

CREATIVE WRITING, MASTER OF ARTS

The Graduate Program in Creative Writing offers an M.A. in Genre Fiction, Nature Writing, Poetry, Publishing, or Screenwriting. Western's curricula differ from other low-residency programs by emphasizing intense training in craft, building of a writing community, close study of historically underrepresented writers, and exposure to the business of being a writer or publisher.

All M.A. concentrations in the Graduate Program in Creative Writing use a low-residency format that engages students in two ways:

1. through rigorous online curricula and regular virtual classes spanning the Summer, Fall, and Spring semesters during which students work closely with faculty and with members of their peer community;
2. through a one-week residency at the end of each summer semester that facilitates connection and community.

All programs require a high degree of commitment and excellence from candidates, who must maintain at least a 3.00 course average to complete the program. A minimum grade of B- in each course is required.

In their first summer, M.A. students complete 3-credits of intensive coursework in their concentration and take CRWR 600, The Common Read & Writing Craft, for an additional 2-credits. In their second summer, M.A. students complete a 1-credit capstone project in which they demonstrate their competency by giving a craft talk, reading, or similar presentation at the summer residency.

During the Fall and Spring semesters, full-time students take two 6-credit courses for a total of 12-credits per semester. Students may anticipate spending between 25 and 30 hours per week on assigned coursework. The coursework typically consists of readings and viewings, asynchronous discussions, and writing assignments for which instructors offer online feedback. Students also participate regularly in live virtual classes and one-on-one meetings with faculty.

Program Information

The low-residency Master of Arts in Creative Writing at Western Colorado University is a 13-month program that emphasizes the development of creative, analytical, and pedagogical abilities. Students choose from five concentrations: Genre Fiction, Nature Writing, Poetry, Publishing, or Screenwriting. The curriculum consists of two regular academic semesters and two summer semesters. During the fall and spring semesters, students complete courses using both live virtual classrooms and online learning platforms. During each of the two summer semesters, students take courses online and also attend an on-campus residency at the end of the summer term.

Total Credits for the M.A. in Creative Writing

First summer = 5 credits

Second summer = 1-credit capstone

Two academic semesters @12 hours/term = 24 credits

Total Credits: 30

Requirements for Full Admission to the MA in Creative Writing

Candidate must submit:

- An official transcript of the bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university showing recommended 3.0 cumulative GPA or higher.
- An 800- to 1,000-word personal statement describing the applicant's experience and commitment to writing. This statement should include a self-assessment of qualifications for admission to Western's Graduate Program in Creative Writing for the chosen degree and concentration.
- A writing sample in the appropriate genre, double spaced and numbered, or properly formatted for the appropriate genre:
 - The Genre Fiction concentration sample should include 20 to 25 pages, ideally from a single work.
 - The Screenwriting concentration sample should include a screenplay of 15-30 pages.
 - The Nature Writing concentration sample should include 20 to 25 pages, in any creative writing genre or a mix of genres.
 - The Poetry concentration sample should include 10 to 15 pages of poetry.
 - The Publishing concentration sample should consist of a 3- to 5-page critical assessment of a story's suitability for publication (story to be provided to applicant during application process).
- Two letters of professional recommendation from those capable of assessing the applicant's preparation to succeed in graduate-level work. All letters must be originals submitted on letterhead, must be signed by the person giving the recommendation, and must be less than a year old.
- Payment of university application fee.

Provisional Admission to the MA in Creative Writing

An applicant who does not meet the requirements for full admission to the Master of Arts in Creative Writing may be considered for provisional admission upon the recommendation of the program director and approval by the Dean of Graduate Studies. A provisionally admitted student will have a maximum of one calendar year to complete any pre-requisite academic coursework. The program director or Dean of Graduate Studies may set additional timeline requirements.

Program Concentrations

Concentration in Genre Fiction

The Concentration in Genre Fiction includes instruction in writing for such forms as science fiction/fantasy, the mystery, romance, and other forms of mainstream commercial fiction. Study includes short and long written forms, as well as strategies and techniques for the effective teaching of creative writing. As the culmination of their work, M.A. students complete a capstone project, which encompasses a book-length manuscript proposal, and present it at their final summer residency.

The M.A. Concentration in Genre Fiction requires the following 30 credits:

Code	Title	Credits
CRWR 600	The Common Read & Writing Craft	2
CRWR 601	FUNDMT WRITING GENRE FICTION I	3

CRWR 608	Genre Writing I- Romance and Mystery Fiction	6
CRWR 609	Genre Studies I-Romance and Mystery	6
CRWR 618	Genre Studies II- Western, Speculative, and Young Adult Fiction	6
CRWR 619	Genre Writing II- Western, Speculative, and Young Adult Fiction	6
CRWR 693	Master's Capstone	1
Total Credits		30

Concentration in Nature Writing

The Concentration in Nature Writing brings students into the contemporary and complex conversation of environmental writing, introducing them to a wide range of authors, literary techniques, and styles. The concentration provides readings and training in all major sub-genres including memoir, personal essay, fiction, poetry, hybrid, and experimental work. Courses include significant reading in primary and secondary sources, workshop, and writing extensive short- and long-format work. As the culmination of their work, M.A. students complete a capstone project and present it at their final summer residency.

The M.A. Concentration in Nature Writing requires the following 30 credits:

Code	Title	Credits
CRWR 600	The Common Read & Writing Craft	2
CRWR 680	Writing Place: New Forms and Techniques	6
CRWR 681	Introduction to Nature Writing	3
CRWR 685	Craft of Creative Nonfiction	6
CRWR 686	Genres of Nature Writing	6
CRWR 688	Writing about Nature and Society	6
CRWR 693	Master's Capstone	1
Total Credits		30

Concentration in Poetry

The Concentration in Poetry brings students into the ongoing conversation of poetics, introducing them to the ideas, questions, approaches, and techniques that have been the concerns of poets across time and cultures. The Poetry curriculum includes workshop-style courses focused on developing voice and expanding range, as well as courses on contemporary authors, poetic craft and technique, special topics in poetry, and professional development. As the culmination of their work, M.A. students complete a capstone project and present it at their final summer residency.

The M.A. Concentration in Poetry requires the following 30 credits:

Code	Title	Credits
CRWR 600	The Common Read & Writing Craft	2
CRWR 630	Foundations of Poetry	3
CRWR 634	Poetry Now	6
CRWR 635	Poetry Workshop I	6
CRWR 644	Poetic Lineages	6
CRWR 648	Poetry Craft and Technique	6
CRWR 693	Master's Capstone	1
Total Credits		30

Concentration in Publishing

The concentration in Publishing brings together the study and real-world practices of traditional, independent and new models of publishing in a rapidly changing industry. The concentration provides training in traditional and alternative methods of publishing, including the various print, electronic, and audio formats, as well as training in the editing, production, and marketing of published materials. Courses include extensive work in designing and producing original and reprint books, formatting for the electronic market, and a wide variety of other publishing business skill sets, including copyright law, and working with authors and agents. As the culmination of their work, students complete a capstone project and present it at their final summer residency.

The M.A. Concentration in Publishing requires the following 30 credits:

Code	Title	Credits
CRWR 600	The Common Read & Writing Craft	2
CRWR 613	INTRO TO PUBLISHING WORLD	3
CRWR 614	Traditional Publishing I	6
CRWR 615	PUBLISHING & MARKETING A BOOK	1
CRWR 623	Independent and New Model Publishing I	6
CRWR 624	Traditional Publishing II	6
CRWR 625	Independent and New Model Publishing II	6
Total Credits		30

Concentration in Screenwriting

The Concentration in Screenwriting teaches screenwriting for both film and television. Each semester pairs an intensive analytical course with an intensive generative writing course. The concentration emphasizes story and scene structure, visual storytelling, character development, development of concept and theme, genre, dialogue-never forgetting that a screenplay is a document that will ultimately be translated to the screen. Through regular mentorship, students refine and consolidate their own best writing practices. As the culmination of their work, M.A. students complete a capstone project and present it at their final summer residency.

The M.A. Concentration in Screenwriting requires the following 30 credits:

Code	Title	Credits
CRWR 600	The Common Read & Writing Craft	2
CRWR 660	Scenes & Sequences	3
CRWR 664	Adapting the Feature	6
CRWR 665	Feature Structure & Genre	6
CRWR 667	Writing the Television Screenplay	6
CRWR 669	TV Structure & Genre	6
CRWR 693	Master's Capstone	1
Total Credits		30