

MFA Packet

Dear MFA Student:

This packet will provide you with resources and guidance to help you complete the program and your thesis. While it's useful to have a single document to reference, it's best to refer to websites for the most current information and deadlines. Please visit and bookmark these sites:

Program Requirements in the Course Catalog:

<https://catalog.umkc.edu/colleges-schools/arts-sciences/academic-departments-programs/english-language-literature/master-of-fine-arts-creative-writing-media-arts/>

Thesis Formatting, Submission Guidelines and Deadlines, Related Forms on the SGS Website:

<https://sgs.umkc.edu/current-students/ready-to-graduate/>

Contact Information

Program Requirements, Advising, and Enrollment	Academic Advisor	Assigned upon admission
Thesis Manuscript	Thesis Director	Assigned in your fourth semester
Thesis Formatting and Submission	School of Graduate Studies Program Manager	Nancy Hoover hoovern@umkc.edu 816-235-1731
General Questions and Required Forms	English Department Administrative Assistant	Audrey Lester lesterak@umkc.edu 816-235-1307

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Reviewed for the 2021-2022 Academic Year

Learning Outcomes for the MFA in Creative Writing and Media Arts

Graduates of the MFA Program in Creative Writing & Media Arts will be able to demonstrate:

- Mastery of poetics or storytelling craft through the creation of a full-length manuscript of poetry, fiction, non-fiction, plays, or screenplays that are deliberately crafted, structurally sound, and complete;
- Effective problem-solving and revision strategies in the composition of poems, fiction, non-fiction, plays, or screenplays;
- A deliberate, masterful command of language, including style, grammar, and mechanics, and a distinct voice;
- Proficiency in at least one genre outside of their primary field and the ability to apply the techniques of their secondary genres to the work they produce in their primary field of study;
- Sophisticated critical analyses of literary texts, including an understanding of how a text displays a writer's artistic techniques and the ability to incorporate those techniques into their own writing; and
- Thorough knowledge of the literary traditions of their primary genre and the ability to situate their own work within current literary conversations.

Advising Guidelines

Always refer to the course catalog for the most up-to-date information about degree requirements. These guidelines are meant to address common questions that arise from MFA students and their advisors.

Total Credit Hours: 42 credit hours are required to complete the MFA program, with at least 27 credit hours completed at the graduate level, and at least 33 credit hours completed at UMKC. With approval from your advisor, you may transfer in up to 6 credit hours of graduate coursework from another institution or another program at UMKC.

Graduate vs. Undergraduate Courses: Always enroll in 5000-level classes when possible; only enroll in 300- or 400-level classes when necessary, allowable, and approved by your advisor. You must complete additional work (additional reading, projects, papers, etc.) and earn a B- (2.7) or better for 300- or 400-level courses to be accepted for graduate credit. A maximum of 15 credit hours at the 300- or 400-level may be counted toward the MFA.

Getting the Most from the Program: We recommend you take at least one workshop and one literature course per semester. We recommend you take a writing workshop in your primary genre in your first semester of the program. You are encouraged to work with as many faculty as possible, but can take the same class up to three times with approval of your advisor and the creative writing director.

Primary Genre: 12 credit hours (4 classes) of writing workshops are required in your primary genre. Writing workshop courses include 487/5487FI, 487/5487PO, 487/5487NF, 487/5487MG, 5550K, and 5555N. Other courses that can count for writing workshop credit include Comm Studies 454 and 5554 (Screenwriting) and Theatre 437 and 438 (Playwriting). Students are encouraged to work with as many faculty as possible, but can take the same class up to three times with approval of a graduate advisor and the creative writing director. Internships and publication practicums (English 448/5548, 449A/5549A, 449B/5549B, 449C/5549C) typically count as literature courses.

Interdisciplinary Component: 6 credit hours (2 classes) of writing workshops outside of your core genre are required for the interdisciplinary component. You may take two interdisciplinary workshops in the same genre, or two different genres.

Literature: 12 credit hours (4 classes) of literature courses are required; 15 credit hours are recommended (5 classes).

Thesis: 6 credit hours of 5598A are required, typically completed in your last two semesters of the program. You will be assigned a thesis advisor and you will ask two secondary readers to serve on your thesis committee. Details are included in the 5598A Guidelines.

5519 Teaching Writing is required for all GTAs and counts as a literature course. This course can serve as an elective for non-GTAs.

5500 Graduate Study in English is not required, but can count as a literature course.

M.F.A. Degree in Creative Writing and Media Arts/Program of Study Planning Worksheet

In consultation with the advisor, the student should fill out this worksheet prior to completion of 15 credit hours.
IMPORTANT: Student must apply for graduation in final semester of study.

name (printed)_____ student ID_____ email_____

current address_____ core genre: (circle one) creative nonfiction, fiction,
 playwriting, poetry, screenwriting

city, state, zip_____

Listed below are courses proposed for your program. A minimum of 42 hours must be taken at the graduate level, of which at least 27 hours must be in courses numbered 5500 or above.

Requirements	Course	Title	Semester	Grade	400-level	5500-level
I. Literature courses – 12 hr minimum. Students are urged to take literature courses in their core genre.						
II. Creative Writing and Media Arts Requirement: 12 hours minimum. Students will complete at least three courses in their core genre. With advisor’s permission, other courses may apply.						
Interdisciplinary Requirement: 6 hours minimum. Students choose at least two craft, workshop, or production course outside their core genre.						
Free elective credits: 0 to 6 credit hours						
Thesis Requirement: 6 hours minimum						

Students choose to focus on two or more of the following genres:

- English: Poetry, Fiction, Creative Nonfiction
- Communications Studies: Screenwriting
- Theatre: Playwriting

The interdisciplinary MFA in Creative Writing and Media Arts allows students the option of developing their writing focus in the Department of Theatre or in the Department of Communication Studies. Students must complete at least six hours outside their writing focus area including one creative writing, craft workshop or production course.

Thesis directors may approve courses in other departments that may be highly valuable for particular student programs, e.g., History for documentary film, Foreign Language for translation, Philosophy for aesthetics and theoretical/experimental approaches, and Art.

Revised 4/2021

5598A MFA Thesis Guidelines and Schedule

Committee

Part of the requirement for the interdisciplinary MFA in Creative Writing and Media Arts is the thesis, completed near the end of your program of study. You will enroll in two semesters of English 5598A MFA Thesis to receive credit while you develop your thesis. The thesis will consist of your own writing and will be expected to contain new work created for the thesis, and may contain earlier work written for class or outside of class.

The thesis will be evaluated by a thesis committee, comprised of three members:

1. A thesis director from the MFA faculty
2. A second member from the MFA faculty
3. A third member (non-MFA faculty) selected from the English Department, another UMKC department, or another institution

At least one committee member must be from the English Department. All committee members should be graduate faculty.

Your thesis director is the person with whom you share multiple drafts (two or more) of your thesis. After you have received feedback from your thesis director and incorporated changes, then you should submit a revised draft to your secondary readers. Secondary readers generally only read your thesis once.

All thesis committee members (director and secondary readers) should be given at least three weeks to review your thesis prior to your oral defense. If you need to make other arrangements, you will need to negotiate that with individual faculty members.

Manuscript

Your thesis will be a publishable or producible manuscript of one of the following:

- A book of poems (48-80 pages, single spaced)
- A book of short stories or creative nonfiction essays (180 pages minimum, double spaced)
- A novel or novel-length nonfiction book (180-page minimum, double spaced)
- A full-length or several one-act plays
- A feature screenplay (95-120 pages) or a series bible and two 1-hour episodes (20 pages and two 45-page episodes)
- A full-length cross-genre work, with Committee Chair permission

Critical Introduction

MFA students are required to write a formal, 5-page critical introduction to their theses. Please respond to the following questions in your introduction, which must be submitted with your thesis:

- Discuss in detail the revision process for your thesis, including specific challenges and ways that you solved these issues. For poetry, you may choose to discuss in detail the revision process for several poems.
- Please comment on how the literature, film, and/or plays you have studied in creative writing, literature, and/or media arts courses at UMKC have influenced your writing and helped to guide the development of your thesis.

Procedure

Students in the MFA program must complete 6 credit hours of English 5598A during their final year of study. These hours must be split over two semesters (three hours each). If you wish to complete the thesis in a single semester, you need permission from all faculty members serving on your thesis committee.

The semester before you begin your thesis:

- You will be assigned a faculty member to serve as your thesis director
- Ask two additional faculty members to serve as secondary readers
- Have the thesis director and secondary readers sign the MFA Thesis Committee Consent Form (obtain from and return to the English Department Office)
- Review formatting guidelines for the MFA thesis as outlined on the SGS website: <https://sgs.umkc.edu/current-students/thesis-dissertation-guidelines/>. Most formatting guidelines are automatically waived for a creative thesis. The formatting requirements that apply to the MFA thesis are title page, abstract, approval page, table of contents, vita, and margins.
- Attend a Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Workshop with SGS (recorded sessions are available online; in-person sessions are offered in September and January)

Schedule for Your Final Semester Prior to Graduation

Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with thesis committee chair to confirm scheduling for the semester • Set date and time for oral defense with thesis committee chair and secondary readers • Reserve a meeting room for defense (contact the English Department administrative assistant)
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit full draft of thesis and critical introduction to committee chair (allow at least 3 weeks for comments)
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Application for Graduation and Final Program of Study forms (work with the English Department administrative assistant)
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate comments from committee chair and revise thesis • Submit Preliminary Approval of Thesis Form to committee chair to sign (you must include this completed form when you submit your thesis for format review to SGS)
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit thesis, with the Preliminary Approval Form, MoSpace License Agreement, and Thesis Delayed Release (Embargo) Form, to SGS for formatting review (see notes below on formatting* and embargo**)
Week 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit thesis with critical introduction to committee chair and secondary readers (one hard copy to each committee member)
Week 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete oral defense • Thesis committee members complete Master's Thesis Final Report Forms at the defense and submit them to the creative writing director • Creative writing director signs and submits completed Master's Thesis Final Report Forms (work with the English Department administrative assistant) • Student submits revised final thesis with critical introduction according to SGS's instructions (\$45 fee required for a hard copy sent from ProQuest to University Archives)
Week 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the MFA Exit Survey and return it to the director of creative writing

*Formatting: While most formatting guidelines are automatically waived for a creative thesis, you must include a Preliminary Approval of Thesis Form with your thesis (week 7). Please note: bibliographic references may be omitted; only the formatting requirements of title page, abstract, approval page, table of contents, vita, and margins must be met.

Embargo: You are strongly encouraged to request an embargo on the release of your thesis through MoSpace **and ProQuest. For MoSpace, simply complete the Thesis Dissertation Delayed Release (Embargo) Request Form and submit it with your thesis for formatting review. For ProQuest, select the maximum embargo (2 years) when you upload your final thesis, then email ProQuest (disspub@proquest.com) to request a permanent embargo that will take effect when the 2-year embargo expires. When you receive a response from ProQuest, you will know your embargo request was granted and that only UMKC affiliates with active passwords can view your thesis.

Please complete this form and forward to the creative writing director following the oral defense of the master's thesis. The creative writing director, in turn, will forward the final report forms to the School of Graduate Studies.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-KANSAS CITY
MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN CREATIVE WRITING AND MEDIA ARTS

Graduate Studies
MASTER'S THESIS
FINAL REPORT FORM

Author: _____

Title: _____

Core Discipline: _____

Final Thesis Examination Committee:

1.	2.	3.
_____	_____	_____
(Thesis Director)	(Secondary Reader)	(Secondary Reader)

Please evaluate the thesis in the following areas on a scale from 1 to 4, with 4 being the highest.
(0 = Unacceptable; 1 = Fair; 2 = Good; 3 = Very Good; 4 = Outstanding)

- Does the writing show mastery of poetics or storytelling craft through the creation of a full-length manuscript of poetry, fiction, non-fiction, plays, or screenplays that is deliberately crafted, structurally sound, and complete?
0 1 2 3 4
- Does the writing show evidence of effective problem-solving and revision strategies?
0 1 2 3 4
- Does the writing demonstrate a deliberate, masterful command of language, including grammar and mechanics?
0 1 2 3 4
- Does the writing demonstrate a deliberate, masterful command of language, including style and voice?
0 1 2 3 4
- Does the thesis demonstrate sophisticated critical analyses of literary texts, including an understanding of how a text displays a writer's artistic techniques and the ability to incorporate those techniques into their own writing?
0 1 2 3 4

6. Does the thesis demonstrate thorough knowledge of the literary traditions of their primary genre and the ability to situate their own work within current literary conversations?

0 1 2 3 4

7. Please assign an overall score based on your answers from questions 1-6, including the scores for the sub-questions:

0 1 2 3 4

8. Do you recommend the acceptance of this thesis for the MFA degree?

Yes No

9. Please summarize your evaluation of the thesis. Include an appraisal of the significance of the contribution to the discipline.

10. What revisions are required to make the thesis publishable?

Printed Name of Committee Member _____

Signature of Committee Member _____

Date _____

All final changes to the thesis have been made and I recommend acceptance of the thesis for the degree requirements.

Signature of Creative Writing Director _____

Date _____

MFA Exit Survey

Please help us better serve our current and future students. Complete this survey and submit it anonymously by leaving it in the director of Creative Writing's campus mailbox.

1. How did you learn of UMKC's MFA Program in Creative Writing & Media Arts?

- a) print ad (specify where) _____
- b) online ad (specify where) _____
- c) the program or department website _____
- d) faculty member _____
- e) student _____
- f) other (please specify) _____

2. What is your most important career goal? (Please check one.) To become?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| _____ a professional freelance writer | _____ a journalist |
| _____ a published author | _____ work in advertising/marketing |
| _____ a professor | _____ an arts administrator |
| _____ a teacher in K-12 | _____ an editor |
| _____ other (please name here) _____ | |

3. How do you feel about the length of time it took you to earn your degree?

too long too brief appropriate length

Please comment:

4. Did you ever have difficulty enrolling in your preferred class?

often sometimes never

If so, which courses were difficult to get into?

5. Please comment on what you think is the most appropriate size for graduate classes. How many students? Why?

6. How could the department have helped you better achieve your educational objectives?

7. What was the most valuable part of your overall academic experience in the MFA Program?

8. What was the least valuable?

9. Which course did you find most valuable? Why?

10. Which course did you find the least valuable? Why?

11. Please rate the quality of instruction within the Creative Writing Program and/or Media Arts Program. (Circle the appropriate number.)

(0) inadequate (1) somewhat inadequate
(2) sufficient (3) good (4) excellent

12. Please rate the quality of instruction within the English Department. (Circle the appropriate number.)

(0) inadequate (1) somewhat inadequate
(2) sufficient (3) good (4) excellent

13. Did you find instructors to be accessible and helpful? (Circle the appropriate number.)

- (0) no, not at all (1) sometimes
(2) most of the time (3) yes, consistently

14. Did you find grading standards to be fair and consistent? (Circle the appropriate number.)

- (0) no, not at all (1) sometimes
(2) most of the time (3) yes, consistently

15. Would you recommend the MFA program to others? Please rate how highly you would recommend it overall. (Circle the appropriate number.)

- (0) poor, would not recommend (1) fair
(2) good (3) very good (4) excellent

16. What do you consider to be the major strengths and weaknesses of the MFA program?

16. Upon entering the program, how would you view your own skills as a writer?

(Circle the appropriate number?)

- (0) inadequate (1) somewhat inadequate
(2) average (3) good (4) excellent

17. Now that you are leaving the program, how do you view your own skills as a writer?

(Circle the appropriate number.)

- (0) inadequate (1) somewhat inadequate
(2) average (3) good (4) excellent

18. Please rate the quality of your own educational experience in the MAF program.

(Circle the appropriate number.)

- (0) inadequate (1) somewhat inadequate
(2) average (3) good (4) excellent

19. If you served as a teaching assistant, please rate your experience. How would you rank the training the program provided? (Circle the appropriate number.)

- (0) inadequate (1) somewhat inadequate
(2) average (3) good (4) excellent

20. How would you rank the advising you received from the faculty on your thesis work? (Circle the appropriate number.)

- (0) inadequate (1) somewhat inadequate
(2) sufficient (3) good (4) excellent

21. How would you rank the advising you received from the faculty to help you prepare for a life-long career as a writer? (Check the appropriate number.)

- (0) inadequate (1) somewhat inadequate
(2) sufficient (3) good (4) excellent

22. Will you be seeking an academic job?

yes no

If you answered yes, how would you rank the advising you received from the faculty to help you prepare to compete in the academic job market? (Circle the appropriate number.)

- (0) inadequate (1) somewhat inadequate
(2) sufficient (3) good (4) excellent

23. Will you be seeking further graduate study?

yes no

If you answered yes, how would you rank the advising your received from faculty to help you prepare for further graduate study? (Circle the appropriate number.)

- (0) inadequate (1) somewhat inadequate
(2) sufficient (3) good (4) excellent

Please feel free to write additional comments in the space provided below, and use the reverse side of this page, if necessary. **Thank you for your help!**