Introduction
Thesis (CRW 296, CRW 297)
(6 units required)
Prerequisite: Submission of thesis proposal

The MFA in Creative Writing culminates in the completion of a thesis, a book-length project that is developed, drafted, revised, and polished in conjunction with the MFA candidate’s thesis advisor and thesis committee. “Book-length” may be defined as a minimum 120-page manuscript of prose (i.e., fiction, creative nonfiction), a 50-page manuscript of poetry, or a full-length play or screenplay (e.g., two-hour running time). The Creative Writing thesis can be written in English and/or Spanish. Six units of thesis hours (CRW 296 and 297) are required for graduation. These units are designed to allow the MFA candidate ample time to work with the thesis advisor on refining, editing, and completing the thesis manuscript. Should students require additional time and support to complete their theses, students may petition for an extra semester of thesis credit (CRW 298, a one-unit course). Please note: thesis credits will not provide ample time in which to see a thesis project from start to finish. MFA candidates are expected to be developing writing throughout their coursework at Mount Saint Mary’s that can contribute to the thesis.

Thesis Advisor and Committee
Each MFA candidate will work with a thesis advisor, a faculty member who approves the thesis project proposal and oversees the thesis-writing process. The MFA candidate is expected to request an advisor early. Conversations with one’s thesis advisor are paramount to formulating a successful project, and the feedback and suggestions of the thesis advisor should guide and support the development of the thesis project’s progress.

The thesis committee comprises the thesis advisor and a second additional faculty member. The second additional faculty member will primarily serve as a reader and participant in the MFA candidate’s thesis defense. The MFA candidate will invite a third member, or reader, from outside of the program to the committee with the advance approval of the thesis advisor. The student is responsible for providing the thesis advisor with the curriculum vitae of outside reader.

Timeline
The deadline for requesting a thesis advisor is October 1 in order to graduate in August.

By the tenth week of the MFA candidate’s semester prior to enrollment in CRW 296, the candidate must submit a thesis proposal to the thesis advisor. All revisions to the thesis proposal must be completed by November 1.

Candidates must produce new work and revisions during the thesis period on a schedule to be set by the advisor. It is expected that candidate and advisor will meet twice monthly during the
thesis period to discuss suggestions and changes. The amount of work done and hours expended during a semester should be the equivalent of what it would be for an actual class.

The thesis advisor, in consultation with the candidate and committee members, will determine the defense date.

Second and third committee members must receive the complete thesis manuscript two weeks before the defense date. The defense must be held no later than two weeks before graduation.

**Thesis Defense**
The thesis defense is a formal discussion among the MFA candidate, the thesis advisor, and the members of the thesis committee. The topic of the discussion is, first and foremost, the merits of the completed thesis manuscript. MFA candidates should be prepared to answer questions about writing process, where the thesis manuscript fits in the world of contemporary literature, and other relevant topics. To accommodate online students, defenses may be completed via video conference. The MFA candidate may invite other students and faculty members to attend the thesis defense as observers.

Thesis hours (CRW 296) is a three-credits course that each student in the MFA program takes to graduate. Students work closely with their thesis advisor (either me or Johnny Payne), so there should be unique sections (e.g., 296-A, 296-B, etc.) for each student. The prerequisite of CRW 296 is the submission of a thesis proposal, due by the tenth week of the semester prior to when the student plans to enroll in thesis hours.