

## ENGLISH 130-1 “WRITING FICTION” FALL 2017

(This syllabus is online: [www.sjsu.edu/english/ENGLgreensheets/2017ENGLfall/index.html](http://www.sjsu.edu/english/ENGLgreensheets/2017ENGLfall/index.html))

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Hours: M 3:00–4:00 p.m.; W 4:00–5:00 p.m.; and Wednesday by appointment  
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### Required Texts:

Poe, *The Fall of the House of Usher and Other Tales* (Signet 978-0451530318)  
Chopin, *The Awakening and Selected Stories* (Signet 978-0451524485)  
Hemingway, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro and Other Stories* (Scribner 978-0684804446)  
Sophocles, *The Three Theban Plays*, trans. Robert Fagles (Penguin 978-0140444254)

### 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. 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.

#### University's Credit Hour Requirement:

“Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.”

Because this is a 4-unit course, students can expect to spend a minimum of 12 hours per week preparing for and attending classes and completing course assignments. This course will have integrated into the syllabus the following 1-unit enhancement: Increased course content and/or collateral readings in the form of the final **Portfolio** assignment, described below, which entails the significant revision and expansion/development by approximately 3,000 additional words of the first and second story assignments. I will grade and comment on the Portfolio, just as I will grade and comment on both the first and second story assignments.

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

- 1) Aesthetic Statement Draft due to Small Group ***before* Monday, October 9<sup>th</sup>**.  
Meets SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.
- 2) Modeled Story Draft due to Small Group ***before* Monday, October 16<sup>th</sup>**.  
Meets SLO 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- 3) Aesthetic Statement and Modeled Story **Final Draft** (graded) due **Monday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>**.  
Meets SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.
- 4) Conflict Story Draft due to Small Group ***before* Monday, November 6<sup>th</sup>**.  
Meets SLO 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- 5) Conflict Story **Final Draft** (graded) due **Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>**.  
Meets SLO 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- 6) Portfolio (Modeled Story) Draft due to Small Group ***before* Monday, November 27<sup>th</sup>**.  
Meets SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.
- 7) Portfolio (Conflict Story) Draft due to Small Group ***before* Monday, December 4<sup>th</sup>**.  
Meets SLO 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- 8) Portfolio **Final Draft** (graded) due **Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup>**.  
Meets SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.
- 9) Written Critiques (graded), due at the assigned Small Group workshops dates.  
Meets SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Each of the two (2) stories must be at least 10 pp.; the Aesthetic Statement about 2-3 pp.  
Each of the ten (10) critiques must be a minimum of 2 pp.

Course Grade Distribution and Percentage Value by Assignment:

35% = First Story; 15% for the Aesthetic Statement and 20% for the Modeled Story

35% = Second (Conflict) Story

15% = Ten (10) Written Critiques, 2 pp. each, of classmates' stories

15% = Portfolio of Revised/Expanded First and Second Stories

100%

Grading:

The Department of English and Comparative Literature reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined by the SJSU Catalog ("Grades - Letter Grading"). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A+/A/A- = excellent; B+/B/B- = above average; C+/C/C- = average; D+/D/D- = below average; F = failure. Within any of the letter grade ranges (*exempli gratia*, B+/B/B-), the assignment of a + (plus) or - (minus) grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment. 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.

Department Policy on Grading Written Assignments:

Grades issued will adhere to the following SJSU academic standards of assessment:

The " 'A' Range " essay will be well organized and well developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will show the student's ability to use language effectively and construct sentences distinguished by syntactic complexity and variety. Such essays will be essentially free of grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors.

The " 'B' Range " essay will demonstrate competence in the same categories as the " 'A' Range " essay. The chief difference is that the " 'B' Range " essay will show some slight weaknesses in one of those categories. It may slight one of the assigned tasks, show less facility of expression, or contain some minor grammatical, mechanical, or usage flaws.

The " 'C' Range " essay will complete all tasks set by the assignment, but show weakness in fundamentals (usually development), with barely enough specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. The sentence construction may be less mature, and the use of language less effective and correct than the " 'B' Range " essay.

The " 'D' Range " essay will neglect one of the assigned tasks and be noticeably superficial in its treatment of the assignment - that is, too simplistic or short. The essay may reveal some problems in development, with insufficient specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. It will contain grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The “F” essay will demonstrate a striking underdevelopment of ideas and insufficient or unfocused organization. It will contain serious grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

Procedures:

- 1) **All due dates are absolute.** Failure to hand in an assignment on its due date will result in a lowered grade or, in the case of your drafts for the small group workshops, exclude you from participation. These drafts for small group workshop must be distributed at least two days *before* the beginning of the workshop segment.
- 2) **All assignments must be typed.** Use 14-point in a readable font style, double-space and paginate the manuscript on standard white 8.5” by 11” paper. Make certain that your name is on the first page and that you title your stories. 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 may email your work to the participants in your small group.
- 3) **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.
- 4) **Concerning Attendance:** You must make a friend in the class from whom you can get handouts and notes for any lecture or discussion you should happen to miss. 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. Do not ask me to do so. However, after you have caught up on the reading and thoughtfully considered your friend’s notes, feel free to ask me specific questions should you need clarification.
- 5) **Please do not ask for special treatment** of any kind or to be exempted from any class policy or procedure - any such request will not be granted.
- 6) **Adherence to the fundamental tenets of literary is expected,** as noted in the “Grading” section above. You must have - and be able to articulate - viable aesthetic reasons for deviating from proper usage, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

University Policies: The link below contains university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc.: [www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/)

### 130-1 FALL 2017 ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

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| Aug. 23 | Course Overview  |
| Aug. 28 | <u>Opening Paragraphs and First Person Narration</u><br>Poe, “The Black Cat” (p. 99) |
| Aug. 30 | Poe, “The Tell-Tale Heart” (p. 172)  |

- Sept. 04 Labor Day (Campus Closed)
- Sept. 06 Poe, "The Cask of Amontillado" (p. 152)  
Opening Paragraphs (handout)
- Sept. 11 The Narrative Function of Irony and Third Person Limited Narration  
Chopin, "The Story of an Hour" (p. 217)
- Sept. 13 Chopin, "The Kiss" (p. 225)
- Sept. 18 Chopin, "At the 'Cadian Ball'" (p. 178)
- Sept. 20 Chopin, "The Storm" (p. 267)
- Sept. 25 Narrative Structures  
Hemingway, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" (p. 3)
- Sept. 27 Hemingway, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" (continued)  
The Hemingway Code (handout)
- Oct. 02 Hemingway, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" (p. 121)
- Oct. 04 Hemingway, "In Another Country" (p. 65)
- Oct. 09 Small Group Workshop of Aesthetic Statement
- Oct. 11 Small Group Workshop of Aesthetic Statement
- Oct. 16 Small Group Workshop of Modeled Story
- Oct. 18 Small Group Workshop of Modeled Story
- Oct. 23 **First Story (Final Draft of Aesthetic Statement and Modeled Story) Due.**
- Oct. 25 Narrative Structure of Tragedy/Drama
- Oct. 30 Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*
- Nov. 01 Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*
- Nov. 06 Small Group Workshop of Conflict Story
- Nov. 08 Small Group Workshop of Conflict Story
- Nov. 13 Small Group Workshop of Conflict Story
- Nov. 15 **Second Story (Final Draft of Conflict Story) Due.**
- Nov. 20 No Class
- Nov. 22 Non-Instructional Day

- Nov. 27 Small Group Workshop of First Portfolio Story  
Nov. 29 Small Group Workshop of First Portfolio Story
- Dec. 04 Small Group Workshop of Second Portfolio Story  
Dec. 06 Small Group Workshop of Second Portfolio Story
- Dec. 11 **Portfolio of Revised/Expanded Stories Due Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup>.**