

2006 Campus Reading Program  
*The Kite Runner*

**Focused Discussion Opportunities  
with SJSU Professors and Students**

- (1) Wednesday September 27, 2006
  - (2) Wednesday October 18, 2006
  - (3) Wednesday November 29, 2006
  - (4) Wednesday February 21, 2007
- 1:30 – 2:45 pm in ENG 189

*The Kite Runner* is a wonderfully told story with many themes and topics for discussion. The sessions listed below promise to be exciting opportunities to hear from SJSU professors and students with expertise on some of these themes and topics. There will be time for questions and discussion with and among attendees.

We hope you'll make time to come to these intellectual discussions that are designed to foster the tradition of higher education to stimulate your quest for knowledge and provide you an opportunity to engage with some of the faculty and students at San José State.

**(1) Understanding Afghanistan Through Its History from The Bronze Age to Today**

**Wednesday, September 27, 2006 from 1:30 – 2:45 pm in ENG 189**

Dr. Jonathan Roth, SJSU Professor of History will discuss the history of Afghanistan. This land, lying between the Near East, Central Asia and South Asia, has played an important, and underrated, role in World History. Professor Roth will discuss the land and its peoples from its early Bronze Age civilizations, through its conquest by the Persians and then Alexander the Great, the rise of the Indo-Greek Kingdom of Bactria and the Kushan Empire, both important in the spread of Buddhism, to the invasion of the Huns, the coming of Islam, the rise of independent Muslim states, the Mongol invasion, the struggle between Persians, Indians and Turks over control of the region, and the rise of the independent Kingdom of Afghanistan in the 18th century, its struggle with the British and Russian Empires, modernization, the brief democratic Republic, the Soviet invasion, Taliban state and finally the Coalition invasion and the present Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

*Professor Jonathan Roth is professor and chair in the SJSU History Department. He is also the Director of the Burdick Military History Project at SJSU. Professor Roth, a Silicon Valley native, was a Fulbright scholar at the Georg-August University in Goettingen, Germany between earning his BA and MA degrees. Dr. Roth earned a BA in Near Eastern Studies at UC Berkeley, and an MA, M.Phil. and Ph.D. in Ancient History at Columbia University. Dr. Roth has been at SJSU since 1994. In addition to teaching and research, Dr. Roth is actively involved in service to his discipline and the university and is currently involved in the planning for the celebration and honoring of SJSU's history for the university's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2007. [<http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/history/Faculty/Roth.htm>]*

**(2) Images of Islam**

**Wednesday, October 18, 2006 from 1:30 – 2:45 pm in ENG 189**

A panel of SJSU students will share their personal stories about their Islamic heritage, the cultural and generational conflicts, and what it's like to be a Muslim in post-9/11 times.

*This program has been arranged through the work of the MOSAIC Cross Cultural Center in the Division of Student Affairs and the Muslim Student Association. [<http://sa.sjsu.edu/mosaic/> AND <http://www.sjsumsa.org/>]*

(3) Making the Old New (even in comic books!): Rumi, Sohrab, Rostam: Poetry and Classic Stories in *The Kite Runner*

**Wednesday November 29, 2006 from 1:30 – 2:45 pm in ENG 189**

Professor Persis Karim from the Department of English and Comparative Literature will discuss some of the poetry mentioned in *The Kite Runner*. Some of the poetry including that by Rumi, written nearly a thousand years ago, remains popular throughout the Middle East and has through translation attained an audience in the West. Her lecture will contextualize this poetry and discuss the ways that poetry remains a powerful force for cultural understanding.

Dr. Karim will be joined by writer Bruce Bahmani who will talk about his recent work - *Rostam: Tales of the Shahnameh* which is a comic book based on the story of Rostam and Sohrab, mentioned in *The Kite Runner* (page 29). *Shahnameh (The King's Letters)* is an epic poem written over 1,000 years ago by Ferdowsi. The poem consists of over 60,000 verses and Ferdowsi worked on it for 35 years. Mr. Bahmani's comic book is a fascinating way to introduce this major Iranian/Persian masterpiece to the Western world. The book is published by Hyperwerks.

[<http://www.hyperwerks.com/series/rostan.html>]

Mr. Bahmani will sign copies of his book after the presentation. His book will be on sale in the Spartan Bookstore before this event and at the event.

*Persis Karim is Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature at San José State University. She teaches world literature, comparative literature and creative writing. She is the editor of the recently published anthology LET ME TELL YOU WHERE I'VE BEEN: NEW WRITING BY WOMEN OF THE IRANIAN DIASPORA (University of Arkansas Press, 2006). She is working on a book-length study on the role of literature and film and the emergence of a public Iranian-American identity. For more information about her book see: <http://www.persiskarim.com>.*

*Behrouz Bruce Bahmani was born in the US to an Iranian father and German mother. As a child he lived in Iran and studied Persian literature in school and read American comic books. He returned to the US after high school and the 1979 Iranian revolution. He is a freelance writer for Iranian.com, Pezhvak, Namak magazine and other Iranian publications. He makes his home today in Northern California. He spent over five years creating and producing Rostam, Tales of the Shahnameh.*

(4) What is Good Writing?

**Wednesday February 21, 2007 from 1:30 – 2:45 pm in ENG 189**

*The Kite Runner* is the first novel of Khaled Hosseini who is an internist. Over 3 million copies of the book have been sold worldwide and it will be made into a movie by Dreamworks. What about the book made it so successful? What makes for good writing? This session will provide perspectives on writing and be of interest to budding authors as well as to readers wanting to gain a better understanding of the styles and approaches of the authors whose books they read.

*Mitch Berman Director of the Center for Literary Arts at SJSU, is the author of the novel Time Capsule, nominated by G.P. Putnam's Sons for a Pulitzer Prize. He has also been nominated for four Pushcart Prizes for short stories published in literary magazines such as TriQuarterly, the Antioch Review, Conjunctions, Confrontation, Witness, Boulevard, Michigan Quarterly Review, Chicago Review, Southwest Review, Brooklyn Review, Agni and the Gettysburg Review. His nonfiction has appeared in The Village Voice, The Nation, the Los Angeles Times Magazine, Mother Jones and other magazines. He is founding editor of the hypermedia arts magazine Hyper: The Hypermedia Magazine of the Arts. His A.B. is from U.C. Berkeley, and his M.F.A. in writing is from Columbia University. [<http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/english/MFA/faculty.html#berman>]*