

Post-MFA Certificate in the Teaching of Creative Writing

The Post-MFA Certificate in the Teaching of Creative Writing program, offered by the Creative Writing Department of the Division of Graduate and Professional Studies, is open to any student holding an MFA in Creative Writing from AULA or another accredited institution, and requires one semester beyond the completion of the MFA degree. During this term the student engages in systematic study of the theory and practice of teaching creative writing and composition, a salutary preparation for working in classroom and workshop settings at any educational level.

Although the Post-MFA Certificate in the Teaching of Creative Writing is not a formal teaching “credential,” it benefits the following groups:

- MFA holders who desire to teach, but have little teaching experience
- MFA holders who are either college/university writing instructors or public school teachers who want to learn more about the intersection of creative and expository writing pedagogies, and to incorporate this knowledge into their teaching
- MFA holders who desire to improve their marketability as teachers
- MFA holders who have teaching careers well under way and seek to improve their current positions through postgraduate professional development encouraged or required by their employers

Note: The California Community College system does not recognize either the MFA or the Post-MFA Certificate as a valid teaching credential for instructors of English. The Post-MFA Certificate is not a program that leads to a teaching credential for secondary or elementary education.

PMFA Program Learning Outcomes

All Post-MFA students incorporate five program learning outcomes and activities into their project period work. The first four of these are accomplished during the student's supervised teaching placement (overseen by the on-site supervisor) and one in the student's independent research on creative writing pedagogy (overseen by the AULA pedagogy mentor).

Graduates of the PMFA program will:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to the range of responsibilities required of an apprentice teacher who is learning to become a professional educator. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Accountability to all chains of command (on-site teaching supervisor, PMFA mentor, Creative Writing Department chair, and Creative Writing Department office)
 - Professional demeanor in all activities related to the program and one's teaching assignment
 - Professional documentation, as needed
 - Communicating clearly and in a timely manner with students, supervisors, and colleagues
 - Engaging with the life of the department of the host institution, including attending faculty meetings (when invited)
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the dynamics that exist in a particular writing classroom or online setting, including the differing viewpoints and learning styles of individual students.
3. Professionally critique one's own strengths and weaknesses as a teacher, and adjust one's own teaching as needed.
4. Demonstrate the ability to develop an assignment or lesson plan that responds to the class's stated learning goals.
5. Develop a critical vocabulary from research in pedagogy to identify and articulate various teaching methodologies and their relation to student learning styles.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Post-MFA Certificate in the Teaching of Creative Writing is completed in three stages with the following learning activities:

Stage I: Pre-Project Period Residency

The entering Post-MFA Certificate student must attend a ten-day residency on the Antioch University Los Angeles campus during which s/he completes the following requirements:

- Orientation to the Certificate in the Teaching of Creative Writing
- Readings in the Pedagogy of Creative Writing seminar
- Teaching Academic Writing seminar
- Workshop in the Pedagogy of Creative Writing
- Attend all seminars, presentations, or panels dealing with creative writing pedagogy

- Five additional residency learning activities (seminars, presentations, panels, roundtables, etc. Attendance at faculty and student readings does not fulfill this requirement.)

Post-MFA students are strongly encouraged to generate a list of possible teaching placements (locations and supervisor contact information) before beginning in the program, and to bring it to the first on-campus residency. Students with a list of possible placements prior to Stage I will be able to make the best use of their first on-campus residency.

The first three requirements listed above may have been fulfilled by AULA MFA students at previous residencies.

Stage II: Semester Project Period

During the five-month project period, Post-MFA Certificate students perform the following off-campus activities:

- Participate in supervised teaching of creative writing, coordinated with the assistance of an AULA creative writing pedagogy mentor. This includes negotiating and fulfilling a Supervised Teaching Contract with an approved on-site supervising instructor in the student's home region.
- Read widely in the pedagogy of creative writing and provide written annotations of books read.
- Participate in an online conference on creative writing pedagogy, supervised by an AULA creative writing pedagogy mentor.
- Write a paper on some aspect of creative writing pedagogy, supervised by an AULA creative writing pedagogy mentor.

The details of each of the above are negotiated with each student's mentor and specified in the Project Period Contract.

Stage III: Post-Project Period Short Residency

Post-MFA Certificate students are required to attend at least the first three days of their post-project period residency. A student may choose to attend as many additional days of the post-project period residency as s/he wishes. Requirements are as follows:

- Present a lecture related to the teaching of creative writing or participate in a pedagogy panel with fellow certificate students.
- Submit an archive copy of the Pedagogy Paper, plus an annotated bibliography of readings in the pedagogy of creative writing.
- Participate in an individualized teaching career development session with the chair of the Creative Writing Department and pedagogy mentor.