn the personal do's and don't's of first-time publishing from these awesome debut authors!

So You Decided to Quit by *Dennis Gaunt*

So you've decided to give up on writing. What now? Before you set fire to your laptop once and for all, come to this class and learn some reasons why you shouldn't quit writing just yet. We'll talk about what success in writing looks like in all its varied forms. We'll talk about perspective, vision, and voice, and why yours is important.

It's So Fluffy: Sheer the Narrative Fluff and Get to the Good Stuff by *Kaylee Baldwin*

Most of us love words, or we wouldn't be writers. But some of us like them a little too much and a really great story can get lost in all the fluff we surround it in! We'll talk about how to determine if scenes are important to the narrative and how to know if it needs a cut. We'll also discuss techniques for cutting word count, recognizing redundancy, and helping you sheer the fluff and get to the good stuff!

INTENSIVE: The Three-draft Writer (continued) by *Marsba Ward* (2-hour Intensive)