Creative Writing and Literature (CWL)

Minor in Creative Writing and Literature
Undergraduate Program Director: Megan McAndrew
E-mail: megan.mcandrew@stonybrook.edu
Office: Humanities 1076
Phone: (631) 632-1133

Creative Writing
A minor in creative writing at Stony Brook offers a way for students to engage subjects in their major field of study, and because the rigors of literary expression necessitate a shift in perspective from that of conservationist, marine biologist, activist or curator, their engagement is likely to be productive. It’s no surprise that the literary tradition is rife with poets who, like John Keats or William Carlos Williams, were trained as doctors. It’s likewise no surprise that the field of medicine is rife with doctors who, like Atul Gawande or Oliver Sacks, have distinguished themselves as writers. Undergraduates may not yet know where their talents best lie, as, for example, a science writer or a scientist who writes, but they are ready to explore the connections between these disciplines.

The program’s interdisciplinary aspects and project-driven structure promote creative thinking in several ways. Since the minor is not housed in a traditional English Department, but rather finds its home in the student’s own interests and burgeoning competences, students learn to write compellingly about the issues at the “deep heart’s core” of their – and our – time and place. Through workshops in the practice of craft, minors develop their capacity for creative thinking, a capacity they can apply to their other endeavors. Through required literature courses, students learn to read rigorously and creatively, with the insight of a fellow practitioner. Through the optional capstone project, students learn to apply their skills and carry a creative endeavor through to completion.

Requirements for the Minor in Creative Writing and Literature

Declaration of the minor

Students should declare the Creative Writing and Literature minor no later than the middle of their sophomore year, at which time they should consult with the directors of both their major and minor to plan their course of study. The objective is to fulfill both sets of requirements in a coherent and complementary way.

To earn the creative writing minor, students may take all of their courses on main campus or, when it is offered, up to five courses in a single semester through a Semester by the Sea residency at the Southampton campus. For more information about which courses are being offered at both campuses, download the Course Schedule at http://www.stonybrook.edu/southampton/mfa/cwl/academics.html. CWL 450, the capstone project, is offered only in the Semester by the Sea format, and so students completing coursework on main campus should plan to take an extra writing workshop instead.

Students should take the prerequisite CWL 202 Introduction to Creative Writing prior to enrolling in the Semester by the Sea. The remaining requirements may also be taken as stand-alone courses in fall, spring and summer terms.

Requirements for the minor

Students must earn a grade of C or better in all courses toward the minor. Completion of the minor in creative writing and literature requires 21 credits, distributed as follows.

A. Introductory Courses required of all minors (6 credits)
   • CWL 190 Introduction to Contemporary Literature
   • CWL 202 Introduction to Creative Writing: Writing Everything

B. Three writing workshops chosen from the following (9 credits)
   Students may repeat a workshop as the topic changes.
   • CWL 300 Forms of Creative Non-Fiction
   • CWL 305 Forms of Fiction
   • CWL 310 Forms of Poetry
• CWL 315 Forms of Scriptwriting
• CWL 320 Forms of Interdisciplinary Arts
• CWL 325 Forms of Science Writing
• CWL 510, 520, 530, 540, 550 (Graduate-level workshop) Forms of Fiction, Poetry, Scriptwriting, Creative Nonfiction, Professional and Scientific Writing (MFA faculty). By special permission of the MFA department only, from time to time, exceptional undergraduates may earn entry into the graduate writing program’s workshops.

C. One literature course for writers chosen from the following (3 credits)

• CWL 330 Topics in European Literature for Writers
• CWL 335 Topics in American Literature for Writers
• CWL 340 Topics in World Literature for Writers

D. Senior Project or one Additional Writing Workshop at the 300 or graduate level (3 credits)*

• CWL 450 Senior Project
• CWL 300, 305, 310, 315, 320, 325 or graduate-level CWL 510, 520, 530, 540, 550

In consultation with the director, a creative writing workshop, preferably at the graduate level, that builds on a project begun in a previous workshop. e.g., CWL 510 “Advancing the Novel.”

*Note: Workshop courses taken to satisfy requirement B may not be used to also satisfy requirement D.
CWL Faculty

Faculty information for this program can be found at http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/southampton/
CWL

Creative Writing and Literature

CWL 190: Introduction to Contemporary Literature
Seminar surveying recent works in a genre or topic, to introduce students to poetry, creative nonfiction, fiction or a combination of selections focusing on a particular theme. Participants will develop skills of interpretation and analysis through reading and writing about contemporary literature.
Prerequisite: WRT 102
DEC: B
SBC: HUM
3 credits

CWL 202: Introduction to Creative Writing: Writing Everything
Creative writing workshop in multiple genres, from fiction to poetry to scriptwriting, intended to introduce students to the basic tools and terminology of the fine art of creative writing. Participants also read contemporary works, give a public reading, and attend Writers Speak, the Wednesday reading series, or an equivalent.
DEC: D
SBC: ARTS
3 credits

CWL 300: Forms of Creative Nonfiction
Study of the genre through readings, discussion and regular submission of original work. Course explores methods for expressing the human condition made available through creative nonfiction, with examples from the tradition and exploration of the nature of fact, memory, subjectivity and perspective. Areas of study include Personal Essay, Memoir, Blogs and Alternate Forms, the Journal, Historical Inquiry and Social Commentary. Course may be repeated as the topic changes.
Prerequisite: CWL 202
DEC: G
SBC: HFA+, WRTD
3 credits

CWL 310: Forms of Poetry
Study of the genre through readings, discussion and regular submission of original work. Course explores methods for expressing the human condition made available through poetry, with examples from the tradition of such tools as metaphor and image, sound, line, form, and juxtaposition. Areas of study include Powers of Poetry, Bright Containers: Form & Meter, and Methods & Madness, a study of the philosophical vs. visionary strains in poetry. Course may be repeated as the topic changes.
Prerequisite: CWL 202
DEC: G
SBC: HFA+, WRTD
3 credits

CWL 315: Forms of Scriptwriting
Study of the genre through readings, screenings, discussion and regular submission of original writing for film or theater. Course explores methods for expressing the human condition made available through these collaborative media. Areas of study include Fundamentals of Dramatic Action, Visual Storytelling, Message Movies, Writing the One Act, and Extreme Events. Course may be repeated as the topic changes.
Prerequisite: CWL 202
DEC: G
SBC: HFA+, WRTD
3 credits

CWL 320: Forms of Interdisciplinary Arts
Regular submission, discussion, and analysis of students' work in conjunction with active engagement with the world beyond the page in order to explore methods for expressing the human condition not available through study in a single genre. Areas of interdisciplinary involvement include writing across genres (Writing Nature); production of the written word (Poetry Bookmaking, Performing & Production); and partnering to write (Endangered Languages: Poetry & the Oral Tradition, Documentary Screenwriting in a Sustainable World, and Testimony in Creative Nonfiction). Students may repeat this course as the genre and topic in the humanities change.
Prerequisite: CWL 202
DEC: G
SBC: EXP+, WRTD
3 credits

CWL 325: Forms of Science Writing
Regular submission, discussion and analysis of students' work in one or more areas of science writing in order to examine the impact of science and literature on one another. Areas of study include Introduction to Science Writing, Environmental Writing and the Media, and Elegance & Complexity: Researched Writing and Writing the Interview. Course may be repeated as the topic changes.
Prerequisite: 1 D.E.C. E and 1 D.E.C F or 1 SNW and 1 SBS; CWL 202
DEC: H
SBC: STAS, WRTD
3 credits

CWL 330: Topics in European Literature for Writers
A lecture for writers concentrating on one area of European literature, to be announced in the course schedule. The course may examine a historical trend in Western literature from multiple viewpoints, the rise of a specific genre, a social issue expressed in literature, or an issue in literary theory, as, for example, The Russian Novel; Classic Plots; Ibsen, Shaw and the Introduction of Feminism to Great Britain; Political Comedy on the Modern European Stage; and Reading Nature. The emphasis will be on scholarly analysis, but with engagement of student writers. Students may repeat this course as the topic changes.
Prerequisite: one D.E.C. B or HUM course Advisory Prerequisite: CWL 190
DEC: I
SBC: GLO, HFA+
3 credits

CWL 335: Topics in American Literature for Writers
A seminar for writers concentrating on one area of American literature, to be announced in the course schedule. The course may examine a contemporary or historical trend in American literature, the rise of a specific genre, a social issue expressed in literature, an issue in literary theory, or any other exploration of American pluralism as, for example, Ethics and the Crime Novel; Varieties of American Humor; Southern Renaissance; and Contemporary Poetry Wars. The emphasis will be on scholarly analysis, but with engagement of student writers. Students may repeat this course as the topic changes.
Prerequisite: one D.E.C. B or HUM course Advisory Prerequisite: CWL 190
DEC: K
**CWL 340: Topics in World Literature for Writers**

A literature course for writers concentrating on one area, to be announced in the course schedule, of non-Western culture. Topics could include a contemporary or historical trend, a social issue, or any other topic of expression that illuminates national, regional or cultural difference, as, for example, Contemporary Poetry from the Middle East, Asia and Beyond; Contemporary World Fiction for Writers; Reading Nature in Japanese Poetry; Varieties of the Short Story; and Asian Theatre and Drama. The emphasis will be on scholarly analysis, but with engagement of student writers. Students may repeat this course as topic changes.

*Prerequisite: one D.E.C. B or HUM course*

*Advisory Prerequisite: CWL 190*

**SBC:** HFA+, USA

3 credits

**CWL 444: Experiential Learning**

This course is designed for students who engage in a substantial, structured experiential learning activity in conjunction with another class. Experiential learning occurs when knowledge acquired through formal learning and past experience are applied to a "real-world" setting or problem to create new knowledge through a process of reflection, critical analysis, feedback and synthesis. Beyond-the-classroom experiences that support experiential learning may include: service learning, mentored research, field work, or an internship.

*Prerequisite: WRT 102 or equivalent; permission of the instructor and approval of the EXP+ contract (http://sb.cc.stonybrook.edu/bulletin/current/policiesandregulations/degree_requirements/EXPplus.php)*

**SBC:** EXP+

0 credit, S/U grading

**CWL 450: Senior Project**

A weekly seminar in planning and executing an independent, interdisciplinary creative writing project, the culmination of the minor, to be taken while writing the manuscript. The nature of the manuscript is up to the individual, though the concept must be approved by the program director before the student can enroll in this course. Projects could incorporate a theme or insight from the writer's major area of study or from any discipline beyond creative writing that engages the writer.

Weekly class meetings give structure to the independent writing process, helping minors to plan, research and locate the resources they need. In the second half of the course, guest speakers with expertise in the areas students are encountering will be brought in.

*Prerequisite: permission of the Director of the Creative Writing minor*

**SBC:** EXP+

3 credits