WRITING, MFA

Writer’s Workshop Department, College of Communication, Fine Arts & Media

Vision Statement
The MFA in Writing is a two-year program of focused instruction for creative writers who are committed to a literary career. The program comprises four 16-week distance writing seminars and five 10-day, conference-style Nebraska residency sessions. The seminars and residencies are integrated to help those who need to hone their writing and critical thinking in order to participate competitively in the wider domain of contemporary American letters. In a two-year course of study, the student earns 60 credit hours toward a Masters of Fine Arts degree in one of four genres: fiction/Ya fiction, poetry, playwriting/screenwriting, or nonfiction.

Program Contact Information
Dr. Miles Waggener, Graduate Program Chair (GPC)
Weber Fine Arts Building (WFAB) 223
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Ms. Jenna Lucas Finn, Associate Coordinator
Weber Fine Arts Building (WFAB) 301
402-554-3020
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Program Website (http://www.unomaha.edu/unmfaw)

Other Program-Related Information
• The MFA in Writing at the University of Nebraska is “low-residency”.
• Upon acceptance, a $500 non-refundable deposit is required to hold the student’s place in the program. This deposit is applied toward the first Residency Meals and Lodging Fee.

Admissions

Application Deadlines
• Fall: May 1
• Spring: October 1
• Summer: NA

Program-Specific Requirements
• Three (3) Letters of Recommendation
  • From persons who can attest to your ability to complete a course of graduate study, the ability to work independently, and/or the quality of your prior literary achievements

• Statement of Purpose
  • A one- to two-page single-spaced self-assessment of your background in writing, reasons for wanting to enter the MFA program, and your goals as a writer.

• For fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry, include any other experience you have in the wider community of literature; e.g., organizing or participating in craft workshops, attending conferences, working for literary magazines, etc.

• For playwriting/screenwriting, include any specific experience as it pertains to full-length plays, one-act plays, and ten-minute plays, plus any experience in other areas of theatre or film.

• Writing Sample
  • A manuscript representing your best work in the genre track (fiction, creative nonfiction, playwriting, or poetry) for which you are applying
    • 30-40 pages of fiction or nonfiction

  • 15-20 pages of original playwriting/30 pages of screen play
  • 15 pages of poetry

NOTE: Your self-assessment statement and your manuscript sample must be submitted in your online application in .pdf format. If you are unable to submit these materials in .pdf format or have questions regarding the content of your submissions, please contact Jenna Lucas Finn at 402-554-3020. Fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry manuscript format should be in 12-point typeface with 1” margins; poetry may be single-spaced; prose should be double-spaced, pages numbered in the top right corner with the applicant’s last name on the top left of each page. Playwriting submissions should follow standard Playwriting format. Screen scripts should follow standard screenwriting format. Material in genres other than the one in which you are applying will not be read. For specific information, requirements, and current residency dates for the program, please consult the program website (https://www.unomaha.edu/college-of-communication-fine-arts-and-media/writers-workshop/mfa-program).

Degree Requirements

Required Residency Session

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<td>MFAW 8700</td>
<td>RESIDENCY SESSION</td>
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Register for one 3-hour session per semester (4 semesters)

Residencies are conference-style sessions (10 days) consisting of a combination of workshops on student writing, craft and theory classes, individual conferences with mentoring faculty, and performance readings.

All students are required to take a minimum of 20 hours of a combination of these events, and to meet with their mentoring faculty member to design a course of study for the semester.

Writing Options (choose one)

Seminars
Seminars are semester-long (16 weeks) supervised distance studies in writing, during which the student corresponds regularly with a faculty mentor on the work which was proposed during the preceding residency session individual conferences. At least four times a semester, the student must submit creative and critical writing to the faculty mentor. The mentor will respond with revisions, suggestions for further readings, and discussion. Seminars are composed of a maximum of 5 students each. Students must register for one 12-hour seminar session per semester for four semesters.

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<tr>
<td>MFAW 8830</td>
<td>FICTION SEMINAR</td>
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<td>MFAW 8840</td>
<td>NONFICTION SEMINAR</td>
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<td>MFAW 8850</td>
<td>PLAYWRITING SEMINAR</td>
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<td>MFAW 8820</td>
<td>POETRY SEMINAR</td>
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Exit Requirements
MFAW 8710 GRADUATING RESIDENCY SESSION 0

Total Credit Hours: 60
MFAW 8700 RESIDENCY SESSION (3 credits)
A ten-day colloquium presenting lectures, classes, workshops, readings and individual conferences with seminar faculty. Taken 4 times, the Residency Session ends one seminar session and begins the next. The session affords students intensive contact with faculty and peers before returning to their writing projects.  
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Admission to MFA in Writing program. Permission of the Program Director. Not open to non-degree graduate students.

MFAW 8710 GRADUATING RESIDENCY SESSION (0 credits)
The Graduation Residency Session is the final residency for MFA students who have successfully completed their seminars and creative thesis. In the ten days of this residency, students will give a graduating lecture, "mentor" new students in their first residency, and give a reading from their thesis. A graduating ceremony will cap their activities during this session.

MFAW 8720 ENRICHMENT RESIDENCY SESSION (2 credits)
An eight-day creative writing symposium-style course presenting lectures, workshops, readings and individual conferences with faculty. The Enrichment Residency affords advanced writing students additional intensive contact with published and apprentice writers to reinforce and enrich their life-long commitment to the art of writing and to the continuing development of their craft. 
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): MFA Program Director's permission. Must have completed MFA/PhD with writing emphasis. Writers with MA in English and emphasis in writing, or writers with an extensive background in writing may also be considered. Not open to non-degree graduate students.

MFAW 8820 POETRY SEMINAR (6-12 credits)
An individualized course in poetry writing. Taken 4 times, the required seminar offers practical instruction in writing and criticism. Using distance technology, student and instructor work through independent projects designed to sharpen the student's writing skills. Each student will compose both original poetry and critical analyses of poetry by other writers preparatory to submitting an original book-length manuscript of publishable quality by the final semester.  
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Permission of Program Director. Not open to non-degree graduate students.

MFAW 8830 FICTION SEMINAR (6-12 credits)
An individualized course in fiction writing. Taken four times, the seminar offers practical instruction in fiction writing and criticism. Using distance technology, student and instructor work through individualized writing projects designed to sharpen the student's writing skills to a professional edge. Students will compose both original fiction and critical analyses of fiction preparatory to submitting an original book-length manuscript of publishable quality by their final semester's work. 
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Permission of Program Director. Not open to non-degree graduate students.

MFAW 8840 NONFICTION SEMINAR (6-12 credits)
An individualized course in nonfiction writing. Taken 4 times, the seminar offers practical instruction in writing and criticism. Students will compose both original nonfiction and critical analyses of nonfiction.  
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Permission of Program Director. Not open to non-degree graduate students.

MFAW 8850 PLAYWRITING SEMINAR (6-12 credits)
An individualized seminar in playwriting. Taken 4 times, the seminar offers practical instruction in playwriting and criticism. Using distance technologies, student and instructor work through independent projects designed to sharpen the student's writing and staging skills. Each student will compose both original scripts and critical analyses of plays by other playwrights preparatory to submitting at minimum a full-length playscript, a one-act playscript, and a ten-minute playscript by the final semester.  
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Acceptance into the MFA in Writing Program and permission of the MFA program director. Not open to non-degree graduate students.

MFAW 8870 ENRICHMENT SEMINAR IN WRITING (6 credits)
An advanced writing semester for those who want assistance launching a new writing project; or have a degree in one genre and want to pursue study of another, in poetry, fiction and young adult fiction, creative nonfiction or playwriting; or would like to spend a semester of intense practical study in a radical departure from one's prior literary aesthetic.  
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): MFAW 8720; MFA Program Dir. permission. U of NE MFA-Writing or MFA/PhD w/writing emphasis at other coll/univ. Writers w/ MA-English & emphasis-writing or writers w/ extnsv bkgrd in writing may also be considered. Not open to non-degree graduate students.

WRWS 8106 FICTION STUDIO (4 credits)
An advanced course in fiction writing. Emphasis on refining the techniques of developing short fiction or the novel.  
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): WRWS 3100 or permission of instructor.

WRWS 8116 FICTION STUDIO-ADVANCED (4 credits)
An advanced course in fiction in which students write and edit the most fully-developed short stories and/or novel sections of their college career, as well as read, analyze, and discuss assigned texts. Students examine the techniques of fiction writing, use the vocabulary and perspective they have gained so far to discuss their and others' work. They draw upon aspects of the self, the senses, imagination and memory to produce texts unique to their own voice and experience. (Cross-listed with WRWS 4100, WRWS 4110)  
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): WRWS 3100 or permission of instructor. Not open to non-degree graduate students.

WRWS 8206 POETRY STUDIO (4 credits)
An advanced course in poetry writing. Emphasis on refining poetic technique. (Cross-listed with WRWS 4200)  
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): WRWS 3200 or WRWS 4210 or permission of instructor. Not open to non-degree graduate students.

WRWS 8216 POETRY STUDIO (4 credits)
A graduate workshop in poetry writing with emphasis on such elements of craft as rhythm, imagery, lineation, diction, and metaphor. The course presumes the student is familiar with principles and practice of Twentieth Century poetry in English.  
Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Graduate standing and permission of instructor based on writing sample.