

San José State University
Department of English and Comparative Literature
ENGLISH 240: Poetry Workshop
Fall 2018

Instructor:	Prof. Alan Soldofsky
Office Location:	FO 106
Telephone:	408-924-4432
Email:	alan.soldofsky@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	M, W 3:00 – 4:30 PM; and T, Th PM by appointment
Class Days/Time:	M 7:00 – 9:45 PM
Classroom:	Clark Hall 111

Course Format

This course adopts a hybrid format. You will do a number course activities using SJSU's learning management system Canvas, including reading activities to augment the textbooks. All writing assignments are described in detail on Canvas, and are to be uploaded to Canvas Discussion pages and Assignment tools in order to receive a grade. You will need a laptop or tablet computer with an Internet connection and access to WiFi to successfully complete this class.

Course Description

English 240 is an MFA-level poetry workshop in which students write, revise, and complete new poems. The course will include regular discussions of poetics and the theory and craft of poetry, as well as an examination of trends in contemporary poetry in the United States and internationally. Students will also learn to how submit poems for publication in small magazines, literary journals, and Web sites. The course may be taken three times for credit (toward the MFA degree).

Thematic Focus

This Fall 2018 Graduate Poetry Workshop will focus on poetry in the modes of [Surrealism](#), [Postmodernism](#), and [Satire](#). We'll read and practice emulating Classical, Modernist and Postmodernist master poets whose work provides models for the modes of poetry this workshop will explore. We'll read Classical Latin satire; works by European and Latin American surrealists (in translation); Modern poets such as Hart Crane, Marianne Moore, and Wallace Stevens; and Postmodern poets such as Robert Bly, John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, Frank O'Hara, Ron Padgett, Victor Hernandez Cruz, James Tate, Mary Ruffle, Terrance Hayes, Juan Felipe Herrera, Paul Beatty, and Matthea Harvey. We'll explore how Satire has evolved in the 20th and 21st centuries, examining works by these poets, and writing satires and surrealistic-style poems in the class. Each class member will complete a portfolio of a minimum of 8 poems, and also complete an in-class presentation. MA students are welcome to enroll in the class, and can select either to complete a poetry manuscript or write two critical research papers during the semester.

The class is satisfies a workshop requirement for MFAs whose primary or secondary focus is poetry. MA students (and students outside the English Department) must submit a short writing sample to the instructor prior to the first class meeting to receive permission to enroll.

Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives

Course Goals:

- Complete a portfolio consisting of (depending on length) of **eight** finished (revised) original poems, at least **three** of which should be written in the surrealist, postmodernist, and/or satiric modes. (You may combine modes in a single poem, but should label the modes used.)
- Explore varied modes and forms of surrealism, postmodernism, and satire from classical to the contemporary periods.
- To workshop early drafts student poems in small writing groups whose members post their poems on Canvas for peer comments throughout the semester.
- Workshop classmates’ poems on a weekly basis, finding ways to improve the work through critique and successive revisions.
- Read the poetry craft and poetry scholarship essays poetry assigned via online hyperlinks in Canvas during the semester.
- Give two multimedia in-class presentations, analyzing individual poems included from the required readings listed on a Playlist.
- Invent a poetry writing assignment based on the poems/poets whose work you present to your classmates.
- **FOURTH UNIT OF CREDIT:** Complete one of the class members’ poetry writing assignments at the end of the semester. Write a group of at least three poems (or a poem in three sections) in response to the assignment. Then write a 1,000 word paper in which you analyze the poems you’ve written emulate or exhibit the techniques you’ve responded to in the assignment.

English Department Students Learning Goals

This course supports several of the English Department’s Student Learning Goals. The Department of English and Comparative Literature seeks to foster the intellectual development of its majors by encouraging study of literature and writing—whether creative, technical, or other professional writing. The Department strives to make its majors familiar with a wide range of works of British, American, and World literature, including folk and popular forms; and with the nature of the canon and of canon-formation, including issues of culture, history, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation.

Learning Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

Student Learning Objectives:	Skills/Knowledge Acquired:	Activities:
------------------------------	----------------------------	-------------

<p>SLO 1: Students will demonstrate a high-level of ability to write and complete a publishable, full-length work of literature in a primary genre concentration (poetry).</p>	<p>1. Students will learn to apply the craft of poetry writing in free verse and traditional meters and forms. 2. Students will learn the differences between poems written in the modes of satire, surrealism, and experimental postmodernism.</p>	<p>1. Write at least eight original poems, at least one of which will be written in the mode of a surrealist, postmodernist, and or satiric poem—or some combination of these modes.</p>
<p>SLO 2: Students will demonstrate high-level of proficiency to write works of literature in a secondary genre concentration (poetry).</p>	<p>See above.</p>	<p>See above.</p>
<p>SLO 3: Students will demonstrate an appropriate level of knowledge of literary history, literary theory, and craft and theory of creative writing.</p>	<p>1. Recognize trends in contemporary creative writing (poetry). 2. Identify developments within poetry, and the development of individual authors and modes/styles of writing—in the modes of surrealism, postmodernism, and satire.</p>	<p>1. Write blog entries each week commenting on, evaluating, and analyzing published poems assigned to be read in advance of the class workshop. 2. Give two in-class presentations on individual published poems from the required reading or weekly Playlists on Canvas. Also read any supplemental critical readings assigned on Canvas</p>
<p>SLO 4: Students will demonstrate critical and analytical skills in the evaluation and interpretation of literary texts.</p>	<p>1. Close read peers’ poems, critical comments, and blog postings. 2. Evaluate strengths (successes) and weaknesses (problems) in peers’ poems as well as published poems by notable authors. 3. Interpret and apply theories of ecopoetry poetry describe in literary supplemental literary essays linked on Canvas or included in the recommended reading list.</p>	<p>1. Workshop peers’ poems weekly. 2. Workshop published poems weekly. 3. Give two in-class presentations on poems included from the required reading list or from links to poems included in weekly Playlists on Canvas.</p>

Required Texts

Willard Bohn, editor. *Surrealist Poetry: An Anthology*.
Matthea Harvey. *If the Tabloids Are True What Are You?*
Juan Felipe Herrera. *Notes on the Assemblage*. City Lights.
Alan Soldofsky, *In the Buddha Factory*.
Tomas Tranströmer, *Half-Finished Heaven*.

Recommended Texts

John Ashbery, *Notes from the Air*.
Beatty, Paul. *Joker, Joker, Deuce*.
Andrei Codrescu. *So Recently Rent a World: New and Selected Poems: 1968 – 2012*.
Hayes, Terrance. *American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin*.
Juan Felipe Herrera. *187 Reasons Mexicanos Can't Cross the Border: Undocuments*, (paper).
Paul Hoover, ed. *Norton Anthology of Postmodern Poetry*.
Juvenal, *Sixteen Satires*. translated by Peter Green.
Victoria Chang, *Barbie Chang*.
Charles Simic. *New and Selected Poems 1962 – 2012*.
James Tate, *The Eternal Ones of the Dream: Selected Poems 1990 - 2010*.

ON-LINE RESOURCES:

Course Homepage on Canvas URL	Update to date course information, syllabus, class activities, worksheets, reading/writing assigned, instructor and student blogs, presentation notes and slides, etc. https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1263310
Academy of American Poets URL	Large resource with thousands of poems, essays, biographies, weekly features, and poems for special occasions. www.poets.org
The Poetry Foundation URL	Publisher of <i>Poetry</i> magazine, an independent literary organization committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in American culture. A large website containing thousands of poems, biographical essays, teaching ideas, blogs, and archived issues of Poetry. http://www.poetryfoundation.org/
Associated Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) URL	AWP provides community, opportunities, ideas, news, and advocacy for writers and teachers of writing. http://www.awpwriter.org
Poets & Writers Online URL	Information, support, and guidance for creative <i>writers</i> . Find <i>writing</i> contests, grants for <i>writers</i> , news, small presses, and much more. http://pw.org

Overview of Workshop Procedures

This class is conducted primarily as a writers' workshop, which requires active student participation. For the workshop, students will write (and revise), new poems (or essays) for other class members to read and discuss on the Canvas course site. The instructor will moderate the workshop discussion. All students are expected to actively participate as critics except when their own work is under discussion. In class we will also discuss poems published in works from the assigned and recommended readings lists, and on the weekly PLAYLISTS on Canvas.

The poems you post should be single-spaced, with a double space between stanzas. Out of respect for yourself and your classmates, please observe the courtesy of proofing your poems before post them. Please follow standard conventions for usage, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. If you deviate from conventional textual practice for aesthetic reasons, you must be able to defend your work to the instructor.

All poems submitted to the workshop must be your own original work (no translations), and written for this course exclusively. You may not hand in any poem you wrote for another course.

Etiquette for Student Writing Groups and Class Workshop Discussions

- When you comment on peers' work, mention what you find to be the strengths as well as offer constructive criticism of the work.
- When your poem(s) are being discussed in the class workshop, listen politely or ask permission to ask a question to clarify what a class member is explaining. Do not interrupt to defend your poem. You will have the opportunity to clarify or explain your intentions in the poem following the critical discussion. Remember, if your poem is published online or printed in a journal, you will not be present to explain the poem.
- As an author whose writing is being discussed, you will want your peers' comments to be helpful for revising your poems. Please keep this in mind when you offer your "take" on others' poems in the classroom Workshop or post comments on Canvas.
- SJSU respects students' diversity and privacy. A poetry workshop should be a safe space. What happens in the workshop is not to be discussed publically without other participants' explicit permission. Do not submit work or make (or write) comments that will intentionally cause offense or hurt to another student (or instructor). Remember, the criticism in a workshop is not personal. It is about the work, not the author.
- If such purposely offensive or hurtful work or comments are found, the instructor will first discuss it with you, then remove the poem or comment from the Canvas Workshop Discussion. If you persist in posting knowingly and purposely offensive material that is intended to disrupt the Workshop, you will receive 0 credit for work. Poets often address sensitive issues or challenge readers' sensibilities and mores in their poems. If you have written something that you think might possibly offend someone else in the class, check with the instructor before you post it. If you post potentially offensive or hurtful material, you are encouraged to include a "trigger warning." And check with the instructor before you post the work.

Seminar Presentations on Surrealism, Postmodernism, and Satiric Poetry

Each student will give two class presentations, unpacking and analyzing poems on the course syllabus required reading list or on the weekly course playlists. Presentations should be no longer than 15 minutes, designed to stimulate questions and further discussion. *One week prior to the class date, the presenters should announce which poems class members will be assigned to read and discuss in the following week's class.* Each week presenters will put additional links to the poem(s) and, if relevant, critical works they will present as postings on Canvas. Also post any of your presentation slides, handouts, notes and links to relevant supplemental critical articles used in the presentation.

Required Writing

Poetry Portfolio

By the end of the semester, you will submit a completed portfolio of at least 8 revised and completed poems, which are of publishable quality.

Blog Discussion on Canvas

Each class member is required contribute a minimum of 8 Discussion posts on Canvas—and reply to 4 Discussion Blogs--on poems read in class from the course syllabus or weekly Playlists on Canvas. The weekly Discussion Blogs will be used to extend the classroom discussion of these poems, before and after the in-person classroom meeting. Discussion posts should be about 250 – 300 words, including a certain amount of close reading/quoting from the poems assigned.

Writing Assignment/Activity, Included with Student Seminar Presentations

With each of your two poetry seminar presentations, create a poetry writing assignment that you can imagine giving to yourself to better understand the poetic techniques exhibited by the poems you discussed in your talk. (You will create two of these assignments—one with each of your presentations.)

Respond to One Student-Created Writing Assignment

Credit Hour Requirements:

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, 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 twelve hours per week preparing for and attending classes and completing course assignments. This course has integrated into the syllabus the following 1-unit enhancement:

1-Unit Credit Enhancement:

Increased course content and/or collateral readings:

Write a Series of Poems in Response to a Student-Generated Poetry Writing Assignment:

For the additional credit this course carries, you are required to write a series of at least three poems (or a poem in three parts) written in response to a student-created poetry writing assignment. With your poems, submit a short essay (minimum 1,000 words) in which you analyze the poems you've written. Describe how your poems exhibit or emulate the poems on which the assignment is based. Analyze the poetic mode, imagery, and/or structure of poems you modeled your poems on. Submit these poems in the Student-Generated Assignment page on Canvas after you've completed them.

For your analytical paper, you may include secondary sources or commentaries on the poet on whose work your poems are based.

ALTERNATIVE ASSIGNMENT: Substitute poems by a poet who read on campus or who's reading you attending off-campus during the semester. Include these poems with your poems and the essay you submit for your fourth unit of credit. (Also due Dec. 10).

Due Dates

You will turn in the poems in two sets: The instructor will provide you with critical comments and a grade-in-progress for the first set. You will also turn in notes, slides, and other materials posted for your presentations by dates specified.

- Set 1 Due: **Oct. 15** (a minimum of 4 completed poems).
- First Presentation: Notes, slides, and URL's and other materials due **Oct. 15**.
- Set 2 Due: **Dec. 3** (At least 8 completed poems, including any Set 1 revisions, and a second set of 4. Your portfolio should include at least 3 poems written in a surrealistic, postmodern, or satiric mode (or a combination of the three).
- Second Presentation: Notes, slides, and URL's and other materials due **Dec. 3**.
- Set of Poems in Response to Student-Generated Assignment: **Dec. 10**. *Submit at least three poems (or a poem in at least three sections), plus a 1,000-word essay analyzing how your poems exhibit or illustrate techniques contained in the poem (or characteristic of the poet) on which the assignment is based.*

Grades

- 60% -- Final poetry portfolio.
- 10% -- Participation in the workshop; in class and posting comments/replies on Canvas.
- 10% -- Two seminar presentations—including presentation-generated poetry writing assignment notes; presentation slides; notes; URL's; handouts, etc.
- 10% -- Blog Discussion posts.
- 10% -- Set of poems and analytical essay submitted in response to student-generated assignment.

A NOTE ON GRADES: In English Department 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 (stanzas).

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.

University policy requires Graduate Students to maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA to remain in good standing in their degree program.

In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs, stanzas, or poetic form. Grades issued will represent a full range of student performance and will adhere to the following SJSU academic standards of assessment. Academic Integrity:

"Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University's Integrity Policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Judicial Affairs."

University Policies

Academic integrity

Avoiding Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of somebody else's words or ideas and is considered an instance of academic dishonesty that instructors must report. Repeated instances of plagiarism will result in a student's expulsion from the University. You commit plagiarism by:

1. Buying, stealing, or borrowing a paper or creative work;
2. Hiring someone to write a paper or creative work;
3. Building on someone's ideas without providing a citation;
4. Or copying from another source or using a source too closely when paraphrasing.

In other words, submit only your own work. To learn how to cite sources accurately and forthrightly, consult MLA 8th edition style reference guide such as provided by the OWL from Purdue University.

More University Policies

The link below contains university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as additional information on academic integrity, accommodations, etc.

<http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

ENGL 240 Fall 2018: Course Calendar

We will conduct an on-going poetry workshop in class until the end of the semester. Poems to be workshopped should be uploaded our Canvas course Workshop Discussion We will workshop students' poems mostly in alphabetical order—except when students have been very active submitting work. Workshops will take place in the second half of each class meeting, following seminar presentations. Please upload poems as Word files (.doc format preferred) or .docx to Canvas in the appropriate week's Workshop Discussion. Students will select the poets/poems for the seminar presentations from a list provided by the instructor.

Week 1 Aug. 27:	Orientation; introduction the subject of surrealism, postmodernism and satire. Focus: Types of satire; Satires of Juvenal. Also: Eminem Bob Dylan.
Week 2 Sept. 3:	LABOR DAY HOLIDAY
Week 3 Sept. 10:	ASSIGNED READINGS: Read Juvenal, Horace, and Sulpicia poems. Also select Jonathan Swift and Lewis Carroll poems (assigned on Canvas Playlist). SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS: Types of Satire; Juvenal, Horace, Sulpicia. Also comparisons to select 18th century British poets Jonathan Swift and Lewis Carroll. POETRY WORKSHOP: (Begin alpha order workshop)
Week 4 Sept. 17:	ASSIGNED READINGS: Read selected poems by French surrealists in <i>Surrealist Poetry Anthology</i> : Aragon, Artaud, Breton, Ceasire, Char, Desnos, Eluard, van Hirtum, Mesens, Pèret, Soupault. PLAYLIST: French surrealist poems links on Canvas. SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS: Select from French surrealist poets/poems. POETRY WORKSHOP: Workshop discussion continues.
Week 5 Sept. 24:	SEMINAR READINGS: Read selected poems by Spanish surrealists in <i>Surrealist Poetry Anthology</i> : Alberti, Aleixandre, Ceruda, Foix, Hinojosa. PLAYLIST: Spanish surrealist poems links on Canvas. POETRY WORKSHOP: Workshop discussion continues.
Week 6 Oct. 1:	SEMINAR READINGS: Read selected poems by Latin American surrealists in <i>Surrealist Poetry Anthology</i> : Arenas, Moro, Neruda, Paz. Also Vallejo from Playlist. PLAYLIST: Latin American surrealist poems links on Canvas. POETRY WORKSHOP: Workshop discussion continues.
Week 7 Oct. 8	SEMINAR READINGS: Read selected poems by Northern European surrealists. Gunnar Ekelöf, Rolf Jacobsen, Tomas Transtomer (<i>Half Finished Heaven</i>). PLAYLIST: Northern European surrealist poems links on Canvas. POETRY WORKSHOP: Workshop discussion continues.
Week 8 Oct. 15:	First Set of Poems Due SEMINAR READINGS: Read selected poems by Wallace Stevens and Deep Image poets: Robert Bly, Galway Kinnell, James Wright (on Playlist).

	<p>PLAYLIST: Links to Wallace Stevens, Robert Bly, Galway Kinnell, and James Wright poems (on Canvas.)</p> <p>POETRY WORKSHOP: Workshop discussion continues.</p>
<p>Week 9 Oct. 22</p>	<p>SEMINAR READINGS: Read Eastern European-influenced surrealists: Charles Simic, Andrei Codrescu, Bill Knott, (on Playlist). Alan Soldofsky (<i>In the Buddha Factory</i>).</p> <p>PLAYLIST: Links to Charles Simic, Andre Codrescu, Bill Knott, Alan Soldofsky poems (on Canvas).</p> <p>POETRY WORKSHOP: Workshop discussion continues.</p>
<p>Week 10 Oct. 29:</p>	<p>SEMINAR READINGS: Mainstream ecopoetic surrealists: W.S. Merwin, Mary Oliver, Gerald Stern.</p> <p>PLAYLIST: Links to W.S. Merwin, Mary Oliver, Gerald Stern poems (on Canvas).</p> <p>POETRY WORKSHOP: Workshop discussion continues.</p>
<p>Week 11 Nov. 5:</p>	<p>SEMINAR READINGS: Read New York School: John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, Frank O’Hara, Ron Padgett (on Playlist).</p> <p>PLAYLIST: Links to John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, Frank O’Hara, Ron Padgett poems (on Canvas).</p> <p>POETRY WORKSHOP: Workshop discussion continues.</p>
<p>Week 12 Nov. 12:</p>	<p>VETERAN’S DAY HOLIDAY—CAMPUS CLOSED</p>
<p>Week 13 Nov. 19:</p>	<p>SEMINAR READINGS: Read select poems by Postmodern Humorists: Billy Collins, Russell Edson, Tony Hoagland (on Playlist).</p> <p>PLAYLIST: Links to Postmodern Humorists: Billy Collins, Russell Edson, Tony Hoagland.</p> <p>POETRY WORKSHOP: Workshop discussion continues.</p>
<p>Week 14 Nov. 26:</p>	<p>SEMINAR READINGS: “Tropicalization”: Read Victor Hernandez Cruz and Juan Felipe Herrera (on Playlist).</p> <p>PLAYLIST: Links to Victor Hernandez Cruz and Juan Felipe Herrera poems (on Canvas).</p>
<p>Week 15 Dec. 3:</p>	<p>Final portfolio due: (Set 2 plus revisions of any poems from Set 1).</p> <p>SEMINAR READINGS: Reading selected postmodern satires by Victoria Chang, Matthea Harvey, and James Tate (on Playlist). (Also read <i>If the Tabloids are True, What are You.</i>)</p> <p>PLAYLIST: Links to Victoria Chang, Matthea Harvey, and Victoria Chang poems (on Canvas)</p> <p>POETRY WORKSHOP: Workshop discussion continues.</p>
<p>Week 16 Dec. 10:</p>	<p>Student Assignment-Generated Poems and Short Paper Due</p> <p>Final Meeting</p> <p>SEMINAR READINGS: Read African-American satiric poems: Paul Beatty, Terrance Hayes, Ishmael Reed.</p> <p>PLAYLIST: Links to Paul Beatty, Terrance Hayes, and Ishmael Reed poems.</p> <p>POETRY WORKSHOP: Ends.</p>

POETRY READINGS SCHEDULED FALL 2019
You may write 500 word reviews for extra credit.