



## English Department Graduate Newsletter



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**Volume XXXIII, Number 2 November 2001**

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### **FALL OFFICE HOURS**

**Prof. Keeseey's office hours this semester will be T, Th 2-3; other hours by appointment. Phone: 924-4435; E-mail: [dkeeseey@email.sjsu.edu](mailto:dkeeseey@email.sjsu.edu). Please feel free to call or to stop by his office (FO 108) if you have any questions about the M.A. program. M.F.A. students should consult Prof. Soldofsky: Office: FO 106, Hours: M 1-3, T,Th 1:45-2:45. Phone: 924-4432, E-mail: [soldofsk@email.sjsu.edu](mailto:soldofsk@email.sjsu.edu).**

### **REGISTRATION FOR SPRING 2002**

**The Schedule of Classes for spring 2002 will give you detailed information on how to register for next semester's courses. Please plan to 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 questions about your schedule for the spring, please get in touch with me.**

### **AL YOUNG ON CAMPUS**

**Al Young, San Francisco Bay Area-based poet-novelist-essayist and screenwriter, will be joining the English department for the spring semester as holder of the Lurie**

**Professorship.** Mr. Young, the author of more than 20 books, is also a world traveler and sometimes writing and literature teacher (Stanford, UC Santa Cruz, the University of Michigan, St. Mary's College) who often performs his own work to live music. Among his honors: Guggenheim, Fulbright, NEA Fellowships, The Joseph Henry Jackson Award, and Stanford's Wallace Stegner Writing Fellowship. Young's titles include *Heaven: Collected Poems 1956-1990*, *Conjugal Visits*, *Mingus Mingus: Two Memoirs* (with Janet Coleman), *African American Literature: A Brief Introduction and Anthology*, the novels *Who Is Angelina?*, *Seduction By Light*, and *Sitting Pretty*. His two most recent books are *The Sound of Dreams Remembered: Poems 1990-2000*, and *The Literature of California (Volume One)*, co-edited with James D. Houston, Maxine Hong Kingston and Jack Hicks.

Mr. Young will teach two courses, one of them our poetry writing seminar, English 240, the other, English 166: Late Twentieth-Century American Literature. Students admitted to the M.F.A. program will have priority enrollment for the seminar. Others may be admitted at the instructor's option. Graduate students may take English 166 for graduate credit, but must do extra work of the "amount and kind expected at the graduate level."

## **ENGLISH GRADUATE SEMINARS FOR SPRING 2002**

**201 Materials and Methods R 1600-1845 Williams**

**201C M&M for the MFA T 1900-2145 Soldofsky**

**204 Modern Approaches to Lit. M 1900-2145 Keesey**

**215 Myth and Symbol T 1900-2145 Birenbaum**

**225 Shakespeare W 1600-1845 Okerlund**

**240 Creative Writing, Poetry W 1900-2145 Young**

**253 Periods in American Lit. T 1600-1845 Engell**

**254 Genres in American Lit. M 1600-1845 Douglass**

**256 20th-Century British R 1900-2145 Wilson**

(Seminars offered in Fall 2002 will probably include 201, 201C, 211, 226, 229, 232, 241, 242, 255, and 259.)

**201 Materials and Methods of Literary Research (Prof. Williams)**

**This course introduces graduate students to the resources, techniques, and standards of scholarly work in the discipline of literary studies. Together we will study the role of the individual scholar within the academic community, and explore various forms of scholarly activity. Students will learn to find, utilize, and evaluate electronic resources, bibliographies, indexes and scholarly journals and other publications. Students will also be provided with a rudimentary introduction to contemporary literary theory. This course is required of all English M.A. students and should be taken as early as possible.**

## **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.)

## **204 Modern Approaches to Literature (Prof. Keeseey):**

This course will explore some of the main contemporary approaches to literature, including versions of genetic, reader-response, formal, mimetic, intertextual, feminist, Marxist, poststructural, and cultural criticism. We will read essays by prominent modern critics explaining and defending each type of criticism as well as essays applying some version of each approach to a few target texts. By this plan we will try to strike a useful balance between the "practical" and the theoretical aspects of criticism, and the format will also allow us to compare the different approaches by seeing what they can show us about the same literary texts. Required texts: Keeseey, *Contexts for Criticism* (3rd ed, 1998); Richter, *Falling into Theory* (2nd ed, 2000). (Those who think ahead may save money by ordering from web discounters like amazon.com.)

## **215 Myth and Symbolism (Prof. Birenbaum)**

This course focuses on the symbolic reality of culture as it appears in literary mythmaking at different periods. Literary imagination will be studied in relation to principles of traditional lore, the symbolic nature of language, dynamics of cultural transformation, stylistics of imagination, and the personal participation in literary projection. Authors will probably range from preliterate, classical, and medieval texts to E.T.A. Hoffmann, Blake, Baudelaire, Kafka, and Ionesco. If you want to do some advanced preparation, you might read Birenbaum's *Myth and Mind*.

## **225 Shakespeare (Prof. Okerlund):**

An in-depth analysis of selected plays by Shakespeare representing the major genres: comedies, histories, tragedies, and romances. Class discussions will focus on a formalist analysis of the plays, supplemented by other critical approaches, including Deconstructionism, New Historicism, Feminism, Marxism, and Psychoanalytic criticism. Discussion will also examine dramatic conventions in Shakespeare's contemporary theater, as well as in modern productions. Reading: five plays, plus secondary criticism. One or two oral reports (depending on class size), reviewing scholarly criticism of the plays. Writing: one essay developed from oral report; one seminar paper reflecting an independent interpretation of the text informed by research and extensive reading of other critics. Expect to speak some words of the Bard.

## **240 Creative Writing: Poetry (Visiting Professor Al Young):**

This advanced workshop in poem composition will require students to turn in one poem a week, usually a poem based on a bardic assignment. Each week the poems of

particular students will be singled out for close scrutiny and discussion. Emphasis will be placed on brand new work; no old manuscripts, please. To point up the limitations of the autobiographical voice or the personal confession, which have long dominated poetry in the United States, we will read selectively from *The Vintage Book of World Poetry* (edited by J.D. McClatchy), then talk about the reading in class. Each workshop will open with a student recitation of a poem memorized followed by a discussion of poems or groupings of poems from one of the required texts. Moreover, each student must deliver a presentation on some topic related to traditional or contemporary poetry or poetic form. No auditors will be allowed. Students must photocopy for everyone in the class their weekly assignments. (Students in the M.F.A. program will have enrollment priority. Others may be admitted at the instructor's option.)

### **253 Period Studies of American Literature (Prof. Engell):**

"American Romanticism." Each student will read major works of non-fiction prose, poetry, and/or fiction by Emerson, Fuller, Thoreau, Whitman, Dickinson, Poe, Cooper, Hawthorne, and Melville. Each student will complete a weekly journal entry, an oral bibliographic presentation, and a research project culminating in a 15-20 page essay. Discussion will focus on the assigned texts and on their historical and cultural contexts. (Note: 253 was previously titled "Early American Literature.")

### **254 Genre Studies of American Literature (Prof. Douglass):**

"Mystery Fiction: An American Genre." Mystery (or Detective) fiction is arguably an American genre, although significant challenges to that claim come from Europe. If not invented here, perhaps one could say it was perfected in North America-or if not perfected, at least stained with the ink of the national character? We will seek a definition of the genre and explore its formulae and mechanisms, asking such questions as these: Does urban culture require such imaginary figures as the Detective? How have Crime and Thriller movies affected the mystery novel's development? What differences are there between Mysteries, Thrillers, Crime, and Detective Novels? Are truly great works of fiction possible in the genre? How has Mystery Fiction affected the general development of American Fiction? We will read some nineteenth-century works (Poe, Twain, Doyle), and a wide sampling of twentieth-century practitioners of the genre, possibly including Hammett, Christie, Chandler, Stout, Cain, Buchan, Ross Macdonald, Mosely, Cornwell, Grafton, and writers who have used academic settings. (Note: 254 was previously titled "19th-Century American Literature")

### **256 Twentieth-Century British Literature (Prof. Wilson):**

The first half of the course will be devoted to a study of novels by Conrad, Joyce, Lawrence, Woolf, Beckett, and Amis. The second will cover the poetry of Yeats, Auden,

**Thomas, Larkin, Heaney, McGuckian, Carson, and Muldoon.**

## **CONDITIONALLY CLASSIFIED GRADUATE 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. Be sure to take only courses from this list. When you are eligible for classified status, the change is not automatic; you need to see me to file the necessary form.**

## **APPROVED COURSES FOR THE ENGLISH M.A.**

**Except for undergraduate courses you may have to take if you are a conditionally classified student, it is assumed that your graduate work will be in 200-numbered English classes. Courses taken outside the department will not count except in unusual circumstances. Get prior approval from me before you take such courses. Similarly, upper-division English course work will not count unless you have convincing reasons to take undergraduate courses. Again, check with me in advance.**

## **GRADUATE STUDIES OFFICE WEBSITE**

**The SJSU Graduate Studies Office website publishes important deadlines, rules, and information that may be useful to graduate students. Dial up [www.sjsu.edu](http://www.sjsu.edu) and follow the links.**

## **PH.D. APPLICATIONS**

**The department would very much like to know which students are applying to Ph.D. programs and what success you are having. Please drop a note or give me a call to let me know where you are applying and how things are working out.**

## **GRADUATE BULLETIN BOARD**

**Important dates and other useful information will be posted on the English Graduate Bulletin Board in the first-floor hall of the Faculty Office Building. New information will be posted as we receive it. So make a point to check the bulletin board frequently and check, too, the English department website.**

## **ENGLISH SOCIETY'S LIST SERVER**

To receive information about English Department activities via email, join the English Society's List Server. To join, simply send an email message to this address: [listproc@listproc.sjsu.edu](mailto:listproc@listproc.sjsu.edu). In the body of the text, type this: **SUBSCRIBE EngDept** [your first name] [your last name]. You will receive an automatic reply acknowledging your successful subscription and explaining how to unsubscribe any time you wish.

## **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 Prof. Keeseey.

## **GRADUATE ASSISTANT POSITIONS FOR SPRING 2002**

The department may have a few new Graduate Assistant positions for spring 2002. Duties may include working as an assistant to a professor or tutoring in the writing lab. If you are interested, write me a brief letter of application sketching your background and listing your graduate school courses and grades. Also include the names of three professors who could be contacted for recommendations (you don't need to supply letters) and be sure to add your current phone number, address, and e-mail address. Get this letter to me by Dec. 1.

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

**Feb. 1, 2002** Last day for August or December 2002 graduates to submit approved programs to Graduate Studies. You must see your advisor to fill out the appropriate form. To be safe, do it before the end of this fall semester.

**Feb. 1, 2002:** Last day for May 2002 graduates to file or reactivate application for graduation at the Graduate Studies Office

**Mar. 13, 2002:** Departmental foreign language exams, FO 104, 3:30-5 p.m.

**Mar. 13, 2002:** Last day to submit thesis to 2nd and 3rd readers

**Apr. 1, 2002:** T.A. and G.A. applications for fall 2002 due

**Apr. 1, 2002:** Last day for May 2002 graduates to submit thesis to Graduate Studies Office

**Apr. 6, 2002:** M.A. Comprehensive Exam, Part 1, 9-12, FO 104

**Apr. 14, 2002: M.A. Comprehensive Exam, Part 2, 9-12, FO 10**

September 2001 Newsletter

