

# ENGLISH GRADUATE NEWSLETTER

San José State University

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## Spring Office Hours and Summer Contacts

The MFA Advisor, Professor Soldofsky, has office hours 3-4:30 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and also by appointment Thursday in the PM. The MA Advisor, Professor Brada-Williams, has drop-in office hours on Tuesdays from 3-5 and is available to meet by appointment Monday through Friday.

The best way to contact Professors Brada-Williams and Soldofsky over the summer is usually via email ([Noelle.Brada-Williams@sjsu.edu](mailto:Noelle.Brada-Williams@sjsu.edu) and [Alan.Soldofsky@sjsu.edu](mailto: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 23.

## Registration for Fall 2017

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).

## Introducing New Faculty Member Selena Anderson

Fiction writer Selena Anderson will be joining our Creative Writing Faculty next Fall. Dr. Anderson recently finished her PhD at University of Houston and completed her MFA at Columbia University. Her stories appear or are forthcoming in such publications as *AGNI*, *Callaloo*, *Georgia Review*, *Joyland*, *Glimmer Train*, and *The Best of Gigantic*, and have been honored with the Transatlantic/Henfield Prize and the Inprint Joan and Stanford Alexander Prize. She is working on a story collection and a novel.

## Four-Unit Courses

Starting next Fall, all graduate courses (with the exception of our new course, English 297 Comprehensive Exam Preparation) will be four units. They will still meet for approximately 3 hours a week but they will have enhancements to account for the 4th unit, such as additional reading, extended research projects, or additional projects that are meant to help you step into professional life—such as a simulated conference presentation. This change will not effect the requirements needed to fulfill the MFA and MA degrees of those admitted to the program prior to Spring 2017, you will just receive more units with each class. However, those joining us in Fall 2017 will have additional required classes and other modifications that will be explained during orientation.

## English Graduate Seminars for Fall 2017

| Class  | Day | Time         | Professor            |
|--|-----|--------------|----------------------|
| 201 Methods and Materials of Literary Research | M   | 4:00-6:45 PM | Revathi Krishnaswamy |
| 202 Poetic Craft and Theory                    | R   | 7:00-9:45 PM | Alan Soldofsky       |
| 216 Medieval English Literature                | W   | 4:00-6:45 PM | Nancy Stork          |
| 241 Fiction Writing Workshop                   | M   | 4:00-6:45 PM | Selena Anderson      |
| 242 Nonfiction Writing Workshop                | T   | 7:00-9:45 PM | Cathleen Miller      |
| 253 Period Studies in American Literature      | T   | 4:00-6:45 PM | John Engell          |
| 259 Composition Studies                        | R   | 4:00-6:45 PM | Cindy Baer           |
| 297 Comprehensive Exam Preparation             | M   | 7:00-9:45 PM | Revathi Krishnaswamy |

### English 201: Materials and Methods of Literary Research, M 4:00-6:45 PM (Professor Krishnaswamy)

This course is designed to introduce graduate students to the basic elements of research in the field. We will hone close reading/textual analytical skills and review basic research techniques including how to use data bases, bibliographies, writing, revising, formatting, footnoting etc. But our main objective will be to learn about various theoretical approaches/methods used in the field and practice applying them to specific literary texts and cultural artifacts. As such, we will delve deep into the complex field of Critical Theory, which cuts across other disciplines like philosophy, psychology, sociology, economics, political science, history, and biology. Focusing on theories/methodologies employed by literary scholars and critics of the 20th century, we will try to understand major intellectual schools such as New Criticism, Structuralism, Deconstruction, New Historicism, Marxism, Feminism, Postcolonialism etc., and engage with fundamental questions about language, literature, reading, and writing. While the course will challenge you to engage with a great deal of complex material, it will give you a deeper understanding of the field and equip you with the tools you will need as a professional.

### English 202: Poetic Craft and Theory, R 7:00-9:45 PM (Professor Soldofsky)

This Fall's Poetic Craft and Theory Seminar focuses on understanding prosody and poetic form, and the evolution of poetic form from the Elizabethan age to Modernism and experimental Postmodernism, and in global poetry beyond the Anglo-American tradition. Students in the seminar will write conference-length critical papers, prosody exercises, and a few new original poems, applying their knowledge of prosody and the poetic line. The poet Donald Revell has written "Like prayer, prosody is both a form and an energy, a compulsion to compel the world in Words. And like prayer, it retains its original necessity in living breath: one by one by one." Forms of poetry are containers for the poem's prosodic music. The poet Robert Hass claims that humans are wired to respond to poetry because we experience it as we experience music, not through rules but through poetry's mutable sonic forms "because we humans are pattern-discerning and symbol-making creatures at the core of our being. You hear a tune, that is, a sequence of notes, but not just a sequence of notes; at some point it seems complete—then it's a tune. And there was a certain sensation that went with it." We will closely read poems by poets from before the twentieth century and from the twentieth century and after, to discern and decode the prosody used to create the music and the forms associated with these poets' signature styles. It is through this means we individual poets' individual styles become transparent to readers.

### English 216: Medieval English Literature W 4:00-6:45 PM (Professor Stork)

This graduate seminar will cover medieval texts useful for taking the first part of the Comprehensive Exams for the M.A. in English Literature. We will look closely at the language of these texts (using facing page translations or glossed Middle English texts) as well as the history of the time period. Texts will very likely include: *Beowulf*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and selections from Chaucer and Malory.

### **English 241: Fiction Writing Workshop, M 4:00-6:45 (Professor Anderson)**

The graduate workshop is a place for students to engage in an advanced study and practice of reading, writing, and critiquing fiction. Over the course of the semester students will focus on craft elements such as plot and story structure, characterization, point of view, voice, and of course, revision to generate new work and further develop their own writing styles. Along with review and discussion of published fiction and craft essays, students will also give a presentation on a story of their choice. They should also be prepared to focus considerable energy in thoughtfully responding to peers' writing as well as revising their own work.

### **English 242: Nonfiction Writing Workshop, T 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 253 Period Studies in American Literature, T 4:00-6:45 PM (Professor Engell)**

Late 19th-century and Early 20th-century American Novels

We'll read six American novels, grouped into three pairs, investigating the cultural and formal similarities and differences of the novels both within each pair and among the three pairs. First pair: Mark Twain *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and Charles Chesnutt *The Marrow of Tradition*; Second pair: Henry James *Portrait of a Lady* and Edith Wharton *The Age of Innocence*; Third pair (tentative): Willa Cather either *My Antonia* or *One of Ours* and Ernest Hemingway either *The Sun Also Rises* or *A Farewell to Arms*. Each student will give three oral presentations, each presentation accompanied by both a detailed handout and a short essay on a subject related to the oral presentation. And each student will write a lengthy seminar essay, subject TBD with input from Professor Engell.

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

What is writing? Why and how have we studied it? How do we learn it? Seminar members will collaborate in teams to design an English 1A course for SJSU's First Year Writing program, including a design philosophy, textbook choice, sample readings, writing assignment, and lesson plans. The team's course design will grow out of seminar reading, research, and discussion, which will survey the theory and practice of rhetoric and writing studies. Along the way, each member will produce one visual and one oral presentation to help the seminar explore the intersection theory and practice. English 259 is a prerequisite or co-requisite for Teaching Associates and is highly recommended for any student, M.A. or M.F.A., who contemplates teaching writing as part of a career.

### **English 297: Comprehensive Exam Preparation M 7:00-9:45 PM (Professor Krishnaswamy)**

This two-unit class will help you with exam preparation through the taking of sample exams, discussion of test-taking techniques, and the sharing of your collective research into key terms, periods, and movements in literature.



## **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 approval of both the instructor and your graduate advisor in advance of signing up for the class. Some classes that will be offered in the Fall at the upper division undergraduate level are English 126, Holocaust Literature, with Professor Mesher, and the undergraduate Honors class, English 180, Rhetoric of American Feminisms with Professor Ryan Skinnell. Both of these are unlikely to be offered again during your graduate career. English 150 with Professor Wilson, The Victorian Age, may be useful for those of you studying for the Spring MA comprehensives. English 167, Steinbeck, is a class that you will not get at the graduate level and yet it draws on our unique resources of both the Martha Heasley Cox Center for Steinbeck Studies at SJSU and the expertise of the director of the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas, Professor Shillinglaw.

## **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/forms/>).

## **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/)

## **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* last 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.

## MA & MFA Foreign Language Exams

Both degree programs require a level of fluency in a second language equivalent to two years of college study of a language. If within five years of filing your program (achieving Candidacy), you have completed the fourth semester (or sixth quarter) of an approved university-level foreign language course sequence with a grade of "B" or better, you have already satisfied this requirement. Please bring that to the attention of your adviser when you file for candidacy. Students who have taken coursework longer than five years previous to filing for candidacy or who have acquired their language skills and knowledge outside of an academic institution can satisfy the foreign language requirement in French, German, or Spanish, by taking the following steps:

1. Contact a language advisor (see below) and request authorization to take a foreign language placement test administered in our Media Center.
2. If the placement test results show a level of 4th semester or higher, the student will take a proficiency exam administered by a faculty member in the World Languages department in order to confirm his or her level and discuss a path to improvement, if needed.
3. If placement test results show a lower than 4th semester language level, the student will have to take the appropriate level language course, based on a conversation with the appropriate World Languages faculty member.

| <u>Examiner</u>                     | <u>email</u>   | <u>phone</u> |
|-------------------------------------|--|--------------|
| Professor Jean-Luc Desalvo (French) | <a href="mailto:jean-luc.desalvo@sjsu.edu">jean-luc.desalvo@sjsu.edu</a> | 408-924-4620 |
| Professor Romey Sabalius (German)   | <a href="mailto:romey.sabalius@sjsu.edu">romey.sabalius@sjsu.edu</a>     | 408-924-4616 |

Inquiries into the Spanish exam are now distributed alphabetically by student's last names:

|  |  |              |
|--|--|--------------|
| (A to G) Professor Vanessa Fernandez   | <a href="mailto:Vanessa.Fernandez@sjsu.edu">Vanessa.Fernandez@sjsu.edu</a> | 408-924-4610 |
| (Book appointment at <a href="http://fernandezwllsjsu.youcanbook.me">http://fernandezwllsjsu.youcanbook.me</a> ) |  |              |
| (H to P) Professor Ruby Ramirez  | <a href="mailto:Ruby.Ramirez@sjsu.edu">Ruby.Ramirez@sjsu.edu</a>           | 408-924-4612 |
| (Q to Z) Professor Cheyla Samuelson  | <a href="mailto:Cheyla.Samuelson@sjsu.edu">Cheyla.Samuelson@sjsu.edu</a>   | 408-924-4611 |

*Evidence of a first-language literacy other than English also satisfies the requirement.* For answers to questions about this requirement, or to satisfy this requirement in a language other than French, German, or Spanish, please contact Professors Brada-Williams or Soldofsky for more information.

## MFA and MA Exam Schedules

Please note that the MFA exams for Fall 2017 are now scheduled September 22nd to 25th. 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 2, 2017 (part 1) and September 9, 2017 (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/macomps.html> to find your own version of the form) and receive your special MA exam ID number.

## Graduate Student Achievements:

**Lisa Francesca** has full-time job writing speeches and other communications for the Dean of Engineering. As managing editor of *Engineering At San Jose State*, an alumni magazine, she writes, edits, and lays out the entire issue.

**Roxanne Powell** will be teaching this summer at the Institute of Reading Development. MFA student **Sherri Harvey** had a photo published in *3Elements Literary Review*. "Sunshine Garden Cannery Handbook" a satirical piece by MA student **Irma Garcia**, is being published online by the San Lorenzo Public Library where she gave a reading as part of the "Now That's What I Call Writing" event in March.

## Important Dates in 2017-2018

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>May 25</b>                      | Department Graduation Ceremony, 5:30-7:00 PM Student Union Ballroom (4:45 PM lineup of graduates). Department Graduation ceremony and reception tickets can be obtained via an online link sent out by the department. |
| <b>May 27</b>                      | University Graduation Ceremony at Spartan Stadium  |
| <b>June 10</b>                     | Deadline for August 2017 graduates to file or reactivate application for graduation at the Graduate Studies Office.  |
| <b>June 12</b>                     | Last day for May 2017 graduates to submit MA and MFA thesis copies for electronic publication (or embargoing).   |
| <b>July 1</b>                      | Approximate date for August 2017 graduates to submit approved theses to Graduate Studies.  |
| <b>Aug. 23</b>                     | Fall Courses Begin.  |
| <b>Aug. 25</b>                     | Sign-up for the MA Comprehensive Exams by this date.   |
| <b>Sept. 2</b><br><b>Sept. 9</b>   | MA Comprehensive Exam Part I 9:00 AM in Sweeney Hall 229<br>MA Comprehensive Exam Part II 9:00 AM in Sweeney Hall 229  |
| <b>Sept. 10</b>                    | Deadline for December 2017 graduates to file or reactivate application for graduation at the Graduate Studies Office.  |
| <b>Sept. 19</b>                    | Last day for August 2017 graduates to submit MA and MFA thesis copies for electronic publication (or embargoing).  |
| <b>Sept. 22</b><br><b>Sept. 25</b> | MFA Comprehensive Exam distributed electronically (9:00 AM)<br>MFA Comprehensive Exam due (5:00 PM)  |
| <b>Oct. 1</b>                      | Probable deadline for May 2018 graduates to submit candidacy forms to GAPE   |
| <b>Oct. 27</b>                     | Deadline to submit thesis proposals for Spring 2018<br>299 credits to Department Grad Committee.   |
| <b>Oct. 31</b>                     | Probable deadline for December 2017 graduates to submit approved thesis to Graduate Studies.   |
| <b>Jan. 24</b>                     | First day of Spring 2018 classes.  |
| <b>Feb. 3</b><br><b>Feb. 10</b>    | Spring MA Comprehensive Exam Part I 9:00 AM in Sweeney Hall 229<br>Spring MA Comprehensive Exam Part II 9:00 AM in Sweeney Hall 229  |

