**About this Course**

Great writing comes from great reading.

“Reading for Writers” is a workshop for writers who want to improve their skills by learning from the masters.

This is a reading- and discussion-based group. Over ten weeks we'll be reading four novels: *Heart of Darkness* (Joseph Conrad, 1902), *Loving* (Henry Green, 1945), *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* (John Le Carre, 1963) and *Clear* (Nicola Barker, 2005). We're staying in the twentieth century but moving between classic and contemporary, literary and more popular genres.

We'll be examining what makes these books work well as novels: comparing how different writers convey character, create suspense and depict setting; exploring varieties of structure in scenes and rhythm in chapters; trying to figure out how to make a beautiful sentence. But in addition, each of these novels is an exemplary model of something important to the art of fiction. The dialogue in *Loving* is renowned, for example—both plausible-sounding and weirdly eccentric. Nicola Barker writes in a highly idiosyncratic, very funny and personal voice, one that only seems casual. We’ll be looking in a focused way at what each novelist does best and what we can learn for them.

We’ll analyze the novels in depth from a writer’s perspective, breaking down the elements of fiction and setting out different techniques we can employ. You will be encouraged to bring your own experience and knowledge to the table so that we can all help each other improve. There will be some writing exercises to put what we are learning into practice.

While the course is ideal for writers with a little experience, it will suit anyone who wants to learn more about how fiction works.

**About the Instructor**

Damian Tarnopolsky has published two books: the novel *Goya's Dog* and the short fiction collection *Lanzmann and Other Stories*. His work has been nominated for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize, the Amazon.ca First Novel Award, the Journey Prize, the CBC Literary Award and other prizes. He has a PhD in English Literature, and has taught writing and literature at the University of Toronto and Humber College.

