

Course Description

Fiction with Peter Oliva

Crafting Fiction

Monday July 19 - Saturday July 24
9:00 am - 1:00 pm
Fernie Alpine Resort



Course Description:

This is a course for writers who wish to energize their work habits and their stories. Students will develop manuscripts that they have brought to Fernie, and do a few writing exercises that come out of the group discussions. These exercises are small but mighty. They hone a writer's skills, and get you thinking about stories in a whole new way. We will talk about building characters, themes, and obsessions. We will discuss the use of detail in fiction and learn how to open a story up. And we will talk about how to craft fiction out of facts and experience.

Students are asked to bring manuscripts to class: novels-in-progress or short fiction. Some of the key words to describe this class might be: creating great writing habits, grabbing lists, and the secret lives of great writers. The goal of this class is to learn how to read your own work objectively and--ultimately--how to make your fiction believable and striking.

Suggested Reading:

It is recommended that participants read Roberto Bolaño's *Last Evenings on Earth* (Harvill Secker 2007) prior to attending the session. This book of short stories is a great introduction to Bolaño's work and an excellent pathway to discuss the reasons for writing fiction.

Course Preparation:

We request that participants submit an excerpt of one manuscript they wish to work on during this session one month prior to the start date. These excerpts will be distributed to all participants and the instructor in advance of the Conference. Submission details will be provided in your registration package.

Instructor:

Peter Oliva won the Writer's Trust Award of Canada with his novel, *The City of Yes*. His first novel, *Drowning in Darkness*, tells the immigrant tale of Italian coalminers in the Crowsnest Pass, and it won a couple of things, too. His books are published in Canada, Spain and France. He has taught English in Japan and lectured in Italy, and elsewhere. In 1993, he opened Pages on Kensington (A Calgary independent bookstore and winner of the 1999 Canadian Bookseller of the Year) and ran the bookstore until 2000. Along the way, he hosted 600 author events and founded Poetry in Motion, a program to put poetry on Calgary buses, and WordFest, a festival of the written word.

Peter has written for Brick magazine, Quarry, Canadian Geographic, The Globe & Mail and The Daily Yomiuri. His most recent literary interests include the novella and the personal essay: two forms which strike fear into the hearts of his publishers. Last year, an Italian film called "Belly Button Broth" was made in Bologna from one of his stories.

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