

ENGL 190 (40744):

Honors Colloquium: American Jewish Story

Fall 2008 ☿ SH 411 ☿ T-Th 9:00-10:15

Course web page: www.sjsu.edu/depts/jwss/mesher/engl/190

Instructor:

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Office Hours:

T-Th: 8:00-8:45, 4:30- 5:30

and by appointment

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A Note on the Honors Colloquium: You and your classmates are in this class because of the exceptional work you have done in your courses thus far. Because of that record of achievement, successful completion of the Honors Colloquium carries two rewards. First, you may use this class to substitute for *any other requirement or elective in the major* (even, if you wish, the senior seminar). Second, if you maintain your GPA, you will earn honors at graduation.

Course Description: A *colloquium* is the many-headed hydra of classroom formats – scary to some, but empowering to the participants, and never dull. Our class will not be a lecture, in which one person does almost all the talking, or even a seminar, in which students contribute a greater share to the discussion, but an on-going colloquy in which the participants take turns as facilitators and contributors. For this reason, each student will be responsible for leading class discussions on at least three short stories during the course of the semester, and for participating regularly in the discussions lead by others. You are outstanding students, and these should be outstanding exchanges. The fact that these discussions will center on short fiction is a plus – it

is much easier to feel as though you have mastered a story than, say, a chapter in a novel. The fact that these discussions will focus on American-Jewish fiction is also a plus – a chance for you to move beyond the mainstream canon, and immerse yourself in an accessible and wildly successful literary subculture. Finally, our interest in the story as both a literary and publishing genre, as well as our interest in the story collection as a specific art form, should provide opportunities for some extra-literary discussions that have probably been lacking in your courses until now.

Course Goals: First, to create a community of scholarship, in which all benefit as individuals pursue their own interests, within the focus of the course. Second, to translate that energy and accomplishment into outstanding written analysis of the literature under study. And third, to focus on three main topics during the semester: short fiction by twentieth-century American-Jewish writers; the decline (and fall?) of the short story in America; and the short-fiction collection as an art form.

Required Texts:

Nathan Englander, *For the Relief of Unbearable Urges* (Vintage).

Bernard Malamud, *The Complete Stories* (Farrar).

Philip Roth, *Goodbye Columbus* (Vintage).

Gerald Shapiro, ed. *American Jewish Fiction: A Century of Stories* (Nebraska).

Isaac Bashevis Singer, *The Collected Stories of Isaac Bashevis Singer* (Farrar).

Anzia Yezierska, *How I Found America: Collected Stories* (Persea).

In addition to the preceding volumes, students should have access to a dictionary, thesaurus, composition handbook (from English 1A or 100W, for example). That dictionary, incidentally, should not be reserved for essays alone. Students are expected to look up any unfamiliar words encountered in the texts, and to be able to define them when called upon to do so in class. These stories also contain occasional words borrowed from other languages (especially Yiddish, Hebrew, Polish, and Russian), many of which have entered American

English, and most of which are easily found and defined on the web, so please make an effort to check out *all* unfamiliar terms.

Assignments and Grading: There will be two essays, both about 1500 words and counting 25% of the final mark each. The other 50% of the final grade will be determined by class participation – half on the three or four times you will lead the class discussion on specific stories, and half on your participation in the

discussions led by others, as well as your timely completion of work. Essays cannot be written on the same stories presented in class; the second essay will be in place of, and due on the day of, the final examination. Both essays will require research into secondary sources.

Grading will be on a 100-point scale for each assignment. For the final mark, 100-97 will be an A+, 96-94 an A, 93-90 an A-, 89-87 a B+, 86-84 a B, 83-80 a B-, 79-77 a C+, 76-74 a C, 73-70 a C-, and so on.

Submission of Written Work: Essays must be typed, double-spaced, and follow standard MLA format. Please number your pages, fasten them with a single staple in the top left corner, make sure your name is at the top of the first page, and do *not* use a cover page. Papers may be handed in only during class only and only by a student in attendance. Do not leave them in the English department office, under my office door, or anywhere else. Please keep a copy of all work submitted (on disk at least), and retain all graded work returned until the end of the semester; English majors should always save the graded copies of their essays in all department classes, since these will be required for the portfolio in their senior seminar. Please do not submit late work, or unassigned work, except by prior arrangement. Students should anticipate a significant delay in the return of any late work.

Plagiarism. Don't even think about it. And to help keep you far from transgression, your essays must be submitted to Turnitin.com before I will read them. Plagiarism is the submission of another's work as one's own (in any sense). If you have any questions about whether what you are doing is plagiarism, talk to me *before* you submit the work. For more on plagiarism and its consequences, please refer to the "fine print" at the end of this greensheet, as well as the "Policy on Academic Integrity," which you can find in both the schedule of classes and in the university catalog.

Please Note: If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, or if you need to share any emergency medical information, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center to establish a record of their disability.

This statement shall be included in all Department of English syllabi or "greensheets": *In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the*

quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. Grades issued will represent a full range of student performance and will adhere to the following SJSU academic standards of assessment:

The "A" essay will be well organized and well developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will show the student's ability to use language effectively and construct sentences distinguished by syntactic complexity and variety. Such essays will be essentially free of grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors.

The "B" essay will demonstrate competence in the same categories as the "A" essay. The chief difference is that the "B" essay will show some descriptably slight weaknesses in one of those categories. It may slight one of the assigned tasks, show less facility of expression, or contain some minor grammatical, mechanical, or usage flaws.

The "C" essay will complete all tasks set by the assignment, but show weakness in fundamentals (usually development), with barely enough specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. The sentence construction may be less mature, and the use of language less effective and correct than the "B" essay.

The "D" essay will neglect one of the assigned tasks and be noticeably superficial in its treatment of the assignment—that is, too simplistic or short. The essay may reveal some problems in development, with insufficient specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. It will contain grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The "F" essay will demonstrate a striking underdevelopment of ideas and insufficient or unfocused organization. It will contain serious grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System"). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A= excellent; B= above average; C= average; D= below average; F= failure. Courses graded according to the A, B, C, No Credit system shall follow the same pattern, except that NC shall replace D or F. In such cases, NC shall also substitute for W (or Withdrawal) because neither grade (NC or W) affects students' GPA.

Syllabus

(Subject to modification. If you miss class, please check for changes to the greensheet on the class web page at www.sjsu.edu/depts/jwss/mesher/engl/190)

The reading assignments for Yeziarska can be found on page 6, below.

| | | | |
|------|----|----|--|
| Aug | 26 | Tu | Introduction |
| | 28 | Th | Cahan, "A Ghetto Wedding" (Shapiro, 1-14) |
| Sept | 2 | Tu | Yeziarska, <i>Hungry Hearts</i> 1: 1-61 |
| | 4 | Th | Yeziarska, <i>Hungry Hearts</i> 2: 62-128 |
| | 5 | F | Last day to DROP |
| | 9 | Tu | Yeziarska, 131-61, 178-90, 210-18 |
| | 11 | Th | Yeziarska, 245-60, 263-84, 297-312 |
| | 12 | F | Last day to ADD |
| | 16 | Tu | Shapiro, 51-93, 115-141 |
| | 18 | Th | Singer, 3-28, 38-56, 79-93, 149-69 |
| | 23 | Tu | Singer, 188-206, 250-300 |
| | 25 | Th | Singer, 301-316, 352-395 |
| | 30 | Tu | No class |
| Oct | 2 | Th | Singer, 421-433, 448-496 |
| | 7 | Tu | Singer, 505-511, 525-541, 574-579, 587-591, 600-610 |
| | 9 | Th | No class |
| | 14 | Tu | Shapiro, 38-50, 174-222 |
| | 16 | Th | Malamud, <i>The Magic Barrel</i> 1: 69-78, 150-6, 123-33, 157-66, 241-60, 174-81, 63-8 |
| | 21 | Tu | Malamud, <i>The Magic Barrel</i> 2: 221-40, 167-73, 86-92, 200-20, 93-9, 134-49 |
| | 23 | Th | No class |
| | 28 | Tu | Malamud, 261-298, 322-68 |
| | 30 | Th | Malamud, 369-447, 448-470 |
| Nov | 4 | Tu | Malamud, 489-530, 536-552, 614-629, 589-594 |
| | 6 | Th | Roth, 137-200 |
| | 11 | Tu | No class |
| | 13 | Th | Roth, 1-136 |
| | 18 | Tu | Roth, 200-298 |
| | 20 | Th | Shapiro, 300-359 |
| | 25 | Tu | Shapiro, 360-end |
| | 27 | Th | No class |
| Dec | 2 | Tu | Englander, 1-80 |
| | 4 | Th | Englander, 81-152 |
| | 9 | Tu | Englander, 153-205 |
| | 15 | M | 7:15-9:45: Final exam |

Student Learning Goals: Department Of English & Comparative Literature

I. SKILLS

- Ability to read texts closely and to articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature and rhetoric.
- Ability to explicate texts written in a wide variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes.
- Ability to recognize and appreciate the importance of major literary genres, subgenres, and periods.
- Ability to respond imaginatively to the content and style of texts.
- Ability to write clearly, effectively, and imaginatively, and to adjust writing style appropriately to the content and nature of the subject.
- Ability to develop and carry out research projects and to articulate them within appropriate conceptual and methodological frameworks, including the ability to recognize when information is needed, and to locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
- Ability to analyze texts other than literary or rhetorical: for example, political, journalistic, commercial, technical, etc.
- Ability to read and speak a language other than English.

II. KNOWLEDGE

- Understanding of the historical development of the English language and of literature written in English from Old English to the present.
- Understanding of the relations between culture, history, and texts, including ideological and political aspects of the representation, economic processes of textual production, dissemination and reception, and cross-fertilization of textual representations by those of other arts: architecture, sculpture, music, film, painting, dance, and theatre.
- Understanding of the twofold nature of textual analysis: 1) objective study from varied analytical perspectives; 2) subjective experience of the aesthetic reality of the text.
- Familiarity with a wide range of British and American literary works, as well as with selected authors and works of other literatures, including folk and popular forms.
- Familiarity with a wide range of literary terms and categories relating to literary history, theory, and criticism, including figurative language and prosody.
- Familiarity with the nature of the canon and of canon-formation, including issues of culture, history, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation.
- Familiarity with basic practices of literary research and documentation, including electronic forms of information retrieval and communication.

III. EXPERIENCES

- Face-to-face exchange of ideas with faculty and fellow students in a classroom, in office visits, and in shared activities on and off campus.
- Cooperative projects with other students in discussion groups, writing activities, and study sessions.
- Cultural resources of the University: interest groups, public lectures, readings by creative writers, theatrical productions, music and dance performances.
- Involvement in the life of the University, connection with its physical environs, participation in a dynamic, rich, diverse intellectual community.
- Achievement of independently-conceived research projects, including the stating of a problem or issue and all steps involved in organizing, synthesizing, summarizing, and analyzing information in order to communicate conclusions.

IV. UNDERSTANDINGS, INTERESTS, AND VALUES

- An enduring interest in language and literature.
- A sense of the presence of the literary and rhetorical past.
- Greater awareness of the depth and complexity of human existence, perceived across the boundaries of time, place, culture, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation
- Long-term interest and involvement in aesthetic, cultural, and intellectual matters as well as in social and political issues.
- Understanding of the ability of great literature and of concentrated language study to awaken and challenge readers and auditors to struggle with the profound questions of human identity and values.
- A personal critical perspective, and sense of intellectual independence and momentum.

The Fine Print: Academic Integrity

Turnitin.com: Students will submit all formal writing assignments for this class to Turnitin.com via the Internet for evaluation, as well as in printed form to be handed in to the instructor.

Academic Integrity Statement (from Office of Judicial Affairs): “Your own commitment to learning, as evidence by your enrollment at San Jose State University, and the University’s Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs.” The policy on academic integrity can be found at (<http://www2.sjsu.edu/senate/S04-12.pdf>).

Academic integrity is essential to the mission of San José State University. As such, students are expected to perform their own work (except when collaboration is expressly permitted by the course instructor) without plagiarizing or paraphrasing from any outside resources, except as quoted and documented in their research. Students are not permitted to use old tests, quizzes when preparing for exams, nor may they consult with students who have already taken the exam. When practiced, academic integrity ensures that all students are fairly graded. Violations to the Academic Integrity Policy undermine the educational process and will not be tolerated. It also demonstrates a lack of respect for oneself, fellow students and the course instructor and can ruin the university’s reputation and the value of the degrees it offers.

We all share the obligation to maintain an environment, which practices academic integrity. Violators of the Academic Integrity Policy will be subject to failing this course and being reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action, which could result in suspension or expulsion from San José State University.

Cheating: At SJSU, cheating is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means. Cheating at SJSU includes but is not limited to:

Copying in part or in whole, from another’s test or other evaluation instrument; submitting work previously graded in another course unless this has been approved by the course instructor or by departmental policy; submitting work simultaneously presented in two courses, unless this has been approved by both course instructors or by departmental policy; altering or interfering with grading or grading instructions; sitting for an examination by a surrogate, or as a surrogate; any other act committed by a student in the course of his or her academic work which defrauds or misrepresents, including aiding or abetting in any of the actions defined above.

Plagiarism: At SJSU plagiarism is the act of representing the work of another as one’s own (without giving appropriate credit) regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements. Plagiarism at SJSU includes but is not limited to:

The act of incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts thereof, or the specific substances of another’s work, without giving appropriate credit, and representing the product as one’s own work; and representing another’s artistic/scholarly works such as musical compositions, computer programs, photographs, painting, drawing, sculptures, or similar works as one’s own.