The MFA in Creative Writing at San Francisco State: Join the Community!

The Creative Writing Department at San Francisco State University offers one of the oldest, nationally renowned MFA programs in the country. We are one of the few MFA programs to offer five tracks for MFA students: Fiction, Creative Nonfiction, Poetry, Playwriting, and Literary Translation. Students work with highly accomplished faculty in a vibrant, world-class city, developing excellence as creative writers and literary translators while discovering the infinite possibilities of language.

Our program, which culminates with a book-length thesis project, not only allows students to experiment across genres, but also fosters exploration of the cultural implications of creative writing, connecting our work to broader themes of diversity, identity, social justice, and the vitality engendered by an international lens.

Students can choose coursework and experiences ranging from the personal to the global, including:

• Creative Writing Workshops
• Creative Process courses on variable topics including Speculative Fiction, Uses of Personal Experience, Border Crossing Narratives, The Prose Poem, Novel Writing, and many others.
• Language and Literature courses in English, Arabic, Hebrew, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, German, Italian, Modern Greek, or/and Latin
• Internships throughout the Bay Area
• The Poetry Center's Reading Series; graduate student reading series, Take Place; and the national literary journal Fourteen Hills.

CORE FACULTY

Nona Caspers

Nona Caspers, currently the Chair of the Creative Writing Department, is an author of five books, including the critically acclaimed novel The Fifth Woman, recipient of the Mary McCarthy Prize, a 2019 Lambda Award nomination and Foreword Review Best Indie Book Finalist of 2018. Among other honors, her work has garnered a National Endowment of the Arts fellowship, a Cultural Equity Grant, and Joseph Henry Jackson Literary Grant. She lives in the city with her little old dog, Edgar.

Carolina De Robertis

Carolina De Robertis is a writer and literary translator of Uruguayan origins. She is the author of four novels: Cantoras (2019), The Gods of Tango (2015), Perla (2012), and The Invisible Mountain (2009). Her books have been translated into seventeen languages, have been international bestsellers, and have received numerous awards, including a Stonewall Book Award, an NEA Fellowship, and Italy’s Rhegium Julii Prize. She is also the editor of Radical Hope: Letters of Love and Dissent in Dangerous Times.

Andrew Joron

An award-winning poet, essayist, and translator, he started writing science fiction and then expanded his scope to include innovative techniques in poetry. His books include Force Fields (1987), Science Fiction (1992), Invisible Machines (1997), The Removes (1999), Fathom (2004), The Sound Mirror (2008), and Trance Archive: New and Selected Poems from City Lights editions in 2010. He has also translated three books from the German and founded the Speculative Fiction course at SFSU.

May-lee Chai

May-lee Chai is the author of ten books of fiction, nonfiction, and literary translation, and is a recipient of an NEA Fellowship in Prose and Asian Pacific American Award for Literature, among other awards. Her most recent short story collection Useful Phrases for Immigrants (Blair, 2018), won the Bakwin Award for Writing by a Woman and American Book Award. She volunteers as a Chinese to English translator for PEN American Center. Her own work has been translated into Chinese, German, and Hebrew.

Paul Hoover

Paul Hoover has published fifteen books of poetry including Poems in Spanish (2005) and Desolation: Souvenir (2012). With Maxine Chernoff, he edited and translated Selected Poems of Friedrich Hölderlin (2008), which won the PEN-USA Translation Prize in 2009. With Nguyen Do, he has edited and translated the anthology Black Dog, Black Night: Contemporary Vietnamese Poetry (2008) and Beyond the Court Gate: Selected Poems of Nguyen Trai (2010). His translation of Maria Baranda’s Yegua nocturna corriendo en un prado de luz absoluta received a PEN/Heim Translation Grant in 2014.
Michael David Lukas

Michael David Lukas has been a Fulbright Scholar in Turkey, a night-shift proofreader in Tel Aviv, and a waiter at the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference in Vermont. Translated into more than a dozen languages, his first novel *The Oracle of Stamboul* was a finalist for the California Book Award and the Harold U. Ribalow Prize. His second novel, *The Last Watchman of Old Cairo* (Spiegel & Grau, 2018), won the National Jewish Book Award in Fiction.

Maxine Chernoff

Maxine Chernoff, professor, has edited the long-running literary journal *New American Writing* and is the author of six books of fiction and fifteen books of poetry, most recently *Under the Music: Collected Prose Poems* (Mad Hat Press, 2019), *Camera* (Subito Press, 2017), and *Here* (Counterpath, 2014). In 2013 she won an NEA Fellowship in Poetry and in 2009 the PEN USA Translation Award for her co-translated *Selected Poems of Friedrich Hölderlin*.

Michelle Carter

Michelle Carter is a two-time recipient of the PEN USA Award in Drama. She has also received the Susan Glaspell Award, the Ebell Playwright Prize, the PEN West Award, Backstage West's Garland Award, a Susan Smith Blackburn Prize nomination, and a Kesselring Prize nomination. Music theater and dance theater projects include: DREAMSPIEL, a Ukulele Opera (libretto, lyrics) with the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain: Arcola Theatre, London, AFTER ALL, Part I, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (Erika Chong Shuch, choreographer/director). THE LUCKY ONE and IRON SHOES (Shotgun Players).

Chanan Tigay

Chanan Tigay is author of *The Lost Book of Moses: The Hunt for the World's Oldest Bible* (Ecco/HarperCollins), winner of the Anne & Robert Cowan Writer’s Prize and finalist for the Sami Rohr Prize. Tigay was awarded fellowships by Harvard University’s Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study and the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism’s Investigative Reporting Fellowship.

Joseph Cassara

Joseph Cassara, the Marcus Endowed Chair in Fiction, is the author of the critically-acclaimed novel *The House of Impossible Beauties* (Ecco/HarperCollins, 2018), which won the Edmund White Award for Debut Fiction, two International Latino Book Awards, the National Arts & Entertainment Journalism Award for Best Fiction Book, and was a finalist for the Lambda Literary Award for Gay Fiction.

Tonya M. Foster

Tonya M. Foster, the Marcus Endowed Chair in Poetry, is the author of *A Swarm of Bees in High Court*, and the bilingual chapbook *La Grammaire des Os: A History of the Bitch* (Sputnik and Fizzle, forthcoming 2020); and co-editor of *Third Mind: Creative Writing through Visual Art*. For the 2020-21 academic year, she is on fellowship at Harvard University's Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study.

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