



## English Department Graduate Newsletter



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### **FALL OFFICE HOURS**

**Prof. Keeseey's office hours this semester will be Wed., 3:30-4:30 and 6-7; 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, Phone: 924-4432, E-mail: [soldofsk@email.sjsu.edu](mailto:soldofsk@email.sjsu.edu).**

### **REGISTRATION FOR SPRING 2003**

**The Schedule of Classes for spring 2003 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 under-enrolled 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.**

### **MOLLY GILES ON CAMPUS**

**[The Constance Lurie Professor of Creative Writing](#) in spring 2003 will be [MOLLY GILES](#).**

Her first collection of short stories, *Rough Translations* (1985), received the Flannery O'Connor Award for Short Fiction, the Boston Globe Award, the Bay Area Book Reviewers Award for Fiction, and was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. Her second collection of short stories, 1997's *Creek Walk and Other Stories*, earned the Small Press Best Fiction/Short Story Award for 1998. Her novel *Iron Shoes* appeared in 2000. Ms. Giles' other awards include the National Book Critics Circle Citation for Excellence in Book Reviewing, the PEN Syndicated Fiction Award, and the California Book Award for Fiction.

Prof. Giles will teach two courses, one of them the fiction writing seminar, English 241, 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. M.A. 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 2003**

**200 Poetry R 1900-2145 (Pollock)**

**201 Materials and Methods T 1900-2145 (Williams)**

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

**211 20th-Century Poetry R 1900-2145 (Maio)**

**216 Medieval Literature F 0900-1145 (Stork)**

**225 Shakespeare R 1600-1845 (Birenbaum)**

**233 Victorian Literature W 1600-1845 (Krishnaswamy)**

**240 Creative Writing: Poetry T 1900-2145 (Soldofsky)**

**241 Creative Writing: Fiction W 1900-2145 (Giles)**

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

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

**256 20th-Century British Lit. W 1900-2145 (Wilson)**

**257 History of Rhetoric M 1900-2145 (Rice)**

(Seminars offered in Fall 2003 will probably include 201, 201C, 204, 208, 217, 230, 241, 242, 255, and 259.)

## **200 Poetry ([Prof. Pollock](#))**

We'll begin the semester with Mary Oliver's *A Poetry Handbook* as a review of the basic elements of poetry, and then proceed to a quick survey of the overall evolution of poetic styles from medieval to modern times. The central focus of the seminar thereafter will be on the theories of "New Criticism" and the application of those theories to lyric poetry, with particular attention to the sonnet as a genre. We'll study critical works by Cleanth Brooks and I.A. Richards and the sonnets of Shakespeare, Donne, Wordsworth, E.B. Browning, John Berryman, and Vikram Seth, in addition to selected critical works and poems by other writers as well. The aim of the course will not be to give the student an exhaustive knowledge of the sonnet as such, but more generally to challenge his or her analytical skills, at the same time developing the student's sense of historical perspective and critical acumen in dealing with poetry as an art form.

## **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.

## **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 four target texts: *The Tempest*, "Ode on a Grecian Urn," "Benito Cereno," and "The Yellow Wallpaper." 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* (4th ed, 2003); Richter, *Falling into Theory* (2nd ed, 2000). (Those who think ahead may save money by ordering from web discounters like amazon.com. Those who read ahead should start with the target texts listed above. The last three are reprinted in *Contexts for*

## Criticism.) V

### 211 Twentieth-Century Poetry ([Prof. Maio](#))

We will treat the major metrical poets of the modern era--Hardy, Yeats, Auden, Frost--as well as key poets of the counter-tradition--Pound, Eliot, and Lowell. Two in-class presentations and one significant research paper will comprise the graded evaluation for the course. V

### 216 Medieval Literature ([Prof. Stork](#))

The heart of this course is reading Chaucer in the original. This will involve translation in class and attention to the linguistic difficulties of Middle English. A background of medieval sermons, saint's lives, lais, and chronicles will inform our understanding of selected Canterbury Tales. We will also read a selection of medieval English lyric poetry. If time permits, we may also read selected Middle English romances such as Sir Orfeo or Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.

### 226 Shakespeare ([Prof. Birenbaum](#))

A broad selection of plays: probably Love's Labor's Lost, Twelfth Night, Measure for Measure, Richard II, Hamlet, Lear, Antony and Cleopatra, Troilus and Cressida, Winter's Tale, with a range of critical readings on all the plays but a particular emphasis on the relation of Shakespeare's art to romance conventions and to the exploration of consciousness.

### 233 Victorian Literature (Prof. Krishnaswamy)

This course focuses on the literature produced in Britain during the Victorian period, conventionally dated 1832-1900. We will study Victorian literature in the context of the great political, social, and cultural issues of the time such as the extension of empire, the economics of industrial society, conflict between science and religion, and the progress of political reform, which included the "woman question." In particular, we will explore the ideology of separate spheres through which Victorian England constructed itself at home and abroad.

### 240 Creative Writing: Poetry ([Prof. Soldofsky](#))

English 240 is an intensive writing workshop course in which students will draft, revise, and complete new poems. The course will include regular discussions of poetics and the theory and craft of poetry, as well as an examination of major trends in contemporary

poetry in the United States and internationally. Students in the course will also learn to submit poems for publication in small magazines, literary journals, and web sites. Workshop meetings will include discussion of the situation of poetry nationally and internationally as well as in the Bay Area. Among the issues we will explore are the polarities of transparency and opacity in the language of post-modern poetry, and the problems of writing what Billy Collins has called "memory-driven poetry." In addition, we will read a few of the dominant American poets of our era. The dominant writers in any era quickly become fashionable, often spawning legions of acolytes and imitators who have not critically examined the work they admire. Too often, a writer fails to discover his or her own originality because of being over-awed by the work of a writer he or she finds admirable or trendy. To examine the nature of these dominant influences, will read poets such as Billy Collins, Rita Dove, Jorie Graham, Robert Hass, and Robert Pinsky, as well as selections from earlier Modernist poets ranging from Robert Frost to William Carlos Williams to Elizabeth Bishop. MFA candidates whose primary genre is poetry will be given priority enrollment in the course. MFA candidates whose secondary genre is poetry will also be considered for priority enrollment. The course may be repeated twice for credit.

## 241 Creative Writing: Fiction ([Visiting Prof. Molly Giles](#))

Students are required to submit two new short stories or novel chapters and one revision during the course of the semester. The seminar will focus on elements of craft including point of view, plot, style, and characterization. Students will be expected to write informal critiques of each others' submissions and to participate fully in class discussions. No text is required. Evaluation will be based on quality of the written work.

## 253 Period Studies of American Literature ([Prof. Engell](#))

"The American Short Story & Novel: Craft & Culture." In this seminar we will read short stories and novels by five American authors focusing on issues of both craft and culture. We will read a number of short stories and one novel by each of the following: Nathaniel Hawthorne, Charles W. Chesnutt, Willa Cather, and Eudora Welty. We will conclude with a novel/story cycle by Tim O'Brien. Assignments will include weekly critical and creative Reading Response entries, weekly seminar presentations, and a research essay of 15-20 pages.

## 254 Genre Studies of American Literature ([Prof. Douglass](#))

"Anglo-American Modernist Poetry." Literary Modernism's roots lie in the 1890s' experimentalism in poetry, painting, sculpture, and music and in the humanistic philosophies of William James, John Dewey, F.H. Bradley, Henri Bergson, and the psychologist Sigmund Freud. One factor making Modernism perhaps the most important

single literary movement of the past century was that some of its major figures were then involved in the creation of what John Crowe Ransom later dubbed "The New Criticism." We will read some of the major poets of Modernism and background materials helpful to understanding the form and content of their work--not neglecting to test it against the sometimes savage critiques by later schools of thought that found Modernism insensitive (or worse) to issues of race, gender, and class. Artists likely to be included are: Ransom, Amy Lowell, A.E. Housman, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, Marianne Moore, H.D., Langston Hughes, William Carlos Williams, Jean Toomer, Robert Frost, W.B. Yeats, Wallace Stevens, and Edith Sitwell.

## **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.

## **257 History of Rhetoric ([Prof. Rice](#))**

We will work our way through Edward P. J. Corbett's *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, familiarizing ourselves with the basic tenets of rhetoric as it was taught in European schools until at least the beginning of the 20th century. This will entail not only an examination of theory but a study of practice, that is, a close evaluation of texts by the standards of classical rhetoric. We will also investigate the influence that classical rhetoric has had on the contemporary teaching of writing. Then we will read and discuss *Learning by Teaching* by Donald Murray, a successful and distinguished writer as well as a rhetorical theorist. The course will address the interests of both writers and the teachers of writing.

## **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 your advisor 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 your advisor before you take such courses. Similarly, upper-division English course work will not count unless you have convincing reasons to take undergraduate courses. Again, get approval in advance.

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

**Lynn Benson** presented a paper titled "The Judgment Process of Franz Kafka" at the Second Annual Northern California Graduate Conference held at CSU-Chico on Oct. 19.

## 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.

## 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 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.

## GRADUATE STUDIES OFFICE WEBSITE

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

## 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.

## IMPORTANT DATES

**Jan. 31, 2003** Last day for August or December 2003 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. 3, 2003** Last day for May 2003 graduates to file or reactivate application for graduation at the Graduate Studies Office

**Mar. 12, 2003** Departmental foreign language exams, FO 104, 3:30-5 p.m.

**Mar. 12, 2003** Last day to submit M.A. thesis to 2nd and 3rd readers

**Apr. 1, 2003** T.A. and G.A. applications for fall 2003 due

**Apr. 4, 2003** Last day for May 2003 graduates to submit thesis to Graduate Studies Office

**Apr. 5, 2003** M.A. Comprehensive Exam, Part 1, 9-12, FO 104

**Apr. 12, 2003** M.A. Comprehensive Exam, Part 2, 9-12, FO 10

### September 2002 Newsletter

