

ENGLISH 71 Creative Writing
Dr. Regina Arnold
SUMMER 2022
ONLINE MODALITY

Professor Arnold: regina.arnold@sjsu.edu

TIME: M/W 9 AM – 1 PM

ZOOM ACCESS:

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will examine works of poetry, creative nonfiction and short fiction as expression of human intellect and imagination. Students will also write their own poetry, creative nonfiction, and a short fiction. This is a 3-unit lower-division course designed and administered by the Department of English & Comparative Literature at San José State University in accordance with the University's General Education Program Guidelines to fulfill Core General Education requirements in the "C2" Letters area of Humanities & the Arts.

This course will focus on the three major genres of creative writing, fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry. In addition to exploring how those genres are put together, we will ask ourselves what makes reading them, and writing them, important and necessary to understanding the world around us. In addition to reading and analyzing major works in all three genres, students will create new works of their own. Class will consist of a mixture of discussion of published works, writing exercises, and writing workshop-style discussion of student work.

Prerequisites: Completion of English 1A or equivalent.

Department Student Learning Objectives (SLOs):

Learning Outcomes and Course Goals

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

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

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

English 71 GE Course Goals (GELOs): Core General Education requirements in the Letters area of Humanities & the Arts

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 the ability to write literary works that express intellect and imagination and

that represent diversity in human cultures

7. Respond to literature through clear and effective communication in both written and oral work

8. Read and respond to texts with both analytical acumen and personal sensibility;

9. Appreciate how literary works illuminate enduring human concerns while also representing matters specific to a particular culture

10. 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.

Course Design

Classes are four hours long and will be divided into two sessions with a brief break each hour. Each session will consist of a discussion of one reading and a writing exercise or workshop. Each student will be responsible for leading a single discussion, sign ups for that session will be handed out in the first class.

Texts

All readings will be available on Canvas.

--Toni Morrison, "Recitatif."

--Sherman Alexie, "What You Pawn, I Will Redeem."

--Michelle Zauner, "Crying In H-Mart."

--Hanif Abdurraqib,

--Jennifer Egan, "Black Box."

--Vanessa Hua, "The Accepted."

--Myriam Gurba, "Pendejo, You Ain't Steinbeck."

--Lauren Hough, "I Was a Cable Guy."

-- Patricia Lockwood, "Rape Joke"

--more TBA

Assignments

1. Nonfiction narrative (memoir, review, or other)
2. Short story (fiction)
3. Poetry/spoken word (video)
4. Workshop assessments of 3 classmates
5. Presentation
6. Short in-class writing assignments

Grades

Grades will be based on 3 measures: full completion of assignments, full class participation, and good course citizenship. To receive an A grade, students must turn in all assignments including in-class exercises, give a single presentation on one of the readings, and exhibit good citizenship, especially in the area of workshop participation, i.e. peer review and commentary. A B grade will indicate that the student has missed one or more of these milestones. A C grade will indicate that the student has not fully participated in class, in workshoping, and/or has missed turning in a major assignment. A D grade indicates that a student has not fulfilled many of these assignments. An F is reserved for a student whose attendance and participation is deficient to fulfill learning goals.

Note: *writing is a creative endeavor that is subjective, personal, and often difficult to accomplish. Therefore, your efforts in creative writing will not be judged by me in a hierarchical manner but will be fully assessed via written feedback. The goal is completion, not perfection.*

WORKSHOP RULES

Workshopping is an important part of any writing practice. It consists of giving and receiving constructive feedback on unfinished (or even finished) work. In this class, you will be giving feedback to no more than four of your classmates on any given assignment. This means you will read their work and provide one (or more) pages of written thoughts, which will be turned into both me (the instructor) and the writer. This feedback should include a brief summary of what you believe to be the overall purpose, message, and stakes of the text, as well as *specific* ways in which you think it could be improved. For example, you might suggest clarifying something that's confusing to you, adding or subtracting something, or going in a different direction. You may also wish to add praise, i.e. mention what you think reads especially well, or portions that you believe were moving, successful, or otherwise excellent. You may also wish to give light proofreading help – if you see a typo or spelling error, for example.

What you will NOT give is harsh criticism. This is not the *New Yorker*. Please address your fellow students as you yourself wish to be treated. If a student receives feedback that they feel is neither constructive nor civil, please report it to me.

ENGLISH 71 SCHEDULE:

Week 1

W/June 1: Introductions/Course design/fairy tale princess (Imbach)

Instagram Exercise

HW: Thompson, Didion, Orwell

finish/turn in Instagram assignment.

Week 2

M/June 6: New Journalism: the fiction of nonfiction.

Lecture: Tom Wolfe and the Sound Barrier,
presentations; Thompson, Didion

Space X exercise

HW: Hough, Zauner, Coulter,

finish, turn in new journalism assignment

W/June 8: Me-search, memoir, and me. Lecture

Presentations, Hough, Zauner, Coulter

Food exercise

HW: finish, turn in memoir reflection

Read: Tolentino, Talese

Week 3

M/June 13: WORKSHOPPING DAY. DUE: NONFICTION DRAFT 1

Presentations: Tolentino, Talese

HW: Gurba, Abdurraqib, Wilson

W/June 15: Reviews

Presentations: Gurba, Abdurraqib, Wilson

Music Podcast, breakup songs

HW: Lockwood, Gorman, memorize one poem to read to class

M/June 20th: Poetry DUE: NONFICTION DRAFT 2, Review or interview

Presentations, Lockwood, Gorman

Discussion with Poetry MFA students

HW: Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Alexie

W/June 22nd: Fiction 1

Presentations: Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Alexie,

HW: Morrison, Egan, Roupenian, Hua

Week 4

M/June 27: Fiction 2 DUE: POETRY

Presentations: Morrison, Egan, Roupenian, Hua

Workshopping

June 29: Presentations

FINAL DRAFTS DUE: July 1