

**San José State University**  
**Department of English & Comparative Literature**  
**English 297, MA Comprehensive Exam Preparation, Fall 2021**

**2 units**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Nancy Stork
<b>Office Location:</b>	FO 218 and ZOOM
<b>Email:</b>	Nancy.Stork@sjsu.edu
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tuesday 9-10 AM; Thursday, 12 noon - 1 pm and by appointment
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	Monday, 4:00 - 5:30 p.m.
<b>Classroom:</b>	ZOOM links will be sent

**MYSJSU and CANVAS Messaging**

Please check for messages regularly through MySJSU and CANVAS.

**Course Description**

This is not a typical seminar on a defined, delimited topic with the usual assignments. It is a workshop aimed at presenting general guidelines, reviewing materials, and offering hands-on practice to help you prepare for the comprehensive MA exams. The take home portion is offered this year the weekend of October 8 - 11. The new in-class portion will be administered on November 17. Our goal is to understand how the exam is set up, what is expected, and how best go about preparing so that you can create an effective study plan for yourself. We will review major periods, movements, authors, themes, theoretical approaches and key concepts in class. Class work will emphasize (a) honing close reading and textual analysis skills, (b) using appropriate literary/critical/theoretical terminology, and (c) connecting the text to the historical/literary context. We will also examine sample exam questions and critique answers to get a clearer understanding of what kind of questions to expect, how to prepare your answers, and how to present your response. While this class will definitely give you many useful tips and tools, intensive independent study outside of class is absolutely essential for gaining the kind of in-depth knowledge necessary to do well on the exams. In other words, you should not expect to pass the exams simply because you take this course!

For basic information about the MA exams, please visit the English department website: <http://www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/ma/macomps.html>

## **Graduate Program Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will demonstrate an appropriate level of expertise in literary history, literary theory, and rhetoric.
2. Students will demonstrate high-level proficiency in literary research and in the synthesis of research.
3. Students will demonstrate critical and analytical skills in the interpretation and evaluation of literary texts.
4. Students will demonstrate a command of written academic English, including the abilities to a) organize and present material in a cogent fashion, b) formulate and defend original arguments, c) employ effectively the language of their discipline and d) write under time constraints.
5. Students will demonstrate a reading knowledge of at least one foreign language.
6. Students preparing for teaching careers will receive the appropriate instruction.
7. Students will be prepared for further graduate study.

## **Course Student Learning Objectives**

- a. Demonstrate familiarity with chosen periods/authors/texts for Part Two of the MA exam (three take-home essays)
- b. Demonstrate ability to analyze literary texts in context and use citations to back up arguments
- c. Prepare to take Part One of the Exam (multiple choice and literary analysis of poetry, given in-class)

## **MA Exam Dates for Fall 2021:**

October 8 (9 AM) through October 11 (5 PM). Part Two

November 15 (during classtime)

## **Recommended Texts** (supplement to the reading list of primary texts/authors)

1. The Norton Anthologies (British Lit, American Lit, Theory & Criticism): Focus particularly on intros to periods/literary movements/authors
2. Turco, Lewis Putnam. *The Book of Forms: A Handbook of Poetics* (for poetry analysis covered in the in-class portion)

## **Assignments:**

- One oral Presentation: You will make 1 oral presentation on a chosen topic from Groups A, B and C. These presentations should focus on at least two texts from your reading list and highlight what these texts tell us about the literary period, history, underlying concepts, or authors. (PLO 1, 2)
- Two Short Essays: You will draft short responses to two questions from Groups A, B or C, provide feedback, and do peer editing. (PLO 3, 4)
- Word Study of an early Modern English Word
- Two Short Essays: Finding poems to illustrate Genres and Forms as well as Figures of Speech. Writing a one page analysis of each.

**Grading:**

- Assignments will be graded Satisfactory/Not Satisfactory.
- The course will be awarded Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving credit for the course is contingent upon Satisfactory completion of at least 5 of the 6 assignments.

**Classroom Protocol**

**Attendance & Participation:** Regular attendance and active participation in class discussions are extremely important. You are responsible for all materials assigned, presented and discussed.

Since most classes will be based on group discussions, presentations and workshops it is crucial for you to keep up with the readings and take an active as well as thoughtful role in all classroom activities. Your questions, comments, insights, and interpretations are valuable, so do speak up!

**Submitting work:** All written work must be turned in on CANVAS. All readings are listed against dates they will be discussed in class; so when you come to class you should have already read the materials and be prepared to discuss them

**English 297 Fall Semester 2020**

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	8/23	Introduction to course The MA exam <a href="http://www.sjsu.edu/english/grduate/ma/macomps.html">http://www.sjsu.edu/english/grduate/ma/macomps.html</a>  Text and Context: close reading, literary terminology, literary history  <b>Form Groups and Sign up for presentations</b>  Homework: Continue preparing/revising your reading list Identify 3 salient quotations from every long work; one salient quotation from every poem Begin preparing your oral presentation
2	8/30	Group A – Classical and Medieval Group A – Early Modern and Neoclassical British and American
3	9/6	Group B – British and American Literature: Romanticisms to Modernism (the long 19 <sup>th</sup> century) Group B – 1900–Present America and British Literature

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		Group B – Multiethnic American Literature
4	9/13	Group B - 1900-Present Global Anglophone Literature Group C – Contemporary Literary Theory and Criticism Group C – Rhetoric/Composition/Professional and Technical Writing/Pedagogy
5	9/20	Discussion of sample questions and sample answers First Response DUE 1,000 words
6	9/27	Discussion of sample questions and sample answers Second Response DUE 1,000 words
7	10/4	Introduction to early modern English Workshop on your Word Studies – time to ask questions, etc.
8	10/11	Genres and Forms First Short Essay DUE 1,000 words
9	10/18	Figures of Speech Second Short Essay DUE 1,000 words
10	10/25	Sample Poems and Analyses Word Study DUE 1,000 words
11	11/1	Sample Poems and Analyses
12	11/8	Workshop, Review, Your questions
13	11/15	<b>In-Class Portion of the MA Exam (Multiple choice and poem analysis)</b>
14	11/22	Optional Debrief