

ENGLISH: CREATIVE WRITING CONCENTRATION (BA)

Program Description

Paying deep attention to how humans use language and cultural signs is an ethical and spiritual discipline, one that teaches intellectual humility even as it empowers us to transfigure the world. Our programs in creative writing, literature, and social justice foster each student's capacity for empathetic understanding, imaginative insight, and compelling wordcraft. By exploring cultural productions (literature, film, technologies, social movements) of various peoples and time periods, our students learn how to wrestle—rigorously, inventively, and fearlessly—with complex human questions about race and class, gender and sexuality, faith and truth, and material Christian practices. By the time they graduate, students will have had extensive training in charitable critical thinking, analytical interpretation, persuasive argumentation, and intercultural competencies. These skills prepare students for a wide range of careers in areas such as publishing, marketing, and digital media; creative arts and entertainment; education and library science; law, medicine, or ministry; environmental studies; non-profits, social advocacy, and civil rights policy.

English Major: Creative Writing Concentration

The creative writing concentration of the English major gives students the opportunity to take multiple workshops in the areas of poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction. These courses focus particularly on questions of literary craft: how do certain author choices affect the reader? How might imagery and indirection, metaphor and ambiguity, communicate more powerfully than attempts to simply "say what you mean"? And how do writers build a supportive workshoping community, one that promotes disciplined creativity and fruitful criticism?

Both concentrations of the English major are well-suited for a wide variety of careers. The creative writing concentration is especially appropriate for students interested in pursuing a Master of Fine Arts and/or a career in imaginative writing.

Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completing the English major, students should be able to

1. Interpret texts and cultural artifacts using "close reading," a method of literary and cultural analysis that attends to a work's genre, its linguistic and aesthetic features, and its effects on readers
2. Place literature and other media in a historical context, understanding how any text (and its criticism) is part of a "long conversation" over time and across space
3. Identify ways that texts can enforce, resist, or ameliorate problematic social systems of power
4. Articulate the value of literary ways of knowing, especially in regard to metaphor, ambiguity, irony, paradox, and mystery
5. Identify various literary and rhetorical strategies for putting Christian values in conversation with other religious and social perspectives
6. Produce analytical writing that asserts a clear and significant claim, marshals compelling evidence, charitably anticipates and addresses alternative interpretations, and responsibly integrates and cites researched sources
7. Articulate the value of recursive processes of drafting, revising, and sentence-level editing, whether in critical or creative writing

Entering and Completing the Major

In order to earn a degree, you must complete at least one academic major. SPU encourages students to explore various academic paths, so if you change your mind about a major, or want to include an additional program, you are able to do so, as outlined below.

Note that the University encourages you to enter your chosen major(s) as soon as you have determined it and are eligible to join it, especially by the start of your junior year. Students who transfer as juniors and seniors should enter a major within their first two quarters at SPU.

- If this is your first quarter at SPU and you identified a major in this department as your first choice on your application for admission to the University, you have gained entry to the major. To change or add a major, follow these instructions (<https://spu.atlassian.net/1/cp/a3th1keb/>).
- If you are an SPU student with an SPU cumulative GPA of 2.0 or better, follow these instructions (<https://spu.atlassian.net/1/cp/a3th1keb/>) to enter a major in this department.
- The University requires a grade of C- or better in all classes that apply to a major; however, programs may require higher minimum grades in specific courses. You may repeat an SPU course only once for a higher grade.
- To advance in this program, meet with your faculty advisor regularly to discuss your grades, course progression, and other indicators of satisfactory academic progress. If your grades or other factors indicate that you may not be able to successfully complete the major or minor, your faculty advisor can work with you to explore options, which may include choosing a different major.
- You must complete the major requirements that are in effect in the SPU Undergraduate Catalog for the year you enter the major.

English: Creative Writing Concentration (BA)

66 Credits Minimum, Including 30 Upper Division (UD)

Code	Title	Credits
Core Requirements		
ENG 2225	Literary Interpretation	5
ENG 2251	English Literature: Beginnings through Milton	5
ENG 2252	English Literature: Restoration through Victorian	5
ENG 2253	American Literature: Beginnings to 1900	5
ENG 4445	Shakespeare	5
ENG 4899	Senior Capstone in English	5
Section Credits Required		30
Creative Writing Core		
ENG 2215	Imaginative Writing ¹	3
Select two of the following:		6
ENG 3150	The Sentence	
ENG 3180	Advanced Grammar	
ENG 4601	History of English	
Section Credits Required		9
Genre Studies Requirement		
Select one of the following Groups:		14
Group A:		
ENG 3310	Elements of Prosody	

ENG 3316	Workshop in Writing Poetry
ENG 4316	Advanced Poetry Writing
ENG 4823	The Poem
Group B:	
ENG 3311	Elements of Narrative
ENG 3317	Workshop in Writing Fiction
ENG 4317	Advanced Fiction Writing
ENG 4822	The Novel
	or ENG 4824 The Short Story
Group C:	
ENG 3311	Elements of Narrative
ENG 3318	Creative Nonfiction
ENG 4318	Advanced Creative Nonfiction
ENG 4825	The Essay
Section Credits Required 14	
Second Genre Requirement	
Select one of the following: ¹ 3	
ENG 3316	Workshop in Writing Poetry
ENG 3317	Workshop in Writing Fiction
ENG 3318	Creative Nonfiction
Section Credits Required 3	
Advanced Literary Studies	
Select 10 credits of the following: ² 10	
ENG 3003	Literature and Medicine
ENG 3004	Literature, Gender, and Sexuality
ENG 3325	Film and Story
ENG 3331	Race Riots Uprisings
ENG 3332	African American Literature
ENG 3334	United States Multi-Ethnic Literature
ENG 3335	Celtic Literature and Culture
ENG 3339	United States Latinx Literature
ENG 3345	Medieval English Literature
ENG 3346	English Renaissance Literature
ENG 3347	Literature of Enlightenment and Revolution
ENG 3348	Romantic Poetry and Fiction
ENG 3351	Victorian Literature
ENG 3380	African Literature
ENG 3381	Middle East: Film and Story
ENG 3382	South Africa: Stages of Protest and Democracy
ENG 3383	Arab Spring: Gender, Islam, Democracy
ENG 3384	US Imperialism in Asia Pacific Islands
ENG 3386	The Eternal City in Art and Literature
ENG 3710	19th Century American Literature
ENG 3715	20th Century American Literature
ENG 3840	Lewis and Tolkien
ENG 4152	Modernist Literature
ENG 4162	Postmodern Literature
ENG 4440	Geoffrey Chaucer
ENG 4442	John Milton
ENG 4449	Jane Austen
ENG 4450	Emily Dickinson
ENG 4451	Toni Morrison

ENG 4950	Special Topics
Section Credits Required 10	
Total Credits 66	

1

ENG 3302 Writing Across Cultures may be substituted for ENG 2215 Imaginative Writing or genre writing course.

2

ENG 2221 Good Poems/ENG 2223 Fantasy and Science Fiction/ENG 2234 Literature by Women/ENG 2248 International Fiction OK for Advanced Literacy Studies (one only).

Suggested Course Sequence

Undecided Students

- If you're undecided about whether you want to commit to the English major and/or the Creative Writing Concentration, in your freshman year you could either:
 - Take ENG 2215 Imaginative Writing as an introduction to the Creative Writing concentration, or
 - Take an English literature course that also meets the Ways of Knowing/Humanities requirement. Good WK options are listed here:

Code	Title	Credits
Freshman Year Options for Undecided Students		
ENG 1110	Literature and Faith ¹	5
ENG 2215	Imaginative Writing ²	3
ENG 2221	Good Poems ³	5
ENG 2223	Fantasy and Science Fiction ³	5
ENG 2234	Literature by Women ³	5
ENG 2248	International Fiction ³	5
ENG 3334	United States Multi-Ethnic Literature	5

1

This course does not count toward the English major

2

This course does not count toward the Literature Concentration nor for Ways of Knowing

3

This course does not count toward the Creative Writing concentration

Committed Students

- If you're committed to the English major, plan to take the required 2000-level core courses in your freshman and sophomore years. Academically talented students may take them as first-quarter freshmen.
 - All English majors are strongly encouraged to take ENG 2225 Literary Interpretation as soon as possible: the writing, research and interpretive skills covered in that course will help ensure success in all other ENG courses.
 - Please note that all core courses for the major are offered in only one section per year.
- Students committed to the Creative Writing concentration are strongly encouraged to take ENG 2215 Imaginative Writing as soon as possible so they can begin the genre workshop sequences in a timely fashion.

Future Teachers

- Please note that students who want to become high school English teachers should complete the Literature concentration, not the Creative Writing concentration.

Code	Title	Credits
2000-Level Core Courses for English Major Creative Writing Concentration		
ENG 2225	Literary Interpretation	5
ENG 2215	Imaginative Writing	3
ENG 2251	English Literature: Beginnings through Milton	5
ENG 2252	English Literature: Restoration through Victorian	5
ENG 2253	American Literature: Beginnings to 1900	5

Additional Notes

- Take your required and elective 3000- and 4000-level courses as a sophomore, junior, or senior.
 - Note that advanced writing workshops in poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction are typically offered every other year, rather than yearly.
- Note that ENG 4899 Senior Capstone in English, required of all English major seniors, is offered only once per year, typically in winter quarter.
- Curriculum Changes for 2025-26: To better meet students' academic needs and interests, the English and Cultural Studies department is working on curricular changes that will take effect in 2025-26. Your faculty advisors will provide you with plenty of guidance as we make this shift. Since the new curriculum features increased flexibility in the requirements, it should not affect students' time-to-degree (and it may actually shorten it in some cases).