

# Writing

The Writing program offers a **Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Writing** in three genres: creative nonfiction, fiction and poetry. Applicants must apply to each genre separately and will be enrolled in only one. However, through themed craft courses, MFA students may take courses with faculty and students in other genres. The MFA in Writing is a two-year program.

The Writing program, which is ranked ninth in the country by *Poets & Writers*, is highly selective, enrolling 10 to 15 students each year. There is a low faculty-to-student ratio, with writing courses generally capped at 12 students. MFA students are generously funded, with all incoming students receiving full tuition scholarships plus university fellowships. Our faculty includes Guggenheim Fellows, National Book Award finalists, and winners of the National Book Critics Circle Award. Graduates of our program have won the PEN/Hemingway Award and the Drue Heinz Literature Prize, among other honors.

Each year, our reading series brings a diverse group of poets, fiction writers and nonfiction writers to the department. In addition, the Hurst Professor program brings in six distinguished visitors each year to present their newest work, lecture on the craft of writing, and work one-on-one with our MFA students. Edward P. Jones, Frank Bidart, Joy Williams, Jorie Graham, Aleksandar Hemon, Lucie Brock Broido, George Saunders, Louise Glück, Kelly Link, C.D. Wright, Richard Powers, Claudia Rankine, Deborah Eisenberg, Paul Muldoon, Charles Baxter, Timothy Donnelly and Lydia Davis are just some of our recent visiting Hurst Professors.

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## Faculty

### Professors

**Mary Jo Bang** (<https://english.wustl.edu/people/mary-jo-bang/>)  
MFA, Columbia University

**Carl Phillips** (<https://english.wustl.edu/people/carl-phillips/>)  
MA, Boston University

### Associate Professors

**Danielle Dutton** (<https://english.wustl.edu/people/danielle-dutton/>)  
PhD, University of Denver

**Edward McPherson** (<https://english.wustl.edu/people/edward-mcpherson/>)  
MFA, University of Minnesota–Twin Cities

### Assistant Professor

**G’Ra Asim** (<https://english.wustl.edu/people/gra-asim/>)  
MFA, Columbia University

### Writers-in-Residence

**Kathryn Davis** (<https://english.wustl.edu/people/kathryn-davis/>)  
BA, Goddard University

**Kathleen Finneran** (<https://english.wustl.edu/people/kathleen-finneran/>)  
BA, Washington University

**Niki Herd** (<https://english.wustl.edu/people/niki-herd/>)  
PhD, University of Houston

**Marshall Klimasewiski** (<https://english.wustl.edu/people/marshall-klimasewiski/>)  
MFA, Bowling Green State University

### Director of Creative Writing Program

**David Schuman** (<https://english.wustl.edu/people/david-schuman/>)  
MFA, Washington University

## Degree Requirements

### Master of Fine Arts in Writing

The Writing program leads to the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Writing. This is a two-year program that requires satisfactory completion of 42 credit units, a thesis, and an oral examination dealing principally with the thesis.

### Courses

Of the 42 credit units required, 24 consist of the graduate nonfiction, fiction or poetry workshop taken every semester. The remainder are primarily literature and craft courses from the English department. However, in consultation with the director of the program, graduate-level courses from any department that will enrich the student's writing are acceptable, as long as the student has the appropriate preparation and the permission of the instructor.

During their first year, students enroll for 24 units: the graduate workshop in their genre (6 units) plus two additional 3-unit courses each semester. During the second year, while participating in the mentored teaching experience, students typically take a total of 18 units: the workshop each semester (12 units), thesis hours (3 units), and an additional course.

## Thesis

The required work for the MFA culminates in a thesis, which may take different forms but is usually a volume (or most of a volume) of poems, stories or essays; a novel (or most of a novel); or a memoir or other long-form creative nonfiction work (or most of one).

## Oral Examination

Near the end of the second year, after the thesis has been submitted in its final form, the program will schedule an oral examination that deals principally with the thesis.