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Proposed changes to undergraduate BA degree in English with a Concentration in Creative Writing (submitted to the College Committee Fall 2008)

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**Rationale**

UPPERMICH FALL 2009

APPROVED NOV 19 2008

For a number of years, staffing issues have combined with high student demand for creative writing courses, creating over-enrolled sections with little clear progression in the degree plan. Students frequently simply enroll into whichever CW course is open, often taking advanced courses before more basic courses. This results in a wide discrepancy in student level within each individual course, further weakening the educational value of the current CW concentration.

This proposal creates a more specialized studio arts degree in Creative Writing while at the same time addressing the needs of the student who has general interest in creative writing for personal enrichment. The proposed Concentration will provide a rigorous and sequenced plan of study for the students in that studio program, and will enable the Creative Writing Program to provide instruction for those students by Program faculty members, which has not heretofore always been the case for our undergraduate majors.

**Summary of Key Changes**

- ENGL 3329 is now a required introductory gateway course for all students wishing to take creative writing;
- Any student may enroll in ENGL 3329, and then ENGL 3330 and/or ENGL 3331. These 3000 level courses comprise the introductory level of courses that are open to the general interest student.
- Admission to the Concentration in Creative Writing requires the submission of a portfolio of writing, which is assessed through a blind review process. After the second time a student fails to be admitted, approval of the Director of Creative Writing Program must be sought to apply again. (The Department has already created documentation for faculty and students describing this assessment process.)
- Only students admitted to the Concentration may enroll in 4000 level CW courses.
- The total number of 24 literature hours and their distribution across British, American, and elective categories remain the same. A new requirement adds that 3 of these hours be in literature after 1950. (Thus a student could satisfy the post-1950 requirement with an elective, or with a course that also satisfies the "any American" or "any British" requirements.)

Attached is the new catalog language we are proposing, followed by a marked-up version of the existing catalog language for comparison. Accompanying this document are CBM forms noting changes to the course descriptions of all of our creative writing courses (ENGL 3329-3331, 4350-4356); these changes are dependent upon the degree program proposal being approved.

by CLASS  
10/17/08  
U.S.C.

**I. Proposed catalog description of CW program**Creative Writing Curriculum [*new paragraph to be inserted in catalog before the list of BA degree concentrations*]

The upper division creative writing curriculum at the University of Houston offers opportunities for students interested in studying creative writing as part of their general education and for those students seeking a Bachelor of Arts degree in English with a Concentration in Creative Writing. Any student who has completed a 2000-level or above literature course may enroll in the required introductory course, ENGL 3329. All students who complete ENGL 3329 are eligible to enroll in ENGL 3330 and ENGL 3331. 4000-level creative writing courses are open only to students who have been admitted to the Concentration in Creative Writing.

Concentration in Creative Writing

Students majoring in English with a Concentration in Creative Writing must complete all university and college requirements for the Bachelor of Arts degree. Before enrolling in advanced courses in English, students must complete the six hour university Core requirement in Communication (ENGL 1303 and 1304 or equivalents) and MATH 1310 or equivalent. Additional nonadvanced courses in English may not be applied toward the major. After completing ENGL 3329 and enrolling in ENGL 3330 or ENGL 3331, students seeking a Bachelor of Arts degree in English with a Concentration in Creative Writing apply for admission to the Concentration. Application to the Concentration in Creative Writing requires the submission of a portfolio. Blind review of portfolios occurs once each semester. Students who are not admitted into the Concentration may reapply the following semester. After the second time a student fails to be admitted, approval of the Director of Creative Writing Program must be sought to apply again. 4000-level creative writing courses are open only to students who have been admitted to the Concentration in Creative Writing. In addition to the university and college requirements for the Bachelor of Arts degree, majors seeking a Concentration in Creative Writing will take thirty-nine advanced hours in English (3000- and 4000-level courses), to include:

1. Nine hours in British literature, to include:
  - a. Six hours in British literature before 1798 (ENGL 3302 through 3313, 3317, and 3327).
  - b. Three hours any British literature (3000- or 4000-level).
2. Six hours in American literature, to include:
  - a. Three hours in American literature before 1900 (ENGL 3350 or 3352).
  - b. Three hours any American literature (3000- or 4000-level).
3. Nine hours electives in English (3000- or 4000-level courses, excluding creative writing courses).
4. Of these twenty-four hours in literature and electives, 3 hours must be in literature since 1950.
5. Fifteen hours in Creative Writing courses, to include:
  - a. Six hours in 3000-level creative writing: ENGL 3329 and either ENGL 3330 or 3331.

- b. Three hours in ENGL 4353 or 4354.
- c. Three hours in ENGL 4355 or 4356.
- d. Three hours in ENGL 4350, 4351, 4352 (or any other 4000-level creative writing courses or repeats of a 4000-level course with approval of the instructor).

In order to graduate with a major in English with a Concentration in Creative Writing, the student must have a minimum overall average of **B** (3.00) in creative writing courses.

Superior students in the Creative Writing Concentration may be permitted to write a senior honors thesis. These students graduate with Honors in English, a distinction also noted in the transcript and graduation program. (Students who also fulfill the requirements of the university's Honors College graduate with University Honors and Honors in English.) In order to pursue a senior honors thesis in creative writing, the student must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.60 in all creative writing courses in addition to the thesis requirements set by the Honors College. He or she must submit a preliminary manuscript of 10 pages of poetry or 20 pages of prose to a creative writing faculty member for review. If the manuscript is accepted, that faculty member will serve as the student's thesis advisor, and the student will register for ENGL 3399 and 4399. Both courses must be completed in order for credit to be earned. The student must complete, with a grade of **B+** or better, the creative writing thesis, a manuscript of approximately 40 pages of poetry or 80 pages of prose. The thesis committee ultimately determines appropriate and sufficient length and quality.

## **II. Insertion of new paragraph about senior honors thesis into the BA degree in English with a Concentration in Literature degree plan to create parallel structure in the catalog.**

Superior students in the Literature Concentration may be permitted to write a senior honors thesis. These students graduate with Honors in English, a distinction also noted in the transcript and graduation program. (Students who also fulfill the requirements of the university's Honors College graduate with University Honors and Honors in English.) In order to pursue a senior honors thesis in literature, the student must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.25 and a major GPA of 3.5. He or she must follow the approval procedures of the Office of Undergraduate Research and the Department of English. If approved, the student will register for ENGL 3399 and 4399. Both courses must be completed in order for credit to be earned. The thesis committee ultimately determines appropriate and sufficient length and quality.