

Thesis and Honors for English Majors with a Concentration in Creative Writing

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. I'm curious about the creative thesis. What makes me eligible to write one?

A. English majors with a concentration in Creative Writing who wish to write a creative thesis must (a) have an A- average in the major as of the end of their junior year, or (b) petition the Creative Writing Committee with a thesis proposal during the fall semester of their senior year. A thesis proposal will include:

1. A sample of outstanding work consisting of 1-2 short stories, a 15 page excerpt from a larger work of prose fiction or non-fiction, or 5-10 poems.
2. A letter providing (a) evidence of exemplary work within the concentration and consistent progress within the major, (b) a detailed description of your proposed project, and (c) an account of how the thesis project might benefit you and your plans for after graduation.

All materials must be submitted to the Director of Creative Writing by the semester's midterm date as marked in the college's academic calendar. The Creative Writing Committee will respond to your proposal by the end of advising week.

Eligible students typically will take their Senior Workshop—English 492 or 494—in the fall of senior year, and enroll for Senior Thesis the following spring.

Q. If I am eligible and interested in writing a creative thesis, how long does it need to be?

A. The creative writing faculty has determined the following page minimums for creative writing; note that these page minimums vary depending on the genre in which the student is writing.

- Fiction, novella or portion of a novel: 60 page minimum
- Fiction, short stories: must have at least 4 stories, 40 page minimum
- Memoir: 60 page minimum
- Creative non-fiction: must have at least 4 essays, 40 page minimum
- Poetry: 35 page minimum
- Screenplays: 2 acts of a full-length screenplay (60-70 pages) OR 2 short
- Screenplays (40 pages minimum)
- Plays: 2 one-act plays (20 pages per play minimum)

Q. If I choose to write a creative thesis, who will serve as my advisor, and who will evaluate my thesis?

A. The Director of Creative Writing will assign an advisor to each student who plans to write a creative thesis; the Director will also appoint a first and second reader/grader for each student (neither will be the advisor). Together, these readers will determine a final evaluation for the thesis.

Q. I'm not eligible to write the thesis or not interested in taking on this project. What then?

A. Students not eligible or interested in writing a creative thesis will take a Senior Workshop in fall of their senior year and a second advanced creative writing workshop—English 333, 334, 335, 336, 441, FILM 337, THDN 305, or THDN 393—in spring of their senior year, unless they have already taken a second workshop.

Q. I'm an English major with a concentration in Creative Writing. How do I qualify for Honors in the major?

A. To be eligible for Honors in the major, creative writing students must complete a creative thesis and attain an A- in the major including the thesis grade.