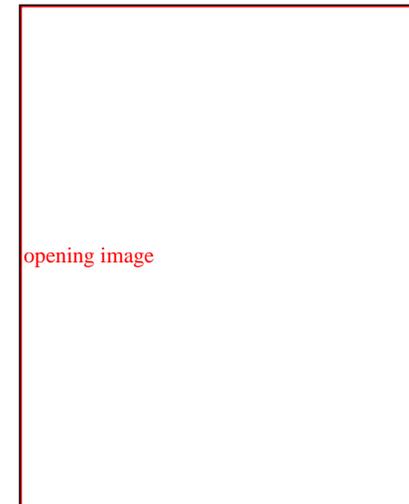


# English Graduate

## Newsletter



opening image

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**Volume XXXIX, Number 2 November 2006**

**Noelle Brada-Williams, M.A. Advisor**

**Alan Soldofsky, Director of Creative Writing**

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### **REGISTRATION FOR SPRING 2007**

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 Brada-Williams or Professor Soldofsky.

### **JAMES KELMAN ON CAMPUS**

The Robert and Constance Lurie Professor of Creative Writing in Spring 2007 will be James Kelman, who will teach the fiction writing workshop, English 241 (see description below). 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 2007**

203	Narrative Craft and Theory	T	1600-1845	Miller
204	Modern Approaches to Lit	M	1900-2145	Krishnaswamy
211	20 <sup>th</sup> -Century Poetry	R	1900-2145	Maio

216	Medieval Literature	M	1600-1845	Cox
232	Romanticism	R	1600-1845	Harris
233	Victorian Literature	R	1900-2145	Wilson
240	Creative Writing: Poetry	W	1600-1845	Soldofsky
241	Creative Writing: Fiction	M	1600-1845	Kelman
255	Themes in American Literature	T	1900-2145	Brada-Williams
257	Rhetoric	W	1600-1845	Rice

### **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS FOR SPRING 2007**

#### **203 Narrative Craft and Theory (Professor Miller)**

Agents and publishers say these are the two hottest words in publishing today: narrative nonfiction. Narrative (the art of storytelling) + nonfiction (literature based on fact) = the most powerful of all genres, writing that has the ability to inform, educate and enlighten as it entertains.

We will be studying nonfiction literature from a writer's perspective, exploring the techniques of drama, dialogue, characterization, plot, pacing, and scenic construction—which we've stolen from our friends, the fiction writers—to use in the creation of narrative nonfiction.

In our efforts to study good storytelling, we will look at a wide variety of materials in this class: movies, short stories, essays, and book-length nonfiction. Most of our time will be spent reading eight narrative nonfiction books, which will present different facets of the genre. These will include works like *In Cold Blood*, *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, *Into Thin Air* and *The Perfect Storm*. At times we will do in-class writing exercises to experiment with the techniques we're studying.

#### **204 Modern Approaches to Literature (Professor Krishnaswamy):**

This course deals with the field of Critical Theory, which includes literary criticism but cuts across other disciplines like psychology, philosophy, economics, political science, history, biology and others. Focusing mainly on theories and methodologies employed by scholars and critics of the 20th century, we will engage with fundamental questions about language, literature, and reading/writing: What is literature? How do we interpret it? How should we evaluate it? What is its relation to culture and to society? What are the rights and duties of artists? Of critics and scholars? We will try to understand major intellectual schools such as New Criticism, Structuralism, Marxism, Feminism, Deconstruction, New Historicism, Postcolonialism etc. and discover how they may be applied to literature. While this course will be tough and challenge you to read a considerable amount of complex material, it should also be exhilarating because you will have an opportunity to form clearer perspectives on language/literature and to acquire tools you can use for interpreting language/literature.

#### **211 Twentieth-Century Poetry (Professor 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.

#### **216 Medieval Literature (Professor Cox):**

From knights in shining armor to the black death of plague, medieval literature has it all: mystery and adventure, romance and riddles, bawdy burlesque and biblical allegory, lilting lyrics and savage sagas. Join our combined undergraduate/graduate class and read some of the most beautiful and fascinating works ever written. Undergraduates will write weekly reader responses, a take-home midterm exam, a research-informed paper (8-10 pages), and a final essay exam. Graduate students will write weekly reader responses; write an evaluation of and present a scholarly article; lead the class discussion of one assigned reading; write a scholarly critical paper (18-20 pages) using both primary and secondary sources; and prepare, present, and distribute to the class an informational abstract of their critical paper, with an annotated bibliography.

#### **232 Romanticism (Professor Harris) -- “William Wordsworth: Questioning a Literary Lion”:**

William Wordsworth, 1770-1850. Author of *Lyrical Ballads* and *The Prelude*. Husband to Mary. Friend to Samuel Taylor Coleridge (sometimes). Collaborator with sister, Dorothy. Father of five children and the Romantic Period.

We know these things about William Wordsworth, but what of the relationships, cultural change and social upheaval that surrounded him during his sixty-year career? Why is he lauded as the literary lion of the Romantic Period? Can we study the impact of his personal relationships with other authors? Does his literary genius impact the generations of Victorians who would live alongside and supersede his poetic triumphs? In this course, we will explore not only the life of William Wordsworth, but also his literary legacy. We will also question his reputation as this literary lion by reading the contemporary poets who influenced him, e.g., Charlotte Smith. In this seminar, we will not necessarily dismantle the hero worship surrounding Wordsworth but will instead re-orient his literary status. By the end of the semester we shall see that Wordsworth was not a single man, writing alone, fathering a literary movement. Instead, he is both a community and part of a community of authors who were responsible for eventually welcoming the Twentieth-Century Modernists. Readings include creative as well as non-fiction writings, including authors' letters, Coleridge's poetry, Wollstonecraft's Letters, Dorothy Wordsworth's *Grasmere Journal*, Charlotte Smith's sonnets, Mary Shelley's

*Frankenstein* and a treatise on the 1842 Copyright Act (which Wordsworth helped to create). Both Marilyn Gaull's *English Romanticism: The Human Context* and digital representations of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century culture will orient our historical context. This course serves as both an introduction to Romantic studies as well as an exploration of particular themes within its literature. Assignments include a primary sources essay, short essay and oral presentation, long research essay and weekly reading responses (posted to our course listserv). (See [required texts here](#).)

### **233 Victorian Literature (Professor Wilson):**

This seminar will examine significant literary works written *circa* 1830 and 1900. We will supplement our readings with important pieces of Victorian art and music. We will read *Little Dorrit*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and the Victorian section of *The Norton Anthology*. One short essay, one seminar research project and two class presentations are required.

### **240 Creative Writing: Poetry (Professor Soldofsky) --"Inscribing the Inexplicable: Poem as Art and Artifact"**

English 240 is a Graduate poetry writing workshop in which students will write and revise new poems throughout the semester. The course will also include discussions of the craft of poetry and contemporary poetics. The theme of this semester's workshop will be "Inscribing the Inexplicable: Poem as Art and Artifact." We will write a number of poems during the semester based on viewing works of visual art. In addition, we will read a selection of essays written by poets as diverse as John Ashbery, Elizabeth Bishop, Joy Harjo, Lyn Hejinian, Edward Hirsch, J.D. McClatchy, and William Carlos Williams about painting and the visual arts as a source of poetic inspiration. We will also read poems based upon interactions between the poet and a work of visual art (also known as ekphrastic poetry). By the end of the course, each student will produce an artifact--either in printed or electronic form--in which he or she will present a poem (or group of poems) in collaboration with the work(s) of a visual artist. English 240 is a course required for students in the MFA program whose primary or secondary genre is poetry. Students in the MA program who write poetry at the advanced level may also be admitted (space permitting) with the instructor's permission. The course may be repeated twice for credit. Conditionally classified graduate students must also obtain the instructor's permission to enroll in the course.

### **241 Fiction Writing Workshop (Professor Kelman):**

Who gives our work a value? Are concepts such as inspiration, genius or talent useful? Is grammatical form just another hegemony? (Repeat After Me!) We hope to deal with some basic questions. Whether we answer them or not is another matter. The sharing of ideas and experience is expected. Artists (writers) do not have to be in competition, not even with themselves. Commitment will reveal itself. There should be space to consider the work of some masters, e.g. Sadat Hasan Manto, Isaac Babel, Gertrude Stein. But the work of individual students provides the starting point. It is assumed that people have their own portfolios but new work should be produced in the aftermath. English 241 is a course required for students in the MFA program whose primary or secondary genre is fiction. Students in the MA program who write fiction at the advanced level may also be admitted (space permitting) with the instructor's permission. The course may be repeated twice for credit. Conditionally classified graduate students must also obtain the instructor's permission to enroll in the course.

### **255 Themes in American Literature (Professor Brada-Williams) -- "Racial and Ethnic Identity Formation in American Literature"**

How is identity shaped? Is it innate or culturally constructed? How do class, gender, religion, and or sexuality affect how one sees oneself or one's ethnicity? How do others see us? How have minority identities been constructed by mainstream American culture and how has the struggle to self-define these identities in turn shaped American literary culture? Twentieth-century prose fiction will be our main focus but texts examined will include a wide range of ethnic communities, settings, and methods, including Ralph Ellison's iconic *Invisible Man* and an example of Hawaiian "Local Literature" such as Lois-Ann Yamanaka's *Wild Meat and the Bully Burgers*. Expect to write a long research paper, an annotated bibliography and proposal, present on one of the texts during the course of the semester, and contribute weekly discussion questions and comments. Readings will include the primary literary works as well as relevant theoretical and critical essays.

### **257 History of Rhetoric (Professor 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*.

Graduate students should also consult the *Department of English & Comparative Literature Newsletter* which has listings of upper division undergraduate courses that may be of interest to you. Dr. Baer's evening Shakespeare course (144) and Dr. Engell's course on nineteenth-century American authors (162), for example, examine works not focused on in the ten graduate courses offered next semester and are scheduled in the evening hours customarily used for our graduate courses.

## TENTATIVE LIST OF COURSE OFFERINGS FOR FALL 2007

The number of graduate seminars offered in Fall 2007 will depend on enrollments and faculty availability but will be drawn from this list: 201, 201C, 203, 204, 216, 230, 240, 241, 242, 256, 259, and one or more of the following: 253 254 or 255.

## 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

The classes you take toward your 30-unit MA program *should* be 200-numbered English courses. Upper-division English coursework (100 level) count if you have received permission of the instructor as well as the MA Coordinator. Classes taken outside the department will not count except in unusual circumstances. Get prior approval from your advisor before you take such courses.

## 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.

## KEEP INFORMED

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. The number of conferences open only to graduate student presenters is growing, and these represent an excellent opportunity to get your work before a larger audience and to begin to participate actively in the scholarly community. We will post the announcements for these and other conferences on the Graduate Bulletin Board and on the department's list serve (see below). Check the submission dates and keep these in mind as you write your seminar papers. Program descriptions, course descriptions, the current Newsletter, and other documents are posted on the Department website: [www.sjsu.edu/depts/english/grad](http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/english/grad)

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 Brada-Williams or Soldofsky.

**Official Graduate Program Announcements:** To receive official notices from the Graduate Program about events, calls for papers and various fellowships, join the ENGGRAD list by sending an email message to: [listproc@listproc.sjsu.edu](mailto:listproc@listproc.sjsu.edu) and in the body of the text type this: SUBSCRIBE EngGrad [your first name] [your last name].

**English Society Group & Lounge:** To receive information about student-run activities via email, join the English Society's listserv. Sign up outside the English Society Lounge (FO 113) to be added to the Yahoo Group. Feel free to visit the Lounge at your leisure.

**Graduate Student Organization:** Students have also formed a graduate student-specific group, English Graduate Organization, which is available as a Yahoo Group listserv. To join, simply enter your email address below:

Subscribe to SJSUEnglishGradOrg

Powered by [groups.yahoo.com](http://groups.yahoo.com)

The SJSU **Graduate Studies Office website** publishes important deadlines, rules, and a list of steps for completing a Master's Degree: [www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/Current/Completing\\_Masters](http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/Current/Completing_Masters)

## MA & MFA FOREIGN LANGUAGE EXAMS

Students wishing to satisfy the foreign language requirement in French, German, or Spanish, should take an examination offered in the Foreign Language Department. You must contact:

<u>Examiner</u>	<u>email</u>	<u>phone</u>
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Professor Trudeau (French): [trudeau@sjsu.edu](mailto:trudeau@sjsu.edu) 924-4594  
Professor Sabalius (German): [sabalius@email.sjsu.edu](mailto:sabalius@email.sjsu.edu) 924-4616  
Professor

Sempere-Martinez (Spanish): [jsempere@email.sjsu.edu](mailto:jsempere@email.sjsu.edu) 924-4592

You will be excused from the examination if, 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. 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](#).

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## SOME IMPORTANT DATES

### 2007

- Feb. 15** Last day for May 2007 graduates to file or reactivate application for graduation at the Graduate Studies Office.
- Feb. 15** August or December 2007 graduates should submit approved programs to Graduate Studies by this date. You must see your advisor to file the [candidacy form](#). To be safe, do it before the end of Fall semester 2006.
- March 1** Last day to submit MA and MFA thesis to 2nd and 3rd readers.
- March 1** TA and GA applications for Fall 2007 due
- April 2** Deadline for [thesis proposals](#) to be submitted to the [Graduate Committee](#) to sign up for Fall 2007 299 units.
- April 5** Deadline for May graduates to submit approved theses to Graduate Studies.
- April 6** MFA comprehensive exam distributed (9:00 AM). (See [September 2006 Newsletter](#) about Format.)
- April 7** MA Comprehensive Exam, Part 1, 9-noon, FO 104. (See [September 2006 Newsletter](#) about Format.)
- April 9** MFA comprehensive exam due (5:00 PM).
- April 14** MA Comprehensive Exam, Part 2, 9-noon, FO 104. (See [September 2006 Newsletter](#) about Format.)
- April 14** GRE Subject Test in English offered
- June 6** Last day for May 2007 graduates to submit MA and MFA thesis copies for binding.
- June 9** Last date for August 2007 graduates to file application for graduation.

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