

WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN CREATIVE WRITING

See <http://webs.wichita.edu/cwfwwww/> for additional information

The degree program for the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in creative writing *places emphasis* on the development of attitudes, skills, and understanding in the practice of imaginative writing, along with related academic study. Unlike some MFA degree programs in creative writing, the WSU program is not conceived as a studio program. It encourages the development of fine writers who are also able, as a result of additional course work in English, to demonstrate skills useful in teaching, editing, and other areas related to creative writing. The program allows for a core of activity in creative writing leading to a final writing project in poetry, short fiction, the novel, or some other appropriate form. Flexibility is provided in other required course work to allow for a variety of possible interests.

All MFA students are required to take English 800 (Introduction to Graduate Study). Teaching Assistants are required to take the in-service training course unless specifically exempted.

ADMISSION

Applicants must meet the general requirements of the Graduate School. The director of creative writing evaluates the applicant's transcript, prescribing additional undergraduate hours for those who have fewer than 24 credit hours of acceptable course work in English. Courses in freshman composition, grammar, teaching methods, journalism, speech, etc., may not be included in the required 24 hours. Exceptions may be made for outstanding students who have majored in related fields. Gifted writers may study in the program as special students with no specific degree intentions; however, their admission to any workshop will be at the discretion of the instructor.

Applicants who earned their undergraduate degrees more than ten years before the time of application for admission must be interviewed by the creative writing director before admission to the degree program.

Applicants who have earned their degrees at institutions in foreign countries (in which English is not the native language) must score at least 600 in the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) Examination before being admitted to the MFA degree program in creative writing.

DEGREE PROGRAM STATUS

Applicants who seek to be admitted with *full standing* in the degree program must submit a sample of original writing in fiction (approximately twenty pages) or poetry (four to six poems) to the director of creative writing at the time (or before) they seek admission. Since full standing in the degree program depends upon the evaluation of submitted manuscripts, candidates who wish to have their manuscripts evaluated prior to official application to the Graduate School should submit sample manuscripts well in advance of submitting an application to the Graduate School, thus allowing sufficient time for a program decision regarding degree status.

Determination of degree program status is made by vote of the members of the creative writing staff of the Department of English, who read the manuscripts submitted. A student may be allowed to submit manuscripts a second time if he or she is unsuccessful in obtaining degree program status.

GENERAL DEPARTMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

TRANSFER OF CREDIT

A minimum of 24 of the total 48 semester hours required for the degree in creative writing must be taken at Wichita State University. No more than 24 hours of credit may be counted toward the degree from other graduate work taken by the student at Wichita State or at another school. If the credit to be transferred comes from a program in which the student took a graduate degree, the time limits imposed by the Graduate School on other transfer of credit will not apply.

DEGREE PROGRAM

COURSE WORK

The 48 semester hours of degree course work are apportioned into two categories, required and elective courses.

Required Courses

A minimum of 3 hours per semester in English 801 (Creative Writing: Fiction), or 805 (Creative Writing: Poetry) to a maximum of 12 semester hours.

3 hours in English 800 (Introduction to Graduate Study in English) or the equivalent, required of all graduate students. English 800 should normally be included in the student's first semester of graduate study.

3 hours in English 830 (Graduate Studies in Drama), 832 (Graduate Studies in Fiction) 834 (Graduate Studies in Poetry). With departmental consent, each course may be repeated for a maximum of 6 hours credit.

3 hours in English 841 (Graduate Studies in Contemporary Literature), 860 (Graduate Seminar in Special Topics), or another suitable seminar in literature. With departmental consent, seminars may be repeated for a maximum of 12 hours credit.

2 to 6 hours in English 875 (MFA Final Writing Project). 6 hours over 2 semesters is typical.

For purposes of enrichment, candidates emphasizing fiction and poetry must take at least 3 graduate hours of comparative literature, literature in translation, foreign language or an applied course in another art or discipline. The choice is contingent upon the student's having the proper prerequisites.

Graduate Teaching Assistants are required to take English 780 (Advanced Theory and Practice in Composition), and English 667 (English Syntax) unless specifically exempted, and to participate in the appropriate syllabus group. Degree credit is awarded for 780, but not for 681.

Elective Courses

Elective courses may be taken to strengthen areas of weakness; to pursue historical, technical, or theoretical studies that the candidates find useful; or to enrich their degree program appropriately. All candidates must successfully complete a minimum of 15 elective hours in

English courses numbered 800 and above, with the exception of English courses numbered 515 through 527, which may be taken for graduate credit. Candidates may take up to 26 elective hours in English courses numbered 800 and above and in the approved 500-level courses. Other exceptions may be made as approved by the director of creative writing. Instructors in 500, 600 or 700-level courses will impose more rigorous assignments upon students taking them for graduate credit. Within this unit, as many as 9 hours total of English 880 (Writer's Tutorial: Fiction), English 881 (Writer's Tutorial: Poetry), and English 855 (Directed Reading) may be taken.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

All candidates are required to pass a written comprehensive examination in the final semester of their course work. This examination is based on a reading list of 30 books chosen from the MFA master reading list by the candidate's final writing project director and the candidate.

FINAL WRITING PROJECT

The MFA final writing project in creative writing consists of a body of original work of publishable quality. The manuscript must be of such length as is appropriate to published books in its genre and is to be written under the direction of a member of the program staff. Candidates may preface their project with a short introduction if they choose.

FINAL WRITING PROJECT REVIEW

Once the candidate has submitted the final writing project, a committee composed of the project director, 2nd reader and another English department faculty member will examine the work and determine whether or not the project meets the standards of acceptance.

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS IN ENGLISH

Except for special fellowships usually awarded to students already enrolled in our programs, the teaching assistantship is the only regular form of financial aid that the Department of English is able to offer. A number of assistantships are available each year and are awarded on a competitive basis. With satisfactory performance and progress toward the degree, a teaching assistant may have his or her assistantship renewed each year for the duration of his or her program.

Teaching assistants normally teach two sections of English Composition while taking six to nine hours of course work. Those who lack prior experience are required to take English 780, a course in the teaching of composition, and English 681, a non-degree credit course in Editing American English. Because of the amount of time that teaching takes and courses require, teaching assistants may not accept outside employment unless they have the written permission of the English department chairperson.

Teaching assistants are employed for the regular school year. Summer employment is a possibility, but the opportunities to teach in the summer are fairly irregular, and a teaching assistant should not make plans that are built upon the prospect of summer teaching. The stipend for the 2007-2008 year is \$8500 (taxable). In addition to the stipend, teaching assistants receive a 100% reduction in basic tuition though not of other student fees.

An *Application for a Graduate Assistantship* form is enclosed. **It should be returned by February 15** (if application is made for the fall semester) **or by October 1** (if application is made for the spring semester).* **Please note that it is the responsibility of the applicant to insure that the three letters of recommendation are sent by the recommenders.**

* Applications for graduate assistantships will be considered after the deadlines only if the department has additional assistantships to award after consideration of those applications that arrive before the deadlines. All applicants are advised to make every attempt to submit their materials before the deadline dates.

Teaching assistantship applications should include **a sample of expository prose**. Either of the following is acceptable:

an academic paper of five or more double-spaced pages (preferably one that has been graded);

an essay of three to five double-spaced pages which might include the following: why you would be an effective teacher; why it is important for a person today, in the era of cell phones and e-mail, to write effectively; and how teaching expository writing might benefit you as a creative or scholarly writer.

Please see *Application Information and Instructions* for directions concerning MFA sample manuscripts, Graduate School applications, letters of recommendation, and expository writing samples.

We very much appreciate your interest in our programs.