MA IN CREATIVE WRITING

Thesis Requirements
To satisfy the Masters of Arts in Creative Writing thesis requirement:

Students, graduating with a Master of Arts in Creative Writing, will produce and present a full-length text and support materials that demonstrate the mastery of requisite standards, processes, and procedures for bringing that project into its appropriate public venue. The diploma will also specify which area of study the student pursued and include the following options: Poetry, fiction, screenwriting, playwriting, creative nonfiction, documentary film, and publishing.

The Writer’s Life
Acknowledging and understanding the spiritual, psychological, physical, discipline, habits, and support mechanisms required for continued sustenance for the writing life.

At the completion of this program, students will be able to:

1. Articulate the strengths and weaknesses of and discriminate between the archetypal models of writerly lives as they build a writing life plan of their own design.
2. Articulate the strengths and address the weaknesses of the work of their peers, as well as their own work and their writing process.
3. Articulate the ways in which the student will be able to create and sustain the writing life (the writing life plan).

Craft and Technique
Demonstrating the mastery of one’s major area of study through the practice of writing in various forms including the demonstrable and the proven ability to critique one’s own work and that of others honestly and vigorously.

Most creative writing programs spend most or all of their assigned time in workshops and in one-on-one critiques that emphasize this area of study. The Wilkes program also spends a great deal of time on studying how a text “works,” whether it be a classic model, students’ work, or a peer’s draft. This study asks students to dissect texts and break them down into their basic elements. To become a better writer, students must learn how to objectively analyze and critique a wide range of texts in their areas of study.

At the completion of this program, students will be able to:

1. Describe the breadth and depth of knowledge of the historical context and tradition of the range of forms, conventions, and styles within their selected major and minor areas.
2. Demonstrate competency in the technology of their major genre area.
3. Demonstrate mastery of the industry specific formatting and presentation of creative work by genre.

Art Delivery Method
Studying the multiple and appropriate pathways in which one’s creative work becomes public, including knowing the research methods, business practices, and genre-specific conventions that writers need to obtain notice of and appreciation for their work.

This program strand addresses the business, economic, and genre-specific opportunities for your work. Faculty panels from each genre will introduce this idea to students in the first residency. As students move through the program, the faculty and their mentors will work with students to understand both the business practices and the appropriate pathway for their work.

At the completion of this program, students will be able to:

1. Understand the legal and ethical standards and the practical issues of their profession, and demonstrate that knowledge through the residencies and portfolio work of the program.
2. Speak and write to people in professional venues of their area in a confident manner.
3. Be able to articulate, both in writing and orally, their own creative work, using genre-specific tools.

Capstone Requirements
The Master of Arts in Creative Writing Capstone is where students have a chance to demonstrate their full mastery of their major area that meet all of the student learning outcomes listed above. All Master of Arts creative projects, no matter which track, will be given an evaluation by an outside reader who is an industry expert, someone who is an editor, agent, publisher, producer, or director. A unique quality of the Wilkes M.A. is how that work comes together in the final capstone. All capstones, no matter which area the graduate selects, must have both a written and spoken component and must also meet specified graduation criteria. The order for the final thesis and some samples are included in other lessons in this section of CW 520. ALL THESSE MUST BE PRESENTED IN STANDARD INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC FORMATS PER GENRE.

The following are the area specific requirements for the Master of Arts in Creative Writing capstone:

Poetry
During the final residency (CW 525R) poets will present a formal reading from their finished poetry chapbook or poetry collection. The formal reading will be limited to ten minutes followed by a Q & A from faculty, mentors, and other students. Some or all work must be recited.)

THESIS/Support materials will include:
• THESIS (24-50 pages, chapbook; 50+ pages., collection)
• A query letter (1-2 pages)
• Writing Self-Analysis Essay, including Writing Life Plan
• Artist’s statement (1 page.)
• Final annotated bibliography of all readings leading to the thesis project, from CW 512-520.

Fiction
During the final residency (CW 525), fiction writers will present a formal reading from their finished manuscript, which will be either a novel or short story collection. The formal reading will be limited to ten minutes followed by a Q & A from faculty, mentors, and other students.

THESIS/Support materials will include:
• THESIS- (Novella, novel, or short story collection- 120 page minimum)
• A query letter (1-2 pages)
• Writing Self-Analysis Essay, including Writing Life Plan
• Jacket blur (bio) (1 page.)
• Final annotated bibliography of all readings leading to the thesis project, from CW 512-520.

Plays
Playwrights will work through the pre-residency with an assigned director to cast and to prepare the play for a formal staged reading that will be held during the CW 525 capstone or off-campus at a designated theatre. Experienced actors, appropriate to the work, will be utilized. Playwrights will
be prepared to answer questions about their work and processes, following
the staged reading.

THESIS/Support materials will include:

- THESIS-(Full-length play, collected one-acts, or performance piece
  80+ pages)
- A query letter (1-2 pages.)
- Playwright's bio (1 page.)
- Writing Self-Analysis Essay, including Writing Life Plan
- Play synopsis (1-2 pages.)
- Final annotated bibliography of all readings leading to the thesis
  project, from CW 512-520.

Screenplays

Screenwriters will work with their writer mentors in the pre-residency to
prepare their script for a table reading during their final residency (CW
525R). Readers will include actors, cohort members, and other available
readers. Screenwriters must be prepared to present a “pitch” to a film
producer, agent, or director before the reading and to answer process
questions, following the table reading.

THESIS/Support materials will include:

- THESIS-(Full-length screenplay, collected feature shorts, 80+ pages.)
- The "pitch"
- A query letter (1-2 pages.)
- Writing Self-Analysis Essay, including Writing Life Plan
- Screenplay treatment (2-4 pages.)
- Final annotated bibliography of all readings leading to the thesis
  project, from CW 512-520.

Creative Nonfiction

During the final residency (CW 525R), creative nonfiction writers will present
a formal reading from their completed full-length manuscript, which will be
either a memoir or essay collection. The formal reading will be limited to ten
minutes, followed a Q & A from faculty, mentors, and other students.

THESIS/Support materials will include:

- THESIS-(Full-length manuscript or collection of short works)
- A query letter (1-2 pages.)
- Writing Self-Analysis Essay, including Writing Life Plan
- Back flap copy (bio) (1 page.)
- Final annotated bibliography of all readings leading to the thesis
  project, from CW 512-520.

Publishing

During the final residency (CW 525R), students in the publishing
track will present their new e-zine, small press, journal as if they are
actually launching this new company. These students will make a formal
presentation to a panel of publishers, editors, and agents. Additionally, they
will create materials that will be included in a M.A. book fair.

THESIS/Support materials will include:

- The first novel, journal, e-copy (minimum) to be launched by the
  student’s new company
- The portfolio of work leading to the student’s decisions:
  - Interviews, logs, transcriptions
  - Marketing materials for launch
  - Self-analysis essay, including the Writing Life Plan
- Final annotated bibliography of all readings, interviews leading to the
  thesis project, from CW 512-520.

Documentary Film

During the final residency (CW 525R), students in the documentary
film track will present their new documentary film as if they are actually
launching this film at a festival. Additionally, they will create materials that
will be included in a M.A. film festival.

- Short documentary film (30 minutes maximum) DVD copy
- The portfolio of work leading to the student’s decisions:
  - Interviews, logs, transcriptions
  - Marketing materials for launch
  - Self-analysis essay, including the Writing Life Plan
- Final annotated bibliography of all readings, interviews leading to the
  thesis project, from CW 512-520.
**Degree Requirements | 30 credits (minimum)**

### First Residency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CW 501R</td>
<td>The Professional Writer / Residency Course</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

First Project Semester: Students select any two of the following foundation courses. Each of these courses will be delivered online by faculty from each genre in the Project semesters.

Students who expect to enter the publishing track may select from any of the five foundations courses; students entering the documentary film track should register for CW 504—screenwriting and one other area of study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CW 502</td>
<td>Writing Fiction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW 503</td>
<td>Writing Poetry</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW 504</td>
<td>Writing Screenplays</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW 505</td>
<td>Writing Plays</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW 506</td>
<td>Writing Creative Nonfiction</td>
<td>3</td>
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Total Credits: 6

### Second Residency

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CW 510R</td>
<td>Planning the Writing Life</td>
<td>3</td>
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In this residency students will select which track they are pursuing and be assigned a writer or editor or filmmaker mentor.

Second Project Semester: Students will be registered in the courses listed below by area of study in both CW 512, 514:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CW 512F</td>
<td>Genre and Context in Fiction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW 512P</td>
<td>Genre and Context in Poetry</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW 512S</td>
<td>Genre and Context in Screenwriting</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW 512L</td>
<td>Genre and Context in Playwriting</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW 512N</td>
<td>Genre and Context in Nonfiction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW 512U</td>
<td>Genre and Context in Publishing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW 512D</td>
<td>Genre and Context in Making Documentary Films</td>
<td>3</td>
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Total Credits: 6

### Third Residency

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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CW 516R</td>
<td>Final Project/Thesis Plan Residency Course</td>
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Third Project Semester: FINAL WRITING TERM—STUDENTS SELECT COURSE BY AREA OF STUDY (6 credit courses):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CW 520 F</td>
<td>Final Project / Fiction Thesis</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW 520 P</td>
<td>Final Project / Poetry Thesis</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW 520 S</td>
<td>Final Project / Screenwriting Thesis</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW 520 L</td>
<td>Final Project / Playwriting Thesis</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW 520 N</td>
<td>Final Project / Nonfiction Thesis</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW 520 U</td>
<td>Final Project / Publishing Thesis</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW 520 D</td>
<td>Final Project / Documentary Film Thesis</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Credits: 6

### Fourth Residency

**Master of Arts in Creative Writing**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CW 525R</td>
<td>Masters Capstone</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
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All students present capstone projects by area of study

Optional CW 530. Continuous registration (one - six credits) optional course used to complete capstone coursework.