



CHIARTS CREATIVE WRITING OVERVIEW AND AUDITION GUIDE



This guide is designed to help you prepare for the Creative Writing program auditions and for considering ChiArts as an option for your high school. ChiArts is a wonderfully creative and educational environment, and we take our work seriously.

DECIDING IF CHIARTS CREATIVE WRITING IS RIGHT FOR YOU

What can I expect from ChiArts Creative Writing?

Our programs are modeled on college-level Conservatory programs and tailored for high school students. It is a rigorous training program that is taught by professionals in their fields who have high standards of excellence and a commitment to training the next generation of writers. Classroom instruction is supplemented by a variety of reading, competition, and publication opportunities in which training is put into practice. Whether or not a student chooses to ultimately pursue a career in the arts, the curriculum will provide a wide variety of learning opportunities and experiences that can benefit them throughout their lives and in whatever field they choose to pursue.

What does ChiArts Creative Writing expect from me?

The school day at ChiArts is from 8 am to 5 pm and includes some evening readings and events. Students must have stamina and focus throughout the entire day and must be committed to both academic and arts education. Students are expected to arrive to each Creative Writing class on time, fully prepared to work with all of their materials and dedicated to their craft and community. Students should be open to practicing sustained focus, taking risks, and providing a safe learning environment for others. Your attendance affects the work of your peers as well as yourself. So you must stay healthy, be organized and have your work completed and bring a positive and supportive attitude to every class, every day.

How do I decide which program(s) to audition for?

You can audition for two ChiArts programs. Select the one(s) that you have the most passion for. Once enrolled, transferring to another program at ChiArts is difficult if not impossible. So give serious consideration to which program is going to be your first and second choice.

What is the difference between ChiArts and other high schools?

By coming to ChiArts, you receive fifteen (15) hours per week of free, intensive arts training. What we do, we do well. However, we are not all things to all people. We are different from some traditional high schools in that we do not offer as wide a range of activities as others may. For instance, we do not have a football team or a cheerleading squad or a drill team. Students need to think hard about the type of high school experience that they want. If you do come to ChiArts, you must readily accept that you will get a tremendous amount with regard to the arts but it means that there will not be some things that other high schools have.

AUDITION REQUIREMENTS FOR CHIARTS CREATIVE WRITING

First Round Auditions

1. 3-6 page prepared sample
2. Timed writing
3. Interview

Callbacks

1. Timed writing (different from the first timed writing)

Audition Preparation

As with all auditions, your primary responsibility is to be as prepared as possible. Start your preparation NOW. Be confident and believe in yourself! Every time that you audition, the adjudicators are on your side and want you to do your best. Be passionate and unafraid to take creative risks.

- Your writing samples should demonstrate your best writing. Remember, this is an audition for high school. Writing samples need to be school-appropriate.
- Edit, edit, edit
- Be on time for your audition.
- Bring your printed prepared sample. You will NOT have the opportunity to print at the audition.
- Be prepared to talk to the adjudicators.
- Bring a pen.

Creative Writing Interview Process

Only students who have submitted a complete application and have met the minimum requirements will be granted an audition for admission to the ChiArts Creative Writing Program. Please visit the application pages on chiarts.org for more information.

Students of all abilities may audition for admission into the Creative Writing Program. ChiArts recognizes the need to provide opportunities for students who have high levels of experience and/or training in creative writing and students who have not had prior training, but demonstrate a strong natural ability and a desire to learn.

In order to place students in a beginning or intermediate/advanced interview group, applicants must complete the arts experience section on the admission application that describes any prior creative writing training or experience. It is important for students to be thorough and accurate when submitting this information.

Required Audition Preparation Details:

- Students must bring a 3-6 page sample of their best writing. Be sure to bring a copy of the original as the writing sample will NOT be returned to the student. The writing may be in any genre. All writing samples must be written by the student alone and clearly labeled with the student's name and title of the piece (if titled). The sample may include, but is not limited to poetry, fiction, drama, and creative nonfiction. The sample may be an excerpt from a longer piece or multiple examples of the student's work as long as students meet the page requirement. The writing sample must be typed, double spaced, 10 or 12 point font for fiction, drama, and creative nonfiction. Poetry must be single or 1.5 spaced. Your 3-6 pages may be divided between pieces from more than one genre. Students may bring additional writing (beyond the required 3-6 page sample) in a portfolio; if time allows, adjudicators may ask to review these pieces as well.
- Students who use a journal or notebook are strongly encouraged to bring it to the interview.
- Students will be asked about the work they have presented and their literary interests.

Creative Writing: FAQ

Should students who have never taken a creative writing class apply? Yes, ChiArts encourages students of all levels to apply.

Should students with many years of creative writing experience and/or training apply? Yes, students will be challenged no matter the experience they have had prior to attending ChiArts.



CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM

Overview and Outcomes

The Creative Writing Program integrates the ChiArts Core Values into rigorous study of the foundations of Creative Writing and the development of individual voice and polished work. The first two years of the program will consist of training in the elements of fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction. Students will write every day and learn habits that will serve them well throughout their lives as writers. At the end of sophomore year, students will select an area of concentration in poetry, fiction, or creative nonfiction. This will give students the techniques, skills, and individual guidance necessary to focus in their chosen genres. The goal is to provide a high level of instruction and experiences that prepare students for further study at the college level or entrance into the profession.

Upon successful completion of the four-year program, ChiArts Creative Writing students will have:

- A portfolio of polished pieces in fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction. The portfolio will include a book-length manuscript in the student's area of concentration.
- A solid foundation in fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction that includes writing and a deep and wide knowledge of texts. This foundation will make the students competitive candidates for undergraduate Creative Writing programs.
- Significant practice in critically and clearly thinking about their own work and the work of others. The ability to offer targeted and thoughtful feedback that aims to support a writer's intentions and guide a writer towards their best work.
- Experience editing and publishing a literary magazine.

CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:

Years One and Two

Elements of Fiction:

The Elements of Fiction combines a close study of short fiction with introduction to, review, and practice of foundational aspects of fiction writing. Students will write every day. Short writing exercises will lead to the creation of short stories and students will develop a portfolio of ideas, beginnings, experiments and complete stories. The class will emphasize the following topics: story, characterization, plot, conflict, setting, point of view, detail, the relationship between scene and exposition, and structure.

Elements of Poetry:

The Elements of Poetry combines a close study of fixed form and free verse poetry with introduction to, review, and practice of foundational aspects of writing poetry. Students will write every day. Short writing exercises will lead to the development and revision of poems. Students will develop a portfolio of ideas, experiments, images, wordplay, and polished poems. The class will emphasize the following topics: subject, image, form, speaker, rhythm, sound, and tension.

Responding to Art:

Responding to Art uses various art forms as inspiration. Students will observe architecture, dance, theatre, music, and visual art and explore ways to extract and expand ideas for writing. Students will investigate the art forms that compel them to write and imitate techniques found in other artists' work. To support the process of writing from art, the class will focus its observations on how various art forms approach the concepts of representation, form, idea, detail, rhythm, and image. Responding to Art is designed to promote a writer's curiosity and to foster a willingness to explore the creative potential of spontaneity, collaboration, and risk.

Elements of Creative Nonfiction:

The Elements of Creative Non-Fiction combines a close study of essays and memoir with introduction to, review, and practice of foundational aspects of writing creative non-fiction. The Core Values of Integrity and Community will play key roles in this course. Students will write every day. This course will focus on the personal essay and the connection of the self to the subject. Students will investigate opportunities for writing in their own lives and in the world around them. Short writing exercises will lead to the creation of personal essays. Students will develop a portfolio of ideas, beginnings, experiments, and complete essays. The class will emphasize the following topics: subject, essay structure, memoir, clarity, and theme.

Fiction II:

Fiction II combines a review and practice of foundations of fiction writing as introduced in Elements of Fiction with close reading and writing that deepens and extends students' understanding of craft. Students will add to their portfolios of ideas, beginnings, experiments and complete stories.

Poetry II:

Poetry II combines a review and practice of foundations of poetry writing as introduced in Elements of Poetry and close reading and poetry writing that builds on and deepens students' understanding of craft. Students will add to their portfolios of ideas, experiments, images, wordplay, and polished poems.

Writer's Studio

Translating ideas to the page and staying with the work for the time necessary to polish a piece takes stamina, discipline, and resilience. Writer's Studio is designed to emphasize and support the ChiArts core values of balance and perseverance. Because of the student-writer workload, Writer's Studio will provide students with significant time to write twice a week. The course gives students a space to draft and polish pieces that are assigned in their creative writing classes and to develop new work based on students' interests and preferred genre.

Instruction in Writer's Studio will focus on the following:

- Each year, the Studio will emphasize one aspect of writing through mini-lessons, exercises, and experiences.
- Students will be given significant time to write during each Studio, and frequent individual coaching sessions will guide students through the writing process and address individual needs.
- Students will workshop their pieces. They will read each other's work and provide supportive, constructive, and clear feedback.
- Additional lessons will be given based on trends and patterns in student work.
- Freshmen and Sophomores will develop ideas and new pieces
- Juniors and Seniors will examine their work, create a plan for writing, and develop a book-length senior project

Writer's Studio I – Perseverance (Freshman/Sophomore):

Writer's Studio I introduces the habits and disciplines required to sustain attention and the patience to bring ideas to fruition on the page. Through reading essays about writing and self-reflection about their own processes, students will identify useful practices and exercises that keep them writing and reject the idea of writer's block.

Writer's Studio II – Inspiration (Freshman/Sophomore):

Writer's Studio II emphasizes inspiration and idea. Through reading, exercises, and experiences, students will create a journal of potential ideas and sources of inspiration. This work, of developing a wellspring of possibilities, will expand students' concepts of their work and allow them to branch out in new ways.

Years Three and Four

Writer's Studio III – Style and Voice:

Writer's Studio III emphasizes the writer's style and voice. The course will encourage students to investigate and discover how their styles and voices contribute to the effect and meaning of their work.

Writer's Studio IV – Revision (Junior/Senior):

Writer's Studio IV emphasizes revision. While revision will be integrated throughout the Creative Writing program, in Studio IV, students will undertake a year of seeing their writing anew. Students will identify and practice ways to revise their own work.

Fiction Workshop (Concentration):

The Fiction Workshop combines intensive study of craft through reading with intensive practice of craft through writing and critique.

Poetry Workshop (Concentration):

The Poetry Workshop combines intensive study of craft through reading with intensive practice of craft through writing and critique.

Creative Nonfiction Workshop (Concentration):

The Creative Non-Fiction Workshop combines intensive study of craft through reading with intensive practice of craft through writing and critique.

Literary Magazine:

The Literary Magazine course will give students experience in developing and producing a literary magazine. Students will review submissions, select pieces, edit, publish, and publicize ChiArts' literary magazine.

Professional Development:

The Professional Development course addresses college and university creative writing programs, the application process, paths to publication, and careers for writers.

Journalism:

The Journalism course will give students experience in developing and producing a news publication. Students will report, interview, write, edit, publish, and publicize ChiArts' student news publication.

*Course descriptions are subject to change based on student and program needs.

**SCOPE AND SEQUENCE
And Daily Schedule**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
YEAR ONE	Elements of Poetry	Writer's Studio I	Elements of Fiction	Writer's Studio I	Responding to Art
YEAR TWO	Elements of Creative Nonfiction	Writer's Studio II	Poetry II	Writer's Studio II	Fiction II
YEAR THREE	Fiction Workshop * Or Poetry Workshop Or Creative Nonfiction Workshop	Literary Magazine	Fiction Workshop * Or Poetry Workshop Or Creative Nonfiction Workshop	Semester I: Sequential Art for Writers Semester II: Professional Development – Careers and Pathways	Writer's Studio III
YEAR FOUR	Fiction Workshop * Or Poetry Workshop Or Creative Nonfiction Workshop	Journalism	Fiction Workshop * Or Poetry Workshop Or Creative Nonfiction Workshop	2:00-5:00 Semester I: Professional Development – Choosing and Applying for College Semester II: TBD	Writer's Studio IV

CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM FACULTY

Dr. Virginia Bell

Creative Nonfiction Workshop

Bell is the author of the poetry collection *From the Belly* (Sibling Rivalry Press 2012). She has been a Pushcart Prize nominee for poetry and a finalist for both the Lamar York Prize in Creative Nonfiction, sponsored by *The Chattahoochee Review*, and the Center for Women Writers' Creative Nonfiction Contest. Her work is forthcoming in *Hypertext* and has appeared in *Fifth Wednesday Journal*, *Cider Press Review*, *Gargoyle*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, *Cloudbank*, *CALYX*, *Poet Lore*, *Pebble Lake Review*, *Wicked Alice*, and other journals, as well as in the anthologies *The Burden of Light: Poems on Illness and Loss*, *Brute Neighbors: Urban Nature Poetry, Prose and Photography*, and *A Writers' Congress: Chicago Poets on Barack Obama's Inauguration*. Bell is a Senior Editor with *RHINO Poetry*, and an adjunct professor of English at Loyola University Chicago and DePaul University's School of Continuing and Professional Education. She has a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and was the recipient of a Ragdale Foundation residency in 2015.

Tina Boyer Brown

Department Head, Writer's Studio I, Arts Instructional Coach

Boyer Brown is the Creative Writing Department Head and a founding English teacher at The Chicago High School for the Arts. She is an alumna of the Summer Poetry Institute for Educators sponsored by Boston University and is a lead teacher for the Summer Poetry Institute for Educators in Chicago sponsored by the Poetry Foundation. Her work appears in *The Journal of Education*, *Rhino Poetry*, and *Poetry Magazine*.

Cecilia Pinto

Elements of Creative Nonfiction

Cecilia Pinto has been a teaching artist in the City of Chicago for close to twenty years. She was an instructor as well as the former director of the Hands on Stanzas program for The Poetry Center of Chicago. She taught in Northwestern's Center for Talent Development summer program for gifted students. She was also coordinator for the Chicago Humanities Festival's Parks@Play program. She is adjunct faculty in the certificate-in-writing program at the Graham School for General Studies at the University of Chicago. Her writing has appeared in *Esquire*, *Fence*, *Diagram*, *TriQuarterly* and elsewhere. She was voted 'One of 25 Writers to Watch for 2015' by the Guild Literary Complex. She received her undergraduate degree from Knox College and an M.F.A. from The School of the Art Institute.

Dr. Ruben Quesada

Poetry II, Poetry Workshop

Ruben Quesada is the author of *Next Extinct Mammal*, translator of Luis Cernuda, *Exiled from the Throne of Night*, he has been founder and publisher of *Codex Journal*, Poetry Editor for *The Cossack Review*, *Cobalt Review*, and *Luna Luna Magazine*. He currently serves as a Senior Editor for *Queen Mob's Teahouse*. He has been a fellow and Writer-in-Residence at *Red Lodge Clay Center*, *Lambda Literary Writers Retreat for Emerging LGBTQ Voices*, *Napa Valley Writers' Conference*, *Vermont Studio Center*, *Squaw Valley Community of Writers*, *Santa Fe Art Institute*, and *CantoMundo*. He is the editor of the anthology, *Latino Poetics*, forthcoming from the University of New Mexico Press. He lives in Logan Square, Chicago.

Kenyatta Rogers

Elements of Poetry, Writer's Studio II, Poetry Workshop, Creative Writing Program Administrative Assistant

Kenyatta Rogers earned his MFA in Creative Writing Poetry from Columbia College Chicago. He is a Cave Canem fellow and was twice nominated for both Pushcart and Best of the Net prizes, his work has been previously published in or is forthcoming from Jubilat, Vinyl, Bat City Review, RHINO Poetry, The Volta among others. He is an Associate Editor with RHINO Poetry and currently serves on the Creative Writing Faculty at The Chicago High School for the Arts.

David Welch

Literary Magazine

David Welch is the author of a chapbook, *It Is Such a Good Thing To Be In Love with You* (The Midwest Chapbook Series/Green Tower Press) and has published poems in journals including *AGNI*, *Boston Review*, and *Colorado Review*. He's received awards from the Academy of American Poets, The Poetry Society of America, and The University of Alabama, where he received his M.F.A. in 2008. A former editor at *Another Chicago Magazine* and *Black Warrior Review*, he teaches in the English Department at DePaul University where he is Coordinator of Literacy Outreach and Managing Editor of Big Shoulders Books.

Jeremy T. Wilson

Responding to Art

Jeremy T. Wilson grew up in Georgia but has called Chicago home since 2001. He has served as a tutor and writing teacher for several Chicago organizations, including 826CHI, After School Matters, Loyola University, and Northwestern University's School of Continuing Studies. Wilson's fiction has appeared in *The Carolina Quarterly*, *Curbside Splendor*, *Printers Row Journal*, and *Third Coast* among other publications. He is the winner of the 2012 Nelson Algren Award for short fiction. He holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Northwestern. www.jeremytwilson.com

Rachel Wilson

Fiction II, Fiction Workshop

Rachel M. Wilson studied theater at Northwestern, and earned her MFA in Writing for Children & Young Adults from Vermont College of Fine Arts. She is the author of *Don't Touch* from HarperTeen, praised by *The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* as "A vulnerable, moving, and often witty story about the terrible price of self-protection." Wilson's novelette, "The Game of Boys and Monsters" was published by HarperTeen Impulse, and she has penned nonfiction works for younger readers with Rourke Educational Media. Wilson has served as a teaching artist all over Chicago with After School Matters, Pegasus Players, The Actors Training Center, CAST, and Dream Big, among others. She served as an adjunct instructor and writing specialist at Harper College and co-directed the Literacy Department at STAR Education in LA. As a longtime company member with Barrel of Monkeys, Wilson leads creative writing workshops and adapts the writing of Chicago students for the stage, performing in schools and in the long-running show, *That's Weird, Grandma*. www.rachelmwilsonbooks.com