

An on-line course

◀ Lynne Pardoe tells us about the joys of an on-line writing course

I FOUND Leigh Michael's online writing course by accident. I liked her website and teaching style and thought I'd try it and I'm delighted I did.

The course, *Romance Writing*, lasts ten weeks and is offered entirely online, so you can take part any time, any day, and from any place. Groups are kept small, to facilitate discussion.

There are four separate activities, which all members take part in.

- The blackboard, a chatty message board
- The lounge, a chat room where we all meet each week at a mutually convenient time
- The notebook, to which you submit 750 words per week
- The booth, where you submit 2,500 words twice during the course.

Each week a lesson is posted on different aspects of the craft of writing and notebook submissions can follow. I submitted troublesome scenes from my manuscripts.

Booth submissions are open and everyone is expected to read and comment on all work. Suggestions are given as to how to do this. To my surprise I learnt a lot by reading others' work. Notebook submissions are only seen by Leigh who comments individually.

Learning online proved a much better experience than classroom learning. You can work at your own pace and time and you can make all your mistakes in private! You can never forget what the teacher said, you can always go back over it or print it out. It's better than a correspondence course because email is faster than snail mail so you get help more quickly. It also helps to share problems with your classmates.

Leigh is very flexible in accepting the work we post in the notebooks and the booth. Her advice is usually right on the money.

But most importantly you learn how to put your work out there to be critiqued and not take the criticisms as personal attacks. We have to learn to disengage our egos and listen.

More at
www.leighmichaels.com or
www.writingclasses.com

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