

Syllabus

Fiction Program

Program Description:

The Author Conservatory is a college-alternative higher education and coaching program focused on advanced writing craft and business training. Our goal is to prepare students for a sustainable writing career by equipping them with the practical skills they need to publish long-term 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 to develop publication-worthy concepts and craft structurally-sound novels. They will also learn to identify viable business opportunities, conduct market research, and get fairly compensated for their time and effort. Outcomes for Year 1 include completing 2 full-length novels and launching a successful business venture.

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

Students will learn to polish their structurally sound stories, hone their craft and prose, and implement editorial feedback from professionals and peers. They will break into student Critique Groups to prepare for submitting for professional developmental feedback on a novel. Students will craft and polish a short story to launch with peers in one of our exclusive Author Conservatory Anthologies. They will gain an understanding of healthy platform building, as well as build a foundational platform and the networking skills to prepare for successful book launches. Students will learn how to identify their target audience and craft an effective marketing plan to pursue consistent clients in their businesses. Outcomes for Year 2 include revising a novel to prepare for pitching in Year 3, drafting and revising a short story for inclusion in one of our anthologies, developing an author platform, and implementing a scalable marketing system for their businesses that will double their income from Year 1.

Year 3: Traditional Publishing & Book Marketing

Students will create and implement a high-level marketing plan to participate in group book launches for their Author Conservatory Anthologies. They will learn how to pitch to agents and publishers, navigate contracts, and work with publishers. They will craft an individual career plan using the business models and strategies for turning writing into a sustainable career. Outcomes for Year 3 include creating pitching materials such as book proposals and query letters, pitching to actual agents and editors, launching their anthologies, and doubling their business income from Year 2.



Writing Track Overview

Students will graduate the program with 2-4 completed novels, a short story published in an exclusive Author Conservatory Anthology, and all the materials they need to pitch to 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.

To accomplish these outcomes students will receive in-depth training in story development, 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 work of short fiction, creating professional pitching materials, and pitching to 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 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 to troubleshoot difficult issues in the plotting process, and implement feedback from industry professionals.
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 Sympathetic, 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 to develop a professional writing process to get your manuscript completed efficiently.



Writing Track | Year 2

Year 2 of the Writing Track focuses on honing your writing craft and the revision process.

Students will dive deep into the writing craft, participate in critique groups, and revise and polish a novel manuscript. They will develop, draft, and polish a short story for publication while receiving regular feedback and editorial review from industry professionals.

Curriculum:	Practicum:
How to Craft a High-Concept Short Story	Craft and choose a short story concept for an anthology and receive feedback from industry professionals.
How to Self-Edit a Project Professionally	Develop an individual self-editing process that is effective for you and self-edit a completed draft from Year 1 to prepare for pitching in Year 3.
Craft Trainings & Critiques	Study the key elements of writing craft to polish your prose and apply them to your own stories while receiving focused feedback from industry professionals on craft execution.
Preparing for Novel Critique Groups	Join a critique group to give and receive peer feedback. Revise structural issues, hone your prose, and implement edits on a novel from Year 1.
Preparing for Your Manuscript Assessment	Submit your novel for an in-manuscript, professional manuscript assessment (post Critique Group) via a 5-10 page edit letter.
Making the Most of Your Manuscript Assessment	Incorporate in-depth, professional feedback without getting overwhelmed.
The Fundamentals of Community Building	Learn the fundamentals of building a community-focused platform and choose what social media you want to utilize for your unique author journey.
The Fundamentals of Platform-Building	Learn the two pillars of effective platforms and how to safeguard against common pitfalls. Begin building your community and blessing others!
The Fundamentals of Branding	Learn how to build an effective brand for your author platform (and business!) and craft a unique story-brand script.





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 the editing/revision process, while also developing the materials they need to start pitching their novels to literary agents and publishers.

Curriculum:	Practicum:
Writing Three Opening Chapters That Will Blow Away A Publisher	Learn from award-winning editors and authors how to craft stand-out opening chapters that will capture a publisher or agent's attention.
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 Professionally Pitch Your Project	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.
How To Work With Your Publisher	Learn what to expect and how to impress your publisher and work with publishing deadlines.
How To Execute A Successful Book Launch	Launch your Short Story Anthology, and learn how to build a street team, create grassroots momentum, and plan a successful launch day!



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.

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 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 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).
The Fundamentals of Marketing	Create and implement a 30 day marketing plan, practicing the fundamentals of marketing and sales.
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

Year 2 of the Business Track focuses on marketing and platform-building. To grow their businesses, 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 90 day 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:
Should I Start A New Business?	Decide whether to continue your business venture from Year 1 or start something new for Year 2.
Marketing System Overview	Learn the principles and structure behind building an effective marketing system/sales funnel.
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.
The Fundamentals of Email Marketing & Email List Trainings	Learn how to utilize one of the most effective marketing tools for your business (and your writing!) and receive feedback from industry professionals.
The Fundamentals of Great Landing Pages	Learn the fundamentals of effective landing pages, choose your lead magnet, and start writing your landing page. Receive feedback from industry professionals.



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.



Writing & Business Schedule | Year 1

To follow this schedule, we recommend students consistently invest **15+ hours per week** into The Author Conservatory, their personal writing, and their business ventures.

Year 1 - Sample Writing Schedule <i>Students complete at least two novels, submit a first chapter for assessment, and launch their business.</i>		
<p align="center">Month 1</p> <p>Develop Story Concepts for Novel #1, graduate, and begin developing Synopsis / Watch “The Fundamentals Of Making Money”</p>	<p align="center">Month 2</p> <p>Develop Synopsis #1 and graduate to Outlining / Develop Business Ideas, graduate, & conduct Market Research</p>	<p align="center">Month 3</p> <p>Develop Outline #1 and graduate to Drafting / Develop Key Distinctions & Elevator Pitch, graduate to the Offer Confirmation Survey</p>
<p align="center">Month 4</p> <p>Start Drafting Project #1 / Conduct OCS and Launch Your Business</p>	<p align="center">Month 5</p> <p>Continue Drafting Project #1 / Watch “The Fundamentals Of Marketing” and Join a Business Club Trial Period</p>	<p align="center">Month 6</p> <p>Finish Drafting Project #1 / Practice Consistent Marketing</p>
<p align="center">Month 7</p> <p>Develop Story Concepts for Novel #2, graduate, begin developing Synopsis #2 / Practice Consistent Marketing</p>	<p align="center">Month 8</p> <p>Develop Synopsis #2, watch craft trainings & submit for craft critiques / Practice Consistent Marketing</p>	<p align="center">Month 9</p> <p>Develop Outline #2, watch craft trainings & submit for craft critiques / Practice Consistent Marketing</p>
<p align="center">Month 10</p> <p>Start Drafting Project #2, watch craft trainings & submit for craft critiques / Practice Consistent Marketing</p>	<p align="center">Month 11</p> <p>Continue Drafting Project #2 finish craft trainings & submit for craft critiques / Practice Consistent Marketing</p>	<p align="center">Month 12</p> <p>Finish Drafting Project #2, polish and submit a first chapter for assessment/ Practice Consistent Marketing</p>

Writing Schedule | Year 2

To follow this schedule we recommend students consistently invest **20+ hours per week** into The Author Conservatory, their personal writing, and their business ventures.

Year 2 - Sample Writing Schedule <i>Students will draft, edit, and prepare a piece of short fiction for publication, as well as revise and polish a novel to prepare for pitching in Year 3.</i>		
<p>Month 1</p> <p>Watch Self-Editing Training, Self-Edit a Year 1 Novel and submit craft critiques as needed, Watch the Fundamentals of Community Building</p>	<p>Month 2</p> <p>Self-Edit a Year 1 Novel, develop Short Story Concepts, and submit craft critiques as needed, Watch the Fundamentals of Platform Building and Choose a platform to begin building</p>	<p>Month 3</p> <p>Finish Self-Editing a Year 1 Novel, sort into Critique Groups, develop a Short Story Outline, and submit for craft critiques as needed, Watch the Fundamentals of Branding and Work on your Brand Script</p>
<p>Month 4</p> <p>Critique Groups work on Novel A, continue developing Short Story Outline as needed, and continue editing Year 1 Novels, continue building platform</p>	<p>Month 5</p> <p>Critique Groups work on Novel A, start drafting Short Story, and continue editing Year 1 Novels, continue building platform</p>	<p>Month 6</p> <p>CG Break Month + Manuscript Assessment for Novel A, finish drafting Short Story, continue editing Year 1 Novels, and watch "Working with an Editor Q&A," continue building platform</p>
<p>Month 7</p> <p>Critique Groups work on Novel B, receive developmental feedback on Short Story in Critique Calls, and continue editing Year 1 Novels, continue building platform</p>	<p>Month 8</p> <p>Critique Groups work on Novel B, receive developmental feedback on Short Story in Critique Calls, and continue editing Year 1 Novels, continue building platform</p>	<p>Month 9</p> <p>CG Break Month + Manuscript Assessment for Novel B, receive developmental feedback on Short Story in Critique Calls, and continue editing Year 1 Novels, continue building platform</p>
<p>Month 10</p> <p>Critique Groups work on Novel C, receive developmental feedback on Short Story in Critique Calls, and continue editing Year 1 Novels, continue building platform</p>	<p>Month 11</p> <p>Critique Groups work on Novel C, finish polishing Short Story, and finish editing Year 1 Novels, continue building platform</p>	<p>Month 12</p> <p>Manuscript Assessment for Novel C</p> <p>End of Year 2 Celebration!</p>

Business Schedule | Year 2 - Marketing

To follow this schedule, we recommend students consistently invest **20+ hours per week** into The Author Conservatory, their personal writing, and their business ventures.

The sample schedule below includes time for students to start a new business. Students who are continuing their Year 1 business would complete “Month 1” and then simply skip to “Month 4” and have an extra two months at the end of the year to optimize their marketing system.

Year 2 - Sample Business Schedule <i>Students will build and implement a scalable marketing system for their business.</i>		
<p>Month 1</p> <p>Watch “Should I Start A New Business?” Decide whether to continue your Year 1 business, and Join the Business Club Trial Period if you haven’t already</p>	<p>Month 2</p> <p>Create <i>Two-Page Business Plan</i> for your new business and graduate to <i>Offer Confirmation Survey</i></p>	<p>Month 3</p> <p>Conduct <i>Offer Confirmation Survey</i>, launch your new business, and get your first customer</p>
<p>Month 4</p> <p>Watch “Marketing System Overview” and “Polishing Your Marketing Message” and Create <i>Marketing Assets</i> (i.e. Customer Avatar + USP)</p>	<p>Month 5</p> <p>Watch “Creating Your Marketing Plan” and Create your <i>90 Day Marketing Plan</i> and <i>Marketing Materials</i></p>	<p>Month 6</p> <p>Implement your <i>90 Day Marketing Plan</i>, Watch and implement “Email List Trainings”</p>
<p>Month 7</p> <p>Implement your <i>90 Day Marketing Plan</i>, Continue “Email List Trainings” and Implementation</p>	<p>Month 8</p> <p>Finish implementing your <i>90 Day Marketing Plan</i> / Continue “Email List Trainings” and Implementation</p>	<p>Month 9</p> <p>Watch “The Fundamentals of a Great Landing Page,” choose your lead magnet, and write your landing page text</p>
<p>Month 10</p> <p>Optimize Your Marketing System (Stage 1)</p>	<p>Month 11</p> <p>Optimize Your Marketing System (Stage 2)</p>	<p>Month 12</p> <p>Optimize Your Marketing System (Stage 3)</p>