CREATIVE WRITING HONORS OPTIONS

1. Senior Creative Writing Honors Project

The Creative Writing Honors Project is a one-semester project, similar in scale to the Honors Essay in the English Department. It is available to qualified Creative Writing majors. The project culminates in the completion of a 25-page chapbook of poetry, or 50 pages of fiction.

Eleven semester courses are required. All four workshop requirements (including two from the 19/39a/79b/109/119 categories) should be completed prior to the project. Most of the literature requirements for the major should be completed; one literature and the studio art requirements may be taken concurrently with work on the honors project course: ENG 96a (Fall) or 96b (Spring).

Students interested in this option should consult with the UAH in their respective genres (poetry or fiction) within the first month of the semester prior to the proposed study to discuss application, guidelines, and an advisor for the project, normally a senior faculty member the student has worked with before.

2. Literary Poetry or Fiction Thesis

Admission to the literary poetry or fiction thesis in Creative Writing is by application only, near the end of the sophomore year. It is a highly selective process, and often a small percentage of applicants are admitted. The committee reads applications carefully, to evaluate a student’s level of accomplishment, potential, maturity, and seriousness of purpose. Writing a thesis requires a great deal of introspection and independent work with the thesis advisor. The focus is on the development and rigorous refinement of a single book-length manuscript. Some students of exceptional talent are better served by pursuing a simple major and continuing to experiment and develop in the more expansive atmosphere of workshops, or by the Senior Creative Writing Honors Project. The committee strives to determine which course of study best suits each applicant.

Eleven semester courses are required. The directed writing requirement is reduced to a minimum of three semester courses in directed writing (poetry, prose, or both). Two of the required workshops must be from the 109 or 119 categories. Also required is the satisfactory completion of two semesters of Senior Creative Writing Thesis (ENG 96d).

ENG 96d (Senior Creative Writing Thesis)

The student will produce, under the direction of his or her adviser, a literary body of writing of appropriate scope: a book of poems (50-70 pages), a collection of stories or a novel (125-200 pages). The writing is expected to be of high imaginative caliber, intelligently conceived and crafted. In fiction, the emphasis is on work driven by emotionally and psychologically complex characters. Primarily commercial genres, such as science fiction and fantasy, are normally not considered appropriate for a thesis. The thesis option also requires an essay on a tutorial bibliography: a list of eight to twelve books, chosen by the candidate in collaboration with the thesis adviser and/or the director of creative writing in the candidate’s genre. The essay will be due at the end of the senior
year, along with the thesis.

**Application guidelines:** A student may apply for the thesis option on completion of at least one course from the 19, 39a, 79b 109, or 119, directed writing courses, and a designated Close Reading course, near the end of the sophomore year. If the first semester of your junior year is the fall semester, your deadline will be in November. If the first semester of your junior year is the spring semester, your deadline will be in April. Deadlines may be found at our website:  
http://www.brandeis.edu/departments/english/undergraduate/majors/cwhonorstrack.html

**Application Format Guidelines:** Thesis applications (15-20 pages of poetry or up to 35 pages of fiction, plus a copy of an informal transcript and a brief cover letter describing a literary work that has inspired you, and your goals for writing a thesis) are submitted as a single email attachment in .doc/.docx format, to the English department, chaucer@brandeis.edu. Include name, email address, and preferred phone number.

Recommendations for departmental honors are based on the excellence of the student’s work in the major, especially as exemplified by the honors project or senior thesis.

*Please visit our website: [http://www.brandeis.edu/departments/english/index.html](http://www.brandeis.edu/departments/english/index.html)*