**Master of Arts in Writing Studies**

**Graduate Arts and Sciences**

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**Program Description**

The Writing Studies program is unique to the Philadelphia area. Our program bridges the gap between traditional master’s degrees in English and creative writing degrees by emphasizing that all writing is creative. Our students take a wide variety of courses in order to explore the craft of writing from various perspectives.

This innovative program has several distinguishing features: it offers excellent training for magazine or journal editors and freelance writers; it provides rich growth opportunities for teachers of writing at the secondary or community college level; it provides important experience for traditional journalists; it incorporates collaborative workshops to stimulate creativity; and it develops skills important for success in corporate communications and public relations.

All of the teachers in the Writing Studies program are practicing writers who write in the genre that they teach. In other words, our public relations writing courses are taught by public relations writers, and published novelists teach our novel writing courses. All of our courses are small—typically fifteen students or less—to enable each student to get individual feedback from the instructor and detailed feedback from peers.

The students in the Writing Studies program are diverse in age, race, occupation, gender, and belief systems. The diversity of our students contributes to the success of our program. In addition to world-class writing faculty, students in our M.A. bring a wide range of ideas, creativity, and energy to our classes. Each class becomes its own community of writers.

In the Jesuit tradition of *Eloquentia Perfecta*, all Writing Studies courses engage students in using speech and writing effectively, logically, gracefully, persuasively, and responsibly. Students focus on developing the craft of a professional writer through drafting, revising, and incorporating feedback from peers and instructors as the writing progresses toward publication. We hope all of our students will become working writers who write for a wide variety of audiences.

This program is designed to position its graduates to be very competitive in the broad field of professional writing and communications. The courses in the program are all focused, in one way or another, on the work of the writer. Graduates will pursue careers in a wide range of areas: public relations, magazine and book editing, freelance writing (fiction and nonfiction), print and broadcast journalism, corporate communications, and the teaching of writing. The Writing Studies program accommodates both full-time and part-time students.

**Learning Goals & Objectives for Writing Studies M.A. Program**

**Goal 1:** Acquire knowledge of the writing process

Students will be able to:

**Objective 1.1:** Exercise patterns of invention for creating original work by following a process-oriented approach to writing that includes brainstorming, drafting, and revision.

**Goal 2:** Develop editorial skills

Students will be able to:

**Objective 2.1:** Formulate constructive responses to the work of their peers regarding stylistic choices and organizational principles in one or more creative literary forms (poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction).

**Objective 2.2:** Practice editing skills through examining their own writing.

**Goal 3:** Acquire knowledge of the publishing process

Students will be able to:

**Objective 3.1:** Locate publishing venues and prepare a manuscript for submission in one or more genres, such as fiction, nonfiction, poetry, journalism, academic writing, or online content.

**Goal 4:** Develop rhetorical skills through analysis and practice

Students will be able to:

**Objective 4.1:** Demonstrate knowledge of rhetorical concepts, such as audience, purpose, and medium.
Objective 4.2: Practice analyzing appeals to character, emotion, and logic in persuasive discourse.

Goal 5: Develop long-form writing skills

Students will be able to:
Objective 5.1: Exercise the ability to plan, write, revise, and edit a work of at least 60-80 pages.

Admission Requirements and Procedures
The Writing Studies program is designed to provide advanced training for people who have a good undergraduate foundation in the writing area and/or people who may have substantial work experience in professional writing or communications. Application forms are available online at http://www.sju.edu/academics/cas/grad/index.html. Applicants should submit the following:

- a completed Saint Joseph's University graduate application.
- official sealed transcript(s) of undergraduate/graduate coursework. Saint Joseph’s University graduates do not have to obtain their transcripts. The program will access your transcripts.
- a current résumé
- two letters of recommendation appraising the candidate’s promise and capacity for graduate study, reflecting, from a professional’s point of view, the candidate’s ability to pursue a rigorous, independent course of study at the graduate level. Often one of these comes from a former faculty member and one from a current employer, but two employer references or two academic references are acceptable.
- a two -to-three page (500 to 750 words) personal statement outlining the candidate’s professional goals and educational objectives for the program, including the applicant’s rationale for program choice and professional study
- Two samples of writing (preferably published work – whether in college publications or in other places). Samples can be up to 30 pages, and can represent a variety of your writing (i.e. a short story and a newspaper article; a selections of poems and a newsletter. See below)
- $35 application fee – waived if attended an Open House or an SJU graduate.

The Graduate Committee looks for both a strong academic record and signs of serious interest in the work of a writer. The personal statement is a particularly important aspect of the application; a prospective student should use the personal statement to articulate his or her reasons for selecting this particular M.A. program and to discuss his or her strengths as writer in some detail. Writing samples can be analytical, creative, journalistic, or persuasive, and they can vary in length (up to 30 pages for the two samples. Many of our successful applicants submit one piece of creative writing and one piece of analytic writing to support their applications. A personal interview with the applicant may be requested.

Degree Requirements
The M.A. in Writing Studies requires 30 credits of graduate work. Six credits will come from a thesis project (either an analytical study or a collection of original creative material, 700 level). The remaining credits involve courses at the 500 and 600 level. The program includes provisions for internships and directed individual projects of various kinds. All students in the program will take two core courses: ENG 550 The Practice of Writing and ENG 560 Rhetoric Then and Now. These courses provide breadth of perspective on all of the general issues and circumstances faced by writers in the process of engaging an audience and making a living through the craft of language. Other courses in the program are organized in three complementary areas:

AREA I Writing and Culture (600-629);
AREA II Rhetoric and Composition: Theory and Practice (630-659);
AREA III Professional Writing (660-699).

All graduates of the program are required to have at least one course from each area; two courses in an area would create a concentration. All of the courses are designed to have writing as the center of concern, and many of the courses will emphasize writing for publication, from blogs to print. Some courses may count in multiple areas; consult the graduate director for details.

Writing Studies Core Courses
ENG 550 The Practice of Writing (3 credits)
An overview of the work of a practicing writer, with explorations of particular genres of interest to individual students in the course. Assignments may include a writer’s history (autobiographical account of interest in writing) and a writer’s apprenticeship
(in-depth examination of a writer admired by the student).

ENG 560 Rhetoric Then and Now (3 credits)
Consideration of the history of rhetoric, from the Sophists to the present day, with particular concern both for the ethical considerations involved in persuasive uses of language and for the stylistic choices in developing written work.

AREA I—Writing And Culture (600-629)
ENG 600 Poetry Today (3 credits)
Exploration of the current poetry scene, particularly in America, reading collections from a wide variety of poetic schools and from the theoretical positions that inform the poems. Movements covered may include feminist and identity poetics, the New York School, poetry of witness, neo-confessional, Language Poetry, and the New Formalism. Use of imitation to experiment with difference poetic stances and styles.

ENG 611 Writers on Writing (3 credits)
Most of us have at least a vague idea of why we write: to discover more about ourselves, for instance, or to help improve society. This course offers a chance to reflect more deeply on our purposes as writers by studying what other writers have said about theirs. We will study a variety of writers such as Eudora Welty, Richard Selzer, William Gass and Annie Dillard, and read a variety of genres and styles including modernists like Langston Hughes, experimentals like Donald Barthelme, and contemporaries like Stuart Dybeck, Richard Bausch, Linda Hogan, Amy Hempel, and Edwidge Danticat.

ENG 612 Biography (3 credits)
This course will focus on reading and critiquing a number of important biographies, in order to see how various professional biographers have approached their task. Concomitantly, each student will be asked to choose a contemporary subject worthy of a biography (not a relative), who lives within a 50-mile radius of Philadelphia. Students will search out publications that often include biographical essays/profiles, gather detailed information about their subjects from various sources they determine to be important, and do the necessary interviews, with the aim of writing a biographical essay/profile.

ENG 614 The Short Story (3 credits)
This course focuses on reading and writing short stories with a particular focus on single-author contemporary and classic short story collections and their significance. Authors that may be considered include Atwood, Diaz, Fitzgerald, Hurston, Lahiri, Munro, Millhauser, Poe, and Twain.

ENG 615 Road to Revolution in the 1960 (3 credits)
A study of the American cultural scene during the 1960s including how racial discrimination, gender discrimination, sexual repression and anti-war activism appeared in writing and culture. Writers may include: Jack Kerouac, Nikki Giovanni, Eldridge Cleaver, Kurt Vonnegut, Joseph Heller, Betty Freidan, and some Beat poets. Films were also consequential both in propelling and in reflecting revolutionary changes in American life through the 1960s. Several key films that may be considered include In the Heat of the Night, Bonnie and Clyde, The Graduate, Easy Rider.

ENG 616 The Art of Political Violence: Fictionalizing the Northern Irish "Troubles" (3 credits)
This course will explore how Irish novelists and short-story writers have represented "the Troubles"—a protracted period of politically motivated violence in Northern Ireland, Great Britain, and the Republic of Ireland, which began in the late 1960s and has not fully ended today. Key questions include the following: What is the role of the artist in representing politically motivated and other types of violence? Should artists offer solutions or only pose problems? What are the moral and aesthetical stakes involved in making art out of atrocity? How might studying the fiction of the Northern Irish "Troubles" provide students in the M.A. in Writing Studies with thematic, technical and ethical insights for their own artistic investigations of the many forms of violence within their own societies?

ENG 617 Writing and the Other Arts (3 credits)
Study of relationship between the work of writers and that produced by other kinds of creative people (in music, in architecture, in painting and drawing, in film) in order to get a full sense of any particular cultural moment (the Renaissance, the Age of Enlightenment, the Roaring 20's, the Rebellious 60's).

ENG 619 Young Adult Literature and Coming of Age Narratives (3 credits)
In this course we immerse ourselves in a range of contemporary literary texts written for, read by, assigned to, or kept from young adults (ages 12-18). Our goals will be to become both more familiar with the wide variety of texts geared
toward adolescents and more attuned to our own experiences as readers and writers of young adult literature. At the same time, we will be attempting to think through the multiple ways in which adults (particularly parents and teachers) and adolescent readers interact with these texts and with each other.

**ENG 620 Special Topics in Literature and Culture (3 credits)**
This course will consider a particular aspect of literature and culture relevant to contemporary writers. Content will vary according to the instructor. Course can be repeated when content varies.

**AREA II—Rhetoric and Composition: Theory and Practice (630-659)**

**ENG 630 Composition Theory (3 credits)**
Exploration of theories of composition, with particular emphasis on contributions to the field in the past half century.

**ENG 635 The Writing Teacher Writing (3 credits)**
Consideration of the writing that teachers can do in order to develop their approach to the teaching of writing.

**ENG 640 Experiments in Narrative (3 credits)**
Through examination of fictional and nonfiction narratives and narrative theories, this course considers such issues as the shift from oral to print to hypertext narratives, linear and nonlinear structure, writing “taboo” subjects, and the impact of social-cultural-historical circumstances upon narrative form and function. Content varies with instructor.

**ENG 641 Rhetorical Theory: Special Topics (3 credits)**
Study of select issues in the domain of rhetoric, to be determined by the instructor.

**ENG 642 Style (3 credits)**
Close attention to the rhetorical canon, with selected readings from classical rhetorical texts and contemporary literature.

**ENG 643 Special Topics in the Essay (3 credits)**
An exploration of a particular topic related to the essay. Topics may include women essayists, personal essays, writing and memory, or other topics.

**ENG 646 Multimedia Storytelling (3 credits)**
The objective of this course is to widen our conceptions of storytelling to include sounds and images as well as words and broaden our understanding of how stories strengthen community. We will spend part of the class learning to use digital storytelling tools that the university will supply, but most of the course will be spent finding, making and critically evaluating stories. These stories will come from American Radioworks, The Moth, The BBC and other sources from around the world. wide range of considerations relative to the work of the writer presenting work through the Wide Web.

**AREA III—Professional Writing (660-699)**

**ENG 665 Memoir (3 credits)**
Consideration of the writing that comes directly from life experience and development of an autobiographical narrative that reflects past achievements in this genre. Can satisfy Area I.

**ENG 668 Creative Nonfiction Workshop (3 credits)**
Workshop course in creative nonfiction; several pieces of nonfiction will be prepared for submission. Can be repeated with the permission of the graduate director.

**ENG 669 Poetry-Writing Workshop (3 credits)**
In-depth look into the concerns of a publishing poet. Students will hone their own work, putting together a final portfolio of polished writing, and will explore publication options including chapbooks and literary magazines. Toward this end, the class will include workshopping and one-on-one conferences with the instructor, as well as reading and responding to contemporary poetry, with attention to the practical concerns of the poet. Can be repeated with the permission of the graduate director.

**ENG 670 Fiction-Writing Workshop I (3 credits)**
Workshop method of critique, with students expected to put together a portfolio of polished short stories. Published short stories will be read as models, and there will be discussion of strategies of getting fiction published. Content varies with the instructor. Fiction-writing workshop I can be taken either before or after Fiction writing workshop II. Can be repeated with the permission of the graduate director.

**ENG 671 Fiction-Writing Workshop II (3 credits)**
Workshop method of critique, with students expected to put together a portfolio of polished short stories or a short section of a novel or
novella. Published short stories and novels will be read as models, and there will be discussion of strategies of getting fiction published in a variety of locations. Content varies with the instructor. Fiction-writing workshop II can be taken either before or after Fiction writing workshop I. Can be repeated with the permission of the graduate director.

ENG 673 Screenwriting Workshop (3 credits)
Exploration of screenwriting in a workshop format with consideration of the whole process involved in development of screen projects.

ENG 675 Special Topic Writing Workshop (3 credits)
Exploration of a particular topic not covered in other writing workshops. Examples include "Playwriting," "Writing and Memory," "Writing through Race, Class, and Gender," "Food Writing," and "Nature Writing." Content varies according to instructor. Course may be repeated with permission of the graduate director.

ENG 676 Writing for Publication (3 credits)
Successful freelance publishing begins with an awareness of what editors and their readers want. It demands knowledge of the manuscript market and familiarity with the requirements of specific publications: subject, length, organization, style. Unpublished writers can perfect their skills by analysis and imitation of authors who already write for the publications in which learners wish to appear. The course requires that assignments be composed—from the beginning—for specific publications and that completed work will be submitted for publication. Content can be fiction, nonfiction, or journalism and varies with the instructor. Can be repeated with the permission of the graduate director.

ENG 677 Case Study: Public Relations (3 credits)
Comparative analysis of several public relations campaigns, with consideration of the rhetorical principles involved in the effort to sway public opinion.

ENG 678 Case Study: Magazine Publishing (3 credits)
Exploration of magazine publishing, and the study of several magazines—their histories and editorial styles—with consideration for changing demographics and the practical considerations of achieving success in the magazine market. Consideration of the state of magazine publishing in both print and the web, and the development of articles from pitch to publication.

ENG 679 Special Topics in Journalism (3 credits)
Exploration of a particular topic in journalism. May include sports journalism, literary journalism, or other topics as determined by the instructor.

ENG 680 Writing the Grant Proposal (3 credits)
The course will explore various rhetorical strategies used to develop grant proposals and related writing such as the letter of inquiry, letter of intent, and mini-proposal. Students will examine and critique samples of actual grant-related submissions and practice developing relevant writing skills. Project budgeting will also be discussed and practiced. For their final project, students will be guided through selecting a non-profit organization; researching the organization's history, mission, needs and other background; and creating a professional-quality grant proposal that the non-profit could choose to submit.

ENG 682 New Media (3 credits)
Exploration of new communications media as the hypertext world expands and technology continues to make possible increased broadcast media opportunities.

ENG 683 Editing Practicum (3 credits)
Assignment to a specific, actual editing project, with expectation that the student will engage in several editorial functions in preparing manuscripts for publication.

ENG 684 Health Writing (3 credits)
Are pharmaceutical makers influencing scientific research? What emerging infectious disease is likely to be the next big scare? What are the pros and cons of universal healthcare? Is chocolate really good for the heart? This course will teach students how to report and write on some of the pressing health issues of the day and encourage them to become more discerning consumers of medical news. Students will learn how to analyze research studies, conduct interviews of doctors, scientists and patients, and translate findings into lively and informative stories for the lay reader. The course will explore the connection between the environment and disease and examine trends in medicine as technology advances and funding shrinks. Students will get the latest information from guest speakers who are leaders in the fields of medical research, public relations and the media. This course will help prepare students for a career in health-related writing or sharpen their
communication skills for whatever field they are pursuing.

**ENG 791 Graduate Internship (1 credit)**
Students have workplace internship assignments in areas of career interest that involve writing (research, editing, writing). A component of the course will be research in the internship field, in addition to writing of various kinds about the actual internship activity, some of it done with an eye to publication. Each placement involves approximately 200 hours of work over the course of the internship, a letter from a supervisor upon completion of the internship, and a journal documenting the work of the internship.

**ENG 793 Thesis Project I (3 credits)**
The thesis project can involve either an analytical study in some area covered by the program or a collection of original creative material. Each project will have a faculty director, selected by the student in consultation with the Writing Studies Program Director. For a project to be completed in one registration period, register for ENG 793 and ENG 794, 3 credits each, for a total of 6 credits. For a project to be completed in two separate registration periods, register first for ENG 793 for 3 credits, then later, for ENG 794 for the remaining 3 credits. It is recommended that each project also be read by a second reader, who will be chosen by the student and thesis director, and approved by the graduate director. At the completion of the thesis project, students will make a formal presentation of it in one of three ways:
1. A public reading of a selected portion of the project,
2. A formal defense whereby the thesis will be explained and questions about it entertained, or
3. A public reading coupled with a formal defense.

The method of public presentation would be agreed upon by the student and the thesis director. The English Department will host opportunities for public readings two or three times a year (in September, December, and May) close to expected completion of degree requirements and the thesis project. Once complete, thesis projects will receive a P (pass). In progress thesis projects will be graded as Incomplete.

**Nota Bene:** The Writing Studies diploma will not be conferred until the candidate has successfully completed the above steps, as well as submitted the thesis project in the correct format for binding. Details about the procedure for binding the thesis can be found on the Writing Studies website.

**ENG 794 Thesis Project II (3 credits)**

**ENG 770 Directed Readings (3 credits)**

**ENG 771 Directed Research (3 credits)**

**ENG 772 Directed Writing (3 credits)**

**ENG 773 Directed Fieldwork (3 credits)**