

Syllabus

Nonfiction 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 page 2*)
- The Business Track (*see page 3*)

Program Overview:

Year 1: Fundamentals of Thinking & Business

Students will learn how to develop publication-worthy non-fiction concepts that reflect original thought, careful analysis, and real substance while receiving regular feedback from published authors. 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 a capstone project on their topic and launching a successful business.

Year 2: Writing Craft, Marketing, & Platform Building

Students will learn how to revise and polish their work for publication and develop their own unique voice and style while receiving regular feedback from authors and editors. They will also start building their platform and connecting with their audience using a variety of methods. Outcomes for Year 2 include publishing more than a dozen articles, completing a practicum experience in their field, and putting together a scalable marketing system for their business that will double their business income over Year 1.

Year 3: Publishing & Career Sustainability

Students will learn how to pitch agents and publishers, navigate contracts, and work with a publisher while receiving regular feedback from authors and literary agents. They will also learn the business models and strategies for turning their writing into a sustainable career. Outcomes for Year 3 include creating a professional book proposal, pitching actual agents and editors, and doubling their business income over Year 2 while working fewer hours.



Writing Track Overview

Students will graduate with a compelling book proposal, growing author platform, and dozens of publishing bylines — while becoming excellent, well-rounded communicators. 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 critical thinking, problem solving, research, discernment, writing craft, writing process, editing/revision, publishing, platform-building, book marketing, and public speaking. They will practice these skills by completing a guided independent study, presenting a capstone project, writing and publishing dozens of articles, reading extensively, creating professional pitch materials, pitching agents and publishers, and much more. Along the way they will receive regular feedback from industry professionals including published authors, professional editors, and literary agents.

Year-By-Year Breakdown:

Year 1 of the Writing Track focuses on the fundamentals of thinking. Students will learn how to think deeply about important topics and become a person who has something of value to say. They will develop publication-worthy non-fiction concepts that reflect original thought, careful analysis, and real substance while receiving regular feedback from published authors.

During Year 1 students will receive personal critique of their ideas and professional guidance on which topics they should write about. They will complete a guided independent study on their chosen topic and prepare a capstone project that will involve both written and oral presentation. In addition, students will complete a year-long study of C.S. Lewis’s non-fiction writing.

Year 2 of the Writing Track focuses on the fundamentals of writing and editing. Students will learn how to revise and polish their work for publication and develop their own unique voice and style while receiving regular feedback from authors and editors. During Year 2 students will publish more than a dozen articles and complete a *Practicum Experience* designed to help them “live their message” in the real world — which will include public speaking.

Year 3 of the Writing Track focuses on pitching and publishing. Students will learn how to pitch agents and publishers, navigate contracts, and work with a publisher while receiving regular feedback from authors and literary agents. During Year 3 students will create a professional book proposal along with other pitch materials and start pitching actual agents and editors





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.

Year-by-Year Breakdown:

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. Students will launch their own business with step-by-step guidance and start earning an effective hourly rate of at least \$20/hour (some students are earning \$35, \$50, or even \$100/hour).

Year 2 of the Business Track focuses on platform-building and marketing. Students will learn how to build a meaningful platform of readers and customers based on genuine connection and service. Year 2 students will focus on creating professional marketing assets (including a professional website), crafting a thorough marketing plan, building their lead capture/nurture system and customer testimonial/referral process, as well as actually executing their marketing plan and optimizing their overall marketing system in order to double their income over Year 1.

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. Year 3 students will focus on moving towards financial self-sufficiency and/or lengthening their financial runway as they continue pursuing their long-term writing goals.

