AWP’s Ninth Tweet Chat: #MFAChat
November 2 from 2:00-3:00 p.m. ET

Today at 2 p.m. ET, use #MFAchat to join the discussion about writing programs.

Welcome to AWP's 9th Twitter chat! Today we'll be discussing writing programs. #MFAchat

With us today is Director of Membership, Diane Zinna, @DianeZinna. #MFAchat
Also from the Membership department is Membership Associate Kenny Lakes, @usyboroda. #MFAchat

And from the Publications department, we are joined by Jason Gray, @jasonmgray. #MFAchat

We are also joined by many writing programs across the world & a recent MFA graduate, Elizabeth Deanna Morris Lakes, @exclamate. #MFAchat

About me: I have an MFA in poetry from @Mason_MFA. I currently work at #FINRA as a test development editor. Yes, I got a real job! #MFAChat
How do you choose a program that's right for you? Find out now! #MFAchat

To ask a question at any time and to follow the discussion, use hashtag #MFAchat.

Welcome! I'm Diane Zinna, AWP's Membership Director, and I'll be your host for the next hour as we discuss MFA programs. #MFAChat

Like many of the staff here at AWP (breathlessly standing by to answer your questions), I attended an MFA Program. #MFAChat

We also invited directors of many different creative writing programs to join us today to share their perspectives. #MFAChat

Over two years, I ended up applying to 30 different MA and MFA programs in poetry. I got into 6, but I only got into 1 fully funded #MFAChat
The W's MFA in CW @TheW_MFACW

See our Guide for Applicants for ideas on writing samples, statements of purpose, recommendations, etc. #MFAChat http://tinyurl.com/ozbsbtx

IAIALowRez @LowRezMFA

The Institute of American Indian Arts' low residency MFA is unique. Check out our faculty here: http://www.iaia.edu/MFA. #MFAChat

Marie-Helene Bertino @mhbertino

I teach here alongside some of the most brilliant minds I know. Check it out and apply, ye MFA seekers!

Jenna Sauers @jennasauers

Are you considering an MFA? I'll be participating in @awpwriter's #MFAChat today at 1 pm CST. Ask me anything about Iowa.

red starbucks cup @helenbholmes

@jennasauers @awpwriter do you feel Iowa's been essential to your development as a writer? would I miss NYC too much to get stuff done?
"essential" is hard to define, but I have developed during my MFA in ways I wouldn't have had I remained a freelancer.

missing NYC is tough though. It is a HUGE change and I vastly underestimated how disruptive the adjustment would be.

but I am much happier now. In grad school I also have amazing shit I never had before as a freelancer, like health insurance.

What are some points I should consider and avoid using on my SOP? 

avoid opening with "ever since I can remember I wanted to write." So has everyone else.
@josiahbohnsack @thebarbook We @southampwriters recommend to be yourself -- which is very difficult to do. You're looking for the right fit.

The W's MFA in CW @TheW_MFACW

@josiahbohnsack I just tweeted a link to our Guide for Applicants. I wrote it with our program in mind, but also for anyone MFA applicant:
http://www.muw.edu/images/colleges/as/llp/MFAGuideForApplicants.pdf

AWP @awpwriter

Any advice for writing a good Statement of Purpose essay? #MFAChat

SMC MFA Program @smcmfa

@awpwriter be specific and honest. spill your guts & let it all hang out. it's your time to put it all out on the table. be brave. #MFAChat

EDML @exclamate

@awpwriter Here's what NOT to put in: "I've been literally writing since I came out of the womb." Focus on what you're doing now! #MFAchat
Alyse Bensel @leaseandleaves

@awpwriter Know the programs you're applying to and truthfully discuss your goals--explain how you're well-matched for each other! #MFAchat

David Schuman @d_schuman

@awpwriter I always tell students asking for advice about SOP--straightforward and honest is best. Smart alecky, not so much.

Daniel A. Hoyt @dan_hoyt

Consider your personal statement a writing sample. Get specific and real. Don't say you've always been a reader or a writer! #MFAchat

Julie Sheehan @thebarbook

@d_hoyt we now ask applicants to describe their current reading interests. #MFAchat

Daniel A. Hoyt @dan_hoyt

@thebarbook Great idea. #MFAchat and no Chuck Palahniuk!

Converse College MFA @ConverseMFA

In the personal statement we look for serious readers and as well as serious writers. Be specific. Let us know why you want this. #MFAchat
Mississippi University for Women has a new MFA that is flexible, affordable, professional and personal. #MFAChat http://www.muw.edu/mfacreativewriting …

Mississippi University for Women has been coed since 1984. Our MFA is open to all. #MFAChat http://www.muw.edu/disclosures/non-discrimination …

The good news: no tracking by genre. The bad news: bring your own artistic focus. #MFAChat

Hello #MFAChat If anyone has a question about the MFA at @WUSTL feel free to ask. Our website is currently down, tho...bummer.
#MFAChat is on! So, first thing: Yes, we hold our residencies at a spa. This is our campus: http://www.omnihotels.com/hotels/palm-springs-rancho-las-palmas...

UCR Palm Desert @UCRPalmDesert

See why students love our MFA program! #MFAChat

Diane Zinna @DianeZinna

@UCRPDLRMFA Wait...what? This is amazing! #MFAChat

Daniel A. Hoyt @dan_hoyt

I suggest that undergrads consider applying to an MA program or two along with MFA programs. #MFAChat

Stephen J Furlong @BeenASon24

Stephen J Furlong Retweeted Daniel A. Hoyt

I applied to four of five MAs and am currently in an MA program now. Having those as options really helped. #MFAChat

Daniel A. Hoyt @dan_hoyt

I'm not just saying that because I direct the creative writing program at #KState's MA program. #MFAChat
I recommend Kansas State (of course, the University of Missouri (where I got my MA two decades ago), and Mississippi State. #MFAchat

The good news: we’re in the Hamptons. The bad news: they don’t let you sleep on the beach. #MFAChat

Let's get started! Alumni and current students, what made you ultimately choose the program you attended? #MFAChat

I did my MFA at @umsl - I wanted to live in a city and be in the Midwest #MFAchat

UMSL has a great magazine and faculty. Good city too: Just ignore those Cardinals fans.

Spend $ on MLB app for your favorite team! $20 a year! #unpaidendorsement
Lisa Romeo @LisaRomeo

@DianeZinna I chose my program almost entirely on faculty. Also, on location (low res), reputation, strength in my track. #MFAchat

Jason Gray @jasonmgray

I'll start with this: “Don’t go in debt to be a poet.” Best advice I ever received about grad school. #MFAchat

Daniel A. Hoyt @dan_hoyt

Here's some general advice and words of caution that we give to students applying to grad school in CW. http://k-statecreativewriting.tumblr.com/post/33706859670/on-applying-to-mfa-programs ... #MFAchat

Diane Zinna @DianeZinna

1/4 Joining us: University of California Riverside's Low-Res Program, St Mary's College of California, Stony Brook Southampton #MFAChat

Diane Zinna @DianeZinna

2/4 Western State Colorado University, Virginia Tech, Sierra Nevada College, Rosemont College, Kansas State, Converse College... #MFAchat
Diane Zinna @DianeZinna

3/4 The Institute of American Indian Arts, Mississippi University for Women, Washington University in St. Louis... #MFAChat

Diane Zinna @DianeZinna

4/4...and Cardiff Metropolitan University in the UK. Whew! That is a lot. But there are hundreds. How to start? #MFAChat

David Schuman @d_schuman

Also excited to let everyone know, if you don't that @WUSTL_English MFA now has a CNF track, starting its second year in Fall 2016 #MFAchat

Lisa Romeo @LisaRomeo

I teach in all online, all CNF program @Bay Path U. Happy to answer any Qs. Graduate of Stonecoast low res program (U So Maine). #MFAchat

EDML @exclamate

I applied to 13 schools while finishing my BA in creative writing from @SUWriters. I got into 13 schools, all unfunded. I waited. #MFAChat

EDML @exclamate

It was an important and good decision. I got out of school with minimal debt, & teaching and editing experience. #MFAChat
Unless you have an inheritance, live at home, work full time, or some combination thereof, do NOT go to grad school unfunded #MFAChat

I am Kenny Lakes, Membership Associate @awpwriter I did not attend an MFA program, but am happy to point out the resources we have #MFAChat

Our Guide to Writing Programs lists over 950 creative writing programs http://bit.ly/1FTizy7 #MFAChat

We recently renovated the Guide to make it a better resource for prospective students #MFAChat

Clicking on the school’s name will bring you to their full listing, where you can learn more about the program #MFAChat

You can sort the Guide by different regions or by a specific state #MFAChat
We have about 50 low-res and online-only programs listed #MFAChat

You can also narrow your search by genre and type of degree. We don’t just list MFA programs, but all undergrad and grad degrees. #MFAChat

@DianeZinna Here is what that looks like on our site! #MFAChat

1. Location
   - Midwest OR Any State

2. Program Type
   - Residential
   - Low Residency
   - Online

When looking at the list of programs, you can easily see what degrees are offered and what genres are covered. #MFAChat
So many genres to choose from! #MFAChat

3. Genre

- Fiction
- Poetry
- Creative Nonfiction
- Literary Translation
- Professional Writing (technical writing, PR, etc.)
- Criticism & Theory
- Writing for Children
- Screenwriting
- Playwriting
- Popular/Genre Fiction

4. Level of Study

All Graduate Degrees

You can also see a list of faculty that teaches at the school as well as where the program is located #MFAChat

Some faculty members' names will link to their AWP bio #MFAChat
VT Creative Writing @VirginiaTechCW

#MFAChat VirginiaTech: small 3 yr program + diverse student body + vibrant college town in bucolic setting + campus looks like Hogwarts

The W's MFA in CW @TheW_MFACW

I tweeted a link to our Guide for Applicants—that's my advice. What other programs have advice like this? #MFAChat
http://www.muw.edu/images/colleges/as/lp/MFAGuideForApplicants.pdf …

Frances Cannon @honeyhog

Where but in Iowa City can a writing grad student spend 10 weeks with so many international scholars? #MFAChat

Leanna J Blackwell @baypathmfaCNF

I direct the MFA in creative nonfiction at Bay Path. The first fully online MFA in CNF. Ask me anything! #MFAChat

English@CardiffMet @English_CMet

Check out our graduate Creative Writing program here: http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/education/courses/Pages/Creative-Writing---MA.aspx … #MFAChat
Program directors & panel members, what are common mistakes/general turn offs that you often find in writing samples? #MFAchat @awpwriter

And typos and cliches within the first sentence -- we want originality and attention to detail #MFAChat

Your entrance essays don't need to be the worst lifetime movie of your life! Tell us something good! #MFAchat

Biggest mistake is when the guidelines aren't followed. If uncertain, be sure to ask. #MFAchat

Just send your best writing and make it as perfect as you can. Write with passion. Be yourself.
Obvious ones: spelling/grammar errors, less obvious, poor poem or story structure, sending too much. #MFAChat

Broadly, I tell prospective writers 1. Fully funded programs only 2. Three years rather than two 3. work on a #litmag #MFAchat

This is so spot on. Conveniently, the #NonfictionWritingProgram @uiowa gives you the chance to do all 3+ #MFAchat

Although if you're mid-career, a part-time program could be the way to go. #MFAchat

Definitely, though I wonder, in that situation, if community programs like @GrubWriters are then better than a program.
@thebarbook @mpnye Indeed. PT, online, low res - all good choices if you can't move, have a family, are in midlife. That was me. #MFAchat

Michael Nye @mpnye

@LisaRomeo @thebarbook Low-res, though, can be shockingly expensive.

Julie Sheehan @thebarbook

@mpnye @LisaRomeo State schools to the rescue! #MFAchat

Lisa Romeo @LisaRomeo

@mpnye @thebarbook Yep. Choose where to apply wisely. I just crossed out the low res ones I knew I couldn't pay off in 2 years. #MFAchat

Julie Sheehan @thebarbook

@mpnye And part-timers generally don't get funding. #MFAchat

Michael Nye @mpnye

Very true, and people should know this #MFAchat
The W's MFA in CW @TheW_MFACW

@thebarbook @mpnye #mfachat We have partial scholarships for part-time at 6 hours, which is also required for federal loans.

Lydia Pudzianowski @DoritosHangover

Yes, yes, and yes. I took loans out and really wish someone had emphatically told me not to. #MFAChat

Jon Chaiim McConnell @JonMcConn

@mpnye Still don't really conceive of what my massive debt means for my life 3 years later, so I don't even know how dumb I am yet #MFAChat

@mpnye that is, it's an amount of money so large that it's not worth worrying about day to day #MFAChat

jen! @JenniferMWolff

@JonMcConn @mpnye Same boat for me now, due to undergrad alone! My student loan debt gets bigger daily, no matter how much I pay into it.
The W's MFA in CW @TheW_MFACW

Affordable: The W offers low in-state tuition & waives non-resident fees for all graduate students. #MFAChat http://www.muw.edu/as/llp/english/graduate/mfacwcosts ...

Converse College MFA @ConverseMFA

@converseMFA is a low res MFA that provides partial scholarships, opportunities of TA spots & other options http://www.converse.edu/mfa #MFAChat

Diane Zinna @DianeZinna

QUESTION: What are the factors you’d rank highly when considering creative writing programs? #MFAChat

Alyse Bensel @leaseandleaves 2h2 hours ago

@DianeZinna FUNDING, faculty, coursework options, lit journal, reading series, location, camaraderie, professionalization. #MFAChat

Diane Zinna @DianeZinna

@leaseandleaves YES! Funding has got to be #1!

SMC MFA Program @smcmfa

@DianeZinna faculty #1; curriculum #2. visit campus if you can. connect w alums & current students #MFAChat
@JasmineKEvans

@DianeZinna @awpwriter faculty, location, professional development, scholarships, and to a lesser extent alumni involvement #MFAChat

@DianeZinna Who you'd like to work with, location, funding, aesthetics of the program. But getting too hung up on any of those can limit you

@JasonGray @jasonmgray

What opportunities are available? Teaching? Lit mag? Reading series? Chance to study second genre? #MFAChat

@jasonmgray @smcmfa offers a 3rd yr in a second genre. @CandaceErosDiaz am an alumna w a dual concentration in CNF & fiction. #MFAChat

@chelseahbryan

UCDavis #MFAChat: it's funded, it's got Yiyun Li, Pam Houston and Lucy Corin, and it's got SF commuters. Not a #frenemy environment. Apply.
SBShampton MFAWriter @SouthampWriters

The good news: Meg Wolitzer, Roger Rosenblatt, Billy Collins, Patty Marx. The bad news: premature laugh lines. #MFAChat

Michael Nye @mpnye

Worry 99.9% about your writing sample, and the other .1% about GRE and statement of purpose #MFAChat

Daniel A. Hoyt @dan_hoyt

I'd tweak @mpnye's numbers a little: 90 writing sample, 9.9 SOP, and .1 GRE! #MFAChat

Diane Zinna @DianeZinna 6m6 minutes ago

QUESTION: What would matter more to you? Location or faculty? #MFAChat

Ana @write2recite 20m20 minutes ago

Faculty is important when looking into MFA programs. Because a quality education counts more than location. #MFAChat @DianeZinna
Leanna J Blackwell @baypathmfaCNF

Faculty, faculty, faculty. By far the most important: http://bit.ly/1iB1zBy. #mfachat

Leanna J Blackwell @baypathmfaCNF

And when I say "faculty," I mean both distinguished writers and gifted, dedicated teachers. Happy to say we have both. #mfachat

Julie Sheehan @thebarbook

I think the community of students matters in an MFA program. A lot. #MFChat

Leanna J Blackwell @baypathmfaCNF

@thebarbook Completely agree. I had that. Want my students to have the same. As director, I make sure faculty foster that community. #mfachat

Converse College MFA @ConverseMFA

@DianeZinna Depends on the individual, but I think faculty is very important. #MFChat

EDML @exclamate

I never looked at schools based on who taught there. Amazing writers can be really bad teachers. (No offense, amazing writers.) #MFAChat
Julie Sheehan @thebarbook

Oh, wow, but when you get both... #MFAchat

SMC MFA Program @smcmfa

@exclamate very true. good then to speak w faculty & ask about their teaching philosophy/experience. don't be afraid to dig in #MFAchat

Chelsea H Bryan @chelseahbryan

@exclamate true! Can be awesome, ex.: @pam_houston. I believe in going somewhere where you can relate on big stuff your work gets at

EDML @exclamate

@chelseahbryan @pam_houston Yes! It's good to get a feel for the faculty as a whole, not just yr fav writer.

EDML @exclamate

Or, maybe your dream writer will end up being so busy you'll never see them! My point: going for one person is risky. #MFAchat

Diane Zinna @DianeZinna

@exclamate Yes, and sometimes the greatest writers are not the greatest teachers. #MFAchat
And just because you haven't heard of a writer on faculty, doesn't mean they aren't a great writer/teacher #MFAchat

The big names will likely be swamped and unable to work with you as closely as you'd like. #MFAchat

Not so! Not so! They don't have to teach, after all. #MFAchat

True, but they often have a ton of their own deadlines to meet. Not always!

Exactly. ask if those marque names do more than an occasional lecture. #MFAchat
This is so true. Too much emphasis on what teachers have pub and not enough on who've they helped get pub

Jennifer Atkinson is my motherpoet/beacon/role model now. I had never heard of her before!

or maybe, once you get in, or while you're there, they get a job somewhere else!

We just had Alan Cheuse die at GMU (RIP.) Faculty changes for so many reasons.

What you need to know: We're looking for writers who want to publish their books and make their movies/tv shows. Not hobbyists. #MFAchat
@mpnye Are there fully-funded programs that are good fits for non-traditional (i.e. really fucking old) students? #MFAchat

@rayjshea @awpwriter @mpnye So many of my peers were "really fucking old." The MFA isn't like getting a BA degree later in life at all.

@exclamate_ @rayjshea @awpwriter Feel like I'm missing a step or two here.

@mpnye @exclamate_ @awpwriter I always hear low-res is often a better fit for older writers, & it sounds appealing. But low-res = no funding

@rayjshea @exclamate_ @awpwriter Right. When you see the prices, you'll have some serious sticker shock, good as the programs are.
@mpnye @exclamate @awpwriter My tattoos are creeping up into that range $$-wise. Will an MFA make me look good with my shirt off? ;)

EDML @exclamate

@rayjshea @mpnye @awpwriter Low-res is great if you have other obligations/own a house or don't want to move/ have a job, etc.

Ray Shea @rayjshea

@exclamate @mpnye @awpwriter Yeah. Have a great job, and cities I want to live in don't necessarily have MFA programs I like.

Ray Shea @rayjshea

@exclamate @mpnye @awpwriter Plus I like the one-on-one mentorship aspect. Just trying to decide if $30-40K is worth it.

Ray Shea @rayjshea

@exclamate @mpnye @awpwriter Plus I like the one-on-one mentorship aspect. Just trying to decide if $30-40K is worth it.

EDML @exclamate

@rayjshea @mpnye @awpwriter Do you want a new writing support group? Do you feel like you've exhausted your current resources? If so, it is.
Hard to say w/o knowing you better. Community matters, such as small town vs. big city, and so forth.

In short, I'd say No. A library card and daily writing will do you much better.

Brother Mouzone agrees.

We offer courses in food & travel writing, writing the personal profile, women's spiritual stories, health & wellness writing, more.

And MFA programs are still really hard on writers of color. Look for diversity among the students and faculty.
@AmyArce @HippieFresa

@mpnye what about Latinos? #MFAchat

@MichaelNye @mpnye

@HippieFresa peep @LowRezMFA and similar programs.

@IAIALowRez @LowRezMFA

@mpnye White faculty and students are the minority at the Institute of American Indian Arts' MFA. #MFAchat

@IAIALowRez @LowRezMFA

@mpnye Which makes for some interesting discussions.

@LowRezMFA I'd love to hear more about this.

@IAIALowRez @LowRezMFA

@mpnye A lot to say in 140 characters, but there will be essays for sure. Follow the action here: https://vimeo.com/138799424
Worth watching, #MFAchat

Yes!

And bear in mind that diversity goes beyond skin color. #MFAchat

Age, culture and life experience all important too

Absolutely. I would want to see diversity in types of writing produced, age, experience, publishing avenues #MFAChat

We offer competitive fees for a WRITING program in one of the UK's capital cities #MFAchat
An #MFAchat is happening right now, English majors @SEUhumanities @SEUCareer

Wondering about MFA programs—whether to go or which to choose? Check out conversation right now at #MFAchat

@Pam_Houston talked about the importance of program location in her article for us: http://tinyurl.com/nnqvjkb. #MFAChat

@Pam_Houston said, “…it is worth trying to set yourself up to succeed, whatever that means to you.” #MFAChat

@Pam_Houston: “Will you write more if you are happy, lonely, isolated, across the country from your parents…" #MFAChat

2/2 @pam_houston: "...in a foreign country, car-less, able to make ends meet, or abjectly poor?" #MFAChat
Diane Zinna @DianeZinna

What I personally wish I had considered: #12 of @Pam_Houston’s piece: http://tinyurl.com/nnqvjkb. This rang very true for me. #MFAChat

The W's MFA in CW @TheW_MFACW

Personal: small online classes using discussions and a/v chat, plus face-to-face residencies. #MFAChat

Flexible & Affordable: Part-time students encouraged. Most are taking 6-9 hours/semester and finish in 2-4 years. #MFAChat
Jenna Sauers @jennasauers

I would advise against going into debt for an M.F.A. I actually got into Iowa in 2012 but didn't get funding. I deferred admission. #MFAchat

UCRLowResMFA @UCRPDLRMFA

We really like it when applicants come and visit residency for a day -- it's good to meet you and it's good for you to meet us #MFAchat

Brittany Borghi @brittany_borghi 3m minutes ago

I'm a 1st year Nonfiction MFAer @uiowa. Can't stress enough the close faculty relationships, vibrant lit community, and FUNDS here #MFAchat

SBShampton MFAWriter @SouthampWriters

The good news: The Southampton Review is a world-class lit mag. The bad news: our students roll up their sleeves to help publish it #MFAChat

Jessica Smith @looktouch

@awpwriter I went to SUNY Buffalo b/c Creeley, Howe, Bernstein were there (late 90s). No MFA program -- best decision I ever made #MFAchat

Jenna Sauers @jennasauers

I reapplied for aid the next year, which I got. Waiting that extra year significantly softened the financial blow of grad school. #MFAchat
Check out the many fine pubs on our alumni book shelf at Iowa. Is that the new memoir by @LucasWMann? Yes! #MFAchat

It's so great to see you in our sun-lit lounge @uiowa, @SoupRubin! Did I mention we get buddies? This guy is mine!
What are the usual sources of funding? #MFAchat

A handful of full fellowships, but usually from TA or other dept work.


Avoid the loans at all costs. The first three (1) are things you can put on a resume/CV and (2) don't ruin your credit.

This is sound. My MFA didn't pay a bunch so I had to take loans anyhow 😞

I made this mistake on undergrad. @EmersonCollege was a great experience but cost me dearly. #MFAchat
@jennasauers scholarships/aid offered by the program (free $$) & teaching assistantships or research assistantships (p/t work for $$)

@josiahbohnsack It really depends on the program and variances of fellowships. As @silas_hansen mentioned, lit mag work is great #MFAChat

The W's MFA in CW @TheW_MFACW

@josiahbohnsack #MFAChat Graduate assistantships, scholarships, and student loans (keep low). Also employers and private scholarships.

Diane Zinna @DianeZinna

A small class size isn’t always optimal. I was 1 of 5 in my year, but the only female & with all male teachers. #MFAChat

@DianeZinna Ouch! #MFAChat

Erika Dreifus @erikadreifus

This & other worthy nuggets if you're considering an MFA program in #creativewriting, via #MFAChat happening now.
Not to mention damage even 1 not-so-constructive participant can do in a workshop of 4, esp if fac don't intervene. #MFAchat

Yes, I learned a lot, but it took me a while to remember who I was after I graduated. #MFAchat

Not quite sure about KU? Lawrence is a completely different town from what you may expect. Many reading series + active journals. #MFAchat

faculty are excellent writers & teach regularly. If you apply to work with a specific writer, you will have opportunity #MFAchat

I love the low-res model...I've seen students make amazing leaps with focused attention. #MFAchat
The good news: our campus in Manhattan. The bad news: finding a seat at your new favorite writing cafe #MFAChat

We also offer flexible part time tuition, in the home of Dr Who! #MFAchat

Flexible: Cross-genre and mixed genre writing is encouraged in classes such as Writing for New Media. #MFAChat http://www.muw.edu/as/lp/english/graduate/mfa-creative-writing-courses ...

Your fellow grad students are a tremendous influence ... but you can't research your future cohort like you can research faculty #MFAchat

In 2014, 36 of our alumni and 11 faculty members published full-length collections. See for yourself: http://newschoolwriting.org/bookshelf/ #MFAchat

Want to teach post-MFA? Make sure you can get teaching experience. Also understand now that this is a v. difficult goal to achieve. #MFAChat
Are you in an MFA writing program or thinking of applying for one? Check out the #MFAchat going on now hosted by @awpwriter.

Brittany Borghi @brittany_borghi

@CityOfIowaCity is a UNESCO City of Lit & a community of writers, for writers. The NWP @uiowa opens doors locally & globally. #MFAchat

UCRLowResMFA @UCRPDLRMFA

Our faculty write books, write TV shows, write movies & win awards. They're also super nice, which is good. #MFAchat http://palmdesertmfa.ucr.edu/faculty/

Meagan Arthur @meaganearthur

What are the most important factors when considering which applicants get funding? #MFAchat @awpwriter

SMC MFA Program @smemfa

@meaganearthur @awpwriter the quality of the manuscript #1 #MFAChat

Julie Sheehan @thebarbook

@meaganearthur @awpwriter Writing sample, writing sample, Statement of Purpose, writing sample, letters of rec. #MFAchat
Getting an MFA was the best thing I ever did, but it's not the right choice for everyone. What do you want out of it? #MFAchat

If you can't answer that question yet, it's worth waiting until you can. It's rare to go straight from undergrad. #MFAchat

An MFA is NOT going to: (1) guarantee you publications, (2) guarantee you a teaching job, (3) guarantee you a job of any kind. #MFAchat

What an MFA *will* give you: (1) 2-3 years to focus on your writing and (2) classmates and profs to read your work. #MFAchat

Yep, @silas_hansen is right on. I wish more applicants would slow down, take a year or two off, think about what they really want. #MFAchat
Julie Sheehan @thebarbook

Totally agree. Doesn't hurt to have something to say. #MFChat

Leslie Pietrzyk @lesliepwriter

My MFA regret...that I went right out of undergrad. #MFChat @ConverseMFA

Silas Hansen @silas_hansen

For the record, I did do my MFA straight from undergrad & it worked out--but it's also fine to wait a few years. It depends on YOU. #MFChat

JohnCabot University @JohnCabotRome

We're offering 4 graduate-level CW courses this summer. Trust us, the Eternal City is good inspiration! http://ow.ly/UcDef #MFChat

The W's MFA in CW @TheW_MFACW

Professional: Our program has the annual Eudora Welty Writers' Symposium with a dozen Southern writers. #MFAChat http://www.muw.edu/welty
Many high school teachers who want to pursue MFA, school district might (help) fund, esp if choosing public institution in state, #MFAchat

@LisaRomeo #MFAChat Yes, and check out lo-rez kid lit program at SUNY school http://www.stonybrook.edu/southampton/mfa/childrens_lit/index.html …

Otherwise, figure out a way to diversify your experience. I got internships that taught me copy editing, proposal writing, and more #MFAchat

If there is any chance you want to teach in academia, apply to @uiowa - having the Writers Workshop on your CV opens a LOT of doors #MFAchat

If you want to ask a student who has studied with us about our program then @Durre_Shahwar is happy to help #MFAchat

#MFAchat
I got my PhD at KU: Lawrence is a terrific college town: great live music, good restaurants, super-popular adult kickball. #MFAchat

We like genre writing! Because, you see, we live in the 21st century, and that's what people actually read. What an idea. #MFAchat

Putting the finishing touches on my application! Get ready @Columbia 'cause here I come! #MFAchat #screenwriting #horrorFilm @JamesGunn

At #UVic, we have a grad course in teaching creative writing for MFA students. WRIT509: Instructional SKills Preparation. #MFAChat

Flexible: In our low-residency MFA, residencies are separate classes. You take 4 that fit your schedule. #MFAChat http://www.muw.edu/mfacreativewriting …

Creative writing faculty, what is the most important advice you would give to a prospective student who wants to apply? #MFAChat
@DianeZinna  Be sure you want to LEARN. Be teachable. Be more interested in developing craft than getting affirmation, impressing. #MFChat

@DianeZinna  Strong sample. Think low-res v. res. Research faculty and READ THEIR WORK (sounds obv, but not!). Research location. #MFChat

@DianeZinna  #mfachat #bestadvice  Know why you want an MFA and where you want to be when finished. Know why you want to do it with us.

@DianeZinna  Identify a potential supervisor that suits your project; submit best portfolio — the first line/page must grab. #MFChat

@DianeZinna  #mfachat #bestadvice  Also, know how you'll pay for it without excessive debt. Work your way through or get aid. Have a plan.
Attend a fully funded program! Usually with that funding comes teaching experience, which is essential for the academic market. #MFAchat

The W's MFA in CW @TheW_MFACW

Professional: We want to graduate professional writers who are skilled at their craft and able to work in writing related fields #MFAChat

South Carolina MFA @scMFA

If you are interested in applying to MFA programs, or deciding whether or not that's right for you: #MFAchat.

Chelsea H Bryan @chelseabhryan

Have heard great things from multiple sources about IAIA. Any #MFAchat takers on IAIA thoughts? #diversity #race

Michael Nye @mpnye

It's behind their paywall, but @poetswritersinc published a good essay by Steve Almond about reading submissions for programs #MFAchat

EDML @exclamate
If you can visit the school before you go, oh do it! Chat up current students. See how the profs interact with them. Visit a class! #MFAchat

The good news: Amazing writers visit campus for Writer’s Speak Wednesdays. The bad news: what to do the other six days of the week #MFAchat

Program director @todgoldberg talks about genre writing and why MFA programs are scared of it #MFAchat: http://palmdesertmfa.ucr.edu/blog/wanted-the-greatest-criminal-minds-of-our-time/

More advice: if you're applying straight from undergrad & want to maximize time, consider funded MA programs to prep for MFA. #MFAchat

It's a different degree--not terminal--but gives you time to hone your craft, experiment with different kinds of writing, read, &c. #MFAchat

Funded MAs also usually require/include more lit classes, rhet comp, etc. than MFAs--helps you succeed in those classes during MFA. #MFAchat
For example, two of our recent MA grads, went on to strong MFAs, and entered PhD programs just this year. #MFAchat

If you can, talk to students who attend a program! Check out our Campus Visit Video Series http://bit.ly/1RKTK89 #MFAChat

In these videos, students discuss life at their creative writing programs. http://bit.ly/1RKTK89 #MFAChat

There are videos featuring residential and low-residency programs, as well as an immersive semester program #MFAchat
Converse College MFA @ConverseMFA

Be sure to talk to current students and graduates of a program. Also, ask to speak to various faculty. #MFAchat

Rhonda BrowningWhite @RBrowningWhite

I vetted programs for two years before applying @ConverseMFA, and I couldn't have made a better choice! #MFAchat

Gabrielle Freeman @TheLadyRandom

Completing the #mfa through @ConverseMFA was the best thing I've ever done for myself. Ask away! #mfachat

Leslie Pietrzyk @lesliepwriter

#mfachat Yes, always ask to speak to students in the program & recent grads before deciding.

Lisa Romeo @LisaRomeo

@lesliepwriter @TheLadyRandom @ConverseMFA Yes, yes, yes. Talk to current students & alumni & faculty, by PHONE if possible. #MFAchat

David Schuman @d_schuman
And see if you can hang out and even stay with them when you visit--get to know the place #MFAchat

Julie Sheehan @thebarbook

@d_schuman @awpwriter @SouthampWriters does a visiting day for admitted students. Very helpful for them to make a good choice. #MFAchat

South Carolina MFA @scMFA

Application tips from us: Writing sample is most important. Statement of purpose is also a writing sample. #MFAchat (1/3)

South Carolina MFA @scMFA

Ref letters with knowledge, specifics>letters from famous writers you met once. Most letters glow; we do look for red flags. #MFAchat (2/3)

South Carolina MFA @scMFA

Don't care tons about grades, but our dept. cares some. Don't care about GRE scores (can waive low ones), but must have them. #MFAchat (3/3)
Joshua Bohnsack @josiahbohnsack

How effective is interfolio? As in ease for me and my references. #MFAchat

Michael Nye @mpnye

@josiahbohnsack It's an awesome service: kudos to any program that uses it.

Diane Zinna @DianeZinna

@josiahbohnsack Super easy! We actually transitioned away from dossier svcs because they were leaders in the market--for a reason. #AWPChat

Diane Zinna @DianeZinna

WHEN did you decide that you wanted to attend an MFA program? #MFAChat

SMC MFA Program @smcmfa

@DianeZinna i (@CandaceErosDiaz) made other ppls dreams come true instead of mine for 10 yrs after UG. i couldn't w8 any longer #MFAChat

Michael Nye @mpnye

@DianeZinna As an undergrad. But I also decided I wanted to be out of school for three years before I attended. #MFAchat
Emily Lundgren @emslun

I'm a 1st yr @NEOMFA'er - cannot stress how welcoming the wrkshp environment is! My research for a constructive wrkshp checked out. #MFAChat

The W's MFA in CW @TheW_MFACW

Flexible: Our program combines workshops with forms and literature classes. You do not have to specify a genre when you apply. #MFAChat

EDML @exclamate

Also keep in mind your resources. My stipend went a lot less far in NOVA than my friends' similar stipends did in AZ. #MFAChat

Daniel A. Hoyt @dan_hoyt

I think my best advice is just listen to @silas_hansen! #mfachat

Shannon H. Polson @ABorderLife

If I were applying now I'd talk to more students who came from the program to get specifics abt their experiences. #MFAChat

Shannon H. Polson @ABorderLife

As well as what the residency focus covers/where it focuses, i.e. Craft v lit review etc #MFAChat
Blake Kimzey @BlakeKimzey

Get an MFA to become a better writer (all that time!) not so you can be an adjunct after you graduate. Focus on your writing. #MFAchat

The W's MFA in CW @TheW_MFACW

“@BlakeKimzey: Get an MFA to become a better writer " Yes, but also to become a more professional writer and develop job skills. #MFAchat

Michael Nye @mpnye

Have an outlet that has nothing to do with writing. You'll become emotionally and mentally exhausted during the program. #MFAchat

EDML @exclamate

Consider location! At GMU, my peers were spread out. I have friends on smaller campuses that are physically closer to their peers. #MFAChat

Shannon H. Polson @ABorderLife

Specifically the amount and quality of interaction between residencies (for low red) and amy and quality of feedback on writing #MFAChat
Michael Nye @mpnye

I'm biased, but I working on a #litmag was one of the most beneficial things about my MFA program. #MFAchat

Carla Spataro @cjspataro

@mpnye #MFAchat this is so helpful for students. Let's them see how submissions really work and why work doesn't get published.

Jeannette Ronson @jeannetteronson

Working on @PYJournal - my MFA's literary magazine - has opened up new doors for me. Work in yours! #MFAchat

David Schuman @d_schuman

Don't think your sample needs to be perfect/publishable, just representative of your voice. Faculty want writers they can teach #MFAchat

Alyse Bensel @leaseandleaves

It's important to figure out YOUR priorities before applying to MFA programs. Then see which programs best match your interests. #MFAchat
Writing genre fiction and getting rejected? It's probably because of this MFAchat:

What is it about genre fiction — not just mystery or crime, but also sci-fi & fantasy or horror — that gets people in academia up in arms?

Well, I think there's a perception that it isn't important. And if it's not important, why would you teach it? And if it's popular, it can't be good. When people say these things — and if you go to an academic conference, for instance, there's always a panel about why genre fiction is important and then, invariably, someone raises their hand and says there hasn't been a decent work of mystery fiction since Poe died, that no one will ever be a better detective than Sherlock Holmes and that JK Rowling has ruined the world, and other like-minded nonsense — my first thought is that they are deeply disconnected from what people actually read. And so I think in some ways that's the challenge creative writing programs have — making it safe for people to write the most serious literary fiction and, if they want, the best story of a vampire hit man from space who solves crimes from the back of his dragon. People can write whatever they want to write and in this program, we're going to help them write it really well. That's not specifically true for a great many creative writing programs and in that way I think it's just an institutional bias based out of fear — they don't know how to teach fantasy fiction, they're not going to admit a student who writes it. It's silly to me. You don't know how to teach it? Hire someone who does.

UsyBoroda @usyboroda

What are your thoughts on a two-year vs. three-year MFA? MFAChat

David Schuman @d_schuman

@usyboroda I thought, back then, I'd want a quick return to "real life" so I chose two. But I'm still here! Depends on funding, family, etc.

EDML @exclamate

@usyboroda KENNY, I'm SO GLAD YOU ASKED.
I had some friends at 2-year programs who wished they had more time. But 2 years might be enough for you! #MFAChat

GMU is a 3-year program, and I definitely appreciated the time. I spent my whole third year writing a MS. #MFAChat

Time is on your side. Take it! #MFAchat

When I was at Ohio St, at the start, three years seemed long, at the end, not long enough. Take the time. #MFAchat

Really know your goals: the studio degree is VERY different than an MFA that functions as a lit degree with a creative thesis #MFAchat
While you figure out your MFA plans, take a look at @LitReactor and its classes. Affordable, targeted writing help. #MFAchat

And an established literary event - The Welty Symposium #MFAChat #TheW #lowresmfa

I used the old @awpwriter Guide to Writing Programs to look for places. I hear it's improved since 2010/2011. ;) #MFAchat
EDML @exclamate

I looked at every program in the states I was willing to live in, looked at funding & other resources, and went from there. #MFAChat

Katie Schmid @kt_schmid

inquire about support/job opportunities during the summer. it's NOT WORTH taking out loans to support yourself. #MFAChat

David Schuman @d_schuman

@kt_schmid MFA at @WUSTL has provided summer funding between first and second years. Other programs may as well and you can ask #MFAChat

Nick Mamatas @NMamatas

NB: lots of MFA programs aren't very competitive. If all your classmates are Great! Writers! maybe you're not a good reader. #MFAChat

Meagan Arthur @meaganearthur

If you are participating in #MFAChat and are representing a fully funded program, give a shout! @awpwriter

VT Creative Writing @VirginiaTechCW

@meaganearthur @awpwriter VT is fully funded! 16k per year for all students!
SBShampton MFAWriter @SouthampWriters

The good news: we’re a family. The bad news: you can never leave. Even after you graduate. #MFAchat

Long Day Press @longdaypress

A lot of great advice is coming from @awpwriter’s #MFAchat discussion.

Carla Spataro @cjspataro

@Rosemont MFA #MFAchat Our program is designed for adults who want to go part time but are also very serious about their work.

South Carolina MFA @scMFA

Also: *sometimes* high grades and/or high GRE scores allow us to locate additional funding for you, on top of our regular package. #MFAchat

Diane Zinna @DianeZinna

We asked @JaneFriedman what BFA programs could be doing to prepare students for MFA life and after. #MFAChat http://tinyurl.com/lk2nql9

Diane Zinna @DianeZinna

1/2 @janeFriedman: [They should help] students better understand the economics of the writing life... #MFAChat
2/2 @JaneFriedman: ...and how authors or artists do manage to put together a full-time living from doing what they love. #MFAChat

#MFAchat thought: don't go into an MA or MFA until you have a project that interests you so much you are not afraid to write the whole thing

@chelseahbryan This is excellent advice. #MFAchat

@DoritosHangover thank you! Given as question since, maybe, sometimes one can see no other way forward in life but MFA!

@chelseahbryan A good point. Going into an MFA with a book idea vs. without is a "Good for you, not for me" thing (thank you, Amy Poehler).

@DoritosHangover Essentially, do what you need to do. #MFAchat
We give our students a competitive advantage in the real world -- everyone who graduates is read by top agents/publishers/studios.

Not some of the students. Not a couple select people. No, all of our students get read by the agents/publishers/studios.

An ideal program might allow both sorts of students to flourish.
@d_schuman 2nd that: one may switch from one mode to the other mid-program. Stylistic, artistic emotional risks:

Pam Houston

I feel that it is my job as workshop leader to create an environment in which students feel free to take stylistic, artistic, and emotional risks.

In this class we will investigate some of the essential components of fiction, including (but not limited to) image, metaphor, form, structure, character, scene, beginnings, endings, narrative arc. We will engage in a process of critique what I believe to be the central mechanism of fiction: the way emotional stakes of the story, the way the writer brings the reader into the bottomless pot of metaphor soup that is our lived and imagined lives and pull out what we need. We will be aiming for layered stories that are working at least two ways at once, stories in which the language is not simply a flat bed trailer in which the writer hauls the content of his mind around, but occasionally rises into what Steve Almond calls the lyric register.

Each student will be expected to turn in three new pieces of writing each week, the course of the semester (either stories or novel chapters), an approximately 50 pages of workshopped and polished fiction that will be included in a portfolio for presentation at the end of the semester.

The W's MFA in CW @TheW_MFACW

#mfachat @awpwriter I tell undergrads, before an MFA program, try summer/weekend workshops and develop as a writer. MFA when you're ready.

David Leach @LeachWriter

Do other MFA programs have a teaching training component & emphasis? I'd like to swap course notes & thoughts. Pros/cons. #MFAChat #UVic
SMC MFA Program @smcmfa

@LeachWriter we do. You can find out a bit more here: http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/mfa-in-creative-writing/prospective-students/funding/teaching-fellowships … #MFAChat

David Leach @LeachWriter

@smcmfa Thanks!

Leanna J Blackwell @baypathmfaCNF

@LeachWriter We do. Emphasis on teaching outside of academia. Students do internships in prisons, shelters, senior centers, hospitals #mfachat

David Leach @LeachWriter

@baypathmfaCNF That sounds like great community engagement. #mfachat

Carla Spataro @cjspataro

@baypathmfaCNF @LeachWriter @Rosemont_MFA We offer Workshopping the Workshop pedagogy class on running workshops in and out of academe. #MFAChat

Steph Vanderslice @wordamour

@LeachWriter ours @ARWritersMFA does.
Thanks! Will follow up....

Carla Spataro @cjspataro

@LeachWriter @Rosemont_MFA offers a Rhet/Comp pedag class and we do a 1 day conf on how to get adjunct work, write a CV, etc. #MFAchat

Carla Spataro @cjspataro

@LeachWriter @Rosemont_MFA we also bring in 1st year writing dir who do hiring so students know what to expect. Our alums work all over!

David Leach @LeachWriter

@cjspataro @Rosemont_MFA Thanks! I like the conference idea....

Julie Sheehan @thebarbook

Yep, Stony Brook Southampton has grueling teaching practicum. I know b/c I teach it. #MFAchat

kimWICKedwitch @kimannjosouth

Anyone interested in applying to a CW PhD program post MFA/[MA] this year, let me know! I love mine. #MFAchat
I was considering an MPhil degree from European programs. Is this degree much less prestigious than an MFA? #MFAchat

@josiahbohnsack Although publication is still seen as being a good equivalent to MFA, MA, MPhil, PhD.... /3

@JOD45 I really like the programs and faculty at Trinity and Cork, but I didn't know how they translated on the American Market.

@josiahbohnsack Me neither - but I should think there'd be Irish-friendly Am universities - round Boston, Chicago, New York? - which would -

@josiahbohnsack MPhils are - you probably know - one down from DPhils or PhDs. TCD (Dublin) run a program, as do other unis. A good degree/1
@josiahbohnsack ... rate TCD in particular? Check out also Limerick - Joe O'Connor is running the MA there and he is tip top.

John O'Donoghue @JOD45

@josiahbohnsack I think Europeans might look down slightly on the MFA. The MA and PhD are often the terminal degrees that matter... /2

Steph Vanderslice @wordamour

@josiahbohnsack Just different. Message me what programs you're considering, some are quite helpful esp if you're interested in publishing.

EDML @exclamate

If you have a partner coming with you, the location can also dictate their ability to get a job. #MFAChat

EDML @exclamate

I was lucky that my husband (@usyboroda) ended up getting a job at @awpwriter! #fulldisclosure #MFAChat

Diane Zinna @DianeZinna

1/2: @LauraKasischke: “I couldn’t have become a writer if I hadn’t studied with X, met X...been encouraged by __.” #MFAChat
2/2: @LauraKasischke: “The blanks, I’m sure, could be filled with anything as long as they do not remain blank.” #MFAchat

At K-State, almost all of our MA students get funding, teaching experience, and teaching training, along with health insurance. #MFAchat

Rather than denouncing genre fiction (SF, crime etc.) instructors should just acknowledge they're not competent to teach it. #MFAchat

@NMamatas #MFAchat Profs need to be open to all genres. Not my business to tell you what to be passionate about, just help you write better.

@nmamatas re: genre fiction #mfachat We've had some good discussions in our new program about genre writing. We're open if also literary.

@NMamatas I think I really lucked out here. My program was one of few with lots of experimental and genre/"genre bending" teachers #MFAchat
@jlikesbooks @TheLincoln which one did you attend, by the by?

@jlikesbooks @TheLincoln Yes, which did you attend? I bet that's the info people following #MFAchat would like to know.

@jlikesbooks @TheLincoln Columbia. At time, we had Kelly Link, Ben Marcus, Victor LaValle, etc. Still leaned "lit fic", but was very open

@jlikesbooks @TheLincoln And glancing at the current faculty, it's still that way.

@DianeZinna AWP's Mentorship Program, Writer to Writer: http://tinyurl.com/pjtpcrt #MFAChat
On the Creative Writing MA @EdinburghNapier in Scotland we specialise in genre fiction, @NMamatas - SF, fantasy, mystery, horror #MFAchat

Or get with the program and the reading public, @NMamatas. I read a lot more literary genre work because of students' interest. #MFAchat

Yeah, get competent. But it can take a while—a few cohorts can march through a program by the time teachers are up to speed.

successful 21st c fiction is often crossover btwn lit & genre. Any programs better for this? #MFAchat

Always check the faculty. Them that does, may teach.
Leslie Pietrzyk @lesliepwriter

@elissafield @dan_hoyt @awpwriter @NMamatas Well, @ConverseMFA has a new YA track. And this is why I recommend reading faculty books.

TP @thranduilion

Liking this #MFAChat trajectories so far. Keep them coming, people!

SBShampton MFAWriter @SouthampWriters

The good news: visiting professors of poetry like Mark Doty, Martin Espada, Matthea Harvey. The bad news: letting go. #MFAChat

UCRLowResMFA @UCRPDLRMFA

An important thing when considering a low residency: is there a day where there's all you can eat ice cream? We have that. #MFAChat

The W's MFA in CW @TheW_MFACW

#MFAChat We're getting requests from international students. Would love to hear from other low-res programs about visa regulations.

Converse College MFA @ConverseMFA

Work w/faculty, agents, book & journal editors, visiting writers. Plus internships, TA spots. Our low res focuses on professional writer #MFAChat
How much does institutional location shape MFA experience? #UVic is in Fine Arts Faculty vs. English Dept/Humanities Faculty. #MFAChat

A little esoteric for applicants, but this matters. #MFAChat

Creative writing PhDs are very different beasts from MFAs. It's best to get an MFA first. You'll be far more prepared. #MFAChat

The MFA makes u look like a strange bird outside of academia. think abt how u can spin yr skills to future non-academic employers #MFAChat

This is super important. We try to teach a bit of life skills, too -- so that people know how to get a real job, too. #MFAChat
gigantic sequins @GIGANTICsequins

We are following along with the #MFAchat right now! How many GS eds have an MFA? 3! 2 w/ MAs.

SBShampton MFAWriter @SouthampWriters

The good news: fiction faculty Ursula Hegi, Susan Scarf Merrell, Melissa Bank. The bad news: a surfeit of attention. #MFAChat

New School Writing @NewSchoolWrites

Our courses meet on weeknights from 8:00-10:00pm, with optional weekend courses. We train working writers. #MFAchat

jen! @JenniferMWolff

#MFAchat is making my heart ache with its loveliness & my own sense of longing to do an MFA in writing. You're all wonderful.

Leslie Pietrzyk @lesliewriter

@JenniferMWolff I can tell that you will excel wherever you land with such an open attitude!
Thank you! Not sure an MFA is in the cards due to finances/location, but it's still my dream. #MFChat

Try part time low-res. Location less relevant, though it helps if travel costs are low. (We're in MS). Low tuition.

I understand. Best of luck to you! Also consider non-degree options like workshops and conferences. Many have scholarships.

Definitely! I've only recently reignited my original passion for the craft, so am exploring furtively at this point. Thank you!
Had resigned myself to a life of professional & tech writing (& very successful/pleasant career), but I want to do more. 😊

Nothing wrong with professional and tech writing, but it's great to combine with your passion for literature.

Absolutely. I love my career & that it opened so many doors for me, & can now freelance. Now I want to stoke the creative fire!

Our program can be done part-time with as few as 3 hours per semester (takes 6 years). Look for one that fits your needs.

Or look for a writing community outside of academia if you don't need the degree. There are other ways to be a writer.
@TheW_MFACW I'll definitely explore your program more. At this point, 6yrs is nothing to finish, ha. & Agree completely w/other communities!

@jennifermwolff Yes, and if you find something nearer to home, you should go for it. I've discussed our program because it's what I know.

@TheW_MFACW Your input has been very helpful, and much appreciated. Not everyone takes the time to give such thoughtful advice.

@jennifermwolff Thanks. I try… Did you see our Guide for Applicants? http://www.muw.edu/images/colleges/as/lp/MFAGuideForApplicants.pdf … I put it together using some blog posts.

@TheW_MFACW Brilliant! Thank you! You & #MFAChat have done so much for me today. A bounty of wonderful resources.
Emily Lundgren @emslun

Also @NEOMFA (especially the YSU gateway with @Cbarzak) has shown to be a welcoming space for sci-fi/fantasy/genre writers! #MFAchat

Annie Frazier @BijouAnnie

Low Res is a great option for those who can't relocate. Loving @spalding_mfa to bits so far! #MFAchat

The W's MFA in CW @TheW_MFACW

"@BijouAnnie: Low Res is a great option for those who can't relocate." #MFAchat I advise if you can relocate, do; if not, the low-res.

Leanna J Blackwell @baypathmfaCNF

@TheW_MFACW @BijouAnnie Low- and no-res an excellent option if you can't relocate. We are online with a summer intensive in Ireland. #mfachat

Tammie Rice @tlrice2

@baypathmfaCNF @TheW_MFACW @BijouAnnie Can I do this and Rome?! #MFAchat #TheW

@tlrice2 @baypathmfaCNF @bijouannie Are you asking me? We accept 6 hours of transfer credit. Let's look into it, if you want to.
You know me - it's the experience not the credit that I care about! Now, where to find the money...

Fun fact: for .5 time teaching appointment @uiowa we get paid ~$18K for 10 months, == ~$1800 a month. How does yr funding compare? #MFChat

roughly similar to how it is here at UMD.

Interesting! I did my BA @merrillcollege, and loved UMD. Cost of living is roughly 14% higher in College Park, tho #MFChat

(For reference: http://www.bestplaces.net/cost-of-living/iowa-city-ia/college-park-md/18000 ...) #MFChat
reu ilion why, yes. The rent in CP is nuts, and it's even crazier when you commute from DC like I do. Probs the only downfall.):

Brittany Borghi and there's always reading here, there, & everywhere, even one tailored for students

ey, the city is fun. It's just the rent that is not. The MFA life's great here, supportive profs & quirky classmates & all

Merrill College Great to count you as a grad, Brittany!
Other important questions about low res MFAs: Do you have to share a bathroom? Are the beds gross? What's the situation with ticks? #MFAchat

And ticks.

See? We don't even know how to spell ticks, that's how few we get.

If you spell it, they will come.

To answer: No! You're staying at a resort! No! You're staying at a resort! No! You need to worry about sunburn. #MFAchat

The whole "go to an M.F.A. program only when you have a book you want to write" thing has never made much sense to me either. #MFAchat
1. The book I would've started when I began my M.F.A. is very different (read: worse) than the one I'm writing now. #MFChat

2. If you already have a book idea, why not...just...write...it? #MFChat

@lesliepwriter A good teacher/program will shortcut you through the learning process, will teach what you don't know you don't know. #MFChat

@awpwriter MFAs are much more about craft than about generating ideas. But of course anyone who wants to write a book should!

3. Imagining you need to have a ride-or-die, capital-I Idea in order to deserve a shot at an M.F.A. may mean you never even apply. #MFChat

4. You'll learn in ways you can't foresee. My work got better when I started trusting that process. And letting myself fuck up, too #MFChat
I don't think most people do, yet I frequ. encountered this advice. Maybe "go only if" advice should not be so black & white.

"go only ifs" are nonsense. Except where funding is concerned. That's the one "go only if" I whole-heartedly believe.

Esp if (as happens), once in program, your book idea evaporates; you find other form, genre, project more compelling. #MFAchat

I've actually heard this argument more and more lately. It's an interesting response to what the programs are for.

Like saying learn to play the guitar only when you have a song to write. #MFAchat
@jennasauers that's right only study architecture if you know what building you want to design, makes no sense

@carmenmmachado THIS. I didn't figure out what kind of writer I wanted to be (/was) until halfway through my MFA. #MFAchat

@carmenmmachado TOTALLY. Went into my MFA with one vision, came out with another. Grateful for change, growth, and possibility. #MFAchat

@TheLincoln What happened to that MFA ranking based on graduate placement in BASS/Pushcart/etc.? #MFAchat

@brandimwells shout out to Alabama (tuscaloosa) where i got my mfa and was funded four years. #MFAchat
Most likely will do a third year here. I applied to work with a writer I look up to, not just to graduate with another degree. #MFChat

The W's MFA in CW @TheW_MFACW

#mfachat One of our New Media projects was a GeoPoem started on Google Maps and written on Twitter. [http://kendalldunkelberg.com/2015/10/16/a-geopoem-project-in-columbus-ms/](http://kendalldunkelberg.com/2015/10/16/a-geopoem-project-in-columbus-ms/)

David Schuman @d_schuman

Often students stay on in STL a few years after the MFA. Think about if the place you're going might be a place you might stay #MFChat

UsyBoroda @usyboroda

AWP’s annual conference is a great place to learn more about creative writing programs! #MFAChat

UsyBoroda @usyboroda

There are several panels at our #AWP16 that discuss MFA programs #MFAChat

Julie Sheehan @thebarbook

@usyboroda Patricia McCormick, @SouthampWriters faculty doing panel on innovations in kid lit at #AWP. #MFAChat
Julie Sheehan @thebarbook

@usyboroda @SouthampWriters Also check out current student @AHBonenberger on war memoir at #AWP #MFAchat

UsyBoroda @usyboroda

“The Meaning of Every(MFA)thing: Program Directors Tell All”
http://bit.ly/1Sk6JvA #MFAChat #AWP16

R282. The Meaning of Every(MFA)thing: Program Directors Tell All

Room 410, LA Convention Center, Meeting Room Level
Thursday, March 31, 2016
4:30 pm to 5:45 pm

Directors of five renowned MFA programs talk frankly about all aspects of the application process, from how to narrow the field for your applications and when and why to embark on an MFA to how to prepare the most effective and successful application—including a discussion of writing samples and personal statements—and how to choose from among the programs to which you’ve been admitted and how to navigate waiting lists. We’ll talk about variations among programs and answer all your questions.
“Full-Residency, Low-Residency, Online: The MFA Student and Faculty Experience”
http://bit.ly/1Q6WYEM  #MFAChat

Our annual conference is also an opportunity to meet faculty, students, and alumni from schools you are interested in. #MFAChat

The @ubccrwr optional residency MFA produces a huge # of published writers. Distinguished faculty, rigorous courses @UBC @awpwriter #MFAchat
Annie Frazier @BijouAnnie

VISIT before applying. Ask students as many detailed questions as possible. Talk to faculty (but, you know, be cool about it). #MFAchat

SMC MFA Program @smcmfa

we recently partnered w @kearnystreet & @writehedgebrook to offer new community sponsored scholarships #MFAChat @awpwriter

SMC MFA Program @smcmfa

@kearnystreet @writehedgebrook @awpwriter more details here: http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/mfa-in-creative-writing/prospective-students/funding/scholarships-0 . . . #MFAChat

Silas Hansen @silas_hansen

I have lots of thoughts re: #MFAChat. When deciding btwn offers, look for relatively equal funding among students--positive community.

Silas Hansen @silas_hansen

You want readers/classmates who will be supportive of your accomplishments--not ones who see you as competition for better funding. #MFAChat
Holly Vanderhaar @HollyVanderhaar

@silas_hansen CO-SIGNED. It makes a huge difference in morale when you're not fighting over basic funding. #MFAchat

Brittany Borghi @brittany_borghi 3m3 minutes ago

Brittany Borghi Retweeted Iowa Admissions

PLUS, LOOK AT IT. #beauty #midwestisbest #IowaBrag #midwest #MFAchat #nonficnov @awpwriter @uiowa @UIowaCLAS

Iowa Admissions @IowaAdmissions

Hope everyone is enjoying this perfect fall day in downtown Iowa City! 🍂🌞
Are there #MFA programs that teach / integrate digital impact on creative writing, interactive writing, hyperlit, etc.? #MFAChat

@leachwriter Yes. Ours has a class. Rochester Institute of Technology is proposing one focused on digital lit. I've heard of others.

@LeachWriter I am doing that this semester in Writing for New Media! #MFAChat

Having a supportive community is essential for graduate creative writing programs. See what the community is like before you apply. #MFAChat

Do not take on debt to get an MFA. Do not take on debt to get an MFA. Do not take on debt to get an MFA. Sideways-8. #MFAChat
I did, but then I started playing more poker... #MFAchat

And @LitReactor has writer/instructors/professionals you can't find at any school, plus peer reviews that trump the avg. MFA class #MFAchat

I know a LOT of writers who openly regret going for their MFA. A lot. #mfachat

@PeterKispert Peter, why? Time lost? Cost? Corrupted focus? Not the outcome they wanted? I'm curious. #MFAchat

A few of my friends went straight from a BA in CW to an MFA. They're a little burnt out. It's amazing but tiring
@exclamate  There's something to be said for getting out and living/writing on your own between bach & masters. Find ur next need. #MFAchat

Steph Vanderslice @wordamour

@elissafield @exclamate  Agree, even though I didn't and it worked out for me. That was 25 years ago though. If I had it to do over though-

Elissa Field @elissafield

@wordamour @exclamate  All diff right? I wasn't ready ideawise to write strt fr BA. Found voice, pract'd novel, more ready for MFA. #MFAchat

SBShampton MFAWriter @SouthampWriters

The good news: fine-tune your work during our summer conference in the Hamptons. The bad news: you can’t stay all summer #MFAChat

Michael Nye @mpnye

Consider cost of living. $$$ is a huge stress already w/o worrying about being a grad student. #MFAchat

EDML @exclamate

Talk to students about what it's like at their program. Do they actually have time to write? Do they feel supported? #MFAChat
I've heard more than one story about writers who end up feeling like they're just by themselves writing. Not the MFA-goal, I'd say. #MFAChat

@exclamate  This makes me very sad. Nooooooo! #MFAChat

@d_schuman  and also, what is life like on campus, in town. Is there a scene beyond the university. Reading series off campus? #MFAChat

@exclamate  speaking of reading series-ours is on fire this yr to celebrate our 20th: http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/mfa-in-creative-writing/creative-writing-reading-series ... #MFAChat

@PeterKispert  Guess where else you can find talented peers to help you w your writing? Online. #mfachat
The big thing: get an MFA because you NEED it, not because you want it. You have to need the instruction, need the transformation. #MFAchat

JohnCabot University @JohnCabotRome

If your MFA program accepts transfer credit, try studying abroad in Rome, grad-style. http://ow.ly/UcHGI #MFAChat

Tammie Rice @tlrice2

@JohnCabotRome I can be back there in about 16 hours! #MFAChat @TheW_MFACW #TheW

Alyse Bensel @leaseandleaves

Does the program you're applying to let MFA/MA students teach more than comp? Because they should. #MFAchat

Call and talk to the program director. See if you like them. It's important. That's the person whose philosophy guides the program. #MFAchat
Pro-tip: don't call the program director at home, however, if you find their # online. Just, you know, from experience. #MFAchat

Leanna J Blackwell @baymentmfaCNF

@UCRPDLRHMFA Excellent advice.DO call the program director & ask about his/her teaching philosophy. Most are very happy to share it. #mfachat

Christopher R Alonso @ChrisRA Alonso

My biggest concern when applying was finding instructors that were receptive to the kind of writing I like. Research your pros. #MFAchat

Daniel A. Hoyt @dan_hoyt

I'd actually talk to them on the phone, if possible, @ChrisRA Alonso. #MFAchat

Christopher R Alonso @ChrisRA Alonso

@dan_hoyt Definitely! My current instructor actually called me. I'm with the program I'm in now. Took a little while, but I'm here.

Daniel A. Hoyt @dan_hoyt

@ChrisRA Alonso That's great, Chris. Hope it's a good fit!
Christopher R Alonso @ChrisRAlonso

@dan_hoyt Thank you! I appreciate the well wishes

Christopher R Alonso @ChrisRAlonso

I'm very happy where I'm at now. I'm happy that my instructor and colleagues are supportive and encouraging and as dorky as me. #MFAchat

Michael Nye @mpnye

A graduate program is only the beginning, not the end all and be all, of a writing life. When it's over you'll ask "Now what?" #MFAchat

Jeannette Ronson @jeannetteronson

#MFAchat The MFA program is only the beginning. You can be totally changed from it IF you put the work into writing.

The W's MFA in CW @TheW_MFACW

“@mpnye: A graduate program is only the beginning” #MFAchat It should be the launchpad for a writing life (or booster rocket), not the end.

Steph Vanderslice @wordamour

Answered by @FairfieldUMFA book of the same name. @mpnye
Michael Nye @mpnye

Noted! @wordamour @FairfieldUMFA #MFAchat
http://www.fairfield.edu/academics/schoolscollegescenters/collegeofartssciences/graduateprograms/mfaincreativewriting/lifeafterthemfa/

New School Writing @NewSchoolWrites

MFA Dir. @LuisRJaramillo + faculty @easyreeder teach the Writing & Publishing Lab, training students on emerging digital media. #MFAchat

EDML @exclamate

Once at the MFA, immerse yourself in the writing community. Go to readings! Work for your MFA's lit mag! Don't be apathetic! #MFAChat

Carla Spataro @cjspataro

@exclamate #MFAchat excellent advice! To be a part of the community you have to engage--it won't come to you! Network! @Rosemont_MFA

JohnCabot University @JohnCabotRome

Our visiting CW grad students this summer will get to work with our Writer in Residence, Susan Minot. #MFAChat
What do you love most about your MFA? For me, the answer is our students: already doing great work & their interactions are great.

If you have a disability, be aware of accessibility issues & ableism in MFA programs. It's a rampant problem.

Here's some real talk: don't underestimate the value of location, especially NYC. I'll get flack for that, but it's true.

@TheLincoln and not (just) because of "connections," but also being immersed in a writing community outside of the MFA bubble.

Agreed. It's a big trade-off against a funded program, but it can be worth it.

@TheLincoln on the other hand, an intense program can give you barely time to breathe, let alone get out to readings & events.
Sometimes it can be difficult to find programs (esp. MFAs) that allow hybrid/cross-genre work. Reach out to faculty and ask! #MFAchat

So glad to hear other programs allow hybrid work! At #KU it is definitely permitted, for both the MFA and PhD. #MFAchat

“@leaseandleaves: Sometimes it can be difficult to find programs that allow hybrid/cross-genre work.” #MFAChat We allow cross/mixed theses.

true. i (@CandaceErosDiaz) am a cross-genre writer & found a safe, nurturing place @smcmfa. #MFAChat

hybrid work shouldn't just be permitted, it should be encouraged! #MFAchat
**English@CardiffMet @English_CMet**

@**davidbishop** @**leaseandleaves** yay! We are just starting a Centre for New and Experimental Writing that will totally encourage it #MFAchat

![Alyse Bensel @leaseandleaves](image)

@**davidbishop** Oh, it is! We have faculty who engage in hybrid forms, and the program offers a mixed forms workshop! #MFAchat #KU

![Julie Sheehan @thebarbook](image)

@**leaseandleaves** same at @**SBSouthampton** #MFAchat

![David Schuman @d_schuman](image)

I also tend to think, the big coastal cities are tough--so much going on, distractions, etc. Not to disparage! Just a thought #MFAchat

![Diane Zinna @DianeZinna](image)

On faculty/fellow students: 1/2 @**powell_DA** says to think of the [MFA] years as barrel years..." #MFAChat

![Diane Zinna @DianeZinna](image)

2/2 @**powell_DA**: …Whatever poets have stained the inside of the barrels will influence whatever else is to come.” #MFAChat #Winereference!
Amy Stuart @AmyfStuart

I began @ubccrwr MFA w a small portfolio & graduated w 2 published stories, a novel draft, an agent & a great community #MFAchat @awpwriter

Lucas Mann @LucasWMann

#MFAchat If you can get funding, then go. If you can get funding for three years somewhere, take the extra year. Try to be nice to yourself.

Adam Clay @adam_clay

My MFA program was ideal because of the students there--profs were great, but the community of students really made the difference. #MFAchat

Adam Clay @adam_clay

I say reach out to current students to find out about experiences in terms of community, post-workshop gatherings, etc. @awpwriter #MFAchat

davidbishop @davidbishop

Creative MA @EdinburghNapier in UK building partnerships with like-minded US MFA programs toward student/credit swaps #MFAchat
I had a 3.0 GPA in undergrad, but feel it's not a great representation of my work. Is there hope for me? #MFAchat

@josiahbohnsack Yes. GPA is not a great indicator of your talent as a writer. Your writing sample, however, is. #MFAchat

@thebarbook @awpwriter @josiahbohnsack So do I need a BA or can I just submit past work in the application?

@thebarbook @awpwriter @josiahbohnsack Although if your GPA is poor in writing courses, that is usually a red flag.

@wordamour @thebarbook good to know. It was math that brought me down. It always is.
What truly matters when applying to MFA programs is the writing sample. It is THE MOST important thing.

If your writing sample shows real promise, I wouldn't worry about a 3.0.

Yes! Our limit is 3.0, but we have provisionally admitted students with lower. Writing and work post-BA help.

If it all works out, you'll end up a MASTER of the FINE ARTS. (Disclosure: cats can't get MFAs.)
Paige Sullivan @BPaigeSullivan

I def agree that seeking out funding, a teaching position, and chances to work on publications are what make an MFA worthwhile. #MFAchat
Julie Sheehan @thebarbook

@SouthamptonRevi @SouthampWriters we offer lit mag & opportunity to teach undergrad cr wrting @stonybrooku #MFAchat

Danielle Lazarin @d_lazarin

Some good advice coming through #MFAchat. Cosign on fully-funded programs, not straight after undergrad, & life beyond the MFA.

Danielle Lazarin @d_lazarin

Other things to know: you may not want to teach after. Name recognition of faculty is irrelevant. Good teachers may be new to you. #mfachat

Lisa Romeo @LisaRomeo

@d_lazarin When researching faculty, some names were new. I talked to them, read their work, asked students & alum about them #MFAchat

Danielle Lazarin @d_lazarin

@LisaRomeo Yes, talking to students & alum is key. I learned that some faculty whose work I adored weren't accessible to students.
(1) Location may be important, but your commitment to furthering your craft is paramount. #MFAchat

(2) In today's virtual world, you're only limited by your own efforts (or lack thereof). #MFAchat

You will likely not be making $100k post-MFA. It's the rewards of active discussion, care, and community that you'll reap. #MFChat

I now have dear friends in these states: Washington, Arizona, New Mexico, New Jersey, California, Utah, Minnesota, & even Alaska! #MFChat

Beyond funding, faculty, and programming, I've benefitted from being in a community of writers unparalleled anywhere in the country #MFChat

Right. Your MFA classmates (and to some degree, faculty) form the bedrock of your post-MFA writing community. #MFChat
Max Rubin @SoupRubin

@LisaRomeo definitely. Can't imagine a stronger group of readers.

Bryan Bliss @brainbliss

If you're looking for a great MFA program, may I suggest Seattle Pacific. I can't even explain the
difference it made to my writing #MFAchat

Doug Paul Case @dougpaulcase

Literally the only reasons you need an MFA are time and to have teaching credentials should
your book do well enough for a TT job. #mfachat

@dougpaulcase Reason for MFA: not teaching creds, but writing creds. Time to write;
Also learn the profession & careers other than teaching.

@dougpaulcase Reason for MFA: not teaching creds, but writing creds. Learn the
profession & careers other than teaching. #MFAChat
Long Day Press @longdaypress

How important are previous publications when applying? Does it help to declare your publications (if you're not just bragging)? #MFAchat

Adam Clay @adam__clay

Working with profs who write poems/prose completely different from your current style is ideal. An MFA is a chance to experiment #mfachat

UCRLowResMFA @UCRPDLRMFA

Let's do some pimping, shall we? Who is the only member of congress with an MFA in Creative Writing? @RepMarkTakano! #MFAchat

Diane Zinna @DianeZinna

1/2: I often hear people say they want to attend an MFA program to have that “built-in” community for the rest of their lives... #MFAChat

Diane Zinna @DianeZinna

2/2: Finding a lifelong writing community is difficult. Attending an MFA program won't guarantee that. #MFAChat

David Schuman @d_schuman

@DianeZinna but can definitely help #MFAchat
Advice on deciding how many programs to apply to--how bad do you want to go and how bad do you want to go NOW. A lot = more apps #MFAchat

Location matters, but not always in the ways you think, and places are often not what you expect if you haven't spent time there. #MFAchat

Agreed; Corvallis didn't seem "exciting" at first, making it the perfect place to write for me. Also nature. #MFAchat

@lesliepwriter @awpwriter I asked NYU MFA in Paris. For privacy would not put me in touch w/ students or grads. That's not normal? #mfachat

Honestly, I'd be leery. Our dir asks students if they are willing to talk to prospective students.
Yes. I want to talk to ppl about actual experience, not party line. They said for privacy reasons they couldn't.

Ugh. Red flag. I hope you have some other programs you're excited about!

they must have a reason why. ask. seems odd tho, yes. #MFAChat

Usually recommend applicants apply to a range of programs, not just in terms of tiers but also in program size, other factors. #MFAchat

oooh *rubs hands together*

Have any specific questions for me? I have opinions. Feel free to ask! #MFAChat
More: “Why the Hell Wouldja Choose an MFA Program Anyways?” @Powell_DA
http://bit.ly/1P6s682 #MFAChat

1/2: “Rankings don’t matter if you feel the school’s a good fit.”— @elizmccracken

2/2: “Rankings matter even less if you feel it’s a bad one.”— @elizmccracken

Adam Clay @adam__clay

a 3 or 4 year program is best for writers just getting their footing, IMO. My first year went by
fast. Years 2-3 = wrote a ton #MFAchat

IAIALowRez @LowRezMFA

@DianeZinna You will compile these tweets into a single coherent document? I'm impressed.
I'd rather register grasshoppers to vote. #MFAchat

AWP @awpwriter

@LowRezMFA @DianeZinna Already up to 120 pages of tweets!
@LowRezMFA Our poor Webmaster: This is going to be terrible to archive, but I love seeing directors and admins answering questions! #MFAChat

davidbishop @davidbishop

#MFAchat programs should volunteer opportunities for applicants to Skype chat with current students and/or graduates - it's a big commit!

Nandini Balial @nandelabra

#MFAchat Should I apply to a program? Is it worth the student loan? Does it make you a happier person?

Converse College MFA @ConverseMFA

@nandelabra I can say I'm glad I did. It was the best choice I ever made, and not because of jobs, but what I learned/experienced #MFAchat

Gabrielle Freeman @TheLadyRandom

@ConverseMFA @nandelabra I fell in love with poetry all over again. Loans are hefty, but, for me, totally worth it. Love my Converse family.
I already owe six figures in loans. But apparently there are programs with funding?

I think I'd only do it if it helped me get a job. It's paramount, for me anyway.

omg only go if you get funding/apply to programs with funding

Yeah. And I don't know if those exist. I also didn't like college, so I'm thinking it's maybe not the best fit for me.

I am very pro mfa we can email about it you want more info

lots of those exist!
Karen Backstein @KarenatashaB

@nandelabra For writing?

Brak Lesnar @Moose_Bigelow

@nandelabra There was a big hubbub in @strangerslog about this. http://www.thestranger.com/books/features/2015/02/27/21792750/things-i-can-say-about-mfa-writing-programs-now-that-i-no-longer-teach-in-one ...

EverywhereAllTheTime @bani_amor

@MorganJerkins literally all white faces in #MFChat

Morgan Jerkins @MorganJerkins

@bani_amor *dives in*

SMC MFA Program @smcmfa

@bani_amor @MorganJerkins POC here representing @smcmfa, also an alumna of the program :) #MFChat #workingondiversity

P.E. Garcia @AvantGarcia

MFA programs are really #cool and #fun. #MFChat #predominatelywhite
Our MFA student-edited lit mag is @YemasseeJournal. Series: The Open Book, Fall Literary Festival, Shark's Parlor. Also town stuff. #MFAchat

The good news: Lou Ann Walker, Neal Gabler, and Roger Rosenblatt teach nonfiction. The bad news: those keen eyes on your work #MFAchat

Your first semester is going to be a nightmare. Hang in there #MFAchat

and embrace your time in a grad program. you'll never have as much time in your life to write and read as you do during an MFA. #MFAchat

@adam__clay #MFAchat @Rosemont_MFA So true. I also tell students to push themselves outside their comfort zone. Safest place to try is GS

Take advantage of EVERY opportunity available to you. Pick up visiting writers at the airport. No job too small. #MFAchat
Last one on #MFAChat, for prose folks: I'd be drawn by a program that makes room to teach the novel. Not done enough.

If you're a POC, there may be a moment when your white colleagues will not understand your characters. #MFAChat

This needs to change. #MFAChat

Take it all in stride. But at the same time, defend your work. Don't shy away from discomfort. It's useful for everyone. #MFAChat

I was the only black person in my incoming class and I was scared. I thought I was just a token. Don't be like me. #MFAChat

Oh, traumatic! I'm pushing for the day when we all recognize the individuality of the imagination. #MFAChat
@MorganJerkins @awpwriter Critiques and workshops are better with diverse classrooms! Thanks for encouraging others to be brave.

@jademoonsun what do you mean? Don't be scared? Don't accept tokenism?

In + out of workshop, make sure you work on finding YOUR voice. You're not a ventriloquist. Your colleagues will be able to tell. #MFAchat

I spent my first year trying to sound like a old white man. My most praised work came from me sounding like me. Imagine that. #MFAchat

Reach out to people. I emailed Junot Díaz for advice and a day later, he responded to me with this: Find your community. #MFAchat
Don't be ashamed if you've never read Didion or Munro. I came from a background of Russian and Japanese lit. You'll be just fine. #MFAchat

If you're a POC, don't be afraid to write in dialect. Force your white colleagues to read it. It needs to stay. #MFAchat

@MorganJerkins I've been told by readers outside my community that I was being disrespectful by using dialect. Forget that!

@MorganJerkins If a colleague is writing a character who shares your racial identity and something bothers you, speak up. #MFAchat

@MorganJerkins Thank you for this whole thread. I'm the only Hispanic in my program right now. Got some comments about some Spanish words.

@MorganJerkins Other than that, my favorite colleagues are supportive and ask questions and have been very welcoming.
How do words become mainstream? One way is usage, so I say use them!

Can I ask what they said?

asked if it was necessary since the story is written in English but set historically in a Spanish-speaking country

that's super basic. Just wow.

I kinda expected that. I'm going to keep the Spanish. Ain't nobody else who can roll these Rs like I can
@ChrisRAlonso dude, I've been told repeatedly in *poc only spaces* to change my Spanish words. We end doing what makes sense for the work.

Christopher R Alonso @ChrisRAlonso

@bani_amor Damn! I definitely see where the Spanish doesn't fit, and I see where it does, and that's where I'll put it. You do you!

seelight @seelight

@MorganJerkins Yes! And support fellow writers of color who speak up in class!

Morgan Jerkins @MorganJerkins

Do not just say a white colleague's POC character is "problematic". Lay it out clearly so that he or she can learn. #MFAchat

Just zis guy you know? @GRIMACHU

@MorganJerkins #MFAchat Despite the borderline racist tone of much of this, that's sound advice. Dismissal is just frustrating as hell.

Morgan Jerkins @MorganJerkins
POCs, gorge yourself on the works of those who look like you. The boldness will rub off on you, trust me. #MFAchat

Morgan Jerkins @MorganJerkins

Dig deep. You think you have your limits but you can go further. It feels like heart surgery but you will thank yourself later. #MFAchat

Stephen J Furlong @BeenASon24

Community is vital when it comes to MFA/MA work. While writing is a soloistic art, it thrives when dedicated people work together #MFAChat

Rachael Warecki @RachaelLaWriter

My MFA program brought me a community of like-minded writers, now some of my best friends. Wouldn't have met them otherwise. #MFAchat

Shannon H. Polson @ABorderLife

Most important thing: it's not about the MFA- it's abt the writing. #MFAchat

Adam Clay @adam_clay

start a magazines with yr fellow students. start a reading series. think literary citizenship. #MFAchat
Thanks, @DianeZinna, @awpwriter, and everyone who participated. Great questions and advice. #MFAchat

Don't over estimate how little it matters if you live or work in NY. #MFAchat

You may think you know what kind of writer you are, but understand you might come out the other side completely not that thing #MFAchat

@SoupRubin and also my writing sample is NOTHING like what I've ended up pursuing in my writing

@SoupRubin And part of that is allowing a faculty member who doesn't share your aesthetic to get under your skin and challenge you #MFAchat
Holly Vanderhaar @HollyVanderhaar

1/2 Speaking as an MFA and now an MFA Prog. Coordinator: Don't go into huge debt. Funding matters. #MFAchat

Holly Vanderhaar @HollyVanderhaar 8m8 minutes ago

2/2 And the big-name faculty who drew u to the program may work with only a few students, or not teach regularly. Research ALL fac. #MFAchat

Paige Sullivan @BPaigeSullivan

I also would research - is the program studio, or studio-academic? No idea that @gsucw was studio-academic, but I love the rigor! #MFAchat

Michael Beeman @MichaelBeeman

Want to keep your day job? Consider a low-residency MFA program. #MFAchat

Nick Mamatas @NMamatas

Don't write stories about the person in workshop you want to have sex with. #MFAchat

Diane Zinna @DianeZinna

Let's end with this: Alumni and current students, what do you wish you knew when you were looking for programs to apply to? #MFAChat
@DianeZinna Say yes to the optional and or tough stuff. Get in the DIScomfort zone. That's where good things happen to yr writing. #MFAchat

@DianeZinna Nothing. Whatever missteps I made ultimately got me to a good spot, and my program, whatever its flaws, helped me do that.

@DianeZinna As an alum (University of Montana) long ago, I wish I'd known how fast the two (in my case) years would pass. #MFAchat

@DianeZinna I was in Montana for the first time in 15 years and realized how significant, intense, and magical those years were. #MFAchat

@DianeZinna Easy! Wish I had known how to submit, where, and to whom. My MFA was 100% craft. I had to learn the rest on my own after. #mfachat
@DianeZinna Mine too! They stapled-together photocopies on publishing with the title, "Trade Secrets" in my mailbox grad day. #MFACHAT

@baypathmfaCNF Oh no! Awful! That's one reason I'm so gung-ho about helping students understand publishing before they graduate. #mfachat

Joshua Bohnsack @josiahbohnsack

Despite each program's preference, generally, does one long story or two shorter stories provide a better sample? #MFAchat

Tasha Cotter @TashCotter

I'd highly recommend taking a class in a different genre. It could be a turning point for you! #MFAchat

Lisa Romeo @LisaRomeo

Great advice. I am a CNF writer, but some of my best aha moments came in a poetry or fiction seminar. #MFAchat
Article by @jpoch discusses MA vs. MFA [http://bit.ly/1LMES7P](http://bit.ly/1LMES7P) #MFAChat

“students should take into account so much more than prestige and, in some cases, ancient history”

Okay wait, one more for #MFAChat! I clicked my way through the math section of my GRE. Single digit score. Still got into good programs.

@d_lazarin Me, too! #mfachat
“@d_lazarin: #MFAchat! [Low] math .. score. Still got into good programs.” Yep. We don't require GRE. Many MFA's don't either.

Nicole Byrne @nicolebyrnepoet

There's a lot of opportunities available to you in grad school that aren't directly related to your MFA. Take advantage of those. #MFAchat

UCRLowResMFA @UCRPDLRMFA

Other random thoughts: make sure you're in a program that lets you write what you want to write, not what they want to read #MFAchat

IAIALowRez @LowRezMFA

After the tweets settle, questions for the Institute of American Indian Arts' low residency MFA can be addressed to jdavis@iaia.edu #MFAchat

davidbishop @davidbishop

#MFAchat working at a UK university, I'm still amazed many US universities charge people to apply! Volume/admin nightmare I know, but still.
Paige Sullivan @BPaigeSullivan

I will also say that teaching a full load and juggling your writing can be a feat -- let alone finding time to submit! #MFAchat

Carla Spataro @cjspataro

@BPaigeSullivan #MFAchat Yes! @Rosemont MFA offers a class called surviving as a writer that helps students get ready for that challenge!

Michael Nye @mpnye

Be humble going into a grad program. If you knew everything, you wouldn't need to go. #MFAchat

Tasha Cotter @TashCotter

At the @BGWritersStudio I took courses in fiction and poetry. Loved that the faculty were so encouraging & supportive. #MFAchat

Michael Nye @mpnye

Ultimately, the person responsible for your writing is you. Programs and communities help, but, face it, writing is a solitary art. #MFAchat

David Schuman @d_schuman

@mpnye and often it's solitary and very much not art...#MFAchat
Dedicate yourself to increasing the diversity in your program. DO WHAT IT TAKES.

Broadly I'd say a graduate program will make you a better writer and, if you can, you should go to one.

for those unable to attend for whatever reason so many other ways to learn craft and grow community

places like Seattle's @HugoHouse and Boston's @grubstreet, great online options and conferences

Agreed: Sackett too, and it seems like most large cities now have communities like these.
Sorry, should have been @mpnye @HugoHouse @GrubWriters #MFAchat

Thanks @ABorderLife! Our Novel & Memoir Incubators are also a good option for finishing book-length work with supportive community #MFAchat

I'd also avoid going to a program for a SINGLE teacher you love, but definitely go to program with a diverse set of great teachers #MFAchat

Research, research, research programs! Don't be afraid to reach out to faculty and students! Only apply to fully-funded programs! #MFAchat

So many great tweets, we can't keep up with retweeting them! #MFAchat
The ego is always the enemy: writers who want their work "torn apart" are just as narcissistic as those who only want praise. #MFAchat

Put a novelist on your poetry thesis panel. Put a poet on your novel thesis panel. Learn from the other. #MFAchat

Knowing why you want a MFA program is crucial to choosing the right one for you. What do you want from your time there? #MFAchat

OMG guys an MFA is not going to make you a writer. You are or you're not, will be or won't. #MFAchat

Watching #MFAchat with interest, now that I've joined the faculty of an MFA program for the first time (@VCFA)! So interesting.

We're happy to have #MFAchat any time! Feel free to email with questions: palmdesertmfa@ucr.edu or just send us questions here.
Make sure to check out the lively conversation happening in #MFAchat right now.

Thanks @awpwriter #mfachat has been intense. Now let me look back over the hashtag to see what I missed!

I write more now with a career and two kids than I did during my MFA years. #MFAchat

@evelynalauer this is incredibly comforting! #MFAchat


Most important, of course, is workshop. I didn't move to fucking Iowa to go to cool parties. What happens in that room is it. #MFAchat
Jenna Sauers @jennasauers

When you're checking out a program, visit campus. Go to workshop. Do you like what you see and hear? That's really the only thing. #MFAchat

Max Rubin @SoupRubin

@jennasauers are you implying that 5 cheeseburger/week at George's is not as culturally fulfilling as the entire offerings of NYC?

Jenna Sauers @jennasauers

@SoupRubin why did you have to bring cheeseburgers into this

AWP @awpwriter

Thank you for joining us today for this #MFAchat! It's been amazing! Feel free to keep the great discussions going

AWP @awpwriter

Our next tweet chat will be in January. We'll chat about the #AWP16 bookfair. #MFAChat

Diane Zinna @DianeZinna

Thank you, everyone! That was exhausting and fun! More questions? Check out advice articles here: http://bit.ly/1l4nhzN. #MFAChat
Lilliam Rivera @lilliamr

Will have to check out the #MFAchat hashtag. Lot's of good advice.

Diane Josefowicz @dianegreco

Don't neglect courses in literary translation #mfachat

Michael Nye @mpnye

"Do it or don't. But I got some place I gotta be" - Marlo Stanfield on MFA programs #MFAchat #TheWire

davidbishop @davidbishop

#MFAchat interested in genre-fiction MA in UK? Here's the skinny on Creative Writing @EdinburghNapier http://macreativewriting.blogspot.co.uk/2015/05/updated-admissions-process-for-ma.html … #shamelessplug

UCRLowResMFA @UCRPDLRMFA

And if you want #MFAChat in real life: our fall residency Dec. 4-13th. Come visit. Email palmdesertmfa@ucr.edu for details/schedule

SMC MFA Program @smcmfa

happy to answer more questions re: @smcmfa or MFA's in general @ cd8@stmarys-ca.edu. Thanks so much @awpwriter & @DianeZinna #MFAChat
Scott Anderson @SMAnderson575

@awpwriter Too many young writers in MFA programs hardly/don't read much fiction. READ READ READ and then read some more #MFAchat

Kate North @katetnorth

I really enjoy teaching Novel Writing on the @English_CMet grad program, feel free to ask any questions #MFAchat

Marian Womack @beekeepermadrid

@Cambridge_Uni Master is low-residence & very well structured for full-time working students. I'm very happy in my 2nd year there. #MFAchat

Alyse Bensel @leaseandleaves

I'd love to chat more about #KU and Lawrence! We've got a lot going on in the graduate creative writing program #MFAchat

Heather Steadham @hbsteadham

When the "lit mag" you can work on in your program is the Oxford American . . . (Arkansas Writers MFA Workshop) #MFAchat @ARWritersMFA

Adam Clay @adam__clay

if you're lucky enough to only teach CW in your MFA program, ask to teach comp for at least a semester. You'll thank me later. #MFAchat
Annie Frazier @BijouAnnie

Want a mentor to read 175-250 pages of your fiction per semester? Check out @spalding_mfa. #MFAchat

Carla Spataro @cjspataro

#MFAchat happy to answer any questions about @Rosemont_MFA. Thanks to @awpwriter & @DianeZinna!

@DianeZinna @awpwriter Thank you for sparking such an awesome & inspiring discussion! #MFAchat

UCRLowResMFA @UCRPDLRMFA

Follow some of our faculty #MFAchat folks: @Elizabeth_Crane, @encurtido, @Ginafrangello, @todgoldberg, @JAEssbaum, @RobergeRob, @davidulin

UCRLowResMFA @UCRPDLRMFA

Follow even more of our faculty and alums #MFAchat people: @SGJ72, @NatashiaDeon, @Nicolucci1899, @ShadesShadows, @DeanneStilman2

David Schuman @d_schuman 2m2 minutes ago

A whirlwind and I forgot to tag #MFAchat like a thousand times but thanks @awpwriter! And feel free to get in touch with any questions.
South Carolina MFA @scMFA

Because we're small, we bring in visiting writers to read and give master classes. *Some* are listed here: http://tinyurl.com/pmlf4gz  #MFAchat

Annie Frazier @BijouAnnie

Try to find out what the workshop atmosphere is like before applying. #MFAchat

Marian Womack @beekeepermadrid

If you want to feel part of a community attend the @ClarionUCSD writers workshop #MFAchat

UCRLowResMFA @UCRPDLRMFA

And for all your information #MFAchat folks: http://palmdesertmfa.ucr.edu

Chelsea H Bryan @chelseahbryan

The biggest part of the experience besides teachers are peers: do go to visiting day to see if it's the right environment. #MFAchat

Leslie Pietrzyk @lesliepwriter

Thinking about an MFA or in the midst of apps? Check out #MFAchat hosted by @awpwriter for smart advice. #amwriting
Online MFA @Bay Path I have far more 1:1 w/ my students than I had w/ faculty in my low res. Not disparaging, just program design. #MFAchat

Also: went to a low-res MFA program, @AntiochLA. Allowed me to work full-time while also learning & writing. #MFAchat

@RachaelLaWriter yes, lots of our low res students work #MFAchat

A few #MFAchat thoughts:

1.) I'm very glad I didn't go to my MFA directly out of college, but I'm also glad that I didn't wait much longer than I did. #MFAchat

@carmenmmachado Yeah, you gotta wait until you've got the burn for school again.
Exactly! If I'd gone right out of college I would have been hella exhausted.

This is fantastic advice. Be sure to check out the whole detailed thread. #MFAchat

2.) I had NO IDEA what sort of writer I was going in. My style happened b/c smarter writers than me sensed what I was trying to do. #MFAchat

3.) Part of the reason I applied for MFAs when I did was because the economy sucked & I hated my job. I needed to Get Out. #MFAchat

4.) I am really grateful that I went to a program in a city with a low cost of living. (Almost went to Austin; so glad I didn't.) #MFAchat
5.) I'm very grateful I didn't take on debt for my MFA. Everyone's needs are different, but I think I made the right choice. #MFAchat

6.) There are more funded programs than you think. I could have spent $$$, but I waited an extra year & applied again & I'm glad. #MFAchat

7.) When you're looking at programs, don't necessarily shoot for big name faculty; fame can't predict how good a teacher is. #MFAchat

@l kz25 thanks for sharing Carmen Maria Machado, have a great Tuesday :) (insight by http://commun.it)

8.) Good teachers don't necessarily have to write in your genre/style; they have to be smart, well-read, and open-minded. #MFAchat
(This is true of fellow students, too. My best readers are themselves writers in a variety of genres, including realism.) #MFAnote

@carmenmmachado I agree! Had a big workshop two weeks ago and saw how receptive and thoughtful colleagues were, esp the realists. Realest.

But I loved getting my MFA. I had time to write & health insurance. I found my voice. I read a ton. I met amazing people. #MFAnote

Oh, another thing: don't rely on "chatter" about programs. Go straight to the source. Talk to current & recent students. #MFAnote

Wondering about a program's competitiveness? Genre-friendliness? Ability to help you during & after your program? Ask the students #MFAnote
Oh, and don't apply with samples that artificially cater to your perception of a program's tastes. Apply with your best work. #MFAchat

Don't be afraid to re-apply a second (or third) year! Readers change, luck changes. And in between, keep improving your writing! #MFAchat

@carumenmmachado I did exactly this and was literally multiple times more successful at round two. You get better with time.

Also: MFAs are not about "teaching writing." They're about giving writers time, space, advice, education, resources, community. #MFAchat

"Can writing be taught?" is not the right question here. It's "What could this writer do if she had the resources she needed?" #MFAchat
Like, my MFA program was the right set of resources for me at the right time in my life & career & writerly arc. #MFAchat

Also, the MFA is just the beginning. Plenty of people get them & stop writing. It's really about what you do afterwards. #MFAchat

Also, there are always more talented writers than there are slots in MFA programs. (This is true of magazines & residencies, too.) #MFAchat

There isn't infinite money for every writer with potential. So apply widely, don't get discouraged, and keep reading & writing. #MFAchat

Make sure you know WHY you're applying for an MFA. Do you want or need what it offers? #MFAchat
For example, if you want an MFA, you should love reading. If you don't, you're in the wrong field. #MFAchat

You also should have thoughts and feelings about literature as an art form--about aesthetic--however that looks. #MFAchat

And... I think that's it? Whew. But I can answer questions about MFAs, if you have them. I have A Lot of Feelings, obviously. #MFAchat

@carmenmmachado I am glad I follow you on Twitter. I am in the process of my first time applying to MFAs & love reading your thoughts! 0:

Getting 2/3 years to read&write is one of the best things you'll do. Don't blow it by being an asshole. #MFAchat
Leslie Pietrzyk @lesliepwriter

@awpwriter Shouldn't have stopped... #MFAchat just started trending! :)

IAIALowRez @LowRezMFA

@lesliepwriter @awpwriter Jon Stewart was in our sights! We had him. #MFAchat

Diane Zinna @DianeZinna

Yes! Another dream come true for me! (The first was getting my MFA, of course!) #MFAChat

UCRLowResMFA @UCRPDLRMFA

Write something that makes you happy. Don't be miserable doing this job. Be miserable in a cubicle. Be happy writing. #MFAchat

GrubStreet @GrubWriters

Yes! Though don't be miserable in a cubicle if you can help it #MFAchat

IAIALowRez @LowRezMFA

One thing that has surprised me about low residency programs is the intensity of the bonds between students. #MFAchat
Rachael Warecki @RachaelLaWriter

True. I have strong friendships with @ArtsCollide, @LimelightWendy, @K_Imani, etc. due to @AntiochLA. #MFAchat

Ashley Perez @ArtsCollide

@RachaelLaWriter @LimelightWendy @K_Imani @AntiochLA @LowRezMFA one of the best parts of the MFA experience

Rachael Warecki @RachaelLaWriter

#MFAchat Also true!

Heather Steadham @hsteadham

Don't be afraid to apply for fellowships--if you don't get them, maybe you'll still get noticed. #MFAchat

Joshua Bohnsack @josiahbohnsack 2m2 minutes ago

So much great advice with #MFAchat. Thanks all!

Anita Laydon Miller @AnitaLaydonMill

@jendellazanna Did you notice the #MFAchat discussion?
South Carolina MFA @scMFA

Thanks @awpwriter for hosting #MFAchat. We have to sign off now, but there's lots of info on our website: http://artsandsciences.sc.edu/engl/mfa-program-carolina ...

Ashley Strosnider @bravenewlady

Does everyone in #MFAchat already have a MFA? Is it "a MFA" or "an MFA?" So many questions.

The W's MFA in CW @TheW_MFACW

@bravenewlady #MFAchat It's an MFA. I think many using this hashtag direct programs or are in them, but it's also for those looking at them.

Laura Villareal @earthandstars

Funding & diversity were concerns when applying. Luckily, I ended up at @NewarkMFA which has both. #MFAchat

IAIALowRez @LowRezMFA

I skipped a meeting with the Dean to be here, so I better justify my time: http://www.iaia.edu/mfa will take you to our faculty. #MFAchat
Hope Jordan @hopejordannah

Going to writing conferences, then back to my normal life felt like starting an MFA and stopping it after a week, year after year #MFAchat

Blake Kimzey @BlakeKimzey

An MFA is not the destination. It can be a starting point (or way station). You don't deserve anything just because you enroll. #MFAchat

Carla Spataro @cjspataro

Just finished participating in my first twitter chat. Felt a little like being a puck in a hockey game, but really informative! #MFAchat

James Tate Hill @JamesTateHill

The #MFA is barely the beginning of your writing education, not the completion. #MFAchat

Amanda Miska @akmiska

#MFAchat just makes me feel bitter that there wasn't an active Twitter lit community in 2005 to tell me I was making a huge mistake

Vincent Scarpa @vincentscarpa

If you're on the wrong meds, your first year barely counts. #MFAchat
Jenna Sauers @jennasauers

This #MFAchat was fun. And, I hope, useful! Thanks @awpwriter

Emma Hutson @Emma_S_Hutson

Did my MA at @English_CMet - the lecturers really make a difference - interaction, support and innovation. #MFAchat

English@CardiffMet @English_CMet

@Emma_S_Hutson great to hear, so glad to provide a place for you to study before your next step onto a PhD! #mfachat

Emma Hutson @Emma_S_Hutson

@English_CMet I miss doing creative writing with you guys though! #MFAchat

HumanitiesCardiffMet @English_CMet

@Emma_S_Hutson the feeling is mutual!

Durre Shahwar @Durre_Shahwar

@Emma_S_Hutson @English_CMet Not to mention that they really know their stuff & are approachable, always make the time. #nostalgia
Yep! Creative writing workshops were brilliant. Don't get quite the same experience anywhere else. #MFAchat

I just found a wealth of interesting people to follow thanks to #MFAchat. I love how the Internet makes creative connections more viable.

Thanks to you too! Really enjoyed your input on #MFAchat. 😊

And, of course, SUBMIT SUBMIT SUBMIT. #MFAchat

This #MFAchat was fun. And, I hope, useful! Thanks @awpwriter

oh dear I just looked up the #MFAchat and confused myself all over again.
There are like 8 MFAs where agents will come sign you (or sign your friend, not you). You'll find an agent later when you're ready #MFAchat

@benhoffman also was in a program that brought agents in but wasn't in a rush for us to sign. Was told: write book first! #MFAchat

@benhoffman yes, even if your program brings in agents, agent is 99% gonna say, cool, keep going, get in touch when you have a book #MFAchat

Applicants do you know about the MFA Draft '16 on Facebook? I've had students who thought it helped. https://www.facebook.com/groups/228419750615188/ …

Don't expect a program to 'make you a writer.' Do the work you need to do to identify as a writer before you apply to grad school. #MFAchat

An MFA doesn't measure talent or skill. It measures whether or not you have the drive to devote your life, your being, to writing. #MFAchat
Some of you are likely MFA bound writers...Tod answered questions today during #MFAchat via @UCRPDLRMFA.

Emma Smith-Stevens @ESmithStevens

#MFAchat

The whole "debate" abt whether MFA programs have worth is absurd to me, esp funded MFAs. 3 yrs of being paid to write? That's a gift.

8/20/15, 9:48 PM

Amal El-Mohtar @tithenai

Check out @carmenmmachado's TL right now for #MFAchat thoughts. A lot of fantastic, succinct advice.

Midway Journal @MidwayJournal

If you haven’t, check out the #MFAchat on Twitter.
Most of what you learn in an #MFA & beyond is a result of your willingness to learn. #MFAchat

Unless it's free, don't. #MFAchat

#MFAchat Don't apply to #gradschool immediately after undergrad. #Travel, #Work, #Fail at something so you have something to write about.

We love seeing the great conversations around #MFAchat. Makes us happy to be a part of this community.

The less you think about #publishing, the more you can think about #writing, #MFAchat

I encourage students to remember that to publish is to join a community. Focus on that and it will come.
So busy reading submissions for our next print issue, we hardly noticed the new trend...What is this #MFAchat anyway?

@hungermtn #mfachat it was a tweetchat by @awpwriter to discuss MFA programs, applications, etc. Official time is over, but continuing.

@TheW_MFACW @awpwriter Thanks! Got our noses buried in stories over here, bummer to miss this Twitter trend though!

@hungermtn @awpwriter Scroll back through the hashtag #mfachat and you can see the whole conversation. A few people are still using it.

Also, this: #MFAChat trending!
David J. Rothman @Prosodisto

So I think I'm coming late to the party -- but what a great chat. #MFAchat

Nandini Balial @nandelabra

So this article makes me think I'm not qualified. #MFAchat
http://www.thestranger.com/books/features/2015/02/27/21792750/things-i-can-say-about-mfa-writing-programs-now-that-i-no-longer-teach-in-one ...
@nandelabra That article created quite a firestorm. Take it with a large grain of salt. You can learn a great deal in an MFA! #MFAchat

Andrea Gutierrez @AndreaGtrrz

@carmenmmachado So so true. @chrisabani said this to us in my first quarter in grad school. #MFAchat

Carmen Maria Machado @carmenmmachado

Someone once said that MFAs are like pressure cookers; they speed along a writer's process faster than if they hadn't taken one. #MFAchat

David J. Rothman @Prosodisto

@carmenmmachado #MFAchat ...and it sure beats Ramen...

Carmen Maria Machado @carmenmmachado

For me, that's apt. I think I could have been in my current place artistically eventually, but it would have taken 5+ more years. #MFAchat

Carmen Maria Machado @carmenmmachado

I think that's a useful metaphor. #MFAchat
Also, SF/F writers: Clarion & Clarion West offer similar, though not identical, benefits to an MFA. #MFChat

Clarion can give you similar access to teachers, advice, connections, & community. But w/o the funding & time, which is important. #MFChat

You can do both, either, or neither. It just depends what you want/need. I did both & it was a great combination. #MFChat

My program is at Western State Colorado University -- a low-res in the Rockies; 2-wk. July intensive. http://www.western.edu/academics/graduate/creative-writing . . . #MFChat

So yeah. Basically, write & read a ton, evaluate your wants & needs, do your research, & don't get discouraged. #MFChat

#mfachat happy to answer questions about low-residency challenges and benefits
Christine Hennessey  @TheNewChrissy

You don't need to go grad school right away! I started my #MFA program when I was 29 and was so glad I waited. #MFAchat

Leslie Jones  @leslesliele

I just read Harold Brodkey expound for 21 pages, mostly on oral sex... And it was awesome! (workshop assignment). #MFAchat

Steve Kistulentz  @kistulentz

Advice for possible grad students: ask. Will faculty be on leave? What help can I get outside workshop? Can I visit a class? #MFAchat

Steve Kistulentz  @kistulentz

Also ask: is MFA the right degree? MA more flexible, perhaps a better entry into PhD study. (disclaimer: I direct an MA program!) #MFAchat

Rathalla Review  @RathallaReview

Amazing conversations happening at #MFAChat! Search the hashtag for insights from @awpwriter @carmenmmachado @cjspataro @LisaRomeo

Emily Coon  @ehcoon

Check out the #MFAchat thread if you have questions/thoughts about MFAs. Moving across the country to begin mine was a good call.
Brittany Borghi @brittany_borghi

What are nonfiction writers @uiowa up to rn? Some Borges, some Whitney, some snacking, etc. #MFAchat @awpwriter

Leslie Jones @lesleslie

Mostly, we wear sweatpants with our concentration (poetry/fiction) stamped across the butt. #mfachat
@MorganJerkins Thank you for your insights in #MFAChat. Am applying to programs this year and found your words super helpful!

Hey #MFAChat people, Let's continue this conversation over a drink at #AWP16

how did i miss #MFAChat? I have things to say! And those things are: MFA debt is the worse. Also: Don't go straight to MFAs from undergrad.

@Mariad_kins good convo about mfa programs happening now on twitter at this hastag: #MFAChat

#MFAChat Find the biggest person in your program and beat them in a fight.
Unplug your thesis chair when fully charged to ensure longer battery life. #MFAChat

Biggest advice for MFA seekers: Don't go for it if you don't really, truly want it. Also don't take on (more) student loan debt. #MFAChat

Don't enroll in any MFA program, ever, that expects you to pay for it with student loans exclusively. Don't do that to your future. #MFAChat

the writer you admire the most is not necessarily the best teacher. Famous writers are also humans with issues, obsessions, flaws #MFAChat

the best teachers see what you're trying to accomplish, and coax you towards it. You walk away still writing like you, not them. #MFAChat

you don't need an MFA. It is a piece of paper that many people have. What you need is to observe, to be inspired, and to dream. #MFAChat
Looks like I missed the #MFAchat, but as a genre writer, going to Seton Hill was one of the best decisions I made. #SHUWPF

I start in January, @SamLienhard. I am really excited about attending the #SHUWPF program. #MFAchat

My MFA was the launching point into a career I love that uses writing as an essential skill: radio reporter and producer. #MFAchat

I dream of an MFA that would help me break the chains of fear that hold me back from speaking my truth. Need a community. #MFAchat

Looking back, wish I'd pursued a MFA in cw rather than pricier film directing/ screenwriting. Master of Fuzzy Aspirations? #MFAchat
Being taught to write like everyone else is super pricey. Ass in seat is free and you'll probably produce more work. #MFChat

Most, but not all, end up just treating it like a social club. Writing is lonely work unfortunately. Just gotta sit down and do it. #MFChat

A thesis, for example, is a book which, if it's your 1st, will probably stink. Better to write ur 1st shitty book without debt. #MFChat

There's also little chance it will lead to a teaching gig. Also, tenure track positions are an endangered species. #MFChat

In short, I've seen more mfa peeps tinker away endlessly with their terrible thesis while others grinded and eventually published #MFChat

That said if you can get a free ride, go for it #MFChat
Our advice (biased but human, from founders who know) is to pursue & invest in only that which assists you in doing what you love.

Yeah I know #MFAchat is over, but look: even one of @uiowa's writers can fix his computer.
My equation: (funding) (faculty) size + teaching load = the right school(s) for you #MFAchat

Take time away from academia after your undergrad, live life and discover yourself, and then apply for an MFA. #MFAchat

Well just so #MFAchat knows, yes, you can write a mass marketed (not as litfic) book while in top MFA programs. http://www.amazon.com/Every-Anxious-Wave-A-Novel/dp/1250067499 …

Golly, missed #MFAchat! All I have to say is: I am GLAD to have taken time off between undergrad and MFA.

Taking time off gave me perspective and discipline. It made me hungry and self-starting. My work gained breadth and depth. #MFAchat

Keep in mind I was a traditional-aged middle-class undergrad so if you're a different type of person, you might not need to. #MFAchat
Also: I LOVE being fully funded for 3 years in a quiet town. I'm easily distracted so it's easier for me to focus. Also money. #MFAchat

As I've told my students, being a writer depends on the practice. If you can't write before or after or without, it's meaningless. #MFAchat

Many comments on debt in #MFAchat yesterday got me looking. Here's an article about loan forgiveness programs.

One resource referenced in this article is http://www.saltmoney.org  — you have to sign up, but it appears to be free. #MFAchat

Still probably the most comprehensive place to get info on student loans is https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/. #MFAChat