
This intensive, two-year master of fine arts program offers an individualized approach in an atmosphere of cooperation and encouragement for the college graduate writer who wants to concentrate on his or her craft in a community of writers and who seeks to expand knowledge of the creative process, criticism, and contemporary literature.

The students enrolled in this highly regarded program have a strong interest in and aptitude for writing and literary study. They work successfully in every genre and cross-genre, including poetry, short fiction, novels, creative nonfiction, and essays on literature.

The Hollins program has one of the highest publishing records of any graduate school in the country. Among the many renowned writers who have graduated from the program are Pulitzer Prize winners Annie Dillard, Henry Taylor, and Natasha Trethewey; novelists and story writers Madison Smartt Bell, Kiran Desai, Tony D'Souza, Jen Fawkes, David Huddle, Jill McCorkle, Anna Caritj, and Jake Silverstein; poets and essayists Adrian Blevins, Jenny Bouilly, Scott Cairns, Wyn Cooper, Kevin Prufer, Mary Ruefle, Will Schutt; and Jennifer Sutherland; novelists and memoirists Richard McCann and Karen Salyer McElmurray; photographer Sally Mann; filmmaker George Butler; and television producer and screenwriter Andy Reaser.

At Hollins, faculty members take considerable time to work with students, both in and out of the classroom. The late poet and fiction writer R.H.W. Dillard, the program's former director, noted, "We do not produce writers who write a certain way. We do provide the guidance of professionals, and we do everything we can to make the program what the students here need." The graduates echo Dillard's words, saying that the criticism and guidance of Hollins' professors and visiting writers help shape and discipline their writing without squeezing them into a mold.

Each academic year, Hollins sponsors a readings series, a literary festival, and the Louis D. Rubin, Jr. Writer-in-Residence, bringing talented writers of many backgrounds to campus for readings, discussion sessions, classes, and informal contact with students. In recent years visitors have included: Stephanie Burt, Kelly Cherry, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Eduardo Corral, Lydia Davis, Carl Dennis, Mark Doty, Cornelius Eady, Claudia Emerson, Nick Flynn, Alice Fulton, Joy Harjo, David Huddle, Mat Johnson, Edward P. Jones, Jamaica Kincaid, Philip Metres, Paul Muldoon, Nathan Osorio, Gregory Pardlo, Francine Prose, George Saunders, Christine Schutt, David Shields, Stephanie Strickland, Elizabeth Strout, Arthur Sze, Brian Teare, Natasha Trethewey, ZZ Packer, and Dara Wier.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

Forty-eight credits in residence are required for the M.F.A. degree. Each student will undertake ten four-credit courses, plus a thesis (eight credits). Elective courses may be in the immediate area of the degree or, if the student's background and preparation warrant, in related areas. Two core advanced studies courses are required, as well as four semesters of Graduate Creative Writing Tutorial and two semesters of Advanced Creative Writing Seminar. No transfer credit is accepted for this M.F.A. degree.

The thesis offered for the degree must consist of a book-length, original creative manuscript and must be completed by the end of year two. Each student will have a faculty thesis advisor who will provide direction in the preparation of the thesis.

TUITION, STIPENDS, AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Tuition for M.F.A. Creative Writing graduate students is \$22,760 for the 2024-2025 academic year. Students desiring to take more than thirty-two (32) credits within the MFA Creative Writing program for the year will be charged for those credits over the allotted thirty-two (32) credit hours per year. Credits above the 32 hours are charged on a per credit hour basis (\$815 per credit hour for 2024-25). If a course is outside of the core MFA Creative Writing program, it will be charged at the rate for that program. The director of creative writing will consider petitions should a student feel a course outside the core program is essential to thesis work.

Students are required to pay fees as stated in that section of the catalog (page 8). A non-refundable enrollment deposit of \$500 is due on the specified enrollment date. This deposit will be credited to the student's account and reflected on the fall term billing.

Graduate assistantships, teaching fellowships (second year only), and generous scholarships are available to qualified students. Interested applicants should fill out the application for Stipend or Scholarship and submit the requested information to the financial aid office.

Courses in Creative Writing

ENG 501, 502: GRADUATE CREATIVE WRITING TUTORIAL I, II (4, 4) Burnside, Guild, Kaldas, Milan, van Eerden

Graduate tutorial seminars in the form and theory of contemporary writing practice, with attention to the writing of the students in the class. The exact contents of any given seminar will be determined by the needs and interests of its members. Limited to graduate students in the creative writing program.

ENG 507, 508: ADVANCED CREATIVE WRITING (4, 4) Harlan, Sharp, Sumra

A workshop course in the writing of prose and poetry. Selected works by students will be read and discussed. Frequent conferences.

ENG 511, 512: GRADUATE CREATIVE WRITING TUTORIAL III, IV (4, 4) Burnside, Guild, Kaldas, Milan, van Eerden

Graduate tutorial seminars in the form and theory of contemporary writing practice, with attention to the writing of the students in the class. The exact contents of any given seminar will be determined by the needs and interests of its members. Limited to second-year graduate students in the creative writing program.

ENG 519: THE JAZZ AESTHETIC IN LITERATURE (4) Anderson

This course explores the development of literature (poetry, fiction, autobiography, etc.) that employs a "jazz aesthetic." The philosophical/aesthetic role that jazz improvisation has played in the development of Modernist and Post-Modernist critique will also be examined. Artists discussed include Charles Mingus, Jack Kerouac, Bob Kaufman, Amiri Baraka, Nathaniel Mackey, Miles Davis, Anthony Braxton, Jayne Cortez, and several others. The course entails the development of a creative and critical portfolio of jazz-inspired writing. Offered Term 1.

ENG 521: SCREENWRITING I (4) Department

An intensive hands-on course in the art of writing for the screen, for beginners and for writers experienced in other genres (fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction). Screenings, writing exercises, and workshop-style critiques comprise the course. Not offered 2025-2026.

ENG 522: SCREENWRITING II (4) Department

An intensive course in screenwriting in which students go through the various stages of developing and writing a feature-length film script, from outline to treatment to presentation and group critiques to finished screenplay, including the analysis of previously produced screenplays and films. Not offered 2025-2026.

ENG 523: CINEMATIC ADAPTATION (4) Department

Students go through the entire process (from analysis of the story to outline to treatment to screenplay) of adapting a work of fiction for the screen. The course also includes close study of works of fiction that have previously been adapted for the cinema, as well as the resulting screenplays and films. Not offered 2025-2026.

ENG 524: POETRY IN PERFORMANCE (4) Anderson

This course examines the aesthetics of textual performance as it has been applied to the performative aspect of poetry. Students will develop methods of critiquing and perform a broad range of aesthetic expression that incorporates poetry with other media. Poets to be discussed

include Jayne Cortez, Ed Sanders, and several others. This course is a composite seminar/practicum. Offered Term 2.

Eng 347: STUDIES IN SHORT FICTION

Sumra

Selected readings in the short story from masters to recent innovators, with attention to stories by women and the contemporary short-short story. Prerequisite: sophomore standing or permission.

Not offered 2025-2026.

ENG 551: WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE: TBD (4)

Brolaski

Topic and genre vary each year in accordance with the writer-in-residence. Offered Term 2.

ENG 553 FILM AS NARRATIVE ART I (4)

Department

A study of films by directors such as Sir Alfred Hitchcock and Ingmar Bergman, as moral, aesthetic, and psychological narratives, with particular attention to the development of cinematic style in relation to concerns throughout their careers. Not offered 2025-2026.

ENG 554: FILM AS A NARRATIVE ART II (4)

Department

This course focuses on a study of films by directors such as Federico Fellini, Akira Kurosawa, Stanley Kubrick, and Orson Welles, as moral, aesthetic, and psychological narratives, with particular attention to the development of cinematic style in relation to concerns throughout their careers. Not offered 2025-2026.

ENG 567: CROSS-GENRE AND EXPERIMENTAL WRITING (4)

Burnside

An examination of and practice in forms of writing that straddle and/or blend the worlds of fiction/poetry, image/word, fiction/nonfiction, and points between, including poetry, conceptual art, graphic memoir and fictional (auto)biography. Students will write concrete and prose poetry, flash fiction, fictional memoir, and experiment and redacted texts and their own invented forms, while considering a range of 20th-and 21st-century authors. Offered Term 1.

ENG 569: PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICE OF CREATIVE WRITING (2)

Burnside

The pedagogical background and practical application of creative writing for the college classroom. Students will research pedagogical materials and texts, build syllabi, work one-on-one with peer mentors, engage in practice teaching, and learn institutional practices pursuant to college level teaching. Limited to MFA-CW program Teaching Fellows and Graduate Assistants by permission. Not offered 2025-2026.

ENG 573: THE BLACK AESTHETIC MOVEMENT IN LITERATURE (4)

Anderson

Referred to as the cultural wing of the Black Power Movement, The Black Arts/Black Aesthetic Movement (1960s-1970s) remains one of the most innovative and controversial movements in modern and contemporary African American literature. This aesthetic movement gave birth to artists' circles, writers' workshops, drama, and dance groups, as well as new publishing ventures. The resultant work was both didactic and explosive and had a profound impact on college campuses and African American communities. This course examines the work of several of the movement's principal theorists and writers: Toni Cade Bambara, Larry Neal, Sun Ra, Amiri Baraka, Sonia Sanchez, Audre Lorde, etc. Prerequisite: sophomore standing or permission of instructor. Not offered 2025-2026.

ENG 575: WRITING OUT OF THE MULTICULTURAL EXPERIENCE (4)

Kaldas

This is a literature and creative writing course. Readings will focus attention on particular issues, such as perception and stereotypes, gender expectations, and cultural conflicts. Assignments will be creative, encouraging students to bring the issues raised in the literature into their own work. Students can write from their specific background, paying particular attention to ethnic, national, and regional identity, economic class, sexual orientation, etc. Not offered 2025-2026.

ENG 584: ADVANCED STUDIES IN POETRY (4)**Burnside**

An intensive exploration of poetry, focusing on contemporary writers from the U.S. Can poetry really matter? How does it mean now? Is craft dead, murderous, of the essence? How do past poets speak through/against/around writers of our time? Is aesthetic progress possible? What are the orthodoxies, transgressions, blunders of the age? Open to creative writing M.F.A. students, and senior English majors with permission of instructor. Offered Term 2.

ENG 585: ADVANCED STUDIES IN THE NOVEL (4)**Guild**

Studies in the form of the novel, ranging throughout the history of the novel. Close readings of a variety of novels with an effort to determine the demands of the form and ways in which it has been and can be developed. Offered Term 1.

ENG 586: ADVANCED STUDIES IN CREATIVE NONFICTION (4)**van Eerden**

This is a course on the literary form that has come to be known as "Creative Nonfiction." We'll read and discuss various modes of writing about personal experience and the aesthetic and ethical issues raised by such writing. Written assignments include discursive prose as well as students' original creative nonfiction. Not offered 2025-2026.

ENG 587: ADVANCED STUDIES IN SHORT FICTION (4)**Milan**

Close readings of representative stories past and present that define or defy our expectations for the form. Attention to building a vocabulary for discussion and to the analysis of technique and structure. Includes focused study of several contemporary masters of the form. Not offered 2025-2026.

ENG 599: THESIS (8)**Department**

A collection of original work: poetry, fiction (short fiction or a novel), screenplay, play, or an appropriate grouping of more than one genre.

Other Courses Open to Creative Writing Graduate Students

Students in the Hollins M.F.A. program in creative writing may also draw from a variety of courses across the curriculum. Most choose their elective courses from upper-level courses offered by the English department, which may be taken at the graduate level for graduate credit. Additional or differentiated work is required of the graduate student and professors must submit a syllabus outlining the differentiation. During the 2025-2026 academic year, the courses include:

ENG 303: Literary History and Theory

ENG 308: Reading and Writing Memoir

ENG 314: Seminar in Jane Austen

ENG 315: Dante

ENG 317: Medieval Literature

ENG 330S: 17th-18th Century Literature: Transatlantic Literature

ENG 332: Shakespeare and the Theatre

ENG 335S: Milton

ENG 342S: Advanced Studies in Children's Literature: American Girl's Fiction

ENG 350: Special Topics: Eco-Cinema

ENG 350: Special Topics: Asia's America, America's Asia

Faculty

T.J. Anderson, III, professor of English, Ph.D., SUNY Binghamton. He is the author of the poetry collections *Cairo Workbook* and *River to Cross*, *Devonte Travels the Sorry Route*, *T/here it Is* and the author of *Notes to Make the Sound Come Right: Definitions of Jazz Poetry: Four Innovators of Jazz Poetry*.

Matthew Burnside, assistant professor of English and creative writing; B.A., University of North Texas; M.A., University of North Texas; M.F.A., University of Iowa. He is the author of six books, including *Postludes and Rules to Win the Game*. His work has appeared in *Best American Experimental Writing*, *Los Angeles Review*, *DIAGRAM*, *Ninth Letter*, and other venues.

Pauline Kaldas, professor of English and creative writing, Ph.D., SUNY Binghamton. She is the author of *The Measure of Distance* (novel), *Writing the Multicultural Experience* (textbook), *Looking Both Ways* (essays), *The Time Between Places* (short stories), *Letters from Cairo* (memoir), and *Egyptian Compass* (poems). She is co-editor (with Khaled Mattawa) of *Dinarzad's Children: An Anthology of Contemporary Arab American Fiction* and *Beyond Memory: An Anthology of Contemporary Creative Nonfiction*.

Joe Milan, Jr., associate professor of English and creative writing; M.F.A., Vermont College of Fine Arts; a Barrick Graduate Fellow and BMI Ph.D. fellow at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. He's the author of the novel *The All-American* (W.W. Norton, 2023) and has been a fellow at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, the Bread Loaf Writers Conference, and a David T.K. Wong Creative Writing Fellow at the University of East Anglia, and a Barrick Graduate Fellow and BMI Ph.D. Fellow at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. His work has appeared in *Electric Literature*, *Literary Hub*, *The Rumpus*, and others.

Thorpe Moeckel, associate professor of English and creative writing; B.A., Bowdoin College; M.F.A., University of Virginia. He is the author of the poetry books *Odd Botany*, *Arcadia Road: A Trilogy*, *Making a Map of the River*, *According to Sand*, and *Venison*. He has been a NEA and Sustainable Arts Fellow. Nonfiction books include *Watershed Days: Adventures (A Little Thorny and Familiar) in the Home Range* and *Down by the Eno, Down by the Haw: A Wonder Almanac*. His most recent book is a middle grade novel, *True As True Can Be* and a hybrid river story, *Closer to Nowhere: Lost and Found in the Lower Canyons of the Rio Grande*.

C.E. Morgan (Catherine Morgan Guild), Distinguished Visiting Writer, B.A., Berea College; M.T.S., Harvard Divinity School. She is the author of the novels *All the Living* (FSG) and *The Sport of Kings* (FSG), as well as criticism and nonfiction. A Pulitzer finalist for *The Sport of Kings*, she has been a Guggenheim Fellow, a USA Foundation Fellow, and a Lannan Foundation Literary Fellow. She also spent one year in residency as a Cullman Fellow at the New York Public Library. Her work has been awarded the Kirkus Prize, a Whiting Award, the Weatherford Prize, numerous international prizes, and the Windham Campbell Award - a global award for achievement in the English language. Named a 20 Under 40 by the *New Yorker* and a 5 under 35 by the National Book Foundation, she lives in Virginia with her husband, son, and two Cardigan Welsh Corgis.

Meighan Sharp, assistant professor of English and creative writing; B.A., Linfield College; M.Ed., University of South Carolina; M.F.A., Hollins University. She is the author of the collaborative poetry collection *Effusive Greetings to Friends*, and the poetry chapbook *Anywhere You're Going*. Her work has twice appeared in the Best New Poets series, as well as *The Sun*, *Blackbird*, *Plume*, *The Florida Review*, and elsewhere.

Zeus Sumra, assistant professor of English and creative writing; B.A., CUNY-Brooklyn College; M.F.A., Rutgers University–Newark. He has held fellowships at the Anderson Center for Interdisciplinary Studies and the British Library's Eccles Institute for the Americas and Oceania. His fiction has appeared in the *Bristol Short Story Prize Anthology*, *Lampblack*, and elsewhere.

Jessie van Eerden, director of the Jackson Center for Creative Writing, associate professor of English and creative writing; B.A., West Virginia University; M.F.A., Iowa University. She is the author of three novels, *Call it Horses*, winner of the 2019 Dzanc Books Prize for Fiction, *Glorybound* (WordFarm, 2012), winner of the Foreword Editor's Choice Fiction Prize, and *My Radio Radio* (Vandalia Press, 2016), as well as the essay collection *The Long Weeping* (Orison Books, 2017),

winner of the Foreword INDIES Book of the Year Award and *Yoke & Feather* (Dzanc Books, 2024).. Her work has appeared in *Best American Spiritual Writing*, *Oxford American*, *AGNI*, *Fourth Genre*, and other magazines and anthologies.