

Program Assessment Plan
CREATIVE WRITING (522-C)

Program Name: **Creative Writing**

Department: **English**

Assessment Year: Spring 2007

Step One : Who are you and how do you do what you do?

I. A. Mission Statement: (Who are you and what do you do?)

The Creative Writing Program at SUNY New Paltz operates as one of the tracks within the English major. Our faculty, all practicing writers with extensive experience in their fields, teach courses devoted to literary fiction, poetry, dramatic writing, and creative nonfiction. The Creative Writing Program offers a sequence of courses designed to develop the undergraduate writer's imaginative, technical, and analytic skills within the context of a liberal arts education.

I.B. Scope of your program: (What are the boundaries of your program?)

The Creative Writing Program offers rigorous training in the art and craft of writing as well as preparation for careers and graduate studies. In order to provide broad cultural and historical contexts for original work in the Creative Writing Program, students take foundation courses in American and English literature as well as upper-division courses in a range of specific topics. Students also complete general education requirements in foreign language, the natural and social sciences, and the humanities.

In addition to completing introductory writing courses, creative writing majors must pass a portfolio review before they are permitted to take the crafts courses (in Creative Nonfiction, Fiction, Poetry, or Dramatic Writing), which emphasize critical reading skills as well as breadth of exposure to exemplary works in the respective forms, and include extensive exercises, drafting, polished final products and a workshop component. Students take two crafts courses. Advanced students are also eligible for independent study as well as special courses, such as Writing the Novel. In general, upper-division courses emphasize extensive writing and revision, refinement of craft, critical reading and mastery of texts in a particular form or genre.

I. C. What activities/processes contribute to the program? (How you do what you do?)

Beginning with the introductory courses (Creative Writing 1 and 2), students are taught the basic nomenclature in the various genres and introduced to theories of fiction, poetry, dramatic writing, and creative nonfiction. To reinforce theory, published literary examples are assigned and discussed in classes. Students are given in-class and homework exercises to explore aspects of these forms and to use as prompts for creative production. Some of these are developed into complete poems, narratives, or dramatic works; they will also learn to initiate their own works via the examples of the start-up exercises. Both complete and partial works are submitted to the class for workshop discussion and further revision. Workshops serve to further hone students' analytical skills as both readers and writers of literature. In craft courses students engage in greater

depth and breadth regarding form and theory in their particular genre, attaining a higher level of expertise. Students may work closely with faculty, who are actively engaged in mentoring those who wish to pursue their craft beyond the classroom. The faculty engage in creative and scholarly activities related to their area(s) of specialization and interest, keeping abreast of trends in their particular areas of expertise.

Student writers at New Paltz have the opportunity to contribute to student-run publications including the weekly newspaper, *The Oracle*, and the annual literary journal, *Stonethrow Review*. Students also frequently coordinate internships with arts publications in the Hudson Valley and are a vital part of the regional arts community, participating in readings and "slams" organized regularly by the Poetry Board and the local community. Student plays are staged in regional venues and sometimes in New York City. The Creative Writing Program also administers the annual Vincent Tomaselli Awards for fiction and poetry writing.

Step Two: Where are you heading and what performances show your progress?

II. A. *What are your priority goals for the next five years (5-8 total)?*

1. *What do you want graduates to know? Be able to do? To believe?*

Students should:

- be proficient critical readers of texts, particularly in their chosen form.
- achieve a minimum competency in the forms of poetry, fiction, drama, and creative nonfiction.
- be versatile writers able to apply creative and analytical skills in many rhetorical situations.
- be able to write well-crafted works in the forms in which they specialize;
- be able to write in a range of forms or genres in their area of specialization.
- understand the tradition of the forms in which they specialize.
- understand major canonical texts (or exemplary texts) in their area of specialization.
- be acquainted with the culture of their specific forms outside the classroom.

2. *What goals do you have for your program? (e.g. out of class experiences, advising, curriculum, faculty development)*

- To employ well-qualified faculty; to enable them to pursue active academic and/or creative agendas; to offer opportunities for them to develop and teach new courses on topics of their choosing.
- To offer a curriculum in Creative Writing comparable to those offered at other universities of similar size and reputation.
- To provide training in a wide range of literary genres, including those typically underrepresented in the academy.
- To help students actively pursue their specific forms and to provide or help them identify venues in which they may publish and/or perform.

- To produce students who continue to pursue their interest in writing after graduation (who publish or perform their creative works and/or continue their writing education in graduate programs).

II. B. *What is the performance you desire to gauge your progress?*

1. Student Learning Performances (outcomes)

Students should be proficient critical readers of texts, particularly in their chosen form.

Students should:

- employ appropriate vocabulary to describe the features of passages in poetic, prose, dramatic, and nonfiction texts;
- use such observations to formulate and support interpretive positions and offer suggestions for revision where appropriate.

Students should achieve a minimum competency in the forms of poetry, fiction, drama, and creative nonfiction.

Students should:

- write works including: poetry, fiction, drama, and creative nonfiction in Creative Writing 1 and 2.

Students should be versatile writers able to apply creative and analytical skills in many rhetorical situations.

Students should:

- compose written comment on peers' works in progress;
- write a variety of exercises in Craft courses;
- write polished products in given genres;
- compile submission packages.*

*"Submission packages" are generally comprised of cover letters accompanying a properly-formatted manuscript designed for submission to a literary journal. The package also includes a rationale for why the student chose a particular journal to which to submit his/her work. These packages are generally turned in at the end of semester in craft courses.

Students should be able to write well-crafted works in the forms in which they specialize; be able to write in a range of forms or genres in their areas of specialization.

Students should:

- write in a way that shows clear understanding of aesthetic and technical rules in their forms;
- be able to apply appropriate dramatic and rhetorical structures in their writing;
- write in more than one form or genre in their areas of specialization.

Students should understand the tradition of the forms in which they specialize.

Students should understand major canonical texts (or exemplary texts) in their area of specialization.

Students should be able to:

- write in ways that explicitly or implicitly exhibit an understanding of the major subtexts in their form(s).
- name several authors and their published works, and describe how they relate to their particular form(s);
- in written essays, describe one or more characteristic aesthetic features of representative texts and discuss the relation of these features to specific historical, social, technical, or philosophical trends;
- in written essays, describe significant similarities and differences in the styles, themes, techniques, of several authors or specific works within the tradition of a form.

Students should be acquainted with the culture of their specific forms outside the classroom.

Students should:

- have the opportunity to participate in literary and arts-oriented activities on campus and in the outside community;
- be able to compile submission packages.*

*“Submission packages” are generally comprised of cover letters accompanying a properly-formatted manuscript designed for submission to a literary journal. The package also includes a rationale for why the student chose a particular journal to which to submit his/her work. These packages are generally turned in at the end of semester in craft courses.

2. Program Performances

To employ well-qualified faculty; to enable them to pursue active academic and/or creative agendas; to offer opportunities for them to develop and teach new courses on topics of their choosing.

- Faculty must have terminal degrees from accredited, nationally recognized institutions or appropriate professional achievements in the form(s) they are hired to teach; they must be specialists in specific subject areas and well-versed in the major literary, historical and critical traditions that inform their field(s);
- Faculty must be productive scholars and/or creative writers, presenting or performing their work at local, regional, national and international venues, or publishing their work as articles, books, reviews, collections and the like;
- In order to be productive scholars and creative writers, the faculty must be supported materially and intellectually by the institution through professional development and travel grants, sabbatical leaves, course release, as well as faculty symposia and workshops;
- Because it is important that the department’s course offerings evolve along with the field of Creative Writing at large, faculty must be intellectually and materially supported by the institution when they undertake study and research to develop new

course offerings, including course offerings to be team-taught with specialists in complementary fields.

To offer a curriculum in Creative Writing comparable to those offered at other universities of similar size and reputation.

- The program must be coherent and comprehensive, exposing students to major authors, historical trends, technical innovations, and aesthetic values related to the four tracks.
- The program must also offer more specialized courses designed to deepen and enhance students' understanding of particular major authors, historical trends, technical innovations, and aesthetic values related to the four tracks.

To provide training in a wide range of literary genres, including those typically underrepresented in the academy.

- In order to provide students with an inclusive, rounded, and realistic view of Creative Writing, the program must offer courses in (or incorporate within extant courses) genres typically underrepresented in the formal study of the four tracks (such as Mystery, Fantasy, Science Fiction, Horror, Graphic Literature, and Mixed-media work); where the program cannot provide such coverage, it should permit appropriate coursework from outside the English Department or provide opportunities for students to pursue independent study coursework.

To help students actively pursue their specific forms and to provide or help them identify venues in which they may publish and/or perform.

- The program will produce a magazine for the publication of excellent student work.
- The program should offer extracurricular activities such as reading and performance series and faculty should serve as advisors to student literary magazines when any are in operation (if they request such advising).

To produce students who continue to pursue their interest in writing after graduation (who publish or perform their creative works and/or continue their writing education in graduate programs).

- Faculty should advise and mentor students in order to help them pursue their interests beyond their undergraduate program.

Step Three: Describe your methodology

II. B. 1 and 2 <i>Desired Performance (from previous step)</i>	III. A. <i>What aspects of the performance are critical to measure?</i>	III. B. <i>How (by what means) will you gather the data?</i>	III. C. <i>When will Assessment Begin?</i>	III. C. <i>Who is Responsible for What?</i>
<p>Students should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employ appropriate vocabulary to describe the features of passages in poetic, prose, dramatic, and nonfiction texts; • use such observations to formulate and support interpretive positions and offer suggestions for revision where appropriate. 	student knowledge of aesthetic features	use rubric to assess random sample of works from Craft courses	2009-2010	Rubric designed by CW Committee; full-time faculty will read essays
	quality of interpretations and suggestions	same rubric to assess written comments on peer drafts	2009-2010	CW Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write works including: poetry, fiction, drama, and creative nonfiction in Creative Writing 1 and 2. 	ability to follow rules of particular forms	use rubric to assess end-of-semester student portfolios	2007	CW Committee

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •compose written comments on peers' works in progress; •write a variety of exercises in Craft courses; •write polished products in given genres; •compile submission packets 	<p>ability to articulate analytic insights;</p> <p>ability to follow rules of particular forms;</p> <p>quality of finished writing in those genres;</p> <p>ability to follow editorial standards and show evidence of research</p>	<p>use rubric to assess end-of-semester portfolios</p>	<p>2007</p>	<p>CW Committee</p>
<p>Students should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write in a way that shows clear understanding of aesthetic and technical rules in their forms; • be able to apply appropriate dramatic and rhetorical structures in their writing; • write in more than one form or genre in their areas of specialization. 	<p>understanding of aesthetic and technical rules</p> <p>application of rhetorical and generic structures</p> <p>diversity of compositions</p>	<p>use rubric to assess random selections from semiannual portfolios for admission into Craft courses</p> <p>use rubric to assess selections from exit portfolios of 2 selected Craft courses</p>	<p>2009-2010</p>	<p>CW Committee</p>

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<p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write in ways that explicitly or implicitly exhibit an understanding of the major subtexts in their forms. • name several authors and their published works, and describe how they relate to their particular forms; • in written essays, describe one or more characteristic aesthetic features of representative texts and discuss the relation of these features to specific historical, social, technical, or philosophical trends; • in written essays, describe significant similarities and differences in the styles, themes, techniques, of several authors or specific works within the tradition of a form. 	<p>use of allusions, structural, and rhetorical devices appropriate to specific form(s)</p>	<p>same rubric</p>	<p>2009-2010</p>	<p>CW Committee</p>
	<p>knowledge of landmark texts and generic conventions</p>	<p>rubric to review random sample of midterm exams or analytic essays</p>	<p>2008-2009</p>	<p>CW Committee</p>
	<p>ability to effectively relate aesthetic features to historical, social, technical or philosophical trends</p>	<p>same rubric</p>	<p>2008-2009</p>	<p>CW Committee</p>
	<p>ability to effectively compare and contrast authors' techniques, styles, themes</p>	<p>use rubric to assess random sample of essays from Craft courses</p>	<p>2009-2010</p>	<p>CW Committee</p>

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<p>Students should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have the opportunity to participate in literary and arts-oriented activities on campus and in the outside community; • be able to compile submission packages.* (See p. 4 above for description.) 	<p>student participation in readings, performances, and literary magazines</p>	<p>review of student activities; sign-in sheets at events; collection and archiving of publicity flyers and magazines</p>	<p>2000-2008</p>	<p>CW Committee</p>
	<p>use rubric to determine effectiveness of submission package.</p>	<p>use rubric to review actual submission packages</p>	<p>2008-2009</p>	<p>CW Committee</p>

<p>Because it is important that the department's course offerings evolve along with the field of Creative Writing at large, faculty must be intellectually and materially supported by the institution when they undertake study and research to develop new course offerings, including course offerings to be team-taught with specialists in complementary fields.</p>	<p>institutional support for new course/program development</p>	<p>faculty annual reports, interviews with faculty, coordination with other programs</p>	<p>2007-08</p>	<p>CW Committee</p>
<p>The program must be coherent and comprehensive, exposing students to major authors, historical trends, technical innovations, and aesthetic values related to the four tracks.</p>	<p>adequacy of course offerings</p>	<p>review and report on course offerings</p>	<p>2008-2009</p>	<p>CW Committee</p>
<p>The program must also offer more specialized courses designed to deepen and enhance students' understanding of particular major authors, historical trends, technical innovations, and aesthetic values related to the four tracks.</p>	<p>adequacy of course offerings diversity of texts on syllabi</p>	<p>same</p>	<p>2008-2009</p>	<p>CW Committee</p>
<p>The program will produce and edit a magazine for the publication of excellent student work. Faculty will serve as advisors to student literary magazines when any are in operation (if they request such advising).</p>	<p>quality of the literary magazines compared to those of similar programs</p>	<p>review and archiving of actual magazines</p>	<p>2007</p>	<p>CW Committee</p>

<p>In order to provide students with an inclusive, rounded, and realistic view of Creative Writing, the program must offer courses in (or incorporate within extant courses) genres typically under-represented in the formal study of the four tracks, including contemporary developing non-canonical genres and forms; where the program cannot provide such coverage, it should permit appropriate coursework from outside the English Department or provide opportunities of students to pursue independent study coursework.</p>	<p>diversity of texts on syllabi; diversity of student exploration of new forms and genres</p>	<p>review and report of program syllabi; examination of student stories during portfolio review; review of final projects in CW3</p>	<p>2008-2009</p>	<p>CW Committee</p>
<p>The program should offer extracurricular activities such as reading and performance series and faculty should serve as advisors to student literary magazines.</p>	<p>faculty advising of student literary and dramatic activity</p>	<p>archiving student literary magazines and flyers for readings and performances</p>	<p>2007-2008</p>	<p>CW Committee</p>
<p>Faculty should advise and mentor students in order to help them pursue their interests beyond their undergraduate program.</p>	<p>quality of advising</p>	<p>tracking of students after graduation</p>	<p>2007-2008</p>	<p>CW Committee</p>
			<p>2007-08</p>	

D. What additional resources will you need to complete your plan?

- assistance from an English Deputy of Assessment, who will have an annual course release and, among other responsibilities to the department, will help creative writing faculty design the assessment rubrics and help compile the creative writing program assessment results.
- resources for communication with creative writing alumni (e.g. postage for letters, survey preparation).