CREATIVE WRITING, MFA

The program in creative writing offers a two-year master of fine arts degree in creative writing in the areas of fiction and poetry. The MFA program is a small program within a large and vibrant writing community. The program typically admits six new students each year.

The MFA program is the only program of its kind to have an “alternating genre” admissions policy. The program admits fiction writers in even-numbered years and poets in odd-numbered years. This alternating admissions schedule allows the program to provide a 2 to 1 student/teacher ratio and lets fiction instructors focus entirely on one group of fiction writers, and poetry instructors on one group of poets for the two-year instructional period.

FUNDING

GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information (https://grad.wisc.edu/funding) is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and processes related to funding.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

Prospective students should see the program website (https://creativewriting.wisc.edu/teachingaid.html#financialaid) for funding information.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress and degree requirements (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/policiesandrequirementstext), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Face to Face</th>
<th>Evening/Weekend</th>
<th>Online</th>
<th>Hybrid</th>
<th>Accelerated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mode of Instruction Definitions

**Evening/Weekend:** These programs are offered in an evening and/or weekend format to accommodate working schedules. Enjoy the advantages of on-campus courses and personal connections, while keeping your day job. For more information about the meeting schedule of a specific program, contact the program.

**Online:** These programs are offered primarily online. Many available online programs can be completed almost entirely online with all online programs offering at least 50 percent or more of the program work online. Some online programs have an on-campus component that is often designed to accommodate working schedules.

Take advantage of the convenience of online learning while participating in a rich, interactive learning environment. For more information about the nature of a specific program, contact the program.

**Hybrid:** These programs have innovative curricula that combine on-campus and online formats. Most hybrid programs are completed on-campus with a partial or completely online semester. For more information about the hybrid schedule of a specific program, contact the program.

**Accelerated:** These on-campus programs are offered in an accelerated format that allows you to complete your program in a condensed time-frame. Enjoy the advantages of on-campus courses with minimal disruption to your career. For more information about the accelerated nature of a specific program, contact the program.

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Minimum Credit Requirement</th>
<th>Graduation GPA Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Residence Requirement</td>
<td>30 credits</td>
<td>3.00 GPA required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement</td>
<td>Half of degree coursework (27 credits out of 42 total credits) must be completed graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university’s Course Guide (<a href="https://registrar.wisc.edu/course-guide/">https://registrar.wisc.edu/course-guide/</a>).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Graduate GPA Requirements</td>
<td>3.00 GPA required.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Grade Requirements</td>
<td>To be considered a student in good standing in the MFA program in creative writing, a student must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 and receive no grade lower than an AB in any creative writing course. If a student does not meet this requirement, or if a student receives an F in any course, the student could no longer be considered to be in good standing. Consequently, a student who is not in good standing could have their TAship or other financial aid support revoked, and could be asked to leave the program.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Assessments and Examinations Requirements

MFA candidates must submit a publishable written thesis in the genre in which they were admitted (fiction or poetry).

Language Requirements

No language requirements.

REQUIRED COURSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 781</td>
<td>Graduate Fiction Workshop (Fiction Genre)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 782</td>
<td>Graduate Poetry Workshop (Poetry Genre)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 783</td>
<td>Creative Writing Pedagogy Seminar (Both Fiction and Poetry Genres)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Pedagogy (during the first semester)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thesis</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 785</td>
<td>MFA Thesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Electives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Total Credits: 42

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1. Students take 3 credits in each of the first, second and third semesters, then 6 thesis credits in the fourth semester. These are not courses—rather, they’re the means by which the University gives MFAs credit for their independent writing.

2. **15 credits of electives** drawn from appropriate courses across the curriculum. While students are expected to focus on and produce book-length theses by the end of their two years here, they are also encouraged to pursue other intellectual interests via these electives. In the past, MFA students have fulfilled their elective requirements by enrolling in literature courses, studying foreign languages, pursuing other artistic interests such as dance, book-making, and classical guitar; augmenting research for historical novels by taking appropriate history classes. MFA students may also hone their writing skills in other genres by taking intermediate and advanced undergraduate workshops and graduate level workshops in genres outside the one for which they were admitted, as electives with the permission of the instructor. Students may also take up to 6 elective credits in the form of additional thesis hours in the second and third semesters.

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**Policies**

**Graduate School Policies**

The Graduate School’s Academic Policies and Procedures (https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy) provide essential information regarding general university policies. Program authority to set degree policies beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the degree program faculty. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

**Major-Specific Policies**

**Graduate Program Handbook**

A Graduate Program Handbook containing all of the program’s policies and requirements is forthcoming from the program.

**Prior Coursework**

**Graduate Work from Other Institutions**

With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 12 credits of graduate coursework from other institutions. coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master’s degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

**UW-Madison Undergraduate**

No credits from a UW-Madison undergraduate degree are allowed to count toward the degree.

**UW-Madison University Special**

With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 10 credits of coursework numbered 300 or above taken as a UW-Madison University Special student. coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master’s degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

**Probation**

The MFA advisor (sometimes referred to as the MFA program director) will review student academic performance and conduct in all coursework to determine that students are making satisfactory progress toward the degree. If at any time the MFA advisor determines that a student’s academic performance and/or conduct has not been satisfactory, the MFA advisor, with the input and concurrence of the voting members of the Creative Writing Steering Committee, may place the student on probation or may dismiss the student from the program. The period of probation will be one semester in duration. Prior to the end of the probationary period the MFA advisor will review the student’s performance and conduct and decide, with the input and concurrence of the voting members of the Creative Writing Steering Committee, to reinstate or dismiss the student.

**Advisor / Committee**

The current MFA advisor (sometimes referred to as the MFA program director) advises all MFA students.

**Credits Per Term Allowed**

15 credits

**Time Constraints**

It is expected that the MFA thesis be completed in May of the second year in the program.

Master’s degree students who have been absent for five or more consecutive years lose all credits that they have earned before their absence. Individual programs may count the coursework students completed prior to their absence for meeting program requirements; that coursework may not count toward Graduate School credit requirements.

**Other**

Each student receives financial aid in the form of teaching assistantships, prize scholarships, tuition remission, and health benefits.

**Professional Development**

**Graduate School Resources**

Take advantage of the Graduate School’s professional development resources (https://grad.wisc.edu/pd) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

**Learning Outcomes**

1. Develop the creative and technical skills necessary to conceive, execute, and revise original literary work in a student’s chosen genre (fiction or poetry).

2. Demonstrate sensitivity to language and style on both the artistic and technical levels.

3. Develop the critical, analytical, and editing skills necessary to evaluate literary works in progress, both in the student’s own work-in-progress, and in that of the student’s peers.
4. Develop the ability to read literary works not only for their social, historical, intellectual, formal, and interpretive value, but for their capacity to inspire and generate new work, and to see in a finished work the process of its being made.

5. Develop through study and practice the pedagogical skills necessary to teach creative writing courses to undergraduate students.

6. Demonstrate understanding of professional and pedagogical practices and opportunities within and related to the field of creative writing.

7. Recognize and apply principles of ethical conduct with respect to one's work.

8. Engage with local communities of creative writers.

PEOPLE

Faculty: Professors Barry, Johnson, Kercheval, Mitchell, Wallace; Assistant Professor Evans