

UNIVERSITY of  
**HOUSTON**

The Honors College

Dear Colleague:

I write to invite you and your fellow teachers to participate in this summer's Common Ground Teachers Institute in The Honors College on the University of Houston campus between June 30th and July 11th, 2014. **There will *not* be a meeting on July 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

Since 1989, the Common Ground Teachers Institute has been an educational collaboration of teaching faculty at the University of Houston and teachers of English from secondary schools throughout the Greater Houston metropolitan area. Common Ground, which follows a seminar model, welcomes teachers who love books and allows them to experience the pleasure of reading significant multicultural works and discussing them with colleagues who are also dedicated teachers. We invite you to spend two weeks this summer discovering new literature and revisiting the classics with professors, fellow teachers, and friends.

Previous participants have found Common Ground to be an excellent professional development opportunity. Teachers can earn up to 30 credit hours of G&T certification. The Institute's hours are 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Friday, July 11<sup>th</sup> will be set aside for evaluations and presentations by teacher-fellows, and will conclude around noon. All activities take place in The Honors College, located on the second floor of the M.D. Anderson Library on the University of Houston campus. The seminars will be held from 10:00-12:00 and 1:00-2:00 each day. Lunch will take place from 12:00-1:00, accompanied by readings by poets and writers.

Underwriting by the McGovern Foundation allows The Honors College to offer the Common Ground Teachers Institute **absolutely free of cost to participating teachers, who also receive a \$100 stipend for books and on-campus parking, at the end of the Institute.**

Information on this summer's seminars is attached with this email. To reserve your spot, send an e-mail with your name, school name, and seminar selection to [kdmyrick@uh.edu](mailto:kdmyrick@uh.edu) by June 10, 2014. For further information on the seminars, or to sign up electronically, we invite you to check out our website at [TheHonorsCollege.com/CommonGround](http://TheHonorsCollege.com/CommonGround).

We look forward to seeing you this summer!



William Monroe

Director, The Common Ground Teachers Institute and Dean, The Honors College

# COMMON GROUND 2014

## Seminar Descriptions

June 30-July 11

### **Bending and Blending the Rules: A Workshop on Multigenre Writing**

Sarah Cooper

Poets teach us that the form a piece of writing takes can be as important as its content. We can reveal things about a person or experience through a letter, a list, an essay or a sonnet that we couldn't by using any other form. Further, by blending multiple genres in a single work, we can create complex and multivocal texts that attempt to reach the more slippery, definition-resistant aspects of the self and world. In this Common Ground/WITS collaboration, participants will read and discuss works by writers who bend and blend genre boundaries toward saying, accurately and adequately, more of what there might be to say. We will then draw from our own personal and family histories to create multigenre texts that combine both traditional genres (poetry, essay memoir, fiction) and more vernacular ones (letters, recipes, journals, photo albums). We will read and discuss *some* of the following works:

Michael Ondaatje, *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*

Ali Smith, *Artful*

John D'Agata, *The Next American Essay*

Norma Elia Cantú, *Canicula: Snapshots of a Girlhood en la Frontera*

A. Van Jordan, *Macnolia: Poems*

Marjane Satrapi, *The Complete Persepolis*

Nick Flynn, *Another Bullshit Night in Suck City: A Memoir*

Phillip Lopate, *The Art of the Personal Essay* (intro)

Brenda Miller, "A Braided Heart: Shaping the Lyric Essay"

Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (excerpts)

Elena Brower and Erica Jago, *The Art of Attention*; Baxter, *The Art of Subtext*; Mark Doty, *The Art of Description* (excerpts)

### **The Public School Experience**

Merrilee Cunningham

The English say "public school" when they mean private; Americans say public when they mean no-cost schools and "prep" when they mean private. Marcus Aurelius brags that he was not sent to any such schools but tutored at home by captured Greeks. This summer we will look at the differences and similarities between public and private schools, the

potential for good preparations outside and inside the “prep” school and preparatory nature of public schools and early specialization in England and America. We will read and discuss *some* of the following works:

Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*  
Jean Anyon, “Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work” (free online)  
Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre*  
Rick Riordan, *The Lightning Thief*  
Curtis Sittenfeld, *Prep*  
J. D. Salinger, *Catcher in the Rye*  
J.R. Rowling, *Harry Potter*  
Cicero, *On the Common Good*  
Jefferson and Adams, *On General Education*  
Alan Sillatoe, *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*  
Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (Youtube)  
Frances Hodson Burnett, *A Little Princess*  
Libba Bray, *Gamma Doyle Trilogy*  
John Knowles, *A Separate Peace*  
Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*  
John Demos, *The Heathen School: A Story of Hope and Betrayal in the Early Republic*,  
Movie Clips: *Stand and Deliver*; *The Breakfast Club*; *The Name of the Rose*

### **Self and Other: The Stories that Bind Us**

Robin Davidson

In *The Fairytale as Art Form and Portrait of Man*, Swiss folklorist Max Lüthi asserts that the erotic and the numinous are two poles of a single force—the human longing to go beyond the self. Literature is one of the greatest opportunities we as teachers have to fuel that longing, to cultivate empathy in ourselves and in our students. Whether in works that bear witness to diasporic conditions resulting from exile, slavery, war, or works that engage spiritual questing, or those that explore love in its various forms—this Common Ground course will reflect on poems, stories, and essays that hone our use of the empathetic imagination as a lens into the lives of others and those threads of the larger human narrative we share. We will read and discuss *some* of the following works:

#### **Poetry**

Robin Davidson, *Luminous Other: Poems*  
Carolyn Forché, *Poetry of Witness: The Tradition in English*.

#### **Fiction**

Robert Boswell, *The Half-Known World: On Writing Fiction*.  
Bohumil Hrabal, *Too Loud a Solitude*. Trans. Michael Henry Heim.

#### **Creative Nonfiction**

Carolyn Forché and Philip Gerard, *Writing Creative Nonfiction*.  
Leslie Jamison, *The Empathy Exams: Essays*.

## **Adolescence and Alienation: Can Stories Heal the Wounds?**

William Monroe

Erik Erikson's work made "identity crisis" a household word, and adolescence seems to require at least a certain degree of alienation. Perhaps adolescence and alienation are inseparable; certainly some of the greatest works in world literature and especially in the American tradition have been about adolescence and alienation. This summer our readings and films will be selected from works such as the following:

Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*  
J.D. Salinger, *Catcher in the Rye*  
Franz Kafka, "The Metamorphosis"  
Lorraine Hansberry, *Raisin in the Sun* (film)  
*Hamlet* (film)  
Willa Cather, "Paul's Case"  
Flannery O'Connor, selected stories  
Walker Percy, *The Moviegoer*  
Lorrie Moore, selected stories

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## **Money: The Root of Evil?**

Led by Dr. Romanus Muoneke, University of St. Thomas

It is generally said that money is the root of all evil, a thought which carefully considered, seems true. The suggestion follows, of course, that money itself is evil. Yet it is not, for there is no doubt that the way money is used determines its moral value. Money is good and desirable, since it helps us stay alive and make ends meet. But, at the same time, so much injustice, destruction, and death have resulted from man's greed for money. Our seminar this year will examine works of literature where writers deal with the theme of money as a necessary or unnecessary evil.

### **Required Texts:**

Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*

Willa Cather, *My Mortal Enemy*

Arthur Miller, *All My Sons*

Chinua Achebe, *No Longer at Ease*

Henrik Ibsen, *Hedda Gabler*

Leo Tolstoy, "The Death of Ivan Ilych"

Reservation Form  
**The Common Ground Teachers Institute 2014**  
June 30 through July 11 (No Seminar July 3)

**Personal Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Polo shirt size, please indicate your size here: \_\_\_\_\_

Women's: XS, S, M, L, XL, XXL, 1X, 2X

Men's: S, M, L, XL, XXL, 3XL

**School Information**

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

District: \_\_\_\_\_

Subjects *you* teach: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please rank your top three seminar choices in order of preference:

\_\_\_\_\_ *Bending and Blending the Rules*, Sarah Cooper

\_\_\_\_\_ *The Public School Experience*, Merrilee Cunningham

\_\_\_\_\_ *Self and Other: The Stories that Bind Us*, Robin Davidson

\_\_\_\_\_ *Adolescence and Alienation*, William Monroe

\_\_\_\_\_ *Money: The Root of Evil?* Romanus Muoneke

To guarantee participation, please return this form via fax or email. Please send your information as soon as possible, but not later than Tuesday **June 10th**, to:

Common Ground Teachers Institute  
The Honors College at the University of Houston  
212 MD Anderson Library  
Houston, TX 77204-2001

phone: 713-743-1012  
fax: **713-743-9015**  
email: [kdmyric2@central.uh.edu](mailto:kdmyric2@central.uh.edu)

# COMMON GROUND TEACHERS' INSTITUTE



10 AM TO 2 PM  
JUNE 30 THROUGH JULY 11

**Bending and Blending the Rules: A Workshop on Multi-genre Writing**

Sara Cooper

**The Public School Experience**

Merrilee Cunningham

**Self and Other: The Stories that Bind Us**

Robin Davidson

**Adolescence and Alienation: Can Stories Heal the Wounds?**

William Monroe

**Money: The Root of Evil?**

Romanus Muoneke

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