

Program in Creative Writing – Creative Thesis Information

Applying for the Creative Thesis Overview

Online Application (opens every spring; you may only apply your **junior spring**):
<https://arts.princeton.edu/academics/creative-writing/program-of-study/cwr-thesis/>

Currently, there are **THREE** parts to the application:

1. Basic Information (name, major, CWR coursework so far)
2. Writing Sample
3. One-Page Project Proposal

1. **Basic Information.** Applicants are normally expected to have taken four Creative Writing Program workshops, though this requirement may be reduced in exceptional cases.

Many creative theses are written by Program VI English and Path E Comparative Literature majors, but the Creative Writing Program welcomes applications from students in other majors. After acceptance into the Program, such students must secure permission from their home department(s) to undertake a creative thesis.

Accepted students are expected to contact their thesis advisor immediately upon notification, to complete a portion of the thesis over the summer, and to meet with their thesis advisor immediately upon return to Princeton. They should expect to meet with their advisor weekly (poetry/translation) or every other week (fiction/screenwriting).

Thesis applicants may wish to apply for a CWR course as a fallback.

2. **Writing Sample Guidelines**

Fiction: 3 stories (approx. 30-35 pages total)

Non-Fiction: 3 stories (approx. 30-35 pages total)

Poetry: 10-15 pages of poems

Screenwriting: 15-30 pages of a short or feature screenplay

Translation: 10-15 pages of translations

Applications must be in a single genre, and submitted work should best represent the applicant's work in that genre. This will be reviewed by a committee of the Program faculty in consultation with the student's workshop and tutorial instructors. The committee will look for demonstrated talent, potential, and discipline as well as the ability to work closely with an advisor on a long-term project.

3. **Project Proposal.** Please include up to one page as a project proposal for your thesis. What do you hope to write for your CWR thesis, and how do you plan on completing your project in the short amount of time you'll have? How will you use the opportunity to work closely with creative writing faculty on a long project?

Applying for the Creative Thesis Frequently Asked Questions

The Online Application only permits me to upload one document. How do I submit both my 1-page thesis project proposal AND my writing sample?

Please combine your 1-page thesis project proposal and writing sample into one Word file or one PDF file. Make your project proposal the first page of the file.

When will I be notified about my decision?

By the beginning of May.

If I am interested in a thesis in playwriting, does this remain solely under the jurisdiction of the Program in Theater?

Yes, please contact Joe Fonseca jfonseca@princeton.edu in the Program in Theater for more information. The Program in Creative Writing does not advise playwriting theses.

May I submit 2 separate proposals for 2 different genres to see which genre I would be selected for?

No, you are only permitted to submit **one** proposal for **one** genre.

Is it better to propose a few possible ideas for my thesis project or propose one well-developed idea?

We would strongly recommend you submit the most focused, well-developed 1-page project proposal as is possible. It is better to present a single well-developed idea for a project than it is to propose a few less developed ideas. In the past, the strongest applications have been those outlining a single well-developed project idea.

I'm interested in conducting research or travel (if approved) for my creative writing thesis. Where can I apply for senior thesis funding?

Below are a few sources of thesis funding. *You are encouraged to apply for these funds **even before you know if you have been selected for the CWR thesis!***

Lewis Center for the Arts Summer Funding—*Due March 12th at 4pm ET*
<https://arts.princeton.edu/about/opportunities/student-funding-awards/>

The Office of Undergraduate Research lists information about senior thesis research funding:
<https://undergraduateresearch.princeton.edu/funding/thesis-funding>

The Office of the Dean of the College lists summer funding sources:
<https://odoc.princeton.edu/curriculum/summer-coursework/summer-funding>

The Creative Thesis **Important Details**

Accepted students seek permission from their home departments to use the creative thesis to satisfy departmental thesis requirements. For students in the [Department of English](#) Creative Writing Track and the [Comparative Literature Department](#)'s Path E, approval is routine, and several other departments have welcomed creative theses. Still, some students undertake the creative thesis as a "second thesis."

Students are expected to begin their theses over the summer before the senior year, and those who have not made satisfactory progress by mid-October are returned to their major department to write a regular thesis.

English majors accepted for a creative thesis may count a maximum of two creative writing courses at the 300 or 400 level toward their eight English departmentals, and their theses are supervised and graded by Program faculty. (English majors not accepted for a creative thesis may still count one 300 or 400 level creative writing course as their Program I cognate.) Otherwise, their requirements—distribution, senior comprehensives, etc.—are identical to those of regular English majors. Thesis students may not take other creative writing courses in their thesis genre during their senior year.

Majors in departments other than English should, after successful application to the Program, secure the permission of the Departmental Representative of their major department to undertake the creative thesis. Such students will usually be assigned advisors in both the Program and the major department. These advisors will negotiate the grading procedure. The department may have special requirements—for example, a critical preface or an extensive bibliography. The thesis will receive a "review" and a letter grade from a faculty reader, in consultation with the thesis advisor.

There is no set length for the thesis. Fiction theses have ranged from 80 to 400+ pages, 100-200 pages being typical. A poetry thesis normally contains 20-40 poems, depending on their length. In general no more than 20% of the thesis should be revised work from previous years. The thesis deadline is established by the Program in Creative Writing, typically sometime in the first week of April.

The Creative Thesis **Important Details: FAQs**

1. **May I use my Creative Writing Thesis to satisfy the thesis requirements of my home department (my major)?** Creative Writing Thesis Students may seek permission from their home departments to use the creative thesis to satisfy departmental thesis requirements. For students in the [Department of English](#) Creative Writing Track and the [Comparative Literature Department](#)'s Path E, approval is routine, and many other departments welcome creative theses. Still, some students choose to do the creative thesis as a "second thesis."
2. **I'm an English major, and I want my Creative Writing thesis to satisfy the thesis requirements for both my English major AND my Creative Writing certificate. In other words, I only want to write 1 thesis.** Seek permission from the Department of English. For students in the [Department of English](#) Creative Writing Track, approval is routine.
3. **I'm an English major, but I want to write 2 completely separate theses – I want to write a critical thesis for my English thesis, and I want to write a creative thesis for my Creative Writing certificate.** Great! You are more than welcome to write 2 separate theses.
4. **I'm an English major – anything else I should know?** English majors accepted for a creative thesis may count a maximum of two creative writing courses at the 300 or 400 level toward their eight English departmentals, and their theses are supervised and graded by Program faculty. Otherwise, their requirements—distribution, senior comprehensives, etc.—are identical to those of regular English majors.
5. **I'm not an English major, and I want my Creative Writing thesis to satisfy the thesis requirements for both my major AND my Creative Writing certificate.** Creative Writing Thesis Students may seek permission from their home departments to use the creative thesis to satisfy departmental thesis requirements. Students should secure the permission of the Departmental Representative of their major department to undertake the creative thesis. Such students will usually be assigned advisors in both the Program and the major department. These advisors will negotiate the grading procedure. The department may have special requirements—for example, a critical preface or an extensive bibliography. The thesis will receive a "review" and a letter grade from a faculty reader, in consultation with the thesis advisor.
6. **I'm not an English major, and I want to write 2 completely separate theses – I want to write a critical thesis for my home department, and I want to write a creative thesis for my Creative Writing certificate.** Great! You are more than welcome to write 2 separate theses.