



Creative and Professional Writing: What to Do if You're Interested in Both

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As new students come pouring into UAB every fall, some know exactly what to study. However, the majority of the lower classmen are going to explore their options, possibly making changes to their career paths along the way through some process of trial and error.

For some, this process goes a step further—a student may find the right subject matter to study, but what about the concentration? I struggled with this decision myself. After changing my major a few different times and feeling unsatisfied, I realized what I felt I should really be studying was English.

However, I found my insecurities with my major surfacing once again when I was faced with finding a concentration. There were many stigma that clouded my judgement when I looked to pick a concentration. I have always loved constructing fiction and other forms of creative writing, but was it practical enough?

I enjoyed being on the newspaper staff in high school, and writing in a professional sense. Would it in fact be more beneficial to my career to be a professional writer despite my passion for crafting stories? I had to find out.

Through this article, I hope to not only break some of the stigmas surrounding both concentrations, but to also give insight to careers that allow individuals who might be

interested in both concentrations, a way to exercise both.

Creative Writing Offers More Than You Think

Oftentimes when people ask me what I'm studying, I don't specify creative writing. I've grown tired of the judgemental comments and looks that some offer to me in response. Many stigmatize that studying creative writing can only result in a teaching job. However, this idea could not be further from the truth. In fact, the creative writing concentration opens you up to a wide range of possibilities.

The creative writing concentration teaches you how to be a skillful, observant writer. Creative writers are taught to take words and pair them in ways that are visually and audibly pleasing to the reader. While a short story and a term paper are very different in content, they both require skillful writing. This concentration will provide you with these skills.

There are many careers that can come from this concentration, including publishing, marketing, and journalism, proving that creative writing can be a very practical concentration.

Professional Writing is Not as Rigid as it Seems

The idea that first struck me when I considered a professional writing concentration was that it was boring. I immediately feared that there was no way I could be creative in my career, like I

wanted to be, with a professional writing concentration. Again, this idea is a stigma associated with the concentration that is far from the truth. There are many ways to be creative with a professional writing concentration.

Professional writing is an interesting concentration because it is essentially applicable everywhere. Students in this concentration will learn to develop skills in technical writing, editing, and publishing. These skills are useful both in the print and digital media worlds. Not only can professional writers find work as editors and publishers, but they can find work with any company that requires a skilled writer.

The Two Concentrations Can Collaborate

The thing to keep in mind with both of these concentrations is that they teach you how to write, and how to write well. It often comes down to how you advertise yourself when you interview for a job. If you are able to assure your employer that you have the necessary skills to get the job done, that's often all that matters.

There are some opportunities that allow you to use both of these concentrations at once. For instance, some literary magazine publishers and editors get to enjoy both piecing together the magazine and submitting their own creative work as well. At the end of the day, these concentrations are what you allow them to be; if you really look deep and explore all of your options, there will be something there for you.