

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION – POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

KEY FACTS

Programme name	Creative Writing (Novels)
Award	MA
School	School of Arts and Social Sciences
Department or equivalent	Journalism
Programme code	PSCWNO
Type of study	Full Time
Total UK credits	240
Total ECTS	120

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

This programme is designed to provide a supportive, thought-provoking and challenging environment for novelists to develop confident prose skills, experiment with approaches to writing, reflect on your own work and that of other writers, learn about the industry, and complete a novel ready to send to publishers and agents. At the core of the programme is the experience of established writers. The programme encourages you to be ambitious and imaginative in your writing, to push the boundaries of what is workable within the field.

The programme is designed for writers with some experience who would now like to complete a novel. We do not therefore teach or examine short stories. This is a programme for people who want to write full-length novels. You are required to choose between these two 'genres' at the time of applying, and will be awarded a place on one of these two pathways (it is not possible to change once the course is underway): the Literary Novel or the Crime Thriller Novel. Within the field of Literary there are myriad possible styles, approaches and forms. We define a Literary novel, following the industry benchmarks, as one which does not fit into the other specific genres and which reflects the highest standards of prose. Within Crime Thrillers, the programme will examine all sub-genres, including noir, hard-boiled, cosy, historical, police procedural, legal and psychological. Our remit is again broad, but we also define Crime Thriller with reference to the industry benchmark as a primarily commercial genre with an emphasis on mystery and suspense.

Teaching is focused on the specific genre you have been awarded a place, but the module structure and teaching processes are identical in both MA pathways. The object is to explore the processes of novel writing and then complete your own novel – in whichever genre you have chosen.

Every year, excerpts from all the students' work is presented in showcase evenings, and, subject to the programme director's approval, published in an anthology in the final term. This is distributed to every literary agent in London and, for overseas students, agents who work in your home territories.

Our ethos is excellence and diversity, with an emphasis on recruiting students of different ages and from a wide range of backgrounds. In November 2011, the *Guardian* ranked City's Creative Writing MA in the top three writing programmes in Britain.

Aims

- 1) To provide a supportive, thought-provoking and challenging environment for would-be novelists of proven commitment and ability so as to allow you to complete a novel to a high, professional standard.
- 2) To develop your skills in conceiving, structuring, researching and writing fiction.

- 3) To develop your critical understanding of the works of published writers.
- 4) To provide you with an introduction to, and understanding of, the publishing industry.

Postgraduate Certificate

Following successful completion of the Postgraduate Certificate in Creative Writing (Novels) you will have a critical understanding of the novel form. You will understand some of the theories related to fiction and storytelling, and be able to apply these to your own creative work.

Postgraduate Diploma

Following successful completion of the Postgraduate Diploma in Creative Writing (Novels) in addition to the above you will know how to structure a full length novel, and you will also acquire more advanced techniques in writing within your chosen genre.

MA

Following successful completion of the MA in Creative Writing (Novels), in addition to all of the above you will be supported to write a full-length novel suitable for submission to a literary agent or publisher. You will have an in depth understanding of how the publishing industry functions and an understanding of the legal and ethical issues affecting novelists. You will be able to analyse novels and long-form fiction to a high standard.

WHAT WILL I BE EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE?

On successful completion of this programme, you will be expected to be able to:

Knowledge and understanding:

- A deep and systematic understanding of your personal writing practice and strengths and interests as a novelist
- A comprehensive understanding of the key elements of novel writing and their interaction: including the creation of character, the uses of dialogue, the function of setting, structure, the maintenance of narrative drive, the use of point of view and voice
- Exhibit a systematic, critical understanding of fiction past, current, and at the forefront of novelistic practice: its themes and concerns; its structures; its techniques
- Critically analyse the relationship between existing novels and your own fiction writing along with an awareness of the ethical issues surrounding: plagiarism; using real people in novels; using real events in novels
- Understand the relationship between novelists and the publishing industry

Skills:

- Employ and synthesise novelistic writing techniques in ways that are both innovative and reflect an awareness of past and current practice by analysing fiction with high conceptual understanding
- Research a subject for the purposes of fiction
- Work effectively in a group: to contribute and receive constructive criticism, to handle conflict with sensitivity and confidence, to provide solutions to problems and to reflect on your own and others' writing in order to improve practice
- Translate knowledge about the publishing industry into an understanding of how the industry's mores affect the novelist

- Control and master narrative voice and thus use it to guide and direct coherent novel writing that answers the demands of maintaining plot and characterisation across both time and space in narrative

Values and attitudes:

- Show informed tolerance of a range of solutions to the problems of writing novels
- Display open-mindedness towards constructive criticism of your work and the self-confidence to recognise unhelpful criticism along with sensitivity in criticising other students' writing
- Demonstrate independence and integrity in making critical judgments both about other writers' work and your own

Maintain integrity in negotiating the demands of the publishing industry and their own desires as novelists

HOW WILL I LEARN?

During Terms 1 and 2, workshops, lectures and seminars are held on two days a week. These are principally concerned with extending your skills, understanding of the novel form, the difference between genres and a wide awareness of creative possibilities; by analysing the work of leading writers and exploring that work through a variety of exercises, all of which are designed to 'put aside your default writing style' and encourage you to experiment with all the other possible approaches to writing fiction. All workshops are based around your own writing assignments. We also closely analyse published novels: this isn't literary criticism; this involves taking apart novels just as you might take apart a clock to see how it works. We aim to give you the confidence to start writing a novel in exactly the voice and structure which suits your story and story-telling abilities. Throughout both years, there are also Q&A sessions with visiting authors.

In Terms 3, 4, 5 and 6, you work principally on your own novel with the support of one-to-one tutorials and participation in student-led workshops. You will be allocated two tutors: one from within the course team and one external tutor – the latter is chosen to specifically suit the style or subject of your proposed novel. For each tutorial, you submit 10,000 words which will be read and annotated in advance by the tutor, then discussed at length in the tutorial.

In Term 6 (the final term), the lectures and Q&As focus on visits from agents, publishers and other industry professionals. These sessions aim to provide you with knowledge and understanding of the publishing industry and of the 'business aspects' of being a writer. Also during this term, for your last tutorial, you will be asked to submit an entire 'first draft' of your novel which will be read in advance by your tutor.

WHAT TYPES OF ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK CAN I EXPECT?

Assessment and Assessment Criteria

Writing workshops (two modules) are assessed by the presentation of a portfolio of work written during the module: these are assessed by a range of criteria relating to successful creative writing. The novel which you present for the Complete Novel module is assessed by the same criteria. Seminar and lecture modules are assessed by the presentation of coursework, which may include practice-based research.

Assessment Criteria are descriptions, based on the intended learning outcomes, of the skills, knowledge or attitudes that you need to demonstrate in order to complete an assessment successfully, providing a mechanism by which the quality of an assessment can be measured.

Grade-Related Criteria are descriptions of the level of skills, knowledge or attributes that you need to demonstrate in order to achieve a certain grade or mark in an assessment, providing a mechanism by which the quality of an assessment can be measured and placed within the overall set of marks. Assessment Criteria and Grade-Related Criteria will be made available to you to support you in completing assessments. These may be provided in programme handbooks, module specifications, on the virtual learning environment or attached to a specific assessment task.

Feedback on assessment

Feedback will be provided in line with our Assessment and Feedback Policy. In particular, you will normally be provided with feedback within three weeks of the submission deadline or assessment date. This would normally include a provisional grade or mark. For end of module examinations or an equivalent significant task (e.g. an end of module project), feedback will normally be provided within four weeks. The timescale for feedback on final year projects or dissertations may be longer. The full policy can be found at:

https://www.city.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/68921/assessment_and_feedback_policy.pdf

Assessment Regulations

In order to pass your Programme, you should complete successfully or be exempted from the relevant modules and assessments and will therefore acquire the required number of credits.

The Pass mark for each module is 50%.

If you fail an assessment component or a module, the following will apply:

1. Resit: you will normally be offered one resit attempt. However, if you did not participate in the first assessment and have no extenuating circumstances, you may not be offered a resit.

If you are successful in the resit, you shall be awarded the credit for that module. The mark used for the purpose of calculation towards your Award shall be calculated from the original marks for the component(s) that you passed at first attempt and the minimum pass mark for the component(s) for which you took a resit.

If you do not satisfy your resit by the date specified you will not progress and the Assessment Board shall require that you withdraw from the Programme.

If you fail to meet the requirements for the Programme, but satisfy the requirements for a lower-level Award, then a lower qualification may be awarded as per the table below. If you fail to meet the requirements for the Programme and are not eligible for the award of a lower level qualification, the Assessment Board shall require that you withdraw from the Programme.

If you would like to know more about the way in which assessment works at City, please see the full version of the Assessment Regulations at:

http://www.city.ac.uk/__data/assets/word_doc/0003/69249/s19.doc

WHAT AWARD CAN I GET?

Master's Degree:

	HE Level	Credits	Weighting (%)	Class	% required
Taught	7	120	100	With Distinction	70
Dissertation	7	120	100	With Merit	60
				With Pass	50
Postgraduate Diploma:					
	HE Level	Credits	Weighting (%)	Class	% required
Taught	7	120	100	With Distinction	70
				With Merit	60
				With Pass	50
Postgraduate Certificate:					
	HE Level	Credits	Weighting (%)	Class	% required
Taught	7	60	100	With Distinction	70
				With Merit	60
				With Pass	50

WHAT WILL I STUDY?

Module Title	SITS Code	Module Credits	Core/ Elective	Can be Compensated?	Level
Storytelling	CWM935	30	C	N	7
Fundamentals of Fiction	CWM918	30	C	N	7
Experiments in Style	CWM919	30	C	N	7
Reading as a Writer	CWM925	30	C	N	7

Module Title	SITS Code	Module Credits	Core/ Elective	Can be Compensated?	Level
Complete Novel	CWM913	120	C	N	7

TO WHAT KIND OF CAREER MIGHT I GO ON?

We would expect our students to approach agents with a view to representation. Alumni are currently represented by all the major London agencies. The manuscripts of those who are successful in finding representation are then presented to publishers with a view to publication.

The alumni who have been published can be found at

<http://www.city.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/creative-writing-novels/#course-detail=4>

If you would like more information on the Careers support available at City, please go to:

<http://www.city.ac.uk/careers/for-students-and-recent-graduates>.

HOW DO I ENTER THE PROGRAMME?

Applicants will normally have a UK Honours degree (in any subject) or the overseas equivalent. But successful completion of a certificate-level writing course, or a professional

qualification, or relevant experience may also be acceptable.

All candidates must demonstrate a commitment to, and ability in, writing fiction. Candidates will need to submit 5,000 words of fiction and attend an interview. In exceptional circumstances the interview may be conducted by telephone.

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