

11-15 July
2022

mslexia
novel school

**WOMEN'S
WRITING
WEEKS**



Mslexia Novel School is an online course for writers embarking on a new novel, or rethinking an existing draft.

This will be a whole week to make real progress with your novel – with expert tuition from renowned tutors, a professional writing coach to keep you on track, an on-call counsellor to provide emotional support, and a lively group of fellow writers to cheer you on. All this and more, in the comfort of your own home.

Course fee: £485

Course structure

Craft tuition

Four leading writer-tutors will each focus on a single aspect of the novel-writing craft, creating a varied week of high-quality workshops.

Our four core craft tutors are:

- ▶ *Lesley Glaister* on creating a character
- ▶ *Jane Rogers* on pace, page-turning and plot
- ▶ *Leone Ross* on imaginative world building
- ▶ *Margaret Wilkinson* on voice and point of view

More details about our craft tutors and their workshops are below.

Small-group teaching

We know individual attention is all-important, so our workshop groups will be limited to 12 people – which means your tutors will have time to get to know you and your writing. There will be only four groups on the course, so book early to secure your place!

A writing community

The core teaching takes place from 10am-4pm, but groups will come together for the coaching workshops and social aspects of each day – to form a community of like-minded writers who will become your friends for life.

Motivation and support

Craft is crucial, but this will be a week that will nurture the whole writer. That's why, in addition to our core Novel School teaching, we're also including motivation and goal-setting workshops led by experienced writing coach Bec Evans, drop-in surgeries with counsellor Hilary Jenkins for anyone who's feeling a bit lost, all held together by our course MC Rosie Garland – novelist, poet and performer *extraordinaire* – who will introduce you to fellow writers on the course.

More details about our motivation and support tutors and their workshops are overleaf.

Our four craft tutors have each designed a bespoke day of workshops, based on their many years of experience teaching creative writing at the very highest level. From Monday to Thursday you and your group of 12 writers will spend a day with each tutor, divided up into manageable tuition and feedback sessions, with breaks for refreshment and private writing.

At the end of each day, from 17:00-18:00, is Happy Hour – when all workshop groups will come together for expert-led sessions designed to

help you prioritise your creativity and maintain the momentum of the course for the future. Friday will be a day to consolidate everything you've learnt.

Our course counsellor will be available for a private chat by phone or on Zoom during the longer refreshment breaks (12:30-13:30 and 16:00-17:00). Contact Kay in our admin team if you want to book a slot (0191 204 8860 or kay@mslexia.co.uk).

For more information, contact postbag@mslexia.co.uk.

Course timetable

MONDAY - THURSDAY

09:30 Welcome and writing warm-ups

10:00 Group tuition & exercises

11:00 Caffeine/snack break

11:30 Group tuition & exercises

12:30 Meal break

13:30 Redrafting

14:30 Feedback

16:00 Caffeine/snack break

17:00 Happy Hour talks and workshops

FRIDAY

09:30 Introduce final day

10:30 Goal-setting

11:30 Caffeine/snack break

12:00 Goal-setting

13:00 Meal break

14:00 Plenary

15:00 Panel Q&A

Course tutors



Lesley Glaister

Lesley will lead a day of workshops about creating character. In her sessions she will work with you towards creating deep, complex and compelling fictional characters. Together, you'll look at how successful writers have made us believe in, and care about, the characters in their stories. Lesley will lead you through a series of exercises, in which you'll experiment with how to develop the physical, mental and emotional aspects of your own characters, making them compelling and convincing to yourself, as well as to your reader.

Lesley Glaister has written 16 critically acclaimed novels, many short stories, one stage play and numerous radio plays. Her first novel *Honour Thy Father* won the Somerset Maugham Award and a Betty Trask Award, *Now You See Me* was shortlisted for the Orange Prize for fiction, and *Easy Peasy* was shortlisted for the Guardian Fiction Prize. Her most recent novel is *Blasted Things*. She mentors novelists and teaches Creative Writing in a variety of settings, including most recently as a Senior Lecturer at the University of St Andrews.



Jane Rogers

Jane will lead a day of workshops on pace, page-turning and plot. Pace is the magical ingredient in every good novel. It's what keeps you reading into the wee small hours. Jane will lead an analysis of the key ingredients of good pace – suspense, variety and structure – with exercises to help you identify and explore these elements in your own work. We will look at how to avoid slow starts, saggy middles, abrupt endings and boring bits. There will be exercises in pruning, cutting, and cutting again – key to turning your novel into a page-turner.

Jane Rogers has published ten novels, a collection of stories, TV and radio drama. Her novels range from historical (*Mr Wroe's Virgins*, which she adapted into an award-winning BBC2 serial) through contemporary (*Island*, about a young woman who sets out to murder her mother) to science fiction (*The Testament of Jessie Lamb*, Man Booker longlisted, winner of the Arthur C Clarke Award). She is Professor Emerita of Writing at Sheffield Hallam, and has taught writing to a wide variety of students. A new collection of stories, *Fire-Ready*, is out this year.



Leone Ross

Leone will lead a day of workshops on imaginative world-building. The world we live in impacts our behaviour and development, influences our decision-making, and helps create our value systems. Environment has a direct effect on character – and character is at the heart of story. From clothing to demeanour, from social systems to flora and fauna, Leone will take you through a series of fun and thought-provoking exercises that will help you create a solid foundation for your novel and its characters.

Leone Ross is a fiction writer, editor and creative writing teacher. Her first novel *All the Blood Is Red* was longlisted for the Women's Prize; her second, *Orange Laughter*, was a BBC *Women's Hour* Watershed Fiction favourite. Her short-story collection *Come Let Us Sing Anyway* was nominated for the Edge Hill, Jhalak and OCM BOCAS prizes. Ross has taught creative writing for 20 years, at universities in Dublin, Cardiff and London. Her 2021 novel *This One Sky Day* was shortlisted for the Goldsmiths Prize and longlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction.



Margaret Wilkinson

Margaret will lead a day of workshops on voice and point of view. What is a writing voice? Do you have one? Where is it? Your prose writing voice is your unique style, the rhythm, the syntax you favour, how visual or speech-led your writing is, how descriptive or pared down, how intimate or distant, lyrical or transparent. Margaret will help you find, clarify, nurture, intensify or change your voice on the page. She'll guide you through a series of exercises and handouts you can use over and over again to access, adapt or sharpen your style.

Margaret Wilkinson is a prose, stage and radio writer. Her short stories have been widely published, her plays have toured around the UK, and her radio plays have been broadcast on BBC Radio 4. She recently retired from her role as Senior Lecturer on the MA in Creative Writing at Newcastle University, where she taught fiction and script at undergraduate and postgraduate level and still curates their Spring School. An inspirational teacher, Margaret is a regular contributor to *Mslexia* and is author of our *Mslexia* Minis ebooks *Writing for Radio* and *Writing Short Stories*.

Course tutors



Bec Evans

Bec will lead Happy Hour sessions on overcoming obstacles to writing – such as procrastination, poor time management and lack of confidence – and on building resilience and a long-term writing practice. Bec will also be leading the goal-setting workshops on Friday that will help you develop a realistic plan to navigate your novel-writing journey, including visualising success, dealing with setbacks, and setting up accountability structures.

Bec Evans is an author, coach and consultant who helps writers keep writing. From her first job in a

bookshop, to a career in publishing, several years managing a writers' retreat centre for Arvon, and now as co-founder of the writers' coaching organisation Prolifiko, she's obsessed with creative persistence. Bec works with individuals, writing groups, publishers, universities and content creators. Her book, *How to Have a Happy Hustle: The Complete Guide to Making Your Ideas Happen* won a 2020 Business Book Award. Her next book *The Writing Playbook* will be published in late 2022.



Rosie Garland

Rosie will be your MC and guide during the course. She will get your creative juices flowing each day with freewriting exercises, introduce our whole-group sessions and lead a Happy Hour workshop on the importance of self-care in a writer's life, and (with Bec Evans) will lead a discussion on routes to publication, growing and developing as a writer, and dealing with the internal critic.

Rosie Garland writes long and short fiction and poetry, sings with post-punk band The March Violets, and performs as her alter ego Rosie Lugosi.

Her writing is published internationally and her latest poetry collection *What Girls do the Dark* (Nine Arches Press) was shortlisted for the Polari Prize 2021. Her most recent novel *The Night Brother* was described by the *Times* as 'a delight...with shades of Angela Carter'. Val McDermid has named her one of the most compelling LGBT+ writers in the UK today.



Hilary Jenkins

Hilary is an experienced counsellor and writing-for-wellbeing workshop leader, who has also taught creative writing as a craft at undergraduate and postgraduate level for many years. Hilary has helped steer many writers through the sometimes choppy emotional seas of the creative process and will be available for a private chat by phone or on Zoom during the longer refreshment breaks on the course.

Hilary Jenkins has degrees in English Literature and Children's Literature. She then taught in India, China

and Saudi Arabia, and worked as an adviser for the British Council. Following an MA in Creative Writing and Personal Development, she taught Creative Writing at Sussex University, Open University and Open College of the Arts and was until recently Senior Lecturer at Teesside University.