Oregon State University
Cascades

# Low-Residency MFA in Creative Writing
# Degree Changes Justifications Winter 2017

We are proposing two changes to the Low-Residency MFA in Creative Writing on the Cascades campus: a 7-credit reduction in the degree requirements and some minor edits to the program description.

Changes to Degree Requirements: 7 credit reduction in program of study
Upon reviewing our program, we have determined that our program of study can be reduced by 7 credits while still maintaining the quality of the program and meeting the learning outcomes shared with the Corvallis MFA. Students in the Low-Residency MFA on the Cascades campus will still be taking more credits to graduate than students in the MFA on the Corvallis campus.

| Current Program of Study | Revised Program of Study |
|---|---|
| WR 513, Mentorship: 29 credits | WR 513, Mentorship: 23 credits |
| WR 500, Residency: 48 credits | WR 500, Residency: 48 credits |
| WR 503, Thesis: 7 credits | WR 503, Thesis: 6 credits |
| **Total: 84 credits** | **Total: 77 credits** |

*Mentorship Term: Reduce WR 513 by 3 credits @ 2 terms = 6 credit reduction*
Currently, students take two terms with 12 credits of WR 513: Mentorship. We propose to reduce WR 513 to 9 credits in those terms. (Students take 2 12-credit mentorships to graduate, so this will reduce the total number of credits by 6.) 9 of those credits go toward the students' project plans and 3 credits go towards the Artist Life Seminar. We propose to cut the 3 credits of Artist Life Seminar. The project plan and, by consequence the quality and quantity of student contact with faculty mentors, will remain the same.

The project plan is an individualized syllabus that includes a project description, 5 genre-specific learning objectives, 5 learning objectives general to the craft of creative writing, a statement of the primary ambition for the mentorship, a reading list, and a detailed schedule for packet exchange between student and mentor, along with the method of submission. None of this will change.

The Artist Life Seminar is designed to help our students maintain a sense of community while working long-distance in mentorship terms. It involves written responses to a common text that covers the spiritual and philosophical aspects of the artist life, work habits and work, and literary citizenship. We have determined that the Artist Life Seminar goes above and beyond what is necessary for students to meet the learning outcomes for our program and to qualify for a degree of MFA.

*Thesis Term: Reduce thesis from 7 credits to 6 = 1 credit reduction*
Currently, students take 7 credits of thesis in their final mentorship term. In addition to completing an oral exam and submitting an original thesis of literary merit and publishable quality, students complete a Graduating Student Experience. Originally, the Graduating Student Experience was designed to help our students transition from student writer to professional writer and involved an individualized professionalization experience. Like the Artist Life Seminar, the Graduating Student Experience goes above and beyond our program's learning outcomes and is not necessary for our students to qualify for the degree of MFA. We propose to cut the Graduating Student Experience and reduce the thesis term to 6 credits. Students will continue to complete and oral exam and submit an original thesis of literary merit and publishable quality.

<u>Edits to the Program Description to communicate accurate residency dates and reduce the redundancy in repeating "freedom" twice in the same sentence:</u>
OSU-Cascades's Low-Residency MFA is a two-year program combining writing workshop with studies in craft, literature, and vocation. The program offers intensive 10-day residency sessions in June and **November** and individualized mentorships by nationally known writers throughout the year. The program's intensive low-residency format is designed to balance the modern writer's need for both solitude and community, for both self-reliance and responsibility—to give our students the freedom as well as the discipline to write. Our curriculum builds sustainable writing habits, develops skills needed to support a creative livelihood after graduation, and creates an environment for taking imaginative risks.