Creative Writing & Poetics MFA

The MFA in Creative Writing and Poetics is a two-year, 48-credit graduate degree. Students typically enroll in 9 credit hours per semester and 12 credit hours in the Summer Writing Program (over two summers).

The program offers an open-genre curriculum within a contemplative academic environment, providing MFA students maximum flexibility within the degree. Graduate students are encouraged to take classes across genres, enabling them to investigate a personal, intensely original writing process and style. We challenge the notion of safe or generic works and create a space for radical exploration and experimentation.

Requirements

• 9 credits of writing workshops
• 9 credits of poetics seminars
• 12 credits of the Summer Writing Program (workshops, lectures, readings)
• 3 credits of contemplative practice
• 3 credits of professional development (teaching or publishing)
• 6 credits of electives (workshops, interdisciplinary courses, etc.)
• 6 credits of thesis [faculty mentorship on book-length creative manuscript and critical research poetics essay]

Degree Requirements

The Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing & Poetics requires a total of 48 credit hours distributed among the following courses:

Summer Writing Program: 12 credits

• WRI651–653 Summer Writing Program I (6)
• WRI751–753 Summer Writing Program II (6)

Writing Workshops: 9 credits

Semester-long courses in creative writing workshops require regular submission of original work for critique, oral presentation, and editing. Creative reading and writing courses have distinct literature and creative writing components.

• WRI614 Prose Workshop: Memoir/Anti-Memoir [3]
• WRI625 Multigenre Workshop: Adaptations [3]
• WRI629 Multigenre Workshop: Translation [3]
• WRI671 Prose Workshop: Narrative Practices [3]
• WRI715 Poetry Workshop: Experimental Poetry [3]
• WRI720 Prose Workshop: Experimental Prose [3]
• WRI722 Poetry Workshop: Eco-Poetics [3]
• WRI729 Multigenre Workshop: Collaborative Texts [3]
• WRI730 Multigenre Workshop: Performance Art and Writing [3]
• WRI731 Prose Workshop: The Novel [3]
• WRI739 Poetry Workshop: Contemplative Poetics [3]
• WRI744 Multigenre Workshop: Somatic Writing [3]
• WRI748 Multigenre Workshop: Activist Writing [3]

• WRI749 Multigenre Workshop: Text and Image [3]
• WRI758 Poetry Workshop: Documentary Poetics [3]
• WRI763 Multigenre Workshop: Notes on Architecture [3]
• WRI770 Multigenre Workshop: Cross-Genre Forms [3]
• WRI775 Multigenre Workshop: Cross-Disciplinary Writing [3]
• WRI793 Special Topics: Writing Workshop [3]

Poetics Seminars: 9 credits

These examine a single writer’s work or specific topics in literary history, or encompass a survey of historical or theoretical orientations, and require critical papers in standard academic format. Students must take WRI617 Poetics Seminar: Writers in Community in their first semester.

• WRI617 Poetics Seminar: Writers in Community [3]
• WRI640 Poetics Seminar: Women Writers [3]
• WRI656 Poetics Seminar: The Archive [3]
• WRI677 Poetics Seminar: Critical Theory [3]
• WRI707 Poetics Seminar: Major Authors [3]
• WRI727 Poetics Seminar: Cross-cultural Literature [3]
• WRI733 Poetics Seminar: Queer Lit [3]
• WRI740 Poetics Seminar: Film Poetics [3]
• WRI757 Poetics Seminar: Lineages [3]
• WRI761 Poetics Seminar: Contemporary Trends [3]
• WRI796 Special Topics: Poetics Seminar [3]

Electives: 6 credits

Students have ample choices to fulfill the 6-credit elective requirement and may choose courses from a wide range of offerings (including taking extra literature and workshop courses). The Creative Writing and Poetics program also offers the following electives:

• WRI789W Fall Writers Practicum [1]
• WRI791W Spring Writers Practicum [1]
• WRI794W Writers Practicum with Anne Waldman [1]
• WRI795W Writers Practicum with Allen Ginsberg Visiting Fellow [1]

Professional Development Requirement: 3 credits

There is a variety of courses available that provide professional development in teaching and publishing.

• WRI602 Professional Development: Letterpress Printing: Well-Dressed Word [3]
• WRI603 Professional Development: Letterpress Printing: First Impressions [3]
• WRI607W Professional Development: Teaching Practicum: Designing a Writing Workshop [2]
• WRI672 Professional Development: Book Arts [3]
• WRI700 Professional Development: Writing Pedagogy Seminar [3]
• WRI705 Professional Development: Small Press Publishing [3]
• WRI781 Professional Development: Project Outreach [3]
• WRI797 Special Topics: Professional Development [3]
Contemplative Requirement: 3 credits

There is a variety of courses available that satisfy this requirement, including, but not limited to, Taijiquan, sitting meditation, aikido, ikebana, sumi brushstroke, thangka painting, and yoga. Each of these disciplines provides training in an art form that cultivates mindful awareness.

The Creative Writing and Poetics program offers the following 3-credit contemplative courses:

- WRI739 Poetry Workshop: Contemplative Poetics [3]
- WRI744 Multigenre Workshop: Somatic Writing [3]

MFA Thesis: 6 credits

In their last semester, MFA students submit an MFA thesis, which includes creative and critical components. Additional information about the MFA thesis and extended thesis is available in the JKS office.

- WRI875 MFA Critical Thesis Seminar [3]
- WRI880 MFA Creative Thesis [3]
- WRI881 Extended MFA Thesis [0.5]

Total Credits 48