



May 17, 2016

Dear Student,

Congratulations on your acceptance to the Creative Writing Program at NOCCA! We're looking forward to seeing you in August, when you'll begin an intensive study of writing. Our goal is to help you develop skills as a writer and reader of literature.

In order to be prepared for the rigor of the program, we ask that you write as much as possible this summer. Try to write every day! You will turn in 10 pages of creative writing on the first day of school. We also require that you read six selections from the enclosed summer reading list; please follow the guidelines for Level I students.

Every summer we choose a text that all the students in the Creative Writing Department read (as one of your six books). This summer's selection is *The Member of the Wedding*, by Carson McCullers. Please read the novella carefully, and consider how character is developed and plot is executed. You will be tested on the book the first week of school (yes, we're already talking about tests). If you've read the book thoughtfully, you'll do fine. You will also give a short presentation on one of the other books you read this summer. Enclosed in the packet are presentation guidelines. This is a great way to introduce your book to your peers, and learn about books you haven't yet encountered.

If you have questions about the summer reading, please email Lara Naughton at linaughton@nocca.com. Please note that replies might be delayed due to summer break.

Again, congratulations on your acceptance to this highly selective program. We know you're passionate about language and storytelling, and we're excited to welcome you to NOCCA.

Best,

Lara Naughton
Creative Writing Chair

CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM AT NOCCA|RIVERFRONT
2016 SUMMER WRITING and READING

Writers write and writers read. As you read challenging and diverse works of literature, you will discover new ways to approach language and storytelling. You are encouraged (required) this summer to read and write. We trust you will pay close attention to what you can learn from the texts, and that you'll experiment with new styles and techniques in your own writing.

Submit at least ten (10) pages of original writing on the first day of class in August 2016. Your pages should be typed in a standard 12-point font (single-spaced if poetry, double-spaced if fiction or creative non-fiction, and properly formatted if drama).

Submit a one-page description of your “arts encounter” on the first day of class in August 2016 (see instructions on page 5).

Read *The Member of the Wedding* by Carson McCullers. You will be tested on the novella the first week of school so please be sure you have a copy of the book with you.

In addition to *The Member of the Wedding*, read at least 5 other books from this book list.

Please be prepared to introduce one of the books in a brief class presentation on the second day of school (see presentation guidelines on page 7).

Students entering Level I, please choose your books from the attached list.

Students entering Levels II-IV, if there is a book you would like to include that isn't on this list, please email Lara Naughton at linaughton@nocca.com for approval. Be sure to include information about the book and your reason for requesting it.

Everyone is, of course, encouraged to read beyond the required texts!

Category I: Books Recommended or Required for Certificate of Artistry

You are required to read at least one book from this category this summer.

Please note: The Certificate of Artistry is the highest level of certificate in the writing program, and is earned by seniors who reach Level III or IV. As part of the Certificate of Artistry, students submit a list of 18 novels that they feel confident discussing. All the books below can be counted toward the Certificate of Artistry. The books with asterisks*** are *required* for the Certificate of Artistry (and are not taught during the school year). (Levels III and IV – read *Bleak House*!)

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*
Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice****
Djuna Barnes, *Nightwood*
Samuel Beckett, *Murphy*
Albert Camus, *The Stranger*
Truman Capote, *In Cold Blood*
Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*
Michael Chabon, *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay*
Philip K. Dick, *A Scanner Darkly*
Julio Cortázar, *Hopscotch*
Charles Dickens, *Bleak House****
Fyodor Dostoyevski, *The Idiot*
George Eliot, *Middlemarch*
William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!*
F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*
Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *Love in the Time of Cholera*
Knut Hamsun, *Pan*
Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*
Franz Kafka, *The Trial****
Jamaica Kincaid, *Annie John*
D. H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers*
Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*
Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita****
Joyce Carol Oates, *Black Water*
Flann O'Brien, *At Swim-Two Birds*
Ben Okri, *The Famished Road*
Walker Percy, *The Moviegoer*
Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way*
Merce Rodoreda, *The Time of the Doves*
Junichiro Tanizaki, *Naomi: A Novel*
Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*
Jean Toomer, *Cane*
Amos Tutuola, *The Palm-Wine Drunkard*
Joy Williams, *The Quick and the Dead*

Category II: Contemporary Literature

This year, we're focusing on international literature. You are required to read at least one book from this category this summer. Unless otherwise noted, the books listed below are novels. The books with an asterisk* can be used toward your Certificate of Artistry.

Afghanistan: Khaled Hosseini, *The Kite Runner*
Argentina: Adolfo Bioy Casares, *The Invention of Morel**
Bangladesh: Tahmima Anam, *A Golden Age*
Brazil: Clarice Lispector, *Soulstorm* (story collection)
Cambodia: U Sam Oeur, *Crossing Three Wildernesses* (memoir)
Canada: Alice Munro, *Open Secrets* (story collection)
Chile: Alejandro Zambra, *My Documents* (story collection)
China: Ma Jian, *Stick Out Your Tongue* (story collection)
Colombia: Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *News of a Kidnapping* (nonfiction)
Cuba: Mayra Montero, *Dancing to Almendra*
Dominican Republic: Junot Diaz, *This is How You Lose Her* (story collection)
Egypt: Naguib Mahfouz, *Midaq Alley**
Fiji: Peter Thomson, *Kava in the Blood* (memoir)
France: Milan Kundera (Czech-born), *The Unbearable Lightness of Being**
Germany: Christa Wolf, *The Quest for Christa T.*
Hungary: László Krasznahorkai, *The Melancholy of Resistance*
India: Amitav Ghosh, *River of Smoke*
Italy: Primo Levi, *The Periodic Table* (memoir)
Iran: Fariba Hachtroudi, *The Man Who Snapped His Fingers*
Ireland: Eimear McBride, *A Girl Is a Half-formed Thing*
Jamaica: Marlon James, *A Brief History of Seven Killings*
Japan: Haruki Murakami, *Kafka on the Shore*
Lebanon: Rabih Alameddine, *An Unnecessary Woman*
Mexico: Valeria Luiseli, *The Story of My Teeth*
Mozambique: Mia Couto, *Under the Frangipani*
New Zealand: Keri Hulme, *The Bone People*
Nigeria: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun**
Peru: Mario Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller*
Portugal: Jose Saramago, *Blindness*
Russia: Svetlana Alexievich, *Voices from Chernobyl* (nonfiction)
South Africa: J.M. Coetzee, *Boyhood: Scenes From Provincial Life* (memoir)
Spain: Javier Marias, *The Infatuations*
Trinidad and Tobago: VS Naipaul, *A House for Mr. Biswas*
Uganda: Okot p'Bitek, *Song of Lawino*
United Kingdom: Zadie Smith, *White Teeth**
Vietnam: Bao Ninh, *The Sorrow of War*
Zimbabwe: Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*

Category III: Poetry Collections

You are required to read at least one collection from this category this summer.

Elizabeth Bishop, *The Complete Poems: 1927-1979*
Jericho Brown, *The New Testament*
Eduardo C. Corral, *Slow Lightning*
Natalie Diaz, *When My Brother Was an Aztec*
T. S. Eliot, *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*
Tarfia Faizullah, *Seam*
Aracelis Girmay, *Kingdom Animalia*
Louise Glück, *Faithful and Virtuous Night*
Terrance Hayes, *How to Be Drawn*
Carolyn Hembree, *Rigging a Chevy to a Time Machine and Other Ways to Escape a Plague*
Marie Howe, *What the Living Do: Poems*
Tyehimba Jess, *Olio*
Saeed Jones, *Prelude to Bruise*
Rickey Laurentis, *Boy with Thorn*
Ada Limón, *Bright Dead Things*
Jamaal May, *Hum*
Aimee Nezhukumatahil, *Miracle Fruit*
Sharon Olds, *Stag's Leap*
Willie Perdomo, *The Essential Hits of Shorty Bon Bon*
Kevin Powers, *Letter Composed During a Lull in the Fighting: Poems*
Claudia Rankine, *Citizen: An American Lyric*
Adrienne Rich, *The Fact of a Doorframe: Poems 1950-2001*
Vijay Seshadri, *3 Sections*
Warsan Shire, *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth*
Mary Syzbist, *Incarnadine*
Ellen Bryant Voigt, *Headwaters*
Ocean Vung, *Night Sky with Exit Wounds*

Category IV: Student Recommendations

You may choose a book from this category. These book recommendations come from Level III students who completed independent author studies this year.

Rikki Ducornet, *The Complete Butcher's Tales*
This collection of short stories is a magical one filled with beautiful imagery of gross tales. The work influenced me to explore character depth and surrealism. (Recommended by Nicola Preuss)

Gabriel García Márquez, *Autumn of the Patriarch*

I picked this novel, not just for the grippingly complex imagery, but for its incredible handle on language and sentence structure. (Recommended by Jordan Blanchard)

Category IV: Student Recommendations, cont'd

David Foster Wallace, *A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again: Essays and Arguments*

I chose this collection because it's irreverent, high-energy, and funny without ever compromising thoughtfulness or insight. I think it's an important collection for anyone interested in nonfiction in general, and is certainly a strong representation of Wallace's specific nonfiction work. (Recommended by Kimberly Pollard)

Richard Yates, *Young Hearts Crying*

This is a book about the limitations about multiple arts and why people want to go into other fields and explore true human nature. (Recommended by Sarah Rolinski)

Category V: NOCCA Visiting Artists

You may choose a book from this category. The books with an asterisk* can be used toward your Certificate of Artistry. It is permissible to read any book by these authors.

Dorothy Allison, *Bastard out of Carolina**

Jamie Attenberg, *Saint Mazie*

John Barry, *Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How it Changed America*

Thomas Beller, *J. D. Salinger*

Wayne Curtis, *The Last Great Walk*

Matthew Dickman, *All-American Poem*

Dave Eggers, *The Circle*

Pia Z. Erhardt, *Famous Fathers and Other Stories*

Richard Ford, *Independence Day**

Patty Friedmann, *A Little Bit Ruined*

Julia Glass, *Three Junes*

Zachary Lazar, *Sway*

Audrey Niffenegger, *The Time Traveler's Wife*

Tom Perrotta, *Election*

Francine Prose, *Lovers at the Chameleon Club*

Nathaniel Rich, *Odds Against Tomorrow*

John Jeremiah Sullivan, *Pulphed: Essays*

Sarah Vowell, *Unfamiliar Fishes*

Category VI: Art Encounters

You are required to experience at least one live arts discipline. Arts Encounters can include a concert, play, trip to a museum or gallery, dance performance, or any other live artistic event. You might explore the New Orleans Museum of Art, the Ogden Museum,

the Contemporary Art Center, first Saturday of the month gallery openings, Summer Shakespeare at Tulane, events in City Park, and more. **Please write a one-page description of your encounter.** You can find listings of local performances and museum exhibitions in The Times Picayune, Gambit, or on-line at www.nola.com.

NOCCA LIBRARY

The NOCCA Library will be open this summer, but will not follow a regular schedule. Creative Writing students are encouraged to use the library to check out summer reading material. Books will be due back on the first day of school in August 2015.

Please call or email Mr. Matt Hassebrock, NOCCA's librarian, to check the library's schedule or to set up a time to visit the library.

mhassebrock@nocca.com

(504) 940-2805

NOCCA|Riverfront Creative Writing

Summer Reading Presentation Guidelines

Choose a book from the NOCCA summer reading list that you enjoyed. You will make a 5-10 minute presentation about the book to the class. This form is meant to guide you as you plan your presentation. Your answers should be carefully and thoughtfully written, and will be turned in to the instructor.

Title:

Name of author and short biography about him/her:

Two sentence plot or thematic summary:

Choose and discuss a passage, no longer than a page, which impressed you as both a reader and a writer. Why? Be specific and use direct quotes: