

Goddard College

PLAINFIELD, VERMONT

BFA IN CREATIVE WRITING

The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing (BFAW) is a degree program composed of students and faculty who aspire to integrate these dimensions into their lives: creative writing as an art and craft undertaken as independent practice and collaboration; an engaged study of literature and literary movements and theories; an understanding of the ethics of creative writing, language, and writing practices in multiple social contexts; and reflections on the role of the writer (the self) in the worlds in which the writer/self engages. The program is low residency and grounded in the principles and practices of student-centered, progressive education. We encourage students to work innovatively in their chosen genres, while also studying various cultural, political, and social time periods along with traditional forms and structures.

The BFAW residency runs concurrently with the Bachelor of Arts in Individualized Studies Program (IBA). In its design, the BFAW and IBA residency encourages interdisciplinary thought, study, and dialogue between creative writing, scholarship, the arts, the hard and soft sciences, and personal and social action. Students typically enter the program at Level 5 (usually the first semester of their junior year), and focus their studies on creative writing practices and approaches and the literary arts.

The Faculty

Faculty members of the program are published writers committed to excellence in their craft, the development of individual voice and unique style, and engagement with an active writing life that involves literary community-building and ongoing scholarly exploration. Students work closely with faculty advisors during each residency to plan the work of the semester. They continue this supportive and sustaining mentorship throughout the semester, benefiting from the experience, insights, and critical feedback of their advisor.



Degree, Program, and Residency Requirements

In addition to meeting the wider undergraduate requirements (Wide Knowledge, Engaged Critical Thought and Writing, Math as a Lived Experience, Natural Sciences, Personal Development, Thoughtful Action, and Social and Ecological Context), BFAW students fulfill these essential elements of the program:

- » Broad literary reading practices (reading across cultures, genres, and eras)
- » Engagement with literary, critical, and philosophical thought, movements, and histories
- » Development of craft (demonstrating the use of craft and articulation of one's application of craft, including a commitment to revision)
- » Reading as a writer (articulating how, and how well, craft is applied in others' work)
- » Writing in at least two genres
- » Group studies*
- » "Writer in the World/Responsibility of the Writer" essay*
- » Senior study
- » Graduation presentation
- » Participation in at least one reading at the residency
- » Attendance and participation in the Visiting Writer's Workshop and Reading*
- » Attendance at the community meeting*
- » Attendance and participation in various workshops, including Introductory & Advanced Genre workshops and Theory, Cultures, and Eras workshops
- » Attendance and participation in individual and group advising sessions

**see reverse for more information*



Spelling It Out

Group Studies

A cornerstone of the BFA in Creative Writing Program is the practice of writing in community. To that end, students are required to participate in group studies around two themes: the writing workshop, and publishing. Over the course of the degree, students must participate in at least two writing-workshop group studies, at least one publishing group study (either *Guideword Literary Journal* or Lo-fi Publishing), and one workshop of their choosing.

Writing Workshop

While all group studies share the same learning objectives, the specific nature of each is developed by students and faculty in collaboration, based on the interests and curiosities of the students and facilitator. A writing workshop might, for example, include presenting creative work and providing feedback to peers. It may also include responding to writing prompts provided by faculty or other group participants.

Guideword

Guideword is the BFAW program's own literary journal, edited and run by students who select, edit, and publish the work of Goddard undergraduates.

Lo-fi Publishing

Aimed at encouraging students to explore chapbook making, broadsides, self-publishing, and micro- and small-press publishing projects, this group study produces literature and conceives of distribution methods as a group or collaborative endeavor. "Lo-fi" is shorthand for "low-fidelity," a term borrowed from music that indicates it is "homemade" or made without the need for expensive equipment or resources outside what the artist has.

Essay on "The Writer in the World" or "The Responsibility of the Writer"

During Level 7 (traditionally, the first semester of the senior year), in the middle of the semester, students submit an essay that discusses their ideas on the ethical responsibilities and challenges of the writer. This essay, given a title of the student's choice, addresses writing in social, cultural, and/or political contexts. The essay is personal, and informed by larger debates on the role of the arts. Students may begin thinking about these topics as soon as they begin their studies at Goddard; as writers, they may consider this contemplation part of their "thoughtful action" degree requirement. A final draft of this essay will be included in the student's senior-study binder.



Visiting Writer Reading, Workshop, and Conversation

Each residency, the BFAW program hosts a guest writer who has wide experience in teaching and publishing. Invited writers represent a diverse array of ideas and approaches, from residency to residency. Previous and upcoming guests Ravi Shankar, Renee Gladman, Adam Braver, Rebecca Brown, Gale Jackson, Rachel Pollack, Doug Kearney, and Jenny Bouly have experiences in publishing and editing, literary innovation, creating community, writing in more than one genre, and collaborating with artists in other fields. The guest writer gives a reading, followed by a question-and-answer period, and a workshop. BFAW students are encouraged to meet individually and in small groups with the guest writer during mealtimes and informally, around campus.

History of the BFAW Program

The BFA in Creative Writing Program was created in 2007 in response to a high number of admissions inquiries regarding creative writing, a high number of bachelor degree students graduating with theses in creative writing, and an interest in creative writing among the faculty.

At the time of its inception, the low-residency BFAW at Goddard was — and still is — the only program of its kind, uniquely positioned to serve dynamic, innovative, nontraditional, working, and adult students. Goddard students often continue on to MFA programs across the country.

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