

## **Proposed Change to English Graduate Studies Curriculum**

We propose making the following change to the English graduate studies curriculum:

(1) Require English 5025, Creative Writing Professional Development, for all students pursuing an MA in Literary Studies with Creative Writing Emphasis.

Rationale: English 5025 provides a necessary addition to the creative writing courses open to graduate students who intend to pursue a Master's in Literary Studies with Creative Writing Emphasis. Our creative writing courses and programs emphasize the fact that creative writing is a form of communication, one whose purpose, as Poet Laureate Ted Kooser puts it, "is to reach other people and to touch their hearts," and as such writers must "keep in mind that there's somebody on the other end of the communication." These courses are structured as workshops precisely as a way of underscoring the need for audience awareness. Requiring a "performance" aspect to the study of creative writing is another way of doing so, but unlike the workshop, the course in performance works with finished, polished texts and focuses both on their effective oral dissemination and, importantly, on author interaction with audience (something that is almost always left out of workshops in order to encourage students to give honest, thorough critiques).

Mastery of performance is crucial for students with plans for a writing life, yet many writers leave their graduate programs so focused on print publication that they lack any understanding of effective performance and have no experience in giving readings and discussing craft—even though, as print publication becomes increasingly difficult to achieve given economic pressures on print media, oral dissemination of texts becomes increasingly important to authors as a key means to share their work and participate in the arts community. As just one example of this importance, the Illinois Arts Council's grant application asks writers to list where and when their work has been performed and will not accept applications from authors who have not given performances.

The course further helps to give form to our graduate program in literary studies with creative writing emphasis. As is, we offer only one 5000-level course in creative writing, offered only once per academic year, in a single genre on a rotating basis. Many students choosing the creative writing emphasis may go through their entire graduate program and not take a single 5000-level course related to their emphasis. Because English 5025 is a 1 semester hour course, it will not interfere with students' ability to take 3 semester hour courses necessary to the literary studies component of their program and will not take students away from other graduate courses. As such, it enhances their existing program of studies rather than conflicting with it.

One creative writing faculty member will be required to teach this course once in an academic year, in addition to his/her regular course load. While this may seem prohibitive to enticing and retaining creative writing faculty, in fact it allows creative writing faculty the opportunity to work with graduate students more frequently (without this course, a faculty member might wait seven years before teaching English 5020). Moreover, as mentioned, English 5025 helps to give form to our graduate creative writing emphasis and promotes the idea to both students and

faculty that this is a specific program of study in which literary studies, creative writing, and performance are significant, interconnected components.

Finally, this course furthers the Department's goal of encouraging and supporting integrative learning through student contributions to the cultural life of the campus and community—something very well worth doing, as these tend to be some of the most deeply educational and memorable experiences students have.

Proposed curriculum is in the left column; current curriculum is in the right column.

<b>Literary Studies with CW Emphasis (30 Hour and Thesis Option) for Candidates Holding Assistantships</b>	
<b>Total Hours with Thesis. Credits: 34 to 37</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Literature Courses. Credits: 9</li><li>• Electives. Credits: 5 (See footnote *)</li><li>• Thesis. Credits: 3 to 6</li><li>• Advanced Creative Writing Courses. Credits: 6</li><li>• ENG 5000 – Introduction to Methods and Issues in English Studies. Credits: 3</li><li>• ENG 5007: Composition Pedagogies. Credits: 3</li><li>• ENG 5500 - Practicum in Teaching Composition. Credits: 1</li><li>• ENG 5502 - Mentored Composition Teaching. Credits: 3</li><li>• <i>ENG 5025 - Graduate Workshop, Creative Writing Professional Development: 1</i></li></ul>	<b>Total Hours with Thesis. Credits: 33 to 36</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Literature Courses. Credits: 9</li><li>• Electives. Credits: 5 (See footnote *)</li><li>• Thesis. Credits: 3 to 6</li><li>• Advanced Creative Writing Courses. Credits: 6</li><li>• ENG 5000 – Introduction to Methods and Issues in English Studies. Credits: 3</li><li>• ENG 5007: Composition Pedagogies. Credits: 3</li><li>• ENG 5500 - Practicum in Teaching Composition. Credits: 1</li><li>• ENG 5502 - Mentored Composition Teaching. Credits: 3</li></ul>

## APPROVALS

Date approved by the department or school: April 13, 2010

Date approved by the college curriculum committee: September 8, 2010

Date approved by the Honors Council (*if this is an honors course*):

Date approved by CAA: CGS: