Innovation is central to a better future for all of us. Hence, the need for humanistic approaches to writing about emerging technologies and science in society. Our nonfiction writing program supports practical writing experience by students immersed in either the humanities or in the worlds of science, technology, engineering, bio-medicine and sustainability.

Program Description

Degree Awarded: Certificate Nonfiction Writing and Publishing (Certificate)

The graduate certificate program in nonfiction writing and publishing encourages students, whether from the humanities, bio-medicine or techno-sciences, to emulate the masters of literary nonfiction as a means to achieve success in commercial and public-interest publishing, both in print and online, especially in the subject areas of technology, science, engineering, the environment and bio-medicine. Such literary role models include Murkajee, on cancer research; Carson, on marine biology; Skloot, on bio-medical materials; Pollan, on food, nutrition and agribusiness; Biss, on vaccine science; Zimmer, on evolutionary biology; Gould, on paleontology; Haley, on race and society; Ida Wells, on racial violence; Ehrenreich, on the working poor; McKibben, on global warming; and Kidder, on computer science.

By uniting reading and writing about complexity, the program aims to help subject-area masters achieve a more positive impact on society through their scholarly work as well as through literary publishing. The intended outcome of the program is to endow master learners and subject-area experts with the confidence and capability to reach wide audiences of non-specialists, including leaders in business, politics, culture and society.

The certificate is open to all graduate students, including those from the humanities. Those students who desire to write eloquently, persuasively and memorably about techno-science and complex socio-technical systems are ideal for this program. Students will be encouraged to draw on their own deep subject-matter of technology, science, bio-medicine and environmental issues to provide the raw material for their literary narrative and non-narrative writing. While inevitably writers with subject-area mastery engage in some crude forms of translation to achieve their literary ends, they also create new forms of language and modes of knowing that suit the interdisciplinary, multidimensional aspect of their complex topics.
On enrollment, students first must take the required core course, Masters of Nonfiction, which combines reading great masters of nonfiction with writing in forms viewed as classic by literary scholars and practitioners. By drawing on their own techno-scientific knowledge, they focus on various forms of popular writing: participant-observer, omniscient narration, advocacy, explanatory, bearing witness, biography and first-person story (or memoir). Additional classes, offered by various departments, teach writing about food, travel, history, explanatory journalism, science communication, technology and creative nonfiction. The specific sequence of courses can be tailored to each student’s specific trajectory and classes can be taken at the student’s own pace.

The core course, Masters of Nonfiction, also is open to students who will not pursue the certificate but wish to deepen their command of writing about complexity for general readers.

At a Glance

- **College/School:** School for the Future of Innovation in Society
- **Location:** Downtown Phoenix campus, Polytechnic campus, Tempe campus, West campus

Degree Requirements

15 credit hours

**Required Core (3 credit hours)**
HPS 520 or HST 520 Masters of Nonfiction (3)

**Electives (12 credit hours)**

Admission Requirements

Applicants must fulfill the requirements of both the Graduate College and the School for the Future of Innovation in Society.

Applicants are eligible to apply to the program if they have earned a bachelor's or master's degree, in any field, from a regionally accredited institution. Applicants who attended school outside of the U.S. must hold a bachelor's degree, graduate degree or equivalent from an institution that is officially recognized by that country.
Applicants must have a minimum of a 3.00 cumulative GPA (scale is 4.00 = "A") in the last 60 hours or 90 quarter hours of a student's first bachelor's degree program, or applicants must have a minimum of a 3.00 cumulative GPA (scale is 4.00 = "A") in an applicable master's degree program.

All applicants must submit:

1. graduate admission application and application fee
2. official transcripts
3. writing sample
4. proof of English proficiency

Additional Application Information
An applicant whose native language is not English (regardless of current residency) must provide proof of English proficiency.

Applicants are encouraged to enroll in a graduate degree program in conjunction with this certificate but are not required to do so.

International students who need an F1 or J1 visa will first need to apply to and be accepted into a master's or doctoral degree program prior to being considered for the certificate program. International students residing in the USA on other types of visas must adhere to all Graduate College policies and procedures regarding admission to be considered for admission to this certificate program. Applicants should see the program website for application deadlines.

Application Deadlines

Fall
Spring

Contact Information

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