PROSE AND POETRY

Department website: https://www.sps.northwestern.edu/masters/prose-and-poetry/

Northwestern’s part-time Master of Fine Arts in Prose and Poetry program provides students the opportunity to grow as artists within the specializations of fiction (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/sps/graduate/prose-poetry/prose-poetry-mfa-fiction-specialization/), nonfiction (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/sps/graduate/prose-poetry/prose-poetry-mfa-nonfiction-specialization/), poetry (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/sps/graduate/prose-poetry/prose-poetry-mfa-poetry-specialization/), popular fiction (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/sps/graduate/prose-poetry/prose-poetry-mfa-popular-fiction-specialization/), and publishing and professional development (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/sps/graduate/prose-poetry/prose-poetry-mfa-publishing-professional-development-specialization/). A dual-genre (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/sps/graduate/prose-poetry/prose-poetry-mfa-dual-genre-specialization/) specialization is also offered. The small-group workshop format allows for individual attention from published, award-winning faculty. Students also have the opportunity to learn the ropes in teaching writing, publishing, and editing. Flexible scheduling – with courses offered evenings and weekends on Northwestern’s Chicago and Evanston campuses as well as online and in hybrid format – gives students the opportunity to balance their professional, personal and writing lives. While earning their degrees, students connect with other writers at readings and other events in an artistic community that extends beyond the University into Chicago’s vibrant literary scene.

Degrees Offered

- Prose and Poetry, MFA (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/sps/graduate/prose-poetry/prose-poetry-mfa/)
- Prose and Poetry, MFA Dual-Genre Specialization (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/sps/graduate/prose-poetry/prose-poetry-mfa-dual-genre-specialization/)
- Prose and Poetry, MFA Fiction Specialization (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/sps/graduate/prose-poetry/prose-poetry-mfa-fiction-specialization/)
- Prose and Poetry, MFA Nonfiction Specialization (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/sps/graduate/prose-poetry/prose-poetry-mfa-nonfiction-specialization/)
- Prose and Poetry, MFA Poetry Specialization (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/sps/graduate/prose-poetry/prose-poetry-mfa-poetry-specialization/)
- Prose and Poetry, MFA Popular Fiction Specialization (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/sps/graduate/prose-poetry/prose-poetry-mfa-popular-fiction-specialization/)
- Prose and Poetry, MFA Publishing and Professional Development Specialization (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/sps/graduate/prose-poetry/prose-poetry-mfa-publishing-professional-development-specialization/)

Prose and Poetry Courses

MCW 411-DL Poetry Workshop (1 Unit)

Through close reading of published work and student poems, this workshop focuses on the elements of the art of poetry and on the process of writing poems, examining language, line, syntax, rhythm, sound, figures of speech, structure, and the implications of different poetic stances. Poetics and craft are at the heart of discussion, annotation, and revisions.

MCW 411-0 Poetry Workshop (1 Unit)

In this generative poetry workshop, students will engage with weekly reading and writing exercises that address elements of craft, including such topics as creating strong poem endings and beginnings; optimizing the relationship between line and sentence; expanding their sources of language and image; engaging in generative revision; and exploring elements of mystery or surprise in their own work. Weekly peer workshops will provide spaces for further conversation about craft, as well as support in revising poems for final course portfolios. Guest poets, special audio features, and weekly optional “wildcard” writing assignments will allow students to build a toolbox of resources to carry forward beyond the course.

MCW 413-DL Fiction Writing Workshop (1 Unit)

Using student work and published short stories, the class examines the craft of fiction writing. Students analyze stories by examining structure, point of view, style and other elements of craft and technique to answer the question, “What is this piece about?” With an emphasis on developing voice, students write and revise two short stories for instructor and peer review. (See syllabus for the focus of each particular workshop.)

MCW 413-0 Fiction Workshop (1 Unit)

In this workshop, students will explore the elements of great nonfiction, will study why these stories are so successful, and several professional writers will visit our class to tell us how they do it. In class, we will work through a variety of exercises designed to hone students’ writing skills and enhance their story telling abilities. Since stories start with ideas,
we’ll discuss how to find ideas and develop them. Students will receive
detailed feedback from the professor on their writing and go over their
manuscripts with the professor on a one-to-one basis.

**MCW 479-0 Poetry for Prose Writers (1 Unit)**
This class examines how the art of poetry can improve the writing of
fiction and creative nonfiction. By examining the literary
strategies shared across genres and what distinguishes one genre from another, students
explore how the elements of both genres work in isolation and in concert with one another. This course begins with an introduction to the major elements of poetry and moves across genres to examine similar modes and impulses in literary prose.

**MCW 479-DL Poetry for Prose Writers (1 Unit)**
Poetry for Prose Writers examines how the art of poetry can enrich
the writing of fiction and creative nonfiction. By examining the literary
strategies shared across genres and the elements distinguishing one
genre from another, students will explore how both genres work in
isolation and in concert with one another. This course includes an
introduction to traditional and more modern forms of poetry and moves
across genres to examine similar modes and impulses in literary prose.

**MCW 480-0 Prose for Poets (1 Unit)**
The class examines how prose strategies, resources, and devices can apply to poetry. Students explore the elements and models of prose
structure and prose style, including syntax and the sentence; detail and
image; diction; the rhetoric of feeling; narration from the first-person point
of view and the third. Readings include fiction and nonfiction. This course
fulfills the cross-genre requirement for poetry students and may be taken
as an elective by fiction and nonfiction students.

**MCW 490-0 Special Topics in Creative Writing (1 Unit)**
Topics vary. May be repeated for credit with different topic.

**MCW 490-DL Special Topics (1 Unit)**
Topics vary. May be repeated for credit with different topic.

**MCW 495-0 Interdisciplinary Writing Studio (1 Unit)**
In this combined workshop, students will write in their home genre, but all
will read, discuss and analyze a variety of classic, experimental and short-
short stories and pieces of creative nonfiction. Students will brainstorm
and write in class, and will develop/revise/re-see their own projects
outside of class. Students will also be required to include some research
in one of their pieces and to turn in two drafts to be work shopped.

**MCW 499-0 Independent Study (1 Unit)**
Independent Study.

**MCW 500-0 Capstone Preparation and Writing (1 Unit)**
Capstone Preparation and Writing.

**MCW 570-DL Seminar on Teaching Creative Writing (1 Unit)**
This seminar incorporates a theory-to-practice approach to teaching
creative writing. Students examine different philosophies and modes of
teaching - exercises, critical papers, workshop teaching creative work, and
reading for writing. Topics include the workshop, how to teach revision,
critical analysis and journaling, issues of craft, the job market, and how to
apply for a teaching job. Students in this class develop ideas and material
that they teach in community workshops and other educational events.

**MCW 575-0 Seminar on Journal Publishing (1 Unit)**
This class looks at the evolution of large and small presses, the effects
of Amazon, and the Internet and digital publishing on conventional book
industry structures, the roles of review publications and reviewers, among
other related topics.

**MCW 575-DL The Publishing Industry - Book Publishers and Literary Journals (1 Unit)**
This class looks at the evolution of large and small presses, the effects
of Amazon, and the Internet and digital publishing on conventional book
industry structures, the roles of review publications and reviewers, among
other related topics.

**MCW 576-0 Seminar in Publishing: The Industry (1 Unit)**
Students develop research projects based on experience gained in an
internship at a literary publication. Students choose from commercial and
nonprofit presses; past students have worked at the literary magazine
Other Voices and the international online magazine Words without
Borders. Main projects are normally a substantial (20 pages or more)
research paper on a well-defined scholarly topic, but other types of
projects are possible, based on department approval. The instructor
supervises the student’s academic work. The supervisor at the place of
internship submits an evaluation to the instructor.

**MCW 579-0 Practicum in Teaching Creative Writing (1 Unit)**
Student-teaching experience at an institution approved by SPS (high-
school level or higher). Students have the option to develop and teach
their own courses. A faculty member supervises the student’s academic
work, which consists of lesson plans, reports, and other assignments
as appropriate. The supervisor at the place of internship submits an
evaluation to the teaching internship director. Grades are assigned
on the basis of the student’s interaction with the host institution and
submission of academic work.

**MCW 580-0 Practicum in Publishing (1 Unit)**
Students develop research projects based on experience gained in an
internship at a literary publication. Main projects are normally a
substantial (20 pages or more) research paper on a well-defined scholarly
topic, but other types of projects are possible, based on department
approval. The MA/MFA publishing internship director supervises the
student’s academic work. The supervisor at the place of internship
submits an evaluation to the publishing internship director. May not be
repeated for credit.

**MCW 581-0 Arts Administration Practicum (1 Unit)**
Students complete an internship with an arts organization. Students
may work on publicity and marketing, community outreach, grant writing,
event planning, and budget management. Students work with the
instructor and the organization supervisor to develop a description of
duties and academic assignments.

**MCW 589-0 Capstone Preparation and Writing (1 Unit)**
Capstone Preparation and Writing.

**MCW 590-0 Capstone Writing & Revision (1 Unit)**
This final project is meant to represent the culmination of a student’s
experience in the program and must demonstrate mastery of the
curriculum and ability to conduct sustained independent research and
analysis. The project may be applied or may be a traditional scholarly
paper, in both cases a write-up following the paper’s program-specific
guidelines is required. Students must submit a proposal and secure a
first reader in order to register; for further details students are advised to
review the student handbook and contact their academic advisor.