Master of Fine Arts in creative writing

Program information

College	Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters		
Department or school	Department of English		
Degree abbreviation	M.F.A.	**CIP code**	23.1302
Program website	www.fau.edu/artsandletters/english/mfa		

Our commitment to you

This Academic Learning Compact describes the program's mission, what students who complete the program will know and be able to do and how faculty assess that learning. Florida Atlantic University publishes a compact for every degree program and standalone certificate so students, families, employers and the community can see what each program commits to providing its graduates.

Program mission

The creative writing M.F.A. at Florida Atlantic University is home to an engaged and lively literary community. The program prepares writers for careers in writing, teaching and related professions, or for further study.

Florida Atlantic University's mission

Florida Atlantic University is recognized as an opportunity university and R1 research institution dedicated to transforming lives through education, discovery, and innovation. We empower students to achieve economic mobility, advance knowledge that creates meaningful impact, and forge partnerships that drive prosperity and connection in the communities we serve.

How the program supports the university mission

The program supports the university's mission by building connection through the literary life of South Florida and beyond. Writers publish, give public readings and graduate with a finished creative thesis and professional experience.

About the program

The M.F.A. is a three-year program with writing workshops in fiction, creative nonfiction and poetry, plus literature courses. Students can also study literary translation, book arts and the teaching of creative writing, and are encouraged to try hybrid work. The program is a great fit for writers ready to complete a significant body of work.

Student learning outcomes

By graduation, students will be able to demonstrate outcomes in three core areas: content/discipline knowledge and skills (Outcome 1), communication skills (Outcome 2) and critical thinking skills (Outcome 3). Faculty assess all three core outcomes every year.

A. Content/Discipline Knowledge and Skills

What graduates will know and be able to do in their field

Areas this program addresses (check at least two)

- ☒ **Declarative knowledge:** key vocabulary, history, theories and concepts of the field
- ☐ **Research skills:** finding, gathering, analyzing and reporting information the way the field does
- ☒ **Technical skills:** hands-on tools and methods of the field, such as software, instruments, lesson plans or business reports

Graduates will be able to explain the literary traditions and genres that shape their own writing.
Graduates will be able to apply advanced craft techniques in their chosen genre.

How students show it
The creative writing thesis and its accompanying critical essay.

Where it is assessed
Creative writing thesis and critical essay

B. Communication Skills

How graduates will share ideas and work with others

Areas this program addresses (check at least two)

- ☒ **Written communication:** clear, well-organized writing suited to the audience and purpose
- ☐ **Oral communication:** well-organized presentations that connect with an audience
- ☐ **Other forms of communication:** visual, media, performance or exhibit work
- ☐ **Team/collaborative communication:** contributing to group projects and shared goals

Graduates will be able to write creative work of publishable quality.

How students show it
The creative writing thesis.

Where it is assessed
Creative writing thesis

C. Critical Thinking Skills

How graduates will analyze, create and solve problems

Areas this program addresses (check at least one)

- ☒ **Analytical skills:** weighing evidence, comparing ideas and judging arguments
- ☒ **Creative skills:** combining knowledge to create something new, such as a design, performance or proposal
- ☐ **Practical skills:** applying knowledge to real situations, such as a business proposal, lesson plan or grant

Graduates will be able to create a significant work in their genre that shows originality of technique and thought.
Graduates will be able to explain and justify the creative choices in their work in a critical essay.

How students show it
The creative writing thesis and the critical essay that accompanies it.

Where it is assessed
Creative writing thesis and critical essay

D. Other Skills (optional)

Additional outcomes the program commits to, such as ethics, leadership or professional practice

Graduates will be able to pursue professional opportunities in the writing field, such as publication, public readings and residencies.

How students show it
Records of student publications, readings, residencies and similar professional activities.

Assessment approaches

Every year, faculty review samples of student work to see how well students are meeting all three outcomes, and they use what they learn to improve the program.

Faculty review each creative writing thesis for originality of technique and thought. They review the accompanying critical essay for knowledge of traditions and genres and a clear rationale for the writer's choices. The program also tracks students' publications, readings and other professional activities.

Assessment methods may change over time.