

Readiness for English 384

The stated course prerequisites for English 384 Writing Creative Non-fiction are AU English 211 Prose Forms, English 212 Plays and Poetry, and excellent university-level writing and research skills. Equivalent junior-level or higher courses in literary studies will be accepted.

Reasons for the Prerequisites

The term creative non-fiction refers to using a number of narrative methods from fiction to write non-fiction. The term also implies that writers will achieve such qualities as distinctive voice, telling observation, complexity, and depth. While it is not required (though an advantage) to have already worked a little in fiction, it is essential to have a good understanding of how fiction works. For this reason, if you are considering doing both English 381 and English 384, there is a certain logic to taking English 381 first. A readiness document accessible from the English 381 syllabus page breaks down the technical areas covered in that course. The attributes of readiness presented there have applicability for English 384 as well.

Prospective students sometimes wonder why English 384 has a prerequisite course in drama and poetry. Most experienced readers of literature agree, however, that there is a poetic dimension to all achieved and natural style, as well as a strong grasp of narrative methods, lyrical and dramatic. Prospective students for English 384 should feel well grounded in recognizing the basic methods and styles (forms) of literature. They should be able to appreciate why critics consider certain pieces of writing to have literary merit and others to be essentially utilitarian. Another term for creative non-fiction is “literary journalism.” While it is hard to give a simple definition to the word “literary,” it implies a natural but stylistically accomplished manner of expressing important concerns and understanding.

Equivalencies Are Accepted

If you believe you have the equivalent of the course prerequisites, please contact the course professor/coordinator with precise information on where and how you gained the knowledge and skills involved. A writing sample is sometimes recommended or requested.