

# CREATIVE WRITING, MASTER OF FINE ARTS (M.F.A.) WITH A CONCENTRATION IN POETRY

## Program goals

Our selective and academically rigorous 48-credit-hour, three-year program is designed to provide talented writers with the opportunity to work closely with both outstanding faculty and gifted peers to strengthen their craft, develop their literary aesthetics, enrich their understanding of existing traditions as well as compositional possibilities, and to participate actively in the life of the literary community at large.

The primary areas of study are poetry and fiction, and admission is highly competitive. In addition to the poetry and fiction workshops, there are courses available that focus on writing drama, nonfiction and screenplays, as well as courses that provide practical experience in editing.

## Student learning outcomes

Students in the M.F.A. in Creative Writing program will:

1. Develop and refine their individual writerly voices, produce literary work of a high quality and demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of their own aesthetics, as well as the literary models and cultural sources of those aesthetics
2. Actively engage in a wider literary culture and community at the local, regional, national or international level
3. Develop constructive workshop practices and demonstrate the ability to read closely and respond perceptively and critically to the writing of their fellow M.F.A. students
4. Develop an advanced comprehension of editing and revision techniques and strategies, which include synthesizing challenges, advice and critiques from professors and fellow M.F.A. students
5. Develop, hone and articulate a keen sense of their artistic and career goals

## Student learning outcomes specific to poetry

1. Demonstrate a skillful use or knowledge of major poetic devices, such as metaphor, imagery, lineation, persona, types of rhythm, rhyme and other sonic effect.
2. Demonstrate the use or knowledge of classic poetic forms, such as the sonnet, the ode and the elegy, as well as other contemporary, experimental or avant-garde forms.
3. In a statement of purpose or aesthetics that is part of their thesis manuscript, as well as in an exit interview/ thesis defense, appraise and locate their own work within literary and cultural contexts

## VCU Graduate Bulletin, VCU Graduate School and general academic policies and regulations for all graduate students in all graduate programs

The VCU Graduate Bulletin website documents the official admission and academic rules and regulations that govern graduate education for all graduate programs at the university. These policies are established by the

graduate faculty of the university through their elected representatives to the University Graduate Council.

It is the responsibility of all graduate students, both on- and off-campus, to be familiar with the VCU Graduate Bulletin as well as the Graduate School website (<http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/>) and academic regulations in individual school and department publications and on program websites. However, in all cases, the official policies and procedures of the University Graduate Council, as published on the VCU Graduate Bulletin and Graduate School websites, take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines.

**Visit the academic regulations section** for additional information on academic regulations for graduate students. (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/>)

## Degree candidacy requirements

A graduate student admitted to a program or concentration requiring a final research project, work of art, thesis or dissertation, must qualify for continuing master's or doctoral status according to the degree candidacy requirements of the student's graduate program. Admission to degree candidacy, if applicable, is a formal statement by the graduate student's faculty regarding the student's academic achievements and the student's readiness to proceed to the final research phase of the degree program.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following degree candidacy policy as published in the VCU Graduate Bulletin for complete information and instructions.

**Visit the academic regulations section** for additional information on degree candidacy requirements. (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/candidacy/>)

## Graduation requirements

As graduate students approach the end of their academic programs and the final semester of matriculation, they must make formal application to graduate. No degrees will be conferred until the application to graduate has been finalized.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following graduation requirements as published in the Graduate Bulletin for a complete list of instructions and a graduation checklist.

**Visit the academic regulations section** for additional information on graduation requirements. (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/>)

## Other information

The M.F.A. Guide (<http://english.vcu.edu/mfa/mfa-guide/>) may be accessed online.

Apply online today. (<https://www.vcu.edu/admissions/apply/graduate/>)

## Admission requirements

Degree:	Semester(s) of entry:	Deadline dates:	Test requirements:
M.F.A.	Fall	Feb 1 (Jan 15 for consideration of assistantship)	

## Special requirements

- Portfolio (see below)

The Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program is designed to attract students from diverse undergraduate backgrounds who are writers of promise. The program is suited particularly to those interested primarily in the writing of fiction and poetry; however, some emphasis also is placed on nonfiction writing, playwriting and screenwriting.

In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements/>), the following requirements represent the minimum acceptable standards for admission:

1. A portfolio of promising fiction or poetry, possibly with drama (as a minimum, approximately eight to 10 poems, or 20 or more pages of fiction or some combination of these; in all cases, applicants should submit only their strongest creative writing samples) to be submitted directly to the M.F.A. program
2. Three recommendations from persons who are qualified to give information concerning the applicant's probable success in graduate school, especially in a creative writing program
3. A scholastic record that is indicative of the applicant's ability to pursue a graduate degree successfully
4. A baccalaureate degree or its equivalent from an accredited institution

## Degree requirements

In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/>), students are required to complete course work in core and elective courses and to conduct significant research.

1. Credit hour requirements: Students in the M.F.A. in Creative Writing program are required to earn a minimum of 48 graduate-level credit hours beyond the baccalaureate. At least half of the credit hours presented for graduation must be at the 600 level or higher.
2. Other requirements: Beyond the required courses, students should select elective courses, in conjunction with the program director or their thesis advisers, which are appropriate to their aims and interests. The thesis work gives students the opportunity to produce manuscripts of publishable quality. Course work also is available in the techniques of teaching creative writing, and the program is flexible enough to include studies undertaken in other departments of the university as well, including the departments of Art History, Theatre and Philosophy and the Richard T. Robertson School of Media and Culture.

## Curriculum requirements

Course	Title	Hours
<b>Workshops</b>		
Select four of the following (majority of course work should be in the student's genre):		12
ENGL 666	Creative Writing: Fiction	
ENGL 667	Creating Writing: Poetry	
ENGL 668	Creative Writing: Drama	
ENGL 671	Film and Television Scripts	
ENGL 672	Writing Nonfiction	

### Elective courses in literature

Select four of the following: 12

ENGL/TEDU 528	Children's Literature II
ENGL 560	Studies in British Literature and Culture
ENGL 570	Special Topics in American Literature and Culture
ENGL/ENED 601	Young Adult Literature
ENGL 605	Introduction to Scholarship in English Studies
ENGL 606	Literary Criticism
ENGL 611	Authors
ENGL 614	Cultural Discourses
ENGL 620	Intertextuality
ENGL 624	Texts and Contexts
ENGL 627	Genres
ENGL 629	Form and Theory of Poetry
ENGL 630	Form and Theory of Fiction
ENGL 631	Form and Theory of Creative Nonfiction
ENGL 692	Independent Study

### Additional recommended electives

Select 18 credit hours of the following (may include up to three additional credit hours of thesis): 18

ENGL/TEDU 528	Children's Literature II
ENGL/ENED 532	Applied English Linguistics
ENGL 550	Studies in Linguistics
ENGL/TEDU/LING 552	Teaching English as a Second Language
ENGL 560	Studies in British Literature and Culture
ENGL 570	Special Topics in American Literature and Culture
ENGL/ENED 601	Young Adult Literature
ENGL 605	Introduction to Scholarship in English Studies
ENGL 606	Literary Criticism
ENGL 611	Authors
ENGL 614	Cultural Discourses
ENGL 620	Intertextuality
ENGL 624	Texts and Contexts
ENGL 627	Genres
ENGL 629	Form and Theory of Poetry
ENGL 630	Form and Theory of Fiction
ENGL 631	Form and Theory of Creative Nonfiction
ENGL 632	Community Writing
ENGL 636	Teaching Writing
ENGL 637	Theories of Rhetoric and Composition
ENGL 638	Responding to Writing
ENGL 652	Studies in Writing and Rhetoric: ____
ENGL 661	Themes in Interdisciplinary Studies
ENGL 666	Creative Writing: Fiction
ENGL 667	Creating Writing: Poetry
ENGL 668	Creative Writing: Drama
ENGL 670	Literary Editing and Publishing
ENGL 671	Film and Television Scripts

ENGL 672	Writing Nonfiction	
ENGL 673	Teaching Creative Writing	
ENGL 692	Independent Study	
ENGL 694	Internship in Writing	
ENGL 798	Thesis	
<b>Thesis</b>		
ENGL 798	Thesis (credit hours variable; may be repeated)	6
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Total Hours		48

**The minimum total of graduate credit hours required for this degree is 48.**

**Contact**

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**Program website:** [english.vcu.edu/mfa/](http://english.vcu.edu/mfa/) (<http://english.vcu.edu/mfa/>)