DESCRIPTION

The MFA Program in Writing at the University of New Hampshire has a
clear and abiding focus: to help you shape your gifts and passion for the
art, and to prepare you for the opportunities and demands that all writers
will experience in a long professional career. Over the years, the graduate
writing program has launched the careers of hundreds of poets, novelists,
storywriters, essayists and memoirists. This is a small, highly-ranked,
and selective program. We emphasize one-on-one contact between a
nationally recognized faculty and talented students. Students typically
complete the program in two to three years.

We are most proud of the supportive community we have created
here, one in which cross-genre exploration is strongly encouraged.
Six out of ten of our MFA students receive direct financial aid (http://
cola.unh.edu/english/financial-aid), with most funding taking the form
of teaching assistantships, tuition scholarships, and grant awards.
Other opportunities (http://cola.unh.edu/english/program/writing-mfa/
opportunities) include paid internships in local arts organizations, and
editorial positions at our on-line journal Barnstorm.

We also run an exciting visiting writers' series (http://cola.unh.edu/
enGLISH/writers-series), so that students have a chance to connect
with some of the finest contemporary poets, novelists and essayists
currently at work. Add to all this the fact that we're located in a stunningly
beautiful spot, close to mountains and sea coast, but within an hour of
Boston and other cosmopolitan areas. We can't imagine that there is a
more energizing and congenial place to pursue your talents and dreams
anywhere in the country.

FICTION

The fiction program centers on your fiction. The one goal of our two years
together is to make your fiction stronger, more aesthetically powerful,
and yes, more publishable. The small 10-person workshop, intense
conferencing with multiple award winning faculty such as Ann Williams
and Tom Paine, craft seminars that range from Joyce and Chekhov
to novellas and contemporary short story collections, 'special topics'
classes on Screenwriting and Children's Book Writing, an esteemed
reading series that brings authors such as Dan Chaon and Elissa
Schappell to class and campus, our nationally known literary magazine
Barnstorm: all of this is here simply to advance your fiction. Maybe it is
because we are in the Granite State, but what is notable in our program
is not just how hard students work on their own fiction, but how much
effort goes into their response to the work of their peers. Writers here
care deeply about each other as people, and the production of honest
work that captures life on the page.

NONFICTION

Our narrative nonfiction program embraces a wide variety of forms, from
memoir to travel writing, literary journalism to the personal essay and all
of its permutations. Our focus, however, is not on labels but on nurturing
your talent and developing your skills with the goal of helping you craft
rich, compelling and publishable essays, stories and books. In short, we
toll together to make facts dance. In our workshops and seminars we ask
our students to read broadly and push themselves beyond their comfort
zone, to experiment and exercise an array of literary muscles, to employ
the imagery of a poet, the drama of a novelist and the content drive of a
journalist. Our classes are small (average size is ten) and students meet
frequently with instructors in individual conferences. As practical as the
state of New Hampshire, our program emphasizes not only the art of
writing narrative nonfiction, but also how to sell it. In one course students
will learn how to write a book proposal and in others how to pitch travel
stories and personal essays. The UNH nonfiction faculty is diverse in its
expertise but united in its passion for reading and writing the literature of
fact, and for sharing that passion.

POETRY

We offer poetry workshops limited to 10 students and small seminars
in craft and poetics in a dynamic, individual-oriented system that
emphasizes intensive conferencing. Students have the chance to work
with master teachers like the award-winning poets Mekke McBride, David
Rivard, and Charles Simic (a Pulitzer Prize winner and the former Poet
Laureate of the United States). We believe in grounding our students
in the widest possible range of poetic technique and approach—with
seminars offered in areas such as translation, 20th century poetic
movements, and ecstatic poetry—and no preconceived notions as to
how anyone should write (other than well!). The poetic tradition of New
England—one of the richest and most expansive in the world—serves as
a backdrop for all our efforts. This is an area teeming with great poets,
with numerous weekly opportunities for students to attend readings and
lectures in the art.

REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to take four workshops in their major genre. In
addition, students take one form and theory course in their major genre,
five elective courses that may include additional writing courses or
courses from the English department's offerings in other fields (such as
literature, linguistics, or composition studies), and 8 credit hours of the
M.F.A. thesis (ENGL 899 Master of Fine Arts in Writing Thesis). Teaching
assistants are required to take ENGL 910 Practicum in Teaching College
Composition as one of their electives. There is no foreign language
requirement.

The M.F.A. thesis is a book-length, publishable manuscript. For fiction
writers, the thesis could be a collection of short stories, a story cycle
(linked stories), or a novel. For nonfiction writers, the thesis could be
a collection of themed essays and/or magazine articles or a book of
creative nonfiction. For poets, the thesis would be a book-length
collection of poems. The minimum length of the thesis is 150 pages for
fiction and nonfiction writers and 45 pages for poets. Students will work
closely with a thesis adviser as they write and pass an oral defense of
the thesis, a defense conducted by a three-member thesis committee of
writing faculty. Students will also conduct a public reading of their thesis
in an event organized by the writing faculty.

In addition, the M.F.A. program offers students opportunities to publish
in an online journal called Barnstorm, as well as intern at arts/cultural
organizations and the university research department, as well as teach in
community schools. A select number of students are chosen to teach
UNH undergraduate writing courses and to work in the University's
Writing Center.

The program admits an average of 15 new students a year, which creates
a writing community of 45 student writers.

https://cola.unh.edu/english/program/mfa/writing