

WRITING, MFA

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 six genres: fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, young adult, playwriting, or screenwriting.

Program Contact Information

Kevin Clouther, Program Coordinator
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Program Website (<http://www.unomaha.edu/unmfaw/>)

Other Program Related Information

- The MFA in Writing 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's meals and lodging fee.

Admissions

General Application Requirements and Admission Criteria (<http://catalog.unomaha.edu/graduate/admission/>)

Program-Specific Requirements

Application Deadlines (Spring 2025, and Fall 2025)

- Fall: June 1
- Spring: November 1

Other Requirements

- **English Language Proficiency:** Applicants are required to have a command of oral and written English. Those who do not hold a baccalaureate or other advanced degree from the United States **OR** a baccalaureate or other advanced degree from a predetermined country on the waiver list (<https://www.unomaha.edu/office-of-graduate-studies/admissions/entrance-exams.php>) must meet the minimum language proficiency score requirement in order to be considered for admission.
 - Internet-based TOEFL: 80, IELTS: 6.5, PTE: 53, Duolingo: 110
- **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, poetry, and young adult** include any other experience you have in the wider community of literature (e.g. organizing or participating in workshops, attending conferences, working for literary magazines, etc.).
 - For **playwriting and screenwriting**, include any specific experience as it pertains to screenwriting or to full-length plays, one-act plays, and ten-minute plays, as well as any experience in other areas of film or theatre.
- **Writing Sample:** A manuscript representing your best work in the genre track (fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, young adult, playwriting, or screenwriting) for which you are applying.

- 15 pages of poetry
- 15-20 pages of playwriting
- 30 pages of screenwriting
- 30-40 pages of fiction, creative nonfiction, or young adult
- **Letters of Recommendation:** Two 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.

NOTE: Your statement of purpose and your writing sample must be submitted in your online application in .pdf format. Manuscripts should be in 12-point typeface with 1" margins. Prose should be double-spaced; poetry may be single-spaced. Playwriting submissions should follow standard playwriting format; screenwriting submissions should follow standard screenwriting format. Material in genres other than the one in which you are applying will not be read. For specific information, as well as 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

PATHWAY 1 Traditional MFA in Writing

Currently enrolled and new students are automatically enrolled in this pathway, unless otherwise approved.

PATHWAY 2 Partial Substitution of Credit Hours Already Earned

Students who have successfully completed graduate-level coursework at UNO or any accredited institution can reduce costs by requesting that up to 18 hours of previously earned credit be applied to the UNO MFA in Writing degree. Subject to individual approval.

PATHWAY 3 Partial Substitution of Credit Hours Earned Through Additional Coursework

Students have the option to enroll in a limited number of approved courses offered online or on any University of Nebraska campus and have those credits substituted for required MFA degree credit hours. Approval must be obtained from the program coordinator BEFORE enrolling.

Required Residency Session

Code	Title	Credits
MFAW 8700	RESIDENCY SESSION	3

Register for one 3-hour session per semester (4 semesters)

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

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 that was proposed during the preceding residency session. 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. Students must register for one 12-hour seminar session per semester for four semesters.

Code	Title	Credits
Fiction		
MFAW 8830	FICTION SEMINAR	12
Non-Fiction		
MFAW 8840	NONFICTION SEMINAR	12

Playwriting		
MFAW 8850	PLAYWRITING AND SCREENWRITING SEMINAR	12
Poetry		
MFAW 8820	POETRY SEMINAR	12
Exit Requirements		
MFAW 8710	GRADUATING RESIDENCY SESSION	0

Total Credit Hours: 60

MFA Graduate Courses

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): 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): 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): Acceptance into the MFA in Writing Program and permission of the MFA Program Coordinator. 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): 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): Permission of Program Director. Not open to non-degree graduate students.

MFAW 8850 PLAYWRITING AND SCREENWRITING SEMINAR (6-12 credits)

An individualized seminar in playwriting or screenwriting. Taken 4 times, the seminar offers practical instruction in playwriting/screenwriting and criticism. Using distance technologies, student and instructor work through independent projects designed to sharpen the student's writing. Each student will compose both original scripts and critical analyses of scripts by other playwrights or screenwriters preparatory to submitting at minimum a full-length script, a one-act script, and a ten-minute script by the final semester.

Prerequisite(s): Acceptance into the MFA in Writing Program and permission of the MFA Program Coordinator. 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, such as fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, young adult, playwriting, or screenwriting.

Prerequisite(s): Corequisite: MFAW 8720. Permission from Program Coordinator required.