The UNH English Department offers the MFA, a 48-credit program in fiction, nonfiction, or poetry. The program emphasizes craft, learned in small workshops, and seeks students who plan to become professional writers after taking their degrees. The program runs 2 and 1/2 years for students with a teaching assistantship, but could be completed in 2 years for students without a teaching assistantship.

Course Requirements

The MFA requires 12 courses (48 course credits):

- four workshops in the major genre
- one form and technique course in the major genre
- five elective courses that may include additional writing courses in their genre, workshops and form and technique courses outside of their genre, or courses from the English Department’s offerings in other fields (such as literature, linguistics, or composition studies). Students may be allowed to take a course outside of the English department with permission from their advisor and the English graduate director.
- 8 credit hours of the MFA thesis
- teaching assistants are required to take English 910, Practicum in Teaching College Composition, as one of their electives.

MFA Thesis

MFA candidates write a book-length, publishable manuscript to complete the program. For fiction writers, the thesis could be a collection of short stories, a story cycle (linked stories), or a novel. The minimum length would be 150 pages. For nonfiction writers, the thesis could be a collection of essays and/or magazine articles or a book of creative nonfiction. The minimum length would be 150 pages. For poets, the thesis would be a book-length collection of poems. The minimum length would be 45 pages.

Prior to their next-to-last semester, students will submit to the MFA director a one-page summary of their thesis project and their wish list of faculty members they would like to serve on their thesis committee. Two out of the three committee members must be in the student’s genre. The third reader could be another MFA faculty member, an
English department faculty member or a faculty member from an outside department if the student's area of study is connected to the faculty member's expertise. For instance, a fiction student may request a history professor if the student is writing a historical novel, or a nonfiction student may seek a criminologist if the student is writing a true crime book. From that list, the MFA director, in consultation with faculty, will select the three-member thesis committee, including the Thesis Advisor who will establish a schedule for completion.

The student will work primarily with the Thesis Advisor on the writing project. Students will begin working with their Advisor on the material for the manuscript in their next-to-last semester. The Advisor will establish a schedule for completion as well as read, edit, and suggest revisions. The Student will submit a completed manuscript draft to his/her Advisor on the first day of classes of his/her final semester, and the Advisor will make comments and suggestions. Further revisions will be made by the student following this. The student then provides a copy of the manuscript to the second and third readers. Second and third readers will provide their comments during the thesis defense. The student must pass an oral defense conducted by the three-member thesis committee. In the final step, the student will read from the book or collection to an audience of peers, faculty, and the general public.

**Deadlines:** If the student plans a May graduation, the second and third readers must receive their draft no later than March 1 of the semester in which the student hopes to graduate. If a December graduation is the plan, the deadline for submitting the draft to the second and third readers is Oct. 15. This gives the readers time to read and edit, and the student time to revise for the oral defense.

Thesis hours (8 credit hours) are variable, which means that the credits can be earned in one semester or over the course of two or more semesters. Students will register for English 899 to earn thesis credits.

The thesis will follow the formatting guidelines established by the UNH Graduate School. Students should be advised to read the graduate school’s thesis preparation manual, which is available online at: [http://www.gradschool.unh.edu/pdf/manual.PDF#search=%22thesis%20format%22](http://www.gradschool.unh.edu/pdf/manual.PDF#search=%22thesis%20format%22) The graduate school also hosts thesis preparation workshops and encourages students to bring their manuscripts to the graduate school
office in Thompson Hall for a format check. Please know that thesis formatting is your responsibility and that if not done properly, the graduate school will reject the thesis. For more details, consult the thesis guidelines handout.

Advising:

Each student will be assigned to a faculty advisor in his/her genre upon entering the program. The student will meet with the advisor each semester to plan his or her courses for the following semester and discuss program progress.

Barnstorm:

MFA students are encouraged to become involved in the production of the UNH on-line literary journal *Barnstorm*. Jobs include evaluating and editing submissions, interviewing visiting writers, reviewing books, writing material for the blog, soliciting and evaluating art, managing the production schedule, and designing and maintaining the site. The position of Editor-in-Chief receives compensation in the form of an annual stipend.

Sample Course Routes:

Poetry M.F.A. Student with a Teaching Assistantship

Semester One
Advanced Poetry Workshop (4 credits)
Practicum in Teaching Composition (4 credits)

Semester Two
Form and Technique of Poetry (4 credits)
Advanced Poetry Workshop (4 credits)

Semester Three
Advanced Poetry Workshop (4 credits)
Form and Technique of Fiction (4 credits)

Semester Four
Ecstatic Poetry Seminar (4 credits)
Advanced Poetry Workshop (4 credits)
Thesis (4 credits)
Semester Five
Advanced Poetry Workshop (4 credits)
Spheres of Influence: Poetry Seminar (4 credits)
Thesis (4 credits)

Poetry M.F.A. Student without a Teaching Assistantship

Semester One
Advanced Poetry Workshop (4 credits)
Ecstatic Poetry Seminar (4 credits)
Advanced Nonfiction Workshop: Travel Writing (4 credits)

Semester Two
Advanced Poetry Workshop (4 credits)
Form and Technique of Poetry (4 credits)
Seminar: Studies in 19th Century American Literature (4 credits)

Semester Three
Advanced Poetry Workshop (4 credits)
Spheres of Influence: Poetry Seminar (4 credits)
Thesis (4 credits)

Semester Four
Advanced Poetry Workshop (4 credits)
Short Novel Seminar (4 credits)
Thesis (4 credits)

Fiction M.F.A. Student with a Teaching Assistantship

Semester One
Graduate Fiction Workshop (4 credits)
Practicum in Teaching Composition (4 credits)

Semester Two
Form and Technique of Fiction (4 credits)
Graduate Fiction Workshop (4 credits)

Semester Three
Graduate Fiction Workshop (4 credits)
English Grammar (4 credits)
Semester Four
Graduate Fiction Workshop (4 credits)
Advanced Nonfiction Writing Workshop (4 credits)
Thesis (4 credits)

Semester Five
Graduate Fiction Workshop (4 credits)
Chekov and O’Connor Seminar (4 credits)
Thesis (4 credits)

Fiction M.F.A. Student without a Teaching Assistantship

Semester One
Graduate Fiction Workshop (4 credits)
The Short Novel Seminar (4 credits)
Seminar: Studies in American Literature (4 credits)

Semester Two
Graduate Fiction Workshop (4 credits)
Form and Technique of Fiction (4 credits)
Graduate Essay Writing (4 credits)

Semester Three
Graduate Fiction Workshop (4 credits)
Form and Technique of Poetry (4 credits)
Thesis (4 credits)

Semester Four
Graduate Fiction Workshop (4 credits)
Chekov and O’Connor Seminar (4 credits)
Thesis (4 credits)

Nonfiction M.F.A. Student with a Teaching Assistantship

Semester One
Researching the Literature of Fact Workshop (4 credits)
Practicum in Teaching Composition (4 credits)

Semester Two
Form and Technique of Nonfiction (4 credits)
Advanced Nonfiction Workshop: Magazine Writing (4 credits)
Semester Three
Graduate Essay Writing (4 credits)
Form and Technique of Fiction (4 credits)

Semester Four
Memoir Workshop (4 credits)
Advanced Nonfiction Workshop: Travel Writing (4 credits)
Thesis (4 credits)

Semester Five
Writing the Creative Nonfiction Book Workshop (4 credits)
Advanced Editing (4 credits)
Thesis (4 credits)

Nonfiction M.F.A. Student without a Teaching Assistantship

Semester One
Advanced Nonfiction Workshop: Travel Writing (4 credits)
Chekov and O’Connor Seminar (4 credits)
Advanced Editing (4 credits)

Semester Two
Advanced Nonfiction Writing: Magazine Writing (4 credits)
Form and Technique of Nonfiction (4 credits)
English Grammar (4 credits)

Semester Three
Graduate Essay Writing (4 credits)
Writing the Creative Nonfiction Book Workshop (4 credits)
Thesis (4 credits)

Semester Four
Memoir Workshop (4 credits)
Form and Technique of Poetry (4 credits)
Thesis (4 credits)