

Creative Writing MFA

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

Learn more about the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing.

About the Program

The MFA program in Creative Writing provides fiction writers and poets with an opportunity to develop their craft and extend the horizon of their thinking about the genre in which they work. Workshops and other graduate courses in creative writing are the core of the program.

For greater detail, visit <https://liberalarts.temple.edu/academics/departments-and-programs/english/graduate/creative-writing/creative-writing-mfa>. Additional details are also available by downloading the MFA Information Packet.

Time Limit for Degree Completion: 3 years

Campus Location: Main

Full-Time/Part-Time Status: The degree program can be completed in two years with full-time study. Students who engage in part-time study may take up to three years to complete the degree. Classes are generally held during the day.

Interdisciplinary Study: With permission of the Program Director, students may take two literature, writing, arts, humanities or social science courses and one elective in departments outside of the English Department.

Study Abroad: Creative Writing students previously had the option to enroll in a 6-credit seminar in Art and Culture in Rome during the Summer term. The seminar entailed an intensive program of classwork, field trips and guest lectures. This course is now only offered infrequently.

Areas of Specialization: The program provides a combination of small, intensive workshops in poetry and fiction, in addition to one-on-one tutorials and craft and special topics courses in Creative Writing. Temple has an excellent faculty of writers in both genres, representing a wide range of aesthetics.

Job Prospects: Graduates have become published authors and have been hired as faculty members at colleges and universities. Others have gone on to become editors in the field of publishing, Web content writers and editors, arts administrators, journalists, librarians, copywriters, grant writers, and primary and secondary school teachers, and have obtained jobs in advertising, communications, marketing and public relations. Books written by our graduates have been published by trade and small presses and cover all genres. These works have won grants, prizes and residencies.

Non-Matriculated Student Policy: Writers (or graduate students from other departments at Temple) who wish to take a class in the MFA program on a non-matriculated basis should inquire about the possibility first, emailing mfaapplications@temple.edu at least two weeks before the start of the academic term about a specific course. Search Temple's class schedule by selecting the term, then "English" and "Graduate." If there is space and the instructor is amenable, you will most likely be asked for a writing sample and other information for further consideration. Upon admission to the program, non-matriculated students may transfer up to 9 credits for courses in which a grade of "B" or higher was earned.

Financing Opportunities: On average, the MFA program in Creative Writing is able to fund 40% of its students with Teaching Assistantships or University Fellowships. These funding packages are awarded on a competitive basis. If you are admitted to the Creative Writing program, you will automatically be considered for an assistantship or fellowship.

Admission Requirements and Deadlines

Application Deadline:

Fall: February 15

All materials should be submitted by February 15. If you would like to be considered for a teaching assistantship or fellowship, please submit your materials by December 15. Applications submitted after December 15 will still be considered for a teaching assistantship or fellowship, but those meeting the initial deadline will be prioritized.

APPLY ONLINE to this graduate program.

Letters of Reference:

Number Required: 2

From Whom: Letters of recommendation should be obtained from professors or work supervisors who can comment on your performance in previous academic, creative and/or professional roles.

Coursework Required for Admission Consideration: Although not required, we prefer applicants to the MFA program in Creative Writing to hold a bachelor's degree in English or creative writing or to have taken a significant number of workshops or literature classes as an undergraduate.

However, in the past, students without this background have performed well in the program. Therefore, we consider the entire application package in our admission decisions.

Bachelor's Degree in Discipline/Related Discipline: A baccalaureate degree is required, although it need not be in Creative Writing or English. An applicant must, however, display evidence of talent as a fiction writer or poet. A minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0 is required for admission.

Statement of Goals: In two to four double-spaced pages, discuss literary influences and models that feed your creative work. We are interested in which writers and texts have been important to you in recent years, as well as what critical approaches, if any, you have found useful. Describe your work or teaching experience. Discuss your aims in attending an MFA program. Mention what attracts you to Temple's program and whether you are familiar with Philadelphia. Give us a sense of who you are—a more detailed, personal picture than what can be gleaned from transcripts or resumes, especially if you have a non-traditional background or atypical undergraduate record.

Standardized Test Scores:

GRE: Optional. Scores may be submitted if available.

Applicants who earned their baccalaureate degree from an institution where the language of instruction was other than English, with the exception of those who subsequently earned a master's degree at a U.S. institution, must report scores for a standardized test of English that meet these minimums:

- TOEFL iBT: 79
- IELTS Academic: 6.5
- PTE Academic: 53

Resume: A personal resume or curriculum vitae is required. Work experience, whether academic or non-academic, is as important as any publishing credits, particularly since the latter is not required or expected at this stage of the applicant's career. The resume/CV should identify institutions, positions, duties and dates for all teaching and/or tutoring experience listed.

Writing Sample: Your writing sample is the most crucial single element of your application. Send a packet of writing in one genre only: poetry or fiction. For poetry, submit ten pages. These pages may include shorter poems, longer poems, and/or an excerpt from a longer project. Individual poems should be separated by page breaks, not run together. Poems may be single-spaced or formatted in whatever way you see fit. For fiction, send a total of 15 to 25 double-spaced pages. The pages may include a single story, a series of stories, and/or an excerpt from a longer work. Please identify the excerpt as part of a long story, novella, novel or hybrid work. For applicants in either genre, if you would like to include a critical essay in addition to the creative sample, please feel free to do so.

Program Requirements

General Program Requirements:

Number of Credits Required Beyond the Baccalaureate: 33

Required Courses:

Code	Title	Credit Hours
4 workshops		12
3 craft, manuscript tutorial, or special topics courses		9
2 literature, writing, arts, humanities, or social science courses		6
1 elective ¹		3
ENG 9995	Master's Project	3
Total Credit Hours		33

¹ Those who hold a Teaching Assistantship must take a Practicum in Composition Theory as their elective.

Culminating Events:

Comprehensive Examination:

The comprehensive examination is intended to give students an opportunity to write about the historical and formal context of the literary genre in which they practice. For the exam, they write a 10 to 15 page essay.

The exam is due between the third and fourth terms of the program on the Friday immediately preceding the day on which the Spring term begins. The paper should address issues of craft and aesthetics, but may include other points of reference. The essay should demonstrate a facility for critical discourse and indicate a breadth of knowledge of literary traditions.

Each exam is graded by two members of the Creative Writing Graduate Faculty. Students pass the exam by writing cogent, well-argued, and stylistically polished arguments.

Master's Project:

The master's project is intended to be a work of fiction (at least 100 pages) or a work of poetry (at least 50 pages) that reflects an aesthetically and intellectually sophisticated example of the genre in which the student has worked over the course of the program. The project is due on the second Tuesday in April of the student's fourth term.

The master's project is graded exclusively by members of the Creative Writing Graduate Faculty. Two readers must agree that the project passes. If there is a conflict, the Director of the Graduate Creative Writing Program adjudicates the decision. A project defense is not required.

Contacts

Program Web Address:

<https://liberalarts.temple.edu/academics/departments-and-programs/english/graduate/creative-writing>

Department Information:

Creative Writing Program
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1114 Polett Walk
Philadelphia, PA 19122-6090
mfaapplications@temple.edu
215-204-1796

Submission Address for Application Materials:

<https://apply.temple.edu/CLA/>

Department Contacts:

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