



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

**MA IN CREATIVE WRITING: 2012  
CREW 591: Creative Writing Portfolio (Writing for the Page)**

**Trimester dates: this is a full year course (G status)**

Trimester dates: 5 March to 17 November 2012

Teaching dates: 5 March to 19 October 2012

Mid-trimester break 1/3: 6–22 April 2012

Mid-trimester break 2/3: 27 August to 9 September 2012

**Withdrawal dates:**

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

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## Course aims

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.

## Workshop

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

There is a weekly, three-hour workshop which runs throughout and sometimes a little beyond the first two trimesters. In 2012 the 20 MA students are divided into two workshops.

Chris Price convenes the workshop on Tuesdays from 1.30–4.30p.m.

The other workshop is conducted by Damien Wilkins 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'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.

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

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.

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 14<sup>th</sup> 2012.**

### **Communication of additional information**

Additional information or information on changes will be made available at workshop meetings, conveyed to students by email to all class members or distributed into student pigeonholes.

### **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.

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. Two examiners – an external reader from the writing community, and Fergus Barrowman, Managing Editor of Victoria University Press – will read the portfolio and make their recommendations. Your supervisor will also write a report. Copies of their written reports will be returned to you.

### **You must submit three copies of your folio or thesis by Thursday 8 November 2012.**

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 THREE copies of your thesis: one softbound, one hardbound, and one electronic copy. The IIML will keep the softbound copy as part of its record of work done for the MA. The hardbound and electronic copies will be deposited in the University Library. The Library requirements for the depositing of theses can be found at: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/library/about/policies/theses.html>

You must complete and sign an Availability of Thesis form at the time of deposit. All electronic theses from the IIML go into the Library's Restricted Archive, unless you specify that you would prefer your work in the Open Archive.

## **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/fgr/policies-and-resources/default.aspx#masters>. The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences also has guidelines for Masters students at: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/study/postgraduate/ma.aspx>

## **Workload**

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

## **Practical Matters**

As well as the Workshop Room, there are two rooms set aside for students in the MA Creative Writing programme. Room 401 at 16 Waiteata Road 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 the IIML. You are welcome to use anything here – fridge, microwave, stove – but please wash your dishes and clean up after yourself.

Printing and copying arrangements: read the document titled 'Information for MA Students 2012' in your course information folder, then check with the IIML's administrators.

We are building a small library of contemporary writing in the Postgraduate Room (Room 401). Please use this library as a resource (books may be borrowed on a card system; journals must be read in the library only). 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 DVDs**

We have a significant resource in the Lannan Writers DVD Collection, which features readings and conversations with many of the world's leading writers. The DVDs may not be borrowed, but we have booked the Workshop Room on Fridays from 2.00 p.m. should you wish to view these DVDs. (Certain Fridays will not be available due to the PhD programme's requirements – please check with the office.) These DVD 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, Brian Castro, Glyn Maxwell, David Vann, Joy Harjo and Lee Gutkind. We will provide details of this year's programme later in the year.

## **Newsletter**

The IIML produces a (roughly six-weekly) newsletter that includes information about literary events and launches (particularly in Wellington), new books by graduates, writing competitions and other book-related goings-on. **If you wish to receive the newsletter email modernletters with SUBSCRIBE in the subject line.**

We will assume that you are receiving the newsletter, rather than repeating the information it contains during the workshops. For more up-to-the-minute information about upcoming events, and links to useful or curious web-reading about writing, follow us on Twitter

[www.twitter.com/modernletters](http://www.twitter.com/modernletters)

## **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, for *Dear Sweet Harry*), Ashleigh Young (2009, for *Can You Tolerate This?*), Rayne Cockburn (2010, for *Someplace for Boys*) and Hera Lindsay Bird (2011, for *And Together We Fight Crime*). Copies of these and all the other completed MA theses are available for reading in the VUW Library.

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), Bill Nelson (2009), Aleksandra Lane (2010), and Rachel Sawaya (2011).

There are also four post-MA project scholarships awarded to allow selected students to work towards publication of their folios. These are valued at \$4000 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; Sylvie Thomson, Amy Head, Simone Kaho and Sarah McCallum in 2010; Ken Heaton, Lucy Kirton, Emily McHalick, and Rosabel Tan in 2011.

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## **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>

## **WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION**

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study). Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress). Most statutes and policies are available at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy), except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx) (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/avcacademic](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic).