

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY
OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE

WRITING BETWEEN THE LINES:
Using Style to Make Meaning

Fall Term, September 26 – October 31, 2018
University Hall, 41C

Instructor: Deborah Lichtman, delicht@writeinberkeley.com

What is 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 fiction and creative nonfiction, 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 – September 26	Introduction: Reading for Style
Week 2 – October 3	Fast and Slow: Generating Momentum
Week 3 – October 10	Thick and Thin: Experimenting with Texture
Week 4 – October 17	Loud and Soft: Playing with Sound
Week 5 – October 24	Color and Drama: Using Details and Metaphors
Week 6 – October 31	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 meeting, you'll need to print new handouts each week and bring them with you to class.

Optional Writing Assignments: If you'd like my 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). You can use your computer to 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!