

Fall 2021

**San José State University
Department of English and Comparative Literature
English 71, Section 2**

Course and Contact Information

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| Instructor: | Leanne Lindelof |
| Office Location: | FOB 219 |
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| Email: | Leanne.lindelof@sjsu.edu |
| Office Hours: | TBD |
| Class Days/Time: | MW 12:30 – 1:45 |
| Classroom: | SH 348 |
| GE/SJSU Studies Category: | C2 |

Course Description:

Introduction to Creative Writing is a 3-unit, lower-division course designed, adopted, implemented, and administered by the Department of English and Comparative Literature at SJSU in accordance with the university's General Education Program Guidelines to fulfill Core General Education requirements in the Letters area of Humanities and the Arts. In this course, we will read and write poetry, creative non-fiction, and fiction. The course will be taught using a combination of discussion, in-class exercises, and writing workshops. For discussions, students are expected to participate in the analysis of both form and content of written work. In-class exercises will be drawn from texts, and workshops will require students to analyze and critique the creative work of their peers. Courtesy and honest critique will be paramount to the success of workshops.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

- 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 non-fiction, and short fiction;
- Communicate such skills with clarity and precision;
- Develop an appreciation of literary works as expressions of human intellect and imagination, and as representations of diverse human cultures;
- 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;
- Conduct library research in relation to writing creative non-fiction.
- Appreciate how literary works illuminate enduring human concerns while at the same time representing their particular cultures;
- Write works of poetry, creative non-fiction, and short fiction that are of interest and value to the writer, to other students in the course, and to a diverse reading audience.

English Department Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

Student Learning Objectives:

SLO 1: Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of creative writing.

Activities:

1. Identify, alone and in class, basic elements and techniques found in poetry, creative nonfiction, and short stories.
2. Read published models of poetry, creative nonfiction, and short stories. Identify key creative elements and strategies they contain.
3. Write critical comments (both positive and constructive) on student work during workshops throughout the semester.

SLO 2: Show familiarity with major literary works (of poetry), genres (styles), periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.

Activities:

1. Complete weekly reading assignments of poetry, creative nonfiction, and short stories by prominent published authors.
2. Complete weekly short quizzes on the assigned readings from prominent authors of poetry, creative nonfiction, and short stories.

SLO 3: Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.

Activities:

1. Complete written assignments of poetry, creative nonfiction, and short stories.

2. Revise poetry, creative nonfiction, and short stories. Submit final portfolio at the end of the semester.

GE Area C2 Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

Student Learning Objectives:

SLO 1: Letters courses will enable students to recognize how significant works illuminate enduring human conditions.

SLO 2: Letters courses will enable students to respond to significant works by writing both research-based critical analyses and personal responses.

SLO 3: Letters courses will enable students to write clearly and effectively. Writing shall be assessed for correctness, clarity, and conciseness.

Required Texts and Materials:

Best American Short Stories 2020, Sittenfeld, Curtis, ed.

Light the Dark, Fasler, Joe, ed.

Course Reader -- available at Maple Press (10th and San Carlos)

Blank paper/notebook for notes

Canvas:

All students are required to regularly check the class Canvas group. Announcements and assignment reminders will be posted in Canvas, and students may exchange information, post articles, and share ideas through the system. The syllabus and a course calendar will also be available on the site.

WRITING REQUIREMENTS :

At the end of the course, students are required to turn in a manuscript consisting of the work they have completed during the semester in the three genres required.

Poetry:

You are required to turn in four poems. Your final poetry manuscript must include the following form requirements.

- Three poems should be written in unrhymed free verse.
- One poem should be written in patterned verse: a sonnet (English preferred), sestina (Italy), or villanelle (France)

Fiction:

You are required to complete two works of short fiction.

- One short-short story (i.e. flash fiction), one to three pages in length (500 - 700 words).
- One short story eight to twelve pages in length (2,000 – 2,500 words).
- The two stories should be written from different narrative points of view.

- Stories should emphasize character development as well as plot.
- There are only two content restrictions : no violence and no porn.

Creative Non-Fiction:

You are required to turn in one work of creative non-fiction, four to five pages in length (1,200 – 1,500 words).

Suggested topics include :

- A familiar essay or biography about a friend or a family member.
- A memoir based on personal experience.
- A piece of travel or nature writing

GRADES :

Grades will be based on quizzes, the quality and quantity of your writing, and the quality and constructiveness of the criticism offered during the workshops.

Creative writing, though subject to the instructor's individual 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, 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.

Final grades will be the product of the following elements:

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| • Poetry | 20% |
| • Creative Non-fiction | 20% |
| • Fiction | 20% |
| • Workshop participation and rough drafts | 20% |
| • Responses, posts, and quizzes | 20% |

TOTAL: 500 PTS

FINAL PORTFOLIO :

At the end of the term, you will turn in a physical manuscript consisting of the **revised** poetry, creative non-fiction, and fiction pieces you completed during the semester plus a list of what changes were made and why. You must also add a one-page reflection piece about the composition of each genre.

In all, the manuscript must contain four poems, one non-fiction piece, one short story + one flash fiction, a description of changes made in each genre, and the one page reflection.

Classroom Protocol

I have one rule: Be nice. This means no engaging in activities that distract other students, yourself, or the instructor. We're all in this together and we will all contribute to an inspirational classroom environment, which will foster open, enthusiastic, and uninterrupted discussions of works and ideas.

ATTENDANCE :

You must be in attendance to complete all in-class assignments, and while in class you must participate, i.e. give feedback, ask questions, add to discussion. You and your classmates will learn more from the course and enjoy the content more if everyone participates. Seriously. This will be fun.

NOTE: All books referenced in a specific week should be brought to class on both Monday and Wednesday. All quizzes and responses, unless otherwise noted on the syllabus, will take place on Wednesday during class.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

Late assignments will not be accepted without prior consent of the instructor. There are no exceptions; this is not a joke.

Also, please don't e-mail me to inquire about what transpired during class when you were absent. I really don't like that. Post any questions you have to Canvas – your peers will fill you in on what you missed, and I just might add a few comments to the discussion.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs.

COURSE SCHEDULE

English 71, Fall '21

Week 1 (8/23) Course introduction – syllabus, expectations, success
Writing creatively: what we know, what we want, what we need.

Readings for Wed:

"Light the Dark," LTD
"Leaving the Reservation of the Mind," LTD
"Follow This Voice," LTD
"Please Stop Thinking," LTD
*quiz (Wed)

Week 2 (8/30)

Readings for the week:

"The Fish," CR (Elizabeth Bishop)
"Another Elegy," CR (Jericho Brown)
*in-class response (Mon)

Topics:

Poetry
Poets
Brain science
Details in poetry and storytelling
*Poetry assigned

Week 3 (9/6)

No class on Monday 9/6: Labor Day

"9 Contemporary Poets on Craft and Inspiration," CR (excerpt)
"Dream Deferred," CR
"Mulberry Fields," CR
"Citrus Freeze," CR
"I Ask My Mother to Sing," CR
"Burning in the Rain," CR
*In-class response (Wed)

Topics: Discussion of readings
Discussion of response

Week 4 (9/13)

Readings for the week:

Two poems by Tina Cane, CR
"Citrus Freeze," CR
"Resurrection," CR
*quiz (Wed)

Sounds, Devices, Language
Discussion of readings

Week 5 (9/20) Readings for the week:

"Some Given Forms," CR (includes Wright poem)
"Sestina," CR
"The Revisionist Dream," CR
Sonnets 94, 18, and 104

Topics:

Discussion of readings
Groups assigned for sonnets
Poetry check-in: how are your poems?

Week 6 (9/27) Poetry workshop

M and W

*rough drafts DUE

Week 7 (10/4) Readings for the week:

"Nobody Asked You to Write that Novel," LTD
"No One Ever Changes," LTD
"You've Been Here Before," LTD
"Butterfly Lampshade," excerpt in Fiction Module
*quiz (Wed)

Topics:

Intro to Fiction
ROB revisited
Discussion of readings
*Fiction assigned
*Poetry DUE

Week 8 (10/11) Readings for the week:

"Sir Arthur Jennings," (excerpt) CR
Introduction (Best American Short Stories)
"Godmother Tea," BASS
"Sibling Rivalry," BASS
*response in-class (Wed)

Topics:

Storytelling, Ryan Gattis
Elements of story
Discussion of readings

Week 9 (10/18) Readings for the week:

"A Faithful but Melancholy Account of Several Barbarities Lately Committed," BASS
"Halloween," BASS
"Last Meal at Whole Foods," CR
"The Nanny," BASS
*quiz (Wed)

Topics:

Setting
Details
Discussion of readings

Week 10 (10/25) Readings for the week:

"Halloween," CR
"The Mirror," CR
"Add That to the List of Things that You Are," Fiction Module
Assorted Stories, opening lines, BASS
*quiz (Wed)

Flash fiction
Opening lines
Discussion of readings

Week 11 (11/1) Fiction workshop both days
*rough drafts DUE**Week 12 (11/8) Readings for the week:**

"From Jamaica to Minnesota to Myself," CR
"Vision," CR
*quiz on Monday

Topics:

Intro to non-fiction
Discussion of readings
*Fiction DUE 11/8
*Non-fiction assigned

Week 13 (11/15) Readings for the week:

"When the Walls Speak" CR
"Mighty Mike McGee," CR
"Enthralled by Sicily Again," CR
*quiz (Wed)

Topics:

Biography
Travel Writing
Discussion of readings

Week 14 (11/22) Non-fiction workshop (first draft DUE)**NO CLASS 11/24 -- THANKSGIVING****Week 15 (11/29)**

Topics: Non-fiction check-in and Non-fiction workshop (second draft DUE on Wed)

Week 16 (12/6)

Readings for the week:

n/a 😊

Reflection piece

Post-diagnostic

*prep in-class

FINAL EXAM (READING)

12/14, 12:15 – 2:30

***PORTFOLIOS DUE**

*Note: assignments, but not due dates, are subject to change