

Creative Writing M.F.A. at Arcadia University

Global Perspectives...Personal Attention...Real-World Integrative Learning Experiences

Faculty

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Master's Degree

Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing

About the M.F.A. in Creative Writing

- Personal attention in small workshops
- Low-residency, using technology to build a dynamic online writing community
- Study abroad residency in Edinburgh, Scotland
- Manuscript requirement and publication plan

Arcadia University's low-residency M.F.A. program in Creative Writing, the only one of its kind in the Philadelphia area, is distinctive in that it incorporates both a dynamic online environment and a study abroad experience. The course emphasizes online workshops; personal attention from faculty; studying abroad, with a residency in Edinburgh, Scotland; and the preparation of both a book-length manuscript and a plan to publish it.

Arcadia's experienced and award-winning faculty help to prepare each student for a career in writing and in teaching the craft at the college level.

Because this is a low-residency program and students take between six and nine credits each term, each participant is able to develop

much of his or her own schedule and maintain a full-time professional life outside school.

- **Online Workshops**—In Arcadia's program, students participate in weekly workshops conducted online and led by the faculty, as opposed to many low-residency creative writing programs in which students have infrequent contact with their peers and instructors. Arcadia utilizes Blackboard software for these discussions, which requires only that the students have a consistent Internet connection. There are no extra programs to buy or download.
- **Personal Attention**—In addition to the online workshops, Arcadia's program utilizes technology to allow consistent one-on-one contact between the students and the faculty. Through the use of e-mail, instant messaging, and voice chat programs such as Skype, students are never out of touch with their faculty advisers.
- **Study Abroad**—A global perspective is an important facet of writing. Therefore, each student spends a residency abroad at the start of the second year of the program. That residency is in Edinburgh, Scotland, though additional locations—including Umbria, Italy—may become available.
- **Manuscript and Publishing**—At the end of the program, each student submits a book-length manuscript in his or her genre and works with his or her faculty adviser to develop a plan for publication. .

Program Description

Overview

Arcadia's low residency MFA Program in Creative Writing utilizes online technology to allow each student an experience that fits into his or her lifestyle. While many low-residency programs are still correspondence courses through the mail, we bring as much of the workshop environment online as possible. Additionally, the programs we use are tablet

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and smart-phone friendly, the course goes anywhere you want it to.

We offer programs in fiction and poetry, and each runs for two academic years.

The Residencies

During the two-year duration of the MFA Program, the students meet in-person three times: the first at the beginning of the program in August, at our King of Prussia campus; the second during the following summer for the residency abroad, either in Italy or Scotland; and the final time in January of the second year, again in King of Prussia.

Each residency is about a week long, and includes workshops, writing exercises, discussions with a visiting writer, and a building of community within the group.

The Workshops

Workshops are conducted during each fall and spring semester, and consist of online discussion boards. These discussions are asynchronous, meaning that while there are weekly deadlines there is no one time that students need to be online, and each student can fit the workshops into his or her specific schedule.

Additionally, the software we use for the discussions themselves and for file sharing are accessible via apps on tablet computers and smartphones, meaning the the classroom truly is portable wherever you go.

Students each get to submit work for peer review three or four times per semester, and review their peers' work every week.

The Practicums

Students take a practicum each fall and spring semester while they're also taking a workshop, meaning that they take six credits each semester.

A practicum is a series of one-on-one meetings with an instructor through the semester, and students have at least four meetings, but usually no more than six or seven. Students schedule these meetings at their convenience, often in the evenings, to accommodate their work schedules. Additionally, these meetings can be held via Skype or Face Time, allowing for those outside

the Philadelphia area to complete the MFA without any problems.

Each meeting focuses on a piece of writing which the student submits to the instructor a few days before the appointment. This can be a revision of a piece the student has submitted to workshop, or a new piece of writing. Each practicum appointment is about an hour long and consists of an in-depth discussion about the work in question and the specific methods or techniques the student might adopt to improve his or her work.

The Thesis

Each MFA student turns in a thesis at the end of their second year in the program. For fiction students this is a manuscript of roughly 60,000 words, and can be either a novel or a collection of short fiction. For poets this is a manuscript of about 48 pages of verse.

The guidelines can be discussed with the faculty and changed based on the goals of each student. Most importantly, in producing the thesis each student develops the habits necessary to lead the life of a writer, including a plan for publication after the program ends.

Technology

Arcadia's MFA program is one of the few low residency programs with a large online content. We conduct workshops through online forums, and students can connect with their instructors for one-on-one appointments via programs like Face Time and Skype. This means that a student can complete most of the work from anywhere with a wifi connection—the three residencies are the only times when students must meet in-person.

The program is also completely mobile accessible. Discussion boards, document sharing, and appointments can be completed on any iOS or Android device. While no mobile device is required for the program, we do recommend that incoming students consider investing in a tablet or smartphone in order to have access to their courses' content as much as possible.

All students must have consistent internet access once they are enrolled in the program, regardless of the type of computer they use.

M.F.A. in Creative Writing Admission Requirements

In addition to the general admission requirements, the following requirements must be met:

1. A graduate application, including personal statements, to be completed online at www.arcadia.edu/gradapp.
2. A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with a recommended GPA of 3.0 or better. The undergraduate major should be in one of the traditional liberal arts or in a professional or pre-professional field but accompanied by strong undergraduate training in creative writing.
3. One official transcript from each college, university or professional school attended. Transfer credits included on a transcript must include grades earned; if not, an official transcript from the original school must be submitted. Transcripts must be sent from the issuing school in a sealed envelope and contain the appropriate signatures and seals to be considered official.
4. Two letters of recommendation. The letters must be of a professional not personal nature. If the student has been out of school five years or less, at least one letter must come from a professor.
5. An interview with the program Coordinator, either in-person or over the phone, if deemed necessary.
6. A writing sample. For poetry students, this should be 10 to 15 pages of verse. For fiction students, it should be 15 to 20 pages of prose. Please do not exceed the page limit.
7. International applicants should visit www.arcadia.edu/international for detailed information on admission requirements and application procedures. Official results from the TOEFL or IELTS are required for all students for whom English is a second language or who have not

earned degrees or diplomas from post-secondary institutions in English-speaking countries (e.g. the United States, Canada, England, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand). A course-by-course evaluation of all transcripts by an independent evaluation service based in the United States also is required.

All application materials must be sent to the Office of Enrollment Management.

Admission deadlines: In order to encourage community and continuity among the cohorts, each student must start in the Fall semester with the first practicum. Applications will be accepted through July 30 for Fall 2013; after that, applications will be accepted for the following year.

Expenses

Tuition for 2012-13: \$695 per credit

Fees:

Audit: \$695 per course
Parking: \$30 per semester (Fall and Spring) before 4 p.m. No charge after 4 p.m.

Financial Aid: Graduate students who have been accepted into a degree program and are enrolled for at least 6 credits per semester are eligible to apply for financial aid. Please visit www.arcadia.edu/finaid for information regarding required forms and documents, most of which can be submitted online.

Graduate assistantships are available to all students registered for at least 9 credits per semester. Students may apply for assistantships upon acceptance and registration. Questions regarding graduate assistantships should be directed to the College of Graduate Studies at 215-572-2925.

Federal Loans: Graduate students are eligible to borrow through the federal Stafford Loan and federal PLUS Loan programs. Arcadia University, in partnership with AES/PHEAA, offers the no-fee Arcadia University Preferred Stafford Loan Program, which provides students with benefits that include:

- Origination and guarantee fee waivers
- Interest rate reduction during repayment
- Superior administration and servicing

All financial aid paperwork not submitted online should be sent to the Office of

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Enrollment Management/Financial Aid. Please e-mail finaid@arcadia.edu or call 1-877-ARCADIA (1-877-272-2342) with additional questions.

Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing Degree Requirements

(A minimum of 40 credits)

Sample Course Sequence Scenario for a Student in the Low-Residency M.F.A. in Creative Writing

*Residency One, August 12-17, 2013—at
Arcadia University*

Fall Semester 2013:
Workshop 1
Practicum 1

Spring Semester 2014:
Workshop 2
Practicum 2

Summer Semester 2014:
Traditional Literature Course; Craft
Course

*Residency Two, July 2014—Edinburgh,
Scotland or Umbria, Italy*

Fall Semester 2014:
Workshop 3
Practicum 3

*Residency Three, January 12-17, 2015—
Arcadia University King of Prussia Campus*

Spring Semester 2015:
Workshop 4
Practicum 4: Thesis Preparation

Thesis turned in at the close of the Spring
Semester, 2015

Residencies (9 credits)

EN 550	Residency 1
EN 551*	Residency 2: Abroad in Edinburgh
EN 552*	Residency 3

Workshops (12 credits)

EN 555A	Workshop 1 (fiction) or EN 555B (poetry)
EN 556A	Workshop 2 (fiction) or EN 556B (poetry)
EN 557A	Workshop 3 (fiction) or EN 557B (poetry)
EN 558A	Workshop 4 (fiction) or EN 558B (poetry)

Practicums (12 Credits)

EN 560	Practicum 1
EN 561	Practicum 2
EN 562	Practicum 3
EN 563	Practicum 4: Thesis Preparation

Literature Courses (6 Credits)

EN 553	Craft of Contemporary Fiction
or EN 554*	Craft of Contemporary Poetry

Plus any other graduate literature offering
from Arcadia

*Courses pending approval

- Students must complete all of the above requirements before being awarded a degree.
- It is important that students make all possible efforts to complete the classes in order, so as to maintain a community within the program.
- If a student must take a leave of absence; however, it is best that he or she take a full year of absence so that it is easiest to rejoin the program at a natural point.
- Extenuating circumstances will be evaluated at the faculty's discretion.

M.F.A. in Creative Writing English Courses (EN)

Residencies

EN 550, 551, 552 (pending approval)

During the on-campus residencies (the first and third residencies), students take part in intensive workshops, meet one-on-one with their faculty

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advisers, participate in seminars and exercises with visiting writers, and generally build the cohesive community of the program. These last for one week, and they are conducted in August of the program's first year, and January of the program's second year.

Students spend the second residency, also for one week, abroad in Edinburgh, Scotland. During that time students take part in workshops and meetings with faculty, but they also will explore the area, meet with local writers, and produce work based on those experiences.

Workshops

EN 555A, 556A, 557A, 558A for fiction. EN 555B, 556B, 557B, 558B for poetry

In each workshop, students are able to submit their work for critiques and discussion by the faculty and their peers. These discussions are conducted online, through Blackboard's forums. There are online discussions every week of the term, and a faculty member leads and participates in each one.

Additionally, students complete writing exercises assigned by their instructor throughout the term. These short assignments help students to develop new techniques to use in their writing.

Practicums

EN 560A, 561A, 562A, 563A for fiction. EN 560B, 561B, 562B, 563B for poetry.

Each of these courses involves one-on-one instruction with a faculty member as students develop their manuscripts over the two years of the program. The professor not only helps the students with their writing, but also assigns readings and other assignments that help the students with their projects.

Students meet with faculty about every other week, either over the phone, through a program such as Skype, or by another agreed upon means. Of course, students always have the option of contacting their practicum instructor more often—this is a way for the faculty to be consistently available to the students.

Craft of Contemporary Fiction

EN 553

This course focuses on the themes, techniques, and movements of contemporary fiction and is reading- and discussion-intensive, utilizing Blackboard's forums in order to conduct weekly conversations led by the instructor. This course is reading-intensive, and students are expected to

write two essays in addition to the weekly online discussions.

Craft of Contemporary Poetry

EN 554 (pending approval)

This course focuses on the themes, techniques, and movements of contemporary poetry and is reading- and discussion-intensive, utilizing Blackboard's forums in order to conduct weekly conversations led by the instructor. This course is reading-intensive, and students are expected to write two essays in addition to the weekly online discussions.