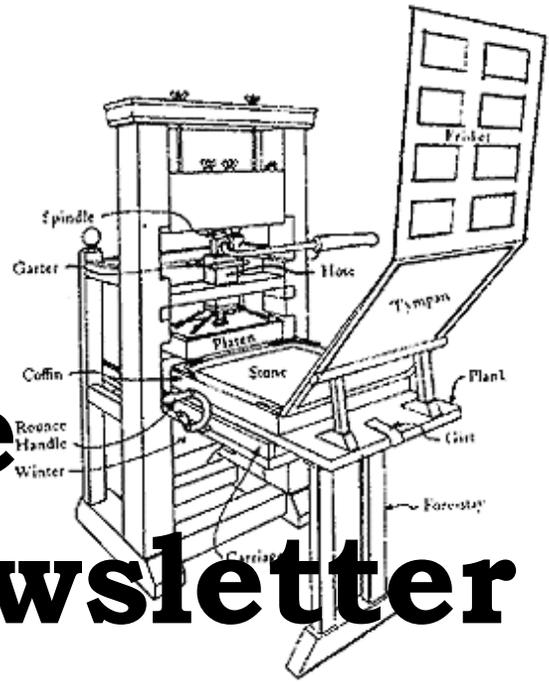


# English Graduate Newsletter



San Jose State University

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Noelle Brada-Williams, Graduate Coordinator

Alan Soldofsky, Director of Creative Writing

Office Hours for

## REGISTRATION FOR SPRING 2010

MySJSU should give you detailed information on how to register for next semester's courses. Please plan to register as early as possible. If you have questions about your schedule for the spring, please get in touch with Professor Brada-Williams or Professor Soldofsky.

## DANIEL ALARCON ON CAMPUS IN SPRING 2011

The Robert and Constance Lurie Professor of Creative Writing in spring 2011 will be fiction writer Daniel Alarcon who will teach the fiction-writing workshop, English 241. Students admitted to the MFA program will have priority enrollment for this seminar, with others admitted at the instructor's discretion after December 9.

## ENGLISH GRADUATE SEMINARS FOR SPRING 2011

202 Poetic Craft & Theory	T	1600-1845	Soldofsky
208 Comparative Literature	M	1600-1845	Krishnaswamy
225 Shakespeare	T	1600-1845	Fleck
240 Poetry Writing Workshop	M	1600-1845	Maio
241 Fiction Writing Workshop	R	1600-1845	Alarcon
242 Nonfiction Writing Workshop	T	1900-2145	Miller
254 Genre in American Lit	T	1900-2145	Shillinglaw
255 Themes in American Lit	W	1900-2145	Brada-Williams
257 History of Rhetoric	R	1600-1845	Gabor

## **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS FOR SPRING 2011:**

### **English 202: Poetic Craft and Theory (Professor Soldofsky)**

Theme: Walt Whitman and the Bardic Tradition in Modern Poetry

Bardic poetry is associated with the tradition of minstrel (musician)/poets who celebrated the exploits of heroes and chieftains or who composed verse that told what Ezra Pound called “the tale of the tribe.” Walt Whitman is considered the poet at the origin of the Modern bardic tradition, particularly as it manifests itself in modern and contemporary American poetry. In this seminar we will investigate the nature of the bardic tradition, as it is exhibited in Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* and in a few of his prose works. We will read Whitman with the guidance of Pulitzer Prize-winning poet C. K. Williams’ new book *C. K. Williams on Walt Whitman*. We will go on to investigate the bardic elements in the work of several 20th century poets, including Hart Crane (*The Bridge*), William Carlos Williams, Garcia Lorca (in English translation), Allen Ginsberg, Galway Kinnell (*The Book of Nightmares*), Gerald Stern, Anne Waldman, Adrienne Rich, and C.K. Williams. The course will require writing two seminar papers, with the option, for the second project, of completing an original poem or cycle of poems modeled on the bardic elements in the works assigned to be read for the course. The course will be of great interest to MFA students in poetry as well as MA students who wish to increase their knowledge of Romantic and Modern poetic craft and theory.

### **English 208: Seminar in Comparative Literature (Professor Krishnaswamy)**

What exactly is postcolonial literature and why should we bother to find out? 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 limitations. Through close reading of major postcolonial authors/texts, we will try to find out whether postcolonial literature presents a substantive challenge to the hegemony of the Western literary canon or whether it just offers a shallow, politically correct, counter-narrative that simply reverses the roles of the villain and 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. (Authors include Achebe, Marquez, Rushdie, Said, Spivak)

### **English 225: Seminar in Shakespeare (Professor Fleck)**

This graduate seminar in Shakespeare will introduce students to many of the current issues in Shakespeare Studies, especially a number of new-historical concerns: writing the nation, the history of the book and editorial practices, the invention of authorship, and original staging. My own research falls mostly into the category of the early modern project of the "nation" and the primary works I've selected for our seminar will allow us to grapple with how the English tried to make their nation come into being. We'll focus on two sets of plays: the *Henriad*, a tetralogy of four great history plays and a subtending comedy, and the Roman plays, four excellent tragedies and an attendant romance. One narrative poem will round out our discussion. While the thrust of these choices will be toward histories and tragedies, we will also touch on other genres in which Shakespeare wrote, giving us a chance to explore a comedy and a romance. We'll have some practice with close reading some of the sonnets as well. We'll talk about other ways to get into Shakespeare too, with an openness to other theoretical modes and approaches to texts.

**English 240: Poetry Writing Workshop (Professor Maio)**

Primarily a workshop, the course also is designed to help students develop and strengthen their poetic talents by practicing essential techniques drawn principally from the English metrical tradition. To that end, we will begin with a brief “boot camp” aimed to refresh your knowledge of verse basics in order to expand the range of poetics suited to the continuing progression of your individual voice, style, and vision. We will examine the aesthetics of master poets from various time periods, concentrating on brief Italian and French lyric forms before moving to longer dramatic and narrative modes. You will write metrical/formal poems as well as *vers libre*, much of which will be treated in workshop.

Note: English 240 is open to *all* graduate students, those not enrolled in the MFA program needing permission before registering. If interested, please contact me at: [Samuel.Maio@sjsu.edu](mailto:Samuel.Maio@sjsu.edu) .

**English 241: Fiction Writing Workshop (Lurie Chair Daniel Alarcón)**

A workshop, in my view, should be not just a place to discuss student stories, but a forum in which to debate ideas, politics, art, culture, news, esoterica of any stripe—all of those components which define the world in which we are writing. Art does not exist in a vacuum. Our primary obsession will of course be student work: how it functions, whether it is accomplishing that which it set up to do, always reading—or attempting to read—a story on its own terms. Students will turn in two pieces of short fiction in the course of the semester, and each be responsible for leading a discussion about one published story of their choosing.

**English 242: Nonfiction Writing Workshop (Professor Miller)**

In this course you will explore the many facets of Creative Nonfiction, a genre that mixes the accuracy of factual reportage with the techniques of fiction writing and the reflective insights of the essayist. The various works you write in this class will leave a nonfiction record of your world as you see it today, experimenting with subgenres such as memoir, biography, travel and op-ed.

Students will be assigned short pieces each week to prime the creative pump and generate new ideas. Workshops will be devoted to critiquing your work in a supportive, constructive environment. And as the MFA is a professional degree, we will begin your metamorphosis into becoming a professional writer.

**English 254: Genres in American Literature (Professor Shillinglaw)**

California Visions: Conquering, Questing, Conserving

California is the golden land, where padres, miners and immigrants sought to realize visions—or failed to do so. Focusing on key 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century texts (and two films), we will discuss the peoples and visions of California. Texts will include: *The Literature of California*, Hicks, Houston, Kingston, Young; *The Big Sleep*, Raymond Chandler; *The Day of the Locust*, Nathanael West; *Big Sur*, Jack Kerouac; *Cannery Row*, John Steinbeck; *Angle of Repose*, Wallace Stegner; *The People of Paper*, Salvador Plascencia and Robinson Jeffers’s poetry. Films students should be familiar with include *Chinatown* and *Mulholland Drive*.

### **English 255: Themes in American Literature (Professor Brada-Williams)**

Race, Ethnicity, and Historiography in American Literature

Ethnic minorities have frequently struggled to determine how their own experiences are recorded in official histories. Often literary artists have served to fill in the gaps left by historians. This class will particularly examine the representation of race and ethnicity in American literature through the practice of historiographic metafiction, a practice which breaks down the barriers between literature and history by making readers interrogate their ability to understand history except through highly selective, mediated narrative constructions. One of its foremost practitioners, E.L. Doctorow, will be visiting our campus in March.

Readings will be chosen from among the following: E.L. Doctorow's *Ragtime* and *The Book of Daniel*, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, Louise Erdrich's *Tracks*, William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*, Maxine Hong Kingston's *Tripmaster Monkey* and *China Men*, Alejandro Morales' *The Brick People*, Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, Luis Valdez's *Zoot Suit*, Karen Tei Yamashita's *I Hotel*, as well as excerpts from literary critics such as Brian McHale and Linda Hutcheon.

### **English 257: Seminar in Topics in Rhetoric: (Professor Gabor)**

Rhetoric and Technology

In this seminar, students will encounter the history of ideas about rhetoric from ancient Greece to current theories of digital rhetoric. In his dialogue the *Phaedrus*, Plato condemns writing as a distraction from good rhetoric (at best), yet for the last few hundred years, most rhetorical theory has assumed that writing is central to--if not inseparable from--*writing*: one of the greatest human technologies. Current rhetorical scholarship pushes us to (re)conceive both *rhetoric* and *writing* in this age of digital design.

Short weekly writing assignments and one significant research paper.

*Some lecture, mostly discussion*

Likely texts: Baron, Dennis *A Better Pencil: Readers, Writers, and the Digital Revolution*; Bruns, Axel *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life, and Beyond: From Production to Prodisage*; Richardson, Bill *Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, and Other Powerful Web Tools for Classrooms*; Wysocki, Anne, *et. al.*; *New Media Writing*; excerpts from *The Rhetorical Tradition*; various articles and web-based texts.

Graduate students may take a limited number of undergraduate upper division courses for graduate credit. Please look over the entire department schedule of classes for courses that may be of specific interest to you but which we are not offering at the graduate level in the spring semester.

### **CONDITIONALLY CLASSIFIED MA STUDENTS**

Conditionally classified students must complete their required undergraduate course work before enrolling in graduate seminars. A list of upper-division literature courses approved for conditionally classified students is available in the rack outside the English department and is posted on the Department website. Be sure to take only courses from this list. When you are eligible for classified status, the change is not automatic; you need to apply. The form is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/forms/>. Bring this form and a print out of your grades from Mysjsu when you contact Professor Brada-Williams.

## APPROVED COURSES FOR THE ENGLISH MA AND MFA

Courses taken outside the department will not count except in unusual circumstances. Get prior approval from your advisor before you take such courses. Upper-division English course work can count if you secure the approval of both the instructor and the graduate advisor to take the class as a graduate student (with assignments and standards befitting your advanced level).

## ENGLISH GRADUATE LISTSERV

To subscribe to the EngGrad listserv, follow the directions at this website:

<http://lists.sjsu.edu/mailman/listinfo/enggrad>. Key information is sent out on that listserv. Consider joining the listserv a requirement of all MA and MFA students.

## PHD APPLICATIONS

The department would very much like to know about students applying to Ph.D. programs and their success. Please let us know where you are applying and how things are working out.

## GRADUATE FORMS

The university is constantly updating the various forms required of graduate students. To ensure that you have the most up to date version, go directly to

[http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/current\\_students/forms/index.htm](http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/current_students/forms/index.htm) Many of their forms can only be printed but not saved so be sure to access these from a computer from which you can print. Note that the “petition for advancement to candidacy” has to be signed off by your advisor and turned into GAPE the semester before graduation and you have to submit the application to graduate early in the semester that you plan to graduate.

## MA & MFA FOREIGN LANGUAGE EXAMS

Both degree programs require a level of fluency in a second language roughly 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. Just be sure to bring this to the attention of your advisor 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 an examination offered in the Foreign Language Department that has been specially devised for our graduate students. Please contact:

<b>Examiner</b>	<b>email</b>	<b>phone</b>
Professor Trudeau (French):	<a href="mailto:trudeau@sjsu.edu">trudeau@sjsu.edu</a>	924-4594
Professor Sabalius (German):	<a href="mailto:sabalius@email.sjsu.edu">sabalius@email.sjsu.edu</a>	924-4616
Professor Eleanor Marsh (Spanish):	<a href="mailto:eleanor.marsh@sjsu.edu">eleanor.marsh@sjsu.edu</a>	924-4592

(it is usually best to call Professor Marsh or meet her in person in office hours)

*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. All those planning on taking one of the language exams should let their advisor know at the beginning of the semester in which you plan to take it so that we can keep track of the results.

## NOTICE OF MFA THESIS AND EXAM DATE CHANGES

Starting in Spring 2011, the MFA exam and thesis due dates will be moved up to earlier in the semester. Candidates wishing to take the MFA Exam will be required to sign up at the end of semester prior to the date of the exam. MFA candidates planning to Graduate in May or August 2011 should note the following dates\* on their calendars:

## KEY DATES FOR SJSU ENGLISH GRADUATE STUDENTS

**Please note that since April first falls during Spring break, many of the traditionally April 1<sup>st</sup> deadlines will be pushed forward to April 4<sup>th</sup> or back to the last business day before the deadline: March 25<sup>th</sup>.**

- Dec. 9\*** Deadline to sign up for the Spring 2011 MFA exam.
- Dec. 9** Last day that Writing Workshops will be open only to MFA's. After this date, seats also will be available to interested MA students.
- Jan. 14** Last day for Dec. 2010 grads to submit University-approved thesis to Graduate Studies and Research for publication as a pdf (review embargo options)
- Jan. 26** Last day to sign up for MA Exam Part I and II.
- Jan. 26** First day of instruction for Spring 2010 Semester
- Jan. 29** MA Exam Part I offered, 9-12:30 in FO 104.
- Feb. 5** MA Exam Part II offered, 9-12:30 in FO 104.
- Feb. 7 \*** Last day to submit MFA theses to directors, 2nd, and 3rd readers.
- Feb. 18\*** Spring MFA exam scheduled Feb. 18 (9AM) – 21 (5 PM).
- Feb. 11** August 2011 graduates should submit approved Candidacy forms to Graduate Admissions & Program Evaluation by this date. The form can be found on the GAPE website but your advisor will need to sign it. To be safe, do it before the end of fall semester 2010.
- Feb. 14** Last day for May 2011 graduates to file or reactivate application for graduation at GAPE
- March 25** TA and GA applications for 2011-2012 school year due to Graduate Coordinator.
- March 27-April 4** Campus closed for Spring Break and Cesar Chavez Day
- April 4** Deadline for MA and MFA theses approved by all three readers to be submitted to Graduate Studies and Research
- April 4:** Deadline for thesis proposals to be submitted to the graduate committee to sign up for Fall 2011 299 units.
- April 4:** Probable deadline for Petitions for Advancement to Candidacy due to GAPE for December 2011 graduates
- April 4-15** TA and GA interviews are planned for the first two weeks of April.
- April 5** Deadline for May graduates to submit approved theses to Graduate Studies.
- June 15** Last day for May 2011 graduates to submit approved MA and MFA theses for electronic publication
- June 6** Last date for August 2011 graduates to reactivate or file application for graduation.
- July 1** Deadline for August 2011 graduates to submit approved theses to Graduate Studies.

