

San José State University
Department of English & Comparative Literature
English 130: Writing Fiction, Spring 2016, section 02

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Luke B. Goebel

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Office Hours: T/TH 12pm-1:30pm and gladly by appointment.
(Please note: No office hours on SJSU holidays.)

Class Days/Time: M/W 1:30PM - 2:45PM

Classroom: Boccardo Business Center 128

Course Description

To start the semester we will be reading and discussing published stories from primarily living authors who are writing contemporary fiction. We will read craft essays and theory and I will give writing prompts and in-class writing activities to help you generate new work, which may lead to what you will submit for workshop.

We will focus on writing literary fiction, and also discuss and explore writers who are writing literary fiction that collides with and shares territory with other genres such as sci-fi, etc., but the writing we will do in this course will be focused on literary fiction given the limited time we have and the course level we are at as fiction writers.

You will write and workshop at least two fiction submissions of roughly 1500 words or greater each—though we care more for fineness of craft and style and scope than for pages generated. You will revise each submission (which can be one or more stories) and I will explain in class what I mean by a revision and what I expect to see in yours. Instead of a final exam you will hand in a final portfolio of work made of your revisions (at least 2,500 words) and due on the last day of class. This portfolio will have an accompanying reflection essay.

Student Learning Goals

This course addresses the following Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) approved for the BA in English:

SLO 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.

SLO 3: Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.

The list of all approved SLOs are listed on the English Department's website: <http://www.sjsu.edu/english/undergraduate/studentlearninggoals.html>

Learning Outcomes (GELO)

Students will demonstrate, orally and in writing, proficiency in the Area of C2 Learning Objectives. Students will be able to

1. Students will demonstrate, orally and in writing, proficiency in the Area A3 Learning Outcomes.

Students will be able to:

1. Locate and evaluate sources, through library research, and integrate research through appropriate citation and quotation.
2. Present effective arguments that use a full range of legitimate rhetorical and logical strategies to articulate and explain their positions on complex issues in dialogue with other points of view.
3. Effectively locate, interpret, evaluate, and synthesize evidence in a comprehensive way in support of one's ideas.
4. Identify and critically evaluate the assumptions in and the context of an argument.
5. Effectively distinguish and convey inductive and deductive patterns as appropriate, sequencing arguments and evidence logically to draw valid conclusions and articulate related outcomes (implications and consequences).

Assignments

- Two new, original pieces of fiction, photocopied for the class (SLO #3).
- Written and verbal comments on your classmates' stories (SLO #1, #3).
- Reading assignments. I will quiz on these (SLO #1).
- A substantial revision of your stories (serves as the final exam) (SLO #3).
- Brief in-class and take-home writing exercises (SLO #3).

- Attendance at two literary readings of your choice, and a 1-2 page written response to each (SLO #1, #3).

Extra Credit Assignments

For extra credit you can attend at up to two more literary readings (and write responses). These must be turned in by the last day of class.

Attending Readings / Lectures

As SJSU fiction author Nick Taylor writes, "The Bay Area is one of the world's great literary regions, where seven days a week one can attend a reading by a renowned writer at a bookstore, college, community center, or library. Readings are listed in the Sunday editions of the *San Jose Mercury News* and *The San Francisco Chronicle*, and in *Metro* weekly."

You will attend two readings this semester, after which you will write a short reflection of (1-2pp) and turn it in before the last day of class. Feel free to respond to any aspect of the performance, especially as to what you gleaned as a writer from the reading experience.

Here are some of the readings being offered on campus this semester:

Feb. 10	Ann Packer 3:00 Mt. Pleasant High & 7 pm reading
March 8	Cristina Garcia 7 pm reading
April 6	House of Sand and Fog screening [Oscar-nominated film based on Dubus novel] Andre Dubus 7 pm reading-Cox
April 7	Andre Dubus in conversation with Cathleen Miller 1:30 pm
April 13	Steinbeck Fellows 7 pm
May 5	Poetry Legacy Day with US Poet Laureate Juan Felipe Herrera
May 9	Paul Douglass & Julia Markus 7 pm

reading and conversation

For more info go to: <http://www.litart.org>

Grading

You will be graded on the quality and quantity of the writing you do as well as the ways in which you contribute to the community through offering criticism in workshop, writing responses to your classmates on their work, and bringing a convivial and generous spirit to this class of writers. While having a natural talent in creative writing can help you in this class, it is not necessary, nor tantamount, in terms of your performance and how you are graded. Furthermore, I have noted that many writers become successful when they had little inborn talent to show at the start of their labor in fiction, while many who had much natural talent did not accomplish much in the long term. Belief in an aesthetic and interest in style can be much more essential than initial natural talent with language and story.

As SJSU professor Nick Taylor writes: "Creative writing, though subject to the instructor's individual subjectivity, can be evaluated according to general standards used to determine how well a piece of writing works. These include: 1) Textual and/or technical competence and eloquence. 2) Imaginative risk. 3) Energy and freshness of language. 4) Effective use of metaphor and other forms of figurative language. 5) Clarity and precision of detail. 6) Capacity for mixed feelings and uncertainty. 7) Effective use of grammar, syntax, and rhythm. 8) Naturalness and believability. 9) Appropriateness of style to subject. 10) Compelling audience interest."

Final grades:

- Your Fiction (your packets for workshop) 50%

If you DO NOT TURN IN for workshop you will lose 1/3 of this 50% (17%) for **each** time you don't hand out your work to the class on the meeting before your workshop date! NO ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS ALLOWED.

- Copies of letters to Classmates' Fiction (hand in binder at end) 10%
- Quizzes and Class Participation 10%
- Attendance at Literary Readings (and 1-2 page write-ups) 20%
- In-class Writing Exercises 5%

Grades given conform to the English Department and university grading policy. The Department of English is committed 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.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT GRADING STATEMENT: In English Department courses, instructors comment on and grade the quality of writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All your writing should be distinguished by

correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.

Late Assignment Policy

I do not accept late assignments. It is crucial that you turn in your stories when you say you're going to. I won't pass around the sign-up sheet until a few weeks into the semester. By then you should know when your work for other classes will be due, so choose your workshop dates wisely.

Required Texts

- I will provide texts unless otherwise instructed

Schedule and Assignments

Course Grades:

In addition to standard letter grades (A-F), a number of other grading marks can be assigned for the course.

- "W" (Withdrawal): If a "W" symbol appears next to a student's name on your grade roster, he or she was permitted to drop the course after the fourteenth day of instruction with the approval of the Director of Academic Services. It carries no connotation of quality of student performance and is not used in calculating grade point average or progress points.
- "WU" (Withdrawal Unauthorized): The symbol "WU" indicates that an enrolled student did not officially withdraw from or drop the course and failed to complete course requirements. This grade is assigned by the instructor and is appropriate for students who have disappeared from or never attended class. For purposes of calculating the grade point average, this symbol is equivalent to an "F". A "WU" *should not be used in place of a failing grade.*
- "I" (Incomplete): Students who fall behind toward the end of the semester often ask for incompletes. An "I" is typically reserved for students who for legitimate reasons (health, personal emergencies) are unable to meet all the course requirements. A grade of an incomplete is appropriate for students who have attended a major portion of the semester and who have completed the majority of required assignments. Please consider the student's situation carefully before assigning an incomplete. If you give a student an "I," you will need to work with him/her the following semester to complete the course. An "I" *is not to be assigned to students who complete all course assignments and have an "F" average.* These students should receive a failing grade for the course. When you post an "I" on the grade roster, you will be prompted to provide reasons justifying the mark.

To clear an incomplete, the student must complete all required work within one year. If the incomplete is not cleared within one year, the "I" is computed as an "F" in the student's grade point average. Clearance of Incomplete forms are available in the department office. The form must be signed by the instructor.

Classroom Protocol

Attendance

Regular attendance and participation is mandatory. You cannot do well in this course if you are not present and ready to participate in exercises, workshop, peer review, and discussions. Exchange information with a classmate so you can find out what you have missed if you ever miss a class. Also, as you can see on this syllabus participation counts as 15% of your final grade. This percent is determined by handing in of peer review sheets, by your attendance (a major factor for this 15%*), and by your participation in class.

*I give everyone three absences, unexcused, before absences start having a major impact on the 15% of your grade that is participation. I strongly recommend not missing more than three classes without excused absences. TALK TO ME if you need to miss more than three classes, please, and let's discuss.

Electronics

- There will be times we may use devices and during those times I will let you know it is okay to use devices.
- There will be other times when I will require all devices be put away. Please don't let devices become an issue, or I will have to say something to you about this and this will lower your participation grade.

Plagiarism

At SJSU, plagiarism is defined at "the act of representing the work of another as one's own (without giving appropriate credit) regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements." Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and can result in failure of the assignment, course, and disciplinary action including in some instances dismissal from SJSU.

University Policies

General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student

As members of the academic community, students accept both the rights and responsibilities incumbent upon all members of the institution. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with SJSU's policies and practices pertaining to the procedures to follow if and when questions or

concerns about a class arises. See [University Policy S90-5](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf>. More detailed information on a variety of related topics is available in the [SJSU catalog](http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbggen/narr/catalog/rec-12234.12506.html), at <http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbggen/narr/catalog/rec-12234.12506.html>. In general, it is recommended that students begin by seeking clarification or discussing concerns with their instructor. If such conversation is not possible, or if it does not serve to address the issue, it is recommended that the student contact the Department Chair as a next step.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester's [Catalog Policies](#) section at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the [Academic Calendars webpage](#) at http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/. The [Late Drop Policy](#) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the [Advising Hub](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

[University Policy S12-7](#), <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf>, requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course and the following items to be included in the syllabus:

- "Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material."
 - It is suggested that the greensheet include the instructor's process for granting permission, whether in writing or orally and whether for the whole semester or on a class by class basis.
 - In classes where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests should be obtained as well.
- "Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent."

Academic integrity

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf> requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The [Student Conduct and Ethical Development website](http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. [Presidential Directive 97-03](http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf) at http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Accessible Education Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/aec) (AEC) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aec> to establish a record of their disability.

Accommodation to Students' Religious Holidays

San José State University shall provide accommodation on any graded class work or activities for students wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays before the add deadline at the start of each semester. If such holidays occur before the add deadline, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed. See [University Policy S14-7](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf>.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the [Academic Success Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/> located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

SJSU Peer Connections

Peer Connections, a campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring, strives to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. You are encouraged to take advantage of their

services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals.

In addition to offering small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses, consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics including preparing for the Writing Skills Test (WST), improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving your first semester at SJSU, and other related topics. A computer lab and study space are also available for student use in Room 600 of Student Services Center (SSC).

Peer Connections is located in three locations: SSC, Room 600 (10th Street Garage on the corner of 10th and San Fernando Street), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. Visit [Peer Connections website](http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu) at <http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu> for more information.

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the [Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook.

SJSU Counseling Services

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit [Counseling Services website](http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>.

KEY DATES:

Thursday, January 28

First day of instruction for Spring semester

Thursday, January 28 - Tuesday, February 16

Late Registration period for Spring semester

Tuesday, February 9

Last day to drop a class without a "W" grade for Spring

Tuesday, February 16

Last day to add for Spring

Last day to submit [Audit option\(PDF\)](#)

Last day to submit [Credit/No Credit grading option\(PDF\)](#)

Last day to submit [Instructor Drops\(PDF\)](#)

English 130: Section 2, Spring 2016

This schedule is subject to change with reasonable notice. If the schedule is changed, we will discuss this in class and all participants will be notified of significant changes in terms of due dates, etc., through in-class announcements as well as often through e-mail updates. HOWEVER: It is each student's responsibility to stay updated on changes by being in class and by always contacting another student for changes and homework if absent from class. There may also be additional readings assigned.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	N/A	
1	N/A	
2	2/1	First day of Class. Syllabus and Introductions. Homework: bring a piece of your favorite writing, a paragraph or two, to class on 2/3.
2	2/3	Sharing what we love. Looking at sentences and reading as writers. Gary Lutz, <i>The Sentence is a Lonely Place</i> HW: Read Packet excerpts from Francine Prose, <u>Reading Like a Writer</u> . [& Sample from Textbook.] All in packet.
3	2/8	Writing Prompts. Looking at short-short stories (FLASH FICTION). What is in an arc? What is in a sentence? What is in a tone—a time? HW: Read Joyce Carol Oats, “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been.” Online at: https://www.d.umn.edu/~csigler/PDF%20files/oates_going.pdf
3	2/10	Presentation on silence. HW: Read packet with stories by Amber Sparks, Junot Diaz, Lindsay Hunter, and Amelia Gray.
4	2/15	Discussing contemporary fiction packet from homework. HW: Read packet with assigned essay, “Dreaming by the Book,” from Elaine Scarry. And JD Salinger’s “A Perfect Day for Banana Fish.”
4	2/17	Discussion of setting and character in J.D. Salinger’s “A Perfect Day for Banana Fish” Looking at Persona and Person. Discussion of identity in new millennium. HW: Read handout of James Purdy’s “Why Can’t They Tell You Why”

5	2/22	Dialogue: Readings and presentation on dialogue. HW: Read packet hand out
5	2/24	Student Workshop
6	2/29	Student Workshop
6	3/2	Student Workshop
7	3/7	Student Workshop
7	3/9	Student Workshop
8	3/14	Student Workshop
8	3/16	TBA
9	3/21	TBA
9	3/23	TBA
10	3/28	SPRING BREAK
10	3/30	SPRING BREAK
11	4/4	Student Workshop
11	4/6	Student Workshop
12	4/11	TBA
12	4/13	Student Workshop
13	4/18	Student Workshop
13	4/20	TBA
14	4/25	Student Workshop
14	4/27	Student Workshop

15	5/2	Student Workshop
15	5/4	Student Workshop
16	5/9	Looking at Literary Journals—Reading like an editor
16	5/11	Nontraditional Narrativity
17	5/16	Discussion of portfolio assignment
Final Exam	TBA	HAND IN Portfolio