

## SYLLABUS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF FINE ARTS (MFA)

### CREATIVE WRITING IN ENGLISH

*These Syllabuses apply to candidates admitted to the Master of Fine Arts in the field of Creative Writing in English curriculum in the academic year 2025-26 and thereafter.*

The Master of Fine Arts curriculum in Creative Writing in English is offered full-time over one year, designed to foster creativity that transcends boundaries between genres, cultures, and languages.

The programme consists of 60 credits, including two compulsory 6-credit courses, two compulsory 9-credit courses, three elective 6-credit courses, and a 12-credit Capstone Experience. Courses in the programme feature foundation courses, workshops, seminar discussions, experiential learning activities in the Black Box Studio, as well as sustained Individual Advising for each writer. Each of these courses will contribute to the writer's own vision and culminating Creative Dissertation, while emphasising the rigorous coursework, readings and studies needed to realise it.

#### Compulsory Courses

##### **ENGL7507. Creative Foundations: Macro Structure and History (9 credits)**

This foundations course offers special focus on the intercultural histories and practices of creative discourse, structure and impact. Students will explore the macro fluid histories and structures of creativity and construction in genre and expectation. This macro course will include emphasis on the legacies of creative discourse and practice in English and monolingual contexts. Included will be the urgent history and contemporary architecture and structure for creativity in evolving and international frames and contexts.

Assessment: 100% coursework

(This course is cross-listed with the Master of Arts in the field of Creative Communications programme)

##### **ENGL7515. Creative Writing Foundations: Poetry and Prose (6 credits)**

The course is one of two Creative Writing Foundations courses that collectively explore a broad range of genres, forms, and modes of creative writing. Paired with *Fiction and Nonfiction*, *Poetry and Prose* focuses on modern and contemporary poetry, where the boundaries between poetry and prose are blurred, and various forms, from traditional to experimental ones, are adopted. Informed by the increasing transnational literary tradition, as well as canonical and contemporary repertoires, the course uniquely examines the intricate interplay of poetry and prose. It investigates *what* constitutes poetry versus prose, prose versus poetry, and *how* writers harness the potential of contemporary poetry, where poetic and prosaic traditions are both adopted and adapted. Through close reading and critique of selected works of modern and contemporary poetry, students will deepen and widen their understanding of the evolving literary tradition, where poetry and prose intersect and intertwine. Students will create original works by engaging in exercises that involve

modeling, adaptation, and constraints, while also analysing the poetic and prosaic qualities in their writing.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **ENGL7516. Creative Writing Foundations: Fiction and Nonfiction (6 credits)**

The course is one of two Creative Writing Foundations courses that collectively explore a broad range of genres, forms, and modes of creative writing. Paired with *Poetry and Prose*, *Fiction and Nonfiction* explores a diverse range of fiction and nonfiction forms, such as the short story, novel, biography, memoir, and personal essay, emphasising both narrative structures and the use of stylistic elements. Throughout the course, students consider how texts evoke emotional and intellectual responses, examining not just what authors communicate, but how they craft their narratives to engage readers effectively. The course uniquely explores the interconnected nature of fiction and nonfiction, highlighting how they inform and enrich one another. Students will investigate how narratives can blend factual and imaginative elements, creating works that challenge traditional boundaries. Through close reading and critique of selected works of fiction and nonfiction, students will draw on their knowledge to create and refine original works of their own. In the process, students engage in drafting, extensive revision, and craft analysis.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **ENGL7517. Creative Writing Workshop (9 credits)**

The course is a natural progression from the two Creative Writing Foundations courses offered, leveraging students' enhanced understanding of the intricate network of connections between poetry and prose and between fiction and non-fiction. The course creates inclusive spaces for creative writing, enabling students to cultivate a distinctive identity as creative writers. This involves honing a voice and perspective influenced by cultural and gender identities and deriving an experimental writing style from traditional elements and multilingualism. Although conducted in specialised groups, each focusing on a particular genre, such as poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction, the course embraces inclusivity on multiple levels by encouraging writing across genres and presentation across media and by drawing from and adapting Anglophone, transnational, and other literary traditions. Each workshop group comprises but is not limited to prompt-based exercises, peer review, craft analysis, editing and revision, and collaborative activities. Known as the Creative Writing Workshop, the course emphasises the writing and workshopping processes, where students produce and reproduce drafts based on self-reflection and feedback received from peers and the instructor. Through this intensive, hands-on writing and workshopping experience, students explore and cultivate their unique writing perspectives and styles.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **ENGL7993. Capstone Experience: Creative Dissertation and Showcase (12 credits)**

This is a two-semester course that builds on students' development as writers and their learning across individual courses, which range from foundational courses, where they grasp the fundamentals of creative writing and arts, to topical electives, where they explore specific writing approaches, as well as the Creative Writing Workshop, where they hone their craft in a collaborative setting. The course is experiential and longitudinal, immersing students in self-directed Creative Capstone Projects under the mentorship of published creative writers. Over the course of two semesters, students initiate and navigate their own reading and writing trajectories, exploring the roles of a reader who writes and a writer who reads. While the Capstone Experience is writer-oriented, the course emphasises individual and, if applicable, group supervision to stimulate rigorous feedback, reflection, revision, and editing cycles, enhancing students' capacity for writing that meets publishing standards and has high potential for dissemination in various formats, such as print, digital, virtual, and stage. The course equips students for the early stages of a writer's career in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, preparing them to become emerging members of global and local creative communities.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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## **Elective Courses**

### **ENGL7514. Internship: The History of Practice (6 credits)**

This course responds to a 21<sup>st</sup> century growing demand for every individual to explore creativity and reinvent a first-rate profile for top competitive positions and collaborative leadership, locally and internationally.

This course also offers students an opportunity to engage in experiential learning through self-initiated internships in various fields related to Creative Writing or Creative Communications. Students will have the flexibility to choose their internship host from a curated list of partner organisations or pursue their own options, fostering a personalised learning experience in Hong Kong. Students also have the option to participate in internal internship opportunities offered by the university. The course requires a minimum of 40 contact hours of service, allowing students to immerse themselves fully in a professional environment.

Finally, this course brings together a 21<sup>st</sup> century interdisciplinary vision and design from around the world, offering students a contemporary and fertile environment of knowledge acquisition, skill-based experiential learning, and networking with potential colleagues and employers in their chosen field of creative communications and writing.

Assessment: 100% coursework (graded on a distinction/pass/fail basis)  
(This course is cross-listed with the Master of Arts in the field of Creative Communications programme)

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### **ENGL7518. Corporate Storytelling (6 credits)**

Storytelling is not just a tradition confined to novels — it extends to nearly every facet of human life, including the life of a business. Corporate storytelling is the art of using narrative

techniques to bring meaning and vitality to business practices. This course explores effective storytelling as a core element of corporate communications, teaching students how to craft captivating narratives that define and amplify a company's values, essence, and vision. By enriching and extending the life of a company or brand, storytelling becomes a powerful tool for connection and growth. Corporate stories can take many forms — advertisements, business proposals, presentations, and digital content such as blogs or vlogs. Students will engage with these platforms to learn how to frame narratives that breathe life into a company's story and create deeper meaning for its stakeholders.

Assessment: 100% coursework

(This course is cross-listed with the Master of Arts in the field of Creative Communications programme)

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### **ENGL7519. Building Characters Across Media (6 credits)**

This course delves into the art and craft of creating multidimensional characters that resonate across diverse storytelling platforms, such as novels, short stories, film, social media, video games, and more. Students will explore how to apply characterisation techniques across different mediums by addressing key fundamentals of character such as dialogue, thought, action, memory and body/interactivity.

Through a combination of analysis, comparative studies, collaborative exercises, and project-based work, students will develop the skills needed to craft characters with depth, consistency, and versatility. The course emphasises tailoring characters to suit the unique demands of each medium — whether writing for the screen, the page, or other immersive and interactive environments. By the end of the course, students will have the tools and knowledge to create compelling, fully realised characters that successfully connect with audiences across platforms.

Assessment: 100% coursework

(This course is cross-listed with the Master of Arts in the field of Creative Communications programme)

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### **ENGL7520. (Re)framing Hong Kong (6 credits)**

What defines Hong Kong literature and the identity of a Hong Kong writer? These questions can spark endless debates, especially in the global-local context where cultural identities are increasingly fluid due to transnational influences. Hong Kong writing is commonly categorised as a form of Sinophone literature, but what about English-language works about Hong Kong? Many writers who claim ties to Hong Kong may not reside in the city and could have been born there but raised elsewhere. Can they be recognised as Hong Kong writers contributing to the body of Hong Kong literature? As a form of urban literature, how does it capture the essence of the city, highly urbanised yet surrounded by mountains and the sea?

Surveying a variety of creative works about Hong Kong, including poetry, fiction, popular song lyrics, and film, this course explores the increasingly pluralistic notion of Hong Kong writing and Hong Kong writers. It engages students studying in Hong Kong in recognising

their unique perspectives on the city, to which they can claim a unique connection. The course views 'Hong Kong writing' and 'Hong Kong writer' as fluid concepts and explores the increasingly blurred boundaries surrounding them, interrogating the value of a geographical-specific categorisation of literature. Students also engage in secondary and ethnographic research to create a creative writing project that they can be critically read as an example of Hong Kong writing.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **ENGL7521. Narrating Transnational Tales (6 credits)**

This course explores the art of storytelling across borders, focusing on both fiction and nonfiction from diverse authors around the world, whose transnational backgrounds and experiences shape their narratives. This course emphasises the concept of transnationalism, which examines how narratives are shaped by the movement of people, ideas, and cultures across national boundaries, allowing students to understand the ways in which writers draw from their multifaceted identities and experiences.

Students will examine a variety of narrative forms, including novels, short stories, autofiction, memoirs, and personal essays, while engaging with themes of identity, migration, and cultural intersection. Through close readings of selected texts, students will critically analyse the stylistic and thematic choices made by these writers. Classes will include creative writing exercises and discussions on personal and cultural narratives, enabling participants to develop their narrative skills and produce original works that capture their unique perspectives and experiences within a transnational context.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **ENGL7522. Writing Speculative Fiction (6 credits)**

Speculative fiction encompasses a broad range of genre literature, including science fiction, fabulism, fantasy, horror, and arguably even works of so-called literary fiction which incorporate the device of magical realism. Speculative fiction makes use of counterfactuals and, ideally, strives to use these un-real elements to examine aspects of the human condition which are not so easily seen under the constraints of Realism in art: Mary Shelley could not have depicted the condition of her Modern Prometheus, for example, had she not imagined Dr Frankenstein's counterfactual technologies. Although largely born of the pulp fiction tradition of the early- to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, speculative fiction is now understood as a medium applicable to all forms of art, including music, sculpture, visual design, and poetry, as well as its more traditional home in prose and scripted fiction.

This course will introduce students to a range of speculative fiction and related genre fiction. We will examine the genres' practices, tropes, forms, and techniques, with an emphasis on how authors use these tools to develop speculative, counterfactual, and fabulist stories. Students will learn to use counterfactuals of setting and character to metaphorise and allegorise elements of the real. Students will close-read and critique published fiction and

give detailed analyses to account for their reactions. Students should be prepared to draft, workshop, and revise their speculative output in the process.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **ENGL7610. Theatre and Performance (6 credits)**

This course will introduce students to the conceptual possibilities of the Performing Arts, where they will learn how creative performance intersects with innovative thinking, community enrichment, and technology. Adopting a dramaturgical approach that will combine textual analysis, technological insight, and theories of spectatorship, students will work towards the realisation of a performance or a theatre piece. Through practical project work as well as the development of analytical skills that will focus on the triangulated relationship between dramatic text, image, and action, students will develop a working critical vocabulary that will encompass frameworks derived from the latest developments in scholarship on global theatrical practices, post-colonial theory, and ideas of socially engaged performances. At the end of this course, students will have a well-developed understanding of key dramaturgical concepts and will be able to deploy dramaturgical analysis to evaluate, critique, and participate in spheres of creative performance.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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