

CREATIVE WRITING, MASTER OF FINE ARTS (M.F.A.) BLUEGRASS WRITERS STUDIO

General Information

A studio-academic, terminal degree program, the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing equips students with the training necessary to become regularly publishing writers. Workshops, contemporary literature courses, and residencies focus on advanced craft, contemporary literature, publishing, the literary marketplace, and professional development.

MFA graduates are qualified for careers in college and university-level teaching, contract and freelance writing, digital content creation, editing, and publishing.

Graduates of the program regularly publish poetry and prose in national literary journals, publish their book-length works with regional and national presses, and have been named finalists or winners of several notable literary and scholarly awards such as The Annie Dillard Award for Creative Nonfiction, The Fulbright Scholars Program, The PEN/Bellwether Award for Socially Engaged Fiction, and others.

The program is regularly ranked among the top low-residency MFA programs in the country, and it has twice been named Best Low-Res MFA Program by Intelligent.com (2022, 2023).

Admission Requirements

Applicants to the MFA in Creative Writing program (Bluegrass Writers Studio) are required to submit a portfolio of work in their desired concentration (poetry, fiction, or creative nonfiction) to the MFA Program Director. The writing sample should consist of up to 15 pages of poetry or 20 pages of prose. The portfolio should also include a Statement of Purpose that addresses the applicant's reasons for applying. Though applicants are not required to have completed an undergraduate bachelor's degree in English or Creative Writing, it is recommended applicants with such preparation have either a minor in English and/or significant outside preparation or experience in literature and writing. In lieu of that, applicants should be prepared to complete additional hours to remove any deficiency in their preparations for graduate study.

Applicants must also meet the general requirements of the Graduate School. Applicants with a cumulative undergraduate GPA of less than 2.50 are required to complete the GRE and achieve satisfactory scores of 150 or higher on the Verbal and 4.0 or higher on the Analytical Writing sections of the exam. The MFA Program Director reserves the right to waive certain departmental requirements in the event that a writing sample is exceptional.

Program Requirements

CIP Code: 23.1302

Students must complete 48 hours in the program, including 12 hours of summer residency, as well as an approved creative thesis. Students must also deliver a craft presentation and thesis reading at their final summer residency.

Each fall and spring, full-time students register for one, asynchronous contemporary literature course (ENW 810, 3 cr. hrs.) and one synchronous workshop (ENW 820, 6 cr. hrs.) that meets live, online, one

day per week. Each summer, full-time students attend two sessions of in-person, domestic or international residency (ENW 801, 3 cr. hrs. for each session)

The Bluegrass Writers Studio Domestic Summer Residency is held in Richmond/Berea/Lexington, Kentucky and begins, annually, the first Friday after the July 4th holiday. Session one runs for 8 days. Session two runs for 7 days. A keynote address and reception is held at the mid-point of the residency.

The Bluegrass Writers Studio International Summer Residency is held in Lisbon, Portugal in partnership with Disquiet International. The first session begins, annually, in late June and runs for two weeks with several off-days built into the schedule. The second session begins the Monday after the end of the first session and runs eight days.

At both residencies, students can expect workshop choices in several genres and to learn from award-winning and best-selling visiting authors, resident faculty, and visiting writing industry professionals. Students can also expect to attend professional development panels, readings, receptions, and other events.

Code	Title	Hours
Required Courses		
Students must complete four sections of the following: ¹		12
ENW 801	Summer MFA Residency	
Students must complete four sections of the following: ¹		12
ENW 810	Topics in Creative Writing: (three-hour course)	
Students must complete three sections of the following: ¹		18
ENW 820	MFA Writing Workshop (six-hour course)	
Students must complete three sections of the following:		6
ENW 820	MFA Writing Workshop ((Thesis))	
Exit Requirements		
GRD 858F	MFA Creative Wrtg Comp Present ((presentation and thesis reading))	0
Total Hours		48

¹

Topic must vary in each section. Course content is not to be repeated.

Exit Requirement

Thesis

After completing 24 credit hours, students will submit a Thesis Prospectus in which they describe the book-length project they will complete for their creative thesis. They will also form their thesis committee which will consist of a Thesis Director and Second Reader they choose. The third and final member of the student's thesis committee, the Moderator, is assigned by the program director. In conjunction with the Thesis Director, the student will set deadlines for drafts of the thesis and a final date by which the thesis will be submitted to the committee for scoring.

Additional Exit Requirements

At their final summer residency, either domestic or international, the student will deliver a public presentation on craft and a public reading from their thesis, both of which will be followed by an oral defense proctored by a member of the resident faculty. Students may complete these requirements once they have filed their Thesis Prospectus with

the MFA Program Director, completed a minimum of 39 credit hours, and been approved to do so by the MFA Program Director.