

The image is a composite of two landscape photographs. The top photograph shows a misty mountain range with a layer of fog or low clouds between the peaks. The bottom photograph shows a grassy field in the foreground with a low stone wall. Behind the wall are two dark-colored Adirondack chairs facing away from the viewer towards a dense forest of trees with autumn foliage. The text 'BENNINGTON WRITING SEMINARS' is overlaid on the white band between the two images. The text 'BENNINGTON COLLEGE' is overlaid on a blue rectangular box in the bottom photograph, positioned to the left of the chairs.

BENNINGTON WRITING SEMINARS

BENNINGTON COLLEGE



READ.
WRITE.
BEREAD.

THE BENNINGTON WRITING SEMINARS

is consistently ranked by *The Atlantic* and *Poets & Writers* as one of the top low-residency MFA programs in the United States.

Founded in 1994, it was one of the first low-residency graduate writing programs in the country. During the two-year program, our students commit as much to reading as to writing, and construct reading lists that strengthen their knowledge and understanding of the zeitgeist in which their own work can be seen, while simultaneously deepening their understanding of the history of the art form. The goal, of course, is to produce bold and original new works of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Our writers complete their time in the program with a polished thesis in hand, and new critical skills



that will make possible a lifetime of creative work engagement and work. In our program, it is also possible to gain teaching experience through our popular Graduate Fellows program.

Because the low-residency model allows our students to thread writing

and reading into every aspect of their lives, Bennington students develop a sustainable, lifelong writing practice. Each 10-day, on-campus residency leaves participants energized, challenged, and ready to write.



OUR STUDENTS



Photos on this page: Laura Gill MFA '17

Representing a spectrum of talent, our students come to us at different stages of their careers: some have books under contract, some sign contracts while at Bennington, others are accomplished journalists, teachers, and have publishing credits in literary journals, and others come with raw gifts, find their voice, and begin a robust literary career as a result of their concentrated study.

Perhaps the greatest strength of the program is found in the relationships our students form with each other. Connections forged between classmates lead to lifelong literary friendships within a community that prefers collaborative support to competition. Time and again we hear, “Bennington changed my life.”

OUR GRADUATES

Graduates of the Writing Seminars are publishing widely, debuting new books, and achieving the highest levels of success in the literary world. Recent alums have won awards from the Rona Jaffe and Elizabeth George Foundations, residencies at Yaddo and MacDowell, appeared in the Best American series, been nominated for major awards, debuted widely-acclaimed books, and have become the leading voices of their generation.



Photo (above): Sylvie Rosokoff

“
**Bennington
transformed
my writing.**

—Morgan Jerkins MFA '16 (left),
NY Times bestselling author of *This Will Be My Undoing*



Clockwise from top left:

Song of a Captive Bird by Jasmin Darznik MFA '14, *The Nest* by Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney MFA '13, *Tonight, I'm Someone Else* by Chelsea Hodson MFA '17, *This Will Be My Undoing* by Morgan Jerkins MFA '16, *Memento Park* by Mark Sarvas MFA '19, and *Fire Sermon* by Jamie Quatro MFA '09



TEACHING MODEL

The Bennington Writing Seminars sets the standard for the innovative model it pioneered. This rigorous four-term graduate program—with study tracks in fiction, nonfiction, poetry and dual-genres—combines ten-day, on-campus residencies each January and June, with six-month non-residential terms.

Our students study one-on-one with four different faculty members during their time here (five for the dual-genre track). During the residency, we offer numerous master classes, panels with editors and publishers, and lectures with leading writers and thinkers.



RECENT LECTURES INCLUDE:

Alexander Chee:

“The Antagonists Antagonist:
Reverse-engineering James Baldwin’s
Go Tell it on the Mountain”

Carmen Giménez Smith:

“Moving Beyond the Surface of Poetry”

Wayne Koestenbaum:

“Punctuation”

Alice Mattison:

“What Does Your Novel Want?”

Monica Youn:

“Generative Revision:
Beyond the Zero-Sum Game”

Claire Vaye Watkins:

“Experiments with Form in Fiction”

MENTORS

Our student-faculty ratio of 5:1 provides a true mentorship experience. Students work closely with acclaimed authors who become familiar with and develop a stake in work they help realize. They themselves are accomplished writers who are as distinguished in their teaching as they are in the literary world.

In keeping with Bennington's progressive tradition, the course of study is self-directed. Our students confer closely with faculty members to form reading lists and submit original work for critique at regular intervals throughout the term. Workshops are small by design—10 writers and two faculty members—which allows for in-depth and individualized critical attention.

“

Bennington was heaven. Enrolling ranks among the best decisions I’ve made.

—Amy Gerstler MFA '01, winner, National Book Critics Circle Award for poetry (1991)



Clockwise from top left:

Carmen Giménez Smith, Clifford Thompson, Stuart Nadler, Amy Hempel, Manuel Gonzales, and Jenny Bouilly

INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY



Our goal is to have our program reflect the diverse range of voices, demographic backgrounds, and aesthetic sensibilities that make American literature so vital. We are committed to increasing access to our program for students from all backgrounds, offering scholarships and increased funding options for the emerging voices we want to support and read. Our faculty represent myriad backgrounds, blend genres, and are fierce voices in the literary community.

Together, we are building an inclusive experience through sustained dialogue about literature. We recommend reading lists within and beyond the Western Canon, read a book together to discuss at the residency through our One Book Initiative, and host World Lit Café, a reading series in which students give voice to writers they admire.



Photo (above): Laura Gill MFA '17

CONNECT

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CONTACT

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APPLY

Writers may apply to enter at either of the January or June residencies.

JUNE RESIDENCY DEADLINE: **MARCH 1**

JANUARY RESIDENCY DEADLINE: **SEPT. 1**

**BENNINGTON
WRITING SEMINARS**

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