Friday, November 4, 3:00-4:15 pm (Session A)

A1. “Writing Different Cultures: To What Extent Can We Become Insiders?” with Lisa Favicchia
As writers, it seems only natural that we are influenced by our travels. However, what do we risk by writing other cultures? Can we ever really become insiders, and if so, to what extent? While writing other cultures presents an opportunity to promote understanding and global connection, we inevitably risk misrepresentation by assuming an understanding based on limited points of view. Through discussion and workshopping, this panel aims to address the potential benefits and risks of writing different cultures, to what degree we are insiders or outsiders, and how to approach fair representation.

A2. “The Poetic Image as Communication,” with Jacob Hall
We will have a discussion on the utility of the poetic image as a means of communicating theme, narrative, sense, and emotion within a poem. This will involve exploring hypothetical uses of image as a means of communication, as well as examining works from a range of poets who utilize the communicative image within their poems. Finally, we will have a workshop in which attendees will work to craft their own poetic images intended to communicate with a reader.

A3. “From Lyric to Lebowski: Writing the Pop Culture Poem,” with Donora Hillard
What does it mean to write a “good” pop culture poem? How can poets use pop culture to access elements of love, anxiety, misery, hope? Led by Donora Hillard, whose most recent full-length poetry collection, *Jeff Bridges*, was released by Cobalt Press in 2016, this workshop will work through those questions and more. Participants will each leave with a poem draft that gets to the root of what we love—and why we love—in the public consciousness.

A4. “Publishing Secrets,” with Coral Nardandrea and Teresa Dederer

A5. “That’s Absurd! How to Write Absurdist Poetry,” with Jen Pelto
Whether you’re still *Waiting for Godot* or undergoing a *Metamorphosis*, this workshop will discuss the thematic and philosophical elements of absurdism, provide post-postmodern examples from working writers, and give you the space to play with language to write your own absurd poems!

A6. “Market Yourself as a Writer,” with Nicole L. Reber
Marketing starts long before your book is published. It should start before your book is even written. Springboarding from the FUSE conference’s theme of literary citizenship, this workshop will talk about how helping other authors, getting free books, and the very act of writing are just some of the many free ways to market yourself. Starting early also helps build a better platform, which leads to quality agent contracts and publishing deals. We’ll set aside some time to generate ideas for marketing yourself, then more time for a Q&A.

A7. “Forcing Found Poetry and Reluctant Collaborative Discovery,” with Jessica Zinz-Cheresnick
Do you get annoyed by found poetry and think it lacks the creative pulp of other work? Or is it the only way you can get writing? Do you detest collaborative poetry or poems with multiple writers? Or do you embrace the struggle two people might have in trying to create one piece?
I used to devalue found poetry. I also hated the concept of poetic collaboration and recognizing that two writers wrote one poem. However, after not getting much of my own writing done in the last several years of teaching, found poetry allowed me to get writing again. After being forced to collaborate on a poem in a festival workshop a few years ago, I was rejuvenated by the resulting poem. I want to bring this life to your work too.

In this workshop, we will discuss found poetry, both its concerns and merits. We will also discuss the ethics of collaborative poems, the judgments of them, and the value in them. Then, participants will be guided in writing a collaboratively found poem.

A8. “On Writing Horror: Avoiding Ghastly Clichés,” with Olivia Zolciak and Tanja Viererther
Creepy dolls, dark basements, experiments gone wrong, and groups splitting up and encountering their inevitable doom. It’s all been done before, but there’s something about the horror genre that keeps readers craving that visceral fear of the unknown and unexplainable. Therefore, it is important to engage readers in a genre that is constantly reproducing similar motifs. In this workshop, we will discuss common horror fiction clichés and how to work in a space defined by them.

Friday, November 4, 4:30-5:45 pm (Session B)

In this workshop, we’ll consider how imitation projects—the study of an established writer and consideration of that writer’s particular techniques, strategies, and approaches to themes—help us to discover and develop our own unique voices. We’ll look at models of imitation projects and try our hand at writing that imitates or exists in conversation with another writer. All writers, regardless of genre, are welcome. Participants will leave with new ideas to implement in their work, as well as with the start of several new pieces.

To complement our own writing, we’ll also discuss the pedagogical possibilities for imitation projects, looking at models and successful sample assignments that participants can try on their own or use in the classroom. The workshop leaders will present a model of a semester-long imitation project, which culminates in a poster presentation suitable for conferences.

An old Sesame Street music scene begins with those words and continues on to study objects that make distinct rhythms. Why is rhythm so often hard for us to grasp as adults? In this workshop we’ll experiment with ways to charge our poetic language rhythmically, whether or not we’re following a meter.

B3. “First, Put Pen to Paper: Instructions as Poetry,” with Daniel Gualtieri
Modern and contemporary poetry contains a great tradition of poems written as sets of instructions, advice, or even recipes. This poetic form can provide interesting structural advantages, a confident and assertive voice, and fresh content for the poet of today. In this workshop, we will delve into the nature, use, and assembly of these instructional poems, take a look at some examples from great poets of the past and present, and spend time writing our own instructional poems and discussing them in a small-group setting.
In this workshop, participants will learn innovative ways to write death scenes in their fiction. Participants will have an opportunity to write their scene depicting the death of a character—remember, the death doesn’t need to be violent, it just needs to be authentic. Please come prepared with a character you’re ready to kill off!

Narrative collage has its beginnings in the Dadaist and Surrealist movements of the 1910s and 1920s and is a hybrid genre that combines elements of image and text. This workshop will examine works like Heather Cousin’s *Something in the Potato Room* and Claudia Rankine’s *Don’t Let Me Be Lonely* and will give writers the opportunity to experiment with incorporating visuals into their own original poetry.
*Note: Participants should bring a laptop computer to the workshop.

B6. “The Kitchen Sink, the Teaspoon: Telling It All vs. Telling Barely Enough,” with Brad Modlin
When should writing go maximalist and pack itself full with details, complexities, chewy sentences, asides, long paragraphs, regret from high school days, and nostalgia for the tangerines your aunt gave you? When to—minimalist—seize the jugular? We will explore examples of maximalism and minimalism from writers of all three genres, such as David Foster Wallace, Amy Hempel, Margaret Atwood, and David Shields. And we will flex both kinds of muscle in our own writing exercises. All genres welcome.

B7. “Beginning Copyright for Writers,” with Scott Piepho
This workshop will offer an overview of basic copyright law concepts that writers need to know. Participants will learn about negotiating contract terms to protect their continued access to their work. The session will also cover the basics of fair use—when a writer can use a snippet of someone else’s work. A writing prompt will consist of song lyrics that participants must work into a piece of writing while staying within fair use.

Being inclusive means more than choosing to designate one of your characters as disabled. It means (1) asking yourself why you want to include that character, (2) doing the research to make sure you are able to portray that character with accuracy and respect, and (3) taking steps to follow through to make sure your depiction does no harm. This workshop provides guidelines and hands-on activities to practice these skills.

Saturday, November 5, 9:30-10:45 am (Session C)

C1. “Good Girl/Bad Girl: Creating Complexity in Female Characters,” with Bridget Adams
Have you ever begun reading a novel and known exactly what to expect from the female characters? Have you ever wondered why your own female characters seem static, cliché, unreal? It can be tempting to fit fiction women into archetypes—making them “good girls” or “bad girls.” In this
workshop, we’ll look at the work of female writers, from Emily Bronte to Jeanette Winterson to Elena Ferrante, who center their stories on unruly, difficult, and complicated women. We’ll examine the techniques each writer uses to develop character, and spend time creating unforgettable female characters of our own.

In this workshop, we will examine jokes and stories that follow a punch line/non-sequitur structure. After reading Saki’s exemplary _The Open Window_, we will review academic theories of jokes and then briefly discuss fictional works that follow this structure, along with some time-honored jokes and acts from comedians who have mastered the art of storytelling. After that, we will generate stories that adhere to this structure, either by fleshing out a joke we already know, or turning a humorous instance from our lives into comedic writing. A few participants will perform their work at the end of class.

C3. “Poetry as Meditation,” with Karen Craigo
For the presenter, each day begins with a poem—one that aims to change her own mindset and to encourage peaceful contemplation in others. Join this workshop to consider the idea of poem as meditation—a tool for connecting with a universal mind. Most poetic education is based on the very useful idea of a piece of writing as a flawed product that requires tinkering. This session explores the notion that a piece of writing might just be an artifact of the spirit, rather than a workshop fix-it project—while understanding that neither mindset suffices on its own.

Anyone can get stuck when trying to write dialogue that is believable and stays true to their characters. We may even let our own voices overpower our characters’ voices, forget that our characters are doing something while they talk, or let our characters ramble on too long. In this workshop, we will explore different ways to obtain believable dialogue from our everyday lives, to make sure that our characters’ dialogue/voices are not too similar, and to create dialogue with a necessary conflict for the story.

C5. “Magic in the Making,” with Nathaniel Meals
This workshop begins with a general, if abbreviated, introduction to magical realism as a genre, its post-WWII Latin American origins, its rise in popularity, and its present place in world literature. From there, the focus will shift to a discussion of the typical features of a magical realist fiction. Using notable texts authored by some chief practitioners of the genre, we will explore how these devices are employed and to what aesthetic ends. Finally, the workshop will close with a few short writing exercises to get your magical juices flowing.

C6. “Let’s Deal With This Thing Called Family,” with Marissa Medley
Families can be a source of inspiration for writers. Whether good or bad emotions flow from these relationships, they can give us much to write about. Here we can take a look at how to write about families and explore why we do this as writers. We’ll also look at writers like Sylvia Plath and Rita Dove. And, of course, we’ll have some writing time to get our emotions on paper.
C7. “Giving Snow White the Heimlich Maneuver and other Tales: Using Classic Tropes and Characters in Original Writing,” with Erika Schnepp
One of the strongest techniques a writer (of any genre) can employ is drawing on the common chords and tropes we as readers have seen since we were little: tropes like religious figures, characters from fairytales, and literary and pop culture figures who have managed to stand the test of time. Also increasingly popular is the updating of these characters for the modern era, introducing the figures and themes to new generations and even subverting outdated messages to better represent the lessons we want to pass down now versus generations ago. It is just as important that the stories are used in a fashion that increases a new theme and that the same story isn’t merely retold. This workshop will explore ways common tropes and characters are currently being updated and played with in prose and poetry, as well as methods to revitalize the tropes for your own work without being bogged down in their shared history.

C8. “The Contemporary Ode,” with Katrina Vandenberg
Poet C.D. Wright said that the ode is “one of the few literary tendencies left on the lot that admits wonder and presumes a future.” In this hands-on workshop, we’ll examine what it means in 2016 to celebrate and wonder, noting strategies of contemporary ode writers like Ross Gay, Sharon Olds, Pablo Neruda, Lucille Clifton, and others, then put those strategies to work on the page as we create new work.

Saturday, November 5, 11:00 am-12:15 pm (Session D)

D1. “Bookbinding Basics,” with Suzanna Anderson
Presenter Suzanna Anderson will demonstrate basic bookbinding techniques and forms, including the X-Book, Snake Book, and a Basic Sewn Signature. The session will include a writing period to write in the new books. Attendees will make three books to take home and write in. Writing exercises will approach writing from a new angle using unconventionally sized paper.

D2. “Write Yourself as You Are, with Purpose: Feminism & Poetry,” with Roseanna Boswell
Adrienne Rich wrote, “the moment a feeling enters a body, is political,” suggesting that the intersection of feelings and bodies is political, which means that poetry is political. Helene Cixous demanded: “write yourself. Your body must be heard,” because we must meet ourselves in our own words, our own bodies, and not settle for someone else’s perspective. Writing poetry is not just political for the listener or reader then, but also for the writer who is claiming their voice as a valuable one. In this workshop we will discuss using poetry as a means of accessing identity, and attendees will be given the chance to draft poems with this goal in mind.

D3. “The Protruding Moment in Fiction,” with Brad Felver
This session will investigate the “protruding moment” in fiction—big, often bizarre, memorable events that tend to stick in the reader’s brain long after finishing reading. We will consider what makes a moment truly protrude: the anatomy of them, their benefits and potential pitfalls, and how to structure stories to best make use of them. Ultimately, we will start sketching out some ideas for protruding moments in our own work.
D4. “Arias and Air Guitar: Writing about Music in Fiction,” with Rebecca Orchard
From *A Visit from the Goon Squad* to *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* to Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Nocturnes*, music plays an important role in the lives of many fictional characters. Just as a vivid description of setting can anchor a work in the physical world, a compelling musical moment can give insight into a person’s inner world. What makes a musical description vivid, interesting, and essential to the dramatic action of a work? This workshop will explore ways to write about fictional encounters with music through prose examples and musical prompts.

This workshop will examine the often thin line between shaped poems and visual art, playing with the way poems can straddle that line, as well as the sometimes quiet way shape and punctuation can impact how a poem is read and experienced. We explore the challenge of curating Emily Dickinson’s letter poems to prose poetry and more explosively hyper-structured poems, as well as how to use forms and structure without the structure overpowering the poem.

D6. “Creating Your Fictional Hometown,” with Eric Wasserman
“Every good writer has a conflicted relationship with the place where he grew up.” Kevin Kline could not have spoken truer words in the movie *Orange County*. Do you struggle with wanting to write autobiographical fiction? Is where you grew up crucial to those stories, but you can’t seem to get beyond your personal history that rests there? In this writing-intensive workshop we will explore techniques that will help you create your own fictional hometown, similar enough to the real thing that you will not lose that special sense of place, but different enough to free yourself artistically.

D7. “Do Tell: 100 Facts for Writing Sensory Details,” with Laurin Wolf
Thanks to William Carlos Williams, we know, “There are no ideas but in things.” Thanks to the glittering handbooks for writers, we know that concrete details are what make writing powerful. We know we need more grit and gusto in our details. But how do we get at those precious details? If your prosody engine needs a jump-start on the details, do tell. In this workshop, we will look at examples from poetry, fiction, and nonfiction that rely on objects to tell a narrative. The workshop culminates in a fact-finding exercise using random objects to generate narrative.

D8. “Collars, Capes, and Chantilly Lace: Learn to Describe Clothing,” with Anne-Marie Yerks
Clothing is the costume of life and creates identity. What are your characters wearing? Lend a layer of realism to your fiction, poetry, and nonfiction with precise descriptions of fabrics, seams, and shapes. We’ll go over a fashion vocabulary list then swatch out a sample of fashion-forward prose.

**Saturday, November 5, 1:30-2:45 pm (Session E)**

As media and art become more beholden to nostalgia and corporate interests, we encounter the risk of cynically integrating popular culture in storytelling. Whether a cinematic zoom to a company logo or reliance on haphazard references in lieu of characterization, we can be locked into a limited shorthand. With analysis of Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*, the Americana-drenched works of
Stephen King, the recent phenomenon *Stranger Things*, and more, we will aim to meld popular culture to the whims of nuanced storytelling.

E2. “Performance in Creative Writing,” with Olivia Buzzacco
How does the world of performance intersect with the world of creative writing? How does performance affect a poem? A story? Above all, how can performance be included into creative writing? This presentation will look to answer those questions and give live demonstrations of performance being applied to poetry/fiction, as well as allow writers to practice a “sound words” technique, and see how performance can bring their work to life.

E3. “Brainstorming the Novel,” with Lawrence Coates
“Brainstorming the Novel” will be a discussion / workshop on conceiving and developing your novel idea. The presentation will feature an outline of the seven basic plots, some guided exercises that can be shared, and some questions that can be used to strengthen your idea or the manuscript you’re currently working on.

This workshop will provide an overview of a typical typesetting workflow for InDesign, with tips for file placement, document setup, creating paragraph and character styles, selecting typefaces, and other design considerations. Best practices will be discussed, with recommendations for creating a house style guide, as well as suggestions for streamlining workflow and preparing a book for print.

Dialogue is as important to writers of fiction as scenes, characters, and plot. Unless your book is about two cars that go “Vroom” in the night, you are stuck with the dilemma we all face. My name is Rod Martinez; I am an author of Middle Grade and Young Adult mystery-adventure drama. I am invited to book talks every year by schools and one of the most common questions I get from young writers is “How do you make dialogue believable?” Or “How do you even get to dialogue?” My workshop will delve into the wonderful world of character conversation with exercises meant to stimulate and intrigue.

E6. “(Re)combining Poetic Sensibilities,” with Brandon North
Centos, erasures, Google sculpting, and other recombinant methods of composing poems are helpful with the metacognition of one’s poetic sensibilities. For both the student and experienced writer, composing with gathered materials is useful in reorienting, honing, or expanding one’s sense of what is possible in a piece of writing. In this workshop, we will try out several methods of composing found poetry with an eye toward critically investigating why we might use, choose, and/or combine words/phrases/sentences in crafting poems. After writing through each method, we will discuss the aesthetics we find ourselves leaning toward, both personally and collectively.

This workshop will explore hermit crab essays, braided essays, listicles, and other fun forms that can have the added benefit of helping you be more productive and turn the heads of editors and contest readers. Use these alternative forms to push the boundaries of nonfiction. We’ll set aside two writing
periods for exploring how you can tell your stories in the form on a prescription bottle, a recipe, or other curious ways. We’ll also discuss publications and contests that favor this type of writing.

E8. “Existence as Conditional on Others’ Perceptions and the Deconstruction of the Self,” with Remi Recchia
The goal of this workshop is to produce new poems centered on the idea of the existence or nonexistence of the self. The focus of this workshop will be to deconstruct your own ideas of who you are and see if there is a core “you” and how it affects your creative work. After a brief presentation, we will examine who we think we are as writers and, more importantly, humans, and challenge these perceptions during a discussion/workshop and in-session writing time. This session is appropriate for all levels of writers or anyone who is interested in existence.

Saturday, November 5, 3:00-4:15 pm (Session F)

F1. “Raid the Other World’: Writing Prose Poems,” with Callista Buchen
Marianne Moore suggests that the problems of definition, of “trying to differentiate poetry from prose,” are the “wart[s] on so much happiness.” In this workshop, we’ll happily blur boundaries and focus on writing prose poems. We’ll look at and try out different kinds of prose poetry, exploring how the prose poem can “borrow” the strategies of non-poems, what Michael Delville calls the prose poem’s “propensity to transcend traditional distinctions.” As we’ll see, all genres are full of contradictions, and recognizing and exploiting these contradictions will help us create exciting new work.

We’ll write lots of our own pieces, using the prose poem form to challenge boundaries. We’ll think about both the boundaries of form and the perceived boundaries of content, since as Delville argues, “what is at stake here is the extent to which poetry, like any other discourse or cultural practice, can have claims to larger concerns in the world outside the text” (x).

F2. “Making Details Matter,” with Christi Clancy, Marley Howe, and Alicia Holliday
A well-chosen detail has the power to reveal character, advance plot, convey social and economic status, and establish a sense of place. Think of the kielbasa and rosaries hanging from the car mirror in Stuart Dybek’s story “We Didn’t.”

This workshop will focus on some strategies I’ve employed to help writers make effective use of details, including classroom exercises and writing prompts. I also leverage the campus and surrounding community as fertile ground for quirky, surprising, and sometimes heartbreaking details. The trick is to move away from Google searches and out of our comfort zone; we are more likely to notice details when our senses are on alert in unfamiliar (but safe) spaces.

We’ll discuss activities like the “battle of the details” to architecture hunts, and field trips to quirky museums and strange auctions. We’ll engage the workshop in several short detail-writing exercises.

The taboo flatly rendered. The ironic precision of abstraction. Economical rhythm. These are just a few of the craft lessons writers of any genre can learn from the fairy tale. How might working with the tell-it-like-it-is, no-nonsense tone of a fairy tale help you develop the intense moments in your
writing? We’ll read the earliest versions of a couple of fairy tales and discuss fairy-tale scholars such as Kate Bernheimer, Jack Zipes, Phillip Pullman, and Italo Calvino. Participants will experiment with the flat tone of the fairy tale in their own prose or poetry, attempting to “lick clean” a particularly blistering moment.

F4. “From Pen to Page to Stage: Secrets to Song Writing,” with Benji Katz and Mark Wierzbowski
Participants will learn about components of contemporary songwriting, including harmony, rhythm, and lyricism. We will talk about strategies for generating new material and dissect notable songs, figuring out what makes them successful in capturing the attention of an audience’s ear and imagination. Workshop members will then have the opportunity to employ these techniques in a lyric writing exercise and collaboration on a song at the end of the session.

F5. “Flash Fiction Battle to the Death,” with Brian Lee Klueter and Zachary Kocanda
Back by popular demand! Contestants will have 40 minutes to write a flash fiction piece based on a photo prompt. Two finalists will be determined by the group. Those finalists will read their pieces to a live audience, who, through applause, will determine a champion.

As a writer, it’s sometimes easy to fall into expected patterns in your work, depending upon a few reliable tricks for plot, structure, and language; this can lead to a writing rut or prevent your work from making leaps and strides. We will amass new tools for dealing with structure in prose, taking a critical lens to the ways that emerging and experimental writers disrupt structural patterns. We will discuss examples of interesting patterns in text, song, and film, establish some ground rules for how they are used, and practice applying them to our own work in freewrites and writing exercises.

How can an emotion as powerful as love so often give rise to overly sentimental, cliché-riddled poetry? Is it impossible to wrangle this emotion in writing without feeling as though we’ve forgotten our pantaloons and lyre?

Although the love poem is well-trodden territory, it’s constantly presenting us with new and strange paths to assuage our confessional impulses. From ancient Mesopotamia to Kobe Bryant, we’ll examine how the love poem has evolved throughout the years and its function in contemporary society, then experiment with approaches to crafting a love poem that doesn’t suck.

F8. “The Seven Deadly First-Page Sins,” with Tex Thompson
There’s no one right way to begin your story—but there are plenty of wrong ones. In this class, we’ll take you on a cautionary tour through the pits of page-one hell, complete with agent pet peeves, reader turn-offs, and “thanks but no thanks” editorial deal-breakers. Don’t let your manuscript suffer in form-rejection torment: Let us guide you through the slush-pile inferno and lead your story toward the light!