

# MASTER OF ARTS IN CREATIVE WRITING

## Master of Arts in Creative Writing

The Master of Arts in Creative Writing is a two-year program with a focus on developing a writing practice as well as preparing students to teach creative writing. The Master of Fine Arts is a three-year program and is considered the terminal degree in creative writing. The program may benefit in particular teachers who want to increase their range and earning potential with a Master's degree and/or individuals who want to teach creative writing at private schools, community venues, labs, and salons. As part of the MA in CW, students can choose to study the teaching of composition, and receive a certificate, a skill that translates into any level of teaching and various subjects that include writing.

The M.A. degree, like the M.F.A., provides students with the inspiration and guidance of a faculty of professional writers in developing the student's own potential as a professional writer. The curriculum emphasizes the primary importance of the study and practice of imaginative writing in the genres of creative nonfiction, fiction, literary translation, playwriting, and poetry. The degree combines an intense workshop requirement and a variety of special topic creative process classes as well as courses that expose students to a wide range of writers and community service learning opportunities. The creative writing courses reflect our commitment to a variety of styles, subjects, and approaches, recognizing the complexity and breadth of contemporary writing. Graduates of the M.A. Program are instructed in literary analysis and develop their craft to constructively critique their own work and that of others. As a culminating experience, the student submits a thesis of creative work in their chosen genre.

In addition to the workshop and process courses, students in the M.A. in Creative Writing elect one of two teaching pathways. The pathway leading to an emphasis in teaching creative writing includes a rigorous course in the pedagogy and philosophy of teaching creative writing (C W 860); a Teaching Practicum Course (C W 859), in which the student gains in-class undergraduate teaching experience as a Graduate Instructional Aide while continuing their study of pedagogy with a seasoned faculty member and a group of peers; and, Projects in Teaching Creative Writing (C W 785), a course that allows students to deepen their teaching experience as a Graduate Instructional Aide under faculty supervision. This teaching curriculum makes our M.A. unique within the nation of creative writing graduate degrees. The pathway leading to the teaching of composition allows students to earn the English Composition Certificate, offered by the English Department, by electing to take four courses (12 units) in English composition. Students on this path would earn an M.A. in Creative Writing along with the English Composition Certificate.

This course of study would lead students to a Masters of Arts degree in creative writing. The combination of workshop and process courses ensures that students would be prepared should they wish to continue on as an M.F.A. candidate in a creative writing program.

All students in the M.A. Creative Writing degree program would be eligible to apply for a Graduate Teaching Associate (GTA) position in their second year of study. A GTA is hired to teach a 101/301 Fundamentals of Creative Writing course. The GTA must be enrolled in at least one unit of study with the university to be eligible. Students in the M.A. also may apply for admission to the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing (54

units) either to switch to the terminal degree program or to complete both degrees, with a separate thesis for each. In no case will a student be admitted to both programs simultaneously.

## Program Learning Outcomes

- Creative Work:** Students will produce a publishable written creative work that demonstrates individual and universal vision and a high level of craft skills.
- Professional Preparation:** Students will demonstrate professional level skills in fields related to literature and/or creative writing, including publishing, writing, teaching, editing, book arts, and/or arts management.
- Literature:** Students will read, discuss, analyze and learn to teach the work of a broad range of writers from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds, as well as explain how literature in general, and their own genre in particular, relates to larger human experience.
- Craft Elements:** Students will write and revise creative nonfiction, fiction, plays, and/or poetry using the elements of craft as well as analyze and discuss craft elements in their peers' creative work.

## Admission to the Program

Students interested in this program must submit, via Cal State Apply (<https://www2.calstate.edu/apply/>), a meaningful sample of their writing (15 to 20 pages of creative nonfiction or fiction, or 15 to 20 pages of literary translation, or a full-length stage play or two short plays, or 15 to 20 poems), two letters of recommendation, and transcripts. by February 15 for consideration for our entry scholarships, or by May 10th for admission to the following fall semester. Applicants from graduate creative writing programs at other colleges or universities may transfer six units to the M.A. program, on review and recommendation of the Creative Writing Admissions Committee and approval of the Division of Graduate Studies. For further clarification, contact the Creative Writing Department. Students accepted into the program with an undergraduate major that is not English are accepted conditionally. Admission to the M.A. does not imply admission to the M.F.A. Students who wish to earn both degrees must finish the M.A. before beginning the M.F.A. degree.

## Written English Proficiency Requirement

### Level One (Pre-admission)

Statement of purpose (500–1500 words) and writing sample (15 to 20 pages of creative nonfiction or fiction, or 15 to 20 pages of literary translation, or a full-length stage play or two short plays, or 15 to 20 poems) scored 8.0 or higher on a scale of one to ten based on the following criteria:

- fluency and precision of expression;
- ability to embody and illustrate ideas creatively; and
- appropriateness of the applicant's interests, life experiences and goals to the program.

### Level Two

Satisfactory completion of C W 893MA on the following criteria: thesis deemed by two faculty readers to be publishable in part or whole (book, chapbook and/or literary journals).

Selected upper-division courses offered by the department may be used for the master's degree upon approval of a departmental advisor. Enrollment is not required in the semester of graduation.

## Creative Writing (M.A.) – Minimum 30 units

### Writing Courses (3-6 units)

Select from:

Code	Title	Units
C W 803	Advanced Short Story Writing	3
C W 807	Developing the Novel	3
C W 808	Novel Writing	3
C W 852	Workshop in Creative Nonfiction	3
C W 854	Workshop in Poetry	3
C W 855	Workshop in Playwriting	3

<sup>1</sup> May be taken for two semesters of credit.

### Special Topic Creative Process (3-6 units)

Select from:

Code	Title	Units
C W 810	Seminar in the Creative Process	3
C W 814	Contemporary World Poetry	3

### Process (3-6 units)

Select from:

Code	Title	Units
C W 806	The Business of Creative Writing	3
C W 809	Directed Writing for Graduate Students	3
C W 820	Writers on Writing	3
C W 825	Playwright's Theatre Workshop	3
C W 840	Fourteen Hills Literary Magazine <sup>1</sup>	3
C W 850	Poetry Center Workshop	3
C W 866	Craft of Translation	3
C W 875	Community Projects in Literature <sup>1</sup>	3
C W 899	Independent Study	1-3

### Guided Electives (9-12 units)

Select from the list below for the teaching pathway or the courses listed above if they have not already been used to fulfill a requirement or from graduate-level courses within the Creative Writing Department or courses across the university at the 300-level-or-above under advisement:

Code	Title	Units
C W 785	Graduate Projects in the Teaching of Creative Writing	3
C W 859	Practicum in Teaching	3
C W 860	Teaching Creative Writing	3
ENG 700	Introduction to Composition Theory	3
ENG 704	Pedagogical Grammar for Composition	3
ENG 709	Seminar in Teaching Integrated Reading and Writing	3
ENG 710	Course Design in Composition and Post-Secondary Reading	3

### Culminating Experience (3 units)

Code	Title	Units
C W 893MA	Written M.A. Creative Project	3