2026 Reading List
Creative Writing Comprehensive Exam (Engl 500)
MA in English

2026 Fiction Reading List

John Gardner, *The Art of Fiction*
Jonathan Lethem, "The Ecstasy of Influence"
Ralph Ellison, "The Paris Review Interview No. 8"
Matthew Salesses, *Craft in the Real World*
Samuel Delany, *About Writing*
Francine Prose, *Reading Like a Writer*
Susan Sontag, "On Style"
Frank O'Connor, *The Lonely Voice*
Zadie Smith, "That Crafty Feeling"
Richard Ford, ed., *The Granta Book of the American Short Story*
Gabriel García Márquez, "The Art of Fiction Interview No. 69" in *Paris Review*
James Baldwin, "The Art of Fiction Interview. No 78" in *Paris Review*
Edith Wharton, *The Writing of Fiction*
Robert Shapard and James Thomas, eds., *Sudden Fiction (Continued)*
John Freeman, ed., *The Penguin Book of the Modern American Short Story*
Toni Morrison, "The Art of Fiction No. 134" in *Paris Review*

2026 Nonfiction/Memoir Reading List

William Zinsser, *On Writing Well*
Jenny Boully, *Betwixt and Between: Essays on the Writing Life*
Annie Dillard, *The Writing Life*
Adrienne Rich, "When We Dead Awaken" in *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence*
Joan Didion, "Why I Write"
Paul Auster, *Invention of Solitude*
Hilton Als, *White Girls*
John Jeremiah Sullivan, *Pulphead*
Roxanne Gay, *Bad Feminist*
Hanif Abdurraqib, *They Can't Kill Us Until They Kill Us*
Rebecca Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*
Philip Lopate, ed., *The Art of the Personal Essay*
Margot Singer and Nicole Walker, eds., *Bending Genre*
bell hooks, *Remembered Rapture*
Charles Johnson, "I Call Myself an Artist" in *I Call Myself an Artist*, edited by Rudolph P. Byrd
Mary Karr, *The Art of the Memoir*
Lex Williford and Michael Martone, eds., *Touchstone Anthology of Contemporary Creative Nonfiction*
John D'Agata, *The Next American Essay*

2026 Poetry Reading List

Arthur Poulin Jr. and Michael Waters, eds., *Contemporary American Poetry*
Cary Nelson, ed., *Anthology of Modern American Poetry*
Prose Poetry: An Introduction by Paul Hetherington and Cassandra Atherton

2026 Aesthetics/Craft/Theory Reading List

Stephen Adams, *Poetics Designs: An Introduction to Meter, Verse Forms, and Figures of Speech*
Robert Bly, *Looking for Dragon Smoke*
Mark Doty, *The Art of Description: Word into World*
Paul Fussell, *Poetic Meter & Poetic Form*
Dana Gioia, *Can Poetry Matter?*
Robert Hass, *A Little Book on Form: An Exploration into the Formal Imagination of Poetry*
Richard Hugo, *The Triggering Town*
Melissa Kwasny, ed., *Toward the Open Field: Poets on the Art of Poetry 1800-1950* Denise Levertov, "Some Notes on Organic Form" (essay) and "On the Function of the Line" (essay)
James Longenbach, *The Art of the Poetic Line*
James Longenbach, *The Resistance to Poetry*
Robert Scholes, "Reading Poetry: A Lost Craft" (essay from *The Crafty Reader*)
Ellen Bryant Voigt, *The Art of Syntax: Rhythm of Thought, Rhythm of Song*
Dean Young, *The Art of Recklessness: Poetry as Assertive Force and Contradiction*