

## **INTRODUCTION:**

The Department of English offers concentrations in both literature and writing. The literature concentration provides students with an advanced education in English and American literature. Literature students extend their knowledge of specific genres and major authors, while exploring the social, historical, and political dimensions of literary production. Students receive a solid foundation in the theory and practice of literary criticism, the history of the English language, modern linguistics, techniques of composition, and critical and creative writing. The writing concentration provides students with the practical skills necessary to develop their own writing. Students receive training in several modes of writing: poetry, the short story, non-fiction, drama, and screenwriting. Students are encouraged to explore both the process and the product of composition, developing a greater sense of the craft and outcome of effective writing.

The program is large enough to offer a full range of graduate seminars and to provide students with flexibility in scheduling. It is also small enough to provide a sense of community and a high level of faculty-student engagement. Students may also register for independent study, a program in which they develop, research, and write about a topic under the guidance of a faculty advisor. The graduate program culminates in the writing of a thesis—a substantial piece of creative writing or literary analysis, which students present at a graduate colloquium.

The department sponsors various readings throughout the semester as well as a writer's conference every spring, which brings to campus internationally known writers and experts in pedagogy and literary analysis. Students have the opportunity to participate in a series of workshops and to attend lectures. Previous distinguished visitors have included Edward Albee, Norman Mailer, Diane Wakoski, Joyce Carol Oates, Kurt

Vonnegut, Allen Ginsberg, Joseph Brodsky, John Ciardi, Judith Ortiz Cofer, and Yusef  
Komunyaka.