

# Creative Writing

## Degrees Available at SIUE

- Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing

## Creative Writing at SIUE

The MFA in creative writing is designed for students interested in pursuing the art of writing fiction or poetry, and is especially tailored to students who are interested in exploring a variety of career paths. During the second year, students will engage in the "Writer in the World" sequence, which allows them to study community-based, service-learning pedagogies and then partner with a local organization and enrich the community with a service program of their own devising. This sequence will better prepare students for meaningful employment in or outside of academia, and help students sustain a rich writing life beyond graduation.

The flexibility of the elective and literature offerings allows students to pursue a host of other interests, from literary publishing to creative writing pedagogy to contemporary literature. Students will also have the opportunity to gain invaluable editing skills by working with *Sou'wester*, one of the oldest continually-published literary magazines in the country. And Edwardsville is just twenty minutes from a thriving literary and arts scene in downtown St. Louis. Students admitted to the MFA at SIUE will immerse themselves in a vibrant writing culture that will allow them to pursue many different potential career paths, and will deepen their creative lives.

The MFA in creative writing is offered by the Department of English Language and Literature in SIUE's College of Arts and Sciences.

## Admission Requirements

- Graduate School application, and \$40 fee
- Submission of all academic transcripts
- Applicants must have completed a baccalaureate degree with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0
  - Applicants with a GPA between 2.5 and 3.0 may be considered if all of the following conditions are met:
    - The baccalaureate degree was earned more than 4 years prior to the application submission
    - The applicant provides a written explanation of their performance in the baccalaureate degree
    - The applicant provides a written explanation of why they will be successful in the MFA program

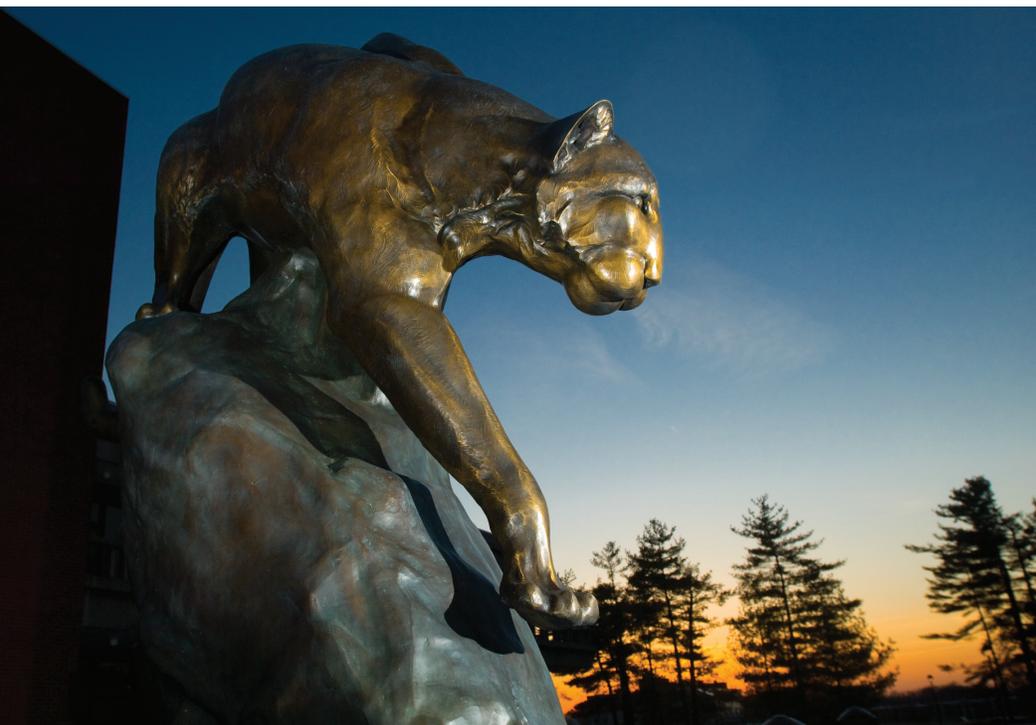
## Faculty

**Tiana Clark**, an assistant professor, has published two books of poetry, *I Can't Talk About the Trees Without the Blood*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2018, and winner of the 2017 Agnes Lynch Starrett Prize, as well as *Equilibrium*, Bull City Press, 2016, which was selected by Afaa Michael Weaver for the 2016 Frost Place Chapbook Competition. Tiana has won a 2019 Pushcart Prize, as well as the 2017 Furious Flower's Gwendolyn Brooks Centennial Poetry Prize and a 2015 Rattle Poetry Prize. She was the 2017-2018 Jay C. and Ruth Halls Poetry Fellow at the Wisconsin Institute of Creative Writing. Her writing has appeared in, or is forthcoming from *The New Yorker*, *Poetry Magazine*, *Kenyon Review*, *American Poetry Review*, *New England Review*, *Best New Poets 2015*, *Lenny Letter*, and elsewhere. She has been the recipient of scholarships and fellowships to the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, Sewanee Writers' Conference, and Kenyon Review Writers Workshop.

**Josh Kryah**, an assistant professor, has published two books of poetry (*We Are Starved*, University Press of Colorado, 2011 and *Glean*, Nightboat Books, 2007). He received his PhD from the University of Nevada Las Vegas and his MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop. He has served as an editor of *Witness* and *Sou'wester*. He has been awarded a New York Public Library Short-Term research Fellowship, an NEA Literature Fellowship, the Third Coast Poetry Prize, and the Schaeffer Fellowship in Poetry, among many other honors.

**Geoffrey W. Schmidt**, a professor, has published two books of fiction (*Write Your Heart Out: Advice from the Moon Winx Motel*, Smallmouth Press, 2001, and *Out of Time*, University of North Texas Press, 2011). He received his MFA from the University of Alabama and his BA from Kenyon College. He has served as an editor of *Sou'wester*. Among other honors, he has received an Illinois Arts Council Literary Award, the Katherine Anne Porter Prize for Fiction, and been nominated for the Pushcart Prize six times, being awarded a Special Mention once.

**Valerie A. Vogrin**, a professor, has published one novel (*Shebang*, University Press of Mississippi, 2004). She earned her MFA from the University of Alabama and her BA from Washington State University. She has served as an editor of *Sou'wester*. She has been awarded residencies at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and the Anderson Center, and her work has won a Pushcart Prize and a Zone 3 Fiction Award and the *Playboy* College Fiction Contest, as well as being named to the Queen's Ferry Best Small Fiction of 2015, and the Wigleaf 50 Top [Very] Short Fictions 2011.



	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Year 1	Workshop 3 Literature Class 3 Elective 3 Total Credits 9	Workshop 3 Literature Class 3 Elective 3 Total Credits 9
Year 2	Workshop 3 ENG 530 - Writer in World 3 Total Credits 6	Workshop 3 ENG 531 - Practicum 3 Total Credits 6
Year 3	Elective 3 Literature Class 3 Total Credits 6	Elective 3 Thesis 3 Total Credits 6

42 credit hours degree total

### Admission Requirements, Cont.

- Applicants with previous graduate-level work must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 in the graduate-level work
  - Applicants with a previous graduate-level GPA less than 3.0 may be considered if all the following conditions are met:
    - The graduate-level work was completed more than 4 years prior to the application submission
    - The applicant provides a written explanation of their performance in the graduate-level work
    - The applicant provides a written explanation of why they will be successful in the MFA program
- International Applicants: Proof of English Proficiency, minimum requirements are TOEFL (79), IELTS (6.5) or equivalent. International applicants are expected to have completed the foreign equivalent of the American baccalaureate degree from an internationally recognized institution of higher learning and meet all other requirements for admissions. Applicants with three-year degrees from Bologna member institutions will be considered for admission. Using current best practices, the Office of Admissions and the Graduate School will evaluate other three-year degrees to determine equivalence to a four-year U.S. baccalaureate. Any noted deficiencies or prerequisites would need to be completed prior to acceptance.
- Three (3) letters of recommendation with waiver forms
- A one-page Statement of Purpose that addresses not just the applicant's commitment to writing, but also the applicant's interest in an experiential, service-learning pedagogy central to the Writer in the World sequence
- Either 2-3 stories (maximum 30 pages) or 15 pages worth of poetry

Program application materials may be uploaded during the application process, but official transcripts must be sent directly from the school attended, and test scores must be verifiable with the appropriate testing service. Please contact the Graduate Admissions office with questions regarding the application submission process at [graduateadmissions@siue.edu](mailto:graduateadmissions@siue.edu).

Review the SIUE Admissions Policy for more information.

### Admission Deadlines

All admitted applicants will begin course of study in the fall semester of a given year.

### Graduation Requirements

To successfully complete the MFA in Creative Writing at SIUE, students will complete 42-45 credit hours as detailed in the curriculum. They will successfully complete the "Writer in the

World" practicum sequence. All students will complete a book-length manuscript and a lengthy artist's statement, detailing the ways in which their coursework and independent reading and study done throughout the program has influenced the writing of the thesis. Students will orally defend the thesis before a committee of at least three faculty members.

Review the graduation policy for more information.

### Curriculum

The MFA in Creative Writing is a terminal degree designed for the student interested in pursuing the art of writing fiction or poetry. Students pursuing this degree will not just develop their skills as writers - they will be better prepared to teach creative writing, pursue other professional writing opportunities, conduct further research into matters of creative writing pedagogy, and publish their own creative works. The Writer in the World sequence will better prepare students for meaningful employment in or outside of academia, and help students sustain a rich writing life beyond graduation.

Completion of the program requires at least 42 hours. However, students may enroll in an optional second unit of thesis hours for a total of 45 hours. Students are required to complete the following primary courses:

- Workshop (12 hours): ENG 593 poetry workshop (taken 4 times), or ENG 592 Fiction workshop (taken 4 times)
- ENG 530 and ENG 531 (6 hours): The Writer in the World sequence, which must be completed in consecutive semesters during the second year of study
- Required Literature (12 hours): Students are required to complete four (4) graduate-level literature courses in consultation with their advisor. At least one (1) of these must be in the contemporary period.
- Electives (9 hours): Electives may be any graduate-level course offering, an additional unit of thesis hours, or a workshop in the student's minor genre (592 or 593)
- Required Thesis (3-6 hours): ENG 599

**Note:** ENG 554 Contemporary Pedagogy is required of all new teaching Graduate Assistants and may not be counted as an elective.

Students will plan their course of study in close consultation with their advisor; in general students should take at least half of their literature and elective courses at the 500-level.

### Contact Information

Geoff Schmidt, Professor  
Email: [geschmi@siue.edu](mailto:geschmi@siue.edu)  
Phone: 618-650-2289