San José State University
Humanities Department
CA/ENG/MUS/TA 172 – Arts in U.S. Society – Spring 2017, Section 1

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Jennifer Rycenga
Office Location: Clark 437
Telephone: (408) 924-1367 (office); (650) 440-0063 (cell; fine for messaging)
Email: Jennifer.rycenga@sjsu.edu; jrycenga@earthlink.net
Office Hours: Wednesday 11:30 am – 2:30 pm, and by appointment
Class Days/Time: T 3:00 -4:15 pm online WebEx via Canvas
Classroom: ONLINE

Prerequisites: Passage of the Writing Skills Test (WST) or ENGL/LLD 100A with a C or better (C- not accepted), and completion of Core General Education are prerequisite to all SJSU Studies courses. Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended. A minimum aggregate GPA of 2.0 in GE Areas R, S, & V shall be required of all students.

GE/SJSU Studies Category: Area “S” (“Self, Society and Equality in the United States”)

Course Description
Study of American arts and artists in their aesthetic, social, and political contexts, focusing on 20th and 21st centuries. Arts examined include architecture, poetry, music, visual arts, dance, theatre, performance art, and fiction. Special emphasis on issues of cultural diversity.

OK, that’s what the catalogue says. This section focuses on art works that tell a story across time and across the geography of the United States; art works that address issues of cultural angst; art works that spark reflection on form and content. We will discuss, blog, travel by foot and in our minds, screen movies, and more. Buckle up for a voyage of discovery

Technology for this Course
This course requires you to access the Canvas Learning Management System and, within that, WebEx. Course materials, including the syllabus, assignments, readings, and more, will be posted on Canvas. Most assignments will be handed in via Canvas. Once you are enrolled, your Canvas account will direct you to this course. This syllabus, and all other course materials, can be found on Canvas. Messaging of enrolled students will be conducted on Canvas.

There are five requirements for students participating in Canvas.
1. Please **include a picture** of yourself for the thumbnail on your Canvas profile. This enables me to connect your face, name, interests, and coursework.

2. Whenever possible, upload your assignments directly into the Canvas system using **MSWord**; that way I can make corrections, pose questions, and comment on your work directly.

3. Within the first three weeks, **initiate a conversation with me about yourself** and your interests in the course, in college, and asking specific questions you have for me as your professor. If you would rather **visit** during office hours, that is fine, too.

4. Once you have a few graded assignments back from me, indicate to me in a message what types of feedback are most useful to you. These can include “micro” comments on your writing (spelling, grammar, syntax, etc.), “macro” comments on your writing (style, structure), “micro” questions for content clarification (“What do you mean here? “Are you sure that the Pope is Catholic?”), or “macro” questions on content (“If your contention that religions are always warlike is accurate, how do you explain religious non-violence from Jesus to Martin Luther King?”). I will probably still use all four methods, but if one is especially important to you, I will try to emphasize that one.

5. Act with respect, enthusiasm, evidence and specificity in relation to your fellow students and to course materials.

**Special Online Rules**

Research has shown that student success rates are often lower with online classes, because enthusiasm and commitment are not as regularly reinforced as happens in a live classroom situation. Therefore we will have weekly required online meetings, every Tuesday from 3:00 to 4:30. I will usually sign on about thirty minutes before our shared WebEx session, and stay available on Canvas immediately after our shared session. This will facilitate your ability to check in with me if you are experiencing problems or have questions.

To maintain your commitment to the class, there are weekly assignments.

Powerpoint shows will be uploaded; filmed lectures may also be added. You will receive a notification about these materials, and what you are expected to do with them. This will frequently include discussion boards on Canvas, where you are free to ask questions, debate ideas, or add additional content and background on the material covered. You will be required to participate in such discussions; this partly constitutes your participation grade (along with participation during our Tuesday sessions).

Since this is my first-ever fully online class, it is likely I will make my share of mistakes re. technical issues and timeliness. Thanks for your patience. I will do my best to reciprocate.

**Faculty Web Page**

My faculty web page can be found [here](#). It contains useful background information about your professor, and links to interesting pages about religion (this latter content is being moved gradually to Canvas). I also encourage Facebook users to like three Facebook pages connected to our department:

- American Studies at SJSU  [https://www.facebook.com/groups/2926064778/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/2926064778/)
- Religious Studies at SJSU  [https://www.facebook.com/relstudsjsu](https://www.facebook.com/relstudsjsu)
- Humanities Club at SJSU  [https://www.facebook.com/groups/HumanitiesClubSJSU/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/HumanitiesClubSJSU/)

**GE Learning Outcomes (GELO)**

Some bureaucratically-minded folks are convinced that upper-division college classes should be as tightly regulated as elementary school lesson plans. These requirements are especially odious in a class on creativity and social identity: this sort of enumeration of specific goals runs counter to the integrative approach to interdisciplinary learning fostered by this department and course. Your professor disagrees with these policies, and is not afraid to say so publicly. However, to fulfill the letter of the law (while scarring its spirit), I provide herewith the list of overly generalized learning objectives, and which assignments will form the basis of my assessment of your learning. Do be aware, though, that the real assessment - the grade you earn - is based on...
every assignment, and participation, not just a few discrete events as described below. I regret having to waste space and time telling you this, but so goes the law.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Students shall be able to describe how religious, gender, ethnic, racial, class, sexual orientation, disability, and/or age identity are shaped by cultural and societal influences in contexts of equality and inequality. Assessed on Final Exam and Short Assignments

2. Students shall be able to describe historical, social, political, and economic processes producing diversity, equality, and structured inequalities in the U.S. Assessed on Short Assignments

3. Students shall be able to describe social actions by religious, gender, ethnic, racial, class, sexual orientation, disability, and/or age groups leading to greater equality and social justice in the U.S. Assessed on Short Assignments

4. Students shall be able to recognize and appreciate constructive interactions between people from different cultural, racial, and ethnic groups in the U.S. Assessed on Short Assignments and Final Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

5. Students shall be able to demonstrate how connections between the arts permit us to comprehend the nature of connections between ourselves and society. Assessed on Research Paper.

Required Texts/Readings

These textbooks have not been pre-ordered; please order online, or obtain an electronic copy, or a library copy.

- **Whitman**  
  *Leaves of Grass* – specific poems will be assigned – use this [link](#) for free online copy

- **Divakaruni**  

- **Wright**  
  *Uncle Tom's Children* – any edition will do; used copies [here](#), and a $7.99 eBook [here](#).

The following movies will be screened during the semester. You should purchase or rent them, and/or add them to your Netflix queue

- **Kubrick**  
  *2001*

- **Edward Zwick**  
  *Glory*

You should purchase or download these works of music. There are additional songs from the Blues tradition and a few rock songs that I will attempt to share with you directly through Canvas and through internet links.

- **Tori Amos**  
  *Scarlet's Walk* (an album)

- **Joni Mitchell**  
  *Hejira*

- **Charles Ives**  
  *Three Places in New England* (this is a classical composition in three movements)

- **Steve Reich**  
  *WTC 9/11*

- **John Adams**  
  *On the Transmigration of Souls*

Additional short readings will be provided by the professor, via Canvas if at all possible.

Library Liaison

- Peggy Cabrera
- Phone: (408) 808-2034
- Email: peggy.cabrera@sjsu.edu
Course Requirements and Assignments

Because this course meets but once a week, and is mostly online, we must use time productively! There will be a great deal of discussion in our weekly meetings and on discussion boards on Canvas: participation is assumed. Strong, respectful participation that makes significant contributions of ideas and examples will go beyond the participation grade to raise a borderline class grade; lack of participation or below average participation will accord with no mercy shown to borderline grades.

Most weeks there is a short writing assignment, based on the previous week’s material. These are one-two pages in length, double-spaced. There are eleven of these scattered through the semester, worth 5% each. You must do at least eight of them. If you do more than eight, I will drop the lowest grades. It is to your advantage to do these every week, especially early in the semester.

There will be a mid-term and a final in the class. Both of these examinations are untimed, and will be essay-based. The full format of the final will be decided later in the semester. The major project for the course is a final paper. The full parameters and topic options for the final paper will available. Students will have a chance to hand in a draft, and to revise the final paper a second time, if they wish, before the end of the semester.

I will occasionally ask to share exceptional or paradigmatic work done by students with the entire class. I will ask permission before doing this with any names or identifying markers attached.

Grading Policy and Weight of Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation (Discussion boards and in-class discussion)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Weekly Written/Participation (8 @ 5 % each)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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Grades are assigned on a 100-point system:

- 98-100 = A+
- 97-92 = A
- 90-91 = A-
- 88-89 = B+
- 82-87 = B
- 80-81 = B-
- 78-79 = C+
- 72-77 = C
- 70-71 = C-
- 68-69 = D+
- 62-67 = D
- 60-61 = D-
- 00-59 = F

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs’ Syllabus Information web page at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/”

CA/ENG/MUS/TA 172 – Arts in US Society, Spring 2017, Section 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 31</td>
<td>Introduction to the Class and to Each Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>February 7</td>
<td>Singing America: Walt Whitman</td>
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<td><strong>Reading:</strong> Poems will be assigned; use the search function to find by first line - use this <a href="#">link</a>. In our shared time together, each student will recite a poem of their choosing, and we will reflect on the experience of reading aloud through this odd medium!</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment:</strong> Where, and around what issues, are art and society having an impact on each other in the spring of 2017? Provide examples (photos, MP3 files, recordings, or written work via links encouraged). One page of writing + additional pages for examples.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>February 14</td>
<td>Public Sculpture: Shaw Memorial</td>
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<td><strong>Listening:</strong> Obtain a copy of Ives’ <em>Three Places in New England</em> and listen to all three movements, with special attention to the first movement. This <a href="#">site</a> has all of the music, but no ascription of performers and no real visuals. This performance, available as three individual movements for $1.29 each on iTunes, is very <a href="#">trustworthy</a>.</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment:</strong> Describe the experience of reading Whitman, both while reading to yourself, and reading aloud. Did this experience awaken any specific ideas or feelings about America? About hope? About poetry? About another identifiable theme? Describe and explain. One page, double-spaced, handed in to Canvas.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>February 21</td>
<td>Freedom to Travel, Freedom to Choose your Lover: Black Women Blues Singers</td>
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<td><strong>Reading:</strong> Angela Davis, <em>Blues Legacies and Black Feminism</em>. <a href="http://discover.sjlibrary.org/iii/encore_sjsu/record/C__Rb3803382?lang=eng">link</a> or cut and paste <a href="http://discover.sjlibrary.org/iii/encore_sjsu/record/C__Rb3803382?lang=eng">http://discover.sjlibrary.org/iii/encore_sjsu/record/C__Rb3803382?lang=eng</a>. From this link, click where it says “An electronic resource available to SJSU Students and Faculty.” That will take you to a new tab with the full text.</td>
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<td>Your assigned reading is the Introduction (p. xi-xx), “I Used to Be Your Sweet Mama” (p. 3-41), and “Here Comes My Train” (p. 66-90); advance listening could include Bessie Smith – “Downhearted Blues,” “I Ain’t Got Nobody,” “Nobody Knows You When You’re Down and Out.” “St. Louis Blues,” “Far Away Blues;” Ma Rainey – “Prove It On Me”</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment:</strong> Visit the McKinley Monument in St. James Park on 1st Street, south of St. James Street (note, some students have felt vulnerable amidst the homeless people there, so I recommend going with a buddy). Describe it, and compare its aesthetic and historical qualities to the Shaw Memorial (as discussed in class). If you are not located close to San José, locate a monument near you that is dedicated to a great figure or event from American history, and visit it to complete this assignment. Two pages double-spaced, handed in to Canvas.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>February 28</td>
<td>How Do We Watch Films?: Plot, Spectacle, Sound, Time, Sense – Genre and Collective Memory: <em>Glory</em> (1989) and the Massachusetts 54th</td>
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|      |            | **Assignment:** How easy, or difficult, is it for you to sense what was original, compelling and noteworthy about the early recorded Blues singers? Why do you think this is the case for you? How does technology impinge on your enjoyment, and/or how does technology facilitate your appreciation of these almost-century-
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>March 7</td>
<td>old compositions? One page, double-spaced, handed in to Canvas</td>
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<td><strong>Richard Wright and “The Ethics of Living Jim Crow”</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reading</strong>: Wright, <em>Uncle Tom’s Children</em>. All students will read the introductory essay (“The Ethics of Living Jim Crow”) and <strong>at least one</strong> of the five short stories. <strong>Assignment</strong>: Reflect on the directorial choices made by Edward Zwick in <em>Glory</em>. One-two pages, handed in to Canvas.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>March 14</td>
<td>The Flowering of American Painting: Painters of Difference <strong>Viewing</strong>: Paintings by Georgia O’Keeffe, Marsden Hartley, Jacob Lawrence, and Judy Baca will be shared via links. <strong>Assignment</strong>: How does Richard Wright use the form of the short story so as to deliver the greatest emotional impact to his content? One-two pages, handed in to Canvas.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>April 4</td>
<td>Musical Conceptions: John Cage and Pauline Oliveros <strong>Assignment</strong>: Mid-term due at the beginning of class. It will include a question on the two <em>9/11</em> musical compositions. Details as the course develops.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>April 11</td>
<td>Kansas; Rage Against the Machine; Tori Amos “Scarlet’s Walk” <strong>Reading</strong>: Mitchell Morris, “Kansas and the Prophetic Tone” (on Canvas) <strong>Listening</strong>: Tori Amos “Scarlet’s Walk,” Bruce Springsteen, “The Ghost of Tom Joad,” Rage Against the Machine, “The Ghost of Tom Joad,” Kansas “Dust in the Wind” <strong>Assignment</strong>: Seek out a place with interesting ambient sound. Turn on the recorder on your phone and perform John Cage’s 4’33”. Submit your file as an MP3 (this <a href="#">site</a> provides conversion between formats if you need that), along with up to one page on your reflections concerning sound from this experiment.</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>Immigrant Impacts: Five Wounds Catholic Church; Buddhist Church of America; Siva-Vishnu Temple; Divakaruni <strong>Reading</strong>: Divakaruni – three short stories from <em>The Unknown Errors of our Lives</em> (reader choice) <strong>Assignment</strong>: Upload pictures of buildings and other markers of immigrant cultures you see during your daily life. No need to be exhaustive; submit at least three pictures with brief captions/annotations, as well as location (don’t betray anyone’s personal home, though – just give a neighborhood if it is a private residence and not a business).</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>April 25</td>
<td>What Architecture and Public Art Tell Us: Design Your Own Field Trip <strong>Assignment</strong>: Paper Draft and Sources Being Used. The Draft can include an outline, any text you have written, and aspirational goals. The more substantive the better. The “sources” can include bibliography, discography, videography, webography, and other resources you have consulted or intend to consult.</td>
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| 13   | May 2 | **Beyond Place and Time: The Ontological Questions in the American Imagination – Kubrick’s 2001.**  
**Assignment:** Design a field trip that highlights public art and monumental architecture in a confined environment (e.g. downtown San José, the Civic Center area of San Francisco, lower Manhatten, the National Mall of Washington D.C., etc.). Take your field trip and describe the buildings and art you are seeing, as well as the impact these works exert. Two-four pages with pictures, submit to Canvas. |
| 14   | May 9 | **Joni Mitchell - Hejira**  
**Assignment:** How is 2001 similar to music in its use of time and sound? Can you “hear” it differently after thinking about Cage and Oliveros? One page on Canvas. |
| 15   | May 16 | **Ginsberg, Lorde and Rich: Howling**  
**Reading:** Read and/or listen to “Howl” [here](#), Lorde, “A Litany For Survival” is found [here](#). Lorde’s “Who Said It Was Easy” is [here](#). Adrienne Rich’s “Power” is found in a blog post [here](#). Her “Phantasia for Elvira Shatayev” is [here](#). The ending excerpt from her poem, “An Atlas of the Difficult World” is [here](#).  
**Assignment:** Work on the Final Paper |
| Final Paper | May 19 | **Assignment:** Final Paper Due  
**Assignment:** Final Exam will be posted |
| Final Exam | May 22, MONDAY! | **Assignment:** Rewrites and Take-home FINAL exam due by 11:59 pm – The Final Exam will be cumulative, but there will be a range of choice on it. There will be a question on the poetry from session 15, Mitchell’s Hejira, and Divakaruni (since you did not have formal assignments on those works). |