

Certificate in Crime Writing

(1 year, part-time course)

Awarded by West Dean College of Arts and Conservation

Course Tutor(s): Elly Griffiths and Lesley Thomson

This Certificate in Crime Writing is awarded in recognition of the successful completion of all three weekend course units spread across each academic term, self-directed study and a final submission of 5000 words fiction. It is delivered by two of the country's best and most successful writers of crime fiction, Domenica De Rosa (Elly Griffiths) and Lesley Thomson.

The course seeks to bring together all the key components of good crime writing into one continuing programme and to offer an insight into the writers' toolkit necessary for developing skills and building your confidence.

Each weekend unit will be based in the inspirational environment of the College's historic rooms. It is aimed at writers who wish to commit to an extended programme of study without having to make a significant time commitment and who will benefit from a cohesive course that offers focus on the key elements of successful crime writing over the course of an academic year.

AIMS

Introduction

To introduce you to the key skills and knowledge that underpins successful crime writing. These will include the organisational skills required for plotting, character development and narrative technique. It will also introduce you to constructive and focused critical reflection of your work and support the development of rewriting/drafting skills.

Skills Development

The course will offer a stimulating and varied learning environment to enable writers to develop their skills around voice, style, point of view, pacing and prose. Writing exercises will be used along with discussion, textual analysis and a review of the 'golden rules of crime writing'. It will facilitate constructive critical thinking/reflection and cover editing, dialogue, suspense and narrative drive: key skills in successful crime writing.

Contextual and Critical Studies

The course will offer insight into the traditions, theory and responsibilities of the crime writer. Enable you to make clear authorial and editorial choices about your developing work.

ESSAY/FINAL WRITING

At the completion of the course students will submit the first 5000 words of a piece they have developed on the programme for feedback from the programme tutors.

COURSE TUTORS

ELLY GRIFFITHS wrote four novels under her own name (Domenica de Rosa) before turning to crime with *The Crossing Places*, the first novel featuring forensic archaeologist Dr Ruth Galloway. *The Crossing Places* won the Mary Higgins Clark award and three novels in the series have been shortlisted for the Theakstons Crime Novel of the Year. *The Stone Circle (Ruth #11)* was published in February 2019 and was a *Sunday Times* Top Ten Bestseller. Elly also writes the *Brighton Mysteries*, set in the theatrical world of the 1950s. In 2016 Elly was awarded the CWA Dagger in the Library for her body of work. Her first standalone mystery, *The Stranger Diaries*, won the 2020 Edgar award for Best Crime Novel. She has also recently published a children's crime novel, *A Girl Called Justice*.

LESLEY THOMSON'S first novel *Seven Miles From Sydney*, (ed:Jeanette Winterson) was one of London's City Limit's Books of the Year in 1987.

A Kind of Vanishing won the 2010 People's Book Prize. In 2013 *The Detective's Daughter* was Amazon UK's longest running #1, knocking JK Rowling (AKA R. Galbraith) to #2. *The Detective's Daughter* series has sold over 800K copies. Stella Darnell is 'one of the most original characters in British Crime Fiction' *Sunday Times*. *The Playground Murders*, (2019) is as 'compelling as its predecessors ... A white-knuckle read' A.N Wilson, *The Tablet*. Lesley's standalone *Death of a Mermaid* (2020) is described by William Shaw as 'a brilliant tale of dark secrets ... like nothing else you'll read this year.'

As well as workshops for several crime festivals, for the past decade, Lesley has run writing courses at the South Bank Centre, Sussex University and Brighton's Creative Writing School.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

This Certificate is designed for writers who want an extended and cohesive course on crime writing. It offers a deeper and broader raft of teaching designed to enable the student to take on a piece of longer fiction. At the end of the third unit students will be asked to submit the first 5000 words of a Work In Progress for marking and feedback from the tutors.

On successful completion students will be offered an interview for the MA in Writing and Publishing should they want to continue their studies and project. The MA is set up to facilitate the production of a completed novel.

Unit 1: Character and Point of View. Tutor: Lesley Thomson
20–22 November, 2020 Weekend Intermediate SWE10151

The first unit will include:

- An introduction to crime fiction
- What is a 'detective'
- How to build a character
- Group work – scene construction
- Point of View – understanding and experimenting with point of view (POV)

Unit 2: Plot and Place. Tutor: Domenica De Rosa (Elly Griffiths)

12–14 March, 2021 Weekend Intermediate SWE10330

This second unit will include:

- The rules of Crime Fiction
- Understanding environment (using the grounds of West Dean)
- Building on weekend one – character and plot
- Plot as a magic trick

Unit 3: Writing Your Book. Tutors: Lesley Thomson and Domenica de Rosa (Elly Griffiths)

11–13 June, 2021 Weekend Intermediate SWE10405

The third and final unit will include:

- The NEW ten rules of Crime Writing in the modern world
- Suspense
- Dialogue
- Pacing
- A session working with an expert detective on establishing and understanding the crime scene.

COMPLETION

The Certificate in Crime Writing while not nationally validated nevertheless aims to provide students with the ability to identify themes within their practice and to identify the kind of work they are looking to produce and be able to communicate this confidently.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- A commitment to attending all three units.
- Some experience of writing or attending a short writing programme
- An interest in and awareness of the crime writing genre

For standard Terms and Conditions please refer to our [Short Course T&Cs online](#), specific Terms and Conditions include a commitment to attend all three weekend course dates listed and no alternative course date can be offered for any that you are unable to attend. However, the standard refund policy would apply for each weekend course.

PLEASE BRING:

Your usual writing equipment, notebook and pen, and/or laptop.

COURSE FEES

Course fees are payable in advance of study.

Course fee: £855 (non-residential, covering all three units – payable by 9 October 2020).

Accommodation for a weekend course, including dinner and breakfast, is currently available from £139 (single occupancy). Please see accommodation costs on our website, specific to the timing of each unit.

For further queries about the course, please contact:

Bookingsoffice@westdean.ac.uk

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