

# Creative Writing

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*Web: [creativewriting.uchicago.edu](http://creativewriting.uchicago.edu)*

Students at Chicago pursue creative writing within the larger context of academic study. While the purpose of the program is, above all, to give students a rigorous background in the fundamentals of creative work by providing them with the opportunity to study with established poets and prose writers, it differs from the professional, free-standing creative writing programs at other universities in seeing itself as an integral part of the intellectual life of the University of Chicago, and most particularly in providing opportunities for interdisciplinary work. A playwright working through University Theater under the auspices of Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities may take writing workshops in fiction or poetry as part of the process of developing scripts. Students in the visual arts join forces with writers in work on graphic novels. And students in non-English languages and literatures may find themselves taking not only literature courses but also poetry or fiction writing workshops as part of developing translation projects. It is this commitment to interdisciplinary work, coupled with the program's insistence on teaching the elements of creative writing that underlie all genres, that accounts for the program's vitality, as well as explains why creative writing at Chicago is currently the largest initiative in the humanities for the College.

Students can pursue their creative writing interests within the formal requirements of the two interdisciplinary majors below; within the formal requirements of the minor program in English and Creative Writing described below; in other programs of study, with approval to count writing courses toward requirements; or among the eight to eighteen electives available to students across the range of other programs of study.

**(1) Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities.** Students wishing to engage the dialogues between creative writing and other studies in the humanities, including artistic mediums (e.g., dance, film, theater, visual arts), may apply to explore writing opportunities through one of the options in this major.

**(2) English Language and Literature.** Students majoring in English Language and Literature may choose to produce a creative writing thesis to satisfy part of the requirement for honors. Prior to Winter Quarter of their fourth year, students must complete at least two creative writing courses in the genre of their own creative project. In Winter Quarter of their fourth year, students will work intensively on their project in the context of a designated creative writing thesis seminar.

## Minor Program in English and Creative Writing

Students who are not English majors may complete a minor in English and Creative Writing. Such a minor requires six courses plus a portfolio of creative work. At least two of the required courses must be Creative Writing (CRWR) courses, with at least one at the intermediate or advanced level. The remaining required courses must be taken in the English department (ENGL) and must include ENGL 11100 (Critical Perspectives). In addition, students must submit a portfolio of their work (e.g., a selection of poems, one or two short stories or chapters from a novel, a substantial part or the whole of a play, two or three nonfiction pieces) to the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies in the English department by the end of the sixth week in the quarter in which they plan to graduate.

Students who elect the minor program in English and Creative Writing must meet with the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies in the English department before the end of Spring Quarter of their third year to declare their intention to complete the minor. Students choose courses in consultation with the associate chair. The associate chair's approval for the minor program should be submitted to a student's College adviser by the deadline above on a form obtained from the adviser. NOTE: Students completing this minor will not be given enrollment preference for CRWR courses, and they must follow all relevant admission procedures described at <http://creativewriting.uchicago.edu>.

Courses in the minor (1) may not be double counted with the student's major(s) or with other minors and (2) may not be counted toward general education requirements. Courses in the minor must be taken for quality grades, and at least half of the requirements for the minor must be met by registering for courses bearing University of Chicago course numbers.

### Summary of Requirements for the minor program:

2	CRWR courses (at least one at the intermediate or advanced level)
1	ENGL 11100 (Critical Perspectives)
3	CRWR or ENGL electives
$\frac{-}{6}$	a portfolio of the student's work

Samples follow of two plans of study:

ENGL 11100. Critical Perspectives  
 ENGL 10700. Introduction to Fiction  
 ENGL 16500. Shakespeare I: Histories and Comedies  
 CRWR 10200. Beginning Fiction Workshop  
 CRWR 12000. Intermediate Fiction Workshop  
 CRWR 26001. Writing Biography  
 a portfolio of the student's work (two short stories)

ENGL 11100. Critical Perspectives  
 ENGL 10400. Introduction to Poetry  
 ENGL 15800. Medieval Epic  
 ENGL 25600. The Poet in the Novel  
 CRWR 13000. Intermediate Poetry Workshop  
 CRWR 23100. Advanced Workshop in the Practice of Poetry  
 a portfolio of the student's work (ten short poems)

## Program Structure

Creative Writing courses are cross listed to enable students to apply to courses based on their level of preparation rather than on their level in the degree program. Classes are organized in the following way:

**Introduction.** Introductory courses introduce students to the fundamentals of imaginative writing in three major literary genres: poetry, narrative, and creative nonfiction. Introductory courses are open to all students; admission *does not* require consent of instructor. Enrollment in each course is limited to twelve students.

**Beginning.** Beginning courses are intended for beginning writers and require consent of instructor based on submission of a writing sample. For specific submission requirements, see course descriptions. Submissions are due in advance of the term by the deadline. Enrollment in each class is limited to twelve students.

**Intermediate.** Intermediate courses are intended for students with some writing experience. Admission requires consent of instructor based on submission of a writing sample. For specific submission requirements, see course descriptions. Submissions are due in advance of the term by the deadline. Enrollment in each class is limited to twelve students.

**Advanced.** Advanced courses are intended for students with substantive writing experience. Admission requires consent of instructor based on submission of a writing sample. For specific submission requirements, see course descriptions. Submissions are due in advance of the term by the deadline. Enrollment in each class is limited to ten students.

**Thesis Seminar.** Enrollment in thesis seminar courses is limited to students who are working on their creative thesis to meet B.A. and M.A. requirements. Students must consult with their respective departments about prerequisites and other requirements; students must obtain permission in advance. Enrollment in each class is limited to ten students.

**Special Topics.** Several special topics courses are offered each year. These courses vary in terms of subject matter, requirements for the submission of writing samples, and enrollment limitations.

**Cross-listed Courses.** Courses originated by other departments that include creative writing components are cross listed by Creative Writing (CRWR).

## Required Writing Samples

Consent of instructor is typically required to enroll in Creative Writing courses, based on faculty review of student writing samples. For specific sample submission requirements, see course descriptions. Samples should be sent as e-mail attachments in Word format to the Creative Writing coordinator ([jnklein@uchicago.edu](mailto:jnklein@uchicago.edu)) by the submission deadline. All submissions must include: the student's name and ID number, the desired course's name and number, and the instructor's name.

Submission deadlines are: Autumn Quarter, September 1; Winter Quarter, December 1; and Spring Quarter, March 1. For more information on creative writing courses and opportunities, see <http://creativewriting.uchicago.edu>.

## Faculty and Visiting Lecturers

*A current listing of Creative Writing faculty is available on the following Web site:* <http://creativewriting.uchicago.edu/faculty.shtml>.

S. Reddy, J. Scappettone, M. Slouka, *Staff*

## University Creative Writing Advisory Committee

H. Coleman, J. Gruenbaum, O. Izenberg, L. McEnerney, A. Obejas, T. Pavel, M. Payne, S. Reddy, M. Santana, B. Shallcross, M. Slouka, C. von Nolcken

## Courses: Creative Writing (CRWR)

**10000/30000. Introduction to Creative Writing.** *If taken Spring Quarter, this course may count toward the third quarter of Readings in World Literature (HUMA 11000-11100).* This course introduces the fundamentals of imaginative writing in three major literary genres: poetry, narrative, and creative nonfiction. Each week we investigate a masterpiece of literary art as a prelude to workshoping weekly creative writing assignments completed by students. In addition to producing original work in poetry, narrative, and nonfiction, we also explore methods for

analyzing and evaluating imaginative writing by exploring the formal vocabularies of each genre. *Staff, Autumn, Winter; S. Reddy, Spring.*

**10200/30200. Beginning Fiction Workshop.** *PQ: Consent of instructor.* This beginning-level fiction writing class uses a wide range of exercises and activities to help students discover their oral and written voices. Point of view, seeing-in-the-mind, gesture, audience, and other aspects of story are emphasized so that students can attempt to incorporate basic storytelling principles, forms, and techniques into their own writing. The major goals of the class are to guide students to discover and use the power of their individual voices, heighten their imaginative seeing and sense of imaginative options, and develop their overall sense for story structure and movement. Students select at least one of the assignments undertaken, rewrite it extensively, and attempt a publishable-quality, complete story movement (short story or novel excerpt). *Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

**10300/30300. Beginning Poetry Workshop.** *PQ: Consent of instructor.* The principal texts for this workshop are those written by the students during the quarter, and class discussion centers on those works. In addition, several other texts may be examined, primarily to enable students to begin criticizing and editing their own works. This is a class in which everyone is free to experiment. The goals by the end of the quarter are that students have a clearer idea of what they want to be doing and how they want to be doing it. *Participation in discussions required. Autumn, Winter.*

**10400/30400. Beginning Creative Nonfiction.** *PQ: Consent of instructor.* In this course, students focus on the interaction between nonfiction and literary elements that constitute creative nonfiction through writing exercises and readings. *Autumn.*

**10500/30500. Beginning Playwriting.** (=ISHU 26600) For course description, see Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities (TAPS). *B. O'Reilly, Autumn; G. Allen, Winter.*

**12000/32000. Intermediate Fiction Workshop.** *PQ: Consent of instructor.* The principal texts for this workshop consist of the students' own writings, though outside texts augment student learning. Form, story, character, dialogue, aspects of style, and other elements of craft are discussed; careful attention is paid to the individual student's voice as well as to the process of revision. *Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

**13000/33000. Intermediate Poetry Workshop.** *PQ: Consent of instructor.* Principal texts for this workshop consist of the students' own writings. *Participation in discussions required. Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

**14000/34000. Intermediate Creative Nonfiction.** *PQ: Consent of instructor.* In this course, students focus on the interaction between nonfiction and literary elements that constitute creative nonfiction through writing exercises and readings. *Participation in discussions required. Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

**15000/35000. Intermediate Playwriting.** (=ISHU 26600) *PQ: Consent of instructor.* For course description, see Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities (TAPS). *B. O'Reilly, Autumn; G. Allen, Winter.*

**22100/42100. Advanced Fiction Workshop.** *PQ: Consent of instructor.* In this course, students' own writings are the primary texts for analyzing and developing the elements that constitute fiction. Outside readings illuminate particular issues related to students' work. *Autumn, Spring.*

**23100/44100. Advanced Poetry Workshop.** *PQ: Consent of instructor and prior experience with poetry writing.* The principal texts for this workshop consist of the students' own writings. *Participation in discussions required. S. Reddy. Spring.*

**27100/47100. Advanced Television Writing: Creating the Situation Comedy.** (=ISHU 27313) *PQ: Consent of instructor based on writing sample and application.* For course description, see Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities (TAPS). *Attendance at each class section and classroom participation required. E. Ferrara. Winter.*

**27101/47101. Beginning Screenwriting.** (=ISHU 27311) For course description, see Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities (TAPS). *J. Petrakis. Autumn, Winter.*

**27102/47102. Advanced Television Writing: W.R.I.T.E. (Writers' Room Immersion Training Experiment).** (=ISHU 27315) *PQ: ISHU 27313 or consent of instructor based on writing sample. Enrollment limited.* For course description, see Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities (TAPS). *Attendance at each class section and classroom participation required. E. Ferrara. Spring.*

**27103/47103. Advanced Screenwriting.** (=ISHU 27314) *PQ: ISHU 27311 and consent of instructor based on eight-page writing sample in screenplay format. Class limited to eight students.* For course description, see Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities (TAPS). *J. Petrakis. Spring.*

**27104/47104. Solo Performance: Biography.** (=ISHU 27305) *PQ: Consent of instructor.* For course description, see Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities (TAPS). *J. Thebus. Winter.*

**27105/47105. Theater and Performance Studies Colloquium.** (=ISHU 29800) *PQ: Consent of Director of Undergraduate Studies and Chair of Theater and Performance Studies Option. Required of fourth-year TAPS majors. Creative Writing or MAPH students preparing theses for performance may participate with consent from their home department and the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Students participate in both Autumn and Winter Quarters, but only register once. Autumn, Winter.*

**29200/49200. Thesis Seminar: Fiction.** *PQ: Open to students working on B.A. and M.A. theses in fiction with consent of instructor.* This course focuses on the extended development necessary for the completion of longer material, specifically the creative thesis. Students should already have a body of work in process (this can be in different stages) and be prepared to discuss their plans for their final manuscript in lieu of a formal proposal. Intense peer reading, critiquing, and editing is required. *Winter.*

**29300/49300. Thesis Seminar: Poetry.** *PQ: Consent of instructor.* This course is an advanced creative writing seminar intended for students writing B.A. and M.A. theses in poetry (there is, however, usually enough room in the class to accommodate additional students, so all qualified students are encouraged to apply). Because it is a thesis seminar, the course focuses on various ways of organizing larger poetic “projects.” We consider the poetic sequence, the chapbook, the long poem, the poetry collection, and the book-length poem as ways of extending the practice of poetry beyond the individual lyric text. Because this class is designed as a poetry workshop, the work of students is the primary text over the course of the quarter. *Winter.*

**29400/49400. Thesis Seminar: Creative Nonfiction.** *PQ: Open to students working on B.A. and M.A. theses in creative nonfiction with consent of instructor.* This course focuses on the extended development necessary for the completion of longer material, specifically the creative thesis. Students should already have a body of work in process (this can be in different stages) and be prepared to discuss their plans for their final manuscript in lieu of a formal proposal. Intense peer reading, critiquing, and editing is required. *Winter.*