

## MFA INFORMATION GUIDE

This guide provides you with all information you will need as an MFA student. *Read it.*

**Links to all necessary information appear on the MFA website under “Resources.”**  
Here’s the link: <http://www.mfatxstate.com/resources.asp>

### SECTION ONE

#### Handbooks

The Graduate College Catalog contains basic information pertinent to all graduate students. The Catalog can be found online at the Graduate College website, or on the MFA website under “Resources.”

The Graduate College’s “Guide to the Preparation of Theses” contains a comprehensive guide to thesis requirements. The link can be found on the MFA website under “Resources.”

All information that you need has a link to the appropriate material on the MFA website under “Resources.” Familiarize yourself with it, and use it.

#### Degree Outline

During your first semester, you will receive an Official Degree Outline from the Graduate School. For any changes you may wish to make of this outline, please contact the MFA Administrative Assistant for a Degree Outline Change Request Form. This must form be completed and submitted to the Graduate College. Note: Students cannot take undergraduate courses and use them for credit in their graduate degree.

#### Coursework

To graduate in three years, if you DO have an Assistantship, plan to take five 9 hour semesters and one 6 hour semester in the spring of your final year to complete a total of 51 hours. You must take 9 hours each semester during your first year, as you need 18 graduate English hours to apply to be considered for a TA position.

During the summer, unless you have Texas resident status or work for the English department as an IA, you must pay out-of-state tuition.

If you do NOT have an Assistantship, plan to take four 9-hour semesters, and two 6-hour semesters to complete 48 hours in three years.

If you apply for Financial Aid, please follow the new 2011 guidelines, which require you to take 9 hours per semester in order to qualify for full financial aid for tuition and fees. If you do not register for 9 hours, your financial aid for tuition and fees will be prorated.

For financial aid information, please go to this link:

<http://www.txstate.edu/financialaid/html/scholarships.html>.

### Required Courses

12 degree hours (four sections) of workshop (5315). After two workshops, you may take a break to digest what you've learned. Then take one workshop during your second year and one workshop during your third year.

3 degree hours of Form & Theory: 5320 (fiction) or 5322 (poetry).

3 degree hours of Literary Techniques (5395).

Note: Literary Techniques may be repeated twice for 6 Cognate credits.

15 degree hours in Literature courses, which may include 6 hours of 5312, Front Porch Journal.

6 degree hours of thesis work

9 degree hours in a Cognate. 6 hours may be 5395 seminars.

### Cognate

An "Open Cognate" is comprised of 9 graduate hours.

If you hope to take a course for your Cognate outside of the English Department, you need to first get permission from the MFA Director. Then you must get permission from the instructor of the graduate class you hope to take in another department. If you do not request and receive permission, the hours will not count toward your MFA degree.

### Degree Outline Update

Request this from Teresa Quinn – [tr19@txstate.edu](mailto:tr19@txstate.edu) -- in the Graduate College Office, or through the MFA office, during the semester prior to the semester you plan to graduate. This update will inform you of any problems with your degree outline. Make certain that you will complete all of your necessary degree hours by the time you plan to graduate.

## SECTION TWO

### Thesis

Read and follow *all* instructions provided by the Graduate College for preparing your thesis. It is your responsibility to do so, and please do it before you consult with either your thesis director or the MFA office. *All* information is at the following link:

[http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Thes-Diss\\_Info.html](http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Thes-Diss_Info.html)

The MFA thesis is a book length work of literary merit. While individual theses will vary in length, the program has established guidelines of 50 pages for poetry, 100-125 pages for short fiction, and 150 pages and up for a novel.

Students must complete *at least* 30 hours of coursework before requesting a thesis director. Do not request to work with a faculty member as your thesis director prior to your fourth full semester in the program, and do not make a commitment with a faculty member to serve as your thesis director until that time.

You must register for thesis credit (5399A and 5399B) in every semester that you work with your thesis director, and you must be registered for thesis B during your final semester, otherwise you will not graduate.

To enroll for thesis 5399A, ask an MFA faculty member to serve as your thesis director. Again, do *not* do this until your fourth semester in the program. If the faculty member agrees, although he or she may not be able to serve as your thesis director, select a second reader and third reader from the English faculty, which may include MFA faculty.

Your thesis committee must be graduate faculty members.

Tell the MFA Administrative Assistant who your thesis director will be

When you begin thesis work, e-mail Karen Bryson, the Chair's Administrative Assistant, at [KBryson@txstate.edu](mailto:KBryson@txstate.edu) and ask for the call number you will need to enroll in thesis 5399A. She will e-mail it to you.

At this time, you must complete the Proposed Research form, found in the "Resources" section on the MFA website. Submit it to the Graduate College, in duplicate, with the signatures of your thesis committee members, and then to Karen Bryson for the Department Chair's signature.

At the beginning of your final semester, Karen Bryson will issue you a call number to enroll for thesis 5399 B.

Enroll for 6 thesis hours in your final two semesters. Begin your first thesis semester with a virtually complete manuscript. Then revise your manuscript in consultation with your thesis director.

### MFA Thesis Faculty

Fiction: Doug Dorst, Tom Grimes, Debra Monroe, Nelly Rosario

Poetry: Cyrus Cassells, Ogaga Ifowodo, Roger Jones, Kathleen Peirce, Steve Wilson

## Adjunct Thesis Faculty

Adjunct Thesis Faculty members critique your entire thesis, once, via mail. Ask the MFA Administrative Assistant to contact your first choice by September 15<sup>th</sup> for spring graduation, or by April 15<sup>th</sup> for winter graduation. Adjuncts have been generally available for thesis reading; however, they may on occasion be unable to read a thesis, in which case you must select another adjunct faculty member. All contact with adjunct faculty members is conducted through the MFA office, not directly. Do not request a writer who is not on our Adjunct Faculty List, and do not contact any writer who is not on our list and ask him or her to serve as your thesis reader. If you do not wish to have an Adjunct Faculty member critique your thesis, simply inform the MFA office in writing.

## Adjunct Faculty

Fiction: Lee K. Abbott, Rick Bass, Karen Bender, Ron Carlson, Charles D'Ambrosio, Rick DeMarinis, John Dufresne, Bret Anthony Johnson, Jayne Anne Phillips, Carole Maso, Elizabeth McCracken, Debra Spark, Sharon Oard Warner, Kate Wheeler, and Terry Tempest Williams.

Poetry: Carolyn Forché, James Galvin, Hettie Jones, Patricia Spears Jones, Li-Young Lee, Philip Levine, Heather McHugh, Jane Mead, W. S. Merwin, David Mura, Naomi Shihab Nye, Alberto Ríos, Pattiann Rogers, Nicholas Samaras, Gerald Stern, Rosemarie Waldrop, Eleanor Wilner, and Mark Wunderlich.

## Thesis Submission to Adjunct Reader

In order to have an Adjunct Faculty member critique your thesis, you must submit it to the MFA office no later than the third Friday in February for spring graduation, or the third Friday in September for winter graduation. If you miss this deadline, you forfeit your right to an adjunct thesis reader's commentary. No exceptions. Manuscript turnaround time is generally six to eight weeks. Having an adjunct thesis reader is optional, not required.

## Thesis Distribution to Second and Third Readers

Your complete thesis manuscript must be delivered to your second and third thesis committee members no less than three weeks prior to your defense, or by the deadline specified on the Graduate College's website, a link to which is on the MFA website under "Resources." No exceptions will be made with regard to this deadline.

## Comprehensive Exam

Once you have sent your manuscript to your adjunct thesis reader, schedule your comprehensive exam with your thesis director. The exam may be taken no later than the eighth week of the semester you plan to graduate to insure that your committee will have ample time to read your exam.

The comprehensive exam requires you to write two to three essays, not to exceed 7500 words. Your comprehensive exam questions are composed by your thesis director.

Deliver your completed comprehensive exam to the members of your committee at the time you submit your thesis to them. Your committee members are not required to offer commentary unless they decline to assign a grade of "Passing" to the exam.

Please bring a copy of your Comprehensive Examination to your Oral Defense for your committee members' signatures. The form may be found on the MFA site under "Resources."

### Oral Defense

Schedule it for late March or early April. Contact your thesis committee, offer several days and times you will be available, and work out a date and time when all can be present at your defense. Once you have done so, please book the Brasher Library or Room 376 for your thesis defense with Melody in the English office. Remember to bring your comprehensive exam form and your thesis signature pages to your defense.

### Graduate College Submission of Thesis and Comprehensive Exam Report

Again, refer to the Graduate College's thesis guidelines for exact information:  
[http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Thes-Diss\\_Info.html](http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Thes-Diss_Info.html)

You are responsible for submitting a copy of your thesis, typed according to Graduate College thesis guidelines, as outlined in the Graduate College's Guide to Thesis Preparation. You must use archival quality paper specified by the Graduate College. The Graduate College offers workshops on Thesis Guidelines. Contact them for information regarding when and where workshops are offered.

You must deliver to the Graduate College Office, JCK 280, two signature pages signed by each member of your thesis committee, and the original signed copy of your Comprehensive Examination Report with exam questions attached.

The Graduate College allows students the option of electronic thesis submission. See the "Guide to the Preparation of Theses" under the "Resources" section of the MFA website for all information regarding the submission of your thesis to the Graduate College and to the Alkek Library. Here's the link:

[http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Thes-Diss\\_Info.html](http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Thes-Diss_Info.html)

### Checklist for Graduates

There is Graduation Checklist on the "Resources" of the MFA website. Please follow the checklist, and, again, refer to the Graduate College's thesis instructions.

## Graduation

Go to this link for instructions:

[http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Thes-Diss\\_Info/Thes\\_Info.html](http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Thes-Diss_Info/Thes_Info.html)

The application deadline is early in the semester you plan to graduate. Apply for graduation online according to the information found at the above link.

## SECTION THREE

### Scholarships

Several Graduate College and English Department scholarships are available. Check with the English Office, FH 365, for its list.

For all Graduate College scholarships, visit the Graduate College scholarship web page:  
[http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Prospect\\_Students/Fin\\_Grad\\_Ed/Scholarships.html](http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Prospect_Students/Fin_Grad_Ed/Scholarships.html)