



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MISSISSIPPI

MFA *in creative writing*



MFA Program

Celebrating its 10th year, the University of Mississippi's MFA program has been ranked as one of *The Atlantic Monthly's* "Top Five Up and Coming Programs" and is listed among the top 50 MFA programs by *Poets & Writers*.

The *Poets & Writers* MFA rankings "measure 16 distinct program features for each of the 148 full-residency programs." Features include funding, cost of living, selectivity, teaching load, curricular structure and placement of graduates. That a program only 10 years old has cracked the tier-one ranking is a notable accomplishment. Congratulations to our current students, growing list of distinguished alumni, faculty and supportive administration for this recognition.

Further strengthening our program, we are extremely pleased to announce that Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Richard Ford and screenwriter Chris Offutt ("True Blood") have joined our faculty. Ford and Offutt will add depth, breadth and excellence to an already highly accomplished faculty.

Our program is small and supportive: About six to eight students are accepted with full funding each year. Students benefit from our well-endowed readings series. (In 2011-12, visiting writers will include Michael Chabon, Jeffery Eugenides, D.A. Powell, Dave Smith, Nicole Cooley, Bob Hicok and Lynn Emanuel.) They also reap benefits from interactions with fresh talent, as the John and Renée Grisham Writer-in-Residence is a yearly appointment for an emerging Southern writer. Our students can take advantage of other opportunities such as participating in our student-run readings series and our literary magazine, *The Yalobusha Review*.

We are located 70 miles from Memphis in Oxford, Miss., home of Faulkner's Rowan Oak, literary conferences, the best bookstore in the South, an active music scene and great restaurants.

Student Stories

A view from inside the University of Mississippi MFA in creative writing program



“During my Ole Miss days (2005-2008), I got splendid instruction and warm encouragement from my writing teachers and enjoyed the companionship of writers and musicians in a charming, culturally rich town. The freedom to participate in workshops outside my primary genre proved a plus: Trying my hand as a ‘fictioneer’ helped me as a poet. Also, taking literature seminars with the University of Mississippi’s seasoned, personable professors fed my creative work. My poetry collection, *Gust*, due out in October of 2011 from Northwestern University Press, includes nearly all of my MFA thesis. Ole Miss and Oxford did right by me.”

—GREG ALAN BROWNDERVILLE



“Early in the second year of my Ole Miss MFA, I was writing a lot of bad stories about Americans working in Iraq. After one particularly frustrating workshop, Barry Hannah gave me a lovely handwritten letter with a pirate stamp on top and a message that said, ‘Bring your tales closer to home.’ I’m pretty sure that finding myself a teaching job in Iraq wasn’t what Barry had in mind. But that’s what I did, and I’ll be forever grateful to Barry, Tom Franklin, Jack Pendarvis and the entire Ole Miss MFA faculty for not only helping me decide to go but also saving my place in the program and my funding for when I returned.”

—RYAN BUBALO



“It’s amazing the maturation that three years of serious work and camaraderie with other writers can yield, and I am thankful for the time and generous funding provided by my Grisham Fellowship, which afforded me the opportunity, straight out of college, to put my poetry first. Ole Miss’ MFA program isn’t just any program, though. It has the wonderful quality of being big enough to draw Pulitzer Prize-winning authors to give readings but small enough that, on any given night, a professor might join students for dinner after class.”

—CORINNA MCCLANAHAN SCHROEDER

Poems

“Lake Ouachita, Late Summer,” published in *Linebreak*:

<http://linebreak.org/poems/lake-ouachita-late-summer/>

“You Tell Me of the Winters in Laramie,” published in *Pebble Lake Review*:

http://www.pebblelakereview.com/archive/2010_v6_4_fall_winter/poem_YouTellMe.html

“Ohm’s Law in the Age of the Bomb,” published in *Barely South Review*:

<http://barelysouthreview.digitalodu.com/all-issues/april-2011/ohms-law-in-the-age-of-the-bomb/>



“I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again. The program at Ole Miss made me a writer. I was a mess on the page when I got there: adverbs everywhere, copying every author I admired as if I could channel them without notice. Ole Miss cured me of that. It wasn’t just the workshops, although they were crucial. It was, instead, the community, folks who quickly became friends pushing me to do my best. It was late-night talks on front porches and at the City Grocery bar, classes on Form, Craft and Influence, and the constant stream of great writers coming through Square Books. All in all, I learned what good writing was during my time in Oxford, as well as the lifelong dedication it takes to produce it. And, I also had a hell of a good time.”

—M.O. WALSH

Book

The Prospect of Magic (short-story collection), May 2010

Awards

Winner of 2009 Tartt’s First Fiction Prize

Editor’s Pick for Best Books of 2010 by *Oxford American*

Finalist and Honorable Mention, 2011 Eric Hoffer Award (general fiction)

Short stories anthologized in *Best New American Voices*, *Best of the Net*, *Louisiana in Words*, *Bar Stories*

Million Writers Award (Notable Stories in 2007 & 2010)

Flavorwire (Top 10 Favorite Story of 2010)

See more work in *New York Times*, *Oxford American* and *American Short Fiction*. Contact and info: www.mowalsh.com



“My Ole Miss MFA experience was essential to my development as a poet. As the Grisham Fellow, I was not only given ample time and encouragement to write, I was also afforded the opportunity to coordinate the Grisham Visiting Writers Series and serve as senior editor of *The Yalobusha Review*. While under the guidance of Beth Ann Fennelly and Ann Fisher-Wirth, I published 25 poems in journals such as *Cimarron Review*, *Smartish Pace*, *River Styx* and *Subtropics*.”

—DANIELLE SELLERS

Book

Bone Key Elegies, 2009

Honors

Phyllis Smart Young Prize, *The Madison Review*

Semifinalist, “Discovery”/*The Nation* Prize

Nominated for the AWP Intro Journals Award

Twice nominated for Best New Poets

Mona Van Duyn scholarship, Sewanee Writers’ Conference, 2007

Walter E. Dakin Poetry Fellow, Sewanee Writers’ Conference, 2011

Founder and editor of *The Country Dog Review* (www.countrydogreview.org)

<http://www.32poems.com/blog/1939/danielle-sellers-an-interview-with-serena-m-agusto-cox> (interview)

<http://www.apostrophecast.com/authors/danielle-sellers.html> (reading and interview)



I came to Ole Miss from New York with a half-finished documentary film and some very rough short stories, expecting vaguely to improve my fiction. Now, beginning my third year of the MFA, the classes I've had in fiction and creative nonfiction have offered me far greater fluency in my prose. In my two years here, I've published nonfiction and been a finalist in a national fiction contest. I've had the time and support to successfully finish my film, which showed at a renowned festival (IDFA) and was signed with a distributor during my second year in the program. Although I am a student in fiction, the faculty have championed my development as a writer across genres, and as a filmmaker. The limited number of students admitted to the MFA and the close community here encourage this kind of individualized mentorship, which seems to me a rare strength of this program.

RACHEL SMITH





Beth Ann Fennelly

Director of the MFA Program and
Associate Professor of English

NEA winner

"My love for writing—both poetry and nonfiction—is complemented by my love of teaching writing. But having great students makes it rewarding to give your all in the classroom. My students' successes make me very proud!"

Education

Diane Middlebrook Postdoctoral Fellowship, University of Wisconsin, 1999
M.F.A. in creative writing, University of Arkansas, 1998
B.A. in English, magna cum laude, University of Notre Dame, 1993

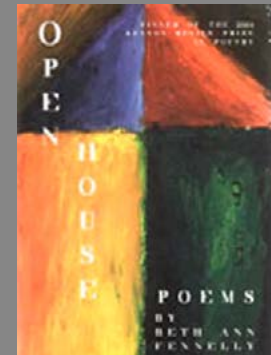
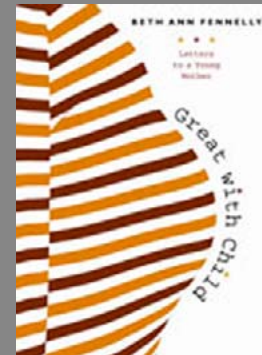
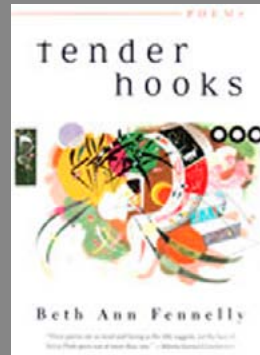
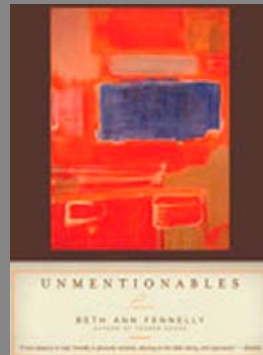
Honors

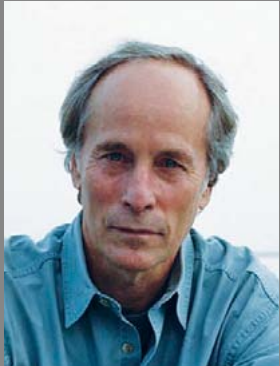
Mississippi Arts Commission Grant, poetry, 2010, nonfiction, 2005
Fulbright Scholarship to Brazil, 2009
Best American Poetry, 1995, 2005, 2006
United States Artist Grant, 2006
National Endowment for the Arts Award, 2003
BookSense Top 10 Poetry Pick, 2001
Pushcart Prize, 2001

Publications

Unmentionables (poetry), 2008
Great with Child: Letters to a Young Mother (nonfiction), 2006
Tender Hooks (poetry), 2004
Open House (poetry), 2002 (winner of *The Kenyon Review* Prize and the GLCA New Writers Award)
A Different Kind of Hunger, 1998 (winner of the 1997 *Texas Review* Chapbook Breakthrough Award)

Book covers:





Richard Ford

*Professor of English and
Senior Fiction Writer*

Pulitzer Prize winner

“As a teacher of writers I think of myself as a colleague—only older. I do, however, have things to impart (not rules), and class is not a democracy. But it is congenial, attentive, high-aspiring and thorough. Reading is the basis of everything.”

Education

M.F.A., University of California,
Irvine, 1970

B.A., Michigan State University, 1966

Honors

Kenyon Prize, 2008

Cavour Prize, Italy, 2007

Commandeur, L'Ordre des Arts et
des Lettres, Republic of France,
2004

Fellow, American Academy of Arts
and Sciences, 2003

Berlin Prize, American Academy in
Berlin, 2003

PEN/Malamud Award for Excellence
in the Short Story, 2003

Doctor of Humane Letters (Hon.),
University of Michigan, 1998

Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, 1996

PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction,
1996

Publications

The Lay of the Land, 2006

Vintage Ford, 2004

A Multitude of Sins, 2002

Women with Men, 1997

Independence Day, 1995

Wildlife, 1990

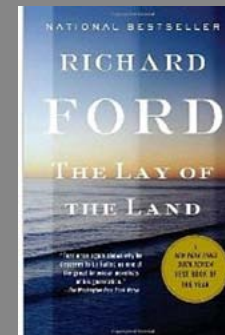
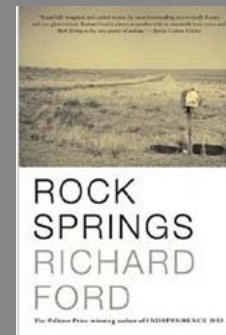
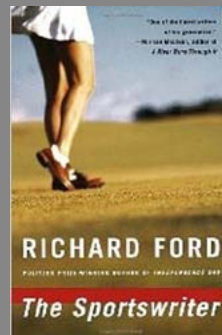
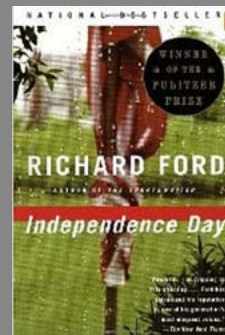
Rock Springs: Stories, 1987

The Sportswriter, 1986

The Ultimate Good Luck, 1981

A Piece of My Heart, 1976

Book covers:





Ann Fisher-Wirth

*Professor of English and Director
of the Environmental Studies
Minor*

Rita Dove Poetry Award

"I love to teach, and I'm so pleased to work with our wonderful students. I teach graduate poetry workshops and literature seminars such as The American Long Poem, American Women Poets, and American Eco-poetry. I also teach short-term workshops in creative writing and yoga."

Education

Ph.D., English and American literature, Claremont Graduate School, 1981

M.A., English and American literature, Claremont Graduate School, 1972

B.A., English, magna cum laude, Pomona College, 1968

Honors

President, Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, 2006

Rita Dove Poetry Prize, 2004

Poetry Award from the Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters, 2004

Poetry Fellowship from the Mississippi Arts Commission, 2004

Malahat Review Long Poem Prize, 2003

Fulbright Distinguished Chair in American Studies, Uppsala University, Sweden, 2002-03

Fulbright Senior Fellowship, University of Fribourg, Switzerland, 1994-95

Publications

Ecopoetry: A Contemporary American Anthology, coedited with Laura-Gray Street, forthcoming 2012

Dream Cabinet, forthcoming 2012

Carta Marina, 2009

Slide Shows (chapbook), 2009

Five Terraces, 2005

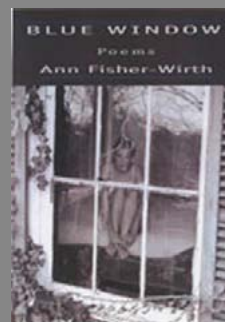
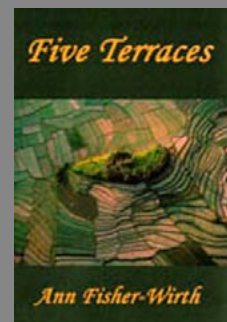
Walking Wu Wei's Scroll (chapbook), 2005

Blue Window, 2003

The Trinket Poems (chapbook), 2003

William Carlos Williams and Autobiography: The Woods of His Own Nature, 1989

Book covers:





Tom Franklin

Assistant Professor of English
LA Times Book Award

"I can't even imagine a more supportive environment for writing. ... Knowing there are expectations for me as a writer, as well as a teacher, keeps me on my toes and motivated."

Education

M.F.A. in fiction, University of Arkansas, 1998
M.A. in English, University of South Alabama, 1995
B.A. in English, University of South Alabama, 1992

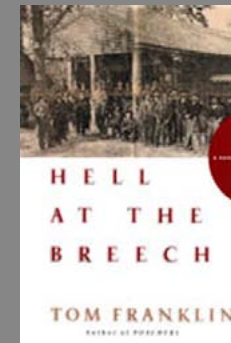
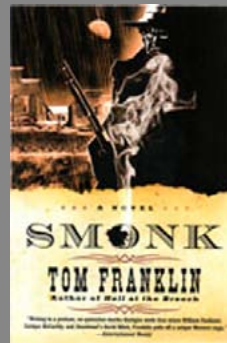
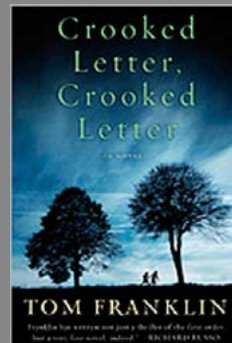
Honors

LA Times Book Prize, Mystery/thriller, 2011
Willie Morris Prize for Southern Fiction, 2011
Mississippi Arts Commission Grant, 2010
Mississippi Institute of Arts & Letters, Best Novel, 2003
Guggenheim, 2001
Edgar Allan Poe Award, short story, 1999

Publications

Crooked Letter, Crooked Letter, 2010
Smonk, 2006
Hell at the Breech, 2003
Poachers: Stories, 1999

Book covers:





Chris Offutt

Assistant Professor of English
and Screenwriting

True Blood

"I've spent the last 25 years devoted to writing in various forms, including screenplays, the novel, short story, essay, memoir and comic books. Also, some really bad poetry."

Education

M.F.A. in fiction, The University of Iowa, 1990

B.A. in theatre, Morehead State University, 1981

Honors

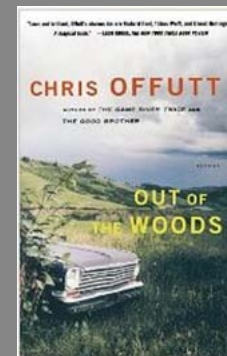
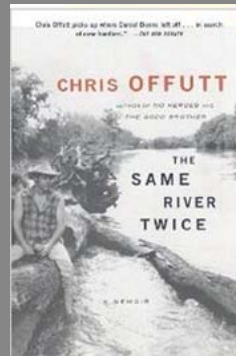
Writers Guild of America Nominee for Best Writing, "True Blood," 2008

Lennan Fellowship for Fiction, 2003

Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship for Fiction, 1996

NEA, American Academy of Arts & Letters

Book Covers:



Publications

Luck (stories), 2011

No Heroes (memoir), 2002

Out of the Woods (stories), 1999

The Good Brother (novel), 1997

The Same River Twice (memoir), 1993

Kentucky Straight (stories), 1992

Screenplays

"Tough Trade" (various episodes), Lions Gate, 2010

"Weeds," Showtime, 2009

"True Blood" (episodes 107, 110), 2007, 2008

"Out of the Woods," 2004

Script for an upcoming episode of *Treme*

TV pilot for crime series for CBS

Film

"The Trapper," 2011



Jack Pendarvis

Writer in Residence

Awesome

"My favorite thing to witness is the friendship forged by our students. They are true, honest friends and bold advocates. Our program seems to encourage the kind of bond that strengthens people and their work."

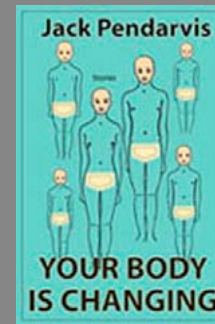
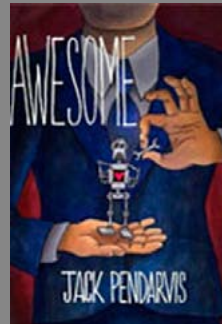
Honors

Pushcart Prize
John and Renée Grisham Writer in Residence

Publications

Columnist for *The Believer*
Columnist for *Oxford American*
Awesome, 2008
Your Body is Changing, 2007
The Mysterious Secret of the Valuable Treasure, 2005

Book covers:





Gary Short

Visiting Poet

NEA winner

"If everyone in the workshop likes a piece that you write, I'll be suspicious of it. I'm suspicious of writing I like too easily. Good writing nudges and bothers people."

Education

Stanford University (two-year Stegner Fellowship)
M.F.A. in creative writing, Arizona State University
M.A. in English, California State University at Sacramento
B.A. in English, California State University at Fresno

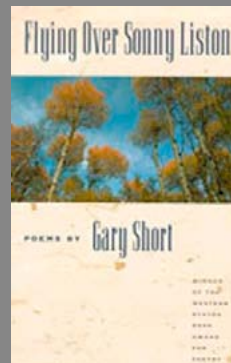
Honors

Pushcart Prize, 2008
National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in Literature, 2011

Publications

10 Moons and 13 Horses
Theory of Twilight
Flying Over Sonny Liston (Western States Book Award for Poetry, 1996)

Book covers:





Josh Weil

*Grisham Writer in Residence
2011-12*

A former writer in residence at Gilman School and the James Merrill House, Josh Weil has received the Dana Award in Portfolio as well as fellowships from the Fulbright Foundation, the Writer's Center, and the Bread Loaf and Sewanee Writers' Conferences.

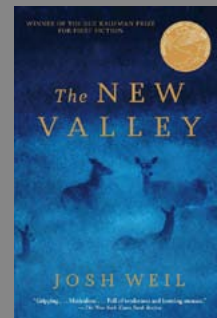
Awards

The Sue Kaufman Award for First Fiction from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (2010)
5-under-35 Award from the National Book Foundation (2009)
2011 Distinguished Visiting Writer at Bowling Green State University

Publication

The New Valley: Novellas, 2009

Book cover:





John and Renée Grisham Writers in Residence

Grisham Writers in Residence are emerging Southern writers who live, write and teach in Oxford for a year. Below is the list of present and past Writers in Residence:

Josh Weil (2011-12)
Jesmyn Ward (2010-11)
John Brandon (2009-10)
James Kimbrell (2008-09)
Jack Pendarvis (2007-08)
LeAnne Howe (2006-07)
Michael Knight (2005-06)
Brad Watson (2004-05)
Janisse Ray (2003-04)
Shay Youngblood (2002-03)
Tom Franklin (2001-02)
Claude Wilkinson (2000-01)
Steve Yarbrough (1999-2000)
Darcey Steinke (1998-99)
Randall Kenan (1997-98)
Tim Gautreaux (1996-97)
Mary Hood (1995-96)
Mark Richard (1994-95)
T. R. Pearson (1993-94)