

Mark Allen Cunningham

Adjunct Assistant Professor of English at Portland State University,
Author & Publisher

www.MAllenCunningham.com

www.Atelier26Books.com

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2004-PRESENT

- o **Portland State University:** International Faculty Leader, Interdisciplinary Creative Writing intensive in Vienna (WR 407, summer 2020)
- o **Portland State University:** Adjunct Assistant Professor of English (current)
- o **Clackamas Community College:** ACC Instructor of English at Clackamas Middle College, taught ENG 230 Documentary Film (spring 2019)
- o **Pan-European MFA Program:** Lecturer & Thesis Advisor (2016-present)
- o **Atelier26 Creative Writing Workshops:** Instructor, facilitating MFA-level workshops (2016-present)
- o **Literary Arts:** Instructor, designing and teaching several new creative writing courses (2016-present)
- o **Oregon State University:** Guest Lecturer (2015)
- o **Oregon Humanities Council:** Public Scholar & Facilitator, conducting intensive public seminars in more than 25 communities (2011-2015)

Additional Selected Courses, Lectures, Seminars:

- Winter 2020: Advanced Fiction Workshop (WR 412), Portland State University
- Summer 2019: *Character, Plot & Time*, lecture, Catamaran Writing Conference (Pebble Beach, CA)
- Spring 2019: Advanced Fiction Seminar: Forms of Fiction (WR 407), Portland State University
- Spring 2018: *Writing Fiction with Lin-Manuel Miranda's 'Hamilton'*, a multi-week course at Literary Arts (Portland, OR)
- Spring 2018: *Six Ways to Think About Character*, lecture, Portland State University, Write to Publish Conference
- Fall 2017: *Writing Beyond Genre*, craft lecture, Pan-European MFA Program. **Video:** <https://bit.ly/2rme0bX>
- Fall 2017: *Beginning the Novel*, sold-out seminar/workshop, Literary Arts
- Fall 2017: *Plotting the Novel*, sold-out seminar/workshop, Literary Arts
- Fall 2017: *Creating Characters in the Novel*, sold-out seminar/workshop, Literary Arts
- Fall 2017: *Beginning the Novel*, sold-out seminar/workshop, Wordstock Literary Festival (Portland, OR)
- July 2017: *Depictions of Time in Literature*, Pan European MFA Program

EDUCATION

M.F.A. in Creative Writing
Cedar Crest College,
Allentown PA

TEACHING TESTIMONIALS & EVALUATIONS

“I don’t think I’ve ever learned so much in a writing class before. I felt pushed in new ways as a writer and never discouraged.”

-Portland State University student

“One of the best writing classes I have taken at PSU. It has helped me think of my writing practice in ways I had never imagined.”

-Portland State University student

“Mark’s choice of texts was spot-on in that they all built upon one another in a cohesive way. I will be thinking about this course for the rest of my writing life. Mark has put so much planning and thought into the curriculum, and it really comes through.”

-Portland State University student

“I wanted to thank you again for your wonderful course. It’s made quite an impact on me, maybe more than any other writing course or workshop I’ve been a part of.”

-Portland State University student

“Mark always gave me a great deal to think about. His prompts, notes, and lectures are balanced and engaging. Thank you!”

—Literary Arts course participant

“I really enjoyed the workshop. The class addressed exactly the kinds of things I’ve struggled to put my finger on. So thank you!”

—Literary Arts course participant

“[Mark Cunningham was] well

- Spring 2017: *Shaping Your Fiction or Memoir*, a multi-week course at Literary Arts
- Fall 2016: *Editing for Writers*, sold-out workshop, Wordstock Literary Festival
- Fall 2016: *Perspectives on Independent Publishing*, Pan-European MFA Program
- Summer 2015: *The Flickering Page*, lecture, Oregon State University, **Audio:** <https://bit.ly/2wfJt4y>
- Fall 2014: Publishing seminar, Portland, OR
- 2014: *The Flickering Page*, lecture, Benton County Historical Society and Corvallis Public Library, Oregon
- 2013: Oregon Legacy Author Series, lecture, Lincoln City, OR
- Lewis & Clark High School, Vancouver WA: Visiting Author, spoke about writing career and conducted creative writing lesson (2010)
- *Rainer Maria Rilke's Life in Pictures*, lecture & visual-media presentation given in multiple venues (2007-2008)
- California State University East Bay, *Mythologizing the Local: Regionalism and Mythological Motifs in Western Literature*, lecture (2005)
- Contra Costa County Public Librarian Symposium: *Mythologizing the Local*, lecture (2004)
- Contra Costa County Historical Society: *Mythologizing the Local*, lecture (2004)
- 2004-2005: *History, Literature, and Landscape*, a guided walk and literary discussion conducted regularly at Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve, Antioch, CA

READINGS, PRESENTATIONS, PERFORMANCES

More than 120 readings, author panels, on-stage interviews, presentations, and lectures throughout the U.S. since 2004.

Selected readings and presentations:

- AWP Conference Reading (Organizer & Host), Portland, OR (March 2019)
- Catamaran Literary Salon, Santa Cruz, CA (March 2019)
- Why There Are Words Reading Series, Portland, OR (Nov. 2018)
- Why There Are Words Reading Series, New York, NY (Oct. 2018)
- L'Ateneu, Barcelona, Spain (July 2017)
- Plonk Reading Series, Portland, OR (May 2017)
- WordFest, Longview, WA (April 2017)
- Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland (July 2016)
- Why There Are Words Reading Series, Sausalito, CA (Aug. 2015)
Video: <https://bit.ly/2KGUQW2>
- Powell's Books, Portland, OR (2004; 2007; 2015; 2018)
Audio: <https://bit.ly/2wfFfd1>
- Yaddo Colony, Saratoga Springs, NY (Aug. 2014)
- ACLU Uncensored Celebration, Portland, OR (Sept. 2009)
- KQED Radio "The Writers' Block," San Francisco, CA (2007)
- Wordstock Literary Festival, Portland, OR (2007)
- Book Group Expo, San Jose, CA (2007)
- New Short Fiction Series, Beverly Hills, CA (2006)
- Square Books, Oxford, MS (2004)

prepared, offered great readings and excellent concepts to take to my practice. Really great, learned so much. Thank you!"

—Literary Arts course participant

"Mark was professional, friendly, knowledgeable, and took time to get to know each of the attendees. He made them feel welcome and encouraged their active participation."

—Allison Terry, Eugene Public Library (Oregon Humanities Conversation Project Program Host)

"Mark Cunningham clearly empathizes with and respects writers and led each critique session with focus, kindness and a quiet determination to push each of us into a deeper understanding of our strengths and areas for improvement. I came away from each session with my love of writing re-ignited."

—Amy Mason Doan, Creative Writing Workshop participant

"[Cunningham's] talk on developing characters was the kind of workshop session that you stumble into in your dreams -- it was simply amazing. Let me tell you it takes quite a bit to amaze me." —Seminar Participant, Portland State University, Spring 2018

"The hour-long discussion of my submission, the extensive annotations, and additional reading material provided by the instructor proved to be invaluable and enjoyable. The workshop format was well-balanced, enlivening, and informative. Cunningham is highly intelligent and he creates an atmosphere of generous discussion and literary exploration."

—Erin Ferrell, Creative Writing Workshop participant

"The class has been truly stimulating and powerful, and these specifics on shaping and improving my manuscript are

CONFERENCES, FESTIVALS, COMMITTEES

- Brooklyn Book Festival 2019: exhibitor, Atelier26 Books
- AWP Conference 2019: exhibitor, Atelier26 Books (Portland, OR)
- American Library Association Winter Session 2019, author appearance and book-signing (Seattle, WA)
- Wordstock Literary Festival 2018: exhibitor, Atelier26 Books (Portland, OR)
- Yaddo Colony Literature Panel 2017: reading and reporting on residency applications in literature
- Portland State University Write to Publish Conference 2017: pitch-session editor
- AWP Conference 2016: exhibitor, Atelier26 Books (Los Angeles, CA)
- Catamaran Writers Conference 2015: panelist (Pebble Beach, CA)
- AWP Conference 2015: attendee (Minneapolis, MN)
- APRIL Festival of Independent Literature 2015: exhibitor, Atelier26 Books (Seattle, WA)
- Wordstock Literary Festival, 2013-2016: exhibitor, Atelier26 Books (Portland, OR)
- Wordstock Literary Festival 2008: author/panelist (Portland, OR)
- Book Group Expo 2006 & 2007: author/panelist (San Jose, CA)
- American Booksellers Association Winter Institute 2007: author (Portland, OR)

PUBLICATIONS

Books — Fiction & Nonfiction

- *Q&A*, a hybrid book (forthcoming from Regal House Publishing, autumn 2020)
- *Perpetua's Kin*, a novel (Sept. 2018)
Named Among the “Most Anticipated Titles of the Season” in *New York Magazine* and a Favorite Summer Read in the *Oregonian*
“One of the bravest and most talented novelists writing today.”-EOWYN IVEY, **Pulitzer Prize Finalist**
- *Funny-Ass Thoreau*, editor (Nov. 2016)
“Hilariously irreverent.”-**Thoreau Society Bulletin**
- *Partisans*, a novel (March 2015)
“It gave me energy. We join forces.”-**JOHN BERGER**
- *The Flickering Page*, cultural criticism (March 2014)
- *The Honorable Obscurity Handbook*, essays (spring 2014)
“Ingenious, important, inspiring, and inspiring.”-**CYNTHIA OZICK**
- *Date of Disappearance*, short story collection (April 2012)
“Deeply seductive...demands a lingering re-reading... wonderful.”-*The Oregonian*
- *Lost Son*, a novel (hardcover, spring 2007)
“Gripping and beautifully written...incredibly ambitious.”-**Strand Books, NY**

exactly what I was seeking.”
—Literary Arts course participant

TEACHING INTERESTS

- Literary fiction
- Creative nonfiction
- The lyric essay
- Hybrid forms
- Experimental fiction and metafiction
- Biographical fiction
- Regionalism
- History of the book
- Editing and independent publishing
- Film Appreciation

HONORS & AWARDS

For Writing:

- *2018 Regional Arts & Culture Council Project Grant
- * 2018 *Lost Son* featured in the International Rilke Society Journal, Bern, Switzerland
- * 2018 *Funny-Ass Thoreau* added to Thoreau bibliography by The Thoreau Society
- * 2017 American Short Fiction Award (Semi-finalist)
- * 2015 Regional Arts & Culture Council Opportunity Grant
- * 2014 Second Yaddo Artist Colony residency (New York)
- * 2014 Whiting Foundation Travel Grant
- * 2014 Sustainable Arts Foundation Travel Grant
- * 2013 Second Oregon Arts Commission Fellowship
- * 2012 Oregon Literary Fellowship, Literary Arts
- * 2010 Honorable Mention, Glimmer Train Magazine Family Matters Competition
- * 2010 First Yaddo Artist Colony residency (New York)
- * 2010 Named one of 20 Writers to Watch in a national list by Dzanc Books
- * 2008 *Lost Son* added to Rilke bibliography in Europe
- * 2007 *Lost Son* named a Top Ten Pick by *The Oregonian*
- * 2007 First Oregon Arts

- o *The Green Age of Asher Witherow*, a novel (hardcover, fall 2004)
“A remarkable first novel, a feat reminiscent of William Styron’s *Lie Down in Darkness*, likewise published in the author’s twenty-sixth year.”—*Foreword Reviews*

Short Fiction

Twenty short stories in distinguished literary magazines since 2002, including *The Kenyon Review*, *Glimmer Train*, *Epoch*, *Boulevard*, and *Alaska Quarterly Review*.

Short Nonfiction

2004-PRESENT

Essays, articles, criticism, blog posts, and short stories in numerous print and online publications both national and regional, including regular contributions to *The Oregonian*.

Selected Publications:

- **Portland Review:** “Variations on the Finding,” April 2019
- **American Book Review**, special biographical fiction issue, [review of *The Noise of Time* by Julian Barnes](#), spring 2018
- **Propeller Quarterly:** “[Always, John,](#)” in memory of John Berger, Jan. 2017
- **Lit Hub:** “[Thoreau Was Actually Funny as Hell](#),” Nov. 17, 2016
- **Timberline Review:** “[Variations on a Beginning](#),” a lyric essay, Issue #3, summer/fall 2016
- **Propeller Quarterly:** “[A Publisher’s Journey](#),” April 2016
- **Tin House Magazine:** “On Paul Zweig’s *Departures*,” Issue #49, “The Ecstatic”
- **Tin House Open Bar blog:** “[Ghost Coda: A Rilke Pilgrimage, or: On Being Glad No One Knows You](#),” Nov. 2014
- **Poets & Writers Magazine:** “Rethinking Restriction: Creative Limitation as a Positive Force,” Jan/Feb 2014
- **Tin House Open Bar blog:** “[Outsideness, or: My Phone Says ‘Searching...’](#),” Sept. 2013
- **Oregon Humanities Magazine:** “[An Anecdotal Glossary of Spectacle](#),” an experimental essay, spring 2013
- **Fiction Writers Review:** “[There’s a Crowd on My Desk](#),” Aug. 2012
- **The Oregonian:** “[The Renaissance Machine](#)” (ran under title “And Now! Instant In-House Printing with the Espresso Book Machine”), July 1, 2012
- **Oregon Humanities Magazine:** “The Artist As Worker,” fall 2010
- **Soul Shelter:** “[John Ruskin on Soulful Imperfection](#),” Feb. 2010
- **Soul Shelter:** “[Why It’s Desirable to Be Eccentric](#),” (on John Stuart Mill) Dec. 2009

TRANSLATION

Numerous original translations from the German of Rainer Maria Rilke’s poetry, prose, correspondence, and journals for my novel *Lost Son*.

PROFESSIONAL EDITING & PUBLISHING

Commission Fellowship

- * 2006 *The Green Age of Asher Witherow* named a “Regional Classic” by Mountains & Plains Booksellers Association
- * 2005 *The Green Age of Asher Witherow* named Finalist for Indie Next Book of the Year Award alongside Marilynne Robinson, Philip Roth, & Joyce Carol Oates
- * 2004 American Booksellers Assoc. selects *The Green Age of Asher Witherow* as #1 Indie Next Pick for October
- * 2004 *The Green Age of Asher Witherow* named a “Best Book of the West,” *Salt Lake Tribune*

HONORS & AWARDS

For Atelier26 Books Editing:

- *2019 *People Like You* named one of 25 *Books to Read Before You Die*, Powell’s Books
- *2019 Oregon Literary Fellowship in Publishing
- * 2018 PEN/Robert W. Bingham Prize in Fiction (1 of 10 longlisted titles)
- * 2017 Grant from the Oregon Community Foundation
- * 2016 PEN/Hemingway Award in Fiction (1 of 2 Finalists)
- * 2015 Balcones Fiction Prize (Winner)
- * 2015 *People Like You* named a Best Book of the Year by *The Oregonian*, *The Portland Mercury*, & Powell’s Books
- * 2014 Flann O’Brien Award in Fiction (1 of 6 Finalists)

EDITING TESTIMONIALS

“Your edits were characteristically spot-on. I continue to be impressed by the keenness and nuance of your work. Thanks for helping me develop this story from a frustrating misstart into a full draft. And thanks, as always, for championing my work and for helping me send it into the world in its best possible form.”

—**Woody Skinner**, author of *A Thousand Distant Radios*

Atelier26 Books, LLC — Editor & Publisher

2011 - PRESENT

Atelier26 is a nationally recognized, award-winning publishing house specializing in contemporary and classic literature. Distributed throughout North America by Independent Publishers Group (IPG).

Duties: Acquire new works of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry; provide comprehensive editing in close collaboration with authors; proofread and copy edit; work with cover designer; manage editorial and publication calendar; manage print production schedules (galleys, proofs, and finals); write advertising copy, book jacket copy, and promotional copy; frequently update content on company website and write for social media channels; work with publicist to coordinate and execute marketing and promotion; confer with Advisory Board members; work with North American distributor; devise budgets; write grants; report to fiscal sponsor; track and dispense author royalties; read and manage submissions; negotiate and execute author contracts.

Published Books — Editor

I have edited more than 15 full-length fiction and nonfiction books for publication, including:

Nonfiction

- o *Stevenson in the States: Notes of an Amateur Immigrant*; collection of Robert Louis Stevenson's American travel writing (forthcoming, 2019)
- o *Bird Book* by Sidney Wade; poetry collection (published Sept. 2017)
- o *Funny-Ass Thoreau*; collected humor of Henry David Thoreau, with an introduction by M. Allen Cunningham (published Nov. 2016)
- o *Gravity* by Elizabeth Rosner; memoir in poems (published Oct. 2014)

Fiction

- o *A Thousand Distant Radios* by Woody Skinner; debut short story collection (published Nov. 2017)
- o *People Like You* by Margaret Malone; debut short story collection (published Nov. 2015)
- o *Someone Not Really Her Mother* by Harriet Scott Chessman; revised edition of acclaimed novel (published spring 2015)
- o *The Beauty of Ordinary Things* by Harriet Scott Chessman; novel (published Nov. 2013)

Moss Literary Journal — Contributing Editor

APRIL 2016 - PRESENT

Moss is a journal of writing from the Pacific Northwest, published regularly online and once annually in print.

Duties: Solicit and edit new works of fiction and nonfiction; review unsolicited submissions; confer with editorial team on acquisitions and plans for future issues, plan events.

“Mark Cunningham’s approach is so personal and so constructive, and he has such a capacity to really inhabit the story or the poem in front of him, so that he’s working with you from the inside — which is something, I think, quite rare in this day and age, in this publishing climate.”

—**Harriet Scott Chessman**,
author of *The Beauty of Ordinary Things*

“Precise, caring, and nurturing to the native voice of his authors, Mark made my first book experience into something like a dream come true.”

—**Margaret Malone**, author of
People Like You

MEMBERSHIPS

Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP)

Fractured Atlas Arts Advocacy

Independent Book Publishers Association

Independent Publishing Resource Center, Portland (IPRC)

International Rilke Society (Rilke Gesellschaft)

Oregon Historical Society

PEN America

PubWest

Thoreau Society

REVIEWS

“A fully formed, timeless American writer.”-**Square Books, Oxford MS**

“A writing unpolluted by careless word choice, emotional flourishes, or manipulative clichés.”-**Salt Lake Tribune**

“Thoroughly researched and accomplished. [The] unusual structure and richly descriptive, evocative language display a mastery that is surprising in a novelistic debut.”-**Booklist**

“Heartfelt characters and stunning descriptions.”-**Library Journal**

Uppercase Writing & Editing — *Freelance Editor & Writer*

2004 - PRESENT

Provide editing and writing services (ad copy, script-writing, editing) to a broad range of clients around the country, from developing writers to cult film directors and rocket scientists and NGOs. Collaborate with illustration and graphic design firm Draw4Us, LLC on numerous projects. Organizational clients include:

- Raytheon
- The American Transplant Foundation
- The Gastro-Intestinal Research Foundation
- Invest for Kids Chicago
- Prosperity Now

SELECTED INTERVIEWS

- Independent Publishers Group: “[Publisher Spotlight: Atelier26](#)”
- *Propeller Quarterly*: “[Trusting the Reader Completely: M. Allen Cunningham on *Partisans*](#)”
- *Truthful Fictions: Conversations with American Biographical Novelists* (Bloomsbury Books, 2014): “Building the Imaginative Record” <http://bit.ly/2kFnudE>

REFERENCES

Available upon request

“Rarely does a writer combine a strikingly beautiful prose style with an unerring instinct for storytelling, but this is indeed M. Allen Cunningham’s startling accomplishment.”-**Robert Olen Butler, Pulitzer Prize winner**

“Impressive and satisfying.”-**San Jose Mercury News**

“Compelling and artfully told...a precise but painterly style.”-**St. Louis Post-Dispatch**

“Cunningham’s prose is perfect. He writes dialogue and sentences that beg to be read aloud.”-**Changing Hands Bookstore, AZ**

“One of America’s most promising voices.”-**Foreword Reviews**

“An extraordinary talent.”-**Ihab Hassan, distinguished American critic**

“Vivid, melodic, and retaining a lyrical beauty throughout.”-**Curled Up with a Good Book**

“I was absolutely hypnotized by the character portrayals...rich and haunting...one of the best contemporary novels I have read to date...a fresh, surprising, daring new voice in fiction.”-**Northshire Bookstore, NY**

“Cunningham’s writing is beautiful and fluid. I found myself torn, lingering over passages and yet eager to rush on...mesmerizing”-**The Oregonian**