

# **Tiana Clark joins SIUE faculty for MFA in Creative Writing**

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EDWARDSVILLE - Southern Illinois University Edwardsville has added poet [Tiana Clark](#) to its faculty as it introduces a master's of fine arts in creative writing beginning fall 2018. The MFA in creative writing is offered by the [Department of English Language and Literature](#) in SIUE's [College of Arts and Sciences](#).

Clark is currently the 2017-2018 Jay C. and Ruth Halls Poetry Fellow at the Wisconsin Institute of Creative Writing. She is the author of *Equilibrium*, selected by Afaa Michael Weaver for the 2016 Frost Place Chapbook Competition. She is the winner of the 2017 Furious Flower's Gwendolyn Brooks Centennial Poetry Prize, 2016 Academy of American Poets University Prize and 2015 Rattle Poetry Prize.

"I am thrilled to join the fabulous SIUE faculty and to share my passion for creative writing, especially poetry," Clark said. "My hope is for students to walk away from class inspired, more emphatic, and brimming with new poems and stories. To borrow from Emily Dickinson, writers tend to  *dwell in possibility*, and I can't wait to show my students how creative writing can unlock new revelations about themselves and the larger world around them.

"My goal is to help foster literary citizens who find themselves inside and outside the traditional Western canon, bridging the gap from the classics to contemporary literature and beyond."

Clark's writing has appeared in or is forthcoming from the *New Yorker*, *American Poetry Review*, *Kenyon Review*, *Best New Poets 2015*, *BOAAT*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Muzzle Magazine*, *Thrush*, *The Journal* and elsewhere.

"We are overjoyed to have such an immensely talented poet joining our faculty," said Geoff Schmidt, professor of English language and literature. "As was immediately obvious to everyone who saw her teaching demonstration, Ms. Clark is an equally talented teacher. She will make a profound difference in the lives of our students and the SIUE community, and her work is going to make a profound difference in the lives of her readers."

A Nashville native, Clark is a 2009 graduate of Tennessee State University where she studied Africana and women's studies. She graduated in 2017 from Vanderbilt's MFA program where she served as the poetry editor of the *Nashville Review*.

A terminal degree for poets and fiction writers, the master's of fine arts qualifies students for careers in academia and writing-related fields. Unlike most programs in the country, the MFA at SIUE includes a service-learning component that encourages experiential learning.

During the second year, students will engage in the “Writer in the World” sequence, which allows them to study community-based pedagogies and then partner with a local organization and enrich the community with a service program of their own devising. This sequence will better prepare students for meaningful employment in or outside of academia, and help students sustain a rich writing life beyond graduation.

The new MFA provides flexibility in its elective and literature offerings, permitting students to pursue other interests, including literary publishing, creative writing pedagogy and contemporary literature. Students will also have the opportunity to gain invaluable editing skills by working with *Sou’wester*, one of the oldest continually published literary magazines in the country.

Prospective students may apply now. Applications close Thursday, Feb. 1. For more information, contact Professor Geoff Schmidt at [geschmi@siue.edu](mailto:geschmi@siue.edu).

Central to SIUE’s exceptional and comprehensive education, the [College of Arts and Sciences](#) has 19 departments and 85 areas of study. More than 300 full-time faculty /instructors deliver classes to more than 8,000 undergraduate and graduate students. Faculty help students explore diverse ideas and experiences, while learning to think and live as fulfilled, productive members of the global community. Study abroad, service-learning, internships, and other experiential learning opportunities better prepare SIUE students not only to succeed in our region’s workplaces, but also to become valuable leaders who make important contributions to our communities.