

# ENGLISH GRADUATE NEWSLETTER

San José State University

May 2016

Volume XXXXVIII, Number 4

Noelle Brada-Williams, Graduate Coordinator

Alan Soldofsky, Director of Creative Writing



**Kym Cunningham** received the Bonita M. Cox Award for Classical and Medieval Studies from **Professor Emeritus Bonnie Cox** on **May 2nd**.

## Summer Contacts

The best way to contact Professors Brada-Williams and Soldofsky over the summer is usually via email (Noelle.Brada-Williams@sjsu.edu and Alan.Soldofsky@sjsu.edu respectively). We will be checking email intermittently as some of our summer will be involved in travel or other pursuits that will make it impossible to get back to people immediately. We will be back with regular office hours when the Fall semester starts—classes begin August 24.

## Upcoming Deadlines

If you are planning to graduate in May 2017, you should fill out your “request for candidacy form” by October 1st. Remember, you need to file your program nearly two semesters before you plan to graduate. Remember, too, that you must apply for graduation early in the semester you plan to graduate. Forms for both are available at the GAPE website: <http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/forms/>. For August graduates, the deadline to apply for graduation is June 10, 2016. For December graduates, the deadline is September 10, 2016. August graduates must present their completed theses to Graduate Studies by July 1, 2016. GAPE has not listed a deadline for when December graduates must submit completed theses to Graduate Studies but October 28 was last year’s deadline.

## Registration for Fall 2016

MySJSU should give you appointment times and information on how to register for next semester's courses in May. Registration for graduate students will begin in June. It is important that you register as early as possible. If there are not enough people signed up for a course, even a graduate course could be cancelled. Contact your advisor if you have any questions. MFA's need to be sure and sign up for any workshops they need for their degree as soon as possible. After a certain point writing workshops are opened up to all graduates on a first come, first served basis, regardless of program (MA or MFA).

## English Graduate Google Group

Please be sure to sign up for the google group for our English Graduate Program. To sign up, send a blank email to: [enggrad-group+subscribe@sjsu.edu](mailto:enggrad-group+subscribe@sjsu.edu). Key information is sent out via the google group that is essential for all MA and MFA students. Program descriptions, course descriptions, the most recent newsletter, and other documents are posted on the department website: <http://www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/>. The SJSU Graduate Studies Office website publishes important deadlines, forms, and information for current students at: [http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/current\\_students/](http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/current_students/)

## English Graduate Seminars for Fall 2016

Class	Day	Time	Professor
201	M	19:00–21:45	Adrienne Eastwood
201c	M	19:00–21:45	Alan Soldofsky
208	M	16:00–18:45	Revathi Krishnaswamy
211	W	16:00–18:45	Sam Maio
241	R	16:00–18:45	Nick Taylor
242	R	19:00–21:45	Cathleen Miller
255	T	19:00–21:45	Susan Shillinglaw
259	T	16:00–18:45	Ryan Skinnell

### English 201: Materials and Methods of Literary Research, M 7:00-9:45 PM (Professor Eastwood)

Course Description: This course is designed to introduce graduate students to the basic elements of work in the field. My goals for the seminar are as follows:

- Introduce students to critical literary theory and various analytical methodologies
- Help students to discover how to work in or apply particular modes to different literary texts
- Hone close-reading/textual analytical skills for poetry and prose
- Learn basic research techniques including bibliography, footnoting, on-line research, and problems/complications in literary study
- Gain experience writing and revising your work for various audiences and purposes

### English 201C: Materials and Methods of Literary Production, M 7:00-9:45 PM (Professor Soldofsky)

ENGL 201C introduces MFA students to the resources, techniques, and culture associated with creative writing networks – both inside and outside academia. The class will explore the individual writer's role within literary and academic communities, and explore various channels for publication and other methods of networking within the literary community. Students will learn what is published in dominant and alternative literary magazines and journals, write book reviews, write essays for presentation at literary conferences and for publication in creative writing and academic journals (print and online), and write a practice thesis proposal. Through this course, students will apply their knowledge and skills in ways useful to their own writing, and in fulfilling their other MFA requirements.

### English 208: Postcolonial Literature M 4:00-6:45 PM (Professor Krishnaswamy)

What is postcolonial literature and why should we care about it? With this fundamental question in mind, we will read a representative sample of postcolonial literature, theory, and criticism in order to get a better understanding of the field's major contributions as well as its limitations. Through close reading of significant postcolonial texts, we will try to find out whether postcolonial literature represents a substantive challenge to the hegemony of the Western literary canon or whether it only offers a shallow, politically correct, counter-narrative that simply reverses the roles of the villain and the hero so that white/Western men valorized in canonical literature are now villainized, while heroic roles are filled by women, people of color, or other politically oppressed groups. We will also try to figure out whether postcolonial literature premises an oppositional/alternative aesthetics or whether it merely replicates the canon in terms of genres, narrative devices, characterization, language and style.

### **English 211: Seminar in Twentieth-Century Poetry W 4:00-6:45 PM (Professor Maio)**

The seminar will explore the salient themes and artistic innovations of Modernism in general, concentrating specifically on the major work of influential poets such as Hardy, Yeats, Frost, Pound and Eliot, and extending to a few poets of the latter-half of the twentieth century, tentatively including Elizabeth Bishop, Derek Walcott and Carol Ann Duffy, among others. Further, select pieces of prose fiction – Hemingway’s “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” and Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying*, for example – will be examined to illustrate how the Modernist aesthetics of poetry were employed for nontraditional narrative techniques, as particularly seen in the use of multiple points of view and perspectives of voice. The course, therefore, is ideally suited for both MA and MFA candidates, poets as well as prose writers. Students will present a paper to the seminar that explicates a work on the syllabus. In addition to the explication, students will have the option of writing either a creative project or a research paper.

### **English 241: Fiction Writing Workshop, R 4:00-6:45 PM (Professor Taylor)**

This is the most advanced fiction workshop offered at SJSU. Experimentation, risk-taking, and stretching of all kinds will be encouraged. Students submit two original pieces of fiction plus a significant revision in lieu of a final exam. The texts for the semester are *Best American Short Stories 2015* (eds. T.C. Boyle & Heidi Pitlor) and an anthology of published short stories chosen by the class. Registration priority goes to MFAs with a primary concentration in fiction, followed by those with a secondary concentration in fiction, and finally graduate students in other programs. If you are not in the MFA program, you must submit a writing sample to the instructor before you may register.

### **English 242: Nonfiction Writing Workshop, R 7:00-9:45 PM (Professor Cathleen Miller)**

How does the real world flatten onto a page? In this course we’ll look at how creative nonfiction authors draw from the world around them to use that material as the life’s blood of their writing. In this vein, we’ll take field trips and experiment with a variety of techniques ranging from the journalistic to the novelistic. We’ll also discuss the fundamentals of creative nonfiction, providing fresh perspectives for newcomers and seasoned veterans alike. Participants are welcome to bring in portions of their theses for workshop. And of course, by popular demand, our no-stress experimentation with the ubiquitous two pagers will continue.

### **English 255: Books (and films) that Changed America T 7:00-9:45 PM (Professor Shillinglaw)**

Abraham Lincoln said to Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*: “Is this the little woman who made this great war?” Other American works similarly shifted the national dialogue: Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle*; John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath*; Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*; Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road*. We will consider the cultural impact of these works and write creatively about their contemporary relevance.

### **English 259 Studies in Composition Studies, T 4:00-6:45 PM (Professor Skinnell)**

How do people write? How do people learn how to write? And, more importantly, how can we—or should we—teach writing? Through course readings and class discussions, you will become acquainted with the history of writing studies and the different theoretical strands that inform the contemporary practice of teaching writing. We will also focus on the practical aspects of writing instruction such as syllabus design, course management, writing assessment, and assignment sequences. English 259 is a prerequisite or co-requisite for Teaching Associates and is highly recommended for any student, MA or MFA, who contemplates teaching writing as part of a career.

## Additional Courses of Interest for the English MA and MFA

A limited number of upper-division undergraduate English courses can count towards the degree but you must secure the cooperation of the instructor and notify the graduate advisor of your plans. Again, get approval in advance. Please note that the 140A and 140B series will be taught next year for those interested in Old English. It most likely will not be taught again until the 2018-2019 school year.



Photo: Katherine King

## Graduate Student Achievements

**Katy King**, who will receive her MFA at the end of this month, presented with **Professor Paul Douglass** at the Conference on "Steinbeck, Modernism, and Biography" at the beginning of this month. She spoke on "Modernism and the Munroe Curse."

MA student **Aubrey Laughlin** published her poem "Pieces of my Heart" last month in the online *Elephant Journal*. Her image entitled "Tea Time" was recently published in the Spring 2016 edition of *convergence: an online journal of poetry & art*. Her article "Emerging from the Cave: Dreams and Individuation in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*" is forthcoming in *Aelurus*.

## Conditionally Classified Graduate Students

Conditionally classified students must complete required undergraduate course work before enrolling in graduate seminars. A list of upper-division literature courses approved for conditionally classified students is available from Professor Brada-Williams. When you are eligible for classified status, the change is not automatic; see your advisor to file the necessary form (found at [http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/current\\_students/forms/](http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/current_students/forms/)).

## PhD and Other Futures

The department would very much like to know about your plans after graduation. Are you staying with your current employment? Looking for a teaching gig in the area? Applying to PhD programs? Please let your advisors know what you are planning and how things are working out. For MAs graduating this May, stopping by the coordinator's office (FO 102) or calling for an informal "exit" interview should be considered a necessary part of your preparations for graduation. Letting us know about your future plans helps us to evaluate the program and assess how well we are preparing students for their chosen paths.



Photo: Jesus Hernandez

**James D. Phelan Literary Award recipients with Professor Alan Soldofsky**  
at the Department Awards and Scholarships Ceremony on May 2, 2016

## Department Awards and Scholarships Ceremony - May 2, 2016

The following graduate students received awards: **Kimberly Cunningham, Jessica Keaton, Shane Diven, Boris Slager, Aubrey Laughlin, Samantha Crain, Richard To, Kimy Martinez, Carmen Kennedy, and Sela Gaglia.**



Photos: Jesus Hernandez

**Shane Diven** received the Roberta Holloway Award from Department Chair, **Shannon Miller**.



**Jessica Keaton**, recipient of the Ruth MacLean McGee Award, pictured with donors, the **McGee family**.

## Electronic Theses

Graduate Studies is now accepting theses electronically and making them available to the public via open access on the web. For those of you who hope to publish your thesis, we suggest you file a form to see that your thesis is “embargoed.” That means it will still be available electronically within the library (just as the hard copies of our alumni’s theses are available to visitors to the MLK library), but will not be available to people who do not have access to the SJSU library. Currently Graduate Studies’ policy is that you can request an embargo for a set number of years (three) and then file an additional form to have the thesis embargoed further. The graduate faculty encourages those of you with the desire to later publish part or all of your thesis to protect your creative and intellectual property. For those of you with no desire to publish your thesis materials in print form, open access will provide you with the immediate and ultimate distribution of your scholarship (or creative work).

## Additional Reminders When Finishing Your Theses

For MA and MFA students planning to write a thesis next year, please note that the MLA updated their *MLA Handbook* this year. You will no doubt want a recent 2016 edition to educate yourself on the changes. Please be aware that Graduate Studies will expect your thesis to be consistently formatted in whatever style you choose for your thesis. They will not allow you to mix styles and they will expect you to be up to date or they will require you to revise before they accept your thesis. MFA students should note that MFA theses must be accompanied by a 2000-3000 word (approximate length) preface, in which the author provides a literary context for her/his work, including literary influences, stylistic and theoretical influences, the influence of historical events, cultural and/or linguistic background, etc. It is hoped that the proposal-writing process will help MFA’s to flesh out their ideas for their preface.

## MFA and MA Exam Schedules

Please note that the MFA exams for Fall 2016 are now scheduled September 23rd to 26th. Please contact Professor Soldofsky immediately in order to sign up for them. You will need to send him your student ID number, all three of your thesis committee members’ names, your primary and secondary genre tracks, and your projected date of finishing the degree. The MA exams for the Fall semester will be on September 3, 2016 (part 1) and September 10, 2016 (part 2). MA exam-takers will need to send Professor Brada-Williams a completed reading list (click on the “Guidelines” at <http://www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/ma/macomp.html> to find your own version of the form) and receive your special MA exam ID number.

## Important Dates in 2016-2017

<b>May 26</b>	The Department Graduation Ceremony and Reception is at 5:30-7:00 PM in the Student Union Ballroom. Lineup of graduates is at 5:00 PM. Contact the department office if you have not already picked up your tickets.
<b>May 28</b>	University Graduation Ceremony at Spartan Stadium with Speaker Harry Edwards
<b>June 10</b>	Deadline for August 2016 graduates to file or reactivate application for graduation at the Graduate Studies Office.
<b>June 13</b>	Last day for May 2016 graduates to submit MA and MFA thesis copies for electronic publication (or embargoing).
<b>July 1</b>	Last day for August 2016 graduates to submit approved theses to Graduate Studies.
<b>Aug. 15</b>	Sign-up for the MA Comprehensive Exams by this date.
<b>Aug. 24</b>	Fall Courses Begin.
<b>Sept. 3</b> <b>Sept. 10</b>	MA Comprehensive Exam Part I 9:00 AM in Sweeney Hall 229 MA Comprehensive Exam Part II 9:00 AM in Sweeney Hall 229
<b>Sept. 10</b>	Deadline for December 2016 graduates to file or reactivate application for graduation at the Graduate Studies Office.
<b>Sept. 19</b>	Last day for August 2016 graduates to submit MA and MFA thesis copies for electronic publication (or embargoing).
<b>Sept. 23</b> <b>Sept. 26</b>	MFA Comprehensive Exam distributed electronically (9:00 AM) MFA Comprehensive Exam due (5:00 PM)
<b>Oct. 1</b>	Probable deadline for May 2017 graduates to submit candidacy forms to GAPE
<b>Oct. 26</b>	Deadline to submit thesis proposals for Spring 2017 299 credits to Department Grad Committee.
<b>Oct. 31</b>	Probable deadline for December 2016 graduates to submit approved thesis to Graduate Studies.
<b>Jan. 26</b>	First day of Spring 2017 classes.
<b>Feb. 4</b> <b>Feb. 11</b>	Spring MA Comprehensive Exam Part I 9:00 AM in Sweeney Hall 229 Spring MA Comprehensive Exam Part II 9:00 AM in Sweeney Hall 229