The Creative Writing Concentration
at UC Santa Cruz

General Information
Creative Writing, a concentration within the Literature major, offers a sequence of workshops from introductory through advanced levels in both poetry and fiction. Other activities available to interested students include participation in student-run literary journals; participation in Writer’s Society, a student-led writing workshop; attendance at readings by visiting writers; and use of the creative writing library at Kresge College.

Admission to the Creative Writing Concentration
Admission to this concentration is selective. Interested students are required to take one lower-division workshop at UCSC before applying to the creative writing concentration; however, students are strongly encouraged to complete two lower-division workshops (at least one at UCSC) before applying.

Students accepted into the concentration must complete three advanced writing workshops and a senior project seminar as part of their upper-division coursework in the Literature major. To apply for admission to the Creative Writing concentration, students should submit a completed application form (available at the Literature Department office and http://creativewriting.ucsc.edu/for-students/apply.html) and a thoughtful selection from their work (eight to ten pages of poetry, or eight to ten pages of fiction).

Applications are accepted on the second Friday of each quarter. Students accepted into the concentration are required to declare the Literature major, with a concentration in Creative Writing, in order to enroll in upper-division creative writing workshops.

2013-14 Creative Writing Faculty

Christopher S. Chen
Twentieth- and twenty-first century African American literature; Asian American literature; twentieth- and twenty-first century poetry in the U.S.; comparative ethnic literary studies and theory; literary formalisms and comparative racialization; contemporary poetics and politics.
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Micah Perks
Reading and writing contemporary fiction, memoir and historical fiction; gender, literature, and culture; alternative communities.
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Rob Wilson
Transnational and postcolonial literatures; especially as located in Asia/Pacific emergences as posited against American empire of globalization; cultural poetics of America; the sublime; Longinus to Hiroshima; mongrel poetics of experimental writing, especially poetry.
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Ronaldo V. Wilson
Twentieth-century and contemporary African American literature; poetry; contemporary American poetry and poetics; Black visual culture; recent experimental writers and artists.
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Karen Tei Yamashita
History and anthropology of Japanese immigration to Brazil; Asian American literature; modern fiction; playwriting.
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2013-14 Visiting Faculty

Melissa Sanders-Self (Spring)
Contemporary fiction; modern literature of the American South; classic literature; screenplays.
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Gary Young
The prose poem; fine printing; print making; publishing and book design.
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UCSC Creative Writing Program
Frequently Asked Questions

I want to apply to the Creative Writing concentration. How do I do that? Interested students are required to take one lower-division workshop at UCSC before applying to the Creative Writing concentration; however, students are strongly encouraged to complete two lower-division workshops (at least one at UCSC) before applying. Students normally apply to the Creative Writing concentration in the spring of the sophomore year or during the junior year. The lower-division courses are Introduction to Creative Writing (LTCR 10), Intermediate Fiction (LTCR 52), and Intermediate Poetry (LTCR 53). Students need a minimum of three quarters to complete the concentration.

Applications are available at the Literature Department office or on-line <http://creativewriting.ucsc.edu/for-students/apply.html>. Return the completed application to the Literature Department by 3:00 p.m. on the second Friday of any quarter. Applicants will be notified (via e-mail) of their application status on the third Friday of the quarter by 6:00 p.m.

What are you looking for in the application? We want your best writing. By best, we mean work that best represents your writing strengths and interests. Excerpts from longer works are fine. Usually it’s better to hand in two different pieces of fiction or more than one poem, so we can get a sense of your range. If you do experimental work, it might be helpful to put the work in context in a prefatory note.

If you are doing genre work (mystery, romance, fantasy, etc.) we prefer it to be playing with the genre in some way—working to create original language, character, and plot.

We want people who like to read. Let us know what your favorite books are and why.

Because Creative Writing at UCSC is an academic concentration within the Literature department, we are looking for students who are excellent readers, editors, writers and seminar participants. Grades from your UCSC creative writing courses play a crucial role in your acceptance into the concentration. Nearly all students accepted into the concentration have earned excellent grades in their beginning and intermediate courses. If you think your grades don’t reflect your abilities, you may explain that in an accompanying note. Alternately, students may take another creative writing course in order to strengthen their work.

What if I don’t get in to the concentration? We always tell students that getting rejected is an initiation into the writing life. Writers get rejected all the time. Nobody liked Moby Dick. Many writers did not study creative writing in college. If you want to apply again, take an intermediate or another introductory class. Read contemporary fiction or poetry that you admire. Meanwhile, begin work toward another concentration in the Literature major or toward another major, in case you don’t get into Creative Writing.

How do I get into Intermediate Fiction (LTCR 52) or Intermediate Poetry (LTCR 53)? You can’t pre-register for intermediate courses. Bring three pages of fiction or three to five poems to the first class meeting. The instructor will review the submissions and select 22 students; a list of students accepted into the course will be e-mailed the next day. PLEASE NOTE: All students applying to Intermediate Fiction or Poetry who have taken a creative writing course at UCSC should ask their former UCSC creative writing instructor(s) to post an evaluation in the confidential Creative Writing evaluation data base.

What is Methods and Materials (LTCR 170)? Methods and Materials is a class that acts as a bridge between creative and critical work. You read published work on a particular topic or genre, and respond both creatively and critically. Topics may include storytelling, memoir, screenwriting, the serial poem, historical fiction, or film and poetry.

Why am I required to go to the Living Writers Reading Series if I am taking a creative writing course? The Creative Writing program at UCSC is small, and we want to expose you to a wide range of writers, to their different styles, preoccupations, writing processes, and to the ways they are writers in the world. (Is the writer a professor, a postal carrier, or a journalist?) We also want to create a community of writers at UCSC, and connect that community to the larger writing world.

What do I do at a reading? Stay awake. Keep your senses open. Notice how the writers read their work, how they present themselves, what they emphasize. Take notes, write down phrases, questions, images, things you don’t like and things you do. Ask questions about the writing or the writing life during the question and answer session. If you start daydreaming, it’s okay, but come back to the present. Many people don’t care about poetry and fiction, but in that auditorium at that moment, you are surrounded by people who do.

Don’t talk during the reading or leave in the middle. Those are real people speaking, and they are working hard at something they care about—show them respect.

Why do we have to read in a writing class? Reading is the best way to learn to write. Reading is a fairly magical process in which what you read goes into your head and influences the way you write. The more carefully you read, the more you learn about the ways language, form, rhythm, and voice work together to create a text.

I want to work on a literary magazine. How can I do that? Contact the creative writing interns at <cwintern@gmail.com> for guidance in your search for work experience on a UCSC literary magazine or newspaper. Student editors of UCSC publications are responsible for selecting their staff; please get in touch with the editors of any publication on which you wish to work. You may start a new magazine or journal; the creative writing interns can help you, and will assist with publicity for your publication.