CREATIVE WRITING (CRWR)

CRWR 600. Summer Orientation. (1 Credit)
Focus on learning mastery of online tools, attending faculty and student readings, and meeting with non-residency mentors during first summer; focus on attending presentations and participating in workshop sessions during second summer; and focus on presenting student thesis as well as attending and participating in other readings during third summer. Must be repeated three times for credit.

CRWR 601. Fundamentals of Writing Genre Fiction I. (2 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. Fundamentals of Writing Fiction II. (2 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 Planning for Genre Writers. (2 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 605. Writing Pedagogy Strategies. (2 Credits)
An opportunity to develop lesson plans, sample lessons, and grading rubrics for a course in writing. Instruction includes strategies for creative writing classes as well as English composition courses, including a guided discussion on pedagogy theory and practice with daily questions on points of interest, suggested readings, and the opportunity for teaching writers to discuss challenges and insights for the practice of teaching.

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, including romantic suspense, historical romance, detective fiction, and thrillers.

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.

CRWR 610. Genre Fiction Writing and Reading Survey. (6 Credits)
A broad genre fiction reading and writing survey course for Out of Concentration students, surveying romance, mystery, speculative fiction, westerns, and young adult category work. Students focus primarily on understanding genre tropes and writing exercises that illuminate them.

CRWR 613. Introduction to the Publishing World. (2 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 and Marketing a Book. (2 Credits)
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 616. Genre Studies II- Western, Speculative, and Young Adult Fiction. (6 Credits)
The primary genre reading course for the second semester of the program. Students study a wide variety of subgenres, including westerns, science fiction, epic fantasy, supernatural, and middle grade works, 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.

CRWR 619. Genre Writing II- Western, Speculative, and Young Adult 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 westerns, speculative fiction, and young adult category fiction, including science fiction, epic fantasy, supernatural, and middle grade works.

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 verbal/elevator pitching, query letters, proposal packets, contracts, dealing with editors and agents, and royalty statements. Students are required to complete a master proposal packet, which includes a query letter, synopsis, outline, and the thesis manuscript (if completed, partial if not).
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 proofreading 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 631. Scansion Immersion. (2 Credits)
Introduction to all major English meters: how to incorporate meters in the poetic line as well as how to identify and analyze them in the works of others.

CRWR 632. Public Speaking for Poets. (2 Credits)
Professional training in all forms of public speaking, particularly the performance of poetry, delivery of lectures, and participation in academic and critical panels. Practical and theoretical study in the craft of using the voice and physical presence to deliver creative, critical and pedagogical work orally to the public, and how to participate in formal conversations with the greatest possible skill and grace.

CRWR 633. Poetry and Music. (2 Credits)
Exploration of the complex relations between poetry and music, from theoretical discussion, to historical study, to the practical aspects of writing everything from song lyrics to choral odes to opera libretti. Students begin to draft their own one-act opera libretti in the course.

CRWR 636. Metrical Traditions and Versification I. (6 Credits)
Close examination of the development of the metrical and stanzaic tradition in English poetry from the beginning to the present. Students read, scan and imitate poems in all the major meters (Anglo-Saxon strong stress meter, the ballad, stress-based imitations of classical quantitative meters, blank verse, triple meters, free verse, etc.) and repetitive stanza forms (couplets, tercets, quatrains, Venus and Adonis stanzas, rhyme royal, ottava rima, etc.) along with studying historical and theoretical commentary. Students read a wide range of works, many of them by poets, in which they describe their craft and that of others, and they compare theories of and approaches to metrical poetry and stanza usage. Students also write a wide range of short essays on various traditions of versification, along with two substantial critical essays.

CRWR 638. History of the English Language/ Poetry Translation. (6 Credits)
A two-stage study, first of the historical development and evolution of English, and second, of the craft and art of translating poetry. Includes the studying and comparison of translations, theories of translation and exercises in poetic translations. Both halves of the course also include critical essays.

CRWR 641. Metrical Traditions & Versification II. (6 Credits)
Close study and imitation of major fixed lyrical forms in English (sonnet, sestina, triolet, ballade, rondeau, villanelle, pantoum, ghazal, haiku, etc.) and lyrical genres (elegy, serenade, aubade, epithalamion, ode, occasional poetry, etc.) Students not only practice the forms, but also read and scan them along with delving into the history, criticism and theory.

CRWR 643. Historical Foundations of English Prosody. (6 Credits)
Consideration of poetic and metrical theory of the 16th and 17th century, the period when English meter and prosody came into its own. Consideration of this crucial development in poetics in light of the development of English as a language, along with theoretical and practical influence from the continent and the classics in the English renaissance.

CRWR 646. Narrative Poetry. (6 Credits)
Deep and broad reading, study, and imitation of the narrative genres and modes of poetry, from the ballad to the epic and novel in verse. Consideration of a wide range of epic and narrative strategies from across the full range of the world’s great literary cultures, from ancient times to the present.

CRWR 647. Dramatic Poetry and Satiric Verse. (6 Credits)
A two stage study, first of dramatic poetry from ancient Greece through the Renaissance and up to modern writers such as T. S. Eliot and into the present, and second of all the major modes of comic verse, including the genres of satire (Menippean, Horatian, Juvenalian) along with technically-based comic techniques such as light verse, parody, doggerel, children’s verse, and more.

CRWR 653. Poetry Book Reviewing/ Poetry, Literacy, Pedagogy. (6 Credits)
A two-stage study, focusing first on close analysis of the best reviews and criticism of the past and present, and practice in writing similar pieces, and then on theoretical approaches and a wide range of techniques and materials available to teachers of poetry.
CRWR 655. Writing about Nature and Religion. (6 Credits)
Introductory survey of major religious texts and commentary insofar as they represent and explore the natural world, including pagan and animist traditions (Greco-Roman, Scandinavian, Native American, African, Indigenous Australian, and more), Old Testament and Jewish religious texts (Tanach, Mishnah, Talmud, Midrash, Kabbalah), the New Testament, the Koran, major Indian religious texts (the Vedas, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Bhagavad Gita and the Puranas), Confucian Analects and Buddhist texts. Students study these works and consider the influence, legacy and role of religion in their own work.

CRWR 661. Film History and Analysis; the Visual Narrative. (2 Credits)
Focus on examination, analysis, and discussion of classic and contemporary films from a screenwriting, story, and character development perspective as well as analyses of theme and motif. Students engage in writing activities and exercises to develop a visual narrative style. All such writing goes towards creating material to fuel the mentoring process in upcoming semesters. The main theme here is: when possible show the story element; don’t have a character say it. Finally the prevailing three- and four-act screenplay structures will be explored.

CRWR 662. Story, Conflict, Character, and Genre in Screenwriting. (2 Credits)
Focus on workshopping of short screenplays and projects along with exploration of story arc, elements of conflict, character development and arc, with an emphasis on film genre choices and styles. Includes proposals for upcoming mentoring semesters, feature-length screenplays, plus an opportunity to practice pitches.

CRWR 663. Screenwriting, Competition, Representation, the "Option". (2 Credits)
Mock or actual 'pitch' sessions of the thesis screenplay. Screenwriting contests researched and entered. Writers Guild guidelines and application explored. Agents, options to produce, and independent film potential also explored.

CRWR 665. Screenwriting Genre. (6 Credits)
Focus on challenging students to write filmic stories in three distinct genre categories, forcing a growth and flexibility to create meaning across a spectrum of setting, time, and circumstance. Dialogue is permitted but is de-emphasized in favor of a more visual narrative.

CRWR 666. The Narrative in Picture Form. (6 Credits)
CRWR 668. Television Drama and Sit Comedy. (6 Credits)
Focus on a thorough proposal for both the drama and sitcom is researched and written. The result will be a complete "pitch" portfolio including a "spec" episode teleplay completed for (both or either) a television drama (and/or) a situation comedy.

CRWR 671. Writing the First Feature-Length Screenplay. (6 Credits)
A thorough review of the existing works in the style and genre of the proposed piece, and a thorough treatment written. Students generate character biographies and a complete story outline. The production is 'pitched' to fellow students along with the mentor. A first draft written and critiqued.

CRWR 675. Writing the TV Pilot. (6 Credits)
Focus on choosing and writing an original TV pilot for either a one-hour drama series, or a half-hour sitcom. In addition to the pilot script, this course requires the students to pitch the idea, come up with marketing materials – i.e. treatment for the series, outline of the pilot, a series “bible,” and loglines for at least 4-5 future episodes.

CRWR 676. The Character Voice-Over. (6 Credits)
The works of noir directors such as Billy Wilder and Martin Scorsese are researched and studied as well as Terrence Malick and others. Internal voice over, false voice over, and the pitfalls of poor voice over pursued in scriptwriting projects, with voice-over and character development emphasized. Prerequisite: Admission to the program.

CRWR 678. Adaptation. (6 Credits)
Focus on taking preexisting source material (books, newspaper articles, videogames, graphic novels etc.) and learn how to begin adapting such into a screenplay. Students examine various forms of adaptation, write a research paper, and write the first act of their own feature adaptation piece.

CRWR 681. Nature Writing Intensive. (2 Credits)
Surveys creative nonfiction as a whole, focusing on excerpts from diverse foundational works and surveying rhetorical components (logos, ethos, pathos) along with specific techniques (description, narrative, analysis, argument) and genres (history, science writing, memoir, journalism, social and cultural commentary).

CRWR 682. The Poetics of Nature Writing. (2 Credits)
Surveys representations of the natural world in poetry and fiction, and theories of nature as expressed in such works. Begins with classic texts by Theocritus and Lucretius and moves towards major modern and contemporary writers such as Jeffers and Snyder, examining other major poets of the natural world such as Wordsworth, Kipling, Keats, Dickinson and many more.

CRWR 683. Thesis Seminar. (2 Credits)
Professor and advanced students work together on student-initiated thesis topics in a seminar setting.

CRWR 684. Teaching and Pedagogy. (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 685. Nature Writing Prose. (6 Credits)
Intensive genre-based survey that builds on the first summer’s intensive. Focuses on the entire genre, but also outlines the emphasis on writing about the natural world, examining subgenres of memoir, social and political writing, writing about science, historical writing, appreciation, and, briefly, fiction, drama and poetry. Students read, analyze and imitate major works in each genre that they will later study in greater detail.

CRWR 686. History and Genres of Nature Writing. (6 Credits)
Historical survey that begins with Theocritus and Lucretius and takes up influential philosophical and non-fiction works about the natural world up to the present. Works include classical philosophy and natural history, medieval and renaissance notions of nature, and other major works, up to and including the 19th and 20th centuries, along with influential contemporary writing.

CRWR 687. Writing about Nature and Science. (6 Credits)
Bridges the gap between the reading public and the scientific community. Surveys the development of rhetorical approaches to the natural world in the light of scientific knowledge, beginning with Plato and Aristotle and considering other major works from the classical period, the Renaissance and the modern world, up to and including contemporary writers. Provides students with historical, rhetorical and technical understanding of the various ways that writers can bring science (and philosophical approaches to science) together with an imaginative response to the natural world in their own writing.
CRWR 688. Writing about Nature and Society. (6 Credits)
Surveys and connects creative nonfiction responding to the natural world with social phenomena, including politics, religion, education and social movements, where nature figures both as fact and as artifact. Explores the ambitions and contradictions inherent in environmental policy throughout history, combining historical survey with close examination of specific policy challenges.

CRWR 689. Advanced Seminar/Special Topics in Nature Writing. (6 Credits)
A course in advanced topics in nature writing as chosen by the professor. One unit devoted to learning the protocols of publishing in the field: magazines, journals, online platforms and books in all publishing formats.

CRWR 690. Screenwriting Master’s Capstone I. (6 Credits)
Focus on a feature-length screenplay, intended for Hollywood or independent production, proposed including a thorough review of the existing works, treatment, character biographies, and generation of a complete story outline. A first draft of approximately 120 pages written and critiqued.

CRWR 691. Screenwriting Master’s Capstone II. (6 Credits)
Focus on completion of the screenplay. Several drafts written and developed with the mentor. Following industry preferences, the screenplay should target approximately 100 pages.

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 694. Capstone. (1 Credit)
Culmination of the student's education at Western. In consultation with his or her adviser, the student completes a single work of genre fiction OR a collection of shorter genre fiction works (such as short stories or novellas) of publishable quality, suitable for public reading, and for thesis binding. Must be taken three times for credit, in Fall, Spring and Summer of the MFA student's final year.

CRWR 696. Introduction to Creative Nonfiction Elective. (3 Credits)
Primarily for non-GPCW graduate students. An intensive genre-based survey of major approaches to CNF. Considers the subgenres of memoir, lyric essay, meditative essay, literary and cultural criticism and journalism, social, historical and political writing, travel writing, writing about science and technology, and other forms. Students read, analyze and imitate major works in each genre.

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 698. Writing the Rockies. (2 Credits)
Provides students with a diverse, immersive conference experience including the opportunity to study with visiting professional poets, screenwriters, novelists, essayists, translators, educators, editors, and publishing professionals from around the country, as well as providing learning opportunities through readings, lectures, seminars, panels, and other literary performances. Requires significant written work and workshop participation beyond attendance at the conference, and introduces students to working in the GPCW online distance-learning platform through written assignments and peer commentary.