

hollins university mfa creative writing

Hollins University MFA Creative Writing program stands as a beacon for aspiring writers seeking to refine their craft in a supportive and intellectually stimulating environment. Nestled in the picturesque Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, Hollins University offers a unique blend of rigorous academic training and a vibrant creative community. This article explores the key features, curriculum, faculty, and community aspects of the MFA program, providing insights into why it is a top choice for writers from diverse backgrounds.

Overview of Hollins University

Hollins University, founded in 1842, is one of the oldest women's universities in the United States. While it has evolved to include a coeducational environment, the university maintains a commitment to fostering a strong sense of community and empowering students through education and the arts. The MFA in Creative Writing program, established in 1976, has garnered national recognition for its dedication to nurturing literary talent.

Program Structure

The MFA Creative Writing program at Hollins University is designed to be both rigorous and flexible, accommodating the diverse needs of its students. The program can typically be completed in two years, with students required to complete a total of 48 credit hours.

Curriculum

The curriculum is structured to provide a comprehensive education in various genres of creative writing. Key components include:

1. Core Workshops:

- Students participate in intensive workshops focusing on fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction. These workshops emphasize peer feedback, allowing students to engage with each other's work critically.

2. Literature Courses:

- In addition to writing workshops, students are required to take literature courses that explore the relationship between reading and writing, examining texts from various genres and periods.

3. Craft Courses:

- Specialized classes delve into specific aspects of writing, such as character development, narrative structure, and the use of language, enhancing the technical skills necessary for effective storytelling.

4. Thesis Project:

- The culmination of the MFA program is the thesis project, which typically consists of a full-length manuscript. This process allows students to work closely with faculty mentors to develop their individual writing styles.

5. Electives:

- Students have the opportunity to take elective courses in related fields, such as screenwriting, playwriting, and publishing, providing a well-rounded educational experience.

Residency Model

Hollins University's MFA program employs a low-residency model, which is particularly appealing for students who may be balancing other commitments. Key features include:

- Summer Residencies:

- The program includes two summer residencies, each lasting approximately ten days. During these residencies, students engage in workshops, attend readings, and participate in discussions with faculty and guest writers.

- Independent Study:

- Between residencies, students work independently on their writing projects and engage with faculty through one-on-one mentoring, providing flexibility in the learning process.

Faculty Expertise

The strength of the Hollins University MFA Creative Writing program lies in its distinguished faculty. The faculty comprises accomplished authors, poets, and literary scholars who are dedicated to mentoring the next generation of writers.

Notable Faculty Members

1. David Jauss:

- A celebrated fiction writer and editor, Jauss has published several acclaimed books and is known for his expertise in short story writing.

2. Jill McCorkle:

- An award-winning novelist and short story writer, McCorkle brings a wealth of experience and insight into the writing process, focusing on character development and narrative voice.

3. Cathy L. Smith:

- A recognized poet, Smith's teaching emphasizes the exploration of language and form, encouraging students to experiment with poetic techniques.

4. Robert C. Smith:

- Known for his contributions to creative nonfiction, Smith's classes often focus on the intersection of personal narrative and broader societal themes.

The faculty's commitment to student success is evident through their availability for mentorship and feedback, fostering an environment of growth and creativity.

Community and Networking

A significant aspect of the Hollins University MFA Creative Writing program is its vibrant community of writers. The program emphasizes collaboration, networking, and support among students and faculty.

Peer Support and Collaboration

- Workshops:
 - The workshop format encourages students to share their work and receive constructive feedback, fostering camaraderie and a sense of belonging.
- Writing Groups:
 - Many students form writing groups outside of formal workshops, providing additional opportunities for collaboration and creative exchange.

Guest Writers and Events

Hollins University regularly hosts guest writers, poets, and literary figures, providing students with the chance to engage with notable voices in the literary world. Events typically include:

- Readings:
 - Students can attend readings by established authors, gaining exposure to diverse writing styles and approaches.
- Lectures and Panels:
 - The program often features lectures and panel discussions on various topics related to writing, publishing, and the literary industry.
- Literary Festivals:
 - The university hosts literary festivals that bring together students, faculty, and writers from the broader community, fostering connections and networking opportunities.

Career Opportunities

Graduates of the Hollins University MFA Creative Writing program find themselves well-prepared for a variety of career paths within the literary and creative industries.

Publishing and Editing

Many alumni pursue careers in publishing, working as:

- Editors:
 - Alumni often find positions as editors at literary magazines, publishing houses, and online platforms, shaping the next generation of literary voices.
- Agents:
 - Some graduates become literary agents, helping authors navigate the publishing landscape and secure deals with publishers.

Teaching Positions

With an MFA degree, graduates are eligible for teaching positions at various educational institutions, ranging from community colleges to universities. Many alumni go on to teach creative writing, literature, and related courses, passing on their knowledge and passion for the craft.

Freelance Writing and Journalism

The skills developed during the MFA program also equip graduates for careers in freelance writing, journalism, and content creation. Many alumni write for magazines, websites, and other media outlets, sharing their expertise and unique perspectives with a broader audience.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Hollins University MFA Creative Writing program offers a comprehensive and nurturing environment for aspiring writers. With its low-residency model, distinguished faculty, rich curriculum, and vibrant community, the program stands out as an exceptional choice for individuals committed to developing their craft. As students engage with peers, faculty, and industry professionals, they are well-prepared to embark on fulfilling careers in the literary world. For those seeking a transformative experience in creative writing, Hollins University represents a remarkable opportunity to hone one's skills and share one's voice with the world.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Hollins University MFA in Creative Writing program known for?

The Hollins University MFA in Creative Writing program is known for its strong emphasis on workshop-based learning, personalized mentorship, and a diverse range of genres, including fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction.

What are the admission requirements for the Hollins University MFA Creative Writing program?

Admission requirements typically include a completed application form, a writing sample (usually 10-20 pages), letters of recommendation, a statement of purpose, and transcripts from previous academic institutions.

Is the Hollins University MFA program fully online or in-person?

The Hollins University MFA program offers a low-residency format, which means students participate in brief in-person residencies combined with online coursework, allowing for flexibility while still providing direct mentorship.

What kind of financial aid options are available for students in the Hollins MFA program?

Hollins University offers various financial aid options, including graduate assistantships, scholarships, and federal financial aid for eligible students to help cover tuition and related expenses.

How long does it typically take to complete the Hollins University MFA in Creative Writing?

Students can typically complete the Hollins University MFA in Creative Writing in about two to three years, depending on their individual course load and pace of study.

What opportunities do MFA students have for publishing their work?

MFA students at Hollins University have numerous opportunities to publish their work through the university's literary magazine, various anthologies, and connections with the literary community, including participation in readings and writer's festivals.

What sets Hollins University MFA apart from other creative writing programs?

Hollins University MFA stands out due to its strong focus on community, mentorship from established authors, a rich tradition of literary excellence, and the unique low-residency format that combines intensive workshops with flexible online learning.

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