

Department of CREATIVE WRITING

PHOTO: GIANCARLO HUAPAYA

Residential Bilingual MFA Program Student Handbook



UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, EL PASO
University Towers — 1900 N. Oregon St. Ste. 520
El Paso, TX 79902

MFA Handbook

MFA in Creative Writing

Department of Creative Writing

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, EL PASO

University Towers — 1900 W. Oregon St. Suite 520

El Paso, TX 79902

utep.edu/cw

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Introduction

Welcome to the Bilingual MFA in Creative Writing! This handbook is designed to help you navigate your two years of study at UTEP with ease. For quick access to specific information, please refer to the Table of Contents (page iii). You will find that some sections contain hyperlinks (in blue) that you can click on if you are viewing this document on a computer. If you cannot find the information you need in the Table of Contents, we encourage you to check the Frequently Asked Questions section (page 42). Should you still have questions or require further assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at:

- Director of Graduate Studies at jdepierola@utep.edu.
- Programa de maestría at creacionliteraria@utep.edu
- MFA Program at creativewriting@utep.edu

The Creative Writing Department

The Creative Writing Department at UTEP was established to nurture intellectual and creative growth for students pursuing an undergraduate major or minor in Creative Writing, as well as a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Creative Writing, available both on campus and online.

Our Bilingual MFA in Creative Writing is the only program of its kind in the world, attracting students from the Americas and beyond who seek to develop their writing skills within a uniquely situated university and vibrant intellectual community. We understand bilingualism not as a requirement for fluency in both languages, but as the dynamic coexistence of Spanish and English in the same classroom.

OFFICE INFORMATION

The Creative Writing office is located in University Towers, Suite 520 (1900 N. Oregon St.). In the main office, you will find our Chair, Daniel Chacón, and our Administrative Services Coordinator, Carla Gonzalez. Additionally, we offer a conference space for students to study and work when meetings or defenses are not scheduled.

OFFICE HOURS

Hours are as follows when the university is in full session (hours are reduced during intersession and during the summer).

- Main Office: Monday – Friday 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
- Should you need to talk with our chair, please, make an appointment at danchacon@utep.edu.

THE CREATIVE WRITING DEPARTMENT

PHONES

- Main Office Phone: 1-915-747-5713
- Main Office Fax: 1-915-747-5523

MAILING ADDRESS

Correspondence for faculty and chair should be addressed to:

Department of Creative Writing
University of Texas, El Paso
1900 N. Oregon St. Suite 520
El Paso, TX 79902

MFA Curriculum

During your two years of studies, you will need to complete the coursework described in this chapter. The order in which you take the courses will depend on your overall plans for your MFA, which you should discuss with your advisor.

Regardless of how you plan your coursework, if you are a full time student, you should complete your MFA in two years. Please, consider the following:

- You need to complete 36 hours of coursework in 4 semesters. If you are an online student, you may take longer than 4 semesters, although it is advisable to take at least one class per semester to keep the continuity of your studies.
- To be considered a full time student, you need to register for 9 hours (3 courses) each semester. This is a requirement for students holding a graduate assistantship (see page 20).
- You may take courses in our summer sessions. These courses may count towards your 36 hour requirement, but they do not count towards your 9 hours requirement to be a full time student in Fall and Spring.
- Exceptionally, you may take one undergraduate class for credit, see guidelines below.
- You will enroll in CRW 5397 Capstone in your fourth semester, concurrently with two other courses to complete your full time requirement. The successful completion of CRW 5397 Capstone is a requirement for your graduation in our program.

CURRICULUM

This section includes the types of courses that make the curriculum of our program.

CRW 5321 NARRATIVE THEORY AND POETICS

This course is a comprehensive introduction to the craft of prose and poetry writing. Students will engage in creative writing workshops, learning to give and receive constructive feedback. Through readings in narrative theory and poetics, students will analyze the principles that shape storytelling and poetic form, culminating in the creation of their own *poetics*—a personal manifesto that articulates their artistic vision. The final project for this class is a “Work in Progress Plan,” a document that will serve as a roadmap throughout their MFA, outlining their creative projects, influences, and literary tradition.

WORKSHOPS (9 HOURS)

The primary focus is honing writing skills through regular workshops, providing students with the opportunity to give and receive meaningful feedback on their work. The final project for the class will be creative, in some cases with a short preface framing the project.

- CRW 5366 Advanced Fiction Writing
- CRW 5367 Advanced Poetry Writing
- CRW 5369 Advanced Playwriting
- CRW 5371 Writing the Novel
- CRW 5372 Advanced Screenwriting
- CRW 5373 Advanced Creative Nonfiction
- CRW 5374 Ten Problems for the Fiction Writer
- CRW 5363 Writing Children’s Literature
- CRW 5368 Variable Topics
- CRW 5370 Literary Translation

CRAFT COURSES (9 HOURS)

These classes are designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the craft of writing. They include in-depth readings and analysis of various writing techniques, styles, and genres. Students will also work on assignments aimed at developing their craft. Depending on the specific objectives of each class, the final project may be a creative piece, an analytical essay, or a combination of both.

- CRW 5375 Writing Comics and Visual Culture
- CRW 5376 Writing About Popular Music
- CRW 5377 Rewriting America Since 1960s
- CRW 5378 The Politics of Narration
- CRW 5379 Kafka and the Art of Fiction
- CRW 5380 The Physics of Creative Writing
- CRW 5382 Studies in form
- CRW 5383 History of the Short Story Form
- CRW 5384 Forms in the Prose Poem and the Short Story
- CRW 5385 Forms in the Contemporary Short Story
- CRW 5386 Minding Fiction
- CRW 5387 Contemporary Latin American Novel
- CRW 5388 Storytelling in Film and Literature
- CRW 5389 High Modernism in Latin America

The class CRW 5382 Studies in Form is a craft class with a different content each semester. Check the Course Catalog before you enroll in this course.

STUDIO COURSES (9 HOURS)

In this immersive studio class, students will be granted dedicated time to focus on their writing projects under the close supervision of a seasoned faculty member. Designed for second-semester students and beyond.

These classes require an approved “Work in Progress Plan.” This plan is developed in the class CRW 5321 Narrative Theory and Poetics, available during your first semester.

- CRW 5394 Prose Studio
- CRW 5395 Poetry Studio

ELECTIVE (3 HOURS)

This is a graduate-level course taken from any department with your advisor's approval.¹

§ Independent Study (3 hours)

This is not a course per se, but a way of taking a course, and it is designed to allow your development as a writer. You can take an independent study from any department with your advisor's approval. It may replace a workshop or a craft course. See the Independent Study chapter (page 9) for more details.

§ Undergraduate Course (3 hours)

Exceptionally, you may take one undergraduate class for credit, as long as you follow the following guidelines:

- You can only take 3000 and 4000 series classes from the list approved by the Graduate Council. See the most current list of undergraduate courses under “[Advising and Enrollment](#)” on the Graduate School website.
- Your advisor must approve the class you are taking.
- You must contact the instructor and have their agreement in writing that they will adjust the assignments and readings for the class to count as a graduate level course.
- This class will count as one of your electives.
- You can only take one undergraduate class for credit.

¹The pedagogy class in the Department of English (ENG 5346) or Language and Linguistics (LING 5308) for students holding a TA with the respective department. Either one of these courses will be counted as your elective (see the section below).

MFA CURRICULUM

CAPSTONE (3 HOURS)

This will be the final project for the student, a collection of stories, essays, a novel or a collection of poems. The details of the project will be worked out and agreed upon with your “Capstone Advisor.”

- CRW 5397 Capstone

Independent Study

The Independent Study format is intended to provide students with the opportunity to explore specific areas of interest that are not covered in regular courses during their two years in the program. This allows for personalized learning of topics relevant to the student's goals.

GUIDELINES

- You are not required to take an Independent Study, nor are you guaranteed one.
- Make sure you ask for an Independent Study within the area of interest, research, or creative work of the professor with whom you will take the class.
- To ensure timely approval, proposals for Independent Studies should be submitted at least one semester in advance. For example, if you wish to take an Independent Study in the Fall semester, your proposal should be submitted by the end of the previous Fall semester.
- Keep in mind the requirements below.

REQUIREMENTS

Before registering for your Independent Study, you must submit a proposal that includes the following components, which must be approved by your instructor and the Director of Graduate Studies:

- A brief letter stating how the proposed independent study will contribute to your development as a writer or to the writing of your thesis.

INDEPENDENT STUDY

- A detailed syllabus for the course. While the syllabus can be formatted to better suit each class, it must include the following components:
 - An introduction
 - A list of readings
 - A means of evaluation
 - A list of assignments
 - A weekly break down of readings, evaluations and assignments
 - Final project

STEPS

To successfully enroll in an Independent Study, please follow these steps carefully:

- Meet with the instructor you plan to take the independent studies with and discuss your plans.
- If the instructor accepts working with you, write an Independent Studies Proposal (see above).
- Submit your proposal to the instructor.
- Once your proposal is accepted by your instructor, submit your proposal to the graduate director.
- Once the graduate director has approved your proposal, you may register for your independent study (CRW 5390 Independent Studies has a different CRN depending on the instructor who teaches it).

Advising Policies

You will be assigned an advisor to guide you during the two years of your MFA (see Advisor List on page ??). Your advisor is responsible for helping you design a comprehensive plan for your MFA, which includes selecting coursework, fulfilling program requirements, and assisting with registration. Your advisor is your main contact with our department, and you should meet with them whenever you have concerns or questions regarding your academic responsibilities.

You may request a change of advisor at any time during your MFA. If you choose to do so, contact the Director of Graduate Studies as early as possible, ideally at the beginning of the semester.

You are required to meet in person with your advisor each semester to discuss your course selections for the upcoming semester and to review your academic progress. These meetings are crucial for ensuring that your coursework aligns with your overall development as a writer. Make sure that the courses you select align with your overall development plan as a writer throughout your MFA. Once you and your advisor have agreed upon your coursework, make sure that your advisor fills out your Advising Sheet and lifts your holds, so you may proceed to registration.

Keep in mind the following policies regarding your study in our program:

TYPES OF COURSES

FIRST-YEAR It is strongly recommended that you take the class “CRW 5321 Narrative Theory and Poetics” in your first year, and, if possible, in your first semester, as this class will help you understand basic theory, but, most importantly, will allow you to write your “Work in Progress Plan,” a requirement for all studio classes and the blueprint to finish your book.

WORKSHOPS These courses focus on the writing practice; most of these classes follow the workshop format and the final project is creative. Students may take up to four workshop courses. You must take at least one workshop in a genre different from the one you write on.

CRAFT These courses focus on various aspects of writing; most follow a seminar format, and the final project may consist of either an analytical paper or a creative work. These courses require reading at least six book-length texts, and writing an analytical or a creative final project of at least 15 pages.

STUDIO These courses will give you time for focused writing so you can advance your book-length project. The format, readings, and meetings will vary depending on the needs of the students enrolled in the class. You are required to have a “Work in Progress Plan” (developed ideally in CRW 5321) to enroll in these courses.

ELECTIVES Students may take any graduate level course at UTEP as an elective with approval from their advisor.

INDEPENDENT STUDIES Each student is allowed one Independent Study (CRW 5390) during the course of the MFA. The proposed Independent Study should not duplicate a course that we regularly offer. It is recommended the independent study be taken in the second year of study (for more information, see Independent Studies on page 9).

UNDERGRADUATE COURSE Each student may take only one undergraduate class for credit. This class must be selected from the list approved by the Graduate Council (for more information, see Un-

dergraduate Courses on page 7). If the class is not in the list, the class will not count towards your degree.

COURSEWORK

1. Undergraduate courses are not accepted for graduate credit under any circumstances (except for those approved by the Graduate Council).
2. Students funded by UTEP, whether through the Department of English or the Department of Creative Writing, must enroll in nine hours (three courses) each semester to maintain their TA eligibility.
3. We strongly recommend that students not enroll in more than nine hours per semester.
4. The Department Chair, in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies, assigns graduate assistantships. They are not done by petition of students. Assignments are calibrated to serve the needs of the Department of Creative Writing and are subject to change from semester to semester.
5. The renewal of graduate assistantships from year to year is not automatic; it is contingent on satisfactory progress in both coursework and TA assignments.

CAPSTONE

- The capstone class gives students the opportunity to complete the manuscript of a work in progress that they have developed over the previous three semesters. The capstone advisor can provide both binding and non-binding instructions for manuscript revisions. Binding instructions must be followed, while non-binding instructions are suggestions that students may choose to implement at their discretion.
- Students are encouraged to meet with their capstone advisor for clarification whenever they have questions regarding the provided suggestions.

ADVISING POLICIES

- Students are required to enroll in the capstone class during their fourth semester. In exceptional circumstances, students may enroll in the Capstone class up to three times, but funding from the department is limited to the fourth semester
- Students may take the capstone class in absentia, provided they have completed all required coursework and have received approval from their capstone advisor. Please note that students who choose to take the class in absentia will forfeit their graduate assistantship appointment.

Grading

GRADES

- To keep a good standing as a graduate student, your GPA must remain at 3.0 or higher.
- Graduate School gives credit to grades A, B, and C.
- Students who earn an F will receive no credit towards their degree.
- In some classes, such as CRW 5397 Captstone, the grading system is I (incomplete), P (in progress), S (satisfactory), and U (unsatisfactory).
- Make sure you understand the grading policy in each class you take.

DROPPING COURSES

- Except for a family emergency, we strongly discourage students from dropping their classes. Nevertheless, should you need to withdraw from a class, consult the [Academic Calendar](#). Usually the deadline to drop a class is around Week 8.
- If you hold a Graduate Assistant position, you must remain a full-time student (9 hours or 3 hours if enrolled in Thesis II); otherwise, your appointment will be canceled.
- For leaves of absence, check the corresponding section in Frequently Asked Questions on page 42.

INCOMPLETE

- Students who cannot complete the assignments of a course will earn either an F (fail) or an I (incomplete), depending on the policies of that particular course. However, students who have not completed a significant number of assignments, cannot request an I (incomplete) grade.
- Students with an Incomplete need to make arrangements with the instructor to fulfill the missing assignments. NOTE: It is the student's responsibility to make these arrangements.
- A student who does not complete the necessary assignments within a year of the course's completion will receive an F for that course.

Working on Your Book

WRITE YOUR BOOK WITH US

One of the primary goals of the MFA program is to help you complete a book-length project. Our program is designed to support your growth as a writer and guide you through the process of writing your book, honoring our motto: *Write Your Book With Us*. This section outlines how the program will help you achieve this goal.

WORK IN PROGRESS PLAN

The “Work in Progress Plan” is a concise document (three to five pages) that outlines the project you intend to develop during your MFA. It includes a timeline spanning from your second semester to your final semester, when you will enroll in the CRW 5397 Capstone class. This plan is drafted during the CRW 5321 Narrative Theory and Poetics course in your first semester.

WORK IN PROGRESS PLAN

The “Work in Progress Plan” includes the following components:

PROJECT A description of your book-length project, including its form and genre. Reference examples from existing works, if applicable.

OUTLINE One to three paragraphs outlining the structure of your project. Specify whether it will be divided into chapters, sections, or pieces, and describe the narrative or thematic arc.

SOURCES A list of creative or theoretical sources relevant to your project. These may include literature, film, music, visual art, performances, or other cultural works.

TIMELINE A semester-by-semester timeline detailing your project's progression. Break each semester into three five-week sections to better track your progress effectively.

UPDATING YOUR "WORK IN PROGRESS PLAN"

FIRST VERSION Draft your "Work in Progress Plan" during CRW 5321 Narrative Theory and Poetics in your first semester.

APPROVAL The plan must be approved by the instructor of CRW 5321 Narrative Theory and Poetics.

SUBMISSION Submit your most current plan to the instructor at the beginning of each studio class (CRW 5394 or CRW 5395).

UPDATE Revise your plan at the end of each studio class to reflect progress and insights gained while working on your book.

STUDIO CLASSES

Studio classes provide dedicated time for focused writing, allowing you to advance your book-length project. The format, readings, and meetings are tailored to the needs of the students enrolled. To enroll in a studio class, you must have an approved "Work in Progress Plan."

After completing each studio class, you are encouraged to revise your "Work in Progress Plan" to reflect the current state of your project, as well as any changes that may have arisen during the course.

There are two studio classes available:

- CRW 5394 Prose Studio
- CRW 5395 Poetry Studio

CAPSTONE

The CRW 5397 Capstone class is your opportunity to complete the manuscript you have developed during the studio classes. Your capstone advisor will provide binding and non-binding revision instructions. Binding instructions must be followed, while non-binding instructions are suggestions you may choose to implement.

While working on CRW 5397, consider the following:

- Enroll in the capstone class during your fourth semester. In exceptional circumstances, you may enroll up to three times, but departmental funding is limited to one capstone class (fourth semester).
- Meet with your capstone advisor to clarify feedback or suggestions.
- You may complete the capstone class in absentia with approval from your capstone advisor and fulfillment of all coursework except the capstone class. Tuition fees apply for in absentia enrollment.

Graduate Assistantships

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Depending on the strength of their application, some incoming students are awarded a Graduate Assistant position. This part-time position (20 hours per week) provides financial support to help cover tuition, living expenses, and books. Graduate assistants are evaluated annually, and the renewal of their appointment depends on their performance.

Students awarded graduate assistantships funded by other departments—such as English—are required to fulfill their duties exclusively within those departments. These students are not available for assignments within the Department of Creative Writing.

TYPES OF GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Graduate assistants in the Department of Creative Writing are assigned to one of the following four categories:

1. Teaching
2. Research
3. Digital and Publishing Work
4. Graduate Program Support

Once offered a Graduate Assistant position, students will have the opportunity to indicate their preferences by ranking the categories above in order of interest. The specific duties for each category are as follows:

I. TEACHING

Students assigned to this category will teach for the department under one of the following roles:

- **Instructor of Record:**
 - Teach an introductory-level course. Responsibilities include attending the annual teaching colloquium organized by the Director of Undergraduate Studies, creating a syllabus, developing lesson plans, grading assignments, and delivering instruction.
 - First-year students are not eligible to serve as Instructor of Record unless they hold a master's degree or equivalent.
 - Continuation in this role is contingent on demonstrated success in the classroom.
- **Teaching Assistant:** Assist a faculty member in teaching a course. Responsibilities may include:
 - Grading assignments and providing feedback,
 - Taking attendance and supporting classroom instruction,
 - Facilitating discussions and offering general classroom assistance.

2. RESEARCH

Students assigned to this category will assist a faculty member with an academic or creative project. Duties may include:

- Conducting research in creative writing, literature, pedagogy, or related fields,
- Assisting with compiling bibliographies, gathering sources, conducting interviews, and analyzing texts,
- Performing other research-related tasks as required by the project.

3. DIGITAL AND PUBLISHING WORK

Students assigned to this category will contribute to the department's digital media and publishing initiatives. Assignments may include:

- **Podcasting and Social Media:**
 - Assist in producing podcasts for the department,

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

- Create and manage social media content to promote departmental activities.
- **Publishing and Editorial Work:**
 - Edit and produce the *Río Grande Review*,
 - Serve on the editorial team of *Hizache*,
 - Assist with the administration of the Montoya Poetry Prize.

4. GRADUATE PROGRAM SUPPORT

Students assigned to this category will assist the Graduate Director in managing and promoting the graduate program. This role is ideal for students interested in gaining experience in literary administration, event planning, and program management. Responsibilities include:

- Creating promotional materials for the graduate program, such as flyers and videos,
- Organizing and promoting student-centered literary events,
- Managing outreach efforts to increase the visibility of the graduate program through digital and print media,
- Assisting with departmental branding and visibility initiatives.

Tuition and Scholarships

PAYING FOR TUITION

All graduate students at UTEP, including those with a teaching assistantship appointment, are expected to pay for tuition. The information below should help you fulfill this obligation. Follow the links to obtain more up to date information under each category.

COMPLETE AND SUBMIT FAFSA

The financial aid process begins after you submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The information you submit is used to determine your eligibility for grants, loans and work study. Our school code is 003661.

IMPORTANT: For best results, submit your application by February 14 (mark your calendar).

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

If you are admitted to the program without a teaching assistantship it is still possible to work on campus. Contact Job Mine at 915-747-5640 or careers@utep.edu.

FINANCIAL AID RESOURCES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

College students have a number of options available for financing their education. The most common types of assistance include grants, loans, work study and scholarships. Additional resources including private loans, internships and fellowships are also available.

TUITION AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Information for aid resources can be found at the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid. All loan forms can be found on the Financial Aid page under “Forms” as well as information about topics below under “Funding”.

- Federal Grants
- State Grants and Programs
- Student Loans
- Workstudy
- Tax Credits and other Programs
- Waivers
- Scholarships
- Additional Financial Aid Resources
- PLUS Loans for Graduate and Professional Degree Students

ESTIMATED LIVING EXPENSES

The following tables show an estimate of expenses for graduate students at UTEP. Keep in mind that some of the line items might not apply to you. For instance, if you plan to live near UTEP, and walk to the university, your transportation expenses will be much lower than those estimated. In the same fashion, if books assigned for your courses are available in the Main Library, this will lower that line item too. For the most up-to-date estimates, visit [Financial Aid](#).

2022-23 ACADEMIC YEAR

	TX RESIDENT	TX NON-RESIDENT
Tuition and Fees	\$ 7,696.30	\$ 17,530.00
Room and Board	\$ 5,134.00	\$ 5,134.00
Books and Supplies	\$ 1,266.00	\$ 1,266.00
Transportation	\$ 2,284.00	\$ 2,284.00
Personal Expenses	\$ 1,986.00	\$ 1,986.00
TOTAL	\$ 18,366.00	\$ 28,200.00

Información para estudiantes internacionales

SEGURO DE SALUD

La universidad ofrece a todos los estudiantes la posibilidad de enrolarse en el plan BlueCross/BlueShield. Tenga en cuenta, sin embargo, que este plan requiere el pago parcial por los servicios, por lo que algunos estudiantes optan por usar los servicios médicos que ofrece Ciudad Juárez, afiliados con BlueCross/BlueShield.

Para obtener información más reciente, consulte la siguiente presentación en formato PDF: [Beneficios BlueCross](#).

IMPORTANTE: Cada año hay una sesión de orientación para Estudiantes Internacionales a la que es obligatorio asistir, ya que aclara muchas dudas para quienes empiezan su maestría en UTEP. Para más información, visite la página siguiente: [Resources for Students](#).

IMPORTANTE: Cada semestre, durante la primera semana de clases, cada estudiante debe ir a la Oficina de Recursos Humanos de UTEP para firmar la inscripción al seguro de salud para que el costo del mismo sea aplicado como un crédito en la matrícula del estudiante, de otro modo el estudiante tendrá que asumir el pago. Este proceso también se puede efectuar vía internet. Las notificaciones de inscripción se envían por correo electrónico.

SEGURO SOCIAL

Antes de poder trabajar legalmente como Graduate Assistant en los Estados Unidos, todo estudiante debe tener un número de seguro social. Para obtener una tarjeta de seguro social, necesita la carta de oferta de nuestro programa. Esta carta deberá ser llevada a Office of International Programs and Study Abroad y solicitar una carta para la oficina del Seguro Social. El OIP creará dicha carta verificando que el estudiante está inscrito a tiempo completo —requisito para ser Graduate Assistant— y que mantiene su estado migratorio. El Asesor de Estudiantes Internacionales firmará luego la carta de oferta. Deberá llevar ambas cartas a la oficina de la Administración del Seguro Social para solicitar su tarjeta.

La expedición de la tarjeta de seguro social puede tomar algunas semanas. Sin embargo, la carta de la oficina de Administración del Seguro Social es suficiente para oficializar su puesto como Graduate Assistant en nuestro departamento.

Para más información, contacte con Office of International Programs and Study Abroad.

VIVIENDA

La universidad está ubicada en una zona de El Paso donde es factible encontrar alojamiento que permite caminar a la universidad y a la mayoría de servicios cercanos. La mejor forma de obtener la información más actualizada es contactando con otros estudiantes que ya hayan vivido en el área por medio del correo de nuestro Departamento. Recomendamos algunas opciones, como una idea general de lo que está disponible en el área. Debe tomarse en cuenta que los costos mínimos de alojamiento rondan entre los \$450 y \$600 dólares al mes, aproximadamente, y por lo general incluyen servicios de agua, luz y gas. La mayoría de los departamentos o habitaciones en alquiler solicitan un anticipo o depósito en garantía, así como la firma de contrato.

CERCA DE UTEP

Highlander apartments

1700 Hawthorne St

\$595 por mes, para una sola persona. Incluye todos los servicios

1127 Los Angeles St. Apartments

Downtown 301 East River Ave.

Victor Valdez—Rooms for Rent

528 Prospect Avenue.

\$500 por mes. Incluye todos los servicios

Contact: email

DORMITORIOS UTEP

Miner Village Summit Hall

2401 N. Oregon St.

Contact: website

Miner Heights Apartments

300 W. Schuster Ave.

Contact: website

OTRAS OPCIONES

Sugerimos también las siguientes páginas web de búsqueda:

- Apartments.com
- ApartmentFinder.com
- Zillow.com

MÁS INFORMACIÓN

Cuando empiece a planear su viaje a El Paso, no deje de consultar la información más reciente y más detallada que aparece en nuestra página web en los siguientes recursos:

- For accepted students.
- Trámites al llegar a UTEP.

Teaching in the Department of Creative Writing

Second-year graduate students with a Graduate Assistant position funded by our department, and in good academic standing, are eligible to teach one of our introductory creative writing courses. Due to the limited number of courses offered, the selection process is competitive. You must submit an application early in the Spring semester to be considered for teaching assignments in the following academic year. All students, regardless of funding status, are eligible to apply for teaching opportunities during the Summer term.

REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible to teach, students must meet the following criteria:

- Complete the “Teaching Creative Writing Colloquium,” offered each Spring,
- Hold a Graduate Assistant position funded by the Department of Creative Writing,
- Maintain good academic standing and full-time enrollment,
- Submit a complete application by the specified deadline.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Students must submit an application to the Director of Undergraduate Studies during the Spring semester to be considered for a teaching assignment. The application should include:

- **LETTER OF APPLICATION:** A statement explaining your interest in teaching and how your skills, experiences, and goals align with the role of an instructor for an introductory creative writing course,
- **A SAMPLE SYLLABUS:** A detailed syllabus outlining weekly assignments, readings, and grading policies¹.

WHY TEACH CREATIVE WRITING?

Teaching creative writing offers several opportunities for professional and personal growth:

- Gain hands-on teaching experience in a classroom setting,
- Mentor and collaborate with undergraduate student writers,
- Apply the knowledge and skills acquired in the graduate program to a teaching context,
- Develop and refine your ability to design syllabi and lesson plans,
- Enhance your own writing through the process of teaching and engaging with students.

BEST PRACTICES FOR TEACHING

While teaching, consider the following strategies to create an effective and engaging learning environment:

- Seek guidance and support from faculty and peers,
- Select readings and materials that resonate with your interests and expertise,
- Design a well-organized syllabus that balances structure with flexibility,

¹For sample syllabi, contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies

- Implement a grading system that is efficient and transparent, such as Engrade or Blackboard,
- Ensure that course materials, assignments, and activities reflect your own passion for writing and creativity.

Improvements and Grievances

Our department is committed to ensuring a positive experience for all students in our MFA program. However, there may be times when you stumble upon challenges or have ideas for improvement. This section outlines how to submit suggestions and address grievances.

SUGGESTIONS

We welcome your input to improve our MFA program. Suggestions may include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- Proposals for new courses or workshops,
- Recommendations for new or revised policies affecting student experiences,
- Ideas for community-building initiatives, such as readings, workshops, or outreach projects.

To share your suggestions, you have the following options:

- Discuss your ideas with your student representative, who will present them at our next faculty meetings,
- Speak directly with the Director of Graduate Studies,
- Contact the Department Chair to share your suggestions,
- Request an opportunity to present your ideas directly at a faculty meeting.

GRIEVANCES

If you stumble upon issues that affect your personal experience in our MFA program, the following steps are available to address your concerns:

- **INSTRUCTOR:** If the issue is related to a course you are taking, discuss it with your instructor during their office hours.
- **ADVISOR:** If the issue is unresolved or not specific to a single course, consult your academic advisor (see the Advisor List on page ??).
- **DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES or CHAIR:** If the issue remains unresolved or extends beyond the MFA program but is still related to UTEP, contact the Director of Graduate Studies or the Department Chair.
- **COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE STUDIES:** For conflicts involving graduate advisors, faculty members, or compliance with degree program requirements, the our department will organize an ad-hoc Committee on Graduate Studies to mediate and resolve a dispute.
- **STUDENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURES:** If the issue cannot be resolved within the department, follow the official UTEP [Student Complaint Procedures](#).

Capstone Class

The goal of our MFA program is to help you complete a book-length manuscript of publishable quality (your Project). To this end, you will draft a “Work-In-Progress Plan” during your first semester in CRW 5321 Narrative Theory & Poetics (see “Working on Your Book” on page 17).

You will develop your project throughout your MFA in the studio classes offered each semester. The Capstone class, taken during your final semester, is designed to help you refine and assemble your manuscript into its final form. During this process, you will receive guidance from your Capstone Advisor.

If you are a full-time student, you will take the Capstone class concurrently with two other courses. Careful planning is essential to successfully completing your MFA.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

The minimum page length requirements by genre are as follows:

- Fiction: 120 pages,
- Poetry: 60 pages,
- Screenplay: 90 pages,
- Translation: Follow the requirements for the corresponding genre (fiction, poetry, or screenplay),
- Other genres: Consult your capstone advisor for specific requirements.

CHOOSING YOUR CAPSTONE ADVISOR

You should select a Capstone Advisor during your third semester, which typically coincides with the beginning of your second year. When approaching a faculty member to discuss the possibility of serving as your advisor, consider the following:

- Only approach faculty members with whom you have taken at least one course,
- Familiarize yourself with their work to determine if their poetics align with your project,
- If a faculty member declines, it does not reflect on the value of your work; it is often due to prior commitments,
- Begin the process early, ideally at the start of your third semester, to secure an advisor before the end of that semester,
- Once a faculty member agrees to serve as your advisor, notify the Director of Graduate Studies via email to request formal approval.

SUBMITTING YOUR PROPOSAL

To request a Capstone Advisor, you must submit a proposal for evaluation. This allows the faculty member to assess whether they are a good fit for your project.

SUBMISSION

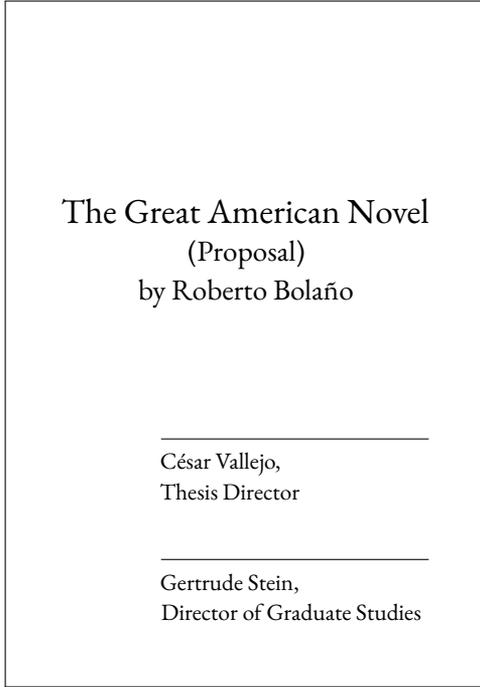
Your proposal should include the following components:

- **COVER PAGE:** Include your project's title, your name, and signature lines for your prospective Capstone Advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies (see sample on page 35),
- **WORK IN PROGRESS PLAN:** Submit the most recent version of the document you drafted in CRW 5321 Narrative Theory & Poetics (see "Work in Progress Plan" on page 17),
- **WRITING SAMPLE:** Provide a sample of your work, such as 10 poems (or a sequence) or 20 pages of fiction (a short story or full chapter). For other genres, consult your capstone advisor.

CAPSTONE CLASS

APPROVAL

- Your proposal must be approved by your Capstone Advisor,
- Once approved, forward the proposal to the Director of Graduate Studies for final approval,
- After receiving approval from the Director of Graduate Studies, you may register for CRW 5397 Capstone.



Capstone Proposal—title page

WRITING YOUR PROJECT

The CRW 5397 Capstone class is designed to provide you with the time and structure needed to complete your project. You will work closely with your Capstone Advisor, and it is essential to establish clear mutual expectations at the outset. Discuss and agree upon the following:

- The frequency of meetings,

- The number of pages or drafts to be submitted for each meeting,
- The type of feedback you expect,
- Any other relevant guidelines for collaboration.

WORKING WITH YOUR CAPSTONE ADVISOR

Each Capstone Advisor has a unique approach to guiding students. Early in the process, you should discuss their expectations and communicate your own needs. Remember that your Capstone Advisor must approve your project, and they will only do so if they are satisfied with the quality of your work based on their standards.

As you work on your project, keep the following in mind:

- Be respectful of your Capstone Advisor's time. While advising is part of their role, they are not compensated for the additional time they invest in supporting your project.
- Follow your Capstone Advisor's preferred method for submitting work,
- Establish clear deadlines with your Capstone Advisor and strive to meet them. If you encounter any issues or delays, notify your advisor as soon as possible,
- Keep all scheduled appointments and arrive on time,
- During the revision process, your Capstone Advisor will provide feedback, which may fall into one of two categories:
 - **BINDING:** These are required changes. Your Capstone Advisor will not approve your project unless these changes are implemented,
 - **NON-BINDING:** These are suggestions intended to improve your work. However, the final decision to incorporate them depends on you.

After Graduation

Our Bilingual MFA in Creative Writing is a terminal degree. This means that you are now qualified to pursue careers requiring this credential and to devote yourself to writing. Below are some possibilities you may wish to consider after completing the program.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

El programa Optional Practical Training (OPT) permite la conversión de su visa de estudiante a una que le permite trabajar por un año después de su graduación. Este programa está diseñado para ofrecer a los estudiantes la oportunidad de adquirir experiencia laboral después de finalizar sus estudios.

Los estudiantes interesados deben solicitar el OPT desde 90 días antes y hasta 60 días después del fin del programa de la visa I-20. Si la solicitud se presenta antes de la expiración de la visa I-20, se descontarán esos días de la visa de trabajo. Para más información sobre los requisitos y el costo de la solicitud, consulte la página del [Optional Practical Training UTEP](#).

IMPORTANTE: Los estudiantes interesados en solicitar el OPT **no deben salir de los Estados Unidos** hasta no tener la nueva visa.

OPORTUNIDADES DE TRABAJO

Después de su graduación, los estudiantes de nuestro programa tienen la oportunidad de trabajar en las siguientes instituciones:

- Otros departamentos en UTEP,
- Diario *El Paso*,

- Comité organizador del Congreso de Literatura Mexicana Contemporánea (UTEF),
- Uno de los *community colleges* en El Paso.

PH.D. PROGRAMS

Although the MFA is a terminal degree, you may choose to pursue further studies in a Ph.D. program. If you are considering this path, keep the following in mind:

- Most Ph.D. programs require at least five years to complete, and coursework from other institutions is typically not transferable,
- Application deadlines for Ph.D. programs usually fall between November and January of the year preceding the academic year in which you intend to begin (typically in the Fall),
- If you plan to request letters of recommendation, be courteous and provide your recommenders with ample time and necessary materials. Follow the guidelines under LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION below.

APPLYING FOR TEACHING JOBS

Teaching is one of the most common career paths for MFA graduates. If you pursue this option, consider the following:

- The job market is highly competitive. Do not be discouraged if you do not secure an interview during your initial applications,
- Publications, particularly in book form, can significantly strengthen your application,
- Teaching at a community college can help you build your resumé and gain valuable experience,
- For references, consider asking your capstone advisor and supervisors, as they can provide personalized and detailed recommendations,
- If you need letters of recommendation, follow the guidelines under LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION below.

PUBLICATION

Many of our graduates go on to publish their projects. If this happens, remember to:

- Notify us so we can share the good news and add links to your work on our website,
- Acknowledge our program and your capstone advisor in your publication,
- Continue writing, even as the demands of promoting your new publication may consume much of your time.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Whether you are applying for further studies, teaching positions, or other academic opportunities, you will likely need letters of recommendation from our faculty. Keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Request letters of recommendation at least one month in advance,
- Ideally, ask faculty who served as your capstone advisor, from whom you have taken at least two courses, or for whom you have worked as a graduate assistant,
- Provide the following information for each institution you are applying to:
 - The addressee of the letter,
 - The institution's name,
 - The department or program,
 - The mailing address.
- **IMPORTANT:** If the letter needs to be mailed via the US Postal Service, provide your recommender with a properly addressed and stamped envelope.

Students' Organization

The BCWSO (Bilingual Creative Writing Students' Organization) is a non-profit organization established by students in our residential MFA program. The primary goals of the BCWSO are:

- Represent MFA students at monthly Faculty Meetings,
- Organize events to showcase the work of MFA students,
- Conduct fundraisers to support MFA students in attending conferences,
- Host cultural events, such as conferences, readings, and workshops.

OFFICERS

The BCWSO's officers are elected annually and include the following roles:

PRESIDENT: Represents the student body, influences BCWSO policies, and attends monthly Faculty Meetings,

VICE-PRESIDENT: Supports the President in their duties and also attends monthly Faculty Meetings,

TREASURER: Manages all financial records and bookkeeping responsibilities,

PRESS SECRETARY: Records meeting minutes, maintains organizational records, and oversees promotion and outreach efforts.

ELECTIONS

Elections are held annually during the first week of classes (typically at the end of August). Usually, the current officers convene a plenary meeting, which all graduate students—particularly first-year students—are encouraged to attend. While it is customary for incoming students to be elected as officers, second-year students may also serve. To ensure continuity, at least one officer from the previous year should remain in a different role.

Once the election is complete, the transition of responsibilities should occur within one week. New officers typically attend the first Faculty Meeting of the Fall semester. If you are interested in becoming a BCWSO officer, please contact the organization for more information.

CURRENT REPRESENTATIVE

- Mónica Ibáñez Lajo
(mibanezlajo@miners.utep.edu)

Frequently Asked Questions

These are some of the most frequently asked questions. If your question is not addressed here or elsewhere in this handbook, please contact the Director of Graduate Studies at jdepierola@utep.edu.

Can I request a leave of absence?

Yes. You may request a leave of absence by scheduling a meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies as soon as you decide to take time off. The terms of the leave depend on how far in advance you make the request, with the most favorable arrangements made well ahead of time. The maximum duration for a leave of absence is one year.

Can a residential student take online courses?

Yes. However, we strongly encourage residential students to take in-person classes, as the program is designed to facilitate direct engagement with faculty and peers. Online courses require the payment of additional fees.

Can I take CRW 5397 Capstone more than once?

Yes. You may enroll in CRW 5397 Capstone up to three times. However, we strongly advise against taking the course more than once, as your Capstone Advisor may not be available to continue working with you. If you anticipate difficulties completing your project on time, communicate with your Capstone Advisor as soon as possible. Note that students with a Graduate Assistant appointment will not receive funding beyond the fourth semester.

Can I take classes in other departments?

While the program is designed to help you complete your book through courses offered in our department, you may take one elective class outside the department (see “Electives” on page 7).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What funding opportunities are available for MFA students?

Funding opportunities include Graduate Assistantships, scholarships, and fellowships. Graduate Assistantships provide a stipend and tuition support in exchange for 20 hours of work per week. For more information on other funding opportunities see the section “Financial Aid Resources” (page 23).

Can I participate in conferences or workshops during the program?

Yes. Students are encouraged to present their work at conferences and attend workshops. The BCWSO (Bilingual Creative Writing Students’ Organization) often organizes fundraisers to help cover travel expenses. Our department also has limited funds that can be requested in advance. Finally, UTEP also offers funds for traveling (see “Grants” on [this link](#)). Be sure to notify your faculty advisor if you plan to participate in such events.

What happens if I need to extend my time in the program?

If you need additional time to complete your degree, you must discuss this with the Director of Graduate Studies. Extensions are granted on a case-by-case basis. However, keep in mind that funding for your Graduate Assistant appointment is limited to two years.

How do I access writing resources and support?

The department provides access to writing workshops, peer review groups, and faculty mentorship. Additionally, the university library and writing center offer resources to support your academic work. For more information, contact the Director of Graduate Studies or your faculty advisor.

Feedback

Like any human endeavor, this handbook is a work in progress. We welcome your feedback, suggestions, and corrections to help us improve it. Please direct your comments to the [Director of Graduate Studies](#).
jdepierola@utep.edu.



Composed for MFA IN CREATIVE WRITING AT UTEP
using EB Garamond in 11 points. “EB Garamond is an open source project to create a
revival of Claude Garamont’s famous humanist typeface from the mid-16th century.

Its design reproduces the original by Claude Garamont.” (from

<http://www.georgduffner.at/ebgaramond/>)

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