

washington university mfa creative writing

Washington University MFA Creative Writing is a highly regarded program that attracts aspiring writers from around the globe. Nestled in the vibrant city of St. Louis, Missouri, Washington University in St. Louis offers an enriching environment for students to hone their craft, explore literary traditions, and engage with a diverse community of writers. This article delves into the key features of the MFA Creative Writing program, its curriculum, the faculty, and the opportunities it provides for budding authors.

Overview of the MFA Creative Writing Program

The Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing at Washington University is designed for individuals who are serious about developing their writing skills and pursuing a career in literature. The program is known for its rigorous curriculum, distinguished faculty, and a supportive atmosphere that encourages experimentation and growth.

Program Structure

The MFA program is typically a two-year course of study that includes:

- **Core Workshops:** Students participate in workshops focused on various genres, including fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction.
- **Literary Study:** Classes that delve into the study of literature and its various forms, enhancing students' understanding of narrative techniques and styles.
- **Electives:** Students have the opportunity to take elective courses that align with their interests, which may include screenwriting, playwriting, and other forms of creative writing.
- **Thesis:** The culmination of the program is a thesis project, where students produce a substantial work of creative writing, often a novel or a collection of stories or poems.

Learning Environment

Washington University fosters a vibrant learning environment where students are encouraged to explore their unique voices. The program emphasizes collaboration and community, allowing writers to share their work and receive constructive feedback from peers and faculty alike.

Distinguished Faculty

One of the hallmarks of the Washington University MFA Creative Writing program is its exceptional faculty. The program boasts a roster of acclaimed writers, poets, and critics who bring their expertise and insights to the classroom.

Notable Faculty Members

Some of the renowned faculty members include:

- **Mary Szybist:** A National Book Award winner, Szybist is known for her evocative poetry and her ability to inspire students to delve deeper into their work.
- **Kevin Young:** An accomplished poet and editor, Young's dynamic teaching style encourages students to experiment with language and form.
- **Gina Frangello:** A celebrated novelist and essayist, Frangello focuses on the intersection of personal narrative and broader social themes in her teaching.

These faculty members not only teach but also mentor students, helping them navigate their creative journeys and offering valuable insights into the publishing world.

Community and Networking Opportunities

The Washington University MFA program is deeply embedded in the literary community, providing students with numerous opportunities to connect with established authors, editors, and agents.

Visiting Writers Series

The program hosts a Visiting Writers Series, which invites notable authors to read from their work and engage in discussions with students. This series is an invaluable opportunity for students to gain exposure to different writing styles and perspectives while networking with industry professionals.

Literary Events and Workshops

Students have access to various literary events, including:

- **Reading Series:** Regular readings by students, faculty, and visiting authors.

- Workshops: Collaborative workshops that allow students to share their work and receive feedback from peers and faculty.
- Conferences: Opportunities to attend and participate in writing conferences and festivals, further expanding their networks.

These events not only enhance students' learning experiences but also foster connections that can be crucial for their future careers.

Publishing Opportunities

With a strong emphasis on practical experience, the Washington University MFA program prepares students for the realities of the publishing world.

Literary Magazines and Journals

Students are encouraged to submit their work to various literary magazines and journals, and many have successfully published their work in prestigious publications. Some notable student-run publications include:

- The River Styx: A well-respected literary journal that features poetry, fiction, and nonfiction.
- The Missouri Review: A renowned journal that publishes a diverse array of literary works.

These publications provide a platform for students to showcase their talent and gain recognition in the literary community.

Internships and Real-World Experience

The program also emphasizes the importance of internships, offering students opportunities to work with literary agencies, publishing houses, and other organizations within the literary field. These internships provide invaluable hands-on experience and insights into the publishing process, helping students to build their resumes and professional networks.

Supportive Alumni Network

Graduates of the Washington University MFA Creative Writing program have gone on to achieve remarkable success in various literary fields. The alumni network is robust and supportive, providing

current students with mentorship and guidance as they navigate their writing careers.

Successful Alumni

Notable alumni include:

- **Jamaica Kincaid:** A renowned author known for her powerful narratives and essays.
- **David Shields:** A bestselling author and innovative thinker in the realm of contemporary literature.
- **Naomi Shihab Nye:** A celebrated poet and anthologist whose work resonates with readers of all ages.

These alumni serve as inspirations, demonstrating the potential paths a graduate of the program can take.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the **Washington University MFA Creative Writing** program stands out for its rigorous curriculum, distinguished faculty, and vibrant literary community. With a strong focus on developing each writer's unique voice, providing networking opportunities, and offering practical experience in the publishing industry, the program equips students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in their writing careers. Whether you aspire to write fiction, poetry, or creative nonfiction, the Washington University MFA program offers a rich and supportive environment to cultivate your passion for writing.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the duration of the MFA Creative Writing program at Washington University?

The MFA Creative Writing program at Washington University typically lasts three years, allowing students to develop their craft in various genres.

What genres can students specialize in within the MFA Creative Writing program?

Students in the MFA Creative Writing program can specialize in fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction.

Are there any notable faculty members in the MFA Creative Writing program at Washington University?

Yes, the program boasts a distinguished faculty, including award-winning writers and published authors who provide mentorship and guidance to students.

What is the application process for the MFA Creative Writing program?

The application process includes submitting a writing sample, a statement of purpose, letters of recommendation, and transcripts from previous education.

Does Washington University offer funding or assistantships for MFA Creative Writing students?

Yes, the program offers a limited number of teaching assistantships and fellowships that provide financial support to graduate students.

What kind of community and resources can MFA students expect at Washington University?

MFA students can expect a vibrant literary community, access to workshops, readings, and events, as well as resources like the Writing Center.

Can students at Washington University's MFA program publish their work during their studies?

Yes, students are encouraged to submit their work for publication and many take advantage of opportunities to showcase their writing in literary journals and anthologies.

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