

New Trier Literary Festival 2024
Thursday Feb. 22 & Friday Feb. 23

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Jeffrey Brown

Making Comics with Jeffrey Brown

Cartoonist Jeffrey Brown will talk to students and answer questions about the process behind writing and drawing graphic novels. Jeffrey will give a quick tutorial on making a short comic, and students will then have the chance to collaborate on a story idea, then write and draw their own.

Jeffrey Brown's inventive, sincere autobiographical works earned him legions of fans with critically acclaimed titles such as *Clumsy* and *Unlikely*; humorous works such as *Incredible Change-Bots*; and observational books like *Cat Getting Out of a Bag* and *Kids Are Weird*. Jeffrey combined his personal style and deep fan knowledge of Star Wars into the New York Times bestsellers *Darth Vader and Son* and *Vader's Little Princess*. He continued to work in the Star Wars universe with the middle grade series *Jedi Academy* before exploring prehistoric cave-kid life with *Lucy & Andy Neanderthal* and galactic exploration with *Space-Time!* More recently Jeffrey entered the DC universe with the middle grade graphic novel *Batman and Robin and Howard*, returned to Star Wars with *The Mandalorian and Child*, and tackled another beloved sci fi series with *The eXtra Files*.

Mark Larson

Working in the 21st Century

We will video clips from his interviews with American workers about what work means to them which he conducted for his new book *Working in the 21st Century*, a contemporary take on Studs Terkel's 1974 classic oral history *Working*. Larson's book is being released to coincide with the 50th anniversary of Terkel's book.

Mark Larson is the author of *Ensemble: An Oral History of Chicago Theater*, for which he conducted over 300 interviews with Chicago theater artists, past and present. His new book is *Working in the 21st Century*. He is currently working on *Ed Asner: A Composite Portrait*.

Ruben Quesada

Crafting Prose Poetry: Tools, Techniques, and Prompts for Creative Expression

This session explores the art of prose poetry, focusing on the various literary tools and techniques that poets and writers can employ in their craft. Through an examination of influential works, rhetorical techniques, and more, participants are guided through a series of writing prompts designed to spark creativity and personal reflection. The session includes reading selections from contemporary poets and offers opportunities for sharing and discussion. Whether a seasoned writer or a beginner, this session invites participants to delve into the world of prose poetry, experiment with sound and structure, and connect with their unique voices.

Ruben Quesada serves as a faculty member in the Department of English and Creative Writing at Columbia College Chicago. He is the editor of the award-winning anthology, *Latinx Poetics: Essays on the Art of Poetry*. His poetry and criticism appear in *The New York Times Magazine*, *Best American Poetry*, *Lambda Literary Review*, *Harvard Review* and elsewhere. His forthcoming collection of poetry *Brutal Companion* was selected as Editor's Choice in the 2023 Barrow Street Poetry Prize and is anticipated in late 2024.

Melissa Isaacson

Rising above the pack - how to be a better sports journalist in the age of aggregation

We will focus on the importance of sharp description and effective ideas in sports writing. Participant will work on honing their powers of observation and word choice as well as developing story ideas and pitching those to others.

Melissa Isaacson is an award-winning journalist and author whose career has spanned the sports world and whose work has consistently endeared her to her readers. A frequent public speaker, Isaacson is currently on the faculty of Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism teaching undergraduate and graduate communications programs. Isaacson was the Chicago Tribune's principal beat writer for the Michael Jordan-led Chicago Bulls during their championship years of the early 90s and later the Chicago Bears for seven seasons. Isaacson was also one of the paper's most respected feature writers and columnists over her 19 years at the Tribune.

Michele Morano

When Bad Things Happen to Good Characters...You've Got a Story!

Nothing kills a short story faster than a great character with an over-protective author. In this workshop, we'll talk about how to create compelling characters and let them get into trouble on the page. What kind of trouble? How much? Come find out!

Michele Morano is the author of the travel memoir *Grammar Lessons: Translating a Life in Spain* and the new essay collection, *Like Love*, which was long-listed for the PEN Diamondstein-Spielvogel Award for the Art of the Essay. Her short fiction and nonfiction appear in a wide range of literary journals and anthologies, including *Best American Essays*. She teaches creative writing and chairs the English Department at DePaul University.

Susan Lieberman

Speed Scene Writing

Ready, set, go write a 1-minute, 2-person scene. You'll read some great ones, then write your own and share it. Please come with a notebook, iPad or other device to write dialogue.

Susan Lieberman is a Jeff-winning playwright, journalist and teacher. She is currently working on a script about America's oldest transgender runway model Stefanie Clark.

Jitesh Jaggi

How to Tell Better Stories- Speak your Truth!

Would you rather listen to someone sharing cold facts and data, or to someone telling a story about those facts? If the answer is stories- then you share what almost every person craves. In this workshop we will learn how to do exactly that- why do stories catch our attention and how do we channel that to become more persuasive and impactful to our listener. Join us as award-winning storyteller Jitesh Jaggi takes you on a journey of his own stories from around the world and teaches you what he has learned about telling a coherent, meaningful story that'll make everyone pause and pay attention.

Jitesh Jaggi is an Indian immigrant storyteller, poet, and dancer living in Chicago. A four-time The Moth Story Slam winner, he has taught storytelling workshops for the World Health Organization and the University of Chicago among several others. He was a keynote speaker at the 2022 international educator's conference- NAFSA. His stories were recently played on the National Public Radio as part of The Moth Radio Hour. Jitesh performed his one-man show "Suitcase Stories" to a sold-out audience at the Steppenwolf Theatre in September.

Friday Feb. 23

Joe Meno

Writing Dramatic Scenes in Fiction

This workshop will focus on scene - craft heightening tension and building stakes to create the most compelling action in fiction writing.

Joe Meno is a fiction writer and journalist who lives in Chicago. He is the winner of the Nelson Algren Award, a Pushcart Prize, the Great Lakes Book Award, and was a finalist for the Story Prize. He is the bestselling author of eight novels and two short story collections including *Marvel and a Wonder*, *Hairstyles of the Damned*, and *The Boy Detective Fails*. His nonfiction book on U.S. asylum, *Between Everything and Nothing*, was a *New York Times* Editor's Choice and one of *Kirkus' Best Books of the Year*. Meno is a professor in the English and Creative Writing Department at Columbia College Chicago. His latest novel, *Book of Extraordinary Tragedies*, set in Chicago, was published in September 2022.

Gary Louris

Inside The Creative Mind

Gary will offer insights into his songwriting process and share stories and lessons from his countless hours in the studio along with a healthy dose of name-dropping. Gary will have his guitar on hand to entertain and demonstrate his process. This workshop is meant to give participants an inside view of the music they love, and musicians and songwriters tips and tools to improve their craft.

Singer, songwriter, guitarist and producer **Gary Louris** has built a deeply compelling body of music whose artistry and integrity has won the loyalty of an international audience and the respect of both critics and his peers. Best known for his seminal work with The Jayhawks, he is one of the most

acclaimed musicians to come out of Minnesota's vibrant rock scene. Louris released his first solo album, *Vagabonds*, in 2008. His long awaited 2nd solo album, *Jump For Joy*, is scheduled for a June 2021 release. In January 2021, Louris launched a Patreon page, featuring weekly posts of new and old music, video content, commentary and more. Along with keeping the Jayhawks flame burning, Louris is currently looking to the future and is busier than ever – writing, performing, producing and exploring new collaborative opportunities.

David Bradburn

Plot Twist

Using my short film "Family", we will explore the use of story structure and writing prompts and log lines to generate story ideas.

After 20 years of teaching English and Film Production for the Chicago Public Schools, **David Bradburn** left to direct and produce commercial, narrative, and corporate videos. His award-winning films have screened across the country, as well as in Europe and Asia. His most recent short film, "Family", has already won awards and continues to be screened at festivals across the U.S. Bradburn brings over 30 years of experience having worked in the Indie film world, corporate video world, Network television as well as having a background in social work and education. When not on set, he spends most of his time working and planning and thinking about being — back on set.

Faisal Mohyuddin

Sound Play: A Prosody Workshop

Language is inherently musical, and this workshop will guide participants on how to use word games to enhance the musicality of their writing. We will learn the basics of prosody/sound devices, create a sound word web, and then draft some sound-heavy poems.

Faisal Mohyuddin is the author of *The Displaced Children of Displaced Children* (Eyewear Publishing, 2018) and the chapbook *The Riddle of Longing* (Backbone Press, 2017). His work has received an Illinois Arts Council Literary Award, a Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Award, and acclaim from the Poetry Book Society, the Forward Arts Foundation, and the Association of Asian American Studies. His poetry has been featured on the Poetry Unbound podcast and the YouTube series Ours Poetica. He teaches English at Highland Park High School in suburban Chicago and creative writing at Northwestern University, and he serves as a master practitioner for the global not-for-profit Narrative 4.

www.faisalmohyuddin.com

Rachel DeWoskin

Art and Trouble: Writing Stakes That Matter

In this craft workshop, students will read two scenes of chaos and trouble, then write a scene in which one character has betrayed another. We will read and discuss the scenes, before a surprise second part of the prompt, one that will let us explore what makes readers care about characters' relationships, lives, and outcomes.

Poetry as Horror: Ballads, Lyrics, and Terrifying Rhyme

In this craft workshop, students will read two horror-story ballads, compose a collaborative ballad (one that is hopefully a hybrid of poetry and horror), and then write, read aloud (optional!) and discuss individual ballads.

Rachel DeWoskin is the award-winning author of five novels: *Someday We Will Fly* (Penguin); *Banshee* (Dottir); *Blind* (Penguin); *Big Girl Small* (FSG); *Repeat After Me* (Overlook); two poetry collections, *absolute animal* (UChicago Press) and *Two Menus* (UChicago Press 2020); and the memoir *Foreign Babes in Beijing* (Norton). She has won a National Jewish Book Award, a Sydney Taylor Book Award, an American Library Association's Alex Award, and an Academy of American Poets Award. *Foreign Babes in Beijing*, *Someday We Will Fly*, and *Banshee*, are being developed for feature film or TV, and DeWoskin's poems, essays, and articles have appeared in numerous journals and anthologies including *The New Yorker*, *Vanity Fair*, *Ploughshares*, and *New Voices from the Academy of American Poets*. DeWoskin serves on the national steering committee of Writers for Democratic Action (WDA).

Daniel Borzutzky

The Writing Laboratory

In this writing laboratory we will learn about and test out various techniques and procedures that can help make the blank page a little less blank. Our procedures will involve translation and re-writing; numerical and mathematical constraints; and experiments with persona, voice, and lyrical reinvention. You'll leave with several new ideas to build your own writing experiments.

Daniel Borzutzky is a poet and translator. His books include *Written After a Massacre in the Year 2018*; *The Performance of Becoming Human*, which received the 2016 National Book Award, and *Lake Michigan* (2018) a finalist for the Griffin International Poetry Prize. His most recent translation is Paula Ilabaca Nuñez's *The Loose Pearl* (2022), winner of the PEN Award for Poetry in Translation. His translation of Galo Ghigliotto's *Valdivia* received ALTA's 2017 National Translation Award, and he has also translated collections by Cecilia Vicuña, Raúl Zurita, and Jaime Luis Huenún. He teaches English and Latin American and Latino Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Julia Thiel

Food Writing and the Art of the Lede

This session will cover how to write a compelling lede (the first sentence or paragraph of an article, depending on how you define it) using examples from Key Ingredient, a long-running chef challenge series in the Chicago Reader, along with other sources. We'll also discuss different types of food writing, such as restaurant reviews and chef profiles. Student activities will include writing their own ledes.

Julia Thiel was a staff writer for alt-weekly newspaper the Chicago Reader for nearly ten years, covering food and drink and writing the column Key Ingredient, for which she won a James Beard award in 2011. She also wrote long-form features, restaurant reviews, and a variety of other articles. She left the Reader in 2018 and has been working as a freelance editor ever since.