

## Portfolio Components

*For details on each individual part of the portfolio, see descriptions below.*

All students complete the Professional Development elements and corresponding oral defense (the mock interview). Students then choose either The Teaching of Creative Writing *or* The Art & Craft of Creative Writing for their other elements and defense.

### The Written Elements

1. Professional Development
  - a. Curriculum Vita and Résumé
  - b. Statement of Purpose
  - c. Statement of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
  - d. Sample Cover Letter (with corresponding job posting)
  - e. Writing Sample
2. The Teaching of Creative Writing
  - a. Sample Syllabi
  - b. Sample Assignments, Exercises, and Lesson Plans
  - c. Statement of Teaching & Workshop Philosophy
3. The Art & Craft of Creative Writing
  - a. Craft Essay
  - b. Single-Author Study
  - c. Statement of Aesthetic Philosophy

### The Oral Defense

1. Professional Development
  - a. Mock Interview
2. The Teaching of Creative Writing
  - a. Classroom Teaching Demonstration
3. The Art & Craft of Creative Writing
  - a. Public Presentation

## The Written Elements

### *Professional Development*

**Curriculum Vita:** The formatting and content of your vita should follow the standards of an academic CV. It should be a list of their academic and relevant professional and service activity. The CV should not include descriptive paragraphs or text.

**Résumé:** The formatting and content of your résumé should follow current professional standards.

**Statement of Purpose:** In this statement, you outline your career goals and aspirations. It should be between 500 and 1,000 words in length.

**Statement of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** This statement should detail how your current and past experiences and activities align with or contribute to diversity, equity, and inclusion in your academic and/or professional life. It should be between 500 and 1,000 words in length

**Sample Cover Letter:** The cover letter should be tailored to fit a particular job posting that you select. The job posting should be one for which your experience in an MFA program is relevant, but it need not be a job you actually intend to apply to. You must attach a copy of the job posting along with the cover letter when submitting the portfolio.

**Writing Sample:** Select a sample of your creative writing that would serve as an introduction to your work. A poetry sample should be 10-15 pages. A prose sample should be 15-25 pages.

### ***The Teaching of Creative Writing***

**Syllabi:** You must prepare three distinct syllabi to be selected from among the following options: multi-genre introductory course for high school juniors and seniors (15-week semester); multi-genre introductory course for sophomore-level college students (15-week semester); single-genre introductory course for junior-level college students (15-week semester); single-genre course for advanced undergraduate or graduate students (15-week semester); multi-genre introductory course for community-based organization (10-week, one-day-a-week meetings); single-genre online course for distance learners (10-week course); single-genre course for incarcerated students pursuing a GED (15-week course). Your syllabi should include your hypothetical instructor and course info; listing of course texts; descriptions of assignments and policies; and a calendar.

**Assignments, Exercises, and Lesson Plans:** Each syllabus should include sample assignments and exercises, as well as detailed lesson plans for four 50-minute class periods (excluding workshops). The lesson plans may include assigned readings and discussion questions, lectures, prompts, in- or out-of-class writing exercises, individual or collaborative work, PowerPoints, audio/visual materials, community engagement projects, etc.

**Statement of Teaching & Workshop Philosophy:** A statement of teaching philosophy is often required as part of the application for a teaching position. The statement is brief (between 500 to 1,000 words) and articulates the applicant's core beliefs regarding the profession of teaching, as well as the applicant's perspective on creative writing workshops. A well-written statement should be distinctive and memorable as well as consistent with the practices articulated in the syllabi and lesson plans.

### ***The Art & Craft of Creative Writing***

**Craft Essay:** Broadly speaking, a craft essay puts forth an argument about some element of literature, written from the perspective of a creative writer and to the practitioners of creative writing. Well-written craft essays are focused in scope, clear in their analyses, and offer specific examples to support their claims. The best essays are provocative and original, even formally inventive, and lead the readers to think more deeply about their own craft and the practice of it. Your craft essay should be between 2,000 and 3,000 words.

**Single-Author Study:** In conjunction with your advisor, you will select a single author whose work you will read, analyze, and review. Both the author and the scope of the author's work to be included in the study, as well as appropriate secondary

sources, will be agreed upon by the advisor and the student. The study should not merely be a surface-level overview of the author's work but should identify some element(s) that may be studied with significant depth and be appropriate for graduate-level work. The completed essay should be a minimum of 3,500 words.

**Statement of Aesthetic Philosophy:** What is beautiful? What is true? What is the nature of your project as a writer? A statement of aesthetic philosophy is a brief introduction to your work and serves to provide context to potential readers of your work. It asks you to articulate, in a few words, your goals and intentions as a writer. It should be between 500 and 1,000 words.

## **The Oral Defenses**

### ***Professional Development***

**Mock Interview:** In coordination with your advisor, you will select a job posting for which you could feasibly apply upon graduating from the MFA. This job should be one for which your experience and training as an MFA student is directly relevant, but it need not be a job you actually intend to apply to. (It may be the posting you used for the Cover Letter in your written components.) You will share the posting with your advisor and second evaluator. At a scheduled time, you will meet with your advisor and second evaluator, who will play the role of a hiring committee for this job, and you will sit for an interview as if you were actually applying to the job. You will receive some of the interview questions in advance, but your advisor and evaluator may ask you other questions that you have not seen in advance. Interviews typically last 20-40 minutes. After the interview, you will step outside the room so your committee can discuss your performance. You'll then be called back into the room to discuss how the interview went. You will be informed whether or not you passed the defense.

### ***The Teaching of Creative Writing***

**Classroom Teaching Demonstration:** Your classroom teaching demonstration should be conducted in an undergraduate creative writing class. For that reason, you will need to proactively coordinate with your advisor, second evaluator, and the faculty member teaching the class to arrange the day and time of this defense. The specific content of the class you teach will be negotiated by your advisor, second evaluator, and the faculty member who is instructor of record for that course. Ideally, you will conduct some mixture of lecture, discussion, guided writing exercise, and workshop. You should teach a full class period (50 minutes for a MWF class or 75 minutes for a T/TH class). After your teaching demonstration, you will meet with your advisor and second evaluator to discuss how the demonstration went. You will be informed whether or not you passed the defense.

### ***The Art & Craft of Creative Writing***

**Public Presentation:** For this defense, you will give a public presentation on a topic related to the art and craft of creative writing. The presentation must be attended by your advisor and second evaluator, but is also a public presentation, and your fellow students will be invited as well. You may use your craft essay or single-author study as the basis of this presentation, but your presentation should not

simply be you staring at a podium as your read your paper aloud. You should prepare an engaging, dynamic presentation, with slides or other audiovisual aids, and your delivery should demonstrate that you've internalized and practiced the content of the presentation. Following the presentation, there will be a Q&A in which any members of the audience may participate. The presentation itself should be no less than 20 minutes and no more than 40 minutes (not including Q&A). After your Q&A, any other audience members will be asked to leave, and you will meet with your advisor and second evaluator to discuss how the presentation went. You will be informed whether or not you passed the defense.