CREATIVE WRITING

Message from the Director

Thank you for taking the time to find us and learn about our low-residency MFA program in Creative Writing at Fairfield University. Our community is uniquely bonded by our experiences on “the island,” where writers get away from the pressures of their daily lives to find creative sustenance and inspiration.

Students gather twice a year for a total of four intensive residencies in an incredible setting: a retreat center on Ender’s Island off the coast of Mystic, Connecticut. Our guest faculty writers have included Anita Shreve, Meghan Daum, Mark Doty, Rick Moody, Mary Karr, Wally Lamb, and Charles Simic. During each residency, students take morning workshops as well as afternoon seminars on a wide range of topics. We meet informally over meals to talk shop and laugh, then enjoy evening readings, the occasional clam bake, and nightly conversations under the stars.

In between the residencies, each student works one-on-one with a writer mentor to bring a project through the stages of inspiration and revision to completion. Our outstanding faculty includes award-winning writers who are also skilled and caring teachers. Students choose a genre focus in poetry, creative nonfiction, fiction, or writing for stage and screen; interested students may also craft dual-genre or multi-genre courses of study and take advantage of curricular tracks in editing and publishing, spiritual writing, or creative writing pedagogy.

While our program helps students to strengthen the “writer within” and master the craft of writing, we also help our students set goals for becoming established in the writing world. Each residency offers students the chance to meet and work with New York editors and agents, and our alumni have already published an impressive number of books. Students gain editing experience working for The Causeway, our graduate student literary journal. Our program has also recently welcomed Dinty W. Moore and Brevity, and students may serve on the staff of this respected journal. We offer seminars and workshops on careers in editing and publishing and are one of the few low-residency programs to offer teaching assistant positions and opportunities to develop as a teacher. With sufficient enrollment we are also able to offer occasional residencies abroad either in Florence, Italy or Galway, Ireland.

For the working adult, a low-residency program offers a wonderful opportunity to focus on craft and writing goals in a way that fits within—and enhances—one’s life. If you’d like to see the island, feel free to come out for a visit, or join us for our summer residency in July.

I’d be happy to talk with you further about how we can design a course of study to meet your writing goals. Feel free to contact me by email (shuber@fairfield.edu) or by phone at 203-254-4000 x2788.

Sincerely,

Sonya Huber, MA, MFA
Director of the MFA Program

Courses

ENW 0444 Fiction 6 Credits
Corequisite: ENW 0447.
The course is an intensive, ten-day program of study. Students must submit two creative pieces to their respective workshop faculty prior to the residency and attend daily workshops. Within the workshops, they must actively participate, both orally and by providing written comments on their peers’ work. Students must attend at least six afternoon seminars, lectures, or panel discussions presented by resident faculty and visiting experts. Preparation for each event involves students having completed a required reading list. After the seminar, a student must submit written critiques of what they learned. Finally, all students must attend evening readings by faculty. At the end of the residency, students work out a semester plan with their assigned mentor for the following semester. This plan must be approved and signed by the mentor and submitted to the MFA administration.

ENW 0445 Non-Fiction 6 Credits
Corequisite: ENW 0448.
The course is an intensive, ten-day program of study. Students must submit two creative pieces to their respective workshop faculty prior to the residency and attend daily workshops. Within the workshops, they must actively participate, both orally and by providing written comments on their peers’ work. Students must attend at least six afternoon seminars, lectures, or panel discussions presented by resident faculty and visiting experts. Preparation for each event involves students having completed a required reading list. After the seminar, a student must submit written critiques of what they learned. Finally, all students must attend evening readings by faculty. At the end of the residency, students work out a semester plan with their assigned mentor for the following semester. This plan must be approved and signed by the mentor and submitted to the MFA administration.

ENW 0446 Poetry 6 Credits
Corequisite: ENW 0449.
The course is an intensive, ten-day program of study. Students must submit two creative pieces to their respective workshop faculty prior to the residency and attend daily workshops. Within the workshops, they must actively participate, both orally and by providing written comments on their peers’ work. Students must attend at least six afternoon seminars, lectures, or panel discussions presented by resident faculty and visiting experts. Preparation for each event involves students having completed a required reading list. After the seminar, a student must submit written critiques of what they learned. Finally, all students must attend evening readings by faculty. At the end of the residency, students work out a semester plan with their assigned mentor for the following semester. This plan must be approved and signed by the mentor and submitted to the MFA administration.

Programs

• Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing (https://catalog.fairfield.edu/graduate/arts-sciences/programs/mfa-creative-writing/mfa-creative-writing)
• Certificate in Creative Writing (https://catalog.fairfield.edu/graduate/arts-sciences/programs/mfa-creative-writing/creative-writing-certificate)
ENW 0447 Independent Study: Fiction 6 or 9 Credits
This course is a five-month, intensive distance-learning writing program of study developed by both the student and his or her assigned mentor. Under the mentor's guidance, the student will develop a plan to improve his or her ability to write in one genre of fiction (e.g., the short story, the novel, the historical novel). The student will be required to write a minimum of 100 pages, spread out over five monthly submissions to the mentor, and the mentor will respond with specific written notes analyzing the work's strengths and weaknesses. In addition, the student will be required to read a minimum of two books per month and to write two essays on some element of the craft, totaling ten craft essays during the term. The mentor will provide feedback on all of the student's writing, accentuated by both a mid-term assessment of the student's development and a final assessment along with a grade.

ENW 0448 Independent Study: Non-Fiction 6 or 9 Credits
This course is a five-month, intensive distance-learning writing program of study developed by both the student and his or her assigned mentor. Under the mentor's guidance, the student will develop a plan to improve his or her ability to write short personal essays or the memoir. The student will be required to write a minimum of 100 pages, spread out over five monthly submissions to the mentor, and the mentor will respond with specific written notes analyzing the work's strengths and weaknesses. In addition, the student will be required to read a minimum of two books per month and to write two essays on some element of the craft, totaling ten craft essays during the term. The mentor will provide feedback on all of the student's writing, accentuated by both a mid-term assessment of the student's development and a final assessment along with a grade.

ENW 0449 Independent Study: Poetry 6 or 9 Credits
This course is a five-month, intensive distance-learning writing program of study developed by both the student and his or her assigned mentor. Under the mentor's guidance, the student will develop a plan to improve his or her ability to write poetry. The student will be required to write a minimum of 20 new poems, spread out over five monthly submissions to the mentor, and the mentor will respond with specific written notes analyzing the work's strengths and weaknesses. In addition, the student will be required to read a minimum of two books per month and to write two essays on some element of the craft, totaling ten craft essays during the term. The mentor will provide feedback on all of the student's writing, accentuated by both a mid-term assessment of the student's development and a final assessment along with a grade.

ENW 0450 Stage and Screen 6 Credits
Corequisite: ENW 0451.
This course is composed of workshops in the area of Writing for Stage and Screen and all other requirements during one graduate MFA residency. Workshop topics include the writing of plays and screenplay as well as principles and application of dramatic structure. Students will actively participate, both orally and by providing written comments on their peers' work. Students must attend at least five afternoon seminars, lectures, or panel discussions.

ENW 0451 Independent Study: Stage and Screen 6 or 9 Credits
This distance-learning independent study comprises a semester's work with a faculty mentor for the MFA program, focusing on writing plays, screenplays, and cross-genre work as well as work in dramatic and narrative structure. A schedule and program of study is developed by both the student and assigned faculty mentor, including approximately 100 pages of creative work as well as a list of books and supplemental readings, and ten pages of analysis and discussion of craft during the semester.

ENW 0452 Directed Independent Study 3 Credits
This independent study course comprises a semester's work with a faculty mentor in preparation for entering the MFA program and as a companion to the certificate program. A schedule and program of study is developed by both the student and assigned faculty mentor, including approximately 15 books and supplemental readings and twenty pages of analysis and discussion of craft during the semester. Students will normally have completed the 12-credit creative writing certificate program and will be either in the process of applying to or already accepted to the MFA program.

ENW 0497 Seminar in Rhetoric and Composition Theory and Practice 3 Credits
ENW 0498 Rhetoric and Composition Practicum 3 Credits

Faculty
Faculty in the program are both award-winning authors and teachers.

Professor
Davis, C.A.
White, M.C.

Associate Professor
Huber, Director

Lecturer
Basch
Davis
Kim
Moore
Muaddi Darraj
Osborn
Páramo
Patrick
Seamon
Vanderbes
Wormser