



Narrative Nonfiction Residency Guide

Aug. 1-7, 2021

LOCATION INFORMATION

Host Hotel

- Springhill Suites—220 S Hull St, Athens, GA 30605

Events

- Unless otherwise noted, all events are at the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education—aka the Georgia Center—1197 S Lumpkin St, Athens, GA 30602. **The daily meetings for Narrative Nonfiction students and faculty will be on the second floor in Room Q.** See the attached map to orient yourself to the sprawling Georgia Center.

Daily Breakfast

- 8-9AM: Continental Breakfast in Dogwood Hall at the Georgia Center

RESIDENCY SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, Aug. 1

6PM

OPENING RECEPTION

- Live Wire Athens—227 W Dougherty St, Athens, GA 30601

MONDAY, Aug. 2

9AM-12PM

WELCOME: Who We Are

1:30-3:30PM

GROUP WRITING EXERCISE

4-6PM

GRADUATING STUDENT READINGS

- PAF, Journalism Building

TUESDAY, Aug. 3

9-11:30AM

WHAT IS NARRATIVE, ANYWAY?

Jan Winburn

We define the genre, examine its elements and study how it differs from classic feature writing. Come prepared to deconstruct – and rewrite – a tale ripe with narrative possibilities that didn't quite hit the mark. **Advance reading – these 3 pieces are short! – is a must. Please read them in this order:** 1/Oreo feature story, 2/One good thing on top of another, 3/A stitch in time.

11:30AM-1:30PM

Lunch + Students Interviewing Each Other (30 minutes each)

1:30-2:30PM

WRITING TIME

2:30-4PM

SHARING NARRATIVES

4-6PM

GRADUATING STUDENT READINGS

- PAF, Journalism Building

WEDNESDAY, Aug. 4

9AM

HOW THINGS WORK/ASK US ANYTHING

10AM-12PM

STORY THEORY AND NARRATIVE ARCS

Melissa Fay Greene

Humans have been creating narratives for probably 70,000 years — ever since the cave-paintings — through art, dance, music, and oral and written stories. In the 20th century, thinkers like Sigmund Freud, Joseph Campbell, Carl Jung, and Otto Rank described glimpses of the underlying shapes of stories. Recently, neuroscientists have entered the field, tracking the brainwave and neurochemical reactions of volunteers as they watched or listened to stories. Their results have peeled back more of the mystery of stories' deep structure, revealing an archetypal story arc. As nonfiction writers, we can't always hit all the markers on a hero's journey, but we ought to know about them! Because, *if* they're present and we can deploy them, they'll seize the imagination and attention of our readers like nothing else in our craft.

1:30-3:30PM

BEYOND THE ETHICAL DILEMMAS OF MEMOIR:

7 Rules for Being True to Yourself While Being Fair to Everyone Else

Bridgett Davis

When we write about our own lives, we inevitably write about the lives of others: Family, friends, foes. Who you are is intertwined with those who shaped and influenced you, challenged you, hurt you: How else to tell your story? But this simple fact brings with it a host of thorny questions: *Am I entitled to write about another person's life? How candid can I be? What if my loved one threatens to never speak to me again? Is it even worth it?*

In this seminar I'll share best practices for addressing this dilemma, garnered from my own experience and that of other memoirists. We'll explore when it's OK to write about

others, how much to reveal when you do, and how to do so with the least amount of harm. Ideally, your goal is to render the lives of others with equal amounts of authenticity *and* empathy, so readers come to know what you came to say.

4-6PM
GRADUATING STUDENT READINGS

- PAF, Journalism Building

THURSDAY, Aug. 5

9AM
NEW MENTOR ASSIGNMENTS

10AM-12PM

ASK THEM ANYTHING:

Zoom discussion with top literary agents David Black and Joy Harris

<https://zoom.us/j/93652966776?pwd=b29NTDFoYnhSY2FadhZJUzc2RllvUT09>

1:30-3:30PM

REPORTING NARRATIVE: You can't write what you don't know

Moni Basu

Now you know the difference between a feature story and a true narrative. In this session, we'll explore a few reporting techniques and tools designed to yield high-quality information for your story. We will touch on interviews, building scenes, developing characters, capturing dialogue and structuring a narrative arc. And we will talk about immersive reporting versus reconstruction and some of the pitfalls of each. [Assigned reading.](#)

4-6PM

THE ROAD TO THE FIRST BOOK:

A conversation with MFA grads and new authors Brandon Fleming and Marty Padgett; Patricia Thomas moderates.

- PAF, Journalism Building, followed by Dean's Reception

FRIDAY, Aug. 6

10AM-12PM

AN INTIMATE CONVERSATION WITH NATASHA TRETHERWEY on her award-winning new book, *Memorial Drive*.

- All students should read the entire book in preparation for this event.

12-4PM

MEETINGS WITH MENTORS

4-6PM
GRADUATING STUDENT READINGS

- PAF, Journalism Building

SATURDAY, Aug. 7

10-11AM
CLOSING CIRCLE

- PAF, Journalism Building

Midday
MEETINGS WITH MENTORS

3PM
GRADUATION + RECEPTION

- UGA Fine Arts Theatre, 255 Baldwin Street, Athens, GA 30601

GUEST SPEAKERS



David Black founded the David Black Agency in 1990, after already working as a literary agent for five years. Over his combined thirty-five years of experience in agenting, David has built up an impressive client list that boasts NY Times bestselling and high-profile authors from a wide array of backgrounds, such as Erik Larson, David Kidder, Jenny Sanford, and Noah Oppenheim. David is committed to advocating for his clients at every stage of development in the publishing process. He represents both fiction and nonfiction but he specializes in representing narrative nonfiction across a wide range of subjects including sports, business, history, politics, fitness, and memoir, as well as any subject area that might spark a personal passion.



Bridgett M. Davis is a novelist, essayist, teacher, filmmaker, memoirist and curator. She is author of the memoir *The World According to Fannie Davis: My Mother's Life in the Detroit Numbers*, a *New York Times* Editors' Choice, and named a Best Book of 2019 by *Kirkus Reviews* and *Real Simple* magazine. Davis' second novel, *Into the Go-Slow*, was selected as a best book of 2014 by *Salon*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *BookRiot*, *Bustle* and *The Root*, among others. Her debut novel *Shifting Through Neutral*, published by Amistad/Harper Collins in 2004, was a finalist for the Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright Legacy Award. She is also writer/director of the critically acclaimed, award-winning film *Naked Acts*, and her reviews and essays have appeared in *The New York Times*, *O, The Oprah Magazine*, *Real Simple*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Electric Lit* and *The Millions*. A major advocate for promoting and nurturing literary talent by people of color, Davis is co-founder and curator for [Words@Weeksville](#), a monthly reading series held at Weeksville Heritage Center in Central Brooklyn. She is Professor of Journalism and the Writing Professions at Baruch College, CUNY, where she teaches Creative, Film and Narrative Writing.



Joy Harris is one of the New York literary world's most successful agents. Her clients include Alice Walker, Sigrid Nunez, Silas House, Carole King, the Zora Neale Hurston Estate, Tessa Hadley, and many others. Harris established her own literary agency in 1990. She works primarily with literary fiction, strongly written commercial fiction, narrative nonfiction across a broad range of topics, memoir and biography, and is drawn to a clear, original voice, an engaging point of view, and strong characters.



Natasha Trethewey served two terms as the 19th Poet Laureate of the United States (2012-2014). She is the author of five collections of poetry, *Monument* (2018), which was longlisted for the 2018 National Book Award; *Thrall* (2012); *Native Guard* (2006), for which she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize, *Bellocq's Ophelia* (2002); and *Domestic Work* (2000), which was selected by Rita Dove as the winner of the inaugural Cave Canem Poetry Prize for the best first book by an African American poet and won both the 2001 Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters Book Prize and the 2001 Lillian Smith Award for

Poetry. She is also the author of the memoir *Memorial Drive* (2020). Her book of nonfiction, *Beyond Katrina: A Meditation on the Mississippi Gulf Coast*, appeared in 2010. She is the recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Beinecke Library at Yale, and the Bunting Fellowship Program of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard. At Northwestern University she is a Board of Trustees Professor of English in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences. In 2012 she was named Poet Laureate of the State of Mississippi and in 2013 she was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

NONFICTION FACULTY MENTORS



Moni Basu is the Michael and Linda Connelly Lecturer in Narrative Nonfiction at the University of Florida, where she's known as Prof. B. Moni worked as a reporter and editor for 35 years before becoming a full-time professor. She still writes as a freelancer and her most recent work has been published in the *Bitter Southerner* and *Flamingo* magazine. She loves terrific storytelling. Her 2012 e-book, *Chaplain Turner's War* (Agate Publishing) grew from a series of stories on an Army chaplain in Iraq. A platoon sergeant gave her the name "Evil Reporter Chick" and she was featured once as a war reporter in a Marvel comics series. Moni's work has been recognized with national and international

accolades, but she is most proud of her latest award: the 2020 University of Florida Teacher of the Year. Born in Kolkata, India, Moni grew up straddling two cultures, which explains her interest in exploring the complexities of race, ethnicity and identity. English is not her first language and she has never taken a class in journalism.



Valerie Boyd, director of the UGA MFA Program in Narrative Nonfiction, is author of the critically acclaimed biography *Wrapped in Rainbows: The Life of Zora Neale Hurston*, winner of the Southern Book Award and the American Library Association's Notable Book Award. She is currently curating and editing the journals of Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Alice Walker. Simon & Schuster will publish *Gathering Blossoms Under Fire: The Journals of Alice Walker* in

2022. Also in 2022, Lookout Books will publish her anthology, *Bigger Than Bravery: Black Writers on the Year That Changed the World*. In addition, Valerie is currently conducting research for her next book, *Until Victory: The Trial of Angela Davis and the Making of a Public Revolutionary*. A former arts editor at *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, she has written articles, essays and reviews for such publications as *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Creative Nonfiction*, the *Oxford American*, *Paste*, *Ms.*, *Essence* and *Atlanta Magazine*. She is an associate professor of journalism and the Charlayne Hunter-Gault Distinguished Writer in Residence at UGA's College of Journalism and Mass Communication, where she teaches courses in arts reviewing, long-form feature writing, and the intersection of journalism and literature. In 2017, she received the Georgia Governor's Award in the Arts and Humanities. She recently became editor-at-large at UGA Press and senior consulting editor for *The Bitter Southerner*.



John T. Edge writes about the American South. The Penguin Press published his latest book, *The Potlikker Papers: A Food History of the Modern South*, which was named a best book of 2017 by *NPR*, *Publisher's Weekly*, and a host of others. Now in paperback, the book was selected by Nashville as a citywide read for 2018. John T writes and hosts the television show *TrueSouth* on the SEC Network and ESPN. He is a contributing editor at *Garden & Gun*. For 22 years, he served as a columnist for the *Oxford American*. For three years he wrote the "United Tastes" column for *The New York Times*. His magazine and newspaper work has been featured in 11 editions of the *Best Food Writing* compilation. He has

won four James Beard Foundation Awards, including two M.F.K. Fisher Distinguished Writing Awards. Winner of the 2018 nonfiction prize from the Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters, he was inducted into the Georgia Writer's Hall of Fame in 2019.



Lolis Eric Elie is a New Orleans born, Los Angeles-based writer who has published in several genres. His television credits include “The Man in the High Castle,” “Treme,” “Bosch,” “Greenleaf” and “The Chi.” Working with the award-winning director Dawn Logsdon, he co-produced and wrote the PBS documentary “Faubourg Treme: The Untold Story of Black New Orleans.” His essay “America’s Greatest Hits” is included in *Best African American Essays: 2009*. A former columnist for *The Times-Picayune*, Lolis is the author of *Treme: Stories and Recipes From the Heart of New Orleans*, and *Smokestack Lightning: Adventures in the Heart of Barbecue Country*; he is also co-producer and writer of “Smokestack Lightning: A Day in the Life of Barbecue,” the documentary based on that book. Lolis is editor of *Cornbread Nation 2: The Best of Southern Food Writing*. A contributing writer to the *Oxford American*, he has published work in *The Bitter Southerner*, *Gourmet*, *The*

Washington Post, *Time*, *The New York Times*, *Bon Appetit*, *Downbeat* and *The San Francisco Chronicle*.



Melissa Fay Greene is the author of six books of nonfiction: *Praying for Sheetrock* (1991), *The Temple Bombing* (1996), *Last Man Out* (2003), *There Is No Me Without You* (2006), *No Biking in the House Without a Helmet* (2011), and *The Underdogs* (2016), and is the Kirk Distinguished Writer-in-Residence at Agnes Scott College. Melissa’s work has been translated into a dozen languages and has been honored with a 2015 Guggenheim Fellowship, two National Book Award nominations, a National Book Critics Circle Award nomination, the Robert

F. Kennedy Book Award, the Chicago Tribune Heartland Prize, the Southern Book Critics Circle Award, the ACLU National Civil Liberties Award, the Hadassah Myrtle Wreath Award, the Lillian Smith Book Award, the Georgia Book Award, a Lyndhurst Foundation Fellowship, the Georgia Governor’s Award for the Arts & Humanities, and induction into the Georgia Writers Hall of Fame. *Sheetrock* was named one of the “Top 100 Works of American Journalism of the 20th Century” by a panel convened by NYU. She has contributed to *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *The Washington Post*, *New York Magazine*, *Newsweek*, *LIFE*, *CNN.com*, and other periodicals. A Macon native and 1975 graduate of Oberlin College, Melissa and her husband, defense attorney Don Samuel, are the parents of nine, the in-laws of three, and the grandparents of two.



Patricia Thomas has been mentoring narrative nonfiction students in the MFA program since 2017, following 12 years as the founding director of the MA program in health and medical journalism at the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication. She held the Knight Chair in Health and Medical Journalism at UGA before becoming a Professor Emerita. Having grown up in a small town in Central Florida, she was eager to go elsewhere for college and earned degrees from UC Berkeley and Stanford. For more than three decades she worked as a reporter and editor in the San Francisco Bay Area, Atlanta and Boston, specializing in science, health, and medicine. She was a science writing fellow at MIT, the editor of Harvard Medical School’s consumer newsletter, and a visiting scholar at Boston University. Pat realized during her year at BU that she wanted to teach writers to become better storytellers. By that time, she had written a narrative nonfiction book of her

own: *Big Shot: Passion, Politics, and the Struggle for an AIDS Vaccine* was published in 2001 and named a Washington Post notable book.



Jan Winburn is a fan of artful storytelling, kickass reporting and the powerful melding of the two. She spent more than four decades working in newsrooms as a narrative editor, writing coach and investigative editor. Among the award-winning stories she edited was “The Umpire’s Sons,” [Lisa Pollak’s 1997 Pulitzer Prize](#) winner. Jan’s career work was recognized with the [2009 Mimi Award](#) given to editors “who encourage journalistic excellence and understand the emotional landscape of assignments on tragedy and trauma.” Jan led reporting teams at the Baltimore Sun, the Philadelphia Inquirer, the Hartford Courant and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Among the other top prizes her writers have earned: a Peabody, a Murrow, the Livingston Award for Young Journalists, the Ernie Pyle Award for Human Interest Storytelling, the Batten Medal for public service and the John Jay College Award for criminal justice reporting. She earned her bachelor’s degree in journalism at the University of Missouri. She is the author of [Shop Talk and War](#)

[Stories: Journalists Examine Their Profession](#) and co-editor of two e-books, [Secrets of Prize-Winning Journalism 2013](#) and [2014](#).



