Our graduate program in Creative Writing offers Master of Fine Arts and Master of Arts degree in three areas – Genre Fiction, Screenwriting for Film & Television and Poetry with an Emphasis on Verscraft – as well as a Certificate in Publishing.

What Is the Western Difference?

Our program stands out with its distinctive concentrations, excellent faculty and rigorous curriculum. Our concentrations respond directly to emerging markets in the literary world and in education.

In each concentration, students follow a carefully sequenced and rigorous curriculum based on imitating the best work in each field. Only when they have begun to master this material do they finish with a creative thesis. We also offer courses on pedagogy, editing, the business side of writing, how to write criticism and more, to teach students how to make it in the world outside the university.

Our faculty members are highly successful writers and together have published hundreds of books, and authored and directed many films and shows. All have advanced degrees and extensive teaching experience.

Each July, students gather at Western for two weeks of study. Students complete their coursework online between Summer Intensives. They can live and work anywhere during the academic year.

The Poetry Concentration is offering one, $10,000-a-year scholarship for a new, full-time student who enrolls in Fall 2015. The scholarship is for two years, at the same amount each year.

Western’s Screenwriting concentration is the only accredited creative writing graduate program taught entirely by current Hollywood screenwriters and producers.

The annual Symposium on Poetry Criticism during Writing the Rockies brings together leading contemporary poetry critics to discuss problems, objectives, and artistic and technical issues.

Writing the Rockies offers a wide range of workshops, lectures, seminars, readings, and special events that create an intense, collegial writers’ community and retreat across four days.

In addition to coursework, students produce, from start to finish, a volume of Manifest West, the literary anthology series of Western Press Books.

Quick Facts

More Information: 800.876.5309 | admissions@western.edu western.edu
What Skills Will I Learn?

Certificate in Publishing students join the editorial board of Western Press Books, preparing books for publication. Poetry students work on the university's national journal, THINK. Students learn how to edit their own writing, and they regularly critique writing from peers to prepare it for submission.

The Genre Fiction program is one of the few with a specific focus on commercial genre fiction – from romance and mystery to westerns, speculative fiction and more. Students gain strong skills in all the genres in their first year. In the second year, students specialize as they work on their theses.

Screenwriting for Film & Television includes classes on shorts, features, spec episodes of TV shows, original pilots and the basics of adaptation. We also study how to get representation, the etiquette of pitching and more.

Poetry students learn the basics of poetic language, history and form. They also learn the crucial role of translation, literary pedagogy, and how to participate fully in the world of journals, teaching and criticism.

What Can I Do With My Degree?

Genre Fiction graduates are prepared to publish and pursue writing careers and teaching.

Screenwriting graduates know how to write for film and television, and leave with diverse portfolios of short scripts, features, TV spec episodes, pilots and pitches.

Poetry students graduate ready to participate in all aspects of literary life.

Graduates of the 13-month Certificate in Publishing program are prepared to enter the publishing field as agents or junior editors at established houses, or to start their own small presses.

With the MA, teachers can advance their knowledge in a particular discipline without earning a terminal degree or writing a full thesis.

Meet Stacia Deutsch

Stacia Deutsch has experienced Western’s Graduate Program in Creative Writing as both student and an instructor.

The New York Times best-selling author is a faculty member in Genre Fiction and a 2013 graduate of the Master of Fine Arts program.

Deutsch, who has written more than 100 children’s books, says she chose to study at Western to grow as a writer and gain confidence in other genres.

“I broke outside of my comfort zone, pushed myself in my craft,” she says, “and learned a few things about poetry and screenwriting that I might have otherwise missed. Through teaching, I want to give the same lessons to my students.”

Western’s program is unique in the variety of writing genres offered, Deutsch says.

“Western provides students with an understanding of what makes popular literature popular,” she says. “The faculty are all well regarded in their fields, and their breadth of industry knowledge makes the time spent here some of the most important time in a writer’s journey.”

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western.edu/creative