



**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MODERN LETTERS
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAMME**

**MA IN CREATIVE WRITING: 2010
CREW 591: Creative Writing Portfolio (Writing for the Page)**

This course gives recognition to work in creative writing. Its aim is to develop the literary skills and imaginative capacity of emerging writers through a programme of folio supervision, writing workshops, and complementary reading. The MA does not limit itself to a single literary genre. Nor does it teach a specific set of predetermined skills; rather, it encourages each student to identify and articulate, as appropriate, their own distinctive voice as a writer. The MA in Creative Writing is a research degree, and by the end of the year each student is expected to complete a book-length work of literature, in publishable form and of publishable standard.

MA students meet as a group twice a week. **These weekly meetings are compulsory.**

Workshop

There is a weekly, three-hour workshop which runs throughout and sometimes a little beyond the first two trimesters. In 2010 the 20 MA students are divided into two workshops.

Chris Price (Glenn Schaeffer House: Room 301, phone 463 5815; home phone 472 7403) convenes the workshop on Tuesdays from 1.30–4.30p.m.

The other workshop is conducted by Damien Wilkins (Glenn Schaeffer House: Room 201, phone 463 6905; home phone 972 0060) on Thursdays from 10.00am–1.00 p.m.

All workshops are held in the Workshop Room (Room 102, Glenn Schaeffer House, 16 Waiteata Road).

At workshops a range of exercise work is presented and discussed, and workshop members present for discussion folio work-in-progress.

The first few workshops will concentrate on weekly exercise pieces.

In the later part of the year, students will also be required to produce written commentaries on the work of other workshop members.

Unless we agree otherwise, there are no formal classes during university breaks: see attached meetings schedule.

Reading Programme

Weekly meetings for Chris Price's class are held 3.00–5.00 p.m. on Wednesdays in the Workshop Room.

Weekly meetings for Damien Wilkins' class are held 12.30–2.30p.m. on Wednesdays in the Workshop Room.

Reading Programme meetings provide a forum for the discussion of craft and literary issues, as well as a number of texts from individual reading lists (each class member leads at least one meeting). They also provide a forum for guest visits.

Where appropriate, we will run combined sessions. These will be held on Wednesday afternoons, 2.00–4.00 p.m.

There are no Reading Programme meetings during university breaks.

Reading Journal

As part of your Reading Programme you are required to read extensively in an area related to your main writing project. You report on your Reading Programme by keeping a detailed, regular journal where you note your responses to the texts you have been reading, as much as possible in the light of your own writing.

The Reading Journal, which is not formally assessed, must be submitted by Sept 10th 2010.

Your Portfolio

This is the equivalent of an academic thesis. While you will be discussing your folio at the workshop meetings, you will also be assigned a portfolio supervisor, with whom you will have regular meetings. (These should average out at one hour per fortnight across the teaching year.) As against the diversity of views you are likely to meet in workshops, your supervisor provides the response of a single, continuing reader. Your supervisor will respond to your work as you write it, and act as final reader at the point when the folio is to be submitted. Your supervisor will also be one of your assessors.

The recommended length of an MA thesis in a subject such as English Literature is 30,000 words. It is recognised, however, that the length of a Creative Writing portfolio will depend very much on the nature of each project. A fiction portfolio, for example, is likely to have a much larger word count, while a poetry portfolio will be shorter. This is a matter you should discuss with your supervisor, as well as with Chris Price or Damien Wilkins.

Assessment

Assessment is based entirely on your submitted portfolio. At present there is provision for the degree to be awarded with distinction or with merit. Three examiners – your supervisor, an external reader from the writing community, and Fergus Barrowman, Managing Editor of Victoria University Press – will read each portfolio and make their recommendations. Copies of their written reports will be returned to you.

You must submit three copies of your folio or thesis by Tuesday 9 November 2010.

These should be in soft or temporary bindings. When examining is completed, copies will be returned to you, along with readers' reports. At this point you can make any necessary corrections.

Depositing Your Thesis

After you have received your readers' reports, you must then lodge one softbound copy of your portfolio and one hardbound copy with the International Institute of Modern Letters, which will keep the softbound copy as part of its record of work done for the MA. The hardbound copy will be deposited in the university library on your behalf. The library requirements for the depositing of theses can be found at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/library/services/thesesdeposit.aspx>

Electronic Library Deposit

If you visit the above url you will note that the Library states it is mandatory to deposit an electronic copy of your portfolio/research thesis with the library. In fact it is not mandatory for this course. At the point you deposit the hardbound copy, the Library will invite you to make an electronic deposit, though the decision will be yours.

Mandatory Course Requirements

If you fail to meet these requirements your folio will not be assessed, and you will automatically fail the course.

There are two requirements:

- you must attend and fully participate in the weekly workshop meeting
- and you must meet Reading Programme requirements as described above, including attendance at the weekly meeting.

Human Ethics Regulations

If your research involves quoting directly from interviews with living people, you may need to seek approval from the Human Ethics Committee. If you are in doubt, talk first to your supervisor or workshop coordinator.

Masters Thesis Policy

The MA in Creative Writing is a distinctive research degree, with its own protocols and requirements. Broader information about Victoria's university-wide Masters thesis policy can be read at: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/degrees/docs/master's-thesis-policy.pdf>. The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences also has guidelines for Masters students at: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/degrees/docs/masters-guidelines-07.pdf>

Workload

You should expect to spend about 40 hours a week on this course.

Practical Matters

Any additional information about the MA will be made available at workshop meetings, or by e-mail, or will be distributed into student pigeonholes.

As well as the Workshop Room, there are two rooms set aside for students in the MA Creative Writing programme. Room 401 in Glenn Schaeffer House contains a small library, student lockers and pigeonholes as well as an on-line Mac and PC. There is also a small writing room next to the IIML at 14 Waiteata Road, which you can book for private work. You will have key access to the buildings and rooms, so that you can come and go after hours. (You will need to see the IIML's administrators about keys and swipe cards.)

There is also a kitchen on the ground floor of Glenn Schaeffer House. You are welcome to use anything here – fridge, microwave, stove – but please wash your dishes and clean up after yourself.

Printing and copying arrangements: check with the IIML's administrators.

We are building a small library of contemporary writing in the MA Room. Please use this library as a resource. We subscribe to a range of contemporary journals, while a number of current NZ literary magazines – *Landfall*, *New Zealand Books*, *Sport* – have generously donated gift subscriptions. Donations of your own future publications will of course be very welcome!

Writers Videos

We have a significant resource in the Lannan Writers Video Collection, which features readings and conversations with many of the world's leading writers. The videos may not be borrowed, but we have booked the Workshop Room on Fridays from 2.00 p.m. should you wish to view these videos. (Certain Fridays will not be available due to the PhD programme's requirements – please check with the office.) These video sessions are not a formal requirement but offer you a chance to see a favourite writer in performance or to discover new writers.

There is also a collection of New Zealand and international poetry recordings on CD available to listen to in the Workshop Room. They may not be borrowed.

Other Meetings and Events

The Workshop and Reading Programme make up the MA's formal requirements. Informal meetings between students are another way of developing networks and skills.

The IIML also runs a series of writer events – “Writers on Mondays” usually held at lunchtimes in the second trimester. The venue for this year is Te Papa. Attendance at these events, where invited writers read and speak about their work, is strongly encouraged. Students will also have the opportunity to take part in this series as writers in September.

Masterclasses

In the past few years we have presented international masterclasses as part of the MA programme. Previous visiting writers have included Richard Ford, Eliot Weinberger, Lavinia Greenlaw, Michael Palmer, Richard Powers, Christopher Reid and Brian Castro. This year we are hosting the British poet Glyn Maxwell, and later in the first trimester two American writers: David Vann and Lee Gutkind.

Prizes and Scholarships

The Adam Foundation Prize in Creative Writing is awarded to the best folio submitted by an MA student in any one year. Recipients to date have been Catherine Chidgey (1997,

for *In a Fishbone Church*), William Brandt (1998, for *Alpha Male*), Tim Corballis (2000, for *Below*), Paula Morris (2001, for *Queen of Beauty*), Cliff Fell (2002, for *The Adulterer's Bible*), Josh Greenberg (2003, for *A Man Who Eats the Heart*), Emily Dobson (2004, for *A Box of Bees*), Michele Amas (2005, for *The Angle of Clouds*), Anna Horsley (now Anna Taylor, 2006, for *Going Under*), Eleanor Catton (2007, for *The Rehearsal*), Lynn Jenner (2008 *Dear Sweet Harry*) and Ashleigh Young (2009, for *Can You Tolerate This?*).

In the past we have awarded a US\$20,000 Glenn Schaeffer Fellowship to assist a member of the MA class to the Iowa Writers' Workshop. Past recipients are Paula Morris, Anna Livesey, Tracey Hill, Emily Dobson, Alice Miller, Therese Lloyd and Eleanor Catton. This fellowship is currently suspended.

Created in 2006, the \$3000 Biggs Poetry Scholarship, which seeks to recognise the potential of a writer, has been awarded to Amy Brown (2006), Joan Fleming (2007), Louise Wallace (2008) and Bill Nelson (2009).

There are also four post-MA project scholarships awarded to allow selected students to work towards publication of their folios. These are valued at \$5000 each. Past recipients are: Pip Desmond, Emma Gallagher, Therese Lloyd and Nick Stanley in 2006; Pip Adam, Sarah Bainbridge, Mariana Isara, and Brent Kininmont in 2007; and Rachael Cookson, Sylvie Haisman, Tina Makereti and Heather McKenzie in 2008; Kay Corns, Breton Dukes, Emma Martin, and Melissa Reid in 2009.

General University Policies and Statutes

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

Communication of additional information

Additional information or information on changes will be conveyed to students by email to all class members.

General University Requirements

General University policies and statutes

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

This website also provides information for students in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates.

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic/Publications.aspx