



CREATIVE WRITING COURSE – JOHANNESBURG AND CAPE TOWN

Do you have an idea for a book, a screenplay, a short story you would love to be writing, or a project you are struggling with? Or do you simply have a powerful urge to re-engage with your creative self?

Here's a course designed to provide you with the skills set and the encouragement every writer needs to tell your own story.

We take a non-formulaic approach distinguished by the personal attention and feedback we give each participant in every session.

Who will benefit?

- ✓ Anyone wanting to start (or finish) a novel, a screenplay, or a work of creative non-fiction.
- ✓ Those with no specific project in mind, but who long to unlock their creative selves.

Course content:

Each of the eight face-to-face sessions tackles a key skill and challenges participants with carefully crafted writing exercises, to which we'll give immediate feedback. The skills focused on are:

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| ✓ Building characters | ✓ Writing dialogue |
| ✓ Building the narrative | ✓ Beginnings, middles and ends |
| ✓ Writing scenes | ✓ Creating suspense |
| ✓ Point of view | ✓ Showing, not telling |

Before you begin, you will be given complete access, through our online forum, to resource material for every module – including a full resource pack on finding and developing creative ideas.

As preparation for the course, you will also receive a starter pack, which provides you with the tools to find your own unique voice. It includes techniques to fight self-consciousness and develop the skills of active observation through journaling and free writing.

2017 COURSE DATES:

Parkview, Johannesburg:

9 October – 27 November, Monday evenings

Newlands, Cape Town:

5 June to 24 July, Monday evenings

9 October – 27 November, Monday evenings

The Creative Writing Course is also available online.

COST AND BOOKING DETAILS:

R 6 950 per person

- Early bird special - R6500 Pay in full ten days before the start of the course (26 May or 29 September) and you receive a R450 discount
- If you would prefer, you may also pay in three tranches. A R2500 deposit to secure your place and two payments of R2225

To book your place please email us at admin@allaboutwritingcourses.com or call us on 0826524643

COURSE OUTLINE

Starter Pack – We give you the techniques to fight self-consciousness. Use skills such as free-writing and personal myth-making to develop a unique style and voice. Learn the skills to avoid self-judgment and to write with flair.

How journaling can help your writing. How to use personal writing to develop a writer's consciousness. How to view the world like a writer, developing the quality of active observation.

- 1. What is the story?** – No matter how plot- or character-driven, every narrative will contain certain elements that we expect of a story. If an element is fudged or, in experimental writing, implied or left out altogether, it needs to be done artfully and for literary effect.

This is equally true for fiction and non-fiction. The successful creative non-fiction writer should be equally concerned with the elements of narrative, constructing a plot through careful selection of the material available to him.

Elbert Hubbard said that life was just one damned thing after another. This is not what we want in a story (nor, in fact, is it the ideal way of looking at life). Every story must have an arc that draws us through it.

- 2. Building characters (real or fictional)** – Characters are the most important part of any narrative. If they don't hold us, if we don't find them compelling, we won't be drawn into their story.

Characters drive plot. The story should flow out of who they are and how they react. As readers, we should believe the story exists because of the people – the way they act, and how they react to events around them.

How they react to what is said and done around them should make psychological sense.

We encourage you to look at what makes them tick. Then we transfer that knowledge to the development of characters that stand out from the page. We show you how to build compelling, psychologically believable people.

- 3. Writing in Scenes** - This module deals with the greatly under-rated, hugely important building block of any narrative: the scene.

This is an important skill for writers of fiction and non-fiction. When people talk of creative non-fiction having borrowed from the skills of fiction, this is the most important of them.

What do we mean by “writing in scenes”, and how do we do it? The scene is the most basic element of “showing” rather than “telling”. It eliminates the distance between your reader and the action. It drops readers into the middle of the action – to experience and interpret it for themselves.

If your story is a castle, its scenes are the bricks you will use to construct it.

- 4. Point of view** – Literary point of view is far more complex than was ever suggested by the grammatical treatment of POV we were taught in school. The decision you make on point of view is a crucial one. Change point of view and you will fundamentally alter the nature of your work. This module deals with the ways in which different literary POVs can be used, with many examples.

All points of view have advantages and drawbacks. But even some of those drawbacks can be used to your advantage. We look at these advantages and disadvantages in all their complexity.

We show how POV can assist you in fiction and creative non-fiction. We deal with successful POV switching, unreliable narrators, and some more experimental uses of POV.

- 5. Dialogue** - A story can succeed or fail on its dialogue. Badly done, it is actively off-putting. Well done, it can take a mediocre story to another level.

We look at the uses of dialogue and how to deploy it most effectively. Dialogue is not speech as it is used in real-life. It is the appearance of real speech. How do you achieve this?

- 6. Beginnings and Middles** – Once you have developed your characters and worked out the elements of your story, you are ready to begin. But where should that be?

This module looks at the importance of the first line, the first page and the first chapter (or equivalent). What are the jobs they should do? How best can they draw readers in and feed them just enough to keep them reading.

Then we look at the book’s basic structure. How can it most successfully be structured? We take a look at some of the basics of keeping a story moving. How to avoid the dreaded sag, how to vary your pacing and avoid exposition.

- 7. Suspense** - The word “suspense” tends to make us think of plot-driven thrillers. But our definition is wide. We like to see it as anything that draws the reader forward. This is as relevant for non-fiction writers as for novelists.

We look at the ways in which you can create an appetite for events yet to be described – a tension between the present moment, and the anticipated moment.

There is no story without some form of conflict. It’s the essential ingredient that keeps us reading. Something’s at stake, and the equilibrium is disturbed. In life,

we long for equilibrium (unless we're a war correspondent). But in stories, when equilibrium's achieved, the story ends.

- 8. Showing not telling** – We present a central truth about good writing: it is almost always better to show your story and your characters, than to tell us about them.

When you tell your readers something, you're explaining it to them. When you show your readers, you allow them to see, hear, taste or smell it for themselves. From this, your engaged and active readers make their own deductions about the people and events you've shown them.

We analyse exactly what we mean by "showing". And we look at the different ways in which we can achieve it, with extensive examples.

We look at detail ... in detail. Every detail has a job to do, whether it exists for textural reasons, or to show us more about characters or situations.

COURSE DESIGNERS AND FACILITATORS

Allaboutwriting is a partnership between **Richard Beynon** and **Jo-Anne Richards** who have both made their livings from writing for many years. They're passionate about good writing, and have devised the courses to help communicate that passion – plus the skills that make it all much more than an academic exercise – to others with a similar calling.

Jo-Anne Richards is an internationally published novelist with a PHD in Creative Writing. Her novels include the best-selling *The Innocence of Roast Chicken*, *Touching the Lighthouse*, *Sad at the Edges* and *My Brother's Book*. Her most recent novel, *The Imagined Child*, was released in 2013. Until recently, she spent 15 years as head of the Honours Programme in Journalism & Media Studies at Wits University.

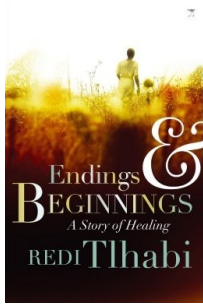
Richard Beynon is an award-winning film and television scriptwriter with a long and accomplished career in the local industry. He has written for – or headed the writing teams of – many of country's most popular soaps from *Isidingo* to *Scandal* and *S'gudi S'naysi*. He is currently headwriter of *Isibaya*.

TESTIMONIALS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND PUBLISHED BOOKS BY PARTICIPANTS

This course has changed lives. There are few things in life that can lay claim to this honour. Allaboutwriting has (almost ... they can't write the whole book for you!) all the answers in their wonderful, warm, nurturing and "growing" writing courses. *Ingrid van den Berg*

Discovering the Creative Writing Course has been one of the most satisfying landmarks in my life and certainly in my writing journey... [They] offer I believe an unequalled forum for prospective writers of all skill levels in this country. I am hooked. *Clive Goodchild-Brown*

I found Allaboutwriting's writing course expansive in style, educative in content and entertaining in delivery. Jo-Anne and Richard present a full gamut of learning and insight on creative writing seemingly effortlessly, with the welcome addition of real verve and wit. It was pure pleasure to participate. *Tim Cohen*, author of *A Piece of the Pie: The Battle Over Nationalisation*



Allaboutwriting really did help me. A great deal. I'm very proud of my association with them. *Redi Tlhabi*, author of *Endings and Beginnings* and winner of the Sunday Times Alan Paton Award

Having sent three of my best-selling authors, Redi Tlhabi, Bonnie Henna and Gia Nicolaides, to Allaboutwriting and having been a student myself, I would recommend the course to anyone, from an aspiring writer to an already established writer looking to refresh and hone their skills. Jo-Anne is a nurturing teacher and an absolute joy to learn from. *Thabiso Mahlape*, Jacana Media

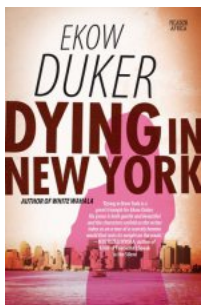


I joined the course because I wanted tips on how to go about writing a novel. I got what I signed up for. However, I achieved a lot more. I honestly think – hope? – that I am a better writer than I was ten or so weeks ago. Thank you. *Marilyn Cohen de Villiers*, author of *A Beautiful Family* and *When Time Fails*.

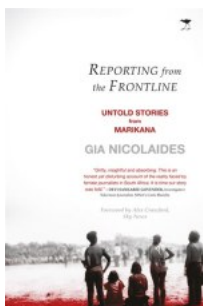
Big cheers to both of you for being the best mentors I've ever had. *Merle Grace* author of the short story, *Disappeared*, chosen for inclusion in the *The Incredible Journey the 2015 Short Sharp Collection*.

Here are just some of the other books published by participants in the past couple of years:

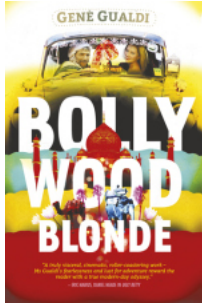
Backtrack: The Voice Behind Music's Greatest Stars by Tessa Niles is the story of her thirty years as a backing singer to some of the planet's most famous acts. She came to Allaboutwriting to kick-start her memoir. We are absolutely delighted to see it in print. (It's also available on Amazon.) Follow Tessa as she records with superstars, appears on the world's biggest stages, rubs shoulders with royalty and reveals the triumphs and heartbreak of life on the road. *Backtrack* is a story of driving ambition, first-hand experience and the accomplishment of a dedicated and talented musician.



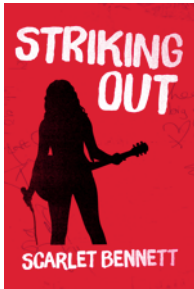
Dying in New York by Ekow Duker. *Dying in New York* is a story of hope and deep longing, made all the more poignant by Lerato's startling candour from the first page until the book's surprising conclusion. 'A long time ago, before I had breasts, sense or a husband, I knew one day I would die in New York. I must have been no more than twelve and the jacaranda trees were about to burst into their lilac-coloured song. I'd never been to New York. Actually I'd never been out of our northern Johannesburg suburb, except for my monthly visits to Doctor Sydney Malema.'



Reporting from the Frontline, by Gia Nicolaides. So much has been said about Marikana since the tragedy of 16 August 2012 where 34 miners were gunned down and police were killed. The news and the images of the massacre made headlines around the globe, for weeks. What the world didn't take into account was who and what it took to bring that news from the small town of Rustenburg to the world. Gia's story and account will take you to the heart of Marikana where journalists fought, often their own emotions, in order to deliver the bulletins.



Bollywood Blonde by Gené Gualdi. Bubbly fine arts graduate Gené is desperate to get into the film industry. Gené starts moonlighting on film sets and finds herself on an Indian paint commercial where a big Bollywood producer offers her a six-month stint in his company in Mumbai. Unable to resist the lure and glamour of working in film and travelling the world business class, she leaps at the opportunity and soon finds herself on a plane headed for India. But there is no free curry in Mumbai. On arrival she realises she is expected to sleep with the producer, and slips into an uneasy, culturally challenging role as his new *firangi* girlfriend.



Striking Out by Scarlet Bennett was written while on our mentoring programme. The book is about an ambitious singer songwriter from regional Western Australia, who moves to the city to become a star, encountering a series of colourful characters along the way – including Todd, the sexy, brooding muso with the dragon tattoo, and sleazy Des, the agent wants much more than a ten percent cut of her earnings.