



GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY CREATIVE WRITING

WRITE ON

A Community of Writers just outside Washington DC...

STUDENT HANDBOOK | 2018-2019

MFA

Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 Preliminary Academic Calendar, At-A-Glance

AUGUST

- 24 MFA Orientation, Robinson A 447
- 24 The MFA Welcome and Welcome Back Party, Jen Atkinson and Eric Pankey's House
- 27 First Day of Fall Classes

SEPTEMBER

- 3 Labor Day, University Closed
- 4 Last Day to Add or Drop Classes

OCTOBER

- 8 Columbus Day Recess, University Closed
- 10 Monday classes meet Tuesday (today). Tuesday classes do not meet this week
- 10-13 Fall For the Book
- 15 Requests for Poetry Thesis Directors Due from second year students only
- 26 Poetry Thesis Directors Announced for second year students only

NOVEMBER

- 21-25 Thanksgiving Recess

DECEMBER

- 7 Completed Thesis Projects Due to the Library
- 8 Last Day of Classes

JANUARY

- 21 Classes Resume
- 31 Prose Thesis Director Requests Due from second year students only

FEBRUARY

MARCH

- 10 Thesis drafts to thesis advisors
- 27-30 AWP Conference, Portland

APRIL

- 1-5 New Leaves
- 5 Thesis due to readers

MAY

- 3 Thesis due to the library
- 16 Graduating Student Reading
- 17 College of Humanities and Social Sciences Convocation

Please check the website for details and updates

Table of Contents

MFA Advising Sheet	3
MFA Degree Requirements	4
• Courses & Registration	5
• Special Topics Courses	6
• Rules & Tips for Registration	7
• MFA Exam	8-9
• MFA Project	10
• MFA Thesis	11-16
Tuition, TAs, Fellowships, Awards	17-19
• Assistantships & TA Selection	17
• TA Waiver & Course Loads, Tuition & Fees	18
• Fellowships, Contests & Awards	19
MFA Faculty	20-23
Journals	24
The Program Online	25
Readings Series	26
NV/DC Area Favorites	27-28
MFA Staff	29

Policy Notes

In all cases, degree requirements are determined by the catalog in effect when the student enters the program. Students may choose to fulfill the requirements of a subsequent catalog by requesting a change of catalog term; however, a student must satisfy all of the requirements of one catalog.

CHSS policy mandates a six-year time limit for completing the MFA program. The clock starts the first semester a student enrolls. If a student take a semester off, the clock keeps running.

Only courses that meet requirements in the university catalog or the MFA Advising sheet may be used toward the completion of the degree. All exceptions must be approved prior to registering for the course in question.

Full time status is 9 credit hours, or 6 credit hours with a full-time graduate assistantship. Students who only have thesis hours

left to complete may file a form with the Verification Services department of the office of the Registrar to be considered full time while completing their thesis.

Financial aid mandates a minimum of 4.5 credit hours. Students at Mason can take two courses (6 credit hours) to meet this minimum and receive financial aid, or they may take a workshop for less than 3 credits if they qualify to do so.

Adding a certificate can enhance a degree but it must be added as a secondary program and that must happen prior to earning half of the credits needed to complete the certificate.

For more policies and tips, please consult the university catalog at:
catalog.gmu.edu

MFA Degree Advising Sheet

The Master of Fine Arts in creative writing has three concentrations: poetry, fiction and non-fiction. Students successfully complete 48 graduate credits, distributed as follows:

FORMS COURSE 3 CREDIT HOURS - IN A STUDENT'S CONCENTRATION _____

- ENGH 564: Forms of Poetry
- ENGH 565: Forms of Nonfiction
- ENGH 566: Forms of Fiction

This should be taken in the first semester. Workshops should not be taken with the forms course but students are encouraged to take ENGH 608 with forms courses.

CRAFT SEMINAR 6 CREDIT HOURS - IN A STUDENT'S CONCENTRATION _____

Students may begin taking these courses in their first semester. More than the minimum may be taken and counted as electives. ENGH 608s of another genre may be used to meet the "other genre" requirement. ENGH 608s vary in topic and genre from semester to semester. ENGH 608s taken to fulfill this requirement should be specific to a student's genre of study. Contact the Graduate Academic Coordinator if you have questions about whether a specific ENGH 608 falls within your genre of study.

WORKSHOPS 9 CREDIT HOURS - IN A STUDENT'S CONCENTRATION: Courses or equivalent should include at least one section of ENGH 616 (nonfiction), ENGH 617 (poetry), or ENGH 618 (fiction), as appropriate to a student's genre of study, and at least three credit hours of ENGH 750 (poetry), 751 (fiction), or ENGH 752 (nonfiction), as appropriate to a student's genre of study. In each concentration, either a 600-level or 700-level workshop may be repeated as a third class to complete this requirement. ENGH 619, a special topics course may also be taken as a third class to complete this requirement.

_____ & _____ & _____
These courses are taken starting in the 2nd semester and repeated along with literature courses, special topics courses, and craft seminars.

OTHER GENRE 3 CREDIT HOURS - OUTSIDE A STUDENT'S CONCENTRATION _____

This course is normally taken after the 1st year. For students in poetry it could be a forms course, ENGH 608, or ENGH 619 in fiction or nonfiction; for fiction students it could be a forms course, ENGH 608, or ENGH 619 in poetry or nonfiction; for nonfiction students it could be a forms course, ENGH 608, or ENGH 619 in poetry or fiction.

LITERATURE COURSES 6 CREDIT HOURS _____ & _____

Any graduate-level literature courses meet this requirement. Contact the Graduate Academic Coordinator if you have questions about whether a specific course is a literature course. ENGH 608s and ENGH 619s are NOT literature courses.

ELECTIVE COURSES 15 CREDIT HOURS: Includes additional literature courses (more than the minimum are recommended) and writing courses beyond requirements. May include ENGH 798 (independent studies) [up to a max of 12 credit hours—nine hours max if three credit hours are counted for literature credit].

_____ & _____ & _____
_____ & _____

Electives will include:

- At least one credit hour of ENGH 699, Visiting Writers - Repeats of ENGH 699 or a two credit hour workshop/independent study can be used to balance the one credit hour of ENGH 699.
- ENGH 506, Research for Narrative Writing - Required for all nonfiction students.
- Two pedagogical courses—ENGH 615 and ENGH 610 - Required for all TAs.
- Any extra course, including literature courses, workshops, special topics in writing courses, independent studies, craft seminars, or other graduate level courses at Mason (courses taken outside of the English department must be preapproved by the writing program director for elective credit.

THESIS CREDIT (required) Students take their credit hours of thesis over two or more semesters. Students must take 3 credit hours of thesis to start and then may divide up the remaining credit hours as they choose. Once enrolled in thesis, students must continue in thesis until the final thesis is turned in, even if this results in extra thesis credits. Extra thesis credits cannot be applied toward the degree.

6 CREDIT HOURS _____ & _____

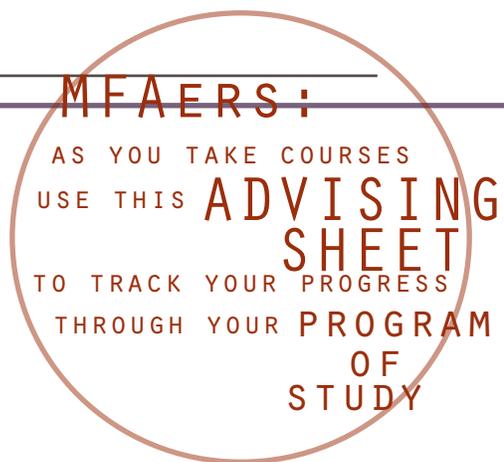
NON-COURSE REQUIREMENTS

MFA EXAM _____
date passed

This exam is a requirement for all poetry students.

MFA PROJECT _____
date submitted

This project is a requirement for all fiction and nonfiction students. Fiction and nonfiction students may opt to take the MFA exam rather than complete a project.



MFA Degree Requirements

Students must successfully complete 48 credit hours of graduate coursework. Students who have earned master's degrees may reduce the requirements for the MFA by up to 23 credit hours with the recommendation of the program director and approval of the College. Graduate credit may be transferred from other institutions if those credits have not been used to earn a degree, and to the extent that they fit MFA requirements. Credits previously earned in other Mason graduate programs or nondegree studies may also be used as they fit MFA requirements. To be eligible for transfer, credits must have been earned within six years prior to first enrollment as an admitted student in the MFA program.

Course Sequence

*see page 3 for the degree advising sheet (also available online)

The degree is usually earned over six semesters (three years). This requires several semesters of taking a minimum of three courses (9 credit hours) and/or taking summer courses. The degree can be completed in a longer period and must be completed within six years of enrolling.

Some writing courses must be taken in sequence. Craft seminars (ENGH 608) should be taken early in the program and may be repeated as a student wishes and as topics vary. Anything more than two would count as elective credit. The first 608 pairs well with the appropriate Forms course (ENGH 564, 565 or 566) in a student's first semester and the second 608 could follow the next semester or any one after that.

A student may take a 600-level workshop (ENGH 616, 617, or 618) concurrently with the appropriate Forms course (ENGH 564, 565 or 566) or he or she may wait until after completing Forms to take the 600-level workshop. Students usually take a 700-level workshop (ENGH 750, 751, or 752) after taking the appropriate Forms course and a 600-level workshop in the genre. Because students are required to take multiple workshops, they are encouraged to take them with different faculty in their genre.

Some workshops may be taken for variable credit (one to six credit hours). ENGH 616 and 618 and 751 and 752 may be taken for variable credit at any time. ENGH 617 can be taken for variable credit only when it is taken for the second time. ENGH 750 is available for variable credit but only with instructor permission. All students interested in variable credit should talk to the instructor before registration and be sure to change the number of hours on Patriotweb when registering.

Non-workshop courses, literature courses, research courses, etc., may be taken as department offerings and student interests dictate, except where prerequisites have been set by the English Department.

All students are required to take at least one credit of visiting writers master class (ENGH 699). Visiting writers are announced before each semester. Three visiting writer master classes taken over three semesters equals one 3-hour elective course, although the 1-hour 699 can be paired other ways, such as with a 2-hour independent study or workshop.

Students may take independent studies (ENGH 798) with MFA or English faculty. Students must first complete at least 15 hours of course work. Forms to set up independent studies are available on the creative writing website at www.creativewriting.gmu.edu. MFA students may take up to 12 hours of ENGH 798, no more than three of which can be counted towards literature credit. All independent studies must be approved by the program director and the English department chair.

Courses & Registration

The English Department offers courses in literature, creative writing, film, folklore, linguistics, Native American studies, and professional writing and editing. Graduate classes are taught as seminars with about 10-18 students. This format facilitates lively and engaged discussion as well as the concentrated attention typical of advanced study. Graduate courses are scheduled with the needs of working students in mind. In Fall and Spring semesters, classes meet once a week at 4:30 or 7:20.

ENGH 619 Special Topics Workshop is an umbrella course: the genres and topics change from section to section. ENGH 619 concentrates on a specialized literary type other than short story or poetry (i.e., the essay, playwriting, scriptwriting, children's literature, travel literature, the short topical essay, autobiography, the gothic novel, translation, etc.). ENGH 619 may count as a workshop, or as a literature under certain circumstances but only when preapproved. The program cannot pay late registration fees.

Students must register for courses prior to the start of each semester or pay a \$125.00 late-registration fee. Students registering for the first time also pay a new-student fee and sometimes pay an educational resource fee. Please see <http://studentaccounts.gmu.edu> for a list of tuition and fees for any approaching semester. If you are a GTA and are receiving a tuition waiver from the college, please be aware that a tuition waiver cannot cover these charges.

Registration is accomplished online at: <http://patriotweb.gmu.edu>.

For specific information on course content and requirements, consult the course descriptions on the creative writing website each semester. Writing students are strongly urged to take a balance of workshop and literature courses every semester. Occasionally students have taken all of their workshop courses, then their literature courses. Not only does this run counter to the beliefs and goals underlying the structure of the graduate program in writing, but it also can mean that students lose touch with their own creative work in the semesters preceding their work on thesis.

ENGH 799 Thesis: Registration & Rules

Students in the MFA program should take their 6 credit hours of thesis over two or more semesters. Students receive a grade of IP (in progress) each semester until the finished thesis has been submitted.

Once enrolled in thesis, students must be continuously enrolled in thesis until the final manuscript is submitted. Students who expect to extend their thesis work should divide thesis hours into smaller blocks, such as 1 or 2 hours per semester, to avoid having to take (and pay for) extra thesis credits. That said, students must take 3 credit hours of thesis to start and then may divide the remaining credit hours as they choose. Additional thesis credits beyond the required six cannot be counted toward the degree.

To register for thesis hours, students must first submit a thesis proposal and have it approved by all committee members, the program director, and the department chair. Once these approvals are in place, the Graduate Academic Coordinator will send registration information via email. Students should use this information (CRN and section number) to register. **It is important to change the variable credit option to the number of credit hours needed at the time of registration on Patriotweb.** Variable credit cannot be changed once a student is registered. If a mistake is made and not fixed during the add/drop period, a *Late Schedule Adjustment* form must be used to drop the current hours and add new hours. There is a fee associated with this change and additional tuition may be owed. Mistakes in registration can be easily fixed if caught early; later adjustments to registration involve paperwork, fees, and additional tuition charges.

Special Courses

Visiting Writer Master Classes

Visiting writers are an essential part of any good writing program. At George Mason we have been fortunate; well over 400 nationally and internationally-known writers have spoken on campus since the program began in 1980. Visiting writers are sponsored by the program, the Fall For The Book Festival, the English Department, the campus bookstore, or other departments and organizations. Sometimes, the visiting writer series includes not only readings but lectures, panels, film and video screenings, seminars, workshops, symposia, and conferences. Events are usually free and open to the public, and most include informal opportunities to meet and talk with the writers. Students are strongly encouraged to become as involved as their schedules allow.

ENGH 699 Workshop in English is the master class portion of a writer's visit and is only open to a maximum of ten registered students. The format of ENGH 699 varies from section to section. Faculty believe it is valuable for students to encounter the teaching methods and styles of many different creative temperaments, and in most cases, faculty ask the guest writer to design his or her own sessions. Visiting writers may make reading assignments in advance and devote class time to the discussion of assigned works and aesthetic issues, or they may make student manuscripts a core of the discussion, or they may do both.

In all sections, however, students are expected to: 1) read the work of visiting writers before those writers arrive on campus, 2) submit a manuscript prior to class, 3) attend all public events such as readings, lectures, and panels, 4) attend all seminars and workshops, and 5) submit creative writing revised in light of seminar and workshop discussions and/or critical writing relevant to the writers' work. Specific syllabi are distributed by the faculty of record. Students must follow the syllabus and complete assignments accordingly.

Special Topics Courses: ENGH 513 Advanced Special Topics, ENGH 685 Selected Topics, ENGH 619 Special Topics in Writing, and ENGH 699 Workshop in English

Students are advised that special topics courses are not offered according to a predictable schedule of rotation. If a course listed above in an area of interest becomes available, students are encouraged to take these courses when they are offered. ENGH 670: Visual Culture: Theories and Histories, is an example of a class that many MFA students have found enriching which is not offered on a regular basis.

Professional Writing & Rhetoric Courses

Creative writing students are encouraged to consider courses offered primarily in conjunction with the MA Concentration in Professional Writing and Rhetoric, for the writing and editing experiences. These courses serve to broaden their future employment options: ENGH 503: Theory & Practice of Editing; ENGH 504: Internship in Writing & Editing (see below); ENGH 505: Document Design; ENGH 611: Studies in Rhetoric; ENGH 612: Cultures of Professional Writing; ENGH 613: Technical Communication; and ENGH 616: The Writing of Nonfiction.

Internships: ENGH 504

The Department of English offers an opportunity for qualified students to work with local companies and agencies in part-time positions involving technical writing and editing, general editing, journalism, public relations, magazine work, creative writing, arts administration, and other career areas. Contact Scott Berg, Internship Coordinator, at sberg1@gmu.edu or 703-993-1635.

Rules & Tips for Registration

Departmental Approval Required: A departmental approval error received while registering on Patriotweb means that the student registering must email the instructor of record asking for an override. The email should include the student's name and G# (and reason for taking the course if the instructor and student are not acquainted or the student is not taking a regular MFA course). In some cases faculty may ask for a manuscript prior to approving an override.

Overrides: Overrides on Patriotweb are the means by which faculty allow students to take courses that are controlled or closed. Once overrides are issued, students can register as normal. Only the instructor can issue an override. Patriotweb **will not** notify by email if you receive an override, so it is imperative that the student check at least every day. For controlled and closed courses that indicate the need for departmental approval, students must contact the instructor via email to ask for an override.

Waitlist Overrides: These allow wait-listed students a chance at a seat in a previously full class. For students on a waitlist, when a seat becomes available it is offered in the form of an override to the student in the #1 position on the waitlist. Students on waitlists should routinely check their registration status page in Patriotweb for any override. Waitlist overrides only last 72 hours so students must register within those 72 hours. A new override will be issued to the next student on the waitlist should the override to the first student go unused.

Full-Time Status: The University Catalog stipulates that a full-time student is one taking 9 or more credit hours or 6 credit hours with a full-time TAsip. Also, students receiving financial aid, scholarship, or fellowship may be required to take a certain number of credit hours per semester, usually 4.5 credits.

Inactive Student Status: With the exception of students in the thesis phase of the program, graduate students may take a semester away from study after they have been enrolled for at least one semester. No forms are required and there are no penalties/fees associated with taking a semester away, but students who are not enrolled in classes will lose privileges in the library and the gym. Those privileges will be restored once the student enrolls again. Students who go unregistered for more than two consecutive semesters will become inactive. Inactive students must apply for reenrollment using a *Graduate Application for Re-enrollment form* (<http://registrar.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/GRE.pdf>). Re-enrollments allow a student to complete a program after having to step away from the program for unforeseen circumstances. Most re-enrollment requests are granted; however, poor academic performance can be a factor in a denied request for re-enrollment. Once the form has been completed, it should be submitted to the Graduate Academic Coordinator for processing. After a re-enrollment has been approved and processed, it will take a few days before the student is allowed to register and his/her status is returned to "active." Students who have not been enrolled for two consecutive semesters or more and wish to register for classes must complete the *Graduate Application for Re-enrollment form*. Students should carefully review the university policies pertaining to re-enrollment as well as information outlined on the re-enrollment form regarding time limits and unsatisfactory grades.

Please Note: Let the Program Director or the Graduate Academic Coordinator know if you need to take a semester away from study. If unforeseen circumstances make progress toward your degree difficult, talk to the program director to discuss your options.

After registering for classes each semester, check your student schedule to ensure you are registered for the correct sections and number of credit hours. Registration errors are easily corrected ahead of the add/drop date for each semester. If missed, however, registration errors can cause serious problems that can lead to extra expenses and possibly extra semesters of coursework.

MFA Exam

One of the traditional components of a terminal degree is the comprehensive exam. It is intended to measure a student's knowledge of the field and its tradition, particularly as it pertains to a student's major genre and concerns as a writer, and to demonstrate the student's ability to articulate his or her perceptions about literature. Mason MFA students in poetry are required to take the 20-author MFA exam based on a list of writers they develop in consultation with their thesis committee members. Prose students can take an exam or opt to complete a self-designed project (see page 9). MFA exams must be passed before a student can register for the last three credit hours of thesis. Exams should be taken in May, June, July, or August of the summer between the second and third years of study.

Exam Reading List

Each student, in consultation with his or her committee, submits a list of twenty authors. The list can be submitted after the completion of 12 hours of course work and must be submitted before the completion of 36 hours.

Rationale

Each student must write 250-500 words discussing the reasons for selecting the names on the list and the various lines of influence and affiliation among the authors on the list. Every author on the list need not fit into a seamless scheme. Several lines of interest, as well as affiliation and influence, will form a typical reading list. In many cases, a couple of names will not fit into any scheme at all. Rationales are required and must be submitted with reading lists for approval.

List Guidelines

1. The list should consist of 20 authors.
2. The list should be divided into "major" authors and "minor" authors; names should be numbered consecutively with birth and death dates after each name.
3. The list must contain at least 10 authors who, for the purposes of the exam, can be considered major, as defined by the writer's importance to the history of literature.
4. With few exceptions, listed authors must have published at least two books.
5. Mason program faculty may not be included on the list.
6. The list should follow or reflect lines of influence or aesthetic affiliation that are further explained in the rationale attached to the list.
7. The list and rationale must be submitted with a cover sheet. The cover sheet and more guidelines are on the creative writing website: creativewriting.gmu.edu/graduate/mfa-exam

Please see the web page for additional guidelines on the MFA Reading List: creativewriting.gmu.edu/graduate/mfa-exam

MFA Exam

Sample MFA Exam Questions

- Language in poetry can be said to move on a scale from the colloquial-transparent to the highly decorative, self-conscious (when language can be said to be calling as much attention to itself as possible). Discuss the language of two of the following poets, in those terms, particularly in relation to the experiences, perceptions, and reflections with which they deal: John Donne, Walt Whitman, Wallace Stevens, Marianne Moore, Sylvia Plath.

- You are designing an "Introduction to Poetry Writing" course that includes reading assignments. You have decided to concentrate all reading on four poets who have come to prominence since 1945. Which four poets on your MFA list will you use? Why?

- A great many readers of poetry and many contemporary poets are impatient with funny poems and lose interest as soon as a poet is associated with humor. Yet when James Wright was asked what role humor played in his writing, he said, "I could not do without it." Discuss the use of humor in three of the following poets: T.S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, Marianne Moore, Gwendolyn Brooks, William Stafford, William Matthews, and Heather McHugh. To what extent and in what ways do they employ humor? How do they combine humor and seriousness of purpose?

- During the 19th Century, and for much of the 20th Century, fiction writers were able to assume, or at least hope, that their work would find a large popular audience. Many contemporary writers, however, make the opposite assumption: that their audience will be limited. Would you agree that this different perception of the role of the fiction writer has affected Donald Barthelme? Flannery O'Connor? Philip Roth?

- William H. Gass has described fiction as high play. Writers such as Hortense Calisher and John Cheever might be flattered by such a description of their work, but would John Fowles like to be considered playful? Would D.H. Lawrence or Henry James? Discuss the appropriateness of the term "high play" with regard to three of these writers, using examples from each writer's work.

Sample MFA List (Poetry)

Major Authors

Dante Alighien
John Donne
George Herbert
William Blake
Walt Whitman
Emily Dickinson
Charles Baudelaire
William Butler Yeats
TS Eliot
Ezra Pound
William Carlos Williams
Marianna Moore
Robert Lowell
Elizabeth Bishop
Charles Olson

Minor Authors

Anne Bradstreet
Christopher Smart
Jules Laforgue
Robert Browning
Hilda Doolittle
Denise Levertov
Robert Creeley
Allen Ginsberg
John Berryman
Sylvia Plath
James Merrill
Amiri Baraka
Lucille Clifton
Derek Walcott
Pamela White Hadas

Sample MFA List (Fiction)

Major Authors

Leo Tolstoy
Charles Dickens
Ernest Hemingway
Jane Austen
Franz Kafka
Joseph Conrad
Mark Twain
Henry James
Herman Melville
DH Lawrence
Thomas Mann
John Cheever
Flannery O'Connor

Minor Authors

Edith Wharton
Charlotte Perkins Gilman
Jayne Ann Phillips
Peter Taylor
John Gardner
Walker Percy
Bobbie Ann Mason
Karen Russell
Benjamin Percy
David Gates
Lauren Groff

MFA Project

Prose (fiction and non-fiction) students choose between taking a comprehensive exam based on a 20-writer reading list or completing an MFA project of their own design. MFA projects are tailored to prose students' post-MFA goals.

Students opting to complete a project work with their thesis directors, and may seek the advice and input of the MFA Program Director as they devise the project. The project may be done for credit (as an independent study) but does not have to be. If it is done for credit, the project must meet the English Department's requirements governing for-credit independent studies, including approval by the English Department Chair with the recommendation of the MFA Program Director. If the project is done for credit, the credits will count as electives unless specifically approved for other purposes. Most MFA students do not complete their projects for credit.

Proposal/Completion

All students working on an MFA project follow the same procedures. Students must submit a written proposal to the Graduate Academic Coordinator outlining the work they plan to undertake (including the nature, scope, and duration), what the final product will be, etc. If the project is for credit, the proposal should include appropriate registration and approval paperwork. A copy of the proposal, signed by the supervising faculty member to indicate his or her approval, must be received by the Graduate Academic Coordinator before the project begins. The project proposal cover sheet and project guidelines are on the creative writing website: creativewriting.gmu.edu/graduate/mfa-project.

The supervising faculty member and the Program Director must approve the project when it is completed. Once their approvals are in place, the Graduate Academic Coordinator will process the appropriate paperwork. Because an MFA project is a degree requirement, students must submit a completed project for review prior to the conferral date in order to graduate that semester. Students must request project approval prior to registering for their final three thesis hours.

Sample MFA Projects

- 1. BIOGRAPHY & READING LIST:** This project involves the development of a 20 author list, rationale, and annotated bibliography. Students completing such a project may submit a proposed list and rationale in the same way a poetry student would when preparing for his/her MFA comprehensive exam. Completion of this project requires the compilation of an annotated bibliography from authors on the proposed list. The bibliography should elaborate on the lines of influence noted in the rationale to show how the works relate to each other.
- 2. SERVE AS EDITOR/READER:** Students must serve for at least one year as editor, department/category editor, or prose reader of an on-campus journal, such as *Phoebe* or *So To Speak*, or for Stillhouse Press. A project proposal for this should specify the journal and position. Completion of an editing project requires writing a paper explaining the project, value of time spent at the journal, and possible advice for future editors or readers. Completion of such a project might also require a handbook or bequeathing of knowledge from one editor to the next.
- 3. EDITING PROJECT:** An editing project may be centered around an anthology of short stories or essays selected for a common theme or style of characterization or setting. A proposal for this project should specify the exact tasks to be undertaken, such as works to include and headnotes, introductions, and other editorial material. Students completing an editing project are encouraged to seek publication opportunities for the project, but successful completion of the project does not rely on publication.
- 4. CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP:** This project involves the creation of a writing workshop or seminar series developed for and taught to elementary or high school students, adult learners, or other special audience. Development of coursework taught here at Mason by TAs does not count as an MFA project, but working with the Merten WITS program can count. A proposal for this project should specify the plans for the course, necessary pedagogical preparation, and workshop development. Completion of this project requires a paper of post-experience self-evaluation or in-progress observation if the course actually is taught.

MFA Thesis

Your MFA thesis must be a manuscript long enough to reflect the overall plan and design of a finished book, and to demonstrate your command of the ideas, techniques, and strategies of your genre. In prose, the manuscript should be at least 30,000 words. In poetry, the length should be at least 45 pages. All finished manuscripts must be approved by the members of the individual thesis committee. All theses also must be accepted by the Department of English and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and all must meet the requirements of the Mason Library for terminal degree theses. Thesis proposals must be approved by the program director prior to initial thesis registration.

First and foremost, regardless of genre, each manuscript should be reviewed to ensure it is mechanically correct. Each thesis should uphold the highest possible standards in manuscript preparation. That those standards will be met should be visible in the final draft of a thesis as it goes to the committee members who are being asked to approve it.

From the content standpoint, the manuscript, regardless of genre, should show each student's ability to meet the intellectual and imaginative challenges of a longer work—such as identifying and defining a subject and theme that merit treatment at length; conducting necessary research; establishing a consistent point of view and voice throughout the work; establishing a consistent sense of a speaker, especially in a poetry collection or in a prose narrative; establishing a consistent sense of the reader's role; with multiple-part works, such as poetry or story collections, finding an arc of relationship among individual works in the manuscript; in a single-volume work such as a novel, finding a unified story line or arc; demonstrating a range of technique and craft; revising in a way that shows an ability to identify weaknesses and solve problems; and demonstrating an awareness of work written by other poets and writers that is relevant to your own.

Most poetry students compile volumes of poems, some of which they have workshopped, some of which they have elaborated since workshop, all of which they have discussed extensively with their thesis directors and committee members, perhaps also with other faculty during their course of study. Nonfiction students generally compile collections of essays as their theses, and the course of producing those volumes may mirror cycles employed by poetry students. Fiction students divide themselves between story collections and novels, with most (90%) composing original first novels as their theses. Workshopping novel fragments is difficult and uneven, so students intending to produce a novel as their thesis should look for novel-crafting courses either as special-topic writing courses or craft seminars during their time in the program. These courses are meant as supportive opportunities and are not required of students before they can undertake a first novel as a thesis. But such opportunities should advance the cause of the thesis and allow the student to produce a more polished final thesis, and perhaps something closer to being a publishable work.

Students approaching the thesis process without a lot of foregrounding workshops of the proposed project, discussion with faculty, craft seminars and literature courses that embrace the thesis genre, should not expect the thesis process itself to make up for all that might be lacking in preparedness. This does not mean that a successful thesis cannot be completed. It does mean that the thesis process and comments from committee members cannot be expected to bear the full weight of all preparation. In such a case, a final thesis may be a more thorough-going if partial manuscript of what will become a publishable work. The committee members have the first say in what constitutes an acceptable thesis, with their judgement to be confirmed by the English department and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

MFA Thesis

Overview Timeline:

Oct	request thesis director (poetry)
Jan/Feb	request thesis director (prose)
Mar	arrange 2nd & 3rd committee members
Apr	propose thesis for approval

prior to registration

Nov	complete draft & give to thesis director
Dec	discuss draft w/director; plan revisions

fall semester of thesis registration

Jan	plan revision schedule; send to committee
Feb	mid to latter part of the month, submit revised draft to thesis director
Mar	March 1st through spring break discuss revisions w/director
Apr	By April 1st, finish 2nd revisions; submit to committee By April 15th gather any added feedback & prepare final manuscript
May	May 1st through posted deadline, collect final signatures by posted deadline, submit final thesis to Fenwick Library

spring semester of registration

MFAERS:
DON'T FORGET TO MAKE
CONTACT WITH THE **UDTS**
OFFICE ABOUT FORMATTING
AS EARLY AS OCT-DEC
OF THE FALL SEMESTER
OF ENGH 799

Thesis Committee Selection

A thesis committee consists of three members, a director and two readers. The thesis director is requested to the program director and assigned, and two readers are selected by the student and thesis director. In poetry, the third reader should not be a poetry faculty member but rather a literature or prose faculty member. In prose (fiction and non-fiction), students have the option of choosing the third reader from the prose faculty or from outside of it. The third committee member also may be from outside of Mason, but he or she must be formally vetted before he or she may sit on the committee. Accepting the outside member is up to the Creative Writing Director, English Department, and College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Thesis Director Requests

Poetry

The Creative Writing Director assigns thesis directors to students, working with the faculty members to do so in a fair and thoughtful manner. This assignment procedure is necessary in order to ensure an equal distribution of thesis work among faculty members, which provides students with their most equitable thesis work situation as well.

The assignment process starts with an email from the Graduate Academic Coordinator at the start of each semester. Students planning to begin their thesis in the following semester should complete the request form specific to their genre of study. On the attached form students rank the faculty in order of preference. Notes may be included if students have already been in touch with faculty regarding their thesis. Prior discussion with faculty; however, is discouraged; students should base their rankings on their knowledge of faculty. For this reason, it is important that students work with as many MFA faculty members as possible in their first two years of study.

Faculty members approach the work of directing a thesis and serving as a reader in different ways, just as students approach the work of writing a thesis in different ways. In their role as directors, some will encourage frequent meetings while others will allow great flexibility.

(continued on page 12)

MFA Thesis

(continued from page 11)

Prose

Prose students will request a Thesis Director assignment in the early spring semester. Faculty will meet with the program director soon after the start of the semester and decide thesis director assignments for each student requesting one. The prose faculty regrets that it will not always be able to give students their first, second or even third choices—in part, the size of any given class and the unevenness of assignment requests spread across faculty will make it impossible sometimes to do that. Faculty will, however, put a good deal of thought and no small amount of discussion into how to make these assignments. It is in everyone's interest that no one faculty member is overloaded.

Prose students should expect to receive written comments from their thesis director and should meet with their director as they work through drafts. Students and their Director will determine the timing and frequency of meetings.

Prose Faculty deeply prefer that thesis students concentrate on quality over quantity. To this end, they ask students to focus on the first 100 to 150 pages of their projects for the purpose of the final draft. They encourage students to look at the thesis project as only one step on the road to publication. Their hope is that with 100-150 strong pages, students will more easily pick up the thread of their work after graduation. By all means, students may write more. They should conceptualize the entire project as much and as fully as possible. And they should discuss it with their thesis director. But students also should be mindful of the fact that more is not always more. And that faculty have seen generations of students walk away from our Program with jumbled manuscripts in the 300-400 page range and return to that work after graduation.

Once the Thesis Director is matched to the student, the student and Thesis Director should begin thinking about the rest of the committee. Bear in mind that all prose faculty may also serve as Second and Third readers in fiction. Poetry faculty - Eric Pankey, Jennifer Atkinson, Susan Tichy, Sally Keith and Peter Streckfus-Green - have also stated their willingness to read prose theses. And, of course, the English Department literature faculty may also serve as readers of prose theses, if students have taken a course with them.

Poetry + Prose

After receiving a thesis director assignment, each student should meet with his or her director and discuss who the other two members will be. Generally, the student will ask two faculty to serve as committee members, but the thesis director may weigh in about the student's choices. Once a committee is in place, a schedule should be planned out to include meeting dates, progress reports, and draft submissions including a proposed date for a complete draft prior to submitting the completed thesis for approval by the department and college. Poetry students should keep in mind when planning their schedule that they will not be allowed to register for their final three hours of thesis until they have passed the required comprehensive exam. Prose students should plan to complete their MFA Projects prior to registering for final thesis credits and must propose their projects before registering for final thesis credits.

MFA Thesis

The Thesis Proposal

Once your committee is in place, it's time to draft a proposal. Proposals usually range from 3-5 pages in length (there is no template for a proposal). Ideally the proposal is submitted to the Graduate Academic Coordinator prior to the end of the semester in which you are assigned a thesis director.

What sort of writing sample should be included with a thesis proposal?

A writing sample can be a chapter of a novel, a representative short story, a group of poems, etc. The number of pages is not specified, but the sample must be long enough to let the reader make a fair appraisal of the quality of the writing. While it is impossible to predict in advance the direction creative work will take, approval of a creative writing thesis proposal indicates that the quality of the work is suitable, and if the remainder of the thesis is the same quality and the work is completed more or less as described in the proposal, the finished work will satisfy the thesis requirement. In this sense, approval of a creative writing thesis is comparable to a publisher's advance to a writer based upon an outline and sample. However, students should expect and should leave sufficient time to revise the thesis once they complete and submit a final draft—something to keep in mind when you are at the end of the thesis process.

Early Thesis Process:

- Apply for your director (at least one semester prior to starting your thesis, earlier for poetry)
- Find two other committee members to serve as readers
- Draft a proposal or abstract outlining your plans for your thesis project
- Prepare a writing sample similar to the writing that your committee can expect to see in your final thesis
- Print and complete a thesis proposal cover sheet available on the creative writing web page
- Submit your proposal, writing sample, and cover sheet to the Graduate Academic Coordinator
- Register for ENGH 799 using the codes provided by the Graduate Academic Coordinator
- ENGH 799 is a variable course credit course. When you register you should check to make sure you are registered for the correct amount of credits.
- If you don't maintain continuous enrollment in ENGH 799 until your thesis is turned in, you will owe those thesis hours retroactively in order to graduate.

MFA Thesis

Preparation for Thesis Submission

In preparing the final version of the thesis, students must adhere to the format specifications found at thesis.gmu.edu. Formatting is an important step and must be approved by the University Dissertation and Thesis Coordinator (UDTS). Each student is responsible for ensuring that his or her thesis meets all such requirements. You should only use the CHSS signature sheet template. Once you have your information in the template, a quick formatting check can be done by sending your signature sheet as an email attachment to Sally Evans, the Thesis and Dissertation Coordinator. You must have her approval prior to submitting your thesis for Chair and Dean approval. Once you have her approval, print official copies of the signature page for collection of signatures. Email the coordinator at udts@gmu.edu to make these arrangements.

Thesis Submission Process:

- Students may attend a thesis formatting workshop early in their process. Contact the coordinator at udts@gmu.edu for scheduling information. Students also may attend an MFA-program thesis workshop offered usually during spring semesters.
- Each student then works with his or her three committee members, writing and submitting drafts and making changes in a timely manner. Note that students no longer have to provide final printed copies of their theses, but some committee members may want to see paper copies during the writing process. See guidelines at: creativewriting.gmu.edu/current-graduate-students/mfa-thesis.
- As the draft is completed, email the document to udts@gmu.edu for format review and also to arrange a Submission Consultation.
- Print a thesis signature cover sheet from the thesis.gmu.edu web site: library.gmu.edu/udts/signaturesheets.
- Collect committee member's signatures. The signature page must be approved and signed by the committee before the chair of English and the college dean will sign. Original signatures are required.
- Make appointments with the English chair and dean to obtain signatures. Note that signatures usually cannot be obtained on a walk-in basis unless the chair or dean is holding open hours for such purposes.
- Follow the instructions provided by the UDTS to electronically submit the thesis and signature pages. Students can have copies of their thesis bound for personal use, but students will no longer turn in paper copies to be bound and placed in the library.
 - **Important:** The electronic version of your thesis will be available for on-line viewing unless you **embargo** it as you submit it. The initial embargo is for six years and renewable. A form is required to request the embargo, and it requires the dean's approval, by signature. Obtain the form as you make final preparations in your manuscript and get the signature when you obtain the dean's signature on the final thesis signature page.

Calendar for Thesis Process

Below are the time frames and deadlines for the thesis process. Students should keep in mind that drafts may always be sent to Thesis Directors and Readers ahead of deadlines. Note that specific days may shift a bit based on a given semester's calendar or events such as adverse weather that affects the academic calendar.

-Sunday before Thanksgiving: first draft due to thesis advisors

-Sunday before Spring Break: final draft due to thesis advisors

-First Friday in April: final draft due to thesis readers

-First Friday in May: Final thesis projects due to the library (the university's deadline)

MFA Thesis

Theis Embargo Policy

No one at the university disputes your ownership of your work. The university leadership does take the position that graduate work should be shared with the scholarly community. This is primarily based on “research” in the more classic sense of the term. But it embraces all work, including creative theses by MFA students. The university system, then, is built to lean toward sharing information that is included in graduate theses and dissertations. For these purposes, they use an Internet system or set of systems that makes this information available to the larger world.

Any graduate student can request an embargo of his or work to keep it off the Internet for a specific period. Almost all of our students make that request. And our graduate students are about the only ones at Mason who make that request. The faculty and administration of the MFA program support students in these requests and will continue to do so, keeping students informed of any changes or alterations of policies or procedures. Though the burden of maintaining the embargo falls to the student ultimately, we pledge to help remind students of renewals and the necessity to file for renewals as the time comes around each year.

As of Fall 2017,

- Embargoes will be granted for up to 10 years initially
- Embargoes can be renewed every ten years and are repeatable forever
- Theses, though kept off the Internet by the embargo, will be available for viewing on campus only and only through the libraries’ Special Collections office. (This is the situation as it pertained prior to the invention of the Internet.) Here, though, a graduating student can request to have the manuscript held out of the viewable files for a period of time starting right after submission in order to give herself or himself time to work with an agent or editor or his faculty mentor to see if she or he can immediately sell the book, and so can do so without it being compromised even by a slip-up in the embargo system. This period of time could be a year or several, depending on the situation
- When graduating students submit their theses they will be told how and when to renew the embargo, how to alter the provisions of the embargo they requested should they desire to do so, and how to stay updated on any changes in the embargo policy. This information is to come from the library staff.

Tuition, TAships, Fellowships, Awards...

Assistantships

Students in fiction, nonfiction and poetry are eligible for appointment as teaching assistants (TAs) working for the English Department. Decisions are based on numerous factors, including interview results, teaching or tutoring needs of the English Department, applicant's background and preparation, etc. TAs take courses in the teaching of composition and literature and work for the department as writing tutors and instructors of composition and literature courses.

Each TA appointment includes tuition waiver for graduate courses that meet degree requirements. TAs are also eligible for paid health insurance and all full-time TA are considered as in-state students for tuition payment purposes. This allows a TA to take a course not covered by waiver and pay for it at in-state rates regardless of domicile status.

TA Selection

Selection of TAs occurs during both fall and spring semesters with assignments made on both a three-year and shorter basis. Students receiving what are expected to be three-year assignments tutor in their first year and then enter the classroom teaching for their second and third years. Students receiving two-year appointments may enter the classroom during their third semester in the MFA program. As classroom instructors, both three-year and two-year TAs must take a pedagogical course, English 615, prior to entering the classroom. Their initial teaching assignment is two sections of English 101, normally in the fall of their first year of teaching. After that, they take a second pedagogical course, English 610, and may move into teaching literature courses. Having gained teaching experience, TAs are eligible to teach the introductory creative writing course, English 396, or another creative writing workshop and pair that with either a repeat of English 101 or 201 or with an assignment to assist another English faculty member teaching a large-enrollment literature course. TAs appointed for less than three years will work on a specific schedule worked out at the time of appointment.

TAs getting a regular two-year appointment may be ready to enter the classroom in the fall of their first semester as TAs, if they take the TA version of the pedagogical course English 615 in the preceding spring, along with those students who receive three-year TA appointments.

In addition to the normal TA appointments, the MFA program works with Fall for the Book to offer the Sally Merten Writers-in-the-Schools program to enable interested MFA students to gain valuable classroom experience and do important work teaching creative writing to younger students or enabling teachers in the schools to be more effective as they teach creative writing to students. Participants in the program are hired to work with specific classrooms of students in schools located in the metro area on an academic calendar basis, are paired with a partner program offering enhancement courses to students at the middle or high school level, or help prepare in-service training workshops for teachers from area schools. These positions do not carry tuition waiver or health insurance benefits but they do pay hourly stipends and offer a diversified pedagogical experience for persons interested in teaching creative writing. The Sally Merten program honors the former first lady of Mason.

Tuition, TAships, Fellowships, Awards...

TA Waiver & Course Loads

All full-time TAships held by MFA students come with tuition waiver. However, the waiver is subject to the allocation of waiver funds by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and is only good for up to 48 credit hours of coursework that meet the requirements of the MFA.

Waiver is managed by the creative writing program to provide for completion of the program in three academic years. Because of the close management of waiver, TAs must inform the Graduate Academic Coordinator of their enrollment plans ahead of each semester and summer term. Reporting intended registration is necessary in managing waiver and ensuring the fairest distribution of available waiver.

All full-time TAs must enroll in at least six credit hours of graduate coursework each semester except in their final semester when, if they have fewer than six credits left, they may register for a smaller number of credit hours. Students may register for coursework during the summer session following the academic year in which they received a tuition waiver and have the hours covered by waiver, but those waiver dollars are part of the student's total for that year.

Tuition

Tuition rates are set by the Board of Visitors as part of its budget-setting function. As of Summer 2018 the in-state rate per graduate credit hour is \$595.00 and the out-of-state rate per credit hour is \$1,416.00. Likely, the rate will change during your time in the program.

Fees

In addition to tuition, students are required to certain pay fees:

- Educational Resource Fee: This fee is charged each semester upon registration. This fee ranges from \$60-\$100 depending on student registration.
- New-Student Registration Fee: This fee is charged one time only upon each student's first registration.
- Late Fee: This fee is charged when a student registers for credit hours after the first day of classes.

TAs, please note: Your tuition waiver allocation includes the ERF (Educational Resource fee), but does not include any other fees, including the new student fee or any late fees.

Tuition, TAs, Fellowships, Awards...

Fellowships

The writing program has established several fellowships to support students as they focus on thesis work in the third year of study. Awards are made early in the spring semester.

- Heritage Fellowship: First set up by Richard Bausch and continued by the second Heritage Chair, Poet Eric Pankey, this award is intended to afford recipients additional time to write. The winner receives a stipend equal to that of a TA and tuition waiver.
- Thesis Fellowships: Also offer students a level of support and time to write. Recipients receive a stipend plus tuition waiver.

To Apply for a Fellowship: The deadline for applications is announced on the creative writing website and the listserv. A fellowship application is analogous to a thesis proposal, including a statement of the project the student intends to undertake and a writing sample. The sample should serve to update faculty with whom the student has not worked recently on the status of his or her writing. Applications are only accepted electronically. More details about available fellowships, deadlines, and application specifics can be found on the creative writing site.

Travel research grants

Grants from the Alan Cheuse International Writers Center (cheusecenter.gmu.edu) are designed to help George Mason's MFA students pursue international research for creative projects they are either currently working on or hope to begin. Students submit proposals of 1500 words for the opportunity to travel to a country or region that fits their research needs, proposals that are evaluated by a three-person review team. Usually between 2-4 students are selected as Cheuse Center travel grant recipients, and each awardee receives \$5,000 towards their international travel. In return, students must deliver a piece of creative writing from their travels and a secondary project designed to engage with the local population.

Contests & Awards

Outstanding Graduate Students: Each spring the Department of English chooses Outstanding Graduate Students from each concentration. Nominees are selected by department faculty and recipients are selected by a faculty committee. Recipients are recognized at the annual English award ceremony where they also receive their award.

Mark Craver Poetry Award: The Mark Craver Poetry Award was created in honor of Mark Craver, an MA and MFA alum as well as a popular Mason adjunct professor and an area high school teacher until his death in January 2004.

Mary Robert Rinehart Awards: The family of the late Mary Roberts Rinehart began a number of years ago awarding small grants to writers whose work showed particular promise. That takes the form of now annual writing contests.

Joseph A. Lohman III Poetry Award: The Joseph Lohman Poetry Prize was established by Judith Lelchok through the Academy of American Poets in New York to honor her husband, a lover of poetry.

Virginia Downs Poetry Award: The Virginia Downs Poetry Award was established by the family and friends of Virginia Downs (1916-1984), poet and George Mason University graduate. The award is given for a single poem of sixty lines or less, on any subject and in any form.

Shelley A. Marshall Fiction Award was established by Donn Marshall, the husband of Shelley Marshall (1963-2001), a GMU alumna killed in the September 11, 2001, attack on the Pentagon, who also was a fan of the short story.

Dan Rudy Fiction Award: This award was established by the family and friends of Dan Rudy (1947-1983), fiction writer and George Mason University MFA candidate.

Alan Cheuse Awards in Fiction and Nonfiction: To honor its former faculty member, the creative writing program this year inaugurates two new awards, one each in fiction and nonfiction and named for him.

To Apply: Contests are open to all currently enrolled Mason students although most applications come from currently enrolled MFA students. Unique submissions are required for each contest entered. Students must submit a paper copy and an electronic copy of each submission. Paper copies can be submitted in the labeled bins in the English Department main office and electronic copies can be emailed to writing@gmu.edu. Submissions may not be submitted via fax. All submissions must be previously unpublished. The deadline for creative writing contests is announced at the beginning of the Spring semester. Contest guidelines and details are updated regularly on the creative writing website.

MFA Faculty

Jennifer Atkinson



Robinson A, 431
jatkings2@gmu.edu

Jennifer Atkinson is the author of four collections of poetry, including: *The Dogwood Tree*, which won the University of Alabama Poetry Prize; *The Drowned City*, which won the Samuel French Morse Poetry Prize; *Drift Ice* from Etruscan Press; and *Canticle of the Night Path*, winner of the 2012 Free Verse Editions New Measure Prize. Her individual poems and her nonfiction have appeared in *Poetry*, *Field*, *The Yale Review*, *The New England Review*, *Threepenny Review*, *Shenandoah*, *The Iowa Review*, *Image*, *Witness*, and elsewhere. Both her poetry and her nonfiction have been honored with the Pushcart Prize. She received a B.A. in English from Wesleyan University, and an M.F.A. in poetry writing and an M.A. in creative nonfiction from the University of Iowa. She taught in Nepal and Japan, and at Washington University in St. Louis, before joining the faculty of George Mason.

Courtney Brkic



Robinson A, 255C
cbrkic@gmu.edu

Courtney Brkic (M.F.A., New York University, 2001) is the author of *The First Rule of Swimming*, a 2013 New York Times Editors' Choice. *Stillness*, her short fiction collection about the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, was a 2003 Chicago Tribune "Best Book" and a 2003 New York Times "Notable Book." Her memoir, *The Stone Fields*, records her work on mass grave sites around Srebrenica, as well as her family's history during the Second World War in Sarajevo, and was shortlisted for a "Freedom of Expression Award" by the Index on Censorship. She has worked as a forensic archeologist, a translator, and for the United Nations International War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague. She is the recipient of an NEA fellowship, a Fulbright Scholarship, a New York Times Fellowship and a Whiting Writers Award, and her work has appeared in *Zoetrope*, *Harpers & Queen*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post Magazine*, *National Geographic*, *Dissent* and *The Alaska Quarterly Review*, among others.

Timothy Denevi

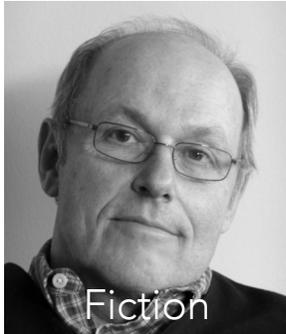


Robinson A, 422
tdenevi@gmu.edu

Timothy Denevi's first book is *Hyper: A Personal History of ADHD* (Simon & Schuster, 2014). He received his MFA in nonfiction from the University of Iowa. He has been awarded fellowships by the MacDowell Colony and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and his stories and essays have recently appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Time Magazine*, *Gulf Coast*, and *Arts & Letters*.

MFA Faculty

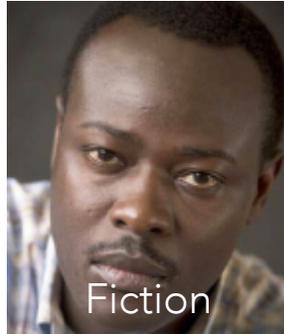
Stephen Goodwin



Robinson A, 425
sgoodwin@gmu.edu

Stephen Goodwin (MA, University of Virginia, 1969) is the author of three novels, including *The Blood of Paradise* and *Breaking Her Fall*, and two books of nonfiction. His short fiction has appeared in *Shenandoah*, *Sewanee Review*, *Georgia Review*, and *Gentleman's Quarterly*; his essays and nonfiction, in the *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *Preservation*, *Poets and Writers Magazine*, and several sports magazines. He has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the Ingram Merrill Foundation. He is a former director of the literature program at the National Endowment for the Arts, and has twice served as president of the PEN/Faulkner Foundation.

Helon Habila



Robinson A, 255G
hngalaba@gmu.edu

Helon Habila won a 2015 Windham Campbell Prize from Yale University and his first novel, *Waiting for an Angel*, won a Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 2003. His second novel, *Measuring Time*, came out in February 2007. His third novel, *Oil on Water*, appeared in 2011. He has edited, with Lavinia Greenlaw, the *British Council Anthology*, *New Writing 14*, and with Khadija George, the anthology of new fiction from Africa, *Miracles, Dreams, and Jazz*. Habila is a contributing editor to the *Virginia Quarterly Review* where he has published numerous essays and short stories. His stories, articles, reviews, and poems have appeared in various magazines and papers including *Granta* and the *London Guardian*. In 2001 he won the Caine Prize for his short story, *Love Poems*.

Tania James



Robinson A, 418
tjames11@gmu.edu

Tania James' most recent novel is *The Tusk That Did the Damage*. Set in South India, the novel looks at the ivory trade through the perspectives of a poacher, a filmmaker, and an elephant. Her previous publications include the novel *Atlas of the Unknowns* and the story collection *Aerogrammes*. *Atlas of Unknowns*, published by Knopf in 2009, was a New York Times Editor's Choice, an Indie Next Notable, a Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writers selection, and a Best Book of 2009 for The San Francisco Chronicle and NPR. *Aerogrammes*, also published by Knopf, was a Best Book of 2012 for Kirkus Reviews, Library Journal, and The San Francisco Chronicle. Two stories from *Aerogrammes* were finalists for *Best American Short Stories* 2008 and 2013. Her individual stories have appeared in the *Boston Review*, *Granta*, *Guernica*, *One Story*, *A Public Space*, and *The Kenyon Review*. James earned her bachelor's from Harvard, majoring in filmmaking, and her graduate degree from Columbia University.

MFA Faculty

Sally Keith



Robinson A, 255D
skeith3@gmu.edu

Sally Keith is the author of four collections of poetry, most recently *River House* (Milkweed Editions) and before that *The Fact of the Matter* (Milkweed). She graduated from the Iowa Writers Workshop in 2000 and holds a B.A. from Bucknell University.

She has published individual poems in journals and anthologies, including *Colorado Review*, *Conjunctions*, *New American Writing*, and *A Public Space*. Sally has been awarded fellowships to the Breadloaf Writers' Conference, a Pushcart Prize, and the Denver Quarterly's Lynda Hall Award. Prior to joining Mason's MFA faculty, she was awarded the year-long Emerging Writer Lectureship at Gettysburg College, after which she taught at the University of Rochester.

Kyoko Mori



Robinson A, 435
kmori@gmu.edu

Kyoko Mori (MA and PhD, University of Wisconsin) is the author of three nonfiction books, *Yarn: Remembering The Way Home, A Memoir*; *The Dream of Water: A Memoir*; and *Polite Lies: On Being a Woman Caught Between Two Cultures*, and her essays have appeared in numerous publications including *The Best American Essays*. She has also published three novels, the most recent being *Stone Field, True Arrow*. She was born in Kobe, Japan, and moved to the United States in 1977. Prior to joining the faculty at Mason, she was a Briggs-Copeland lecturer in Creative Writing at Harvard University.

Eric Pankey

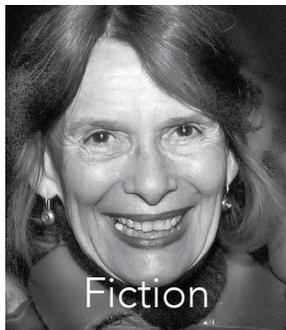


Robinson A, 431
epankey@gmu.edu

Eric Pankey (M.F.A. University of Iowa, 1983) is the author of eleven collections of poetry, most recently *Trace*, *Dismantling the Angel* and *Crow-Work* (Milkweed Editions). His poems, essays, and reviews have appeared in *Antaeus*, *The Antioch Review*, *The Gettysburg Review*, *Grand Street*, *The Iowa Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *New Republic*, *The New Yorker*, *The Quarterly*, *Shenandoah*, and many other publications. Winner of the Walt Whitman Award from the Academy of American Poets, Pankey has received numerous grants supporting his work, including fellowships from the Ingram Merrill Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, The Brown Foundation, and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. Visit Eric's website: ericpankey.com

MFA Faculty

Susan Shreve



Robinson A, 425
sshreve@gmu.edu

Susan Shreve (MA, University of Virginia, 1969) is the author of fourteen novels, most recently, *You Are The Love Of My Life*, and a memoir, *Warm Springs: Traces of a Childhood in FDR's Polio Haven*. She is the editor or coeditor of five anthologies, including *Skin Deep* with Marita Golden, *Tales Out of School* with Porter Shreve, and *Dream Me Home Safely*. She has written twenty-nine books for children. Susan has been a Guggenheim Fellow, an NEA fellow, and a Jenny McKean Moore Fellow. She has served as president of the PEN/Faulkner Foundation.

Please note: Susan Shreve teaches classes each fall semester. While available via email, Susan is not on campus during the spring semester.

Susan Tichy



Robinson A, 455A
stichy@gmu.edu

Susan Tichy (M.A., University of Colorado, 1979) is the author of five volumes of poetry, *A Smell of Burning Starts the Day* (Wesleyan), *The Hands in Exile* (Random House), which was selected for the National Poetry Series, *Bone Pagoda* (Ahsahta), *Gallowglass* (Ahsahta) which received a Bronze in ForeWord Review's Book of the Year awards, placing it as one of the top six small-press poetry books of 2010, and most recently *Trafficke* (Ahsahta). Her poems, collaborations, and mixed-genre works have appeared in *42opus*, *Agni*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Cerise Press*, *Chapman*, *Colorado Review*, *CutBank*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Fascicle*, *Feminist Studies*, *Five Fingers Review*, *Green Mountains Review*, *Hotel Amerika*, *Indiana Review*, *The Literary Review*, and other journals. She has received numerous awards, including a fellowship from the NEA, the Chad Walsh Poetry Prize, The Indiana Review Poetry Prize, the Runes Poetry Prize, a Pushcart, and an innovative prose award from Quarter After Eight. Susan's web page can be found at: susantichy.com.

Peter Streckfus



Robinson A, 466
pstreckf@gmu.edu

Peter Streckfus (MFA, George Mason) won the Yale Series of Younger Poets Award in 2004 with his first book, *The Cuckoo*. His second book, *Errings*, came out in February 2014 from Fordham University. His individual poems have won numerous prizes and awards, including grants from the Peter S. Reed Foundation and the Breadloaf Writers Conference. At the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, where he taught as an assistant professor prior to joining the faculty at Mason, Peter won the Barnwell-Sellers Award for Creative Writing plus two research grants. In the 2013-14 academic year, he was selected as a Rome Prize Fellow by the American Academy in Rome and spent the year in Rome studying and writing.

Journals, Presses and Student Opportunities

Mason is home to three journals and a small press, all run by Mason students. Each is unique, but all four offer MFAers the chance to gain experience and insight while reading or editing.

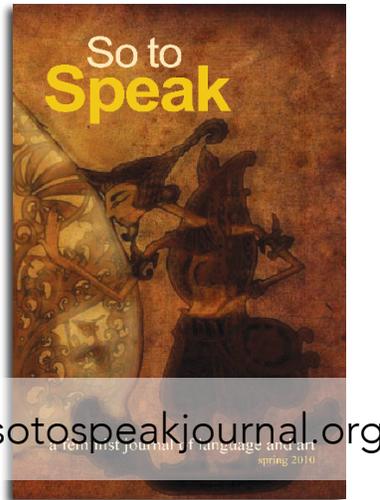
MFAers often use their experience as a reader or editor as their MFA project. Projects include binders/guides created for future editors/readers, reflections about the experience of editing, broader discussions of the submission process and how and what readers look for in submitted manuscripts, or papers about the growth and development of each institution.

Mason's journals and press represent the creativity and dedication to craft of our MFAers who work to make each issue stronger than the last.



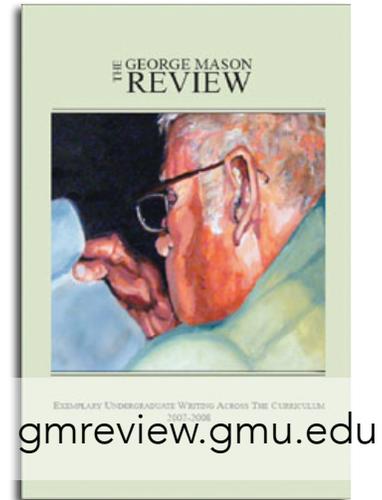
Phoebe

Phoebe, George Mason's literary magazine, publishes fiction and poetry and sometimes nonfiction from Mason students and writers across the country.



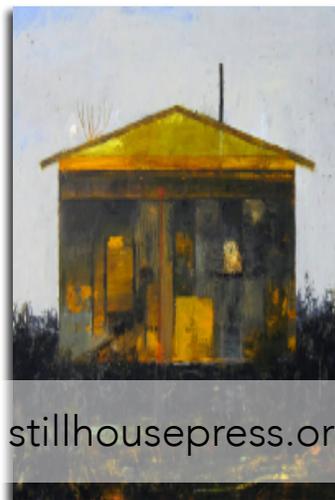
So to Speak

So to Speak, founded in 1993 by an editorial collective of women MFA candidates at George Mason University, publishes poetry and fiction with a feminist theme.



GMR

The George Mason Review is an annual anthology of exemplary undergraduate writing across the curriculum.



StillHouse Press

Stillhouse Press, founded in 2014, is a student-run small press created as a way to give creative writing students the opportunity to learn about small press publishing through hands-on experience.

The Program Online

creativewriting.gmu.edu

The creative writing website is even more valuable now that you're an MFA student than it was when you applied.

1. Degree requirements and contact information creativewriting.gmu.edu/current-graduate-students/advising
2. Faculty bios... creativewriting.gmu.edu/people/all_faculty
3. MFA alumni achievements and bios... <http://creativewriting.gmu.edu/alumni>
4. CW Reading Series schedules... creativewriting.gmu.edu/current-graduate-students/loud-fire
5. CW contests... creativewriting.gmu.edu/current-graduate-students/spring-writing-contests
6. Links to Mason journals... creativewriting.gmu.edu/current-graduate-students/opportunities
7. MFA Students' Calendar... creativewriting.gmu.edu/current-graduate-students/mfa-students-calendar

Available to current students:

1. MFA advising sheet to track your degree progress
2. How to propose an independent study, and the forms to submit
3. More about MFA projects, how to propose one, and the forms to submit
4. More about MFA exams, how to prepare for one, how to draft and submit a rationale/reading list, and the forms needed to submit
5. More about the MFA thesis process from start to finish, and the forms needed to submit
6. Folklore study opportunities for MFA students
7. Frequently requested graduate student forms
8. Current-student news
9. TA application and information
10. "Best of NV/DC" list including student and faculty favorite restaurants, movie theaters, hangouts, etc.
11. link to the MFA alumni site to find out who's making headlines and who's bio is featured



Find us on [facebook](#) too at the following prompts: George Mason Creative Writing, English Department @ George Mason University, The Writing Center at George Mason University, Fall for the Book, Loud Fire, Kindling, Phoebe Literature Art, So to Speak: A feminist Journal of Language and Art, Poetry Instigator, Creative Writing Community

Readings & Events



What began as a two-day literary event in 1999, organized by George Mason University and the City of Fairfax, has expanded into a multiple-venue, regional festival that brings together people of all ages and interests and 150-200 writers. Dozens of MFA students volunteer at the Fall for the Book when it occurs in September or October. The festival also features a reading by alumni of the MFA program, as well as reading by the MFA program's student Fellows.

- Connects readers and authors at all levels, offering book lovers the chance to meet and greet their favorite writers and hear behind-the-scenes stories of writing and publishing
- Builds community by connecting with senior centers, book clubs, special interest community groups, libraries, bookstores and many others
- Encourages diversity by combining common points of cultural reference with forums for discussion of our shared stories
- Makes literature fun by showcasing literary events in an active, engaging atmosphere that includes skits, dance, storytelling and more, and by introducing young people to living authors whose work they're reading in the classroom
- Advances children's education by hosting specially tailored writing workshops or readings for students at the elementary, middle and high school levels and by publishing an annual anthology of student writing in partnership with the Northern Virginia Writing Project

Events take place at George Mason University's Fairfax, Virginia, campus and at locations throughout Northern Virginia, D.C., and Maryland. All events are free and open to the public

Reading Series:

Loud Fire Reading Series:

Loudfire is a forum for alumni and students to present their works to fellow students and alumni. MFA students are encouraged to attend as well as present their work. A timetable and schedule is set up by the students themselves. Announcements and current reading schedules are sent out to the listserv regularly. There is more information about Loudfire on the creative writing website.

Kindling:

Kindling is a student reading series that brings first-year students to present their work. The series is managed by students

Graduating Student Reading:

Each May graduating students present their work to an audience of fellow writers, friends, family, and MFA faculty. The reading and reception honoring graduating students is planned by a committee made up of first- and second-year students. The reading takes place the week of the University commencement ceremonies.

Visiting Writers:

The visiting writers series brings at least twelve authors to Mason per academic year to give readings and craft talks, and to lead master classes with students enrolled in ENGH 699.

Area Favorites

Popular Cafes, Restaurants, & Bars

Angelico's Pizza

10869 Lee Hwy
Fairfax, VA

* great selection of pizza toppings;
good greek salads; try the eggplant

Arties

3260 Old Lee Hwy
Fairfax, VA

* host of many MFA visiting writer
dinners; member of the great
american food chain (often has
coupons/incentives)

The Auld Shebeen

3971 Chain Bridge Rd.
Fairfax, VA

* irish pub with great food and drinks,
trivia on Tuesday nights

Brion's Grille

10621 Braddock Rd.
Fairfax, VA

* just across the street from campus in
University Mall

Busboys & Poets (three locations)

4251 Campbell Ave.
Arlington, VA

2021 14th Street NW
Washington, D.C.

1025 5th Street NW
Washington, D.C.

Coyote Grill

10266 Main Street
Fairfax, VA 22207

District Taco

5723 Lee Highway
Arlington, VA 22207

Greene Turtle

3590 University Drive #209
Fairfax, VA 22030

* sports bar in Old Town Fairfax

Hard Times Cafe (two locations)

4069 Chain Bridge Rd.
Fairfax, VA

3028 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington VA 22201

Havabite Eatery

10416 Main Street
Fairfax, VA 22030

* featuring Greek and Italian
specialties

Oh George

10659 Braddock Rd, Fairfax, VA 22032
Fairfax, VA

Lost Dog Cafe (two locations)

5876 North Washington Blvd.
Arlington, VA

2920 Columbia Pike (smaller venue)
Arlington, VA

* a non-profit, great menu with many
fabulous sandwiches, pizza, and beer;
try the dog collars

Gathering Grounds

10637 Braddock Rd.
Fairfax, VA

* great place to write, hang out,
people watch, get a cup of coffee

Vienna Inn

120 Maple Ave.
Vienna, VA

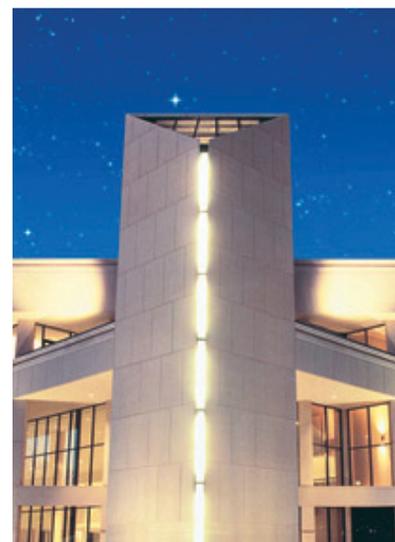
*good local dive; landmark in Vienna;
chili dogs and salads are good

Center for the Arts

George Mason University offers performance art to stimulate our students' creativity. The Center for the Arts serves as the venue for world-renowned music, dance, and theater productions. For a list of events and ticket information, visit the Center for the Arts website: cfa.gmu.edu

All full-time students—graduate students carrying six or more credit hours—are eligible for free tickets. Students must pick up their tickets in person and show their Mason ID. For most performances, two free tickets are available, but sometimes tickets are limited. Students may also purchase discounted tickets in cases where more than two tickets are needed.

The Creative Writing program often uses Grand Tier III within the Center for the Arts for readings and awards ceremonies. Grand Tier III is a great space overlooking Mason Pond.



cfa.gmu.edu

Bookstores & Libraries

Barnes & Noble Booksellers
12193 Fair Lakes Promenade Drive
Fairfax, VA

Books for America Warehouse
3829 Pickett Road
Fairfax, VA

Burke Centre Library
5935 Freds Oak Rd.
Burke, VA

Chantilly Regional Library
4000 Stringfellow Rd.
Chantilly, VA

City of Fairfax Regional Library
10360 North St.
Fairfax, VA

C & W Used Books, Inc.
13888 Metrotech Drive
Chantilly, VA

One More Page Books
2200 N Westmoreland St #101,
Arlington, VA 22213

Pohick Regional Library
6450 Sydenstricker Rd.
Burke, VA

**Politics and Prose Bookstore +
Cafe**
5015 Connecticut Ave. NW
Washington, D.C.

The Campus Bookstore, located in the Johnson Center, is run by Barnes & Nobel and offers a free ordering service for titles not in stock.

Other Favorites:

Burke Lake Park: The park is a great place to relax under a tree, read, write, play mini-golf, practice frisbee-golf, eat ice cream, walk or run around Burke Lake (6 miles of trail around the lake), bring the kids to a playground, camp, etc. Cars with VA tags pay no entrance fee.

Celebrate Fairfax! Festival: This annual (in June) festival has rides, karaoke contest, food, and lots of fun for everyone. Tickets are required for admission to the festival.

Fairfax Fall Festival: Festival tents line main street and University Drive each Fall (October). Local vendors sell crafts, gifts, food, and festival gear. There is live music and fresh kettle corn. There is a shuttle bus service at Mason that takes guests to and from the festival. Parking is free.

Woody's Golf
11801 Leesburg Pike
Herndon, VA
The mini-golf course at Woody's is Amazon themed and lots of fun. This is a family entertainment center offering not only a mini-golf course, but also a state-of-the-art driving range, batting cages, basketball and volleyball.

Theaters

Cinema Arts Theater
cinemaartstheatre.com
9650 Main St
Fairfax, VA

**Fairfax Corner 14: Cinema De
Lux**
11900 Palace Way
Fairfax, VA

University Mall Theaters
universitymalltheaters.com
10659 Braddock Rd.
Fairfax, VA

meet the Staff

William Miller, Creative Writing Program Director*... 703.993.2763 or wmiller@gmu.edu
Jay Patel, Graduate Academic Coordinator... 703.993.1180 or jpatel2@gmu.edu
Lisa DesRochers-Short, Graduate Admissions Coordinator... 703.993.1185 or ldesroch@gmu.edu

DEPARTMENT CONTACT INFORMATION

main line: 703.993.1160 | fax: 703.993.1161 | MSN 3E4, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030

*Gregg Wilhelm steps in as director this summer.