

MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN CREATIVE WRITING WITH AN EMPHASIS IN PROSE

The Mills MFA in creative writing provides a strong foundation in fiction, creative nonfiction, and contemporary literature. The program allows you to take classes on campus, register for a semester of individualized study, or move flexibly between these options. Whatever path you take, you will enter a community of writers who inspire and challenge one another to write their best work.

The master of fine arts (MFA) degree in creative writing with an emphasis in prose supports and trains writers who go on to do great things. Alumnae/i (<https://www.mills.edu/academics/graduate-programs/creative-writing-literature/>) of our programs go on to publish books that shift the conversation. They teach, facilitate, and organize in their communities. They perform locally and nationally, win awards, and are successful publishers, editors, and academics.

Whether you attend class on campus or pursue individualized study through our flex-semester option, the core curriculum of workshops and craft classes center your writing. You will be mentored by our renowned faculty (<https://www.mills.edu/faculty/english/>) including distinguished visiting writers such as Nayomi Munaweera and Shanthi Sekaran. Your professors will encourage you to write a thesis that is risky, investigative, and confident, that pushes your development as a writer, and speaks to your own passions, experiences, and ideas.

We offer the flexibility to construct a degree that meets your needs and prepares you for the next step. Electives give you access to our flagship pedagogy course and connect you with a network of local and national teachers. You can pursue concentrations that focus on Young Adult fiction, or prepare you for the PhD or a dynamic career in literary arts administration. You can dive deeper with literature and theory courses or cross register for a specialized class at one of our local partner schools. Whatever you choose, your academic advisor will encourage you to utilize electives that support your unique writing and career goals.

Graduate assistantships (<https://www.mills.edu/admission-aid/graduate-admissions/graduate-programs-cost-aid/scholarships-assistantships-fellowships/english.php>) provide invaluable experience in the classroom, as a tutor, or in literary events programming, editing, and production. Every student has the opportunity to apply for assistantships each year, which provide a small supportive salary. You are also encouraged to apply for community collaborator positions, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation through We Are The Voices (<https://performingarts.mills.edu/performing-arts-programs/we-are-the-voices/>). Each year a cohort of collaborators are mentored as they propose, conceptualize, and implement a project that explores the transformative power of literature in East Bay communities.

Community is at the heart of everything we do. As one of the most diverse creative writing programs in the country, our community is rich with multiple forms of knowledge, experience, and ways of seeing the world. The connections and friendships you form at Mills—at weekly

readings or in conversation after workshop—will be central to your creative life long after you leave the program.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will become familiar with literary works and ideas from an author, period, genre, or specific selection of periods and genres.
- Students will gain in-depth knowledge of a particular literary period, genre, or writer(s).
- Students will develop critical or creative writing skills through experience with a variety of writing assignments.
- Students will formulate and execute a viable advanced project that engages with advanced critical and creative writing skills.
- Students will understand the relationships between history, literature, and culture and the ways literature reflects and effects changes in societies.
- Students will gain skills in teaching writing of various genres, practice as a teacher and fundamentals of writing pedagogy.

Requirements

Minimum of 36 semester course credits

Students are admitted in either fiction or creative nonfiction.

The basic curricular components of this program consist of

- four graduate writing workshops (12 credits)
- two craft of prose courses (6 credits)
- elective courses (12 credits)
- thesis course (6 credits)

Note: All courses must be taken for a grade. Courses taken on a pass/no pass basis may not be used to fulfill any degree requirements.

Flex MFA

Our portfolio-based Flex MFA curriculum allows for flexible degree completion and close engagement with a faculty mentor. Students may choose to complete all, some, or none of their degree requirements through the Flex MFA, and may move in and out of this option on a semester by semester basis. When a student opts to enroll in a semester of Flex MFA mentored study they must always register for ENG 238A Flex MFA: Workshop. ENG 238A Flex MFA: Workshop may be taken concurrently with some combination of ENG 238B Flex MFA: Craft of Prose, ENG 238D Flex MFA: Literature, and/or ENG 238E Flex MFA: Community Engagement Project for up to 9 total credits. With the exception of thesis, which may be completed concurrently with a different faculty member, when a student opts to enroll in a Flex MFA semester, all coursework must be completed via portfolio-based mentored study under the direction of a single faculty mentor for that semester. Faculty mentor assignments are facilitated through the department. Students submit requests and the department assigns mentors based on availability; students are encouraged to work with a variety of different faculty mentors.

Graduate Writing Workshops (12 credits):

At least three of the four required writing workshops must be ENG 268 Graduate Prose Workshop or ENG 238A Flex MFA: Workshop. Either ENG 268 Graduate Prose Workshop or ENG 238A Flex MFA: Workshop must be taken in consecutive semesters during the first year. All workshop credits must be taken at the graduate level (200) to fulfill this requirement. All of some of the required workshops may be completed

through Flex MFA registration. The department recommends that students work with several different instructors, as exposure to varied perspectives is crucial to one's development as a writer.

Registration for required workshops is facilitated through the department. Students are welcome to take more than one workshop per semester on a space-available basis.

Note: While students may apply to switch creative writing genres while they are in the MFA program, they should keep in mind that if their application is approved by the department, they are still required to take the three required workshops in the new genre of study which may extend their total number of semesters in the program. Students should check the department's google drive folder for more information and procedures.

Craft of Prose Courses (6 credits):

Students are required to take ENG 203 The Craft of Prose or ENG 238B Flex MFA: Craft of Prose consecutively during their first two semesters of study. Other craft courses offered in the department may be taken for elective credit.

Electives (minimum of 12 credits):

The program encourages students to fulfill the elective requirement with coursework that supports individual creative, intellectual, and career goals. It is assumed that the majority of the electives will be literature or additional craft courses unless a student is pursuing a concentration area (see below). Students must consult with their academic advisor when selecting elective courses. In general, elective credits can be fulfilled by any graduate-level (200) or upper division undergraduate (100) course offered by the College for academic credit, within the following guidelines.

- No more than 3 credits taken at the upper division undergraduate level (100) may be used to satisfy the elective credit requirement (lower-division courses do not satisfy any graduate degree requirements).
- No more than 3 elective credits may be satisfied through Independent Study.
- Students who are awarded a graduate assistantship in the Rhetoric and Composition Program must complete ENG 272 Theories and Strategies of Teaching Writing either concurrently or prior to their assistantship; this course will be counted towards the required elective credits. This course may not be fulfilled by Flex MFA registration.
- Students who enroll in a Flex MFA semester may fulfill elective credit with ENG 238D Flex MFA: Literature or ENG 238E Flex MFA: Community Engagement Project. Elective credit may also be fulfilled taking additional Flex MFA Craft courses (ENG 238B Flex MFA: Craft of Prose or ENG 238C Flex MFA: Craft of Poetry) beyond the 6 required craft credits.
- Physical education courses do not satisfy any graduate degree requirements. Graduate students interested in taking a physical education course should contact Athletics, Physical Education, and Recreation directly at athletics@mills.edu for information on how to register.

Students may also gain teaching experience through a Mills classroom TA practicum (ENG 277). Off-campus teaching, publishing internships, or other professional experience can also be taken for practicum credit.

Both courses may only be taken on a pass/no pass basis and may not be used to fulfill any degree requirements.

Thesis Course (6 credits):

The MFA thesis is a two-semester process. The course does not have an assigned class period and instead requires regular meetings between the student and the thesis director. Students submit their choices for thesis directors and readers, and the department assigns final thesis committees. Please see the department's google drive folder for full thesis schedule and guidelines. Students will register for the section of ENG 250 Thesis for the MFA Degree corresponding with their thesis director. ENG 250 must be taken consecutively in both semesters of the final year. Students registered for a Flex MFA semester will follow the same thesis process, but meetings may be held by phone or video. Please see the department's google drive folder for full thesis schedule and guidelines.

Concentrations

Students may pursue a variety of concentrated study options with their elective credits. Concentration areas provide access to more focused study of: young adult fiction; preparation for application to PhD programs; education; or literary arts administration. These concentration areas reflect the career paths that many alumni pursue. Concentration areas still allow flexibility to take additional elective credit in literature and other craft courses. Concentrations are always completed *in addition to* the core requirements (ENG 270 Graduate Poetry Workshop and ENG 204 The Craft of Poetry) and cannot be used to replace these courses.

Concentration in Young Adult Fiction 6-9 credits

Those interested in studying young adult fiction use their elective credit to take the following courses:

- ENG 209 The Craft of the Young Adult Novel: suggested sequence—first semester
- ENG 255 Advanced Fiction for Children and Young Adults Workshop: suggested sequence—once in the second semester and again in the fourth semester

Concentration in PhD Preparation 14 credits

MFA students who wish to pursue a PhD use their elective credit to take the following courses:

- ENG 282 Critical Theory: suggested sequence—first semester
- Two 200-level literature courses both which must include the graduate-only lab
- ENG 250A MA Research Project suggested sequence—fourth semester

Concentration in Education 10 credits

Those interested in teaching use their elective credits to take the following courses:

- ENG 272 Theories and Strategies of Teaching Writing: suggested sequence—first semester
- EDUC 210A Research and Inquiry Methods in Education: MEET: suggested sequence—third semester

- EDUC 210B Research and Inquiry Methods in Education: MEET:
 suggested sequence—fourth semester

Concentration in Literary Arts Administration

9 credits

Those interested in pursuing a career in literary arts administration, marketing, or related fields use their elective credits to take the following courses:

Code	Title	Credits
Required		
MGMT 286	The Business of Being an Artist	3-3
Select an additional 6 credits from the following:		
MGMT 214	Financial Accounting	
MGMT 224	Persuasive Communications	
MGMT 227	Negotiations	
MGMT 230	Marketing Management	
MGMT 247	Project Management	
MGMT 250	Persuasive Oral Presentations	
MGMT 270	Nonprofit Management	
MGMT 271	Funding Social Impact	
MGMT 275	Social Entrepreneurship	