



Creative Writing Class

What: The Saigon Writers Club – A private and in-person creative writing class for people who have always wanted to write and publish fiction. The course will be taught by Sam Korsmoe, an American writer who has published two books, is nearing completion of a third book, was a journalist for several years, has taught creative writing to adults and youth, and has accumulated 10,000 hours of writing practice.

Where: 217 Dien Bien Phu, Ward 15, Binh Thanh District in HCM City (Cimigo Building near Hong Bang International University).

Target Market: Budding and wannabe fiction writers of any nationality and students from local universities and international high schools who have creative writing programs or marketing programs that demand creative writing skills. All instruction will be in English.

Class Schedule: There are nine classes in total. The course begins with a three-hour weekend workshop on Sunday, May 9 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 Noon followed by eight classes over the following eight weeks. Each weekly class will be 90 minutes long and will be scheduled for Thursday evenings from 7:30 to 9:00 PM.

Course Deliverables: 15 hours of in-person instruction plus up to 60 minutes of one-to-one consulting with the instructor (two 30-minute sessions). See the draft syllabus at the end of this document.

Course Objective: Completion of a short story that is published into a book with all the other class members' stories. The book will be published by Ingram Sparks (USA) or potentially in Vietnam. Each student will receive a print copy. Students can order bulk copies on their own.

Tuition: VND 5,000,000 per person inclusive of all classes and private sessions, course materials, editing and consulting support of the final short story draft, and one print copy of the final book upon its publication.

Class Components and Activities (to include)

- Lectures on specific topics of creative writing and producing a short story
- Workshop activities in class
- I Love Words exercises
- Talking through an issue, scenario, plot, character, voice, setting, etc...
- Group sharing and support
- Peer Review
- Reading and discussing short stories written by the masters
- Individual in-person sessions for plot/character issues and reviewing final edits
- One-to-one editorial and consulting support on the final draft of the short story

Lecture Topics (to include)

- History of the short story
- Fiction/Non-fiction
- Brainstorming story ideas
- Short Story Structure
- Plot development
- Character development
- Voice and narrative
- Setting
- Point of View
- Dialogue creation
- Leads and Hooks
- Mood and Tone
- Word Choice and Sentence Structure
- Crisis and Climax
- Ending and dénouement
- The editing process
- Peer review process and accepting critiques
- The publishing process

Workshop Activities (to include)

- Brainstorming story ideas
- Character development
- Testing points of view
- Setting the mood
- Describing the setting

- Writing dialogue – two or more people
- Mapping and creating outlines – setting up the arc of your short story
- Testing and shaping voices
- Lead sentences and word choice practice (I Love Words exercises)
- Showing and not telling
- Discussion session of short stories by professional writers (several short stories will be assigned for reading and in-class discussion)

Short Stories assigned for reading, studying, and discussion (to include)

- **The Ransom of Red Chief** by O’Henry Theme: Character development and plot twist
- **The Short Happy Life of Francis McCumber** by Ernest Hemingway Theme: Plot development and crisis, climax, and the denouement
- **Fetching Raymond** by John Grisham Theme: Establishing mood and tone
- **The Tell Tale Heart** by Edgar Allen Poe Theme: Creating a voice for the character
- **Broke Back Mountain** by Annie Proulx Theme: Word choice, sentence structure, and dialogue by interesting characters
- **To Build A Fire** by Jack London Theme: Establishing the setting and leads and Man vs. man/environment/animal/etc...plot development
- **Batting Against Castro** by Jim Shephard Theme: Point of view and political/social settings

The course will begin with a three-hour workshop from 9:00 AM to 12:00 noon on Sunday, May 9. The first weekly class will be held on Thursday of the following week (May 13) in the evening from 7:30 to 9:00 PM. Students will be strongly encouraged to begin brainstorming their story ideas before the course begins. Each student will receive course materials including copies of the required short stories and a weekly course agenda for the entire program one week prior to the start of the course.

The course will limited to 12 students. To reserve a spot, a VND one million deposit should be made with the remaining due on May 8.

Questions about the program and information on how to sign up should be directed to Sam Korsmoe (Tel: 0904347591 or Email: sam@yespi.net)

Thanks for your consideration!



Saigon Writers Club

A Distinguished Club for Writers Who Write

Draft Syllabus

This is a draft syllabus for the inaugural creative writing class of the Saigon Writers Club. The course consists of nine separate classes. The first class is a three-hour workshop on Sunday, May 9 from 9:00 AM to 12:00. The following eight classes will be 90 minutes in length on Thursdays from 7:30 to 9:00 PM.

The primary goal of the class time is to introduce and discuss the various tools needed to develop, write, edit, and complete a short story. The course objective is to have this short story completed by approximately July 15. This will give everyone about 10 weeks to get their short story done. After all, writers write. By joining this club, you will be a writer with a deadline.

The lecture topics below are the key issues involved with writing fiction though other topics might be added and the order of the lectures might be changed. The classroom activities will be used to practice techniques and methods that can later be used for your own short story. The discussion section will be a combination of discussing and showing the progress of your own short story, discussion of key themes in fiction writing, and discussion of the works of professional writers. Several short stories will be assigned as homework and several more will be provided for students to read on their own.

There will be homework assignments. These will be designed to keep the progress going on completion of your own short story. At a minimum, the weekly assignments will include:

- Read one short story every few days with reader instructions
- Write at least 500 words every day
- Submit a section of your short story by the assigned deadline (one section per week)

There will be two private sessions for each student. Each will be approximately 30 minutes in length. The first session will be to discuss and plan the development of your short story. This will include a detailed discussion of the characters, setting, plot, use of dialogue, voice, and other issues involved with fiction writing. The second session will be scheduled when there is at least 2,500 words of your short story written in first draft form. This session will include detailed discussions on all aspects of the writing process, word choice, editing, voice, etc...

There is a very clear and tangible goal for this inaugural class and for the writing club overall. It is this: Write a short story with your own characters, plot, setting, voice, dialogues, etc... This short story will then be published with all the other stories into a single volume of the Saigon Writers Club. Writers write, and this is an opportunity to write and publish.

Date	Lecture Topic (30 minutes)	Class Activity (30 minutes)	Class Discussion (30 minutes)
May 9 9 to 12:00 180 minute	Fiction/Non-fiction Short Story Structure Brainstorming Topics --- Building characters Character development	Design story arc Brainstorm topics Create characters --- Design a round character I Love Words exercise	Share favorite novel/story Share short story ideas Describe story arc --- Introduce the protagonist Interview characters
May 13 7:30 – 9:00 90 minutes	Characters and the Plot/Setting match	Describe a person and/or place Write a page of attributes I Love Words exercise	Share character and plot Short story Discussion (The Master writers)
May 20 7:30 – 9:00 90 minutes	Setting with time, place, mood, & theme	Exercises on creating the setting Short Assignments (1” window) I Love Words exercise	Share setting description Edit the setting in pairs or groups
May 27 7:30 – 9:00 90 minutes	Plot and the arc of the short story ABDCE method	Plot development exercises Breaking down plot and trends I Love Words exercise	Share plot ideas and conflicts Short story Discussion (The Master writers)
June 3 7:30 – 9:00 90 minutes	Point of View, Lead Characters, & Narrator	Testing various points of view Short Assignments (1” window) I Love Words exercise	Test point of view in groups Class confirms POV Reading the narrator’s role
June 10 7:30 – 9:00 90 minutes	Voice, Sentence Structure, & Word Choice	Listening to multiple voices Testing different voices for characters and interactions I Love Words exercise	Show and test voice Provide alternate voice Short story Discussion (The Master writers)
June 17 7:30 – 9:00 90 minutes	Dialogues, Scenes, & how the characters interact	Two-person dialogue practice Short Assignments (1” window) I Love Words exercise	Get feedback on test dialogue Read dialogues out loud Act out the various roles
June 24 7:30 – 9:00 90 minutes	Beginnings and Endings, i.e. clean beginnings and endings so the reader doesn’t get lost	Writing clever leads and hooks Developing strong endings Short Assignments (1” window) I Love Words exercise	Test hooks and endings Short story Discussion (The Master writers)
July 1 7:30 – 9:00 90 minutes	Editing & Publishing Getting the damn thing done!!	Cleaning up a messy first draft ‘Killing your babies’ i.e. cutting out your favorite sections	Co-edit each other’s stories Honest opinions on what works and what doesn’t