

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY
OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE

WRITING BETWEEN THE LINES:
Using Style to Make Meaning

Fall Term, January 23 – February 27, 2019
University Hall, 41C

Instructor: Deborah Lichtman, delicht@writeinberkeley.com

What's the relationship between form and content? How do novelists create suspense with syntax? How can an effective sentence become a brilliant one? In this class for experienced writers of imaginative prose, we'll study the purposeful use of stylistic techniques. We'll read closely to see how the construction of a sentence can advance the mood and meaning of a literary work. Lectures will cover topics such as diction, syntax, cadence, and imagery. In-class readings will focus on illustrative excerpts by fine prose stylists, and students will use these models to compose brief pieces in class. Together we'll heighten our attention to language and expand our repertoire as creative writers.

Class Schedule: (subject to revision)

Week 1 – January 23	Introduction: Reading for Style
Week 2 – January 30	Fast and Slow: Generating Momentum
Week 3 – February 6	Thick and Thin: Experimenting with Texture
Week 4 – February 13	Loud and Soft: Playing with Sound
Week 5 – February 21	Color and Drama: Using Details and Metaphors
Week 6 – February 27	Suspense and Surprise: Exploiting Sentence Structure

Here's what will happen each week:

- Informal lectures on craft, enriched by your contributions to discussion.
- Reading for style in brief excerpts of published works.
- In-class writing exercises to help you shape your prose.
- Time devoted to sharing your impromptu work in small groups or pairs.

PLEASE NOTE: All of the class reading will be posted on the OLLI website. In order to be prepared for each class, you'll need to print new handouts each week and bring them with you to class. You don't need to read them before class, however.

Optional Writing Assignments: If you'd like written feedback on a class exercise of yours, you may hand in a typed piece, double-spaced, in 12-point font, with pages numbered. Please limit each submission to three pages (750 words). Your computer can count your words. I can accept submissions through the fifth class meeting.

About class meetings:

- Please bring **all** of your handouts and your writing from previous weeks.
- If you know you'll miss a class, try to let me know beforehand.
- Remember to turn off your cell phone, please!

Suggested Reading

Steering the Craft, Ursula K. LeGuin
The Art of Fiction, David Lodge
Reading Like a Writer, Francine Prose

Thank you – and welcome!