

Monmouth University
Department of English
Master of Arts in English

**CREATIVE WRITING:
INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MANUSCRIPT SEMINAR**

General Information

The MA Creative Writing Manuscript constitutes the capstone to the student's work in the English MA program, and it should represent the student's strongest creative works.

The MA manuscript should extend and deepen both thematically and stylistically the creative work written in previous MA-level courses, through intensive revision of that work and through the writing of new work, such that it can be used as a writing sample in a student's application for subsequent graduate study (MFA or PhD) or form the basis for a conference presentation. If a manuscript is exceptional, the advisor may recommend that the student revise the manuscript in part or whole toward publication.

Students will register for six credits of mentored course work, Manuscript Seminar, normally in their final semester, though a two-semester (three credits each) seminar may be arranged during Fall/Spring or Spring/Fall with the permission of the faculty Mentor and the Director of Graduate Study. Students may not register for Manuscript Seminar in the summer.

Preparing and Registering for Manuscript Seminar

The Manuscript will be written under the supervision of a full-time faculty member in the English Department with additional guidance from a Second Reader. The Manuscript Mentor will normally be a member of the Graduate Faculty. In cases where the Mentor is not a member of the Graduate Faculty, the Second Reader must be a member of the Graduate Faculty. In the semester before the student wishes to begin Manuscript Seminar, the student must identify the Manuscript Mentor and Second Reader, consult with the Graduate Program Director about the intent to begin, and with the Mentor and Second Reader set out the direction and scope of the Manuscript.

Before registering for Manuscript Seminar, the student must submit a 500-word Proposal describing the project's nature, aesthetic approach, formal considerations, and goals and providing a brief bibliography (approximately five items) of key primary and secondary sources. The student should consult with the Manuscript Mentor and the Second Reader in preparing the Proposal. Preparation of the Proposal is not a formality, but a substantive part of the intellectual and creative process of developing a project of appropriate focus.

Registration for Manuscript Seminar is accomplished by submitting, through e-forms, the Thesis Application/ Registration form with the attached Proposal as approved by the Mentor and Second Reader. Students would normally register after completing 18 graduate credit hours.

Manuscript Seminar

During the semester of registration for Manuscript Seminar, the student will submit previously written creative work as well as new creative work in a single genre to the Mentor, and will substantially revise that work in consultation with the Mentor. The student will also prepare an arrangement that demonstrates each work's unique characteristics while allowing the works to enhance each other and suggest a cohesive vision. The manuscript may consist of poems, short stories, plays, creative nonfiction, a novella, or (with the Mentor's permission) sections of a larger work in a single genre.

The student must complete an Annotated Bibliography of approximately 20 items approved by the Mentor. Such items may include novels; novellas; plays; books of creative non-fiction, short fiction, or poetry; books on craft; volumes of correspondence; biographies and/or autobiographies; books of interviews; critical studies; and journal articles. Each item in the Annotated Bibliography should include one to two substantial paragraphs of commentary, including summary as well as comments on how the item reflects or does not reflect the manuscript's aesthetic underpinnings. The entire Annotated Bibliography will consist of approximately 25 pages.

In addition, the student will prepare a brief (3-5 pages) prose introduction to the manuscript, consisting of a statement of aesthetics, a consideration of influences, and a discussion of the discipline and craft evident in the creative work.

The length of the Manuscript shall be determined by the candidate and mentor and be appropriate to the genre-- generally not more than 80 pages, exclusive of aesthetic statement, table of contents, acknowledgments, notes, or similar materials. Normally, 40-50 pages for poetry and prose and 80 pages for drama will be deemed sufficient. A hard copy of a complete draft of the Manuscript should be submitted no later than the tenth week of the semester to the Mentor and the Second Reader to allow feedback with time for revision before the Defense.

With permission from the faculty Mentor and the Director of Graduate Study, a student may register for a two-semester (three credits each) seminar.

During the first semester, the student will complete 20-25 pages of poetry or prose, or 40 pages of drama, consisting of both previously written work that has been revised substantially, along with new work. At least half of the work must be new. In addition, the student will complete 10 annotations for the Bibliography. During the second semester, the student will complete an additional 20-25 pages of poetry or prose, or 40 pages of drama, which may consist either of previously written work (not already included in the manuscript) that has been revised

substantially, along with new work, or of new work only. Drafts of new work should be revised during the semester under the supervision of the Mentor. At least half of this semester's work must be new. In addition, the student will complete the final 10 annotations for the Bibliography, and craft the prose Introduction (3-5 pages) to the manuscript.

The completed manuscript should be submitted in hard copy to both the Mentor and Second Reader no later than the tenth week of semester to allow feedback from both and time for revision before the Defense.

As the Manuscript nears completion, the student must schedule a formal Defense with the Manuscript Mentor, Second Reader, and Graduate Program Director. This should occur during the last week of regularly scheduled classes (not during final exams). The faculty of the English department and fellow graduate students will be invited to attend. The Defense will normally last one hour, during which the student will read, with commentary, a portion of the Manuscript (or, in the case of drama, present a scene from the play), then answer questions from the faculty. Following the Defense, the student must submit a revised version of the Manuscript in digital form as well as in hard copy. Two bound copies of the Manuscript will be produced: one will be archived in the Monmouth University Library and one in the English Department.

For additional information, please consult Dr. Heide Estes, Graduate Program Director, at (732) 571-7547 or hestes@monmouth.edu.