College of Arts and Sciences, University of Oregon (Fall, 2018)

**Graduate Degree Learning Outcomes**

Creative Writing Program

**Note:** The list of outcomes that follows builds on the basic expectations we also hold for our undergraduate students in the Creative Writing Program. Because our pedagogical goals are continuously fundamental in nature, both at the undergraduate and graduate level of study, we view our curriculum and the varietal redundancies below as a cumulative process, one through which our poets and fiction writers build a portfolio of knowledge whose components are interactive. This is to say we view historical periods, critical modalities, and aesthetic movements to be in constant conversation with one another.

Additionally, what distinguishes the outcomes below from their undergraduate counterparts is that we expect all our MFA candidates to wear two hats simultaneously: that of the apprentice writer *and* that of the apprentice teacher, given that all of the people enrolled in our program teach Creative Writing classes in their first year and Composition in their second. The following outcomes should be considered very much in this context, in that our graduate students are expected to both pursue these goals as scholars then contemplate the many ways these skills translate to their own pedagogical experience.

The entirety of our curriculum is structured with the expectation that we enable our MFA graduates to continue to grow intellectually and develop as writers and masters of the craft once they have received their degrees, long after they have left the University of Oregon.

1. **Proficiency in close reading.** We expect our MFA candidates to read widely and meticulously while pursuing their studies. Our aim is for each student to encounter a variety of historical periods, aesthetic styles, and critical approaches. Any student graduating from our program should be capable of examining a single text for its many formal conventions and the style or styles with which it is conversant.
2. **Development of vocabularies for assessing literature, with an emphasis on craft.** Our graduate students are expected to acquire the clear and sophisticated language that enables them to speak at length about a range of craft considerations for any single piece of literature. This applies to the published works they encounter in our craft seminars, but it is equally essential in the Creative Writing Workshop, when they comprehensively critique the works of their peers.
3. **Application of the formal elements of craft in either genre.** We expect our apprentice poets and fiction writers to be able to identify, assess, and deploy many of the formal conventions they encounter in the Creative Writing workshop and craft seminar. We believe that the practice of exploring formal challenges is necessary for the MFA student in order to build on his or her own resources as an artist. We especially believe that a knowledge of such conventions is a responsibility of any writer in our MFA program.
4. **Familiarity with fundamental concepts, forms, modes, and traditions in literary fiction and/or poetry.** At the graduate level, this outcome is particularly geared toward and measured by the MFA exam that all of our graduating students take at the end of their second year. Our expectation is that our students will demonstrate a command of the texts they have encountered while earning their degrees, along with the multitude of aesthetic concepts, compositional possibilities, and artistic concerns to which they have been exposed.