

The English Major in Writing

THE CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM (The English Major in Writing), an undergraduate concentration within the English Department at Northwestern University, **teaches the writing of poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction, as well as courses that cross genres.** By asking students to examine poems and prose works with the eye of a writer, and by encouraging students to apprentice themselves, as energetically as possible, to the best literary models, the Creative Writing Faculty hope to help promising artists in their craft, as well as to educate the discerning readers of the future. Some features of this unique and rigorous undergraduate program include the intensive writing course-sequence, the honors seminar and tutorial, the cross-genre minor track, and the visiting writers festival in the spring.

Admission to the English Major in Writing and the Sequence-Based Minor is competitive. The application process takes place in the spring quarter of the academic year.

Requirements of the English Major in Writing

Two Introductory Courses:

206 Reading & Writing Poetry **AND EITHER**
207 Reading & Writing Fiction—pre-requisite: 206 **OR**
208 Reading & Writing Creative Nonfiction⁴—pre-requisite: 206

Students must take the introduction course in the genre they intend to apply in.

Year-long Writing Sequence (3 credits):

393 Fall, Winter, Spring: Theory & Practice of Poetry **OR**
394 Fall, Winter, Spring: Theory & Practice of Fiction **OR**
395 Fall, Winter, Spring: Theory & Practice of CNF

THE SEQUENCES: Theory and Practice of Poetry (393), Fiction (394), and Creative Nonfiction (395)

These sequences ask students to pursue a year-long program that includes close reading of literary texts, explication and critical writing, imitation and modeling, and original creative work. Departing from Northwestern's typical quarter system, the sequences are arranged in two consecutive semesters. They begin in the fall semester with specialized courses in the fundamental technical and rhetorical bases of each genre. Poetry students study the uses of metaphor and mode, and the theory of prosody (including both the major form of poetry in English—accentual-syllabic verse—and the minor forms—accentual, syllabic, and free verse). Fiction students consider the tenets of realism and its alternatives, and practice different approaches to style, characterization, structural rhythm, and point of view. Creative nonfiction students focus on essay forms, logical method, authorial tone, and techniques of discourse and description. In all genres, imitations and models of estimable writers are assigned. The second semester in each genre, with a second instructor, is devoted to intensive writing of a longer original work—a poem of at least 120 lines or an essay/novella of 50 to 70 pages.

Third-Genre Introductory Course: students must take the intro course they have not previously taken (207 OR 208).

392 The Situation of Writing

Six 300-level literature classes (from English Department offerings ONLY):

2 on material written prior to 1798
2 on material written after 1798
2 from any era

Two non-literature Related Courses, from other department(s) as approved by a major advisor, that broaden a student's background for the study of literature.

The Sequence-Based Minor in Writing

Requirements of the Sequence-Based English Minor in Writing

Two Introductory Courses:

206 Reading & Writing Poetry **AND EITHER**
207 Reading & Writing Fiction—pre-requisite: 206 **OR**
208 Reading & Writing Creative Nonfiction⁴—pre-requisite: 206

Students must take the introduction course in the genre they intend to apply in.

Year-long Writing Sequence (3 credits):

393 Fall, Winter, Spring: Theory & Practice of Poetry **OR**
394 Fall, Winter, Spring: Theory & Practice of Fiction **OR**
395 Fall, Winter, Spring: Theory & Practice of CNF

Two 300-level literature classes (from English Department offerings ONLY):

1 on material written prior to 1798
1 on material written post-1798

The Cross-Genre Minor in Writing

Students not pursuing a creative writing minor through one of the year-long sequences will, as of 2009, now have a new way to minor in writing that provides advanced training in a core genre as well as opening up the curriculum to the crossing of genres. There will be a variety of new courses to choose from, including one-term core genre workshops on the advanced level offered by distinguished visitors both in the Center for the Writing Arts and by continuing appointments in the English Department such as fiction-writer Stuart Dybek, poet Ed Roberson, and the Blattner Visiting Professors in Fiction; a "creative" option for some literature courses taught by Creative Writing Faculty; and the option of stepping outside the core genre to explore a course that combines genres.

Requirements of the Cross-Genre Minor in Writing

Two Introductory Courses:

206 Reading & Writing Poetry **AND EITHER**
207 Reading & Writing Fiction—pre-requisite: 206 **OR**
208 Reading & Writing Creative Nonfiction⁴—pre-requisite: 206

Two Core Courses in One Genre from:

English 306 (poetry), 307 (fiction), 308 (creative nonfiction)
Center for Writing Arts 301 (fiction), 302 (poetry), 303 (creative nonfiction)

One Cross-Genre Course from:

English 306 (poetry), 307 (fiction), 308 (creative nonfiction)
Center for Writing Arts 301 (fiction), 302 (poetry), 303 (creative nonfiction)

Two 300-level literature classes (from English Department offerings ONLY):

1 on material written prior to 1798
1 on material written post-1798

For more information about the English Major in Writing or the Sequence-Based and Cross-Genre Minors in Writing visit our website:

www.english.northwestern.edu

The Spring Writers Festival

Creative Writing will hosts a week-long festival of writers who give master classes, readings and participate in a "guided discussion" on the challenges of their genres.

During the week of April 12, 2010, all creative writing classes will participate in the Writers' Festival with:



Frank Bidart
Poetry



George Saunders
Fiction



JoAnn Beard
Creative Nonfiction

30 Years of Creative Writing

This academic year, 2009-2010, the Creative Writing program is celebrating its 30th anniversary on campus. Events include a winter quarter faculty & student reading series, and, in conjunction with the Spring Writers Festival, a reading of invited alumni as well as a celebration gala honoring Professor Mary Kinzie, founder of the creative writing program.



Major Honors in Creative Writing

The path to honors in the creative writing major involves two courses: the **Honors Tutorial (399)** and the **Honors Seminar (398)**. In the tutorial, taken in the fall, the student works individually with a faculty member on the project. The project may be a combination of older work, which the student revises, and new work, or all new work. The tutorial term also involves an analytic component, so that the student gains further expertise in the close reading of writers immediately pertinent to the project as well as writers who model risk and variety. A board of second readers reviews the work produced during the fall tutorial and makes recommendations for the continuation during the winter of revising. In the honors seminar, taken in the winter of the senior year, students work to amplify and revise their projects, and periodically discuss the avenues to revision with the other honors candidates and the honors coordinator. In the spring, honors projects are reviewed by a committee of Writing Faculty, who decide whether to forward them to Weinberg College for Honors consideration. **Translation projects** in prose and poetry are also possible for honors work.

Other Program Features

Several members of the staff of the Writing Major are or have been editors of literary quarterlies, small presses, or established publishing houses. Thus instruction in the theory and practice of fiction, poetry, and the essay is augmented by the faculty's considerable knowledge of publishing, editing, and book preparation. Furthermore, all of the Writing Major faculty are currently publishing their own work in journals and in book form.

Contributing to the lively atmosphere for undergraduate writers at Northwestern are several publishing and academic initiatives, including the student run and published PROMPT literary magazine. The University-wide Center for the Writing Arts also hosts visitors for entire terms. Writing by students at Northwestern is recognized by the award-winning student literary magazine, *Helicon*, and by the Department of English Annual Writing Competition.

www.english.northwestern.edu



Teaching Faculty for the English Major in Writing

Eula Bliss, Artist in Residence. B.A. in nonfiction writing from Hampshire College and an M.F.A. in nonfiction writing from the University of Iowa. Co-founder and co-editor of the new Essay Press, dedicated to publishing innovative essays in book form. Her work has been recognized by grants from the Vogelstein Foundation, the Barbara Deming Memorial Fund, and the Rona Jaffe Foundation. Her essays have recently appeared in *The Believer*, *Gulf Coast*, *Columbia*, *Ninth Letter*, the *North American Review*, the *Iowa Review*, the *Seneca Review*, and *Harper's*. Her second book, *Notes from No Man's Land: American Essays*, appeared from Graywolf Press in February 2009. Teaches creative nonfiction.

Brian Bouldrey, Senior Lecturer. B.A. Northwestern University, M.F.A. Warren Wilson College. Author of three novels, *The Genius of Desire* (Ballantine), *Love, the Magician* (Haworth), and *The Boom Economy, or Scenes from Clerical Life* (University of Wisconsin Press), and three works of nonfiction, *Honorable Bandit: A Walk Across Corsica* (Wisconsin), *Monster: Adventures in American Machismo* (Council Oak Books), and *The Autobiography Box* (Chronicle Books). Editor of *Writing Home: Literature of the New West* (Heyday), and the *Best American Gay Fiction* series (Little, Brown). Associate Editor of the *San Francisco Bay Guardian's Lit Supplement*; frequent contributor to that weekly, as well as to the *Chicago Tribune*. Recipient of the Joseph Henry Jackson Award from the San Francisco Foundation, a Lambda Literary Award, and the Western Regional Magazine Award. Teaches fiction and creative nonfiction.

John Bresland, Artist in Residence. M.F.A. University of Iowa. www.bresland.com. A non-fiction writer and documentary filmmaker, several of his essays have aired on public radio, while his video essays and webfilms can now be seen at *Ninth Letter* and *Blackbird* online. His print nonfiction has recently appeared in *North American Review*, *Hotel Amerika*, *Minnesota Monthly*, and others. In 2006 he was the recipient of the Tamarack Award for Fiction, a Ludwig Vogelstein fellowship, and was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Teaches creative nonfiction and fiction.

Averill Curdy, Artist in Residence. M.F.A. University of Houston, Ph.D. University of Missouri. She was awarded both a Creative Writing and a Gregory Fellowship. Co-editor of the *Longman Anthology of Poetry*. Her poems and translations have appeared widely. In 2007, she received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Illinois Arts Council, as well as a residency fellowship from the Lannan Foundation. Teaches poetry.

Sheila P. Donohue, Senior Lecturer. M.F.A. University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She was a Randall Jarrell Fellow and served as poetry editor and production manager for *The Greensboro Review*. Former Wallace Stegner Fellow and Jones Lecturer in Poetry at Stanford University, and a recipient of an Academy of American Poets prize and several nominations for a Pushcart Prize. Her work has appeared in numerous publications, including *The Threepenny Review*, *Tikkun*, *TriQuarterly*, and *Prairie Schooner*. Was elected to the ASG Faculty Honor Roll for excellence in teaching. Teaches poetry and fiction.

Stuart Dybek, Distinguished Writer in Residence at Northwestern University. Graduate of Loyola University of Chicago and the University of Iowa. Professor of English at Western Michigan University from 1974 to 2006. Author of three books of fiction: *Childhood and Other Neighborhoods* (1980), *The Coast of Chicago* (1990), *I Sailed with Magellan* (2003), and two collections of poems. His work has appeared in the *New Yorker*, *Harpers Magazine*, the *Paris Review*, and the *Atlantic Monthly*, among many others. Awards include a Whiting Foundation Fellowship, a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, an NEA fellowship, the Nelson Algren Award, a PEN/Malamud Award, and a lifetime achievement award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 2007 he was awarded a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. Teaches fiction.

Reginald Gibbons, Professor. Ph.D. Stanford University, Comparative Literature. Author of eight poetry collections, most recently *Creatures of a Day* (LSU); has also written short stories and a novel *Sweetbitter* (Penguin). Has published translations of Luis Cernuda and Jorge Guillén, of plays by Euripides (*Bakkhai*) and Sophokles (*Antigone*), and of *Odes and Fragments* by Sophokles. Former editor of *TriQuarterly* magazine (1981-97), he has also held Guggenheim and NEA fellowships in poetry, and won the Anisfield Wolf Book Award, the Carl Sandburg Prize, and the Folger Shakespeare Library's O.B. Hardison Jr. Poetry Prize. Teaches poetry, fiction, and translation.

John Keene, Associate Professor. A.B. Harvard College, M.F.A. New York University. Author of the award-winning novel *Annotations* (New Directions, 1995), and, with artist Christopher Stackhouse, of the poetry collection *Seismosis* (1913 Press, 2006). He has published his fiction, poetry, essays, and translations in a wide array of journals, including *African-American Review*, *Gay and Lesbian Review*, *Indiana Review*, and *New American Writing*, and in anthologies such as *Giant Steps*, *Shade, Step Into a World*, and *Other Countries III: Voices Rising*. Recipient of fellowships from the New York Times Foundation, Yaddo, and the Bread Loaf Writers Conference. He was Northwestern's inaugural Simon Blattner Visiting Assistant Professor of Fiction in 2001. His current projects include a new novel, a book of short stories, and translations of poetry and fiction by Brazilian, Dominican, and Francophone writers. Teaches fiction.

Mary Kinzie, Professor, and Director of Creative Writing. M.A. Johns Hopkins University, Writing Seminars (fiction), Ph.D. Johns Hopkins, English. Author of seven poetry collections, including *Summers of Vietnam* (Sheep Meadow) *Autumn Eros* (Knopf) and *Callifornia Sorrow* (Knopf 2007); two volumes of critical essays, *The Cure of Poetry in an Age of Prose* (University of Chicago Press) and *The Judge Is Fury* (University of Michigan Poets on Poetry series); and a critical handbook, *A Poets Guide to Poetry* (University of Chicago Press). Won the 2008 Hardison poetry award from the Folger Shakespeare Library, and a residency fellowship from the Lannan Foundation in 2009. Teaches poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction.

Faculty Continued

Ed Roberson, Distinguished Artist in Residence. Taught from 1990 – 2003 at Rutgers University and from 2004-2006 at Columbia College Chicago. Received the Shelley Memorial Award from the Poetry Society of America in 2008. In March, 2008, Roberson was one of three writers honored at the recent conference "Literature, Culture, & Critique," organized for and about African American writers by *Callaloo* magazine, the preeminent journal of African, African-American, African Diasporic letters and culture. Teaches Poetry.

Shauna Seliy, Artist in Residence. B.A. University of Pennsylvania; M.F.A. University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Author of the novel *When We Get There* (Bloomsbury USA and UK 2007). She has received fellowships from Yaddo and the MacDowell Colony, and is a recipient of the Mary Roberts Rinehart National Award for emerging writers. From 2003-2004 she was the Writer-in-Residence at St. Albans School in Washington D.C. Her work has appeared in *Other Voices*, *Meridian*, the *New Orleans Review*, and the *Alaska Quarterly Review*. Teaches fiction and creative nonfiction.

Rachel Jamison Webster, Artist in Residence, received her B.A. from Lewis & Clark College in Portland, OR, and her M.F.A. from Warren Wilson. Her poems have most recently appeared in *Poetry*, *The Southern Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Madison Review*, *Redivder* and *Blackbird*, and her essays have been published in the *Chicago Tribune*, *The Free-Times* and other outlets. She has received several awards for her work, including an Academy of American Poets Young Poets Prize and an American Association of University Women Award. For several years, Rachel designed and implemented writing workshops for city teens. In this capacity she co-edited two anthologies of writing by young Chicagoans, *Alchemy* (2001) and *Paper Atrium* (2005), both published by Gallery 37. She currently edits the online anthology of international poetry, *UniVerse of Poetry* (www.universeofpoetry.org). Teaches Poetry.

Spring 2010 Visiting Assistant Professor



Cristina Henriquez

Cristina Henríquez is the author of the novel *The World In Half and Come Together, Fall Apart: A Novella and Stories*, which was a New York Times Editors' Choice selection.

Her stories have been published in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *Glimmer Train*, *Ploughshares*, *TriQuarterly*, and *AGNI* along with the anthology *This is Not Chick Lit: Original Stories by America's Best Women Writers*.

Cristina's non-fiction has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Oxford American*, and *Preservation* as well as in the anthologies *State by State: A Panoramic Portrait of America* and *Thirty Ways of Looking at Hillary: Women Writers Reflect on the Candidate and What Her Campaign Meant*.

She was featured in *Virginia Quarterly Review* as one of "Fiction's New Luminaries," has been a guest on National Public Radio, and is a recipient of the Alfredo Cisneros Del Moral Foundation Award, a grant started by Sandra Cisneros in honor of her father.

Cristina earned her undergraduate degree from Northwestern University and is a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop. She lives in Chicago.

Blattner Fellows

The English Department and the Creative Writing Program periodically host an emerging fiction writer who holds the Simon Blattner Visiting Assistant Professorship in Creative Writing. Past Blattner fellows include John Keene (2001), Aleksander Hemon (2003), Tara Ison (2005), Miles Harvey (2006), Suki Kim (2008), Patrick Somerville (2009).

