

Syllabus

Fiction Program

Program Description:

The Author Conservatory is a college-alternative focused on advanced writing craft and business training. Our goal is to prepare Christian students for a sustainable writing career by equipping them with the practical skills they need to get published and support themselves financially.

Students will participate in two tracks each year:

- The Writing Track (*see pages 2-4*)
- The Business Track (*see pages 5-7*)

Program Overview:

Year 1: Fundamentals of Storytelling & Business

Students will learn how to develop publication-worthy concepts and craft structurally-sound novels. They will also learn how to identify viable business opportunities, conduct market research, and get fairly compensated for their time and effort. Outcomes for Year 1 include completing 1-2 full-length novels and launching a successful business venture.

Year 2: Writing Craft, Marketing, & Platform-Building

Students will receive professional editorial feedback and break into student critique groups. They will build a foundation of book marketing and branding skills, and prepare all the necessary pieces for a successful independent book launch in Year 3. Outcomes for Year 2 include completing, editing, and revising a novella for publication, developing their author platform and building a solid street team for their launch, and putting together a scalable marketing system for their business that will double their income over Year 1.

Year 3: Traditional Publishing & Book Marketing

Students will independently-publish their novella in the beginning of Year 3. They will also learn how to pitch agents and publishers, navigate contracts, and work with a publisher. They will also learn the business models and strategies for turning writing into a sustainable career. Outcomes for Year 3 include creating all the materials they need to start pitching their novels, pitching actual agents and editors, and doubling their income over Year 2.



Writing Track Overview

Students will graduate the program with 2-4 completed novels, an indie-published novella, and all the pieces they need to pitch agents and publishers. While a book contract is not guaranteed, students who complete all assignments should be well-positioned for traditional publication within a few years of graduating the program — if not during Year 3 itself.

To accomplish these outcomes students will receive in-depth training in story craft, writing craft, writing process, editing/revision, publishing, platform-building, and book marketing. They will practice these skills by completing full-length novels, polishing manuscripts for publication, publishing a novella, creating professional pitch materials, and pitching agents and publishers. Along the way they will receive regular feedback and mentorship from industry professionals.

Writing Track | Year 1

Year 1 of the Writing Track focuses on the fundamentals of storytelling and drafting. Students will learn how to develop publication-worthy concepts and craft structurally-sound novels while receiving regular feedback and mentorship from published authors and professional editors.

Curriculum:	Practicum:
How To Craft A High-Concept Premise	Create three new story concepts from scratch and receive feedback from industry professionals.
How To Write A Strong Story Synopsis	Create a three page story synopsis and receive feedback from industry professionals.
How To Outline Your Novel Professionally	Create a full novel outline and receive feedback from industry professionals.
Troubleshooting Your Concept/Synopsis/Outline	Learn how to edit your own concept, synopsis, and outline like a professional editor.
How To Craft A Narrative With High Stakes	Study the key elements that keep readers engaged and implement them into your own stories.
How To Create Well-Developed Characters	Study the key elements that make strong characters and implement them into your own stories.
How To Draft A Full-Length Novel Efficiently	Learn a professional writing process to get your manuscript completed quickly.





Writing Track | Year 2

Year 2 of the Writing Track focuses on the fundamentals of writing and editing. Students will dive deep into the writing craft, participate in critique groups, and revise and polish a manuscript for publication while receiving regular feedback and editorial review from industry professionals.

Curriculum:	Practicum:
Novella Concept / Synopsis / Outline Training	Create concepts, synopsis, and outline while receiving feedback from industry professionals.
Critique Group Training	Join a critique group and receive feedback from peers and industry professionals.
Craft Trainings	Study the key elements of writing craft (POV, tension, descriptions, inciting incident, etc) and apply them to your own stories.
Craft Critiques	Receive in-depth critique from award-winning authors and editors on pieces of your writing.
Preparing For Your Content Edit	Prepare your novella (and yourself) for an in-manuscript, professional content edit.
Making the Most of Your Content Edits	Incorporate in-depth, professional feedback without getting overwhelmed.
Utilizing Your Line & Copy Edits	Receive Line & Copy edits and implement them into your projects.






Writing Track | Year 3

Year 3 of the Writing Track focuses on pitching and publishing. Students will continue working on story craft, writing craft, and editing/revision, while also developing the materials they need to start pitching their novels to literary agents and publishers.

Curriculum:	Practicum:
How To Query Literary Agents	Write query letters for your novels and receive feedback from industry professionals.
How To Develop A Compelling One-Sheet	Create a one-sheet for your novels and receive feedback from industry professionals.
How To Write A Killer Book Proposal	Learn how to write a book proposal and receive feedback from industry professionals.
How To Pitch Your Stories To Agents	Practice pitching your projects and receive feedback from industry professionals.
How To Work With An Agent/Editor	Learn how to work with key publishing partners like literary agents and acquisition editors.
Picking The Right Publishing Partner	Learn how to navigate your various publishing options to find the best publishing partner.
How To Navigate Book Contracts	Learn the key elements of a publishing agreement so you can negotiate a fair contract.
How To Work With Your Publisher	Learn what to expect and how to impress your publisher and work with publishing deadlines.





Business Track Overview

Students will graduate the program with one or more profitable business ventures that are compatible with their writing goals, the business strategies they need to turn their writing into a long-term career, as well as numerous high-demand skills that are transferable to any industry.

While no income is guaranteed, it is not unrealistic for students to earn back their tuition and be financially self-sufficient within 1-2 years of graduating the program — if not immediately afterwards. Students living at home after graduation will be able to amass significant savings.

To accomplish these outcomes students will receive in-depth training in market research, product development, business analysis, marketing, sales, bookkeeping, customer service, team-building etc. They will practice these skills by launching business ventures, marketing products/services, serving customers, managing their own finances, and even hiring employees. Along the way they will receive regular feedback from successful business owners and industry professionals.

Business Track | Year 1

Year 1 of the Business Track focuses on the fundamentals of business. Students will learn how to identify viable business opportunities, conduct market research, and get fairly compensated for their time and effort while receiving regular feedback from industry professionals.

Curriculum:	Practicum:
The Fundamentals Of Making Money	Learn the three fundamental skills of making money in any industry and share your personal takeaways.
Coming Up With Your Business Idea	Brainstorm three business ideas and receive feedback from instructors.
What To Sell And What To Charge	Research similar businesses for pricing comparisons and receive feedback from instructors.
Preparing To Launch Your Business	Develop your Key Distinctions and Elevator Pitch and receive feedback from instructors.
Testing The Market Before You Start Selling	Develop your Offer Confirmation Survey and gather 100 responses from your existing network.
Getting Your First Paying Customer	Launch your business and land your first paying customer (non-family member, full-price purchase).





Business Track | Year 2 - Marketing

Year 2 of the Business Track focuses on marketing and platform-building. On the marketing side of the track students will build a scalable marketing system with the goal of doubling their business income from Year 1 and generating more consistent, predictable revenue.

Students may continue their business venture from Year 1 or start a new business venture using an accelerated version of the process from Year 1.

Year 2 students will create professional marketing materials, craft a thorough marketing plan, build their lead capture/nurture system and customer testimonial/referral process, as well as actually execute their marketing plan and optimize their overall marketing system.

Curriculum:	Practicum:
Polishing Your Marketing Message	Use your <i>Customer Avatar</i> and <i>Unique Selling Proposition</i> to create powerful marketing messages.
Creating Your Marketing Plan	Create a three-month marketing plan for turning strangers into prospects and prospects into leads.
Building Your Lead Capture/Nurture System	Build a landing page for your business and set up your Email Service Provider and email sequences.
Delivering A World-Class Customer Experience	Implement best-practices for turning customers into repeat buyers and loyal advocates.
Managing The Money You're Making	Implement sound bookkeeping practices to manage the money coming into your business.
Paying Taxes & Staying Out Of Trouble	Develop a solid plan for some of the "not-so-fun" parts of business: taxes, permits, licenses, etc.





Business Track | Year 2 - Platform-Building

Year 2 of the Business Track focuses on marketing and platform-building. On the platform side of the track students will spend the year developing their author brand, engaging their audience, and creating a street team for their novella launch in Year 3.

Curriculum:	Practicum:
Identify Your Brand Message	Identify how you want to reach your audience and what messaging represents your unique brand.
Create Your Brand Script	Craft your unique brand script and get hands-on training and branding assessments from incredible authors and branding coaches.
Prepare & Launch Your Platform(s)	Decide on what social media and email list strategies suit your unique message best, prepare your materials and launch your platforms, focusing on grassroots growth.
Build Your Street Team	Learn from award-winning authors with incredible street teams the best tools to nurture an engaged and active street team, and then build your own!
Create A Indie Novella Launch Plan	Put together an in-depth strategy for launching your novellas and learn cutting-edge marketing techniques from a variety of instructors.
Hire A Cover Designer	Utilize resources through the Conservatory to hire a high-quality cover designer.



Business Track | Year 3

Year 3 of the Business Track focuses on career strategy and sustainability. Students will learn the business models and strategies for turning writing into a sustainable career and double their business income from Year 2 while receiving regular feedback from industry professionals.

Curriculum:	Practicum:
Choosing The Right Business Model	Learn the key elements of a business model that can support a long-term writing career.
Advanced Business Strategies For Authors	Learn how to double, triple, or quadruple your revenue per book published.
Keys For Long-Term Financial Sustainability	Learn strategies to avoid the “revenue rollercoaster” and achieve financial sustainability.
Low-Ticket Products/Services	Review the numerous options for low-ticket products and services built around your books.
High-Ticket Products/Services	Review the numerous options for high-ticket products and services built around your books.
Nonfiction Strategies For Fiction Authors	Learn and implement nonfiction strategies for growing your platform and your income.
Advanced Platform-Building Principles & Techniques	Learn and implement advanced strategies for growing your audience of readers and buyers.
Growing Your Business Into A Full-Time Income	Learn and implement strategies to increase your business revenue and profitability.
Building A Team To Free Up Your Time	Learn how to hire employees, lead your team, and build a business that can run without you.
Generosity & Building a Kingdom Business	Gain a bigger vision to use your business and income to further the Kingdom of God.

