

Writing 301

“THE ART OF FICTION”

with Visiting Writer in Residence Fall Quarter 2011

JANE TAYLOR

Monday and Wednesday 2:00-3:20 pm



JANE TAYLOR

JANE TAYLOR is a writer, scholar and curator from South Africa. For the past several decades, in addition to writing fiction and plays, she has been involved in cultural critique and public scholarship. In 1987 she and David Bunn co-edited *From South Africa (TriQuarterly and University of Chicago Press)*. In 1996 Taylor designed and curated “FAULT LINES,” a series of cultural responses to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that followed the end of Apartheid in South Africa. As part of this program she wrote the playtext *Ubu and the Truth Commission* for South African artist/director William Kentridge and the Handspring Puppet Company. In 2000 she wrote the libretto of a new opera for Kentridge, *The Confessions of Zeno* (performed at Lincoln Centre in New York and the MCA in Chicago). She has published two novels, *Of Wild Dogs* (winner of the Olive Schreiner fiction prize in South Africa) and *The Transplant Men* (grounded in the first heart transplant an event that took place in South Africa). Taylor has been commissioned by Renaissance scholar Stephen Greenblatt to write a version of the so-called “missing” Shakespeare play, *Cardenio*. She has taught at the University of Chicago, and in South Africa at the University of Witwatersrand and the University of Western Cape; she has been a Visiting Fellow at Oxford and at Cambridge Universities, and has received Mellon and Rockefeller Fellowships.

This course is open only to undergraduates and only by application.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This writing workshop will appeal to writers of fiction, nonfiction, and theater pieces. Students will explore the border between fiction and non-fiction. Special attention will be paid to the documentary function of the arts. In South Africa, writers and artists of conscience have been at times and in certain ways pressured to engage in a process of reflecting contemporary political events, and as a result, they have worked through (or not) the difficulty of keeping both creative and historical dimensions of their writing projects alive. At the same time, this artistic “obligation to history and memory” has generated some of the most compelling fiction of the twentieth century. Students in this workshop will explore how to take risks of invention inside a project that pays due regard to the ethics of factual accounts.