

**MFA Program in Creative Writing, Editing, and Publishing
Sam Houston State University
Portfolio Components**

Fall 2018

The Written Component (for instructions for each element, please see below)

1. Professional Development
 - a. Curriculum Vita
 - b. Statement of Purpose
 - c. Statement of Aesthetic Philosophy
 - d. Sample Cover Letter
 - 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 or Compendium Review
 - c. Statement of Editorial Philosophy

The Oral Defense (for instructions for each element, please see below)

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 Elements of the Written Portfolio

Curriculum Vita: All MFA students should submit a current CV.

Sample cover letter: All MFA students should submit a cover letter for a particular (hypothetical or real) position, to be determined in conjunction with their advisor.

Statement of Purpose: All MFA students should submit a statement of purpose, which outlines their career goals and aspirations. It should be between 500 and 1,000 words in length.

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 1000 words.

Syllabi: The student will 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).

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 and Workshop Philosophy: A statement of teaching philosophy is often required as part of the application for a teaching position. The statement is brief (between 750 and 1000 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.

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. Craft essays in the portfolio should be between 2,000 and 3,000 words.

Single-Author Study: In conjunction with a member of the MFA faculty, the student selects a single author whose work they 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 faculty member 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.

Compendium Review: In conjunction with a member of the MFA faculty, the student selects 3 to 5 related works by multiple authors and writes a single review that encompasses the works as related bodies. The completed review should be a minimum of 3,500 words.

Statement of Editorial Philosophy: If a statement of aesthetic philosophy applies to your own work, the statement of editorial philosophy asks you to articulate your perspective on the curation of works created by others. It is the kind of statement you might be asked to give if you were brought on board the editorial staff of a press or literary journal. How would you decide what and whom to publish? What ideas and principles would guide your selections? It should be between 500 and 1000 words.