Course work and thesis work in the School of Letters require independent thinking and writing. Students in the Master of Arts program are expected not only to understand what others have said about literary works under study, but to contribute original understandings of their own. Students in the Master of Fine Arts program, besides being grounded in the history of creative writing in English, are expected themselves to contribute publishable, original work.

Sewanee places major emphasis upon honor. Its students are expected to conduct themselves with integrity, discipline, a sense of individual responsibility, and regard for other people. In exchange for this conduct the University grants its students freedom and privacy. The Honor Code is a time-honored tradition at Sewanee, and students’ matriculation at the University acknowledges their willingness to live within the bounds of academic, personal, and community relationships the Honor Code upholds.