

# Master of Fine Arts

[www.nhia.edu/mfa](http://www.nhia.edu/mfa)

WRITING CURRICULUM

The MFA in Writing at NHIA offers a possibility space for hybridity and cross-pollination of genres and media. We draw inspiration from writers like Anne Carson, Lance Olsen, Maggie Nelson, Claudia Rankine, Valeria Luiselli, and John D'Agata to transcend distinctions not only between fiction, essay, memoir, and poetry, but also across codes, cultures, and disciplines. Our students might produce a science fiction novel, or a memoir in photographs and poems, or a chapbook, and our faculty have expertise in all those areas to ensure a deep, rich knowledge in the chosen genre. We emphasize hybridity as a tool for exploration; however, our students often create works that are more traditional in form. Our goal is to give writers the means, opportunities, and space to make thoughtful and informed choices about their practice and aesthetic outcomes.

We also emphasize professional practice and literary citizenship, and visiting faculty and editors travel to each residency to critique student work with a real-world perspective. Our writers are strongly encouraged to send out work to journals on a regular basis and to attend readings and conferences regularly. Each residency, every student writer sits down for a one-on-one with a writing professional from small presses, literary journals, and writing residencies. In addition, we offer assistantships to student to teach in our BFA Creative Writing program, edit fellow students' critical theses, and work in marketing.

As a student you will participate in five ten-day residencies with all but the fifth followed by a semester of self-directed study with a writing mentor who oversees your creative output, reading list, and critical work. To fulfill the requirements of the MFA in Writing, you must complete five residencies and four semesters for a total of 60 credits, as well as self-publish your book including a critical introduction.

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### Graduate Seminar I, Reading Intensely: Reading for Craft

In this seminar, students learn to read as creative writers. They will figure out different methods of reading for craft, test them side-by-side, and determine what their own reading strengths and weaknesses are, and build on the strengths while shoring up the weaknesses. Students will produce short writing assignments that accompany assigned readings.

### Graduate Seminar II, Hybridity as Possibility Space

Students will consider the territory along the borders of literary and artistic genres. Through readings, exercises, and collaboration, we will see what innovative territory can be created when genres blend, whether it is between poetry and prose, or language and the visual image. We will also examine the written and artistic process, analyzing similarities and differences between mediums, and searching for ways that these techniques can energize our creative work. Students will create and present a hybrid piece at the culmination of the residency.

### Graduate Seminar III: Professional Practices

In this seminar students will assess survival tactics for the professional world of publishing and the writer's market. Students will develop a professional portfolio including a CV, an artist statement, and examples of published or publishable work. They will also develop a teaching portfolio. Topics will include how to present work to a potential agent or publisher, marketing, self-publishing, giving public readings, grant-writing, writing residencies, and entrepreneurship. The course concludes with students giving a 15-minute professional public presentation and reading of their work.

### Graduate Seminar IV: Research for Writers

Students learn to apply the critical understanding of the integration of theory and practice to their own writing. The content of the course is essentially driven by student work and research. To that end readings and content are reliant on and responsive to the student's field of research related to their writing. Research skills are employed to deepen students' individual writing practice and find an appropriate language in writing and speech to critically engage their practice as artists in the creative process. Each student's Thesis begins with a written proposal that delineates his or her artistic practice and outlines a research plan and goals for their creative work. Students will then work on subjective and objective writing, developing short papers over the semester that will become the basis for their Thesis. Students will work in small collaborative discussion groups and support each other in expanding and deepening their research through a series of presentations taking place over four sessions.