



# 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. 2 – 4 page prepared sample
2. Timed writing
3. Interview

## **Callbacks**

1. 2 – 4 page prepared sample (must be different from the sample submitted in the first round)
2. In-class revision during a timed session
3. Interview

## **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.
- Three general tips: Writers write, writers revise, and writers read.

## **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](http://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 2 – 4 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 non-fiction. 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 non-fiction. Poetry must be single or 1.5 spaced. Your 2 – 4 pages may be divided between pieces from more than one genre. Students may bring additional writing (beyond the required 2 – 4 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, Creative Non-fiction, and Writing for the Stage and Screen. 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 non-fiction. 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, creative non-fiction, and work for the stage or screen. The portfolio will include a book-length manuscript in the student's area of concentration.
- A solid foundation in fiction, poetry, creative non-fiction, and writing for the stage including both 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 his or her 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.

### **Elements of Writing for the Stage and Screen:**

The Elements of Writing for the Stage and Screen combines a close study of plays and screenplays with introduction to, review, and practice of foundational aspects of scriptwriting. Students will write every day. Short writing exercises will lead to the creation of scenes and will culminate in a polished ten-minute play. Students will develop a portfolio of ideas, character descriptions and biographies, scene settings, dialogue fragments, scenes and the ten-minute play. The class will emphasize the following topics: Plot, conflict, character, motivation, dialogue, setting, and stage directions.

### **Elements of Creative Non-Fiction:**

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.

### **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.

### **Acting for Writers:**

Acting for Writers gives students an opportunity to view character from an actor's perspective. Through improvisation, scene study, and performance of written scenes, students will develop new approaches to developing three dimensional characters.

### **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 Non-Fiction 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.

### **Writing for Performance I and II:**

Writing for Performance I delves deeply into playwriting and other forms of writing for the stage. Students will investigate and write for poetry slams, storytelling, one-person shows, and plays. The course will build on the skills introduced in the Elements of Writing for the Stage and Screen and provide students with multiple ways their work can come alive on the stage.

Writing for Performance II focuses on writing for media: film, television, radio, and visual platforms on the internet. Students will be introduced to a variety of production techniques and forums. The course will continue to build on the skills introduced in the Elements of Writing for the Stage and Screen and provide students with multiple ways their work can come alive through media.

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