

## M.F.A. in Creative Writing Requirements and Description (42 Credits)

<b>Required Courses</b> (24-27 Credits)			
Writing Workshops: MFA 688 (15-18 Credits)	<i>Semester</i>	<i>Genre or Topic</i>	<i>Credits/Grade</i>
Tutorials: MFA 677 (5 Credits)			
Thesis: MFA 699 (4 Credits)			
	Title:		
	Date Completed:		
<b>Elective Courses</b> (15-18 Credits)			
	<i>Semester</i>	<i>Genre or Topic</i>	<i>Credits/Grade</i>
<b>Total Degree Credits (42 minimum)</b>			

Thesis Committee members (4) and date of thesis approval:

Oral Discourse (date taken/passed):

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The Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing is a degree for students who wish to improve their creative writing abilities on the graduate level. The program is designed to be completed on either a full-time or part-time basis, in two and a half to seven years. The M.F.A. is a terminal degree, consisting of a minimum of 42 semester credits; most of a student's work will be in actual writing courses, in tutorials, and in thesis preparation.

Admission Requirements

1. University-wide admission requirements: Baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution and GPA of 2.75 on a 4.0 scale, or at least 3.25 for the last 30 credits of graded course work.
2. Submission of a representative manuscript sample of creative work: 20-25 pages or original writing in fiction, 10-20 pages of poetry, or a similar amount of material in the student's preferred genre.
3. Submission of three letters of reference from those who can speak to the student's potential and/or experience as a creative writer.

The M.F.A. Program Coordinator, in consultation with members of the M.F.A. staff, will evaluate the applicant's transcript, prescribing additional undergraduate credits for those who have inadequate background in English and American literature and creative writing. Exceptions may be made for outstanding students who have majored in related fields. Gifted writers with no specific degree intentions may study in the program as special students. Applicants who earned their undergraduate degrees more than 10 years before the time of application must be interviewed by the M.F.A. Program Coordinator or his/her designee before admission. The Graduate Record Examination is not required for admission.

All application materials should be clearly labeled for the M.F.A. in Creative Writing and submitted directly to the Graduate Admissions Office, Minnesota State University Moorhead. Students will be forwarded a copy of the MSU Graduate Bulletin and a checklist for admission. Applications will also require a \$15 application fee, as well as official transcripts from all institutions previously attended.

Application Deadlines: May 1 for fall semester and November 1 for spring semester.

### **Degree Requirements**

1. A minimum of 42 semester credits.
2. A minimum of 28 of the total 42 semester credits required for the degree must be taken at Moorhead State University. Transferred credit must have received a grade of either A or B, and must have been completed within seven years previous to admission.
3. 3.0 grade point average. A grade of "C" or less is unacceptable in the program.
4. Thesis.
5. Oral examination administered by the student's thesis committee following completion of the thesis and based on the thesis and on the student's program.

### **Degree Program**

Students are expected to emphasize a single genre (fiction, poetry, film, playwriting or creative nonfiction), but they are required to take at least one workshop in a second genre. In addition to workshops offered by full-time faculty, students will also be eligible for intensive workshops occasionally taught by visiting writers. The final requirement is a thesis-length manuscript of work (usually in one genre) that has been approved by the thesis director and a thesis committee.

### **Advising**

All M.F.A. candidates in Creative Writing will be assigned an advisor by the M.F.A. Program Coordinator. Each candidate's progress will be reviewed at least once a year by the Program Coordinator and M.F.A. faculty. This

annual review and evaluation will confirm satisfactory progress or recommend that a student be placed on probation for one year.

## Course Requirements

The 42 semester credits of course work are apportioned into two groups, required and elective.

### 1. Required Courses:

A. A minimum of three credits per year in graduate-level workshop courses to a minimum of 15 semester credits and a maximum of 18 semester credits.

B. Nine credits in graduate-level literature courses and/or seminars.

C. Five credits in MFA 677: Tutorial. The consideration of various problems in literature.

D. Four credits in MFA 699: Thesis.

2. Elective Courses: All candidates must successfully complete a minimum of six or a maximum of nine credits of electives from selected English courses taken for graduate credit, Master of Liberal Arts (M.L.A.) courses (to be chosen in consultation with the candidate's advisor), or other graduate courses taken with permission of the M.F.A. Program Coordinator and the candidate's advisor. Elective courses may be taken to strengthen areas of weakness; to pursue historical, theoretical or technical studies that the candidates find useful; or to enrich their degree programs appropriately with an area of specialization. Courses taken for graduate credit in comparative literature, literature in translation, foreign language or an applied course in another art or discipline may be taken with permission. For candidates who wish to strengthen a professional expertise, internship credit (MFA 699: Internship-Writing) may be substituted for all or part of the above elective credits, if approved by the Program Coordinator and an Internship Committee composed of M.F.A. faculty.

## Courses Applicable to the Program

### English Department Courses:

563: History of the English Language 580: Advanced World Literature  
509: Studies in American Literature 585: Topics/Authors  
510: Studies in British Literature 588: Advanced Creative Writing  
530: Individual Authors 595: Advanced Study in Language or Literature  
550: Critical Traditions 597: Tutorial

### Master of Liberal Arts Program Courses:

621: Existentialism and Literature  
631: Dimensions of Drama  
651: Autobiographical Writing  
658: Literature and Psychology: The Archetypes of Midlife  
660: Special Topics (as applicable to language and literature)

### M.F.A. Courses

MFA 669: Internship-Writing (1-6 credits). Supervised employment requiring substantial writing practice in government, private agency, or other appropriate venue.

Prerequisite: consent of M.F.A advisor and director and committee.

MFA 677: Tutorial (1-3 credits). The consideration of various problems in literature or language, agreed upon by the instructor and student.

Prerequisite: consent of instructor and advisor.

MFA 688: M.F.A Workshop (3 credits). Graduate-only work in the writing of poetry, fiction, plays, film, or creative nonfiction. Students may repeat this course.

Prerequisite: consent of instructor.

MFA 699: M.F.A Thesis.

### Thesis

The candidate will submit a body of original work of publishable quality. The finished manuscript must be of such length as is appropriate to published books in its genre and is to be written under the direction of members of the program staff. Candidates must preface their thesis with a short introduction which discusses influences, process, and/or issues related to the structure and content of the thesis, as well as a comprehensive bibliography completed in consultation with the thesis director. Once completed, the thesis will be defended orally before the candidate's thesis director and readers, emphasizing the project's content, sources, structure, style, and value. Thesis credits will normally be taken at the end of a candidate's program.

### Oral Examination

A thesis committee is appointed as early as is practicable in a candidate's course of study to meet with the candidate and to examine work. The committee must be in place by the time a candidate begins to schedule thesis credits. This committee will consist of three members of the M.F.A. faculty, usually including the Program Coordinator, and one member from outside of the M.F.A. program and English Department to be appointed by the Dean of Academic Services; members will read the first and subsequent drafts of the thesis and offer specific criticism. The committee must approve the thesis before the candidate can receive the M.F.A.

### Individual Profiles of the M.F.A. Faculty

Alan Davis, Professor, is Chair of the English Department at Minnesota State University Moorhead. He received a Ph. D. at the University of Denver. His collection of stories, *Rumors from the Lost World*, won the Minnesota Voices Award and was published in 1993. He is also Editor of *American Fiction*, an annual anthology of short fiction. His articles, stories, and book reviews have appeared in numerous publications, including *The Hudson Review*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *Kirkus* and *South Dakota Review*. He has been awarded a Minnesota State Arts Board Fellowship, a Breadloaf Writers' Conference Scholarship, and a Loft-McKnight of Distinction,

Lin Enger, Assistant Professor, received an M.F.A. from the University of Iowa. Prior to coming to Moorhead State, he was Chair of the Writing Division at the Center for Arts Education, Minnesota's Residential Arts High School in Golden Valley, MN. He has published five novels in collaboration with his brother Leif, most recently *The Sinners League* (MacMillan, 1994). He has published short fiction in several literary journals and also serves as Assistant Editor for the annual anthology *American Fiction* (New Rivers Press).

Gordon Jackson, Associate Professor, received a Ph.D. from the University of Utah, an M.F.A. in Fiction from the University of Iowa, and an M.A. in Philosophy from the University of Illinois-Chicago. His stories and poems have appeared in a number of journals, including *Quarterly West*, *Ploughshares* and *Western Humanities Review*, and in anthologies including *American Fiction*, *Sudden Fiction: American Short-short Stories*, and *Other Sides of Silence: New fiction from Ploughshares*. He has been editor and fiction editor of *Karamu*, a literary quarterly published by Eastern Illinois University.

David Mason, Associate Professor, received his Ph.D. from the University of Rochester. In 1995, he was chosen Minnesota's Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation. His book of poems, *The Buried Houses* (Story Line Press, 1991), won the Nicholas Roerich Poetry Prize. His 45 page narrative poem, "The Country I Remember," won the Alice Fay DiCastagnola Award from the Poetry Society of America (chosen by Joyce Carol Oates (and was published in its entirety in *The Hudson Review*. It will also be published as a part of his new collection of poems, *The Country I Remember* (Story Line Press, 1996). His story "Pullandbedammed Point" won third prize in the third edition of *American Fiction* (chosen by guest judge Anne Tyler). His poems, essays, translations, reviews and stories have appeared in many journals, including *Grand Street*, *Hudson Review*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Poetry*, and *Sewanee Review*. He is also co-editing an anthology, *Poets of the New Formalism*. He has been a Poetry Fellow at the Wesleyan Writers Conference and in 1995 was the recipient of a Minnesota State Arts Board grant.

Thom Tamaro, Professor of Multidisciplinary Studies, received a Ph.D. from Ball State University. He is the author of two collections of poems, *When the Italians Came to My Home Town* (1995) and *Minnesota Suite* (1988), both from Spoon River Poetry Press. He has edited *Roving Across Fields: A Conversation with William Stafford and Uncollected Poems 1942-1982* (Barnwood Press, 1983) and *Remembering James Wright* by Robert Bly (Ally Press, 1991). He is also co-editor of *Common Ground: A Gathering of Poems from the Rural Midwest* (Dacotah Territory Press, 1989), *Inheriting the Land: Contemporary Voices from the Midwest* (University of Minnesota Press, 1993), and *Imagining Home: Writing from the Midwest* (University of Minnesota, 1995). His poems, essays and reviews have appeared in numerous anthologies and journals, including *Chicago Review*, *College Composition and Communication*, *Midwest Quarterly*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *South Dakota Review* and *Quarterly West*. He is a recipient of two Minnesota State Arts Board Awards in poetry, and in 1995 he was the recipient of a Loft-McKnight Award in poetry.

Mark Vinz, Professor and M.F.A. Program Coordinator, received an M.A. from the University of Kansas and completed two additional years of graduate study at the University of New Mexico. His many books of poems include *Minnesota Gothic* (Milkweed Editions, 1992), winner of the 1991 "Seeing Double" Collaborative Book Competition (with photographer Wayne Gudmundson); *Later Night Calls* (New Rivers Press, 1992); *Mixed Blessings* (Spoon River Poetry Press, 1989); *Climbing the Stairs* (Spoon River, 1983); and *The Weird Kid* (New Rivers, 1983), winner of the Minnesota Voices Award. He is co-editor of *Imagining Home: Writing from the Midwest* (University of Minnesota Press, 1995), *Inheriting the Land* (University of Minnesota, 1993), *Beyond Borders: New Writing from Manitoba, Minnesota, Saskatchewan, and the Dakotas* (New Rivers, 1992), *Common Ground* (Dacotah Territory Press, 1996). Numerous poems, stories, and essays are in print. He has been awarded a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in Poetry and, on five separate occasions, a PEN Syndicated Fiction Award.

Richard Zinober, Associate Professor, received an M.F.A. from Columbia University, an M.S. in film from Boston University, and a M.A. in English from Windsor University in Canada. He is a prize-winning playwright: *Seekers of the Light*, chosen from among 500 submissions in a contest, was produced in 1990 by the Ann White Theatre in Ft. Lauderdale; *The House at the Edge of the World* took first prize at the Southeastern Theater Conference Competition and received a staged reading in 1992 in Orlando. He has been awarded developmental workshops and staged readings by various theaters in New York City, Minneapolis and Oregon. His stories have appeared in several journals.

Students will also have opportunity to work with writers coming to campus via the Tom McGrath Visiting Writers Series. Co-directed by Thom Tamaro and Mark Vinz, the Series began in 1985 and has featured such notable authors as Jonis Agee, Carol Bly, Robert Bly, Siv Cedering, Diane Glancy, Paul Gruchow, Patricia Hampl, Jon Hassler, Ted Kooser, Reginald McKnight, Tim O'Brien, William Stafford, Susan Allen Toth and Gerald Vizenor. In the spring of 1996, the noted poet and teacher Patricia Goedicke will be on campus for a week-long residency and will teach an M.F.A. writing workshop in poetry.

Multi-media consultants to the M.F.A. Program include Wayne Gudmundson (Mass Communications) and Timothy Ray (Art).