



LITERARY ARTS

FIND YOUR STORY HERE

Delve Guide for Participants
2026-2027



Welcome to Literary Arts!

Whether you are a new or returning participant, we hope you will find this handbook useful. It includes information about seminar policies and expectations, and tips to help you get the most out of your seminar experience.

Delve: Readers' Seminars offer the opportunity to explore great books with an experienced guide and the company of other dedicated readers. Seminars cultivate lively, in-depth discussions. Participants complete designated reading in advance and come prepared to discuss the text in an informal, friendly atmosphere. **Please note:** Delve participants purchase or provide their own texts for the seminar. Many titles are available at the Literary Arts bookstore or can be easily ordered.



The Literary Arts Café and Bookstore

In 2021, Literary Arts purchased an historic building at 716 SE Grand Ave. in Portland, becoming the new, permanent headquarters for the organization. The building, named The Susan Hammer Center, includes a bookstore, classroom and event space, staff offices, and café space. The Literary Arts

Bookstore opened in December 2024, and the Literary Arts Café opened in June 2025. If you've taken a seminar in the new space since we opened in December 2024, congratulations you are a member of the inaugural class of writing students at Literary Arts!

There are spaces on the ground floor and mezzanine of the café and bookstore for writers to bring their laptops or notebooks and write, and seminar participants to meet before or after a class, or any time!

More About Literary Arts

Literary Arts is a statewide, nonprofit arts organization. Our mission is to engage readers, support writers, and inspire the next generation with great literature. The programs of Literary Arts are the Programs for Writers, Delve Readers' Seminars, Portland Arts & Lectures, the Portland Book Festival, and Youth Programs.

Mission: Our mission is to engage readers, support writers, and inspire the next generation with great literature.

Vision: Reading and writing builds engaged, inclusive, and strong communities. Literary Arts is a national leader in empowering people to tell their stories, and in placing all forms of literature at the center of civic life.

Values:

Community: We create space for the exchange and amplification of diverse stories and ideas.

Accessibility: We strive to identify and remove barriers in our work.

Adaptability: We respond to the shifting needs of our community.

Art: We uplift the arts as central to the fabric of a healthy civic society.

Literary Arts Anti-Harassment Policy

Literary Arts has a zero-tolerance policy for harassment of any kind, including but not limited to: race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, gender presentation, sexual orientation, age, body size, disability, appearance, religion, citizenship, pregnancy, marital or familial status, military or veteran status. Harassment includes but is not limited to: stalking, verbal or physical intimidation, offensive verbal or written comments including conversations online, physical assault and/or battery, harassing or non-consensual photography or recording, bathroom policing, inappropriate physical contact, unwelcome physical attention.

Literary Arts recognizes that reading and writing, by their nature, include exposure to controversial and challenging ideas. Therefore, harassment does not include respectful disagreement or critique in good faith.

This policy extends to employees, vendors, independent contractors, event attendees, presenters and speakers, and seminar workshop or class participants. This policy covers all events at Literary Arts as well as events sponsored by or produced by Literary Arts in third-party venues. This policy also extends to conversations online.

Literary Arts reserves the right to revoke, without refund, tickets of any event attendee or participant not in compliance with this policy; the right to remove from an event, seminar, workshop or class any attendee or participant not in compliance with this policy; the right to delete offensive comments from online, and the right to cancel a contract with a vendor or contractor that is not in compliance with this policy.

Any employee, vendor, independent contractor or event attendee who believes they have witnessed or been subjected to prohibited harassment or discrimination should report it immediately to a Literary Arts staff member, the Executive Director of Literary Arts and/or member of the Literary Arts Board.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Literary Arts recognizes that a public commitment to equity is crucial to both our own growth and that of the Portland arts and culture ecosystem. It is our hope that by addressing racial inequity in our community, we will create a space in which readers, writers, and youth of all identities feel welcome.

We commit ourselves programmatically to:

Define our mission broadly to include all forms of literature and storytelling. Support more writers of color and highlight their stories.

Build a diverse, intergenerational audience for literature. Create equitable access to our programs.

We commit ourselves administratively to:

Create a staff, board, and volunteer base reflective of our community.

Apply the best practices and tools to ensure that the organizational systems are equitable.

In all of the above, we strive to work with humility and in collaboration with our community to be adaptable and responsive, and to better accomplish these important goals.

Literary Arts Community Agreements for Classes and Meetings

- Practice active listening and respectful curiosity
- Give space for grace and assume positive intent
- Notice the role of power in shaping culture
- Uphold what's confidential with care & support
- Allow space for multiple truths and ways of being, feeling, thinking, and sounding

Registering for a Class or Seminar

Adult writing classes and seminars at Literary Arts are for people 18 years of age and older.

Our classes often sell out quickly. We recommend registering as soon as possible. We process all registrations on a first-come, first-served basis. We are not able to reserve a spot for you without payment.

The easiest and fastest way to register is online, at www.literary-arts.org.

Our current offerings are listed at <https://literary-arts.org/events/category/writing-classes/>. You can also call us at 503-227-2583; the box office line is staffed on this phone line during the following hours: Monday-Thursday from Noon-4:00 p.m.

Once a class or seminar is full, it is listed as "SOLD OUT" on our website. You can email us at writers@literary-arts.org and ask to be emailed if a spot opens up on the website. These spots are available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Accessibility

Our building is an accessible space and fully ADA-compliant. If you have access needs we can assist with, please contact us in advance of the first class meeting.

In-Person Classes at 716 SE Grand

Plan your transit/parking ahead of time—Sometimes a difficult commute is outside of your control, but to set yourself up for success in the way of arriving on time for class, consider arriving early (and hanging out in our bookstore and café), planning your route ahead of time, or even carpooling with fellow classmates if you feel comfortable doing so.

Online Delve seminars

Most Delves take place in person, but occasionally Delves are offered online. Though we work hard to ensure a smooth online learning experience, dealing with technology means that inevitable glitches or issues might occasionally happen anyway. We recommend you:

Check your email regularly for any class details or updates

Look in your spam folder for the Zoom link email if you don't see it in your main inbox

Test the strength of your internet connection

Check that you have enough laptop battery or easy access to an outlet

Access Tuition

Our Access Program offers Delve seminar registrations at a reduced rate. The access program covers 75% of the class tuition. Most seminars have at least one access spot available. Priority is given to students who have not taken classes or seminars with us before, and students who identify as BIPOC. Access spots are filled no later than 7 days before a class begins. Access tuition cannot be applied retroactively if you have already registered at the full tuition price. There is a link on every class page to the online application for access tuition. Applicants will receive a response 1-2 weeks before the class begins.

Class Liaisons

Every in-person class and seminar at Literary Arts has one liaison position. Liaisons perform specific duties for each class meeting. If you are a liaison for a class or seminar, the full amount of your tuition is covered by Literary Arts. There is a link on every class page to the online liaison application. All liaisons must complete a 30-minute training session at Literary Arts before the first class session and commit to attending every class meeting.

Liaisons are the first to arrive and last to leave. They arrive at least 15 minutes before the class or seminar start time each week and greet the other participants. After each class, they return the meeting space to the pre-class levels of cleanliness and order. The teacher might also have other duties that they assign.

Liaison applicants will receive an update about the status of their application approximately 1-2 weeks before the class begins, depending on the number of applicants. Tuition can't be waived retroactively if you are approved for a liaison spot after registering for a class.

Delve Cancellation Policy

If Literary Arts cancels a seminar, participants will receive a full refund.

For students who need to cancel registration for a seminar before it begins, the following refund schedule applies:

If you cancel at least 5 business days or more before a seminar begins, you will receive a credit minus 15% of the tuition. Or you can request a refund minus 25% of the tuition. Credits can be used on any seminar or class; credits expire after 12 months.

If you cancel 4 business days until 24 hours or less before a seminar begins, you will receive a credit minus 20%. No refunds are given 4 business days or less before a seminar begins.

24 hours or less before a seminar begins, no refund or credits will be given.

Refunds and recordings for missed seminars

Literary Arts cannot provide refunds, transfers, or makeup sessions for individual classes and seminar sessions that students miss. Literary Arts does not record Zoom classes for students who are absent.



Email Etiquette

Email expectations will vary from class to class; your instructor will let you know their expectations. Here are some tips to consider:

- Be mindful about CC'ing the whole class or CC'ing the instructor. If you have a specific question or comment for a classmate, email them on a new thread—not the class's weekly email chain. You don't need to include the instructor on those direct emails unless you feel their input is needed.
- Including your name and the name of the seminar in your subject line is helpful.
- If you have a question for the instructor that only pertains to you, you most likely don't need to CC the whole class.
- If you have a question or comment that can't be covered in 1-2 short paragraphs, consider asking it face to face, either in person or a Zoom meeting.
- Although the initial email sent to your seminar will BCC everyone's email, eventually the instructor will need to start CC'ing everyone so that you can communicate with each other. If you'd rather not have your email shared with the class, please create a new free dedicated email account (like Gmail or yahoo), separate from your personal email, that you can share with the class.
- Teachers sometimes have full-time jobs and multiple commitments. It can sometimes take up to 2 days for an instructor to respond to your email.

Tips for a Successful Delve Experience

Reflect and set intentions—Before your seminar even starts, think about what you'd like to learn from the experience and consider writing down 1-3 goals for yourself. Even if these intentions are never shared with anyone else—and even if they change by the end of the class—they can still help you focus your mind-set and stay motivated throughout the seminar.

Attend – Your presence is expected each week: the discussions benefit from engagement from everyone. Guides can often update you on missed discussions and materials but are not required to meet with you outside of the seminar to explain everything you missed. We do not recommend missing more than one session of a 6-week seminar, or more than two sessions of longer multi-weeks. Literary Arts seminars are not recorded under any circumstances, and we do not offer hybrid seminar models for in-person seminars.

Learn about your guide—All Literary Arts guides have a short biography listed on their seminar page on our website. We also occasionally publish interviews with new guides on the Literary Arts blog. Reading these in advance can help set your expectations for the seminar by providing useful context about the guide, including their publications, what genre of writing they specialize in, and their teaching style.

Be curious, kind, and open-minded to others—While it's the responsibility of the guide to ensure a safe and inclusive environment to the best of their abilities, you can do your part by bringing a positive attitude to the classroom and being respectful to your classmates.

Communicate if you need support—If you're struggling with something in class or would like to read additional resources on a particular topic, check in with your teacher to see if they can assist. If something comes up that you feel is best addressed by someone other than your teacher, you can get in touch with Director of Programs for Writers Susan Moore (susan@literary-arts.org) or Programs for Writers Associate Manager Alexa Winik (alexa@literary-arts.org).

In-Person Classes at 716 SE Grand

Plan your transit/parking ahead of time—sometimes a difficult commute is outside of your control, but to set yourself up for success in the way of arriving on time for class, consider arriving early (and hanging out in our bookstore and café), planning your route ahead of time, or even carpooling with fellow classmates if you feel comfortable doing so.

Suggested Conversation Guidelines for Delve

The guide will begin each session by asking a question. The guide's role is not to teach the book but to facilitate conversation along fruitful paths.

The conversation is a group effort in which everyone is invited to participate.

Please do not engage in side-talk or interrupt your fellow readers, and please keep your remarks to the point so that others are not inclined to interrupt you. It's important that each participant feels he or she is welcome to join in the conversation, and it is everyone's responsibility to make sure that each individual can do so.

Be mindful of how much, and how, you occupy space in the conversation. We all have differing communication styles, but we should each feel welcome to speak up freely, or at times to sit back and just listen, in this forum.

Listening carefully is as important as speaking since developing connections between ideas will generate a deeper conversation. Asking questions of others is also an important way to participate; however, our conversation is not a debate.

Discussion of books may naturally lead to contemplation of social, political or ideological matters, which (for some in the room) may at times feel personal. Remain mindful of the widely different backgrounds and views participants in your group may hold, and speak with inclusivity and respect. Do not assume any absolutes, and remember our conversation is not a debate. Keeping discussion focused on the book(s) you are reading together will help to ground and support these discussions.

Above all, seminars are intended to be fun. Please bring your openness, your curiosity and a good sense of humor!

Feedback for your seminar

Evaluations are distributed electronically at the end of every class. These evaluations are anonymous and shared with the instructor.

If you have feedback, questions or concerns about a seminar, please contact us at writers@literary-arts.org. We'd love to hear from you!