

Hello, everyone. My name is Annabel Lyon. I'm a professor and the director of the School of Creative Writing here at UBC. I use pronouns she and hers.

I want to begin by acknowledging that the UBC Vancouver Point Grey campus where we're making these recordings is located on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the hənq̓əmin̓əḿ-speaking Musqueam people.

We are privileged to live, learn, and work on this land.

Let me start by talking a little bit about the general makeup of our program, who we are.

We're one of the oldest and largest creative writing programs in North America.

Our program is largely workshop-based, which means that most of the courses are small,

and they really focus on you generating work and bringing it in and sharing it with other students in the class.

the class. So it's very much studio based as opposed to, you know, for instance, seminar or theory based, although, you know,

workshop classes do, of course, include some reading and craft and theory. One of the real distinguishing features of our

program is the number of genres that we offer. We have 10 genres available, which is a really, you know, rich and amazing

array. As a student in the program, you'll have the opportunity to explore a number of them, you'll be required to work in a

a minimum of three genres.

The other-- or another distinguishing feature

of our program is that we offer hands-on paid teaching

experience through our TA positions

at our large undergraduate classes.

So that's an excellent opportunity for any of you

who may be interested in using the MFA degree as a gateway

into future teaching positions.

We also offer a lot of opportunities to connect with your peers and with professionals in industry through social events, through professional development opportunities and through work-learn positions, which my colleagues are going to discuss in more detail.

So ideal applicants, who are we looking for?

Who are you?

We're looking for applicants who are really interested in engaging with this multiple-genre approach that we have.

And we're also looking for people who are collaborative.

Because as I just mentioned, our workshops are very much focused on reading and writing and discussing each other's work.

We're interested also in people who want to challenge themselves and get out of their creative comfort zones.

So maybe you already have a lot of experience writing fiction and poetry, but you're interested in trying your hand at screenwriting or comics or nonfiction or any of the other genres that we offer.

And that's really that's what we're looking for.

You'd have a great experience here. That's the kind of creative outreach and experimentation that we're hoping to see from you.

Finally, we're a program that values diversity in our faculty, our staff, and our student body.

Diversity is a value we talk about a lot as instructors, how valuing diversity can manifest

in the way that we teach, for instance. We welcome students from around the world, Indigenous students,

LGBTQ and Two-Spirit students, students of color. There's been a lot written in the past decade or

so about how Ivy Park students in particular haven't always felt welcome in conventional

creative writing classrooms. As a faculty, we try to face towards those criticisms and address them

directly. We are committed to creating safe and productive learning spaces for all of our students,

no matter how you identify. I'm going to switch gears a little bit here and talk about the thesis,

which is a big component of our program that draws people to us. This is a capstone experience in the

program where you're going to be writing a book length or production length work in your given

genre. You're also in that experience going to be working directly one-on-one with a thesis

supervisor. We have faculty who can work with you across a range of genres and sub-genres. So in

fiction that could be literary or speculative or horror. In dramatic forms that could be screen,

TV, playwriting, web series. People can work with you in poetry, creative non-fiction, writing for

young adults, young people and children, theatre, graphic forms, songwriting. These are all, our

instructors are all practicing writers who have experience working in their own fields and who

would be working with you in a sustained mentorship process for you to finalize that MFA thesis.

Let's talk a little bit about the degree options that we offer. We have two streams in the MFA

program. The on-campus MFA program involves full-time study. This is typically a mixture of

synchronous and blended classes and occasionally asynchronous classes. And if you're not as deeply

immersed in the world of education, sort of right now as some of us are at the university,

you might not be as familiar with these terms as we are, but in a nutshell, synchronous classes meet live in real time. Asynchronous tends to be more text-based across a larger window of time that you can come to based on your own availability and blended classes will be a mixture of the two.

So our on-campus classes, you know, as you can probably guess, a lot of that came out of COVID.

As we're sort of coming out the other side of COVID, we are largely moving back to a synchronous

in-person model for our on-campus classes with a few exceptions. Our optional residency MFA

is where you can take the program from a distance. You can do it from anywhere in the world, and we

do have students around the world in our optional residency program. You could do it full-time or

part-time, and all of these classes are taught asynchronously. They're 27-hour classes. So,

for instance, your class might meet starting Wednesday 9 a.m. and run through Thursday at noon,

and you would participate based on your time zone availability, your schedule. You come in when you

can throughout that time. However, for both of these streams, the On-Campus and the Optres,

it's the same curriculum, the same number of genres, there's no difference in the in terms

of the kinds of classes that you would take, the number of credits, the degree is the same in the

end. It's just a distinction between, you know, the way that the classes are delivered. I would

like to mention also what is for me always one of the real highlights of our MFA program, which is

the summer residency. We do offer an intensive 10-day long course in typically in July. This is

an opportunity for students in the distance program to come to campus, get to meet their

instructors, meet each other. It is optional, that's why we call it the optional residency, so people don't have to, but it really is a marvelous opportunity to not only meet people, but get a really intensive experience. We offer panels, craft talks, keynote lectures, workshops, opportunities to meet with agents and editors and screenwriting folks and people from industry and really to talk about all the aspects of the writer's life. I do also want to mention that the Creative Writing School is involved in some joint programs. We have a joint MFA in Creative Writing and Theatre, a joint program with Creative Writing and Film Production, as well as an MA in Children's Literature. The program is called, the acronym is MACL, the Master of Arts in Children's Literature, which is an interdisciplinary program that crosses a number of programs and units, including Writing for Children in our unit.

Awards, I'll touch on briefly. We do have awards available to students who are full-time, part-time students who are not eligible for any scholarships or awards. We offer some graduate entrance scholarships. You don't have to apply for them, we just give them to you. There are also international tuition awards and a number of other awards that you would need to apply for, but we help you with that.

We'll give you advice on that.

So for instance, the CGSM Indigenous Graduate Fellowship and Affiliated Awards, these are larger awards where our faculty would work with you on crafting your documentation and trying to give you the best possible shot

at getting these funds.

I'm not gonna go into a lot of detail on tuition.

You can find that information on the UBC website  
in our MFA handbook.

However, I will just mention that the tuition  
that you would pay varies a little bit  
between the on-campus program  
and the optional residency program.

And also varies depending on whether you're a domestic  
or an international student.

For the on-campus program,  
you're paying in three installments per year.

However, so you're paying by term,  
but in the optional residency program,  
you're paying by credit.

So there is a bit of a difference there.

And I encourage you to explore the UBC Grad Studies website  
to get more information on that.

I mentioned a little bit earlier that we also offer Work-Learn and TA possibilities.

These are available to students located within Canada.

You don't have to be Canadian, but you have to be on Canadian soil.

These are salaried, they're teaching assistant positions for these large undergraduate classes

that we offer in multiple genres.

You would be marking assignments, interacting with students.

There's the possibility of guest lecturing and more depending on what your instructor needs and what the needs of the course would be. And again, we have work-learn student employment

positions that are competitive in the sense that you would apply for them and they're salaried and

I understand that the co-grad chairs are going to be speaking a little bit more about that.

So in conclusion, that's just really the quickest possible snapshot of our program and you know,

you're going to get a lot more detail further on in these videos. Please, please feel free to

to review the MFA handbook,

which you can find on our website,

and feel free to follow up with us

if you have questions that weren't answered there.

Please check there first.

We're really looking forward to receiving your application

and hopefully welcoming you down the road to UBC.

[ Silence ]