



Holy Family
UNIVERSITY

Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2025-2026

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1.0 Program and University Information

1.1 About Holy Family University

Holy Family University is a private Catholic institution located in Philadelphia, PA. Founded in 1954, the University's mission is informed by its core values of family, respect, integrity, service and responsibility, learning, and vision. The University embraces inclusion, ensuring a welcoming and accessible learning community for all. Holy Family University educates students in liberal arts and professional studies to fulfill lifelong responsibilities toward God, society, and self. The University is composed of five schools: Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Education, Nursing and Health Sciences, and Professional Studies. Nestled in the heart of a historic residential neighborhood in the Northeast, the University is just minutes from the excitement of Center City. Holy Family enrolls more than 3100 students at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels at its Philadelphia and Newtown campus locations.

Holy Family University is a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

1.2 Mission Statement

The mission of Holy Family University's Low-residency MFA is to prepare graduates to publish and work within the varied field of creative writing. The hybrid structure of the MFA respects students' time, as well as the growing demand for professionalization by focusing on faculty mentorship, immersive experiential learning, as well as rigorous craft-focused instruction. Students hone their skills by working one on one with award-winning, internationally renowned faculty in a program that recognizes the expanding role of creative writing beyond the traditional academy.

In fulfillment of this mission the program:

- Emphasizes a sustainable practice of writing that encourages discipline, revision, creativity, and growth
- Recognizes the connection with tradition and audience by adopting curriculum that focuses on an understanding of craft, genre conventions, and intention, as well as ways to challenge expectations and audiences through experimentation
- Promotes the cultural importance of writing and its connection to community, and social justice.
- Engages with the professional elements of the writing life and prepares students for publishing/professional opportunities

1.3 Program Outcomes

The overarching goal of the program is to prepare students to publish and work within the varied field of creative writing. To this end, graduates of the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program will demonstrate skills and knowledge aligned with the following program goals:

- Identify exemplary and varied model texts from which to draw inspiration
- Demonstrate knowledge of craft and literary analysis through an engagement with relevant works, critical thinking, reading, and writing
- Generate opportunities for professionalization, research, and community engagement

- Improve one's ability to write, edit, and revise writing
- Generate a substantial body of written work
- Produce a creative thesis in a primary genre of study

1.4 Core Curriculum

The low-residency MFA is based on one-on-one mentoring relationships between students and faculty. The program requires limited time on campus (two residency periods each year in January and in June). This allows students to complete their degree from anywhere in the world. This accessibility provides a unique learning environment. However, academic rigor, a focus on an individual's growth as a writer, as well as an emphasis on completing publishable works remain central to the focus of the program.

Core Curriculum (48 Credits)

Craft 1	3
Interdisciplinary Practice 1	3
Writing Mentorship 1	3
Residency 1	3
Craft 2	3
Interdisciplinary Practice 2	3
Writing Mentorship 2	3
Residency 2	3
Craft 3	3
Interdisciplinary Practice 3	3
Writing Mentorship 3	3
Residency 3	3
Writing Mentorship 4	3
Creative Thesis	3
Residency 4	3
Capstone Prep/Presentation	3

Total credits: 48

*Candidates have five calendar years from the time of enrollment to complete the MFA degree.

1.5 Course descriptions, course titles, and course goals

Residency 1,2,3, & 4

Course description: During these intensive residency experiences students participate in workshops, seminars, lectures, panel discussions, individual meetings with mentors, and public readings. The content of each residency will be created by visiting faculty, as well as by the Program Director. Visiting faculty are required to teach or participate in at least one programming event during each residency, and proposed courses and new content for residency experiences will be submitted to the Program Director by visiting faculty for approval. During a student's fourth residency they will present their capstone presentation, attend presentations from their peers, and give a public reading from their creative thesis.

Course Goals: Improve creativity, originality, and skill in poetry, fiction, nonfiction, graphic novel, young adult, and literary genre writing which includes travel, or food writing; produce and revise work; demonstrate the skills of written and oral critique of one's own work as well as peers' work, engage with critical scholarly works, and build opportunities for professionalization.

Writing Mentorship 1,2,3, & 4

Course description: In Writing Mentorship, students will work one on one with faculty members in their genre to create a course of study for their time in the program, generate unique work within their specific genre or subgenre, and workshop that work as their craft develops.

Course goals: Improve creativity, originality, and skill in poetry, fiction, nonfiction, graphic novel, young adult, literary genre, travel, or food writing; produce and revise work; demonstrate the skills of editorial practice.

Interdisciplinary Practice 1,2, & 3

Course description: Working with the Program Director and HFU faculty students develop a unique course of directed, independent study during the first three semesters in the program. This course of study might consist of studies in literature, internship and professionalization opportunities, research opportunities, pursuit of grants, editorial work, other graduate courses at HFU, teaching opportunities, etc.

Course Goals: Support students' writing while providing them with opportunities for professionalization by developing new skills through writing related experiences.

Craft 1,2, & 3

Course description: Craft classes provide a focused look at the elements of writing. The heart of the course is close reading of published work, but students can also expect to respond to works through a series of essays. "Craft," for example, may refer to study of the braided essay, graphic novel forms, magical realist fiction, neo-formalist or free verse poetics, as brief examples.

Course goals: Identify, critically read, and implement core terminology associated with each genre; analyze published work to gain models for students' own writing; generate ideas for original work.

Creative Thesis

Course description: All students will take Creative Thesis in the second semester of their second year. Students will work one-on-one with a mentor to complete a cohesive work of writing in their genre of focus. The thesis will be evaluated by the student's thesis advisor and at least one other faculty reader.

Course goals: Demonstrate ability to write and revise own work on a schedule; produce a complete final thesis for evaluation.

Capstone Prep/ Presentation

Course description: All students will take Capstone Prep/Presentation in the second semester of their second year of study. During the Capstone Prep course students will work with their thesis director to develop a directed course of individual reading/study that not only will help the composition of the student's thesis but will also prepare the student to write an essay on craft that will be presented during the student's final residency in a 30–45-minute lecture format.

Course goals: Demonstrate ability to read, interpret, and synthesize criticism within one's field of study; produce work within one's field that is rigorous and reflective of current academic standards; Demonstrate ability to present work and engage in critical dialogue within the field of creative writing.

1.6 Catalogue Descriptions

ENGL 501,502,503-Craft (1,2, and 3)- Genre specific investigation of craft with an emphasis on literary analysis and criticism. The course may also be interdisciplinary.

ENGL 511, 521, 531, 541-Writing Mentorship (1,2, 3, and 4)- Genre specific and individualized course of study that will improve creativity, critical thinking, originality, and skill for crafting creative work.

ENGL 510, 520, 530, 540-Residency (1,2, 3, and 4)- Residency experiences may include workshops, seminars, lectures, panel discussions, individual meetings with mentors, public readings, or other applicable content.

ENGL 505, 506, 507-Interdisciplinary Practice (1,2, and 3)- Genre specific and individualized course of interdisciplinary study that will improve creativity, critical thinking, originality, and skill for crafting creative work while providing opportunities for community engagement and professionalization.

ENGL 550-Creative Thesis- Genre specific and individualized course of study that will improve creativity, critical thinking, originality, and skill for crafting a "book-length" work.

ENGL 560- Capstone Prep- Genre specific and individualized course of study that will result in the composition of an academic, publishable craft essay.

2.0 Academic Policies and Procedures

2.1 Admissions Procedures

The Graduate Program in Creative Writing strives to admit students who demonstrate both the creative and academic abilities required to be successful given both the rigor and unique format of the low-residency program. The ideal candidate will have earned a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and will have earned a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

Other application requirements include:

- A personal statement that provides insight into the applicant's desire to obtain an MFA, artistic vision, personal history of writing, potential contribution to the program, and readiness to meet the requirements of the program.
- A writing sample consisting of original writing in the applicant's primary genre (10-15 pgs. of poetry, 20-30 pgs. of prose).
- Official transcripts from all previous institutions of higher education attended by the applicant.

* Candidates may be asked to participate in a telephone, Zoom, or in-person interview with the Program Director or other program faculty members.

2.2 Advising

All matriculated MFA Creative Writing students are initially advised by the Academic Advising Office. A MFA academic advisor will also be assigned to each student. Each student is expected to schedule advising appointments with their individual academic advisors and to actively participate in the advising process.

Once the student and academic advisor have developed a roster for the next academic semester, it is required that the student inform the advisor of any changes in course selection. Additionally, a student planning to withdraw from a course should make an appointment with their academic advisor to determine the impact of the withdrawal on program progression, full-time status, and/or financial aid eligibility. Failure to officially withdraw from a course with the Registrar's Office can result in a student receiving a grade of F.

The advisor's role is one of assisting the student in completing the program of study; therefore, it is important that a strong professional relationship be established between the student and academic advisor. Students should log on to *Self Service* and under 'Academic Profile' select 'Program Evaluation'. Click the checkbox next to your current program and submit. The report generated lists all the courses that are required for graduation and where the classes you have taken meet those requirements. This should be completed prior to meeting with academic advisors. Support of faculty advisement does not reduce the student's responsibility for academic decisions. Final responsibility for attaining all degree requirements rests solely with the student.

2.3 Eligibility to Remain in the Program

Continued enrollment requires students to achieve a minimum:

1. Grade of C+ (77%) in all MFA courses,
2. Concentration GPA of 2.3*, and
3. Cumulative GPA of 2.3*

Students earning less than the minimum grade of C+ in a concentration course will be academically dismissed from the MFA program. Dismissal from the program does not constitute dismissal from the University.

*Students whose *concentration* and/or *cumulative* GPA drops below 2.3 will have one semester to improve academic performance and increase the GPA to 2.3. Students who do not achieve a cumulative GPA of 2.3 after one additional semester will be academically dismissed from the program. Students who restore the *concentration* and/or *cumulative* 2.3 GPA after one additional semester will be permitted to continue in the program. If the student's *concentration* or *cumulative* GPA falls below the minimum 2.3 at the completion of any subsequent semester, the student will be academically dismissed from the MFA program.

2.4 Program Readmission

Program readmission is only granted to students having stopped-out due to nonacademic reasons. Students seeking readmission must adhere to the following:

1. Readmission may be requested only once.
2. Readmission is dependent upon space availability.

3. Readmission will only be considered following a student's voluntary withdrawal (due to non-academic reasons) from the program/University. Students dismissed due to academic (or clinical) reasons or who withdrew in poor academic standing are not eligible for readmission.
4. The student must have earned the minimum "C" in *concentration* courses and maintained minimum *cumulative* and *concentration* GPAs of 2.3 before leaving the program to qualify for readmission.
5. A written request must be submitted to the MFA Program Director two semesters prior to the semester to which the student is seeking readmission, to provide sufficient time to assess and process the request.
6. The student must be readmitted within 12 months from the time of stop-out. After 12 months, student readmission will not be considered.
7. Compliance with the steps involved in this policy rests solely with the student.

2.5 Grievance Procedure

2.5.1 Non-Academic Grievance

The policies and procedures set forth in this *Policy Manual* have been established as a guide for students to ensure a proper environment for academic, spiritual and social growth. It is hoped that students will respond with maturity and a strong sense of individual responsibility while completing the program's requirements.

If any student has a grievance related to University policy and non-academic in character, the student shall refer to the University's Grievance Policy, Non-Academic as published in the University's [Student Handbook](#).

2.5.2 Academic Disputes and Grade Challenges

The appeal procedure shall act as a vehicle for communication and decision-making between student and faculty and provide a process through which a grievance can be resolved. Justifiable cause for grievance shall be defined as any act that is perceived as either a prejudiced or capricious action on the part of a faculty member in the evaluation of a student's performance or an arbitrary action or imposition of sanctions without regard for due process.

If a student has an academic grievance, the student should refer to the University's [Student Handbook](#) and [Undergraduate Catalog](#) Grievance Procedures, Academic Disputes and Grade Challenges policies.

2.6 Course Withdrawal

The student must schedule a meeting with their assigned academic advisor to withdraw from any academic course.

2.7 Program Withdrawal

The Program Director must be informed, in writing, of intent to withdraw from the MFA program and/or from the University.

An exit interview is to be scheduled with the Program Director. Formal withdrawal from all courses must be completed with the University's Academic Advising Center and/or Registrar's Office in accordance with University policy.

3.0 Distance Learning and Academic Structures

3.1 Assignment of Faculty Mentors

Incoming students are paired with a Faculty Mentor within their primary genre. It is advised that during their first three semesters of study, students should attempt to work with at least three different Faculty Mentors. At the beginning of each academic year, the Program Director solicits student preferences regarding Faculty Mentors. The Program makes every effort to pair students with their preference, but logistics prohibit any guarantee.

In the fourth semester of the program, one of the mentors the student has worked with will serve as the student's fourth-semester thesis advisor. This decision will be made by the student and their advisor.

3.1.1 Mentor Semester Study Plan

Within the first two weeks of the semester, working with their assigned faculty mentor, students will put together a study plan (See appendix 1) that includes their learning objectives for the semester, as well as a schedule for feedback and packet submissions. This plan should focus on specific goals within the context of their work with a faculty mentor during a particular semester and relate to a student's overall degree progress. This study plan is the basis for describing and discussing the semester's achievements in the end-of-semester narrative evaluations by faculty. The study plan may also include due dates, workshop strategies and guidelines, and a bibliography of books to be read and/or annotated. This plan is developed collaboratively in discussion between the student and faculty mentor.

Failure to complete a faculty approved study plan by the close of the residency may prompt a student's withdrawal from the semester, and failure to carry out the activities and meet the goals included in the study plan may be grounds for an unsuccessful semester.

3.2 Distance-Learning Exchanges

Creative and critical writing, study plans, submission cover letters, follow up emails, and all other forms of distance-learning communications between faculty and students are part of the MFA Program's graduate curriculum. It is important to note that these documents are not confidential, personal correspondence. Emails between students and faculty should be sent from a Holy Family University Email address. Faculty Mentors may share with the Program Director all responses to student writing submissions, and, at their discretion, may also share with the Program Director and with other Faculty Mentors any additional faculty-student communication.

3.3 Writing Mentorship Packet and Response Guidelines

In Writing Mentorship Courses, students are expected to submit at least 4 packets of original writing per semester.

While creating their semester study plan (See appendix 1), faculty mentors and students should discuss their expectations regarding the number of pages of creative writing included in each submission as well as the due date for each submission over the course of the semester, with the understanding that expectations and limits should be flexible depending on the style and scope of the project.

The following page limits are suggestions and are *specified only to prevent excessive disregard, from either the faculty or the student, of those reasonable assumptions*:

- In poetry, submissions should be *up to* 10 single-spaced pages, unless Faculty Mentor and student agree to different quantities in advance.
- In fiction/nonfiction/travel & food writing, submissions should be *no more than* 6,500 words, unless Faculty Mentor and student agree to different quantities in advance.
- In YA, prose should be *no more than* 6,500 words, unless Faculty Mentor and student agree to different quantities in advance.

Students and Faculty Mentors should agree on the specific method by which student submissions will be made and faculty responses will be communicated— electronic mail, regular mail, canvas submission, etc.

Faculty critiques of student work should include a written response evaluating the submission as a whole, suggesting further work and relevant readings, as well as specific suggestions for revision. The response should also include line edits of student work. The length of faculty responses will vary but should average 1000-1500 words (or more), inclusive of all line edits and general remarks.

****Faculty Mentors are entitled to respond to late student submissions with comparable lateness****

It is also understood that faculty are working writers with numerous other professional commitments that may involve occasionally adjusting the distance-learning submission/response schedule. It is also assumed that Faculty Mentors will make their best efforts to meet the faculty response deadlines and that they will keep both the Program Director and their students informed about any major variations from those deadlines.

For all genres, if a Faculty Mentor suggests major revisions to a student's submission, and the student makes and resubmits those revisions, the Faculty Mentor has the discretion to consider those revisions included in a subsequent submission as new work, and thus subject to the guidelines above.

For all genres, if a Faculty Mentor suggests minor revisions to a student's writing, and the student makes and resubmits those revisions, the student and Faculty Mentor should confer in advance about what will make a reasonable amount of new work to include in a student's subsequent submission.

During the distance-learning portion of the semester, students should not re-submit work to Faculty Mentors that has already been critiqued in a prior semester or residency workshop, *unless it has been substantially revised since its last critique*. (The exception to this policy is the first submission of the thesis draft.) In the cover letter for each distance-learning submission, students should note whether any of the work submitted has been critiqued by a prior Faculty Mentor, as well as which mentor critiqued it.

***For Mentorship rubric see Appendix 1**

3.4 The Packet Process

The packet process consists of four elements:

- A cover letter introducing the work and your goals for revision.
- The packet of work itself which follows program guidelines as well as the guidelines discussed by the student and their faculty mentor.
- A one hour virtual meeting; a live conversation between you and your advisor held on WebEx or over the phone.
- A written process/reflection and summary to be sent to your faculty mentor after the meeting

While creating your semester study plan, a student and their mentor establish the number of and timeline for your packets within in the established timeline of semester dates and deadlines.

The virtual meeting may be on the platform that is most convenient for both parties depending on circumstance— video conferencing (e.g. Skype, Google Hangout, Zoom, WebEx, Facetime), or phone call. You will determine in advance what to discuss, depending on your academic and creative needs. Within three days after the virtual meeting, you will email a separate process/reflection letter that summarizes the virtual meeting, reflects on what you learned, and outlines how you will implement this in your remaining packets.

3.5 Self-Plagiarism

The same material cannot be submitted to faculty mentors in different semesters without significant revision, documentation, and discussion of the revisions with your current faculty mentor. This does not pertain to the submission of the creative thesis.

3.6 Interdisciplinary Practice

Interdisciplinary practice is a unique course of directed, independent study during the first three semesters in the program. This course of study might consist of studies in literature, internship and professionalization opportunities, research opportunities, pursuit of grants, editorial work, other graduate courses at HFU, teaching opportunities, etc.

While the MFA Faculty Mentor is usually not the primary evaluator of the student's work in their interdisciplinary practice course of study, a Faculty Mentor, the student's Interdisciplinary Advisor or Internship Supervisor may be in touch regarding the student's interdisciplinary study and its relation to the writing concentration.

At the start of each Interdisciplinary Practice course the student and the course instructor will make a plan to begin complete, or continue an ongoing Interdisciplinary Practice project. All projects, even if they continue across multiple semesters, must be completed by the end of the student's third semester.

***For Interdisciplinary Practice rubric see Appendix 1**

3.7 Genre Focus and Thesis

To graduate from the program, a student must have a satisfactory genre focus: you must select a genre for your final thesis and must spend three consecutive semesters working in that genre, and you must have also completed approximately half of your reading and annotations on works in that genre. By the end of your final semester, you are asked to produce a unified creative thesis of within the genre you selected of publishable, professional quality. This thesis is a complete "book-length" work in the student's primary genre and must be at least 50 pages in poetry and 150 pages in prose, but not more than 100 pages in poetry and 250 pages in prose.

The Thesis includes 5 pages of front matter, and the rest must be composed of original creative work. Front matter includes:

- A cover page with the thesis title, student's name, and completion date (1 page)
- Table of contents (1 page)
- Introduction to the overall theme(s) of the work (1 page)
- A Documentation of revisions process and a summary of edits made during the thesis course to work in the thesis that was composed before taking the thesis course (1 page)
- A process description page which details the writing process for new work in the thesis (1 page)

At least 1/3 of the final thesis must be entirely new work that is written during the thesis term. Students must summarize their writing process for these new pages on their process description page. Up to 2/3 of the pages can be a revision or revisions of work that was written previously. However, revisions/edits that are worked on during the course must be documented on the revisions page in the front matter of the thesis.

***For Thesis rubric see Appendix 1**

3.8 Capstone Presentation

All students will take Capstone Prep/Presentation in the second semester of their second year of study. During the Capstone Prep course students will work with their thesis director to develop a directed course of individual reading/study that not only will help the composition of the student's thesis but will also prepare the student to write a 20-25 page essay on craft that will be presented during the student's final year of residency in a 30–45-minute lecture format.

The goal of this capstone essay is to demonstrate ability to read, interpret, and synthesize criticism within one's field of study; produce work within one's field that is rigorous and reflective of current academic standards, and demonstrate ability to present work and engage in critical dialogue within the field of creative writing.

***For Capstone Presentation rubric see Appendix 1**

4.0 In-Person and Virtual Residency Information

4.1 Residency Periods

In person residency periods are held for 4 days on the main campus of HFU academic each year. During the course of the academic year there are also two weekend-long “mini residencies” that are held virtually. Dates of current and upcoming residencies may be found on HFU MFA website.

4.2 Residency Curriculum

The residency curriculum may include but is not limited to:

- Seminars for first-, second-, third-, and fourth-semester cohorts
- Individual meetings between Faculty Mentors and mentees
- MFA writing faculty readings, panels and events
- Presentations by visiting faculty
- Intensive writing workshops
- Capstone presentations and thesis readings

4.3 Residency Attendance

Students are required to attend each residency period in order to get credit for the residency class that they are enrolled in each semester and must participate in at least **7** of residency programming during an in-person residency and **5** of residency programming during a virtual residency to receive attendance credit.

The following guidelines constitute the MFA Program in Creative Writing's policies regarding residency class attendance:

1. Illness, family emergencies, unavoidable travel delays, and religious observances constitute the only valid reasons to miss *a portion* of residency events.
2. In consultation with individual faculty, the Program Director may decide that students missing more than a combined total of **5 hours** of workshops, seminars, conferences, or evening events—***for whatever reasons, including those specified above***—will be required to withdraw from the program—either permanently or for the subsequent semester.

For the Creative Writing Program, “class meetings” include all residency activities including, but not limited to, seminars, workshops, panels, readings, discussions, and individual conferences.

All students meet with their Faculty Mentors in an individual conference at least once during residency. In these conferences, the details of the distance-learning part of the semester are discussed, such as: reading lists, craft annotation topics, and creative writing submissions. By the end of residency, students are expected to have a finalized and approved Semester Study Plan.

4.4 Disability and Accommodations

During the course of the semester, as well as during virtual or in-person residency periods Holy Family University will serve students in need of accommodations according to its most up to date Accessibility policy.

Appendix 1: Course Evaluation Rubrics, Guidelines, and Study Plan Agreements

1.1 Interdisciplinary Practice Study Plan Agreement and Evaluation Guidelines

Interdisciplinary Practice Study Plan

Working with the Program Director and HFU faculty students develop a unique course of directed, independent study during the first three semesters in the program. This course of study might consist of studies in literature, internship and professionalization opportunities, research opportunities, pursuit of grants, editorial work, other graduate courses at HFU, teaching opportunities, etc.

Instructions: This contract must be completed and signed by the student, an interdisciplinary practice representative, and the MFA Program Director.

Semester: _____

Student Name: _____

Title of Project: _____

Documentation of Project Content (Give a detailed outline of the interdisciplinary project. Use separate sheet of paper if necessary.):

Estimated Number of hours per week to be devoted to the project: _____

Plan to demonstrate progress or during the time of project (use separate sheet of paper if necessary):

Description of final outcomes or projects associated with the interdisciplinary practice study period (use separate sheet of paper if necessary):

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Interdisciplinary Practice Instructor _____ . Date _____

This study plan represents the student's commitment to earn 3 credits of graduate work:

- 3 credits of *Interdisciplinary practice* (ENGL-505, 506, or 507)

Signing this form indicates that the student and the faculty mentor understand the Program's academic standards and requirements detailed in MFA program handbook. **IMPORTANT:** **faculty will not grant credit for project that fails to meet graduate-level standards.**

After both faculty mentor and student sign this completed form, the **student is required** to email the contract to the faculty mentor, and MFA Director [Keith Kopka](#)

1.2 INTERDISCIPLINARY PRACTICE CHECK IN FORM

HOLY FAMILY UNIVERSITY MFA PROGRAM IN CREATIVE WRITING MFA WRITING FACULTY EVALUATION OF STUDENT

Name: _____

Faculty Evaluator: _____

Semester and week: _____

1. Comment on the student's progress in studies in literature, presentation of creative or scholarly work, internship and professionalization opportunities, research opportunities, pursuit of grants, publishing, editorial work, other graduate courses at HFU, teaching opportunities, etc.

Excellent	Satisfactory	Incomplete
Student exceeds in their application of knowledge to independent studies, professionalization, community engagement, social justice, etc.	Student demonstrates an application of knowledge to independent studies, professionalization, community engagement, social justice, etc.	Student does not demonstrate an application of knowledge to independent studies, professionalization, community engagement, social justice, etc.

2. Please list and/or comment on goals to be achieved before the next check in period.

Student Signature_____. Date_____

IDP Advisor Signature_____. Date_____

1.3 HOLY FAMILY UNIVERSITY MFA PROGRAM IN CREATIVE WRITING MFA WRITING INTERDISCIPLINARY PRACTICE FACULTY EVALUATION

Student's Name: _____

Faculty Evaluator: _____

Semester: _____

1. Time on Task:

The student must spend a minimum of 45 hrs per semester on task, including mentoring, to receive full course credit. Time exclusions include planning in conjunction with mentor or advisor, time spent completing interdisciplinary practice, and time spent on written or oral reporting. Please comment on the student's time on task:

Excellent	Satisfactory	Incomplete
Application of demonstrated learning outcomes exceeds the necessary time spent on interdisciplinary practice	Application of demonstrated learning outcomes exemplifies the necessary time spent on interdisciplinary practice	Application of demonstrated learning outcomes does not reflect the necessary time spent on interdisciplinary practice

2. Growth in individual practice:

The project/practice is evaluated for evidence of its impact on a student's progress in refining craft and other elements of practice as they relate to their specific genres and art forms. This progress is also evaluated as it relates to work a student has previously submitted. Please comment on this interdisciplinary practice as it relates to student's growth in their individual practice:

Excellent	Satisfactory	Incomplete
Through interdisciplinary practice, the applications and outcomes exceed the benchmark for growth in individual practice	Through interdisciplinary practice, the applications and outcomes meet the benchmark for growth in individual practice	Through interdisciplinary practice, the applications and outcomes do not meet the benchmark for growth in individual practice

3. Synthesis of creative and academic knowledge:

Whether the project/practice under consideration is academic or more practical in nature, the student's work or practice must contribute to their overall artistic development. The project must also be relevant to the student's academic focus, and it must demonstrate academic rigor. Please comment on the quality of the student's development in regard to their academic and creative practice below:

Excellent	Satisfactory	Incomplete
Through interdisciplinary practice, the applications and outcomes exceed the benchmark for demonstrating the synthesis of creative and academic knowledge	Through interdisciplinary practice, the applications and outcomes meet the benchmark for demonstrating the synthesis of creative and academic knowledge	Through interdisciplinary practice, the applications and outcomes do not meet the benchmark for demonstrating the synthesis of creative and academic knowledge

4. Application of Knowledge:

The project/practice under consideration must demonstrate an applied knowledge from outcomes within the MFA program and engage with individual professionalization, the literary community, social justice, or other relevant aspects of culture, professionalization, or community. Please comment on the application of knowledge below:

Excellent	Satisfactory	Incomplete
Through interdisciplinary practice, the applications and outcomes exceed the benchmark for demonstrating the application of knowledge	Through interdisciplinary practice, the applications and outcomes meet the benchmark for demonstrating the application of knowledge	Through interdisciplinary practice, the applications and outcomes do not meet the benchmark for demonstrating the application of knowledge

☐

I award 3 credits of Interdisciplinary Practice 505, 506, or 507

☐

I **do not** award 3 credits of Interdisciplinary Practice 505, 506, or 507

MFA Faculty Signature _____ Date _____

1.4 Thesis Study Plan Agreement and Evaluation Guidelines.

Semester: _____

Student Name: _____

Primary Genre _____

Title of Project: _____

All students will take Creative Thesis in the second semester of their second year. Students will work one-on-one with a mentor to complete a cohesive work of writing in their genre of focus. The thesis will be evaluated by the student's thesis advisor and at least one other faculty reader.

A complete "book-length" work in the student's primary genre. The thesis must be at least 50 pages. The Thesis includes 5 pages of front matter, and the rest must be composed of original creative work. Front matter includes:

- A cover page with the thesis title, student's name, and completion date (1 page)
- Table of contents (1 page)
- Introduction to the overall theme(s) of the work (1 page)
- A Documentation of revisions process and a summary of edits made during the thesis course to work in the thesis that was composed before taking the thesis course (1 page)
- A process description page which details the writing process for new work in the thesis (1 page)

At least 1/3 of the final thesis must be entirely new work that is written during the thesis term. Students must summarize their writing process for these new pages on their process description page. Up to 2/3 of the pages can be a revision or revisions of work that was written previously. However, revisions/edits that are worked on during the course must be documented on the revisions page in the front matter of the thesis.

Genre Guidelines

POETRY

The student's thesis, as a work of poetry, illustrates a coherence across poems in terms of form, content, theme, or voice. Craft elements such as imagery, lineation, form, tone, pacing, meter, rhyme, sonics, etc. are to be demonstrated throughout the thesis, and the thesis should be successful in conveying its intended meaning to its audience. The thesis

should also be grammatically and syntactically clear in its composition.

PROSE

The student's thesis, as a work of fiction/nonfiction, must be focused story rather than mere narrative or its component parts create a cohesive narrative. Craft elements such as plot, dialogue, character development, setting, scene, etc. are to be demonstrated throughout the thesis, and the thesis should be successful in conveying its intended meaning to its audience. The thesis should also be grammatically and syntactically clear in its composition.

OTHER

The student's thesis, as an experimental, hybrid, or other work, must demonstrate a purpose in its content and the way in which that content is presented. Craft elements in connection to all relevant genres must be demonstrated or challenged throughout the thesis, and the thesis should be successful in conveying its intended meaning to its audience. The thesis should also be grammatically and syntactically clear in its composition or in relationship to its purpose as a piece

Thesis Advisor will not grant credit for any writing—critical or creative—that fails to meet graduate-level standards for grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling, and documentation.

MLA style specifics are available at: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

In accordance with the guidelines above, the following constitutes the agreement made between faculty mentor/thesis advisor and the MFA thesis candidate:

The schedule for *Creative Thesis* involved incremental work throughout the semester. The schedule below offers one suggested organization, but students should work with their thesis advisor to create a schedule that fits the specific project.

Please edit this sample submission and revision schedule in conjunction with your thesis advisor:

- **First Submission**—*Rough draft of project to be subject to major revision*
- **Second Submission**—*Edited draft subject to revision*
- **Third Submission**—*Minor revisions in content and thesis formatting*
- **Fourth Submission**—*Completed Creative Thesis materials*

Signatures

MFA Thesis Candidate _____ Date _____

MFA Faculty Mentor/Thesis Advisor _____ Date _____

Program Director _____ Date _____

1.5 HOLY FAMILY UNIVERSITY MFA PROGRAM IN CREATIVE WRITING MFA WRITING THESIS EVALUATION

Student's Name: _____

Faculty Director: _____

Second Evaluator: _____

Semester: _____

TITLE OF THESIS: _____

GENRE OF THESIS: _____

OUTCOME: Thesis meets formatting guidelines outlined in the graduate handbook and is a “book-length” project that meets the guidelines in the English Department’s Graduate Handbook, including deadlines, publishable length, and cohesiveness of the whole.

FICTION/NONFICTION: a collection of short stories/essays, or a novel/Memoir no fewer than 150 pages and no more than 250 pages

POETRY: a collection of poems no fewer than 50 pages and no more than 100 pages

OTHER: please define:

Please Circle your selection: YES NO

OUTCOME: Thesis demonstrates a knowledge of craft, proficient use of genre elements, techniques, and basic genre conventions and it is grammatically and syntactically clear.

PROSE

The student’s thesis, as a work of fiction/nonfiction, must be focused story rather than mere narrative or its component parts create a cohesive narrative. Craft elements such as plot, dialogue, character development, setting, scene, etc. are to be demonstrated throughout the

thesis, and the thesis should be successful in conveying its intended meaning to its audience. The thesis should also be grammatically and syntactically clear in its composition. Please comment on the craft elements of the student's thesis below:

Note any significant issues or problems with the craft or content of the thesis here:

Excellent	Satisfactory	Incomplete
The thesis exceeds the benchmark for demonstrating a knowledge of craft, proficient use of genre elements, techniques, and basic genre conventions, and is grammatically and syntactically clear.	The thesis meets the benchmark for demonstrating a knowledge of craft, proficient use of genre elements, techniques, and basic genre conventions, and is grammatically and syntactically clear.	The thesis does not meet the benchmark for demonstrating a knowledge of craft, proficient use of genre elements, techniques, and basic genre conventions, and is grammatically and syntactically clear.

OUTCOME: Thesis demonstrates a knowledge of craft, proficient use of genre elements, techniques, and basic genre conventions and it is grammatically and syntactically clear.

POETRY

The student's thesis, as a work of poetry, illustrates a coherence across poems in terms of form, content, theme, or voice. Craft elements such as imagery, lineation, form, tone, pacing, meter, rhyme, sonics, etc. are to be demonstrated throughout the thesis, and the thesis should be successful in conveying its intended meaning to its audience. The thesis should also be grammatically and syntactically clear in its composition. Please comment on the craft elements of the student's thesis below:

Note any significant issues or problems with the craft or content of the thesis here:

Excellent	Satisfactory	Incomplete
The thesis exceeds the benchmark for demonstrating a knowledge of craft, proficient use of genre elements, techniques, and basic genre conventions, and is grammatically and syntactically clear.	The thesis meets the benchmark for demonstrating a knowledge of craft, proficient use of genre elements, techniques, and basic genre conventions, and is grammatically and syntactically clear.	The thesis does not meet the benchmark for demonstrating a knowledge of craft, proficient use of genre elements, techniques, and basic genre conventions, and is grammatically and syntactically clear.

OUTCOME: Thesis demonstrates a knowledge of craft, proficient use of genre elements, techniques, and basic genre conventions and it is grammatically and syntactically clear.

OTHER: (Please Name):_____

The student's thesis, as an experimental, hybrid, or other work, must demonstrate a purpose in its content and the way in which that content is presented. Craft elements in connection to all relevant genres must be demonstrated or challenged throughout the thesis, and the thesis should be successful in conveying its intended meaning to its audience. The thesis should also be grammatically and syntactically clear in its composition or in relationship to its purpose as a piece of experimental craft. Please comment on the craft elements of the student's thesis below:

Note any significant issues or problems with the craft or content of the thesis here:

Excellent	Satisfactory	Incomplete
The thesis exceeds the benchmark for demonstrating a knowledge of craft, proficient use of genre elements, techniques, and basic genre conventions, and is grammatically and syntactically clear.	The thesis meets the benchmark for demonstrating a knowledge of craft, proficient use of genre elements, techniques, and basic genre conventions, and is grammatically and syntactically clear.	The thesis does not meet the benchmark for demonstrating a knowledge of craft, proficient use of genre elements, techniques, and basic genre conventions, and is grammatically and syntactically clear.

REVISION: The student demonstrates significant effort in the process of revising works in preparation for inclusion in the final thesis document. This revision process is clearly documented in the front matter of the thesis, and the work has undergone significant revision that demonstrates a clear understanding of craft. Please comment on the student's revision process below:

Note any significant issues or problems with the revision of the thesis here:

Excellent	Satisfactory	Incomplete
The thesis exceeds the benchmark for demonstrating a knowledge of craft, proficient use of genre elements, techniques, and basic genre conventions, and is grammatically and syntactically clear in the process of revision.	The thesis meets the benchmark for demonstrating a knowledge of craft, proficient use of genre elements, techniques, and basic genre conventions, and is grammatically and syntactically clear in the process of revision.	The thesis does not meet the benchmark for demonstrating a knowledge of craft, proficient use of genre elements, techniques, and basic genre conventions, and is grammatically and syntactically clear in the process of revision.

-
- ☐ I award 3 credits of Creative Thesis 550
- ☐ I **do not** award 3 credits of Creative Thesis 550

☐ Thesis is complete and the student is in good standing.

☐ Thesis must be revised and resubmitted.

MFA Faculty Director Signature_____ Date_____

Secondary Evaluator Signature_____
Date_____

1.6 Capstone Study Plan Agreement and Evaluation Guidelines

Semester: _____

Student Name: _____

Primary Genre _____

Title of Project: _____

Overview

All students will take Capstone Prep/Presentation in the second semester of their second year of study. During the Capstone Prep course students will work with their thesis director to develop a directed course of individual reading/study that not only will help the composition of the student's thesis but will also prepare the student to write an essay on craft that will be presented during the student's final residency in a 30–45-minute lecture format.

The goal of this capstone essay is to demonstrate ability to read, interpret, and synthesize criticism within one's field of study; produce work within one's field that is rigorous and reflective of current academic standards, and demonstrate ability to present work and engage in critical dialogue within the field of creative writing.

After creating a course of study for the semester with one's faculty mentor, students will begin to craft a critical essay of 15-20 pages that illustrates innovative scholarship, deep immersion in process, and cross-pollination between critical and creative texts, students will work with faculty mentors to develop a topic, edit the essay, and discuss submission of the essay for potential publication. The content of this essay is meant to demonstrate the synthesis of knowledge gained over the time the student has spent in the program.

During a residency period in the student's final year of the program, that student will present their critical essay to an audience of instructors, community members, and fellow students. The presentation must be 30-45 minutes in length, include a visual component, and inform the audience of the content of your essay without simply reading your essay to them from the page.

This presentation will be evaluated by your faculty thesis advisor.

Topic for Capstone Essay:

Reading List Guidelines

In the pursuit of thinking about and developing an essay/argument in connection to the topic listed above, the student will read the following books (number can vary depending on the size and complexity of individual works). *On average*, students should read, ***between each submission deadline, three or four books*** in their primary genre.

Reading List titles:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.

Capstone Essay Editing and Drafting Schedule:

The student will complete **at least four** submissions of the capstone essay, each including new work and/or revisions. Work with your thesis director to complete as many specifics as possible in the sample schedule below. **The final schedule must involve incremental work throughout the semester.**

First Submission— (MM/DD/YYYY)

Research Plan:

Writing plan:

Editing plan:

Second Submission— (MM/DD/YYYY)

Research Plan:

Writing plan:

Editing plan:

Third Submission— (MM/DD/YYYY)

Research Plan:

Writing plan:

Editing plan:

Fourth Submission— (MM/DD/YYYY)

Research Plan:

Writing plan:

Editing plan:

Signatures

MFA Thesis Candidate_____ Date_____

MFA Faculty Mentor/Thesis Advisor_____ Date_____

Program Director_____ Date_____

**1.7 HOLY FAMILY UNIVERSITY MFA PROGRAM IN CREATIVE WRITING MFA WRITING
CAPSTONE ESSAY/ORAL PRESENTATION EVALUATION**

Student's Name: _____

Faculty Director: _____

Semester: _____

During their final semester students must take a Capstone Prep course where they will work with their thesis director to develop a directed course of individual reading/study that not only will help the composition of the student's thesis but will also prepare the student to write an essay on craft that will be presented during the student's final residency in a 30–45-minute lecture format.

The essay and presentation must demonstrate ability to read, interpret, and synthesize criticism within one's field of study; ability to produce work within one's field that is rigorous and reflective of current academic standards; and to demonstrate the ability to present work and engage in critical dialogue within the field of creative writing.

Capstone Essay: The 20-25 page Capstone Essay must demonstrate a student's knowledge of necessary elements of writing and craft by engaging critically with published work within the field. Students must compose an essay that engages with, makes arguments about, and, at times, interrogates craft elements, forms, canonical knowledge, etc. This essay must also demonstrate a knowledge of how the student sees their own work in relationship to the formal, cultural, political, and social history of poetry while also maintaining clarity in grammar, syntax, meaning, and other elements of formal academic writing. Please comment on the knowledge demonstrated in the student's capstone essay below:

Note any significant issues or problems with the essay here:

Excellent	Satisfactory	Incomplete
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The capstone essay exceeds the benchmark for demonstrating necessary elements of writing and craft by engaging critically with published work within the field. The essay is excellent in the way that it engages with, makes arguments about, and, at times, interrogates craft elements, forms, canonical knowledge, etc. The essay is excellent in the way that it demonstrates a knowledge of how the student sees their own work in relationship to the formal, cultural, political, and social history of poetry with exceeding clarity in grammar, syntax, meaning, and other elements of formal academic writing.	The capstone essay meets the benchmark for demonstrating necessary elements of writing and craft by engaging critically with published work within the field. The essay engages with, makes arguments about, and, at times, interrogates craft elements, forms, canonical knowledge, etc. The essay demonstrates a knowledge of how the student sees their own work in relationship to the formal, cultural, political, and social history of poetry while maintaining clarity in grammar, syntax, meaning, and other elements of formal academic writing.	The capstone essay does not meet the benchmark for demonstrating necessary elements of writing and craft by engaging critically with published work within the field. The does not engage with, make arguments about, and, at times, interrogate craft elements, forms, canonical knowledge, etc. The essay does not clearly demonstrate a knowledge of how the student sees their own work in relationship to the formal, cultural, political, and social history of poetry, and there is a pattern of mistakes in grammar, syntax, meaning, and other elements of formal academic writing.
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Oral Presentation:

The oral presentation of the essay must demonstrate the ability of the student apply their knowledge to an academic or professional setting. Students are expected to create a presentation that is engaging, has a visual component, clearly presents knowledge that is put forward in their written essay. The student must also demonstrate presentation skills that allow the audience to understand the ideas they are presenting. Please comment on the knowledge and skills demonstrated in the student's oral presentation below:

Note any significant issues or problems with the oral presentation here:

Excellent	Satisfactory	Incomplete
The oral presentation exceeds the benchmark in the way that it demonstrates the ability of the student apply their knowledge to an academic or professional setting. The presentation is excellent in the way that it is engaging, has a visual component, and clearly presents knowledge that is put forward in their written essay. The student's presentation skills engage the audience excellently and allow them to fully understand the ideas they are presenting.	The oral presentation demonstrates the ability of the student apply their knowledge to an academic or professional setting. The presentation is engaging, has a visual component, and clearly presents knowledge that is put forward in their written essay. The student's presentation skills allow the audience to understand the ideas they are presenting.	The oral presentation does not demonstrate the ability of the student apply their knowledge to an academic or professional setting. The presentation is not engaging, it does not have a visual component, and it does not clearly present knowledge that is put forward in their written essay. The student's presentation skills do not allow the audience to understand the ideas they are presenting.

award 4 credits of Capstone Prep/Presentation 560

☐ I **do not** award 3 credits of Capstone Prep/Presentation 560

MFA Faculty Signature _____ Date _____

1.8 MENTORSHIP SEMESTER STUDY PLAN CONTRACT (Final Study Plan Contract should be **typed by student**)

The following constitutes the agreement made between faculty mentor:

and student:

1. Supplemental Reading

The student will read the following books (number can vary depending on the size and complexity of individual works). *On average*, students should read, ***between each submission deadline, three or four books*** in their genre. **Books may be added at the discretion and agreement of the student and mentor after the initial signing of this form.**

Craft & Reflection Reading List:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

2. Other Creative Writing Projects

List any other projects—writing assignments, craft readings, or activities—that the student and faculty mentor agree will be part of the distance-learning semester.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3. Signatures

_____ Student

_____ MFA Faculty Mentor

This study plan represents the student's commitment to earn 3 credits of graduate work:

- 3 credits of *Writing Mentorship* (ENGL-511, 521, or 531)

Signing this form indicates that the student and the faculty mentor understand the Program's academic standards and requirements detailed in MFA program handbook. ***IMPORTANT: faculty will not grant credit for any writing—critical or creative—that fails to meet graduate-level standards for grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling, and documentation.***

MLA style specifics are available at: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

After both faculty mentor and student sign this completed form, the ***student is required*** to email the contract to the faculty mentor, and MFA Director [Keith Kopka](#)

1.9 WRITING MENTORSHIP EVALUATION FORM

HOLY FAMILY UNIVERSITY MFA PROGRAM IN CREATIVE WRITING MFA WRITING FACULTY EVALUATION OF STUDENT

Name: _____

Faculty Evaluator: _____

Semester: _____

3. Comment on the student's creative writing, specifying: a) key strengths and progress made; b) craft issues needing further work; and c) problems, if any, that might impede accomplishment befitting an MFA.

Excellent	Satisfactory	Incomplete
Student exceeds in their demonstration of skills and the elements of writing and craft through the application of these skills to their own written work.	Student demonstrates the skills and the elements of writing and craft through the application of these skills to their own written work.	Student does not demonstrate the skills and the elements of writing and craft through the application of these skills to their own written work.

☐
☐

I award 3 credits of Writing Mentorship ENGL 511

I **do not** award 3 credits of Writing Mentorship ENGL 511

MFA Faculty Signature _____ . Date _____

1.10 RESIDENCY EVALUATION FORM

HOLY FAMILY UNIVERSITY MFA PROGRAM IN CREATIVE WRITING MFA WRITING RESIDENCY EVALUATION OF STUDENT

Name: _____

Faculty Evaluator: _____

Residency Period: _____

4. List events attended during the residency:

5. Student has met with their faculty mentor and completed a study plan

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Excellent	Satisfactory	Incomplete
Student has exceeded the attendance requirements for the events hosted during the residency period	Student has met the attendance requirements for the events hosted during the residency period	Student has not met the attendance requirements for the events hosted during the residency period

- ☐ I award 3 credits of Residency I, II, III, or IV (ENGL 510,520, 530,540)
☐ I **do not** award 3 credits of Residency I, II, III, or IV (ENGL 510,520, 530,540)

MFA Faculty Signature _____ . Date _____