



English Department Graduate Newsletter



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DEADLINES: AUGUST AND DECEMBER GRADUATES

If you are planning to graduate in August or December of 2002, you should have filed your approved program (i.e. been formally advanced to candidacy) by Feb. 1. If you missed this deadline, please see me immediately. Remember, you need to file your program nearly two semesters before you plan to graduate. Remember, too, that you must apply for graduation (at the Graduate Studies office, 10th St. Garage) early in the semester you plan to graduate. For August graduates, the deadline is June 14. August graduates must present their completed theses to the Graduate Office by July 5.

PROGRAM APPROVAL DEADLINE: MAY 2003 GRADUATES

If you plan to graduate in May 2003, you will need to file your approved program very early in the fall. To be on the safe side, you should file before the close of this spring semester. Course descriptions for the fall seminars and a tentative list of spring offerings are included in this issue of the newsletter. Once you have determined what courses you will take to complete your 30 units, see me to fill out the official form.

REGISTRATION FOR FALL 2002

The Schedule of Classes for fall will give you detailed information on how to register for next semester's courses. Touch-tone registration for graduate students will begin in mid-May. It is very important that you register as early as possible; the budget will again be tight and underenrolled seminars may be canceled early in the registration process. If you have any questions about your schedule for the fall, please get in touch with me before the end of the spring semester.

ENGLISH GRADUATE SEMINARS FOR FALL 2002

201 Materials and Methods R 1900-2145 Stork

201C M&M for MFA T 1900-2145 (Soldofsky)

211 20th-Century Poetry T 1900-2145 (Maio)

226 Tragedy W 1900-2145 (Keeseey)

229 17th-Century British R 1900-2145 (Grant)

232 Romanticism R 1600-1845 (Haeger)

241 CW Fiction M 1600-1845 (Fink)

242 CW Non-Fiction W 1600-1845 (Iversen)

255 Themes in American Lit. T 1600-1845 (Shillinglaw)

259 Composition Studies M 1900- 2145 (Rice)

(Seminars for Spring 2003 will probably include 200, 201, 201C, 204, 216, 225, 227, 233, 240, 241, and 257)

201 Materials and Methods of Literary Research (Prof. Stork)

This course will introduce graduate students to the resources and techniques of formal literary research and to the standards of scholarly work. Students will learn to evaluate and use specialized libraries, indices, bibliographies, journal publications, checklists, concordances, histories, data bases for computer searches, handbooks, and other materials. In addition, they will gain practical experience in transcription and text editing by working with the Steinbeck Ledger Book of 1934 housed in the Steinbeck Research Center. We will also discuss various (and at times competing) theories of literary criticism. Students should complete the course ready to apply the technical and critical

competencies they have gained to their work in other graduate seminars. The course will include a number of formal oral presentations and written exercises. English 201 is required of all English graduate students and should be taken as soon as possible after achieving classified standing. [Note the Thursday evening meeting time.]

201C Methods and Materials of Literary Production (Prof. Soldofsky)

This course introduces Creative Writing graduate students to the resources, traditions, techniques, and culture associated with professional creative writing both inside and outside academia. The class will study the role of the individual writer within the literary and academic communities, and explore various forms of literary activity that commonly support "the literary life." Students will learn to find and evaluate dominant and alternative literary magazines and publishers, book review indexes, academic journals, and online and other electronic resources. By means of this course, they will find ways to apply their knowledge of these resources that are useful in their own writing, and in their other courses. A creative writer's work is both a personal journey toward increasingly masterful artistic expression as well as an increasing understanding of what the literary world requires of a writer as a professional. In order to succeed, a student needs to understand how the interlocking networks within the literary, academic, and publishing communities function. To gain such an understanding, students will accomplish the following objectives in this course:

- Explore the traditions, conventions, sub-genres, and schools, associated with contemporary poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction.
- Explore the literary tradition as it has evolved in Northern and Central California.
- Examine the role of the creative writer within academia.
- Become familiar with a wide range of literary journals, publishers, and electronic resources for creative writers.
- Examine evolving genres and new literary forms and forums.
- Gain a familiarity with some common professional forums and networks for creative writers within academe.
- Gain familiarity with various avenues for publication and other professional activity. (This course is required of all M.F.A. students and should be taken as early as possible.)

211 Twentieth-Century Poetry (Prof. Maio)

We will treat the major metrical poets of the modern era--Hardy, Yeats, Auden, Frost--as well as key poets of the counter-tradition--Pound, Eliot, and Lowell. Two in-class presentations and one significant research paper will comprise the graded evaluation for the course.

226 Tragedy (Prof. Keesey)

This course will explore one of the major "kinds" or forms of literature, and the one that has inspired the most discussion and controversy. We will take as our target texts some of the chief examples of the genre, starting with the ancient Greeks and ending with the twentieth century. And we will play off against these texts several theories of tragedy. Over the semester, then, we will grapple with the questions raised by these encounters, such as: Is there such a thing as tragic form? Is there a tragic vision in addition to, and even in opposition to, tragic form? Does tragedy require a certain kind of plot? A certain kind of hero? A certain emotional effect? Does tragedy have an "essence," and is this essence to be found (only?) in the works of the ancients? Of Shakespeare? Of the moderns? Or is it the case that tragedy has no essence but only a history? What, finally, is a literary "genre" and in what ways can generic concepts illuminate individual texts?

229 Seventeenth-Century British Literature (Prof. Grant)

English 229 will in many ways continue where English 217 leaves off--we will study poetry, prose, and drama as works of art whose theme primarily is love: love between man and woman, love of God. The historical context is darkly exciting since England is moving toward a gruesome civil war and--perhaps for the first time in history--the "legal" beheading of its king. Having closed down the theaters in 1642, the Puritans found a way to close down the monarchy several years later--or so they thought. Shakespeare's world, the comprehensive Elizabethan world view, its great images and correspondences, are also beginning to fragment. As Donne writes in his *Anatomy of the World*, mourning the death of his patron's fourteen-year-old daughter, Elizabeth Drury: "'Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone;/ All just supply, and all relation." This young girl, the age of Romeo's Juliet, represents as Donne told Ben Jonson, Donne's "Idea of Woman." In many ways this Elizabeth's death represents the death of that Idea which took hold of England's literary consciousness beginning most dramatically with Bembo's celebration of Platonic love, a ladder ascending through woman and up to God. Our theme is love, then, both sacred and profane. We begin with Donne and Jonson and end with Milton. We also read plays that show how the idea of woman becomes much more humanized (and then some): John Webster's *The White Devil*, Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling*, and John Ford's *The Broken Heart*. Students will take one midterm, give two short oral presentations--one on an article and another on one of the works read--and write a critical paper of fifteen to twenty pages.

232 Romanticism (Prof. Haeger)

This course will focus on the writings of William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge to investigate literary romanticism from a variety of perspectives. Participants in the seminar will read Wordsworth and Coleridge in depth, from samplings of selected juvenilia and early works, to examples of later writings; some works by Byron, Shelley, and Keats may be examined in relation to influence from Wordsworth and Coleridge. Secondary materials will be included on subjects ranging from biography to criticism, from background studies to philosophical essays, and from early reviews to modern critical theory. Among numerous topics to be explored are romantic nature, romantic subjectivism, romantic epistemology and the imagination, romantic intertextuality and influence, and the status of "romanticism" as a cultural and aesthetic phenomenon in the history of ideas. Seminar members will give one formal report and one informal report during the term and they will submit an interpretive research paper at the end of the term. Active and informed participation in each seminar session will form a large measure of individuals' success.

241 Creative Writing: Fiction (Prof. Fink)

241 is the graduate seminar in fiction writing. Students are required to submit 40-50 pages of new fiction--in the form of stories or novel excerpts--during the course of the semester. The seminar will focus on elements of craft including point of view, style and characterization. No text is required, though students will read variously from literary magazines, anthologies, story collections and craft manuals. Evaluation will be based primarily on quality and consistency of creative work, as well as revision, participation, and peer critique.

242 Creative Writing: Non-Fiction (Prof. Iversen)

Creative Nonfiction has been called "the most urgent genre." How has this genre changed -- or not changed -- in recent years? Students in this writing and reading course will explore the art of creative nonfiction including memoir, literary journalism, personal essay, and biography. We'll discuss classic as well as innovative or controversial examples of creative nonfiction and how to use these as models or springboards for our own creative work. We'll explore the difference between fiction and nonfiction and review literary approaches to language, and also discuss how the voice, style, and aesthetic sensibilities of the creative nonfiction writer bear upon the writing itself.

255 Thematic Studies in American Literature (Prof. Shillinglaw)

Two Southern Voices: William Faulkner and Flannery O'Connor Reporting on the Faulkner Centennial in 1997, the New York Times posed the question: Who reads

Faulkner today? He's tough; "he sets up roadblocks with his endless interior monologues and sudden change in point of view"; he needs to be reread; he writes of the South sympathetically and yet traces its decline. In this seminar we will attend to Faulkner's words: "The aim of every artist is to arrest motion, which is life, by artificial means and hold it fixed so that 100 years later, when a stranger looks at it, it moves again since it is life." After considering "life" captured in 5 of Faulkner's novels, the class will turn to a writer with a far smaller output, Flannery O'Connor, who published 31 stories and two novels in her lifetime-and wrote this marvelous sentence: "She would of been a good woman if it had been somebody there to shoot her every minute of her life." Through discussions, brief lectures, and weekly presentations of 2-page papers, this class will explore the tragic, comic, brutal and doomed South of Faulkner's and O'Connor's works: *The Sound and the Fury* (1929); *As I Lay Dying* (1930); *Light in August* (1932); *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936); *Go Down, Moses* (1942); *Wise Blood* (1952) and *A Good Man is Hard to Find* (1955). Requirements: 2-page papers for presentations (6 total) and a 15-20 page seminar paper.

259: Composition Studies (Prof. Rice)

As the catalog promises, English 259 examines current approaches to "composition," that is, to writing and writing instruction. We will focus on recent theory and practice, hoping to make the former serve the latter. In other words, we will study theory not for its own sake but as a useful and necessary underpinning of effective practice (whether our practice is writing or teaching). Put another way, using Erika Lindemann's terms, we will be more interested in the how than in the what. Because it enables us to address so many issues, we will concentrate on the product-process debate that has raged for the past quarter century. Our ultimate position in this debate determines such crucial matters as whether and how we find a place for reading in our classrooms, or how we best approach our writing tasks. In addition, we will also discuss such issues as remediation, peer evaluation, feminist theories of discourse, and diversity in the writing classroom.

COURSE SELECTION

Remember that courses taken outside the English department normally will not count toward the English M.A. program. Please check with me before you take such courses. You will need special approval to include such a course in your official program. Usually upper-division literature courses offered by the department will count, if they also carry English major credit and if you have a compelling reason to take an upper-division rather than a graduate course. If you plan to take any upper-division courses, again, check with me in advance.

CONDITIONALLY CLASSIFIED GRADUATE STUDENTS

Conditionally classified students must complete their required undergraduate course work before enrolling in graduate seminars. When you are eligible for classified status, the change is not automatic; you need to see me to file the necessary form.

STUDENT HONORS

Congratulations to Jimmee Greco (M.A. Dec. 2001) whose thesis, "The Garden Was the World: Garden Imagery in To the Lighthouse," was chosen as the English and Comparative Literature Department's Outstanding Thesis for 2001. Congratulations, too, to Ann Jennings, whose research on composition instruction won first place in the Humanities division in the university's Outstanding Student Research Competition.

ARE YOU APPLYING TO PH.D PROGRAMS?

We would like to know which of our graduates go on to Ph.D. work and what success they find in the application process? If you are applying to Ph.D. programs, let me know how it is working out for you. This information might be useful to those who follow in your footsteps.

ENGLISH GRADUATE GROUP

In previous years this organization of English graduate students has arranged study groups and readings and even hosted conferences. In the past year, however, the group has been inactive. If you are interested in serving as an officer and reviving the organization, please contact me. Meanwhile, the undergraduate group, the English Society, has become quite active and there is talk of possibly merging the two groups. Consult the Graduate Bulletin Board for announcements. Better yet, join the English Department list server and receive information about department activities via email. To join, send an email message to: listproc@listproc.sjsu.edu. In the body of the text, type this: SUBSCRIBE EngDept [your first name] [your last name].

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT DATES

June 14: Last day for August graduates to file application for graduation at the Graduate Studies Office (10th St. Garage)

July 5: Last day for August graduates to submit thesis to the Graduate Studies Office.

Sept. 6: Last day for August graduates to submit thesis copies for binding to Graduate Studies Office.

Sept. 1: Last day for December graduates to file application for graduation at the Graduate Studies Office.

Oct. 1: Last day for May 2003 graduates to file their official programs with Professor Keesey. To be safe, complete this task in May 2002 before the summer break.

[February 2002 Newsletter](#)

