

# Creative Writing and Literature (CWL)

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**Degrees awarded:** MFA in Creative Writing and Literature

The MFA program in Writing and Literature at Stony Brook Southampton emphasizes creative work in fiction, poetry, and scriptwriting. However, the program also extends its emphasis beyond the familiar categories of creative expression to treat all forms of writing as equally relevant to understanding and mastering a world constructed out of words. In particular, the program broadens its interest to include forms of scientific writing—environmental, medical, technological—to draw benefits from the University's well-established strength in science.

The 42 academic credits for the MFA program is divided among required courses that introduce students to the profession and discipline of writing and the skills necessary to teach writing to others; advanced writing workshops in a variety of writing genres; seminars designed to focus closely on an issue or type of contemporary writing; graduate-level literature courses; and an MFA thesis intended to be a publishable, book-length work. The program is offered in two academic semesters, two six-week summer sessions, and a credit-bearing writers conference.

Courses are taught by a full-time core faculty of three, joined by a part-time faculty of ten distinguished visiting writers whose teaching and lecturing assignments rotate among the fall, spring, and summer sessions. These distinguished visitors provide creative breadth to the writing program, offering coverage in areas of writing that are essential in contemporary society, in particular fiction, non-fiction, scriptwriting, scientific writing, and writing for the media.

## Special Programs Southampton Writers Conference

The MFA in Writing and Literature sponsors the Southampton Writers Conference, an intensive program of three-credit workshops in contemporary writing that includes lectures, readings, workshops, and panels featuring nationally distinguished authors who join the Department's summer fac-

ulty. Graduate students in the program will assist in planning and running the Conference, and will have the option of taking a Conference workshop for credit. The Writers Conference also encourages participation by visiting students—new writers, established writers, teachers of writing, and editors—who will be admitted by application and may receive academic credit upon request.

### Stony Brook Manhattan

MFA courses are regularly taught in the fall and spring semester at Stony Brook Manhattan. Stony Brook Manhattan is conveniently located at 28th Street and Park Avenue South. The location is easy to reach by bus, train, and subway.

### The Southampton Review

*The Southampton Review (TSR)*, sponsored by the MFA Program in Writing and Literature at Stony Brook Southampton, is a carefully edited, beautifully designed journal dedicated to publishing fine fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and art. *TSR* focuses on work by students and graduates of the MFA program and from the Southampton Writers Conference, but we do open our pages to writers from across the globe whose work is compelling. Our pages are equally devoted to writers whose voices are fresh as well as to those whose are well-established.

### Admission

Application for admission to the Graduate School is made to a specific program for a specific degree. For the MFA in Writing and Literature, applicants must fulfill both the Graduate School admission requirements and the specific requirements for the MFA in Writing and Literature. See sections I and II for details on these requirements. Application forms may be found online at [www.grad.sunysb.edu/prospective/applying/index.shtml](http://www.grad.sunysb.edu/prospective/applying/index.shtml). Please note that applications for Admission to the MFA in Writing and Literature are made to the MFA in Writing and Literature program and not to the Graduate School.

Completed applications should be mailed to:

MFA in Writing and Literature  
Stony Brook Southampton  
239 Montauk Highway  
Southampton, NY 11968  
Phone: (631) 632-5030

### Application Deadline:

The MFA program in Writing and Literature accepts applications for admission on a rolling basis. To receive full consideration for admission with financial support, completed admission and financial aid applications should be filed by January 15 for the fall semester and October 1 for the spring semester.

### I. M.F.A. in Writing and Literature Admission Requirements

Applicants for the MFA program in Writing and Literature must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. The program accepts applications from candidates whose undergraduate degrees were taken in areas other than the humanities.

Admission to the program is based on the evaluation of a portfolio of the applicant's writing, made in conjunction with a review of the candidate's entire academic career, and letters of recommendation. The portfolio may include works in any written form including creative non-fiction, fiction, poetry, scripting, or other genre. Results from the Graduate Record Examination are encouraged, but not required.

In addition to the Graduate School admission requirements, the MFA in Writing and Literature requires the following:

- Letters of recommendation from three instructors or writing professionals familiar with your written work.
- A statement discussing your reasons for graduate study (one to two pages, may be submitted with the online application)
- A writing sample consisting of up to 10 pages of poetry (single-spaced, stapled) or 30 pages of prose (double-spaced, stapled); your name should appear on the writing sample

- A single sheet listing your address, phone number, e-mail address, and title(s) of submission(s)

- A copy of your résumé or C.V. (may be submitted with the online application)

Any deficiencies in these or the Graduate School admission requirements will not automatically bar admission, but it is understood that inadequacies in undergraduate preparation normally will require the student to take additional work, the amount to be determined by the appropriate graduate advisory committee. Additional work may not be used to fulfill MFA degree requirements.

## Faculty

### Professor

Rosenblatt, Roger, Ph.D., 1968, Harvard University: Literary essay, novel, novella, playwriting, literature for writers.

### Associate Professor

Reeves, Robert, Director. B.A., 1973, M.A., 1977, Harvard University: Graduate writing, advanced fiction, comedy.

### Lecturer

Walker, Lou Ann, Editor-in-Chief, *The Southampton Review*. B.A., 1976, Harvard University: Memoir, children's literature, publishing and editing.

### Writers

Alda, Alan. B.S., 1956, Fordham University: Science and writing

Bank, Melissa. M.F.A., 1988, Cornell University: Short fiction.

Collins, William. Ph.D., 1971, University of California-Riverside: Poetry

Feiffer, Jules. The Pratt Institute: Humor and truth, screenplay

Hegi, Ursula. M.A., 1979, University of New Hampshire: Fiction

Jones, Kaylie, M.F.A., 1988, Columbia University: Novel, Russian literature

Klam, Matthew. M.A., 1992, Hollins College: Creative nonfiction

McCourt, Frank. M.A., 1958, Brooklyn College: Memoir

Sheehan, Julie, M.F.A., 2000, Columbia University: Poetry

Wolitzer, Meg. B.A., 1981, Brown University: Fiction.

### Affiliated Faculty

Macadam, Heather. M.F.A., 1999.

Southampton College: Creative nonfiction

Westermann, John. Popular fiction

## Degree Requirements Requirements for the MFA Degree

The MFA in Writing and Literature degree requires 33 credits of course work and a nine credit thesis for a total of 42 credits. Following are the specific requirements:

A. Required Introduction to the MFA Program (three credits)

CWL 500 Introduction to Graduate Writing

B. Six of the following writing workshops (18 credits). Individual courses under each category will be labeled according to the content of the course. Although courses may be repeated for credit, students are strongly encouraged to experiment among the disciplines:

CWL 510 Forms of Fiction

CWL 520 Forms of Poetry

CWL 530 Forms of Scriptwriting

CWL 540 Forms of Creative Nonfiction

CWL 550 Forms of Professional and Scientific Writing

CWL 570 Advanced Writing Workshop (This course is for manuscripts in progress across writing disciplines and is strongly recommended for students preparing to take the thesis.)

CWL 575 Writers Conference

C. Three of the following special topic writing and literature seminars (nine credits):\*

CWL 560 Topics in Literature for Writers

CWL 565 Special Topics in Writing

CWL 588 Independent Study

\*With the approval of the Writing Program director, this requirement may be filled through taking the following graduate English Literature courses offered at Stony Brook University: EGL 501 Studies in Chaucer, EGL 502 Studies in Shakespeare, EGL 503 Studies in Milton, EGL 503 Studies in Genre, EGL 520 Studies in Renaissance, EGL 525 17th-Century Literature, EGL 530 Studies in Restoration Literature, EGL 535 Studies in Neoclassicism, EGL 540 Studies in Romanticism, EGL 545 Studies in Victorian Literature, EGL 547 Late 19th-Century British Literature, EGL 550 20th-Century British Literature, EGL 555 Studies in Irish Literature, EGL 560 Studies in Early American Literature, EGL 565 19th-Century American Literature, EGL 570 20th-Century American Literature, EGL 575 British and American Literature, EGL 584 Topics in Genre Studies

D. One of the following practicums (three credits):\*\*

CWL 580 Practicum in Arts Administration (Writers Conference and Lecture Series)

CWL 681/EGL 698 Practicum in Teaching Writing

CWL 582 Practicum in Publishing and Editing (Literary Magazine)

√\*\*With the permission of the director, a course in writing or literature may be substituted in place of the practicum requirement.

E. MFA Thesis (nine credits)

CWL 599 Thesis

## Courses

### CWL 500 Introduction to Graduate Writing

A seminar that introduces students to one another, the faculty, the program in Writing and Literature, and to issues in contemporary writing. Offered in conjunction with the Writers Reading Series. Students will attend the regular series of readings sponsored by the Writing program and meet at weekly intervals under the direction of a faculty advisor to discuss and write about topics raised in the lecture series, as well as issues generated from seminar discussions.

3 credits, ABCF grading

### CWL 510 Forms of Fiction

Regular submission, discussion, and analysis of students' work in one or more of the modes of fiction, including the short story, the novella, and the novel. Writing assignments may include exercises, imitations, responses, and original work. Students will examine relevant works that illustrate point of view, character development, dialogue, plot, setting, theme, motif, and other aspects of fiction. Specific mode or topic to be studied will be announced in the course schedule.

*Prerequisite: Permission of instructor and/or Departmental consent*

3 credits, ABCF grading

*May be repeated for credit*

### CWL 520 Forms of Poetry

Regular submission, discussion, and analysis of students' work in one or more of the modes of poetry. Writing assignments may include exercises, imitations, responses, and original work. Students will examine relevant works that illustrate structural principles, metrical and syntactical rhythm, sound and rhyme, formal and stanzaic organization, the use of figurative language, and other aspects of poetry.

*Prerequisite: Permission of instructor and/or program director*

3 credits, ABCF grading

*May be repeated for credit*

### CWL 530 Forms of Scriptwriting

Regular submission, discussion, and analysis of students' work in one or more of the contemporary modes of scriptwriting, including writing for film, theater, radio, and television. Writing assignments may include exercises, imitations, responses, and original work. Students will examine relevant works that illustrate point of view, character development, dialogue, plot, setting, and other techniques vital to scriptwriting. Specific mode or

topic to be studied will be announced in the course schedule.

*Prerequisite: Permission of instructor and/or program director  
3 credits, ABCF grading  
May be repeated for credit*

#### **CWL 540 Forms of Creative Nonfiction**

Regular submission, discussion, and analysis of students' work in one or more of the contemporary fields of nonfiction writing, including biography, autobiography, memoir, expository writing, and social commentary. Writing assignments may include exercises, imitations, responses, and original work. Students will examine relevant works that illustrate the methods and techniques available to the nonfiction writer. Specific mode or topic to be studied will be announced in the course schedule.

*Prerequisite: Permission of instructor and/or program director  
3 credits, ABCF grading  
May be repeated for credit*

#### **CWL 550 Forms of Professional and Scientific Writing**

Regular submission, discussion, and analysis of students' work in one or more of the contemporary modes of professional writing, including technological writing; writing about science; and writing for advertising, business, and public relations, as well as for governmental, educational, and professional organizations. Writing assignments may include exercises, imitations, responses, and original work. Students will examine relevant works that illustrate the strategies available in modern professional communication. Specific mode or topic to be studied will be announced in the course schedule.

*Prerequisite: Permission of instructor and/or program director  
3 credits, ABCF grading  
May be repeated for credit*

#### **CWL 560 Topics in Literature for Writers**

A seminar for writers concentrating on one area of literary study, to be announced in the course schedule. The course may examine a contemporary or historical trend in literature, the rise of a specific genre, a social issue expressed in literature, an issue in literary theory, or any other topic of relevance and concern to students of writing. The emphasis will be on scholarly analysis.

*3 credits, ABCF grading  
May be repeated for credit*

#### **CWL 565 Special Topics in Writing**

A seminar concentrating on a specific topic or concern in writing. The particular theme of the course will be announced in the course schedule. Topics may include, among others, studies of character development, the uses of humor, writing about place, finding one's voice, and narrative style. Written work will be supported by the reading of related texts.

*3 credits, ABCF grading  
May be repeated for credit*

#### **CWL 570 Advanced Writing Workshop**

The focus is on work in progress and the extension of the manuscript. The workshop is open to students interested in any form of

writing. Students are encouraged to pursue their own writing interests while simultaneously being exposed to the work of others in varying genres. Regular writing is required, and vigorous analysis and discussion are encouraged. Strongly recommended for students preparing for the thesis.

*3 credits, ABCF grading  
May be repeated for credit*

#### **CWL 575 Writers Conference**

The Southampton Writers Conference is an intensive program of workshops in contemporary writing that includes lectures, readings, workshops, and panels featuring nationally distinguished authors who join the Department's summer faculty. Graduate students in the program will assist in planning and running the Conference, and will have the option of taking a Conference workshop for credit. The Writers Conference will also encourage participation by visiting students, new writers, established writers, teachers of writing, and editors who will be admitted by application and may receive academic credit upon request.

*1-6 credits, ABCF grading  
May be repeated for up to six credits*

#### **CWL 580 Practicum in Arts Administration**

Under the guidance of a faculty advisor, students will learn the essentials of arts administration. This may include assisting in the coordination of reading and lecture series, conference organization, or other writing and arts administration activities.

*Prerequisites: Permission of instructor and program director  
Semester: On demand, 1-3 credits,  
ABCF grading  
May be repeated for up to six credits*

#### **CWL 581 Practicum in Teaching Writing**

Students take the seminar in conjunction with teaching a section of WRT 101. This course provides hands-on experience and instruction in the basics of writing pedagogy, including designing writing assignments, sequencing assignments, motivating writing, writing skill development, and evaluating writing. Students will also be given a preliminary overview of the major theories driving composition pedagogy.

*Fall, 3 credits, S/U grading*

#### **CWL 582 Practicum in Publishing and Editing**

Under the guidance of the faculty advisor, students will be exposed to the hands-on process of editing and publishing a literary journal.

*Prerequisites: Permission of instructor and program director  
Semester: On demand, 1-3 credits,  
S/U grading  
May be repeated for up to six credits*

#### **CWL 588 Independent Study**

Independent studies in topics chosen by the student are arranged through an individual instructor.

*Prerequisites: Permission of instructor and program director  
1-3 credits, S/U grading  
May be repeated once for credit*

#### **CWL 599 Thesis**

Every student in the M.F.A. program in Writing must complete a thesis that is a publishable, book-length work. It may be fiction, non-fiction, poetry, or a script for the visual media. It may be a collection of short pieces. Its subject matter may be scientific or literary. It may be business-oriented or academic. The thesis is judged solely on the quality of its intelligence and its writing. Every student will, with the assistance of the program director, choose a thesis supervisor to provide guidance and criticism in the completion of the project. At the same time that the thesis supervisor is chosen, the program director will also guide the student in the selection of a thesis committee, which will consist of the thesis supervisor, one other member of the faculty in Writing, and one outside reader knowledgeable in the student's field of interest. Progress toward the completion of the thesis will be reviewed not only by the thesis supervisor but also by members of the thesis committee.

*Prerequisites: Permission of thesis advisor and program director  
Offered every semester, 1-9 credits,  
S/U grading  
May be repeated once for up to 12 credits*