

# Creative Writing

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Department Website: <http://creativewriting.uchicago.edu>

Students at the University of 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 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 may 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 and 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 major in Creative Writing described below or through a minor in English and Creative Writing, which is open to students outside those two programs. Students who do not wish to pursue a formal program in Creative Writing will have access to our courses that satisfy the general education requirement in the arts and open-entry "beginning" workshops. They may also apply for advanced workshop courses.

## Major in Creative Writing

Students who graduate with the bachelor of arts in Creative Writing will both be skilled in writing in a major literary genre and have a theoretically informed understanding of the aesthetic, historical, social, and political context of a range of contemporary writing. Students in the major will focus their studies on a primary genre chosen from fiction, poetry, and nonfiction.

The organization of the major recognizes the value of workshop courses, but incorporates that model into a broader education that furthers students' knowledge of historical and contemporary literary practice, introduces them to aesthetic and literary theory, sharpens their critical attention, and fosters their creative enthusiasm. Valuable experience with group work and peer criticism, which comes from the practices and skills central to Creative Writing pedagogy, will prepare students for success in a range of fields in the public and private sectors.

## Program Requirements

The Program in Creative Writing requires a total of 13 courses and completion of a BA thesis, as described below. Students who matriculated in 2016–17 or later may declare this major. Students in the Class of 2019 may declare, though it may only be realistic for those who have already begun creative writing course work. All interested students should speak with the Director of Undergraduate Studies or program administrator. Students in the Class of 2018 are not eligible for the Creative Writing major.

Students contemplating a major or minor in Creative Writing may choose to take one or two Creative Writing courses toward the general education requirement in the arts. These courses will not count towards major requirements, but they do offer an opportunity to test out the program while satisfying a general education requirement.

### One (1) Fundamentals in Creative Writing course

CRWR 17000-17999

The Fundamentals in Creative Writing course is a cross-genre, one-quarter seminar to be taken by all students in the major. Every section of the course focuses on a current debate relevant to all forms of literary practice, such as mimesis, translation and appropriation, and art and the market. This course introduces students to a group of core texts from each major literary genre. The course is taught in a seminar format and will require a final paper. Fundamentals in Creative Writing is restricted to students who have declared the major, as its aims are to develop cohort solidarity, promote a culture of articulate exchange, and induct students into a reflection on practice that will serve their artistic and professional development. Students should plan to take the course as early as possible after declaring the major, ideally in the first or second quarter in the program. See Enrolling in Creative Writing Courses for additional details.

### Two (2) Technical Seminars

Fiction: CRWR 20200-20299; Poetry: CRWR 20301-20399; Nonfiction: CRWR 20400-20499

Students in the major must take two technical seminars in their primary genre of fiction, poetry, or nonfiction. The aims of the seminars are to enlarge students' technical resources through extensive reading and analysis of contemporary literature and to provide practice-based training in technical skills. Students submit papers that address technical questions, chiefly with reference to contemporary texts. For example, poetry students may write on "the line," where fiction students write on "point of view." These courses may also count as electives in the minor. See Enrolling in Creative Writing Courses for additional details.

### Three (3) Advanced Workshops

Fiction: CRWR 22100-22299; Poetry: CRWR 23100-23299; Nonfiction: CRWR 24001-24199

Students in the major must complete three Advanced Workshops, at least two of which must be in the student's primary genre. The Advanced Workshop is the characteristic pedagogical instrument of Creative Writing as an academic discipline. Workshop practice relies on an understanding of support that is dedicated to improving students' writing, not unconditional approval. Critique is the core value and activity of the workshop, and students will practice it under the guidance of the workshop instructor. Although Advanced Workshops begin with attention to exemplary texts, they typically focus on original student work. See Enrolling in Creative Writing Courses for additional details.

Credit for a Beginning Workshop: Students who have completed a Beginning Workshop in their primary genre and have received a grade of B+ or above will be able to count this course as one of the required Advanced Workshops. Because students must take at least two Advanced Workshops in their primary genre, any qualifying Beginning Workshop may only serve as the third required workshop. Beginning Workshops offered by other institutions will not count towards the major. Beginning Workshops are open to all students during pre-registration.

### **One (1) Literary Genre Course**

Students are required to take one introductory Literary Genre course related to their primary genre as an introduction to key texts and debates in the history of their chosen genre. This requirement can be met by a cross-listed English course or a comparable course in another literature. Depending on the student's genre, courses like ENGL 10400 Introduction to Poetry, ENGL 10700 Introduction to Fiction: The Short Story, or ENGL 11004 History of the Novel may be eligible. Specific courses that are identified as filling this requirement will be listed at [creativewriting.uchicago.edu](http://creativewriting.uchicago.edu).

### **Three (3) Literature Courses**

Creative Writing majors are required to take three literature courses offered by other departments. These courses can be focused on the literature of any language, but one must involve the study of literature written before the twentieth century and one must center on theory. The Director of Undergraduate Studies will offer guidance and approve all qualifying courses. Specific courses that satisfy the distribution element of this requirement will be listed at [creativewriting.uchicago.edu](http://creativewriting.uchicago.edu).

### **Two (2) Research Background Electives**

Students take two courses outside the Creative Writing department to support the student's individual interests and thesis project. These courses must be selected in consultation with and approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Depending on a student's interests, courses in e.g., Cinema and Media Studies or Visual Arts might be appropriate. Others may take additional literature course work. The students must provide documentation of these approvals to their College adviser.

### **BA Thesis and Workshop**

Students work on their BA Projects throughout their fourth year. Early in Autumn Quarter of their fourth year, students will be assigned a graduate student preceptor, who will lead a series of mandatory colloquia over the course of the quarter. In Winter Quarter, students will continue meeting with the graduate preceptor and must also enroll in the appropriate Thesis/Major Projects Workshop in their genre (CRWR 29200 Thesis/Major Projects: Fiction, CRWR 29300 Thesis/Major Projects: Poetry, or CRWR 29400 Thesis/Major Projects: Creative Nonfiction).

Students are not automatically enrolled in a workshop; they must receive the consent of the workshop instructor, who will also serve as the faculty advisor for their BA Project. Students should be aware that because of the high number of students wishing to write fiction for their BA Projects, students will not necessarily get their first choice of workshop instructor and faculty advisor. See Enrolling in Creative Writing Courses for additional details.

Students will work closely with their faculty advisor and with their peers in the workshops and will receive course credit as well as a final grade for the workshop. In consultation with their faculty advisor and graduate preceptor, students will revise and resubmit a near-final draft of the BA Project by the end of the second week of Spring Quarter. Students will submit the final version of their BA Project to their preceptor, faculty advisor, and the Director of Undergraduate Studies by the beginning of the fifth week of Spring Quarter. Students graduating in other quarters should speak with the Director of Undergraduate Studies about an appropriate timeline.

### **Program Honors**

The faculty in the Program in Creative Writing will award program honors based on their assessment of the BA theses, with input from graduate student preceptors. To be eligible, students must have an overall GPA of at least 3.6 and overall GPA of 3.25. Honors will be awarded only to the most exceptional projects from a given cohort; the majority of students will not receive this designation.

### **Summary of Requirements**

One (1) Fundamentals in Creative Writing course *	100
Two (2) Technical Seminars (in the student's primary genre) †	200
Three (3) Advanced Workshops (at least two in the student's primary genre) §	300
Three (3) Literature Courses	300

One (1) Literary Genre Course	100
Two (2) Research Background Electives	200
One (1) BA Workshop, chosen from:	100
CRWR 29200      Thesis/Major Projects: Fiction	
CRWR 29300      Thesis/Major Projects: Poetry	
CRWR 29400      Thesis/Major Projects: Creative Nonfiction	

Total Units 1300

\* CRWR 17000-17999

† Technical Seminars in Fiction: CRWR 20200-20299; Poetry: CRWR 20301-20399; Nonfiction: CRWR 20400-20499

§ Advanced Workshops in Fiction: CRWR 22100-22299; Poetry: CRWR 23100-23299; Nonfiction: 24001-24199.  
Beginning Workshops may count as the third workshop if they meet the stipulations listed under the Program Requirements.

### Advising

Students considering the major should meet with the Director of Undergraduate Studies or Program Coordinator as early as possible to discuss program requirements and individual plans of study. Declaration of the major must be formalized through [my.uchicago.edu](http://my.uchicago.edu).

The Program Coordinator and Director of Undergraduate Studies will provide guidance to students choosing courses to complete the major requirements. By Autumn Quarter of their third year, all students will be required to file a major program worksheet with the department, and the student's final major program must be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Students will need to regularly provide documentation of any approvals for the major to their College advisers for the necessary processing.

Graduate student preceptor support will be available to students while they write BA theses and minor portfolios during their final year of study, and faculty instructors will serve as thesis advisors for the students in their winter workshops.

### Courses outside the Department Taken for Program Credit

A maximum of three courses outside Creative Writing and the Department of English Language and Literature (or another literature) may count toward the total number of courses required by the major. Ordinarily, two of these courses will be Research Background Electives. Substitutions for a further course will be subject to approval, but students may not substitute non-literature courses for the Literature Course requirement.

For students double majoring, this means a maximum of three courses can count towards both majors (pending approval from both departments).

### Double Majors in English

When students choose a double major in Creative Writing and English Language and Literature, the three Literature Courses and the Literary Genre course will count towards both majors. However, the two Research Background Electives required for the Creative Writing major should be taken outside of the Department of English Language and Literature. This means that a maximum of four English Language and Literature courses, including the Literary Genre course, can count towards the Creative Writing major.

### Grading

Students with a major in Creative Writing must receive quality grades (not P/F) in all courses counting toward the major or minor. Non-majors may take CRWR courses for P/F grading with consent of instructor.

### Sample Plan of Study for the Major

Fundamentals in Creative Writing	100
CRWR 17000      Fundamentals in Creative Writing: Literary Empathy	
Technical Seminars	200
CRWR 20302      Technical Seminar in Poetry: Units of Composition	
CRWR 20301      Technical Seminar in Poetry: Manifestos, Movements, Modes	
Advanced Workshops	300
CRWR 23113      Advanced Poetry Workshop: Waste, Surplus, Reuse	
CRWR 23100      Advanced Poetry Workshop	
CRWR 10306      Beginning Poetry Workshop <sup>+</sup>	
Literary Genre Course	100
ENGL 10400      Introduction to Poetry	
Literature Courses	300
ENGL 17515      Seventeenth-Century Verse <sup>*</sup>	
ENGL 22903      Literature of the City: Between Utopia and Dystopia <sup>**</sup>	

ENGL 28614	Contemporary Latina/o Poetry	
Research Electives		200
ARTV 20410	Expanded Arts, 1958-1978	
CMST 14503	Cinema in Theory and Practice	
BA Workshop		100
CRWR 29300	Thesis/Major Projects: Poetry	
Total Units		1300

+ Beginning Workshop is eligible because it met the conditions outlined in the Program Requirements (above).

\* Satisfies period requirement (pre-20th century)

\*\* Satisfies theory requirement

### Minor in English and Creative Writing

Students who are not English Language and Literature or Creative Writing 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) workshop courses, with at least one being an Advanced Workshop. Three of the remaining required courses may be taken in either the Department of English Language and Literature (ENGL) or the Program in Creative Writing (CRWR). This may include CRWR Technical Seminars or general education courses, as long as they are not already counted toward the general education requirement in the arts.

In addition, students must enroll in one of the following workshops offered during the Winter Quarter: CRWR 29200 Thesis/Major Projects: Fiction; CRWR 29300 Thesis/Major Projects: Poetry; CRWR 29400 Thesis/Major Projects: Creative Nonfiction. Finally, students must submit a portfolio of their work (e.g., a selection of poems, one or two short stories or chapters from a novel, two or three nonfiction pieces) to the Creative Writing program coordinator by the end of the fifth week in the quarter in which they plan to graduate. Students will work with a graduate student preceptor to compile and refine their final portfolios.

Students who elect the minor program in English and Creative Writing must meet with the program administrator for Creative Writing 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 administrator. The administrator'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.

Students completing this minor will be given enrollment preference for CRWR Advanced Workshops and Thesis/Major Projects Workshops, and they must follow all relevant admission procedures described at the Creative Writing (<https://creativewriting.uchicago.edu>) website. For details, see Enrolling in Creative Writing Courses.

Courses in the minor (1) may not be doubly 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 (not P/F), 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 in English and Creative Writing

Two CRWR workshop courses *	200
Three CRWR or ENGL electives	300
One Thesis/Major Projects Workshop +	100
A portfolio of the student's work	
Total Units	600

\* At least one must be an Advanced Workshop.

+ CRWR 29200 Thesis/Major Projects: Fiction, CRWR 29300 Thesis/Major Projects: Poetry, or CRWR 29400 Thesis/Major Projects: Creative Nonfiction.

### Minor to Major and Major to Minor

Student circumstances change, and thus a transfer between the major and minor programs may be desirable to students who begin a course of study in either program. Workshop courses (including Beginning Workshops) and one Technical Seminar may count towards the minor, but Fundamentals in Creative Writing will not. The Thesis/Major Projects Workshop will also function as a portfolio workshop for minors. Students should consult with their College adviser if considering such a transfer and must update their planned program of study with the Program Coordinator or Director of Undergraduate Studies in Creative Writing.

### Sample Plan of Study for the Minor

CRWR 10200	Beginning Fiction Workshop	100
CRWR 22110	Advanced Fiction: Exploring Your Boundaries	100
ENGL 16500	Shakespeare I: Histories and Comedies	100
ENGL 10706	Introduction to Fiction	100

ENGL 26909	The American Novel, 1950–1990	100
CRWR 29200	Thesis/Major Projects: Fiction	100
A portfolio of the student's work (two short stories)		
Total Units		600

### Enrolling in Creative Writing Courses

General education courses and Beginning Workshops are open to all students via the standard pre-registration process. Other courses require consent, and some may require submission of work for evaluation. These courses may prioritize students in the major. Note: Students who have not formally declared the major will not receive priority in consent-based courses. Those interested in the major should see Advising (above) and meet with the Director of Undergraduate Studies before the end of Autumn Quarter of third year.

Applications for consent-only courses **must** be received by the deadlines listed below.

#### Creative Writing courses for the general education requirement in the arts

These multi-genre courses are introductions to topics in Creative Writing and satisfy the general education requirement in the arts in the College. General education courses are generally taught under two headings—"Reading as a Writer" and "Intro to Genres"—and will feature class critiques of students' creative work. Open to all undergraduate students during pre-registration. These courses do not count towards the major in Creative Writing, but students in the major may use these courses to satisfy their general education requirement in the arts.

#### Beginning Workshops

These courses are intended for students who may or may not have writing experience, but are interested in gaining experience in a particular genre. Courses will be focused on the fundamentals of craft and will feature workshops of student writing. Open to all undergraduate students during pre-registration.

#### Fundamentals of Creative Writing courses

Focuses on a current debate relevant to all forms of literary practice and aims to develop cohort solidarity, promote a culture of exchange, and induct students into a reflection on practice that will service their artistic and professional development. Open to declared majors only. Those students may apply to take the course by submitting the CW Seminar Consent Form, found at [creativewriting.uchicago.edu](http://creativewriting.uchicago.edu).

#### Technical Seminars

These seminars enlarge students' technical resources through extensive reading and analysis of contemporary literature and provide practice-based training in technical skills. Priority is given to declared majors. Those students may apply to take the course by submitting the CW Seminar Consent Form, found at [creativewriting.uchicago.edu](http://creativewriting.uchicago.edu).

#### Advanced Workshops

These courses are intended for students with substantive writing experience in a particular genre. Advanced workshops will focus on class critiques of student writing with accompanying readings from exemplary literary texts. Priority is given to students in the major, minor, or the Creative Writing Option of the Master of Arts Program in the Humanities. All students may apply to take the course by submitting the CW Workshop Submission Form, found at [creativewriting.uchicago.edu](http://creativewriting.uchicago.edu). A writing sample in the genre of the relevant course is required for faculty review. Specific submission requirements appear in the course descriptions.

#### Thesis/Major Projects

This course will revolve around workshops of student writing and also concentrate on the larger form students have chosen for their creative thesis. Priority is given to students in the major, minor, or the Creative Writing Option of the Master of Arts Program in the Humanities. All students may apply to take the course by submitting the CW Workshop Submission Form, found at [creativewriting.uchicago.edu](http://creativewriting.uchicago.edu). A writing sample in the genre of the relevant course is required for faculty review. Specific submission requirements appear in the course descriptions.

#### Quarterly Deadlines to apply for consent-based CRWR courses

- Autumn Quarter, September 6
- Winter Quarter, November 17
- Spring Quarter, February 23

For more information on Creative Writing courses and opportunities, visit the Creative Writing (<https://creativewriting.uchicago.edu>) website.

Faculty and Visiting Lecturers

For a current listing of Creative Writing faculty, visit the Creative Writing (<https://creativewriting.uchicago.edu/faculty>) website.





### Font Notice

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

Times was used instead of Trajan.

Times was used instead of Palatino.

The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.