# CREATIVE WRITING, MFA

*for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing*

The Department of English offers a program of study in Creative Writing leading to the Master of Fine Arts degree. We welcome qualified students who wish to pursue their interests in fiction or poetry writing.

Graduate Degree Programs in Creative Writing

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**Admission**
A candidate for the MFA must spend at least four semesters or the equivalent in residence and complete at least 48 graduate hours. A full-time student typically completes this program in three academic years. Because applications for admission usually far exceed capacity, in recent years undergraduate grade point averages of students admitted have been significantly higher than the 3.0 (A = 4.0) required by the Graduate College.

All applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores. Currently, a minimum score of 550 on the paper-based test (213 on the computer-based test) is required. Before a teaching assistantship involving classroom instruction or student consultation can be awarded to a non-native speaker of English, the applicant must take the Test of Spoken English (TSE) and achieve a score of 50 or higher (230 or higher before 1996).

The committee on admissions tends to select those applicants who have a solid array of undergraduate courses, strong recommendations, and above all a compelling writing sample: in short, a demonstration of an academic record that shows promise of a student capable of doing outstanding work in the field and earning a degree within a reasonable time. Preference is given to applicants who will be full-time students and active degree candidates. Applicants are considered only in spring for fall admission, and the deadline for submitting applications is December 1st.

**Graduate Teaching Experience**
Experience in teaching is considered a vital part of the graduate program and all MFA candidates will have ample opportunity to teach undergraduate writing classes.

**Financial Aid**
Financial aid is available to students in the form of fellowships, teaching assistantships, and waivers of tuition and service fees. For complete information about the program, prospective applicants should consult our website (https://english.illinois.edu/admissions/our-mfa-creative-writing/).

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For additional details and requirements refer to the department's program requirements (http://creativewriting.english.illinois.edu/graduate/requirements/) and the Graduate College Handbook (http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook/).

| Code | Title | Hours |
|---|---|---|
| Workshops | | 16 |
| Craft course in the appropriate genre | | 4 |
| Proseminar | | 4 |
| Approved Literature courses at the 400 and 500 level | | 8 |
| Electives | | 8 |
| CW 595 | Final Project | 8 |
| **Total Hours** | | **48** |

Other Requirements

| Requirement |
|---|
| Other requirements may overlap |
| Four semesters in residence |
| Teaching experience is required. |
| A public reading from the completed project is required for graduation |
| Minimum 500-level Hours Required Overall: 12 |
| Minimum GPA: 3.0 |

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1. Writing: Students will focus on creating works of high literary quality, honing their own distinctive personal writing styles. They will demonstrate the ability to revise drafts of their work in response to useful critical commentary. Upon completion of the program, students will understand how to create and polish individual shorter works; they will also understand how to compile and complete a book-length manuscript in the genre of their choice.
2. Craft discussion: Students will demonstrate an advanced ability to read, analyze, and discuss published works of literature—especially contemporary literature—from a craft perspective, identifying authorial choices and evaluating the effect of those choices on the work.
3. Literary Community and Profession: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the professional creative writing field with regards to literary journals, presses, and other iterations of the literary community, and will have participated in one or more professional activities, including editorial work on Ninth Letter, giving a public reading, attending a writers' conference, etc.
4. Teaching: Students will learn best practices for leading creative writing workshops and mentoring beginning writers.

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**Department of English**
Head of Department: Bob Markley
Director of Graduate Studies: Andrew Gaedtke
Director of Creative Writing: Ted Sanders
Associate Director of Creative Writing: John Dudek
Creative Writing Program website (http://creativewriting.english.illinois.edu/)
210 English Building, 608 South Wright Street, Urbana, IL 61801
(217) 333-3646
Program email (shockey@illinois.edu)

## College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences website (https://las.illinois.edu/)

## Admissions

Graduate College Admissions & Requirements (https://grad.illinois.edu/admissions/apply/)