

San José State University
Department of English and Comparative Literature
ENGL 130, Writing Fiction, Section 02, Spring 2020

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Jill Logan
Office Location:	Faculty Office Building 112
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Office Hours:	MW 10:30-11:30 or by appointment
Class Days/Time:	MW 12:00-1:15
Classroom:	Clark Building 111
Prerequisites:	ENGL 71 (Intro to Creative Writing) or instructor consent

What exactly is this course?

This course is a workshop in short stories and short fiction, and may include beginning novels (with my approval). We will begin the course by studying the short fiction of modern authors, taking each story apart in an effort to understand how it works. During this time you will also be working on your own fiction. The second half of the class will then be devoted to workshopping two stories from each of you, to discuss what works and what could work better in those drafts—one of which you'll revise for the end of the course.

The fiction that we'll be looking at and writing will be *character-driven* fiction that somehow seeks to *defamiliarize*. (I know, I know. "Defam-huh?" Don't worry. You'll soon be slinging this term around like it's attached to you.) So, we'll begin our class by talking about what these terms mean, what they look like in practice, and why they're so important in the wider discussion of what we mean by *literary fiction*.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

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

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

- 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 the nature of the subject.

What texts do I need?

Textbook

Doerr, Anthony, ed. *The Best American Short Stories 2019*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2019.
ISBN: 978-0393342468

What will we be required to do for this class?

- Write and workshop two new, original pieces of fiction (SLO #3)
- Write critique letters for your classmates' stories (SLO #1, #3)
- Read assigned short stories from the textbook (SLO #1)
- Complete quizzes on the assigned readings (SLO #1)
- Fully participate in In-Class Activities (SLO #3)
- Attend two literary readings of your choice, and write a response to each (SLO #1, #3)
- Complete a substantial revision of one of your stories (serves as the final exam) (SLO #3)

Two new, original pieces of fiction

You will be required to submit two new and original pieces of fiction for workshop. We will sign up for workshop slots during class. You will send me a Google Docs link to your manuscript **one week before you are scheduled to be workshopped**, and I will then email it to the rest of the class. This will give your peers time to thoroughly read and comment on your work. **All manuscripts should be 8-12 pages, titled, double-spaced, and should include page numbers.**

Critique letters

You will submit a critique letter (of at least 300 words) for each of your classmates' workshops. For each manuscript that you critique, you'll need to make comments on the manuscript itself and to submit a critique letter addressed to the author. You will post these letters to Canvas, so that the writer can access them and so that I can see and grade them. They will be graded according to the rubric on Canvas.

When critiquing a manuscript:

- Read it once without marking it, while asking yourself what the author is trying to accomplish, and how the piece might improve and become what it seeks to be. Then go back and read it again, annotating it to show what works well and what doesn't work so well.
- List the elements of the manuscript that are working well. Compliment parts that are effective or that elicit a particular emotional reaction from you.
- Question the way in which the story proceeds. What isn't quite clear? What needs more development?

Quizzes

To ensure that we're all fully engaged in the reading—and thereby in our discussions of story elements—you'll need to complete a Canvas quiz on the assigned readings before each due date. You may take each quiz two times, but understand that you won't necessarily have the same questions each time. **No late work will be accepted for quizzes.**

In-class Activities

These activities will vary from class to class, and I will give individual instructions on them during class time. Some you will turn in to me; some you will not. Because the full class period is built upon these activities, no credit will be awarded **if you are more than 5 minutes late for class. Also, no late work will be accepted for In-class Activities.**

Attend and Respond to Two Literary Readings (One-Unit Enhancement)

You are required to attend two readings by poets or prose writers presented on the SJSU campus or elsewhere. I'll post a list of possibilities on Canvas, but feel free to scour the San Jose and San Francisco papers/websites for others. You'll attend the reading and write a 1000-word response to it. Your response should include a

description of the event, a summary of what was read, and your reflection on the experience. If you anticipate any difficulty in meeting this course requirement, please consult me in the first two weeks of the semester.

Final Revision

In lieu of a final exam, you will turn in a substantial revision of one of your workshop submissions. Examples of changes that might be included in a substantial revision include adding or deleting a character, changing the point of view, inserting a new scene, and altering the ending of the story. It is not enough simply to correct the spelling and grammatical errors of the first draft. To earn a high grade on the revision, you must alter the story in some significant way.

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 three hours per unit per week) for instruction, 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.

How will I be graded?

Creative writing, though subject to the instructor's 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

Grades will be based on the quality of writing you do, as well as the quality and constructiveness of the criticism offered during the workshops.

Final grades will weighted be as follows:

- Workshop Submission #1 20%
- Workshop Submission #2 20%
- Final Revision 20%
- Critique Letters 10%
- In-Class Activities 10%
- Reading Quizzes 10%
- Response Papers for Literary Readings 10%

Determination of Grades

Grade	Percentage
A	93 to 100%
A minus	90 to 92%
B plus	87 to 89 %
B	83 to 86%
B minus	80 to 82%
C plus	77 to 79%
C	73 to 76%
C minus	70 to 72%
D plus	67 to 69%
D	63 to 66%
D minus	60 to 62%

Is late work accepted?

Any work not turned in by the assigned time/date will be lowered 10% per day up to 3 days. **I will not accept late work for Quizzes or In-Class Activities.**

What is expected of me in this class and what can I expect?

Your task as a student will be to embrace the opportunities afforded to you in this class: the exploration of new reading, the discussions with your class and me about the work at hand, the opportunity to give feedback on the works of your peers, the opportunity to receive constructive feedback on your own work, and, of course, the opportunity to take part in a thoughtful and supportive community of writers. I hope that you'll understand how truly valuable all of these opportunities are (even if it's years from now).

Because writing requires us to find the sometimes difficult and ugly truths in life, there may be times when you feel uncomfortable about something that you've read or something that you're attempting to write. Please communicate with me about these situations. The sooner I know about them, the more effective I can be in helping to find solutions to ease your discomfort.

To help foster a positive classroom community, I expect that you will treat each other and me with respect and dignity at all times, and that you will attend class regularly and give your full attention to the activities. You can expect that I will treat you as an individual, and that I will challenge you to think, experiment, probe, and create. I am happy to talk to you about any concerns or questions by email or during my office hours.

Workshop Etiquette

While we are workshopping:

- Listen to your classmates and be careful not to interrupt. It is frequently difficult to formulate responses in front of peers, and even slight interruptions can derail the thoughts of the person speaking.
- Focus your comments on the work and never on the author. It should be as if we're discussing a manuscript that arrived with no name on it.
- It is not acceptable to issue insults or to praise sarcastically. Likely, some of the work we read will not meet your exact taste. That should not prevent you from delivering a sound analysis of its strengths and weaknesses.

If your manuscript is being workshopped:

- Remain silent until the conclusion of the discussion. Do not nod or shake your head to questions raised about your piece. If we cannot determine what was intended by a particular passage, this should alert you to something that's not yet being communicated in the writing. Let this feedback guide your revision.
- Take notes. Even if what we're saying does not sound useful in the moment, later on you may read through our comments and discover one or two to be of value.

Anything else I should know?

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](http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html) 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](http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/) 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](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/) 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), <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/>.

Note: In this policy you will notice that it is considered “cheating” to submit previously graded work for a grade in another class, as well as to submit the same work simultaneously in two or more classes. **This means that you cannot submit a piece of writing for this class that you have also submitted for another class.** Any such submissions will receive a “0” and I will take the appropriate administrative actions. Please come see me if you have any questions about this policy.

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 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>.

ENGL 130 / Writing Fiction, Spring 2020, Course Schedule

Note: This schedule is subject to change. I will alert you to changes through class announcements, Canvas announcements, and/or email.

+All reading is to be done before class. Page numbers are from *The Best American Short Stories*.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	1/27	Introductions
1	1/29	Read: Karen Russell's "Black Corfu" (230-254) In-Class Activity: Discuss <i>Defamiliarization</i> with exercise
2	2/3	Read: Alexis Schaitkin's "Natural Disaster" (271-289), Mona Simpson's "Wrong Object" (310-322) Due: Quiz 1 (on Canvas) In-Class Activity: Discuss <i>Conflict</i> with exercise
2	2/5	Read: Jamel Brinkley's "No More Than a Bubble" (47-66), Maria Reva's "Letter of Apology" (215-229) Due: Quiz 2 (on Canvas) In-Class Activity: Discuss <i>Narrative Voice</i> with exercise
3	2/10	Read: Jeffrey Eugenides' "Bronze" (101-123), Deborah Eisenberg's "The Third Tower" (67-82) Due: Quiz 3 (on Canvas) In-Class Activity: Discuss <i>Structure</i> with exercise
3	2/12	Read: Weike Wang's "Omakase" (330-348), Wendell Berry's "The Great Interruption: The Story of a Famous Story of Old Port William and How It Ceased To Be Told (1935-1978)" (36-46) Due: Quiz 4 (on Canvas) In-Class Activity: Discuss <i>Point of View/Perspective</i> with exercise
4	2/17	Read: Manuel Muñoz's "Anyone Can Do It" (182-196), Sigrid Nunez's "The Plan" (197-214)

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		<p>Due: Quiz 5 (on Canvas)</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Discuss <i>Tension</i> with exercise</p>
4	2/19	<p>Read: Said Sayrafiezadeh's "Audition" (255-270), Jenn Alandy Trahan's "They Told Us Not to Say This" (323-329)</p> <p>Due: Quiz 6 (on Canvas)</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Discuss <i>Setting</i> with exercise</p>
5	2/24	<p>Read: Ursula K. LeGuin's "Pity and Shame" (154-181), Kathleen Alcott's "Natural Light" (19-35)</p> <p>Due: Quiz 7 (on Canvas)</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Discuss <i>Mystery</i> with exercise</p>
5	2/26	<p>Read: Julia Elliott's "Hellion" (83-100), Ella Martinsen Gorham's "Protozoa" (124-139)</p> <p>Due: Quiz 8 (on Canvas)</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Discuss <i>Dialogue</i> with exercise</p>
6	3/2	<p>Read: Nicole Krauss's "Seeing Ershadi" (140-153), Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah's "The Era" (1-18)</p> <p>Due: Quiz 9 (on Canvas)</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Discuss <i>Abstraction and Emotion</i> with exercise</p>
6	3/4	<p>Read: Jim Shepard's "Our Day of Grace" (290-309)</p> <p>Due: Quiz 10 (on Canvas)</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Discuss <i>Topicality</i> with exercise</p>
7	3/9	In-Class Activity: Student Workshops
7	3/11	In-Class Activity: Student Workshops
8	3/16	In-Class Activity: Student Workshops
8	3/18	In-Class Activity: Student Workshops
9	3/23	In-Class Activity: Student Workshops
9	3/25	In-Class Activity: Student Workshops

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
10	3/30	SPRING BREAK
10	4/1	SPRING BREAK
11	4/6	In-Class Activity: Student Workshops
11	4/8	In-Class Activity: Student Workshops
12	4/13	In-Class Activity: Student Workshops
12	4/15	In-Class Activity: Student Workshops
13	4/20	In-Class Activity: Student Workshops
13	4/22	In-Class Activity: Student Workshops
14	4/27	In-Class Activity: Student Workshops
14	4/29	In-Class Activity: Student Workshops
15	5/4	In-Class Activity: Student Workshops
15	5/6	In-Class Activity: Student Workshops
16	5/11	In-Class Activity: Student Workshops
Final Exam	5/19 @ 9:45 am	Due: Story revision (on Canvas)