

ENGLISH 130-1 "WRITING FICTION" FALL 2014

(This syllabus can be found online: www.sjsu.edu/english/ENGLgreensheets/2014ENGLfall/index.html.)

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English 130-1, MW 12:00-1:15, BBC 120

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Course Description and Objectives: English 130 focuses on the craft of writing literary short fiction. Students will learn the basic techniques and conventions of character development and narrative structure through close readings of exemplary creative work and by writing stories designed as exercises in the aesthetics of short fiction as well as writing original stories. **Literary Fiction:** For this course you only are allowed to write literary fiction – *realism*, fiction about **real, human people** in credible circumstances and situations that take place in **our actual world**, and about the attendant emotions, desires, and internal and external conflicts that drive those people and create those situations. It is fiction written **for adult humans** that is designed to be memorable, complex, and true about life and what it means to be living in the real world.

To that end, you will **not** be writing about: zombies, vampires, wizards, elves, werewolves, mutants, shape-shifters, space-colonists, time-travelers, dimension-hoppers, monsters, talking animals, conscious-but-inanimate objects (such as toasters or shoes that think), artificial intelligences, ninja turtles, or . . . *zombies*. Ask yourself: Would the characters and situations you plan to write about fit well in a video game, comic book, monster flick, or a fantasy or sci-fi movie? If so they will not fit well in this course – **and will not be accepted for credit**. However, suggestions of the supernatural as presented in the fictions of Edgar Allan Poe meet the definition of Literary Fiction and, therefore, *are* acceptable.

Course Student Learning Objectives (SLO): The Department of English and Comparative Literature has established the following Student Learning Objectives (SLO) for its baccalaureate courses, such as English 130: Students will demonstrate the ability to 1) read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric; 2) show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature; 3) write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject; 4) develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively; 5) articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts.

Required Texts:

Hemingway, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro and Other Stories* (Scribner's)
Chopin, *The Awakening and Selected Stories of Kate Chopin* (Signet Classics)

Assignments and Correspondence to SLO, Grading, and Due Dates:

Four (4) written assignments, as follows:

~~Two (2) Original Stories, each worth 30 points (totaling 60 points of the course grade) and each a maximum of 12 pp. These stories will be workshopped, due *in final form* one week after your scheduled workshop date. Meets SLO 1, 2, 3, and 4.

~~Two (2) critiques, 2-pages each, written as a Lead Discussant for the workshop segment, each critique worth 10 points for a total of 20 points. Each critique is due at the story's workshop. Meets SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

~~Note: 20 points for participation in workshop when not a Lead Discussant.

All due dates are absolute. There is no provision for late work. Failure to hand in an assignment on its due date will result in a lowered grade. Your workshop stories must be distributed no later than the class meeting before the workshop date or else you will lose your workshop turn as well as lose the benefit of my critiquing your story before it is due, which remains one week after your scheduled workshop date - no exceptions.

The four assignments and participation comprise 100 points. The points represent percentages which graduate in accordance with University policy as follows: 100–98 = A+; 97–94 = A; 93–90 = A-; 89–87 = B+; 86–84 = B; 83–80 = B-; 79–77 = C+; 76–74 = C; 73–70 = C-; 69–67 = D+; 66–64 = D; 63–60 = D-; 59–0 = F.

The Department of English and Comparative Literature reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the official SJSU Catalog (“The Grading System”). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure. In English and Comparative Literature courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of the ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.

Course Procedures: You must turn in to me a hard copy of each assignment on its due date.

****Emailed assignments are not accepted and will be treated as failing to meet the due date.****

You must distribute hard copies of your workshop stories to the assigned Lead Discussants and to me; however, you may email your workshop stories to everyone else in the class. **Manuscript Preparation and**

Procedures: 1) All assignments must be typed in 12-point in a readable font style, and must be double-spaced, paginated, and on standard white, 8.5” by 11” paper. Make certain that your name is on the first page and that you title your stories. 2) All assignments must be your own work and must be written exclusively for this course. By University policy, you may not hand in any work for which you were previously given credit in another course, including mine should you happen to be a former student or currently enrolled in another course of mine this semester. 3) Adherence to the fundamental tenets of literary is expected. This includes the correct usage of grammar, punctuation, and spelling. **Failure to do so will result in a grade reduction, as per department policy, as stated above.** You must have - and be able to articulate - viable aesthetic reasons for deviating from proper usage, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Concerning Attendance: I *strongly advise* your making a friend in the class from whom you can get handouts and notes for any lecture or discussion you should happen to miss and to distribute the required hard copies of your workshop story should you not be able to attend class the meeting before your workshop turn. I will not distribute your workshop story for you, so if you are absent the meeting before your workshop date you must make another arrangement or else lose your turn, as indicated above. I cannot conduct private tutorials with you, either by email or during office hours, in order to replicate what you missed by not attending class. Please do not ask me to do so. However, after you’ve caught up on the reading and thoughtfully considered your friend’s notes, feel free to ask me specific questions should you need clarification.

Please do not ask for special treatment of any kind or to be exempted from any course policy or procedure.

University Policies: You are responsible for reading the SJSU academic policies available online (<http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>). Academic Integrity Policy (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm>); Add/Drop Deadlines (http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/index.html); Late Drop

Policy (<http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy>). [Note: Friday, September 5th is the last day to **Drop** without a transcript notation, and Friday September 12th is the last day to **Add** courses and register late.] Campus Policy in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act: If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please see me as soon as possible. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities register with the Accessible Education Center (AEC) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/aec/>) to establish a record of their disability.

The Center for Literary Arts (CLA) Fall 2014 Schedule. All events are free and begin at 7:00 in MLK Library 225/229. It is expected that you will attend as many of these events as possible:

- Sept. 24 (Wed.) David Shields Reading and Book Signing
- Oct. 16 (Thurs.) Maggie Nelson Reading and Book Signing
- Oct. 29 (Wed.) Tracy K. Smith Reading and Book Signing
- Nov. 12 (Wed.) Ru Freeman Reading and Book Signing

For more information see <http://www.litart.org> or call the Event Hotline: (408) 924-4600.

Class Schedule:

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| Aug. | 25 | Course overview. |
| | 27 | Chopin, "The Kiss" (p. 225) |
| Sept. | 01 | Labor Day (campus closed). |
| | 03 | Chopin, "At the 'Cadian Ball" (p. 178) and "The Storm" (p. 267) |
| | 08 | Hemingway, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" (p. 3) |
| | 10 | Hemingway, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" (p. 121) |
| | 15 | <u>Round I</u> Workshop. |
| | 17 | Workshop. |
| | 22 | Workshop. |
| | 24 | Workshop. |
| | 29 | Workshop. |
| Oct. | 01 | Workshop. |
| | 06 | Workshop. |
| | 08 | Workshop. |
| | 13 | Workshop. |
| | 15 | Workshop. |
| | 20 | Workshop. |
| | 22 | Workshop. |
| | 27 | <u>Round II</u> Workshop. |
| | 29 | Workshop. |

Nov.	03	Workshop.
	05	Workshop.
	10	Workshop.
	12	Workshop.
	17	Workshop.
	19	Workshop.
	24	Workshop.
	26	No class.
Dec.	01	Workshop.
	03	Workshop.
	08	Workshop.
	10	Workshop.
	17	Final Examination, 9:45 - 12:00pm, Wednesday, December 17th.