

Fic Writ Workshop Section 01

ENGL 241

Fall 2022 Section 01 4 Unit(s) 08/19/2022 to 12/06/2022 Modified 08/23/2022

Contact Information

Instructor: Professor Jessica Hollander

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Office Hours

Mon 9:30-10:30 am (online), Wed 3:00-4:00 pm (in office), or by appointment

Class Days/Time: W 4:00-6:45

Classroom: CLARK 225A

Course Description and Requisites

Fiction writing as preparation for thesis. Study of canonical and contemporary fiction and fiction produced by students. Intensive workshop experience. May be repeatable for credit for up to 12 units.

Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

Collaboration and Active Participation

This classroom will operate as a collaborative, communal space that opens up several pathways to learning: teacher to student, student to student, and student to teacher. As such, the course requires extensive contribution to large group discussion, small group work, evaluation of peer writing, and collaborative activities. This means all students are responsible for contributing verbally to both their own learning experience and the learning experience of others. As you will see below, a portion of the course grade is based on activities requiring active participation and collaboration with your peers.

Attendance Policy

Because of the collaborative, discussion-based nature of the course, attendance is essential for quality learning to take place, and students must attend class every day that they are well and illness-free. However, a silver lining of the pandemic is that we are all savvier with online learning, and my intention is to continue to use those tools going forward in the interest of keeping everyone as healthy as possible all semester. Students should stay home from class when they have cold or fever-like symptoms, especially a cough, temperature above 100, or a COVID-related symptom (loss of taste/smell, extreme exhaustion, etc.) or when they have been directly exposed to COVID. Students who have known exposure to COVID and/or symptoms of any contagious illness must contact me

prior to the class period they will miss. To receive credit for the missed day, students must still submit all workshop feedback due for the day as well as write 300-400-words in response to the day's readings and class concepts (students who attend class will complete a much briefer reading response). If students are well enough to participate in class activities, we may Zoom them into the class.

All materials must be submitted by class time of the class period you will miss. For students who are very ill, due dates may be further extended with approval by the professor. Students who must miss two or more class periods in a row due to illness may email the professor a doctor's note or positive test result to avoid penalty.

If the professor has symptoms of illness, we may conduct class online synchronously or asynchronously until I can resume class in good health. I will inform you of any time we must miss class through Canvas email.

Missing class for reasons other than illness will impact in-class participation and reading reflection grades. If students must miss class for **extreme circumstances** other than illness, you must let me know ahead of time and we may make private arrangements according to the situation. Please note that I will penalize for **excessive tardiness** by subtracting points from in-class participation and/or reading response grades as well.

Policy for Late Work:

- Late assignments will be penalized by a full letter grade for each 24 hours they are late.
- However, if students cannot submit assignments on time due to legitimate circumstances beyond their control (i.e., things that do not involve a choice, like serious illness, medical emergency, or family funeral), they may schedule alternative arrangements with me in advance. **Particular flexibility will be provided this semester to any student dealing with a COVID-related illness or emergency.**
- Assignments late due to any other reason (things that involve choice or were known in advance, like voluntary or athletic travel, club activities, etc.) will be penalized.

Classroom Conduct

Since the contribution of ideas from each student is critical to the learning process, any behavior that makes other students or me uncomfortable in our learning environment will not be tolerated. This includes interrupting others while they are talking, carrying on conversations separate from class discussion, or making comments that could be perceived as offensive in terms of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, nationality, disability, etc. Disruptive behavior also includes cell phone, text-messaging, or other electronic device use that is not directly essential to the class, reading the newspaper or other non-class related materials, physical abuse, verbal abuse, threats, stalking, hazing, possession of controlled substances, and possession of alcoholic beverages. Please make every effort to maintain an atmosphere where everyone is comfortable sharing and responding to ideas. Students who engage in behavior that is disruptive or obstructive to the teaching/learning environment will be penalized and subject to disciplinary sanctions.

A Note about Technology: Please turn your ringer off, do not check or send text messages, and don't use a laptop for anything other than essentials for this class. Even if done discreetly, the use of media devices is nearly always apparent and distracting to a teacher and to your fellow students, and this hurts the focused learning environment of the classroom. I will not necessarily interrupt class to ask you to put your device away; this does not mean I do not see you. If you are using these devices for anything other than class-related activities, your participation grade will be **significantly** lowered, even if you are a good participator otherwise. Please email me if you notice student(s) using their technology in an inappropriate manner. This is necessary if we are to continue to use our computers for class and workshoping purposes, as I cannot always see what is going on across the classroom and we want to keep a positive, respectful, and fully-engaged learning and workshop community. Your feedback will remain anonymous.

Plagiarism/Academic Misconduct Policy

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Adherence to ethical standards is obligatory; members of the college community are expected to be honest and forthright in their undertakings. To falsify the results of one's work, to present the words, ideas, data, or work of another as one's own, or to cheat on an examination, is a serious offense. If it is proven that a student, in any course in which he or she is enrolled, has knowingly committed such a violation, suspension from the course and a failing grade in the course may result. Due process is accorded to students in the event of any alleged violation of college regulations. Academic Misconduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Cheating – using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, study aides, or computer-related information.
2. Plagiarism – representing words, data, works, ideas, computer programs, etc. as one's own when they are not.
3. Fabrication – presenting as genuine any invented or falsified citation or material.
4. Misrepresentation – falsifying, altering, or misstating the contents of documents or other materials related to academic matters, including schedules, prerequisites, and transcripts.
5. Recycling – turning in your own work written at a previous time for other schools or for other classes. Your work should be original and written for this course alone.*

***Note: you must write original work for this class. You may not submit material you have written at a previous time. I recommend writing stories for this course, as receiving feedback on completed projects is generally more useful for your long-term development as a writer. However, if you have a "novel-in-progress" you would like to work on, you must write and submit new pages for it. You can provide a brief summary of what you have already written as needed.**

Program Information

The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi: 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. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the 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.

Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a +(plus) or -(minus) grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

Program Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the MFA in Creative Writing, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a high level of ability to propose and complete a publishable, full-length work of literature in a primary genre concentration (fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, or scriptwriting).
2. Demonstrate high level of proficiency to write works of literature in a secondary genre concentration (fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, or scriptwriting).
3. Demonstrate an appropriate level of knowledge of literary history, literary theory, and craft and theory of creative writing.
4. Demonstrate critical and analytical skills in the evaluation and interpretation of literary texts.
5. Demonstrate a command of written academic English, including the abilities to:
 - a) organize and present material in a cogent fashion;
 - b) formulate and defend original arguments;
 - c) employ effectively the language of their discipline;
 - d) write under time constraints.

Department Information:

Department Name: English and Comparative Literature

Department Office: FO 102

Department Website: www.sjsu.edu/english (<https://www.sjsu.edu/english>)

Department email: english@sjsu.edu (<mailto:english@sjsu.edu>)

Department phone number: 408-924-4425

Course Goals

Course Description:

This course is devoted to establishing a strong creative community, where we develop a safe space to submit our own writing, give helpful feedback to each other, and enter into conversations about craft and the writing process. Each student will submit three fiction manuscripts, two self-contained stories or chapters of 10-20 double-spaced pages and one fiction "short" of 3-5 double-spaced pages. Every other week students will provide detailed feedback to their classmates' writing, including close analysis of particular assigned literary strategies. Other weeks, students will stretch themselves with course readings and exercises that engage them with diverse fiction techniques, experimenting with time and structure, image and motif, viewpoint, and style and language. We will read works by authors such as Katherine Vaz, Kelly Link, Donald Barthelme, George Saunders, Claire Vaye Watkins, and Ramond Queneau. As we carefully track and dissect writers' artistic choices, we will learn to articulate how the use of techniques shape theme and meaning and apply what we learn to our own writing.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Objectives:

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify effects of various narrative strategies in diverse works of fiction and show an awareness of contemporary interests and trends
- Demonstrate stamina and consistency in their fiction writing with masterful use of literary strategies and thematic complexity
- Effectively analyze peer writing and recommend revisions with consideration to peers' aesthetic interests
- Summarize and respond to constructive feedback they receive on their writing and define their own writing aesthetic
- Learn to live as a writer, continually drafting, submitting, and revising
- Reflect on their experience and growth
- Apply a broad understanding of diverse aesthetics, processes, and philosophies in reading and writing contemporary fiction

Course Materials

Required Texts:

1. Various readings posted on Canvas (see calendar for details)

Course Requirements and Assignments

Grades will be determined by:

1. **In-Class Participation:** 10%
2. **Reading Reflections:** 15%
3. **Writing Exercises:** 15%
4. **Manuscript Submissions (3):** 25%
5. **Workshop Tracked Strategies and Feedback:** 30%
6. **Final Reflection:** 5%

In-Class Participation: 10%

- 50 points for active attendance (student is prepared for class, has all readings and assignments printed, is alert during large group discussions, participates in group work, in-class exercises, and workshops, and is not disruptive, texting, or engaged with other non-class-related materials)
- 50 points for contribution to full-class discussions (student offers productive insight to readings and other materials when discussed with instructor and full class, is a vocal and considerate participant in formal workshop, shares in-class exercises, and consistently contributes verbally to the dynamic learning experience of the whole class)

Students must come to class on time having read all assigned reading and with all materials in hand, including copies (hard copy or electronic) of every reading, as we will often perform close-readings of texts. **Keep in mind that this class is based in discussion, not lecture.** Students are expected to contribute substantially to class discussions and group work, participate in workshops, and offer respectful verbal feedback to fellow students. To a teacher, it is apparent who contributes regularly and productively and who rarely comes prepared or speaks all semester. To receive full points, be sure to register on my radar as a consistent contributor to large class discussions as well as to group work. Students should also be prepared for in-class quizzes, reflections, and activities based around readings. **You must be in class to receive credit for any quizzes, activities, and in-class writing we do each day; if you are ill, contact me and you may complete an alternative assignment as outlined in the attendance policy.**

Reading Reflections: 15%

Reading reflections will be completed at the beginning of most classes to ensure students are completing the assigned reading and analyzing the content. **Students must be in class and on time to take reading quizzes and must have a printed or electronic copy of each reading the day it is due.**

Writing Exercises: 15%

Students will try out concepts introduced during our technique weeks by bringing in 1-2 double-spaced pages of writing the following week to share with their classmates. **Students must be in class on time with a printed or electronic copy to share their exercises and receive full credit.**

Manuscript Submissions: 25%

Students will submit three fiction manuscripts, two self-contained stories or chapters of 10-20 double-spaced pages each throughout the semester and one fiction “short” of 3-5 double-spaced pages at the end of the semester. This writing must be **new fiction writing**, not revisions or writing completed at a previous time. Though writing will not be graded on content or aesthetic choices, and may range from traditional to experimental, students must strive to write purposeful literary fiction, with thematic complexity and round characters, and utilizing several literary strategies in contribution to a unified purpose. Manuscripts should be clean and clear of grammatical errors. Students will be marked down for unprofessionalism as well as for not meeting the page requirement (or trying to fudge page requirement with a different style/size font). Manuscript submissions must be posted by class time (4:00 pm PT) prior to students’ workshop weeks.

Tracked Strategies and Comments during Workshops: 30%

During formal workshop weeks, students will give comments throughout each other’s manuscripts and provide each student writer with **400-500 words** of typed feedback, becoming a “specialist” on particular assigned literary strategies and including aspects about the writing that you admire as well as suggestions that are respectful to what you believe to be the writer’s vision and interests. To receive full points, you must also be present in class on workshop days and participate in the general discussion of student work. On the Canvas discussion board designated for each writer, each student will begin a new discussion thread, post their feedback, and upload the marked-up manuscript.

Final Reflection: 5%

At the end of the semester, students will write a 3-5 double-space page reflection on the writing they completed and the feedback they received during the semester. Due during Final Exam week on **Thursday at midnight CST**.

***A note on upsetting themes:** Some students have strong negative reactions to themes that are overtly sexual, violent, or incendiary in other ways. Creative works submitted for review that explore themes in ways that could be upsetting should be marked with a “trigger warning.”

✓ Grading Information

Final Grades

Final numeric grades will be converted to letter grades like this: 100-98=A+; 97-93=A; 92-90=A-; 89-88=B+; 87-83=B; 82-80=B-; 79-78=C+; 77-73=C; 72-70=C-; 69-68=D+; 67-63=D; 62-60=D-; 59 and below=F. I strictly adhere to the standard grade roundup: if you have a .5 or above a .5, it goes up; if you have below a .5, it goes down. So if you have a 89.5, you will receive an A- for the class. If you have a 89.4, you receive a B+.

🏛️ University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

📅 Course Schedule

When	Topic	Notes
Week One	Elements of Scene and Summary	<p>Reading:</p> <p>Assignments:</p> <p>In Class: Syllabus</p> <p>Introductions</p> <p>Stamina and Drafting Strategies</p> <p>Why Literature?</p> <p>Story and the Unified Effect</p> <p>Close Reading Practice (Link, Adjei-Brenyah, Millet, etc.)</p> <p>Contemporary Trends</p> <p>Narrative Strategies within Narrative Modes</p> <p>Workshop Instructions</p> <p>Workshop Sign up</p>

When	Topic	Notes
Week Two	Image and Atmosphere	<p>Readings: Kelly Link, Stone Animals (<i>Canvas</i>)</p> <hr/> <p>Assignments: First Workshop Stories (4 due) Choose one writing exercise from last week and write 1-2 double-spaced pages</p> <hr/> <p>In Class: Impact of Imagery Meaningful Description Setting with Purpose Activating Objects Layering and Sustaining Motifs Tracking Strategy Assignments</p>
Week Three	Workshop	<p>Assignments: Track Strategies for Workshop Submissions Choose one writing exercise from last week and write 1-2 double-spaced pages</p> <hr/> <p>In Class: Workshop 4 manuscripts Workshop Guidelines</p>
Week Four	Time and Structure	<p>Reading: Katherine Vaz, What the Conch Shell Sings (<i>Canvas</i>) Finned, Johanna Stiefler Johnson (<i>Canvas</i>)</p> <hr/> <p>Assignments: Workshop Stories (4 due)</p> <hr/> <p>In Class: Time in Fiction Chronological Alternatives Modular Stories Three Obsessions Discuss Stories</p>

When	Topic	Notes
Week Five	Workshop	<p>Assignment:</p> <p>Track Strategies for Workshop Submissions</p> <p>Choose one writing exercise from last week and write 1-2 double-spaced pages</p> <p>In Class:</p> <p>Workshop 4 manuscripts</p>
Week Six	Plot and Surprise	<p>Reading:</p> <p>Donald Barthelme, <i>The School</i> (<i>Canvas</i>)</p> <p>George Saunders, <i>The Perfect Gerbil</i> (<i>Canvas</i>)</p> <hr/> <p>Assignment:</p> <p>Workshop Stories (4 due)</p> <hr/> <p>In Class:</p> <p>Tension and Surprise</p> <p>Bender on Goodnight Moon</p>
Week Seven	Workshop	<p>Assignment:</p> <p>Track Strategies for Workshop Submissions</p> <p>Choose one writing exercise from last week and write 1-2 double-spaced pages</p> <p>In Class:</p> <p>Workshop 4 manuscripts</p> <p>Share writing exercises</p>
Week Eight	Viewpoint	<p>Reading: Russel Banks, Sarah Cole: <i>A Type of Love Story</i> (<i>Canvas</i>)</p> <hr/> <p>Assignment:</p> <p>Workshop Stories (4 due)</p> <hr/> <p>In Class:</p> <p>Contemporary POVs</p> <p>Psychic Distance</p> <p>Metafiction</p>

When	Topic	Notes
Week Nine	Workshop	<p>Assignment:</p> <p>Track Strategies for Workshop Submissions</p> <p>Choose one writing exercise from last week and write 1-2 double-spaced pages</p> <p>In class:</p> <p>Workshop 4 manuscripts</p> <p>Share writing exercises</p>
Week Ten	Viewpoint	<p>Reading:</p> <p>Claire Vaye Watkins, Ghosts, Cowboys (<i>Canvas</i>)</p> <p>Assignment:</p> <p>Workshop Stories (4 due)</p> <p>In Class:</p> <p>Multiple Viewpoints</p> <p>Blurring Fiction and Reality</p>
Week Eleven	Workshop	<p>Assignment:</p> <p>Track Strategies for Workshop Submissions</p> <p>Choose one writing exercise from last week and write 1-2 double-spaced pages</p> <p>In Class:</p> <p>Workshop 4 manuscripts</p> <p>Share writing exercises</p>
Week Twelve	Voice, Language, Style	<p>Reading:</p> <p>Raymond Queneau, Excerpts from <i>Exercises in Style</i> (<i>Canvas</i>)</p> <p>Lorrie Moore, "Strings too Short to Use" (<i>Canvas</i>)</p> <p>Assignment:</p> <p>Workshop Stories (4 due)</p> <p>In Class:</p> <p>Flash Fiction (shorts) Directions</p> <p>Variations in Language</p> <p>Language Strategies</p> <p>Language Examples</p> <p>Experiments in Style</p>
Week Thirteen	No Class - Thanksgiving Break	

When	Topic	Notes
Week Fourteen		<p>Assignment:</p> <p>Responses to Shorts</p> <p>Half of class: fiction shorts due</p> <p>In class:</p> <p>Workshop shorts</p> <p>Reflection Instructions</p>
Week Fifteen	NO CLASS – STUDY/ CONFERENCE DAY	
Final Exam		<p>Assignments:</p> <p>Responses to Shorts</p> <p>*Reflection Due*</p> <p>In Class:</p> <p>Workshop shorts</p>