

# WRITING STUDIES M.A.

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## Program Description

The Writing Studies program is unique to the Philadelphia area. Our program bridges the gap between traditional master's degrees in English and creative writing degrees by emphasizing that all writing is creative. Our students take a wide variety of courses in order to explore the craft of writing from various perspectives.

This innovative program has several distinguishing features: it offers excellent training for magazine or journal editors and freelance writers; it provides rich growth opportunities for teachers of writing at the secondary or community college level; it provides important experience for traditional journalists; it incorporates collaborative workshops to stimulate creativity; and it develops skills important for success in corporate communications and public relations.

All of the teachers in the Writing Studies program are practicing writers who write in the genre that they teach. In other words, our public relations writing courses are taught by public relations writers, and published novelists teach our novel writing courses. All of our courses are small—typically fifteen students or less—to enable each student to get individual feedback from the instructor and detailed feedback from peers.

The students in the Writing Studies program are diverse in age, race, occupation, gender, and belief systems. The diversity of our students contributes to the success of our program. In addition to world-class writing faculty, students in our M.A. bring a wide range of ideas, creativity, and energy to our classes. Each class becomes its own community of writers.

In the Jesuit tradition of *eloquentia perfecta*, all Writing Studies courses engage students in using speech and writing effectively, logically, gracefully, persuasively, and responsibly. Students focus on developing the craft of a professional writer through drafting, revising, and incorporating feedback from peers and instructors as the writing progresses toward publication. We hope all of our students will become working writers who write for a wide variety of audiences.

This program is designed to position its graduates to be very competitive in the broad field of professional writing and communications. The courses in the program are all focused, in one way or another, on the work of the writer. Graduates will pursue careers in a wide range of areas: public relations, magazine and book editing, freelance writing (fiction and nonfiction), print and broadcast journalism, corporate communications, and the teaching of writing. The Writing Studies program accommodates both full-time and part-time students.

## Learning Goals and Outcomes

**Goal 1:** Acquire knowledge of the writing process.

**Outcome 1.1:** Students will exercise patterns of invention for creating original work by following a process-oriented approach to writing that includes brainstorming, drafting, and revision.

**Goal 2:** Develop editorial skills.

**Outcome 2.1:** Students will formulate constructive responses to the work of their peers regarding stylistic choices and organizational

principles in one or more creative literary forms (poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction).

**Outcome 2.2:** Students will practice editing skills through examining their own writing.

**Goal 3:** Acquire knowledge of the publishing process.

**Outcome 3.1:** Students will locate publishing venues and prepare a manuscript for submission in one or more genres, such as fiction, nonfiction, poetry, journalism, academic writing, or online content.

**Goal 4:** Develop rhetorical skills through analysis and practice.

**Outcome 4.1:** Students will demonstrate knowledge of rhetorical concepts, such as audience, purpose, and medium.

**Outcome 4.2:** Students will practice analyzing appeals to character, emotion, and logic in persuasive discourse.

**Goal 5:** Develop long-form writing skills.

**Outcome 5.1:** Students will plan, write, revise, and edit a work of at least 60-80 pages.

## Requirements

### Degree Requirements

The M.A. in Writing Studies requires 30 credits of graduate work. Six credits will come from a thesis project (either an analytical study or a collection of original creative material at the 700 level). The remaining credits involve courses at the 500 and 600 level. The program includes provisions for internships and directed individual projects of various kinds.

All students in the program will take two core courses: **ENG 550 The Practice of Writing** and **ENG 560 Rhetoric Then and Now**. These courses provide breadth of perspective on all of the general issues and circumstances faced by writers in the process of engaging an audience and making a living through the craft of language. Other courses in the program are organized in three complementary areas:

Code	Title	Hours
AREA I: Writing and Culture (ENG 600-ENG 629)		
AREA II: Rhetoric and Composition: Theory and Practice (ENG 630-ENG 659)		
AREA III: Professional Writing (ENG 660-ENG 699)		

All graduates of the program are required to have at least one course from each area; two courses in an area would create a concentration. All of the courses are designed to have writing as the center of concern, and many of the courses will emphasize writing for publication, from blogs to print. Some courses may count in multiple areas; consult the graduate director for details.