

# CREATIVE WRITING, BFA

**Banner Code:** LA-BFA-CW

B413 Robinson Hall  
Fairfax Campus

Website: [creativewriting.gmu.edu/programs/la-bfa-cw](http://creativewriting.gmu.edu/programs/la-bfa-cw)

The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing is one of only thirty BFAs in creative writing available nationwide. With three concentrations to choose from (fiction, poetry, nonfiction) the BFA is structured to give students ample opportunity to learn to write and think creatively while also developing the vocational writing skills that are desperately needed in the workplace. All students pursuing a BFA are strongly advised to complete on-site workplace internships in writing-intensive environments, and finish the degree with a submission of a portfolio of work as part of a final-semester capstone course, with final approval from the faculty.

## Admissions & Policies

### Admissions

Acceptance into the program is competitive. Admission to the university does not guarantee admission to the BFA program.

After acceptance to Mason, students who wish to pursue a major in creative writing should inform the academic coordinator in the English department or the director of the creative writing program of their interest in the program and should seek evaluation of any prior coursework as well as guidance on courses to take and the sequence in which to take them. In the program, students enroll in a series of courses intended to introduce them to all forms of creative writing, and then they select a core set of courses built around a specialization in fiction, nonfiction or poetry, along with upper-level writing, literature and advanced studies courses.

Students planning to enter the BFA program are initially designated as "pre-BFA" until they have successfully completed the requirements for full admission. Full admission requires a minimum of three creative writing courses successfully completed with a grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 or higher in those courses. Alternatively, students who have taken creative writing courses at another institution or in their early undergraduate coursework at Mason may gain full admission status to the BFA program on the strength of recommendations from the instructors in those courses, subject to departmental approval, which is obtained from the Mason creative writing faculty and the director of the creative writing program.

A student admitted to the university and intending to enter the BFA program may designate a major in English and complete English major courses before attempting to move into admitted BFA status. Meeting minimum requirements does not guarantee admission to full BFA status.

### Policies

For policies governing all undergraduate degrees, see AP.5 Undergraduate Policies.

Students pursuing this degree must complete 45 credits (15 courses) in English/Linguistics beyond ENGH 300 Cover to Cover (not

including ENGH 302 Advanced Composition (Mason Core)) with a minimum GPA of 2.00.

At the discretion of the department, transfer students may substitute transferred lower level creative writing classes for some BFA requirements. With permission of the department, BFA students may select a substitute for concentration required coursework from the list of courses approved for the writing or literature elective requirement. Substitutions must be justified as specifically relevant to the student's study. Substitutions will not satisfy more than one requirement within the major.

## Requirements

### Degree Requirements

Total credits: minimum 120

Students should be aware of the specific policies associated with this program, located on the Admissions & Policies tab.

Students will complete 21 credits of BFA core requirements, 12 credits from one of 3 concentrations, and 12 credits in English department requirements. 300-level courses in English and linguistics teach the foundational principles for a field of study, include courses of broad scope, and provide an introduction to a genre, literary period, or methodology. 400-level courses in English and linguistics provide an in-depth approach to a field of study, a single genre, literary period, or methodology. They include special topics classes and English honors classes. Some 400-level courses require ENGH 305 Dimensions of Writing and Literature as a prerequisite.

Students should consult with an English department advisor to learn ways in which the Mason Core requirements can also satisfy college-level requirements or the BFA.

### Core Courses in the Major

Code	Title	Credits
ENGH 301	The Fields of English	3
ENGH 305	Dimensions of Writing and Literature	3
ENGH 377	Digital Creative Writing	3
ENGH 396	Introduction to Creative Writing (Mason Core)	3
ENGH 495	Capstone and Thesis (Mason Core)	3
Total Credits		15

### English Department Requirements

#### Literature before 1800

Code	Title	Credits
Select one course from the following:		
ENGH 320	Literature of the Middle Ages	3
ENGH 321	English Poetry and Prose of the 16th Century	
ENGH 322	Shakespeare	
ENGH 323	Shakespeare: Special Topics	
ENGH 324	English Renaissance Drama	

ENGH 325	English Poetry and Prose of the 17th Century
ENGH 330	Augustan Age: 1660-1745
ENGH 331	Age of Sensibility: 1745-1800
ENGH 332	Restoration and 18th Century Drama
ENGH 333	British Novel of the 18th Century
ENGH 340	Early American Literature
ENGH 421	Topics in Medieval and Renaissance Literature
ENGH 422	Chaucer
ENGH 424	Spenser
ENGH 428	Milton

Total Credits 3

### Literature before 1915

Code	Title	Credits
Select one course from the following: 3		
ENGH 334	British Poetry of the Romantic Period	
ENGH 335	Prose and Poetry of the Victorian Period	
ENGH 336	British Novel of the 19th Century	
ENGH 341	Literature of the American Renaissance	
ENGH 343	Development of the American Novel to 1914	
ENGH 348	Beginnings of African American Literature Through 1865	
ENGH 349	African American Literature: Reconstruction to 1903	
ENGH 360	Continental Fiction, 1770-1880	
ENGH 361	Continental Fiction, 1880-1950	
A second course from literature before 1800 list above		

Total Credits 3

### Minority, Folkloric, or Popular Literary and Cultural Traditions

Code	Title	Credits
Select one course from the following: 3		
ENGH 310	Topics: Women and Literature	
ENGH 315	Folklore and Folklife	
ENGH 319	Popular Culture	
ENGH 348	Beginnings of African American Literature Through 1865	
ENGH 349	African American Literature: Reconstruction to 1903	
ENGH 350	African American Literature Through 1946	
ENGH 351	Contemporary African American Literature	
ENGH 352	Topics in Ethnic American Literature	
ENGH 362	Global Voices (Mason Core)	
ENGH 366	The Idea of a World Literature (Mason Core)	
ENGH 367	World Literatures in English	
ENGH 412	Topics in Folklore Studies	
ENGH 414	Folklore and the Supernatural	
ENGH 415	Folk Arts and Folk Artists	
ENGH 416	Ethnicity and Migration in Folklore	

ENGH 417	RS: Topics in Folklore Research (Mason Core)
ENGH 419	Topics in Popular Literature
ENGH 451	Science Fiction
ENGH 452	Critical Study of Children's Literature
ENGH 484	RS: Writing Ethnography (Mason Core)

Total Credits 3

### Writing or Literature Electives

Code	Title	Credits
Select one course from the following: 3		

#### Additional Writing Courses

ENGH 388	Professional and Technical Writing
ENGH 402	Honors Independent Study
ENGH 459	Internship
ENGH 484	RS: Writing Ethnography (Mason Core)
ENGH 492	Advanced Fiction Writing Workshop
ENGH 493	Advanced Workshop in Nonfiction
ENGH 494	Advanced Poetry Writing Workshop
ENGH 497	Topics in Creative Writing
ENGH 499	Independent Study
ENGH 505	Document Design

#### Courses in Contemporary Literature

ENGH 315	Folklore and Folklife
ENGH 319	Popular Culture
ENGH 337	British Poetry after 1900
ENGH 338	British Novel after 1900
ENGH 339	British and Irish Drama after 1900
ENGH 344	Development of the American Novel since 1914
ENGH 345	American Drama of the 20th Century
ENGH 346	American Poetry of the 20th Century
ENGH 351	Contemporary African American Literature
ENGH 368	Modern Drama
ENGH 412	Topics in Folklore Studies
ENGH 414	Folklore and the Supernatural
ENGH 415	Folk Arts and Folk Artists
ENGH 419	Topics in Popular Literature
ENGH 451	Science Fiction
ENGH 452	Critical Study of Children's Literature
ENGH 453	Topics in Fiction
ENGH 454	Topics in Poetry
ENGH 455	Topics in Drama
ENGH 456	Topics in Literary Nonfiction (for fiction and poetry concentrators only)

#### Course in Writing for other Arts

AVT 395	Writing for Artists
THR 380	Playwriting I
THR 381	Playwriting II
THR 382	Screenplay Workshop
THR 480	Advanced Playwriting

Total Credits 3

## Required Workshop Courses

The workshops are in the two areas outside of the chosen concentration. The remaining workshop is included as part of the concentration requirements.

Code	Title	Credits
Select 6 credits from the following:		
ENGH 397	Poetry Writing	6
ENGH 398	Fiction Writing	
ENGH 399	Creative Nonfiction Writing	
Total Credits		6

## Concentrations in the Major

Students must complete one of the following concentrations.

### Available Concentrations

- Concentration in Fiction (FIC)
- Concentration in Nonfiction (NFIC)
- Concentration in Poetry (POE)

### Concentration in Fiction (FIC)

Code	Title	Credits
ENGH 398	Fiction Writing	3
ENGH 392	Forms of Fiction	3
ENGH 355	Recent American Fiction	3
ENGH 492	Advanced Fiction Writing Workshop	3
Total Credits		12

### Concentration in Nonfiction (NFIC)

Code	Title	Credits
ENGH 399	Creative Nonfiction Writing	3
ENGH 393	Forms of Nonfiction	3
ENGH 456	Topics in Literary Nonfiction	3
ENGH 493	Advanced Workshop in Nonfiction	3
Total Credits		12

### Concentration in Poetry (POE)

Code	Title	Credits
ENGH 397	Poetry Writing	3
ENGH 391	Forms of Poetry	3
ENGH 356	Recent American Poetry	3
ENGH 494	Advanced Poetry Writing Workshop	3
Total Credits		12

## Writing-Intensive Requirement

The university requires all students to complete at least one course designated "writing intensive" in their majors at the 300 level or above. Students majoring in creative writing may fulfill this requirement by successfully completing ENGH 305 Dimensions of Writing and Literature.

## Upper Level Requirement

Students seeking a bachelor's degree must apply at least 45 credits of upper-level courses (numbered 300 or above) toward graduation requirements.

## Additional Electives

Any remaining credits may be completed with elective courses to bring the degree total to 120.

## College Level Requirements for the BA Degree

In addition to the Mason Core program, students pursuing a BA degree must complete the coursework below. Except where expressly prohibited, a course used to fulfill a college level requirement may also be used simultaneously to satisfy other requirements (Mason Core requirements or requirements for the major).

### Philosophy or Religious Studies

Code	Title	Credits
Select 3 credits from the following:		
PHIL <sup>1</sup>		3
RELI		

<sup>1</sup> Note that the following courses may not be used to fulfill this requirement:

- PHIL 323 Classical Western Political Theory
- PHIL 324 Modern Western Political Theory
- PHIL 327 Contemporary Western Political Theory
- PHIL 393 Humanities College to Career
- PHIL 460 Senior Seminar in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics

Additionally, PHIL 253 Philosophy and Literature (Mason Core) and RELI 235 Religion and Literature (Mason Core) cannot be used to fulfill both the philosophy/religious studies requirement and the Mason Core literature requirement.

### Social and Behavioral Sciences

Code	Title	Credits
Select 3 credits of social and behavioral sciences from the following (additional to the Mason Core social and behavioral sciences requirement) <sup>1</sup>		
ANTH		
CRIM		
ECON		
GOVT		
HIST <sup>2</sup>		
LING		
PSYC		
SOCI		
Or choose from the following GGS courses:		
GGS 101	Major World Regions (Mason Core)	
GGS 103	Human Geography (Mason Core)	
GGS 110	Introduction to Geoinformation Technologies	
GGS 301	Political Geography	
GGS 303	Geography of Resource Conservation (Mason Core)	
GGS 304	Population Geography (Mason Core)	
GGS 305	Economic Geography	
GGS 306	Urban Geography	
GGS 315	Geography of the United States	
GGS 316	Geography of Latin America	
GGS 320	Geography of Europe	

GGS 325	Geography of North Africa and the Middle East
GGS 330	Geography of the Soviet Succession States
GGS 357	Urban Planning
GGS 380	Geography of Virginia

<sup>1</sup> The two courses used to fulfill the combined college and Mason Core requirements must be from different disciplines in the social and behavioral sciences.

<sup>2</sup> HIST 100 History of Western Civilization (Mason Core) and HIST 125 Introduction to World History (Mason Core) may not be used to fulfill this requirement.

### Foreign Language

Code	Title	Credits
Intermediate-level proficiency in one foreign language, fulfilled by: <sup>1</sup>		
Completing a course in a foreign language numbered 202 (or higher level courses taught in the language)		
Or achieving a satisfactory score on an approved proficiency test		
Or completing the following ASL three course sequence:		
EDSE 115	American Sign Language (ASL) I	
EDSE 116	American Sign Language (ASL) II	
EDSE 219	American Sign Language (ASL) III	

<sup>1</sup> Students who are already proficient in a second language may be eligible for a waiver of this requirement. Additional information on waivers can be found at the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs (<http://chssundergrad.gmu.edu>).

### Non-Western Culture

Select 3 credits of an approved course in the study of a non-Western culture (additional to the Mason Core requirement in global understanding)

Code	Title	Credits
Select 3 credits (additional to Mason Core Global Understanding requirement) <sup>1</sup>		
ANTH 114	Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (Mason Core)	3
ANTH 300	Civilizations	3
ANTH 301	Native North Americans	3
ANTH 302	Peoples and Cultures of Latin America (Mason Core)	3
ANTH 303	Peoples and Cultures of the Andes	3
ANTH 306	Peoples and Cultures of Island Asia (Mason Core)	3
ANTH 307	Ancient Mesoamerica (Mason Core)	3
ANTH 308	Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East (Mason Core)	3
ANTH 309	Peoples and Cultures of India (Mason Core)	3
ANTH 313	Myth, Magic, and Mind (Mason Core)	3
ANTH 314	Zombies	3
ANTH 316	Peoples and Cultures of the Caribbean (Mason Core)	3

ANTH 323	Digging and Dealing in the Dead: Ethics in Archaeology	3
ANTH 330	Peoples and Cultures of Selected Regions: Non-Western	3
ANTH 332	Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Globalization (Mason Core)	3
ANTH 381	Medical Anthropology	3
ANTH 383	Cities of the Global South	3
ANTH 396	Issues in Anthropology: Social Sciences (Mason Core)	3
ARAB 360	Topics in Arabic Cultural Production	3
ARAB 420	Survey of Arabic Literature	3
ARAB 440	Topics in Arabic Religious Thought and Texts (Mason Core)	3
ARTH 203	Survey of Asian Art (Mason Core)	3
ARTH 204	Survey of Latin American Art (Mason Core)	3
ARTH 206	Survey of African Art (Mason Core)	3
ARTH 318	Art and Archaeology of Ancient Egypt	3
ARTH 319	Art and Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (Mason Core)	3
ARTH 320	Art of the Islamic World (Mason Core)	3
ARTH 382	Arts of India (Mason Core)	3
ARTH 383	Arts of Southeast Asia (Mason Core)	3
ARTH 384	Arts of China (Mason Core)	3
ARTH 385	Arts of Japan (Mason Core)	3
ARTH 386	The Silk Road (Mason Core)	3
ARTH 482	RS: Advanced Studies in Asian Art	3
CHIN 318	Introduction to Classical Chinese (Mason Core)	3
CHIN 320	Contemporary Chinese Film	3
CHIN 325	Major Chinese Writers (Mason Core)	3
DANC 118	World Dance (Mason Core)	3
ECON 361	Economic Development of Latin America (Mason Core)	3
ECON 362	African Economic Development (Mason Core)	3
FREN 451	Topics in Sub-Saharan Francophone Literature and Culture	3
FREN 454	Topics in Caribbean Francophone Literature and Culture	3
GGS 101	Major World Regions (Mason Core)	3
GGS 316	Geography of Latin America	3
GGS 325	Geography of North Africa and the Middle East	3
GGS 330	Geography of the Soviet Succession States	3
GGS 399	Select Topics in GGS	3
GOVT 328	Global Political Theory	3
GOVT 332	Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa	3
GOVT 333	Government and Politics of Asia	3
GOVT 338	Government and Politics of Russia	3
GOVT 340	Central Asian Politics	3

GOVT 341	Chinese Foreign Policy	3	RELI 315	Buddhism (Mason Core)	3
GOVT 345	Islam and Politics	3	RELI 337	Mysticism: East and West	3
GOVT 433	Political Economy of East Asia	3	RELI 365	Muhammad: Life and Legacy	3
HIST 251	Survey of East Asian History (Mason Core)	3	RELI 374	Islamic Thought (Mason Core)	3
HIST 252	Survey of East Asian History (Mason Core)	3	RELI 375	Qur'an and Hadith	3
HIST 261	Survey of African History (Mason Core)	3	RELI 379	Islamic Law, Society, and Ethics	3
HIST 262	Survey of African History (Mason Core)	3	RELI 387	Islam, Democracy, and Human Rights	3
HIST 271	Survey of Latin American History (Mason Core)	3	RELI 490	Comparative Study of Religions (Mason Core)	3
HIST 272	Survey of Latin American History (Mason Core)	3	RUSS 353	Russian Civilization (Mason Core)	3
HIST 281	Survey of Middle Eastern Civilization (Mason Core)	3	RUSS 354	Contemporary Post-Soviet Life (Mason Core)	3
HIST 282	Survey of Middle Eastern Civilization (Mason Core)	3			
HIST 326	Stalinism	3			
HIST 327	The Soviet Union and Russia Since World War II	3			
HIST 328	Rise of Russia (Mason Core)	3			
HIST 329	Modern Russia and the Soviet Union (Mason Core)	3			
HIST 353	History of Traditional China	3			
HIST 354	Modern China	3			
HIST 356	Modern Japan (Mason Core)	3			
HIST 357	Postwar Japan (Mason Core)	3			
HIST 358	Post-1949 China (Mason Core)	3			
HIST 360	History of South Africa (Mason Core)	3			
HIST 364	Revolution and Radical Politics in Latin America (Mason Core)	3			
HIST 365	Conquest and Colonization in Latin America (Mason Core)	3			
HIST 366	Comparative Slavery	3			
HIST 367	History, Fiction, and Film in Latin America	3			
HIST 387	Topics in Global History (Mason Core)	3-6			
HIST 426	The Russian Revolution	3			
HIST 460	Modern Iran (Mason Core)	3			
HIST 461	Arab-Israeli Conflict	3			
HIST 462	Women in Islamic Society (Mason Core)	3			
HIST 465	The Middle East in the 20th Century	3			
JAPA 310	Japanese Culture in a Global World (Mason Core)	3			
JAPA 340	Topics in Japanese Literature (Mason Core)	3			
KORE 320	Korean Popular Culture in a Global World	3			
MUSI 103	Musics of the World (Mason Core)	3			
RELI 211	Religions of the West (Mason Core)	3			
RELI 212	Religions of Asia (Mason Core)	3			
RELI 240	Death and the Afterlife in World Religions	3			
RELI 272	Islam	3			
RELI 313	Hinduism (Mason Core)	3			
RELI 314	Chinese Philosophies and Religious Traditions	3			

<sup>1</sup> A course used to fulfill the Mason Core global understanding requirement may not be simultaneously used to satisfy this college-level requirement. A course used to fulfill this requirement may be used simultaneously to fulfill any other requirements (Mason Core requirements, college-level requirements, or requirements for the major). Additional information on waivers can be found at the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs (<http://chssundergrad.gmu.edu>).

## Mason Core

Note: Some Mason Core requirements may already be fulfilled by the major requirements listed above. Students are strongly encouraged to consult their advisors to ensure they fulfill all remaining Mason Core requirements.

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Foundation Requirements</b>		
	Written Communication (ENGH 101)	3
	Oral Communication	3
	Quantitative Reasoning	3
	Information Technology and Computing	3
<b>Exploration Requirements</b>		
	Arts	3
	Global Understanding	3
	Literature	3
	Natural Science	7
	Social and Behavioral Sciences	3
	Western Civilization/World History	3
<b>Integration Requirements</b>		
	Written Communications (ENGH 302)	3
	Writing-Intensive <sup>1</sup>	3
	Synthesis/Capstone <sup>2</sup>	3
	<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>40</b>

<sup>1</sup> Most programs include the writing-intensive course designated for the major as part of the major requirements; this course is therefore not counted towards the total required for Mason Core.

<sup>2</sup> Minimum 3 credits required.

## Honors

### Honors in the Major

Highly qualified students in either the BA in English or the BFA in Creative Writing programs may pursue advanced work leading to graduation with honors in the major. To graduate with honors in the major, students must complete a two-course honors sequence and receive a minimum GPA of 3.50 in all courses counted toward the major and, separately, a minimum GPA of 3.50 in their honors courses. Honors courses may simultaneously satisfy concentration and distribution requirements in the major.

Students satisfy the honors course sequence by taking one of the following:

- Two sections of ENGH 400 Honors Seminar
- ENGH 400 Honors Seminar and ENGH 401 RS: Honors Thesis Writing Seminar (Mason Core)
- ENGH 400 Honors Seminar and writing a creative honors thesis in ENGH 402 Honors Independent Study (for students in the creative writing concentration) or ENGH 495 Capstone and Thesis (Mason Core)
- ENGH 402 Honors Independent Study in conjunction with an advanced course in nonfiction writing and completing a nonfiction thesis as part of ENGH 401 RS: Honors Thesis Writing Seminar (Mason Core) (for students in the nonfiction concentration)

Students interested in pursuing honors in the major should consult the English Department for more information.

## Accelerated Master's

The accelerated master's program listed below specifies the BFA in creative writing as a feeder degree for its program. It is important to note, however, that many accelerated master's programs are available for any bachelor's degree at Mason, including these. See the full list of master's degrees with accelerated programs at George Mason. In addition, as a student with a BFA in creative writing you may be particularly interested in the accelerated MA in English with a concentration in linguistics.

### English, BA or Creative Writing, BFA/ Curriculum and Instruction, Accelerated MEd (Secondary Education English concentration)

#### Overview

Highly-qualified Mason undergraduates may be admitted to the bachelor's/accelerated master's option and obtain both a BA in English or a BFA in Creative Writing and an MEd in Curriculum and Instruction (concentration in secondary education English) in an accelerated time-frame after satisfactory completion of 149 credits. See AP.6.7 Bachelor's/Accelerated Master's Degree for policies related to this program.

This accelerated option is offered jointly by the Department of English and the Graduate School of Education.

Students in an accelerated degree program must fulfill all university requirements for the master's degree. For policies governing all graduate degrees, see AP.6 Graduate Policies.

### Application Requirements

Applicants to all graduate programs at George Mason University must meet the admission standards and application requirements for graduate study as specified in Graduate Admissions Policies. For information specific to this accelerated master's program, see Application Requirements and Deadlines (<https://cehd.gmu.edu/bachelors-accelerated-masters-program>).

### Accelerated Option Requirements

Students complete the following courses in their senior year:

Senior			
Fall Semester	Credits	Spring Semester	Credits
EDCI 569	3	EDCI 669	3
EDUC 672	3	EDRD 619	3
	6		6
Total Credits 12			

While undergraduate students, accelerated master's students are able to apply two of the courses listed above to both the bachelor's and master's degrees. These courses are considered advanced standing for the MEd. A minimum grade of B must be earned to be eligible to count as advanced standing. The other two courses are taken as reserve graduate credit and do not apply to the undergraduate degree. Early in their final undergraduate semester, students must submit the Bachelor's/Accelerated Master's Transition Form to the CEHD Admissions Office and specify which of the four courses are to be designated as advanced standing and reserve graduate credit.