MFA in Creative Writing (low residency) proposal

**MFA Thesis Committee (p.5)**

“Committee Composition for the MFA thesis: The committee will consist of the Director, who will hold an MFA, the professional mentor (chair), Henry Sayre (Distinguished Professor) or Neil Browne (Associate Professor), and the Graduate Council Representative.* Low-residency programs maintain a stable core of professional mentors who are qualified to support thesis work and are typically renewed term by term in service of thesis advising. In addition, low residency programs typically have an additional group of professional mentors who may serve in a variety of shorter-term roles to lead workshops and provide programming. As the program develops and a solid core of professional mentors is established, these individuals will also be able to serve on MFA thesis committees. All professional mentors will hold a terminal degree.”

*See list for Graduate Council Representatives from OSU Cascades. Graduate Council Representatives will need to be recruited from OSU Cascades tenured and tenure-track faculty.

(Note: Professional Mentors. There is language in the proposal under head 3. The program will establish a core of Professional Mentors who will work on a consistent basis. As the program builds and these professional mentors become a key part of the program, they will be able to serve as committee members and chairs as well.)

**MATRICES (p.4)**

Outcome 1: Produce original work in a specified genre, culminating in a thesis of publishable quality and of high literary merit. The student and professional mentor confer to determine length, form, and content, but typically a thesis will be for prose, 80-120 pages, and for poetry, 38-45 pages.

- ✔ WR 516: ADVANCED COMPOSITION (4 credits)
- ✔ WR 524: ADVANCED FICTION WRITING (4 credits)
- ✔ WR 541: ADVANCED POETRY WRITING (4 credits)
- ✔ WR 548: MAGAZINE ARTICLE WRITING (4 credits)
- ✔ WR 503: THESIS
- ✔ WR 504: WRITING AND CONFERENCE
- ✔ WR 599X

Outcome 2: Develop and employ methods of intensive revision.

- ✔ WR 516: ADVANCED COMPOSITION (4 credits)
- ✔ WR 524: ADVANCED FICTION WRITING (4 credits)
WR 541: ADVANCED POETRY WRITING (4 credits)
WR 548: MAGAZINE ARTICLE WRITING (4 credits)
WR 503: THESIS
WR 504: WRITING AND CONFERENCE
WR 599X

Outcome 3: Demonstrate mastery of various literary theories and techniques. Mastery will be achieved through participation in the poetry or fiction/non-fiction workshop (24 total credit hours of WR 521, WR 524, or WR 548), as well as in courses that focus on specific aspects of craft. Craft courses concentrate on a particular theory, genre, theme, technique, author or topic. Examples include courses on dialogue, the “uncanny” novella, linked story collections, the prose poem, the lyric essay, literary imitations, etc.

WR 516: ADVANCED COMPOSITION (4 credits)
WR 524: ADVANCED FICTION WRITING (4 credits)
WR 541: ADVANCED POETRY WRITING (4 credits)
WR 548: MAGAZINE ARTICLE WRITING (4 credits)
WR 503: THESIS
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Outcome 4: Demonstrate an understanding of the contemporary creative writing profession. In addition to the instruction received in workshops on the profession, students attend mandatory residencies each year. These events feature nationally acclaimed writers who give public readings of their work and conduct colloquia specifically designed for the MFA students. Students engage in in-depth conversations with the writers about craft, the creative process, publishing, creative writing pedagogy, and other topics. Students also benefit from panels on a wide range of subjects relevant to the profession, as well as readings, roundtable discussions, and other events.

WR 516: ADVANCED COMPOSITION (4 credits)
WR 524: ADVANCED FICTION WRITING (4 credits)
WR 541: ADVANCED POETRY WRITING (4 credits)
WR 548: MAGAZINE ARTICLE WRITING (4 credits)
WR 504: WRITING AND CONFERENCE
WR 599X

Outcome 5: Perform all activities in an ethical manner. This will be demonstrated by the student’s production of original work; by the student’s ability to engage in constructive criticism and evaluation in a workshop setting, both oral and written; and by the student’s coursework in literature, where he or she will explore a diverse canon of primary and secondary literary sources and document scholarship appropriately. An ethics component will be added to each residency period, here designated by 599X.

WR 516: ADVANCED COMPOSITION (4 credits)
WR 524: ADVANCED FICTION WRITING (4 credits)
WR 541: ADVANCED POETRY WRITING (4 credits)
WR 548: MAGAZINE ARTICLE WRITING (4 credits)
Initially, program success in a broad sense will be gauged by the following benchmarks:

**A High Graduation Rate.** A high percentage of matriculated students graduate from the program, and a small number of students drop out or transfer to other programs.

**Acceptance Ratio.** The program will maintain a high number of applications in relation to acceptances.

**Literary Accomplishments in Post-Graduate Student Work.** Many graduates go on to publish significant literary work and to win honors and awards for their writing.

**Outside Assessment.** After the program is up and running for two or three years, we will invite the AWP (Association of Writers and Writing Programs), the national organization for university creative writing programs to a program wide assessment.

**Oversight (p. 2)**

"Along with the director, the Board will also assume the responsibility of overseeing the composition of MFA thesis committees, and the hiring and performance of professional mentors. The board will provide orientation and direction to the Director. Procedure:

**RESIDENCIES**

1. One Board member (and other veteran mentors) will attend any new mentor's lecture or class.

2. Board and veterans go to the lectures and classes by returning mentors.

3. Students evaluate every class and lecture and provide comments on workshops during residencies.

The Director will receive the board, faculty, and student evaluations and report on each to the Board in full.

**MENTORSHIP TERMS**

4. Both the faculty member and the student will fill out a form at the beginning of each term listing the mutually-agreed upon expectations for the term, covering both writing and reading assignments.

   a. Each student answers a prompt at the midterm and again at the end of the semester about work with his or her mentor. The director evaluates progress gauged on student and mentor agreed upon expectations (4).

   b. At mid-term, both student and mentor will file, with the Program Director, a progress report; then again at the end of the term, the mentor and student will file a report on
whether or not the term’s goals had been satisfactorily met, gauged on student and
mentor agreed upon expectations (4)—if not, why.

The director sees every faculty member's midterm evaluations and final evaluations, and will
report to the Board in full about the faculty member's work. Only fully satisfactory mentors can
be renewed.

The low-residency program is administered under the same conditions as other graduate
programs at OSU-Corvallis, with governing authority ultimately belonging to the Director of
the School of Writing, Literature and Film. Local authority on day-to-day operations and
hiring/renewals or non-renewals of professional mentors belongs to OSU Cascades. The
MFA Low Residency Director will have the responsibility of personnel decisions, advising,
admissions, scholarships, and student appeals.”