

COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO
THE MFA in CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

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I. THE MFA PROGRAM

The MFA Program in Creative Writing at the University of Miami was established in 1992-93 by Professor Lester Goran. Since then, our program has gone from strength to strength, graduating over one hundred writers, many of whom have gone on to publish significant work in poetry, fiction, and nonfiction while securing employment in a wide array of setting from academia to the private sector. With a unique focus on multilingual writing, the MFA Program encourages students to engage with the possibilities of language, including through dialects, code switching, the different registers of a particular language, and the ways language is embodied by voice.

Program Requirements

36-44 credit hours must be completed to earn an MFA. Those are broken down as follows:

- Students must take a Workshop in their chosen genre every semester. Each Workshop is worth 3 credit hours, totaling in 12 Workshop credit hours accrued over two years.
- Students must also take a Forms course in their chosen genre every semester. Each Forms course is worth 3 credit hours, totaling in 12 Forms credit hours accrued over two years.
- Students must take two graduate level electives in their first year. A Forms course outside of a student's area of genre specialization may serve as an elective but can only be taken with permission from the instructor. Electives are worth 3 credit hours per class, totaling in 6 credit hours accrued during the first year.
- A completed thesis is worth 6 credits and is mandatory for graduation.
- Students can also earn 2 credit hours under the category of Research in Residence.
- Third-year students may take up to 6 credit hours in graduate electives.

Students are required to **maintain a B average or higher in all coursework** in order to receive a graduate degree and maintain their fully funded status.

Students are automatically enrolled in all Forms and Workshop courses by the Office Administrator.

The MFA Thesis & Program Timeline

The MFA Thesis is a book project that students work on throughout their time in the program. The timeline for this project is as follows:

Semester 1 (Year 1)

This is the time to explore and experiment in workshop and individually, getting a sense of the kind of story or manner of poems a student wishes to write. Reading is essential at this point, as well as an openness of mind regarding what is possible.

Semester 2 (Year 1)

The late spring of a student's first year (second semester), MFA students will complete and submit a **Thesis & Committee Proposal Form** to the **Director of Creative Writing**.

The Thesis & Committee Proposal asks the student to:

- Describe their thesis project in 200 words, proposing a thesis that demonstrates familiarity with the genre of their chosen work and their own project's position to it. This is evidenced through a working knowledge of literature, and a fluency with their genre's craft, which should be indicated in the description.
- List two or three published works that might be "in conversation" with the proposed project.
- Request a Thesis Advisor from the list of Creative Writing graduate faculty and a Second Reader, from the graduate faculty in the Department of English. Ideally, the Second Reader is also a Creative Writing graduate faculty member. The Third Reader can be a faculty member at UM, a faculty member at another university, or a published writer whose work and expertise is useful to the student. The Third Reader is elected with the help of the student's Thesis Advisor, typically done in the fall of their second year.
- Students are encouraged to list second and third choices for these committee roles.
- Student choices with regards to their committee will be honored as much as possible. At times, faculty schedules might not align with a student's selection, and faculty workload will also be taken into consideration.
- The Director of Creative Writing (DCW) will have final say in the committee formation. A Committee Letter will be sent to students and their advisor. The letter must be signed and returned to the DCW and the front office before thesis work can commence.

Summer between Year 1 & Year 2

At this point, student committees have been formed. Students should have met with their Thesis Advisor at least once before the summer begins. **It is the student's responsibility to arrange thesis meetings in consultation with their Thesis Advisor.** During that meeting, Student and Thesis Advisor will determine a plan of action for thesis writing in the summer. Ideally, a completed first draft will be submitted to the Thesis Advisor in fall on an agreed upon date.

Semester 3 (Year 2)

The third semester is a time of meetings and revisions. The Student and Thesis Advisor will work together to create a **Thesis Calendar Agreement** detailing due dates for revisions throughout the academic year. **A copy of the Thesis Calendar Agreement should be sent to the DCW and filed with the administrative staff in the main English office (Ashe 321).** It is the student's responsibility to be attentive to deadlines set by their Thesis Advisor, and to communicate openly with regards to their progress.

Students who are NOT making good progress as determined by their Thesis Advisor will receive a **Warning of Non-Completion.** In such cases, Students and their Thesis Advisors will agree on a plan of action to get the thesis project back on track for a spring graduation. The DCW will receive a copy of the Warning of Non-Completion in writing and will meet with the student to offer further resources and support.

Winter Break between Semesters 3 & 4

This should be a time for any final, large-scale revisions, and a last chance to make major changes to the thesis.

If a student received a Warning of Non-Completion, winter break may be the time to act on the plan of action agreed upon with their Thesis Advisor.

Semester 4 (Year 2) **THESIS SEMESTER**

Revisions at this stage of the thesis writing process should be detail-oriented, with an eye toward polishing the completed draft for the committee to read.

If a student who has been given a Warning of Non-Completion has not made progress toward their thesis as determined by their Thesis Advisor, they will be put on probation, which may affect time to graduation and/or funding.

Once the final draft is approved by the agreed-upon date established in the Thesis Calendar Agreement, the thesis should be sent to Second and Third Readers, who should be given a month, at minimum, to read the thesis.

With regards to formatting, please see the sample pages at the end of the guide. It is up to the student to get a final sign-off from their Thesis Advisor on their thesis formatting.

In poetry, the minimum page requirement for the thesis is 50 pages. In prose, the minimum page requirement is 150 pages.

Closing Conversation

At the end of the fourth semester, students will hold their Closing Conversation. This conversation takes the place of a traditional “thesis defense.” **It is the student’s responsibility to choose a date that works for all members of the committee and to work with the main office to select an appropriate location to hold the Closing Conversation.** Committee members who are not local may join via digital avenues.

During the Closing Conversation, the Student, Thesis Advisor, Second, and Third Readers all meet to discuss the thesis. The committee members will ask questions about the work and future plans. The student also may ask questions (and should!) regarding next steps for their thesis.

Students should bring the appropriate signing pages to the Closing Conversation (see materials in the addendum). If the Closing Conversation takes place remotely via Zoom, the Student should arrange to have those pages signed digitally by all members of the Thesis Committee.

The completed thesis, signature pages, and portfolio materials must be submitted to the main office in a pdf file.

After the Closing Conversation, the student can expect a feedback letter on their thesis from the members of their committee. Faculty should send a copy of this letter to the main office for the student’s file.

MFA Portfolio Materials

In addition to the thesis, students will also produce and submit to the Thesis Advisor and to the main office:

- **An annotated bibliography.** The annotated bibliography is an annotated list of texts that have shaped the student’s thesis. **There should be a minimum of ten entries.** Each entry should be accompanied by a summary, and an explanation of the text’s influence on the student’s thesis. A paragraph per entry is the minimum expectation.

- **A sample critical paper.** Typically, this is a paper a student has previously written either in a Forms class or an elective course.
- **A sample of creative work that is not part of the thesis.** For poets, this may be 5-10 poems. For fiction writers, a short story, or a set of flash fiction (2-3 pieces) would be suitable.
- **A Process Letter.** The Process Letter is an essential part of the portfolio in that it is an opportunity for the student as writer to discuss their literary path, their goals, and their influences. A strong process letter is 8-10 pages long, typed and double-spaced, and mimics most closely the personal essay in that it cohesively and cogently tells the story of the writer's journey. This is a useful document moving forward, either publishable in its own right, or serving as a document that can be used in future for fellowship, scholarship, and/or career applications.

Thesis Assessment

The MFA thesis is assessed by the advisor and second reader on a 1-5 scale, with 5 being a thesis that is excellent in all outcomes, 3-4 being satisfactory in all outcomes, 2 which indicates the thesis must be revised and resubmitted, or 1 which indicates a failing thesis.

In most cases, a thesis on track to earn a 1 or 2 will not reach the Closing Conversation step, and a Warning of Non-Completion has typically been given at this point. The student will meet with their advisor and the DCW to determine next steps.

The thesis assessment outcomes are:

- The thesis is creatively and technically advanced.
- The thesis demonstrates knowledge of other work in the writer's chosen genre, either via discussion with the advisor or in the work itself.
- The writer has responded to and/or incorporated their advisor's feedback.
- The thesis is without mechanical errors.

Literary Citizenship

Literary citizenship refers to the active participation and engagement by individuals within the literary community. For students, such participation is an essential part of becoming a working, publishing writer. The MFA Program fosters literary citizenship and community in several ways:

The biannual Ibis Reading Series features a poet and a prose writer who are invited to campus to give a reading and meet with MFA students. The Ibis Reading Series focuses on bringing marginalized voices and multilingual writers to UM whenever possible. MFA students support this event by 1) reading the work of the Ibis invitees ahead of their visit, 2) attending the reading, 3) encouraging undergraduates to attend, 4) and being present and participatory during the writers' meeting with MFA students.

Other MFA program-sponsored events include **The Beyond the Book Series**, which brings editors, agents, translators, festival organizers, etc. to campus to speak with students about literary opportunities. Additionally, the MFA program invites published alums to meet with students and give readings.

The program sponsors **Sinking City**, an online literary magazine. All MFA students are invited and encouraged to work on *Sinking City*. One UGrow position is associated with *Sinking City*—Managing Editor. MFA students interested in the Managing Editor position must:

- Demonstrate interest and experience in working with the magazine.
- Apply via the UGrow application process, announced each spring.

All MFA program sponsored events are mandatory for MFA students. If a student knows they must miss an event, they should let the DCW know ahead of time and in writing. If a student misses two or more events, they will receive a formal warning (see Chapter 2 re: warnings).

Other departments and programs at the University of Miami offer opportunities to engage in literary citizenship. For example, each spring, the **One Book, One U program** brings a distinguished writer to campus for a reading and other activities. Students are encouraged to pay attention to UM announcements regarding special events.

MFA students are encouraged to actively participate in community literary discussions, whether it's through book clubs, author events, or online platforms. In Miami, this is easy to do. For example: **Books & Books** holds nightly readings, the **Miami Book Fair** is a major literary event each fall, and **O, Miami** brings poetry to the entire county each spring. MFA students should take advantage of these literary opportunities offered year-round.

Finally, for MFA students teaching undergraduates, literary citizenship also includes inspiring future generations. Engaged MFA students can be role models for aspiring writers and readers.

By being actively involved in the literary community and exemplifying this for undergraduates, they inspire younger writers to pursue their passion for writing and reading, thus ensuring the continuation of the literary tradition.

II. GENERAL GRADUATE PROGRAM INFORMATION

Expectations of an MFA Student

A student's continuation in their appointment is based on their success in their academic program and as a graduate assistant. These standards include a basic code of conduct characterized by professionalism, respect, and collegiality. Students who fail to meet these standards may receive up to and no more than three written warnings before their funding is terminated.

An MFA student is expected to:

- Maintain good standing academically (3.0 GPA or higher) and make good progress toward their thesis.
- Attend all classes, paying attention to each professor's attendance policy.
- Attend all program sponsored readings and events.
- Attend all teaching colloquia (teaching circles).
- Fulfill all their duties as either teachers or tutors in the Writing Center.
- Communicate any problems or issues with their Thesis Advisor, the DCW, or their professors.

Exemptions for illnesses, emergencies, or religious holidays are applied to all attendance requirements.

Grading & GPA Requirements

Grade Point Average: MFA students must complete the program with a grade point average of at least 3.0. If a student's grade falls below a 3.0, then they are put on probation and receive a letter of probation which must be signed and returned to the DCW. The student has until the following semester to raise their GPA to a 3.0 or higher. If a student does not earn a 3.0 in the following semester, they will be dismissed from the program.

The Letter Grade "C": A grade of C is not a satisfactory grade at the graduate level. A student receiving such a grade should immediately see the Director of Creative Writing.

English Department Policy on Incompletes: A grade of Incomplete that remains on a student's record for more than one semester may be regarded as evidence of unsatisfactory progress; if the grade remains unchanged for a full year, the course may not thereafter be used for credit toward a graduate degree.

Teaching Assistantships and Incompletes

Assistantships are annually renewed between June 1 and June 15. Funding may be withdrawn from any Teaching Assistant who does not fulfill the work for an Incomplete and subsequently receive a grade of B- or above within one semester after the end of the course. (It is strongly recommended that any student receiving an "I" endeavor to complete any necessary work before the start of the subsequent semester.)

Graduate Bulletin Statement on Incompletes

The 'I' should be changed to a letter grade within one (1) calendar year after it is given, unless the Academic Dean of the student's primary school or college and the Dean of the Graduate School approve the delay. If the 'I' is not changed within one year, credit can be earned only by successful repetition of the course. **Fellowships and financial aid may be withdrawn if there is an excessive accumulation of 'I's on a student's transcript.**

Leaves of Absence

If students on a Graduate School approved leave of absence do not return by the expected return date inputted on their Petition for Leave of Absence form, they must submit a new Petition for Leave of Absence form to update their expected return date and extend the leave. If a new Petition for Leave of Absence is not submitted to extend the leave, that student's UM IT access (e.g., CaneLink, email, cloud storage, library access, etc.) may be lost. Also, any student who is not continuously enrolled and who is not on an approved leave of absence may lose UM IT access. The Petition for Leave of Absence form can be found on the Graduate School's forms website: <https://www.grad.miami.edu/policies-and-forms/forms/index.html>. Students returning from an approved leave of absence must submit an Application for Readmission by the readmission deadline as listed in the Academic Calendar for the semester they intend to return for graduate study. If they do not, they risk having their UM IT access impacted.

Academic Ethics

It goes without saying that any form of academic dishonesty or misconduct is unacceptable in a graduate program, and such behavior can result in dismissal from the program. Yet some academic ethical standards are not necessarily self-evident. About plagiarism—the presentation of another person’s work as your own—there is no ambiguity. The Writing Studies Department offers a handout that describes the different forms of plagiarism, and English handbooks also offer useful definitions.

Other actions that are not so overtly dishonest, however, may also cross ethical boundaries, and you must be certain before conducting and presenting creative work that your practices fall within accepted disciplinary guidelines. For example, the submission of all or part of a creative work or seminar paper to more than one professor is not customarily acceptable unless you have received explicit permission beforehand from both professors. Questions might also be raised about collaborative work if you have not cleared the collaboration in advance. If you have any questions about particular situations, you should seek advice from one of your professors or the Director of Creative Writing. Additional descriptions of student responsibilities and the graduate student code of ethics are set forth in the annual bulletin of the Graduate School.

Grievances

Occasionally, a graduate student may have a concern or grievance while in the MFA Program. If there is a concern regarding the contents or management of a course (i.e. about course materials, discussions, procedures, etc.), the first step is for the student to initiate a conversation with the professor teaching the course. If necessary, the student or faculty may request to have another member of the department in that meeting. If a resolution cannot be achieved, then either the student or faculty member may involve the program and/or department administrators.

Programmatic and departmental concerns should be initially addressed to the Director of Creative Writing, who may include the Department Chair or other faculty members as part of the discussion.

Please note that these steps, going from local (the classroom) to administrative (program and department administrators) echo the guidelines in the university's Graduate Student Handbook, which is available at:

https://www.grad.miami.edu/_assets/pdf/graduate-student-handbook-2020-2021.pdf:

From the Graduate Student Handbook:

The Graduate School can provide guidance on addressing graduate student concerns or grievances. Grievance or appeals procedures vary depending on the nature of the concern. The University ombudsperson may also be consulted. It should be noted that the Graduate School expects an appeal to have gone through the program or department and then the school's or college's academic dean prior to it being heard by the Graduate School. For more information, please refer to the Academic Bulletin (see "Graduate School Grievance Guidelines" and "Graduate Student Grade Appeal Process" sections). PAGE 12

In all cases, a student may initiate a conversation with the DCW at any time for guidance on how to approach a grievance or concern.

Title IX Protections

From the University of Miami website:

Title IX is a federal civil rights law passed as part of the Education Amendments of 1972. This law protects people (students, employees, and others) from discrimination based on sex in educational programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance. Covered Persons at educational institutions are protected by Title IX — regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, part- or full-time status, disability, race, or national origin — in all aspects of the institution’s educational programs and activities.

Information about Title IX at the University of Miami, including how to get help, can be found at:

<https://titleix.miami.edu/index.html>

III. FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND GRADUATE STUDENT TEACHING

Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistants in the MFA Program receive full tuition remission and a stipend. The stipend for the 2023-2024 academic year is \$25,915. New assistants are assigned to 10 hours a week of tutorial work in the Writing Center.

Second year assistants are assigned one course per semester, typically teaching the Introduction to Creative Writing course (ENG 209). In preparation, TAs must complete the ENG 209 practicum in their second semester and be approved to teach by the Director of Creative Writing. Second year assistants are mentored pedagogically by a faculty member and must attend all required meetings. They will also be formally observed by their assigned teaching mentor. (See the addendum for the Teaching Class Observation rubric.)

TAs interested in teaching in the Writing Studies Program, i.e. Composition/First Year Writing, must have taken the WRS Practicum their first semester (WRS 691).

Occasionally, enrollment issues may affect a teaching assignment. As such, TAs whose classes don't "make" or aren't offered will be assigned tutoring hours in the Writing Center equivalent to their teaching assignment.

Third year students are typically assigned two courses in Creative Writing or in the WRS Program (if they've completed WRS 691). They may be assigned tutoring hours in the Writing Center in lieu of teaching.

TAs may apply for a UGrow position after their first year. A UGrow position takes the place of a teaching assignment (10 hours a week).

Assistants are expected to devote themselves full time to their graduate work and assistantship duties, taking 9 credits per semester during the period of coursework. Taking on other employment on a regular basis during the academic year is a violation of the terms of the assistantship that may result in the loss of funding.

Additional Assignments/Teaching or Tutoring Overloads

Occasionally, TAs may be offered additional service duties by the Writing Center, the Writing Studies Department, a different department or unit on campus, or by the Department of English. To take on the added work, TAs must get permission from the Director of Creative Writing, in consultation with their advisor. For Third year TAs, work overloads (more than 20 hours per week) ALSO require permission from the Dean's office.

If a TAs advisor does not feel the student is making good progress towards their degree, then the overload will not be approved.

International students cannot work more than 20 hours.

Students are strongly discouraged from working more than 20 hours outside of their teaching assistantship.

Professional Conduct and Performance

Teaching Assistantships furnish an opportunity for graduate students to learn about the profession in ways not provided by seminars. Teaching Assistants, like the regular faculty, represent the University, and they are expected to maintain standards of professional conduct and performance as required by the University.

Although the English Department does not define specific standards of conduct, the University website (www.miami.edu) offers such information. The standards published by the University describe obviously unprofessional forms of behavior (e.g., habitual tardiness or absenteeism; use of threatening or abusive language; evidence of intoxication; noncompliance with University or Department policies). In the case of unprofessional behavior, the Teaching Assistant may be counseled by the Director of Creative Writing; if some particular behavior is regarded as sufficiently inappropriate, or if the Teaching Assistant does not respond to counseling, the Teaching Assistantship may be withdrawn.

Funding for Graduate Student Travel and Research

Students are encouraged to apply for outside fellowships and awards, conferences, workshops, etc. Faculty are available to help assist with preparing your materials. However, a TA's duties to their students (including students in the ENG 209 Practicum and the Writing Center) take priority over any fellowships that require attendance. **Students may not cancel class to attend an outside workshop or conference.**

Similarly, a Graduate Student's responsibility with regards to their learning takes priority. **Students may not miss class to attend an outside workshop or conference without explicit permission from your instructor.** Students are encouraged to check all dates for any fellowships, retreats, or workshops and rule out conflicts with their schedule before applying to anything. When in doubt, students should check with their advisor or the DCW.

With regards to funding, there may be travel support for students available through the program, department, or university, **depending on the annual budget.** Priority will be given to outside workshops and conferences with an application process. To access these funds, the following steps must be taken:

- 1) Students must check with their Advisor, and the DCW, before applying. They can advise whether this is a valuable use of time, best approaches to the applications, etc. Students will need their permission IN WRITING to access any possible reimbursement funds.
- 2) Students should send a description of the activity and their financial request to the DCW. They will let you know what is possible re: funding.
- 3) If you are admitted to the workshop/conference/etc., send copies of that acceptance to the DCW.
- 4) Students must follow all University travel rules and regulations. Travel arrangements must be made through the university's travel portal if you are going to be reimbursed.
- 5) Students must remember that they are representing the University, the Dept. of English, and the MFA Program at these workshops/conferences/etc. The professional goals and expectations for GTAs are the same even when a student is not on campus.

GAFAC (Graduate Activity Fee Allocation Committee)

GAFAC will pay up to \$400 per academic year. Note: the GAFAC funds should be the last award for which a student applies. Application forms for GAFAC awards are available online: <https://gafac.miami.edu/>.

Conditions:

- Students must be full time and in good academic standing.
- Students must have paid the graduate activity fee for all enrolled semesters.

- Students are funded only once during the academic year.
- Students must have first attempted to seek some funding from alternative sources.

More information on possible sources of funding for graduate students traveling for presentations or research can be found on the Graduate School's webpage:

<https://www.grad.miami.edu/about/costs-fellowships-and-other-funding/index.html>

Internal Awards and Fellowships

There are several opportunities for additional funding to MFA students offered during the year. These are competitive awards, requiring samples of work and statements of purpose, as well as letters of support from advisors and/or the Director of the MFA Program.

The Pines and Goran awards are funded through donations, reflecting the impact the MFA Program has had on the lives of writers and a desire to support the program's current poets and writers. The other awards are funded through the program and Dean's office.

External judges are invited to read applications, and all reading is done without identifying information included on submissions. External judges are always writers and poets with extensive records of publication.

| | |
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| The Dean's MFA Summer Award* | \$5,000 |
| The Irene Pines Award | \$2,000 |
| The Lester Goran Award | \$950 |
| The Fred Shaw Fiction Prize | \$200 |
| The American Academy of Poets Prize | \$200 |

*Students in their final year of funding may **not** apply to the Dean's MFA Summer Award

Third Year of Funding

During their third semester (fall of their second year), students in good standing may apply for a third year of funding. The application is a competitive process as only 2 third year positions will be offered. Students may also be offered a position on a waiting list. Creative Writing faculty will assess the third-year applications in the fall and issue a recommendation for up to 2 students to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts for funding. A copy of the application can be found in the addendum.

Third year students, as described in Chapter 2, typically teach two courses in Creative Writing or Writing Studies per semester. They are assigned a faculty mentor, who may hold mandatory meetings.

Additionally, third year applicants may be interested in editorial work on *Sinking City*, our literary magazine, or in serving as Outreach Coordinator for the program.

Third year students are expected to fulfill all their assigned duties (teaching, outreach, editorial) with care and professionalism. It is also expected that third year students will attend all MFA Program events.

IV. RESOURCES

English Department Website

The Department of English maintains a website (<https://english.as.miami.edu/>). This website contains general department information along with links to other sites, including those that furnish descriptions of graduate seminars and faculty information.

English Graduate Organization (EGO)

The organization seeks to give information and support, both academic and otherwise, to the students enrolled in the PhD and MFA programs here at the university. EGO connects graduate students at various stages in the program and in different fields to facilitate informal but informative relationships where students can ask questions not just about academic concerns but also job placement, teaching, living in Miami, etc. EGO has put together workshops on writing seminar papers and abstracts, searching for jobs, and assembling CVs. Students have also organized different reading, writing, and discussion groups and have conducted surveys of graduate students' attitudes and ideas about the program. The results of these surveys have been presented as part of the regular liaison between graduate faculty and students. Students also organize an annual spring symposium where they present research in a conference setting.

Graduate School Services and Information

The Graduate School offices are in 235 Ashe; their phone number is (305) 284-4154. Website: <https://www.grad.miami.edu/>

At this site, you will find information on:

- Housing
- Health insurance
- Fellowship information
- Graduation information
- Professional Development

ADDENDUM: APPLICATION FORMS & THESIS DOCUMENTS

– application continues on back –

Please attach your responses to the prompts below to this application form. You can provide your answers in either a numbered list or in narrative form.

1. Describe the specific professional opportunities you intend to pursue in the coming year. These may include external fellowships, residencies, jobs, and/or graduate programs you intend to apply to. Please include a calendar of deadlines for the opportunities you are interested in and a schedule/plan for completing your proposed work/applications.
2. Detail your plans for the revision, refinement, and/or publication of your MFA thesis in the upcoming year. You should also describe your plans for submitting individual works for publication in journals and magazines.
3. Describe your teaching pedagogy, i.e. your approach to teaching, and your teaching goals for the upcoming year.
4. If you are interested in an additional area of professionalization-- arts administration or editorial work—please describe your interest, as well as any relevant, prior work experience—at the University of Miami or elsewhere—related to any or all the areas of concentration offered.
5. Third year students are asked to consider developing a community Creative Writing project. This can have an undergraduate focus, a graduate focus, or be partnered with other outreach projects. Projects might include a reading, panel, participation in O, Miami!, an AWP off-site, or other idea. You may have one idea or several. Please describe what these efforts might look like and how they might benefit the writing community at UM.

Signature _____

Date _____



MFA Thesis & Committee Proposal

1. Your name:
2. Type of thesis proposed (poetry collection, lyric essays, novel, short story collection, etc.)
3. Please list 2 or 3 published works that might be in conversation with your project to help give an idea of what you have in mind.
4. Please provide a project/thesis description of up to 200 words. Your thesis proposal must demonstrate familiarity with the genre of your chosen work and your own project's position to it. This is evidenced through an explicit working knowledge of literature, and a fluency with your genre's craft, which should be indicated in the description.
5. The following faculty are available to serve on Thesis committees in academic year____:
6. Requests for Thesis Director
 - First Choice:
 - Second Choice:
 - Third Choice (if applicable):
7. Requests for 2nd reader
 - First Choice:
 - Second Choice:
 - Third Choice:



Thesis Calendar Agreement

Regarding the thesis project tentatively titled: _____, Professor _____ and _____ have reached the following Calendar Agreement (student and thesis advisor may modify the categories below):

First draft due:

Revision 1 due:

Revision 2 due:

Revision 3 due:

Formatting check due:

Thesis sent to committee members by:

Student:

Faculty:

Date:

Thesis Formatting Guidelines

1A. FRONT MATTER: Unnumbered Pages at the Beginning of the Manuscript

These pages (a-e) are unnumbered in the following order:

- (a) Blank page or front flyleaf (optional).
- (b) Title page
- (c) Copyright page – Master’s and Ph.D. students must include
- (d) Signature page
- (e) Abstract

1B. FRONT MATTER: Pages with Lower-Case Roman Numeral Page Numbers

The pages (f-l) should each begin on a new page and are numbered with lower-case Roman numerals, beginning with “iii,” starting with the Table of Contents or one of the optional pages (f-h) if included. The numerals are always centered at the bottom of the page and are carried through to the page before the first page of the main body of document, i.e., Chapter 1.

- (f) Dedication page (optional)
- (g) Acknowledgment page (optional)
- (h) Preface (optional)
- (i) Table of Contents
- (j) List of Figures
- (k) List of Tables
- (l) List of Abbreviations (optional)

2. MAIN BODY: Pages with Arabic Numeral Page Numbers

The first page in the main body should begin with the number 1. Page numbers for the main body of the document should be in the upper right-hand corner of the manuscript except for the first page of a new chapter, which should have the page number moved to the bottom of the page, centered.

On the pages where the page number is in the upper right-hand corner, placement should roughly be around the intersection of 0.5 inches from the top and 1 inch from the right.

*NOTE: The page number on the first page of a new chapter should be placed at the bottom of the page, centered; the pages that come after it should have the page number placed in the upper right-hand corner. This is most easily accomplished by putting all the page numbers in the upper right-hand corner then moving the page number to the bottom of the page, centered, by inserting page breaks. Instructions on how to do this are posted on the ETD Web site, www.miami.edu/etd, in the “Before You Begin Writing” section. Under “Formatting Guidelines” you’ll find the instructions next to “Page Numbering.” If you still need help with this, please call UM IT Service Desk, 305-284-6565, select Option 8. If a staff member who can assist is not available when you call, an incident report will be created and someone will get back to you to help resolve your issue.

Signature Page

The Signature Page can be one of the most challenging pages to correctly complete. Students frequently have to redo the page because of formatting errors or typos in the document. You may be able to avoid the hassle of redoing the page by taking note of the following:

- Format the Signature Page exactly like the template. DO NOT add to or embellish it in any way.
- Before obtaining signatures, print the page out and proofread it to make sure all names are spelled correctly and nothing is missing. Formatting and spacing errors and typos stand out when viewed in hard copy.
- It is recommended that you check with each committee member to make sure you have included his or her correct title on the Signature page before obtaining signatures. Faculty will sometimes refuse to sign pages that display incorrect titles.

Teaching Class Observation

Instructor:

Observed by:

Class observed:

Date:

Room:

No. of students:

*Scale: 1= Lowest, 5= Highest

| Class and course goals | Ye s | N o | Scal e* | Notes |
|--|---------|--------|------------|-------|
| Did the goals and plan for the day seem clear to students? | | | | |
| Did the instructor make clear how the work fit in with the rest of the course (either implicitly or explicitly)? | | | | |
| Did the activities reflect one or more learning outcomes for the course? | | | | |
| Was the instructor prepared? | | | | |
| Was classroom management effective? Class began and ended in timely fashion. | | | | |
| Pedagogical strategies and classroom relationships | Ye s | N o | Scal e* | Notes |
| Did the instructor's presentation seem effective? | | | | |
| Did the pedagogical choices seem appropriate for the material? | | | | |
| Did the students seem to see the purpose/focus of the discussion? | | | | |
| Did the instructor's questions help guide discussion? | | | | |
| Did the instructor encourage participation? | | | | |
| Did the instructor's questions encourage and guide critical thinking? | | | | |
| Did s/he allow enough time for thought after asking questions? | | | | |
| Did s/he treat students with respect? | | | | |
| Did s/he restate or clarify student comments if necessary? | | | | |
| Did he/she follow up on student comments to encourage further thought/contribution, both from the individual responder and the class as a whole? | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---------|--------|------------|-------|
| Did s/he provide appropriate praise and motivational comments? | | | | |
| Was the general level of student attentiveness high? | | | | |
| Did the instructor seem to have rapport with the students? | | | | |
| Was the level of student participation appropriate, given the lesson? | | | | |
| Small group discussion: | | | | |
| Were the learning objectives and instructions for the work clear? | | | | n/a |
| Were the mechanics of the group work handled effectively? | | | | n/a |
| Class Content | Ye s | N o | Scal e* | Notes |
| Was the work focused on student writing? | | | | |
| If a reading was discussed, did the instructor make the ties between the reading and student work apparent? | | | | n/a |

Glossary of Abbreviations and Terms

ENG the three-letter code for the Department of English

WRS the three-letter code for the Department of Writing Studies

WC Writing Center, located in the Richter Library, and part of the work of the Department of Writing Studies

DUS Director of Undergraduate Studies

DGS Director of Graduate Studies

DCW Director of Creative Writing

TA Teaching Assistant. Sometimes GTA is used instead and stands for Graduate Teaching Assistant

Warning of Non-Completion a written warning given by a Thesis Advisor to a student in their thesis year. It serves as an alert that the student is not making good progress toward their graduation. A Warning of Non-Completion is followed up by meetings with the student and the DCW in order to craft a plan moving forward.

Thesis Calendar Agreement a document, signed by both a thesis student and their advisor, agreeing to a set of due dates for the thesis.

Thesis year this is the second year of an MFA's student's plan of study. The thesis is due in the spring of this year.