

# Creative Writing Annual Assessment Report AY17-18

## Summary

The Creative Writing Department sought to add to their survey of students in Foundations during Spring 2017 with direct assessment of student's reflective writing, professional writing, and upper-level creative work, with the latter being assessed Fall 2018. Faculty reviewers rated the work highly, with most discussion going towards ways to further develop rubrics to match the creative work being done, and to reassess the learning outcomes as written and understood by Foundations faculty and students. In regards to the upper level work especially, but to be considered across the discipline, the faculty sees a need for the department to discuss how to address privacy concerns of students, and to appropriately share work among the reviewers if it deals with highly personal topics.

### I. Major Degree Programs

Creative Writing BA

- Fiction
- Nonfiction
- Poetry

Fiction BFA

Interdisciplinary Documentary BA

### II. Outcomes Assessed AY17-18

Foundations in Creative Writing (59-1100) Course Outcomes

- Demonstrate an understanding of the interplay of craft elements across genres.

Writer's Portfolio (59-3150) Course Outcome

- Effectively articulate, within a professional context, how their portfolio reflects their goals and potential.

Creative Writing BA

- Use a variety of narrative techniques, written forms, and revision strategies to create effective [fiction, nonfiction, poetry]

Applicable Universal Learning Outcomes

- Communication
- Creativity
- Critical and Analytical Thinking
- Career Readiness

### III. Assessment 1: Foundations in Creative Writing

#### *Method*

To assess students' understanding of craft elements and their own writing process, a self-reflection assignment was developed by department faculty and made part of the Foundations in

Creative Writing course (See Appendix A). The assignment asked students to choose two pieces of their class writing from different genres and write a one-page reflection, discussing the craft elements in each piece and how they interacted with genre. Department faculty also developed a rubric with four criteria and a scale of 1 to 4 for assessing the student writing (See Appendix B). A panel of four faculty, following a norming session, assessed the work of 47 students across four sections.

### Results

During the norming session, faculty brought up several questions regarding the rubric, especially with criteria that seemed more appropriate for a “yes or no” score rather than a scale. One of the main points from the assessment activity, as noted by faculty, was the need to develop improved rubrics for directly assessing students’ creative work.

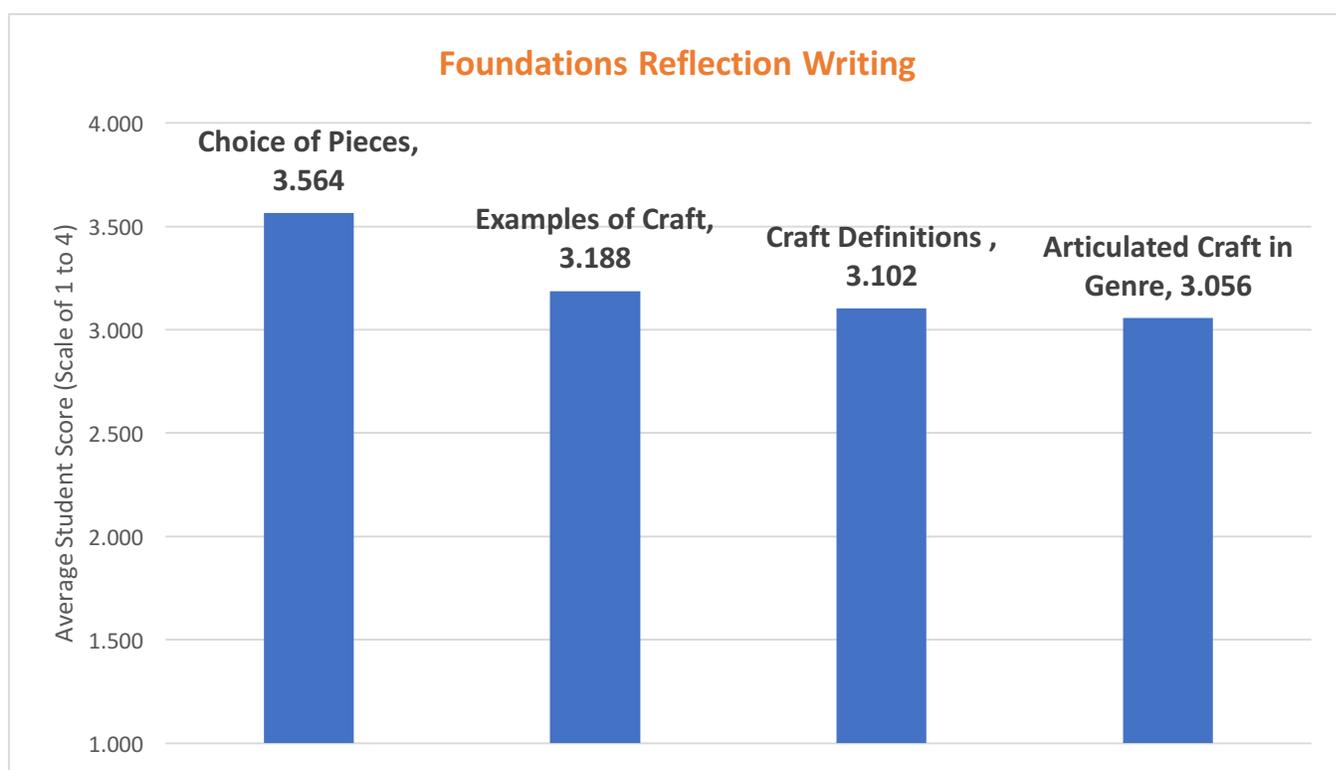


Figure 1. Foundations Reflection Writing Scores. N= 47

### Criteria, Relative Ranking

Criterion	Average Score (Scale of 1 to 4)
1) Chose appropriate pieces representative of poetry, fiction, and/or non-fiction	3.564
2) Thoughtfully identified examples of craft elements across the pieces	3.188
3) Correctly defined each craft element selected	3.102

4) Articulated how the craft elements worked within each genre	3.056

### *Moving Forward*

- As faculty mentioned during the norming session, having participating faculty further develop/revise a rubric for evaluating students' creative work for assessment activities will be a worthwhile endeavor for faculty.
- Faculty will further consider the stated learning outcomes for the course and how they are articulated to course faculty and students.

## **IV. Assessment 2: Writer's Portfolio**

### *Method*

In Writer's Portfolio, the instructor assessed the introduction that students write to accompany their final work portfolios. The instructor utilized a rubric with six criteria and a scale of one to five (see Appendix C). The work of 10 students was assessed.

### *Results*

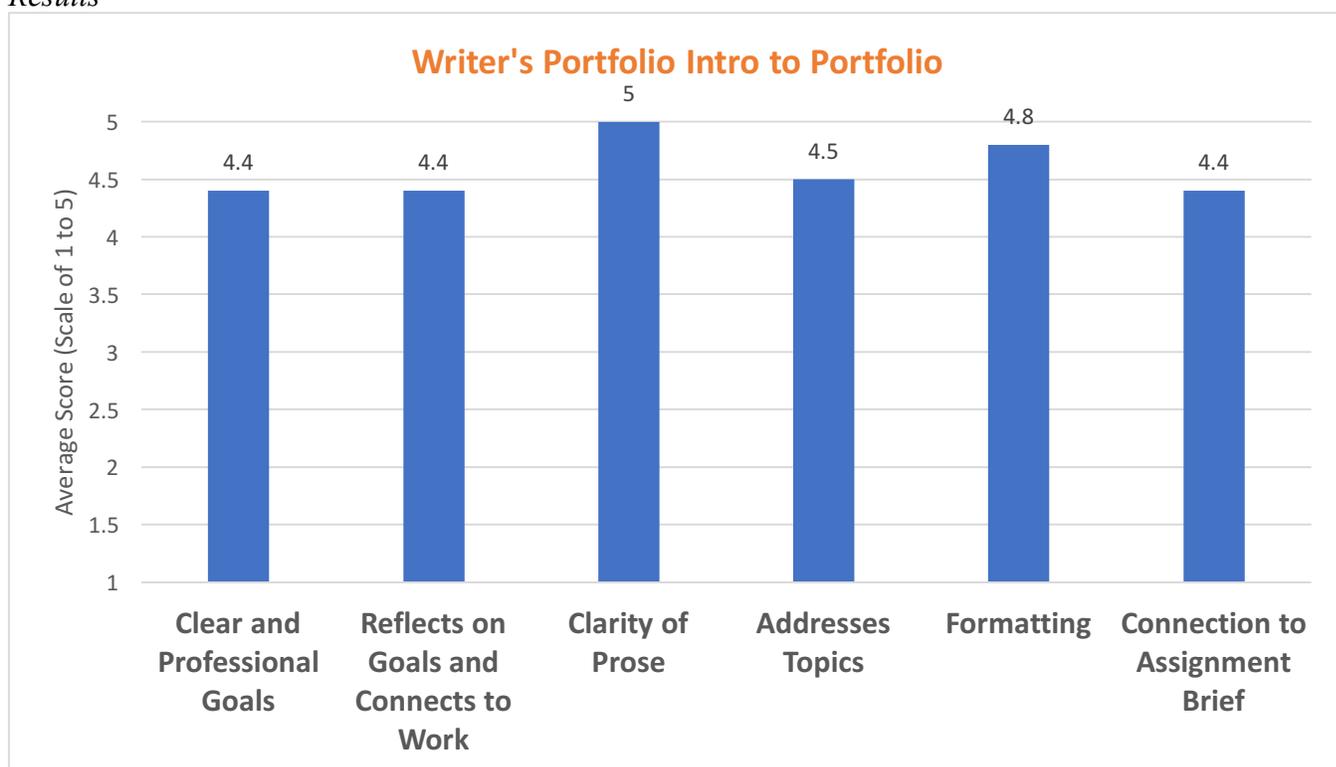


Figure 2. Portfolio Intro Data. N= 10

### Criteria, Relative Ranking

1) Clarity of prose	5
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2) Formatting and proofreading	4.8
3) Effectiveness at addressing the topics	4.5
4) Demonstrates clear and professionally appropriate goals and potential	4.4
4) Thoughtfully reflects on and makes connections between goals and potential and the selected student works	4.4
4) Connection to assignment brief	4.4

## V. Assessment 3: Thesis Workshops

### *Method*

For assessing students' creative work, the Thesis Workshops for all three concentrations (Poetry, Fiction, and Creative Nonfiction) were chosen as the most helpful courses to draw student samples from during Spring 2018. The plan was to take appropriate selections from the theses of all students in the three courses and have a panel of faculty review and score the work based on a rubric. To adequately assess the work in three different concentrations, the department determined that three reviewers (one to review each concentration) would be more helpful than a panel reviewing work from across all concentrations.

The instructor of each course was asked to submit the selections, which would then be coded and made anonymous to the reviewers. Work was submitted for Poetry and Fiction; however, after an email conversation about sharing student work with other faculty reviewers, the instructor for Nonfiction chose to not submit student work for this particular assessment activity since the "thesis students wrote and submitted their essays with the idea that only other workshop attendees and the professor (all women) would see the essays unless they chose to submit them for publication or grad school" and many of the works deal with highly personal topics.

### *Results*

Reviewers will review and score the work during early Fall 2018, following a norming session.

### *Moving Forward*

- Creative Writing faculty and the Assessment Office should work together to determine the best ways to solicit and assess student creative work that will allow for assessing work from all three concentrations and can draw from students' highest levels of work, while being sensitive to privacy issues related to highly personal writing.

## Appendix A. Foundations Reflection Assignment

### Foundations in Creative Writing: Reflection Assignment

This assignment asks you to think about genre and craft elements from your writing from the beginning of the semester up until now. Specifically, the assignment focuses on your ability to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the interplay of craft elements across genres

#### **Selection:**

From two distinct genres (poetry, fiction, nonfiction) chose **two pieces** of your creative work, one from each of two genres (your choice.) In each of these two pieces, identify **at least two** of the same types of craft elements (examples: concrete and specific details, imagery, figurative language, setting, characterization, etc.) Highlight those elements on the pages of the creative work.

#### **Reflection:**

In a brief reflective essay, define each of the craft elements you have selected and explain the impact and function of those craft elements in the genres of your pieces. In your definition/explanation/reflection, touch on: What craft elements did you choose and how do you define them? Why and how specifically did this element (imagery, detail, setting, etc.) work in each of the genres you chose (poetry, fiction, nonfiction.)?

In explaining your thoughts, it will be helpful to refer to specific examples from your pieces (what you highlighted) to ground and demonstrate your ideas.

To recap, a successful Reflection Essay will

- Define and contextualize the craft elements in your work, especially as they relate to the variety of genres you have chosen
- Use adequate textual examples from your own work

**Length: Minimum one page, double-spaced. Please turn in copies of the pages highlighted in the creative work as well.**

**Due Date: Beginning of Week 14**

**Appendix B. Foundations Reflection Rubric**

<b>Student Name:</b>	Poor (1)	Fair (2)	Strong (3)	Excellent (4)
<b>Genre and Craft Elements</b>				
1. Chose appropriate pieces representative of poetry, fiction, and/or nonfiction				
2. Thoughtfully identified examples of craft elements across the pieces				
3. Correctly defined each craft element selected				
4. Articulated how the craft elements worked <i>within</i> each genre				

Assessors comments (optional):

### Appendix C. Writer's Portfolio Rubric

<b>Writer's Portfolio Fall 2017</b>	<b>Significantly Lacking (1)</b>	<b>Needs Improvement (2)</b>	<b>Satisfactory (3)</b>	<b>Strong (4)</b>	<b>Excellent (5)</b>
<b>Reflection on Goals and Potential (Portfolio introduction piece)</b>					
1. Demonstrates clear and professionally appropriate goals and potential					
2. Thoughtfully reflects on and makes connections between goals and potential and the selected student works					
<b>Effective Articulation</b>					
3. Clarity of Prose					
4. Effectiveness at addressing the topics					
<b>Professionalism</b>					
5. Appearance and formatting					
6. Connection to assignment brief					