

ENGLISH GRADUATE NEWSLETTER

San José State University

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Revathi Krishnaswamy, Graduate Coordinator

Alan Soldofsky, Director of Creative Writing



Nayomi Munaweera, 2019 Lurie Chair Distinguished Visiting Author-In-Residence

Novelist, short-story writer, and nonfiction writer
Nayomi Munaweera has been appointed to be the Lurie Distinguished Visiting Author at SJSU in spring 2019. She will teach the Graduate Fiction Workshop in the spring semester.

Nayomi Munaweera was born in Sri Lanka. She grew up in Nigeria and immigrated to Los Angeles with her family in the early 80's when she was 12. She is the award-winning author of the novels, *Island Of A Thousand Mirrors* and *What Lies Between Us*. She has been named one of "Twelve Women of Color Writers You Need to Know" by *Bustle Magazine* and "One of the Asian American Women Writers Who are Going to Change the World" by *Electric Literature*. *Island of A Thousand Mirrors* was the Commonwealth Regional Prize Winner in Asia. It has also been shortlisted for the Northern California Book Award and the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature.

She has presented her work around the world at literary festivals including the Jaipur Literary Festival, Mumbai Literary Festival, Galle Literary Festival, Bay Area Book Festival, LitQuake, and AWP. Her debut novel has been the freshman incoming read at UC Santa Cruz for three consecutive years. She appears frequently at book clubs, classrooms, and bookstores and loves engaging with readers.

2019 Lurie Distinguished Visiting Author-In-Residence, Nayomi Munaweera

Munaweera is an alumni of VONA, Voices of Our Ancestors Writing Workshop, and the Squaw Valley Community of Writers. In addition to SJSU, she teaches at Mills College and at the Ashland University low-residency MFA program. She holds writing workshops in Sri Lanka through a program called Write to Reconcile in which she co-teaches with legendary Sri Lankan writer, Shyam Selvadurai. Their aim is to use creative writing as a tool of reconciliation and healing for both Tamil and Sinhala survivors of the civil war. To read more about her click [here](#).

Fall Office Hours

MA Advising: Professor Revathi Krishnaswamy's drop-in office hours this semester are Mondays 1:00-3:00 p.m. Additional times are available by appointment. Please feel free to call or to stop by her office at FO 109. Phone: 924-1384; email: revathi.krishnaswamy@sjsu.edu.

MFA Advising: Professor Alan Soldofsky's hours are M/W 3:00-4:30 p.m. and T/Th p.m. times by appointment. His office phone is 924-4432 and his email is alan.soldofsky@sjsu.edu.

The MA in English: A Guide for Students

"The MA in English: A Guide for Students," turned into a list of FAQs, is available on the web at <http://www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/ma/mafaq.html>.

Deadlines for May 2019 MA and MFA Graduates Please consult the GAPE website for current candidacy and graduation deadlines: www.sjsu.edu/gape/current_students/deadlines/. Note that if you are planning to graduate in May 2019, you should file your official "Petition for Advancement to Graduate Candidacy" by October 1, 2018. Applications (or reactivations of applications) for May 2018 graduation must be filed by February 10, 2019. The relevant forms can be found at the GAPE forms website: www.sjsu.edu/gape/forms/.

University Policy Changes

University Policy now requires that graduate students must be enrolled in classes when they finish their culminating experiences (such as theses and exams). Note that it is already a policy that students must finish their theses while they are enrolled in their 299 units (or else enroll in UNVS 1290R which is basically just a fee, not a class).

MA Comprehensive Exam Schedule

The fall 2018 MA exams are scheduled on the following consecutive Saturdays in November: 10th (part 1) and 17th (Part 2). Spring 2019 MA exam will be given on the following consecutive Saturdays in March: 2nd (Part 1) and 9th (Part II). The time and place for both exams is 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. in Sweeney Hall 229 (unless you are notified of a change).

Please let Professor Krishnaswamy know at least **two weeks** in advance if you plan to take one or both parts by submitting a completed self-survey of your reading (available on the web as part of the MA exam guidelines: www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/ma/macomps.html).

Computers will be supplied for the exam. Please indicate when you sign up whether you would prefer an Apple or a PC.

MA Comprehensive Format

Questions on the first part of the exam cover the reading list through the 18th century and those on the second part cover material from the Romantic period onward. Expect questions on or informed by literary theory in both parts. Each of the two parts takes three and a half hours and asks for three separate essays. Students may take one or both parts of the exam in any term and in any order. The reading list and guidelines for the exam are at: www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/ma/macomps.html.

Copies of some previous exams are also posted on the website. Please note that section C of the Part 1 exam is a close reading of a poem and section C of the Part 2 exam is on World Literature.

MA Foreign Language Exam

The MA degree program require a level of fluency in a second language equivalent to one year of college study of a language. In a new streamlined process, students will be able to take the language placement exams for the most commonly taught languages in the SJSU World Languages Media Center in Clark 206. If you score higher than a 2nd semester level in a given language, bring the printout to the World Language office and Chair Damian Bacich will sign off on it. Should you place into a level of 2nd semester or below, you would then do whatever coursework is needed for you to achieve a level of language skill equivalent to one year of study. As always, native fluency in a language as shown by schooling in that language or attestation by an academic skilled in that native language are also ways to satisfy this requirement.

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 Professor Krishnaswamy for more information.

Deadline for MA and MFA Thesis Proposals

Thesis proposals must come to the Graduate Committee at least five weeks before the end of the semester preceding the semester in which you will enroll for 299 credits. If you plan to write your thesis or project in the Spring 2018 term, you must get your proposal to the Graduate Committee no later than Friday, November 9. Do not wait until the deadline approaches to get started.

Guidelines for MFA theses and thesis proposals are available here:

www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/mfa/mfathesis.html.

Guidelines for MA theses and cover sheet are available here:

www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/ma/mathesis.html.

Once you have secured a thesis advisor or “first reader,” and the thesis advisor has carefully read and approved your proposal, you can submit your proposal electronically to the chair of the Graduate Committee (revathi.krishnaswamy@sjsu.edu). Be sure to cc your thesis advisor in the email so that the Graduate Coordinator knows that the first reader has approved of the proposal being submitted to the Graduate Committee and has stated that it is ready for that step.

Spring 2019 Graduate Courses

At least 21 of the 30 units of classes required for the MA program should be in 200-numbered English courses. Of the 30, only 6 units can be taken as credit/no credit independent study of thesis units. Upper-division English coursework (100 level) may count for graduate students if you have received permission of the instructor as well as the MA or MFA Coordinator. Classes taken outside the department will not count except in unusual circumstances. Get prior approval from your advisor before you take such courses.

Here is a tentative list of our seven spring 2019 graduate course offerings:

Class	Day	Time	Professor
202 Poetic Craft and Theory	M	7:00-9:45 PM	Alan Soldofsky
208 Seminar in Comparative Literature	W	7:00-9:45 PM	Revathi Krishnaswamy
230 Seminar in 18th Century British Literature	W	4:00-6:45 PM	Cynthia Baer
232 Seminar in Romanticism	R	7:00-9:45 PM	Katherine Harris
241 Fiction Writing Workshop	R	4:00-6:45 PM	Nayomi Munaweera
254 Seminar in Genre Studies of American Literature	T	7:00-9:45 PM	Allison Johnson
257 Seminar in the History of Rhetoric	M	4:00-6:45 PM	Ryan Skinnell

Check the schedule for additional upper division undergraduate course offerings that may be of interest, and which will not be covered by the Graduate Curriculum.

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 the MA Coordinator to file the necessary form and await approval.

Spring 2019 Course Descriptions

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

"Pacific Rim Poetics"

In ENGL 202, Seminar on Poetic Craft and Theory, we will be investigating William Carlos Williams' free verse poetics and the various contemporary poetics that have been influenced by Williams' work. Williams' poetics and the later Projective Verse theories of Charles Olson have had an enormous influence on San Francisco Bay Area poetry, and on successive generations of American poets. Some critics believe that Williams' poetics have become a dominant mode of American poetry. On the West Coast, several major poets whose work evolved from the Williams tradition have also been strongly influenced by translations of classical Japanese and Chinese poets (from the Tang Dynasty in particular). San Francisco poet Kenneth Rexroth has written: "... the Pacific Coast of America faces the Far East, culturally as well as geographically..." In our seminar, in addition to Williams, we will closely read the work of poets who are associated with the development of a "Pacific Rim Poetics." We will read work by poets considered central to the San Francisco Renaissance of the mid-century, including work by: Allen Ginsberg, Joanne Kyger, Kenneth Rexroth, Gary Snyder, Philip Whalen, and Lew Welch. We will also read some works by more recent generations of Bay Area poets, including Richard Brautigan, Robert Creeley, Victor Hernandez Cruz, Thom Gunn, Robert Hass, Bobbie Louise Hawkins, Jane Hirschfield, Juan Felipe Herrera, Nathaniel Mackey, D. A. Powell, and Adrienne Rich. And also a few earlier Bay Area poets, including Robinson Jeffers, Weldon Kees, and George Oppen. In addition, we will also read essays on projective verse and poetics by Charles Olson, Robert Creeley, and Adrienne Rich. We will practice close reading of poems, and also write a few poems in the modes and styles associated with these poets' signature styles. It is through close reading and emulating texts by these poets that we will learn to recognize individual poets' poetic styles and their contributions to American poetry as it continues to evolve.

English 208: Seminar in Comparative Literature, W 7:00-9:45 PM (Professor Krishnaswamy)

Globalization, technology, and climate change are radically reshaping us and our planet. The world wide web stretches across virtual space linking people and spreading (mis)information across continents. America's unending war on terror splashes on screens in Europe, Asia, and Africa, fanning old animosities and sparking new conflicts. Multinational corporations relocate overnight taking money and jobs that workers frantically chase. As businesses, money, and goods flow across national borders, Hollywood films and McDonald fries become as easily available in Tokyo and Istanbul as Chinese cuisine and Caribbean music are in Boston and Botswana. Desperate refugees and immigrants from "s***h***" countries try to cross into Europe/America while robots and "crazy, rich Asians" take over the world. Jingoistic forms for nationalisms arise, channeling deep-rooted racial fears, religious hatreds, and gender anxieties. Are we witnessing a clash of civilizations, a battle of sexes, tribal warfare on a global scale, or the chaotic creation of new communities, alternative identities, unforeseen solidarities? Is globalization unleashing suppressed potential and empowering oppressed groups or aiding corporatization and imperial expansion? How are global forces shaping our narratives, ideologies, identities, and actions? What role does culture/literature/art/the aesthetic play in these turbulent times? We will explore these and other questions through a reading of contemporary world fiction by Nayomi Munaweera, Chimamanda Adiche, Jamaica Kincaid, Assia Djebar, Kiran Desai, Tayeb Salih, J.M.Coetzee, and others.

English 230: Seminar in 18th Century British Literature, W 4:00-6:45 PM (Professor Baer)

"The novel as a species is messy, digressive, inclusive, circumstantial, temporal, particular, and subjective. . . . The novel vigorously rejects traditional notions of what literature was; it carves out new literary space," says Mikhail M. Bakhtin. Its origins lie between the end of Britain's Civil War (in 1660) and the beginning of the French revolution (1789). In this seminar we will organize as a collaborative research team to explore the rise of this "transgressive form"—with its focus on seduction, harlotry, transvestism, marriage markets; its pageant of female characters and women writers. We will read and discuss a set of common seminar texts—all novels. To contextualize these, each seminar participant will read and present a text from a supplementary list of rhetoricians, essayists, journalists, and satirists of the period.

English 232: Seminar in Romanticism, R 7:00-9:45 PM (Professor Harris)

#Bigger 6: *Decolonizing British Romantic Literature (1775-1835) through Print Culture*

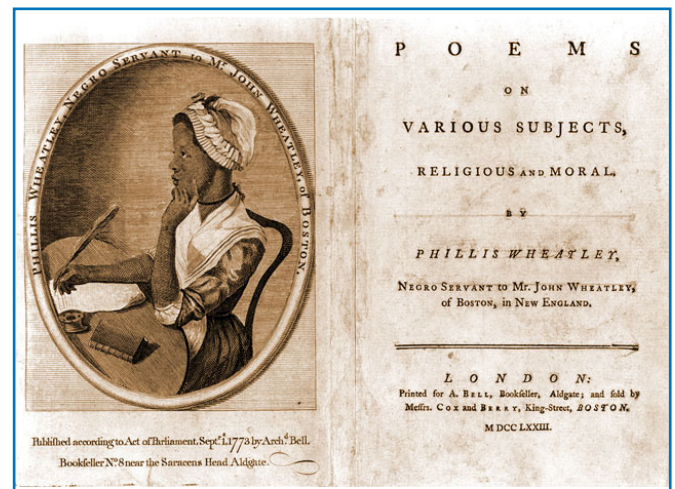
In the last few years, we have seen a rise in provocative efforts to expand and challenge the ways that scholars study and engage with British Romantic literature beyond the “Big 6” authors (Byron, Keats, Shelley, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake) and instead look towards the multi-vocal representations of the Romantic spirit, especially through the overwhelming amount of print materials aimed at both reinforcing and resisting the British Empire. Starting with Mary Shelley's 1818 *Frankenstein* as our ur-text, participants will learn about decolonizing British Romantic literary study by engaging in the international conversations on Twitter (hashtag #bigger6); engaging in archival study of women authors in the Stainforth Library of Women's Writings; participate in Skype lectures by international scholars on “brown Romantics” and women authors; creating a project using a 19th-century iron press in collaboration with Santa Clara University; and performing archival research to construct a literary history (digital projects welcome!). Students will come to understand that the literary voices heralding the Industrial Revolution and mechanization of print culture were immigrant, non-white, or female. Assignments include a variety of weekly written assignments along with a culminating project. (Those wanting a foundational survey in canonical British Romantic literature in preparation for our spring seminar should look through this British Romantics survey course: http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/harris/TechnoRom_F09/Schedule.htm).

English 241: Fiction Writing Workshop, R 4:00-6:45 PM (Lurie Chair, Nayomi Munaweera)

Fiction writing as preparation for thesis. Study of canonical and contemporary fiction and fiction produced by students. Intensive workshop experience. May be repeatable twice for credit.

English 254: Seminar in Genre Studies of American Literature, T 7:00-9:45 PM (Professor A. Johnson)

American Poetry, Beginnings to 1900, will explore themes and tropes central to the genre's development in the New World, including self-hood, the nation, the home, and the environment. We'll take on big names like Bradstreet, Wheatley, Bryant, Poe, Dickinson, and Whitman, but also look at lesser-known and anonymous poets, paying close attention to publication history, print culture, and issues of circulation and consumption.



Phyllis Wheatley © Schomburg Center

English 257: Seminar in the History of Rhetoric, M 4:00-6:45 PM (Professor Skinnell)

Rhetoric is one of the oldest areas of study in Western history, dating back more than 2500 years to Ancient Greece. But rhetoric—that is, the art of persuasion—is obviously not strictly Greek, nor strictly western, nor strictly ancient. In fact, studying the history of Greek rhetoric helps us understand how persuasion has been theorized, taught, and used across a variety of national, racial, and gendered boundaries. In this class, we will study the history of rhetoric by studying ongoing disagreements about what “rhetoric” is, what it does, and how best to study its history. Taking our cue from a variety of scholars and sources (some ancient, western, and Greek, but many working in different traditions), we will try to understand what it means to study persuasion, what is at stake in studying rhetoric, why it matters (or doesn't), why it continues, and why we should care.

Graduate Student and Alumni Achievements

Former Steinbeck Fellow **Dallas Woodburn** signed a deal with Month9Books to publish her debut YA novel, *The Best Week That Never Happened*, with an estimated publication date of 2020. Woodburn's debut short story collection, *Woman, Running Late, in a Dress*, was published in March 2018 by Yellow Flag Press and won the Cypress & Pine Short Fiction Award. She will be doing a reading along with **Peter Nathaniel Malae** at the Steinbeck Center on October 9 at 7:00 p.m.



Dallas Woodburn



Peter Nathaniel Malae

Michael Quintana's short script "The Civilian" became a 2018 Official Selection of the HollyShorts Film Festival. An article he wrote about screenwriting got published through BlueCat Screenplay Competition. And **Script Journey** (www.scriptjourney.com), his script and story consultation service is in full swing! Michael also acted for the first time in a production of *Footloose* at the Aurora Arts Theatre here in Corpus Christi, TX. He is a leader of the Feature Film Screenplay Team at Cinequest this year.



Lily Dayton and Helen Meservey

Photo: J. Lamb

MFA candidate **Helen Meservey's** proposed panel on travel writing, "Not All Who Wander Are Lost: Finding the Heart of Travel Writing," has been accepted for AWP 2019 in Portland, OR. Other panelists include 2018 Lurie Professor, **Don George**, MFA alumna Professor **Sherri Harvey**, and former English Department lecturer **Dan White**.

Lily Dayton's poem "Fil de Calzón" was published in *The Rumpus*.

MFA student **Sharon Simonson** has been named managing editor for 2019's *Lift Off*, the catalog for the annual exhibit of MFA graduates in the studio arts program at San José State University. The appointment represents a new interdisciplinary collaboration for the art publication, which incorporates essays from SJSU student art historians.

MFA alumnus **Matthew McCoy** received an MA in Folklore and Anthropology from UC Berkeley in 2012 before entering the PhD program in the Department of Anthropology at UCLA, where he is currently finishing up his dissertation, *Para-Encounters: An Ethnography of Divided Ethical Worlds in a Walled Belfast Community*, based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in a working-class social housing estate in which Catholics and Protestants are segregated by a series of "peace walls." His research has been funded by a Herb York Fellowship from the Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation and from a Hayman Fellowship from The University of California – New Center for Psychoanalysis Interdisciplinary Psychoanalytic Consortium. He was recently awarded the Richard G. Condon Prize from the Society of Psychological Anthropology for a forthcoming article in *Ethos* titled "'I Will Not Die On This Street:' Thinking Things Over in Conflicted Belfast." He has also co-authored with Alessandro Duranti an entry for the *International Encyclopedia of Linguistic Anthropology* (Wiley-Blackwell) titled "Language and Creativity, Theoretical Aspects Of: Improvisation."

Julia Dunn and **Vinnie Lopez** were selected as 2018-2019 Graduate Equity Fellowship award recipients by Graduate Studies at SJSU. Julia's faculty mentor for the fellowship will be Professor **Cindy Baer**. Vinnie's faculty mentor will be Professor **Alan Soldofsky**.



Julia Dunn



Vinnie Lopez

Keep Informed

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. 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 **English Department website**: www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/.

The SJSU Graduate Admissions and Program Evaluations (GAPE) Office website publishes important deadlines, forms, and information for current students at: www.sjsu.edu/gape/current_students/deadlines/.



Important Dates in 2018-2019

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|----------------|---|
| Oct. 1 | Deadline for May 2019 Graduates to submit their "Departmental Request for Candidacy" form to GAPE. Requires the MA or MFA advisor's signature. |
| Nov. 2 | Deadline for December 2018 graduates to submit signed theses to the Graduate Studies Office. |
| Nov. 9 | Deadline to submit thesis or project proposals (for spring 2019 ENGL299 units) to the English Department Graduate Committee. |
| Dec. 18 | Deadline for signing up to take the spring 2019 MFA Comprehensive Exam. |
| Jan. 14 | Deadline for December 2018 graduates to submit thesis for publication (or embargo). |
| Feb. 1 | Deadline for May 2019 graduates to submit graduation application to Graduate Studies Office. |
| Feb. 15 | Deadline to submit reading lists to sign up for the spring MA exams (see the "Guidelines" at http://www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/ma/macomps.html). |
| Feb. 22 | MFA Comprehensive Exam distributed (9:00 a.m.). |
| Feb. 25 | MFA Comprehensive Exam due (5:00 p.m.). |
| Mar. 2 | MA comprehensive exam, Part 1, SH 229, 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. |
| Mar. 9 | MA comprehensive exam, Part 2, SH 229, 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. |
| April 1 | Deadline for December 2018 graduates to file their "Request for Candidacy" forms (requires MA or MFA advisor's signature). |
| April 1 | Deadline for applications for 2019-2020 TA and GAships due to the Graduate Coordinator. |
| April 1 | Deadline for May 2019 graduates to submit signed theses to the Graduate Studies Office. |