

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	<b>BA Creative Writing</b> (Level 6)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	Dip HE, Cert HE
Is the programme offered with a Foundation Year?	Yes
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home School/other teaching departments	School of Creative Arts, Culture and Communication
Location of delivery	Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Full-time – 3 years: Part-time – 4 years Full-time with Foundation Year – 4 years Part-time with Foundation Year – 6 years September
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	N/A
<a href="#">QAA subject benchmark group(s)</a> <a href="#">Higher Education Credit Framework for England</a>	English – Creative Writing
UCAS code	W800; W801 (with FY)
Birkbeck Course Code	UUBACWRT_C (Full-time, 3 years) UBACWRIT_C (Part-time, 4 years) UUBFCWRT_C (Full-time with FY, 3 years) UBFCWRIT_C (Part-time with FY, 6 years)
HECoS Code	100046
Start date of programme	September 2010
Date of programme approval	Summer 2009
Date of last programme amendment approval	Spring 2017
Valid for academic entry year	<b>2024-25</b>
Date of last revision to document	08/08/2022

## Admissions requirements

We welcome applicants without traditional entry qualifications as we base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge and previous work experience. We may waive formal entry requirements based on judgement of academic potential.

**UCAS tariff:** 96-128 points (48 points for with Foundation Year entry)

The UCAS tariff score is applicable to you if you have recently studied a qualification that has a UCAS tariff equivalence. UCAS provides a [tariff calculator](#) for you to work out what your qualification is worth within the UCAS tariff.

A-levels: CCC-ABB

## Course aims

The BA Creative Writing is a unique and exciting programme of study that gives you the opportunity to explore a range of disciplines, from prose fiction to poetry, scriptwriting to creative non-fiction.

Under the guidance of practising published writers, you will not only build an understanding of the craft of writing and hone your authorial technique, you will also learn the vital skills of reading as a writer. Through practical projects and engagement with visiting professionals, you will broaden your understanding of the many aspects of the writing industry. You will also complete an extended creative project in a specific genre in the final year.

The programme provides you with a basis of skills necessary to pursue writing as a profession. It also equips you with expertise transferable to many careers in the arts, education and the media. And you will be studying right in the heart of literary London, walking in the footsteps of Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Group.

This programme is also available for part-time evening study over four years.

## Aims

The programme aims to:

- Provide a cogent full-time progression route from undergraduate study to postgraduate study in creative writing at Birkbeck.
- Enable students to develop their skills as writers of fiction, poetry, drama, screenwriting and creative non-fiction.
- Deepen students' awareness of form and elements of the writer's craft.
- Develop students' skills of self-evaluation and constructive analysis of their own work and the work of others.
- Provide students with a broad and balanced understanding of the practices of reading and researching as a writer.
- Enable students to undertake and complete a long-term creative writing project.
- Enable students to develop skills in editing and revising their own writing.
- Provide students with a contextual understanding of the publishing, performance, and broadcast industries.
- Provide students with opportunities to interact regularly with fellow writers and industry professionals.
- Enable students to consolidate learning through lecturer/peer feedback.
- Enable students to engage imaginatively in the analysis and interpretation of texts as well as develop their own practices as writers.

- Develop students' independent critical judgment, helping them attain understanding of the histories, conventions, and processes of various writing genres, and to present lucid, logical, and well-structured work.
- Produce well-rounded students capable of independently evaluating and engaging creatively and critically with the current literary scene.

### Distinctive Features

- It is the only centrally located single honours BA (Hons) Creative Writing in London and one of the few currently offered in the UK.
- It offers face-to-face teaching to full-time students by published writers—active practitioners in their respective fields—and by guest lecturers (established authors) and publishing industry professionals.
- The expansive, multi-disciplinary approach to the study of writing (fiction, poetry, drama, screenwriting, creative non-fiction) with a choice of optional elective modules from the wider School of Arts.
- Synergy of learning: the unique opportunity for students to develop their skills as writers while deepening their understanding of the demands and expectations of writing as a career. Students will study and interact with guest speakers from the creative industries—editors, literary agents, publishers, theatre practitioners as well as established writers across all genres.
- The opportunity for students to specialise in a specific writing discipline and develop a sustained writing project, the intensity of which prepares them for the expectations of an MA or MFA programme.
- The opportunity for students to engage in a stimulating publishing project in their final year. Students will have the opportunity to organise and host a literary event, featuring readings from student work.
- Students on the course will also be eligible to submit work to the The Mechanics' Institute Review, compiled annually by students on the MA in Creative Writing.
- Students are predominantly taught in small, interactive workshop groups, alongside plenary lectures.
- Full and part-time, evening, face-to-face study.

For aims of the Foundation year, please see separate School of Arts FY specification

### Course structure

(For FY, see school of Arts FY specification)

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
<b>Full-time – 3 year</b>					
<b>Year 1</b>					
4	AREN256S4	Storytelling: Narrative Archetypes, Forms and Techniques	30	Comp	T1-T2
4	AREN286S4	Introduction to Playwriting & Poetry	30	Comp	T1
4	AREN287S4	Fiction Workshop 1	30	Comp	T2
4	AREN288S4	Writing for Film and TV	30	Comp	T3
<b>Year 2</b>					
5	AREN005S5	Narrative Methods	30	Comp	T1
5	AREN100S5	Creative Non-fiction	30	Comp	T2

5	AREN204S5	Screenwriting Workshop 1: Essentials of Stage and Screen	30	Option	T1-T2
5	AREN041S5	or Poetry Workshop 1	30	Option	T1-T2
5	AREN289S5	The Writing Industry	30	Comp	T3
<b>Year 3</b>					
6	AREN171S6	Dissertation	30	Comp	T1-T2
6	AREN181H6	IRP: The Critical Reflection	15	Comp	T2
6	AREN182H6	The Publishing Project	15	Comp	T3
6		Two 30-credit options from:	60	Options	T1, T2
6	AREN179S6	Scriptwriting Workshop 2: Writing for the Contemporary Stage	30	Option	T1
6	AREN143S6	Poetry Workshop 2: The Open Page	30	Option	T1
6	AREN205S6	Scriptwriting Workshop 4: The Television Drama	30	Option	T2
6	AREN139S6	Fiction Workshop 2: The Contemporary Novel	30	Option	T2
<b>Part-time – 4 years</b>					
<b>Year 1</b>					
4	AREN256S4	Storytelling: Narrative Archetypes, Forms and Techniques	30	Comp	T1-T2
4	AREN286S4	Introduction to Playwriting & Poetry	30	Comp	T1
4	AREN288S4	Writing for Film and TV	30	Comp	T3
<b>Year 2</b>					
5	AREN005S5	Narrative Methods	30	Comp	T1
4	AREN287S4	Fiction Workshop 1	30	Comp	T2
5	AREN204S5	Screenwriting Workshop 1: Essentials of Stage and Screen	30	Option	T1-T2
5	AREN041S5	OR Poetry Workshop 1	30	Option	T1-T2
<b>Year 3</b>					
6	AREN179S6	EITHER Scriptwriting Workshop 2: Writing for the Contemporary Stage	30	Option	T1
6	AREN143S6	OR Poetry Workshop 2: The Open Page	30	Option	T1
5	AREN100S5	Creative Non-fiction	30	Comp	T2
5	AREN289S5	The Writing Industry	30	Comp	T3
<b>Year 4</b>					
6	AREN171S6	Dissertation	30	Comp	T1-T2
6	AREN181H6	IRP: The Critical Reflection	15	Comp	T2
6	AREN182H6	The Publishing Project	15	Comp	T3
6	AREN205S6	EITHER Scriptwriting Workshop 4: The Television Drama	30	Option	T2
6	AREN139S6	OR Fiction Workshop 2: The Contemporary Novel	30	Option	T2

<i>Core:</i>	<i>Module must be taken and passed by student</i>
<i>Compulsory:</i>	<i>Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)</i>
<i>Option:</i>	<i>Student can choose to take this module</i>

## **How you will learn**

Your learning and teaching is organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all of the material and sessions arranged for you.

Each course is divided into modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed.

Your learning for this course will be organised around the activities outlined below.

Teaching on this course is a combination of lectures, seminars and workshops. Lectures are designed to provide you with an outline or overview of the topic, to engage you with the material and direct you to other resources. They are a springboard for your own learning. Seminars are group sessions where you will be asked to contribute to discussion or group work around the topic, with material set in advance for which you need to prepare.

## **How we will assess you**

Assessment for Creative Writing modules is 100% coursework. However, an optional School of Arts module at Level 6 may include an examination or another form of assessment.

A creative Dissertation is also a compulsory requirement of both the full-time and part-time BA Creative Writing in the final year.

Teaching is varied and interactive, and takes the form of lecturer-led sessions on elements of craft, workshopping of students' creative work, class and home exercises, student readings, individual and group work. It also includes:

- Plenary lectures to year groups to allow for general exposition of craft elements and instruction therein, as well as to disseminate course-related information and to foster a sense of community amongst students.
- Branch-off workshops following lectures, encouraging student participation in general discussion and the use of weekly student presentations. This encourages development of communication skills in small groups and promotes exploration of material presented in the lecture.
- One-to-one tutorials by arrangement, particularly when students are preparing and receiving feedback on essays; one-to-one supervision of final year research project.
- The Independent Reading Portfolio module develops self-reflective and research skills and further enables the ability to evaluate and synthesise material across the degree programme.
- Visiting speakers—other writers and publishing professionals.
- Opportunity to submit work to and/or take part in the BA Creative Writing launch event curated annually by final-year students on the degree.
- Opportunity to submit work to *The Mechanics' Institute Review*, produced annually by students on the MA Creative Writing.

Other important modes of learning include: note-taking, visual and textual analysis; private study; group projects; library and archival research; use of internet sources; use of museums and galleries; writing assignments, including essays, creative work, research essays and projects.

### **Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)**

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

#### **SUBJECT SPECIFIC**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate control of elements of the writer's craft in their own work.
- Use language more confidently, precisely, and imaginatively.
- Discuss and evaluate the work of fellow students and established writers in relation to elements of craft.
- Experiment with style and form.
- Utilise critical skills in the close reading and analysis of creative texts.

#### **INTELLECTUAL**

- By the end of the course, students will have gained:
- Knowledge and understanding of the various forms and genres of creative writing and the different techniques and processes they employ.
- Greater confidence and fluency in their own writing.
- Skills in researching relevant fields of knowledge and developing drafts of their work.
- Knowledge and understanding of contemporary writers and writing.
- An awareness of the contemporary marketplace and its relationship to creative writing.

#### **PRACTICAL**

- By the end of the course, students will have developed:
- A portfolio of creative work (with which the student can pursue publication or entrance onto higher-level creative writing programmes, such as the MA Creative Writing at Birkbeck).
- The ability to sustain and evaluate creative projects.
- Creative writing skills, including the ability to edit and revise, to apply technique and critical analysis to the development of a piece of work in one or more genres.
- Research skills, including the ability to gather, sift, and organise material independently and critically, and to present it in the form of an essay, report, dissertation, presentation or written creative piece.
- Relevant IT skills; the use of libraries and electronic sources of information, online discussion groups, web-based research.

#### **PERSONAL AND SOCIAL**

- By the end of the course, students will have gained:
- A richer knowledge of the field of creative writing, and an informed critical and creative approach to the subject area.
- The ability to act as a reflective, self-directed learner, recognizing and employing a range of strategies to support independent learning, including an awareness of strengths/weaknesses.

- The ability to respond more effectively to the work of others; to participate in workshop or small group discussion by listening and contributing ideas in a sensitive and informed manner.
- The ability to accept and evaluate constructive criticism on their own work; to participate in workshop or small group discussion by listening to feedback of fellow students and lecturers.
- The ability to communicate in public and in working groups with expressive clarity and sophistication.

### **Careers and further study**

You will find Creative Writing graduates in the following kinds of roles:

Publishing, agenting, writing, teaching, performing arts, advertising, public relations, game design

Birkbeck's BA Creative Writing graduates will complete with a set of valuable attributes, for example:

- A deepened awareness of literary forms and a practical understanding of the writer's craft
- The ability to use language more confidently, precisely, and imaginatively
- Skills in evaluating and assessing creative and critical writing across a range of forms
- An awareness of the industry-standard expectations for the presentation of written work
- Skills in the planning and time-management of independent creative writing

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on [the careers pages of our website](#).

### **Academic regulations and course management**

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

### **Support for your study**

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services](#). This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

## Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is [available online](#).

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