

# CREATIVE WRITING - MASTER OF FINE ARTS (MFA)

The MFA in creative writing is a three-year degree program that values literary study, innovation and writing that tests the limits of conventional forms.

The program challenges students to write in a variety of genres and to study literature from the point of view of a working writer. Recent graduates have become not only published authors of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, plays and screenplays, but also journalists, editors, publishers and college-level and secondary-level teachers.

The degree program culminates in the submission and oral defense of a creative thesis in poetry or fiction. Students may develop custom programs in nonfiction and scriptwriting with available faculty with secondary interests in those genres.

## Requirements

### Required Coursework

Code	Title	Credit Hours
<b>Literature Courses</b>		
Choose four:		12
ENGL 5019	Survey of Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory	
ENGL 5029	British Literature and Culture Before 1800	
ENGL 5059	British Literature and Culture After 1800	
ENGL 5109	Literature and Culture of the United States	
ENGL 5139	Global Literature and Culture	
ENGL 5169	Multicultural/Postcolonial Studies	
ENGL 5199	Studies in Special Topics	
ENGL 5279	Studies in Poetry	
ENGL 5299	Studies in Fiction	
ENGL 5319	Studies in Literary Movements	
ENGL 5849	Independent Study (Graduate Level 1)	
ENGL 7019	Advanced British Literature and Culture Before 1800	
ENGL 7059	Advanced British Literature and Culture After 1800	
ENGL 7119	Advanced Literature and Culture of the United States	
ENGL 7149	Advanced Global Literature and Culture	
ENGL 7489	Advanced Special Topics	
EDUC 5135	Story and Memoir	
ETHN 6841	Advanced Directed Readings in Ethnic Studies	
IAWP 6100	Theory and Practice of Doing	
IAWP 6700	Special Topics	
REES 5431	Dostoevsky	
REES 5861	Absurd and Supernatural in Russian Literature	
<b>Graduate Creative Writing Workshops</b>		
Choose four: <sup>1</sup>		12

ENGL 5229	Poetry Workshop
ENGL 5239	Fiction Workshop
ENGL 5259	Nonfiction Workshop
ENGL 5269	Publishing Workshop
ENGL 5849	Independent Study (Graduate Level 1)
<b>"Studies In" Courses</b>	
Choose two:	6
ENGL 5199	Studies in Special Topics
ENGL 5279	Studies in Poetry
ENGL 5299	Studies in Fiction
ENGL 5319	Studies in Literary Movements
ENGL 5529	Studies in Special Topics 1
ENGL 5549	Studies in Special Topics 2
ENGL 5559	Studies in Special Topics 3
ENGL 5849	Independent Study (Graduate Level 1)
<b>Elective Courses</b>	
Choose two:	6
ENGL 5000	Introduction to Applied Shakespeare
ENGL 5003	Old English 1: Introduction to Old English
ENGL 5013	Old English 2: Intermediate Old English
ENGL 5019	Survey of Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory
ENGL 5023	Old English 3: Beowulf
ENGL 5029	British Literature and Culture Before 1800
ENGL 5059	British Literature and Culture After 1800
ENGL 5109	Literature and Culture of the United States
ENGL 5139	Global Literature and Culture
ENGL 5199	Studies in Special Topics
ENGL 5229	Poetry Workshop
ENGL 5239	Fiction Workshop
ENGL 5259	Nonfiction Workshop
ENGL 5269	Publishing Workshop
ENGL 5279	Studies in Poetry
ENGL 5299	Studies in Fiction
ENGL 5309	Playwriting
ENGL 5319	Studies in Literary Movements
ENGL 5529	Studies in Special Topics 1
ENGL 5549	Studies in Special Topics 2
ENGL 5849	Independent Study (Graduate Level 1)
ENGL 7019	Advanced British Literature and Culture Before 1800
ENGL 7059	Advanced British Literature and Culture After 1800
ENGL 7119	Advanced Literature and Culture of the United States
ENGL 7149	Advanced Global Literature and Culture
ENGL 7179	Advanced Multicultural/Postcolonial Studies
ENGL 7489	Advanced Special Topics
ARTF 5010	Topics in Film Production
CMDP 7300	Theories of the Avant-Garde

COMM 5435	Readings in Community and Social Interaction	
DNCE 5001	Graduate Technique	
ETHN 6000	Foundations of Critical Ethnic Studies	
GRMN 5030	Foundations of Critical Theory	
IAWP 6000	Introduction to Practice-Based Research	
IAWP 6100	Theory and Practice of Doing	
IAWP 6700	Special Topics	
MUSC 5832	Studies in American Music	
THDN 5051	Topics in Performance Studies	
WGST 6190	Feminist Methodology	
WRTG 5050	Graduate Studies in Writing and Rhetoric	
<b>Thesis</b>		
ENGL 6959	Master's Thesis	9
<b>Total Credit Hours</b>		<b>45</b>

<sup>1</sup> Each workshop is repeatable up to 12 credits with the exception of the publishing workshop, ENGL 5269, which may only be taken once for workshop credit.

## Language Requirement

Students earning the creative writing MFA must complete a foreign language requirement, either before or after enrolling at CU Boulder, prior to the semester in which they intend to graduate. The language requirement can be met in one of the following ways:

- Complete a fourth-semester (second-semester sophomore) college language course with a grade of C or better. Completion of only freshman-level language courses does not qualify as evidence of competence.
- Take the foreign language proficiency exam administered each semester by the English department. In some cases, students may be asked to make independent arrangements for such an exam.
- Present other evidence of competency in a foreign language to the associate chair for graduate studies. In most cases, this evidence consists of native or near-native command of a language; a written exam may be administered to confirm such fluency.

## Thesis

### General Requirements

All students must complete a thesis as part of the degree requirements. The thesis should be a book of poetry, short stories, literary/creative nonfiction or a substantial portion of a novel, play or screenplay. It may also be a combination of these genres. The thesis should be at least 70 pages in length, though most students write between 70 and 150 pages. The bulk of work used in a thesis should have been written while the student was enrolled in the creative writing MFA program, and it should be in a form acceptable to the committee. The thesis must include an abstract (1 to 3 pages) that states the writer's aims and explains how the thesis reflects those aims.

Students take a total of 9 thesis hours in one or more semesters. The student should select a committee of three faculty (the advisor, who is a faculty member in the Creative Writing Department, one other creative writing faculty member and a faculty member in literary studies) during the semester prior to that in which they will defend the thesis. A rough draft of the thesis should be made available to the advisor prior to the thesis defense so that problems may be discussed at an early enough date to enable the student to work on them. The advisor will work with

the student to advise them on manuscript length, suggestions for improvement and general compilation. The advisor and the student will also agree on a reading list about which the student may be questioned at the defense.

See the index in the Graduate Student Handbook (<https://www.colorado.edu/english/current-students/graduates/forms-additional-information/>) for the MFA-CRWR Thesis Action Item Checklist, which includes deadlines and a suggested schedule.

A thesis defense must take place before the semester's deadline for completing defenses (see the Graduate School's website (<https://www.colorado.edu/graduateschool/academic-resources/graduation-requirements/>) for a list of semester deadlines). A student must give their completed thesis to their entire committee and file a Master's Examination Report at least two weeks in advance of the defense. The defense is an oral examination of the thesis that lasts about an hour. All committee members must be present in person or via teleconference. A positive vote from at least two of the committee members is required to pass. A student who fails the defense may not reattempt it for at least three months, and not until any work prescribed by the committee has been completed. The student may retake the examination only once; the second exam covers the same material and includes the same committee members as the first.

### Thesis Submission and Format

The final draft of the MFA thesis must be submitted to the Graduate School by the applicable deadline and must comply with the Graduate School's specifications for theses and dissertations as described on the Graduate School's Master Graduation Information - Thesis Plan (<http://www.colorado.edu/graduateschool/academic-resources/graduation-requirements/master-graduation-information-thesis-plan/>) webpage. Students must include all stipulated parts of the thesis (e.g., title page, signature page, abstract, table of contents, bibliography) and are encouraged to ask the Graduate School to check the format of the thesis before they submit the final copy ([gradinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:gradinfo@colorado.edu)).

### Candidacy and Diploma Applications for MFA

Students must submit their Candidacy Application for an Advanced Degree ([https://portal.prod.cu.edu/psc/epprod/UCB3/ENTP/s/WEBLIB\\_CU\\_EFORM.ISCRIPT1.FieldFormula.IScript\\_Populate\\_eForm/?form=UCB\\_Registrar\\_Candidacy\\_for\\_Advanced\\_Degree](https://portal.prod.cu.edu/psc/epprod/UCB3/ENTP/s/WEBLIB_CU_EFORM.ISCRIPT1.FieldFormula.IScript_Populate_eForm/?form=UCB_Registrar_Candidacy_for_Advanced_Degree)) by the stipulated deadline, which is generally the third or fourth week of classes in the semester in which the student plans to graduate. The candidacy application confirms that all degree requirements will have been completed by the end of the semester. Return all forms to the graduate program assistant for signatures and submission to the Graduate School.

All students planning to graduate must apply online to graduate. This step must be completed regardless of whether the student plans to attend the commencement ceremony. See the Graduation (<https://catalog.colorado.edu/graduate/graduation/>) section for more information.

### Time Limit

MFA students have four years from the semester in which they are admitted and begin coursework to complete all degree requirements. To continue past four years, students must file a petition for an extension of the time limit with the dean of the Graduate School. Such petitions must first be submitted for endorsement to the English Department's associate chair for creative writing. Extensions may be granted for up to one year.

## Learning Outcomes

By the completion of the program, students will be able to:

- Utilize their understanding of the techniques of poetry (including but not limited to metaphor, symbolism, prosody, voice, allegory, tone, form and structure) to craft poems, chapbooks and/or poetry collections as they move towards professionalization and developing a body of work. (Poetry specialization)
- Utilize their understanding of the techniques of prose (including but not limited to point of view, plot development, character development, genre, setting, tone, style, structure and voice) to craft short stories, novellas and/or novels as they move towards professionalization and developing a body of work. (Prose specialization)