

**MFA IN CREATIVE WRITING**  
**STUDENT GUIDE 2023-2024**

**BEST POINTS OF CONTACT FOR MFA STUDENTS:**

- [Farid Matuk](mailto:matuk@arizona.edu), Program Director (PD), ML 488 ([matuk@arizona.edu](mailto:matuk@arizona.edu))
- [Stephanie Mao](mailto:smao@arizona.edu), Program Coordinator ([smao@arizona.edu](mailto:smao@arizona.edu))

**OTHER PLACES TO GO IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS**

- **The Program Director (PD) is always available to talk about any concerns you may have or to answer any questions.**
- **Logistical questions** are usually best directed to, in this order, the PC or the PD.
- **Questions about your degree paperwork** are usually best directed to, in this order: the PC, then the [Graduate College degree counselor/GSAS](#).
- **Questions/concerns about your Writing Program teaching** are best brought to the Writing Program, but it can be useful to loop the PC or the PD in if you need us.
- **For anything you don't feel comfortable bringing to the attention of the PC or PD for whatever reason**, you may contact [Cristina Ramírez](#), Head of the English Dept.
- **For anything, but especially for concerns that you feel may be shared by other graduate students in CW or English:** The EGU (English Graduate Union), <http://english.arizona.edu/english-graduate-union-egu>; [egucochairs@gmail.com](mailto:egucochairs@gmail.com).
- **For concerns about issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion:** If you'd rather not bring these to the PD, please feel free to bring them to any of our faculty members.
- **If you feel that you've witnessed or experienced discriminatory conduct**, all of us (especially the PD) are good initial points of contact for your concerns. We will also direct you to consult (and report your concerns if appropriate) to The Office of Institutional Equity: <http://equity.arizona.edu/>. The University's policy strictly prohibits retaliation against an individual for reporting perceived discrimination or participating in a resulting investigation.

Find us in person:

- Modern Languages 445 (CW and English mailboxes)
- Modern Languages 488 (office of the Program Director)
- Modern Languages 445 (office of the Program Coordinator)
- All of the CW faculty offices are in Modern Languages on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors

Find us online:

- MFA webpage: <http://english.arizona.edu/creative-writing>
- MFA twitter: <https://twitter.com/ArizonaMFA>
- Email us: [smao@arizona.edu](mailto:smao@arizona.edu)

MFA Listservs:

- [creativewriting@list.arizona.edu](mailto:creativewriting@list.arizona.edu) goes to all MFA students, faculty, and staff
- [cwstudents@list.arizona.edu](mailto:cwstudents@list.arizona.edu) goes to MFA students

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## MFA PROGRAM CALENDAR 2023-2024

### 2023

August 23	Classes begin
September 2	MFA Beginning of Year Social
September 5	Labor Day, no classes
November 11	Veteran's Day, no classes
Nov 24-27	Thanksgiving Break, no classes
December 7	Last day of classes
December 8	<b>December graduates:</b> Last day to turn in hardcopy & pdf of thesis MS & aesthetic statement/critical introduction [ <b>hard deadline</b> ]
Dec 23-Jan 12	University winter closure

### 2024

January 11	Classes begin
January 16	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, no classes
February (TBA)	Applications to teach 200-level CW workshops in Summer and Fall 2022 and Spring 2023
March 4-12	Spring break, no classes
March (TBA)	Thesis Advisor Selections
May 3	Last day of classes
May 4	Graduate Readings at the Poetry Center (note: 11 am start!)
May 13	SBS Convocation
May 13	<b>May graduates:</b> Last day to turn in hardcopy & pdf of thesis MS & aesthetic statement/critical introduction [ <b>hard deadline</b> ]

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The University of Arizona MFA program is an energetic, demanding, and flexible, fully-funded 3-year program (though it may be completed more quickly if a student prefers). The faculty are committed to providing the tools for student success, including extensive verbal and written feedback; safe and multivocal workshop spaces; challenging craft courses that build on foundational skills and extend them in complex ways; and building and respecting policies that protect against discrimination and that maintain appropriate professional boundaries. As well, the program is committed to widening canonical discussions to include voices that are representative of a deep history of diverse American and global literature while at the same time developing an understanding of the origins and contours of the history that got us here, from Romanticism to postmodernism. To that end, we include here the latest iteration of the program's Statement on Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity.

## PROGRAM STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND EQUITY:

"The concepts contained in words like 'freedom,' 'justice,' 'democracy' are not common concepts," writes James Baldwin. "On the contrary, they are rare. People are not born knowing what these are. It takes enormous and, above all, individual effort to arrive at the respect for other people that these words imply."

So, too, might we consider words like "equity," "diversity," and "inclusion." In March 2016, University of Arizona President Ann Weaver Hart called for a Diversity Task Force, stressing an understanding that such a project could help "all of us build a campus environment that values diversity and inclusion as core tenets of what it means to be a Wildcat" (see Diversity & Inclusion site for more information). This is an important step in anticipating campus-wide initiatives that advance our understanding of these concepts and their benefits to our campus. It is also an important call for us as creative writing faculty to consider what makes a better and stronger working environment for all.

As we welcome the new academic year, we ask what equity, diversity, and inclusion mean to the wide range of experiences and approaches that shape literary art. We recognize that the vitality and risk of art encourage us to produce differing and unique points of view. At the same time, we exist as an interconnected community that relies on discussion, debate, and appreciation to thrive. What is the writer's role as an individual practitioner, and what is the writer's role within the community? How do we intersect and what are the invisible currents that shape our lives? We believe that thinking about these questions is central to our program's development as a place where writers assemble and grow.

Audre Lorde describes difference as "a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark." As working artists, our MFA community understands how essential and significant this concept is to the literary art we practice and teach. As a faculty, we embody a commitment to difference and embody it in diverse ways. We recognize that the core tenets described in this statement are vital to our primary commitment: the respectful

mentoring, advising, training, and supervising of early-career artists. Each of us is in a unique position to consider carefully how the integrity of those interactions affects not only an individual's artistic production, but also the spirit of openness and community that we support.

## MFA FACULTY

KATE BERNHEIMER

Professor, Fiction

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ML 438

Kate Bernheimer is the author of a novel trilogy and the story collections *Horse, Flower, Bird* and *How a Mother Weaned Her Girl from Fairy Tales* (both with Coffee House Press), and co-author, with Laird Hunt, of the novella *Office at Night*, which was a 2015 finalist for the Shirley Jackson Awards (Coffee House Press/The Walker Art Center). She has edited four fairy-tale anthologies including the World Fantasy Award winning and bestselling *My Mother She Killed Me, My Father He Ate Me: Forty New Fairy Tales* and the World Fantasy Award nominated *so Orpheus: 50 New Myths* (both with Penguin Books). She also writes award-winning children's books, published by Penguin Random House Children's Books. Her books have been published in Korean, Turkish, Spanish, Italian, French, Russian, Chinese, and Hebrew editions, among other languages. Her short fiction and short nonfiction have appeared such places as *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Sunday Book Review*, *Bookforum*, and *The Massachusetts Review*. She is also Founder and Editor of *Fairy Tale Review* (Wayne State University Press Journals Division).

SUSAN BRIANTE

Program Director and Professor, Poetry

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ML 342

Susan Briante is the author most recently of the Pegasus Award winning *Defacing the Monument*, a series of essays on immigration, archives, aesthetics, and the state. Briante is also the author of three books of poetry: *Pioneers in the Study of Motion*, *Utopia Minus* (an Academy of American Poets Notable Book of 2011) and *The Market Wonders*. Briante writes creative nonfiction and essays. Some of these can be found in *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Gulf Coast*, *Guernica*, and *Black Warrior Review*, among others. Her poems and essays have been collected in the anthologies *The Poetry of Capital*, *Bodies Built for Game: The Prairie Schooner Anthology of Contemporary Sports Writing*, *Poems for Political Disaster* (*Boston Review*), and *The Arcadia Project: the North American Postmodern Pastoral*, among others. Her work was named a notable mention in *The Best American Essays of 2019* (edited by Rebecca Solnit) and is forthcoming in *The Best American Poetry of 2020* (edited by Tracy K. Smith).

She serves as co-coordinator for the [Southwest Field Studies in Writing Program](#). The program brings MFA students to the US-Mexico border to engage in reciprocal research



with community-based environmental and social justice groups as well as to lead workshops with local high school students.

Her research and teaching interests include poetry and poetics, cross-genre writing, experimental autobiography, documentary studies, affect theory, and translation.

## BOJAN LOUIS

Assistant Professor, Poetry and American Indian Studies

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Office: ML 432

Bojan Louis (Diné) is the author of the poetry collection *Currents* (BkMk Press 2017), which received a 2018 American Book Award, and the nonfiction chapbook *Troubleshooting Silence in Arizona* (The Guillotine Series 2012). Louis has been a resident MacDowell and was the inaugural Virginia G. Piper Fellow-in-Residence at Arizona State University. A debut collection of short stories, *Sinking Bell*, is forthcoming from Graywolf Press on September 20, 2022.

*Note: Bojan Louis will be on research leave in Spring 2022.*

## FARID MATUK

Associate Professor, Poetry

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A queer writer of mixed Syrian and Peruvian heritage, Farid Matuk has lived in the U.S. since the age of six as an undocumented person, a “legal” resident, and a naturalized citizen. He is the author of the poetry collections *This Isa Nice Neighborhood* (Letter Machine) and *The Real Horse* (University of Arizona Press), and of several chapbooks including *My Daughter La Chola* (Ahsahta). His work has been anthologized in *The Best American Experimental Poetry* and in *Angels of the Americlypse: An Anthology of New Latin@ Writing*, among others. Matuk's poems and translations from Spanish appear in journals such as *The Baffler*, *The Nation*, *The Boston Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Poetry*, *Bomb Magazine*, and *Lana Turner Journal*. His essays and interviews can be found in *Scubadivers and Chrysanthemums: Essays on the Poetry of Araki Yasusada*, *The Force of What's Possible: Writers on Accessibility and the Avant-Garde*, *The Racial Imaginary: Writers on Race in the Life of the Mind*, *The Boston Review*, *Entropy*, *Bomb*, and *Cross-Cultural Poetics*. Matuk serves as poetry editor at *FENCE* and on the editorial board for the book series *Research in Creative Writing* at Bloomsbury. His work has been supported, most recently, by residencies and grants from The Headlands Center for the Arts and The Lannan Foundation and a Visiting Holloway Professorship in Poetry & Poetics at UC Berkeley. Matuk's book

arts project, *Redolent*, made in collaboration with visual artist Nancy Friedemann-Sánchez, is forthcoming from Singing Saw Press.

#### ANDER MONSON

Professor, Nonfiction, Fiction, Poetry, Digital Texts, and Hybrid Works

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Ander Monson is the author of nine books of nonfiction, fiction, and poetry, including the forthcoming *Predator: a Memoir* (Graywolf, 2022). He edits the magazines *DIAGRAM* <thediagram.com> and *March Xness* <marchxness.com>, the website *Essay Daily* <essaydaily.org>, and the New Michigan Press. Though he writes and teaches fiction and poetry in addition to nonfiction, his specialties are primarily in literary nonfiction, the essay, hybrid texts, digital and visual texts, pop culture, and work that perforates and explores the spaces in between genre boundaries.

*Note: Ander Monson will be on research leave in Spring 2022.*

#### MANUEL MUÑOZ

Associate Professor, Fiction

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Manuel Muñoz is the author of a novel, *What You See in the Dark* (Algonquin, 2011) and two story collections, *The Faith Healer of Olive Avenue* (Algonquin, 2007) and *Zigzagger* (Northwestern University Press, 2003). A finalist for the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Prize, Muñoz is the recipient of a Whiting Writers' Award and three O. Henry Awards. Stories from a collection in progress have appeared in *Glimmer Train*, *American Short Fiction*, and *Southwest Review*. Muñoz earned his MFA at Cornell University and his BA from Harvard. Stories from a collection in progress have appeared in *Freeman's*, *ZYZZYVA*, *Glimmer Train*, *American Short Fiction*, and *Southwest Review*.

#### AURELIE SHEEHAN

Professor, Fiction

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ML 471, 621-7399

Aurelie Sheehan, Head of the English Department, is the author of two novels and four short story collections, including *History Lesson for Girls*, *Jewelry Box: A Collection of*

*Histories*, and *Demigods on Speedway*. Her most recent collection, *Once into the Night*, is the recipient of FC2's 2018 Catherine Doctorow Innovative Fiction Prize and will be published in 2019. A novella, *This Blue*, was published as a *Ploughshares* Solo. Individual stories and essays have appeared in *Alaska Quarterly*, *Conjunctions*, *Epoch*, *Fence*, *Mississippi Review*, *Nimrod International Journal*, *New England Review*, *The New York Times*, *Ploughshares*, and *The Southern Review*, among other journals. She has received a Pushcart Prize, a Jack Kerouac Literary Award, a Camargo Fellowship, and an Artists Projects Award from the Arizona Commission on the Arts. Her interests include the novel and short story, flash fiction and prose poetry, the novella, and cross-genre writing.

Sara Sams

Assistant Professor

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ML 440

Sara Sams is the author of [\*Atom City\*](#), a book of poetry that scrutinizes various legacies of her Manhattan Project hometown: the received history of the atomic bomb, local mythologies orbiting that narrative, and closer stories of family and inheritance. Reviewing the collection, poet Sarah Vap writes: "Sams shows us what violence and invisible interiority and tenderness is at the core of the American hometown. At the core of the American superpower myth. At the core of American exceptionalism, and uranium, and the atom, itself— which is at the core of everything." Sams grew up in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and is currently researching the influence particle physics has had on contemporary poetics. Creatively, she is working on new poems about medical science, childbirth, infant surgery, and frontline workers, as well as a novel about nuclear-reactor-powered ghosts and the opioid crisis in rural Tennessee.

Between 2013 and 2016, Sams received fellowships to teach at the National University of Singapore and for the Ministry of Education in Logroño, Spain. Her experiences teaching abroad solidified her interest in language acquisition and teaching writing in classrooms with second-language students. She has translated poetry from Spanish (David Leo García, Adriana Bañares) and collaborated on a multilingual and interdisciplinary piece of artwork about Jorge Luis Borges and Xul Solar for the Phoenix Art Museum. A graduate of Davidson College (B.A. in English and Spanish) and Arizona State University (M.F.A. in Poetry), Sams's poems and translations have appeared in *Blackbird*, *The Volta*, *Matter Monthly*, *The Drunken Boat*, *Now & Then: The Appalachian Magazine*, and elsewhere. She has served on the editorial staff of *Parnassus: Poetry in Review* and *Hayden's Ferry Review*; she has also supported student editors as a faculty mentor for *The Superstition Review*. You can find her work online at [saraesams.com](http://saraesams.com).

## PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The MFA degree requires 42 units (the equivalent of 14 three-unit classes), at least four semesters in residence, and the completion of an acceptable thesis project.

Course requirements:

- **Four Creative Writing workshops** in Fiction (604), Poetry (609), or Creative Nonfiction (501). At least three must be in your genre; one out-of-genre workshop may also be counted toward this requirement if you like.\*
- **Four Creative Writing Craft Seminars** (596H), including at least one outside your genre. Topics vary each semester.\*
- **At least three Electives:** Electives may include coursework in the English Department or in other departments, additional workshops outside primary genre, additional ENGL 596H seminars, the CW Pedagogy Preceptorship (required for all students teaching CW workshops for the first time), internships (up to 6 units), and Writing Program preceptorship credits (up to 4 units for Writing Program GTAs). Courses outside English require CW Program Director approval.
- **MFA Colloquium**, required for all MFA students every semester, is a one-credit, pass/fail course that meets on select Fridays during the semester. This course houses MFA orientation and logistical discussions, conversations with visiting writers and editors, and discussions around professional development.

Thesis requirement:

- **One Thesis Manuscript Independent Study** (ENGL 909) taken during student's final semester (3 credits).

\*Because of changes to the size of our cohort and of our faculty, we will make exceptions to these requirements (especially in regard to the number of workshops in your genre). Please see the PD if you have questions.

**The Grad College requires that at least half of the credits needed to complete the degree must be fulfilled by classes for which the student receives a letter grade, instead of classes (such as independent studies, internships, studio) that are Pass/Fail. Please be mindful of these classes.**

## ACADEMIC PROCEDURES

### ACADEMIC PROBATION

Students with a GPA falling below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation by the Graduate College. These students will be required to meet with the director or their graduate adviser, discuss the steps to be taken to remedy whatever caused the probationary status, and submit a written plan of action to the program.

## CHANGING THESIS ADVISER

At any point a student may make a formal request, with a specific rationale, to the program director to switch advisers. The PD will consider these requests in consultation with the student and faculty, as appropriate. As all faculty are well-prepared to work with all students, we strongly discourage thesis adviser change requests purely for reasons of aesthetics or affinity. Students will not be forced to work with faculty they are uncomfortable working with, and there will be no retaliation for the request. Because changing advisers typically means significant shifts in workload for faculty, it may not be possible for the program to accommodate requests for specific advisers.

## SWITCHING GENRES & DOUBLE GENRES

We encourage MFA students to take craft courses and workshops outside of their admitted genre. However, because the MFA is ideally used to pursue a significant mastery of a single genre (a complicated enough task in itself!), students are expected to do thesis work in their genre of admission.

If an MFA student wants to apply to do thesis work in a genre outside of the one in which they were admitted (whether they want to switch genres or work in multiple genres, the process is the same), they must formally make an application to the faculty, typically no later than December of their second year, in which they declare their intention, a rationale with brief project proposal (< 5pp), and enclose a writing sample equivalent to the manuscript pages they would use to apply to the program (< 30pp of prose or < 10 poems). Because of workload and staffing limitations, the program is limited in its ability to accommodate these requests, so it may not be possible to accommodate any individual request, even though the work in question may well be accomplished and very promising.

If a student is accepted to do a second thesis in a second genre, that means that they must complete all MFA requirements in both genres (two theses, usually one in fall and one in spring of the final year; two defenses; two committees; 4 workshops and craft courses in each genre). A much more common (and probably wiser, for most of us) arrangement is to complete the thesis in your genre, and to also work on another book-length project via independent study with a faculty member.

## FILING A GRIEVANCE

A student should first file the grievance with the PD. If the grievance is about the PD, or if the student feels otherwise uncomfortable speaking directly with the PD, or if the student feels the issue has not been resolved, the student then takes the issue to the Department Head.

Graduate College grievance procedures are available to any student who has exhausted all options within their program and academic college. The Graduate College website provides guidelines to determine whether a complaint fall within its jurisdiction:

<https://grad.arizona.edu/policies/academic-policies/summary-grievance-types-and-responsible-parties>.

## FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The MFA Program offers fully-funded GTA or other positions to all its students. These positions are typically renewable for up to three years, assuming continued university funds, satisfactory academic progress in the program, and satisfactory performance as an instructor. Other financial aid opportunities are also available through the Graduate College (for more details see [here](#)). As long as students continue as .5 FTE GTAs, they are only responsible for yearly fees. If you're considering giving up your GTA position, please talk with the PD as soon as possible. It is sometimes possible for the MFA program to cover tuition for students who have relinquished their GTA positions, but we have limited funds with which to do so, and it varies from year to year.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Graduate students may be granted a leave of absence for any reason for up to one academic year. Students will be readmitted without reapplying to the department and the Graduate College. Please see the PC for more information on the Leave of Absence. (Be aware that because of changing faculty leave schedules, a leave of absence may result in your being assigned a different adviser.)

## LISTSERVS

You will automatically be subscribed to the program listserv for general announcements, award announcements, and various other general Creative Writing MFA business. The subscribers to [creativewriting@list.arizona.edu](mailto:creativewriting@list.arizona.edu) are all the faculty and students in the MFA program. All MFA students (and no faculty) are enrolled to the CW Student List: [cwstudents@list.arizona.edu](mailto:cwstudents@list.arizona.edu). This list is for topics relevant to our students. You have the choice of emailing your fellow students or the whole program directly on this list.

## POLICY ON NON-MFA STUDENTS TAKING MFA COURSES

Graduate students not enrolled in the MFA program who seek admission to MFA courses must query the creative-writing program director in advance. Ideally, they should approach the program director in the previous semester, but in any case they must file a request at least two weeks in advance of the first class meeting. As part of their query they should attach: (1) a short (1-3 paragraph) narrative or summary of their writing and workshop experience at the undergraduate or graduate level and/or at short-term writing workshops, as well as any other pertinent study or career information; (2) a short (1-3 paragraph) statement of their interest in the course. In addition, they may be required to

submit a short (5 to 15 pp.) writing sample. After appropriate faculty consultations, the program director will inform the applicant of the decision to allow enrollment or not. Exceptions to this policy may be made at the discretion of the faculty. Students seeking admission under this policy may be advised to consider other courses that may suit their needs, including enrolling in graduate-level independent studies that incorporate undergraduate creative-writing workshops for appropriate credit, with the graduate-level portion of the workload to be determined in consultation with the professor.

#### NONDISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY:

<http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy>.

#### PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR STUDENTS TO UPHOLD:

Please see the UA's Code of Academic Integrity. All graduate students must sign a responsible conduct of research statement in Gradpath, the Graduate College's academic progress and degree audit site here: <https://grad.arizona.edu/gsas/gradpath>. This form is an acknowledgement and acceptance of the University's Academic Code of Integrity. For more step by step information on this form:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OROLVBHAcZQ&feature=youtu.be>.

#### REGISTRATION

The PC registers students for courses, independent studies, and internships.

During preregistration each semester, the PC emails students descriptions and ask for their course choices. Students in their primary genre are given priority for workshops and craft seminars. Second-year students who may not have another chance to work with a certain professor or who need a course for graduation will be given priority over first-year students.

#### SIMULTANEOUS WORKSHOPS

The program discourages students from taking two workshop courses in one semester, because for most writers it will decrease the usefulness of and your performance in both workshops; choosing to do so requires the approval of the program director.

#### TAKING COURSES OUTSIDE OF THE CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM

You are encouraged to take courses outside the Creative Writing program that support your work. For example, almost every semester the Art Department at the University of Arizona offers courses in letterpress printing and bookbinding. For more information



please see <http://art.arizona.edu/facilities/book-art-and-letterpress-lab>. The MFA in Playwriting offers courses appropriate for our students. We have world-class programs in many disciplines, and while some are highly specialized and require a very particular background, there are many opportunities for curious and dedicated students.

Taking courses outside of the English department will require the approval of the Program Director.

### STUDIO HOURS (910 CREDITS)

Third-year students are advised to discuss their plans for the final year with their thesis advisor as soon as possible. In an MFA student's third year, in addition to the 3 thesis (909) credits in their final semester, they may take up to an additional 3 hours of studio credits (writing time with no faculty oversight or involvement) with the approval of their thesis advisor and the program director.

### THESIS EXTENSIONS BEYOND PROGRAM TIME FRAME

This is a three-year MFA program, and we fund and support students for up to three years. Students may, however, have up until 6 years to complete their MFA, which includes turning in a thesis project, but the program cannot guarantee financial support nor faculty availability to direct that thesis to students beyond those three years.

### TRANSFER CREDITS

The UA MFA program does not accept transfer credits.

### WORKSHOPS IN OTHER GENRES

Graduate students are admitted into the MFA program based on their work in one genre and are expected to complete their thesis project in their genre of acceptance, but we encourage our students to experiment in other genres. Workshops are open to all students in the program when space is available and with the professor's consent. In-genre students receive first priority. One out-of-genre workshop course may count to fulfill workshop requirements; after that, workshops in a secondary genre will count as electives.

### USEFUL LINKS

Department website: <http://english.arizona.edu/>

Graduate College (from here students may access Graduate College policies, contacts, information about resources, and other useful information): <http://grad.arizona.edu/>.



Resources for parents, for professional development, for health and wellness, etc:  
<http://grad.arizona.edu/new-and-current-students>

General catalog <http://catalog.arizona.edu/> (link is external)

Academic integrity: <https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/student-rights-responsibilities/academic-integrity>

Responsible Conduct of Research: <https://research.arizona.edu/research-support-home>

Graduate Students are expected to follow the policies and procedures for the UA, the UA Graduate College, and the University of Arizona as a whole.

Policies are updated frequently and it is the student's responsibility to comply with current policies.

## FUNDING

### TUITION & FEES

A semester of tuition (not including fees) for a graduate student in the English Department in 2022-2023 is \$16,145 for a non-resident taking 9 units. The Graduate Teaching Assistantship covers the entire cost of the tuition, but students are still responsible for student fees, typically around \$833 per semester.

For further details: <https://bursar.arizona.edu/tuition>.

### WRITING PROGRAM GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Offered upon acceptance into the program, these .50 FTE assistantships are renewable for up to three years. They include a salary, tuition waiver, and student health insurance. The typical 203-2024 salary was \$21,750 per academic year (2 semesters) for students teaching in the Writing Program. (Graduate students entering the program with Masters degrees earn a slightly higher stipend.)

### CREATIVE WRITING TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

By application for continuing students, these positions are one-class, one-semester assignments teaching an Introduction to Poetry (209), Fiction (210), or Creative Nonfiction (201) undergraduate workshop, or occasionally, if need arises, a 300-level workshop. Each SPRING semester students are invited to apply for the next year for these competitively-awarded positions. After faculty review of applications, invitations to teach these courses are made by the program director.

### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR TRAVEL

The English Graduate Union (EGU) has limited funds available for travel, typically for graduate students who are GTAs presenting their work at regional or national academic conferences. Students on official program business (such as the editors of *Sonora Review* representing the journal at the AWP Conference) are typically eligible for these funds.

Please see: <https://english.arizona.edu/gta-travel-fund> for more details.

The Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC) also has limited funds available for travel (as well as other great opportunities on grants and awards for graduate students!)

Please see: <http://gpsc.arizona.edu/> for more details.

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### GPSC Research and Project (ReaP) grants:

- <http://www.gpsc.arizona.edu/research-grants>
- \$1000 for research projects

### GPSC Professional Opportunities Development Funding

- <http://www.gpsc.arizona.edu/pod>
- \$1500
- “The GPSC recognizes that graduate and professional student education is advanced by events promoting the development of skills necessary to succeed in their fields of study. Therefore, the GPSC strives to support professional development initiatives of graduate and professional students through Professional Opportunity Development funding. Such initiatives and events include, but are not necessarily limited to academic seminars, conferences, meetings with industry representatives, etc. Any group of at least three graduate and/or professional students can apply to the GPSC for funding to support a POD event they are directly involved in planning.”

### SBSRI Pre-doctoral dissertation grants

- <http://sbsri.sbs.arizona.edu/sbsri-funding>
- max amount: \$500
- “Up to \$500 for PhD and Master's research activities. Allowable expenses include research-related travel and expenses, subject payment, supplies, and small equipment. Students may be awarded only one Pre-doctoral Research Grant; prior awardees are not eligible. See guidelines for further information.”

### UA Confluentcenter Graduate Fellowships:

- <https://confluentcenter.arizona.edu/graduate-fellowships> for more information

### Carson Scholars Program

- <http://carson.arizona.edu/>
- The Carson Scholars Program offers one-year, one-time- only, \$5,000 graduate scholarships to exceptional University of Arizona graduate students committed to interdisciplinary research on environment and society. The scholarships are designed to support and retain University of Arizona graduate students whose

research is related to the environment and/or social justice and who are interested in communicating science to a broad audience.

### AWP Intro Awards

Arizona's MFA program nominates work in fiction, nonfiction, and poetry each year for the Associated Writing Programs (AWP) Intro Journals award. The deadline for student submissions is Nov 1, 2021. This isn't a financial award, but it is a prestigious one, and comes with publication in a leading literary journal. Submissions are judged by a panel of faculty members, and the nominees go into contention for the national award. Submissions welcome by students in any genre.

### Foundation Awards

The Bill Waller Award for Non-Fiction, the John Weston Award for Fiction, and the Minnie Torrance Award for Poetry are competitive monetary awards in each genre each year. Submissions for these are in the spring semester. Winners are read blind and selected by outside judges. Submissions welcome by students in any genre. More details TBA.

### UA Poetry Center Student Contests

- <http://poetry.arizona.edu/opportunities/ua-student-contests>
- \$100-\$1000
- various deadlines:
- The Hattie Lockett Awards: Three prizes in the amount of \$300 are awarded.
- Other Poetry Contests: Five prizes in the amount of \$100 to \$200 each are awarded.
- The LaVerne Harrell Clark Fiction Prize, offered biannually: One prize of \$1000 is awarded.

### Writing Program Fellowships and Teaching Awards

- By application for GTAs in the English Department, administered by the Writing Program.

### Monique Wittig Scholarship

- Awarded by the [Department of Gender & Women's Studies](#) This scholarship honors the life and work of Monique Wittig, French novelist, poet and social theorist. Wittig was a professor at the University of Arizona, Tucson from 1990 to 2003. First published as a novelist, Wittig's fiction revolutionized French literature. Mary

McCarthy called her “the best writer anywhere of her generation.” Wittig’s fiction, as well as theoretical writing, has had a fundamental and worldwide impact upon feminist theory and lesbian and gay theory. In honor of Wittig, the Monique Wittig Writer’s Scholarship will foster innovation in literary forms and the connection between politics and language. It will allow University of Arizona graduate and undergraduate students to allocate more time to their writing. MFA students have historically been quite competitive for this award. Deadline for applications each spring via the website for the [Department of Gender & Women’s Studies](#).

Other Funding Resources:

Research Gateway: <https://rgw.arizona.edu/development/funding-opportunities/internal-funding-opportunities/graduate-students>.

Grants & Funding are also available to student clubs via [ASUA](#) and [GPSC](#).

## STEPS TO GRADUATING

### SCHEDULING OVERVIEW

Students in their 4th semester:

Meet with faculty during MFA colloquium to discuss the thesis process and subsequently submit at least three ranked choices for thesis adviser to the Program Director, who makes the assignments.

Students in their final semester:

1. Meet with adviser regularly and write, edit, and polish their thesis manuscript.
2. Defend their MFA thesis with their adviser and committee (to be arranged between student and adviser—usually in the last couple weeks of the semester; typically students submit the MFA thesis and critical intro/aesthetic statement 2 weeks before the thesis defense).
3. Submit the MFA thesis in both PDF and hardcopy (including critical introduction/aesthetic statement) to the program assistant by the deadline. See MFA Thesis and MFA Manuscript Printing sections below.
3. Make sure all your forms are complete on UA GradPath.

For more information, please contact the PC.

### MFA THESIS ADVISING

In the 4<sup>th</sup> semester in the program, MFA students will meet with faculty in all genres to talk about the thesis process and expectations. After that meeting, students will submit to the PD a 2-page thesis project proposal and a ranked list of preferred faculty advisers.

The PD pairs students with advisers based on four primary criteria:

- student's stated preference (via her ranked list of faculty in order of preference) and timeline
- balancing thesis advising workload among faculty (considering faculty leaves and our many other commitments)
- the suitability of faculty's aesthetic, research, and teaching interests to the proposed project;
- preference for advisers in genre will typically be given to students in genre

At any point a student may make a formal request, with a specific rationale, to the program director to switch advisers. The PD will consider these requests in consultation with the student and faculty, as appropriate. As all faculty are well-prepared to work with all students, we strongly discourage thesis adviser change requests purely for reasons of

aesthetic or affinity. Students will not be forced to work with faculty they are uncomfortable working with, and there will be no retaliation for the request. Because changing advisers typically means significant shifts in workload for faculty, it may not be possible for the program to accommodate requests for specific advisers.

## MANUSCRIPT COMMITTEE & DEFENSE

The thesis process concludes with a thesis defense. Some advisers call this “defense” an editorial meeting or exit interview. Some conduct it as a more formal defense of the thesis. A defense typically involves a committee assembled by the student under the guidance of the thesis adviser. Defense committees will consist of three people maximum (with a minimum of two creative writing faculty, including the thesis adviser, typically only one in-genre). The thesis adviser will read and relay comments, the other two will be readers only, and are only expected to read the final draft and be present for the final meeting. The third person on the committee is typically not a member of the CW faculty, and is approached by the student at least six months in advance.

## GRAD PATH

You are required to fill out the following forms for graduation:

1. Responsible Conduct of Research Statement (CRTVMFA)
2. Plan of Study (CRTVMFA)
3. Master's/Specialist Committee Appointment Form (CRTVMFA)

The first one (RCR) is just a yes/no type thing.

Once you finish that, the Plan of Study form will open up for you to fill out. Once submitted this form gets routed to the Program Assistant, the Program Director, and finally the Graduate College.

Once the form has completed the rounds you will receive an email from the Graduate College letting you know it is approved. You can then open up and fill out to the next form. The previous form has to complete the approval process before you can open the next form (except between the RCR and Plan of Study – that’s immediate).

Your Completion of Degree form is done by the program coordinator once the thesis book has been received.

## MFA THESIS

The MFA thesis is a requirement of the program for all MFA degree candidates and represents the culmination of the writer's workshop study. The suggested length for the manuscript is a minimum of 48 pages for poetry and 100 pages for prose. An aesthetic statement or critical introduction is required. The writing must achieve a professional

standard throughout, this being more important than the page count. Exceptions to the page-count standard may be made at the discretion of the thesis adviser and/or program director. It is the student's responsibility to meet with his or her thesis adviser early to work out expectations regarding length, subject, and form.

The deadline for submitting the book is listed in the program calendar. **The degree will not be awarded until the program coordinator receives the thesis; missing the deadline may mean that you will be required to take an additional thesis credits for which you may have to pay out-of-pocket.**

All MFA theses are kept in perpetuity by the program for archival purposes. They are not publicly available in digital form. All MFA theses on file may be read onsite at the Poetry Center.

#### MFA THESIS: AESTHETIC STATEMENT / CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

The aesthetic statement or critical introduction invites the writer to create a cogent orientation of his or her work within a wider context. It must be included as the final pages in the bound manuscript, or as the introduction if appropriate.

For poets, the statement may explore notions of style, voice, linguistics, form, and so on. The poet may also place herself or himself within or without a historical, political, social, or spiritual tradition. The preparation of a precise statement of personal aesthetic implies that the candidate for the MFA is capable of analyzing the poetry and principles of historical and contemporary figures as well as his or her own.

Likewise for prose writers, the statement may discuss the elements of craft, or where the writer falls into or departs from a larger tradition. The aesthetic statement may be considered a statement of location, a creation myth of the writer as an artist, or solely as an introduction to the manuscript, a discussion of literary influences and future plans. The statement should serve the writer—in other words it should be true in an essential way for the writer as an artist.

The recommended length for the statement is at least two to four pages. The timeline for review of the statement is up to the adviser and candidate, but certainly it should be part of the manuscript submitted for the thesis defense.

If you would like to see samples of past aesthetic statements you can find them in the UA Poetry Center where our theses are kept in perpetuity.

#### MFA THESIS: PRINTING AND BINDING GUIDELINES

The program requires a bound hardcover or paperback MFA thesis as well as a digital copy for archival purposes. Please no spiral binding.



*Book cover/title page:* Your name and the title must be on the spine of the book. Genre and year of graduation *must* be included inside, either on the title page, or the last page. This information is essential for archiving your book at the Poetry Center.

*Table of contents:* Include a table of contents with page numbers if your book is a collection of stories, essays, or poems.

*Margins:* Your bound manuscript must be approximately 8.5 X 11, 12 point font. Left margins should be about 1.5." The top margin should be about 1.5" and the right and bottom margins should be about 1". You can look at manuscripts in the Poetry Center in order to get a better idea of how the finished manuscript should look.

Please consult the PC if you have questions about where to print your book.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CONNECTIONS

### UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA POETRY CENTER

The [University of Arizona Poetry Center](#), an area of special emphasis within the College of Humanities, was founded in 1960 by writer and philanthropist Ruth Stephan. The Center's nationally acclaimed special collection library of poetry contains over 50,000 items, including books, periodicals, audio and video recordings, rare and limited edition books, photographs and broadsides. Begun in 1962, the Visiting Poets and Writers Reading Series has featured over 1,000 readers, including most major contemporary U.S. poets, significant international visitors and emerging artists. In addition, the Poetry Center sponsors diverse outreach programs as part of its sustained effort to cultivate audiences for poetry and literature.

### UA PROSE SERIES

Founded in 2001, the [UA Prose Series](#) brings writers of distinction to the University of Arizona. The Series is currently sponsored by the Department of English, and presented in cooperation with the University of Arizona Poetry Center. The Series has brought such writers as Lydia Davis, Junot Diaz, Joy Williams, and George Saunders to the U of A campus. Conversations with writers usually occur in MFA colloquium, though there are often other opportunities to connect with our visitors. The Series relies on student help to put on the events so please join us in this effort. Prose Series readings can be found on the Poetry Center website as well as the CW program website.

### WORKS IN PROGRESS (WIP) READING SERIES

Join a genre-friendly, genre-bending reading series by and for emerging writers, poets, experimentalists & more in the University of Arizona's MFA creative writing program. Run by student coordinators.

### UA PRESS

The [University of Arizona Press](#), founded in 1959 as a department of the University of Arizona, is a nonprofit publisher of scholarly and regional books. As a delegate of the University of Arizona to the larger world, the Press publishes the work of scholars wherever they may be, concentrating upon scholarship that reflects the special strengths of the University of Arizona, Arizona State University, and Northern Arizona University.

The University of Arizona Press publishes about fifty-five books annually and has more than 1,000 books in print. These include scholarly titles in Native studies, anthropology, archaeology, environmental studies, geography, Chicano studies, history, Latin American studies, and the space sciences. It specializes in general interest books on Arizona and the Southwest borderlands. In addition, the Press publishes two series in literature: Sun

Tracks: An American Indian Literary Series and Camino del Sol: A Chicana/o Literary Series.

MFA students have often interned or worked at the press, typically in editorial, production, or marketing roles, depending on their interest and background. To apply, send a cover letter, resume, and brief writing sample to [internship@uapress.arizona.edu](mailto:internship@uapress.arizona.edu).

#### ENGLISH GRADUATE STUDENT UNION (EGU)

The English Graduate Union is the association of graduate students in the Department of English. MFA students become members with enrollment in the program. Each year, two MFA students may serve as representatives to the EGU. Founded in 1991, the EGU monitors graduate student workload, advocates for graduate student concerns and issues on many departmental and administrative levels, and mobilizes graduate students across the campus around important issues like health care, tuition remission, and childcare.

Creative Writing EGU reps typically serve one-year terms, with one representative elected each semester. The reps serve as liaisons between the students and faculty on a variety of issues affecting the program. For more information on the EGU, please visit the EGU web page. The Creative Writing EGU rep is TBA for 2019-2020.

#### MANY VOICES:

Many Voices is a club founded in 2014 to provide social and professional support to graduate students of color in the University of Arizona's creative writing MFA program. Our goals include: increasing professional development and networking opportunities for students of color; promoting community-building; advocating for a more diverse creative writing MFA program; disseminating information to UA writers of color pertaining to academic, financial, and social needs and supports, networking opportunities, literary events, and professional opportunities; serving as a liaison between faculty, staff, student organizations, and the community at large; increasing opportunities to study literary works by writers of color; and fostering the creative development of writers of color at the UA. For more information, contact us at [manyvoices.uofa@gmail.com](mailto:manyvoices.uofa@gmail.com). Or follow us on Twitter @uamanyvoices.

#### AWP

Each student receives a membership to [AWP](#) throughout their time in the program. Our subscription to the Associated Writing Programs *Writer's Chronicle* provides a copy for everyone in our program. Copies are also available in the English Department Office. The AWP online job list is also a good place to look for jobs. Once the Program Assistant registers you for AWP membership (automatically done for every MFA student), you will receive an email with your personal login information.

## [POETS & WRITERS MAGAZINE](#)

This magazine's lists of competitions and awards, as well as its deadlines for grant applications, are useful for writers. Published six times a year by Poets & Writers, Inc., you can subscribe to the magazine and also to the free newsletter online.

## THE NATIONAL WRITERS UNION

The [National Writers Union](#) is the trade union for freelance writers of all genres, and even has a Poet & Fiction Writers Caucus. The NWU offers contract advice and grievance resolution, member education, job banks, networking, and social and professional events.

## ARIZONA COMMISSION ON THE ARTS

The [Arizona Commission on the Arts](#) is the state agency that issues grants to individual artists and organizations, and can be a good source of funding for the projects of MFA students.

## SONORA REVIEW

[Sonora Review](#) is one of the nation's oldest literary magazines, and is run entirely by MFA students. Positions available include Editor-in-Chief, Managing Editor, Fiction, Nonfiction, and Poetry genre editors, and assistant editor. Genre editors and Editors-in-Chief typically receive academic credit for their work in producing two yearly issues. For more information please contact [Kevin Mosby](#) and [Lucy Kirkman](#), or the faculty advisor, [Ander Monson](#).

## INFUSE SERIES

Administrative positions running student-based reading series and/or putting together literary salons. For more information, please email [Manuel Muñoz](#).

## DIAGRAM

*DIAGRAM* <[thediagram.com](http://thediagram.com)>, founded in 2000, is one of the oldest online literary journals. We publish six issues of art, text, and (found, original, and reprinted) schematics a year, sometimes also with art, audio, and digital work, and together with the New Michigan Press, sponsor a yearly chapbook contest with an April deadline. Though *DIAGRAM* is not a publication of the University of Arizona, it is housed here, since it's edited by Ander Monson. If you're interested in working on the magazine, we often need assistant editors and readers for our yearly chapbook contest.

## ESSAY DAILY

*Essay Daily* <[essaydaily.org](http://essaydaily.org)> is a website hosting about nonfiction, particularly the essay (and its many offshoots and hybrid forms). If “essays are how we speak to one another in print,” to quote Edward Hoagland, *Essay Daily* is accelerating that process. Regular features include columns on the trans essay, the visual essay, Writing the Ellipsis, Rule-Breaking, International Essayists, and the Malcontent (a pseudonymous black hat column in which we’re cranky about writers that everyone seems to think are super awesome except for us). We publish an essay a week, sometimes two, and also feature conversations with editors and publishers of nonfiction, journal editors, and writers with collections of essays out. We’re pretty various. Want to get involved? Pitch us by contacting Will Slattery ([wjaslattery@gmail.com](mailto:wjaslattery@gmail.com)) or Ander Monson. We’re often looking for craft essays or those interested in conducting interviews with an emphasis on nonfiction, or lively, nonacademic engagements with contemporary or classic essays or essayists. Plus we run a yearly advent calendar, publishing an essay a day during Advent.

## MARCH XNESS

*March Xness* is a literary tournament of essays about music that occurs each March. Each year features a themed, interactive March Madness-style tournament of essays about songs and. 64 songs enter, and we play the songs off against each other with live voting during the month of March each year. In 2017 the tournament was March Fadness (one-hit wonders of the 1990s: the winner was Natalie Imbruglia’s “Torn”). In 2018 it was March Shredness, sweet and awful hair metal songs battling it out for the trophy (winner: Loudness’s “Crazy Nights”). 2021’s theme is the covers bracket: March faxness. Get in touch with [Ander Monson](#) if you’d like to get involved.

## NEW MICHIGAN PRESS

[New Michigan Press](#) is a small chapbook press and the publisher of *DIAGRAM*. Together with *DIAGRAM* NMP runs a chapbook contest for prose, poetry, and hybrid work with an April deadline. We’ve published 59 chapbooks, plus five print anthologies. Our authors include Paul Guest, GC Waldrep, Melanie Rae Thon, Joshua Marie Wilkinson, Mathias Svalina, Joshua Poteat, Ben Mirov, Kristy Bowen, and James Franco. If you’re interested in working on the magazine, we often need readers for our yearly chapbook contest (who read mostly in April-June). There may be other opportunities. Talk to Ander Monson if you’re interested.

## COMMUNITY INTERNSHIPS

### POG

[POG](#) is a nonprofit organization presenting poetry and multi-arts events to the Tucson community, and recording, archiving, and presenting those events to the national and international communities through POGSound and PENNSound web sites. In its 15-year history POG has presented 200-plus writers, artists, musicians, and critics, including local, national, and international figures. Each year POG presents a minimum of 6 events, and sometimes as many as 11 events. In addition, POG partners with the Tucson Poetry Festival, the University of Arizona Poetry Center, Sonora Review, and other organizations to make a space in Tucson for avant-garde practices in poetry and related arts forms. Please contact: [pog@gopog.org](mailto:pog@gopog.org) for inquiries.

### KORE PRESS

[Kore Press](#) is a non-profit literary arts organization that has been publishing women since 1993. As a community of literary activists devoted to bringing forth a diversity of voices through works that meet the highest artistic standards, we publish women's writing that deepens awareness and advances progressive social change.

Publishing internships are available for summer and fall semesters (6-10 hours a week.) Duties may include assisting with publicity; maintaining website; filling book orders; promoting new titles; producing content for monthly email newsletter; communicating with authors; staffing tables at book fairs; general correspondence; grants research, assisting with readings and other events; coordinating fundraising activities and general administrative support. Interns are expected to attend weekly staff and occasional board meetings. Academic credit available.

### [THE CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY](#)

Internships available in writing, editing, and design within this 20-year-old, national nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places. Hours to be determined, academic credit to be determined. For more information please visit <https://biologicaldiversity.applicantpro.com/internaljobs/>.

### [TERRAIN.ORG](#): A JOURNAL OF THE BUILT + NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

Terrain.org is a nonprofit, international online journal based in Tucson, Arizona, that publishes two theme-based issues per year at [www.terrain.org](http://www.terrain.org). Founded in 1997, Terrain.org is unique because it combines both literary and technical work: editorials, poetry, essays, fiction, articles, reviews, an interview, the ARTerrain gallery, and the UnSprawl case study. We also maintain a regularly updated blog. The journal currently

receives over 100,000 visits per issue. For more information please contact Simmons Buntin, Editor-in-Chief.

#### THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA MUSEUM OF ART

The [University of Arizona Museum of Art](#) is interested in class visits and other collaborations with creative writers. To take your students there, [contact](#) the museum directly. For other projects, such as readings, ask [Manuel Muñoz](#) for more information.