Cindy Skaggs

Author, English Professor, Public Speaker, and Writing Workshop Leader

Skaggs, Cindy

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BIO:

Cindy Skaggs grew up on stories of mob bosses, horse thieves, cold-blooded killers, and the last honest man. Those mostly true stories gave her a lifelong love of storytelling that enables her writing addiction. She is the author of seven published romantic suspense novels, including *The Untouchables* series for Entangled Publishing, plus the *Team Fear* series.

Her essays have appeared in *So to Speak Feminist Journal, Progenitor Art & Literary Review, Soundings, Wanderlust Journal,* and *the Fredericksburg Literary Art Review*. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing, three jobs, two kids, and more pets than she can possibly handle. She also plays the flute, makes crazy-good sculptures out of tortilla dough, and can wrangle the neurotic dog without getting mauled. Find her as Cindy Skaggs, Writer on Facebook, @CLSkaggs on Twitter, or www.CSkaggs.com to sign up for her newsletter.

BOOKLIST:

The Untouchables series

How far will they go to escape the mob? No one leaves the family, except by way of a body bag.

- Untouchable https://amzn.to/2LHmQx9
- An Untouchable Christmas https://amzn.to/2Mamv2l
- Unforgettable https://amzn.to/2LPJR0e
- Unstoppable https://amzn.to/2LPK7fI

The Team Fear series

Military trained, medically enhanced, designed to kill. You've never met a band of brothers like the men of Team Fear.

- Live by the Team https://amzn.to/2OzRyWy
- Fight by the Team https://amzn.to/2v5qfLT
- Survive by the Team https://amzn.to/2OzRLsO
- Die by the Team (coming 2019)

Nonfiction

"Matchbook Memory," *Progenitor Art & Literary Journal,* ACC Writer's Studio, pp. 98-103, 2015. Pushcart Nominee.
"Under Pressure," *Soundings*, Rainier Writing Workshop, p. 4, 2016.
"Inertia," *Wanderlust Journal*, 2017.
"Frozen Moment," *Fredericksburg Literary & Art Review*, pp. 238-240, 2017.

"Check Yes or No," *The New Limestone Review*, 2018.
"Legacy." *So to Speak Feminist Journal,* 2019.

PUBLIC SPEAKING & WRITING WORKSHOPS

What makes Cindy the best person to teach this/these class/es?
I teach writing for a living. I am a hybrid author with both Indie and traditionally published novels, plus publications in literary nonfiction. I know the pros/cons of both traditional and indie publishing. In addition, I have 2 master's degrees in creative writing specializing in fiction and creative nonfiction. I've taught the class before, and I enjoy teaching and networking with fellow writers.

Teaching Experience:
- College English Professor at PPCC
- Online MFA Professor at Southern New Hampshire University
- Founder of Library 21C writing group: 21st Century Writers
- Public Speaking includes keynote speaker for American Association of University Women; "This is my circus; these are my monkeys" at Rainier Writing Workshop (2017), Pikes Peak Writers Conference (2019), and Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers Colorado Gold Conference (2019); Basic Novel Writing Course (2017); Advanced Writing Course (2017), and additional can be found at https://www.cskaggs.com/speaking.html

All That's Missing is An Easy Button

Description: A storytelling keynote address on the writing journey. From purple paper to published novel and the journey between. All that was missing was the easy button.

Type of workshop: General audience (readers/civic organizations/writers' groups)
Length: .5 – 1 hour (can be scaled)

How is this structured? Keynote address, with slides (as needed) and time for Q&A.

Last/Next presented: October 2018.

Moonstruck & Minor Characters

Description: It's easier to see cardboard characters in someone else's writing, and often hard to see in our own.

Minor characters should not exist in a vacuum, but rather they should behave as if they have a full, rich life outside the pages of the scene/book.

Minor characters should:
- Feel real: they have a life outside of this one interaction with the character.
- Lack artificial purpose: they are present in the scene for reasons completely separate from the main character.
- Move the main character from one situation to another.

This workshop will discuss the how/why of creating realistic minor characters who enrich your stories and give depth to your character and your fictional world. Hands-on activity follows the presentation, so be sure to bring writing materials.

Type of workshop: Craft
Writing Level: all-levels
Length: 1.25-2 hours (can be scaled)
Why me: I studied many literary works and the research of Scott Nadelson (who specialized in minor characters) to build a workshop that benefits writers of all stages and helps to create realistic minor characters.

How is this structured: PowerPoint presentation, followed by a hands-on exercise and Q&A
Last/Next presented: May 2019 / September 2019

Order from Chaos: Fiction Plotting Devices for Nonfiction writers

Description: Real life. Easy to write, right? Open the laptop. Type. But wait, is something missing? Order from chaos. While our lives follow a series of random events, memoirs and essays that want an audience do not. This plotting workshop for nonfiction

(memoir, personal essay, and creative nonfiction) utilizes fiction plotting devices to take memoir and personal essay to the next level.

Type of workshop: Craft
Length: 1 hour-2 hours (can be scaled). The 1st hour of class (or a 1-hour class) defines terminology and gives explicit types of nonfiction forms such as the Hermit Crab essay, the Lyric essay, etc. The 2nd hour uses fiction plotting format for nonfiction memoirs and/or essay collections.

How is this structured? Lecture with slides (as needed) and time for Q&A.
Audience: Nonfiction writers (memoir, personal essay, and creative nonfiction)

Last/Next presented: February 2019

The Dark Hero

Description: An anti-hero by any other name would still kick ass and go home bloody. The dark her aka the anti-hero, aka villain as protagonist aka Byronic hero are typically male (although not always), highly intelligent, with a tragic backstory. In this class, we'll discuss the elements that make up a dark hero to create a flawed hero who is more full-bodied rather than perfectly imperfect. Giving characters imperfections/weaknesses/tragic backstories makes them more rounded, interesting, and relatable. Examples of the dark hero/anti-hero are *Frankenstein* (the monster and the creator), *The Count of Monte Cristo, Dexter, The Punisher, and John Wick.*

Type of workshop: Craft
Length: 1 hour

How is this structured? Lecture with slides (as needed) and time for Q&A.
Audience: Fiction writers

Last/Next presented: July 2019

This is my circus & these are my monkeys: Writing multiple-character scenes

Description: A multiple character scene is one in which there are several individuals or groups interacting within a larger group. Writing a multiple-character scene such as Jane Austen's ballroom scene in Pride and Prejudice is like a 3-ring circus. There are three simultaneous performances in three separate rings, and without a ringleader, the audience is unclear where to focus. The writer is the ringleader and responsible for successfully navigating the populated scene. In this presentation, we will delve into the crowded scene to determine why these scenes increase tension, build suspense, create conflict, and change the direction of the story. Using examples from Ernest Hemingway, Virginia Woolf, JK Rowling, and Jane Austen, we'll discuss and enumerate the necessary techniques used to craft a successful multiple-character scene, so the reader doesn't get lost and close the book before it's finished.

Type of workshop: Craft
Writing Level: Intermediate-Advanced
Length: 1-2 hours (can be scaled)

How is this structured? This is a presentation/lecture using movie clips, and examples from books to clarify the lecture.

Last/Next presented: May 2019 / September 2019
Handout: 2-page fill-in-the-blank Skaggs_MulticharacterHandout

Writing Short Stories for Novelists

Description: Do your short story ideas turn into novellas? Your novellas into a novels?

This workshop discusses how to scale your plot into short-story-sized pieces. Historically speaking, the short story is a recent genre, and most of the craft elements used in novel writing are shared with short story writing. How does the short-story writer develop the major elements of fiction—such as plot, theme, character, point of view, etc.—in less than 10,000 words?

While most "rules" were meant to be broken, especially by writers, it's valuable to study the "rules" of short story writing to help develop quality stories that do not "accidentally" become full-length novels.

Find out what these rules are and how to use them to create short stories for journals, magazines, and to offer short stories about existing characters from your book or series that you can use as a form of Lead Generation, to build reader loyalty, and to create more well-rounded characters.

Type of workshop: Craft
Writing Level: All
Length: 1.25 hours

How is this structured: Lecture/slides followed by a writing exercise plus Q&A.

Last/Next presented: 2017

From Finished to Published: Packaging and Platform Creation for Indie Authors

Description: Writing "The End" is just the beginning. Writers still need to edit, format, and package the book; work on building a platform, production schedules, and ARCs. Formatting and cover design. Front matter, back matter, and the dreaded back cover copy.

The production and packaging process is explained in a detailed manner with live creation of an author platform for those who bring their laptops. Exercises include writing your own back cover copy and tagline.

The point of this workshop is to give you a glimpse at the post-writing production process for Indie writers that starts with the editing process and ends the moment you press the button to go live. Let's begin!

How is this workshop structured? Presentation + lecture, with exercises and Q&A. I run an interactive class with questions throughout. The last time I taught this class, it went 3.5 hours as we delved into very specific directions and real-time development of book covers, blurbs, taglines, etc. It can be scaled down to a 2-hour class where there is less hands-on demonstration of book covers and demonstrations that are time-consuming.

Last Presented: May 2019