The mission of the low-residency MFA program at Murray State University is to provide quality advanced instruction to creative writers while allowing them to live and work where they choose. Our foremost goal is to facilitate the creative and professional growth of writers, but the degree also offers the necessary academic credentials for a writer to teach creative writing at the college or university level. It also provides a foundation for careers in other writing-related fields.
Of the 49 hours required for the degree, 13 hours must be completed on campus in January and July residencies. The remaining 36 can be completed via distance learning. These 36 hours comprise three semester-long Graduate Tutorials (6 hours each), a Creative Thesis (6 hours), the *New Madrid* Field Study (3 hours) and three graduate literature courses (3 hours each). The graduate literature courses may also be completed on campus at Murray State. (While students may transfer up to nine semester hours — “B” or higher — of graduate-level literature courses from another accredited graduate institution, they must complete all residencies, tutorials and the field study within the MFA program at Murray State.)

“When I decided to go back to school and get my MFA, I wanted someplace that was unpretentious, with a faculty that represented a wide swath of experience. Murray has definitely provided that, while keeping me on my mental toes. I haven’t learned so much, or laughed so much in a classroom, ever.”

— Larry Dean
Although the program allows students to work in more than one genre, upon admission each student will select a concentration in fiction, poetry or creative nonfiction. This initial choice will largely shape the student’s course of study for the degree. The program commences with the student’s first nine-day residency, during which the student will attend workshops, readings and lectures, and meet with the faculty mentor with whom he or she will work throughout the following tutorial semester. The student and mentor will collaboratively design a work plan, including a reading list and proposed writing projects. During the subsequent tutorial semester, the student will submit work to the mentor using electronic or traditional mail. The mentor will respond with suggestions for revision, which the student will complete and submit for evaluation and instructions for further revision. The residency/tutorial sequence (each residency followed by a tutorial) will be the set model throughout the student’s time in the program.
> **FOUR ON-CAMPUS RESIDENCIES (12 hours)**
  - At least three must be in the student’s chosen genre

> **ONE ON-CAMPUS THESIS RESIDENCY (1 hour)**
  - The final residency, during which students defend their theses, give teaching presentations and participate in other exit activities, but do not attend workshops or seminars

> **THREE SEMESTERS OF OFF-CAMPUS TUTORIAL (18 hours)**
  - At least two must be in the student’s chosen genre
  - Tutorials are completed in the semester immediately following an attended residency

> **ONE SEMESTER OF OFF-CAMPUS THESIS TUTORIAL (6 hours)**
  - Should occur at the end of the student’s program once all other course requirements have been fulfilled, and immediately following the student’s last non-thesis residency

> **ONE SEMESTER OF FIELD STUDY ON NEW MADRID JOURNAL (3 hours)**
  - Should occur in the student’s second or third semester

> **THREE SEMESTERS OF GRADUATE-LEVEL LITERATURE COURSES (9 hours)**
  - One class must focus on contemporary literature

**Requirements for Degree Completion / 49 hours**
Richard Ford
Rock Springs
From Time
The faculty members of Murray State’s MFA in creative writing program are not only dedicated mentors, but also nationally recognized and award-winning novelists, poets and essayists. Students in the program work with writers such as:

Nickole Brown  Karen Salyer McElmurray  Lynn Pruett
Tommy Hays  Ann Neelon  Martin Roper
Carrie Jerrell  Elena Passarello  Jeffrey Skinner
Gary Jackson  Dale Ray Phillips  Julia Watts

“The Low-Residency MFA from Murray State provided everything I wanted in a long-distance learning program: camaraderie and focus on craft during the residencies; challenging readings and rigorous attention to writing during the mentorships; a cost-conscious and flexible way to integrate the writing life with my all-too-real life as a wife, mother and teacher.”

— Pamela Johnson Parker
Published twice a year and released at the residencies in January and July, *New Madrid* is the national journal of the low-residency MFA program at Murray State University. It takes its name from the New Madrid seismic zone, which falls within the central Mississippi Valley and extends through western Kentucky. MFA students serve on the editorial board as part of the Field Study requirement, thus gaining experience and insight into the behind-the-scenes workings of a literary magazine.
During each residency, visiting writers make for an exciting complement to our faculty and expose our MFA students to a variety of styles, voices and subjects. Our visiting writers have included:

Richard Bausch  
Linda Bierds  
Robert Olen Butler  
Dennis Covington  
Kate Daniels  
Nick Flynn  
Alice Friman  
Silas House  
Andrew Hudgins  
Holly Goddard Jones  
Ilya Kaminsky  
Beth Lordan  
Lee Martin  
Erin McGraw  
Nick Reding  
Scott Russell Sanders  
George Singleton

BOOKS FROM LEFT:
Something Is Out There  
by Richard Bausch  

Girl Trouble  
by Holly Goddard Jones  

Dancing In Odessa  
by Ilya Kaminsky
We are looking for candidates who show strong promise as creative writers and who also demonstrate a commitment to the serious reading of literature. Additionally, we seek students who are self-motivated, able to work independently and capable of making positive use of criticism to improve their writing.

Applicants must have completed a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution, usually with a major or minor in a literary field. Applicants without significant undergraduate credit in literary studies should address how they have made up for this deficit in their personal statements. Committee review of MFA applications will be based on the following:

- Writing sample in appropriate genre
- Performance in previous undergraduate and/or graduate programs
- Two letters of recommendation
- GRE (verbal) *
- Maturity, preparation and experience as demonstrated in the personal statement

The application deadlines are October 1 to begin at a January residency, and April 1 to begin at a July residency.

MFA Program: www.murraystate.edu/mfa
Graduate Admissions: www.murraystate.edu/Admissions/GraduateSchool.aspx

* Although the GRE is not absolutely required, a good score in the verbal section will enhance your candidacy.
Tuition rates are available online at the MSU bursar’s office website (www.murraystate.edu/admissions/BursarsOffice.aspx) or by calling 270.809.4227. Regional tuition rates are available for residents of Alabama, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Ohio and Tennessee.

For information about financial aid, contact the student financial aid office via email at: > msu.sfa@murraystate.edu, or by calling 1.800.272.4MSU (ext. 3) or 270.809.3116

For information about scholarships, contact the scholarship office via email at: > msu.scholarships@murraystate.edu, or by calling 1.800.4MSU (ext. 4) or 270.809.3225

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