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 literary journals on campus, 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. 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–ten pages of poetry, or eight–ten pages of fiction, comprising at least two stories).

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.

2014-15 Creative Writing Faculty

Christopher S. Chen
Twentieth- and 21st-century African American literature; Asian American literature; 20th and 21st-century US multiethnic poetry and poetics; comparative ethnic literary studies; literary formalisms and comparative racialization; contemporary experimental poetics and political theory
Humanities 1, room 628 • cche75@ucsc.edu

Micah Perks
Reading and writing contemporary fiction; memoir; historical fiction; gender, literature, and culture; alternative communities.
Humanities 1, room 233 • meperks@ucsc.edu

Rob Wilson
Transnational and postcolonial literatures, especially as located and transformed in Asia/Pacific; cultural-political emergences as posited against empires of globalization; cultural poetics of America in the Pacific and Oceania; the sublime, Longinus to Hiroshima; poetics of experimental writing, especially poetry; the poetry and cultural poetics of Bob Dylan; Beat beatitude, social and literary, from Jesus to Juliana Spahr et al; San Francisco as Global City, with its literature read as archive of vision and critique; Pacific Rim cities from Hong Kong and Seoul to Taipei, Kaohsiung, Shanghai, Honolulu, San Francisco, and Los Angeles
Humanities 1, room 631 • rwilson@ucsc.edu

Ronaldo V. Wilson
20th-century and contemporary African American literature; poetry; contemporary American poetry and poetics; Black visual culture; recent experimental writers and artists.
Humanities 1, room 238 • rvwilson@ucsc.edu

Karen Tei Yamashita
History and anthropology of Japanese immigration to Brazil; Asian American literature; modern fiction; playwriting.
Humanities 1, room 231 • ktyamash@ucsc.edu

2014-15 Visiting Faculty

Melissa Sanders-Self (Winter, Spring)
Contemporary fiction; modern American Southern literature; classic literature; screenplays.
Humanities 1, room 234 • msanders@ucsc.edu

Gary Young (Fall, Spring)
The prose poem; fine printing; printmaking; publishing and book design.
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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 late in 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).

Applications are available at the Literature Department office or on line <http://creativewriting.ucsc.edu/for-students/apply.html>. Completed applications must be returned to the Literature Department by 3:00 p.m. on the second Friday of fall, winter or spring quarter. Applicants will be notified via email on the third Friday of the quarter by 6:00 p.m. whether they were accepted into the concentration.

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 the prefatory note.

If you are doing genre work (mystery, romance, fantasy, etc.) we prefer that it play with the genre in some way—working against the standard form through language, character, or plot.

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

Because at UCSC creative writing is an academic concentration within a 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 received excellent grades for their beginning and intermediate courses. If you think your grade(s) don’t reflect your abilities, you may explain that in the accompanying note. Alternately, students may take another creative writing course in order to strengthen their work.

What if I don’t get in? 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 working toward another concentration in the Literature major or 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)? Bring three to seven pages of fiction or three to five poems to the first class meeting. You can’t pre-register for intermediate courses. The instructor will review the submissions and select 22 students; a list of students accepted into the course will be posted the next day. PLEASE NOTE: We ask all students applying to Intermediate Fiction or Poetry who have taken Introduction to Creative Writing (LTCR 10) to bring a copy of their grade and evaluation (if applicable) for LTCR 10 to submit along with their writing sample. You may ask your LTCR 10 instructor for an unofficial evaluation.

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 certain 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. Turn off your phones and electronic devices. 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 do I do that? Contact the creative writing interns <cwintern@gmail.com> for guidance in your search for work experience on a literary magazine or newspaper. Also, you can start a magazine if you’d like; the interns can help you, and do publicity as well. Ultimately, if you are to be on the staff of a magazine, it is at the discretion of the magazine editors.