

## **THE BOOK**

### **A Guide to Colorado State University's Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing Program**

(updated 8/1/20)

## Table of Contents

<b>THE APPLICATION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>GTAS &amp; OTHER POSITIONS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>THE GTA APPLICATION</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>FELLOWSHIPS &amp; FINANCIAL AID</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>ESTABLISHING RESIDENCY</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>HOUSING IN FORT COLLINS</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>THE THESIS</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>DUAL-GENRE THESIS</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>ETDs (ELECTRONIC THESES &amp; DISSERTATIONS) &amp; EMBARGOES</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>THE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>ADVISORS &amp; ADVISING</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>DATES, DEADLINES, &amp; MILESTONES</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>FORMS &amp; PROCEDURES</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>INERNSHIPS &amp; SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT WRITING CONTESTS</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>READINGS &amp; THE WRITING COMMUNITY</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>FUNDS FOR RESEARCH &amp; TRAVEL</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>THE MFA YEAR BY YEAR</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>FACULTY &amp; STAFF CONTACTS</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: FACULTY TEACHING STATEMENTS</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: SUGGESTED READING</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>APPENDIX C: SAMPLE ANNOTATIONS</b>	<b>46</b>

## THE APPLICATION

The MFA program admits new students only for the fall semester; the application deadline is January 1. A complete application to the MFA program includes the following:

1. **Statement of Purpose:** A one-page, single-spaced statement in which you introduce yourself and state your goals for graduate study.
2. **Writing Sample:** We ask for 12-20 pages of poems; two short stories or a novel chapter from fiction writers (maximum 25 pages); from nonfiction writers, 20-25 pages of personal essay, memoir, hybrid or other form, as either one longer submission or two shorter submissions.
3. **Three Letters of Recommendation:** Provide email addresses for each recommender who has agreed to write a letter. Your recommenders will be e-mailed instructions to upload their letters.
4. **Transcripts:** You must provide a transcript from each university or college you attended that represent the course work you completed for your Bachelor's degree and any advanced degrees since then. Use institution code 4075 and ask each institution to send either electronic transcripts to [gradadmissions@colostate.edu](mailto:gradadmissions@colostate.edu) or hard copies directly to this address: Colorado State University Office of Admissions, 1062 Campus Delivery, Fort Collins, CO 80523-1062.
5. **GTA Application (optional):** If you intend to apply for a Graduate Teaching Assistantship, there is an additional application that must be submitted. If you indicate online that you intend to submit a GTA application, it will be considered a required document to complete your application. (See "The GTA Application," below.)

Applications are submitted online. Visit [gradadmissions.colostate.edu/apply](http://gradadmissions.colostate.edu/apply).

For more information, including International applications, visit [english.colostate.edu/academics/graduate/graduate-study-application-process/](http://english.colostate.edu/academics/graduate/graduate-study-application-process/).

## GTAS & OTHER POSITIONS

- **Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs).** GTAs are awarded to some incoming MFA students on the basis of their potential to be successful teachers of college composition. Most GTAs teach CO150 (College Composition). CO150 has a training program and extensive support system to help new teachers be successful. GTAs are provided tuition coverage and a stipend for the equivalent of nine months. These jobs are defined as 20-hour-a-week jobs; most people find that the workload fluctuates above and below this number. GTA Applications are submitted with the application to the MFA program. Contact [Emily.Dailey@colostate.edu](mailto:Emily.Dailey@colostate.edu) for details.
- **Introduction to Creative Writing.** MFA students also have the opportunity to teach a section of Introduction to Creative Writing (E210), after taking Teaching Creative Writing (E607B), offered each Fall. Those who do not have a GTA will be paid a stipend for teaching E210.
- **Other English Department positions.** These positions provide a stipend but not tuition coverage. They include serving as advisor to *Greyrock Review* (the undergraduate literary magazine) and managing the Eddy Hall computer labs. E-mail announcements for applications for these positions go out to current MFA students in the spring semester. Students can also apply to work in the Writing Center. Tutoring in the Writing Center pays \$12 an hour, and tutors can work anywhere from two to twenty hours a week. Applications for the Writing Center are available in April.
- **Unpaid TA positions.** Those students who aren't awarded GTAs can also search for professors who'd like an unpaid TA for an undergraduate class they are teaching, gaining experience that may help on future applications for teaching positions. Faculty also hire students to do freelance writing and editing work. Most of these jobs are advertised via e-mail, so make sure your current e-mail address is on file with the university and department.
- **Off-campus jobs** include paid internships, which you can research through the CSU Career Center's website. Karen Montgomery Moore, Internship Coordinator, is also very helpful in arranging paid and unpaid internships. See the list of internships, under Internships and Service Opportunities, for an idea of where people have worked in the past. You can also find on-campus and off-campus Fort Collins jobs through Student Employment Services ([ses.colostate.edu/](http://ses.colostate.edu/)), through the local newspaper's website ([coloradoan.com/](http://coloradoan.com/)) and through the university's newspaper, *The Collegian* ([www.collegian.com](http://www.collegian.com)). Other Northern Colorado job sites include [www.northerncoloradohelpwanted.com](http://www.northerncoloradohelpwanted.com), [www.larimer.org](http://www.larimer.org), and [www.fcgov.com/jobs](http://www.fcgov.com/jobs)
- **Visit Student Financial Services** ([financialaid.colostate.edu/](http://financialaid.colostate.edu/)) for information about scholarships and grants.

## THE GTA APPLICATION

When students apply to the MFA Program, they have the option to apply for a Graduate Teaching Assistantship. The GTA application consists of three sections: Background and Experience; Statement of Interest; and Recent Writing Sample.

**Background and Experience:** Here you should describe any teaching, tutoring, undergraduate teaching assistantship work, any course grading for a professor, and any elementary and/or secondary school teaching you've done. If you don't have direct classroom experience, describe any and all supervisory, training, coaching, or outdoor recreation experience. Describe your duties and experiences, and explain what you learned from any job in which you were a supervisor, instructor, or guide. Important: Remind recommenders to speak to your potential for college teaching.

**Statement of Interest:** In this section, the committee wants to know about your future plans. Do you see teaching and writing as part of your life? Do you see teaching as a way to better understand writing—yours and others? As a creative writer, how do you see teaching composition as fitting in with your graduate studies overall?

**Recent Writing Sample:** Include an edited and proofread copy of a recent piece of expository writing: a term paper for class, a research paper, a nonfiction essay, or, if you have none of these, a brief intellectual autobiography.

*\* Note: The GTA Statement of Interest and Writing Sample are separate from the MFA Program Statement of Purpose and Writing Sample.*

### GTA Selection Process

Our GTA selection committee is made up of faculty members from the different programs within the English Department. This committee reads all the files of applicants recommended for GTAs by the individual graduate programs. When selecting students for teaching assistantships—as for admission—we most strongly consider the writing sample. We also look at GPA, letters of recommendation, teaching experience, and personal statements, but mainly it is the writing sample and the promise it shows that determine our selection. The GTA selection committee chooses GTAs with three factors in mind: 1) the strengths of the individual applicants; 2) balance across the six graduate programs in the department; and 3) the needs of the composition program. The committee respects the rankings of the individual programs and takes care to preserve these rankings, but they are free to—and do—rearrange the rankings based on such factors as teaching experience, academic record, and the committee's own response to the application materials.

First-round GTA offers are usually made in early March. Students offered GTAs will be given a deadline for acceptance. As not all applicants will accept the offer, a second and sometimes a third round of offers will go out in the late Spring or, occasionally, into the summer.

On rare occasions, GTAs may be awarded to current MFA students, beginning in their second year. Interested students should contact [Emily.Dailey@colostate.edu](mailto:Emily.Dailey@colostate.edu) for the details of this process.

The GTA application instructions and form can be found [here](#).

## FELLOWSHIPS & FINANCIAL AID

If you aren't familiar with the FAFSA, visit <https://financialaid.colostate.edu/financial-aid-guide/>. This is Colorado State's Student Financial Services webpage; they have information about scholarships, the FAFSA, loans, and CSU aid. You can also search their website for CSU and other scholarships.

Visit the websites below for specific information about deadlines and applications for scholarships and post-MFA fellowships:

### **College of Liberal Arts/Department**

English Faculty & Staff Graduate Scholarship – apply between December 1 and March 1:  
<https://www.libarts.colostate.edu/students/scholarships/how-to-apply-for-scholarships/>

Community Engagement Scholarship – apply between December 1 and March 1:  
<https://www.libarts.colostate.edu/students/scholarships/how-to-apply-for-scholarships/>

### **Graduate School**

Select from financial aid options listed at <http://graduateschool.colostate.edu/financial/financial-aid-opportunities/>

For information about the Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship and the application and requirements criteria, contact [Ludy.Avalos@colostate.edu](mailto:Ludy.Avalos@colostate.edu).

### **Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing Fellowship Funds**

There are a number of fellowships awarded each year to incoming students who will not have Graduate Teaching Assistantships in the English Department. Creative Writing faculty determine the recipients of these fellowships; there are no applications. Recipients will be notified before the deadline to accept admission into the MFA program.

## ESTABLISHING RESIDENCY

In-state tuition is substantially lower than out-of-state tuition. To qualify for in-state tuition, you must have been a Colorado resident for one full year before the start of the Academic Year. It is important that you establish Colorado residency immediately upon your arrival in Fort Collins, so that you will be eligible for in-state tuition beginning in your second year. (If you have a GTA, your tuition waiver only covers in-state tuition in your second and third years.)

To establish residency, be sure to do one or more of the following:

1. Go to the Department of Motor Vehicles and get your Colorado driver's license.
2. Register your vehicle in the state of Colorado.
3. Register to vote. You can do this when you get your Colorado driver's license. There is no charge.
4. If you do not have a GTA, get some form of off-campus, non-temporary employment.
5. Find a place that you can use as your "residence" (a PO Box is NOT sufficient) if you have not secured permanent housing yet.
6. Attend a Tuition Classification Orientation Session in the Office of Financial Aid (100A Centennial Hall). The session lasts approximately one hour and the schedule is available on their website listed below.
7. Residency dates change yearly, so please check the dates and the procedures by visiting the following website: <https://financialaid.colostate.edu/residency/>.

## HOUSING IN FORT COLLINS

The best way to secure housing is to come to Fort Collins in the late spring or early summer, preferably during the week. Oftentimes, you can sign a lease that will start in August if you find a place in May. There are numerous rentals within walking distance of campus. Some students find that the further they live from campus, the quieter their neighborhood is. We strongly recommend visiting Fort Collins, and the property you will be renting, rather than finding and leasing a place that you haven't seen. Walking around campus, you can always find posters advertising rooms for rent.

It's also helpful to get in touch with current students, who may know of roommate situations or have other valuable advice about where to find housing in Fort Collins. Ask Emily Dailey or the Creative Writing director for contact information.

The university maintains a website that lists off-campus rentals: [rentalsearch.colostate.edu](http://rentalsearch.colostate.edu). Also, check out the local newspaper, the *Coloradoan* ([www.coloradoan.com/](http://www.coloradoan.com/)); CSU's newspaper, the *Collegian* ([www.collegian.com](http://www.collegian.com)); and Craigslist ([www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org)). There are several property-management companies in Fort Collins with extensive rental listings on their websites.

### Housing Advice

There is a wide range of housing options in Fort Collins, from new apartments to old, practically antique houses—and everything in between. Here are some hints:

- The most affordable “student” housing is found surrounding campus. Much of this housing includes old houses that are shared by three to four roommates; since many of these houses were built in the early 1900s, utility bills may be higher than average in the winter.
- Please note that Fort Collins has a city ordinance that prohibits more than three unrelated people from occupying a property together: [www.fcgov.com/neighborhoodservices/occupancy.php](http://www.fcgov.com/neighborhoodservices/occupancy.php).
- North Fort Collins is the “college town” area. The housing in this area usually provides a nice walk to Old Town, where the bars, coffee shops, and music venues are located. There are also many fun, independently owned shops in this area and tons of restaurants. If you want an apartment or house with “character,” look in the area between the north edge of campus (Laurel Street) and Old Town. Be sure to ask landlords if an apartment has private or shared bathrooms. (If you don't mind sharing bathrooms, youth-hostel style, you may find some studios for lower prices).
- The neighborhoods east of campus, between College Ave. and Lemay, have more houses for rent, including quaint Craftsman-style bungalows and mid-century ranch houses. There are rentals east of Lemay (near Poudre Valley Hospital), but living there makes for a long walk or bike ride to campus.
- The area immediately west of campus is full of mostly undergrad housing. There are many townhomes and campus apartments in this area, as well as a number of fraternity and sorority houses. If you are seeking a quiet area to live, this is probably not the place. Rams Village is “party central” for undergrad students, as are many of the surrounding townhome complexes. However, west of Taft Hill Rd. toward Overland and Horsetooth Reservoir, things quiet down quite a bit.

- The south end of town, below Drake Ave., offers newer construction and more expensive rentals. These areas are more suburban with many “big box” stores (Target, Best Buy, Bed Bath & Beyond, et. al.). If you prefer the newest housing Fort Collins has to offer and don’t mind a longer trip to campus, this is the area for you.
- Fort Collins is very bicycle friendly, with bike lanes on most major streets and many city-maintained bicycle paths. Many students and faculty bike to campus.
- Fort Collins has good public transportation options, with many bus lines terminating on CSU campus or at the Downtown Transit Center. Additionally, the MAX line (a dedicated express-bus lane) runs north-south through the city, with two stops on campus. All Fort Collins public transportation is free to CSU students and faculty. Visit [www.ridetransfort.com](http://www.ridetransfort.com) for maps and schedules.

## PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The MFA program is a 48-credit program, which is usually completed in three years. Required coursework is listed below; additionally, you will take 12 credits of E699: Thesis in your third year. All remaining credits are elective, and usually fulfilled by taking other courses in the English Department.

### **Workshops (E640)**

You must take 12 credits (usually taken as four 3-credit courses) of E640 in the genre in which you were admitted to the MFA program. Specific requirements and focus of each workshop are determined by the instructor. (See **Appendix A** for faculty teaching statements.) It is assumed that students accepted into the workshop already command a critical vocabulary.

#### **A. Fiction**

Group discussion of original student fiction, emphasizing plot, characterization, style, structure, and theory. Students will normally submit one substantial story or chapter per credit hour and will be responsible for revising their own work as well as providing detailed evaluations of all work submitted to the workshop.

#### **B. Poetry**

This graduate workshop provides the student poet with an audience made up of instructor and fellow students who read the student's work in advance and offer analysis and suggestions in weekly class meetings. Since one of the main aims of the course is to help students develop a body of work, students who enroll are expected to produce poems every week and to be open to criticism offered in class discussion. At the end of the term, poems written during that semester may be resubmitted as a portfolio in revised versions.

#### **C. Creative Nonfiction**

This is a writing workshop that challenges students to learn, through reading and a lot of writing, ways in which to conceive, research, write, and critique literary nonfiction—from personal essays to reportage-based literary journalism.

### **Form & Technique (E513)**

You must take one 3-credit course of E513 in the genre in which you were admitted to the MFA program. Specific requirements and focus of this class vary with instructors. Be aware that E513 is normally offered only once every two years, in each genre.

#### **A. Fiction**

This is a reading and discussion class about the way a wide variety of modern and contemporary fiction writers use form and technique. Focus will be on the writer's point of view and on the relationship between theory and practice. Typical discussion might cover the ways in which theme is developed through voice, plot, characterization, tone, and so forth. The course, though not a history of contemporary fiction, may cover trends in fiction from the Modernists to the present day—realism, metafiction, minimalism, etc.

## **B. Poetry**

This course examines individual poems and critical writings by major modern poets in an effort to establish relationships between theory and practice, between poetics and poetry. It usually will trace some sources of modern and contemporary trends as they take their beginnings in the nineteenth century. Major precursors such as Whitman, Dickinson, and Hopkins may be included as well as the French Symbolists for the backgrounds they provide in understanding twentieth-century modernist poetry. Technical and formal issues such as the use of persona, imagery, rhythm, rhyme, stanzaic form, poetic line, diction, and figurative language will provide continuity as the course moves through literary history and such movements as Imagism and Surrealism toward the contemporary period.

## **C. Creative Nonfiction**

This reading and discussion class explores a wide variety of contemporary literary nonfiction books and shorter forms and focuses on the writer's point of view—specifically on questions such as “How did the writer accomplish the structure of this work?” “How might you do this, too?”; “How do voice, plotting, characterization, and other techniques typical of the fiction writer help develop themes in nonfiction?”; and “What kinds of research are needed to help create a credible story?” This class might look at personal essays and any number of creative nonfiction books in the following genres or areas of interest: memoir, nature or environmental writing, science, travel, anthropology, immersion reporting, history.

## **Out-of-Department Class**

One 3-credit course (300 level or above) outside the English Department. In the past, students have used classes such as playwriting (offered through the Theater and Music Department) or science writing (listed as CM640) to satisfy this requirement. *This requirement is waived for students who earned an undergraduate degree in a field other than English or Creative Writing.*

## **Pre-20<sup>th</sup> Century Literature**

You must take one 3-credit course concentrating on pre-20<sup>th</sup> century literature at the 500 level or above. At least one course meeting this requirement is offered by the English Department each semester. Contact the professor if you have questions about whether a given class will fulfill this requirement.

## **Transferring Credits**

You may transfer up to 9 graduate-level credits from other graduate institutions toward completion of your degree. You will need a transcript from each graduate institution you attended, as well as a course description for each course you want transferred. Foreign language credits are subject to the approval of the Foreign Languages and Literature Department at CSU.

## **Portfolio**

The portfolio is designed to allow for an accurate and thorough assessment of a student's progress in the program, while granting a student maximum time for writing and study. The portfolio will be evaluated in your final semester—a prerequisite to the oral defense—by your advisor. It must be submitted to your advisor three weeks before the oral defense. Other committee members may request to see all or some of your portfolio at this time as well. You may complete the portfolio requirements by choosing one of the following options:

### **Option A**

1. A sample critical paper from a literature course.
2. A sample paper from a craft course (Form and Technique, Narrative Voice, The Short Story, Contemporary Memoir, Essay, Poetics and Poetry, etc.).
3. A sample of your creative work: one story, chapter, or essay, or a group of poems, from the thesis.
4. A self-assessment of your teaching, internship, or service while in the program. The self-evaluation should discuss how any (or all) of the positions above helped you to become a better writer and critical thinker. You may also include a supervisor's evaluation of your teaching or internship.
5. An annotated bibliography. The annotated bibliography must include a minimum of 50 works, 20 of which must be full-length books. The rest of the works can be made up of short stories, poems, creative nonfiction, critical articles, and other primary and secondary sources. See "The Annotated Bibliography," below, for more information.

### **Option B**

1. A sample critical paper from a literature course.
2. A sample paper from a craft course (Form and Technique, Narrative Voice, The Short Story, Contemporary Memoir, Essay, Poetics and Poetry, etc.).
3. A sample of your creative work: one story or a group of poems from the thesis.
4. A self-assessment of your teaching, internship, or service while in the program. The self-evaluation should discuss how any (or all) of the positions above helped you to become a better writer and critical thinker. You may also include a supervisor's evaluation of your teaching or internship.
5. A substantial critical paper of 25 pages or more. Papers can focus on an individual author, a formal technique or development, a contemporary thematic concern, or a literary movement. You will devise your paper topic in consultation with your advisor, who may suggest you work with another faculty member to develop it.
6. An annotated bibliography. The annotated bibliography must include a minimum of 25 annotations, 10 of which must be full-length books. The rest of the works can be made up of short stories, poems, creative nonfiction, critical articles, and other primary and secondary sources. You may choose to annotate texts that will be central to your critical paper. See "The Annotated Bibliography," below, for more information.

## FAQs

*How will the contents of my portfolio be evaluated?*

We intend the evaluation to be a quantitative more than qualitative measurement. We won't be second-guessing the professor who has already graded your literature or craft paper. The bibliography will be evaluated as to whether the format has been followed and the minimum number of entries included. The essay will be read and critiqued by your advisor.

*Do I have to teach in order to fulfill the portfolio requirements?*

No. You may fulfill the service requirement by teaching, service to the program (e.g., serving as president of OGSW, creative writing committee representative, etc.), an internship, or other options such as working in the Writing Center. We hope you will take advantage of a number of opportunities in the program, as time allows.

*Do I have to sign up for an internship?*

No, though most students find an internship helpful as hands-on experience for gaining future job opportunities and for their development as writers.

## THE THESIS

This information is available online [here](#).

### How to Set Up a Thesis Committee

Your thesis committee is composed of two departmental faculty members, one of whom is your advisor, and one outside-department faculty member. In the case of a dual-genre thesis, the committee will include an additional advisor in the secondary genre. Be aware that not all faculty members are available for all thesis committees; be sure to meet with faculty early, to discuss their availability. You will choose thesis committee members by **October of your third semester** and submit their names on the GS-6 form. Use the GS-9 form to change advisor or committee members, the GS-25 to declare your graduation term and amend your GS-6 course listing, and the GS-24 upon completion of your defense, for approval of your thesis.

The biggest challenge people usually encounter in recruiting their committee members is finding someone outside of the department. Most people recruit someone they have taken a class from (i.e., while fulfilling the out-of-the-department course), a faculty member in a discipline with relevance to your work, or someone who has previously served on a thesis committee. Ask your advisor, professors, and/or fellow students for recommendations.

### The Defense

You may defend your thesis only after you successfully complete the portfolio, all course work, and program requirements. **Your oral defense must take place by approximately the ninth week of the semester in which you wish to graduate.** And your committee should have your thesis at least three weeks before your defense date. Deadlines change from year to year, so please check with the graduate school to confirm the deadline for defenses.

When you and your committee have agreed to a date and time for your defense, e-mail this information to [Emily Dailey@colostate.edu](mailto:Emily.Dailey@colostate.edu), who will reserve a room for your defense. Be sure to see her for the forms and instructions you'll need at your defense.

### Poetry Thesis

A poetry thesis is defined as a book-length collection of poetry. Therefore, a thesis will have the number of pages and the quality of work that make publication a possibility, at least 48 double-spaced pages. These pages do not include the preliminaries.

### Fiction Thesis

A fiction thesis is defined as a book-length collection of stories or a novel. Therefore, a thesis will have the number of pages and the quality of work that make publication a possibility, at least 8 short stories or no fewer than 100 pages, double-spaced. These pages do not include the preliminaries.

### Creative Nonfiction thesis

A creative nonfiction thesis is defined as a book-length collection of essays or a memoir. Therefore, a thesis will have the number of pages and the quality of work that make publication a possibility, at least 8 essays or no fewer than 100 pages, double-spaced. These pages do not include the preliminaries.

**Format**

*Note: A thesis must follow the Graduate School's formatting guidelines before it will be accepted by the Graduate School.*

The preliminary pages are the title page, copyright page, abstract page, table of contents, and the acknowledgements, etc. The body is the work itself. The thesis will be prefaced by an introduction, which is a brief discussion of the aesthetics behind your work. The introduction should be tailored to your specific concerns. Topics covered in the introduction can include influences, issues of craft, background, development as a writer, and evaluation of the works in the thesis. It may be helpful to visit the library and read former MFA candidates' theses. Some theses can be found in the stacks; more recent theses can be found online.

## DUAL-GENRE THESIS

While enrolled in the poetry, fiction, or creative nonfiction tracks as an MFA candidate at CSU, some students may wish to complete a dual-genre thesis. This option is intended for exceptional candidates and must be approved by both thesis advisors and by the program director before submitting the GS6 form. This option is intended to foster cross-disciplinary thought and artistry and must not detract from the primary genre thesis.

Dual-genre candidates are not awarded two MFA degrees. The diploma will read “Master of Fine Arts in English” with a concentration in the genre in which you were accepted into the program. Your dual-genre credentials will be reflected in your transcripts and thesis manuscript.

### Dual-Genre Thesis Requirements

- You must take **E513 in both genres**.
- You must accumulate at least **15 credits of workshop**: 12 in the genre in which you were admitted to the program and at least 3 in the genre in which you write your secondary thesis. (For instance: A poetry student writing a secondary nonfiction thesis must take both E513B and E513C, and must take 12 credits in E640B and at least 3 in E640C.)
- Your committee must consist of **two principal advisors** (one for the primary thesis genre and one for the secondary thesis genre), as well as a second reader and an outside reader for the primary genre. These advisors will work with you as you write. Their responses will focus on their respective genres, although they may agree to review the secondary thesis as well if they wish.
- You will complete a **substantial project** in your secondary genre. The scope, approach and page requirement of this project will follow the model of the chapbook in poetry, and the essay or the novella in fiction. Regardless of the form or style, the writing in the secondary genre will be held to the same rigorous standards as the primary genre.
- The **defense** of the secondary thesis will be held separately from the primary-thesis defense and will be scheduled by the secondary thesis advisor. As mentioned, the participation of the primary thesis advisor in the secondary-thesis defense is optional, and vice versa. Signatures for both theses will appear on the same GS-24 form and will be filed on upon completion of the primary-thesis defense.
- The Graduate School requires only the **submission of the primary thesis** for completion of the MFA degree. However, a candidate has the option of submitting the secondary thesis as a supplementary document under the “Multipart Thesis option” in the Graduate School submission system. Consult [graduateschool.colostate.edu/thesis-dissertation/organizing-and-formatting-your-thesis-and-dissertation/](http://graduateschool.colostate.edu/thesis-dissertation/organizing-and-formatting-your-thesis-and-dissertation/) for guidance.

## ETDs (ELECTRONIC THESES & DISSERTATIONS) & EMBARGOES

Keeping pace with national university policies, CSU has moved to an electronic format for the filing of theses and dissertations. Thus, CSU now requires that all theses and dissertations completed at the university be submitted electronically to ProQuest (UMI). The electronic submission process eliminates the need to print these documents for final submission and allows students to pay online via credit card.

Filing your thesis with ProQuest constitutes the granting of First North American Serial Rights, which can cause problems with some publishers who may consider the work already to have been published. Creative Writing, along with the Graduate School and CSU Libraries, has crafted an Embargo Policy that protects the publication rights of your MFA thesis. You must follow this procedure exactly if you want to control the rights to your work. You *must*:

1. File your thesis electronically according to the Graduate School's requirements, and
2. Request an embargo, using the **GS-31 form**, which your advisor must sign and submit to the Graduate School.

This will limit access to your thesis to the CSU community for two years. Once your thesis is received by ProQuest (within about six weeks), you can then contact ProQuest directly and request a permanent embargo. *It is up to you to make sure that the permanent embargo is arranged with ProQuest.*

Please consult the Graduate School website for specific information and attend an orientation meeting (offered each Fall): [graduateschool.colostate.edu/thesis-dissertation](http://graduateschool.colostate.edu/thesis-dissertation).

## THE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Because a good writer is, first and foremost, a good reader, we expect students to read heavily and widely during their time in the program, and to reflect on the impact of what they read. We do not assign a formal reading list or require comprehensive exams; instead, we ask students to include in their portfolio an annotated bibliography that details what they've read and discusses the contribution of each work to their growth as a writer, scholar, and critic. As described above, the bibliography should comprise either 50 (**Option A**) or 25 (**Option B**) works.

### **What Are Annotations?**

Annotations are not “papers.” We do not require or encourage theoretical analysis, biographical investigation, or outside research. Nor are they mere “likes,” recommendations, or summaries. These should be thoughtful, detailed discussions of form and technique, with a focus on what you have learned from your encounter with the text – what has surprised or challenged or inspired your ideas about writing – and how it informs your own work. For sample annotations, please see **Appendix C**.

### **How Long Is an Annotation?**

Annotations should be no less than one page. Most will be 1-2 pages, perhaps 500-750 words, in length.

### **How Do I Choose My List?**

Suggested reading lists are provided in **Appendix B**, but each student should begin developing their bibliography in consultation with their advisor in their first year. Selections will naturally arise out of suggestions from professors and peers, in the course of workshops or classes, out of informal discussions, or through your own research. You should consider a balance between classics and contemporary work, and we encourage you to include several international works. While most students will naturally read most heavily in their own genre(s), you are welcome to include other genres and disciplines as well: essays, theory, philosophy, stage- and screen-plays, culture criticism, author biographies, history, science, etc. *You may not include works assigned for your courses in the program.*

### **How Should I Format My Annotations?**

The organization of your annotations is up to you. Some students have arranged their annotations by type (nonfiction, fiction, short stories, craft, etc.), others chronologically, or alphabetically. Please include the completion date for each individual annotation.

### **When Should I Write My Annotations?**

We recommend that you annotate each work soon after reading it, to best record its immediate impact. A prudent schedule might be to complete 15 annotations in each of your first two years, leaving slightly more for your third year, when you will have little or no coursework. Your advisor will discuss the schedule with you and may require regular submissions of completed annotations.

*Do not leave annotations until your third year.* The demands and pressures of writing your thesis are considerable; if, at the same time, you are rushing to complete 50 annotations you will neither enjoy nor learn anything from the process.

## ADVISORS & ADVISING

Your advisor will help you negotiate the rigors and pleasures of the program and will serve as the chair of your MFA thesis committee. Upon acceptance to the program, you will be assigned an initial advisor from among the faculty in your genre. Faculty do their best to create a compatible, beneficial match between students and temporary advisors. Once your first semester begins, you should set up an appointment to meet with your advisor to discuss your proposed course of study. Do not delay!

Your advisor remains temporary until the **middle of the fall semester of your second year when you complete the GS6 form**, on which you will list your thesis committee. At this point you may either: (a) request that your initial advisor become your permanent advisor, or (b) change your advisor. If you want to change your advisor, you must consult with and receive permission from your new advisor. Please note that faculty are limited in the number of advisees they are able to accept each year.

Advising checklists giving degree requirements and forms are available online at [creativewriting.colostate.edu](http://creativewriting.colostate.edu) under Program Requirements. You and your advisor should update your checklist each semester together.

### **Your advisor's role & duties:**

- Giving students feedback on class selection
- Giving students feedback on their writing
- Providing students with career-related guidance
- Providing intensive feedback on students' theses during their last year of study

### **Your responsibilities:**

- Contacting advisor to set up meetings to talk about classes and writing
- Contacting advisor if you have a problem, question, or concern
- Submitting work to advisor
- Being aware of and meeting graduate school requirements and deadlines

## DATES, DEADLINES, & MILESTONES

### Summer before First Year

It is essential that you establish Colorado residency before Fall classes begin. To be eligible for in-state tuition in your second year, you will need to have been a Colorado resident for *one full year* before classes begin. If you hold a GTA, your second-year tuition coverage will only cover in-state tuition. Check with the Office of Financial Aid regarding applying for residency: [financialaid.colostate.edu/residency](http://financialaid.colostate.edu/residency). Do not delay!

### Fall Semester (first year)

- Meet with your advisor.
- October: Register for Spring classes. (Meet with your advisor, if necessary, to help decide what classes to take.)
- November: Deadline for AWP Intro Journals Project competition. The Associated Writing Programs (AWP) holds this contest each year for MFA programs throughout the country. You will be invited to submit a sample of your work for the contest.

### Spring Semester (first year)

- March/April: Meet with your advisor to discuss your anticipated course of study.
- March/April: Deadline for Academy of American Poets (AAP) University Prize (open to CSU graduate poetry students only).
- Register for fall classes in early April.

### Fall Semester (second year)

In October, you will complete your **GS6 form**, available online through your Ramweb. Propose the 48 credits of courses you will take throughout your time in the program and list the faculty members who have agreed to serve on your thesis committee. Don't wait until a hold is placed on your registration (which will prevent you from registering for classes in the spring of your second year) to start on this form.

### Spring Semester (second year)

March: Complete the thesis application form, available from Emily Dailey in 359 Eddy. Review it with your advisor and have each committee member sign the application. Then return the application to Marnie, who will ask the Graduate Coordinator to approve. Once it has been approved, Marnie will enter an override for the number of thesis credits you are requesting for the fall term and then e-mail you with the CRN and approval to register.

### Fall Semester (third year)

October: E-mail Emily Dailey to request an override to register for Spring for your remaining thesis credits; you do not have to complete the thesis application form a second time.

### **Spring Semester (third year)**

Before the second week of classes: Complete the **GS-25** form, available online through your Ramweb. On this form, you must declare your graduation term and make any course changes to the list you provided on your GS-6. Confirm changes with your advisor, then complete the form online.

Third week of classes: Review the required **Graduate School formatting** for your thesis. Thesis-submission-process information and the required Graduate School thesis formatting links are online at [graduateschool.colostate.edu/thesis-dissertation/organizing-and-formatting-your-thesis-and-dissertation](http://graduateschool.colostate.edu/thesis-dissertation/organizing-and-formatting-your-thesis-and-dissertation).

When you and your committee have agreed to a date and time for your defense, e-mail this information to [Emily.Dailey@colostate.edu](mailto:Emily.Dailey@colostate.edu), who will reserve a room for your defense. Be sure to see her for the forms and instructions you'll need at your defense.

Defend early in the semester—at least two weeks before the deadline—to allow time for you to make any recommended revisions to your thesis and resolve any discrepancies before the Graduate School deadline. Deadlines are online at <http://graduateschool.colostate.edu/policies-and-procedures/deadline-dates/>. If you do not defend and submit your thesis before the deadline, you will need to pay extra to defend in the late spring or summer for a summer graduation date.

If you have completed all of your course work but want to defend in the late spring or during the summer semester after your third year, please first check with your committee to see if they are available in the summer (or even late spring semester) and observe the Graduate School deadlines, update your application term online, and register for Continuous Registration for the summer of your graduation. Please note: defending in the summer must be approved by all of your committee members, as faculty are often not available during the summer months. You will be required to pay a fee to the university for Continuous Registration.

Be sure to fill out the Embargo form so that your rights to your manuscript are retained. See **ETDs & Embargoes**, above.

## FORMS & PROCEDURES

**Graduate school forms and corresponding instructions** are available online at [graduateschool.colostate.edu/policies-and-procedures/forms/](http://graduateschool.colostate.edu/policies-and-procedures/forms/)

### First and Second Years

Complete the **GS-6** form in October of your third semester at CSU. On this form, propose the 48 credits of courses you'll take to complete your degree and list your three (or four, in the case of dual-genre theses) committee members who have agreed to serve. You can make corrections to the courses on the **GS-25** form at the start of your final term.

To change advisors or to change committee members, you'll need the **GS-9A** form. You'll need signatures from those being deleted, and if a new advisor is being added to your committee. Signatures of both your new advisor and old advisor are required to switch advisors. Look under "Advising Guidelines" for more instructions.

### Third Year

Complete the **GS-25** form (Application for Graduation) by the second week of your final semester. You'll need to compare your unofficial transcript to a copy of your GS-6 to complete this form.

The **GS-24** form must be submitted to the Graduate School within two business days of your defense. Each of your committee members must sign this form, so bring it to your oral defense along with the **GS-30** Thesis Submission form and the **GS-31** Embargo Restriction Request form (see ETDs & Embargoes, above). Be sure to leave at least two weeks between your defense and the Graduate School deadline to make revisions to your thesis, submit your thesis electronically, correct any formatting as notified, and receive official approval of your submission.

**Department Forms** must be completed in order to register for irregular courses. **Irregular courses** are internships, independent study, and thesis, and they have two things in common:

1. They must be applied for and approved by the appropriate faculty.
2. You must receive an override before you can register, upon completing Step 1, above.
3. Application forms are available from Emily Dailey, 359 Eddy Hall.

**Internship application forms** are available from the Internship Coordinator, Karen Montgomery Moore, 334 Eddy. Plan to apply early so you can register before the semester begins.

- Contact [Stephanie.GSchwind@colostate.edu](mailto:Stephanie.GSchwind@colostate.edu) regarding internships with *Colorado Review*.

## INTERNSHIPS & SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

The English Department encourages experiential learning by offering for-credit internships to explore possible career paths before graduation. MFA students may register for any number of internship credits, and may apply up to 6 credits toward their degree.

- In order to register for internship credits, graduate students must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 and be enrolled in a graduate program. In addition, students must have approval from their academic advisor and internship coordinator, with required documents signed by intern, internship supervisor, and internship coordinator.
- Interns will be assessed for tuition and fees just as they are for academic credits.
- A wide variety of experience is possible: designing websites, writing articles and book reviews, teaching students in literacy programs, writing and editing newsletters and brochures for nonprofit agencies, etc. You may generate your own position in a field of interest, or you may pursue established local, regional, or national internship opportunities. Expect to invest about 48 hours for each credit hour earned. In the case of out-of-department internships, your final grade (S or U) will be assigned by Karen Montgomery Moore, Internship Coordinator, in consultation with your on-the-job supervisor. For internships conducted with a departmental faculty member, that faculty member will assign your grade.
- At least 80 percent of an intern's duties should be directly related to their degree work and career objectives.

### **Center for Literary Publishing/ *Colorado Review***

One of the many benefits of our MFA program is the opportunity to intern at the Center for Literary Publishing, which publishes the triquarterly journal *Colorado Review*, as well as the Colorado Prize for Poetry and Mountain West Poetry book series. Any graduate student in the English Department may register for 1 to 5 credits at the Center each semester. For each credit, the intern works three hours weekly at the Center. Most MFA students choose to intern at the CLP at some point during their time at CSU.

While fulfilling an internship, students learn about the publishing business and participate in the following tasks: reading submissions (fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, and book reviews), copyediting, typesetting, proofreading, designing books, and working with social media. Students learn and practice valuable skills that have helped alumni acquire jobs in publishing and other related fields.

Please contact Stephanie G'Schwind at [Stephanie.Gschwind@colostate.edu](mailto:Stephanie.Gschwind@colostate.edu) for details. For more information on *Colorado Review*, visit [coloradoreview.colostate.edu](http://coloradoreview.colostate.edu).

### **Organization of Graduate Student Writers (OGSW)**

OGSW serves all graduate student writers through membership in the Associated Students of CSU (ASCSU). OGSW organizes, supports, and/or participates in the following activities:

- Provides a support group for the English graduate students and a way for them to have a unified voice in the English Department.
- Literacy Through Prose and Poetry (see below)
- Creative Writing Reading Series (contributes to cost of visiting author honorariums)
- Fork/Socket Reading Series (a grad student-directed reading series held off campus)

As a recognized student organization, OGSW is eligible to apply for university funding for student activities. Graduate students in the English Department serve as President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. OGSW exists for the sole purpose of contributing to the experience of all English graduate students at CSU. MFA students are strongly encouraged to get involved.

### **Literacy Through Prose and Poetry (LitProPo)**

Initiated by Colorado Poet Laureate and CSU Emeritus Professor Mary Crow, Literacy Through Prose & Poetry (LPP) gives CSU graduate students and elementary-school students an opportunity to communicate and learn together through creative writing. Graduate student “apprentice writers” learn through seminars and campus visits to teach creative writing to elementary school students. After this training period, the graduate students work with an elementary-school teacher in the Poudre School District to teach eight one-hour writing sessions, culminating in a publication and a reading.

The project aims to harness student enjoyment of writing as a means to improving the level of literacy in Fort Collins elementary schools. LitProPo seeks to engage children’s love of words to help them become not only better readers, but also writers in their own right.

LitProPo provides internship credit and a small honorarium. Participants will:

- Develop appropriate lesson plans and readings
- Write official reports and personal narratives on their visits
- Record elementary-school readers
- Produce exit narratives of their experiences in LPP

**Other internships** that students in the English Department at CSU have held include:

#### **Nonprofit Organizations**

Bas Bleu Theatre  
 Larimer County Partners Program  
 Larimer Humane Society  
 Littlest Angels  
 Poets in the Park (Loveland)  
 Poetry in Motion (a Colorado Poet Laureate Project)  
 Trees, Water, People  
 United Way

**Publishing**

*Bloomsbury Review* (Denver)  
Center for Literary Publishing/*Colorado Review, The Freestone*  
Interweave Press (Loveland)  
*Scene Magazine*  
University Press of Colorado (Boulder)

**Businesses and Corporations**

Advanced Energy  
All About Events  
ExperiencePlus! Bicycle Tours  
Hewlett Packard

**Education**

Kids at Work  
Poetry in Motion  
Poudre School District's International Baccalaureate Program  
Discovery Science Museum  
Teaching College English (Graduate students assist a CSU professor in an undergraduate class)

For more information, please contact Karen Montgomery Moore, English Department Internship Coordinator: [Karen.Montgomery\\_Moore@colostate.edu](mailto:Karen.Montgomery_Moore@colostate.edu), 970-491-3418, Eddy 334. Also be sure to check out the internships page on the English Department website: [english.colostate.edu/grad-internships/](http://english.colostate.edu/grad-internships/).

## DEPARTMENT WRITING CONTESTS

We run several contests within the MFA program. The Assistant to the Director of Creative Writing will notify all eligible MFA students of contest requirements several weeks prior to the deadline. For most of these contests, faculty judge the entries, and entries are judged blindly.

### **AWP Intro Journals Project Awards**

- Poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction
- MFA students may submit in more than one genre, but only one entry per genre. One poetry entry can consist of one to three poems
- CW faculty serve as judges
- Submission deadline usually in November
- Three poems (which may or may not be by the same author), one short story, and one essay are chosen by the faculty to submit to the national contest, where they are judged by an AWP panel of judges
- National selections are published in a national journal

### **Academy of American Poets Award**

- MFA poets submit up to three poems
- Blind read
- CW faculty choose outside judge
- Submission deadline usually in March or April
- Outside judge chooses one winner and one honorable mention. Winner receives \$100 and announcement by the AAP
- Names of winners and honorable mentions are sent to the Academy of American Poets along with winning poem(s) by early May.

## READINGS & THE WRITING COMMUNITY

### Student Readings

As a student, you will have many opportunities to read your work. OGSW (the Organization of Graduate Student Writers) hosts **Fork/Socket** events, which are open to all English graduate students. These readings are casual, with one poet, one fiction writer, and one creative nonfiction writer.

The **5x5 Reading Series** is a collaborative event put on by creative writing students from CSU, CU Boulder, Denver University, Naropa University, and University of Wyoming. Five times per year, students from each institution give a reading of their work for the creative writing communities of Fort Collins, Boulder, Denver, and Laramie. Second-year MFA students have the possibility of reading as part of this series.

In your third year, you will be scheduled to give a public **MFA Reading** from your thesis or other work in progress. There will generally be two or three readers per event. The Assistant to the Director of Creative Writing will contact you during your second year to schedule your reading. This reading is considered a capstone to your career as a graduate student writer; many students invite family members, friends, and significant others to attend. Typically, your advisor will introduce you; please contact your advisor well in advance regarding availability.

There are other opportunities to read around town. Many coffee houses and bookstores sponsor open mics, as do OGSW and *Greyrock Review*, the undergraduate literary magazine.

### CSU Creative Writing Reading Series

This series, sponsored in part by the English Department and OGSW, brings local, national, and international writers to give readings at CSU. Students are welcome to suggest visiting readers to the director of the reading series. Before each reading, a faculty member or alumnus will host a potluck for the visiting writer at their home; faculty, graduate students, and their families are all invited. Some readers will also host a workshop/discussion about craft, often just for MFA students. Students also have the opportunity to go to potlucks, lunch, and receptions with visiting readers. These events are always free.

### Writing Community

CSU's Creative Writing Program prides itself on having a strong community of writers. Maintaining this community requires student and faculty involvement. Our reading series and the potlucks give students an opportunity to mingle with faculty, visiting writers, and one another. OGSW events, including meetings, readings, open mics, and writing retreats, give graduate students time to hang out together. There are also, of course, informal parties, bar outings, and dinners. Your involvement is important: you show up, and the community continues to grow and thrive. You will find that you will get back whatever you put in. Some of the friendships you make here will last a lifetime.

## FUNDS FOR RESEARCH & TRAVEL

Students in the MFA program have access to several sources of funding for travel and research activities related to their thesis projects, other coursework, or pertinent professional development. In the past, students have used such funds to attend conferences such as AWP, MLA, ASLE, or ASAP; to travel to residencies; or to conduct research related to their creative projects. Available funds change from year to year, and awards are not guaranteed. Please check with the contact person listed, or with Lillian Nugent (Lillian.Nugent@colostate.edu), for up-to-date information.

### **Professional Development Program (Graduate Committee)**

Grants are primarily for conference participation through presentation and/or attendance. The graduate committee will also consider proposals for other opportunities that contribute to graduate students' professional development. Priority given to students not receiving other funding during the current academic year.

**Amount:** Up to \$750 (when available)

**Application procedure:** Application must include: 1) a brief description and explanation of how the activity enhances your work; 2) CV or résumé; 3) budget; 4) listing of other support granted for the activity; 5) invitation to the conference or other supporting documents; 6) description of activity's relevance to rhetoric and composition theory and pedagogy (when applicable)

**Deadline:** Usually in January

**Contact:** Chair of the Graduate Committee (Deborah.Thompson@colostate.edu)

### **Development Grants for Graduate Students (MFA Program)**

Grants in support of MFA students' artistic and professional aspirations. Eligible activities include selection in a competition of national or international prestige; opportunities likely to have significant, tangible benefit for the student's writing career (i.e. through public visibility for student, or proximity to industry leaders); or situations where the student's participation will bring recognition or prestige to the MFA program.

**Amount:** Up to \$750 (when available)

**Application procedure:** Application must include: 1) a brief description and explanation of how the activity enhances your work; 2) a budget; 3) listing of other support granted for the activity; 4) invitation or other supporting documents

**Deadline:** Rolling

**Contact:** Director of the MFA program (Andrew.Altschul@colostate.edu)

### **AWP Conference Assistance (Center for Literary Publishing)**

Up to six senior interns – generally students in their third year working with the CLP – may be offered some funding to attend the annual AWP conference. Funded students are expected to take shifts at the CLP/*Colorado Review* booth at the conference bookfair.

**Amount:** Varies, up to \$500

**Application procedure:** Informal

**Deadline:** Interested students should talk to Stephanie during fall semester

**Contact:** Stephanie G'Schwind (Stephanie.GSchwind@colostate.edu)

## **THE MFA YEAR BY YEAR** **(Advice from Former Students)**

### **First Year**

It's best to arrive in Fort Collins several weeks, if not a month, before classes start, so that you can find an apartment, get settled, register your car, and do other necessary things before classes start. Plan to be a bit overwhelmed at first, especially if you are a GTA. It is grad school, after all. Remember why you are here: to write, write, write. Remember that you would not have been accepted if our faculty did not see talent in your writing. Now is the time to make connections with other students and faculty, figure out CSU, and get acquainted with Fort Collins.

There will be an orientation, followed by a picnic, the week before classes begin, where you will meet and greet your fellow MFA students, some program alumni, and faculty.

Get involved with OGSW and internships, go to readings, and get to know your fellow writers. The best way to meet other students and former students is to attend these events. If you don't have a GTA, it can be a little bit easier to get lost in the shuffle, so attending OGSW meetings and readings will help you to get to know others in the program.

### **Second Year**

Remember to take time to write over the summer—it's a good time to focus on your work without the distraction of required classes, and many MFAs find that they can get a great deal of work done during the summertime.

Being in your second year is kind of like being the middle child. You're wise about the ways of CSU now, but you're not a third-year about to leave the nest. Many students find that they're most productive during their second year—they are used to the program, but they don't yet have the stress of impending thesis deadlines. Many students try to get all their coursework requirements out of the way during their first and second years, so make sure to look closely at your requirement checklist so that you can focus on your thesis during your third year. Keep reading for your annotated bibliography. By the spring semester of your second year, you should have narrowed in on your thesis project and set up a work schedule with your advisor.

### **Third Year**

Your main job during your third year is to write your thesis. *Start early, revise often* might be your motto. Also, look to the future: apply for fellowships and jobs, and keep submitting to magazines and contests. Get your work and yourself out there. Get your portfolio together, and make sure to submit it to your committee before your thesis defense. If you have been working on your annotated bibliography all along, this will be no sweat. Keep an eye out for the graduate school's many deadlines, and make sure to meet them.

## FACULTY & STAFF CONTACTS

### Poetry Faculty

Dan Beachy-Quick, 343 Eddy, Dan.Beachy-Quick@colostate.edu  
Matthew Cooperman, 315 Eddy, Matthew.Cooperman@colostate.edu  
Sasha Steensen, 320 Eddy, Sasha.Steensen@colostate.edu  
Camille Dungy, 318 Eddy, Camille.Dungy@colostate.edu

### Fiction Faculty

E. J. Levy, 342 Eddy, EJ.Levy@colostate.edu  
Andrew Altschul (Director), 339 Eddy, Andrew.Altschul@colostate.edu  
Ramona Ausubel, 340 Eddy, rausubel@colostate.edu

### Nonfiction Faculty

Harrison Candelaria Fletcher, 316 Eddy, hcfletch@colostate.edu  
E. J. Levy, 342 Eddy, EJ.Levy@colostate.edu  
Debby Thompson, 332 Eddy, Deborah.Thompson@colostate.edu  
Sarah Sloane, Eddy 331, Sarah.Slone@colostate.edu

### English Department Internship Coordinator

Karen Montgomery Moore, 334 Eddy, Karen.Montgomery-Moore@colostate.edu

### Creative Writing Teaching Program Coordinator

Todd Mitchell, 323B Eddy, Todd.Mitchell@colostate.edu

### Center for Literary Publishing/*Colorado Review*

Stephanie G'Schwind, Editor  
206 Tiley House, Stephanie.GSchwind@colostate.edu

### English Department Contact and Graduate Programs Assistant

Emily Dailey, 359 Eddy, Emily.Dailey@colostate.edu

Instructors' office hours are posted outside their office doors at the start of each semester, as well as on their faculty page of the department's website. You can also check with the English Dept. office, 359 Eddy, (970) 491-6428.

## APPENDIX A: FACULTY TEACHING STATEMENTS

### Andrew Altschul

As a professor I try to combine the roles of wise elder, experienced scholar, Little League coach, and Number One Fan. I work to create a challenging intellectual atmosphere, to teach students that writing demands not only an artist's imagination and eloquence but a scholar's breadth of knowledge, a critic's keen eye, and an athlete's discipline and endurance. At the same time, I do all I can to build an environment that's supportive, fun, and exciting. A good workshop can be the most important community a writer will ever have.

I'm told that I'm a more active workshop leader than some – I try to focus discussions on certain crucial issues and steer away from topics that are unproductive or incidental. I ask students to justify their assessments and articulate (or discover) the aesthetic values that inform them. A good workshop helps students develop those values, and also functions as a laboratory of ideas about culture, ethics, and the purposes of art. I'm not interested in referendums; a workshop's purpose is not to decide whether a story “works” but to describe *how* it works, to immerse ourselves in the writer's creation and report back on what we've found there and how it has affected us. The best discussions provide the writer with a diversity of perspectives on her work and help to identify what is most original and promising about it.

Also: I don't want writers to leave my workshop having only improved their technical skills. I want them to have thought more deeply about what it means to be an artist in our world, what their work might accomplish, and why writing fiction matters.

### Ramona Ausubel

In my classroom, I approach students as newer members of a guild—fellow readers and writers, always learning, always asking questions, always improving. I try act as a window into the creative process, pressing students to see published work and work by peers in ways they might not have otherwise. We look toward theme and meaning, but also toward construction. It is always important to me to invoke the writer herself, to remind us that writing is made in space and time, by people who are (or were) alive in the world. No matter how important or successful a writer might seem, he or she was engaged in the same messy, brave journey through the darkness as the people in our classroom. Every writer—even those who are working on their very first prose—are already part of a tradition, part of a conversation.

As writers we are constantly going back and forth between modes—wild abandon and exploration, then asserting control and making patterns. In my classes I want to encourage these equally. I like to assign exercises that ask us to look at work in new ways or try things that are outside of our known worlds. But we have to go toward our own fascinations and obsessions and aches, too. My favorite writing advice is from Jim Shepard who says, “Follow your weird.”

Writing a book is an immense task that requires our whole selves. In order to write as deeply and bravely and possibly we have to feel safe while also being pressed farther than we thought we could go. That's the classroom and workshop table I aim to create.

### Dan Beachy-Quick

I believe Emerson when he claims that the Delphic imperative “Know Thyself” and the Stoic imperative “Study Nature” are but a single command: to attempt one is also to do the other.

Reading and writing—those seemingly opposing but actually co-creative activities in which we spend our time while in school—present us not only with the difficult fact of manifold voices speaking the inquiries for themselves, but implicate us in the very same process. As with most things, I think an actual education looks very different from what we had expected to gain: no repository of facts, no knowledge that remains in our minds as does a book remain closed on a shelf, no set of skills by which we can learn to annotate a text or compose a poem. A genuine education gives us to our actual confusion, and within that confusion, gives us resources—not answers necessarily, but necessarily light . . . a light that clarifies complexity without reducing it. My hopes for a class are simple to say: To begin the discussion that leads to actual learning. That discussion involves that particular poetic courage of drawing connections where none seem to exist, stitching poems to philosophy to theology to diaries to fiction. That discussion also involves putting books down and picking the blank page up, and adding our voice into the cacophony of voices (past and present) in hopes that someday, impossibly enough, the din reconciles into harmony. It seems easy to forget in the weeks a syllabus charts out that we ourselves are also part of the discussion we’re trying to have. But by the end of class, in the midst of an education, I hope we leave humbled by the audacity of the undertaking: to learn, to think, to ask a question, to write a poem.

### **Harrison Candelaria Fletcher**

When considering my philosophy about teaching, I believe poet and essayist Adrienne Rich said it best: “There is nothing more unnerving, yet empowering, as the making of connections.” I view writing as a patient, persistent endeavor to discover what you did not know you knew. My goal is to create an environment in which writers of all levels challenge themselves and take risks. I believe in a ground-up approach to teaching and mentoring in which issues of craft and theory arise from the work in hand rather the podium down. I try to help writers find answers rather than dictate them. To me, it’s about being engaged and encouraged, about hearing “yes” as often as “no,” and about discussing what’s working as well as what might be improved. I consider a writers’ vision inviolable. My job is to help them discover and articulate their voices, not impose my own. I view each semester as a collaboration. What I ask of students I give in return – focus, commitment, effort. I write a lot on manuscripts. Not to worry. I like to think out loud on the page as I interact with the work. I offer line-editing suggestions on word choice, specificity and clarity, and provide big-picture thoughts on theme, structure and narrative arc. In terms of texts, I believe there are books every writer should read, but I also encourage students to trust their own curiosities and instincts and explore B-sides as well as greatest hits. I’m also very conscious of diversity and take special care to suggest books accordingly. It’s important to me that writers of all ethnicities and backgrounds see themselves reflected in the American literary experience. My approach to the genre: Nonfiction is rooted in fact – in realism – and that matters. I agree with Janet Burroway that it’s easy to be truthful with the reader if you’re honest with yourself. “There’s a clear touchstone of nonfiction truth,” Burroway says. “An absence of the intent to deceive.” I believe that. But I also believe that the writing itself – in whatever form it takes – will ultimately determine its classification. At its French root, “essay” means to attempt, to try. I encourage that.

### **Matthew Cooperman**

My approach to teaching assumes the classroom as an exploratory setting. Whether it be a creative writing, literature, or composition class, the point is to stretch, and to stretch by doing. Process, therefore, is the key term. We learn by doing, and in our case, doing writing. It is much of what Charles Olson meant in his conception of writing as *istorin*: a way to find things out for oneself.

Such a classroom requires flexibility and open-endedness, and I ask my students to therefore recognize learning as a provisional act. It requires risk and participation, in the process of doing and in the consideration of various aesthetics, texts, cultural assumptions. In our words and our imaginations we are always going somewhere, and the going many places is the hope. Variety—of materials, activities, processes, physical spaces, and authorities—enables this multiple excursion. I am very interested in procedures: the ones we do now, the ones we assume, and the ones we might discover in a reformulated approach to learning. “Now do it slant.” All of this amounts to an engagement with texts. To consider the whole text in context is key, as is the atomization of texts into parts. Global patterns obtain in local instances. We see patterns, echoes, strategies most clearly when we have experienced them firsthand. Knowing how to read, to read closely, is still the best way to get started. I start there. I want, as much as possible, to foster invention, and to make that invention leap across boundaries—of periods, disciplines, applications. The best class is always that which is a surprise; it is a class where conversation is open and quickening, and people feel free to risk their deepest selves. Simple pragmatism. If, as recent theory tells us, we are a collocation of texts, then the most useful class makes the most of our texts available. We find these by reading deeply and writing variously. Allowing wander into wonder enlarges the very real possibility of learning some THING. If we are successful, the class continues long after the grades are in.

### **Camille Dungy**

My engagement in the contemporary writing community allows me to bring energy, compassion, and relevance into the classroom. In workshops, seminars, and lectures, I encourage students to challenge their understanding of writing and literature while emphasizing the cultural, social, and creative implications of the work they write and study. My classes integrate the study of literature with the discussion of student writing. Students actively engage with how their work resonates as part of and/or apart from the work of their time and the work of the ages. It is my intention to provide students with the highest level of attention, feedback, and instruction. I challenge students to push themselves and their writing beyond their preconceived limits and into new spaces of discovery. It is in these new spaces of discovery where the exciting writing can truly begin. Our classroom should be a supportive environment that encourages the risk taking necessary for developing critical and creative skills. Students should be willing and able to push their writing and reading abilities beyond their current comfort zones, and they are responsible for helping to promote learning and growth in others. I encourage careful reading, develop stimulating critical and creative responses, and help facilitate fruitful discussions so that we all can work together toward the goal of writing more and more bravely every day.

### **E.J. Levy**

Teaching creative writing is rather like teaching a foreign language; as in language study, aspiring creative writers are aided by immersion in the vocabulary they seek to master—the variety of fiction and nonfiction forms. In my beginning creative writing classes, I aim to expose students to a range of formal possibilities for and schools of thought on the art of prose; I want them to understand that they are participating in a tradition. I provide a range of exercises to help them generate material and to experiment with the possibilities to see what works for them. At the same time, I encourage students to develop faith in their vision, to follow their interests and instincts, and to begin to see their lives and the world around them as worthy subjects for literature. Although the specific structure of classes varies with the subject matter and course level, in general I structure each course

so that the first half of the term we discuss readings by masters of the form under consideration, and the second half we concentrate on student work. By the end of the term, I hope to have provided my students with (1) an adequate definition of the basic elements of the genre, (2) the tools to write fiction or nonfiction and techniques for its revision, (3) the opportunity to speak with me as often as necessary in one-on-one conferences, and (4) a comfortable but rigorous atmosphere in which to share their work.

Often students come to creative writing classes with concerns about talent: they want to know if they have the necessary gifts to write. I try to change that question, to create an environment in which students will ask instead: What kind of writer am I? What interests me formally? What subjects most compel me? What stories do I have to tell? I begin with the assumption that each student possesses a distinctive vision, a unique “psychic fingerprint” (to borrow a phrase from memoirist/novelist Michelle Herman), which we will work to discern and develop in class. In place of the intimidating T of Talent, I encourage students to focus on three alternative T's fundamental to writing creative nonfiction: Tools for generating work, Techniques for revision, and Time to write.

### **Sarah Sloane**

I think the link between mind and world is enlivened most when empiricism leads to deeper inquiry and reflection. One home for such deeper inquiry is a notebook. In most courses I ask my students to keep chronicles, journals, and commonplace books. In them we muse, photograph, compose, and sketch. First, in the chronicle we record what seems to be outside ourselves: the sound of a winter rain on still sections of the Poudre River; a phrase overheard; photographs of Long's Peak; the eyestrain of trying to see one of the 42 black-footed ferrets released at Soapstone Prairie. In a recent *New Yorker* profile the philosopher Andy Clark talks about our extended minds, how mind ranges beyond the body and collects tools to take back inside and think with. Such movement may be how a chronicle transforms into a journal, which I conceive of as a space where we turn our observations inside-out and mull them over. And we might start a commonplace book, copying out parts of other writers' stories, proverbs, fragments of Greek, and sestinas, for example.

In my commonplace book yesterday I copied down something from painter Sam Pink: “Your glass head against the brick parade of now whats.” When I look inside an old journal I am still eavesdropping on a conversation four years ago: “I never knew how silent change could be.” On the back pages of my journal I write down possible titles, usually the overheard or the misread, dozens of them. Today my two favorites are: “The Calendar of Unforeseen Events” and “The Libraries that Preserve the History of Small Islands,” although by tomorrow I'll prefer other ones.

### **Sasha Steensen**

In *On Beauty and Being Just*, Elaine Scarry writes: “This willingness continually to revise one's own location in order to place oneself in the path of beauty is the basic impulse underlying education. One submits oneself to other minds in order to increase the chance that one will be looking in the right direction when a comet makes its sweep through a certain patch of sky.” In the classroom, my primary goal is to encourage students to revise their locations, to consider new methods, models, and techniques so that they might stumble on beauty's path again and again. After all, the etymological root of invention is “to find,” so looking with the utmost attention is crucial for the writer. Of course, in the workshop, this involves careful and critical reading of texts produced not only by fellow students, but also by predecessors and contemporaries. I encourage students to view

outside readings as models for their own writing and to use these texts to develop a vocabulary to constructively and considerately critique each other's work. But submitting oneself to other minds is only part of the struggle, and I ask students to document and articulate their own gathering, thinking, and writing processes. Although the most inspired moments of writing are often spontaneous and serendipitous, an understanding of one's own process is inherent in any sustainable writing practice. Poets are always re-newing—that is, the poem is both a response to the raw material that prompted it and a transformation of that raw material into something new. Watching oneself find and transform this material is what makes writing an activity. When we watch together, as a class, the chances that we might be looking in the right direction multiply.

### **Debby Thompson**

One of the things I love most about teaching creative nonfiction is that the genre is still discovering itself. Every time we workshop an essay, we're also workshopping the genre itself, exploring its possibilities and challenging settled assumptions about art and truth. Creative nonfiction demands that we ask such questions as: What is truth and how do we know it? How can a rigorous demand for truth-telling accommodate the inherent—and sometimes generative—flaws of memory? What is “emotional honesty”? When is it appropriate to write about others, and when is it overly appropriative? What are the ethics of speaking for others? When is a writer being “self-indulgent” and what, exactly, is the problem with self-indulgence? What models of psychology and philosophy motivate our concepts of “voice,” “point of view,” “plausibility,” and “truthfulness”? What ideological assumptions underlie current standards of “good writing”? In a cultural moment when concepts of truth are in crisis, so much more is at stake in the CNF workshop than crafting good writing.

## APPENDIX B: SUGGESTED READING

These lists are not exhaustive. Please be sure to work with your advisor to tailor your reading and annotation list.

### FICTION

#### Novels:

*Bastard Out of Carolina*, Dorothy Allison  
*Northanger Abbey*, Jane Austen  
*Pride and Prejudice*, Austen  
*Emma*, Austen  
*The Hiding Place*, Trezza Azzopardi  
*Continental Drift*, Russell Banks  
*Nightwood*, Djuna Barnes  
*The Adventures of Augie March*, Saul Bellow  
*Herzog*, Bellow  
*Humboldt's Gift*, Bellow  
*Jane Eyre*, C. Bronte  
*Villette*, C. Bronte  
*Wuthering Heights*, E. Bronte  
*The Way of All Flesh*, Samuel Butler  
*The Awakening*, Kate Chopin  
*Disgrace*, J. M. Coetzee  
*Waiting for the Barbarians*, J. M. Coetzee  
*Mrs. Bridge*, Evan Connell  
*The Leatherstocking Tales*, James Fenimore Cooper  
*Hopscotch*, Julio Cortazar  
*The Hours*, Michael Cunningham  
*The Red Badge of Courage*, Stephen Crane  
*Moll Flanders*, Daniel Defoe  
*Libra*, Don DeLillo  
*White Noise*, DeLillo  
*Great Expectations*, Charles Dickens  
*Bleak House*, Dickens  
*Our Mutual Friend*, Dickens  
*Play It As It Lays*, Joan Didion  
*Crime and Punishment*, Fyodor Dostoevsky  
*The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky  
*Castle Rackrent*, Edgeworth  
*Look at Me*, Jennifer Egan  
*Middlemarch*, George Eliot  
*Daniel Deronda*, George Elliot  
*The Sound and the Fury*, William Faulkner  
*Tom Jones*, Henry Fielding  
*The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald  
*Madame Bovary*, Gustave Flaubert

*A Sentimental Education*, Flaubert  
*Desperate Characters*, Paula Fox  
*The Death of Artemio Cruz*, Carlos Fuentes  
*Fat City*, Leonard Gardner  
*Caleb Williams*, William Godwin  
*Dead Souls*, Nikolai Gogol  
*The End of the Affair*, Graham Greene  
*The Power and the Glory*, Greene  
*The Quiet American*, Greene  
*Hunger*, Knut Hamsun  
*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Thomas Hardy  
*Jude the Obscure*, Hardy  
*The House of the Seven Gables*, Nathaniel Hawthorne  
*A Moveable Feast*, Ernest Hemingway  
*The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway  
*A Hazard of New Fortunes*, William Dean Howells  
*Portrait of a Lady*, Henry James  
*The American*, James  
*Who's Irish?* Gish Jen  
*Ulysses*, James Joyce  
*Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce  
*Thumbsucker*, Walter Kirn  
*The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, Milan Kundera  
*The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, Kundera  
*Under the Volcano*, Malcolm Lowry  
*Death in Venice*, Thomas Mann  
*The Magic Mountain*, Mann  
*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Gabriel García Márquez  
*Property*, Valerie Martin  
*Everything in This Country Must*, Colum McCann  
*That Night*, Alice McDermott  
*Atonement*, Ian McEwan  
*Moby Dick*, Herman Melville  
*Billy Budd*, Melville  
*The Good Mother*, Sue Miller  
*Like Life*, Lorrie Moore  
*Beloved*, Toni Morrison  
*The Book and the Brotherhood*, Iris Murdoch  
*The Philosopher's Pupil*, Murdoch  
*A River Runs Through It*, Norman Maclean  
*Pnin*, Vladimir Nabokov  
*McTeague*, Frank Norris  
*Eugene Onegin*, Aleksandr Pushkin  
*Clarissa*, Samuel Richardson  
*Housekeeping*, Marilynne Robinson  
*The Radetzky March*, Joseph Roth  
*The Human Stain*, Philip Roth

*Sabbath's Theater*, Philip Roth  
*Mating*, Norman Rush  
*Why Did I Ever*, Mary Robison  
*Everything Is Illuminated*, Jonathan Safran Foer  
*Civil Warland in Bad Decline and Other Stories*, George Saunders  
*Austerlitz*, W. G. Sebald  
*Caucasia*, Danzy Senna  
*Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley  
*Red and Black*, Stendahl  
*Tristram Shandy*, Laurence Sterne  
*Vanity Fair*, William Makepeace Thackeray  
*War and Peace*, Leo Tolstoy  
*Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy (new translation)  
*A Sportsman's Notes*, Ivan Turgenev  
*Fathers and Sons*, Turgenev  
*The Master*, Colm Toibin  
*Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain  
*The Age of Innocence*, Edith Wharton  
*The House of Mirth*, Wharton  
*Birdy*, William Wharton  
*Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf  
*The Waves*, Woolf  
*To the Lighthouse*, Woolf  
*Revolutionary Road*, Richard Yates

#### **Short Novels/Novellas:**

*Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad  
*Notes from the Underground*, Fyodor Dostoyevsky  
*So Long, See You Tomorrow*, William Maxwell  
*Bartleby the Scrivener*, Herman Melville  
*Pale Horse, Pale Rider*, Katherine Anne Porter  
*The Age of Grief*, Jane Smiley  
*The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, Leo Tolstoy  
*Miss Lonelyhearts* and *The Day of the Locusts*, Nathaniel West

#### **Story Collections:**

*The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*, Sherman Alexie  
*The Collected Stories*, Isaac Babel  
*Ship Fever and Other Stories*, Andrea Barrett  
*Come Back, Dr. Caligari*, Donald Barthelme  
*Come to Me*, Amy Bloom  
*The Sheltering Sky & Collected Stories*, Paul Bowles  
*Emperor of the Air*, Ethan Canin  
*Where I'm Calling From*, Raymond Carver  
*Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*, Sandra Cisneros  
*Adultery and Other Choices*, Andre Dubus  
*Drown*, Junot Diaz

*All Around Atlantis*, Deborah Eisenberg  
*Rock Springs: Stories*, Richard Ford  
*Because They Wanted To*, Mary Gaitskill  
*The Collected Stories*, Mavis Gallant  
*The Collected Stories*, Hemingway  
*Collected Stories*, Henry James  
*Jesus' Son*, Denis Johnson  
*The Pugilist at Rest*, Thom Jones  
*Dubliners*, James Joyce  
*The Metamorphosis and Other Stories*, Franz Kafka  
*Lovers for a Day*, Ivan Klima  
*The Magic Barrel*, Bernard Malamud  
*Birds of America*, Lorrie Moore  
*The Things They Carried*, Tim O'Brien  
*The Complete Stories*, Flannery O'Connor  
*The Collected Stories*, Katherine Anne Porter  
*The Collected Stories*, William Trevor  
*A Curtain of Green and Other Stories*, Eudora Welty  
*In the Garden of the North American Martyrs*, Tobias Wolff  
*The Collected Stories*, Richard Yates

**Books/Essays on Craft and Criticism:**

*The Friday Book: Essays and Other Nonfiction*, John Barth  
*Burning Down the House*, Charles Baxter  
*Bringing the Devil to His Knees*, Baxter and Turchi, Eds.  
*The Story Behind the Story*, Baxter and Turchi, Eds.  
*The Uses of Literature*, Italo Calvino  
*The White Album*, Joan Didion  
*Political Fictions*, Didion  
*Living by Fiction*, Annie Dillard  
*Unacknowledged Legislation*, Christopher Hitchens  
*On Moral Fiction*, John Gardner  
*The Art of Fiction*, John Gardner  
*The Art of the Novel*, Milan Kundera  
*Mystery & Manners*, Flannery O'Connor  
*The Habit of Being*, Flannery O'Connor  
*The Lonely Voice*, Frank O'Connor  
*Art and Ardor*, Cynthia Ozick  
*Curious Attractions: Essays on Writing*, Debra Spark  
*Against Interpretation*, Susan Sontag  
*AIDS as Metaphor*, Susan Sontag  
*A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again*, David Foster Wallace  
*On Becoming a Writer*, Eudora Welty

**Recommended Authors for General Work:**

James Baldwin

John Cheever

Anton Chekhov

Alice Munro

Cormac McCarthy

Gabriel García Márquez

Leo Tolstoy

Eudora Welty

Flannery O'Connor

Henry James

Joan Didion

Ernest Hemingway

William Faulkner

The Brontës

## NONFICTION

### Craft Guides

- *Narrative Design: A Writer's Guide to Structure*, by Madison Smart Bell
- *The Situation and the Story*, by Vivian Gornick
- *Essayists on the Essay*, edited by Carl Klaus and Ned Stuckey-French
- *The Memoir and the Memoirist*, Thomas Larson
- *To Show and To Tell*, Phillip Lopate
- *After Montaigne: Contemporary Essayists Cover the Essays*, Patrick Madden and David Lazar
- *Tell it Slant*, edited by Brenda Miller and Suzanne Paoula
- *Fearless Confessions: A Writer's Guide to Memoir*, by Sue William Silverman
- *Metawritings: Toward a Theory of Nonfiction*, Jill Talbot

### Anthologies

- *Best American Essays Series*
- *Art of the Personal Essay*, Phillip Lopate
- *Touchstone Anthology of Contemporary Creative Nonfiction*, edited by Michael Martone and Lex Williford
- *In Fact: Best of Creative Nonfiction*
- *Lost Origins of the Essay*, John D'Agata
- *Makings of the American Essay*, edited by John D'Agata
- *The Next American Essay*, John D'Agata
- *Brief Encounters: A Collection of Contemporary Creative Nonfiction*, edited by Judith Kitchen/Dinah Lenney
- *Short Takes*, edited by Judith Kitchen and Dinah Lenney

### Essay

- *Notes of a Native Son*, James Baldwin
- *Boys of My Youth*, Jo Ann Beard
- *Notes from No Man's Land On Immunity* by Eula Biss
- *Island of Bones*, Joy Castro
- *Maps to Anywhere* by Bernard Cooper
- *Late Essays and Boyhood*, J.M. Coetzee
- *The White Album, Slouching Toward Bethlehem*, Joan Didion
- *Broken Vessels; Meditations from a Moving Chair*, Andre Dubus
- *At Large & At Small: Familiar Essays, Ex Libris: Confessions of a Common Reader*, Anne Fadiman
- *Bad Feminist*, Roxane Gay
- *Falling off the Map*, Pico Iyer
- *Portrait Inside My Head, Against Joie de Vivre; Portrait of My Body*, Phillip Lopate
- *Empathy Exams*, Leslie Jamison
- *Between Panic and Desire* by Dinty W. Moore
- *Sublime Physic, Quotidiana*, by Patrick Madden
- *Racing in Place: Collages, Fragments, Postcards, Ruins*, Michael Martone
- *Listening to the Stone, Season of the Body*, by Brenda Miller
- *Vanishing Point, Neck Deep and Other Predicaments*, by Ander Monson
- *The Essays*, Michel de Montaigne
- *Fame & Folly, Quarrel & Quandry, and Metaphor & Memory*, Cynthia Ozick
- *Animals Strike Curious Poses*, Elena Passarello

- On Looking: Rough Likeness*, Lia Purpura
- Days of Obligation*, Richard Rodriguez
- Staying Put; The Paradise of Bombs*, Scott Russell Sanders
- Thoughts from a Queen-Sized Bed*, Mimi Schwartz
- Me Talk Pretty One Day*, David Sedaris
- Never in a Hurry: Essays on People and Places*, Naomi Shihab Nye
- Remote: Reflections on Life in the Shadow of Celebrity*, David Shields
- Consider the Lobster*, David Foster Wallace
- *One Man's Meat*, E.B. White
- Holocaust Girls: History, Memory & Other Obsessions*, S. L. Wisenberg
- The Death of the Moth and Other Essays, Moments of Being*, Virginia Woolf
- Evanescence: From My City-Village*, Xu Xi

## **Memoir**

- *Confessions*. (Also, JJ Rousseau's 18<sup>th</sup> century *The Confessions*), St. Augustine.
- You Don't Have to Say You Love Me*, Sherman Alexie
- Paula*, Isabel Allende
- The Invention of Solitude*, Paul Auster
- *Lit: A Memoir, The Liar's Club*, Mary Carr
- The Truth Book*, Joy Castro
- Silent*, Judith Ortiz Cofer
- Stop Time*, Frank Conroy
- The Bill From My Father; Truth Serum*, Bernard Cooper
- The Year of Magical Thinking*, Joan Didion
- Firebird*, Mark Doty
- Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*, Dave Eggers
- Barbarian Days*, William Finnegan
- The Re-Enactments, Ticking is the Bomb, Another Bullshit Night in Suck City*, by Nick Flynn
- The Meadow*, James Galvin
- Autobiography of a Face*, by Lucy Grealy
- Butterfly Boy* by Rigoberto Gonzalez
- Fierce Attachments*, by Vivian Gornick
- *The Florist's Daughter*, by Patricia Hampl
- The Kiss*, Kathryn Harrison
- Lost in Translation: Life in a New Language*, Eva Hoffman
- A Walker in the City*, Alfred Kazin
- My Brother*, Jamaica Kincaid
- The Woman Warrior* by Maxine Hong Kingston
- Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*, Audre Lourde
- From Our House*, Lee Martin
- The Seven Storey Mountain*, Thomas Merton
- The Color of Water*, James McBride
- *Angela's Ashes*, Frank McCourt
- Running in the Family*, Michael Ondaatje
- Excavation*, Wendy Ortiz
- Speak Memory*, Vladimir Nabokov

- *Hunger for Memory*, Richard Rodriguez
- *The Turquoise Ledge: A Memoir*, Leslie Marmon Silko
- *Because I Remember Terror, Father, I Remember You*, by Sue William Silverman
- *Lying* by Laren Slater
- *Illness as Metaphor*, Susan Sontag
- *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, Gertrude Stein
- *Wild*, Cheryl Strayed
- *Darkness Visible: A Memoir of Madness*, William Styron
- *The Hue and Cry at Our House*, Benjamin Taylor
- *Down These Mean Streets*, Piri Thomas
- *The Suicide Index*, Joan Wickersham
- *The Duke of Deception: Memories of My Father*, Geoffrey Wolff
- *This Boy's Life*, Tobias Wolff
- *The Chronology of Water*, Lidia Yuknavitch

### **Place, Nature, Science, Travel**

- *Desert Solitaire*, Edward Abbey
- *A Natural History of the Senses*, Diane Ackerman
- *Hungry for the World*, Kim Barnes
- *Winter*, Rick Bass
- *Red Delta: Fighting for Life at the End of the Colorado River*, Charles Bergman
- *Recollected Essays, 1965-1980*, Wendell Berry,
- *Here and Nowhere Else: Late Seasons of a Farm and its Family*, Jane Brox
- *The Fallen Sky: An Intimate History of Shooting Stars*, Christopher Cokinos
- *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek: Teaching a Stone to Talk*, Annie Dillard
- *The Solace of Open Space*, Gretel Ehrlich
- *Entering the Stones: On Caves and Feeling Through the Dark*, Barbara Hurd
- *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life*, Barbara Kingsolver
- *Hole in the Sky*, William Kittredge
- *Local Wonders: Seasons in the Bohemian Alps*, Ted Kooser
- *Things That Are*, Amy Leach
- *Blue Highways*, William Least Heat Moon
- *Arctic Dreams: Imagination and Desire in Northern Landscape*, Barry Lopez
- *A River Runs Through It*, Norman MacLean
- *A Year in Provence*, Peter Mayle
- *Patagonia Road: A Year Alone through Latin America*, Kate McCahill
- *Coming into the Country*, John McPhee
- *Grammar Lessons: Translating a Life in Spain*, Michele Morano
- *The Names of Things*, Susan Brind Morrow
- *The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer*, Siddhartha Mukherjee
- *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography*, Kathleen Norris
- *The Wet Collection*, Joni Tevis,
- *Old Patagonian Express*, Paul Theroux
- *Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir*, D. J. Waldie
- *After the Fire: A Writer Finds His Place*, Paul Zimmer

## Literary Journalism/Immersion/Nonfiction Novel

- Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, James Agee
- Long Dark Road*, Ricardo Ainslie
- Fugitive Days*, Bill Ayers
- Down by the River* by Charles Bowden
- In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote
- Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China*, Jung Chang
- The Wet Engine: Exploring the Mad Wild Miracle of the Heart*, Brian Doyle
- Nickel & Dimed* by Barbara Ehrenreich
- On Being Blue: A Philosophical Inquiry*, William Gass
- Shot in the Heart*, Mikal Gilmore
- Invented Eden: The Elusive, Disputed History of the Tasaday*, Robin Hemley
- Dispatches* by Michael Herr
- *Schindler's List*, Thomas Keneally
- Among Schoolchildren and House*, Tracy Kidder
- Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer
- *Executioner's Song* by Normal Mailer
- Long Walk to Freedom*, Nelson Mandela
- The Snow Leopard*, Peter Matthiessen
- Encounters with the Archdruid* (or anything else), John McPhee
- Anne Frank: The Book, the Life, the Afterlife*, Francine Prose
- The Orchid Thief*, Susan Orlean
- Literary Journalism* edited by Norman Sims
- Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag
- Working*, Studs Terkel
- Hells Angels, Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, Hunter S. Thompson
- The Right Stuff; The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, Tom Wolfe

## Book-length essay/Collage/Hybrid/Graphic Memoir

- *Halls of Fame, About a Mountain*, by John D'Agata
- Fun Home*, Alison Bechdel
- The Balloonists* by Eula Biss
- The Body, The Book of Beginnings and Endings*, Jenny Bouilly
- Syzygy Beauty*, by T. Fleischmann
- The Argonauts, Bluets*, Maggie Nelson
- Citizen*, by Claudia Rankine
- Rings of Saturn*, by W. G. Sebald
- Reality Hunger*, by David Shields
- Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*, Margery Satrapi
- Postcard Memoir*, Lawrence Sutin
- Family of Strangers*, Deborah Tall

## POETRY

### Recommended Authors for General Work:

A. R. Ammons  
John Ashbery  
W. H. Auden  
Amiri Baraka  
Charles Bernstein  
John Berryman  
Elizabeth Bishop  
Louise Bogan  
Evan Boland  
Gwendolyn Brooks  
Anne Carson  
Lucile Clifton  
Hart Crane  
Robert Creeley  
E. E. Cummings  
Diane DiPrima  
Hilda Doolittle [HD]  
Mark Doty  
Rita Dove  
Robert Duncan  
T. S. Eliot  
Robert Frost  
Allen Ginsberg  
Louise Gluck  
Jorie Graham  
Barbara Guest

Joy Harjo  
Robert Hayden  
Lyn Hejinian  
Seamus Heaney  
Geoffrey Hill  
Susan Howe  
Langston Hughes  
Randall Jarrell  
Robinson Jeffers  
Yusef Komunyakaa  
Maxine Kumin  
Philip Larkin  
Ann Lauterbach  
Denise Levertov  
Audre Lorde  
Robert Lowell  
Gerard Manley Hopkins  
Bernadette Mayer  
W.S. Merwin  
Marianne Moore  
Lorine Niedecker  
Josephine Miles  
Frank O'Hara  
George Oppen  
Charles Olson  
Sylvia Plath

Ezra Pound  
Claudia Rankine  
Kenneth Rexroth  
Adrienne Rich  
Theodore Roethke  
Muriel Rukeyser  
Sonia Sanchez  
Leslie Scalapino  
Anne Sexton  
Ron Silliman  
Gary Snyder  
Gary Soto  
Jack Spicer  
William Stafford  
Gertrude Stein  
Wallace Stevens  
Cole Swensen  
Dylan Thomas  
Anne Waldman  
Rosmarie Waldrop  
Richard Wilbur  
William Carlos Williams  
James Wright  
Charles Wright  
W. B. Yeats  
Louis Zukofsky

## APPENDIX C: SAMPLE ANNOTATIONS

These sample annotations have been taken directly from past students' submitted portfolios (the student's name is in parentheses following the annotation). Each entry is a little different in that the student's style and format were maintained as much as possible to display the different ways to arrange the bibliography. Remember to be consistent when you put your own bibliography together, and be sure to consult your advisor as you devise your own lists. You can find additional examples of annotations on the Creative Writing blog. Annotations are organized first by program and then alphabetically, and you will find a range of texts represented—novels, books of poetry, craft and theoretical texts, etc.

### Fiction Program

**Bass, Rick. "Wild Horses." *The Watch: Stories*. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. New York: 1989.**

There are some interesting and surprising uses of secondary characters in Rick Bass' story "Wild Horses." The first two secondary characters who appear have no actual life in the story. Karen's husband is introduced in the third sentence as a man who "had run away with another woman after only six months" (147) only to be disposed of in the fourth sentence, written off as someone Karen thinks about every so often. The next character, Henry, is introduced in the second paragraph as a man who "had drowned in the Mississippi the day before [he and Karen] were to be married" (147). The placement of these secondary characters within the story should immediately signify something to the reader about their functions—they are here not to "exist" in the story, but merely to introduce Karen, to give a roundness to the main character, to give a sense of her situation, her disappointing past. Henry also helps Bass introduce the story's other main character, Sydney, as Sydney is present when Henry dies. Within only a few paragraphs, thanks to Karen's husband and Henry, the stage is set for the heroes of the story—Karen and Sydney.

But the character of Henry performs a function beyond simply debuting the stars if the show, as is suggested by the sentence following the revelation of his death: "They never even found the body" (147). Though he doesn't have a speaking role, or any real action in the story besides jumping from a bridge, Henry's presence is felt throughout. The empty space he is *supposed* to take up affects the actions and gestures of the primary characters; Henry's conspicuous absence causes them to react to one another. Sydney allows Karen to take her anger out on him—to beat him—because of that emptiness; this is not an action solely transferred from Karen to Sydney and vice versa, but an action transferred from Henry's death to Sydney, to Karen. Likewise, at a moment when Sydney gets too close to Karen—holds her hand—she responds not only to Sydney's touch, but to the absence of Henry's touch, leading Sydney to confess that he had pushed Henry off the bridge, a lie less in response to Karen's repulsion than to his own guilt at having been present and helpless to save Henry. Henry pushes these characters throughout the story, brings them closer, pulls them apart, initiates conflict, provokes action, as if every scene possesses not two characters but three, each moving about the others, each with his/her own objective, each contributing to the story's forward progression.

Another interesting secondary character is Dr. Lynly, the veterinarian who takes Karen on as an assistant. Every screenwriter knows that when dealing with a love story—and "Wild Horses" is a kind of love story—the two primary voices grow weary, the space of two lovers claustrophobic

lacking in context and complexity. The solution: give the lovers friends they can run off to, ask opinions of, get life coaching from. Though Bass manages to avoid these love story tropes, Dr. Lynly does provide a similar function to the “best friends” of the romantic comedy/drama: a breath of fresh air, a movement away from the two-person play. When Karen goes to work, she is able to gain perspective on her relationship with Sydney, to appreciate Sydney’s devotion to her, to see how Lynly’s animals either heal by trudging forward through the pain or die, and thusly, Karen can reach her turning point—the recognition that she is the one to nurse Sydney through *his* pain, not the other way around.

In addition to character growth, Bass is able to layer his story by offering a way for the reader to critically engage with Karen and Sydney’s story. That the story steps aside and explores the world of this veterinarian is a signal to the reader to pay attention, that these scenes will feed the reader’s interpretation of the central struggle, and of the characters within that struggle. That Sydney breaks horses and Lynly heals horses is no coincidence—at least not in terms of the presentation of a story. Even though they never have a scene together, Sydney and Lynly are connected; they do have a thematic relationship. Where at times they even seem foils to one another—Karen’s two suitor-types; Sydney’s love of horses and Lynly’s dismissal of them (something Karen notices, something that deepens her connection with Sydney)—they are made to coexist in this story to allow for Bass’ exploration of the story’s themes—the healing process, the caregiver/patient relationship—and of the character’s complexities—the relationship Karen recognizes between the tired, old mule and Sydney, increasing the stakes in a way that a story between Sydney and Karen alone could not do. Only after witnessing the mule, so close to death, does Karen, and the reader, see how close Sydney is to death, how tortuous and fatal his guilt is.

If a story is to have both forward motion and depth, secondary characters are a necessity; a character alone in a room cannot move forward, cannot explore his/her own complexities, let alone others’. For this purpose, Bass offers Henry as a way to introduce the primary characters’ relationship with one another and to incite their struggles—a tool for the story’s forward movement. And as if Bass realized partway through the story (when Sydney and Karen have a near climactic moment, Karen raising a gun to Sydney with 13 pages still to go), that the story was moving but not deepening, he offers Dr. Lynly, a character and a place for the story to take a side-step, to delve into the themes and complexities, to increase and complicate the reader’s, and the characters’, understanding of the story. (Nick Maistros)

**Cather, Willa. “Paul’s Case.” 1920. *The Collected Stories of Willa Cather*. New York: Vintage, 1992. Print.**

I don’t know the first work of fiction that demonstrated to me that conflict needs to come from character; I suppose I understood this at some basic level even reading R. L. Stine’s *Goosebumps* series when I was a boy. But I do remember it seeming like a fresh lesson to me when I was introduced to Cather’s nearly perfect short story “Paul’s Case” when I was a freshman in college, in a course called “The Short Story in Context.” Most pick *O Pioneers!* as Cather’s unchallenged masterpiece, but for me, “Paul’s Case” continues to cut the deepest, and continues to reward even after multiple rereadings.

It helped that the instructor of the class managed to share some important details of the story: that Cather had written it while living in Pittsburgh, where I was a student, and that the Schenley Hotel described in the story as something that “loomed big and square through the fine rain, the windows of its twelve stories glowing like those of a lighted card-board house under a Christmas tree,” was in fact now our student union (174). So I was predisposed to like it, sure, and

still am. But what Cather manages with the narrative is nothing short of masterful. Paul, an adolescent who wishes for something better for himself, even if he remains unclear on exactly what that *something* is (though he knows, at least, it has something to do with having money), makes plenty of trouble for himself as a means of achieving his vague though still quite pressing desire. He gets kicked out of school for his queer behavior, loses his job at Carnegie Hall where he was closest to that life he wanted, steals money from his father, and takes a train to New York to stay in an opulent hotel and, well, *pretend* he is who he always wanted to be. Told in summary, the events of the story seem exaggerated; false, even. But Cather is a deft storyteller, and the lessons the story has to teach are many—as deserving of close consideration in a fiction class as any Flannery O’Connor or Raymond Carver. These things happen because Cather builds the events of the story so that they seem inevitable while still remaining surprising. Of course he stole his father’s money and left; they took away the only thing he loved. And of course they took away the only thing he loved; he was failing at school. And so on.

It helps, too, that she has what is perhaps the best final paragraph of any short story I’ve ever read. I’m not exaggerating. It’s the ending I always think of when I write my endings, hoping I might, by some God-granted miracle, get my writing in even the same zip code as hers—that it might convey the same mystery and beauty and terror. It still gives me chills, even after I’ve dissected the story so many times, even when I read it outside of the context of the story itself. The “picture making mechanism” is meant to be his mind: “He felt something strike his chest,—his body was being thrown swiftly through the air, on and on, immeasurably far and fast, while his limbs gently relaxed. Then, because the picture making mechanism was crushed, the disturbing visions flashed into black, and Paul was dropped back into the immense design of things” (189). So much is worth admiring here, but among this closing’s most striking elements is her almost inhuman understanding of prepositions and adverbs, typically rather off-putting pieces of grammar that she uses to marvelous effect. The swiftness with which Paul’s body *matters* here, because we understand the power of the train that he has used to kill himself. That he is being dropped *back* into “the immense design of things” speaks volumes of Cather’s understanding of death and creation; we literally see Paul dropping, and there is nothing to be done. Chills, chills. Everything seems worth it after a paragraph like that—every long hour or week or month of working on a piece of writing. It’s worth it if writing can do something like *that*. It’s the only thing to do. (Derek Askey)

**Egan, Jennifer. *Emerald City and Other Stories*. New York: Anchor Books, 2007. Print.**

It’s remarkable to finish Jennifer Egan’s collection of short stories *Emerald City* and discover the book to be a mere 178 pages, such is the deft way in which Egan moves her characters through space and time. And it is this effective movement through setting and chronology that makes this collection so satisfying.

One way in which Egan moves so deftly through narration is by taking advantage of setting in order to play with a character’s context and thus efficiently reveal much about that character. It’s as if by moving a character into an unexpected context or setting, the character (and his/her emotional turmoil and desires) becomes all the more enlivened. And Egan plays with this heightened sense of emotions on the page to also heighten the tension and stakes for her characters. For example, in the collection’s first story, “Why China?”, the protagonist *thinks* he recognizes the man whose conned him out of twenty-five thousand dollars. As one of the only other Westerners in the off-the-beaten-path China town, the protagonist clings to this man (who could or could not be the con man). “I turned to him. He looked small – one small man, alone in the middle of China. And I thought I saw in him some diminishment or regret...” (25). He then watches his daughters on the

train packed with peasants in the countryside of China and it's there that he can see in their faces so clearly, and so painfully, "the thick patina so many years of privilege had left behind" (15). Had the family been on a bus back in their hometown San Francisco, the effect Egan creates here would be diminished greatly.

The out-of-context settings utilized by Egan are not always, it should be noted, foreign and exotic locales. There is a stunningly tense scene, for example, that takes place in a suburban Illinois Mexican restaurant when the protagonist of "Puerto Vallarta" spots her father. Because the teenager's father is expected to be somewhere else, his appearance at this restaurant with a woman who is not his wife (the protagonist's mother) is out of context, albeit in a different way. When she looks at her father, "Ellen was struck by how handsome he looked—handsome the way strangers are" (120). Thus, even in a suburban restaurant, Egan effectively uses setting to defamiliarize, and thus emphasize, a character.

Not only do Egan's characters move around in space—from Bora Bora to U.S. suburbs—but her characters also move efficiently through time within each of these settings. In my writing, I have managed to narrow the scope of my short stories from the sweeping, too-large plots I used to try to tell. However, I have done this by tightening up on the time covered in my stories so that I feel my stories have a constricted, paralyzed feel to them. For this reason, I was fascinated by Egan's efficient movement through time, particularly in the story "Sacred Heart." A mere 13 pages, this story covers the full academic year for its protagonist and Egan uses markers at the start of many paragraphs to signal this progression through time: "In the ninth grade" (27); "Late in the fall of that ninth grade year" (28); "It was getting near Christmas" (31); "Amanda grew thinner as winter wore on" (32). Egan also uses markers like these at the start of paragraphs to indicate a zoom-in to a scene or a zoom-out to summary. For example, a zoom-in on page 36 is marked "One night, when my mother had gone to a meeting..." And a zoom-out on page 34 is marked by "Each morning."

Having just read her most recent novel, *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, last month, it's clear to me that Egan has been fascinated with both time and setting throughout her writing career.

Therefore, her most recent novel, with its intelligent handling of time and chance-meetings can be seen as the natural progression of the obsessions this writer first explored in this collection. (Lauren Gullion)

**Havazelet, Ehud. "Pillar of Fire." *The Story Behind the Story: 26 Writers and How They Work*. Ed. Turchi, Peter. New York: Norton, 2004. 197–224. Print.**

The protagonist, David, has just parted ways with his ex-wife, Maura, and her new partner after visiting them at their home in the Berkshires. He's driving quite fast, and thinking of the circumstances of Maura leaving, when a driver in a black muscle car runs him off the road. Then there is a section break and the story resumes when David is at a bar calling 911 to report that he saw the black muscle car overturned in a ditch. But as soon as David hangs up, he sees the driver at the bar. The structure of the story, specifically the section break (nonlinearity) and the interspersed flashbacks, contributes to the unity of David's character; in other words, the form reinforces the protagonist's disorientation as he navigates these life-changing events. Because David's 911 call precedes the more authoritative narrative recounting of events, the reader is unsure of exactly what happened. This mirrors David's own confusion and bewilderment about the course his life has taken.

The narrator's tone is bitter and humorous, which prevents the story from becoming melodramatic—the narrator doesn't lapse into self-pity. For instance, after the encounter with the

black muscle car, David stands on the side of the road, pondering whether his wife is simultaneously watching the sun set. He realizes how ridiculous he seems in that moment. When David goes out to the parking lot, at first he doesn't recognize his own car because two teenaged girls are sitting on the hood—again, this scene illustrates David's disorientation and how unfamiliar his life has become to him. The teenage girls are sisters, hitchhiking, and David decides to give them a ride. This decision is integral to the story, because it is a decision that begins the character's transformation. The sisters are excited about seeing Halley's Comet, and they convince David to exit the freeway. In the final scene, about to have his eyes uncovered by the girls, David doesn't know where he is: how he ended up in either that location or at this point in his life, with no job and his marriage dissolved. Viewing the comet with the girls thus becomes more than a metaphor for the character's mindset or present condition; the comet foreshadows further transformation and suggests the character's epiphany without belaboring it.

In the brief essay that accompanies his story, Havazelet discusses the process of writing the story. His main point is that the story didn't work until he stopped patching together the pieces of it—writing around the true event that inspired him (picking up hitchhikers, one of whom exuded the chemical odor of a diabetic person not taking insulin). He realized the story wasn't working because he was writing from an experience that moved him; he concludes that *experience* is often the reason the story isn't working. Stories must be organic. This is probably my primary struggle in writing, which is why I found Havazelet's essay so helpful. The main metaphor of the story, the comet, simply appeared in Havazelet's earlier drafts as a means of tying together the story's "undeveloped tensions" (223). The comet lacked specificity, in that the event could have happened to anyone: "It isn't enough to nudge us toward the momentous ... why to this individual character, now, here?" (223). The events of a story cannot be merely "evocative coincidence" (233). Instead, the events should be transformative, a transformation assisted by interactions with other characters (in this case, the hitchhikers). Havazelet realized that his protagonist was too much in control of the narrative, and for change to occur, David had to lose some of that control. (Anitra Ingham)

**Woolf, Virginia. *Mrs. Dalloway*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1925. Print.**

In this novel, Woolf writes from the points of view of several characters, and gives her audience direct access to the consciousness of these characters. Woolf takes omniscience much further than any other writer, in effect combining it with a very close third-person point of view, so that we are aware of the emotions, thoughts, and memories of many characters. The primary technical lesson I learned from this novel is how to tell a story through the stories people tell themselves, rather than through voiceless exposition. For instance, in the scene on pages 105-107, Walsh overhears a conversation between Septimus and Rezia, and he tells himself his own story about the couple.

Woolf shows us in that scene that our consciousness is a story in progress, in terms of both our present and past.

The way that Woolf handles flashbacks is completely fluid, as if the consciousness of the character is seamless, not bounded by time or linearity. For instance, on page 3 Clarissa is recalling being eighteen, but her mind is there—the scene is not written in exposition, as in recorded memory; instead, I felt as if I were in Clarissa's mind at that time. Some of the essential themes that *Mrs. Dalloway* is grappling with are introduced through Clarissa's thoughts on the first fifteen pages or so. The fear of aging, of being invisible and unknown (14), the conflict between maintaining independence in marriage and sharing oneself (10). Rezia's character reinforces this theme also in her struggles in her marriage to Septimus: "To love makes one solitary, she thought" (33). Woolf's ability to situate character is evident in *Mrs. Dalloway*. For instance, she locates Septimus's

madness in his particular experience of the war. He realizes that he lost the ability to feel. Septimus's mindset is described through direct access to his consciousness—Woolf goes beyond the idea of filtering events through character, instead providing direct insight. For me, Woolf's talent for describing Septimus's psychology so elegantly is a highlight of the book. My favorite line in the novel is in the introduction of Septimus: "The world has raised its whip. Where will it descend?" (20).

*Mrs. Dalloway* also deals with class in some interesting ways. For instance, on page 263 Walsh is considering the mediocrity, passivity, and luxury of the upper class, which he of course benefits from being on the fringe of. In the character of Miss Kilman, Woolf presents a class critique without being heavy handed—the author describes the mutual dislike of Miss Kilman and Clarissa in an amusing way. Woolf gives us a few pages of an old beggar woman's memories and thoughts in the Regent's Park Tube station (122-123). Walsh has encountered this woman, and her mourning for a lost love of course echoes his own quite forcefully. Woolf interweaves the main characters' stories, secondary characters' experiences, and chance encounters with strangers to reinforce or juxtapose characters' emotions and to explore certain themes (aging and death, lost love, and madness).

Septimus's story, interwoven with Clarissa's, forms the heart of the novel, and it is Septimus's death that permeates Clarissa's party in the end, and she thinks of it viscerally, "reliving" her own version of it (280).

From the very first line of *Mrs. Dalloway*, in which Clarissa says she will buy the flowers herself (3), Woolf suggests that our real lives, these richer inner lives of thought and feeling, occur between inconsequential moments such as shopping and planning parties. Woolf has used the form and structure of the novel to underpin this thematic emphasis. (Anitra Ingham)

## Poetry Program

**Agamben, Giorgio. *What Is an Apparatus?* "What Is the Contemporary?" Trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford U.P., 2009. Print.**

In Giorgio Agamben's essay "What Is the Contemporary" from *What Is an Apparatus?* Agamben attempts to address the issue of contemporaneity, the same pressing issue I witnessed so many poets struggle with in our Form and Tech readings. (I'm thinking in particular of T. S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent" and Gertrude Stein's "Composition as Explanation.") For Agamben the issue of contemporaneity has high stakes. After all, the contemporary "perceives the darkness of his time as his most personal concern." Analyzing Osip Mandelstam's poem "The Century," Agamben argues that there is both a distance or separation and a bonding required to be contemporary—a caesura (both as fracture and bonding). The individual who can position herself within this gap is contemporary with her own time. The poet, according to Agamben, is contemporary because he has a broken spine, has a non-identity with the present time at the same time as an unbearable proximity. Agamben uses the analogy of space, explaining that some galaxies are so distant, and while the light wants to move toward us, it is so far away and moving so fast we can't see it. This ability to perceive that distant light, to see what wants to be seen but can't, is the purview of the contemporary.

To further explore this concept of the contemporary created by caesura, Agamben explores the narrative of Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden. This narrative had become, for me, a beautiful and powerful site for eros, as well as a site to explore the complex position of the feminist subject within this narrative, and Agamben's essay became a surprising source for further exploration. I became fascinated with one anecdote from this essay where he uses fashion to

illustrate the unique relationship to time that the contemporary has. There is, according to Agamben, “a theological signature of clothing”: it is a “tangible symbol of sin and death in the moment [God] expelled them from paradise” (58-59). The first dress was the naked glory of god, and the fig leaves (and later loin cloths) were symbolic attempts to bridge the caesura created by the expulsion from the garden. (Again, lack creating the desire to bridge what cannot be bridged.) Eve’s sin as a necessary part of God’s plan (and each individual’s access to salvation) was a narrative I was familiar with in my Mormon upbringing, but the role of the feminine as a catalyst for further creation (besides the biological) and the gender reversal created by seeing God as the first dress-maker exposed a shimmering thread overlooked in our cultural assumptions about women, creativity, and production. I found myself fascinated with cloth, sewing, creation associated with the domestic.

Within many of my thesis poems, I am preoccupied with the image of an amorphous, undecided garment and the activity of determining the shape of a garment, the object of headdress as a metaphor—to be capable or “not knowing capacity but desiring” a weight, responsibility, identity as this weight—but also the nightie, the remnant, the selvedge. I see the scraps (as fabric) as the variety of short term domestic tasks and activities that prevent women from sustained thought or discourse, according to Mary Wollstonecraft’s critique of Rousseau (*A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* 22): what little sustenance women are given in discourse and yet their ability to stitch these scraps together. And therefore, within my manuscript, the necessity for the variety of forms, the edges of different forms abutting each other. The stitching together becomes a site of power (à la bell hooks), a feminine method of dealing with the shapelessness associated with female form in a tradition where masculinity pervades (see Carson, “Gender of Sound” annotation). Equally important are the scraps associated with the domestic that have long been forgotten or left out of poetic discourse: Emily Dickinson’s drafts of poems written on her recipe cards, the domestic as the site of the fairy tale, Lyn Hejinian’s experimentation with the genre of autobiography and memory in *My Life*, and much of Alice Notley’s work (see annotations on Dickinson, George MacDonald, Hejinian, and Notley). Dare I say that certain subject positions stand closer to the caesura of their time? Might more keenly feel the fracture and see the work of bonding to be done within, so that the contemporary (as a space one throws their voice out in the dark into) is more available to them? This is not an argument but a personal realization that vibrates in my core. That is, some of my questions as a female poet trying to observe the work occurring in the field of contemporary poetry. What is the value of identity politics within contemporary poetry? Does the grouping of all those with broken spines create a space and a chorus announcing distant stars? Or do the spaces being made relegate these voices so that their work within the caesura is not seen? (Cassie Eddington)

**Browne, Laynie. *The Agency of Wind*. Penn Grove, CA: Avec Books, 1999. Print.**

Browne’s *Agency of Wind*, written mostly in prose, is a genius fairy tale about a girl traveling to find the origin of the wind’s power. In much of her journey, she is accompanied by a crane that depends on the wind to lift its wings for travel. Browne’s little girl—inquisitively, innocently young—also travels alone. She visits a doormaker, wears a tiara (or the tiara wears her), and visits the bank of common knowledge only to find that they won’t accept her, to which the girl replies, “I am not at present accepting refusals.”

The tale of the girl’s journey gives Browne’s philosophical ruminations grounding. If ever the reader is lost in abstracts—such as Browne’s declaration that “if certainty is a point on a line, that remains unnamed, then wind is every point on the same plain, and behind this plain is another identical image” (35)—the reader can return to the girl and gain grounding amid the hurricane created by Browne’s declarative winds.

Another lesson to learn from Browne's book is her use of imagistic and syntactical repetition. In the book's second poem, she says, "I approached a windmill, but it was really a series of persons extending their limbs in a similar motion" (17). In the last third of the book, she returns to this image: "I approached a river, but it was really a series of swimmers extending their limbs in a similar manner" (76). The imagistic repetition heightens the image's importance in the book by drawing the reader's attention across more than 60 pages. In essence, it creates a thread across the landscape of the book, toyed with by the wind.

Similarly, the tiara from the first half of the book turns into a headpiece by the book's end. Even the number 108 returns: "You have an idea of yourself upon rising, amidst many other ideas of yourself, and as you life up your morning, so do you lift up all of the ideas of yourself lifting the morning, so that if you could watch a film of yourself, you might see 108 images of yourself, lifting the morning" (25). Later, the narrator/speaker says, "I am of one-hundred and eight minds" (102). Repetition of image, idea, and number ground the book, as does the tale of the girl and her crane. The lesson is this: To make philosophical lyrics that border on the grand, one must be sure that the "grand" is grounded—perhaps in a piano, maybe by a bird or young girl traveling. (Bonnie Emerick)

**Goodyear, Sara Suleri, and Azra Raza. "Ghalib and the Art of the "Ghazal"." *Transition*: No. 99 (2008), pp112-125. Print.**

Suleri and Raza begin their article with the seemingly required and omnipresent disclaimer about their approach to translation, of the ghazal in particular, and their contribution to the endless debate over whether "couplet" is an appropriate term for a "twosome," or a *sher*. While I understand deeply that this debate over naming matters in a poet's contemplation of the function and nature of a *sher*, I am so tired of it. Anyhow, the authors proceed with some particularly incisive observations about the *sher*, particularly the ability for one line in a *sher* to not necessarily relate directly in subject matter to the other line. Their translations of poems I have read in several forms seem a productive addition, while I would often contest their interpretation of individual *sher*. The term *marsiya* as "elegy," and its relation to the Karbala, helps me situate the ghazal among Islamic traditions; the translators' passing meditation on Ghalib's relation to Sufi philosophies is thought-provoking if desperately incomplete and inconsistently uncertain.

The issue of how directly each *misra* (line) within a *sher* must relate to one another (literally, in image or continuity of utterance) is pertinent because I was, just this very morning, debating how "couple-y" a *sher* had to be between its two lines. I feel freed and vindicated by this assertion, if somewhat suspicious at its convenient timing. However, consideration of these constructions may lend weight to why a *sher* might be a pearl, able to stand apart of any poem and reside within its own perfection: because each *sher* is its own poem, micro-poem, and so two lines might pair in aching counterpoint with disparate or tangential images to achieve its effect. Often, here, these translations represent each line as end-stopped, and often the two lines of a *sher* do not enjamb to form one longer grammatical phrase. Hence, a thing such as Goodyear and Raza's version of the *sher* "The gaping mouths of a hundred crocodiles form netted traps in each wave/ Consider the labor within the sea change of a raindrop to a pearl." In "doggedly pursuing meaning," the translators have presumably preserved the lineation and not altered the phrasing so as to conform to some poetic sense foreign to the original. It is clear to see that the crocodiles and wave relate to the sea (change) and the forming of pearls in some sense; that each line refers to some impossible containment, that of the "netted traps" of crocodile mouths and the "labor within the sea change of a rain drop to a pearl"...while related by their water imagery and references to containment, they are also only

metaphorically related, and possibly opposed. Other *sher* seem more obviously one continuous thought: “I agree that you will not remain indifferent, but/ I will be dust by the time you become aware of me.” (The dust opposing the earlier abundant water seems an underlying poignance.)

I have already realized my own approach to the ghazal is desperately less lyrical than Ghalib’s is constantly reported to be. This is certainly in part due to my translating/refusal of the metrics available in the Urdu form, since syllabic lines in English rarely establish a quickly recognizable meter, and I detest overly metered poems. Certainly, also, it is due to the translations I read of Ghalib, those that refuse to attempt a pathetic mockery of his lyricism and music and rely instead on meaning. The poetry I model my ghazal on is thus stripped of something—austere, devoid of a distracting music that might interfere with the music of meaning, intention, voice, and mystic connection/reflection.

It seems hilarious to me now that my annotation of a 15-page article should so outstrip that of a 187-page book, and that I should consistently get so angry at the texts I read...particularly as my taking apart their position leads me to clearer understandings of my own purpose. If in translating the ghazal as a form, as I have claimed I am doing, I focus so much on the ‘couplet’, as a pearl, more than the formal constraints that tie *shers* to one another...then shouldn’t I have an intimate knowledge on how the *sher* is constructed, *misra* by *misra*? In going back to other texts I am more aware of enjambment and end-stop within the *sher*, and the difficulty in triangulating where the translators have separated me from Ghalib’s original vision and lineation. (Sarah Pieplow)

### **Hejinian, Lyn. *My Life*. Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Press, 1987.**

While being here at CSU’s MFA program, I’ve realized how entirely lacking my undergraduate creative writing education was in contemporary poetry. Maybe this has something to do with the poetry faculty (my fiction professor exposed us to a variety of strange postmodern fiction), or maybe faculty were afraid undergraduates couldn’t handle anything beyond the confessional poets (such as Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath—who, granted, were pretty exhilarating for me at the time), that we couldn’t grasp a postmodern lyric. Regardless of the cause, the absence of Lyn Hejinian’s *My Life* in my life up until this point is reprehensible. I’m especially shocked at its absence because of the accessibility of the prose poetry fragments that is Hejinian’s non-linear and experimental autobiography *My Life*.

It wasn’t until I was a ways into *My Life* that I read that Hejinian had written each section as a year in her life. In hindsight, I remember how differently the first few sections felt, and when I went back and read the beginning sections of the book again I *saw* it. Exploring a child’s perspective (at various stages) has become, I’ve realized, something important to my poetry. Hejinian represents different years of her life through different sets of fragments and observations. In the first section her father (or the *time* when he left for the war) “was purple—though moments are no longer so colored” and “Somewhere, in the background, rooms share a pattern of small roses” (7). These fragments and observations seem to occupy a middle ground of her perspective in that specific time (in that year) and her adult reflection on that time. This approach to memory feels very honest and draws attention to the very gap in memory and experience that requires her fragmentary approach. There is a texture created by these fragments and an accretion that occurs in the repetition and cycling of fragments. The roses in the first section come a few sections later “I try to find the spot at which the pattern on the floor repeats. Pink, and rosy, quartz” (14). Subjunctive clauses reassert themselves in different contexts: “As for we who ‘love to be astonished’, my heartbeats shook the bed” (22); “As for we who ‘love to be astonished,’ mother love” (30). In a later section we get “Only

fragments are accurate” (55). This realization comes later in life, though it’s been functioning all along. In this way, Hejinian illustrates how form produces thought. This method of an accretion of fragments seems such an accurate way to show the affect of experience, the very nature of being and becoming. I imagine though that the repetition of my own fragments would look very different I think than Hejinian’s, which included a privileged childhood in the 1950s, a Harvard education, etc. While I am not interested in writing a prose poem autobiography, the accretion of fragments that create a texture and sincerity of experience is something I would like to incorporate into my own writing.

I’ve also been very wary of making universal sounding or explicitly philosophical observations or proclamations in my own poems. *My Life*, though, makes these kinds of observations and statements in a way that feels very true in its subjectivity and lyric energy. A few that I related to very personally:

“There is so little public beauty” (21)

“You are not different from your friend, but with your friend you are different from yourself, and recognizing that, I withdrew, wanting to protect my honesty” (32).

“I felt self-sufficient except with regard to my feelings, to which I was always vulnerable, always in relation to someone else” (39).

“Math is like a joke I just don’t get, whose punchline isn’t funny” (40).

“I discovered that I could never quite remember how my favorite songs went” (41).

“At some point hunger becomes sensuous, then lascivious. Not a fuck but a hug” (57).

After reading *My Life*, I found myself feeling much more free to make these kinds of statements, I found myself writing much more prolifically in my own notebooks—a nice counter to the self-censorship and anxiety that sometimes comes to me after reading other poets. (Cassie Eddington)

### **Herbert, George. *The Complete English Poems*. Ed. John Tobin. London: Penguin, 1991.**

Certainly, my thesis engages with many traditions from the Alexandrian poetry of Sextus Propertius, Ovid, and Catallus to the lingual play and magical realism of Latin American poets like Huidobro, Neruda, and Vallejo, but how likely is it that my work also owes something to an English metaphysical poet who wrote primarily Christian devotional poetry? If one sets aside some of the biases one might have toward religious poetry, then the parallels start to become clear on examining my work. The poetry of George Herbert has affected my writing in several ways thematically and linguistically.

First, Herbert’s work concerns itself with Western man’s battle between the flesh and the soul, the belief that the flesh is something to shed so that the soul can commune with God. The poem “Matins” configures God as a suitor wooing human hearts (l. 9), which leads to human desire to transcend the flesh and join God in an ecstatic (orgiastic?) union: “Then by a sunbeam I will climb to thee” (20). The progression of my thesis is from seduction to sexual intercourse, from a concern with the flesh that I hope results in the shedding of the flesh to launch into more spiritual concerns, specifically naming the world. While I don’t necessarily set out to show the flesh as being secondary to the spirit—in fact, I often try to complicate and undermine how frequently Western writers privilege the spirit—I do embrace that the flesh must move toward spirit. That flesh is a method of spiritual arrival. This belief falls in line with Herbert’s idea that the flesh must be shed.

We both view the physical as a vehicle to something higher.

Second, Herbert's imagery has always fascinated me. His relationship with God is not unlike Donne's in that both seem to have an uneasiness regarding their position with their deity. For Donne, who wrote erotic secular poems before becoming a priest, the uneasiness resulted from him being forced to assume the role of the female in the classical erotic conquest narrative; for Herbert, the uneasiness stemmed more from the awful acknowledgment of God's power. But I'm getting away from my point. Herbert's imagery often combines the physical with the spiritual, such as in the poem "The Agony:"

“           there shall he see  
A man so wrung with pains, that all his hair, His skin, his garments bloody be.  
Sin is that press and vice, which forceth pain  
To hunt his cruel food through ev'ry vein” (ll. 8-12).

In the above quoted passage, Jesus becomes a grape crushed in the wine press of human sin. The result, of course, makes possible God's forgiveness of human transgression, yet the image makes readers squirm in pain. Herbert creates many such images throughout his work, something I strive to do throughout my thesis. My hope is that readers feel the image physically as well as mentally, spiritually, emotionally. Despite our thematic differences, Herbert is a fine example.

I didn't think George Herbert would be a poet I would find myself wanting to read time and time again, but, happily, I was wrong. Each time I read Herbert I discover something new as I come to the understanding that one's poetic tradition may have unlikely inhabitants. (Jerrod Bohn)