



AUTHOR-EDITOR CLINIC FAQ ONLINE CLASSES

Introduction to Developmental Editing: Book-Length Fiction and Creative Nonfiction (8 weeks, online only)

This in-depth introductory course focuses on learning to analyze the structure of a book-length manuscript and communicate your analysis to authors in an organized, insightful, and respectful manner. Weekly online lectures address elements of fiction and memoir that overlap: Theme, storyline, characters, scene and summary, dialog, and narrative shape. Weekly written assignments build on the lectures. Participants will read a published work of fiction or narrative nonfiction and practice looking at it from a variety of angles, taking notes in a systematic fashion, and crafting an editorial letter that deals with the big picture. This course is geared toward freelance editors who already work in the field as proofreaders and copyeditors and would like to move into developmental work.

Format

Participants will join a Yahoo Group. On the group site, the instructor and all participants will be able to post, access, and download files of lectures and assignments, as well as participate in threaded email conversations via a private listserv. Participants will receive an email notice in their inboxes whenever files or comments are added to the group site.

Lectures

Each week, instructor Barbara Sjolholm will post a short lecture on the subject of editing fiction and creative nonfiction (see syllabus below), explain the week's assignment, and suggest further reading. She will also post related resources on the Yahoo site for easy access.

Assignments

At the outset, participants will choose and read a published work of fiction and/or creative nonfiction (preferably not a masterpiece; suggested titles provided on request). There will be one written assignment each week, based on the lecture topics (see below). The assignments should take about an hour or two to complete and are designed to give participants an opportunity to explore editing for structure and the big picture. Participants will be asked to practice writing notes about elements of the works they read and crafting their analysis into sections of an editorial letter to the author.

Forum

In addition to the lectures and assignments, participants will be encouraged to discuss related topics of interest in the online forum.

Syllabus

- Week 1: Overview of structural and developmental editing; How to read a manuscript; Editorial letters
- Week 2: Theme, general structure, general plot
- Week 3: Character and point of view
- Week 4: Scene and summary and the reflective voice
- Week 5: Dialog and inner monolog
- Week 6: Chronology and moving around in time
- Week 7: Narrative shape and pacing
- Week 8: Issues of fact and fiction