

San José State University
Department of English and Comparative Literature
English 71, Introduction to Creative Writing (24307), Section 08, Spring 2016

Instructor: Tommy Mouton, MFA, **Office Location:** Faculty Offices (FO) 112, **Telephone:** (408) 924-4479, **Email:** tommy.mouton@sjsu.edu, **Office Hours:** MW 1:30-3:00 p.m., and by appointment **Class Days/Time:** MW 12:00-1:15 p.m. **Classroom Location:** Sweeney Hall 238

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the Canvas learning management system course website. You are responsible for regularly (at least once every other day) checking with the messaging system through MySJSU to learn of any updates. *Also: In lieu of handouts, I will often upload reading materials to Canvas.

Course Description

Introduction to Creative Writing (English 71) is a 3-unit lower-division course designed, adopted, implemented, and administered by the Department of English & Comparative Literature at San Jose State University in accordance with the University's General Education Program Guidelines to fulfill Core General Education requirements in the Letters area of Humanities & the Arts. In this course you are expected to read and write in the genres of poetry, short fiction, and creative nonfiction. Along with reading and writing, this class is comprised of weekly discussions, two presentations, and a number of writing workshops.

Prerequisites: Completion of English 1A or equivalent; an ability to think both creatively and critically.

Department Learning Outcomes:

In the Department of English and Comparative Literature, 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, and/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 the 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.

English 71 Course Goals:

- Decipher and understand the form and content of assigned literary works
- Comprehend the historical and cultural contexts of assigned literary works
- Recognize the accomplishments of and issues related to writing by men and women representing diverse cultural traditions
- Acquire through both individual and collaborative/workshop efforts of a written and oral nature the skills necessary for reading, discussing, analyzing, interpreting, and—most importantly—emulating and writing works of poetry, creative nonfiction, and short fiction;
- Communicate such skills with clarity and precision
- Develop the ability to write literary works that express intellect and imagination and that represent diversity in human cultures
- Respond to literature through clear and effective communication in both written and oral work
- Read and respond to texts with both analytical acumen and personal sensibility;
- Appreciate how literary works illuminate enduring human concerns while also representing
 - matters specific to a particular culture
- Write works of poetry, creative nonfiction, and short fiction that are of interest and value to the writer, to other students in the course, and to a diverse reading audience

Required Texts: Are available in the SJSU library

The Poet's Companion: A Guide to the Pleasures of Writing Poetry-Addonizio and Laux (ISBN-13: 978-0393316544)

Other Reading Materials:

Outside reading materials will be taken from *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft, 9th Edition*-Burroway, Stuckey-French; *Imagining America: Stories from the Promised Land A Multicultural Anthology of American Fiction, Revised Edition*-Brown and Ling; *Writing True: The Art and Craft of Creative Nonfiction*-Perl and Schwartz. All other reading materials will be made available to you.

In-Class Materials:

One Journal Notebook/Binder
Pens and Pencils
Stapler
Highlighters

Out-of-class Materials:

Laptop/Tablet
Printer access

Classroom Protocol

Attendance/Professionalism: You will arrive on time and be ready to work. Regular attendance is expected of you. If you are not present, you cannot participate. A lack of participation will adversely affect your growth as a writer and your overall grade in this course. Consider this your workplace: appropriate language, dress, and behavior are expected. Technology excuses regarding the failure to compose/type or print work will not be tolerated. Do not text or make/receive phone calls during class. Laptops/ipads, e-readers, etc., will remain off/closed during class, unless told differently. Please eat and drink prior to coming to class. In most instances, however, bottled water will be allowed.

***About Office Hours:** You should plan on seeing me regularly, especially if you are having a hard time in my class. Make the necessary time to meet with me. Your final grade will often depend on how well you advocate for yourself.

Assignments/What Are They Worth:

100 points total

Poetry (20%):

2 Formal Poems (1 Petrarchan Sonnet; 1 Villanelle)

2 Free Verse Poems

Fiction (20%):

1st Person short story- 4-8 pages

3rd Person (Limited or Omniscient) short story- 4-8 pages

Creative Nonfiction (20%):

Memoir-4-8 pages

Presentations (30%):

Ekphrastic Poem + Slides

Experimental poem or short story or personal essay (2 poems or 2-4 pages of prose)

Revision

Homework/Outside Readings/Quizzes (5%):

Homework in the form of short sketches will be assigned

When necessary, quizzes will be given

Reading Event (5%):

1 reading event is required

Grading Protocol:

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.

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.

Creative writing, though subject to the instructor's individual interpretation, 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, rhythm; also meter, rhyme, and other elements of poetic style and form. 8) Naturalness and believability. 9) Appropriateness of style to subject. 10) Compelling audience interest. *Note: Grammar and mechanics are key to developing one’s written craft, since the author him/herself is aware of the deliberate choices he/she must make from a clausal level. Poor grammar and mechanics, attempted to be masked as stylistic choices, without the necessary growth, will negatively impact your overall grade.*

The following grading will apply: A (96-94%), A- (93-90%), B+ (89-87%), B (86-84%), B- (83-80%), C+ (79-77%), C (76-73%), C- (73-70%), D+ (69-67%), D (66-63%), D- (63-60%), F (0-59%)... *Note: I do not, under any circumstances, round up.*

Assignments

Poetry, Fiction and Creative Nonfiction (LO 3, 5): All poetry that is to be workshopped and turned in to me is to be typed (12pt. font, Times New Roman, single-spaced, except at stanza breaks, one inch margins, stapled when necessary). All prose/short stories and nonfiction essays are to be typed (12pt. font, Times New Roman, double-spaced, one inch margins, with page numbers present somewhere on the page and stapled). Failure to follow directions will negatively impact your grade. Your name and the work’s title (even if it is *untitled*) are to always appear on the first page of the work’s final draft.

Workshop Procedures (LO 1, 3):

In this class we will workshop approximately twice a month. Groups will be assigned (approximately 8 groups of three). Each student is responsible for printing out the necessary copies for workshop. *Note: See the course schedule below for “Print Out” days.* Failure to workshop (without the necessary absence documentation/doctor’s excuse) will *adversely* impact your grade.

Revision write-up + Presentation (LO 1, 3, 4, 5): Your ability to go back into your work (after my and your peers’ comments have been returned) and very critically look back at your work is crucial. Revision and your commitment to doing so is what often sets published and unpublished writers apart. So, you will have the opportunity to share with the class the ways in which you

have critically and creatively gone back into your work (from any of the three genres) and have made the necessary decisions to improve your project. You are not presenting on the obvious; you are presenting to the class the real problem (i.e. the questions you have yet to answer) areas found by your peers and I, along with those problem areas that your artistic sensibilities continue to happen upon. A short write-up (between 300-500), along with a slide show, are due to me on your presentation day. If using a document camera works best (since I will have one) I will give the necessary credit in lieu of slides. *Note: from poetry, you are choosing one poem and from fiction/creative nonfiction, you are choosing one story/essay, along with any revision exercise I assign.*

Experimental Project (LO 1, 3, 4, 5): One of the other ways you will grow as a writer in this course is by taking risks. Influenced by a favorite published writer or multiple writers' work, you will attempt your hand at employing, from a thematic and craft standpoint, your chosen writer's/writers' techniques. Be careful; do not merely emulate the writer's/writers' style, where *your* voice and creative point of view are lost. This is still *your* work. Have fun!

Homework/Readings and Quizzes (LO 1, 3, 4, 5): Any assigned homework is due at the beginning of the class period. If you are late, your homework *will not* be accepted. If you are absent, you can pass your homework on to a classmate. If any homework is assigned (i.e. an addendum to what is on the syllabus) while you are absent, plan on contacting a classmate. Do not contact me! *Late* homework will not be accepted.

Concerning quizzes: If I sense that the class as a whole has not read, I will quiz you! If you are late or arrive after the quiz has begun, or if you are absent, you forfeit that day's quiz. Quizzes *cannot* be made up.

Participation: Class participation (being present; engaging in class discussions) is expected of you. An unwillingness to participate will more likely than not keep you from growing and enjoying the class.

Reading/Literary Events (LO 2, 3, 4):

You are required to attend one literary event over the course of the semester. I do, however, encourage you to attend as many as your schedule will allow. I will post via Canvas all literary events within a week in advance.

Events can be found at:

<http://www.litart.org/> (Center for Literary Arts)

<http://www.sjsu.edu/english/community/index.html> (SJSU English Department)

<http://www.sjsu.edu/steinbeck/index.html> (Center for Steinbeck Studies)

<http://www.pcsj.org> (Poetry Center San Jose)

<http://www.sjsu.edu/english/community/pwc/> (Poets and Writers Coalition)

Diversity Statement: *Some assignments (reading and writing) may in fact address issues of race, class, gender, etc. I expect you to have an open mind and respect the views of your peers, as they will respect yours. Insensitivity will not be tolerated.*

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

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

- “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: **PLAGIARISM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED**

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 any student wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require you, the student, to be absent from class. It is your responsibility to inform me, in writing, about such holidays before the add deadline at the start of each semester. If such holidays occur before the add deadline, you must notify me, in writing, at least three days before the date you will be absent. It is my responsibility to make every reasonable effort to honor your request without penalty. It is also your responsibility to make up all 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>.

English 71: Spring 2016

Course Schedule

Note: I will teach to your needs. This schedule is subject to change. When the need arises, I will make the necessary amendments to this schedule.

Week	Date	Topics and Due Dates	Next Class Period's Readings/Homework and Assigned Essays
1	M 2/1	Creative Sketch Course introductions Syllabus Review Student Introductions	Buy Textbooks Complete Sketch- HW#1
1	W 2/3	Sketch Due! Sketch Share-outs Formal Poetry: Format, Meter, the Italian/Shakespearian Sonnet	Read Italian and Shakespearian Sonnet Handout Read from the Poet's Companion (PC)-138-148 Complete Ex. #2 (PC 149)-HW#2
2	M 2/8	Rhyme scheme exercise "A Grammatical Excursion"/Clausal Awareness	Complete Italian/Shakespearian Sonnet draft Print Copies!
2	W 2/10	Sonnet Workshop Introduction to the Villanelle: "The Story We Know"-Collins; "The Grammar Lesson"- Kowit and "One Art"-Bishop	Read PC (151-163) Work on Villanelle Draft
3	M 2/15	Meter, Rhyme, and the Clause Read "Do not go Gentle into that Good Night"- Dylan Thomas and "The Waking"- Roethke	Complete Villanelle draft Print Copies
3	W 2/17	Villanelle Workshop Intro. to Free Verse	Read PC (19-45) Complete Ex. #1 (PC 28) and Ex. 4 (PC 29) HW#3
4	M 2/22	Homework Share-outs Grammatical Excursion/Clausal Awareness	Complete two Free Verse Poems (any length) Print Copies
4	W 2/24	Free Verse Workshop Sonnet and Villanelle: Revision clarifications	Begin free verse revisions Bring Laptops/Tablets

Week	Date	Topics and Due Dates	Next Class Period's Readings/Homework and Assigned Essays
5	M 2/29	Work on free verse poems Introduction to Ekphrasis	Complete Sonnet and Villanelle Revisions Bring Laptops/Tablets
5	W 3/2	Final Revised Sonnet and Villanelle Due! Research artwork Begin writing ekphrastic poem	Complete ekphrastic poem and presentation slides Email presentation slides Print out ekphrastic poem
6	M 3/7	Begin Ekphrastic Poem Presentations	Prepare for Presentation
6	W 3/9	Complete Ekphrastic Poem Presentations	Complete Free Verse final revisions Print out final revised free verse poems
7	M 3/14	Final Revised Free Verse Poems Due! Intro. to Fiction: Prose vs. Poetry	Read "Fiesta, 1980"-Diaz
7	W 3/16	1 st Person POV Conflict vs. Plot + Characterization + Dialogue Read "Eleven" Cisneros	Complete 1 st Person Story Draft (2-4 pages) Print Copies
8	M 3/21	1 st Person Story Workshop Tense Discussion	Read "Birthday"-Louie
8	W 3/23	Revision: Story, Form, Conflict and Plot	ENJOY SPRING BREAK!
9	M 3/28	Spring Recess: No Class	ENJOY SPRING BREAK!
9	W 3/30	Spring Recess: No Class	Prepare mentally and physically for class
10	M 4/4	Introduction to 3 rd person POV Omniscient vs. Limited	Read "Everything that Rises Must Converge"-O'Connor
10	W 4/6	1 st Person Story Due "The Intruder"-Dubus Methods of Presentation	Complete 3 rd Person Story Draft (2-4 pages) Print Copies!
11	M 4/11	3 rd Person Workshop	Begin 3 rd Person story revisions

Week	Date	Topics and Due Dates	Next Class Period's Readings/Homework and Assigned Essays
11	W 4/13	Experimental Project Introduction	Begin Working on Experimental Project Bring Laptops/Tablets
12	M 4/18	Work on Experimental Projects	Complete Experimental Projects Email slides (if necessary)
12	W 4/20	Begin Experimental Project Presentations	Complete 3 rd Person Final revisions
13	M 4/25	3 rd Person Story Due! Complete Experimental Project Presentations	Read "Under the Influence"-Sanders
13	W 4/27	Discuss Sanders Introduction to the Memoir/Personal Essay: Scene, Summary, and Reflection	Read Memoir (TBD)
14	M 5/2	Voice and Style/Where Does "I" Stand Memory Collage: The Image	Read Memoir (TBD)
14	W 5/4	Scene, Summary, and Reflection exercise	Complete Memoir Draft (2-4 pages) Print copies!
15	M 5/9	Memoir Workshop	Bring Laptops/Tablets
15	W 5/11	Revision: <i>Re-seeing</i> the draft Work on Memoir	Bring Laptops/Tablets
16	M 5/16	Work on Memoir End-of-class Reading clarifications	Complete Final Memoir (4-8 pages) Literary Reading event Write-up (Final opportunity to submit for credit) Prepare for Reading/Party
Final	TH 5/19 9:45-12:00 SH 238	Final Revised Memoir Due! End-of-Class Reading	Enjoy Summer Break!

Important Dates for Spring 2016

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\(PDF\)](#)

Wednesday, February 24

Enrollment census date for Spring

Monday, March 28 - Friday, April 1

Spring Recess - no classes

Thursday, March 31

Cesar Chavez Day - campus closed

Tuesday, April 26

Last Day to withdraw for Spring - [Withdrawal from the Semester Request on AARS website](#)

Monday, May 16

Last day of instruction for Spring

Tuesday, May 17

Faculty web access for Spring grade posting opens at 8:00am

Wednesday-Friday, May 18-20 & Monday-Tuesday, May 23-24

Spring's Final Exams (Exam Schedule)

Saturday, May 28

Commencement

Monday, May 30

Memorial Day - campus closed

Friday, May 27

Spring 2016 grades due from Faculty (Preliminary Deadline)

Saturday, May 28

Initial Spring 2016 [grades viewable on MySJSU](#)

Tuesday, May 31

Deadline to clear Spring 2015 Incomplete grades

Spring 2016 grades due from Faculty (Final Deadline)

Faculty web access for grade posting closes at 11:59pm

Monday, June 6

Spring 2016 Academic Standing viewable on MySJSU-unofficial transcript