
SYLLABUS

Program Description

The Author Conservatory is a college-alternative program focused on advanced writing craft and entrepreneurship. Our goal is to give students the tools they need for a sustainable 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 3-6)*

The Business Track *(see pages 7-11)*

Program Overview

YEAR 1 Fundamentals of Storytelling & Business

Students will learn to develop publication-worthy concepts and craft structurally-sound novels with weekly personalized feedback from published authors and professional editors. 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 1-2 full-length novels and launching a successful business venture.

YEAR 2 Writing Craft, Marketing, & Platform-Building

Students will learn how to revise a manuscript for publication and receive a full manuscript assessment from a professional editor. They will start building their author platforms and continue practicing their marketing skills using their own business ventures. Outcomes for Year 2 include revising a novel for publication, gaining extensive editorial feedback from professional editors and authors, writing and revising a short story for publication, launching their author platform, and completing a 90-Day Marketing Plan for their business.

YEAR 3 Publishing & Book Marketing

Students will learn how to pitch agents and publishers, navigate contracts, and work with publishers. They will practice book marketing and participate in a group book launch for a short story anthology. They will craft an individual roadmap for turning writing into a sustainable career. Outcomes for Year 3 include creating professional pitch materials, pitching actual agents and editors, launching their anthologies, and crafting an individual career plan.



Writing Track Overview

Students will graduate the program with at least two 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 will have the tools they need to effectively pursue traditional publication.

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 a professional manuscript assessment via a 5-10 page edit letter.
Making the Most of Your Manuscript Assessment	Incorporate in-depth, professional feedback without getting overwhelmed.

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 (<i>non-family member, full-price purchase</i>).
The Fundamentals of Marketing	Create and implement a 30 day marketing plan, practicing the fundamentals of marketing and sales.

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 Customer Avatar and Unique Selling Proposition 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

Learn how to utilize one of the most effective
marketing tools for your business (*and your writing*).

The Fundamentals of
Great Landing Pages

Learn how to write high-converting pages, choose
your lead magnet, and create your landing page.

The Fundamentals of
Community Building

Learn how to build a community-focused platform
and choose what social media (*if any*) you prefer.

The Fundamentals of
Platform-Building

Learn the two pillars of effective platforms and
how to safeguard against common pitfalls.

The Fundamentals of Branding

Learn how to build an effective brand for your
author platform and craft your story-brand script.

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 & High Ticket Products/Services	Review the numerous options for low-ticket & 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.
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.