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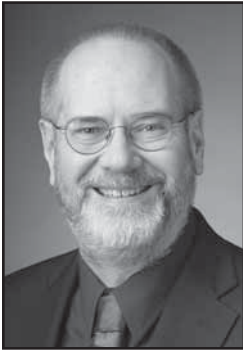
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James Hynes, M.F.A.
Novelist and Writing Instructor

Professor James Hynes is a working novelist who has taught creative writing as a visiting professor at the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop, the University of Michigan, The University of Texas, Miami University, and Grinnell College. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy from the University of

Michigan in 1977 and a Master of Fine Arts degree from the Iowa Writers' Workshop in 1989.

Professor Hynes is the author of four novels: *Next*, which received the 2011 Believer Book Award from *Believer* magazine; *Kings of Infinite Space*, a *Washington Post* best book for 2004; *The Lecturer's Tale*; and *The Wild Colonial Boy*, which received the Adult Literature Award from the Friends of American Writers and was a *New York Times* Notable Book for 1990. His novella collection *Publish and Perish: Three Tales of Tenure and Terror* was a *Publishers Weekly* Best Book of 1997 and appeared on several critics' best-of-the-year lists.

Professor Hynes has received numerous literary grants and teaching fellowships. He received a James Michener Fellowship from the University of Iowa (1989–1990), and he was a member of the Michigan Society of Fellows at the University of Michigan (1991–1994). He received a Teaching-Writing Fellowship from the Iowa Writers' Workshop at the University of Iowa (1988–1999) and a Michigan Council for the Arts writer's grant (1984). As an undergraduate, he received the Hopwood Short Fiction Award from the University of Michigan (1976).

Professor Hynes is also a media and literary critic. He is a former television critic for *Mother Jones*, *The Michigan Voice*, and *In These Times*. His book reviews and literary essays have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Boston Review*, *Salon*, and other publications.

Professor Hynes lives in Austin, Texas, the main setting of his novel *Next*, and is currently working on a new novel. ■

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Writing Great Fiction: Storytelling Tips and Techniques

Scope:

We all think we have a novel in us, and in this course of 24 lectures, a professional novelist will guide you through a survey of the most important concepts and techniques behind the creation of contemporary prose fiction, using examples from a wide range of classic novels and stories, as well as some demonstrations of his own process. By taking you step by step through such topics as creating characters, composing dialogue, crafting plots, and using different points of view, this course will help you get that book out of your head and heart and into the hands of readers.

Lecture 1 considers how to prepare yourself, both logistically and emotionally, for beginning to write a piece of fiction, and Lecture 2 explores the concept of evocation, or the art of making fictional characters in a fictional world come alive, which is fundamental to most fiction.

The next four lectures provide an introduction to the creation of fictional characters. In Lecture 3, we explore the differences between fictional characters and real people and consider how a “person” who is only a few thousand words on a page can come to life in the mind of the reader. Lecture 4 shows how you can create credible and interesting characters by combining your imagination with observations of real people. Lecture 5 looks at several ways of introducing a character into a narrative for the first time, and Lecture 6 examines different types of characters, such as round and flat characters and major and minor characters, and explores how they work together in a story or novel.

The next two lectures are about writing dialogue. Lecture 7 explains the mechanics and grammar of dialogue, including tips on when and when not to use dialogue tags and adverbs. Lecture 8 is about using dialogue to evoke character and tell a story and about integrating dialogue seamlessly into the rest of the narrative.

Next comes the longest block of lectures in the course, six lectures about plot. Lecture 9 introduces the subject by discussing the difference between a story and a plot and by showing three ways to structure a traditional plot. Lecture 10 demonstrates how traditional plots can usually be diagrammed with the well-known Freytag pyramid, while Lecture 11 suggests ways you can rearrange or adapt the individual pieces of a traditional chronology to make your plot more complex and intriguing. Lecture 12 covers how to structure a narrative when you're not interested in using a traditional plot; Lecture 13 introduces techniques for getting a plot started; and Lecture 14 explores ways to bring a plot to a satisfying conclusion.

The next three lectures discuss the concept of point of view in fiction. Lecture 15 surveys the range of points of view, from the godlike, omniscient third person to the intimacy of the first person. Lecture 16 looks at the various ways you can use the first-person point of view, and Lecture 17 runs through the many varieties of the third person.

The remaining seven lectures look at a variety of individual topics of importance to fiction writers. Lecture 18 discusses the various ways setting and place can be used in fiction, while Lecture 19 explores pacing and the need to pace different types of narratives in different ways. Lecture 20 considers how to craft an individual scene, which is one of the basic building blocks of fiction, and Lecture 21 looks at the advantages and disadvantages of composing manuscripts in complete drafts. In Lecture 22, we'll take a look at the essential process of revision and rewriting, while Lecture



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23 considers two approaches to doing research for a work of fiction. The final lecture touches on the changing nature of the publishing business and offers personal insights into the challenges and joys of making a life as a fiction writer. ■