



Kingston University London

CREATIVE WRITING MA
WRITING FICTION MA
WRITING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE MA
TRAVEL WRITING MA
WRITING POETRY MA

quality **innovation** diversity **opportunity** reputation

About the course

COURSE OVERVIEW

These MA courses at Kingston University are uniquely flexible programmes designed to enable you to develop the craft of creative writing while specialising in a chosen genre of popular literature: writing fiction, writing children's literature, travel writing or poetry writing.

You will receive expert guidance and rigorous, constructive feedback from established, published creative writers in the genre or form of your choice. Professional writers and visiting professors provide regular input to workshops in specific genres or forms.

WHAT YOU STUDY

You will have the chance to develop your creative writing skills in general or specialise in a chosen genre. You will also study literary criticism and theory and will look at the professional elements of writing, such as copy-editing and how to get your work published. You will have the unique opportunity to work in a focused workshop, in which you will study one-to-one or in small groups with experts in your chosen area of popular literature, working towards producing a substantial piece of creative writing within that area.

Creative Writing MA

www.kingston.ac.uk/pgcreativewriting

This MA aims to give you the knowledge and confidence to enter the cultural debate and identify outlets for your own writing. It enables you to work on your writing in different genres while being supported by published practitioners. The Writers' Workshop will encourage you to develop your writing 'voice' in fiction or creative non-fiction, while the Special Study module enables you to specialise in poetry, drama or screen writing.

Writing Fiction MA

www.kingston.ac.uk/pgfictionwriting

This MA allows you to specialise by choosing the Contemporary Fiction option as well as participating in fiction workshops. You will develop the critical skills necessary to understand the codes and conventions in contemporary fiction, and will be encouraged to try different kinds of fiction writing within the Writers' Workshop and the Special Study modules. Your study experience at Kingston will be enhanced by visiting authors, the presence of novelists such as Adam Baron and Hanif Kureishi, and by the sessions provided by writers-in-residence, Maggie Gee, Paul Bailey and Liz Jensen.

Writing Children's Literature MA

www.kingston.ac.uk/pgchildlit

This MA covers the critical appreciation of existing writing in this area and will enable you to develop your own work for young readers. With access to published practitioners, you will be encouraged to study the various sub-genres devoted to children's writing. In addition, you will specialise in writing for children within the Special Study and the Writers' Workshop modules. Visiting writers, such as Chrissie Gittins, and resident Faculty members, especially Professor Norma Clarke, will enhance your study and writing practice.

Travel Writing MA

www.kingston.ac.uk/pgtravelwriting

One of the earliest 'hybrid' genres, combining literary non-fiction with an element of 'life writing', travel writing is an area recognised by both publishers and critics as increasing in popularity.

Writing Poetry MA

www.kingston.ac.uk/pgwritingpoetry

This MA will provide you with a critical understanding of the poetic tradition of poetry in English, and will enable you to develop your poetic 'voice'. You will be encouraged to submit your creative work for publication in literary journals and magazines. This course makes full use of the Faculty's two leading practitioners, Jane Yeh and Siobhan Campbell, and is further augmented by readings from visiting poets.

CAREERS

These courses provide students with a detailed knowledge and expert awareness of the power of the written word, and are particularly valuable for graduates wishing to enhance their careers in publishing, journalism, teaching, the arts, communications and creative writing.

RESEARCH AREAS

In addition to being published authors, many of the staff in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences are research active. This ensures they are in touch with the latest thinking and bring best practice to your studies.

Research in English Literature at Kingston University covers the following areas:

- 19th and 20th century British and American fiction
- Fictions of globalisation
- Modernism
- Gothic writing
- Travel writing
- Literary representations of the Balkans
- Narratives of slavery
- Women's writing from the 18th century to the present
- New Woman and fin de siècle fictions
- Shakespeare
- Literature of the English Reformation period
- English women's religious poetry during the 17th century
- Postcolonial studies

The research focuses around three initiatives:

- The Centre for Iris Murdoch Studies – established in 2004 to oversee research on the Iris Murdoch archives acquired by Kingston University in 2003/04
- Performing History – in collaboration with Hampton Court Palace, this research project studies early Tudor plays in performance at Hampton Court and looks at the relationship between architectural space and the performance of drama
- Centre for Suburban Studies – committed to pioneering interdisciplinary approaches to the study of suburbia.

SPECIAL FEATURES

- These MAs give you the chance to develop your creative writing skills in general or to specialise in a specific genre of your choice.
- You will receive expert guidance and constructive feedback from established, published creative writers in the genre of your choice.
- Professional writers and visiting professors provide regular input to workshops and a range of voices and styles to extend your experience of approaches to writing.
- Recent visiting writers have included Beryl Bainbridge, Rhidian Brook and Will Self.
- You will also be introduced to the professional elements of writing by experts such as copy editors, producers, literary agents and literary editors.
- We now offer a joint MA in Creative Writing and Publishing (subject to validation).



Course content

MODULES

Each MA comprises the following four core modules, one option module and a creative dissertation and critical essay.

Core modules

Writers' Workshop

In this module you will present and discuss your own and each other's work in a weekly workshop. The draft work presented may include several genres and forms, such as crime writing, fantasy fiction, children's literature, historical fiction, science fiction, romance and autobiography. Practical criticism of student writing will be accompanied by discussion of the scope or constraints of the various genres, as well as the implications of particular forms. Attention will be paid to the components of good writing: appropriate use of language, narrative pace, dialogue, expression, characterisation and mood.

Structure and Style

This module will provide the opportunity to write across three genres – including prose, poetry and playwriting – and will teach you how to apply literary techniques from other forms to your own work. It will include an in-depth look into issues of voice, imagery, tone and characterisation, as well as elements of narrative, dramatic and lyrical forms. Contemporary works will be studied so that you can master structure and style and understand how various literary forms function. You will submit a portfolio of writing exercises in the different genres studied.

Special Study: Workshops in Popular Genre Writing

This module offers a regular and intensive review of your writing. You will be advised on how to strengthen your knowledge of the codes and conventions of your chosen genre to reflect critically and constructively on your own writing. You will produce a substantial piece or collection of work that will reflect your knowledge of and engagement with your chosen genre.

Elements of Professional Writing

This module looks at the various processes involved in preparing written work for publication. Lectures and workshops will provide you with practical advice and information, such as how to copy-edit your work to professional standards, which

publications to submit your work to, how to use handbooks, and how to select a literary agency, editor or publisher. You will also complete tasks and exercises designed to develop your self-editing skills and ability to review your work critically with regard to potential audiences.

Creative Dissertation and Critical Essay

This module is devoted to writing and research carried out into your chosen form or genre. It is developed in consultation with your assigned supervisor and taught via one-to-one tutorials with your supervisor.

You will produce two pieces of writing:

- a creative dissertation, which will take the form of a portion of a novel, poetry, a play, screenplay or other creative form of no more than 15,000 words; and
- a critical essay of approximately 3,000 words that considers the relationships between your writing and the literary contexts and theoretical concerns that inform a range of published writing in your chosen genre or form.

Option modules

In addition to the core modules, you can also choose one of the following modules.

Historical Contexts of Popular Literature

This module looks at debates around the development of popular literature and popular culture. Considering the significance of the rise of mass literacy, the development of urban readerships and the influence of new media forms, the module will develop your understanding of the historical contours that have shaped and defined popular literature. You will then discuss these issues in relation to specific genres or forms of popular literature.

Concepts of Popular Literature

This module provides you with expertise in the conceptual debates around popular literature and popular culture. Looking at the significance of the distinctions between 'literature' and other forms of writing, and questions of taste and issues linked to popular culture, you will develop your understanding of the ideas that have shaped and defined responses to popular literature. As with Historical Contexts of Popular Literature, you will choose the specific genre you would like to consider.

Staff members

The MAs are taught by a combination of appointed staff, writers-in-residence, guest speakers with expertise in the area of publishing, and visiting writers.

WRITERS-IN-RESIDENCE

Paul Bailey has been shortlisted twice for the Booker Prize and has won a clutch of other awards. Paul's work focuses on the often grim lives of families and outcasts. His novels include: *At the Jerusalem*, *Peter Smart's Confessions*, *Gabriel's Lament*, *Sugar Cane*, *Kitty and Virgil*, and *Uncle Rudolf*. Non-fiction includes: *An English Madam: The Life and Work of Cynthia Payne*, *An Immaculate Mistake: Scenes from Childhood and Beyond*, and *Three Queer Lives: An Alternative Biography of Naomi Jacob, Fred Barnes and Arthur Marshall*. He also edited the *Oxford Book of London*. Paul has taught creative writing at the University of East Anglia and in Italy.

Maggie Gee is also a Teaching Fellow at Sussex University and Fellow and Council Member of the Royal Society of Literature. Her fiction is often experimental or futuristic and includes: *Dying, in Other Words*, *The Burning Book*, *Grace*, *Where are the Snows*, *Lost Children*, *The Ice People*, *The White Family*, and *The Flood*. She has also edited an anthology of writings against war.

Liz Jensen spent two years as a journalist in the Far East before joining the BBC as a journalist, then producer. She then moved to France where she worked as a sculptor and began her first novel, *Egg Dancing*. Back in London she wrote *Ark Baby* (shortlisted for the Guardian Fiction Award), *The Paper Eater*, and *War Crimes for the Home* (longlisted for the Orange Prize and adapted for the stage). Her latest novel, *The Ninth Life of Louis Drax*, was featured on Radio 4's Book at Bedtime and is being adapted for film, written and directed by Anthony Minghella.

TEACHING STAFF

Dr Meg Jensen is field leader of the Creative Writing MAs, is a creative writer and academic specialising in contemporary British and American fiction and poetry, literary and cultural theory, and influence and intertextuality. She is author of *The Open Book: Creative Misreading in the Works of Selected Modern Writers*. She completed her first novel in 2005, and is now working on a second. She writes poetry and drama, and has published academic work on Tolkien, Woolf, Katherine Mansfield and Thomas Hardy.

Jane Yeh is a poet whose first major collection, *Marabou*, was shortlisted for the Forward and Whitbread prizes in 2006. She holds an MFA from the University of Iowa writers' college and an MA in Creative Writing from Manchester Metropolitan. She was runner-up in the TLS poetry competition and writes regularly for *Time Out*, *The Village Voice* and *The London Review of Books*, and publishes poetry in both English and American journals.

Adam Baron is an internationally renowned crime novelist whose work has been translated into French and German. He has published four novels with Macmillan: *Shut Eye*, *Hold Back the Night*, *Superjack* and *It Was You*. *Shut Eye* and *Hold Back the Night* have been broadcast on BBC Radio 4.

Dr Vesna Goldsworthy is the author of *Inventing Ruritania*, a groundbreaking study of representations of the Balkans, and the widely acclaimed *Chernobyl Strawberries, A Memoir*.

Vesna has a background in the study of travel writing, 20th-century fiction and popular culture.

Winsome Pinnock's plays include: *The Wind of Change* (Half Moon Theatre); *Leave Taking* (Royal National Theatre and Lyric Hammersmith, Studio); *A Hero's Welcome*, *A Rock in Water* and *Talking in Tongues* (all Royal Court Theatre Upstairs); *Water* and *One Under* (2005; both for the Tricycle Theatre). Radio plays include: *Her Father's Daughter*, *Water*, *Let Them Call It Jazz* (adaptation of a Jean Rhys short story) and *Something Borrowed* (all BBC Radio 4). Contributions to television series include *Chalk Face* and *Eastenders* (both BBC) and the screenplay *Bitter Harvest* (co-written with Charles Pattinson for BBC2). Awards include the George Devine Award and the Carlton Television best play of the year award. She was Senior Visiting Fellow at Cambridge University.

Siobhan Campbell is a poet and critic and has worked in book publishing for many years as Publishing Manager and Director of Wolfhound Press. Her collections of poetry are entitled *The Permanent Wave* and *The Cold that Burns*, both from Blackstaff Press, Belfast. Siobhan's work is represented in many contemporary anthologies, including *Making for Planet Alice* (Bloodaxe) and *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Literature* (Norton). She has been writer-in-residence for the Airfield Trust, Dublin, where she founded the Airfield Readers and Writers Group.

Professor Norma Clarke is not only a renowned scholar of 18th-century literature, but is also the author of a series of children's novels. Her expertise in the study of literature and her professional life as an author will form a key part of the teaching of this course.

Dr Jane Jordan is a specialist in Victorian writing and the author of biographies on Josephine Butler and Kittie O'Shea. Jane teaches the study of biography and draws on her knowledge of Victorian popular culture.

Alison Baverstock began a career in publishing before setting up a marketing consultancy. Today she offers consultancy on all aspects of marketing and communications. She has published widely, including 11 books and numerous articles for the professional and general press. Her book, *How to Market Books*, is often referred to as the 'bible of book marketing'.

Hanif Kureishi is the multi-award-winning author of numerous novels, essays, stories and screenplays. His early work includes the seminal *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *The Buddha of Suburbia*. His more recent works include *Gabrielle's Gift* and *My Ear at His Heart*. He also wrote the screenplay for the acclaimed film *Venus*, which was released in early 2007.

Rachel Cusk is the author of four novels and various works of non-fiction. Her 1993 debut novel *Saving Agnes* won her the Whitbread First Novel award. In 2003 she was nominated by *Granta* magazine as one of 20 'Best of Young British Novelists'. Her latest novel is *Arlington Park* (2006).

Student feedback

Alice did her first degree in English Literature and completed an MA in English: Issues in Twentieth Century Literature at Kingston four years ago. She is now studying for an MA in Creative Writing.

"This course is giving me the structure, self-discipline and direction I need. I've always written poetry – I started when I was just seven – but I have done it in a very unstructured way. As I'd had a good experience on the MA in Twentieth Century Literature, and Kingston is my local university, I decided to do the Creative Writing MA. Completing work for the weekly writers' workshops has been very useful. I've attended creative writing evening classes before where we shared our work, but the comments and criticism from other students on the MA is at a much higher level.

"For the workshops you can choose your own genre: I've written mainly poetry and some prose. Other students focus on their own particular specialism – we encouraged one of our workshop members to write something else as well as science fiction. Next year, I will be able to specialise in poetry for the Special Study workshops.

"The module on publishing has also been much more interesting than I expected. A wide variety of speakers have provided insights into the practical side of getting work accepted. Writers in different genres, as well as a publisher and agent, talked about their experiences from their different points of view.

"By the end of the course, I aim to be writing in a more disciplined way on a regular basis and would like to get my work published.

"Lisa DiVito, another student on the MA, and I have set up a literary review, Ripple, to publish the work of students at Kingston University. We've just launched the first issue and are looking for submissions for the next one."

Alex is currently studying part-time for an MA in Creative Writing.

"The course covers a wide spectrum of styles and types of writing. You can develop your expertise in one genre to a high standard or try your hand at a variety of different forms of writing to find your own voice.

"I would recommend the course to writers who are looking to practise their writing in various areas and also to those wishing to gain critical and professional feedback on enriching their work. There is a particularly useful module called Elements of Professional Writing, which gives an excellent insight into the publishing world.

"One of the many highlights of the MA is the experience I have gained working with the range of talented writers here on the staff and listening to readings and advice of the inspiring series of guest speakers that regularly visit Kingston University."

Katerina is currently studying for an MA in Creative Writing.

"One of the main reasons I've chosen the MA in Creative Writing at Kingston University is the variety of genres you can choose from. I am writing poetry but I wanted to get involved with people who are writing different things so I could experiment with other genres and learn from them too. I believe that the MA in Creative Writing not only gives you that opportunity but, more than that, you can choose workshops that reflect exactly your style of writing.

"One of the most useful modules of the course is 'Elements of Professional Writing', which focuses on the practical side of being a writer: it offers tips from how to stay positive to advice on how to present your work in order to get published.

"By the end of this course I believe that I will have significantly improved my writing skills and that, by being in contact with other writers, I will become more confident to present myself as a writer (through readings, feedback and advice from both tutors and students)."



The Serpent's Tail MA Prize

Renowned publishing house, Serpent's Tail, is sponsoring our MA prize. The winner will receive a year's supply of Serpent's Tail books and their work will be given serious consideration for publication. The prize is awarded to the student with the highest overall mark.

Creative Writing

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

One or more of the following:

- a second class degree or above, or equivalent, in creative writing, English literature, literature and language, drama or theatre studies, or a similar subject, and/or a demonstrable interest in creative writing;
- relevant professional experience;
- consideration is also given to non-standard entrants and all applicants are normally invited for interview by the admissions director or a senior member of the teaching team;
- we will ask you to submit a creative writing sample of up to 2,000 words with your application;
- international students are required to have an IELTS score of 6.5 or an equivalent qualification.

ATTENDANCE / DELIVERY

This is a modular programme based on credit accumulation. The full MA consists of five taught modules plus a creative dissertation. Students will be expected to carry out their study at home as well as attending classes at the University. We offer a flexible programme to fit in with the work commitments of part-time students.

DURATION

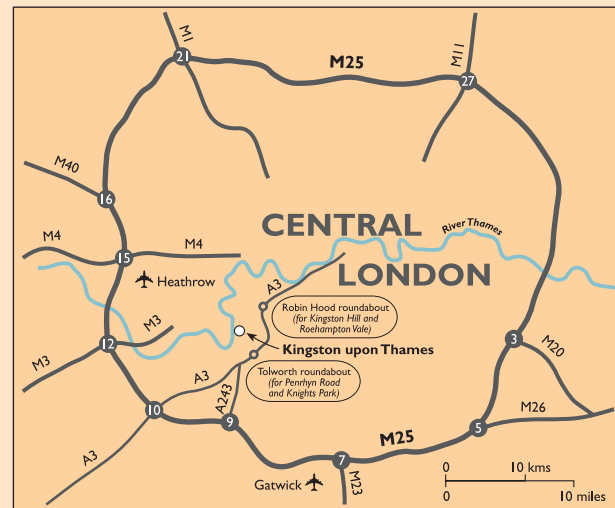
One year full-time or two years part-time.

ASSESSMENT

There is a variety of assessment methods for the course, including portfolios of exercises, edited and revised creative writing with evidence of extensive drafting, essays, presentations, research projects, and a substantial piece of creative writing of publishable standard.

Location

Located beside the Thames, Kingston University is within the London travel-pass zone. Easily accessible from surrounding areas such as Surrey and Middlesex, its local train stations (Kingston; Surbiton) are also only 25 minutes from Waterloo.



Further information

Please contact the Faculty's Admissions Office for an application form or with any further queries.

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