

## CREATIVE WRITING

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The Creative Writing Department at NOCCA offers a three-year course of study as well as year-long writing workshops for talented and disciplined students who aspire to be writers. NOCCA selects students on the basis of demonstrable writing promise, overall academic performance and enthusiasm for literature. They must show open-mindedness, discipline, maturity, imagination and strong self-motivation in respect to their creative work and to their education as a whole.

In classes concentrating on aesthetic quality and technique, students study novels, short and long stories, poems, drama, book reviews and other nonfiction and films. They discuss and analyze texts, then apply that knowledge to their own writing. Students write almost every day and are given exercises that encourage both imaginative and technically skilled work. During class and the more structured workshop sessions, they receive feedback from peers, instructors and visiting artists toward revision of their work.

Grounded in the belief that the qualities of good writing remain consistent regardless of literary form, faculty teach all aspects of the curriculum. They also rotate instruction among all of the classes so that students have the benefit of receiving a variety of approaches, while instructors remain involved with all of the students in the department.

Students who have completed the program may pursue studies in undergraduate and graduate programs and find such outlets for their writing as literary journals, magazines and books. Students should have a lifelong dedication to literature and writing and leave NOCCA with a sound appreciation for the written word and as valuable supporters of the literary arts. In addition, the benefits students receive from being trained as close and appreciative readers, help them pursue a variety of careers.

### COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

#### Level I

The primary goal of this class is to immerse students in good writing in order to introduce basic techniques and approaches to writing poetry and prose. Over the course of the year students read roughly sixteen novels, dozens of short stories and hundreds of poems. Daily writing exercises focus on both the imaginative properties of language and the practice of specific technique. In addition to students' extensive creative work, the study of film and various non-fiction material is also used to develop their critical sensibility.

At the end of Level I students should: show college level proficiency in reading, demonstrate a command of various figurative language devices, have an understanding of the structure and development of a poem as well as the basic elements of fiction, recognize the unifying artistic elements of a film and have produced at least four short stories, one work of creative non-fiction and twenty poems.

#### Level II

Enrollment Guidelines: Successful completion of Level I and consent of instructors.

The goals for Level II students are to broaden and deepen their knowledge of literature and to master advanced writing skills. In a more specialized curriculum than Level I, Level II students closely examine the formal properties of writing. Their study of poetry includes a historical survey, prosody and scansion, and writing in traditional forms; they also read poetry in translation from other languages. Their study of short fiction includes a survey of narratives in American and British literature from the 18th century to the present, and novels and stories by international writers. Students practice writing both traditional and experimental stories. In addition, they study and write prose poems, creative nonfiction, and produce at least one extensive critical paper, on either a literary or film topic.

### **Level III**

Enrollment Guidelines: Successful completion of Level II and consent of instructors.

In addition to a close study of the formal properties of poetry, short fiction, the prose poem and non-fiction prose, and continuing their historical surveys of American, British and international literature, Level III students must also complete the requirements for the Certificate of Artistry. These include an independent study of one author's work; passing an oral and a written examination based on an extensive reading list; maintaining a "B" average or better; and presenting and defending a thesis-length work of publishable quality. They should also have a basic understanding of what being a professional writer entails, including the current situation in publishing, career possibilities, and the role of the writer in contemporary culture.

### **OTHER COURSE OFFERINGS**

#### **Extended Studio**

Extended Studio offers an introduction to creative writing with the benefits of a flexible schedule as well as weekly in-class interaction. Throughout the week, students read and respond to lectures on craft, stories and poems in an online format. Twice a week, students attend classes on campus for workshops, critique and class discussion. Students must show self-discipline, a familiarity with online technology and a commitment to working independently.

#### **Visiting Artists**

The Creative Writing Department seeks to give students an accurate understanding of the professional realities of the literary world, while focusing primarily on the aesthetic value of the literature. The visiting writers program supports this aim by offering students the benefit of working with dozens of writers who treat them as peers, sharing their experience in the writing world and leading workshops that give students critical feedback on their work.

#### **Certificates**

The Creative Writing Department offers three levels of certification: Certificate of Artistry, Certificate of Achievement and Certificate of Recognition.

*Certificate of Artistry:* Students must have met all the performance expectations of Level III, including having presented and defended a thesis; passed a written and an oral comprehensive examination; maintained a grade of "B" or better throughout his/her years in the program.

Seniors who have completed the required coursework in any given level with significant accomplishment may receive the *Certificate of Achievement*.

First-year seniors who have completed required coursework in any given level may receive the *Certificate of Recognition*.

In all cases, the judgment by the core creative writing faculty regarding the awarding of certificates is final.