



FAQs: Classes and Seminars

Q. What are the classes like?

- A. Each class is different. But overall they are interactive, which means you learn by doing, discussing, experimenting, reflecting on your experience, and then applying those insights to your work.

Q. What is the format?

- A. We generally start by getting to know each other in some way that relates to what the class will be about. So:
- If you're in the publishing process class, for example, you'll create a name card that includes a stick-figure type drawing of your project—and that discussion gives you practice in drafting a pitch, which we refine at the end of the class into a tagline for your book.
 - Or if you're in the creative nonfiction class, you'll interview each other about favorite nonfiction articles or books and why you liked them...which leads into a discussion about what goes into telling that kind of compelling story.
 - If you're in a class about memoir, you might share your reaction to a quote about memoir writing, telling how it relates to your own story—which leads to organizing a class about what memoir is and isn't, and mastering the skills that help you write a memoir others want to read.

Q. OK, that's the first class. What about the rest?

- A. Each course has specific learning objectives and activities targeted to those objectives. These activities might include brief presentations, handouts, games, small- or large-group discussions, reading and writing exercises, "shared pairs," review sessions, and more. Even though we have specific learning objectives, what we do is always tailored as much as possible to what individual participants want or need to learn.

Q. You mentioned "shared pairs." What's that?

- A. Shared pairs means finding a partner and sharing what you wrote (for a particular exercise) with that person.

Q. What if I don't want to share my writing?

A. That's perfectly fine. Sharing stories is optional. Write your stories, yes, but know that you have control over what you do with them.

Q. Who else will be there?

A. We have a variety of participants—varied ages, varied professions, varied stations in life. The diversity—and the multiplicity of voices and stories—is amazing and inspiring.

Q. How big are the classes?

A. Depends on the class. Publishing classes have had as many as 18 people. Writing circles are smaller (10-15). Certain classes, like those focusing on revision, are also on the smaller side (4-6), to allow us to do the in-depth work that this process requires.

Q. What will I get out of it?

A. The chance to meet other writers who “get” what you do and why you do it. Concrete, practical information to help you achieve your writing goals. A built-in deadline. A community of people who click with you, so much so that you might even form your own writing or “mastermind” group that continues long after the class is over. (This has happened many times, and the groups are still going strong.)

Q. How do I know if a particular class is right for me?

A. The honest answer is you never know until you try. If, however, you'd like to talk to others who've taken workshops with me to get a feel for how we work, let me know and I'll put you in touch with someone. Also, you can get a sense of the classes from what others have said...so check out the next question.

Q. What have people said about their experience in this workshop?

A. Here's a sampling of comments taken from evaluations:

- *I thought the course was well-organized and it answered a lot of my questions. The instructor was clear and knowledgeable.*
- *Ms. Glenn was very helpful and created a respectful classroom atmosphere.*
- *Joanne Glenn made us work. The info I needed is out there but finding it all was a problem. Not anymore. I feel armed and ready, and hopeful.*
- *Joanne is one of the best instructors I have had for any course, including college. She creates a very positive learning experience where people with various levels of skill and experience are able to learn from each other. It was a remarkable class. I'm joining her group of repeat students—can't wait to sign up for the winter class.*

- *Keep the course, keep the instructor. She is really outstanding—knowledgeable, engaged, dedicated, and encouraging.*
- *The atmosphere was supportive. The instructor set the guidelines for discussion during the first class and all participants followed her lead. In the brochure, one might suggest the participant take the basics of creative nonfiction writing before this class. I will be taking that class in the winter semester. However, the teacher is so good that there was no discomfort for me in this class.*

Q. How should I dress?

- A. Comfortably. I always like to wear layers as insurance against whatever the HVAC system has in store that day!

Q. What should I bring?

- A. Your curiosity, an open heart, and a desire to speak your truth while respecting others' right to speak theirs, too.

Q. I have a question that isn't listed here. Can you help me?

- A. Yes, you can email me (jmlglenn@gmail.com) or call me (703.721.2088). I'm happy to hear from you.

Q. How do I register?

- A. Unless it's a private class (something I deliver directly), contact the sponsoring organization (Fairfax County Adult and Continuing Education or Vienna Community Center). If you're not sure, just email me (jmlglenn@gmail.com) and I'll let you know how to sign up.