Creative Writing, M.F.A.

DEPARTMENT

MA in English - Literature Option, M.A.
MFA in Creative Writing, M.F.A.
MN in Creative Writing, Minor
MA in English-Rhetoric and Writing Studies Option, M.A.
BA in English - Creative Writing Option, B.A.
MN in Literature of Diversity, Minor
BA in English - Literature Option, B.A.
BA in English Studies, B.A.
MN in English Literature, Minor
CERT in Composition, Certificate of Adv. Study
CRED in Single Subject Credential - English

REQUIREMENTS

Department of English

Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing Requirements

The M.F.A. in Creative Writing offers advanced degree training to talented students who wish to gain expertise in the writing of poetry, fiction, or creative nonfiction. It assumes that, as in music or the visual arts, the best education for the artist includes: training in the history and traditions associated with the student's discipline, training in theoretical and formal approaches to the craft, and extensive practice with critique of student work by peers and faculty writers. The program combines studio and academic approaches, providing the student with substantial critical workshop experience and a solid background in theory and literature. In addition to a traditional literature based course of study, we offer the Emphasis in Publishing and Editing for those students who wish to gain professional training and experience in the field.

Admission Requirements

Admission to the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program requires: a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution with a GPA of 3.0 or better in the undergraduate major (foreign students must score 600 or better on the TOEFL); three letters of recommendation from teachers, editors, or others familiar with the applicant's writing and academic skills; and a writing sample of the student's creative work (up to 10 poems or 20 pages of prose) to be evaluated by the creative writing admissions committee. The advanced GRE is not required.

Degree Requirements

In consultation with the M.F.A. advisor, each student prepares and submits a coherent program individually designed within one of the two following frameworks:

M.F.A. in Creative Writing

ENGL 261 or 263 or 265 (16 units)
ENGL 241, 243, or 245 (8 units)
(one course in the student's focus genre and one in either of the other two genres)
ENGL 250T or 280T (12 units)
Approved electives (upper-division or graduate level courses) (12-14 units)
ENGL 299 (Thesis) (1-6 units)
Total (54 units)

Note: At least 70% (38 units) of coursework must be at graduate (200) level.

M.F.A. in Creative Writing: Emphasis in Publishing and Editing

ENGL 261 or 263 or 265 (16 units)
ENGL 241, 243, or 245 (8 units)
(one course in the student's focus genre and one in either of the other two genres)
ENGL 250T or 280T (8 units)
ENGL 286 and/or ENGL 242 (8 units)
Approved electives (upper-division or graduate level courses) (8 -10 units)
ENGL 299 (Thesis) (1-6 units)
Total (54 units)

Note: At least 70% (38 units) of coursework must be at graduate (200) level.

Specific Requirements

Thesis. The thesis for the M.F.A. in Creative Writing consists of a single book-length manuscript of fiction, a collection of poems, or creative nonfiction that works together to make a unified body of work. The thesis committee works closely with the student on style as well as content; it adheres to a high standard of publishable quality work. In their final semester, students will complete a formal defense of their thesis with their committee.

Graduate Writing Requirement. Before advancement to candidacy, the student must also satisfy the Graduate Writing Skills Requirement. This requirement is met by submission and approval of a sample of scholarly writing. (This is distinct from the sample of creative work required for program admission.) See English Department's Advising Booklet for more information.

Contextualizing Narrative. In addition to the general Graduate Division requirements, students are required to complete the M.F.A. Contextualizing Narrative Assignment with a grade of B or above. Students work with their advisor to create an approved reading list for the assignment. The Contextualizing Narrative Assignment consists of craft-focused annotations of approved texts that allow students to demonstrate a theoretical and critical knowledge of their genre.

FACULTY

The English Department consists of 26 full-time faculty whose teaching fields cover every area of literary studies and the humanities, including film and folklore. Most of the faculty have published books, textbooks, and articles in their disciplines, five have received outstanding teaching awards at the university, and one has received an outstanding teaching award for the entire CSU system. In addition, the faculty includes a number of lecturers, part-time instructors and teaching assistants, and the department operates an English writing lab staffed by tutors trained to work with students on an individual basis.

For faculty phone numbers and e-mail, see the campus directory.

For more on the faculty, see the faculty pages.
The faculty pages are updated by the department or program.