

## LTWR Studies Graduate Level Creative Thesis Guidelines

A creative writing thesis can be submitted in at least one of the following media, although others are possible with the consent of the thesis committee: fiction (a collection of short stories or a novella), poetry, creative non-fiction, drama (plays, performance art text), cross or mixed genre work, and multimedia work with a significant literary component. In most cases, a full-length novel is not a suitable project at the master's level, although with the approval of the thesis committee some selected portion of a larger novel may be submitted as a thesis.

The committee for a creative thesis must be chaired by an LTWR tenure-track faculty in creative writing unless those faculty members sign an official form permitting another faculty member to chair the thesis. Other committee members should be decided upon in consultation with the thesis chair. At this time, LTWR tenure-track faculty members in creative writing include Sandra Doller, Mark Wallace, and Martha Stoddard Holmes (though she is currently working as an administrator so will not be taking on students until she returns). For initial thesis advising, students should consult any member of the tenure-track faculty in creative writing.

Knowledge of the field in which one is working is as crucial to a creative thesis as to a thesis in any other field, so workshop experience and knowledge about contemporary literature are essential backgrounds for pursuing this thesis option. Students interested in writing a creative thesis are required to take LTWR 545 (Advanced Creative Writing Workshop) and LTWR 513 (Studies in Contemporary Literature) at least once each.

If for some reason LTWR 513 or LTWR 545 are not offered during a two-year period, then substituting another graduate level course (or in rare cases, a 400-level course) is possible. Before pursuing this course of action, students must get an official signature on the substitution from one LTWR tenure-track creative writing faculty member and from the Graduate Coordinator.

There are no required page lengths for the creative thesis. In fact, projects with off-the-page components literally cannot be measured in this way. Each project will be determined as sufficient relative to its own terms and with the approval of the thesis committee. Nonetheless, a 150-page limit is a firm maximum except in rare cases. 40-50 pages of poetry and 50-80 pages of prose are in general good averages, depending on the nature of the project in question.

The creative thesis also needs to include an introductory essay that makes a case for the place of the thesis in the field of relevantly similar literature. The essay may also need to consider key scholarship on that literature. Although, again, page lengths cannot be absolutely defined, in most cases a good general guideline for this essay is 15-20 pages.

One of the features of a creative thesis may be the way it not only refuses to meet, but actively challenges, any pre-set guidelines for what constitutes successful creative work. We encourage that kind of innovation. Key to such innovation is a condition of knowledge and critical awareness. Students will be asked to make an effective argument for the reasons that their thesis projects depart from the general guidelines. That said, one of the great things about literature is the way new literature can constantly challenge the accepted features of what literature is said to

be. The LTWR creative writing faculty is committed to daring, originality, and risk-taking, and we will do our best to help you go in any direction you want to try.