

Special Topics Workshops at Minnowbrook



Workshop Dates: July 27 to August 1, 2025

Minnowbrook Conference Center ([see on map](#))

Special Topics Workshops are facilitated by Syracuse University faculty and are open to secondary educators for discipline-specific professional development experience. Certified SUPA instructors have the added option of enrolling in these workshops for SU graduate credit at a significantly reduced tuition rate.

The Advanced English workshops address current topics within the fields of literary, cultural, composition, and rhetorical studies—to communicate enhanced content knowledge and classroom pedagogy—as well as topics of broader significance for teachers in the arts and sciences, e.g., research strategies across the curriculum.

Workshop participants have the opportunity to enroll in one or two workshops during the five-day retreat. Syllabi, required textbook lists, and any course readers for the workshops will be sent to participants upon receipt of the registration form.

[Click here for copy of Flyer/Registration Form](#)

2025 Workshops

ENG 600: Teaching Writers, Not Writing: Pedagogies for the Post-Pandemic Generation

Faculty: Emily Dressing, Associate Teaching Professor & Director of Writing Across the Curriculum, Syracuse University

“Students today just don’t care about writing.” How many of us have heard this statement, or even thought it ourselves, in the years since the pandemic and as generative AI has entered our classrooms? At the same time, we know that students do care about the writing that they do every day outside of our classrooms; they value words, just not the ones that they write for class.

In this workshop, rather than interrogating why students aren’t engaged with our assignments, we will start from a different question: why do we assign student writing in the first place? What do we want student writers to do? In his seminal text on writing centers, Stephen North argues that the job of the writing center is to produce better writers, not better writing. How might a similar approach in our classrooms shift our instruction to more effectively contend with current challenges?

This workshop seeks to productively engage with these questions by designing and trying out writing activities; developing models for discussions of audience, craft, and

voice; and analyzing readings drawn from various disciplines and genres. The goal of our individual and collaborative work will be to situate our classroom pedagogies within a writer-focused framework that contends with individual students' needs, but also works to scale those needs into complete lesson plans that ask students to think of themselves as writers engaging in meaningful communicative acts.

ENG 600: Documentary Poetics in Practice

Faculty: Jesse Nissim, Poet and Teacher, Manlius Pebble Hill School

In this workshop we will explore various forms of writing that contend with facts and truths in unexpected ways. Immersing ourselves in the reading and writing of lyric experiments that cross genre boundaries, this workshop will focus on craft and pedagogies of truth-telling that can enliven our own practice as writers as well as inform our pedagogies as creative writing teachers. Together, we will investigate different strategies for leaning into historical, journalistic, narrative, lyric, and fictional impulses in order to locate and articulate the truths we find most urgent and compelling. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions about craft and content as we read documentary poetics texts, and then begin to create our own. Participants' generative work can take any form they see fit and we will collaborate to build a thoughtful, supportive space to take risks and follow lines of inquiry that will enrich our own writing and teaching practices. instructors are equally welcome; no prior experience is necessary.

About Minnowbrook

Syracuse University's Minnowbrook Conference Center is an enchanting facility built in the rustic elegance of the Adirondack "Great Camp" tradition.

Room accommodations are spacious and comfortable. They will be designated single occupancy, unless registration numbers require room sharing. All meals will be provided by the kitchen staff at Minnowbrook, as will snacks throughout the day. Meals are gourmet quality and participants are guaranteed to never go hungry!

Recreational facilities—including a game room, workout equipment, tennis court, canoes, kayaks, paddleboats, and rowboats—are available for participants, and of course, the Adirondacks themselves offer great opportunities for hiking and other outdoor sports.

Workshop Fees & Tuition

Participants have several registration options for the Special Topics workshops. Most register for one workshop only. Graduate credit is optional, and this specially reduced tuition rate (\$210 for 3 credit hours) is *available only to SUPA certified instructors*.

The fee structure for the workshop- only option—which includes room and board, use of the Minnowbrook facilities and workshop fees, is **\$1,595** (\$75 deposit due by June 27, 2025).

(If you are interested in taking both workshops, please contact Sean Conrey at smconrey@syr.edu)

Please note that in the event of low enrollment, individual workshops may be canceled.*

Registration

To register for the Special Topics workshops, complete the [application form](#) by **June 30, 2025**.

Testimonials

What do past Minnowbrook participants say about their experience?

"I can't think of any situation where you have the opportunity to immerse yourself in not only a subject, but a place, that allows for the leisure to contemplate the world without distractions—a serenity that is very different from the hectic world of teaching in the high school in particular. This is the perfect time to lose yourself and do something that you love. Talking about books, talking about art, with people who have the same passion, the same interests, and so much experience to exchange."

"During my free time, I spent a lot of time on the dock just listening to the water and reading for chunks of time. That's one of the lures of Minnowbrook: time to think. And to read and to be uninterrupted. And to talk to people who are from all over, finding out what's going on at other places."

"Each of the years I've attended, I've come home with something I've been able to use directly in my classes and in my instruction. I'm getting materials and points of view that I didn't have. The marriage of people from the high schools and Syracuse University in this particular program, which we've come to call an intellectual community, has the distinct advantage of giving us an opportunity to generalize our knowledge, to find out what things are like in other places, and to see what works in other places. It's so refreshing: you come home and you have thought deeply about a variety of subjects and discussed them with a variety of very intelligent and very articulate and very well-read and informed people, and how can that be bad? It's just a totally good time."

"Well, first of all, the setting is so gorgeous. And you just feel at peace and relaxed. It becomes a very intense experience, because when you're with a group of people and

you're in class with them for so many hours of the day, and then you sit down and have lunch with them, and you sit down at dinner with them, and you have breakfast with them, and you talk, continually, and the issues that come up in the class get hashed out again and again, new things get brought up over meals, and it's just a very stimulating, and totally involving experience. And you come back very invigorated and with new ideas and ready to try new things."

"The intellectual stimulation that you get here is incomparable. I mean you go to the faculty room and everybody complains about problems with the day-to-day routine, and you don't get to discuss ideas at all or techniques that you would use in the classroom. Here, we talk about all kinds of things that we can try and that we've tried before that worked. It's just a constant exchange of new ideas. It's a totally new networking that is not normal in a high school room. Everybody here is just on an automatic cycle of exchange of ideas. And that's what happens here all the time. Not just in a group meeting but while we're on a hike up to Castle Rock or while we're at dinner or after dinner."

"This has some of the same benefits as any sort of camp provides. People get to come away. They get a retreat. And they come together with other people who are interested in the same issues, the same topic, the same inquiry, and they get to live, eat, breathe, and do this for however many hours of a day, so it's a very short experience, but it's a very intense experience. And the benefit comes not just from the content delivery, but from the kind of all-inclusive interaction. So there's this constant flow of discussion, from one course to another, to issues in my school, to how am I going to do this unit of my course, and there's this sort of seamless interaction for whatever period of time and that's just remarkable. So you can call it camp but it's a much more intense sort of professional interaction than any other venue I can imagine."

"What brings me here? The opportunity to gain credit working with the Syracuse University program and the idea of it being concentrated in one week; other courses that I take are spread out over several months or they take up weekends and don't feel as though they have the same continuity as they do here."