

English Department Graduate Newsletter

Paul Douglass, M.A. Advisor
FO 108
(408) 924-4429

 pdouglas@email.sjsu.edu

Volume XXXVIII, Number 2 November 2005

FALL OFFICE HOURS

[Professor Douglass's](#) office hours this semester are T 2:00-4:00 PM and W 10:00-12:00

AM and by appointment. Phone: 924-4429; email:  pdouglas@email.sjsu.edu. Please feel free to call or to stop by his office (FO 108) if you have any questions about the MA program. MFA students should consult [Professor Soldofsky](#): Office: FO 106: Office hours

T-Th 2:30-4:00 PM. Phone: 924-4432, email:  soldofsk@email.sjsu.edu

REGISTRATION FOR SPRING 2006

The Schedule of Classes will 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 Douglass or Professor Soldofsky.

JAMES HOUSTON ON CAMPUS

The Robert and Constance Lurie Professor of Creative Writing in spring 2006 will be James Houston, 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.

ENGLISH GRADUATE SEMINARS FOR SPRING 2006

201 Materials and Methods T 1900-2145 Mitchell

202 Poetic Craft and Theory M 1600-1845 Pollock

204 Modern Approaches to Lit M 1900-2145 Keeseey

211 20th-Century Poetry R 1900-2145 Maio

225 Shakespeare W 1900-2145 Fleck

232 Romanticism R 1600-1845 Harris

233 Victorian Literature R 1900-2145 Wilson

240 Creative Writing: Poetry T 1900-2145 Soldofsky

241 Creative Writing: Fiction M 1600-1845 Houston

242 Creative Writing: Non-Fiction T 1600-1845 Miller

253 Periods in American Literature W 1600-1845 Engell

257 Rhetoric M 1900-2145 Rice

292 Beowulf MW 1030-1145 Stork

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS FOR SPRING 2006

201 Materials and Methods of Literary Research (Prof. Mitchell)

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.

202 Poetic Craft and Theory (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.

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*.)

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.

225 Seminar in Shakespeare (Professor Fleck)

Course Title: "Texts of the Nation, a Nation of Texts." What is a nation? What is a text?

This seminar in Shakespeare will take up these two cutting edge concerns of New Historicist criticism. We'll be reading several of Shakespeare's history plays and several of his Roman plays with an eye towards understanding how Shakespeare participated in the project of creating what it meant to be "English" in the Elizabethan and Jacobean period. We'll also be returning to the very texts themselves as we examine the material circumstances of their production. Both of these concerns will give us an opportunity to interrogate the New Historicist project. Guaranteed to be a rewarding challenge. [Note: We will be using the Pelican Complete Shakespeare, but if you have one of the other standard anthologies of Shakespeare's complete works (Bevington, Riverside, Norton) that should be acceptable. Also, a Maple Press packet of readings will be sold at the initial class meeting for about \$20. Those interested in this period's drama may want to consider English 152a as well]

232 Romanticism (Prof. Harris)

Course Title: "Romantic Genders" Girly girls, supermen, tough-talking viragos, queer fairies and cross-dressers are all part of the celebrated cast we'll meet this semester as we read poetry, novels and essays of the Romantic period. What was it about the 1790s that caused all hell to break loose in the field of British letters anyway? Edmund Burke blamed the French, but the revolutions on English soil were just as colorful if a lot less bloody. In this course, we'll be reading work by canonical big six - such as Wordsworth and Byron - and by their noncanonical - but just as fiery - counterparts such as Inchbald and Landon as we focus on the reactionary, radical, transgressive and just plain weird constructions of gender people created during one of the most explosive periods of British literature. We will explore many digital representations of nineteenth-century culture in order to orient our historical context. In addition, we will be guided by selections from Marilyn Gaull's English Romanticism: The Human Context. This course serves as both an introduction to Romantic studies as well as an exploration of particular themes within its literature.

233 Victorian Literature (Prof. Wilson)

A study of significant literary texts of the Victorian Age. We will read Great Expectations, Middlemarch, The Mayor of Casterbridge, the poetry of Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, the Pre-Raphaelites, Hopkins, and Hardy. Art, music, and critical prose will supplement the above readings.

240 Creative Writing: Poetry (Prof. Soldofsky)

Intensive writing workshop in which students draft, revise, and complete poems.

241 Fiction Writing Workshop (Prof. Houston)

Intensive writing workshop in which students draft, revise, and complete short fictional pieces.

242 Creative Writing: Non-Fiction (Prof. Miller)

Autobiography & Biography Workshop: This course will teach you the tools to write a life-yours or someone else's. We will examine several texts as models, discuss techniques for writing and research, meet with visiting authors, practice writing exercises to get us started, workshop your manuscripts, and explore publishing options.

253 Period Studies in American Literature (Prof. Engell)

Readings in seven major American Romantics: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Edgar Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Herman Melville. Non-fiction prose, poetry, and short stories. No novels. Research paper. Oral presentations, handouts, and several two-page essays.

257 History of Rhetoric (Prof. Rice)

The course will introduce the student to the theory and practice of composition teaching, from a survey of classical rhetoric (and its concern with persuasion, arrangement, audience, levels of style, and so on), to more recent work in the writing field (with its interest in issues like the process-versus-product debate, writing as discovery, and the student-centered classroom, gender studies, and computer-aided instruction). In becoming more familiar with the lore of writing instruction, you will learn about prewriting, sentence and paragraph instruction, revision techniques, evaluating student writing, designing courses, selecting texts, and miscellaneous other activities involved with writing and the teaching of writing. Texts: Corbett, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*; Murray, *Learning By Teaching*.

292 Beowulf (Prof. Stork)

**The heart of the course is a translation of Beowulf from Old to modern English. We will also consider the manuscript of the poem, its history and its rediscovery in the 19th-century after lying in obscurity, unread for some 800 years. Prerequisite: English 140A, Introduction to Old English or the equivalent language training.
n.b.: Seminars offered in Fall 2006 will probably include 201, 201C, 203, 204, 208, 215, 230, 240, 241, 242, 254, 255, 256, and 259.**

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 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 see your advisor to file the necessary form.

APPROVED COURSES FOR THE ENGLISH MA AND MFA

Except for undergraduate courses you may have to take if you are a conditionally classified student, it is assumed that your graduate work will consist 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 and you secure the cooperation of the instructor. Again, get approval in advance.

ENGLISH GRADUATE GROUP

English MA and MFA students are arranging study groups, readings and other events. If you are interested in serving as an officer or working on events, contact Professors Douglass or Soldofsky and join the Enggrad list by sending an email message to: listproc@listproc.sjsu.edu and in the body of the text type this: SUBSCRIBE EngGrad [your first name] [your last name].

PH.D. 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 BULLETIN BOARD AND OTHER INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES

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. Check, too, the English department website <http://www2.sjsu.edu/depts/english/index.htm> The SJSU Graduate Studies Office website also publishes important deadlines, rules, and information useful to graduate students: <http://www2.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/> To join the English Society's List Serve send an email message to: listproc@listproc.sjsu.edu and in the body of the text, type: SUBSCRIBE EngDept [your first name] [your last name]. It is very important also that you check your MySJSU account regularly.

MA & MFA FOREIGN LANGUAGE EXAM

Students who wish to satisfy the foreign language requirement in French, German, or Spanish, may take an examination offered in the Foreign Language Department. For details, or to satisfy this requirement in another language, please contact Professors Douglass or Soldofsky. You will be excused from the examination if you show evidence that within five years of filing your program (achieving Candidacy) you have completed the fourth semester of an approved university-level foreign language course sequence with a grade of "B" or better. Evidence of a first-language literacy other than English also satisfies the requirement.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR SJSU GRADUATE STUDENTS IN ENGLISH

Feb. 15 Last day for May 2006 graduates to file or reactivate application for graduation at the Graduate Studies Office

Feb. 15 August or December 2006 graduates should submit approved programs to Graduate Studies by this date. You must see your advisor to fill out the candidacy form. To be safe, do it before the end of fall semester 2005.

March 1 Last day to submit M.A. thesis to 2nd and 3rd readers.

March 1 TA and GA applications for fall 2006 due

April 8 Deadline for May graduates to submit approved thesis to Graduate Studies.

April 8 MFA comprehensive exam distributed (9:00 AM).

April 8 MA Comprehensive Exam, Part 1, 9-noon, FO 104.

April 10 MFA comprehensive exam due (5:00 PM).

April 15 MA Comprehensive Exam, Part 2, 9-noon, FO 104.

June 6 Last day for May 2006 graduates to submit M.A. thesis copies for binding.

June 9 Last date for August 2006 graduates to file application for graduation.

[September 2005 Newsletter](#)

