

MFA PROGRAM IN WRITING

I. ADMISSIONS. Individuals with at least a Bachelor's degree or its equivalent from an approved undergraduate institution may apply for admission to the English MFA program in Writing. Applicants need not have been undergraduate Writing or English majors but should be prepared to submit a sample of writing in the genre in which they wish to specialize. Applicants will be evaluated on their personal statement, writing sample, GRE scores (general aptitude only), undergraduate grades, and recommendations.

II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. General Requirements

1. The MFA in Writing will be awarded for the completion of a minimum of 36 credit hours with a minimum grade average of 3.0, plus the completion of an acceptable final manuscript (see "Final Manuscript Requirement" below).
2. In the final year of coursework, MFA students are encouraged to register for 3 credits for manuscript preparation (ENGWRT 2900: Manuscript Writing for the MFA) under the supervision of their final manuscript committee Chair, or another committee member. This course will count, only once, as an elective towards the 36 credits required for the degree. ENGWRT 2900 is an option, not a requirement. It is designed to give MFA students greater flexibility in planning their final year of coursework and completing their final manuscript. It is available to all MFA students who have completed most of their coursework.
3. MFA students may not take more than 12 credits of their required 36 credit hours in undergraduate courses from the 1000 level. Courses numbered below 1000 are not accepted as graduate credit.

Below are the particular requirements for each area of major interest in the Writing Program.

B. Fiction and Poetry

1. 12 credits in four graduate Writing courses:
 - a. A minimum of 9 credits is required in three graduate Writing workshops in the student's chosen genre (fiction, poetry, or nonfiction), or across genres.
 - b. Students are required to take 3 credits in graduate-level readings courses. Students should enroll in a readings course in their area of major interest as soon as possible in their careers (i.e., before any elective seminar or course other than a Writing workshop).
2. 12 credits (4 seminars) in graduate English courses in Composition, Film, or Literature. These credits can include ENGLIT 2500: Seminar in Pedagogy. In extraordinary circumstances, and with the approval of the student's advisor, a maximum of 3 credits may be taken at the 1000 level to satisfy part of the 12-credit graduate English requirement. Any 1000-level course counted toward the MFA must include a graduate component in the form of additional and advanced readings and writings to be determined by the instructor. A statement from the instructor describing the graduate component should be placed in the student's file.
3. 12 elective credits:
 - a. A maximum of 6 credits at the 1000 level or above may be taken outside the Department of English if they are relevant to the student's program and approved by the student's advisor.
 - b. A maximum of 3 credits may be taken in Writing courses at the 1000 level.

C. Nonfiction

1. 18 credits in six graduate Writing courses:

- a. 3 credits in ENGWR 2400: Structures and Techniques are required. This course covers strategies in advanced research, interviewing, and immersion reporting.
- b. A minimum of 9 credits is required in three graduate Writing workshops in nonfiction.

2. 18 credits in additional courses:

- a. A minimum of 9 elective credits is required in other English courses outside the Writing program, which may include ENGLIT 2500: Seminar in Pedagogy. A maximum of 3 of these credits may be earned in Department of English 1000-level courses in Composition, Film, and Literature.
- b. A maximum of 9 elective credits is required in other areas of interest deemed appropriate preparation, as determined by the student and approved by his or her advisor, for the individual student's particular endeavors. These 9 credits may be taken outside the department, at the 1000 level or above, if they are in classes particularly appropriate for a major writing project of the student and are approved by his or her advisor. These electives may, of course, be taken entirely within the Department of English.

Note: The MFA does not have a foreign language requirement, but study of a foreign language is encouraged. 6 credits in foreign language study may be counted toward the degree as elective credits under section 3.a of "Fiction and Poetry" above and under section 2.b of "Nonfiction" above.

III. FINAL MANUSCRIPT. The final manuscript consists of a book-length manuscript of the student's best work in his or her area of major interest.

A. Formation of Final Manuscript Committee. Each student will form a final manuscript committee consisting of three English department faculty members: two graduate Writing faculty members in the student's area of major interest, and one member of the graduate faculty in Composition, Film, or Literature. A fourth committee member may be drawn from another department within the University if a faculty member in another area is deemed to have expertise that relates to a student's particular subject matter. No later than the beginning of the student's second year in the program, the student should complete the MFA Manuscript Committee Form and return it to the Graduate Administrator, with the signatures of each of the committee members. The Chair of each committee shall call an initial meeting as soon as possible after the committee's formation to review the student's work to date.

B. General Manuscript Requirements. The final manuscript committee must accept the student's manuscript as a work of professional quality. "Professional" does not necessarily mean "commercial"; it does mean that the manuscript should be of sufficient excellence to deserve an intelligent and literate audience. The student's manuscript committee shall decide what constitutes a "book-length" manuscript, but the suggested minimum page count is 50 for poetry, and 150 (typed, double-spaced, standard format) for fiction and nonfiction. For poems, short stories, and articles, a table of contents with page numbers should be included. Realizing that nonfiction books sometimes run longer than this minimum, the faculty advises students that a committee may allow the 150 pages to be part of a longer book. In such cases the manuscript must be accompanied by a comprehensive outline or synopsis for the entire book project. Poetry manuscripts must be single-spaced; nonfiction and fiction manuscripts must be double-spaced. All MFA manuscripts must have single-sided printing (printed on one side only), must have numbered pages, and must be hard-bound or spiral-bound.

C. Preliminary Approval. A substantially complete draft of a student's manuscript must be submitted for approval to all committee members no later than the end of the term preceding the term in which the degree is expected in order to allow time for revisions. The department emphasizes the importance of revision in all writing and thus the necessity of allowing ample time for this process.

D. Final Approval. Customarily, the final manuscript will require revisions determined by the final manuscript committee together with the student in meetings and in individual conferences. When the last draft of the final manuscript is approved by a majority vote of the committee, the student will provide the Graduate Administrator with one bound copy of the final manuscript. Students are invited to examine copies of final manuscripts previously accepted for the MFA. Each committee will reserve the right to determine when a manuscript is finished, and

publishable. Successful completion of this degree requirement is not guaranteed simply by meeting the manuscript deadlines.

IV. TRANSFER OF CREDITS. A maximum of six graduate credits earned at another institution may be transferred, with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies, toward fulfillment of the MFA credit requirements. Any transfer of credit, however, depends on a course-by-course evaluation by the Director of Graduate Studies, in consultation with Writing Program faculty, regarding the relevance and comparability of each course to our MFA program and its curriculum. Students are not guaranteed a transfer of graduate credits. Transfer of credit will not be approved for courses in which a grade lower than a B or its equivalent was received.

V. CHANGE IN MAJOR AREA OF INTEREST. Changes in a student's major area of interest must be made in consultation with the departmental advisor and workshop faculty in the new genre, and may involve additional coursework.

VI. STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS. Full-time students must complete all requirements for the MFA degree within four calendar years of the student's first registration for graduate study.

VII. ADMISSION OF UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH MFAS TO THE PHD PROGRAM IN CRITICAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES. The MFA in Writing is a terminal degree. MFA students should be aware that admission to the PhD program is extremely competitive and that an MFA degree from our department does not in any way lead to guaranteed acceptance into the PhD program. Students may transfer, with the approval of the director of Graduate Studies, up to 24 credits from graduate Literature, Film, and Composition courses taken during their study for the MFA degree in our department toward fulfillment of the PhD credit requirements. Transfer of credit will not be approved for courses in which a grade lower than a B or its equivalent was received. Students should be aware that any credit applied toward the PhD degree here may affect the number of years of support they can expect from the department and may also affect the pace at which they need to pass certain milestones towards the degree.