



In this March 2022 Issue:

1. Spotlight on:

Destiny Howell, DDC '19, Hunter College '23, was accepted to four summer research programs in astrophysics – the study of the physical and chemical properties of objects in space – at top-ranked universities: University of Texas (UT), Department of Astronomy and McDonald Observatory; Texas Christian University (TCU), Physics & Astronomy; National Astronomy Consortium (NAC), Michigan State University; and Villanova University, Astrophysics and Condensed Matter Physics. The research projects explore stars, planets in and beyond the solar system, and brown dwarfs – intermediary objects between a planet and a star. *I selected the 2022 TAURUS summer research program at UT Austin, says Destiny, because I want to know more about brown dwarfs and I always wanted to work with a telescope!*

Congratulations Destiny!

2. Creative Writing, from Essay to Poetry to Fiction

3. Fast Friending – How to Build Healthy Social Connections

4. All Things ALUMNI

2. Creative Writing, from Essay to Poetry to Fiction

"Literary Imagination, Finding Your Voice and Obsessions" is not your run-of-the-mill writing class about the five-paragraph essay, says Nathan Motulsky, co-instructor of the course and MFA Candidate, Fiction, Columbia University School of the Arts. The class reviews the elements of creative writing, which uses imagination to convey meaning and includes different genres and styles, from poetry to nonfiction to fiction. We tell students to explore their obsessions, which is whatever catches their fancy – favorite animals, science fiction, feminist characters, and more, says Ariel So, MFA candidate, Poetry, Columbia University School of the Arts and co-instructor. We introduce them to a diverse range of writers from all backgrounds and we show them how these authors broke out of conventional modes and played with language elasticity. Then we help students adapt the same techniques to their own writing.

Students practice freewriting, a technique similar to brainstorming but in sentence and paragraph form, that gets words on the page and quiets the "inner critic," explains Nathan. We then provide specific guidance for revision: clarity of thought and clarity of writing go hand in hand. As students analyze various modes of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, they develop their own writing style, increase their self-expression, and build up their analytical reading and critical thinking skills, says Nathan. The ability to both structure writing around key elements and identify these key elements in a text is critical for students of virtually any subject. Students will use these skills all the way through college and beyond, he adds.

*We read the French poet Arthur Rimbaud's "Phrases" to focus on surrealist writing and its use of imagery that bridges dream and reality, says Ariel. We review defamiliarization techniques in literature, which make the familiar seem new or unusual, and we show students how to apply them in their own work. We look at the poets Anne Sexton – "Just Once" – and Audre Lorde – "From the House of Yemanjá" – to examine how they use the first-person, the "I" perspective, Ariel explains. This style of writing, called confessional poetry, wants to make private experiences universal. For the class exercise, we ask students to borrow the poet's technique and write about what makes them feel a sense of longing or a flood of emotions. Nathan selected *How to Become a Writer* by Lorrie Moore to demonstrate how an author develops a fictional three-dimensional character with personality, depth, and memorable quirks. He then gave students a character questionnaire exercise to help them build compelling roles that are unique and, at the same time, universally human. Character growth is an essential element of fiction writing.*

It is important to foster students' passions, say Nathan and Ariel. High school is a pivotal stage where students discover their interests and prepare to pursue higher education and careers. We want them to walk away from the class with the tools to make writing an integral part of their everyday lives.

Shantel S., DDC '23

This character questionnaire is really useful! Knowing the basics of their core values

helps me figure out how they would react in certain situations. I can then further develop these characters in my story in a way that makes sense and fits into the plot!

Giada R., DDC '23

I signed up for this class because I wanted to learn more about writing. I am not disappointed, I enjoy having a space where I can write what I want and create something without feeling the pressure to get a good grade.

3. Fast Friending – How to Build Healthy Social Connections

HMB first in-person event in two years: *Fast Friending!* The DDC workshop focused on helping students reconnect with familiar peers and make new friends. *Strong friendships and social networks are crucial for achieving positive health and educational outcomes, so it was important for us to support our DDC students in making these connections as we transition out of the pandemic,* says Kristan Rosenthal, Assistant Director, Healthy Minds and Bodies. *Many of our students felt isolated. They expressed challenges in meeting new people and they struggled to reestablish friendships after a year and a half of remote learning. Our goal with the "Fast Friending" event was to guide them through this process with icebreakers, communications skills, and other activities, to help them reconnect with each other and get comfortable with making new friends once again.*

Students found the online environment isolating as it limited their interactions with teachers and classmates. Friendships were difficult to nurture and many simply faded away. *It has been tough to make new friends the past two years. I enjoyed this "Fast Friending" in-person event!* says Tahmina N., DDC '25. *In fact, it was very easy to interact with everyone because the adults in the room were able to relate to us, they really understood what we were going through.*

The event was structured around activities such as bingo, fun questions, and game of murder mystery, to help students get comfortable with introducing themselves and initiating new relationships. *I learned that it is 100% worth it to put myself out there and ask questions because I am not that different from everyone else,* says Hawa K., DDC '24. *I will continue this approach to connect with new people.*

Students were talking, laughing and having a great time, while learning how to build healthy emotional connections. *It felt like DDC again, before the pandemic!* says Kristan.

4. All Things ALUMNI

DDC Emergency Funds:

The DDC Emergency Fund is available for students, alumni, and families who need short term financial support. We are currently able to provide funding and connections to resources across five key areas that may impact a student's ability to stay engaged in their education: food, housing, utilities, healthcare, college tuition, and transportation to and from college campuses. Financial needs outside the previously listed categories may be considered on a case by case basis. As funds are limited, we are able to provide a maximum

of \$800 in funding per student at this time. If you are interested, email Kristan to set up a time to meet: krr2128@columbia.edu

YOU MUST HAVE A CURRENT BALANCE DUE ON YOUR ACCOUNTS TO BE ELIGIBLE

Graduate School Test Prep with Kaplan:

If you are interested in Graduate School Test Prep, we currently have 4 vouchers for the LSAT and GREs, and 5 vouchers for the GMAT. Please email [Yarisell Hernandez](#) with any inquiries.

Reducetarian Foundation

The [Reducetarian Fellowship](#) is a brand new program for exceptional New York City-area undergraduate students who are eager to create a more sustainable, healthy, and compassionate world. The one-year experience includes both a curricular component and a summer internship with one of many exciting and impactful [partner organizations](#). Each fellow receives a \$7,500 stipend to support their participation in the program and one-on-one mentorship throughout the year. [Applications](#) close April 15!

Careers at DDC:

- DDC is looking for an instructor to design and implement an in-person course during DDC's five-week (July 5th through August 5th) Summer 2022 Academy for its 9th and 10th-grade students. The DDC Instructor is expected to design, document, and deliver a curriculum in a specific content area (e.g. Math, History, Visual/Performing Arts, Literacy, Science, Foreign Language) and to assess student progress on the learning standards/skills of focus for the class. Our classes are all in person and will require the instructor to live in the NYC metro area. For more information visit: [2022 Summer Academy Course Proposals](#)
- For Columbia and Barnard Students: DDC is seeking to hire a [Residential Teaching Assistant, Expanded Learning Opportunities Coordinator](#)
- For full time positions at The Double Discovery Center, visit our [Careers Page](#)

Tell us about your time at the Double Discovery Center:

If you are an alumni from the class of 2019-2021, please share your favorite DDC moments. The moments can be from your experience in Summer Academy, your favorite class project, or your relationship with your counselor. It will be great to hear how DDC impacted your life!

For any other alumni related questions, please email [Yarisell Hernandez](#)

Double our Discovery, Double our Impact!

Partner with us to offer the gift of education!

[Click Here to "Change a Life"](#)

Calling all DDC Alumni and Former Volunteers!

We want to hear from you!

Click [Here](#) to reconnect!



Double Discovery Center
Alfred Lerner Hall, Room 306
2920 Broadway, MC 2604
New York, NY 10027
Phone: 212 854 3897
Fax: 212 854 7457
ddcnewsletter@columbia.edu

Click here to **unsubscribe from this list**.