

**San Jose State University**  
**Department of English and Comparative Literature**  
**English 71: Introduction to Creative Writing**  
**Section 08 Spring 2019**

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<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30-2:30, and by appt.
<b>Class Days/Times:</b>	Fridays, 9:30-12:15
<b>Classroom:</b>	Clark 316
<b>GE Category:</b>	Letters C2: Letters Area of the Humanities and Arts

### **English 71 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. Also note that this course is an elective in the English major and Creative Writing minor. It is a pre-requisite for taking upper division Creative Writing workshops.

**Section 08:** This course will introduce you to how to write fiction, poetry, and non-fiction. You'll be introduced to various traditions and conventions, but also invited to question those traditions and conventions. We'll read from a wide range of authors and styles, and each week we'll use the readings to discuss an element of craft such as plot, dialogue, imagery, or enjambment. You'll also practice each element of craft by completing an exercise either in class or for homework, and material from these exercises can be used for your final workshop piece in each genre.

### **Prerequisites**

This is a writing-intensive course, so I recommend that you've completed at least English 1A, Freshman Composition.

### **Canvas and MYSJSU Messaging**

Course materials such as the grammar text, syllabus, handouts, and some assignment instructions can be found on Canvas Learning Management System course login website at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU at <http://my.sjsu.edu> to learn of any updates and assignments.

### **English 71 GE Course Goals (GELO):**

Students enrolled in Introduction to Creative Writing will learn to:

1. Decipher and understand the form and content of assigned literary works;
2. Comprehend the historical and cultural contexts of assigned literary works;

3. Recognize the accomplishments of and issues related to writing by men and women representing diverse cultural traditions;
4. 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;
5. Communicate such skills with clarity and precision;
6. Develop an appreciation of literary works as expressions of human intellect and imagination, and as representations of diverse human cultures;
7. Develop the ability to write literary works that express intellect and imagination and that represent diversity in human cultures;
8. Respond to literature through clear and effective communication in both written and oral work;
9. Read and respond to texts with both analytical acumen and personal sensibility;
10. Appreciate how literary works illuminate enduring human concerns while also representing matters specific to a particular culture;
11. 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

\*\*\*You can find these texts in the SJSU bookstore, but also on Amazon.com or other sites, where they might be cheaper.

*Magical Realist Fiction*, edited by David Young and Keith Hollaman

*The Vintage Book of Contemporary Poetry*, edited by J.D. McClatchy

All other texts will be posted on Canvas.

### Required Materials

Please have a laptop or tablet with you each class so that you can complete exercises and reading responses. A phone won't suffice—it takes too long to type on one. If you need to rent a laptop, please visit the library.

Please also purchase a stapler if you don't have one. All workshop and final submissions must be stapled before class. I won't accept unstapled submissions.

### Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, students are expected to spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally **three hours per unit per week**), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

### Grading Policy

Minor assignments such as exercises and reading responses cannot be submitted late. Major assignments such as workshop pieces will be marked down a full grade per class late.

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.

- A: Creative writing that receives an “A” is likely to:
  - Fulfill all assignment requirements
  - Demonstrate complex, unique and/or insightful approach
  - Function well as a whole
  - Demonstrate engaging voice
  - Incorporate strong word choices
  - Incorporate, where appropriate, striking imagery
  - Lack clichéd or over-used language
  - Incorporate unusual/unique associations that fit the tone of the piece
  - Lack spelling and punctuation errors, typos, etc.
- B: Creative writing that receives a “B” is likely to:
  - Fulfill the assignment requirements
  - Demonstrate insightful approach
  - Function generally well as a whole
  - Demonstrate a generally engaging voice
  - Incorporate some strong word choices
  - Use some concrete imagery
  - Mostly lack clichéd or over-used language
  - Mostly lack spelling and punctuation errors, typos, etc.
- C: Creative writing that receives a “C” is likely to:
  - Meet the assignment requirements
  - Be derivative of other works
  - Not completely function as a whole (some parts may be underdeveloped)
  - Incorporate some strong, and some weaker, word choices
  - Lack concrete imagery
  - Include clichéd or over-used language
  - Have some spelling and punctuation errors, typos, etc.
- D: Creative writing that receives a “D” is likely to:
  - Not fulfill the assignment requirements
  - Not function as a whole
  - Be a cursory response that demonstrates lack of motivation and/or poor understanding of the assignment
- F: No response.

Final grades in this section will be the product of the above factors based on a 4-pt. scale where 4=A:

Letter Grade	Grade Scale
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
C-	1.7
D+	1.3
D	1.00
F	0.0

## Course Assignments

I'll describe and discuss each assignment before it's due.

Assignment	Word Count	Course Grade	SLO
Participation and Peer Workshop Responses	~10 x 200 words per response	20%	4, 5, 7, 8, 11
Revised Fiction Piece	2,000 words	10%	1, 2, 4, 7
Revised Poetry Packet (Free Verse, Sonnet, Lineation Exercise, Reflection)	Three poems and 500-word reflection	10%	1, 2, 4, 7
Revised Non-fiction Piece (Personal Essay, Profile, or Travel Essay)	2,000 words	10%	1, 2, 4, 7
Literary Event Report	500 words	10%	1, 2, 3, 5
Exercises, Reading Responses, and Quizzes	~12 x 200-300 words each	30%	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10
Final Exam Reading	n/a	10%	1, 2, 11

## Local Literary Events

Throughout the semester, there will be a number of literary events held on campus or nearby. I'll announce these as they approach, but please check these websites. Events are normally free, or five to ten dollars.

You're responsible on attending and writing a report on one of them.

- [www.litart.org](http://www.litart.org) (Center for Literary Arts at SJSU)
- <http://www.pcsj.org/calendar.html> (Poetry Center San Jose)
- <http://www.sjsu.edu/english/events> (English Department Events listed)

## Assignment Format

- All prose should be MLA-formatted: size 12 Times New Roman font, one-inch margins, double-spaced)
- All poems should be MLA-formatted, but single-spaced
- When submitting hard copies to your workshop partners, they can double-sided. When submitting hard copies to me, however, they should be single-sided.
- All work must be stapled. I won't accept unstapled submissions.

## Course Participation

This course will thrive only if you're fully engaged. That means coming to all classes—we only have 16 sessions—on time and prepared to discuss the previous night's readings, prepared to participate in writing exercises, and prepared to discuss your peers' work. If it's a workshop day, you must bring enough copies of your submission for your partners, and have them stapled and easy to read. If you don't bring enough copies, your final submission will be marked down one full grade.

Participation also means keeping your phone out of sight, and, when you're using your laptop or tablet, focusing on the task at hand rather than surfing the internet. If I see you doing this once, I'll ask you to get back on track. If it happens again, I'll ask you to leave the class for that day, and your participation grade will drop as a result.

## **Plagiarism**

If you plagiarize, you'll fail the assignment and possibly the course.

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/>.

## **University Policies**

Per University Policy S16-9, university- wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, recording of class and public sharing of Instructor Material, religious holidays, etc., is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

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**Tyson Morgan**  
**Course Schedule**

This schedule is subject to change; please check it each week, as I'll make adjustments according to the needs and interests of the class.

*MRF* indicates the text *Magical Realist Fiction*, edited by David Young and Keith Hollaman. *ACP* indicates the text *The Vintage Book of Contemporary Poetry*, edited by J.D. McClatchy. All other stories and excerpts will be posted on Canvas. Each session, please read the day's texts prior to class, bring them with you, and also bring a laptop or tablet to complete in-class exercises.

Week and Topic	Read or Complete Prior to Class
1/25: <i>Subtext</i>	"Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid "Indian Camp" by Ernest Hemingway
2/1: <i>Sentences: Logic and Association</i>	"A Country Doctor" by Franz Kafka ( <i>MRF</i> ) "Hell-Heaven" by Jhumpa Lahiri <i>Zone</i> by Mathias Enard, excerpt
2/8: <i>Character and Point of View</i>	James Wood on Character Steven Jauss on Point of View John Gardner on Proofs "The Nose" by Nikolai Gogol ( <i>MRF</i> ) "Aurora" by Junot Diaz "My Life with the Wave" by Octavio Paz ( <i>MRF</i> ) "The Death of Chamberlain Brigge" by Rainer Maria Rilke ( <i>MRF</i> )
2/15: <i>Dialogue</i>	"What We Talk About When We Talk About Love" by Raymond Carver "Emergency" by Denis Johnson David Jauss on Dialogue
2/22: <i>Plot and Structure</i>	"New Islands" by Maria Luisa Bombal ( <i>MRF</i> ) "The Falls" by George Saunders "The Hand" by Rainer Maria Rilke ( <i>MRF</i> ) "Views of My Father Weeping" by Donald Barthelme ( <i>MRF</i> ) "A Shinagawa Monkey" by Haruki Murakami
3/1: <i>Peer Short Story Workshop</i>	Peer Stories
3/8: <i>Rhyme</i>	*** revised short story due "Her Kind" by Anne Sexton ( <i>ACP</i> ) <i>Dart</i> by Alice Oswald, excerpt
3/15: <i>Imagery</i>	"One Art" by Elizabeth Bishop ( <i>ACP</i> ) "Poem" by Elizabeth Bishop ( <i>ACP</i> ) "90 North" by Randall Jarrell ( <i>ACP</i> ) "Daddy" by Sylvia Plath
3/22: <i>Stanzas and Enjambment</i>	"Having a Coke With You" by Frank O'Hara ( <i>ACP</i> ) "Adolescence--II" by Rita Dove ( <i>ACP</i> ) "My Erotic Double" by John Ashbery ( <i>ACP</i> )
3/29: <i>The Sonnet / Rebel Sonnets</i>	"Those Winter Sundays" by Robert Hayden "Sonnet" by Billy Collins "I like to beat people up" by Ted Berrigan "November Cotton Flower" by Jean Toomer "Sonnet" by Terrance Hayes "Corydon and Alexis, Redux" by D.A. Powell
4/5: Spring Break	No Class

4/12: <i>Peer Poetry Workshop</i>	Peer Poetry Packets
4/19: <i>Truth in Memoir</i>	***final draft of poetry packet due, with reflection “Literary Hoaxes and the Ethics of Authorship” by Louis Menand “‘The Best of Times, The Worst of Times’” by Anthony Griffith “From Jamaica to Minnesota to Myself” by Marlon James <i>Youth</i> by J.M. Coetzee, excerpt
4/26: <i>Sentimentality and the Self</i>	<i>The Soccer War</i> by Ryszard Kapuściński, excerpt “King” by Dickson Lam
5/3: <i>Profiles</i>	“The Spy Who Came in From the Cold” by Ben Taub
5/10: <i>Non-fiction workshop</i>	Peer non-fiction pieces
Mon 5/20, 7:15 a.m (Final): <i>Class Reading</i>	***final draft of nonfiction piece due