

CREATIVE WRITING (CRWR)

CRWR 600. The Common Read & Writing Craft. (2 Credits)

Provides incoming students with an introduction to Western's creative writing community and to the contemporary state of creative writing through readings and discussions conducted prior to the residency and through participation in craft talks, readings, panels, seminars, workshops, and other literary events at the residency itself.

CRWR 601. FUNDMT WRITING GENRE FICTION I. (3 Credits)

The primary foundation and introduction for the genre fiction track, covering a wide variety of topics including: proper manuscript format, understanding of basic principles of fiction (such as plot and dialogue), the Monomyth, archetypal characters, and voice. Students complete a short story during the course and critique each other's work in a group setting. This course also lays the groundwork for students to work efficiently during the online portions of the program as well as within their own writing process.

CRWR 602. FUNDM WRITING GENRE FICTION II. (3 Credits)

Begins the process of students planning their theses, using instructor-provided tools on world building, novel outlining and planning techniques, and story arc considerations for longer work. At the end of this course, students are prepared to submit their thesis outline and synopsis to their adviser and move forward during the following year to write it for completion the next spring.

CRWR 604. CAREER PLANNG FOR GENRE WRITER. (3 Credits)

Assists students in preparing a detailed career plan covering the 12 to 24 month period after graduation, including writing, submission, and networking plans. On completion, students have a clear roadmap to follow in the years ahead. In addition, students prepare to give a public thesis reading during the residency.

CRWR 608. Genre Writing I- Romance and Mystery Fiction. (6 Credits)

The primary genre writing course for the first semester of the program. Students complete exercises, excerpts, and shorter works in the primary subgenres of romance and mystery fiction, as they study best practices in writing for audiences across the adult, young adult, and middle grade spectrum.

CRWR 609. Genre Studies I-Romance and Mystery. (6 Credits)

The primary genre reading course for the first semester of the program. Students study a wide variety of subgenres, including romantic suspense, historical romance, detective fiction, and thrillers, among others, to build a detailed understanding of the specific tropes and hallmarks of each subgenre and how to apply them to their own work when writing for a variety of audiences.

CRWR 613. INTRO TO PUBLISHING WORLD. (3 Credits)

Provides a basic overview of both traditional and alternative models of publishing, including organizational systems, editing, production and distribution processes, as well as how new technologies have disrupted the industry. Students research traditional publishers as well as platforms for independent publishing. Students develop a concept for an original anthology, write a description, and a solicitation for professional authors to submit stories. This anthology is developed, edited, produced, and released over the following year as the main project for the degree.

CRWR 614. Traditional Publishing I. (6 Credits)

Provide students with a basic understanding of different types of traditional publishing, with a focus on commercial book publishing, but also other forms, such as magazines, newspapers, textbooks, and audio books. Students learn about agents, acquisitions and developmental editors, and other roles in the industry. Analysis of book and short story contracts. Students read the slushpile submissions for their anthology project and select the stories, while adhering to production and budget requirements. Students issue contracts for the accepted stories, and work with authors on revisions in preparation of producing the anthology during the spring semester.

CRWR 615. PUBLISHING & MARKETING A BOOK. (1 Credit)

Students oversee the release of their joint anthology project as well as their individual reprint book, in both print and electronic formats. Using their marketing plan, students generate publicity for their work, identify and submit to appropriate awards, and participate in an actual book signing for their book. While learning about distribution models, students track sales of their books on different platforms and compare the efficacies of various strategies. Students learn about royalty statements, how and why a book goes out of print, and how to determine the success of a project.

CRWR 618. Genre Writing II- Speculative and Western Fiction. (6 Credits)

The primary genre writing course for the second semester of the program. Students complete exercises, excerpts, and shorter works in the primary subgenres of speculative fiction, including science fiction, fantasy, horror, and westerns as they study best practices in writing for audiences across the adult, young adult, and middle grade spectrum.

CRWR 619. Genre Studies II- Speculative and Western Fiction. (6 Credits)

The primary genre reading course for the second semester of the program. Students study a wide variety of subgenres, including science fiction, fantasy, horror, and western genre blends, among others, to build a detailed understanding of the specific tropes and hallmarks of each subgenre and how to apply them to their own work when writing for a variety of audiences.

CRWR 620. Short Forms Genre Fiction Writing. (6 Credits)

Provides students with an opportunity to focus strictly on writing in the shorter forms of genre fiction and gives them an immediately marketable portfolio of materials. Instructors cover craft concerns in flash fiction, short-short, short story, and novelette.

CRWR 621. Business Fundamentals for Genre Writers. (6 Credits)

Provides students a fundamental understanding of the business concerns for writers, including: traditional, independent, and hybrid publishing models; pitching, query letter, and synopsis writing; opportunities for creating multiple streams of income as a writer; introductions to branding, creating platforms, and marketing; contracts; dealing with editors and agents; and royalty statements. Students are required to complete a proposal packet and general business plan, both of which should align with their personal long-term and short-term business and writing goals.

CRWR 623. Independent and New Model Publishing I. (6 Credits)

Students review and learn how technological advances have and continue to change the publishing industry. Study the history of “self publishing” from vanity presses to highly successful champions of independent publishing. Familiarization with various e-reader platforms, distribution and aggregator platforms, and print-on-demand. Students study current methods and opportunities in independent publishing and marketing, including a review of copyright, fair use, and public domain materials. Each student will select a public domain title for reprint publication, verify its copyright status, acquire/scan the text, and proofread it for full production in the spring semester.

CRWR 624. Traditional Publishing II. (6 Credits)

Students develop hands-on skills with book production and design while preparing their anthology project for publication. Students learn copy-editing and proofing skills, which are applied to producing the anthology. Students also serve on a proofing team for a mid-sized independent publisher. Working with authors to complete page proofs, assemble the anthology, and prepare it for release in print and ebook formats. Students learn about pricing models for print and ebooks, and develop a marketing plan for the anthology, identify review outlets and submission processes, and study printing options.

CRWR 625. Independent and New Model Publishing II. (6 Credits)

Guides students through the process of designing, producing, publishing, and uploading a book in print and ebook formats. Students learn in-depth typography, book and cover design, as well as layout platforms for creating print and ebook titles. Research sources for artwork, select fonts, obtain images, and design the cover, lay out the printing masters and format ebook files for their public-domain title. Learn innovative book marketing and distribution methods, and write a marketing plan. Because the field changes so rapidly, students remain up-to-date through current, sometimes controversial, blogs and podcasts. At the end of the semester, students prepare their reprint book project for release during the summer intensive.

CRWR 626. Pedagogy & Practicum. (6 Credits)

A guided discussion on pedagogy theory and practice with weekly questions on points of interest, suggested readings and the opportunity for writing teachers and aspiring writing teachers to discuss challenges and insights about the practice of teaching.

CRWR 630. Foundations of Poetry. (3 Credits)

This course provides students with the foundations and language necessary to write, discuss, and understand contemporary and modern poetry and poetics. It offers students an immersive residency experience involving community building activities, generative writing, craft talks, workshops, panels, readings, and other literary events. The course requires significant work prior to the residency in the form of reading, online discussions, generative assignments, and discussions.

CRWR 634. Poetry Now. (6 Credits)

This course focuses on the factors that influence the composition of poetry and teaches students how to engage in careful readings of the work of modern poets to get a comprehensive grasp of the authors' vision, philosophy, sensibility, voice, and craft. Students track evolving ideologies and social circumstances and investigate how literary schools and counterinfluences contribute to the creation of contemporary poetry. Some seminars may concentrate on questions of craft or aesthetics-figuration, the line, or open field theory - while others will have a theme focus? - politics and poetics, revolution and poetics, psychoanalysis and surrealism, ecopoetics, etc.

CRWR 635. Poetry Workshop I. (6 Credits)

This studio-style course teaches students to develop their craft and creativity in the genre of poetry. Students submit original poems weekly, read selected works of contemporary and canonical poetry, and critique their own work and that of their classmates. Students practice revision and submit revised work in a final portfolio of at least 20 pages.

CRWR 640. From Thesis to Book. (3 Credits)

This course prepares students to create a book-length collection of original poems. Students examine and discuss several poetry collections in terms of their structures and the decisions made by their authors in assembling them into a book. Students also write a prospectus for a poetry collection of their own (the Thesis in the case of MFA students) and prepare an ordering strategy for a chapbook or section of a poetry book.

CRWR 645. Poetry Workshop II. (6 Credits)

This studio-style course teaches students to develop their craft and creativity in the genre of poetry. Students submit original poems weekly, read selected works of contemporary and canonical poetry, and critique their own work and that of their classmates. Students practice revision and submit revised work in a final portfolio of at least 20 pages.

CRWR 648. Poetry Craft and Technique. (6 Credits)

In-depth research and study of the technical aspects of poetry, such as its meter, accent, music, and rhyme, as well as the numerous literary tropes and received and invented forms. Students experiment through readings and exercises that have an emphasis on poetic craft. Students investigate the inner essence of poetry as well as the external forms of poetry, focusing on how one aspect of poetry can develop and strengthen another. This close examination of craft and technique reveals the philosophy contained within the work of particular poets and helps students develop their own poetic philosophy.

CRWR 649. Special Topics in Poetry. (6 Credits)

Offers advanced study of special topics in poetry as chosen by the instructor. Examples of special topics include Eco Poetics, Narrative Poetry, Translation, Erasure Poetry, Native American poetry, The Confessional Poet, etc.

CRWR 650. Graduate Poetry Seminar. (3 Credits)

This course prepares MFA students to be active contributors to the field of poetry after graduation from the program. Students examine and discuss the diverse ways that contemporary poets engage their communities and present their work to the public. Students write an aesthetic philosophy, propose a career plan, and create an annotated list of journals to which they plan to submit their work. Students also prepare and deliver a professional craft talk.

CRWR 653. The Writing Life. (6 Credits)

This course helps students develop as writing professionals. It teaches students how to prepare their creative manuscripts for publication, write a literary review, create a cover or query letter, generate a professional CV or resume, become involved with a professional publication, and teach or give an effective craft presentation. Students identify short- and long-term professional and creative goals, learn writing habits and hygiene and develop skills that promote a lifetime of writing and make connections that help to build a robust writing community.

CRWR 657. Writing the Feature. (6 Credits)

Tutorial style course in outlining and writing full-length feature screenplay. Students engage in analysis of structural and character development paradigms through script-reading and craft their own story from logline to outline to script, while generating extemporaneous writing exercises that explore character and dialogue. Effective format/presentation elements and nurturing of a unique writer's voice are also emphasized.

CRWR 658. Film History and Script Analysis. (6 Credits)

Through exploration of important touchstones in film history and the techniques used in generating industry script analysis (known as "coverage"), students deepen their understanding of the throughlines of subject matter, theme, character, dialogue, and visual elements that thread through film and television history and develop a toolkit for professional analysis of screenplays and teleplays.

CRWR 659. Portfolio and Career Presentation. (6 Credits)

Prepares students for entering their professional careers in the film and television industry. Throughout the course, students evaluate their existing scripts to select the best samples for a portfolio that represents their specific brand/voice. They also create new materials to round out their portfolios and build skills to grow and maintain industry connections, professional opportunities, and healthy writer self-care.

CRWR 660. Scenes & Sequences. (3 Credits)

This course offers students an in-depth introduction to graduate-level work in the construction of dramatic scenes and sequences. Students examine starting and ending points, conflict, escalation, stakes, jeopardy, wants and obstacles, and resolution. Focus on a series of craft exercises designed to increase mastery of these dramatic tools. This course also covers special topics in screenplay formatting.

CRWR 664. Adapting the Feature. (6 Credits)

Tutorial-style course in adapting public domain, pre-existing source material (books, articles, true stories) into a feature-length screenplay. Students source and study story source material from another medium. They then write an outline and a first draft of an adapted short film; an outline of a feature film; and two to three acts of their own adapted feature.

CRWR 665. Feature Structure & Genre. (6 Credits)

The primary course in feature structure and genre for the first semester of the program. Through screenings of feature films, study of feature screenplays, and close reading of texts on feature structure, students learn to apply the tools of feature-writing to their own work.

CRWR 667. Writing the Television Screenplay. (6 Credits)

Tutorial-style course in outlining and writing a half-hour or one-hour episode for a TV series or streaming series. Students write a spec episode beat sheet, an original pilot concept document and beat sheet, and an outline and first draft of either an original pilot or a spec episode.

CRWR 669. TV Structure & Genre. (6 Credits)

The primary course in series structure and genre for the second semester of the program. Through screenings of pilots, study of pilot screenplays, and close reading of texts on pilot and series structure, students analyze the tools of pilot-writing in order to apply them to their own work

CRWR 670. Visual Storytelling. (3 Credits)

Deep study of how the screenwriter uses the tools of the medium to tell a highly visual story, without directing the director. Topics include use of space, light, writing to the cut, wardrobe, behavior, gaze, and realism.

CRWR 672. Screenwriting Workshop. (6 Credits)

Workshop course focused on revision of an existing early draft of a screenplay or teleplay generated in a previous GPCW Screenwriting course. Student, classmates, and instructor engage in intense appraisal of plot, character, dialogue, research, and other key elements of style and craft. This is followed by application of the appraisal elements into a scene-by-scene revision that demonstrates a deeper understanding of visual storytelling and reader/audience engagement.

CRWR 673. The Concept & The Pitch. (6 Credits)

Student learn to track and interpret news from the trades as they develop their future project slate. Emphasis on idea generation, pitching, story research, outlining, and market research as students develop pitches and outlines for their next (post-thesis) projects. Students finish the course with at least three pitches and one outline.

CRWR 680. Writing Place: New Forms and Techniques. (6 Credits)

Explores ways of writing about place with a focus on experimental form and technique in contemporary fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry. Students read significant work in all major genres, produce substantial creative work of their own, and engage in active workshopping of peers' writing.

CRWR 681. Introduction to Nature Writing. (3 Credits)

This course surveys important works in the field of contemporary environmental literature and examines the history, culture, and philosophies shaping them. Through freewriting, creative storytelling, workshopping, and revision, students learn writing techniques in several genres. Emphasis is placed on establishing productive writing practices and establishing a writing community.

CRWR 682. Book-Length Considerations. (3 Credits)

The course fosters the process of writing the thesis or other book-length work. It facilitates the brainstorming, focus, and pre-writing necessary for the completion of a long work; provides students the opportunity to consider comp titles in both style and content; and provides a series of activities designed to help writers think through the scope, arc, themes, characters, and narrative structure of longer works.

CRWR 683. THESIS SEMINAR IN NATR WRITNG. (3 Credits)

Professor and advanced students work together on presentation of thesis, mentoring second-year students, and applying their thesis work to the contemporary conversation via publication, internships, volunteering and engagement with community.

CRWR 685. Craft of Creative Nonfiction. (6 Credits)

Intensive survey of the creative nonfiction genre. Focuses on the entire genre, examining the subgenres of memoir, social and political writing, writing about science, historical writing, etc., while placing emphasis on writing about the natural world. Students read, analyze and write works in each sub-genre.

CRWR 686. Genres of Nature Writing. (6 Credits)

Survey of contemporary writing in the genres of fiction, poetry, and nonfiction. Includes drafting and completing substantial work in each genre, as well as significant workshopping of peers' work.

CRWR 687. Nature Writing Workshop. (6 Credits)

This workshop focuses on the development of craft and creativity. Students submit original work regularly, workshop their peers' work in a student-centered environment, and read selected works of contemporary nature writers. Students practice revision and submit revised work in a final portfolio of at least 20 pages.

CRWR 688. Writing about Nature and Society. (6 Credits)

Surveys and connects creative work responding to the natural world with social phenomena, including politics, education, eco-philosophies and social movements. Students read, analyze, write and workshop peers' work.

CRWR 689. Special Topics in Nature Writing. (6 Credits)

Offers advanced study of special topics in nature writing as chosen by the professor. Examples of special topics include climate change, soil science, indigenous traditions, eco-feminism, etc.

CRWR 692. Independent Study. (1-6 Credits)

Focus on working with a faculty mentor to research, develop, and structure a student's particular areas of interest into a written work. May be repeated for up to 12 credits.

CRWR 693. Master's Capstone. (1-3 Credits)

Culmination of the curriculum for M.A. concentrations and Second Concentrations. Students complete a project, exhibit or publish a work, or offer a performance that demonstrates Master's-level knowledge and expertise in their field. Students attend either the second- or third-year course in their concentration at the summer residency and present their Capstone work to peers. Can be taken for 1-3 credits in the final year of coursework.

CRWR 694. MFA Thesis. (1-6 Credits)

Culmination of the curriculum for all MFA concentrations. In consultation with a thesis mentor, students complete either a single, book-length work or a book-length collection of shorter works. The work (or works) must be of professional quality and suitable for both public reading and thesis binding. Must be taken three times for credit in the Summer, Fall, and Spring of the second year of coursework, for a total of 6 credits.

CRWR 695. Professional Development in Nature Writing. (6 Credits)

This course helps students develop as writing professionals. It teaches students how to prepare their creative manuscripts for publication, write a cover or query letter, generate a professional CV or resume, become involved with a professional publication, and teach. Students identify short- and long-term professional and creative goals and explore job opportunities.

CRWR 696. Introduction to Creative Nonfiction Elective. (3 Credits)

This course provides non-GPCW graduate students with an introduction to creative nonfiction as a compelling vehicle for writing about nature and the environment. Students examine major works of the genre and consider the history, culture, philosophies and policies shaping them, as well as their real-world impacts. Through intensive freewriting, creative storytelling, workshoping, editing and rewriting, students learn effective techniques in descriptive, narrative, analytical and persuasive writing. Strong emphasis is placed on developing a professional writing practice that supports scientific and other professional work.

CRWR 697. Special Topics. (1-6 Credits)

Focus on studies of a particular topic of interest to students in the MFA program to be announced each time the course is offered.

CRWR 699. Creative Writing Internship. (1-6 Credits)

An opportunity for a professional learning experience with an outside organization, institution, business, or agency. Program internship placements are crafted to promote unique learning experiences and address students' career goals. This is a repeatable course for variable credit, up to 6 credits total. Prerequisite: Concentration and Program Director permission.