

UBC Creative Writing Forums

User Guide and Manual

How to Register

Registration is only open to UBC Creative Writing faculty, staff and students enrolled in the BFA or MFA programs.

To sign up, visit the forums at: <http://optres.creativewriting.ubc.ca/forum>

Click the "Create Account" link at the top of any page. You should then fill in all of the fields on the registration page.

YOU MUST USE YOUR FULL NAME AS YOUR USERNAME.

Please include capitalization and the space between first and last name (for example, 'Margaret Atwood').

As you move from field to field you will be alerted to any problems with the information you have entered. Please **do not** use the same password you use with your email account – this is extremely insecure.

The Registration Question answer is "UBC".

When you have filled in the form, click 'Create Account'.

We will manually approve each registration. Once you have registered you won't be able to use the forums until you have been approved. This usually takes less than a day unless you are registering on a weekend or holiday.

Signing In and Out

Signing In

Once you have signed up for an account, you can sign in by visiting the website. You will not be able to view any pages until you are signed in.

From here, you should enter your username and the password you used when you registered. If you tick the "Remember Me" box you will not have to sign in when you

visit the community in future. This can be very useful, but **should not be used** if other people have access to your computer or if you are using a public computer.

You are also able to hide your username from the online list by checking the "Sign in anonymously" box. Administrators will still be able to see you online if you do so, however other members will not be able to.

When you are ready, click Sign In.

Forgotten Password?

If you have forgotten your password, you can click the "I've forgotten my password" link on the sign in page below the password box. This will take you to a page where you can enter your username, and we will then either email you a new password that you can use or a link for you to reset your password.

Note that if you locked your account by typing in the wrong password too many times, you will still need to unlock your account before you can use your new password.

Logging Out

To log out click the "Sign Out" link at the top of the screen from any page.

Getting Started

1. Click on the Forums link at the top menu. You will see several sections (depending on what you are enrolled in). If you are enrolled in online workshops, you will see a section titled 'Workshops' first, otherwise it will read 'Program Communication'. Other sections include 'Student Initiatives', 'Alumni' and 'Discussion Topics.'
2. Each section contains a number of forums. These are groups of topics, organized by subject.
3. Click the name of any forum to read topics related to the forum title.
4. Click **your name** at the top right corner of any page and explore the links under this. You can update your profile and adjust your settings. You can also add an avatar – a picture which will represent you online.
5. The Envelope icon takes you to the personal messenger, which allows you to send private messages to other students and faculty members.

Forum Purpose & Expectations

Students and faculty should regularly check the Program Communication section of the forum for program announcements and updates. All important information is posted on the forum, including information about scholarships, registrations, policies, employment and more.

Topics and Forums

Forum Wayfinding & Navigation

To enter a forum, click on its name.

When viewing the forums, there are icons shown next to them which indicate the status of a forum, and if it has unread posts or not.



This indicates that there are posts which you have not read contained inside this forum, or one of its sub forums.



This indicates that all of the posts contained in this forum and its sub forums have been read.



Redirect forum, when you enter this forum you will be redirected elsewhere.

The Topic List

Within each forum there are a list of topics. Just like forums, each topic has a marker to indicate the type of topic it is:

- A regular topic with posts you have not read. The name of the topic will also be bold if it has unread posts.
- ★ This is a topic which you have participated in, with no new replies since you last read it.
- ★ This indicates that you have previously replied in this topic, and there are new replies since you last read or replied to the topic.

Special Types of Topics



This icon indicates an "Announcement" - Announcements are not regular topics, because members cannot reply to them. They are simply important news or information which should be read.



This icon indicates a topic which has many members participating and replying.

← Topic that has been moved into another forum.

🔒 This indicates that a topic has been locked, and can no longer be replied to.

To enter any topic, click on its name.

Understanding the typical topic display

We can see by the icon (see image below) that this is a regular topic with some unread posts. The topic title is '*Winter Semester*'. To the right we see the topic author, Joseph Boyden. Clicking the topic title will open the topic; clicking the author's name will show the author's profile. There have been 11 replies to the first post in the topic, meaning that there are 12 posts in total in the discussion. It has been viewed 103 times.

The last column, on the far right, shows the most recent post in the topic. Clicking the date will take you directly to that post. Clicking the member's name will show his or her profile information.



The screenshot shows a forum topic header for 'Winter Semester'. On the left, there is a blue dot icon and the text 'Winter Semester' followed by 'Started by Joseph Boyden, 01 Dec 2011'. In the center, it displays '11 replies' and '103 views'. On the right, there is a profile picture icon, the name 'Brenda Payne', and the date '26 Dec 2011'. A small square icon is visible in the top right corner of the header box.

There may be more than one page of topics, if this is the case, you will see page buttons at the top and bottom of the page.



The screenshot shows forum pagination controls. It displays 'Page 1 of 2' followed by a green square containing the number '1', a grey square containing the number '2', and a grey button labeled 'NEXT'.

Adding a Topic

Start New Topic

To add a new topic, press the "Start new Topic" button. This may not be available for all forums. In forums where you cannot create a topic you will see "You cannot start a new topic" in place of the button.

Once you press this button, you will view the **post editor**. Not unlike a small word processor on the website page, this allows you to write and format your work before submitting it.

You give your topic a title and then type your content into the large text area. Click the 'post new topic' button when you're ready. You can even preview your post before sending it.

The icons are very similar to those found in a word processor – you can bold, italicize, underline, make lists and even paste directly from Word documents.

Posting a New Topic in CRWR 212 - Introduction to Fiction, Bo

Topic Title
Test Topic

Topic Tags
 Use first tag as prefix
Select a maximum of 10 tags

Font Size My Media

B ***I*** **U** x_2 x^2

This is a test topic.

Attach Files
 Used 18.27MB of your Unlimited global upload quota (Max. single file size: 5MB)
Trouble uploading? [Try our basic uploader](#)

or **Cancel**

Attachments

You will be able to upload attachments to your message.

To start, press **Choose Files**. A box will appear for you to select the file or files on your computer that you want to attach. Select the file or files you want to upload.

You can select more than one file at a time by holding Ctrl (on Windows) or Command (on Mac) and click on the files.

Once you have selected your files and clicked "Open", they will begin uploading. If there are any errors uploading the files, you will receive an error message, otherwise, you will see the attachments appear.

Managing Attachments

Regardless of which uploader you use, once the files are uploaded you will see them on your screen. By default, all attachments are added to the bottom of your message, however, you can add any attachment to a particular section of your post by pressing the "Add to Post" link. This is useful especially when you want a photograph to appear in the body of your post rather than having it show up as a file attachment to be downloaded. Your attachment will appear as a tag containing the name of the file you uploaded. You will not be able to see it until you preview or post your message.

If you wish to remove an attachment and have it not appear in your post, simply press the "**Delete**" link.

Files allowed

We allow almost any type of file to be attached to a message, including images, documents from Word and both Celtx and Movie Magic Screenwriter. We can add new file types on demand.

Restrictions:

Total upload limit: 50 MB per user.

Individual file upload limit: 5 MB per file.

Personal photo limits: 250 KB per photo, 300 x 300 pixels.

Taking part in a discussion

Once you or another member has created a topic of discussion, you are able to reply to posts and take part in the discussion.

Replying is quite simple – at the bottom of the page there is a blank box titled 'Reply to this topic'. When you click in this box, you will see the text tools which also appear when you are creating a topic. You can then type your reply directly in the box and when you are finished, click 'post'.

Attachments in Replies

If you want to add an attachment to a reply, you'll have to click 'more reply options' as the attachment button will not show up for a quick reply.

Quoting

This is an extremely useful thing. In a long discussion, often a post you wish to reply to is not the most recent post in the conversation. To ensure people know what you're referring to, use the 'Quote' button.

If you click this directly below the member's post you wish to refer to, you'll see that their original words are copied into the reply box at the bottom of the page. You can edit and remove extraneous text from the quote to just highlight the material you want to refer to.

Quick Quote

What if you only want to quote a little? You can simply highlight with your mouse the text you want to quote (by clicking and dragging your cursor over the text) and then click the pop-up 'Quote' button. This will select only the highlighted text.

Personal Messenger

The personal messenger can be used to have private **conversations** with other members. This is like a private email system, but there are some important differences. The most important one is that conversations between users are like mini-discussion forum topics rather than individual emails. So when you message another member and have a conversation, all replies are stored with the original message. This can lead to confusion, but can also be a powerful tool.

Conversations can have more than one member, and members can be invited into a conversation at any point. Keep in mind that once a member has been invited to join an existing conversation he or she will be able to view the entire conversation.

Remember, if you think of each conversation as your own private discussion forum topic, it will make much more sense than if you think of it as a conventional email exchange.

Using Messenger

To access it, click the envelope icon on any page at the top right of the screen.

If you have any new conversations, you will see the 'New' folder when you first view messenger. If you do not have any new (unread) messages, then you will view 'My Conversations', which is the default folder where all conversations are stored.

Managing conversations

Change which conversations you are viewing

By default, all conversations are shown, but you can change the view to only display conversations you started, or conversations that others have started. To change this, select the appropriate option from the dropdown underneath the conversation list (at the bottom of the page) and then press **Update**.

Deleting conversations

To delete a whole conversation, select the checkbox beside the conversation, then select "Delete" from the dropdown at the bottom and then press **Go**.

If you started the conversation, this will remove the conversation from your list, and lock it for everyone else - nobody else will be able to make replies to the conversation, but they will still be able to read it until they also delete it.

If you did not start the conversation, this will remove the conversation from your list and remove you from the conversation - you will not be able to make any more replies, but others will still be able to continue the conversation without you, and see your previous replies.

Managing messages

To edit or delete one of your messages in a conversation, press the "Edit" or "Delete" button underneath the post. The changes will be reflected to all participants in the conversation.

Starting a new conversation

To start a new conversation, start by pressing the "Compose New" button. Enter the user's name into the "Recipient's Name" field. As you type, suggestions will appear below the box. When you see the member you are looking for, click on their name.

You are able to add other recipients into the "Other Recipients" box. If you choose to, the next option allows you to specify how the messages will be sent to alternate recipients: "Invitation" allows all invited members to participate in a single conversation, while "Copy" will send a separate conversation to each member.

You should then type a message subject and the message body, just like you would for a new topic in the forums.

You can also attach a file. This is done exactly as it is done in the discussion forums.

When you are done, you can press **Send Message** or **Save (Send Later)** to save the message for later. This is only available if you are sending a new message, not if you are replying.

Replying to a conversation

To reply to any conversation, press the "Reply" button when viewing it or press the "Reply" button underneath any existing message to quote it. Then type your message and press **Send Message**. You can also use the Fast Reply box at the bottom of each conversation to quickly reply to the conversation.

Adding participants to a conversation

You can also add more participants to an existing conversation. You should see an Invite Participants link on the left side of the page.

Click 'add' and a box will appear for you to enter member names into. To add more than one member, separate their names with commas. When you are done, press **Add**.

Managing your messenger folders

By default there are four folders for messages:

- New, which stores all unread conversations.
- My Conversations, which contains all conversations you are participating in.
- Drafts, which stores unsent messages saved for later.

You can also add your own folders to make it easier to manage your messages.

Adding a new folder

To add a new folder, click the "Add" link beneath the list of folders.

Type the name of the folder you want to add, then press the "+" button.

Moving messages

To move a message from one folder to another, select the checkbox beside the conversation, then select the name of the folder you want to move the conversation to from the dropdown at the bottom and then press **Go**.

Renaming, Deleting or Emptying a folder

To rename, empty or delete a folder, click the "Edit" link beneath the list of folders.

To rename a folder, type the new name in the textbox currently containing the folder name, and then press the ">" button. You cannot rename default folders.

To empty a folder, press the garbage can icon beside the folder name after clicking 'edit'.

To delete a folder, press the  icon beside the folder name. Be careful as this will also empty the folder. You cannot delete default folders.

Your Settings

You can access your settings from any page by selecting your name at the top of the screen and then selecting "My Settings".

In addition to changing Profile Settings (the default page) there are several links on the left side, each of which reveal a number of settings pages. Most of these should be self-explanatory. Profile Settings allows you to put personal information into your profile for other students to see, including a personal photo (if you wish). Profile Customization lets you change the look of your profile page.

Other Settings

Email & Password

You can use this tool to change the email address and password associated with your account.

Signature

An optional text line or two which appears after all posts you make. We discourage these in the program.

Ignore Preferences

More suited for public forums, this allows you to 'block' a member.

Manage Attachments

This page will show you all of the attachments you have uploaded to the community and the amount of space you have left.

If you are running out of space, you can delete some old attachments by selecting the checkbox on the right-hand side of the table for the attachments you want to delete, and then pressing the Delete Selected button at the bottom of the table.

Notification Options

You are able to change how you are notified by the forums. You can set up your notification preferences in some detail, telling the system to email you when various things happen, such as personal messages.

Your Notifications

A list of notifications you have received previously.

Other Features

Chat

We do not use this feature of the forums.

Calendar

We populate the calendar late each summer with important dates from the academic calendar at UBC, including holidays and the start and end of each term.

See the help documentation online for further information on searching the forums, finding more about members, and using the calendar. Please note, however that some of these are out of date and reflect the previous version of the software.

<http://optres.creativewriting.ubc.ca/forum/index.php?app=core&module=help>