

**The William Paterson University of New Jersey**  
**College of Humanities & Social Sciences**  
**Department of English**  
**Master of Fine Arts in Creative & Professional Writing**

**Craft Essay Guidelines**

The MFA Craft Essay is a dozen-page analysis that discusses the forms and themes of selected published work in relation to your own writing. The essay should demonstrate a strong working knowledge of textual issues and authors in your genre as you situate your work within the larger literary landscape of contemporary publishing.

1) With your advisor, choose 3-5 exemplary works that have inspired your thesis; most of the works selected should be contemporary. Reflecting on these literary influences, explain what draws you to the work selected. [1-2 pages]

2) Through close readings of specific passages, analyze how the writing operates stylistically and/or thematically. In treating the various passages, you might consider the following.

- a) What literary or rhetorical techniques are employed?
  - b) How is emotion conveyed?
  - c) How is meaning made to resonate?
- [4-6 pages]

3) Discuss what you learned about writing through your reading of the selected authors. Specifically, which of their writing techniques have you practiced in order to improve your own writing? [3-4 pages]

4) Describe your own thesis project as you might to a potential publisher. Touch on its genre, content, style and themes. How does your work compare/contrast to similar recently published work in your genre? Be sure to explain what you think distinguishes your work from others' work. [1-2 pages]