

Ashland University MFA Program Handbook

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Program Overview

The Ashland University Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing is a low-residency program in poetry and creative nonfiction, with intensive 14-day summer residencies and individual study with writing mentors during fall and spring semesters. The program resides in the Ashland University English Department.

Program Governance:

The MFA Program is governed by the MFA Faculty Committee, consisting of the following members:

- MFA Director
- MFA Administrative Director
- Resident Faculty Mentor
- Ashland University English Department Chair
- Faculty Representative from the AU English Department
- Two Elected MFA Core Faculty Members who are not regular members of the AU English Department

The MFA Program Mission Statement:

The low-residency Ashland University MFA in Creative Writing will enhance talent in the areas of creative nonfiction and poetry in order to provide students with the aesthetic tools to embody, in writing, a deep understanding of human experience, both within the context of the personal self and within the broader cultural and spiritual contexts that define the self.

The program will also guide student writers as they pursue publication, and potential employment, as active members of the American literary community.

Student writers will develop their practical and artistic pursuits through the program's emphasis on a sustained and committed devotion to writing, through deep and wide reading, through mentorship with established writers who are also devoted teachers, and through participation in workshops, seminars, lectures and readings, all of which

will enhance the students' shared sense of belonging to a community of writers.

Admission

Admission is open to all qualified persons regardless of handicap, religion, race, creed, age, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin.

Faculty Responsibilities

Ashland University Graduate Faculty

Stephen Haven, Professor of English *

Daniel W. Lehman, Professor of English

Associate Graduate Faculty

Peter Campion, Assistant Professor of English, Auburn University

Jill Christman, Associate Professor of English, Ball State University

Bob Cowser Jr., Associate Professor of English, St. Lawrence University

Angie Estes, Auxiliary Professor of English, The Ohio State University

Steven Harvey, Dean of the Humanities, Young Harris College *

Sonya Huber, Assistant Professor of Creative Writing, Georgia Southern University

Robert Root, Emeritus Professor of English, Central Michigan University

Ruth L. Schwartz, freelance writer, former Associate Professor of Creative Writing, Goddard College *

Kathryn Winograd, Assistant Professor of English, Arapahoe Community College *

* Core faculty members

Faculty Responsibilities During Summer Residencies:

Each MFA faculty mentor will teach ten morning sessions of a Writers' Workshop during each summer residency, participate in one afternoon Craft and Publishing seminar, and present an evening reading. Each MFA faculty mentor will also hold a half-hour conference with each member of his or her workshop. Meals and lodging will be provided for MFA faculty.

Faculty Responsibilities During Non-Residential Semesters:

As a mentorship program, the success of the Ashland University MFA in Creative Writing depends upon each student's individual relationship with his or her faculty mentor. The MFA Program makes this commitment to our students: we will hire as faculty only accomplished writers who thrive as teachers by giving close personal attention to each student. Faculty mentors are limited to working with no more than five students during non-residential semesters and will respond to each submitted packet of student writing in detail, through written comments, and through phone conferences when necessary.

During non-residential semesters, faculty mentors should respond to student packets of writing within two weeks of submission.

In addition to the individual nature of the student and faculty mentor working relationship, faculty mentors are expected to facilitate interactive group discussion about assigned reading and topics through the online forum provided by the university. As part of their teaching responsibilities, faculty will provide clear guidelines for student online posting, and will themselves contribute substantial postings to the online classroom each week. While the online forum is interactive in nature, with students assuming a leadership role in the discussion, faculty postings are designed to stimulate student discussion, to provide substantive critical feedback to student comments, and to serve as a catalyst to start and to deepen student discussion about assigned texts and topics.

Course guidelines including a reading schedule, a list of common texts, and a timeline for submitting creative and critical work should be posted by the faculty mentor the first day of class each semester. The faculty mentor will also initiate an online discussion topic to which students are expected to reply as a "role call" on the first day of the semester.

Non-Residential Semester Grading Policy

As with all courses, it is up to the faculty mentor to determine whether a student has received an "S" Satisfactory or "U" Unsatisfactory grade for the non-residential semester (see "Academic Policies"). Grades should

be based on the student's completion and quality of required creative and critical writing, response to assigned readings, and class participation in online discussions of assigned materials.

Faculty Advisors

The faculty mentor teaching a student in his or her first non-residential semester (Eng631) will become that student's academic advisor for the entire span of the student's years in the MFA Program. Students seeking advice about the program during non-residential semesters may contact their advisors via phone or e-mail.

Ashland University Email Policy

As per University policy, all program communication between faculty, students, and university personnel must take place via Ashland University email accounts. MFA faculty are in no way obligated to accept a student's failure to check e-mail as a legitimate excuse for non-compliance with instructions, requests or appointments.

Ashland University Graduate Faculty Teaching Policy

Full-time Ashland University faculty members who have faculty status in the MFA Program will fulfill teaching load responsibilities with a combination of undergraduate and graduate teaching. For such faculty members, Ashland University will count each MFA student taught during a nine-credit, non-residential graduate semester as the equivalent of teaching one undergraduate credit. Under this formula, a tenured or tenure-track faculty member who is also a member of the core MFA faculty would receive a three-credit reduction in his/her undergraduate teaching load for every three MFA students taught during non-residential semesters. If the number of MFA graduate credits taught exceeds three credits in any given semester, the Ashland University MFA faculty member can "bank" credits toward undergraduate teaching in future semesters within the same academic year.

In any given semester, full-time Ashland University faculty members who hold faculty status in the MFA Program and who are not receiving course load reductions for non-teaching responsibilities may choose to be paid for MFA teaching in a supplemental contract, on the same basis

as core adjunct MFA faculty. During such semesters, the Ashland University MFA faculty member may choose to apply a portion of MFA teaching toward a reduction in his/her undergraduate load and receive a supplemental contract for the remaining portion of the MFA teaching assignment.

Curriculum

Each non-residential course during fall and spring semesters is 9 credit hours. Each summer residency is 3 credit hours. The MFA Program traditionally begins and ends with a summer residency; however, students may begin their course of study with the spring non-residential semester. Students must complete three summer residencies and four semesters of non-residential course work to complete the degree.

Non-Residential Courses

Non-residential courses in the MFA Program are designed as mentorships: students will work individually with one faculty mentor per semester and will work collectively with other students assigned to the same mentor. Throughout each of the four non-residential semesters (English 631, 632, 633, and 701), students will interact with their mentors via e-mail and online forums. Students will work individually with faculty mentors, and collectively with other students, in enhancing their ability to write and effectively edit poems and creative nonfiction, and in developing the ability to read and write critically in response to canonized and contemporary authors in their chosen genre. Each faculty mentor will work with no more than five students during the four non-residential semesters required by the program.

Summer Residencies

During 14-day summer residencies (English 501, 502, 503), students will work at Ashland University with MFA faculty and with visiting writers by attending workshops, lectures, seminars, readings, discussion groups and individual conferences. Students will also attend technical support workshops.

During summer residencies, each visiting writer will present one reading and lead one Craft and Publishing Seminar.

Traditional Course Sequence (Beginning in Summer)

	Course Number and Title	Hours	Prerequisites
First Year		3	None
Summer	English 501: Residency I		
Fall	English 631: Mentorship I (non-residential semester)	9	English 501
Spring	English 632: Mentorship II (non-residential semester)	9	English 631
Second Year		3	English 632
Summer	English 502: Residency II		
Fall	English 633: Mentorship III (non-residential semester)	9	English 502
Spring	English 701: Mentorship IV: MFA Thesis (non-residential semester)	9	English 633
Summer	English 503: Residency III	3	English 701
	Total Number of Credits	45	

Non-Traditional Course Sequence (Beginning in Spring)

	Course Number and Title	Hours	Prerequisites
First Year		9	None
Spring	English 631: Mentorship I (non-residential semester)		
Summer	English 501: Residency I	3	None
Fall	English 632: Mentorship II (non-residential semester)	9	English 631
Second Year		9	English 632
Spring	English 633: Mentorship III (non-residential semester)		
Summer	English 502: Residency II	3	English 633
Fall	English 701: Mentorship IV: MFA Thesis (non-residential semester)	9	English 502
Spring	Semester off; continue work on thesis		
Summer	English 503: Residency III	3	English 701
	Total Number of Credits	45	

Note that students enrolling in the spring will have a spring semester off in between completion of English 701 and the final residency. Students are encouraged to continue working on their theses during this period.

Course Descriptions

English 501: Summer Residency I: This gateway residency will be taught over 14 days. There will be three major components to the course:

- 1) Writers' Workshop/Mentor Tutorial Sessions
- 2) Craft, Style, and Publishing Seminars
- 3) Evening/Weekend Readings and Discussions

Students will attend 10 two-hour-and-forty-five minute Writers' Workshop/Mentor Tutorial sessions and 10 hour-and-a-half Craft, Style, and Publishing Seminars. Students are encouraged to attend all Evening/Weekend programs. In addition, students will meet individually with their mentors to define a writing/reading project for the non-residential courses. There will also be new student orientation sessions, academic advising sessions, and computer support sessions.

English 631: Mentorship I: This course represents the first step in a program-long process of working toward the completion of a book of poems or nonfiction (culminating in the MFA Thesis). Via the internet, each student will work individually with his or her faculty mentor, and collectively with student peers, to develop the craft of drafting the body of a book. Students will also develop skills in judiciously applying constructive criticism to improve the quality of their writing and skills in articulating constructive criticism of both published and student work. While students will actively engage in the revision process, the emphasis of the course will be on the generation of new material.

English 632: Mentorship II: This course represents the second step in a program-long process of working toward the completion of a book of poems or nonfiction (culminating in the MFA Thesis). Via the internet, each student will continue to develop the craft of drafting new poems or pieces of nonfiction by working individually with a faculty mentor and collectively with student peers. In addition, students will work toward

the completion of a group of poems or pieces of nonfiction worthy of serving as the core of a book. While students will continually create new work, there will be an emphasis on the revision process and on the ability of students to articulate the nature and degree of aesthetic coherence in their own developing manuscripts, as well as in existing works of literature.

English 502: Summer Residency II: This mid-program residency will be taught over 14 days. There will be three major components to the course:

- 1) Writers' Workshop/Mentor Tutorial Sessions
- 2) Craft, Style and Publishing Seminars
- 3) Evening/Weekend Readings and Discussions

Students will attend 10 two-hour-and-forty-five minute Writers' Workshop/Mentor Tutorial sessions and 10 hour-and-a-half Craft, Style, and Publishing Seminars. Students are encouraged to attend all Evening/Weekend programs. In addition, students will meet individually with their mentors to define a writing/reading project for the non-residential courses. There will also be academic advising sessions and computer support sessions.

English 633: Mentorship III: This course represents the third step in a program-long process of working toward the completion of a book of poems or nonfiction. Via the internet, students will continue to develop new writing by working individually with a faculty mentor and collectively with student peers. Students will also sharpen the ability to articulate traits, on the level of theme, form and/or style, that characterize the well-crafted books encountered in assigned reading and that characterize their own developing manuscripts. While students will actively work toward the creation of new essays or poems and will continue to revise individual works, there will be an emphasis on the ability to articulate key formal and thematic characteristics that contribute to the resonance and aesthetic integrity of a body of writing.

English 701: MFA Thesis: This course represents the fourth and culminating step in a program-long process of working toward the completion of a book of poems or essays. Via the internet, students will develop further the craft of shaping a book-length collection of poems or nonfiction by working individually with a faculty mentor and collectively with student peers. Though each student will actively work toward the creation of new poems or new pieces of nonfiction and toward the revision of individual works, the primary emphasis of the course will be on developing the student's ability to shape a book-length collection of writing into an aesthetic construct that is at once informed by and larger than the sum of its parts.

English 503: Summer Residency III: This exit residency will emphasize post-thesis concerns. Each student will defend his or her thesis before a faculty committee, participate in a thesis reading, and develop a deepening awareness of the publication industry through advisement from faculty, visiting writers, agents and editors. There will be individual meetings with editors and agents, in addition to the regular three components of the summer residency:

- 1) Writers' Workshop/Mentor Tutorial Sessions
- 2) Craft, Style, and Publishing Seminars
- 3) Evening/Weekend Readings and Discussions

Emphasis in the Writers' Workshop/Mentor Tutorial Sessions will vary but might typically involve a focus on new writing unrelated to the thesis, on outtakes from the thesis that might form the nucleus of a new book, or on the further development of the completed thesis into a publishable manuscript. Students will attend 10 two-hour-and-forty-five-minute Writers' Workshop/ Mentor Tutorial sessions and 10 hour-and-a-half Craft, Style, and Publishing Seminars. Students are encouraged to attend all Evening/Weekend programs.

Program Requirements

Degree Tracks in Poetry or Creative Nonfiction

There are two degree tracks in the Ashland University MFA in Creative Writing. Students are admitted into the program in either poetry or creative nonfiction. The course requirements are the same in both tracks; students will register for and complete the same courses. Poetry students will fulfill the requirements of those courses by reading, analyzing, discussing and writing poetry. Creative nonfiction students will fulfill course requirements by reading, analyzing, discussing and writing nonfiction. All students in the program must complete three semesters of creative/critical reading and writing, one semester of thesis preparation, a thesis defense, and three intensive 14-day summer residencies. Students must accumulate 45 hours of class credit by completing all courses in the program.

Students Interested in Both Genres

Interested students may petition the MFA director to take *either* English 632: Mentorship II, or English 633: Mentorship III, in their secondary genre rather than in their primary genre. For example, a student accepted into the MFA Program in poetry might petition the MFA director to take one course, either English 632 or English 633, in creative nonfiction. Creative nonfiction would then become that student's secondary genre. Students must support such requests with writing samples in the secondary genre. In making decisions to grant or deny student requests to study in a second genre, the MFA director will consult appropriate MFA faculty. Decisions will be based on the student's writing sample and on progress the student has made in his or her primary genre. Students taking courses in two genres must complete English 631: Mentorship I and English 701: MFA Thesis, and *either* English 632 or English 633, in their primary genre.

Requirements for Non-Residential Classes

Creative Writing Requirements

English 631, 632, & 633: Though English 631, 632, and 633 are distinct from one another (see Course Descriptions above), they share similar requirements and the same schedule for the submission of creative work. In each of these three classes, students will submit to their writing mentors either 10-15 pages of prose, four times per semester, or 5-10 pages of poetry, four times per semester. Faculty mentors may count substantial revisions toward this total number of pages.

English 701: MFA Thesis: The thesis must be written in either poetry or nonfiction. At the beginning of the semester, students will submit to their writing mentors the entire body of poetry or nonfiction completed in earlier courses. During the thesis semester, students must submit to their writing mentors 3-4 revisions of their entire manuscripts. The completed thesis should be approximately 150 pages of prose or 50-60 pages of poetry. At the end of English 701, faculty mentors will recommend to the MFA director those students ready to defend their theses during English 503: Summer Residency III.

Critical Writing Requirements

In addition to completing the required creative writing, students will write critically in response to books mutually selected by students and their mentors. Together with writing mentors, students will read and analyze the successes and failures of published collections of poems or books of nonfiction to inform the process of writing toward the completion of their own books.

English 631, 632: During each semester, in English 631 and 632, students will submit a total of 10-15 pages of critical commentary on assigned reading.

Critical Writing in English 633: During this semester, students must submit a draft and a final draft of a 20-25 page critical commentary on the specific thematic, formal and/or stylistic attributes of one or more

published books (mutually chosen by the student and the faculty mentor).

English 701: MFA Thesis: There are no critical writing assignments during the thesis semester.

Informal Writing Requirements: Non-Residential Classes

In addition to completing any creative and critical writing requirements, in each non-residential class students are required to participate by contributing substantial, multiple posts each week in online threaded discussions of assigned reading and of student written work.

Summer Residency Requirements

See Course Descriptions for distinctions between the three Summer Residencies, English 501, 502, and 503 (the first a gateway residency, the second a mid-program residency, and the last an exit, post-thesis residency). The three summer residencies nevertheless share many of the same requirements:

- **Summer Residency Workshop Sessions**

During each summer residency, there will be 10 Writers' Workshop sessions. Students are required to attend all ten Writers' Workshop sessions.

Students are required to send an electronic version of their manuscripts to the administrative director one month prior to the Summer Residency. Poetry manuscripts should be no more than 10-15 pages. Creative nonfiction manuscripts should be no more than 20-30 pages.

- **Summer Residency Craft/Publishing Seminars**

During each summer residency, there will be at least 10 Craft/Publishing seminars. Students are required to attend all weekday Craft/Publishing Seminars.

- **Summer Residency Evening & Weekend Programs**
Students are encouraged to attend all evening & weekend programs.

Requirements for Graduation

Each student who applies for graduation must have completed all required courses other than English 503: Summer Residency III and obtained the recommendation of his or her faculty mentor (in English 701: MFA Thesis) for a thesis defense. At the conclusion of English 701: MFA Thesis, faculty mentors will nominate theses deemed of sufficient quality to merit a defense. Students obtaining the nomination of their faculty mentors will then enroll in English 503: Summer Residency III to defend their theses during their last summer residency.

The MFA Thesis

The completion of the MFA thesis during English 701 represents the culminating step in a program-long process of writing and revising toward the completion of a book of poems or essays or a book-length memoir. Students enrolled in English 701 will be grouped together by genre into groups of 3-4 students. Whenever possible, faculty mentors teaching English 701 will work with groups consisting of English 701 students exclusively. If necessary, an occasional English 633 student may also be grouped with English 701 students. While student preferences will be considered in the assigning of faculty mentors, the MFA Program will determine faculty mentor assignments in order to make MFA courses most beneficial for the greatest number of students. Faculty may choose to assign student theses as texts for the course and/or books and other materials that can serve as models for structuring student manuscripts.

Each thesis defense will take place in person, on the Ashland University campus, during English 503: Residency III. Student theses must consist of writing composed during the process of completing MFA course work at Ashland University and cannot consist of work completed prior to the beginning of the MFA. Students must demonstrate evidence of working through the drafting process toward the goal of completing a book-length manuscript of poetry or creative nonfiction. The thesis should be a final synthesis of all writing previously begun in the program and a final synthesis of the critical sensibility students developed in the program.

English 701 Expectations and Requirements

Students in ENG 701 are expected to continue participating in online discussions and workshops while refining and finalizing their thesis. At the beginning of the semester, each student will submit a draft of the thesis in its entirety to his or her faculty mentor and to other members of the student's workshop.

Students will complete the following tasks in ENG 701:

- Actively work on the creation and revision of new poems or new pieces of nonfiction to extend and complete the thesis
- Continue to lead and participate in online discussions and reading assigned texts
- Continue to revise thesis following critiques from advisor
- Finalize thesis for submission to advisor by end of semester
- Submit final thesis to MFA Administrative Director for review by the Faculty Thesis Committee within two weeks following the end of the semester. Students who receive an S-Satisfactory grade on the thesis are permitted an additional two weeks to revise the thesis before submitting it to the Administrative Director. See program calendar in the back of this handbook for dates.
- Apply for graduation – visit <http://www.ashland.edu/graduate/GraduationInformation.html> for more information

Passing ENG 701

Faculty mentors will recommend for a thesis defense only those manuscripts that realize fully or largely the character of a volume informed by unifying aesthetic traits. Each student will define for a Faculty Thesis Committee attributes that contribute toward the integrity of the thesis as a volume of writing.

A thesis will be ready for a defense when it is clearly defined by one or more of the following:

- common controlling ideas or interaction between ideas;
- specific aesthetic effects that provide a sense of balance, order, or unity;
- distinct relationships of one poem to another, one essay to another, or one narrative segment to another, in the body of the thesis as a whole.

Faculty mentors may assign the SR grade to a nearly complete thesis that is of such quality that the student's advisor expects a passing grade will result after the student completes final revisions. The U grade will be used if the thesis shows little sign of promise, even with the possibility of further revision.

The thesis submission consists of:

- Final book-length manuscript of work, approximately 50-60 pages of poetry or 150 pages of creative nonfiction.
- Students who complete a semester of cross-genre study may petition to submit a multi-genre manuscript

Formatting Guidelines

- Margins should be set at 1" all around
- Title page should center the following:
 - Title of thesis
 - "A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing Program at Ashland University"
 - by [Author]
 - "In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts"
 - Month and Year of Graduation (August)
- Two copies of the Ashland University MFA signature page (distributed by Administrative Director) – one copy is for MFA records, other copy will be bound with final thesis
- Table of contents is encouraged but not required
- Pagination
 - No page number should appear on the title page or signature page
 - Page numbers should appear in the bottom right hand corner of each page
 - Pages that occur prior to the body of text (acknowledgements, dedication page, table of contents, etc.) should use roman numerals (I, ii, etc.) as page numbers

- Each page in the body of text should be numbered using Arabic numbers (1, 2, etc.)
- Electronic version of thesis should be submitted to the Administrative Director as a PDF. Word documents (.doc) or rich text format (.rtf) are also permitted.

Creative Nonfiction Thesis Formatting Guidelines:

- Approximately 150 pages
- Double-spaced in Times New Roman or comparable font, 12 point

Poetry Thesis Formatting Guidelines:

- Approximately 50-60 pages
- Single-spaced in Times New Roman or comparable font, 12 point

ENG 503 – Post-Thesis Summer Residency Preparations

In addition to the three regular components of the summer residency (writers' workshop, craft seminars, evening readings), the student in the post-thesis semester will defend his or her thesis before a faculty committee, participate in a thesis reading, and develop a deepening awareness of the publication industry through advisement from faculty, visiting writers, agents, and editors.

In order to prepare for the thesis reading and defense, students should:

- Compile and submit to the Administrative Director along with the final thesis submission within two weeks following the end of ENG 701:
 - a list of 20-50 books that have informed the student's understanding of his or her genre. Books are not limited to assigned readings within the coursework or duration of the program.
 - a five-page introduction in which the student defines the way in which a smaller (5-10) select group of books informed the process of developing the thesis. Each student should think of this essay as the act of defining a

literary genealogy in the form of 5-10 books, from which the thesis descends. Students should define in this paper specific effects or techniques that they have learned through the experience of reading particular authors and particular books.

Faculty Thesis Committee

Each faculty thesis committee will consist of the student's thesis advisor and two other MFA faculty. The MFA director or the resident faculty mentor will serve on most thesis committees. Members of thesis committees will have read and evaluated theses prior to scheduled defense dates.

Thesis Reading & Defense

1. Each graduating student will read for 15 minutes (5-6 double spaced pages of prose) from his or her thesis and present a 30-40 minute defense in front of a Faculty Thesis Committee. Each student should select in advance poems or passages of prose and should practice reading aloud.
2. Students may choose to have an "open" thesis defense in which the public and all other students are welcome to attend or a "closed" thesis defense in which only the Faculty Thesis Committee is present. In the case of a closed defense, the reading will be open to the public, and the chair of the Faculty Thesis Committee will dismiss the audience once the reading is complete and the defense begins.
3. The Faculty Thesis Committee will respond to each thesis shortly after the thesis defense.
4. Any student who fails the thesis defense must take English 701 a second time and must work with a Faculty Writing Mentor different from the mentor who first recommended the student's thesis for a defense.

Passing the Thesis Defense

The faculty thesis committee will determine the success or failure of a defense. Students will be expected to define and analyze the characteristics of his or her collection of nonfiction or poetry and the process by which that collection came into being. During the defense, each student will articulate the thematic, formal or stylistic effects that characterize his or her own volume of writing. Each defending student will also define the way in which critical feedback from faculty and student peers helped shape the growth of his or her book. Each student will articulate the relationship—if any—between the shaping of the thesis and any critical writing or reading experience the student completed in the MFA Program.

After the Thesis Defense

1. *MFA Graduation Reception* – Students approved for graduation following the Thesis Defense will be recognized in a graduation reception on the final Friday of the residency. Each student's thesis advisor will formally introduce his or her advisees and present them each with an MFA certificate (diplomas will not be formally presented until the graduation ceremony in December).

2. *Bound Thesis* – The student's final thesis will be bound for the Ashland University library's collection at \$15.50 per copy. Additional copies may be supplied by the student for his or her own personal use. The program will assume the cost of the University's copy of the thesis. A final electronic copy of the thesis must be submitted to the Administrative Director as an archival copy by the week following the residency.

Academic Policies

Transfer Credits

No more than 9 credit hours of graduate creative writing classes can be transferred into the program.

Time Limits

The minimum length to complete the program is two years and two weeks. The maximum length to complete the program is four years and six months. Once the maximum allotted time has passed, students must reapply for admission. Any credits earned prior to readmission cannot be used toward the fulfillment of the degree.

Waivers of Degree Requirements

Waivers of degree requirements will be granted rarely. Any such waivers must be approved by the MFA faculty committee. Requests for waivers must be submitted in writing to the MFA director.

Course Repeat Policy

Any student receiving U-Unsatisfactory for a course will be given the opportunity to retake the course. Both first and second grades will appear on the student's transcript.

Students may elect to take any course in the program a second time. Both first and second grades will appear on the student's transcript.

Non-Degree Seeking Students

People who do not wish to receive college credit for coursework in the MFA program may apply as non-degree students for the summer residency and/or the spring non-residential semester. Because of the relationship between the summer and fall semesters for degree seeking students, non-degree students cannot register for fall semester courses. If there is enough interest from non-degree seeking students for the summer residency, a workshop will be formed. Non-degree students must submit a writing sample in addition to completing the graduate school's requirements for admission.

Grades

Courses will be graded:

S—Satisfactory: applies to performance equivalent of B- or higher

U—Unsatisfactory: applies to performance equivalent of C+ or lower

SR—Satisfactory with Revision: a grade option available only for English 701: MFA Thesis.

Assigning the SR-Satisfactory with Revision Grade:

The SR grade indicates that the thesis shows promise and should be of sufficient quality to pass following substantial revision. Students receiving the SR grade for English 701: MFA Thesis will have until July 1 to complete thesis revisions if they intend to graduate that summer. The student's faculty mentor for English 701 will review thesis revisions within one week of submission following July 1 and consult with one other MFA faculty member before deciding whether or not to change SR grade to S-Satisfactory.

If the faculty mentor decides revisions to the thesis are inadequate, the student is not eligible to graduate during the immediate summer residency; however, the student will have until September 15 to complete satisfactory revisions, at which point the faculty mentor will again consult with another MFA faculty member prior to deciding whether the grade will revert to an S-Satisfactory or be changed to U-Unsatisfactory. The authority for the final grade rests entirely on the faculty mentor. Students who do not complete satisfactory revisions by September 15 must retake English 701 with a new faculty mentor.

Students who take English 701 during the fall semester and receive the SR grade will have until April 15 to make satisfactory revisions to the thesis. The same procedure for reviewing an SR grade applies in this instance.

Other grades are:

I—Incomplete: may be given when students are not able to complete the course work due to illness, accidents, or other emergencies. This grade applies to work of acceptable quality when the full amount is not completed. It is never applied to unsatisfactory work. The required work in non-residential mentorship classes must be completed within three months of the completion of the course. In Residencies I & II (English 501 & 502), students receiving an Incomplete must repeat the course. In Residency III (English 503), at the discretion of the program director students receiving an Incomplete must either repeat the course or submit the remaining required work within three months of course completion. In all cases, the "I" grade becomes "U" if not completed within the time frame allotted.

K—Transfer: credit accepted in transfer. Courses are recorded on the student's permanent academic record.

W—Withdrawn: assigned for official withdrawals.

Academic Good Standing

To remain in good standing in the program, students must receive a grade of "S" for each course previously taken. Students who receive the grade "U" for a course will be placed on academic probation. Students placed on academic probation will be given the opportunity to retake the course for which they have been assigned a "U". Upon receiving a grade of "S" for the retaken course, such students will return to the state of being in good standing in the program.

Students who receive the grade "U" for two courses will be subject to a dismissal review by the MFA Faculty Committee. Such students will appear before the MFA Faculty Committee to plead their cases. The MFA Faculty Committee may grant such students the opportunity to retake both courses for which they have been assigned the grade "U". The Committee will determine by vote whether or not to dismiss.

Students who receive the grade “U” for three courses will be dismissed automatically from the program without possibility of review or reinstatement.

Student Appeals Policy

(The following is the policy of the Ashland University Graduate School)

Students who have questions about instructional faculty performance or conduct should follow the procedure listed below. Any appeals must be initiated no later than the end of the semester following that in which the issue arose:

1. The student should consult the faculty member in question. It is only after this approach has been attempted that further recourse is appropriate. No appeal will be heard until this initial step has been taken, unless the complaint involved conduct that the student does not feel comfortable raising with the faculty member. In this case, the student may initiate the complaint by writing directly to the director of the graduate program as described in step 2 of this process.
2. If consultation with the faculty member in question does not produce satisfactory results, the student should submit his or her appeal in writing to the director of the graduate program. The written appeal should specify the details and circumstances that justify the appeal and state the action or decision sought by the student.
3. If the director of the graduate program, after having consulted with the individual who is the subject of the complaint, denies the student’s appeal or complaint, the student may submit a copy of the appeal to the dean of the academic college in which the graduate program is housed.
4. The academic dean will review the information presented, make such inquiries as necessary, and render a judgment. If the student is dissatisfied with the dean’s decision, the student may make final appeal to the provost.

5. If a written appeal is made to the provost, the provost will schedule a meeting including the student, the faculty member in question, and a Review Committee consisting of the academic graduate program chair and the academic dean. The provost, in consultation with the Review Committee, will make a final decision on the appeal or complaint and will specify what action, if any, is required by the student, the faculty member and/or the University.

Distance Learning – Non-Residential Semester

During all four mentorship courses, English 631, 632, 633 & 701, students will communicate with their mentors and with other students using the online software platform provided by the university. Students and faculty will take online course training sessions during summer residencies or prior to the commencement of the spring non-residential semester. In the event of a software change or upgrade, students in English 502 will be encouraged but not required to attend software training sessions.

Online Classrooms

In order to begin each semester, students will post in the faculty-initiated online discussion as a “role call” the first day of class. Formats for online classrooms will vary, but all online courses will include the following components:

Dates and Deadlines

Each faculty mentor will post a reading schedule and writing submission schedule for his or her students. This should be the equivalent of a traditional course syllabus.

Workshop/Reading Discussion/E-mail

Most student work will be done in the online discussion forums and through e-mail. Each faculty mentor will serve as a catalyst in stimulating threaded discussions of assigned reading and strategies of writing. Though faculty mentors will participate actively, students are expected to take a leadership role in online discussions.

As part of their responsibilities in fulfilling the work expectations of each non-residential class, students will participate in online discussion by contributing substantial, multiple posts each week. They may also be asked to serve as discussion leaders on assigned books and topics. While the exact nature of student participation in online discussion will be defined by each student’s

faculty mentor, all faculty mentors will require frequent exchanges among students about their work or about their assignments.

Drop Box

The course software used by Ashland University allows faculty mentors to open a “drop box” for student assignments. This is where students will turn in their writing packets. Faculty mentors may also opt to use e-mail or regular mail to send and receive student writing packets. This preference will be discussed at the start of each semester.

MFA Community Group

The MFA Community Group is a program-wide section of the course software. It is available for the informal use of all students, staff, and faculty. Chat sessions will be scheduled intermittently throughout the semester, and a program-wide discussion forum will be available for students to interact from a cross-genre and classroom perspective.

Ashland University Email Policy

As per University policy, all program communication between faculty, students, and university personnel must take place via Ashland University email accounts. Please note that University offices are in no way obligated to accept a student’s failure to check e-mail as a legitimate excuse for non-compliance with instructions, requests or appointments.

Information Technology Help Desk

Students can receive technological support by calling the Information Technology Help Desk at (419) 289-5405. Tutorials are also available online at tech.ashland.edu/training. The Information Technology Help Desk is open for calls Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. (except during university holidays).

Tuition and Fees

There is a \$538 cost per credit for course work in the Ashland University MFA Program. A technology fee is included in the \$538 per credit cost. There are no other mandatory student fees.

First Year Tuition (2009-2010)

Summer Semester:

English 501: Summer Residency I (3 credits): \$1,560

Non-Residential Semesters:

English 631: Mentorship I (9 credits): \$4,842

English 632: Mentorship II (9 credits): \$4,842

Tuition Cost for First Year: \$11,244

Second Year Tuition (2010-2011)

Summer Semester:

English 502: Summer Residency II (3 credits): \$1,614

Non-Residential Semesters:

English 633: Mentorship III (9 credits): \$4,842

English 701: Mentorship IV: MFA Thesis (9 credits): \$4,842

Estimated Tuition Cost for Second Year: \$11,298

Exit Residency Tuition (Estimated)

English 503: Summer Residency III (3 credits): \$1,614

Estimated Tuition Cost for Final Residency: \$1,614

Total number of credits to complete program: 45

ESTIMATED TUITION COST for MFA PROGRAM: \$24,156

Tuition Refund Schedule

Students who withdraw from English 501, 502, & 503 (Summer Residencies) prior to the start of the residency will receive a 100% tuition refund. No tuition refund for a summer residency will be available once the residency has begun.

The refund schedule for English 631, 632, 633 & 701 will follow the Ashland University tuition refund policy, as defined online at www3.ashland.edu/services/business/policies.html.

Student Loans

Financial Aid for Students in the MFA Program

Ashland University participates in the Federal Stafford Loan Program. This program is available for all eligible students enrolled in the MFA Program. In addition, there are private education loan programs available for MFA students.

Financial aid will not be processed until students are accepted into the MFA Program. However, prospective students may begin the financial aid application process prior to acceptance to ensure that all forms have been received by the Financial Aid Office and are ready to be processed as soon as students receive their acceptance letters.

A separate AU Summer Session Loan Application (for the Summer Residency) is required in addition to the AU Graduate/Post-Baccalaureate Loan Application for MFA students in order to access federal loan funding for the Summer Residency and for classes taken during the regular academic year. In addition, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be completed each year.

For further information about federal and private loans, application procedures, and required forms, please see the Ashland University Financial Aid webpage at www.ashland.edu/finaid. Follow the procedure below:

- Click “Graduate Students in the First Steps” to find links for:
 - How to Apply* – step-by-step instructions to apply for Graduate student loans
 - Forms* – required AU application forms and the link for the FAFSA
 - Student Loans* – detailed information on the Stafford Federal Loan, including terms and maximum dollar amounts, as well as a listing of private education loans
- Click “Graduate Students in the Next Steps” to find these links:
 - Review My Award* – steps for viewing your award online once you are a registered student
 - Loan Processes* – required processes to ensure your Stafford loan is credited to your account

Each AU student is assigned a Financial Aid Counselor. Financial Aid Counselors are assigned according to students’ last names. Students can click on the *Contact Us* link to obtain assigned counselor’s name and contact information. Students can also call (800) 882-1548 x5003.

Summer Residencies

Summer residencies are integral parts of the MFA experience. The 14-day residency features a rigorous schedule of workshops, seminars, and readings. Students are housed on campus or within walking distance of campus. While optional, shared meals with other MFA students, faculty, staff, and visiting writers are an important part of building community in the MFA Program. MFA faculty, staff and visiting writers will dine with MFA students during lunch and dinner. Room and board costs and detailed residency information can be found in the Summer Residency Packet and on the program website (www.ashland.edu/mfa).

Using WebAdvisor

What is WebAdvisor?

WebAdvisor is an avenue for students to view and edit their University account. The following information can be accessed through WebAdvisor:

- Financial Aid Awards
- Forms Needed to Complete Financial Aid Process
- Student Account Balance
- Tuition Payments
- Transcript at AU

Logging in to WebAdvisor:

First Time Logging In:

Go to webadvisor.ashland.edu and read the Acceptable Use Policy. If you do not know your user name, click on “What’s My Username?” Enter the required information and your username will appear. ***Your password will be the last six digits of your social security number.*** Once logged in, you will be asked to change your password. You will use the new password in WebAdvisor from this point on. Use the password hint function to avoid having to request a new password from the registrar. If you have problems, contact Vicki Yoho at vyoho@ashland.edu or (419) 289-5031.

Financial Aid Forms & Awards:

Once you have submitted your Financial Aid documents, you may view the status of your award online through WebAdvisor. WebAdvisor also allows you to see if there are any necessary documents missing from your application. If you have a problem with your financial aid award, feel free to contact the Financial Aid Office at (800) 882-1548 x5003.

Student Accounts:

WebAdvisor allows you to view the balance of your student account. *All student accounts must be paid in full prior to the start of each semester.* There are a number of options for paying off the balance on your account. Visit the Ashland University Business Office website for more

information on making payments online or in person, tuition payment plans, corporate reimbursement, and other student accounts questions. If you have any questions about WebAdvisor, feel free to contact the Information Technology Help Desk, (419) 289-5405.

MFA Program Calendar

<i>Summer/Fall 2009</i>	
July 26 – August 8	Summer Residency
August 14	Faculty: Summer Residency Grades Due
August 24	Fall Non-Residential Semester Begins: Students <i>must</i> report to faculty mentor by posting to their assigned online discussion groups.
October 15	Cross-Genre Applications Due
October 15	Thesis Advisor Preference Forms Due
November 1	Registration Opens
November 25-29	No Class: Thanksgiving Break
November 30	Classes Resume
December 10	End of Fall Non-Residential Semester: Final manuscripts are due to faculty mentor.
December 15	Spring Registration Closes
December 15	Faculty: Semester Grades Due by Noon EST
<i>Spring 2010</i>	
January 11	Spring Non-Residential Semester Begins: Students <i>must</i> report to faculty mentor by posting to their assigned online discussion groups.
January 18	No Class: Martin Luther King Day
March 8-14	No Class: Spring Break
March 15	Cross-Genre Applications Due
March 15	Thesis Advisor Preference Forms Due
March 15	Classes Resume
April 1	Summer/Fall Registration Opens
April 2-5	No Class: Easter Break
May 3	Graduation Applications Due
May 6	End of Spring Non-Residential Semester: Final manuscripts are due to faculty mentor.

May 13	Faculty: Semester Grades Due by 10 AM EST
May 13	Faculty: Thesis Defense Recommendations Due
May 15	Summer/Fall Registration Closes
May 28	Final Draft of Thesis, Book List, and Introduction to Thesis Due to Administrative Director Electronically
July 24-August 7	2010 Summer Residency
August 17	Final Thesis Due to Administrative Director for Library Binding and Archiving

Program Contact Information

Stephen Haven, MFA Director
MFA in Creative Writing Program
Ashland University
Ashland, OH 44805
shaven@ashland.edu
(419) 289-5979 (w)
(419) 685-3838 (cell)

Sarah Wells, MFA Administrative Director
MFA in Creative Writing Program
Ashland University
Ashland, OH 44805
swells@ashland.edu
(419) 289-5957 (w)
(330) 703-2265 (cell)

Lisa Pawlikowski, Administrative Assistant
MFA in Creative Writing Program
Ashland University
Ashland, OH 44805
lpawliko@ashland.edu
(419) 289-5110 (w)

Information Technology Help Desk
(419) 289-5405
Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.