

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS · FOR PROGRAM PARTNERS

Bringing a Salon Course to Your Community

Everything a program director needs to know, in one document.

What the courses are. Who they're for. How to book.
What it costs. What you supply. What I supply.
And every reasonable question in between.

James F. Mulhern

Kirkus-starred novelist · Oxford Writing Fellow · Professor Emeritus of English

salon.silvercurrentpress.com/partners.html

IF YOU'D RATHER JUST TALK

Email jamesfmulhern@gmail.com. Fifteen minutes on the phone
will tell us both whether there is a fit.

First offering at a new venue is at no cost as a proof of concept.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

THE COURSES

What courses can I book?

Twelve. The full catalog is at salon.silvercurrentpress.com/partners.html. They include five literary surveys (American Literature; Women in American Literature; Minority Voices; Jewish Writers; Irish Literature), one interdisciplinary course (Literature and American History), two reading workshops (Poetry; Shakespeare's Sonnets and Speeches), three writing workshops (Memoir; Revision; The Writing Life), and one master salon (The Art of Telling). Every course can also be built to spec for a specific occasion — a Joyce weekend for a museum, a Chekhov masterclass for a writers' conference, and so on.

How long is a course?

Any of them can be a full sixteen-session series, a shorter four-to-eight-session workshop, or a single 60–90 minute evening lecture. The Art of Telling is a ten-session salon. Length is shaped to your calendar and audience, not to my convenience.

Where can it be delivered?

In person or on Zoom. Hybrid works too. In-person locations include libraries, bookstores, community centers, universities, retirement communities, museums, and literary nonprofits, primarily in the Philadelphia region. Zoom courses work anywhere in the world.

What does a typical session look like?

Ninety minutes, discussion-based, no lecture podium. We read a short published text together, ask three or four honest questions of it, and let the room work. There are no quizzes, papers, or grades. Every session is generous, close, and non-competitive.

YOUR AUDIENCE

Who are these courses for?

Adult readers and writers who are not looking for a degree. The audience I've been teaching for years is thoughtful adults who read seriously and want more than a book club can give them. Retirees, mid-career professionals, empty-nesters, lifelong learners, people who miss a college English seminar and want it back. The reading load is modest and the discussion is generous.

Do participants need to have read a lot of literature?

No. All of my courses are designed so that a curious adult who has never taken an English course beyond high school can walk in and be at home in the room within the first ten minutes. The reading workshops (Poetry, Shakespeare) are especially designed for people who have always suspected they were supposed to like these things but somehow never did.

What's the ideal group size?

Twelve to twenty-five participants in person; up to forty on Zoom. Smaller groups (six to twelve) produce the deepest conversations. Larger groups (twenty-five to forty) work well when the format is more lecture-plus-discussion. I can adapt to whatever your venue and audience produce.

COST AND LOGISTICS

What does it cost?

For a first offering at a new venue, I'm glad to teach at no cost as a proof of concept for both of us. Ongoing terms are set to fit the host. That can be an honorarium, a per-session fee, a revenue share on a paid course, or grant-funded — whatever fits your operating model. I'm easy to work with.

What does the host supply?

A room and its promotion, or the equivalent Zoom platform. That's it. All course materials, syllabi, reading lists, and discussion frameworks are on my side. I bring my own laptop and, when needed, my own projector.

How does enrollment work?

Handled entirely by your organization. I don't collect fees, addresses, or personal information from participants. Your venue's normal registration process is the one we use.

What about accessibility?

The courses are non-graded, non-competitive, and non-technical. Every reading is either public domain or freely accessible online through Project Gutenberg, the Internet Archive, the Poetry Foundation, and similar sources. Zoom sessions can be captioned via the built-in tool. For in-person sessions, I follow the venue's accessibility standards.

MATERIALS AND COPYRIGHT

What reading materials are used?

Every reading is either public domain or freely available online. No participant needs to buy a book. Where a longer work is helpful, it's linked to the Internet Archive's controlled digital lending program (a free account borrows any book for an hour at a time). For copyrighted poems and short stories, links go to the Poetry Foundation, Poets.org, and other legitimate free hosts.

Can we reuse your syllabi or reading lists?

Yes, with a short note. Institutional and classroom use is welcome; a one-line email to jamesfmulhern@gmail.com is enough. For most partners the answer is a warm yes with an attribution line. I ask only because material like this can otherwise disappear into commercial course kits with no attribution.

Can we record the sessions?

Yes, if the participants and I both agree in advance. Zoom sessions can be recorded and made available to your audience for a limited window. In-person recording is possible with venue and participant permission.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

Who is teaching?

James F. Mulhern. Kirkus-starred novelist (*Give Them Unquiet Dreams* was starred by Kirkus and named a Kirkus Best Book of 2019). Oxford Writing Fellow (fully funded fellowship at Exeter College, University of Oxford). Pushcart Prize nomination in fiction. Aesthetica Creative Writing Award shortlist in poetry. Professor Emeritus of English with more than thirty years of college and secondary teaching. Founder of Silver Current Press, an independent literary imprint in Philadelphia.

How can I verify these credentials?

The Kirkus starred review is at kirkusreviews.com. The Amazon Author Page lists all eight books. The author site (authorjamesmulhern.com) has the press kit, a full biography, and interviews. All of these are linked from the partners page. Feel free to reach out to any of them independently.

What's your teaching style?

Discussion-based, generous, unhurried. I do not lecture down to a room. I open the material and let the room work with it. I assume intelligence. I take questions seriously. Nothing said in the room is repeated outside it. The best sessions I have ever taught happened wherever a serious group of adults sat down together with a shared text.

NEXT STEPS

How do I book a course?

Send me an email at jamesfmulhern@gmail.com. Tell me which course you're interested in, roughly when you'd like to offer it, and what your venue can accommodate. I usually reply within a day. Fifteen minutes on the phone tells both of us whether there is a fit.

What if the fit isn't right?

That's entirely fine. Program directors often know a colleague or a peer organization who would be a better match, and a warm introduction from you is one of the most useful things I can receive. If the fit isn't right this year but might be next year, we can put it on a soft calendar and revisit.

Ready to talk?

Fifteen minutes will tell us both whether there is a fit.

Email: jamesfmulhern@gmail.com

The partners page: salon.silvercurrentpress.com/partners.html

Course catalog: salon.silvercurrentpress.com

The author's site: authorjamesmulhern.com

Kirkus starred review: kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/james-mulhern/give-them-unquiet-dreams/

IF NOT NOW, MAYBE LATER

If the fit isn't right this season, I'd welcome a note anyway. Program directors who like the work but can't host this quarter are one of my best resources — a warm introduction to a colleague at another venue is worth more than a booking. And if I'm just early for your calendar, put this on a soft calendar and I'll write again in six months.