

# CREATIVE WRITING

## Message from the Director

Dear writer, poet, play- or screenwriter, memoirist, novelist, essayist, dabbler, explorer, lost or un-lost wanderer,

However you would describe your relationship to your work, we are happy you've made your way to us at the Fairfield University Low-Residency MFA Program in Creative Writing. Our writing community is comprised of a rich mix of voices brought together by the common goal of improving our craft. We do that through intensive nine-day residencies twice a year combined with close one-on-one mentorship during the intervening semesters. Our low-residency model allows writers a balance of intensive instruction in community (through residencies) and rigorous individual craft-based study and guidance (through one-on-one mentorships). We offer concentrated study in fiction, nonfiction, poetry, screen- and playwriting, and encourage multi-genre experimentation. Our institution's Jesuit orientation, which encourages us to be both self-reflective and outward-turned toward community, and our program's extensive offerings and options to layer on concentrations in editing and publishing, literary health and healing, social justice, or spiritual writing are key aspects that make our program distinctive and unique.

For those who apply to the MFA program with impressive publishing credentials or unpublished work of high quality, we have created a Prior Learning Assessment that grants up to a semester's credit for individual work. We also have a robust Veterans Fellowship program supporting service members entering our program after their GI benefits have been utilized. Both of these populations, and some who overlap into both categories, enrich our workshop environment and contribute to a highly diverse and engaged writer's community at Enders Island residencies. Those who come in with less completed work but the seed of a long-delayed project, or come to us fresh from undergraduate study with many possible ideas, are met by faculty members who are skilled writers and teachers, ready to differentiate instruction and fully prepared with many pertinent assignments and texts for individual study. In short, at Fairfield you will find a community poised to assist with your growth, and to celebrate it.

Choosing to formalize a lifelong passion for writing by pursuing an advanced degree such as ours is a huge step. The choice of program can be intuitive, and fit is crucial. Because of that, there's no substitute for experiencing a bit of the program for yourself, by visiting our residency. If it's feasible for you, please consider joining us during a residency for a meal, an afternoon seminar, or a reading. If it's not convenient to visit, I'm happy to speak with you further about how the program might best fit with your writing life and your needs. I'm available to arrange a residency visit or to answer your questions by phone at 843-814-7159 or by email (cdavis13@fairfield.edu).

With warm wishes for your work,

**Carol Ann Davis, MFA**  
*Director of the MFA Program*

## Programs

- Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing
- Certificate in Creative Writing

## Courses

### ENGL 5441 Fiction

6 Credits

**Corequisite:** ENGL 5991.

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.

### ENGL 5442 Non-Fiction

6 Credits

**Corequisite:** ENGL 5992.

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.

### ENGL 5443 Poetry

6 Credits

**Corequisite:** ENGL 5993.

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.

### ENGL 5444 Stage and Screen

6 Credits

**Corequisite:** ENGL 5994.

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.

**ENGL 5445 MFA Residency Full Term** **0 Credits**

**Fee:** \$1265  
A course that represents attendance at in-person residency at Enders Island, Mystic, CT for the MFA program.

**ENGL 5446 MFA Residency Half Term** **0 Credits**

**Fee:** \$632.5  
A course that represents half-residency (four-day) attendance at in-person residency at Enders Island, Mystic, CT for the MFA program.

**ENGL 5990 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.

**ENGL 5991 Independent Study: Fiction** **1-9 Credits**

This course is a five-month, intensive distance-learning writing program of study developed by both the student and their assigned mentor. Under the mentor's guidance, the student will develop a plan to improve their 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 midterm assessment of the student's development and a final assessment along with a grade.

**ENGL 5992 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 their assigned mentor. Under the mentor's guidance, the student will develop a plan to improve their 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 midterm assessment of the student's development and a final assessment along with a grade.

**ENGL 5993 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 their assigned mentor. Under the mentor's guidance, the student will develop a plan to improve their 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 poetry 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.

**ENGL 5994 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.

**Faculty**

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

**Professor**

Davis, C.A., Director  
Huber

**Professor of the Practice**

Klay

**Lecturer**

Ahmed  
Basch  
Clark  
Doaks  
Gallagher  
Jones  
Kim  
Madden  
Moore  
Muaddi Darraj  
Osborn  
Páramo  
Patrick  
Vanderbes