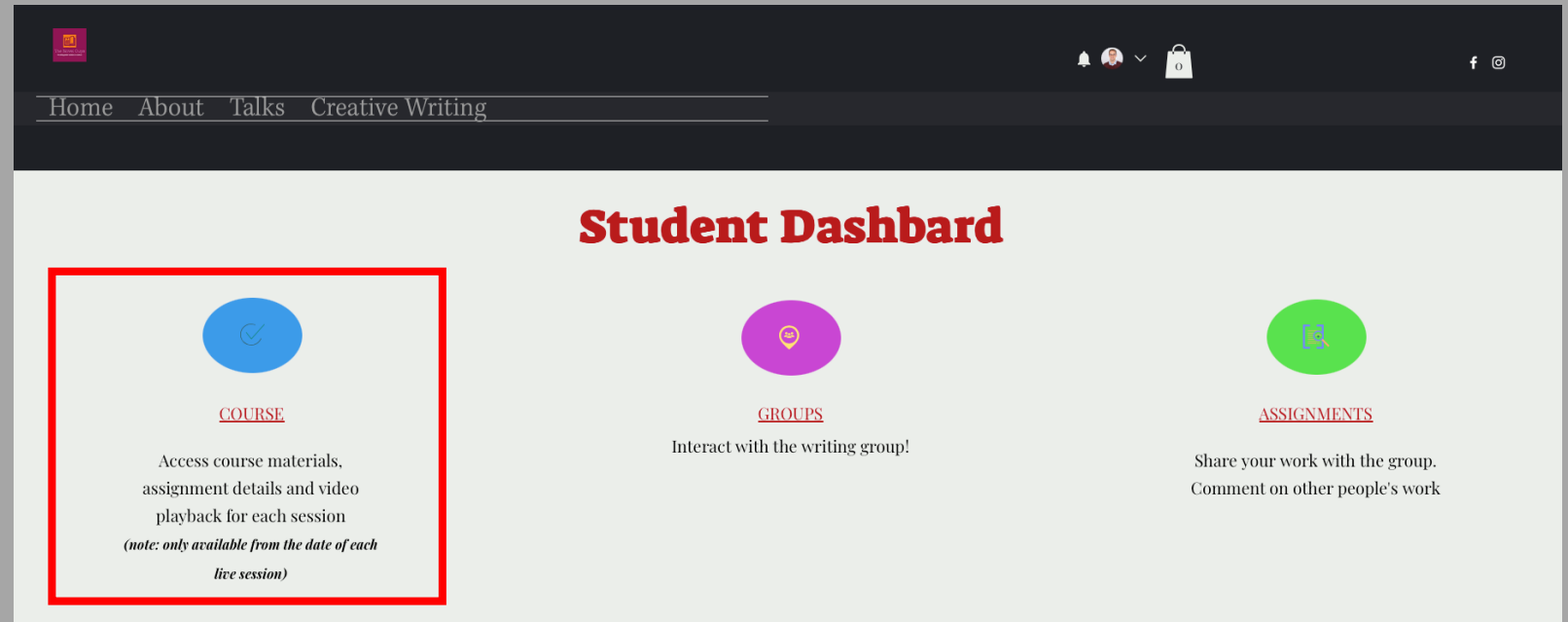
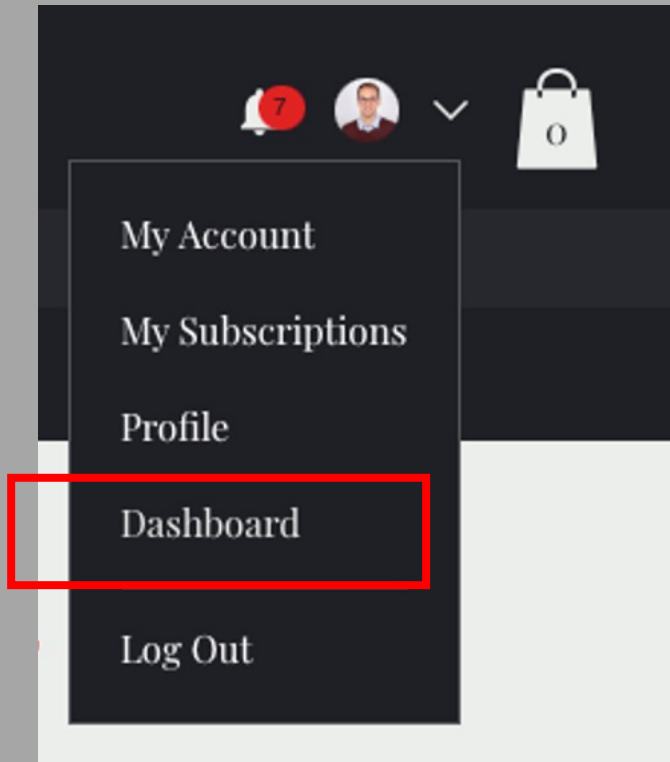


Genealogical Crime Mystery



Creative Writing Course





Sep 1, 2024 - Oct 31, 2024

Exploring Genealogical Crime Mysteries: A Beginner's Writing Journey

28

Participants

About

Over this seven week course you will learn how to write your own genealogical crime mystery story. You will be lead and guided by experienced author, Nathan Dylan Goodwin, through a range of practical sessions covering setting, characterisation, dialogue and weaving genealogy into your narrative. The course will have a live weekly session with modelling, examples, workshops and individual writing assignments. Nathan will give formative feedback each week and summative feedback on a final (up to) 3,000-word submission.

Instructors



Nathan Dylan Goodwin

[View Details](#)

Overview

Tue, Sep 3, 2024

Introduction to Genealogical Crime Mysteries: Setting the Sc

Tue, Sep 10, 2024

Crafting Compelling Characters

Tue, Sep 17, 2024

The Art of Setting: Bringing the Past to Life

Tue, Sep 24, 2024

Dialogue and Interactions

Exploring Genealogical Crime Mysteries: A Beginner's Writing Journey

Sep 1, 2024 - Oct 31, 2024

61 Days - 7 Steps

- Overview
- Tue, Sep 3, 2024**
0/1 steps
- Tue, Sep 10, 2024**
0/1 steps
- Tue, Sep 17, 2024**
0/1 steps
- Tue, Sep 24, 2024**
0/1 steps
- Tue, Oct 1, 2024**
0/1 steps

Members Chat

Exploring Genealogical Crime Mysteries: A Beginner's Writing Journey

Tue, Sep 3, 2024 > Introduction to Genealogi...

- Overview
- Tue, Sep 3, 2024**
0/1 steps
- Introduction to Genealogical Crime Mysteries: Setting the Sc
- Tue, Sep 10, 2024**
0/1 steps
- Tue, Sep 17, 2024**
0/1 steps
- Tue, Sep 24, 2024**

Introduction to Genealogical Crime Mysteries: Setting the Sc

Introduction to Genealogical Crime Mysteries: Setting the Scene

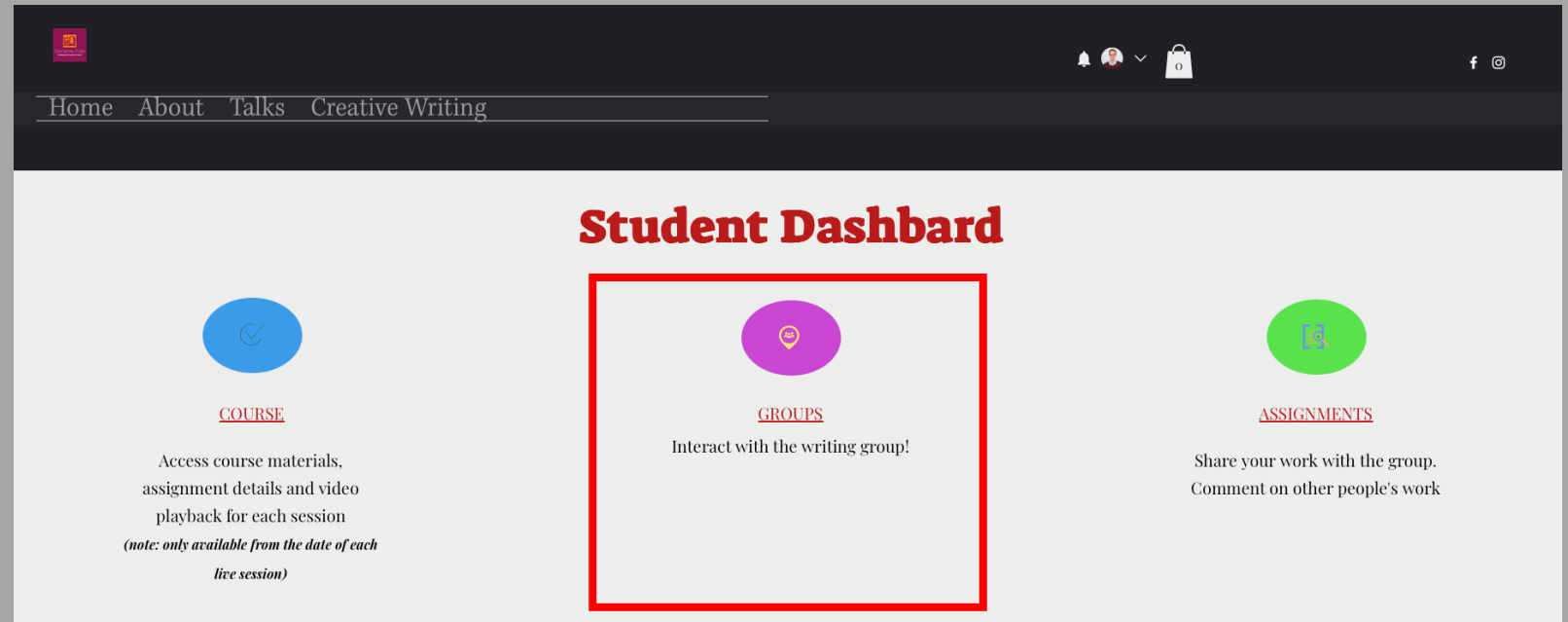
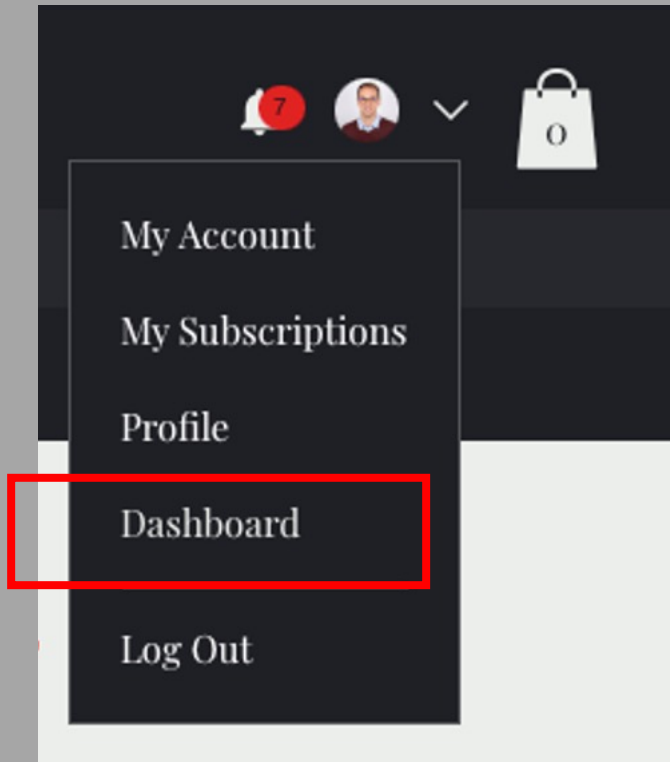
- Understanding the genealogical crime mystery genre
- Exploration of key elements of the genre
- Case Study. Small group discussion. Individual writing task
- Assignment: Write a brief outline of a genealogical crime mystery story
- Q&A

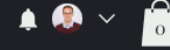
Assignment: To write an outline for your own genealogical crime mystery

- Can be entirely fictional, from your own family history research or something found in the archives
- Do some basic research on the 'story world' that allows you to expand on your central themes.
- Expand on your central theme(s). Who was murdered? Why? What was the missing artefact? Who faked their identity? Why?
- Try and read some fellow students work and offer construct criticism


Things to consider:



- Essential components of the genre
- Central theme (What is the family secret / hidden past?)





Groups Feed



 **Nathan Dylan Goodwin** 
8 hours ago · posted in Pilot Group



Hi everyone

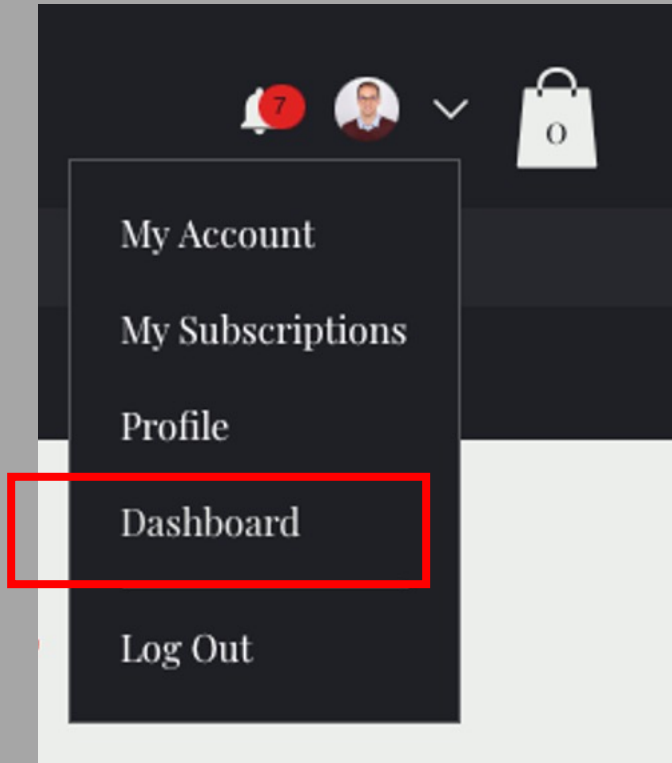
Loving the first assignments! I'll finish looking at them later today - heading out for a Novel Guys strategy brunch right now!

I'm working on a better place for your assignments. If anyone is available to check the 'Student Dashboard', then click 'Assignments' and upload a test document to the 'Week 2 Assignments' folder that would be great. Can you see and comment on my test doc? Thank you!

Nathan

My Groups

 **Pilot Group** 
Hidden · 30 members



A dark-themed user profile menu is shown. At the top, there is a notification bell icon with the number '7', a circular profile picture, a dropdown arrow, and a shopping bag icon with the number '0'. Below these are five menu items: 'My Account', 'My Subscriptions', 'Profile', 'Dashboard', and 'Log Out'. The 'Dashboard' item is highlighted with a red rectangular border.

7

0

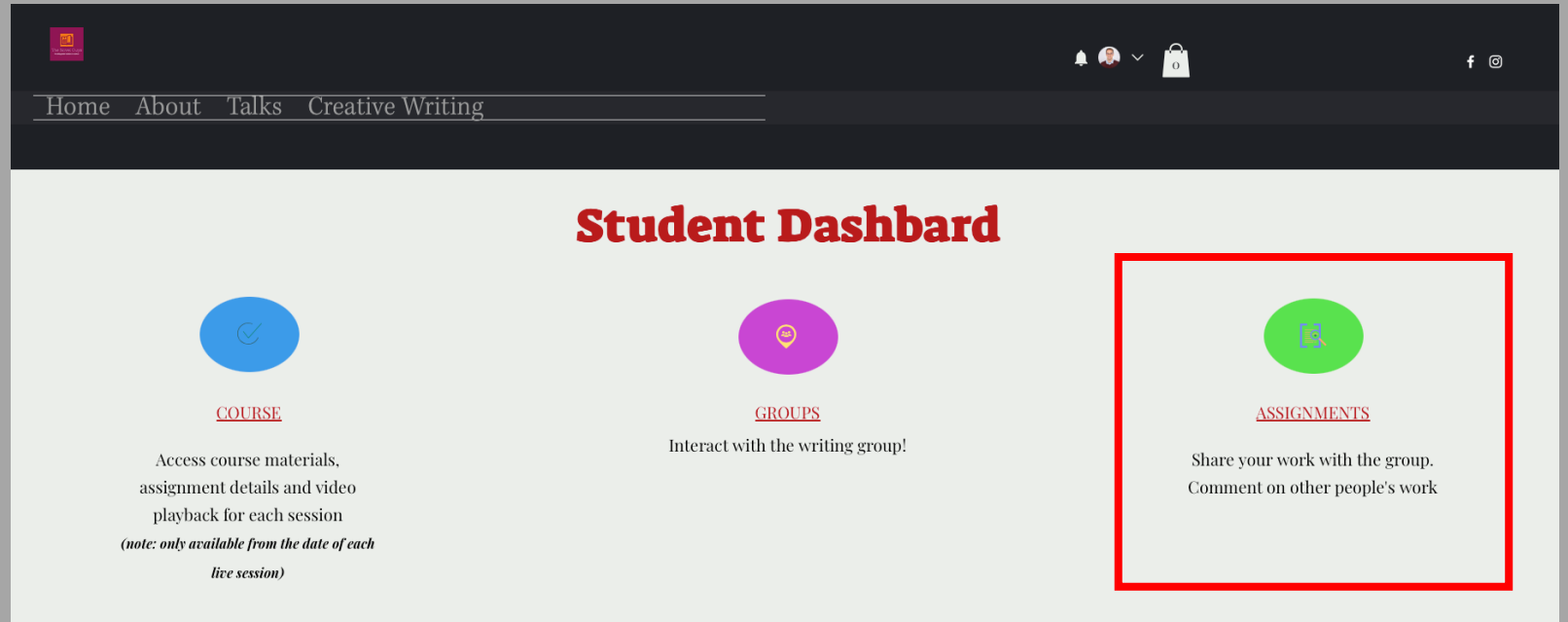
My Account

My Subscriptions

Profile

Dashboard

Log Out



The 'Student Dashboard' page features a dark header with a logo on the left and notification, profile, and shopping bag icons on the right. A navigation bar contains links for 'Home', 'About', 'Talks', and 'Creative Writing'. The main content area is titled 'Student Dashboard' in large red text. It contains three cards: 'COURSE' (blue icon), 'GROUPS' (purple icon), and 'ASSIGNMENTS' (green icon). The 'ASSIGNMENTS' card is highlighted with a red border. The 'COURSE' card includes a note: '(note: only available from the date of each live session)'.

Home About Talks Creative Writing

Student Dashboard

COURSE

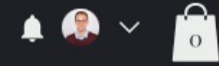
Access course materials, assignment details and video playback for each session
(note: only available from the date of each live session)

GROUPS

Interact with the writing group!

ASSIGNMENTS

Share your work with the group. Comment on other people's work




[Home](#) [About](#) [Talks](#) [Creative Writing](#)


[Categories](#) [All Posts](#) [My Posts](#)

Search





Choose a folder & upload





Week 2 Assignments 


Upload your work

 8


 2


Following 




Week 3 Assignments 

Upload your work

 0

 0

Following 



Week 2 Assignments

Sort by: Recent Activity

More Actions

Upload your work



Recent Activity

Test 2
lornapcowan

2

1

4



15



test
The Novel Guys

3

0

7



37m





Category

Week 2 Assignments



Show Guidelines



Posting as Nathan Dylan Goodwin

Give this post a title

140

Write your post here. Add photos, videos and more to get your message across.



GIF



Cancel

Publish

Session overview

Week 2 - Crafting Compelling Characters

- Review last week's assignment
- Creating relatable protagonists / antagonists
- Genealogist as Protagonist
- Developing character back stories
- Assignment: writing sketches for your main characters

Genealogical crime mystery outlines...

STELLA SANFORD – WEEK 1 WRITING ASSIGNMENT – 9-5-2024

Story World:

1. Where: State of Tennessee, USA – East Tennessee, Knoxville and Memphis.
2. When: 1940s and 2020s – World War II era and Modern DNA/Genealogist
3. Research/Background: From 1920s to 1950s – Georgia Tann was an American social worker and child trafficker who operated the Tennessee Children's Home Society (TCHS), an unlicensed adoption agency in Memphis, Tennessee. Tann used the home as a front for her black market baby adoption scheme from the 1920s to 1950. Young children were kidnapped and then sold to wealthy families, abused, or—in some instances—murdered.
 - a. <https://www.commercialappeal.com/story/life/2019/11/07/georgia-tann-adoption-scandal-before-and-after-lisa-wingate-judy-christie/4165494002/>

Central Theme:

1. Family Secret/Hidden Past – 1941 to 1945
 - a. At the beginning of WWII before Japan bombs Pearl Harbor and the USA enters the war, a young man elopes with a young woman from Eastern Tennessee, getting married by a justice of the peace. But the new groom doesn't disclose that he is still married to his first wife.
 - b. A few months later, the newly married couple has a child in a hospital in Knoxville. The baby died shortly after birth. The devastated couple move on to Memphis shortly before Japan bombs Pearl Harbor. The wife finds out she's having another baby right before the husband is drafted and shipped out to Europe. He is killed in action.
 - c. The wife and the second baby return to East Tennessee and discovers that her husband was a bigamist having never divorced his first wife.
2. Uncovering The Family Secret/Hidden Past – 2015-2020
 - a. ZB, a historical preservationist consultant, is hired to renovate and restore buildings on a college campus in Knoxville funded by a multi-million dollar donation from a recently deceased alumni.
 - b. In the midst of planning the work and doing preliminary site investigations, bones are discovered, and all work is stopped. The crime lab initially determines that these are baby bones. The bones are sent for DNA testing and ZB starts investigating the historical documents associated with the college. ZB learns of the Knoxville connections to TCHS and meets AX, a forensic genealogist who is also investigating the various TCHS' adoptions.
 - c. When the DNA profile from the bones is uploaded to GEDCOM, three possible first & second cousins are identified. ZB & AX goes to interview the cousins to find out the relationship between the cousins, the dead baby and the baby broker.

Genealogical Crime Mystery: Week 1 Assignment Paul Graham

Two murders thirty years apart reveal a multi-generational conspiracy to control valuable property and take it from a family that did not know they stood to inherit.

The Treasure and Foundations

- 1850s, two wealthy men—one in Georgia and the other in New York—form a business partnership, purchase a tract of land along the railroad in the young city of Atlanta.
- New York man was silent partner who never had children, but his sisters did.

Action Rising

- 1875, New York man dies, failed to mention the Atlanta property in his will and heirs didn't know about it.
- Atlanta owner, with his children, conspired to consolidate control of the property and not pay the New York heirs the money they were owed, forged the New York man's signature to keep up appearances of co-ownership.
- Atlanta family became political and business leaders; had goals to build a grand railroad depot on the partnership property. They did not want to share profits with others and were willing to do whatever was necessary to keep it that way.

Setting

- Atlanta, Georgia, 1870s to 1910s.
- Rebuilding after Civil War; forward-looking development era; expanding population; significant economic growth

Murder #1

- 1882, nephew of the New York partner found cryptic notes about Atlanta property.
- Traveled south to investigate but vanished shortly after his arrival.

Murder #2

- 1912, thirty years after disappearance, one of his nieces—who had heard the story her whole life—couldn't contain her curiosity and traveled to Atlanta to see if she could find information about her missing uncle
- A week after arriving, her body was found in a hotel room with a bullet hole in her chest.

Protagonist

- Police detective F.G. assigned to the case; the city's most successful detective; long-time hobby genealogist; had published a family history book.
- The case of the unidentified woman was his biggest brain teaser yet and drove him into single-minded pursuit familiar to seasoned researchers.

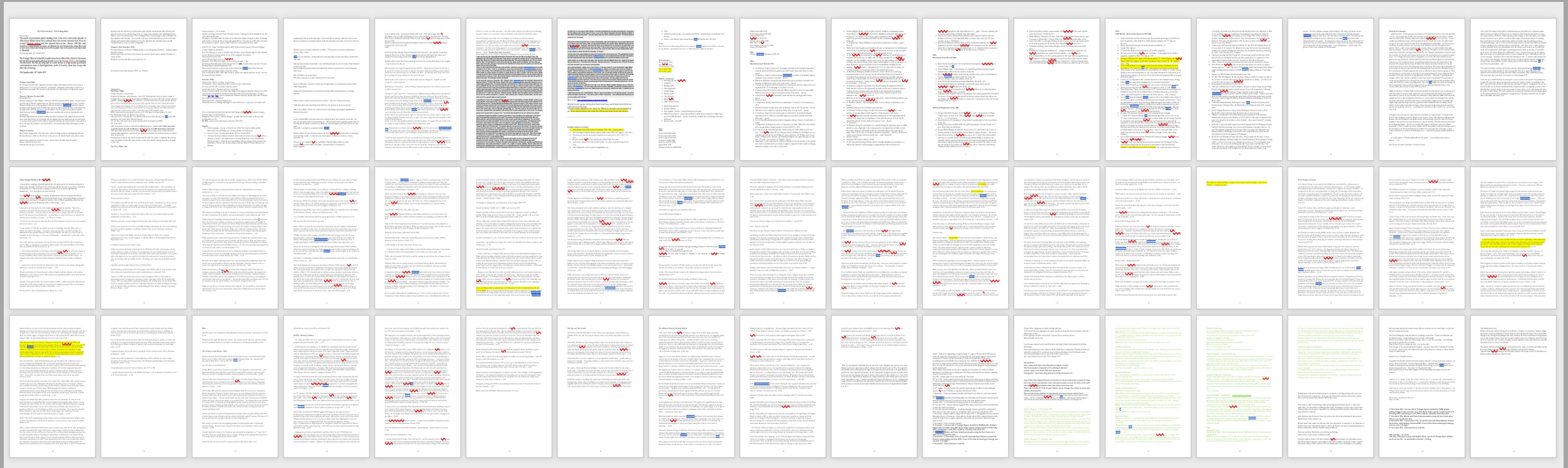
The Great Galveston Storm story

- next steps...



- Create a dedicated file for the story
- Look at reliable sources online
- Read as many factual books as I could
- Biographies / oral history crucial
- Visit locations if possible
- Don't discard anything yet!

Research!



Research!

1900 United States Federal Census for Francie Edmonson
 Texas > Galveston > Galveston Island > District 0142

TWELFTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES.
 SCHEDULE No. 1.—POPULATION.


State: Texas County: Galveston City, town, or village: Galveston Island Day of June, 1900: 1 Name of institution: Edna C. Davis Supervisor's District No.: 11 Examination District No.: 162

FAMILY NO.	PERSONAL DESCRIPTION	SEX	AGE	MARRIAGE	OCCUPATION	REMARKS	BIRTH		REMARKS
							MO.	DA.	
1	Francie Edmonson	F	10				1890	10	
2	Francie Edmonson	F	8				1892	8	
3	Francie Edmonson	F	6				1894	6	
4	Francie Edmonson	F	4				1896	4	
5	Francie Edmonson	F	2				1898	2	

Francie	0
Francie	1
Francie	0
At school	
At school	
Francie	0
Francie	0


Germany	Germany	Germany
Germany	Germany	Germany
Texas	Germany	Germany
Texas	Germany	Germany
Texas	Germany	Germany
Texas	Germany	Germany
Texas	Germany	Germany
Texas	Germany	Germany
0	Germany	Germany
Texas	Texas	Texas
Texas	Germany	Germany
Texas	Kentucky	Kentucky
2	Missouri	Kentucky
Texas	Texas	Missouri
Texas	Texas	Missouri
4	England	England
Texas	England	England
Texas	Missouri	Texas

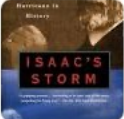
Research steps


 galvestonhistorycenter.org
<https://www.galvestonhistorycenter.org/research/1900>


1900 Storm | Galveston & Texas History Center


The hurricane that destroyed Galveston on September 8, 1900, is the nation's deadliest natural disaster. Although its death toll will never be known ...













 The 1900 Storm - Galveston, Texas
<https://www.1900storm.com>


The 1900 Storm - Galveston, Texas

Night of terror shaped island. A Galveston Daily News reporter in 1900 said the story of the Sept. 8, 1900, hurricane could never truly be written.

 Visit Galveston
<https://www.visitgalveston.com/blog>


History of The Great 1900 Storm in Galveston, TX

The Great Storm, as it is now called in history, struck Galveston on Sept. 8, 1900, claiming the lives of more than 10,000 and taking its place in infamy.

 History.com
<https://www.history.com/news/how-the-galveston-hurricane-became-a-legend>


How the Galveston Hurricane of 1900 Became ...

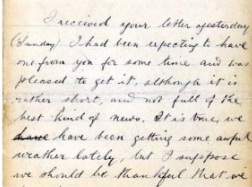
29 Aug 2017 — The deadliest natural disaster in American history remains the 1900 hurricane in the island city of Galveston, Texas.


 Galveston Historical Foundation
<https://www.galvestonhistory.org/news/the-1900-storm>


The 1900 Storm

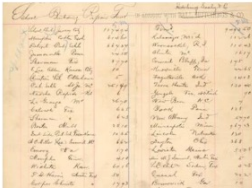
Galveston's 1900 Storm is one of the islands defining historical moments. It is the largest loss of life due to natural disaster in the U.S..


 Photographs

 Manuscripts

 Oral Histories

 Maps

 Recorded Deaths

 StoryMap

Research steps



Research steps



On the morning of Sunday, September 9, some bodies were buried where they were found in unmarked graves. Others were brought by wagons to various cotton warehouses on the Strand, which were used as temporary morgues. There people attempted to identify the bodies.

The following day, over 700 bodies were loaded onto barges where they were taken out to sea, weighted, and dropped overboard. The bodies eventually washed back on the beach.

By Tuesday afternoon, September 11, with the number of bodies growing astronomically, the Central Relief Committee decided to burn them in funeral pyres with the wreckage. All attempts of formal identification ended; **however, jewelry and other personal items removed from the bodies were made available for later identification.**

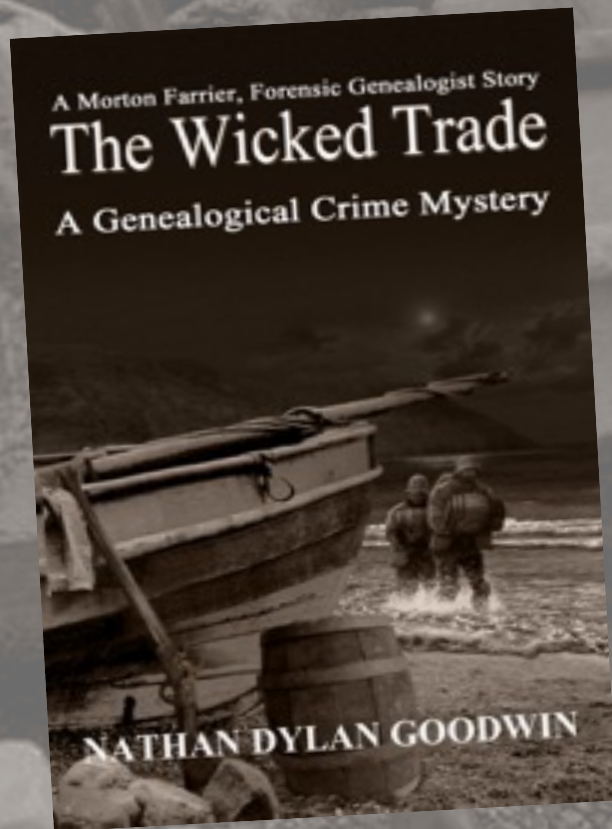
Plotting a genealogical crime mystery – Case Study

- **A murder.** Possibly someone killed just before storm hit. Body found among the storm victims. Detective suspicious.
 - **A missing person.** Someone disappears that night.
 - **A valuable artefact** that goes missing during the storm—presumed lost.
- We see bodies being loaded onto barges and buried at sea – one of these is relevant to the story somehow and washes back up on shore – identified by jewelry?
 - A child from the orphanage survives the storm – possibly saved by a mysterious woman from the women’s home. Child watches the storm roll in from the balcony?
 - The artefact is of German origin - perhaps the orphan is too, but is unaware of their heritage...
 - Someone goes missing that night but no sign of the body – possibly connected to the person who washed back up on shore?
 - Is the artefact a piece of jewelry?
 - Girl is outside of the city looking for answers to something connected to the story – can’t get back to warn the orphan because of the storm

Creating relatable protagonists and intriguing antagonists



Goodies versus baddies!



Goodies versus baddies!

"Sometimes villains feel self-doubt; sometimes they feel pity. And sometimes the good guy tries to turn away from doing the right thing..."

Stephen King, *On Writing*

Bad



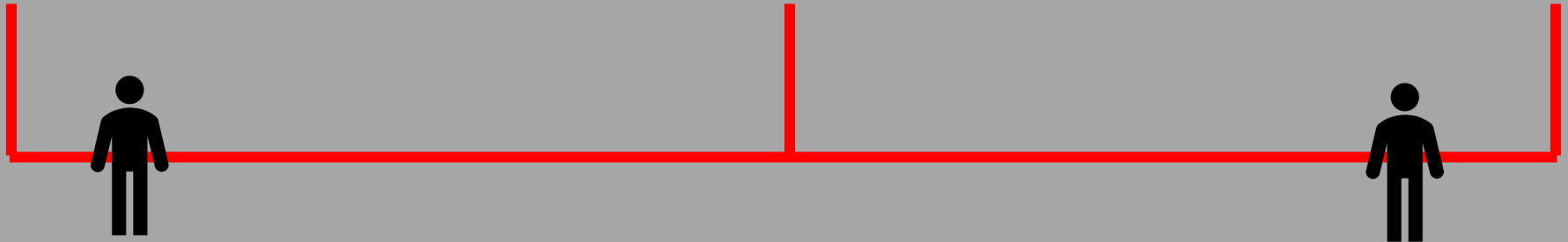
Good



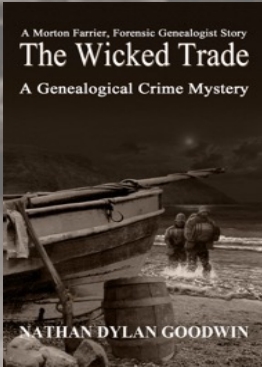
Goodies versus baddies!

Bad

Good



Goodies versus baddies!



Cast of lead characters: *(all fictional, but other real people are in the story)*

Present day narrative:

Morton Farrier – lead character / genealogist

Minor lead:

Phil Garrow – ‘bad’ (antagonist)

Past narrative:

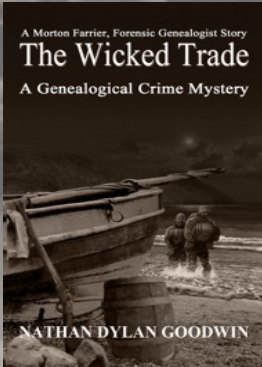
Samuel Banister – ‘good’ smuggler

Ann Fothergill - ‘good’ vagrant / apothecary / criminal

Minor lead:

Jonas Blackwood – Bow Street investigator (antagonist)

Goodies versus baddies!



Cast of lead characters: *(all fictional, but other real people are in the story)*

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Minor lead:

Jonas Blackwood – Bow Street investigator (antagonist)

90% of the story is shown from the perspectives of Morton Farrier, Samuel Banister and Ann Fothergill – all of them should be liked / empathised with by the reader

The Galveston Storm story – lead characters



Based on what you know about the Galveston Storm story, how many lead characters might you have in the past narrative?

What struggles / difficulties do they have that endear them to the reader? What mystery do they have in their life that is related to the story?

Who would be the antagonist(s)? What might their motivation be?

Would you have any other leads in the present day, or just your main genealogist character?

The Galveston Storm – lead characters



Based on what you know about this story, how many lead characters might you have?

What struggles / difficulties do they have that endear them to the reader?

Who are the antagonists?

Will you have any other leads in the present day, or just your main genealogist character?

Cast of lead characters:

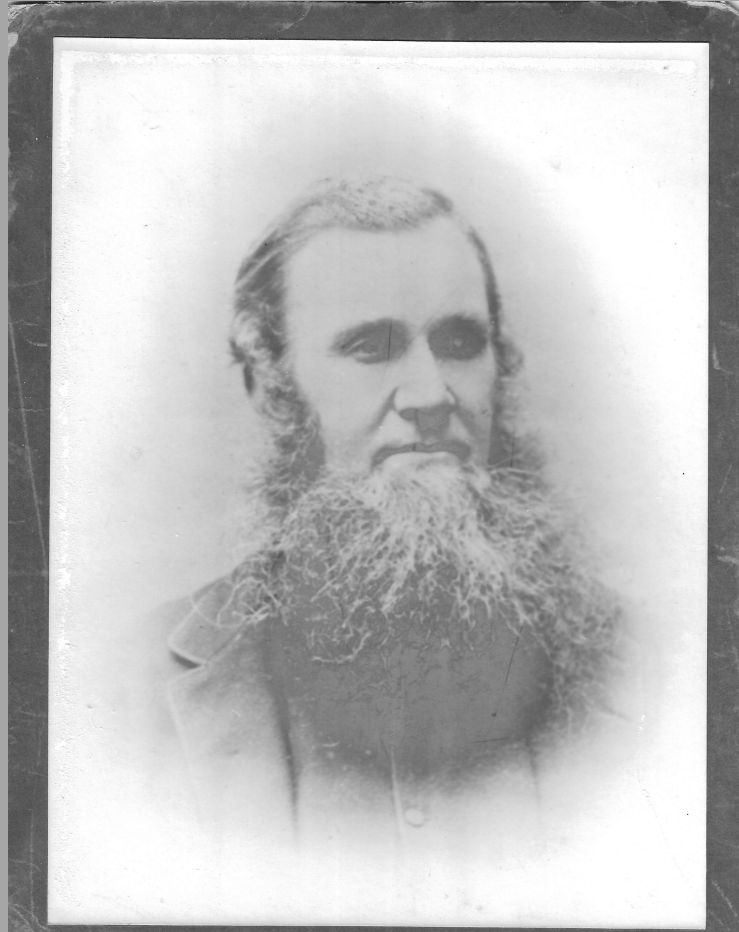
Present day narrative:

- Morton Farrier – lead character / genealogist (**mystery: working on an aspect of his own / wife's own genealogy**)

Past narrative:

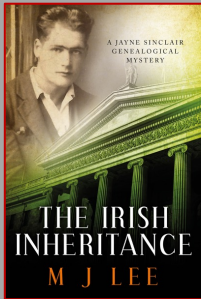
- Teenager / orphan male - 'good' (**mystery: birth parents / circumstances of birth**)
- Teenager / female trapped outside the city (**mystery: what was she doing / trying to find out outside of the city?**)
- Detective – 'good'. Trying to solve crime (**mystery: trying to solve a murder / unidentified body / stolen artefact**)
- Bad man – murderer / trying to find the artefact / jewelry (main antagonist) (**mystery: what's his motivation? How does he know about the artefact?**)

Using real people...

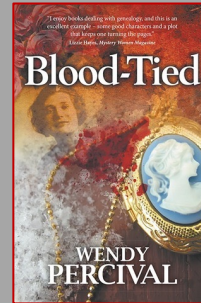




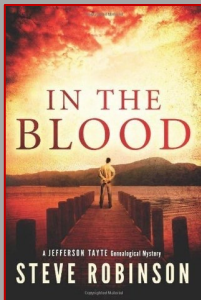
Genealogist as Protagonist



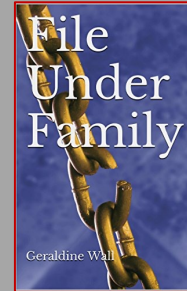
Jayne Sinclair – female, 40s, former detective, British, genealogist



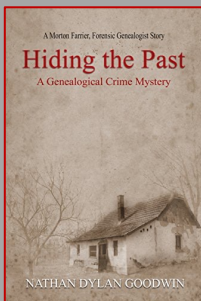
Esme Quentin – female, British, genealogist



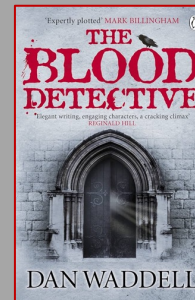
Jefferson Tayte – male, American, professional genealogist



Anna Ames – female, British, probate genealogist



Morton Farrier – male, British, 30s-40s professional genealogist



Nigel Barnes – male, British, genealogist

Genealogist as Protagonist



Genealogist as Protagonist

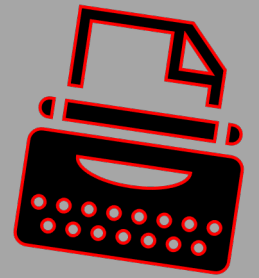
Basic elements to consider:

- Hobby genealogist or professional?
- Nationality? (where are cases based?)
- Gender / age / ethnicity
- Domestic situation

More detailed character points:

- Physical description
- Possible city / town / village they live – why here?
- Education background
- Interests outside of genealogy
- Significant past relationships
- Temperament
- Internal / external conflicts?
- Political?

Individual activity



- Start to think about your **main** genealogist character
- Jot down some ideas about them, starting with the basics, then move to more detail
- When your character has a choice about an aspect of their lives, try and think about **why** they have chosen it? i.e. where they live / hobbies / friendships / pets / car / vacations
- Try and make them likeable but well-rounded and not perfect. What are their flaws?
- Is there some mystery in their own life? (adopted / unknown parent / missing child?) – **you don't need to 'solve' this by the end of this story!**

- Hobby genealogist or professional?
- Nationality? (where are cases based?)
- Gender / age / ethnicity
- Domestic situation

- Physical description
- Possible city / town / village they live – why here?
- Education background
- Interests outside of genealogy
- Significant past relationships
- Temperament
- Internal / external conflicts?
- Political?



Genealogist as Protagonist



Assignment



To write a sketch for your main characters

- Start with your genealogist in the modern day
- Then work your way through your lead characters in the past narrative – use research for the time period to help you
- Include basic information and then elaborate to make them rounded characters. Try and include some conflict and mystery for each of them. **(Remember that the mysteries in the past narrative need to be wrapped up by the end but not necessarily for your main character in the modern day)**
- Present it how you like. This could be a report or in note form or subheadings or full sentences
- Try and read some fellow students work and offer constructive criticism
- Name your document ***your name week2***
- Upload by Sunday if possible


Things to consider:

- Where do your characters sit on the continuum between 'good' and 'bad'?
- How will you get readers to like / empathize with your main characters?
- What mystery does each character have to offer the story?
- What internal / external conflicts do your characters have?




Home About Talks Creative Writing

Student Dashboard




COURSE

Access course materials, assignment details and video playback for each session
(note: only available from the date of each live session)



GROUPS

Interact with the writing group!



ASSIGNMENTS

Share your work with the group.
Comment on other people's work

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Category: Week 2 Assignments Show Guidelines

Posting as Nathan Dylan Goodwin

Give this post a title

Write your post here. Add photos, videos and more to get your message across.

Cancel Publish


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Choose a folder & upload

 Week 2 Assignments Upload your work 8 2 Following



 Week 3 Assignments Upload your work 0 0 Following

Categories All Posts My Posts Search

Week 2 Assignments

Upload your work

Week 2 Assignments Sort by: Recent Activity More Actions **Upload your work**

	Comments	Reactions	Views	Recent Activity	
Test 2 lornapcovan	2	1	4	 15	⋮
test The Novel Guys	3	0	7	 37m	⋮

Any questions?

