

## TEACHING TESTIMONIALS

### **Susan Shapiro is the recipient of The New School Distinguished Teaching Award & New York University's Award for Teaching Excellence**

"I appreciate the work Susan Shapiro does at The New School in Manhattan, where she has been teaching writing for many years, specializing in the short, personal essay. Her students are enthusiastic and serious about writing. They cheer each other on. Sue cheers them all on. And they publish like mad." --Daniel Jones, *New York Times* Modern Love editor

"It's no secret that writing is hard, but getting that writing out into the world is often even harder. Susan Shapiro is not only a beloved professor here at The New School, teaching undergraduate, continuing education, and graduate students, but she is also a genius literary matchmaker, with superhuman powers of connection. If Sue sees a piece of writing, she instantly has ideas about where that piece could flourish in the world, reaching not only the widest audience, but also the right audience. Through her own experience as a writer (with a brand new book coming out this summer, the novel *What's Never Said*), her profound generosity as a teacher, and her professional savvy, she has launched countless writing careers. There is really no one like her." -Laura Cronk, Associate Director of the New School Writing Program

"Sue is truly an inspiration, and a huge reason why I continue to write. If it wasn't for her class, I wouldn't have **published my first clip in the *New York Times***, gotten a job, or completed an internship for *Playboy*. I continue to work with her because she's an incredible teacher who always gives each new piece the attention it deserves." -Alex Miller

"Sue Shapiro's class gave me the kick I needed. **I learned more from her in one day than I learned from most of my college professors.** With her help, I broke into the *New York Times* and *Salon* and sold my first book!" -- Kimberlee Auerbach author of *The Devil, The Lovers, and Me: My Life in Tarot* (Dutton)

"Sue helps her students break into print by sharing her knowledge, expertise and connections without reservation. Within five weeks, **my assignment for class saw print in the *New York Observer*.** Sue went beyond my expectations to help me get three other pieces published. What Sue offered that was just as important as her practical and constructive advice was the feeling that she really wants to see her students succeed. She helps every step of the way." -- Paul Smalera, *QZ* editor

"As an undergraduate at the New School, I didn't find my purpose until I took Susan Shapiro's class. Every Monday night I looked forward to going to class to

share my stories and struggles with my classmates. That's when I realized I had more than just one story, I was a writer all along. I found my voice, which led to my first time ever getting published – in *The New York Times*. The positive feedback was such an amazing experience that I'm now working on a memoir. I entered school a student and left a writer." –Giselle Perez

"Sue Shapiro is the most passionate, generous professor a young writer could wish for. Because of her smart assignments and her brilliant editing, personal essays I wrote for her class were published in *The New York Times Modern Love*, *Psychology Today*, *The Daily News*, and *Tin House* literary magazine, and I landed an agent who sold my memoir. None of this would have happened without Sue's class. My book would not exist. That's why I dedicated it to Sue. I don't know what I'd be doing in New York without her." –Aspen Matis, author of *Girl in the Woods* (Harpercollins) <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/06/fashion/a-hikers-guide-to-healing.html?mcubz=0>

"Sue Shapiro saw my rough essays and cleared the chaff, gave me the wherewithal to publish – the tools, rules, formats, and contacts – and said: go for it! I was shocked when my first assignment (the terrifying humiliation essay) was bought by the *New York Times*! I sold other pieces to *Out* and the JTA. If the question is "How can I get published?" Sue has the answer. She gives more than a push to act, she gives the most generous gift of all: opportunity." –Isaac Lobel

**"Sue is great. Any writer at any level will find a lot to learn from her."** --  
Sheila McClear, author of *The Last of the Live Nude Girls* (Soft Skull Press)

"When I met Susan Shapiro at the New School, I was a depressed 20-year-old. She honed my ambition, encouraged my voice and positively reshaped my universe as she has done for thousands of others as a journalism professor. Ten years later, I write regularly for *The New York Times*, *Interview Magazine*, *The Forward*, *Bomb*, *The Rumpus* and *The New York Post* and I'm an author proud to share my book publisher with Shapiro. Her criticism is sharp, poetic, fast paced and addictive." -Royal Young, author of the memoir *Fame Shark* (Heliotrope)

"If it weren't for Sue's class I wouldn't have a book deal. Sue is extremely savvy and extremely generous with her publishing network. That who you know thing paid off for me. I met an agent who spoke to her seminar. He heard my first page, emailed me the next day, and long story short, I had a deal with Penguin."  
--Louise Sloan, author of *Knock Yourself Up* (Penguin)

"Quite simply, Sue Shapiro's course is responsible for launching my career as a journalist. In fifteen weeks she managed to teach me how to use my professional expertise and personal experience to create great, sellable articles and essays. Of the assignments I did for the course, I sold three, including my first clip in *The New York Times*. Fifteen years and two columns later, I'm almost up to 900."

--Seth Kugel, former *New York Times* Frugal Traveler and author of *The Intrepid Traveler: Rediscovering Discovery in a Wired World* (Norton, March 2018)

"Sue's critique of my work was a crucial step in improving it. My essays have been published in the *New York Times*, *Psychology Today*, *Self*, *Jane* and *Salon*. My novel sold to a fantastic imprint of Random House. I couldn't recommend studying with Sue more." -- *Liza Monroy*, author of *The Marriage Act* (Counterpoint) and *Mexican High* (Spiegel & Grau)

"I was coming down the homestretch writing my book proposal. Before panic set in, I signed up for Sue Shapiro's workshop. As soon as Sue started to talk, fear backed off. Sue is passionate, fiercely strategic, authoritative, and demanding. Hers was just the kind of high-energy-get-your-ass-in-gear pep talk I needed. **Just weeks later, I got a deal with Penguin to publish my first book!**" - *Bruce Frankel*, author of *What Should I Do with the Rest of My Life* (Avery)

"Working with Susan Shapiro helped me break into the *New York Times* Modern Love and Op-ed page, *The Los Angeles Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Poets and Writers*, and made me feel inspired and supported with every step. My clips opened up both publication and work opportunities, including a new job at university supporting a yoga program, a topic I wrote about often. I'm so thankful for Sue and her mentorship. She helped me turn some of my most challenging experiences into something beautiful through writing. I can't recommend working with her more." -*Sarah Herrington*, author of *Essential Yoga* (Fair Winds Press) & *Wanderlust* (Rodale)

"Sue's class was both fun and informative. I had already had some personal essays published years before, but had gotten out of the groove and needed guidance getting back into it. Sue gave insightful, encouraging feedback and had lots of great ideas about ways to rework essays and recast them for different publications. She has lots of great tips to offer, plus **she shares contacts, which is absolutely invaluable**. I've placed all the essays I worked on in Sue's class - in *The New York Times*, *Marie Claire* and *Village Voice*. *Sari Botton*, Longreads editor and bestselling author of *"Goodbye To All That"* (Seal Press) and *Never Can Say Goodbye* (Touchstone)

"English wasn't my first language and I had no writing experience, but Susan strongly believed my story was important to share. She diligently worked with me on improving my writing on a daily basis, helping me publish my work in *The New York Times Magazine* and *Op-Ed page*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Slate*, *Salon*, *Newsday*, *International Herald Tribune* and *Best American Travel Writing*. Attending Susan's book seminar was essential in landing the great WME agent who was speaking. She collaborated with me on the memoir I could not have written without her persistence, direction and heartfelt dedication to helping me tell my life story." -*Kenan Trebincevic*, coauthor of *The Bosnia List* (Viking Penguin)

"I wanted to only write something funny and not touch anything revealing with a ten foot pole. But in her class, Sue challenged me to write something real, pushing me hard which made me want to throw up. But it helped me turn a corner to get a really good draft. I sent it out and almost sold it. But it was rejected and because it was timely, I planned to put it away for a year. Hugely disappointing! Then Sue called me at 11pm with VERY specific instructions to get home asap and send it to an editor she knew at the *New York Times*. I did, though part of me said, "Couldn't this wait until I got home?" Had I waited, it might not have been published in the *New York Times* that week. My piece still makes me cry because it's so raw. It has a similar effect on people who read it. That's classic Sue! No wonder I've taken the class six times." -Danielle Gelfand, TV producer

"I entered Sue's class confused about my career, and left as an author with big bylines and the conviction that I could make it as a writer. Sue was generous, brutal, compassionate, tough, inspiring - and immediately sensed my talent. Thirteen years later I'm the editor of one of India's leading magazines, and am struck by how her insights continue to inform my creative decisions. Sue Shapiro will always be my guru."

- Che Kurrien, Editor-in-Chief, *GQ* India

"Sue Shapiro's assignments teach students exactly what editors want. As an undergraduate in her fun New School feature journalism class, I sold my very first piece to *Cosmopolitan* for \$2000. Since then, I've been published in *The New York Times*, *New York Observer* and *The Forward*. Sue is the only teacher I've had who really helps her students break into newspapers and magazines. 'Tell the story only you can tell' works. Sue is simply the best." -Susie Kantar Cohen

"When I met Susan, I was a college kid with no idea what I wanted to do. I can't believe I now call myself a writer with many pieces published in *Salon*, *Newsday*, *Dame Magazine*, *DailyDot*, *TheFrisky*, *Free Press* and *Alternet*. I'm finally working on a book proposal, now that I have steady work. And through a piece I published in *Salon*, it was Susan who wound up bringing my boyfriend into my life. He has been such a major source of love and support for me that I never really had before from a man. It's crazy how much influence ONE person can have on your entire existence. I can't imagine what my life would be like right now if I didn't end up in her class. I imagine, not half as good." -Tiffanie Drayton

"When it comes to the art and business of writing, Susan Shapiro has is all covered. Her endless wealth of information, connections and spot-on criticism will be beneficial to any writer, new or experienced. Thanks to her, I published in *The New York Times*, *Quartz*, and was able to interview Pulitzer prize winner, Tom Reiss, author of *The Black Count*. I worked as the features editor for *SFWire* and a became a contributing writer for *Out Magazine*, *Interview*, *New York Press* and *dot429*. If you're looking to get published, Susan is the best chance there is-hands down!" -Emillio Mesa

"I took a class with Sue in 2006 right after graduating from college and it was my first introduction to the New York writing world. I got published halfway through the six-week course and I was beyond thrilled. She gives tons of straight-shooting, practical advice which would benefit anyone who wants to figure out how to get published. She had great editors come to speak and I'd highly recommend her classes and lectures. I really appreciate Sue's guidance in helping me launch my career in journalism." Katherine Goldstein, former [vanityfair.com](http://vanityfair.com) editor and Harvard University professor

"I am grateful to Susan Shapiro for teaching me the basics of how journalism and book publishing really work. She not only helped me with getting published, she's introduced me to some of my best friends and a great writing community."

-Victoria Moy, author of *Fighting for the Dream: Voices of Chinese American Veterans from World War II to Afghanistan*

"Not long after I moved to New York City, I took Sue Shapiro's writing class and it changed my life. Sue introduced her students to many editors, including one from the *New York Times Book Review* who spoke about the type of pitches he liked and what he wanted in his writers. Not long after that, I had my first small piece accepted by the *Book Review*. Taking Sue's class isn't just a rite of passage, it is simply essential for anyone in the city who wants to be a published writer. She's one of the sharpest editors I've known, and she understands everything there is to know about the in's and out's of newspaper and magazine publishing. It's always a buzz to reconnect with Sue and talk writing whenever I'm back in town. This trip, I returned to my old New School classroom to be interviewed by her new class. Sue goaded me to tell them my book got a rave on the cover of the next week's *Times Book Review*." -Christine Kenneally, author of *The First Word: The Search for the Originals of Language* (Viking) and *Invisible History of the Human Race* (Viking)

"Susan is more than a high octane teacher who guides students to win in the high stakes game of writing professionally. She is a passionate mentor, a sharp-eyed editor and a guardian angel who gives her students wings. Her network of editors, publishers, agents and writers is a currency that she shares and we all profit from her generosity. I took her 5-week course and published two op-ed pieces about an illness I'd contacted after the World Trade Center attacks in *Newsday* and *The New York Daily News*. My essays are now part of the 9/11 Memorial Archives and have been referenced by Senator Kristen Gillibrand of New York who is sponsoring new legislation for the continuation of benefits for the victims of 9/11 toxic dust exposure. Susan changed my life." -Richard Dodd

"Sue is an amazing editor and literary matchmaker. The first "humiliation essay" I wrote in her class sold for \$300 and won a *NY Press* award. My next piece "Defriending My Rapist" wound up in *The New York Times* and on Dr. Drew's TV show. After that I started speaking publicly about the rape and my recovery. My next talk is at John Jay College, where my essay is required reading for a criminal

course. I'm now working on a memoir the essay inspired. I also write for *The Forward*, *The Fix*, *TheFrisky* and *The Blot*. Through a travel editor I met in Susan's class, I've had free trips to Puerto Rico, Curaçao, Cancun and Costa Rica. I've interviewed Laverne Cox, Shia LaBeouf, Woody Allen, Susan Sarandon and Steven Spielberg and I speak on freelancing panels at the American Society of Journalists & Authors (ASJA). Sue really is the best writing teacher on the planet! -Dorri Olds

"I can't say enough about Sue's class and her skills as a teacher. She's clear and practical, while at the same time genuinely supportive and encouraging. She's responsive and available, always eager to help. She's an experienced and prolific writer, a bestselling author who has published countless articles and ten books. *Unhooked*, about how to recover from drug addiction, was particularly useful to me as an addiction psychiatrist. I read the Spanish edition of the book and found it to be thought provoking and inspiring. Sue's goal is for her students to publish before the end of class, and she has an incredible success rate. Her efficient, to-the-point teaching style helped me make the most of class and time in the midst of my busy schedule. With her help and guidance, my first piece was published in the *New York Times* by the end of the semester, an immensely gratifying experience. If your goal is to grow as writer and get published, Sue is the teacher for you." -Dr. Carlos Saavedra

"Within five weeks of meeting Susan Shapiro, I had a *New York Times* Modern Love and a bulldog literary agent who negotiated a book deal with my favorite publishing imprint. There is a difference between knowing how to write and knowing how to write in a form that is recognizable to the literary gatekeepers--the editors--and Sue breaks it all down and then makes sure you break in. If you're a writer who wants to play with form, Sue's classes will get you through the important doors, which will give you more freedom to experiment. Sue is a fairy godmother, a literary rainmaker, my Jewish mother in New York." -Kassi Underwood, author of *May Cause Love: An Unexpected Journey of Enlightenment After Abortion* (HarperOne)

"I felt seriously lost and in need of guidance. I needed to recharge my batteries. I'm so glad I took Susan's New School class, which helped me write an essay about how I'm finally graduating college at 47, the same time as my daughter. I'm very excited that Eli Reyes, the *Newsday/AMNY* editor, just said he wants to publish it. I can't think of a better way to end my undergraduate career. Susan is amazing at what she does and how she helps her current and former students. It's incredible. I'm Team Susan!!" -Ralph Ortiz

Letter To Sue:

"Thanks for your encouragement/mentoring/talking with me. You gave me a lot of hope when I needed it. I always looked up to you. You're so sharp and you say what's on your mind. I never felt any of your positive feedback was you being nice or your negative feedback didn't make perfect sense. You taught me what makes something publishable and what doesn't. At that point it was difficult because I

had talent and ambition, but I didn't know how to mold it into something a magazine/newspaper would take. I'm grateful (as many are) that you choose to use your powers to help others. I just know how to be talented in a very narrow square box whereas you can branch out and have wider appeal. You're someone I always wanted to impress which brings out my best writing. Mother issues! But seriously, all the mentors I had were men and you really did make an awesome impression on me, being a super funny, strong, cool woman. You're the only one where I could see: Oh that's how I can be when I'm older. It's not just a choice between art/self-destruction at 29 or marrying/giving up at 29. You can be cool and a woman and not be soft spoken/polite or a bitch. You can be cool and still be open. I needed to see that. Getting your approval means more than I can say."  
-Jade Sharma, author of the novel *Problems* (Emily's Books)

"If anyone is interested in writing in New York, there's an awesome teacher named Sue Shapiro who teaches at The New School and also out of her apartment. She teaches a class I took called 'Instant Gratification Takes too Long.' When I was at Parson's I took it as an elective. It's all about how to get essays, memoirs and Shouts & Murmur type humor pieces published in different places. She's fantastic."  
-interview with Meredith Scardino, TV writer for Colbert & The Unbreakable Kimmi Schmidt

"After taking Sue Shapiro's 5-week 'Instant Gratification' class and doing the op-ed assignment I published my first piece in The New York Times' On Campus section. I couldn't have done it without Sue's guidance and connection to the editor. Sue's class gave me the push I needed!" -Kate Chia  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/17/opinion/my-asian-pussycat-parents.html>

"Susan Shapiro is so important to me and many young writers. I took her class Writing for NYC Newspapers and Magazines three times at the New School-- I paid out of pocket twice. It's the best class in NYC. She teaches you how to freelance and brings in the best editors and writers. I got my first clip from Sue's class! I remember being so enthralled by the guests who came to class and now I'll be speaking there in December about my own book!" -Cat Marnell, author of *How to Murder Your Life* (Simon & Schuster)

"The first thing I read aloud in your workshop was about this boy's death. And I cried. And you said that crying was a good sign. Thank you for everything you've given me." -Jessica Ciencin Henriquez  
<https://nytimes.com/2017/03/31/fashion/modern-love-the-accident-no-one-talked-about.html>

"Whether you're a novice in search of your first byline, you want break into bigger publications or focus on books, a class with Susan Shapiro is the best investment any writer at any level can make. In my case, it changed my life. Though I'd had minor successes after graduating with a journalism degree from Emerson College, they were sporadic until I took her New School class. After that, it's like a light

switch flipped on. I become better at my craft. I learned how to freelance in New York, from how to spot and pitch timely stories to how to deal with editors, an art itself. I made great contacts through the guest editors who came to her class that led to assignments from The New York Times Book Review, Time Out NY, The Daily News, The Wall Street Journal and The NY Post, work that led to my publishing three books. In fact, the class I took with Sue was so helpful that I took it three more times. I wouldn't have had the career I have without her." -Tripp Whetsell, coauthor of *The Improv: An Oral History of the World-Famous Comedy Club That Revolutionized Stand-Up*

"Thank you Susan Shapiro for your brilliance in helping me establish my point of view for my memoir, and for helping me with the essay I published in *Psychology Today* that landed me my book deal! You rock!" -Kathleen Frazier, author of *Sleepwalker: The Mysterious Makings And Recovery of a Somnambulist* (Skyhorse Press, winner of the 2017 Independent Publishers Award for Best Non-Fiction)

"When I signed up for Susan Shapiro's class, I hoped to better my writing. Getting published felt like a long-shot. But Sue read in between my lines, and helped me make my points more clearly. Because of Sue, I've placed my work in *Salon*, *The New York Times*, *Oprah*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, and *The Washington Post*. If clips are like crack (a truism of hers), she is simply the best writing teacher you'll find." -Haig Chahinian

"I wanted to write you a quick note to just say thank you. Your political posts have been incredible and sane in a darkly terrible time. I love your spirit and candor, always have since day one in your class so many years ago. I love reading your pieces and hearing about the amazing deluge of students you have elevated to writers by helping them hone their voices and giving them permission to be heard. I hope you know how valuable you are to all of us who have dared to believe we were worthy of writing and laid bare our souls to see our names in print. You're amazing. Thank you." -Jenni Shafiro

"Two years ago, almost 60, I'd never been published before. I took Susan Shapiro's five-session course, and she mid-wived an essay that was published in the Private Lives column of the *New York Times*. She had asked me two questions about my life, and suggested a topic. As a result of the article, I was invited as a guest on a radio show. Suddenly, I had a writing credit and a media credit. I took her course again. This time Susan guided me in writing a parenting piece that was accepted by the Well Family Ties column of the *New York Times*. To me she has been the wizard stationed just outside the entrance to Platform Nine and Three-quarters allowing me to board the train to Hogwarts. She performs that kind of alchemy." -Robert Markowitz

[New York Times: Abandoning the Work I Hated](#)

[New York Times: An Older Dad, Down for the Count](#)



"Sue Shapiro is a powerhouse. She pushed me to write the guts of my story, and helped me get published in *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and sell my books. She is incredibly generous and wildly talented." -Abby Sher, author of the memoir *Amen, Amen, Amen* (Scribner) and YA novels *Kissing Snowflakes* (Scholastic) and *All The Ways the World Can End* (FSG)

"Sue Shapiro helped me turn my ideas, the places I wanted to go, and the people I wanted to meet into marketable pieces of journalism. I took her New School class four times. Using Sue's strategies, I eventually wrote several feature stories for the *The New York Times* and six front-page A-Heds for *The Wall Street Journal*. Now I'm working on a book, expanded from one of my *Times* stories. I don't think I could have done any of it without Sue." -- Tyler J. Kelley, author of the forthcoming  *Holding Back the River* (Simon & Schuster)

"Susan is an amazing teacher! She shaped my life in enormous ways. I took a one-night workshop in her apartment and brought in "From Hunger" and this essay: <https://www.thecut.com/2013/04/stalker-sarah-17-only-takes-selfies-with-stars.html>. At the time, if you can believe it, they were one essay, a kind of monstrous half-formed thing. Susan told me to break it into two, and suggested I submit one to the editor she knew at the Anxiety column of the *New York Times*. I did, and received a good response almost immediately. She had mentioned writing for *New York Magazine's* *The Cut*, so I pitched the other piece to *The Cut* not long after. You can guess what happened. Publishing these essays led to two books. All to say, she's a genius and a mensch, and will be loyal to you for the rest of your life. Cherish her." -Sarah Gerard, author of the novel *Binary Star* (Two Dollar Radio) and the essay collection *The Sunshine State* (Harpercollins)

"With Susan's incredible guidance, I published the first essay I wrote in her class in the LGBT magazine the *Advocate*. With her pushing me to mix humor with "blood on the page," I published my next essay in the *Washington Post*. Through her amazing course, I published additional op-eds, articles, and essays in the *Advocate* and in newspapers like *Newsday* and the *New York Blade*. I took time away from personal essay writing to get my Ph.D. and become a professor, but my first book, *Dying to be Normal: Gay Martyrs and the Quest for Equality* (forthcoming from Oxford University Press) builds on the ideas about queer life in America that I first started writing about in Susan's classes. I am deeply grateful."  
-Brett Krutzsch