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

Prospective students should see the program website for funding information.

Requirements

Minimum Degree Requirements and Satisfactory Progress

To make progress toward a graduate degree, students must meet the Graduate School Minimum Degree Requirements and Satisfactory Progress (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext) in addition to the requirements of the program.

Master of Fine Arts Degree

MFA, with available tracks in Fiction or Poetry

Minimum Graduate Degree Credit Requirement

42 credits

Minimum Graduate Residence Credit Requirement

30 credits

Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement

More than half of degree coursework (27 out of 42 total credits) must be completed in graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university’s Course Guide (http://my.wisc.edu/CourseGuideRedirect/BrowseByTitle).

Prior Coursework Requirements: 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.

Prior Coursework Requirements: UW-Madison Undergraduate

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

Prior Coursework Requirements: 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.

Credits per Term Allowed

15 credits

Program-Specific Courses Required

Fiction track: ENGL 781 Graduate Fiction Workshop

Poetry track: ENGL 782 Graduate Poetry Workshop

Both tracks: ENGL 783 Creative Writing Pedagogy Seminar and ENGL 785 MFA Thesis

Overall Graduate GPA Requirement

3.00 GPA required

Other Grade Requirements

No other specific grade requirements.

Probation Policy

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.

Assessments and Examinations

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

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.

**LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS**
No language requirements.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

- Imagine, create, and complete original literary works in the primary genre of study (poetry or fiction) in a manner that is sensitive to language and style.
- Develop editing skills including employing editing and revision techniques and strategies to work in progress; synthesizing evaluations and editorial advice from others; and analyzing, editing, and evaluating work in progress by peers.
- Analyze, evaluate, and demonstrate understanding of works in the primary genre with special emphasis on current modes and practices.
- Demonstrate knowledge of literary forms and devices both as a writer and as a reader, and locate one's own work within literary and cultural contexts.
- "Read as a writer," that is, read work in the primary genre not only for its social, historical, intellectual, formal and interpretive value, but also for its capacity to inspire and generate new work and to discover in the finished work the process of its being made.

**PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

- Demonstrate understanding of professional and pedagogical practices and opportunities within and related to the field of creative writing.
- Recognize and apply principles of ethical conduct with respect to one's work.

**ADDITIONAL LEARNING GOALS**

- Engage with local communities of creative writers.

**PEOPLE**

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