



WEST VIRGINIA
WESLEYAN



**LOW-RESIDENCY
MASTER OF FINE ARTS
IN CREATIVE WRITING**

Student Guidelines Handbook
(revised 2017)

59 College Avenue
West Virginia Wesleyan College
Buckhannon, WV 26201
www.wvwc.edu/MFA

The light on this page is not bright,
but the light in my mind is.
I felt for a scrap..
I grasped the pen as hard as I could
and wrote four lines....
I put it in a packet
with the others: the Choclat Meunier wrapper,
the mildewed subscription blank,
the soiled brown paper bags smoothed out,
and tucked them all in a little drawer
where I can stretch out my hand
and touch them any time I want to.

--Irene McKinney, from "Her Fascicles"

Wesleyan's MFA Program Founding Director, Irene McKinney, was the State Poet Laureate of West Virginia from 1992 until her death in February 2012. Her seven books include *Six O'Clock Mine Report*, *Vivid Companion*, *Unthinkable: Selected Poems 1976-2004*, and her posthumous collection *Have You Had Enough Darkness Yet?* published by WV Wesleyan Press. The MFA faculty is committed to carrying on Irene's vision now and for the future.



West Virginia Wesleyan College

Low-Residency Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing Student Guidelines Handbook

This handbook is intended to be used in tandem with the WV Wesleyan Graduate Catalog which sets forth the policies of all graduate programs. This handbook is subject to changes and is issued as a guide, not as a binding contract; its primary use is for operation and functionality of the MFA program.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

West Virginia Wesleyan College, a private educational institution, is committed to the principle of equal opportunity for all qualified persons, welcomes students of all backgrounds and takes pride in the diversity of its faculty and staff. It assures students of access to all the privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available at the College. West Virginia Wesleyan College strongly supports affirmative action principles and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, or religious affiliation in the administration of its educational programs, admissions policies, financial aid programs, athletics, co-curricular activities or other College administered programs.

In accordance with the Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act, complete information regarding campus security policies and campus crime statistics can be obtained from the Vice President for Student Development and Enrollment Management.

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THE PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Low-Residency

LENGTH OF PROGRAM: 2 Years
(5 residencies, 4 semesters)

TOTAL CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED: 49

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

1. Online Graduate Application, with Statement of Purpose and curriculum vitae
2. Writing Sample
3. Two Letters of Recommendation
4. Transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate coursework

(see website for modified application requirements for prospective auditors)

Application deadline for Winter Residency: Oct 1

Application deadline for Summer Residency: Apr 1



I seem most instinctively to believe in the human value of creative writing, whether in the form of verse or fiction, as a mode of truth-telling, self-expression and homage to the twin miracles of creation and consciousness.

—John Updike

West Virginia Wesleyan is a small liberal arts college in the rural Appalachian region with a tradition of fostering excellent writing. Writers associated with Wesleyan include Breece D’J Pancake, Jayne Anne Phillips, Denise Giardina, Maggie Anderson, Aaron Smith, and Irene McKinney, West Virginia’s former State Poet Laureate and Founding Director of the Program. Past visitors to the campus include Gerald Stern, Lynn Emanuel, Padgett Powell, Jean Valentine, Kevin Canty, and Ann Pancake, among dozens of others. Wesleyan is located in the Allegheny Mountains, near the Monongahela National Forest, Snowshoe and Canaan Valley Ski Resorts, New and Gauley River whitewater rafting outfits, and other cultural and recreational opportunities. Our campus is 100 tree-filled acres situated in Buckhannon, West Virginia, a small town of 7,500.

ADMISSION DETAILS

The Admission Committee will read all applications and make decisions about admittance to the program. The committee is made up of the director and two writers on faculty. The committee will make the recommendation for admission to the Dean who makes the final admission decision. Applicants are notified of admission decisions by mail and email, within four weeks of receipt of the complete application. Admission requirements include: a completed Online Graduate Application with Statement of Purpose and résumé/vitae; a writing sample of twenty pages for fiction or nonfiction, and fifteen poems for poets; two recommendations from knowledgeable and relevant recommenders; and official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate coursework. Primary consideration is given to the writing sample. The Admission Committee will consider applications on a rolling basis. Students may apply to begin their study at either the Winter (early January) or Summer (early July) Residency. **The application deadline is Oct 1 for the Winter Residency and Apr 1 for the Summer Residency.**

For other questions regarding Wesleyan Accreditation, Admission Process, Tuition and Fees, and all institutional policies, refer to the West Virginia Wesleyan College Graduate Catalog available on the program website under Resources for Current Students.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Our Mission

The faculty and administration at West Virginia Wesleyan initiated the low-residency MFA Program to serve the need for older and returning writing students to work toward a degree while continuing their work and outside community life in their own places of residence. We felt that there was a need for a graduate writing program which would allow mature students to earn a degree working with writers who are prominent in their field, and to use the degree to become writers, teachers, and editors. The region itself has been lacking in such learning centers for non-traditional writing students. Public school teachers who may wish to become better writers and to teach creative writing can also profit from this program.

For those who wish to pursue their writing with guidance, but who cannot commit to a degree program, auditing the residency period is an option. And students who have completed a degree may wish to audit additional residencies. For details on auditing, see the Audit Option section in this Handbook.

Program Outcomes

Students who complete the WV Wesleyan low-residency MFA program will be:

- versant in the craft of creative writing with a thorough grounding in the best that is being written.
- proficient in the craft and technique of creative writing while deepening and enlarging their writing mind and talent.
- active and productive as members of a community of writers who will mutually enrich each other’s life and writing.

Commitment to the Appalachian Region

We believe that a course of study with an emphasis on questions of craft and technique in writing and a thorough grounding in literature of the past and present will deepen and enlarge the student writer’s talent and mind. Further, our location offers students the unique opportunity to produce and study writing steeped in the Appalachian region, which is rich in its setting in the natural world of mountains and rivers, flora and fauna, social traditions, local music, and art. Although our program fosters fine writing regardless of its subject matter, many of the writers invited to participate in the program address concerns about the region or locate their imaginative works within Appalachia. Several prominent writers have been associated with Wesleyan in the past, and over the years a strong faculty has actively encouraged student writers, maintaining a thriving undergraduate creative writing program, and supporting a stream of exciting writers as visitors to the campus.

Membership in AWP

Wesleyan has been one of the very few undergraduate creative writing programs to become an institutional member of the Associated Writing Programs, the chief organization of writers and writing programs in the country. We have been a member for over twelve years, and in our capacity as a graduate program, we continue that affiliation and subscribe to its list of hallmarks of successful MFA programs, including:

1. A Challenging Workshop
2. Extensive Literary Study
3. Attentiveness to Revision
4. A Variety of Seminars and Workshops
5. Strong Thesis Advising
6. Strong Mentorship
7. Cross-Genre Study
8. Vocational Study Options
9. Accomplished Writers Who Teach Well
10. Stable Faculty
11. A High Retention Rate
12. A Student Handbook
13. Financial Aid
14. Publication by Students and Graduates
15. Strong Leadership
16. Sufficient Autonomy
17. Good Collegial Relations
18. Community Outreach
19. Diligent Quality Control
20. Clear Criteria for Evaluation of Faculty
21. Participation in Professional Networks
22. Administrative Support Staff

(AWP Director's Handbook: Guidelines, Policies, and Information for Creative Writing Programs. 2009)

Further, our membership in AWP entitles our students to copies of *The Writer's Chronicle* and access to the Job Placement Services AWP provides. The AWP office will keep transcripts, résumés, and letters of recommendation on file and will mail these to prospective employers. They also post listings of current job openings in teaching, writing, and editing and in administrative positions. (www.awpwriter.org)

Community of Writers

Wesleyan provides an atmosphere that creates a community of writers who mutually enrich each other's life and writing. Our faculty members are practicing writers committed to both the tradition of literature and the craft of writing. Visiting writers are chosen on the basis of their passion for teaching and their accomplishment in their art. Our program prepares students for a dedicated and productive writing life.

Student-Designed Program

The MFA in Creative Writing, a 2-year, 4-semester, 5-residency, low-residency program requiring 49 hours of credit, offers students the opportunity to design their own program in poetry, fiction, or creative nonfiction under the supervision of a faculty advisor and the director. The student's own stated goals form the basis for each semester's writing project, the Critical Essay, and for the terminal Creative Thesis. Each semester begins with a 10-day intensive residency on Wesleyan's campus, after which students return home and carry out their programs of study by correspondence. During the residency, student writers will participate in a scheduled series of craft seminars, workshops, and readings presented by the Wesleyan core faculty and the semester's visiting faculty. Student writers often present an evening of public readings.

PROGRAMS OF STUDY

Programs of Study: A minimum of 49 credit hours are required for the MFA degree. Requirements include completion of four residencies and a fifth thesis-presentation residency, and completion of the following required courses:

Poetry Track: ENGL 540 (four times), ENGL 545 (four times), ENGL 570 (three times), ENGL 650, and ENGL 655.

Fiction Track: ENGL 520 (four times), ENGL 525 (four times), ENGL 570 (three times), ENGL 650, and ENGL 655.

Creative Nonfiction Track: ENG 530 (four times), ENG 535 (four times), ENG 570 (three times), ENG 650, and ENGL 655.

(ENG 520, 525, 530, 535, 540, 545, 655 are satisfied during the residency period; ENG 570 and 650 are satisfied during the semester of apprenticeship-model correspondence study.)

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MFA DEGREE WITH A SECONDARY GENRE CONCENTRATION (minimum of 61 credit hours)

Poetry Concentration adds ENGL 540, 545, 570 (Semester Project in Poetry) to Fiction or Nonfiction Track.

Fiction Concentration adds ENGL 520, 525, 570 (Semester Project in Fiction) to Poetry or Nonfiction Track.

Nonfiction Concentration adds ENGL 530, 535, 570 (Semester Project in Nonfiction) to Fiction or Poetry Track.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

ENGLISH 520. Craft and Theory of Fiction. 2 hrs. In this course, various issues of craft and theory in fiction are presented by the fiction faculty, in a format which ranges from lectures to seminars. This course provides an analysis of professional and student work, focusing on a particular issue of craft or theory, including the construction of time-lines, the use of sensory detail, characterization, and narrative structure. May be repeated for a total of 8 hours credit.

ENGLISH 530. Craft and Theory of Creative Nonfiction. 2 hrs. In this course, various issues of craft and theory in creative nonfiction are presented by the nonfiction faculty in a format which ranges from lectures to seminars. The course provides an analysis of professional and student work, focusing on a particular issue of craft or theory, including the role of memory, structure, characterization, point of view, and detailed description. May be repeated for a total of 8 hours credit.

ENGLISH 540. Craft and Theory of Poetry. 2 hrs. In this course, various issues of craft and theory in poetry are presented by the poetry faculty, in a format which ranges from lecture to short-term seminars. The course provides an analysis of professional and student work, focusing on a particular issue of craft or theory, including traditional verse forms, the use of vernacular speech in poetry, the long poem, the role of place and region in poetry, and the structure of free verse. May be repeated for a total of 8 hours credit.

ENGLISH 525. Fiction Workshop. 2 hrs. This course focuses on student fiction writing, which is read and evaluated by the entire class. Students expand their writing and critical skills, and strengthen their knowledge of literary standards. May be repeated for a total of 8 hours credit.

ENGLISH 535. Creative Nonfiction Workshop. 2 hrs. This course focuses on student writing in memoir, autobiography, creative essay, and nature writing. The work is read and evaluated by the entire class. Students expand their writing and critical skills, and strengthen their knowledge of literary standards. May be repeated for a total of 8 hours credit.

ENGLISH 545. Poetry Workshop. 2 hrs. This workshop focuses on student writing in the poetic form, which is read and evaluated by the entire class. Students expand their writing and critical skills, and strengthen their knowledge of literary standards. May be repeated for a total of 8 hours credit.

ENGLISH 570. Semester Project in Fiction, Poetry, or Creative Nonfiction. 8 hrs. Students plan their semester projects with their faculty advisor. The project entails twenty-five hours per week of work on the packets of writing exchanged with the advisor. A booklist of 20-25 books relevant to the craft and theory of the chosen genre will be assembled and documented in an annotated bibliography, five packets of writing will be exchanged throughout the semester, and a final portfolio will be submitted at the semester's end. The faculty advisor may refer the student to other readings in addition to those on the agreed-upon reading list. May be repeated for a total of 24 hours credit. *Prerequisites: Completion of 4 hours of residency courses (ENGL 520/525, 530/535, or 540/545) immediately preceding this semester course, as appropriate to student's genre.*

ENGLISH 650. Thesis Manuscript Preparation. 8 hrs. The student will complete the Creative Thesis of publishable quality under the supervision of the faculty advisor. For prose writers, both fiction and nonfiction, the manuscript should be 100-125 pages; for poetry writers, the manuscript should be 48-60 pages. *Prerequisites: Completion of a minimum 24 hours of ENGL 570; completion of 4 hours of residency courses (ENGL 520/525, 530/535, or 540/545) immediately preceding this semester course, as appropriate to the student's genre.*

ENGL 655. Fifth Residency. 1 hr. The graduating student will return for a final instructional residency to participate in a Thesis Interview, give a reading from the completed Thesis Manuscript, and teach a seminar to peers. *Prerequisite: Completion of minimum 8 hours of ENGL 650.*

AUDIT OPTION FOR RESIDENCY

The program offers an audit option for serious writers who desire an in-depth experience of writing instruction but who are not seeking an MFA degree. Auditors join enrolled students for a full ten-day residency session—in either summer or winter—attending the interdisciplinary morning seminars and participating in the afternoon workshop in their genre.

The audit option was important to the program's Founding Director Irene McKinney at the program's inception as part of her vision for supporting a diverse community of writers. In our ongoing commitment to that vision, we continue to offer instruction to those seeking continuing education without the need for a degree. At the same time, we aim to vigilantly maintain the atmosphere of rigor essential to a thriving graduate program in creative writing; thus, prospective auditors are required to submit an application (downloadable from the program website) to the Admission Committee. Auditors are accepted on a basis of writing aptitude and on the potential for mutual benefit for both auditors and the community of enrolled students. For more information on applying to audit, please review the Admission Requirements on the program website under Resources>Prospective Students.

To further ensure this studious atmosphere and a rich experience for all residency attendees, we allow only full-participation auditing. Although auditors do not receive credit toward a degree, they are required by good-faith contract to prepare for and participate in all morning seminars and afternoon workshops with the seriousness of a graduate student. Along with students, auditors submit a workshop sample and receive seminar assignments and peer workshop samples one month in advance of a residency and are expected to complete all reading assignments; for workshops, auditors receive instruction on workshop critique and are expected to read and comment on other participants' work and attend every workshop session. All materials are distributed electronically through email, so auditors will need adequate online access to download and print documents.

The cost to audit is \$400 per class, and there are two classes per residency for a total of \$800. If granted permission to audit, auditors

must submit a \$200 deposit, which is applicable to the \$800 auditor fee, to secure their place in the residency. An optional room and board plan is available to auditors. Visit the fees page on the program website for the most up-to-date information about costs.

Graduates of the program may also request to return to audit residencies. Auditors may also apply for the **Ireland Residency** (see that section of this Handbook for Ireland details). *The audit option is limited to campus and Ireland residency sessions only, with modified requirements for Ireland; correspondence semesters are reserved for enrolled students.*

SECONDARY GENRE CONCENTRATION

At campus residencies, the interdisciplinary morning sessions offer all students instruction in fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry. For students who wish to go further into studies outside their primary genre, the program offers the option to study a secondary genre for one residency and semester period.

During the cross-genre residency, students participate in the afternoon workshop in the genre of interest; and during the semester immediately following that residency, they complete creative and annotative work in that genre under the guidance of an advisor with a specialty in that genre. This option adds one residency and one semester (a total of 12 credit hours) to a student's total program of study and earns the student a secondary genre concentration which is documented on the final transcript. Students enrolled in this option are required to complete 61 credit hours (49 credit hours required in their primary track, 12 credit hours required in their secondary track).

Since it is most advantageous for students to first be grounded in the MFA program and in the study of their primary genre before broadening out, **students are eligible for the cross-genre study option only during their third or fourth residency/semester** (in other words, before or after the Critical Essay semester; both the Critical Essay and the Thesis must be completed in the student's primary genre). Students interested in this option should contact the director to hear more details and to establish a timeline.

The application deadline for students intending to enroll in a secondary-genre residency/semester is April 1 for summer/fall and October 1 for winter/spring. To apply for the secondary genre concentration, students submit a writing sample in the genre of interest (15 poems or 20 pages of prose) to the director who then consults the relevant faculty; director and faculty approval is required for this option.

All applicants of the MFA program first apply in a primary genre and begin with a 49-credit-hour program of study. Once the student applies for the secondary concentration and is accepted and enrolled in the secondary genre concentration option, his/her credit requirement changes from 49 to 61 credit hours; because the additional credits are required for an MFA degree with concentration, **students are eligible to receive federal loans to fund the additional residency/semester.**

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM

A student who wishes to completely withdraw from the MFA program and the college must express an intent to withdraw in writing, via email or mail, to the Program Director who will process the withdrawal with campus offices. The tuition for which the withdrawn student will be responsible will depend on the date of withdrawal. Students intending to withdraw should review the tuition refund schedule listed on the current MFA Calendar (available on the program website under Resources>Current Students).

CREDIT AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

No partial credit will be given. Twelve hours of credit is awarded for the completion of each residency and semester's work. If a student should need to sit out a semester for personal or work-related reasons, s/he may apply to the Program Director for a **Leave of Absence** without jeopardizing enrollment or standing with the Program, but it is assumed that the student will attend for four consecutive semesters.

Requests for a Leave of Absence must be submitted by **April 15** for requests for leave during summer residency/fall semester, and by **November 15** for requests for leave during winter residency/spring semester. Students on leave will have their Wesleyan email account suspended while on leave, and are responsible for making any necessary loan arrangements with the Financial Aid office. Students on leave will also need to request reactivation from the Director approximately 2 months before resuming study the subsequent residency/semester. **Students may not take a leave of absence for two or more consecutive semesters and remain in the program.**

RESIDENCY

Students are required to spend 19-20 days a year on campus, ten days in July and nine or ten in January. Students have the option of substituting a residency in Ireland for one ten-day session on campus (see "Ireland Residency" section). Students participate in four residencies plus a final Fifth Residency for thesis-presentation (see "Fifth Residency" section for more details). Note that evening readings will be open to the public but all other residency activities are for students and auditors only.

What to Expect at the Residency

WHAT TO EXPECT ACADEMICALLY

The ten-day residency session is an important and exciting time because of your contact with other writers (both faculty and peers), exposure to various aesthetics, direct criticism of your manuscript, and stimulation for writing. The seminars, workshops, advising conferences, and readings

make each session unified and intensive. Each residency also closes one semester and initiates another, thereby complementing the independent work. The dense residency schedule includes opportunities to share and evaluate completed work, to begin generating new work, to receive counseling about your plans, and to formulate a new project with your advisor. While the correspondence semester is a time for highly focused, individualized study with a single advisor, the residency offers you the broad context, with many resources, for that study.

To build this broad context, the residency curriculum is both interdisciplinary and genre-specific. All students, regardless of genre track, sit in on **morning seminars**. The interdisciplinary nature of the morning reflects the reality that writing is essentially interdisciplinary: prose and poetry don't happen without one another. The compressed musicality of a poem sharpens the paragraph, and the well-wrought narrative ever reverberates with the poetic line. The interdisciplinary morning is not a default of a small program, but rather an intentional curricular design: even if students will occasionally break out for concurrent genre-specific seminars, the program will maintain at least one all-cohort session per day in order to maintain the foundation for the ongoing residency-wide conversation. You can thus expect a wide variety in seminars: some lecturers will focus on nuts-and-bolts issues of craft, and some on theory. Although every seminar won't speak explicitly to all genres, each will still offer something for students of all genres, and students at the graduate level are expected rise to the occasion, to extrapolate and investigate, to listen intently. You are encouraged to approach lecturers to follow up and discuss applications to your particular genre; you may also raise these questions in workshop, or with your advisor in individual conferences. An added benefit to the interdisciplinary seminars is that, for students who plan to teach at the college level, often beginning their careers teaching multi-genre introductory courses, these morning classes provide background on genres outside of one's specialty.

The **afternoon workshops** are genre-specific and focused on student writing. In these small workshops, you can expect a supportive but rigorous atmosphere, analytical but not judgmental, noncompetitive, vigilant against workshop jargon or any preferred aesthetic. You can expect specific constructive feedback on workshop pieces and, depending on workshop size, additional writing exercises for generating new work (see the "Workshop Procedures" section for more details on workshop participation).

Regarding preparation for seminars and workshops, you will receive peer workshop pieces and pre-reading assignments for seminars (and occasionally brief writing assignments) one month in advance of the residency. All workshop samples and brief readings are distributed electronically, and you are responsible for printing the materials (or storing them electronically for ready access), as well as for locating any books assigned as pre-reading; at the residency, you are required to have in hand the materials relevant to the day's seminars. Lecturers are responsible for communicating, in their seminar descriptions and assignments, the nature of the pre-reading: whether it's background, for instance, or if a close reading is expected, or if specific sections are likely to receive more focus than others. That said, at the graduate level, you should not expect every reading to be explicitly parsed in each lecture; because seminars are compressed to a 75-minute time frame in order that students be exposed to a variety of aesthetics and approaches, some extrapolation will be necessary for every seminar.

Because of the pace of the residency, you will need to complete all seminar and workshop preparation in advance of the residency. Read peer work carefully, make notes on all of the material for workshop, and compose responses to each of your workshop peers. During the residency, you may need to reserve some time the evening before in which to review the work of the student/s being discussed the next day. You will also want to have the Handbook with you for quick reference throughout the residency, and should prepare plans for the upcoming semester to share with your advisor.

WHAT TO EXPECT INTRAPERSONALLY AND INTERPERSONALLY

The residency can be an experience of surprise. Students are often surprised by their creative breakthroughs, by their artistic capabilities, by their hunger to learn alongside other writers. But students can also be surprised by flashes of self-doubt or fear, or by the emotional reactions that result from exhaustion and the vulnerability involved in sharing one's work. Very few adults put themselves into these circumstances willingly: eating dorm food, living among strangers, sitting for long hours in hard desk chairs (bring a pillow!), and receiving critique about something that sprang from the depths of one's heart and mind. Needless to say, the situation can be stressful, so you'll need to take care of yourself.

You can expect to be worn thin at some point during the residency. Step back when you need to. **Although consistent engagement is expected throughout the session, and seminars and workshops are mandatory for earning credit for residency courses, evening readings have been made optional**, since now and then both students and faculty need a breather.

You can expect the residency to provide you a safe space to enhance your craft and to grow together with other writers, but every participant has to diligently safeguard that space. Faculty and students collaborate to maintain a nonaggressive, noncompetitive residency atmosphere. You may meet lifelong literary companions in this program; you may not like everyone; you may be offended by others' opinions and their work. However, the residency's supportive atmosphere is not maintained by natural affinity but by everyone's commitment to focus on the work at hand and by a spirit of humility and respect. Diversity of opinions is a given—and essential to aesthetic growth—so there will be disagreement and conflict. Students are expected to express disagreement respectfully, without damaging the confidence or participation of others; the supportive atmosphere of the residency cannot survive abrasive or condescending comments in seminar sessions or in workshop. It's normal to experience stress or have an emotional reaction to something—please deal with these reactions professionally, making no personal attacks. The workshop guidelines outlined in this Handbook, together with this what-to-expect section, provide a set of ground rules and standards for residency-wide interpersonal communication. The faculty pay attention to the dynamics and will intervene when ground rules are broken. You are also encouraged to seek out a faculty member to talk to about issues that come up.

Finally, on the topic of self-care and care for our communal spaces, please note that the program operates during the college's "off-season"—when the undergraduate semesters are not in session—which means that, although we do have custodial and staff support, resources are slightly slimmer and response time to our needs somewhat slower than they would be during the regular semester session. Please be mindful of spaces and clean up your own messes; communicate any support needs to the 24-hour security staff or the MFA Director.

Accommodations

If students opt for a meal plan, they dine in the campus dining hall; vegetarian meals are available. If students opt for campus housing, they stay in a residence hall with suite bathrooms in summer, and usually share same-gender communal baths in the residence halls that are available in winter. Most students select the single-room option, but shared rooms are also an option at a lower cost when a roommate is available. In order to maintain the studious atmosphere of the residency, the program cannot accommodate overnight guests in the residence hall except in special cases approved by the director. Students who disregard this request will be fined.

Workshop Procedures

Afternoons during the residency are devoted to two-hour writing workshops. Students submit work 6 weeks in advance of the residency, prompted by the director who will then distribute the work to all workshop participants.

The director provides specific details on submissions in the email requesting work for residency, but, in general: Workshop submissions should be new work that workshop participants have not yet discussed. Your submitted work should be work that you are invested in, but not something already “published in your head” – it should be work that you’re committed to making better. Students may submit a **maximum of 6 poems or 6000-8000 words of prose in a single document**; poetry should be single-spaced, unless a poem requires nontraditional formatting; prose should be double-spaced and a novel/memoir excerpt prefaced by a synopsis of what has preceded it. The pages should be numbered and the author’s name should appear at the top of each page, in the right hand corner. New students may ask that application material comprise their workshop submission but will need to submit a digital copy.

Students are expected to come to the residency with hard copies of all workshop samples in their genre, having carefully read and prepared comments on their peers’ workshop submissions. If responding electronically using the comment tool in Word, print out the manuscripts with inserted comments to hand to your peers.

Workshops are usually taught by two teachers on a rotating basis, or team-taught; this ensures that students will be exposed to multiple approaches and that no single style dominates. Students will have the op-

portunity of working with several faculty members, as well as benefitting from each other.

In addition to critiquing previously-submitted work, faculty may assign writing prompts or exercises to generate new work. This work will necessarily be in rough draft form, and critiques will need to take that into account, applying less rigorous standards and helping to point the way toward further development.

The usual and time-honored approach for writing workshops is to ask the student whose work is up for critique to remain silent until everyone has had a chance to speak. This not only prevents the student from going into a defensive mode, but it creates the necessary calm mind needed to listen to and absorb peers' and teachers' remarks and suggestions. The workshop experience is not only about presenting work; talking in detail about others' work helps to develop a critical vocabulary and a way of seeing that eventually feeds into future work in a beneficial way.

In reading and making notes on the work for workshop, first try to identify the intention of the piece, withholding judgment until that is clear. Describing the work in detail yields surprising insights. Then note where the writer accomplished his or her purpose, and where it fell short. In discussions, articulating questions as opposed to flat statements can lead to broader understanding of the implications of the work. At the end of the critique, the writer whose work is being discussed may wish to ask questions of the group to further delve into possible directions the work might take. If the writer finds him- or herself explaining what the work is "really about," this will indicate that it hasn't yet fulfilled its purpose, and needed changes may present themselves more clearly.

Because the workshop is so central to MFA study, in conjunction with workshop samples one month prior to residency, students receive a Fundamentals for Workshop packet, which includes sample critique letters, along with a Fundamentals for Genre packet to help with development of the craft-focused vocabulary. Workshop facilitators also evaluate student performance at the end of residency and provide feedback for improvement in workshopping. Here are some basic guidelines to ground you in workshop etiquette and best practices:

Points for Critique

1. *Decide to hear other people's thoughts. Our usual habit is to listen for a couple of minutes and then decide we already know "where they're coming from," so we stop actively listening and start thinking about what we're going to say next.*
2. *In your own words, paraphrase the work in question.*
3. *After the class has finished speaking, ask the writer some open-ended questions about the work (not "yes" or "no" answers). Most American students are never once asked to enlarge upon, or refine, anything they have just said. The aim here is to keep investigating, to delve deeper into the discussion, to gather more data from the writer, to further discuss reported feelings, and to further understand meaning attached to these feelings. These discussion sessions will often expose more material that the writer will want to include.*
4. *In your own words again, paraphrase what the writer has just answered in response to your questions.*
5. *Finally, ask the writer something like, "Taking these responses into account, where do you want to take this piece of writing?"*

The advantage of this kind of critique is that it can expose and clarify the fact that multiple meanings may exist within a piece of writing, meanings that the writer may not have been aware of, and which can now be developed.

An unfortunate side-effect of the great popularity of writing workshops has been the development of workshop clichés, such as "show, don't tell" and "use more specific details." An essay by poet Steve Kowitz examines these clichés ("A Poet's Anti-Rule Book," *Writer's Chronicle*, May/Summer 2011) and argues that such formulaic responses may simplify the critique and paralyze the discussion at a single level. Vigilance against such unthinking methods should be a concern for all participants. Comments and suggestions for revision need to be backed up by careful analysis.

The teacher's role in workshop is to moderate the discussion, acting both as participant and director when needed to move it along. The teacher will make certain everyone is heard and that no one voice dominates. The teacher's concern is that the work in question receives a fair scrutiny, one that will advance it and future work.

Students will need to gradually form a critical vocabulary and way of speaking that will do justice to the full range of a particular work, and to monitor themselves on these points:

1. Speak to the work that is in front of you, not a hypothetical work you would write.

2. Try to temporarily suspend your preferences for a certain kind of writing, and place yourself in the position of the writer.

3. Describe the work in detail, as to style, subject, language choices, tone, imagery, and so on.

4. Only after steps 1 – 3 through have been considered, suggest changes and revisions that are in keeping with the perceived intent of the work.

Semester Project Proposal

Before each residency, students should be thinking about what they would like to work on during the semester and should draft a project proposal to share with their advisors; for returning students, this proposal can be based on the updated project plan submitted as part of the self-evaluation at the end of the previous semester. The first advising meeting will take place after students are assigned their faculty advisor at Orientation. Students will be assigned a different advisor each semester and will be able to request an advisor, in conversation with the director and faculty, as they move further into their tenure in the program. Students sometimes ask to work with the same advisor for more than one semester. This can be arranged when it is pedagogically sound, but most often it is not. Although we want you to continue what is productive, we balance that concern against the benefits a new approach and angle of vision can bring to the work. Students will have the option of working with the same advisor for up to two semesters only.

The advisor and student should schedule a meeting or two in the middle of the residency period for further expansion of the proposal; a final meeting for the purpose of finalizing the proposal is scheduled for the last morning of the residency before departure. At this final meeting, students and advisors will exchange relevant contact information and agree upon deadlines for the semester's work. Although these personal conferences with the advisor are built into the residency schedule for the purpose of planning the semester project, students are encouraged to request further consultation with their advisors or the Program Director if they have questions or concerns.

With the faculty advisor, students will also assemble a **reading list, or bibliography, of 20-25 books for the semester project**, to be expanded and adjusted in mutual agreement throughout the semester as necessary. It is to be expected that a portion of these books may serve only as reference, while others will provide subjects of close scrutiny. The makeup of the bibliography will be agreed upon by student and advisor, but as a general rule of thumb, approximately one-fourth should be works on craft, theory, technique, aesthetics, or essays by creative writers in the various genres, and the remaining number should be original works of fiction, poetry, or creative nonfiction.

An excellent resource for the bibliography is the series called "The Art of..." from Graywolf Press, which includes "The Art of Time in Fiction," "The Art of the Poetic Line," "The Art of Recklessness," and other works on craft and theory. Some flexibility is expected; faculty advisors may wish to modify the requirements for the number of books, taking into account particular needs and projects. Handouts of various faculty-recommended reading lists will be available at orientation; these lists are not intended to be strictly adhered to, but are meant to suggest the range of works from which one might choose. During the third semester, the list should be relevant to the Critical Essay, and during the fourth (or Thesis) semester, the list may provide structural models for the Creative Thesis manuscript.

At the end of the residency, students will write a two- to three-page **Residency Self-Evaluation**, detailing what they have gained from the residency seminars and workshops, the events they attended and participated in, and how they developed as a writer during this period. This document, along with the finalized **Semester Project Proposal**, must be emailed as an attachment to both the advisor and director **no later than three days after the end of the residency**.

Both of these forms can be downloaded from the MFA website: www.wvwc.edu/MFA. Both documents will be kept in the student's file; the self-evaluation will constitute evidence of the student's completion of the residency component, and the proposal will serve as the advisor/advisee contract for the semester-long project period. Students will also complete a **Residency Program Evaluation** with the aim of improving the residency curriculum (forms and curricular evaluative processes may be updated as the program adopts an online evaluation system).

SEMESTER PROJECT

The requirements for the semester's work include five packets of creative and critical written work, to be sent to the advisor approximately every three weeks, and a final portfolio of revisions which will serve as the basis for the advisor's final evaluation of the student's work. **Note that the final, or Thesis, semester follows a different structure (see the "Thesis" section for more details).** The advisor will read and comment on each packet of work in writing and may suggest further readings and/or revisions; students can expect the advisor's response within a week of packet receipt. **Students are expected to spend twenty-five hours per week on their writing and directed reading.** Correspondence may be by mail, phone, or e-mail; electronic submission of packets is the default unless student or advisor requests hard copy, mailed submissions. **Medium of exchange will need to be workable for both student and advisor but is ultimately at the discretion of the advisor.** These packet exchanges are not online courses, but tutorials which encourage a close, sustained apprenticeship with writers who have significant publications and reputation in their field. We emphasize the low student-faculty ratio, which will never exceed four to one, and is usually lower. This guarantees a close, sustained level of personal attention.

Writing Packets

During each of the first three semesters, the student will send a packet of writing approximately every three weeks, keeping to the submission schedule agreed upon by both student and advisor during the residency. Punctual submission of packets is important for both the student's pacing of work throughout the semester and the advisor's staggering of packets received from his/her multiple advisees; thus, if a student foresees challenges to making a deadline, s/he should communicate with the advisor to make adjustments. Students who fail to meet deadlines without communication with the advisor risk a failing grade for the semester. **The general rule is that students can be late with a packet only once a semester and only in communication with their advisors without jeopardizing a passing grade.** The low-residency model is unique in the way it offers students flexibility in sustaining graduate study alongside busy jobs and other commitments; however, the flexibility lies in shaping the schedule at the beginning of the semester with your advisor, when you sit down with your calendar at the residency to set your packet deadlines. Once those deadlines are set, you are expected to meet them. So, take note of significant upcoming events in your life that you'll need to work around, and encourage your advisors to do the same – jog their memories to make sure you're also working around major conferences or other trips they may have planned. Advisors are expected to be prompt as well.

Students and advisors may choose to abandon the writing-packet structure during the theThesis Semester, though a regular rhythm of contact should be established (see "Thesis" section for details).

PACKET LOG

The student should keep an ongoing written record of the dates when packets are sent and the contents (including titles of new/revised work, length/topic of annotations, etc.); this log will be included in the student's Semester Self-Evaluation. Likewise, the advisor should keep a written record of packet contents and receipt dates and should include this record in the student's final evaluation.

Sample Packet Log Entry by Student

PACKET 3, sent on time, March 8, 2014

3 pg letter on progress

3 ½ pg annotation, braiding in Beard's "Fourth State of Matter"

3 pg annotation, imagery in B Miller

4 pg annotation, endings in Cooper essays

Second revision of "Fine Art of Monkeying Around" (12 pgs)

2 new essays ("Junebug" 11 pgs, "My Fifth Birthday" 9 pgs)

Response, received March 12, 2014

4 ½ pg letter

All work with margin comments

Enclosed essay by Andrea Barrett

Each of the five writing packets should include these three elements:

1) A letter on progress: This letter to the advisor describes the progress of the project, any concerns or questions the student has, any challenges s/he is facing, and it provides space for the student to respond to any elements in the advisor's previous letters and revision suggestions. The letter is not meant to be a throwaway "Here you go!" indicating an attitude of simply handing in an assignment and moving on to the next, but an opportunity for engaging in a true apprenticeship-model exchange as the writing evolves. These letters provide the rich, ongoing exchange that forms the heart of the apprenticeship model which makes low-residency MFA study unique and dynamic. **The letter exchange is where the mature learning happens; thus, the letter on progress is core to semester expectations, not optional and not just an afterthought.** To better equip you to write letters that will help you make the most of your advising relationship, review the sample letter written by a graduate of the program (see "Sample Letter" section). This sample letter isn't prescriptive in form or content, but it gives you an idea of what is expected and possible.

2) Original pieces of fiction, poetry, or nonfiction: These pieces can be new drafts or revisions of earlier work, though it is expected that the student will not just be recycling old work during his/her MFA study. As a general rule, students should submit both new and revised work each packet. Original work should be literary in nature and should avoid any formulaic style (e.g. mass-market genre fiction or topical nonfiction). Page length or number of poems per packet will vary according to the goals set forth in the Semester Project Proposal, but students are required to select a minimum of 30 pages of prose or 15 pages of poetry for the semester's final portfolio. Students will be held to these portfolio minimums during the Critical Essay Semester as well, in order to ensure an adequate quantity of material as they move into their final semester.

The program stipulates no page minimums per packet for original work; minimums are under the advisor's supervision. However, to respect the workload of advisors, to afford them greater focus and to enable timely responses, **the program caps each packet at 35 pages of new and/or revised original work** (double-spaced, normal 1-inch margins, 12-point font, Times New Roman or a comparable font). If a student wishes to submit one long piece, s/he may opt to submit either new or revised work for that packet. Individual advisors are welcome to approve submission of creative work that exceeds 35 pages, but if students exceed the limit without first consulting their advisors, advisors are free to request a shorter submission or to respond to only a 35-page portion of the work submitted. **Note that the 35-page limit per packet is increased to 50 pages during the Thesis semester;** an advisor can adjust this maximum according to the plan established with the Thesis student, but in order for advisors to have ample time for thorough response to manuscript pages, Thesis students should respect the 50-page limit unless otherwise arranged with advisor.

3) Annotations: These annotations (sometimes called critiques) of individual pieces of poetry or prose are short analytic essays of two to four pages. **The student is required to submit a minimum of 15 annotations per semester (during Semesters 1 and 2), so s/he should average 3 per packet.** The student

may elect to submit two annotations in one packet and four in a later packet, keeping in mind the semester minimum.

The analytic portion of every semester is largely focused on primary texts, not scholarship, and discusses craft rather than literary theory or cultural history. In the first semesters, annotations help the student learn how to identify basic elements of craft; compile a vocabulary for analyzing imaginative works; develop a clear, serviceable prose style; and read as a writer. Annotations also contribute to the dialogue between student and advisor, providing quick illustrative reference for issues raised by the creative work, and the depth of insight or conviction in particular annotations may signal promising Critical Essay material.

The subjects of annotations will be decided upon mutually by advisor and student and should be directly relevant to the student's work. Advisors' approaches to the annotations may vary, but, broadly speaking, these short essays do not analyze craft books but imaginative works, do not need to incorporate secondary sources, and can take the form of explications of a text, or whatever point of focus the individual advisor and student agree upon. Specific readings of a text may examine matters of tone, plot, imagery, line breaks, setting, rhyme scheme, juxtaposition, disjunction, and the like. This writing hones analytical skills and clarifies craft and technique which the student may put to use in his or her own writing. Note that, **during the third semester, a reduced minimum of 4 annotations** is required due to the focus on writing the Critical Essay; students are encouraged to use these four annotations to generate rough draft material for the Essay (see the section on "Critical Essay" for details). Also, students may or may not be required to submit annotations during the Thesis Semester--this will be mutually decided upon by student and advisor.

Note that the advisor may request revisions of annotations throughout the semester if the student demonstrates a lack of depth in his/her analytical engagement of the text.

Sample Template for the Annotation

Passionate engagement with readings is both instructive and important, but the goal of the annotation is not to gush or to attack: the goal is to get down to the nuts-and-bolts reason *why* a piece evokes particular emotions and responses. The goal of this exercise is to learn to be a better writer. As you write each annotation, voice your feelings and opinions only if you can substantiate these responses with solid craft analysis. If your advisor determines that your annotations are turning into rants or airy claims full of unsubstantiated judgments, s/he may ask you to create an artificial separation in your writing, requiring you to set aside feelings and opinions and discuss only how the poem, essay, etc is built. Once you and your advisor agree that you've mastered reading for craft, you can abandon this artificial separation and write more intuitively.

Include: your name, author's name, title, publisher and date of publication, annotation number in the semester series (Annotation 1, 2,...), date of annotation

1. Write a brief synopsis of the poem, story, essay, book, etc.
2. Describe the structure and organization (e.g. a braided essay, an achronological story, a meditative lyric...).
3. Define the major and any minor themes.
4. Describe the point of view of the speaker/narrator.
5. Make a character list (if appropriate to the genre), with brief one-sentence backstories for each (major and minor characters).
6. Choose one or more elements of craft as lenses through which to view the piece. Some options for analysis include (*each option below is an example focus of a single annotation*):

--How does the writer create characters?

--Define a craft term and explore that term through a close reading.

--How does the piece move from the personal to the universal?

--What specific details/images stay in your mind? Why? How do these small details lead to larger ideas, or characterizations?

--Does any image repeat? If so, why did the author choose it? Does it carry metaphorical significance? Is it transformed in any way from

beginning to end?

--Find examples of abstract and concrete language. What are the effects?

--Identify passages of exposition (summary/"narrative of thought"/ meditation on experience) and passages of scene (narrative sequence that unfolds around the reader/full of sense detail)—describe the balance of exposition and scene.

--How does the dialog work? Does it accomplish more than one thing?

--How does the writer create a sense of place?

--Describe the rhythms, syntax, diction—reading aloud can help you get a sense of the writer's voice.

--Investigate line breaks/line length.

--Why does the piece begin and end where it does? Is there an echo between the opening and closing?

--Break down the piece by stanza, paragraph, or section. How does each piece act as a "building block"? How does the writer create dramatic tension or interest with these building blocks?

--How do the transitions work?

--Are there any moments that seem weak or clichéd to you? If so, why? How would you change those moments?

(You will likely find other options for analysis in your craft books; focus most keenly on areas in which you feel you currently struggle.)

7. Close your annotation by responding to one of these prompts:

--Now that you have read and considered this work in the context of your own ongoing writing, how does it change or deepen your understanding of your own work? Does it serve as a model for you?

--Compare and contrast the authorial choices in this work with your choices for your own project. Does the comparison confirm your choices, or cause you to reconsider them? How? Be specific.

Sample Letter on Progress

Dear ADVISOR NAME,

I've attached Charlie and Walt revisions for you.

I don't have much to talk about in the way of reading in this packet's letter, mostly because I'm in the middle of four books and haven't finished any of them yet. I'm reading Carter Sickels' *The Evening Hour*, Jayne Anne Phillips' *Lark and Termite*, Nora Ephron's *I Feel Bad About My Neck, And Other Thoughts on Being a Woman*, and Dodie Smith's *I Capture the Castle*. Since I can't speak much to the content of each book since I haven't finished them, I thought I'd at least tell you WHY I have chosen to read them at this point in the semester. I chose Sickels because I wanted to read an Appalachian book that wasn't "typical." Meaning it's not about coal mines or grandmas or any of the things I've read (and written) about. Instead, the main character is a drug dealer who happens to work in a nursing home. I'm hoping to learn something about how to make my characters seem more realistic and less stereotypical. I'm reading Phillips for two reasons: 1. Because I've never read a book by Jayne Anne Phillips (I've tried, but have never finished one, is that a safe confession to make? I feel like I will lose all credibility as a student in an MFA program in WV by making that admission), and 2. because I wanted to read about how war affected people living in Appalachia, and this seemed like a good choice. I didn't want to read just about a soldier or just about the people that get left behind, so it seemed like a good mix. I started reading Ephron just because I needed some comedic relief. Then I realized that I would love for Charlie's story to feel more like an essay, to seem really confessional, so my leisure reading has turned into something I can study as well. I tried to make Charlie sound more conversational. As for Smith, this is a book that is on my reading list for the semester. Dr. Saunders suggested it to me either last summer or the one before because he thought I would like the narrator, so I'm giving it a try. So far, it is not to my taste. Admittedly I've had to stop reading because I spilled yogurt in my bag and it got all over the book (which happened to belong to the library because I loaned my personal copy to a friend and she hadn't finished it before I decided to start reading). I also am going to read *Flight Behavior* soon, it's next on my list.

I've been having a hard time writing lately. I think it's mostly because I have a lot going on, both personally and at work. No, that can't be it because I've always had a lot going on and it's never really made me feel differently about my writing. If I'm really honest, I think it's more to do with this sense of fear that I have about the end of the program. It's like when you've had a really good vacation that has flown by and pretty soon it's Saturday evening and you know you have to leave in the morning but instead of packing you just want to sit on the balcony and look at the ocean. And sure, you're excited to get home and see your friends and sleep in your own bed and those things, but you've gotten really comfortable at the beach and maybe just want a few more days.

Well, I have that Saturday evening feeling and it's making me want to slow down. I'm afraid to lose the "student" part of myself, because I'm not really sure I know what I am without that label. I have consistently been a student for twenty of the twenty-six years of my life. It seems really strange to leave it behind. Then I have to think about what I am if I'm not a student. Am I a writer? What makes someone a writer? Is it an MFA? Being published? Being read? Just loving to write? I'm coming to the end of all of this and I'm not really sure where I'm going to be when it's over. It's exciting, but also terrifying.

But, since this is supposed to be my official packet letter, I should probably talk about my writing. Of the two, Walt's story was the easiest to revise. That's not to say it was simply easy, it was just easier than Charlie. When I think about the central idea of my stories, the struggle with leaving home, Walt is a prime example. He leaves Nebraska for a war. He leaves the war for Detroit. He leaves Detroit for his wife. He leaves his wife to provide for his family. He is always leaving and always wanting to return home. Walt and Charlie are two sides of the same coin. Walt leaves because he has to, Charlie leaves because she doesn't know what else to do.

I'm glad you suggested adding a narrative from Walt. I really enjoyed writing about his recollections as he drove along the highway. Actually, I just realized in his final piece I have sent him back home to Nebraska, which is where he will die. Walt's character manages to come full circle. I don't address the death in the story, I didn't know if I needed too. I kind of thought another character could make mention where he died and allow the reader to come to the conclusion themselves. I tried to write the accident scene and it just didn't feel right. It was either too technical (just describing the supports coming loose from the load and him being crushed) or too sentimental (Walt thinking about all the things he didn't get to say). I couldn't write it in a way that made me feel comfortable. So instead I just left him wishing to get back home. Do I need to address his death in his story? Revising Charlie was the real struggle. I wanted her to be running from something, yet this story about her grandmother is really grounded in being home. It was hard to convey that Charlie loves her grandmother, and is really genuinely happy to be home visiting her, but also that she couldn't wait to leave. Charlie really has no idea where she belongs. She's most comfortable being at home if she's with her grandmother, and once Susie dies, I think Charlie loses all sense of connection with her home. I wanted to show that she thinks, for just a moment, that maybe Leo can provide that same sense of home for her, to be a tether back to her life in Kentucky, but in the end, she's too afraid to allow that sort of connection, so she leaves. What I want the reader to understand is that Charlie is afraid to feel attached to anything, people or places. But I want that to seem like a natural part of her character. I'm not sure if I've done a good enough job in that respect.

So that's where I am at this point in the semester. A little scattered and a lot afraid.

STUDENT NAME

End-of-Semester Materials

At the end of each of the student's first three semesters, s/he submits a final portfolio and evaluations which will be kept in the student's file. The grading system is pass/fail (see "Grading & Evaluation" for more details). The advisor will submit a written evaluation of the student's work for the semester. After consultation between faculty and the Program Director, and on completion of all requirements for the semester, eight hours of credit will be awarded, in addition to the four hours of credit earned after successful completion of the residency. The student will be notified of this by advisor, and Pass/Fail grades will be available for review on WebAdvisor (accessible on the MFA website under Resources for Current Students).

A single-sheet **Residency & Semester Submission Checklist** (available as a PDF on the MFA website under Resources for Current Students>Program Forms) will be helpful at the semester's end as you gather your final materials for submission. You will also want to consult the current academic calendar for specific due dates (also available on the site in Resources for Current Students). **Students should stay up-to-date on deadlines; those who fail to meet deadlines risk losing credit and/or advancement.**

Materials to be submitted electronically (unless hard copies are requested) to both the advisor and director at the end of the semester include:

FINAL PORTFOLIO (submitted Semesters 1-3 as a single Word Doc or PDF by the End of Semester Portfolio Due Date as specified on academic calendar). Portfolios are available to your next advisor so s/he can get familiar with your work. Your current advisor will also base his/her evaluation on this portfolio and on your overall semester; note that you can expect a copy of your final evaluation and P/F grade from your advisor, but advisors are not expected to give detailed feedback on the portfolio.

Portfolio includes:

- Revisions of selected original work** submitted throughout the semester (approx. 30 pp prose; approx. 15 pp poetry)
- One revised annotation** (Semesters 1 & 2 only)

--**Annotated bibliography** of the 20-25 books read and consulted during the semester, along with books read for the semester's initiating residency; the entry/description of each book should be approx. 50-100 words. With this assignment in mind, **students usually write entries for the bibliography progressively, as they complete books during the semester, while the text is freshest in the mind.** (See "Annotated Bibliography" section for more details.)

CRITICAL ESSAY (Semester 3 only, by the End of Semester Portfolio Due Date) (submitted as a PDF separate from portfolio; see "Critical Essay" section for guidelines)

SEMESTER SELF-EVALUATION (downloadable form on the MFA website; due by Portfolio Due Date): This evaluation provides space for students to summarize the semester work, include a packet log, evaluate achievement of project goals, look forward to the next semester's work by updating the project plan, and submit a request to work with a particular advisor the following semester. Students will be notified of available advisors before the semester's end; for biographies of core and guest faculty, see the program website; guests typically return no more than once a year, to maintain diversity in advisors. **Please offer a first, second and third choice for advisor;** we do our best to honor student requests, taking all factors into account, including faculty load, but students should be aware that requests cannot always be accommodated. (Thesis students submit **FINAL SELF-EVALUATION & NARRATIVE TRANSCRIPT** instead of the regular self-evaluation form.)

SEMESTER EVALUATION OF FACULTY ADVISOR

(downloadable form on website; due by Portfolio Due Date; process may be updated with program's adoption of online evaluation system): This evaluation is designed to ensure ongoing quality advising. Students submit this evaluation to the **director only**; the director will share a summary of evaluations with the advisor, or will share evaluations as they are submitted if no advisees request their evaluation be kept confidential (the director's advisees submit the form to the Dean).

Students and faculty are encouraged to contact the director (or Dean, when appropriate) at any time during the semester if they feel uncomfortable or dissatisfied with the student-advisor exchange.

APPLICATION FOR DEGREE (Semester 3 only; downloadable form on MFA website): Print, complete and mail (or scan/email) this form to Academic Services, WVWC, 59 College Ave, Buckhannon, WV 26201 (form requires your signature).

THESIS MANUSCRIPT (final semester only; see “Thesis” section for guidelines on all final semester submissions)

EXIT SURVEY (downloadable form on the MFA website; completed and submitted after final semester only; due one week after the Fifth Residency; process may be updated with program’s adoption of online evaluation system)

Annotated Bibliography

On your end-of-semester Annotated Bibliography, include books you have read during the semester and also for your residency preparation for the residency that initiates the semester (you do not have to include handouts or excerpts); residency readings do not count as part of your 20-25 titles in your semester list. All residency books will eventually need to be included in your Comprehensive Annotated Bibliography submitted with your Thesis Manuscript, so this progressive compilation of residency texts will save you time and headache in your final semester.

--Alphabetize your bibliography **by author’s (or editor’s) last name.**

--Don’t get gushy in your entry, but you can include some specific aspects of what the book taught you.

--Write entries as you *finish* books so you don’t have the entire task to complete at the end of the semester; ask your advisor to review an entry or two, to make sure you’re on track.

--Use the most recent edition of the MLA Handbook for formatting bibliographic information (sample entries here are based on MLA 8th Ed.)

Sample annotated bibliography entries:

Swift, Graham. *Last Orders*. Vintage Books, 1997.

Graham Swift's *Last Orders* is a novel told by four revolving first person narrators. The main action of the story takes place in a single day, in which they are on a road trip to scatter their friend's ashes in the sea. However, there are many flashbacks in the story as well, allowing the reader to get a complete picture of the lives of the men. The very close first-person is a little limiting at times, but the strength of each character's voice allows the reader to keep track of who is narrating which section. The characters are flawed, yet very realistic. The tone is perfect, solemn, yet containing little bits of humor, and very conversational.

Welty, Eudora. "Why I Live at the P.O." *The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980.

Welty's narrator, Sister, is the postmistress of her small town, mostly populated by her own family. When her sister Stella-Rondo, comes home with a child she claims is not hers, Sister feels extremely jealous. As she lists all of the various crimes committed against her by her immediate family members, it becomes clear that Sister is an unreliable narrator. Her jealousies taint her claims, and it becomes impossible to determine the truth of the incidents from her creations. Sister is one of the most comic unreliable narrators I've ever encountered.

Wood, James. "Character." *How Fiction Works*. Picador, 2009.

In the section on character, James Wood reflects on methods to take a portrait of a character and turn them into a real person. He warns the writer to not push too hard to make a character three dimensional, because instead of creating a real character you create one that is larger than life. He stresses getting the basics correct: how a character looks, walks, talks, and acts. Authors should strive to create regular people, characters that readers can understand, to be the main population of a creative piece.

IRELAND RESIDENCY

The Ireland Residency is offered every other year and is designed to introduce students to the literature and culture of a literary nation during a week of writing and literary enrichment. Students attend readings and historical lectures and explore this “city of words” and its seaside suburbs. Other possible events include a play at The Abbey Theatre, a day-trip to ancient Newgrange in the Boyne Valley, a visit to the shore of the Irish Sea at Sandymount, or an excursion to County Wicklow. The schedule may include a train to Galway in the West, a writing workshop with Irish writers, a bus-trip to County Clare, and ferrying to the Aran Islands. The trip evolves based on conversations with interested students.

Curriculum: Students complete advance reading and submit a project proposal for the trip. After returning to the United States, students turn in a piece of writing—fiction, creative nonfiction, or poetry—relating to or inspired by the travel experience and also submit a personal evaluation/summation of their participation in the project. Pass/fail grades are assigned. *(A more detailed project description provided in the fall preceding the residency.)*

Tuition and credits: This residency fulfills two two-hour courses* (ENGL 520/525, ENGL 530/535, or ENGL 540/545). Tuition is the same as that of on-campus residency: 4 credits X \$425 = \$1700. MFA graduates, and other non-degree persons, may audit for a total of \$800.

Residency equivalency: Although the Ireland Residency replaces one on-campus residency*, students are still encouraged (but not required) to attend the subsequent summer residency, especially to meet with advisor, with tuition waived, paying only for room/board; if attending the summer on-campus residency, full participation is expected.

Estimated costs beyond tuition: \$3200 (includes flight, lodging, events, and most transit costs); a passport number and a deposit are due in the fall preceding the trip.

**Because of fundamental work completed at a student's first residency and because of the nature of fifth-residency requirements, the Ireland Residency cannot serve as a student's first or final (fifth) residency.*

GRADING & EVALUATION

The grading system is Pass/Fail. It is the belief of the faculty and administration that in an arts program such as the MFA, the practice of written evaluations provides a more comprehensive overview of the student's accomplishment and progress than traditional letter grades. The advisor's written report at the end of each semester gives the student, as well as the student's next advisor, assessment of the work which may indicate directions for future work and progress. In addition, faculty will write a midterm evaluation to keep the director informed of any concerns or problems; this midterm evaluation does not form part of the student's permanent record. The end-of-semester evaluation will go to director and student, and will go into the student's permanent file. All evaluations are narrative; in addition, advisors score the student's capstone projects (Critical Essay, Thesis, and Graduate Seminar) on a simple rubric that highlights performance in key areas. Students can review evaluation forms and rubrics on the program website under Resources>Faculty>Faculty Program Forms.

For the residency period, a passing grade requires attendance to all activities (including most evening readings, though attending *all* readings is not mandatory for a passing grade); thorough preparation for seminars and workshops; serious, graduate-level engagement in discussion and exercises; satisfactory performance review by workshop facilitators; and prompt submission of the Residency Self-Evaluation and the Semester Project Proposal to both advisor and director three days after the residency.

Evaluation style of semester work will vary with each advisor and each genre, but general, consistent areas for Pass/Fail criteria include:

--Punctuality and thoroughness in submission of materials (see the Residency & Semester Submission Checklist and MFA Calendar for a breakdown of due dates and submission details; available as a PDF at www.wvwc.edu/MFA).

--Realization of the goals set forth in the Semester Project Proposal and evolved in conversation with the advisor throughout the semester. This should include completion of at least 20 books listed on the Project Proposal; list may be modified in consultation with advisor throughout semester.

Criteria specific to creative work:

--Originality: uniqueness and strength of voice, level of surprise and the thwarting of the reader's expectations, understanding of conventions and exploration of ways to write beyond those conventions, literary merit and avoidance of any formulaic style (e.g. mass-market genre fiction or topical nonfiction)

--Quality: compelling language/imagery, skillful use of narrative/poetic elements, emotional and intellectual potency

--Integration of instruction from craft analysis and readings, advisor feedback, residency seminars and workshops

--Strength of initial drafts and level of revision in subsequent drafts: Significant revision beyond line editing is expected at the graduate level, even if a student comes into the program with a body of work.

--Organization and formal characteristics

Criteria specific to critical work (Annotations and Critical Essay):

--Relevance to creative work: making connections between analysis and creative projects.

Overall analysis: graduate-level depth and rigor, privileging discussion of the craft elements of a work over reliance on personal opinions of like/dislike or reliance on literary analysis that eschews focus on craft, discussion of specific textual excerpts

--Application of craft studies or criticism (integration of sources for Critical Essay)

--Organization and clarity/mechanics

--Adherence to guidelines set forth in this handbook

Mid-Tenure Warning Letter

Because we use a Pass/Fail evaluation system, we don't have a handy official "middle zone" in grading that can alert a student to potential precariousness of his or her status in the program when necessary. As a faculty, we have determined that the middle of a student's tenure in the program is the point at which we need to be frank if sufficient progress has not been made toward the MFA degree, or if sufficient commitment has not been shown. If your advisor and the director are concerned about your lack of progress or lack of effort after your 2nd semester, an official warning letter will be given to you and also put in your file. This letter is not intended to be a threat, or a punitive action; instead, if you are a struggling student, we hope it will offer you a "wake up call" to reassess your goals for MFA study, to dive in deep during your 3rd semester, and to ratchet up your commitment level if you plan to complete the program.

Incompletes and Academic Probation

[This section is reproduced from the WVWC Graduate Catalog.]

An incomplete grade is not an option for MFA residency courses (ENGL 520, 525, 530, 535, 540, 545). Because the residency is prerequisite to the semester-long course and because residency courses are on-site, requiring immersion with full participation, a student cannot complete coursework outside of the residency period. Students who are unable to complete the residency due to illness, or other circumstances which take the student away from the residency for more than two days, must receive a medical withdrawal and must repeat a full residency before proceeding with semester study. In some cases, the Director, in conversation with the Faculty, may consider enrolling the student in an independent study semester course to help him/her maintain momentum in the program; successful completion of an independent study course will be required for enrollment in the subsequent residency period, but will not count toward credits earned for the MFA degree.

An incomplete grade for ENGL 570, the semester-long course, can be issued to a student who is passing the course but cannot complete scheduled course work due to illness or a cause that is beyond reasonable control. An Incomplete Course Grade Form must be completed by the advisor and turned into the Registrar. Students receiving an “I” for ENGL 570 will have four weeks after the End-of-Semester Portfolio Due Date (listed on the MFA academic calendar) to submit the final portfolio so that (1) the Faculty Advisor has sufficient time for portfolio evaluation before the student proceeds to the residency and subsequent semester, and (2) the student has sufficient time to prepare for residency participation and the subsequent semester’s project.

If, having received an incomplete for ENGL 570, a student still does not complete all work satisfactorily by the end of the four-week period, s/he will have to take a failing grade and repeat the semester under Academic Probation, with the option of auditing that semester’s initiating residency period (with full participation) or skipping the residency since residency course requirements will have already been satisfied for the repeated semester (see note on opposite page regarding financial aid during probationary semester). A student on academic probation who fails to pass the repeated semester of the probationary period will be dismissed from the program.

The thesis-semester student’s Pass/Fail grade for the final credits earned during Thesis project completion (ENGL 650) will remain an “I” by default (with Incomplete Course Grade Form waived) until the completion of the Fifth Residency (ENGL 655) and the receipt of the Final Deposit of Thesis (See “Thesis” section for more details on this default incomplete.) Once all requirements are satisfied, the final grades will be submitted to the Registrar. For ENGL 650 and 655, if the thesis student cannot fulfill requirements outlined in the MFA Thesis Semester Timeline, the MFA Director and Faculty will determine whether the student must repeat one or both courses, or be granted an extended incomplete, filing an Incomplete Course Grade Form, with the requirement that the Thesis and Fifth Residency coursework be completed six months from the end of the course.

Note on Financial Aid for Students on Academic Probation

To be eligible for the full \$5000 loan available each semester to graduate students, the student must be enrolled in 12 credit hours (the standard amount of credit hours for each residency-semester period). Thus, students on academic probation are advised to discuss with the Financial Aid Office and MFA Director the options of skipping residency, or auditing and paying only \$800 plus room and board for the residency preceding the repeated semester; under the terms of either of these options, the student will be officially enrolled in only 8 credit hours for the repeated semester period so will be eligible for a lower loan amount. Another option is to fully enroll in the additional residency; this option charges the student full residency tuition and is more costly in the long run, but it does make the student eligible for the full loan allowance.

Transcripts

Graduates of West Virginia Wesleyan's low-residency MFA Program receive a two-part transcript: a Registrar's Transcript and a Narrative Transcript. The latter is partially prepared by the student, finalized during graduation review and approved and submitted by the MFA Director; the student's portion of the Transcript officially outlines the curricular components unique to the WVWC MFA Program and incorporates student self-reflection. Since the WVWC MFA Program does not make use of letter grades, faculty evaluations excerpted in the Director's Review, which completes the Transcript, show evidence that the student has met the requirements for the award of the Master of Fine Arts degree, one of those requirements being graduate work that would merit a grade of B or above. The Narrative Transcript is maintained on file with the WVWC Registrar and is attached whenever a Transcript is requested by the graduate. Graduates can request transcripts online from the program website under "Resources for Alumni."

CRITICAL ESSAY

Description

During the third semester the student will submit a longer critical work, to be planned with the faculty advisor during the residency, and approved by the Program Director. As an extension of the critical inquiry the student has practiced in the writing of annotations, this longer work will foreground the student's own writerly preoccupations and will thus address writers and craft/theoretical issues relevant to the student's work. We use the term "critical," although strictly speaking, these essays are not the scholarly texts usually indicated by the term. Instead, they are writerly examinations and meditations on works of literature, perhaps canonical works, but more often contemporary ones, and they afford the space to explore some aspect of another writer's, or group of writers', work with close scrutiny. The goal of the Critical Essay is to examine a work from the inside, reading like a writer, not solely as a reader. This emphasis results in a much more personalized essay that develops a coherent argument wherein the student writer's voice and interests come to the forefront. While the tone and approach of the essay will be less formal and more personal than the typical scholarly essay, it should be no less rigorous in thought.

The student's specific plan for completing the Essay will be determined in conversation with his/her advisor; however, students will need to tackle the Essay early in the semester and not put it off.

The Critical Essay can, but does not have to, serve as a basis for the seminar to be taught to MFA peers at the Fifth Residency following the student's final semester (see "Fifth Residency" section for more details).

The third semester's bibliography should be directly connected to the Critical Essay, including some works of craft analysis or literary review (such as articles in the *AWP Writer's Chronicle*) that can provide models for the kind of writing the essay requires. During this semester, students are required to maintain the level of creative output consistent with Semesters 1 and 2 (final

portfolio minimums of 30 pp prose, 15 pp poetry). However, fewer annotations are required as students dedicate their analytical faculties to the Critical Essay. **A minimum of four annotations** should be submitted during the semester in addition to the Critical Essay draft/s; students are encouraged to use these annotations for the generation of rough draft material for the Essay.

There are many topics and approaches that are possible for the Essay. Possibilities include, but are not limited to: a discussion of some aspect of craft, an exploration of a particular literary form or genre, a survey of trends in a specific literary period, an analysis of a particular author's, or group of authors', work. **The Essay will need to make an argument of some sort and not simply be a survey.** Here are some sample Essay titles:

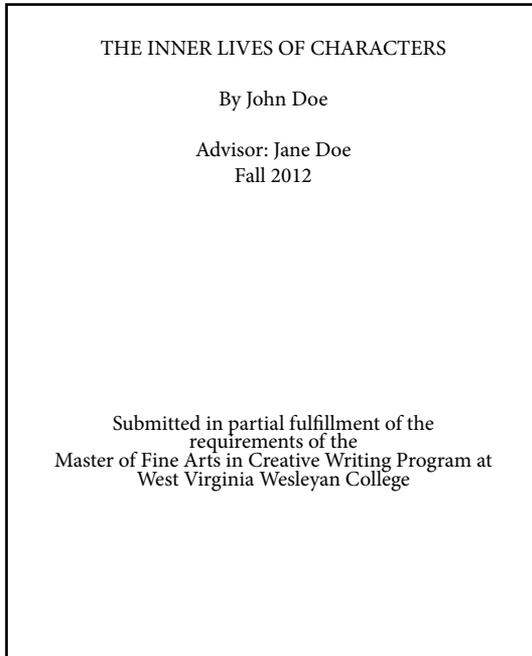
- Strategies for Subverting Sentimentality in the Poetry of Mothering
- The Inner Lives of Characters
- Crafting Credible Endings: A Study of Raymond Carver
- C.D. Wright and American Prison Poetry
- The Poetry of Trauma
- Tracing Literary Lineage: A Comparison of Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* and Willa Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop*
- The Thin Line Between Memoir and Autobiographical Fiction in the Work of Bobbie Ann Mason

Guidelines

The final version of the Critical Essay should:

- be submitted electronically as an emailed PDF attachment to both the advisor and director by the End of Semester Portfolio Due Date (you may submit it earlier).
- have undergone at least one full revision incorporating the advisor's feedback on the submitted draft/s.
- run between 20 and 25 double-spaced pages (not counting title page or standard bibliography page/s).
- use a standard 12-point font with 1-inch margins.

- include page numbers in the upper right-hand corner (except on title page).
- adhere to the Modern Language Association (MLA) Handbook's current guidelines for citations (guidelines available online at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>).
- include a standard bibliography that also adheres to the most current MLA guidelines; the bibliography will include both primary sources and sources of literary criticism and/or craft. (*This bibliography is not a substitute for the complete annotated bibliography to be included in your third-semester final portfolio.*)
- begin with a **title page** that includes the following: Critical Essay title, student name, advisor name, semester date (i.e., Spring 2012) and the following statement: *Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing Program at West Virginia Wesleyan College.* (See sample below; please note that the title page should not be



THESIS

Description

The capstone of the MFA degree is the Creative Thesis, a manuscript of publishable quality, composed of poetry, fiction, or creative nonfiction generated or substantially revised during the student's tenure in the program. The fourth semester's work will focus on writing and revising this manuscript, building on the student's foundation of material from his/her first three semesters. **Poetry manuscripts must fall between 48 and 60 pages, and fiction and nonfiction manuscripts must fall between 100 and 125 pages.** The Thesis must be substantial enough to represent the student's progress, to demonstrate his/her ability to structure a larger work, and to indicate mastery of a literary genre; the minimums of 48 pages of poetry and 100 pages of prose ensure that substantiality. The maximums of 60 pages of poetry and 125 pages of prose enforce the rigor of selectivity and polish. Quality, of course, matters more than quantity, and the advisor and director are able to modestly adjust these page-count parameters if the student makes a reasonable appeal based on the structure and intent of the work.

During the Thesis process, the program maintains that faculty can better help students prepare work of publishable quality by stressing selectivity when compiling the Thesis, instead of steering students toward industry-standard book form and length for the Thesis manuscript. For example, an outstanding partial-novel submission, including a synopsis of projected subsequent chapters, rather than a full-novel submission with a completed-arc but merely serviceable prose, will provide graduating students with a stronger foundation for an eventual book manuscript. For most students writing novels and memoirs, submitting a Thesis that has a completed arc and that is also multilayered and polished according to program standards is not achievable; in fact, training one's focus on the finished product at this stage can stymie one's growth. Most students compose and revise a large portion of the Thesis manuscript during their second year in the program, usually spending the first two semesters deepening and broadening their skills and experimenting in the field of the genre—this spadework is vital to producing a high-quality Thesis and eventual book manuscript.

In composition stage, prose students may want to draft the full arc of a narrative, depending on their project plans composed in collaboration with their advisors, but they will need to polish 100-125

pages for the Thesis submission to the committee of readers. **In cases of memoirs and novels that project a page count higher than 125 pages for completion of their narrative arc, the Thesis student will be asked to submit a 2-4-page summary of subsequent projected chapters.** The summary will help direct the Thesis Committee in their feedback and will also help guide the Thesis Interview conversation about next steps for the manuscript after graduation.

The Thesis Semester involves the student in a culminating, mature apprenticeship that is tailored to his/her creative process. Thus, during this semester, the student and advisor decide together whether or not submitted annotations will be part of the semester's work, and also whether or not to subscribe to the writing-packet structure of the first three semesters. A regular rhythm of contact with letters of exchange is essential, but the student and advisor are free to establish whatever rhythm best serves the successful completion of the Thesis manuscript. **Unless otherwise arranged with advisors, prose students are generally asked to limit Thesis packet submissions to 50 pages in order to allow the advisor ample time for thorough response.**

In addition to the Thesis manuscript, the fourth and final semester requires a **Comprehensive Annotated Bibliography** of all books read and consulted during the student's four semesters of work, whether for **semester projects** or for **residency participation**. Each work should be briefly described (in 50-100 words) and citations should follow MLA Handbook guidelines (available online). The Comprehensive Annotated Bibliography is submitted as part of the First and Final Deposits and should also include entries of books read during the Thesis semester (a separate annotated bibliography for the Thesis Semester is not required).

THESIS COMMITTEE: The full Thesis Committee is made up of four readers: the advisor (who is requested by student in conversation with faculty), the secondary reader (who is a member of the core or visiting faculty and who is assigned by the director), the director, and an outside reader (who is also assigned by the director, is an impartial reader, is an experienced published writer, and who will be familiar with the program standards and expectations, though s/he will not have the power to assign a Pass/Fail grade to the Thesis; the outside reader is not typically on MFA faculty, though may be a faculty member

who has not worked directly with the student; the outside reader remains anonymous to the student until the student receives collated committee feedback on the manuscript).

THESIS SEMESTER TIMELINE: Midway through the fourth semester (at the end of the 8th week), a draft of approximately **half of the projected manuscript (roughly 50-60 pages of prose, 24-30 pages of poetry)** should be completed and submitted electronically to the advisor and director, who are two of the four members on the Thesis Committee. After reviewing half of the manuscript, the advisor will consult with the director concerning the merits of the work in progress and may offer suggestions and editorial comments on the manuscript.

At the end of the 8th week, the Thesis student also submits a **Graduate Seminar Proposal** that s/he develops with the Thesis advisor; the seminar will be taught to fellow MFA students at the Fifth Residency. This proposal offers a brief description of the class format and goals, along with any assigned advance reading. The description can still undergo changes later in the semester but this 8th-week submission deadline ensures that the student is developing the graduate seminar over an adequate span of time, and, since graduate seminars are an important part of the residency curriculum, this early submission of the seminar description aids overall residency curricular planning. The graduating-student seminar topic may evolve out of the subject matter of the student's Critical Essay, or may undertake new concerns and interests, but in all cases should be pertinent to the student's own creative work and the issues it raises. At this final residency, Thesis students will also participate in a Thesis Interview and deliver a reading from their manuscripts (see "Fifth Residency" section for details on the seminar and interview).

At the end of the fourth semester, on the Portfolio Due Date specified on the academic calendar, the **First Deposit** of the completed, carefully-edited manuscript (see guidelines below) should be submitted to all readers on the Thesis Committee. (The director is responsible for forwarding the manuscript to the anonymous outside reader.) The student will also submit a Final Self-Evaluation & Narrative Transcript (available for download on the website) to begin the transcript-compilation process.

The Thesis Committee will have one month to review the First Deposit of the manuscript, and will then submit written evaluations of the Thesis to the director who will collate these evaluations for the student's permanent file. The director will share the collated evaluations with the student, Thesis Advisor, and Secondary Reader no later than three weeks before the Fifth Residency. The student will then prepare for the Thesis Interview to be held during the Fifth Residency (see "Thesis Interview" section for details), revise the manuscript according to the committee's feedback and interview conversation, and submit the **Final Deposit** to the advisor and director 3-4 weeks after the Fifth Residency.

The writing faculty and the Program Director will determine if the Thesis manuscript is of publishable quality, and if so, and if all other requirements are met, the MFA degree will be awarded. The Thesis student's final Pass/Fail grade for the Thesis project will remain an "I" (Incomplete) until completion of the Fifth Residency and submission of the Final Deposit. Pending the committee's recommendation, Thesis students finishing in Spring may participate in Wesleyan's May Commencement, but the MFA degree will not be finalized until August of that year, on the first degree-conferring date to follow the students' submission of Final Deposit. Thesis students finishing in Fall may participate in the May Commencement that follows their Thesis completion and will have their MFA degree conferred that May.

If the writing faculty determines that a student is not prepared for the Thesis Semester—as evidenced by lack of quality or quantity in creative and/or critical work—they may require the student to enroll in an additional semester before advancing to the Thesis Semester. Additionally, if the Thesis is not accepted by the committee, the student may be required to enroll in a fifth semester, and may then re-submit the revised Thesis. However, every effort of the faculty and director will be made to assure that any problems will be addressed before the Thesis arrives at that stage.

Guidelines

Note that the single-sheet **Residency & Semester Submission Checklist** is available as a PDF on the MFA website: www.wvwc.edu/MFA>**Resources**>**Current Students**>**Program Forms**. This checklist will be helpful as you gather and submit your Thesis materials. You will also want to consult the current academic calendar (also in Current Student Resources on the website) for specific dates. Additionally, the director will provide you with a comprehensive Thesis Semester Timeline that will fill in further details for you and will let you know when you can expect feedback after you hit benchmark deadlines.

FIRST DEPOSIT OF THE THESIS MANUSCRIPT:

- should be submitted electronically as an emailed single PDF or Word attachment to the Thesis Committee (advisor, secondary reader, and director who will also forward the manuscript to the outside reader) by the End of Semester Portfolio Due Date.
- should have standard 1-inch margins (with flexibility for nontraditional formatting called for by the material).
- should include page numbers in the upper right-hand corner (after preliminary pages).
- should follow current MLA Handbook guidelines in all technical matters (guidelines online).
- should be carefully edited.
- should include (in this order):
 - **Cover Page** (with no page number): including title, name, month and year of expected degree conferral date (August for spring students, May for fall students), signature line for director, and the following statement: *Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing Program at West Virginia Wesleyan College* (see Cover Page sample below); the Cover Page will be signed by the director upon receipt of the student's Final Deposit of the Thesis Manuscript and Thesis Advisor's approval of Final Deposit; the signatory Cover Page will be included with the hard copy of the Thesis to be filed in the library archives.

- **Title Page** (with no page number): including title, name, month and year of expected degree conferral date (August for spring students, May for fall students), and an Abstract of the Volume (i.e., a 50-150 word description of the contents of the Thesis manuscript, to be used for library cataloging purposes and to be included on the Narrative Transcript) (see Title Page sample below).
- **Dedication** (optional) (with no page number).
- **Acknowledgements** (optional) (with no page number).
- **Table of Contents** (with no page number) (see Table of Contents sample below).
- **Original creative work** completed or substantially revised while in the program (begin pagination with first page of original work). Page parameters for fiction and nonfiction: 100-125 pages double-spaced; page parameters for poetry: 48-60 pages single-spaced, except where stylistic concerns require different spacing.
- **2-4-page summary of subsequent projected chapters**, only for memoirs and novels that project a page count higher than 125 pages for completion of their narrative arc.
- **Comprehensive Annotated Bibliography**: single-spaced, ordered alphabetically and prepared in MLA Style, with a 50-100 word description for each text; including all books read and consulted during the student's tenure in the program, whether for the semester project or residency participation; this bibliography must be included in the pagination and should be listed in the Table of Contents.

Sample Cover Page:

THE DEED TO ARCHER HOUSE
By Shirley Smith
August 2017

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing Program
at West Virginia Wesleyan College

Program Director, Name

Sample Title Page:

THE DEED TO ARCHER HOUSE
By Shirley Smith
August 2017

ABSTRACT OF THE VOLUME

This creative thesis contains five linked short stories set in Eastern Kentucky in the 1970s. The stories explore mother-daughter relationships and race relations in rural Kentucky during this time period. Of the five stories, four were conceived of and written while I was a student in the program. The fifth, although composed prior to my MFA study, has been substantially revised in recent semesters. The stories are arranged here to follow a chronological progression.

Sample Table of Contents:

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
Jennie's Version	4
Death Valley	18
The Unfair Advantage.....	38
Uncle Mortimer.....	53
Anger	83
The Deed to Archer House.....	102
Comprehensive Bibliography	122

FINAL DEPOSIT OF THE THESIS MANUSCRIPT:

- should be submitted electronically as an emailed single PDF **and** Word Document attachment to the advisor and director 3-4 weeks after the student's Fifth Residency.
- should have undergone any revisions to the First Deposit as required by the Thesis Committee before final submission.
- should be accompanied by a letter (pasted in body of submission email) summarizing revisions completed.
- should adhere to the same formatting guidelines required for First Deposit and include the same materials in the same order.
- will, upon approval, be submitted by the director to be printed and archived in the campus library (see section on archiving procedures).

Note that the degree cannot be awarded until the director has received the Final Deposit, along with semester evaluations, and the student has completed the Fifth Residency. The student's Narrative Transcript will be finalized within a month of receipt of the Final Deposit and submitted to the student for review. The transcript must be approved by both director and student and its cover page must be signed by the director before filed in the Registrar's Office.

ARCHIVING PROCEDURES FOR MFA THESES:

The director will submit all Thesis manuscripts to be printed and bound for the library archives and will include in the archive a digital compilation of the theses of each graduating cohort for the purpose of backup only (electronic copies are not for borrowers). A copy of the following set of instructions, signed by the director, will be submitted to the archivist with each set of bound MFA theses:

Instructions for Library Archives Deposit of MFA Theses

1. One (1) printed and bound copy of each MFA Thesis is to be shelved in the Archives for the purposes of preservation and may be loaned out to approved borrowers but should not be removed from the Archives room.
2. Under no circumstances is any Thesis to be scanned into an electronic format by the Library or any other third party for the purpose of circulation; a digital backup will be filed with the theses of each graduating cohort for backup purposes only and is not to be checked out by any borrower.
3. The work contained in each Thesis and all content thereof is protected by federal copyright law, and the Author (MFA Student), as copyright holder, maintains several exclusive rights, including the right to make reproductions, to distribute the Thesis, and to create derivative works. Submission of this work does NOT convey any rights to scan, copy, distribute, transmit, display, publish, sell, donate, electronically store, or reproduce the Thesis in any form including print, audio, and any and all current or future electronic or new media, except for those limitations expressly allowed by United States copyright.

FIFTH RESIDENCY

The final residency is the fifth residency for students in the standard curriculum; it is the sixth for those who add a secondary genre concentration. The process of MFA study involves a gradual shift from apprenticeship, with its natural dependence on a mentor, to increased self-confidence, self-sufficiency as writers, and relationships with peers. That shift is formalized during the Fifth Residency, which is the 10-day residency that follows a student's Thesis Semester. After completing four residencies, the student returns for this final instructional residency during which s/he gives a 20-minute reading from the completed manuscript, teaches a seminar to MFA peers on a subject of his or her choosing, participates in a Thesis Interview, and participates in morning seminars and specialized afternoon workshops. Afternoon workshops may cover topics such as book proposals, submission to magazines, and post-MFA career tracks. If the cohort is large enough, graduating students usually participate in a mixed-genre workshop with their graduating peers. Workshopping across genres can bring new, enlivening perspectives to the work, and these workshops can give graduating students some traction with new projects, or unfinished thesis portions, in the company of peers in a similar more-developed state. Graduating students are charged for only room and board and 1 credit-hour of tuition for the Fifth Residency.

The graduating student's final Pass/Fail grade for the final credits earned during Thesis project completion will remain an "I" (Incomplete) until the completion of the Fifth Residency and the receipt of the Final Deposit. Once all requirements are satisfied, the final grades will be submitted to the Registrar and the MFA degree will be finalized on the first degree-conferring date to follow the students' Final Deposit submission—for Thesis students finishing in Spring, the degree is finalized in **August**; for students finishing in Fall, the degree is finalized the following **May**.

One week after the student's Fifth Residency, s/he submits a final **Exit Survey** (form available on the MFA website) to the director to offer an overall assessment of his/her MFA experience. (The Exit Survey process may be updated as the program adopts an online evaluation system.)

Thesis Interview

During the Fifth Residency, graduates participate in an hour-long Thesis Interview, a lively culminating conversation between the graduate and his/her committee of thesis readers (MFA Director, Thesis Advisor, and Secondary Reader—Outside Reader does not typically attend). Committee members not attending the residency will be Skyped in. The interview is not a “defense,” nor an exam, nor an occasion for “performance” by either students or faculty, but a chance to provide reader response to the manuscript as a volume of polished work, rather than for “workshop” response to individual pieces in process. The interview also provides the graduating student an opportunity to discuss his/her growth as an artist in the program, the evolution of his/her aesthetic, salient influences, formal issues raised by the thesis volume, the relationships between the thesis and the Critical Essay or Graduate Seminar, and to explore future plans for development.

Each interview will have its own agenda, prompted by the thesis itself, but in every case, thorough preparation in advance of the interview is crucial. Graduates will need to carefully review collated committee feedback received approximately three weeks before the Fifth Residency. The interview typically begins with the student reflecting on his/her tenure in the program, how s/he has grown. The conversation then moves organically to address the ways in which the manuscript illustrates that growth. Further discussion of the manuscript addresses:

- stylistic characteristics
- primary thematic concerns
- how the manuscript coheres as a volume
- professional presentation (clean type, consistent margins, no grammatical errors, effective title)
- questions about/suggestions for structure and organization of individual poems, chapters, essays or stories

Committee members preparing for the interview might also consider the following:

- Does the manuscript show consistent high quality throughout?
- Would you suggest that particular poems/stories/essays/chapters be omitted?
- Having read some of these pieces previously, can you comment on how they have been revised? Have your readings of them been changed by their context?
- What suggestions do you have for expanding/revising the thesis into a full-length volume of poems, essays or stories, or a memoir/novel?
- What suggestions do you have for reading? For new work?

In short, committee members respond as they would to any first book manuscript written by someone they know: with description of its effect, constructive criticism, and praise whenever warranted. The conversation will highlight resonances between the readers' responses and places where the responses diverge, what revisions may need to happen for the Final Deposit, and what revisions might continue post-MFA study as the manuscript evolves into a book. The session should be balanced between the particular typescript in hand and the graduate's upcoming task, be it revision, expansion, or a new project, and the committee's role is that of helpful readers.

But the interview is meant to be a dialogue. During the interview, committee members might pose the following questions to the writer (*and the graduate should feel free to query his/her readers during the session as well*):

- What problems did you encounter in structuring your manuscript?
- What other writers (faculty excluded) have most influenced your own work?
- What plans do you have for the project? Will you expand it? Submit parts/all of it for publication?
- Do you have any sense of direction yet for your next project?
- How did your Critical Essay influence your creative work?
- What relationship do you see between the Graduate Seminar you've prepared and the thesis?
- What audience do you envision for the work?

Graduate Seminar

At the end of the 8th week of the Thesis student's semester, s/he submits a Graduate Seminar Proposal that s/he develops with the Thesis advisor--a brief description of the class format and goals, along with any assigned advance reading. The director approves the description and distributes it to the other students, along with the descriptions of faculty seminars, before the residency. The graduating-student seminar topic may evolve out of the subject matter of the student's Critical Essay, or may undertake new concerns and interests, but in all cases should be pertinent to the student's own creative work and the issues it raises.

Graduating-student seminars will be **one hour in length, leaving 15 minutes afterward for questions** from attending faculty and students. The student can expect the attending faculty to raise questions during the seminar that allow the student to incorporate thoughts on his/her Thesis manuscript. The Thesis advisor or secondary reader will attend and evaluate the seminar, and this evaluation will be given to the student and kept in his/her permanent file.

At the residency prior to a student's Thesis semester, MFA faculty will provide final-semester students with instruction and resources regarding the pedagogy of creative writing; students may also want to consult the "Pedagogy" section on AWP's website for topics of interest: **www.awpwriter.org**

PREPARING TO TEACH THE SEMINAR

A Quick 8-Point Guide by Dr. Eric Waggoner

This Graduate Seminar is designed (A) to show the student's deep understanding of the subject being presented, and (B) to provide evidence of the student's ability to explain and teach that subject clearly and coherently.

As you prepare to teach your Seminar, use the Faculty-led classes from the residencies as guidelines for preparation and execution of your own. What seminars have you found most useful in your experience with the MFA program, and what made those seminars so useful to you? Consider how to model your own seminars on the one(s) you have found most helpful, engaging, or useful.

The topic and focus of the Seminar will be designed by the student, in consultation with primary advisors and the Program Director. The style in which you choose to teach the seminar will be up to you as well. However, certain guidelines and standards of preparation are expected from all students, no matter how their topics or teaching styles may vary. **Students will need to go over their seminar with their advisor, in person or on the phone, before presenting at the Fifth Residency.**

This brief document should serve as a “checklist” for students who are preparing to teach their seminar course.

1. This seminar is a formal presentation. Though teaching styles and methods of transmitting information will of course vary from person to person, faculty and fellow students have a right to expect that the seminar will be “formal”—that is, prepared in advance, structured with thought and care, and reflective of the student’s attentiveness to providing the relevant information in a cogent, understandable way. That said, a student may choose to (A) write a formal lecture, which he or she will deliver in a direct reading; (B) use a combination of direct lecture and extemporaneous comments in delivering relevant material to the class; or (C) use prepared notes or an outline to deliver an extemporaneous talk. Please note that in all cases, faculty will have access to all of the student’s primary supportive material, from the full text of a formal lecture to an outline, and may opt to use that written material in evaluating the success of the seminar. **STUDENTS WILL NEED TO ELECTRONICALLY SUBMIT PRIMARY SUPPORTING MATERIALS TO THEIR ADVISOR AND SECONDARY READER 2 WEEKS BEFORE THE FIFTH RESIDENCY.**

2. This seminar should deliver focused summary and explanatory information on an element of craft, either rooted in technique, or in connection with the work of a specific writer (or writers). Likely, the topic will be drawn at least in part from the content of your Critical Essay, though of course an unrevised, unexpanded Critical Essay, by itself, would not be acceptable as a seminar lecture. The purpose of this seminar is not only to provide information, but to teach. Additionally, as in all critical inquiry you’ve engaged in for this program, the seminar should be directly linked to craft issues in your own work. In addition to the ongoing critical inquiry during the semester, graduates will also have a few weeks following the submission of the completed thesis in which to complete preparation of their seminars in detail. So, the seminar should not eclipse the importance of the semester’s focus on

the thesis manuscript; on the other hand, Thesis Advisor resources should be used, in the preparation for the seminar, as needed.

3. The seminar should provide evidence of your deep research and serious engagement with this topic. Such evidence of research and engagement might be provided by the following sorts of ancillary material:

- a. A bibliography of important publications and examples, with some explanatory commentary;
- b. Primary examples of the craft element, perhaps accompanied by your self-generated explanatory notes or marginal directive comments (the body of the seminar should consist of the presentation of illustrative examples; an allegiance to clarity should be paramount—*one or two well chosen examples will function far more effectively than a flurry of individual texts which must be hurried through*; as with the annotations and the Critical Essay, students are reminded of the importance of dealing directly with individual texts);
- c. Informational handouts presenting key terms and definitions of concepts covered in the seminar;
- d. Short writing assignments designed to give the class some practice in generating their own examples of the craft element. (However, bear in mind that the seminar is not a workshop. If you wish to provide short writing exercises during your seminar for whatever pedagogical purpose, these should be very brief.)

4. This seminar should provide evidence of your facility and skill at managing a classroom. A successful seminar will provide information in a cogent and efficient format, allow for some class interaction and discussion, and allow students to process and articulate their understanding of the material being presented (insofar as the time frame makes this possible). This means that everything that happens in that time and space is yours to manage and control. Successful seminar teachers will not simply fill the allotted time; they will use that time efficiently and thoughtfully, in order to allow for the optimal educational experience for everyone.

5. This seminar should have some built-in time set aside for student feedback, Q&A, and interactive discussion. Students will be assigned 75 minutes in which to teach the seminar—60 minutes for the presentation and 15 minutes for follow-up question and answer. The seminar is instructive, but should also allow for students to ask questions during the 60-minute presentation, when needed, in order to ensure that the relevant information is being

presented successfully, and that students are processing the material accurately. Again, this element will be shaped to a significant degree by the instructor's teaching style. However the instructor frames this sort of interactivity—time for questions, breaks in lecture to discuss key points, etc.—that interactivity should be built into the structure of the seminar proper. In addition to questions from peers, the student can expect the attending faculty to raise questions that ask the student to incorporate thoughts on his/her Thesis manuscript. Faculty will inquire about connections between the seminar material and the student's imaginative work, the evolution and nature of the student's aesthetic, salient influences, etc.

6. As stated above, any instructor-generated ancillary material should be provided to your advisor and secondary reader 2 WEEKS BEFORE YOUR FIFTH RESIDENCY, and may be assessed by faculty as part of the formal evaluation of the seminar. Generally speaking, strong original content, as contained in these documents, will be taken as evidence of thoughtful preparation, and will be weighed as such in the faculty's evaluation.

7. The student instructor is responsible for photocopying any ancillary material to be distributed during the seminar. Handouts should be prepared in advance and brought with you to the residency; because sessions will be held concurrently, 20 is a safe estimate of number of copies needed. Remember your own experience with residency exhaustion—while you want to provide sufficient texts for illustration, students who are overwhelmed by the amount of material provided are learning less than they might.

8. Any advance reading assignments must be noted on the Graduate Seminar Proposal form submitted at the 8th-week mark of the semester. Any requests for accommodating supportive audio/visual material must be likewise requested from the Program Director on this form.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- 1. Four semesters of supervised work, earning minimum of 49 credit hours. [Five semesters of supervised work for graduation with Secondary Genre Concentration, earning a minimum of 61 credit hours.]*
- 2. Five residencies. [Six residencies for graduation with Secondary Genre Concentration.] The Fifth [or Final] Residency is devoted to participating in a Thesis Interview, teaching a seminar and presenting a graduate reading.*
- 3. Critical Essay (20-25 pages).*
- 4. Creative Thesis (100-125 pages for fiction and nonfiction; 48-60 pages for poetry).*
- 5. Comprehensive Annotated Bibliography.*
- 6. Submission of the Application for Degree form one semester before intended graduation.*
- 7. Payment of the \$150 graduation fee.*
- 8. Narrative Transcript prepared collaboratively with Advisor and Director.*

EMAIL POLICY & INSTRUCTIONS

Your West Virginia Wesleyan Email Account

It is very important that you check your Wesleyan email regularly since pertinent information from the College is shared via this tool, along with your AWP membership info and materials from your advisor and the director. The program cannot be responsible for information that you miss due to neglecting your email account. If you prefer to use an account other than the one the College issues, it is possible to create a permanent forward on your Wesleyan email account so that all WVWC email is routed to the account you check regularly. Please note that the College will **always** use your Wesleyan account, so to receive Wesleyan email at an email address that you prefer, you must place a permanent forward on the Wesleyan account. **To place a permanent forward on your Wesleyan account:**

1. Log into your Wesleyan email account.
2. Click the Gear icon in the upper right corner and select Mail Settings from the menu.
3. Click the Forwarding POP/IMAP tab. Under Forwarding, click the Add a forwarding address button. Enter the desired address and click OK. This causes a confirmation email to be sent to the account that you specified. You must open that email and click the confirmation link.
4. Once you have done that, go back into the Mail Settings, then Forwarding POP/IMAP section of the WVWC Gmail account.
5. Under Forwarding, elect to Forward a copy of incoming mail to (the Address You Specified) and choose the option desired for the WVWC copy. If you don't want to use the WVWC account, you should opt to delete it.
6. Finally, click the Save Changes button at the bottom of the page.

If you have trouble setting a permanent forward on your Wesleyan account, please contact the Help Desk at 304.473.8877.

LIBRARY ACCESS

For online access to library journals, or other materials, off-campus:

Username: Last name

Password: P# on back of student ID (example: P64104)

TUITION, FEES & FINANCIAL AID

TUITION & FEES (as of 2017-18)

Tuition: \$425 per credit hour

Residency Fees:

BOARD (includes most meals during residency) \$250

ROOM (students stay in a residence hall with suite bathrooms

in summer, and usually share same-gender communal baths in

the residence halls available in winter) \$250 for single; \$200 for

double (when available)

Graduation Fee: \$150

Audit Fee per Course: \$400

Enrollment Deposit (non-refundable, but applied to first semester's tuition and/or fees):

DOMESTIC \$200

INTERNATIONAL \$500

Graduate tuition is billed per credit hour. The MFA program requires 12 credit hours per residency and semester: \$5100. There are four full semesters and residencies, plus a fifth residency for thesis-presentation; students pay tuition for only one credit-hour and room and board for this fifth residency.

TOTAL PROGRAM COSTS: \$23,475*

[\$425 x 49 credit hours; \$500 x 5 residencies with standard room/board if staying on campus, \$150 graduation fee]

**Note that books and travel to residencies are not included in this breakdown, nor are cross-genre study or Ireland Residency.*

Students are billed approximately 1 month before a residency; a student account balance must be paid—or a payment plan initiated by the student—before the residency in order for a student to participate in the residency and semester. If on a payment plan, a student must schedule payments so that all outstanding balances are paid by November 15 in fall and April 15 in spring so there will be no holds for pre-registration for the subsequent term. **Tuition and fees are subject to changes at any time; any changes will promptly appear on the website, and students will be informed.**

FINANCIAL AID

To be eligible for financial aid, students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application and be fully admitted as a matriculated student in the MFA program. Continuing students desiring aid will need to complete the FAFSA each spring following their income tax filing. The FAFSA application is available online: <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>. You are required to secure a Personal Identification Number (PIN): <https://pin.ed.gov/PIN-WebApp/pinindex.jsp>. WVWC's School Code is 003830-00.

Some financial aid opportunities are available for graduate students including interest-free loan deferrals, Federal Student Loan programs, and other loan opportunities. Additionally, many employers provide full or partial tuition reimbursement to their employees who participate in job-relevant graduate study. (If you are a public school teacher, check with your county superintendent about funding for continuing education.)

For financial aid purposes, students are considered full-time when enrolled in six or more graduate credit hours per semester or session. Fourth Semester—or Thesis Semester—students should be aware that they will be enrolled in the 1-hour course (ENGL 655) when they return for their Fifth Residency, paying for 1 credit-hour plus room and board (if staying on campus). One hour of credit does not, however, qualify Fifth Residency students for financial aid for this final residency session, so these students will have two options for paying for the Fifth Residency session:

- plan to pay for the Fifth Residency session out of pocket (approximate cost: \$1075 [\$425 for tuition for one credit hour, \$500 estimate for room and board, plus the \$150 graduation fee]).

- refuse approximately \$1075 of refund at the start of the fourth semester, leaving enough in one’s student account to cover the charges to be incurred during the Fifth Residency.

For further information, contact the WVWC Financial Aid Office at 304-473-8080.

We also maintain an internal scholarship fund in honor of our late founder, Irene McKinney, and we award partial scholarships when funds are sufficient for disbursal.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF MFA FACULTY

Basic Overview of the MFA Faculty Role:

Each faculty member participates actively in the full residency period—teaching a seminar, co-facilitating genre workshops, giving a reading, participating in Thesis Interviews and evaluating a graduate’s seminar (as appropriate), meeting individually with students to plan semester projects, and remaining accessible to the MFA community. During the semester that immediately follows the residency, s/he is contracted to advise 1-4 semester projects, possibly serve as a secondary reader for a thesis manuscript, and evaluate each advisee’s progress twice during the term.

Expectations during the residency period:

WV Wesleyan’s program seeks to create and sustain a culture of participation and stimulation at our ten-day residencies. At the residency, guest faculty are housed together and are provided meals in the dining hall to encourage informal connections with students. Modest breakfast offerings are usually provided in guest housing, and spontaneous dining at local eateries is of course acceptable but not paid for by the program. (Core faculty stay in their homes during residency; those who live locally are provided only lunch in the dining hall; those who commute longer distances are provided lunch and dinner.) Each core and guest faculty member is expected to participate actively in the residency period, teaching a morning seminar, facilitating afternoon genre workshops, meeting individually with advisees, and remaining accessible to other students and faculty for informal exchange.

Faculty are asked to submit their craft seminar descriptions and any pre-assigned readings for the seminar (books of reasonable length, or shorter assignments in PDF form) to the director three months before the residency (in April for summer residency, in October for winter residency). One month prior to residency, faculty receive the workshop samples for their genre workshops: 5000-6000 words of prose or up to 6 poems per student. Workshops average 5-8 students. Two or three faculty members split each genre’s workshop days during residency and are expected to consult one another as they prepare for the workshop sessions, divvying up workshop pieces for which each will be responsible for leading discussion. Regardless of which faculty member spearheads workshop discussion on a particular work, faculty are expected to respond in writing to all students in their workshop so that students have the benefit of at least two faculty perspectives on their writing.

Prior to residency, faculty serving as semester advisors are expected to review portfolio materials for each advisee—core faculty can locate portfolios and evaluations on the campus network (MARS); guest faculty will receive these background materials electronically from the director. No exchanges or consultations with the advisee are required before residency; advising pairings are usually announced first night of the residency. Having familiarized themselves with the student's writing samples and prior evaluations, faculty arrive at the residency prepared to meet with advisees for at least two individual conferences, and to make suggestions for each student's project focus, reading list, writing goals, Critical Essay topic and thesis preparation, as appropriate—the student's formalized Semester Project Proposal should reflect these conversations. Project planning is a collaborative process for advisor and advisee. Together, the student and faculty advisor also set a specific schedule for the semester's packet deadlines; if an advisor is working with more than one student, it can be helpful to stagger advisees' packet deadlines.

All faculty are expected to attend the residency's opening and closing faculty meetings, the evening readings, and other faculty members' seminars when possible (though not other faculty members' afternoon workshop sessions). Depending on the nature of one's contract, other faculty responsibilities during the residency may include guiding the Genre Fundamentals discussion during first-day orientation, sitting on the closing panel, guiding one of the critical sessions (on annotations, Critical Essay, or teaching the graduate seminar), giving a reading, participating in Thesis Interviews (in person or via Skype, if on a thesis committee), and evaluating a graduate's seminar (if serving as thesis advisor or secondary reader).

Expectations during the 17-week semester:

During the semester, a faculty advisor is contracted to supervise 1-4 semester projects; each project involves five packet-exchanges, via mail or email, approximately every three weeks, with variation expected for the thesis semester (see the section below on advising theses). Each student packet contains a letter on progress, new and revised creative work (**up to a maximum of 35 double-spaced pages** unless exceptions are agreed upon by advisor and student), and an average of three annotations or a draft of the Critical Essay (annotations are optional for thesis students). The student also submits a final portfolio at the semester's end. The portfolio serves as a basis for the advisor's final evaluation of the student; additional commentary on the portfolio contents is not expected. No further exchanges or consultations are required

fter the final evaluation is shared with the advisee at the end of the semester (with the exception of Final Deposit review by thesis advisors, as noted below).

Supervision of projects includes frequent and thorough exchange through correspondence and requires prompt, attentive response to submitted material; advisors are expected to respond to packets **within one week** (sometimes longer, as agreed upon, for thesis students with packets of higher page count). Ideally, this one-week turnaround time is counted from advisor's receipt of packet submission to student's receipt of feedback. The manner of packet submission—via the post or email—must be agreed upon by student and advisor, but electronic submission and response are recommended. Advisors who prefer to comment on manuscripts by hand instead of with inserted comments in MS Word might consider scanning marked-up pages to a PDF and emailing them as an attachment. So that the student does not feel adrift during the semester, advisors are encouraged to be reasonably available by phone, email, and/or Skype in between packets, and should discuss, at the residency, the expectations for and means of communication that will best serve both advisor and student throughout the semester. Setting reasonable limits for between-packet communication is acceptable.

The nature and length of feedback offered by each advisor does vary, but here are some general standards upheld by Wesleyan's program, based on AWP recommendations:

A typical response packet from the advisor should include:

1) a letter that:

- dialogs with the student about his/her reading, work habits, questions of form and aesthetics, etc.
- offers a holistic critique of the student's creative work and suggestions for new and revised work
- comments on the student's critical analysis of reading assignments (annotations or sections/drafts of the Critical Essay) along with suggestions for annotation topics when needed (requiring revisions of subpar annotations is acceptable)

- offers suggestions for related reading, especially books that provide models of craft pertinent to the student's particular ambitions and style of writing (these can be “next up” suggestions pulled from the existing reading list on the student's Semester Project Proposal, suggestions for substitutions in the reading list, or they can be reasonable suggestions beyond that list)

2) a return of the student's manuscripts with marginalia and line-specific suggestions, either in hard copy or digital copy; advisors who prefer to comment on manuscripts by hand instead of with inserted comments in MS Word might consider scanning marked-up pages to a PDF and emailing them as an attachment (return of the manuscripts and detailed commentary are not expected for the final portfolio)

Twice during the term, advisors submit written evaluations of each advisee's project and a log of the correspondence to the director. At midterm, the report is informal: it does not become part of the student's record but is used by the director as an early-warning system if the student seems to be in danger of not completing the semester or if there are difficulties in the student-advisor relationship. At the semester's end, a faculty member's detailed narrative assessment of the student's progress and written products forms the basis of award of credit and recommendations for further study. (Final evaluation for thesis students differs; see below.) The final evaluation enters the student's record, along with materials supplied by the student, and is made available to subsequent advisors; the advisor also sends a copy of this report to the student, and a portion of it is quoted in the student's transcript. Deadlines for informal midterm reports and formal end-of-semester evaluations are included on the academic calendar and must be submitted on time.

Expectations of members of a thesis committee:

Faculty can serve as either Thesis Advisor or Secondary Reader for a student in his/her thesis semester. Faculty members in either committee role receive additional compensation. The director and an Outside Reader, external to the program, also make up the four-person thesis committee.

The **Thesis Advisor** reads half of the thesis at the eighth week of the semester and gives appropriate written and/or oral feedback and consults with the director on the student's progress. The advisor also arranges for other exchanges of manuscript pages and, if preferred by student and advisor, annotations with his/her advisee as necessary during the semester.

The advisor looks at drafts of the student's Graduate Seminar description, reviews the final description submitted at the eighth week, and helps the student prepare to teach the seminar, reviewing the student's primary supportive materials (outline, handouts, etc) submitted prior to the final residency. The advisor reads the student's First Deposit of Thesis submitted at the End of Semester Portfolio Due Date (early November in fall, early May in spring) and has one month to submit an Evaluation Narrative to the director. The advisor receives collated thesis feedback from the full committee of readers three weeks before the student's Fifth Residency and prepares for and conducts, along with the secondary reader and the director, the student's Thesis Interview during the student's Fifth Residency (advisors not attending the residency will be Skyped in). At this residency, the advisor also meets with the student to review preparations for the Graduate Seminar (or discusses preparations over the phone), and, if in attendance, observes and evaluates the Graduate Seminar taught, submitting the evaluation to the director promptly after the Fifth Residency (when an advisor cannot attend the Graduate Seminar, the secondary reader will complete the evaluation). Finally, the advisor reviews the Final Deposit of Thesis four weeks after the Fifth Residency (usually early August or early February) and confirms degree conferral with the director.

The **Secondary Reader** reads the student's First Deposit of Thesis submitted at the End of Semester Portfolio Due Date (early November in fall, early May in spring) and has one month to submit an Evaluation Narrative to the director. The secondary reader receives collated thesis feedback three weeks before the student's Fifth Residency and prepares for and conducts, along with the advisor and the director, the student's Thesis Interview during the student's Fifth Residency (secondary readers not attending the residency will be Skyped in). At this residency, if the thesis advisor cannot be in attendance, the secondary reader observes and evaluates the Graduate Seminar taught and submits the evaluation to the director promptly after the Fifth Residency.

SAMPLE RESIDENCY SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS

These interdisciplinary seminars fulfill Craft & Theory Courses: ENGL 520, 530, 540.

POETRY AND THE BODY. Irene McKinney. 2-day Seminar. Irene explored the role of the body in contemporary poetry by examining the work of Sylvia Plath, Sharon Olds, Galway Kinnell, Gerald Stern, and 3 or 4 younger poets. Her key questions: Can the body stand in for matters of the spirit, or not? Have we transferred what were once religious or spiritual concerns off onto the physical body? When is this successful, and when not?

THE LONG POEM IN ENGLISH. Eric Waggoner. 2-day Seminar. Long poems test the reader's endurance. They also test the writer – Can I sustain this effect over time and space? Can I shape the entire piece into a unified arc? How can I tell when a project is beginning to demand a longer form? How do I begin to build a long-form poem from the ground up? Out of what individual pieces can I create this extended performance? When should I modulate the tone or the rhythm of the poem? And – importantly – how much is too much? This class provides a setting in which writers can ask these questions of themselves and fellow writers during the composition process, and in which the writer can also spend time with multi-part and book-length poems by other poets, mostly contemporary. From William Carlos Williams and Marianne Moore to Charles Olsen and Jorie Graham. Coursework and assignments will divide fairly evenly between the critical and the creative.

LAND LIGHT, SEA LIGHT, HUMAN DWELLINGS. Devon McNamara. 2-day Seminar. What did you grow up looking at and where? Did you live at sea level? In the mountains? Small Midwestern town? The indoor outdoors of a great city? How does exploring where your imagery comes from unlock the visual power of concentrated memory to reveal where your piece of writing is going, to charge its rhythms, and intensify its shape in the mind's eye and heart? Together we'll study and discuss the role of image in poetry, focusing on the ways its energies can derive from landscape, waterscape, cities, roads and towns, where remembrance, longing, insight, and our infinite feelings and intelligences reside. Handouts of poems by Czeslaw Milosz, Gerald Stern, Eavan Boland, Seamus Heaney, Philip Levine, and others will be supplied during the sessions. Required Reading: Jane Hirschfield, *Nine Gates: Entering the Mind of Poetry* (HarperCollins, 1997).

THE HILLBILLY SPEAKS OF RIVERS. Doug Van Gundy. 1-day Seminar. The Appalachian poetry of James Wright. Much is written about Wright's portrayal of the industrial Midwest, and his affinity with marginalized figures, but very little has been mentioned regarding the Appalachian nature of his work. We will compare Wright's work with other "Appalachian" poets and explore the themes of poverty, history, place, and self-reliance in Wright's poetry.

ASPECTS OF 3rd PERSON POINT OF VIEW. Richard Schmitt. 2-day Lecture and Workshop. This class will examine two different aspects of 3rd person point-of-view. First, we will examine how time elements – the handling of how time passes – affect the point-of-view in "Lunch in Winter" by William Trevor and "Hey Sailor, What Ship?" by Tillie Olsen. We will also look at the endings of "Revelation" by Flannery O'Connor and "Gusev" by Chekhov to see how these endings made necessary certain point-of-view choices.

FROM THE BACK PEW TO THE PARTRIDGE SNOW CAVE TO THE HOG FARM TO THE ALTAR: Some Notes on Spiritual Autobiography. Jessie van Eerden. 2-day Seminar. Through lecture, discussion, and writing exercises, this seminar will explore the pitfalls and gifts of spiritual writing for writers with or without a religious creed. How do we shape essays about the unwritable experiences of the spirit? How do we avoid a tone that is too self-serious, too homiletic, or too derisive, indulgent in caricature? Can we interrogate our spiritual heritage and translate it into an honest work that “generates its own power” in its felt particulars, as Annie Dillard describes in *Living By Fiction*, and not a sentimental, dishonest work that “tries to rob power from the cataracts of the given?” We’ll consider these questions and a few more. Handouts of work by David Lee, David James Duncan, Kathleen Norris, and Mary Rose O’Reiley will be supplied and discussed during the session. Required reading to be completed in advance of the session: Annie Dillard, *Holy The Firm* (Harper Perennial, 1988).

DEVELOPING A WRITTEN VOICE. Richard Schmitt. The class will focus on stylistic choices rooted in traditional rhetoric and the effects of those choices. We will seek to define and broaden some of the many interpretations of this thing writers call Voice. Ultimately, the class will be about, as always, self-definition and taking responsibility for one’s written words.

ALLUSION, DELUSION, ILLUSTRATION, TONGUE IN CHEEK AND WORKING CHOICES – STYLE, PARODY, TONE, SATIRE. Mark DeFoe. A wide-ranging overview of the elements of style, with attention to tone, mood, diction, sentence structure, audience, and narrative point of view. The class will consider examples from fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Students will be asked to investigate their own stylistic choices in their writing.

HOW THE POEM MOVES. Devon McNamara. This study of the strong and delicate rhythmic patterns of classic and contemporary poems examines the ways poems reveal and maintain their lively presences. Preparatory reading: *The Brass Girl Brouhaha* by Adrian Blevins (Ausable Press, 2003), “The Journey” in *An Origin Like Water* by Eavan Boland (Norton, 1996), *Dancing in Odessa* by Ilya Kaminsky (Tupelo Press, 2004), Four poems by Gerard Manley Hopkins: “The Windhover,” “Inversnaid,” “Pied Beauty,” and “Hurrahing in Harvest”

FORMS OF THE ESSAY: THE PORTRAIT. Jessie van Eerden. An exploration of strategies and ethical/philosophical concerns for writing about others’ lives in creative nonfiction. We’ll also take a look at the nature of the writer’s self-portraiture in her essays that profile others. Required Advanced Reading: A short theory piece by art critic John Berger and sample portrait essays.

WRITING THE SESTINA: AN EXERCISE IN OBSESSION, REPETITION, AND REVELATION. Doug Van Gundy. The Sestina is old French from that repeats the same six end words (in shifting order) over six sestets and a tercet. The form is challenging to write, but when successful can be particularly rewarding and revelatory for both poet and reader. Participants in this two-day workshop will read and discuss a number of sestinas (both contemporary and classic), participate in an idea-generating exercise, and write and workshop their own poems in the form.

AGAINST SENTIMENTALITY: Pathos and Emotion in Narrative Voice. Eric Waggoner. This seminar focuses on the use and deployment of pathos, or the appeal to emotion, in narrative voice (prose and poetry). In the popular mind,

we often think of “sentimentality” as the overabundance of emotion in writing. However, we might more accurately begin a discussion of sentimentality by defining it as the attempt to reduce what would realistically be a complex set of emotional responses to a single emotional response – a common problem for young writers, though one that haunts all writing. This seminar begins with the assumption that, defined in this way, “sentimental” writing oversimplifies, and in fact obscures, the complexities of the human experience as represented in literature, by attempting to force the reader’s response and engagement along a single emotive trajectory. In doing so, sentimental writing actually prevents the representation of the complex realities of human experience, resulting in writing that is not simply bad art, but in fact anti-art. This seminar will provide opportunities to discuss “bad art” critically, with an eye towards refining the writer’s ability to recognize and guard against such oversimplifying tendencies in his/her own writing.

EKPHRASIS: WRITING ABOUT PICTURES. Doug Van Gundy. 2-day Workshop. Ekphrasis isn’t only about pictures, of course, but is a rhetorical device by which one art form is used to explore, examine or comment upon another. (Keats’ “Ode on a Grecian Urn” and Auden’s “Musée des Beaux Arts” are two famous examples.) Participants will read and discuss examples of ekphrastic poems, examine the relationship between the artwork and the corresponding, and then draft and workshop their own ekphrastic poems.

SUBDUING THE SELF IN 1st PERSON POINT-OF-VIEW STORIES. 3-day Lecture and Workshop. Richard Schmitt. Note first that 1st person *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is Mark Twain’s greatest triumph, not 3rd person Tom Sawyer. In this class we will examine ways to provide the distance necessary to transform personal experience into fiction that stands on its own. The heart of the matter is more than a switch in pronoun or gender; we want to be able to write in 1st person if that is what the story calls for, we want to make the character someone like us if that is what the story needs. We will strive to understand ways we might ultimately be able to tell stories wholly invented and very much like our own personal stories. Handouts provided.

EXPLORING FORM. 4-day Class. Mark DeFoe. A workshop class which focuses on investigating traditional forms in poetry. The class will study classic and contemporary examples of the sonnet, the villanelle, the pantoum, and the sestina. Students will then produce their own poems modeled after these forms. The primary purpose will be to learn both the strengths and limitations of formal expression and how they might use this knowledge to enhance their poetry.

NON- FICTION FEATURE WRITING. Mark DeFoe. 5-day Workshop Class. This is a course in basic feature writing for print media. It will ask students to produce publishable non-fiction features and to submit them for publication to appropriate magazines, newspapers, and journals. Research and reporting skills will be emphasized, as well as the elements of vital, intelligent, thought-provoking and responsible journalism.

A SMALL LOOK AT THE LITTLE MAGAZINE. Mark DeFoe. 4-day Lecture Course. A look at the phenomena of the small or little magazine – its history, influence, and role in American letters. Students will be asked to explore this important element of the publishing world, with attention to three selected journals and to present their findings to the class in short critical and analytical papers and reports.

DEFT, SWIFT, INDELIBLE: THE PROSE POEM. 2-day Class and Workshop. Devon McNamara. What are these weird, compact, brash, and mysterious forms? Ways to tell a story when you can't find another (longer, fuller) shape? Jokes? Meditations? From its origins in France (Blaise Pascal) to its contemporary expressions (Margaret Atwood, Carolyn Forché, David Ignatow, Julio Cortázar), the prose poem is unique, expressing every possible and impossible human instance. Our sessions will study its many varieties, sometimes termed Flash Fiction, or Short-Short, and will include writing exercises.

VOICES SINCE THE WALL CAME DOWN. Devon McNamara. 2-day Lecture and Class. What does post-samizdat poetry and prose have to tell us about rendering new, personal, national, and global realities? The lecture's perspective includes the work of twentieth century figures whose shadows are long (Milosz, Seifert, Herbert, Szymborska, Hrabal), and emerging writers, Karasova, Olahova, Drakulic, Bagryana, as well as writings from formerly marginalized writers from cultures like the Roma.

NEW VOICES IN IRISH WRITING. 2-day Lecture and Class. Devon McNamara. The pronounced change in Irish writing in the last two decades: the presence of an international sensibility, the breaking of silences, a more flexible political, even religious, resonance invites us to see contemporary Irish literature against Ireland's vexed and brilliant literary past. New Irish poets, playwrights, fiction writers – Eavan Boland, Maeve McGuckian, Mary O'Malley, Martin McDonagh, Conor McPherson, Roddy Doyle, William Trevor – are involved in an intense dialogue with the renowned writers of the past.

ULTRA-TALK. 1-DAY LECTURE. Irene McKinney. Irene explored this current direction in poetry, through the work of its most prominent poets: David Kirby, Barbara Hamby, Denise Duhamel, Albert Goldbarth, and others. Ultra-Talk is an expansive form, filling the page margin to margin, following up side issues and sudden thoughts, incorporating all kinds of "non-poetic" material, and creating a sense of space and freedom, and loose, delighted movement.

THE MUSIC OF POETRY. Mark Defoe. 1-day Lecture. A review of those poetic techniques that give poetry its symbiotic connection with music – rhyme, meter, beat, rhythm and all the sonic devices available to a poet in writing a poem.

Nothing quite emerges, but it pushes up
because our deepest urges need
to come out in season. If the bee that blundered
in here had kept on growing inside his little hexagon
he would have squeezed himself to death just
by continuing. Like that, the rooms I find myself inside
are odd-shaped and functional, for awhile.

--Irene McKinney, from "Before Spring"

IRENE MCKINNEY POSTGRADUATE TEACHING FELLOWSHIP

This fellowship honors the founding director of WV Wesleyan's MFA Program by offering a graduate of the program the opportunity to gain teaching experience in close mentorship with practiced faculty.

GUIDELINES:

The Irene McKinney Postgraduate Teaching Fellowship is available to all graduates of the West Virginia Wesleyan College MFA Program for up to 3 years after graduation. The fellow will teach six undergraduate courses during the academic year—typically three Composition I courses in the fall, and two Composition II courses and a 100-level Introduction to Literature course in the spring, with possible variation depending on English Department needs; s/he will also offer a literary reading on campus in the spring. The fellow will work under the supervision of the MFA Director and English Department Chair, will meet regularly with a mentor and undergo at least two classroom observations, and will receive a stipend of \$16,500. The fellow will be required to live in the Buckhannon area (or at reasonable commuting distance which allows the fellow to hold a minimum of 5 office hours weekly) from the mid-August New Faculty Orientation to the early-May Final Grades due date during the fellowship year.

Timeline for application process: The fellow must have the MFA degree in hand before the fellowship year. To comply with Final Deposit of Thesis deadlines and MFA degree conferral dates, fall Thesis students are eligible to apply as early as the March following their Fifth Residency, and spring Thesis students are eligible to apply as early as the March during their Thesis semester. For example, a Fall 2015 Thesis student may apply for the fellowship as early as March 2016, and a Spring 2016 Thesis student may apply as early as March 2016.

An applicant should submit the following:

1) letter of application which discusses:

–relevant teaching/work experience (applicants with no teaching experience will be considered)

–areas of expertise and interest in writing and literature

–current writing projects

2) teaching philosophy for basic composition 3) drafted syllabus for a Composition I course and sketch of an Introduction to Literature course

4) current CV

5) writing sample of no more than 20 pages of prose, 10 pages of poetry

An applicant must also have **two letters of recommendation** addressing his or her experience/potential as a teacher mailed or emailed directly to the MFA Director. One letter of recommendation may be submitted by Wesleyan MFA core or visiting faculty; the other letter must come from outside the program.

While the fellowship may be received only once, and while we prioritize new applicants so to offer teaching experience to as many as our alumni as possible, current fellows may apply to renew for a second consecutive year. Also, previous applicants who were not awarded the fellowship are permitted to reapply. Those who reapply—along with current fellows applying to renew—may elect to use letters of recommendation already on file, though all other materials should be refreshed. Applications will be reviewed and finalists chosen by the MFA Director and core MFA faculty; advancing candidates may be interviewed by phone or Skype. The final decision will be made by the English Chair, in consultation with the MFA Director and with the approval of the Dean of the College.

Applications must be received by March 1 for the following academic year; a decision will be made by April 1.

Electronic submissions are required. All application materials should be sent in a single Word or PDF file to the MFA Director, indicating McKinney Fellowship Application in the subject line. Letters of recommendation should be sent to the MFA Director via email or mail.