

STONY BROOK SOUTHAMPTON

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STONY BROOK
SOUTHAMPTON
State University of New York

MFA in Writing and Literature



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The Young American Writers Project (YAWP)

Sponsored by Stony Brook Southampton's MFA in Writing and Literature Program

The Young American Writers Project (YAWP), created by Stony Brook Southampton's MFA in Writing and Literature Program, is dedicated to mentoring middle and high school students as they learn creative expression and critical thinking through writing.

"In naming our program YAWP," says MFA director Robert Reeves, "we hope to summon the spirit of Walt Whitman, that Long Island teacher, journalist, poet — and restless seeker of the quintessential American voice — who first sounded his 'barbaric yawp' a century and a half ago."

The YAWP curriculum sends professional writers and writing teachers into Long Island schools with a variety of innovative, interdisciplinary writing workshops, including:

PLAYWRITING • SCREENWRITING • POETRY • PERSONAL ESSAY • FICTION

... all of which conclude with special projects and presentations, as well as potential vodcasts, blogs and/or publication in the YAWP E-zine.



The goals of YAWP include:

- To enhance critical thinking, collaboration and communication skills.
- To help each student find and develop his or her unique voice and point of view.
- To use creative expression as a way to solve problems and promote global awareness.
- To advance 21st century skills while supporting ELA requirements.
- To expose students to the unique creative programs and resources of Stony Brook Southampton, including the annual Southampton Writer's Conference.
- To support the readers and writers of the next generation.

YAWP Programs are offered throughout the school year, and can be custom designed to fit the needs of an individual school. They can be offered in "push-in" format, as enrichment to creative writing, English, theater or other academic classes, as extra-curricular programs or

as a retreat. YAWP programs can be particularly effective for at-risk students, or for those who find writing and communication skills challenging in the traditional academic environment.

Please contact us to discuss how the YAWP programs can best serve your school!

Emma Walton Hamilton

Executive Director

emma.waltonhamilton@stonybrook.edu

Will Chandler

Program Director

william.chandler@stonybrook.edu





PLAYWRITING

Middle School & High School



The YAWP Playwriting Program introduces middle and high school students to the elements of dramatic writing. Using a curriculum inspired by Aristotle's *Poetics*, teaching artists guide students through a series of written and improvisational exercises to develop ideas, characters, themes and dialogue, assisting each student in the discovery and celebration of their unique perspective and creative voice.

By the end of the program every student will have completed a short play, and one play from each class will be selected to be professionally staged at Avram Theatre on the Stony Brook Southampton campus. Students then perform in and assistant direct or stage-manage the plays, which receive two public performances.

Once they have completed the program, all students not only have a script in hand, but also they have experienced theater as a living, vital medium to provoke thought, ask challenging questions and express their point of view. Select plays may be published in the YAWP E-zine and video footage of final performances may be broadcast on the YAWP YouTube Channel. DVD's of the performance are made available to participating students and the general public.

COURSE OFFERINGS & INFORMATION



7-WEEK RESIDENCY plus performance (High School & Middle School)
Includes 14 single-period workshops, 2-3 times per week, plus 2 weeks after school production preparation, culminating with 2 public performances of selected student plays.

Program Schedule

Middle Schools:

January & February – In-class workshops
March – Production weeks & final performances

High Schools:

September, October & November – In-class workshops
Early December – Production weeks and final performances

please turn the page for more course options



YAWP PLAYWRITING,
Course Offerings cont.



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PLAYWRITING

PLAYWRITING

5-DAY MINI-RESIDENCY, plus performance
(High School and Middle School)

Includes 3 hours class-time per day, for 5 consecutive days, plus 2 weeks' after school production preparation, culminating with 2 public performances of selected student plays.

Program Schedule:

Middle Schools:

Can be scheduled at school's convenience, anytime during January or February. Final performances are in March, concurrent with 7-week residency program.

High Schools

Can be scheduled at school's convenience, anytime during September, October or November. Final performances are in December, concurrent with 7-week residency program.

5-DAY OVERNIGHT RETREAT, plus performance (High School only)

Students complete the same curriculum as the residency over 5 consecutive days, in an overnight "retreat" format on the Stony Brook Southampton campus, culminating with staged readings of all student-written plays. One play per school is subsequently chosen for inclusion in the High School Playwrights production at Stony Brook Southampton's Avram Theatre. Housing and meals are provided at the Southampton Fresh Air Home. The Retreat Program accepts up to 5 students per participating school (to be selected at school's discretion) for a total of 35 students. Students must be accompanied by one designated teacher/chaperone. Time is set aside daily for school homework. The Playwriting Retreat is taught in conjunction with the Screenwriting Retreat.

Program Schedule:

Second week of November. Final performances are in December, concurrent with residency programs.





SCRIPT TO SCREEN

High School only



Write a script... Make a movie! In the digital age it's become much easier to tell a story through pictures. The YAWP screenwriting program teaches students effective dramatic writing techniques and increases their visual literacy for screens as small as YouTube and as big as the silver screen.

Professional screenwriters work with students to deconstruct popular films, both narrative and documentary, and to help them discover the elements of their own short screenplays.

At the end of the program, all students will have written a short film, one of which may be selected for production in video format.

COURSE OFFERINGS & INFORMATION

7-WEEK, 14-SESSION RESIDENCY

Includes 2-3 periods/sessions in school per week. One screenplay from each school is selected for staged reading in "SOUNDING OUR YAWP - An Evening of Spoken Word" at Stony Brook Southampton, and one finalist script will be selected for production.

Program Schedule:

Can be scheduled at school's convenience.

5-DAY OVERNIGHT RETREAT

Students complete the same curriculum as the residency over 5 consecutive days, in an overnight "retreat" format on the Stony Brook Southampton campus, culminating with staged readings of all student-written screenplays. Housing and meals are provided at the Southampton Fresh Air Home. The Retreat Program accepts up to 5 students per participating school (to be selected at school's discretion) for a total of 35 students. Students must be accompanied by one designated teacher/chaperone. Time is set aside daily for school homework. The Screenwriting Retreat is taught in conjunction with the Playwriting Retreat.

Program Schedule:

Second week of November.





POETRY

Middle School/High School

YAWP’s poetry program starts, as Yeats wrote, “where all ladders start / In the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart.” It aims to build on the latent interest in poetry that young people already have, using a series of creative writing activities. Our visiting poets will lead hands-on craft workshops in the seven powers of poetry: the image, the power of the particular, visitations of the random, juxtaposition/parataxis, repetition, sound, and form. Seven or 14-day residencies culminate in a friendly poetry slam. Participants compete in such categories as Instant Haiku and Group-Think Sonnet, which, while irreverently light-hearted, nonetheless require competence in poetical forms and strategies.

Whether it’s one session or 14, our emphasis is not so much generating something to say—our experience is that young people have plenty on their minds—as unleashing their abilities to express it powerfully through the focused exercises in our curriculum.

COURSE OFFERINGS & INFORMATION:

Offered as single-period sessions to be scheduled at school’s convenience throughout the year.

SINGLE SESSION, STAND ALONE WORKSHOP

One single class period workshop, 45 minutes.

7-SESSION RESIDENCY

Includes 7 single-period sessions, consecutive or non-consecutive, plus potential mini-poetry slam and E-zine publication

14-SESSION RESIDENCY

Includes 14 single-period sessions, consecutive or non-consecutive, plus poetry slam, E-zine publication and participation in “SOUNDING OUR YAWP - An Evening of Spoken Word” at the Stony Brook Southampton campus.

Program Schedule:

Can be scheduled at school’s convenience throughout the year. Final student poetry may be read in “SOUNDING OUR YAWP - An Evening of Spoken Word” at the Stony Brook Southampton campus, and may be eligible for publication in the YAWP Ezine. Video footage from readings may also be broadcast on the YAWP YouTube Channel.





FICTION

Middle School, High School



YAWP Fiction workshops provide students with 21st century reasoning and critical thinking skills as students hone their ability to express themselves on the page. Students are taught the essential elements of fiction writing, beginning with exercises to find their individual voices, and moving on to the crucial elements of character, dialogue, narrative and action, ultimately leading them to understand how to craft the arc of a story. Students also focus on clarity of expression and grammar. Workshops culminate in student readings and potential vodcasts, as well as publication in the YAWP E-zine — an online journal that serves as a résumé builder for many students as they apply for college or summer jobs.

COURSE OFFERINGS & INFORMATION:

Offered as single-period sessions to be scheduled at school's convenience throughout the year.

3-SESSION RESIDENCY

Includes 3 single-period sessions, consecutive or non-consecutive.

7-SESSION RESIDENCY

Includes 7 single-period sessions, consecutive or non-consecutive, plus potential Ezine publication

14-SESSION RESIDENCY

Includes 14 single-period sessions, consecutive or non-consecutive, plus potential Ezine publication and participation in "SOUNDING OUR YAWP - An Evening of Spoken Word" at Avram Theater on the Stony Brook Southampton campus.

Program Schedule:

Can be scheduled at school's convenience throughout the year. Final work may be read in "SOUNDING OUR YAWP - An Evening of Spoken Word" at the Stony Brook Southampton campus, and may be eligible for publication in the YAWP Ezine. Video footage from readings may also be broadcast on the YAWP YouTube Channel.





PERSONAL ESSAY

Middle School, High School

One of the most important skills any student needs today is the ability to craft a cogent, thoughtful essay. The essay is a crucial form for students as they prepare for the SAT writing and write their college entrance applications. Students also need essay-writing skills as they look for jobs, and indeed, for every aspect of their lives, from writing a clever eBay ad to blogging, making sales pitches and so forth. During the Personal Essay workshops, teaching artists provide students with challenging essay prompts that lead young writers to find their unique stories. Teaching Artists then work with students as they learn to craft their essays. Each student emerges from the sessions with a solid personal essay. Workshops culminate with student readings as well as potential vodcasts and/or publication in the YAWP E-zine – an online journal that serves as a résumé builder for many students as they apply for college or summer jobs.

COURSE OFFERINGS & INFORMATION:

Offered as single-period sessions to be scheduled at school's convenience throughout the year.

3-SESSION RESIDENCY

Includes 3 single_period sessions, consecutive or non_consecutive.

7-SESSION RESIDENCY

Includes 7 single-period sessions, consecutive or non-consecutive, plus potential Ezine publication.

14-SESSION RESIDENCY

Includes 14 single-period sessions, consecutive or non-consecutive, plus potential Ezine publication and participation in "SOUNDING OUR YAWP - An Evening of Spoken Word" at Avram Theater on the Stony Brook Southampton campus.

Program Schedule

Can be scheduled at school's convenience throughout the year. Final work may be read in "SOUNDING OUR YAWP - An Evening of Spoken Word" at the Stony Brook Southampton campus, and may be eligible for publication in the YAWP Ezine. Video footage from readings may also be broadcast on the YAWP YouTube Channel.





SUMMER WORKSHOPS

Ages 13 – 18

YAWP Summer Workshops pair professional writers with middle and high school students for 4-day workshops in playwriting and creative writing. Scholarships are available. YAWP summer students have the added benefit of being on campus during the acclaimed Southampton Writers conferences, whose faculty members include award-winning authors, playwrights, poets and screenwriters of the first rank. These adult-level professional conferences feature a rich schedule of readings, presentations, seminars and electives, some of which are open to YAWP students on a limited basis. Select student work from the YAWP Summer Workshops may be eligible for publication in the YAWP ezine, and video footage from readings may be broadcast on the YAWP YouTube channel.

Program Schedule:

YAWP Summer Workshops run 10AM – 3 PM, Monday-Friday for one week in July, concurrent with Session 1 & 2 of the Southampton Writer's Conference.

THE YAWP CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP



The YAWP Creative Writing Workshop is the offspring of the acclaimed Southampton Writers Conference and brings young adults into the creative world of working writers. This workshop allows young poets, essayists and storytellers to discover and explore new talents and develop existing ones. By week's end, students will have a body of work to submit or publish and will participate in a final reading open to the public.

THE YAWP SUMMER PLAYWRITING WORKSHOP

The YAWP Summer Playwriting Workshop is led by professional teaching artists who guide students through four days of concentrated instruction in the process of writing a short, two-character play. The final day is devoted to presentation in rehearsed reading format of the participating students' work. The reading will be open to the public.

Application details can be found online at:

http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/southampton/mfa/yawp_summer.shtm





YAWP FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION

Teaching Artist Biographies



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TEACHING ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

ROBERT REEVES (Director, MFA in Writing and Literature) is the author of two critically acclaimed novels, both published by Crown, as well as short fiction, essays, and literary criticism. Kirkus Review hailed *Doubling Thomas* as "a zesty, classy original," and Patricia Holt of the *San Francisco Chronicle* called *Peeping Thomas* "funny, disturbing, and brilliant." Reeves, director of the Southampton Writers Conference, has also taught writing at Harvard and Princeton.

CARLA CAGLIOTI Associate Director, MFA in Writing and Literature
Carla Caglioti is the founding Associate Director of the Stony Brook Southampton MFA in Writing and Literature as well as a longtime associate of the Southampton Writers Conference. She is also an Assistant Dean at Stony Brook Southampton. Caglioti has a BA in English Literature and Writing, an MS in English Education, and is a doctoral candidate in English Literature. Her dissertation focuses on the rise of the field of creative writing in higher education. Her interests in writing and literature range from Old English riddles to the influence of technology on the writing process (from the quill to the computer).

EMMA WALTON HAMILTON (YAWP Executive Director/Playwriting Co-Director) is a theater professional and arts educator, as well as a best-selling author and editor. A co-founder of Bay Street Theatre in Sag Harbor, she served as Co-Artistic Director and Director of Education and Programming for Young Audiences there for seventeen years, spearheading the Young Playwrights Program in area schools, as well as Kidstreet, the Theatre's performance series for young audiences. She has written 20 children's books in partnership with her mother, actress Julie Andrews, as well as her own book, *Raising*

Bookworms: Getting Kids Reading for Pleasure and Empowerment. She serves as Editorial Director for The Julie Andrews Collection publishing program, and as Director of Stony Brook Southampton's Children's Literature Conference and Co-Director of the Southampton Playwriting Conference.

WILL CHANDLER (YAWP Program Director/Playwriting Co-Director) is an American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) Nicholl Fellowship screenwriter, Chandler was formerly the Education Director for Bay Street Theatre in Sag Harbor where he taught, administered and expanded the theatre's education programs. He has sold scripts and worked on assignment for a number of studios and independent producers, including Sony Pictures and actor Russell Crowe. He has also been a story analyst/script doctor for CBS, Viacom, Harpo Productions, New World Pictures and private clients. As Director of Development for Green-Epstein Productions, Chandler worked on dozens of projects for ABC, CBS, NBC and HBO.

WILLIAM BURFORD's (YAWP Producer) "legit" career as a stage director eventually brought him to Sag Harbor, where he served as producer and general manager for Bay Street Theatre. He has directed for other nationally recognized play development venues, including the Preston Jones, Stages Repertory, Edward Albee and New Harmony programs. A director and instructor at Stony Brook's West Campus since 2004, he now teaches playwriting for the MFA in Writing and Literature on the Southampton and Stony Brook Manhattan campuses. His honors BA in philosophy at UT Austin was followed by an MFA in directing and a thesis on eastern European political comedy.





LOU ANN WALKER (YAWP Fiction and Personal Essay Director) is Editor-in-Chief of The Southampton Review, and a writer-in-residence and lecturer in the MFA Program in Writing and Literature at Stony Brook Southampton. She is also a screenwriter and journalist and has written for many publications, including *The New York Times Magazine*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *New York Magazine*, *Parade*, *People*, *O*, *The Oprah Magazine*, and *Esquire*. She's the author of a number of books, including the memoir, *A Loss for Words*, winner of the Christopher Award and a Book of the Month Club Editor's Choice, as well as a book on artist Roy Lichtenstein. Other honors include a Marguerite Higgins Distinguished Reporting Award, a New York Public Library Book of the Year, a National Social Studies Book Council Books of the Year Award and a National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Grant. She previously taught at Columbia and Marymount Manhattan College.

JULIE SHEEHAN (YAWP Poetry Director) is a 2008 recipient of a Whiting Writers' Award and author of the poetry collections *Orient Point*, which won the Barnard Women Poets Prize, and *Thaw*, winner of the Poets Out Loud prize from Fordham University. Other honors include the Elizabeth Matchett Stover Award from Southwest Review, the Robert H. Winner prize from Poetry Society of America, and, from *Paris Review*, the Bernard F. Connors prize. Her poems have appeared in numerous magazines and anthologies, including *Parnassus*, *Kenyon Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Yale Review*, *The Best American Poetry* and *180 More: Extraordinary Poems for Every Day*, and the anthologies *Seriously Funny: Poems About Love, God, War, Art, Sex, Madness, and Everything Else* and *Poem in Your Pocket*. Her third collection, *Bar Book: Poems & Otherwise*, was published by W.W. Norton.

ANNETTE HANDLEY CHANDLER (YAWP Screenwriting Director) is the Director of the Southampton Screenwriting Conference and teaches Screenwriting through the MFA Writing & Literature program. She has produced films for Paramount Pictures, Disney, PBS, ABC and CBS. Among them, the 2001 Emmy Award winning *Ansel Adams: A Documentary* directed by Ric Burns. A former literary agent and ABC programming executive in Los Angeles, Handley Chandler taught screenwriting at UCLA and Pepperdine University. Locally, she has written, directed and produced Plum TV's documentary on vintner/sculptor Walter Channing. She writes fiction and has been published in numerous publications including the *East Hampton Star*, *The Southampton Press* and *HamptonStyle Magazine*.

DIANA GALLAGHER (YAWP Administrative Associate) holds an MFA in Writing and Literature from Stony Brook Southampton. In her tenure with YAWP, she has taught playwriting, fiction, poetry, and personal essay. Her sports-related essays have been published internationally, and she has just completed her first novel, *Mexico*.

ADRIENNE C. UNGER
Administrative Coordinator, MFA in Writing and Literature
Adrienne C. Unger received her BA in English/Creative Writing and Literature from Long Island University, Southampton, and her MFA in Creative Writing from George Mason University. Her work for arts and publishing organizations includes stints at the Associated Writing Programs, the Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre Foundation, and Crain Communications Inc. Formerly a freelance writer for various trade and specialty magazines, Unger also worked for the Johns Hopkins Children's Center and the Stony Brook University Humanities Institute.

YAWP Teaching Artists are all professional writers and/or educators, and members of Stony Brook Southampton's esteemed MFA in Writing and Literature faculty or student body.





YOUNG AMERICAN WRITERS PROJECT

PROGRAM	LEVEL	COURSE OFFERINGS / OPTIONS				
		1 Session	3 Sessions	7 Sessions	14 Sessions	Retreat
Playwriting	HS/MS	-	-	-	\$5,400	\$3,000
Screenwriting	High School	-	-	-	\$5,400	\$3,000
Poetry	HS/MS	\$500	-	\$1,800	\$3,000	-
Fiction	HS/MS	-	\$1,000	\$1,800	\$3,000	-
Personal Essay	HS/MS	-	\$1,000	\$1,800	\$3,000	-

Please Note:

* Schools selecting multiple offerings, or with more than one section per grade, may inquire about special pricing.

* Courses may also be custom designed to accommodate specific school needs or fit within school requirements.

FOR DETAILS, PLEASE CONTACT:

Will Chandler, Program Director

Young American Writers Project

Stony Brook Southampton

239 Montauk Highway

Southampton, NY 11968

Phone: 631-632-5030

Fax: 631-632-2576

E-mail: william.chandler@stonybrook.edu





YAWP Testimonials

"This is a program that gives young adults the license to bring power and authenticity to their natural voices. At an age when these students are dismissed as filled with 'raging hormones,' the YAWP folks turn this stereotype around and actually embrace this turbulence. The end result, through smart lesson planning, group critique, and a full-blown professional production, YAWP creates a genuinely transformative experience for young adults."

— Mark Tompkins, 8th grade English/Cultural History Teacher, The Ross School

"What an incredible experience to be able to explore your inner playwright! The course was inspiring and exciting. It was great to be able to communicate with others who loved to write."

— Emily Schlosser, 8th grade, Summer Playwriting Workshop

"YAWP really helped many kids, including me, get over a self-conscious mindset in the classroom."

— Jake Merrell, The Ross School

"When I look back on my four years of high school, I know for sure that YAWP was one of my most cherished experiences."

— Justin Reilly, Shelter Island School

"The YAWP Program was one of the best experiences that I had in my life."

— Alfred Pepushaj, Foreign Language Academy of Global Studies (FLAGS), Bronx, NY

"The YAWP Program was both beautiful and amazing. If I had a choice, I would go back in time continuously to retake the program again, a million times."

— Karl Santana, Foreign Language Academy of Global Studies (FLAGS), Bronx, NY





YAWP QUOTES FROM STUDENTS:

"This program is wonderful and expanded my horizons."

— Kye Vatash, Pierson High School (Sag Harbor, NY)

"The chance to experience, to write, to be surrounded by creative energy and grow with people is unlike any other. I got the chance to be myself and to learn about other points of view."

— Nicole Stanek, Westhampton Beach High School

"You're not going to get this amazing writing experience anywhere else."

- Alana Mercurio, Westhampton Beach High School

"The program is amazing."

— Curtis Jones, Foreign Language Academy of Global Studies (Bronx NY)

"It's a great program where you can learn a lot, express yourself in a non-judgemental space and still have fun."

— Lisa Kaasik, Shelter Island School

"This program is amazing. It is one of the best writing programs I've been involved in. I'm so thankful I was able to participate and discover my voice in this world."

— Gabby Cavanagh, Southampton High School

"YAWP is AMAZING, its a great program for people that love writing and love plays."

— Sam de Poto, Pierson High School (Sag Harbor, NY)

"YAWP Is An Ammazing Way To Expand Your Horizons And Explore Your Mind And Be Yourself In Your Writing."

— Jayneleen Castro, Foreign Language Academy of Global Studies (Bronx NY)

"YAWP Is the best way to enhance your skills in acting and play writing. At the same time It is fun and you create a family out of friends!"

— Melany Mercedes, Foreign Language Academy of Global Studies (Bronx NY)

"YAWP was a foundational experience for me as a creative thinker and writer. I was always excited to wake up early (no small feat, especially during the summer) and work in an inspired, passionate and supportive environment. I learned so much in so little time and would do it again in a heartbeat."

— Giulianna Reiley, Eastport South Manor

AND FROM TEACHERS:

"This program does amazing things for my students. The experience is more valuable than words can describe, and the effects are unendingly positive and long term for each and every one of them."

— Caitlin Dunne, Teacher at Foreign Language Academy of Global Studies (Bronx NY)

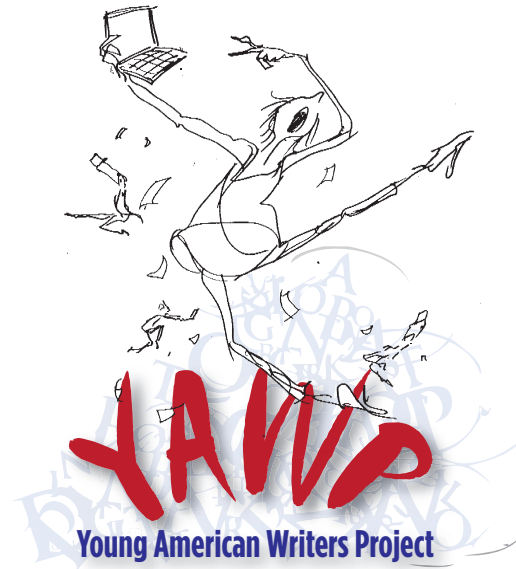
"YAWP was invaluable to me and my students! The curriculum was completely in line with the 7th grade ELA curriculum. It reinforced the writing skills students need and their knowledge of literary elements. I watched some of my struggling students succeed in ways that they haven't before. Thank you and looking forward to next year!"

— Logan Kingston, 7th grade teacher, Shelter Island School





FAQ'S



“We already have strong writing and/or arts programs at our school.

Why do we need YAWP?”

The ability to write well has never been more important than in today's highly competitive, technology-driven world. According to a recent survey by the National Commission on Writing for America's Families, Schools, and Colleges, writing is “the neglected 'R' in school reform.”

"While trying to improve math, science, and technology in our schools, we've neglected writing," says Commission member Gaston Caperton, president of the College Board, which founded the Commission. "Writing is a fundamental professional skill. Most of the new jobs in the years ahead will emphasize writing. If students want professional work in service firms, in banking, finance, insurance, and real estate, they must know how to communicate on paper clearly and concisely."

The YAWP Programs are unique in that they:

- ◆ Are **taught by professional writers** and members of the esteemed MFA in Writing and Literature faculty or staff at Stony Brook Southampton, many of whom are published and/or award-winning authors, playwrights, screenwriters or poets. YAWP students have the unique opportunity to supplement their school's existing curriculum and gain valuable writing, communications and life skills from gifted professionals, all of whom are actively working in the field.
- ◆ Afford students and schools the opportunity to develop a relationship with **Stony Brook Southampton**, the intimate eastern campus of a major research institution that is **ranked among the top one percent of all universities in the world.**
- ◆ Have **performance and publication opportunities** for students, from Playwriting Festivals and “Sounding Our YAWP” presentations to E-zines and vodcasts.
- ◆ Allow students to co-mingle and **collaborate with peers from other schools and districts** in a non-competitive, creative environment.
- ◆ Provide **new teaching resources and ideas** for classroom teachers, which they can use to supplement their existing programs and enrich their own portfolios.
- ◆ Provide participating students with **valuable material and additional credentials for their transcripts.**





How many students can participate in a YAWP program at one time?

The size of a YAWP class varies from school to school. YAWP programs have been taught to small, intimate classes as well as to entire grades at a time. The programs are naturally most effective when students receive individualized attention and training from the teaching artist(s), therefore they generally work best for groups of 12-25 students at a time. However, programs can be customized to reach as many students as possible and/or to suit an individual school's needs.

The program sounds great but doesn't fit with our schedule. Can you customize a version for our school?

Yes. We are happy to customize programs based on individual school needs. Simply call us to arrange a meeting so that we can explore the options together with the school's key administrators and or teacher.

Do you offer a discount if we sign up for more than one YAWP course?

Yes. Prices are adjustable based on the number of programs to which a school commits to over a given academic year. Scholarships may also be available to certain schools and students in under-served areas.

Can we pay for YAWP programs through BOCES?

Yes. YAWP has a relationship with Eastern Suffolk BOCES and payment may be arranged through the Arts in Education division.

Which students benefit most from taking YAWP courses?

YAWP programs have been taught to students at all levels, from AP English to inclusion and at-risk groups. Often it is the student who has been struggling in the traditional academic environment who achieves the greatest learning curve and success with the "outside the box" approach the programs provide. Naturally, YAWP programs also provide students who have demonstrated serious interest in the arts and/or writing with additional support, new skills and unique opportunities for advancement.

Which classes do you recommend YAWP programs be placed in?

YAWP programs work best as enrichment to Creative Writing, English, Theater/Drama, Language Arts and Communications classes. They have also been offered in Social Studies, Public Speaking, and other programs, and even as electives. The latter placement tends to be the least effective, as YAWP programs are concentrated, often involve homework and work best when students are additionally motivated by the prospect of their program participation influencing their overall grade at the end of the term.

Do YAWP programs require students to do homework?

Yes. Generally speaking, any of the programs that are more than one workshop include some form of homework as well as in-class writing assignments. Full residencies include quite a bit of homework, as class time is focused mainly on exploring the principles of writing and support/feedback for the re-writing process. This necessitates that the bulk of the writing (of a final play, screenplay, essay etc.) be accomplished outside of class time.





How much participation is expected from the classroom teacher in a YAWP program?

The participating classroom teacher is integral to the program's success. He/she is responsible for:

- ◆ Preparing students for participation in the program prior to its commencement
- ◆ Serving as the primary liaison and facilitating communications between the school and YAWP administrators and teaching artists
- ◆ Maintaining classroom discipline and order
- ◆ Facilitating permission slips, and enrollment and evaluation forms
- ◆ Organizing any associated field trips, buses, etc.
- ◆ Assisting with the copying and distribution of homework materials
- ◆ Monitoring and assessing students' homework
- ◆ Arranging audition and rehearsal spaces and schedules at the schools for performance components

Of equal importance is the classroom teacher's role as program advocate and participant in the classroom during and surrounding the workshop sessions. YAWP Teaching Artists welcome teacher input, participation in exercises and feedback. When a class is especially large, the group may be divided into sections for reading and feedback on the students' work, with the classroom teacher partnering the teaching artists so as to maximize the opportunities for individualized support.

I understand that YAWP programs operate under a philosophy of non-censorship. Our school's code of conduct prohibits the use of inappropriate language on campus. Will the program encourage our students to violate this code in any way?

Non-censorship is fundamental to the success of the YAWP programs. We believe that creativity cannot thrive in an environment of restriction—human beings, regardless of age or experience, are usually unwilling to express their innermost ideas or feelings if they feel at risk of being censored. The best, most effective writing has at its core a personal perspective and truth that requires tremendous courage to cultivate and express. We therefore use an approach of “How?” and “Why?” with students, especially when providing feedback to their work, as opposed to “Can’t” or “Shouldn’t”. Students who have been tentative about writing often feel liberated by this approach, and may initially over-react by testing the waters. At this point, there is always a discussion about what is gratuitous versus what is earned when it comes to creative expression, a discussion that continues at every opportunity throughout the creative process. We find that this helps students to consider and define for themselves what is the best, most effective and truest way for them to convey their point or message. We emphasize that our non-censorship policy to students is limited to the confines of YAWP classroom, and does not extend to or advocate violating a school or family code of conduct.



Students' Plays Will Get Full Treatment at Avram

Publication: *The East Hampton Press & The Southampton Press*
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Grant Kusick and Celia Joy Gianis in "The Cleansing," written by Stephen Puckett of Pierson High School.

As the culminating event of the fall semester of the new Young American Writers Project (YAWP) at Stony Brook Southampton, a festival of short plays written and performed by high school students from area schools will be presented at the Avram Theater.

"Dramatic writing and production skills give young people unparalleled lessons in communication and collaboration," Executive Director Emma Walton Hamilton said in a statement this week. "They build confidence and have a direct impact on young people's ability to become engaged and compassionate citizens in later life."

This project represents a wonderful synergy between all the creative disciplines and values about which I am passionate."

The program is affiliated with Stony Brook Southampton's master of fine arts degree program in writing and literature. Participants include students from Bridgehampton, Pierson in Sag Harbor, Southampton, Eastport South Manor, and the Foreign Language Academy of Global Studies (FLAGS) in the Bronx, as well as physically challenged students sponsored by the Southampton Fresh Air Home.

Saturday's presentation represents the collaboration between student playwrights, actors and designers who have been taught and mentored by theater and writing professionals.

"When we go into schools, we work closely with classroom teachers as we convey the basic elements of dramatic writing," Program Director Will Chandler added. "Learning dramatic writing is a great way to improve overall writing skills, but what we're really teaching them is that each student has a 'voice,' and we want to hear it."

Professional directors stage the plays, which encompass a variety of genres—from comedies to dramas—with subject matter drawn from the students' own lives.

The Young American Writers Project is dedicated to mentoring middle and high school students in the development of creative expression and critical thinking through writing; the program is an integral part of Stony Brook Southampton's commitment to its community and to the next generation of readers and writers. YAWP programs send professional writers and teaching artists into classrooms to lead workshops in a wide



array of writing disciplines, including playwriting, screenwriting, poetry, personal essay and fiction.

More than 100 students participated in the inaugural YAWP High School Playwriting Residency and Retreat this fall. Over the course of two months, students explored the basic elements of dramatic writing: how to develop ideas, characters, themes, dialogue and scenes. At least one play from each participating class was then selected for production in the festival.

The Young American Writers Project is run by Ms. Walton Hamilton and Mr. Chandler. Ms. Walton Hamilton is a bestselling children's book author, editor and arts educator. A co-founder of Bay Street Theatre in Sag Harbor, she served as the theater's coartistic director, and subsequently director of education and programming for young audiences for 17 years.

Mr. Chandler, an American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) Nicholl Fellowship screenwriter, also served as education director and as a teaching artist for Bay Street. He has written a number of screenplays for clients ranging from Sony Pictures to actor Russell Crowe and has been a story analyst/script doctor for ABC, CBS, NBC, Viacom and HBO, among others.

For curriculum development and program design, the YAWP administrators drew on the strengths of the Stony Brook Southampton MFA faculty, including novelist and MFA Director Robert Reeves; recent Whiting Award-winning poet Julie Sheehan; best-selling memoirist and editor-in-chief of *The Southampton Review*, Lou Ann Walker; and screenwriter and Emmy Award-winning producer Annette Handley Chandler.

Mr. Reeves said in the same statement, "In this, our second full semester of YAWP, we're beginning to see a range of creative expression that is truly astonishing. On the same Avram stage, within a single year, we can now present creative work from young playwrights in middle school, and from those in secondary schools, and then on to the work of our new undergraduate Performance Lab, to the new emphasis on playwriting at the master's level, and finally to commissioned work from the most distinguished playwrights in the country. These are wonderful developments for our campus and for arts education on the East End."

The YAWP High School Playwrights Festival will be presented on Saturday, December 12, at 7 p.m. in the Avram Theater. Tickets for the performance are free. For reservations and more information, e-mail william.chandler@stonybrook.edu.

The Avram Theater is located in the Fine Arts Building on the campus of Stony Brook Southampton, 239 Montauk Highway in Southampton.

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Local Students Plays Featured on Big Stage

Publication: *The Southampton Press*

By Michelle Trauring Dec 15, 2010 10:07 AM



Eastport South Manor Junior-Senior High School's Amelia Navarrete, center, debuted her play, "Anonymous," starring Amanda Johnson, left, and Steven Rathjen, right, on Saturday night as part of the Young American Writers Project.

Online dating is foreign territory to Amelia Navarrete, a senior attending Eastport South Manor Junior-Senior High School. Bridgehampton High School senior Gregorio Rojano does not know what it is like to be an ant on the run from an exterminator. And James Allen, a senior at Southampton High School, has never been homeless. But they can't say the same for the characters in their one-act plays.

On Saturday night, Amelia, Gregorio and James—as well as six other high school students—debuted their original plays at

the second annual showcase for the Young American Writers Project (YAWP), a workshop hosted by Stony Brook Southampton's MFA in Writing and Literature program. The event was held at the Avram Theater on the Shinnecock Hills campus.

The YAWP playwriting program is a two-month school residency that begins in September and sends teams of two instructors—who are usually professors or graduate students enrolled in the MFA program—into high school classrooms to guide students as they write two-actor plays over the course of 14 weeks. Goals of the program are to enhance the critical thinking skills of high school students while also helping them develop their own unique voices.

In January, the same program will kick off in local middle schools for seventh- and eighth-graders, culminating with their own showcase at the Avram Theater in March. One play from each school district is chosen to be produced on the big stage by a reading committee, explained YAWP Executive Director Emma Walton Hamilton. Students whose plays are not selected can then audition for the plays or work as the stage crew.

"Picking's always the hardest part," Ms. Hamilton said. "We had to choose from over 130 plays in the high schools—and so many of them are absolutely incredible."

The other six selected plays were written by: Alana Mercurio of Westhampton Beach High School; Gabrielle Gardiner and Gabe Burford of Pierson High School; Lisa Kaasik of Shelter Island High School; Aimee Morales of Southampton High School; and Maigan Monsanto of the Foreign Language Academy of Global Studies in the Bronx.

Five of the nine plays were plucked from a retreat program held at the Stony Brook Southampton campus during the first week of November. That is when the curriculum that is spread over the residency program is compressed into mere days.

"The residency program is impossible to begin with," said YAWP Program Director William Chandler. "Then the retreat program is really impossible. But because it's so





challenging, the parts of the students that want to get in the way of their creativity can't find their voice because there's no time for delay."

Students felt the pressure to produce in both programs, they said. In Gregorio Rojano's senior English class, he said he was falling behind while struggling to find a play idea—until one night while he was doing his chores at his home in Bridgehampton. "I had to do the dishes, and I saw a few ants around the sink," he recalled. "So, I started thinking about them and other reasons why ants would want to run away. Then it came to me: an exterminator."

Gregorio's play, "Los Ants," was the show's finale on Saturday and drew roaring applause from a student audience during its dress rehearsal last Friday afternoon. After such positive feedback, Gregorio said he's thinking about writing another play. "At first, I didn't think I'd like the program, but then I broke my arm and was spending less time playing soccer and basketball," he said. "In the end, I ended up really liking it, surprisingly."

Unlike Gregorio, Amelia Navarrete immediately took to the residency program in her senior theater class. Still, she also had difficulty coming up with her story line. "I knew I wanted to write about a couple, but I was over the typical high school scene—so I started thinking about online dating and a way to spin it to make it comical," she said. "It's always seemed so funny to me."

And Amelia's outlook comes across in her play, "Anonymous," where she hooked up her two high school characters—who kept their identities hidden—through an online dating service, only to have them meet in person and realize they were ex-flames. "The play is all about the nervousness of a first date. Anyone can relate to that," she said. "Kids in high school put up a front of being put together, but, really, everyone's just waiting for that something."

Amelia's and Gregorio's comedies were in the company of several plays with heavy subject matters, including James Allen's "Not Too Far From Home," an act written completely in rhyme that watches a rich, snobby man pass by and judge a homeless kid on the street. James, who also had his play picked for last year's YAWP showcase, said he was inspired after hanging out under a bridge in Sag Harbor, where he met a group of homeless people.

"Poetry has always been my forte, so I decided to give it a shot with YAWP," he said. "When I finish a piece, I feel completely detached from the world and everything in it. It's just me. Who I am is my words, and all I'm ever trying to do is find my voice."

YAWP is funded by donors, foundations and local governments, as the school district fees do not cover the entire cost of the program. Both Ms. Hamilton and Mr. Chandler said they are hopeful that the workshops will continue to grow in popularity. "I hear so much about how teens have checked out, how they're constantly texting and cocooned to the world," Mr. Chandler said. "But what I see is that they're clued in. They know more about how to be in 2010 than anyone. That's what the plays show—they comedies, dramatic or angry. That's their voice."





Young American Writers Project Playwrights Festival stages plays by local students at Stony Brook Southampton

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By Colleen Reynolds Mar 16, 2010



A pair of fire-discovering cavemen, the proverbial horse and bartender from the oft-rehashed jokes, and deer are among the characters to leap from the imaginations of local middle school students to the stage at Stony Brook Southampton's Avram Theater this Friday and Saturday, March 19 and 20.

Costumes and set design will be kept to a minimum so that the students' playwriting and acting can take center stage in a series of eight short plays, a culmination of this year's Young American Writers Project (YAWP), created and sponsored by Stony Brook Southampton's Master in Fine Arts degree program in writing and literature.

Schools to be represented at the YAWP Middle School Playwrights Festival this weekend include the Bridgehampton, Tuckahoe, Shelter Island and Ross schools, Sag Harbor's Pierson Middle School and Manorville's Eastport South Manor Junior-Senior High School.

YAWP's aim is to mentor secondary school students in the development of creative expression and critical thinking through writing by offering workshops in such disciplines as playwriting, screenwriting, poetry, personal essay and fiction led by professional writers and teaching artists.

"The goal is to create a safe space where, over the course of eight weeks, kids can really let their hair down and their authentic voices shine through," explained Emma Walton Hamilton, executive director of YAWP. "Often it is the student who has been challenged academically who surprises himself—and everyone else—by breaking through."

The shows are short, but genuine; amateur, but awe-inspiring.

"These plays are an incredible window into our future," Ms. Walton Hamilton said. "They offer an uncensored look at what the next generation is thinking, feeling, grappling with. They are sophisticated, funny, moving and ultimately extremely life affirming."

Nearly 200 adolescents participated in this winter's two-month playwriting residency, exploring the elements of dramatic writing. Each student penned a 10-minute, one-act play, and Saturday's octet of shows represents the selection of one play from each class.





The student work spans a variety of genres, including comedies, dramas and lyrical fantasies.

The Pierson Middle School play demonstrates how two cavemen use the discovery of fire to elevate their positions in their community. Three plays by Ross students address: the notion of whether or not the horse and bartender jokes are a sign of intolerance; two girls plotting to deceive their parents about attending a party; and a boy falling down a rabbit hole, where he finds a young girl dusting sunflowers as a way of “cleaning the global conscience.”

The Bridgehampton piece revolves around a “cool” boy dating a “nerdy” girl on a dare and then discovering there is more to her than meets the eye. Tuckahoe students wrote about a young dog that must decide if he will abandon his beloved stuffed animal friend in favor of a real friend. And students from Shelter Island explored how a tagged deer and untagged doe might confront their judgments about each other. While the personal essay component of the young writers program is still being developed, YAWP plans to publish an “e-zine” of student work next month, with plays as well as works of fiction and poetry created by local students.

Meanwhile, Southampton Intermediate School has already signed up for YAWP offerings in fiction and poetry, which commenced this month for eighth-graders. Will Chandler, program director for the middle school Young Playwrights Festival, explained that many adults consider younger generations to be oblivious to their surroundings, absorbed in an e-bubble of iPhones and other gadgets. But he maintains that young people are actually very “tuned in” to the world—which is especially evident in their writings.

“There are people who express dismay about our future, but I think our future is going to be fine,” Mr. Chandler said. “We just have to listen ... Adults always tell younger people, ‘We know more than you do,’ but we don’t know more about being 13-year-olds than they do.”

This is the second year of the YAWP shows at Stony Brook Southampton; Mr. Chandler and Ms. Walton Hamilton ran a similar program, tailored exclusively to playwriting, in previous years at Sag Harbor’s Bay Street Theatre.

“We are teaching the elements of effective, dramatic writing that can carry over to the future,” Mr. Chandler said. “Some of these kids may never write another play, but they will hopefully have found their own voice.”

The Young American Writers Project (YAWP) Middle School Playwrights Festival will present local students’ plays in two free performances at Stony Brook Southampton’s Avram Theater this weekend: a matinee performance on Friday,

March 19, at 11 a.m., and a Saturday evening performance on March 20 at 7 p.m. Tickets may be reserved at <http://shopsb.fsa.sunysb.edu/index.php?productID=880>.

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