

Steinbeck Section 01

ENGL 167

Spring 2023 4 Unit(s) 01/25/2023 to 05/15/2023 Modified 01/24/2023

Contact Information

Instructor(s):	Daniel Lanza Rivers
Office Location:	Clark 420C
Email:	Daniel.rivers@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Mon 4-5PM and by appointment via Zoom
Class Days/Time:	Mon/Wed 1:30-2:45
Classroom:	King 590, SJSU Steinbeck Center (5 th Floor of the Library)

Course Description and Requisites

Major works of John Steinbeck. Use of Steinbeck Center for research.

Prerequisite: Upper division standing.

Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

Late Work & Makeup Work:

Every student is allowed one two-day extension once per semester on written work, but the student must give 24 hours' notice that they are using their extension. All late work (including late makeup work) will have its final grade reduced by 10% for each day it is late. No assignments will be accepted more than a week out from their adjusted due date.

E-Mail Communication:

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (known as FERPA) requires careful protection of your rights and academic record. To protect your right to privacy, all of our communication will happen using our SJSU email accounts. Please be sure to check your SJSU email account regularly for updates about readings and changes to the course schedule.

Library Liaison:

Our library liaison is Peggy Cabrera. She can assist you with any research or library-related questions you may have. Her e-mail address is Peggy.Cabrera@sjsu.edu and her campus phone number is 408-808-2034.

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 (PLO)

Upon successful completion of an undergraduate degree program in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will be able to:

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.
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.
4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, including structures of power.

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

John Steinbeck is one of the most widely-read U.S. authors, whose works have been a regular part of K-12 education for decades. Most readers form their opinions about the author around a very limited reading of his oeuvre (particularly with *Of Mice and Men*). While engaging with the author's mainstream persona and popular works, this section of ENGL 167 will explore the *other* Steinbeck: the author who wrote a climate novel in his 20s; whose novella about Nazi occupation was circulated among European freedom fighters; and who published a travelogue about visiting communist Russia in the 1950s. Along with reading some of Steinbeck's neglected texts, we'll analyze elements of his life and writing that are complicated, overlooked, controversial and ignored. Students in this class will also attend the International Steinbeck Studies conference hosted at SJSU in March. Throughout this semester, we'll discuss Steinbeck's relevance to contemporary considerations of climate change, colonialism, immigration, race, gender and sexuality, and worker's rights.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

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.
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.
4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, including structures of power.

Course Materials

William Souder, *Mad at the World: a life of John Steinbeck*, ISBN: 9780393868326

John Steinbeck, *To a God Unknown*, ISBN: 9780140187519

_____, *In Dubious Battle*, ISBN: 9780143039631

_____, *The Harvest Gypsies*, ISBN: 9781890771614

_____, *The Grapes of Wrath*, ISBN: 9780143039433

_____, *The Moon is Down*, ISBN: 9780140187465

_____, *A Russian Journal*, ISBN: 9780141180199

_____, *The Winter of Our Discontent*, ISBN: 9780143039488

_____, *Travels with Charley*, ISBN: 9780140053203

Course Requirements and Assignments

Classroom Participation (15%):

This score includes in-class participation activities, breakout discussions, media activities, and archival encounters. All students are expected to participate in classroom discussions in a curious manner that is respectful of others. Participation activities cannot be made up in the case of absence, but end-of-term participation grades will be lowered to reflect two penalty-free days of missing discussion.

In-Class Reading Responses (15%)

In-Class Response times will generally last ten minutes, and will occur promptly at the start of class. These informal reading responses will ask you to develop and/or reflect on a question related to the day's reading. Some of these assignments will be reflective, while others will ask you to respond to questions about the book, and develop material to share in small-group discussion.

Canvas Reading Responses (30%):

Each week, you will be asked to submit a brief reflection and analysis paper that discusses key elements, themes, and/or insights from the week's readings. Your finished Canvas post should be 1.5-3 double-spaced pages in length, and should demonstrate the following: a) that you completed the assigned reading in its entirety, b) that you have taken sufficient notes that you can identify and analyze key passages, symbols or metaphors, and elements of context that shape the book under discussion, and c) that you can reflect on connections between this reading and your developing understanding of Steinbeck as an author and a public figure.

1) Please spend 1.5-3 pages answering the following cluster of questions:

- What do you make of Steinbeck's representation of the world in this text? How does he engage and represent the cultural, historical, economic, environmental, racial, gendered, and/or political context of the story he is telling?
- What stands out to you about the novel at the level of craft? What particular narrative elements, characterizations, themes, conflicts, or passages helps use analyze and interpret the text in a deeper way?
- How reading does this text help you understand Steinbeck's development as an author, thinker, and public figure?

Please note: Every student can skip one reading response a semester without penalty. Any student who doesn't skip a response will have their lowest response score dropped.

Classroom Facilitation (15%):

Each student will sign up to lead class discussion for one day of the term. Students will select their date at the beginning of the term, and they will be in charge of developing a brief presentation on the text (and its contexts) on the given class day. Along with identifying key passages and/or questions about the text, the student can bring in media, current events, author biography, discussion activities, and/or environmental or cultural contexts that enrich class discussions of this text. The presentation material should be between 5-10 minutes (including media), and students should submit a short overview of their presentation at least 24 hours before the class they are scheduled to facilitate.

When you are facilitating, I will ask you to extend your Canvas Post by 1 page and respond to the following prompt:

Please identify the broader argument or significant insight that arises across your supplemental reading for this week, and select 2-3 quotes that capture this argument and its nuances. Then spend a long paragraph analyzing your quote and discussing how the author develops their argument. Are there particular archives, theories, quotes from other scholars, or pieces evidence they use to support and expand their thinking? How does this text help us better understand Steinbeck's work, its contexts, and its legacy?

These posts will be due by 12:00PM (before class) on the day that the corresponding reading is scheduled for discussion

Class Gallery Project: Steinbeck, Agriculture, and the US (10%)

This project asks you to work with team members to make a display for the International Steinbeck Conference that addresses a motif, biographical connection, interpretative insight, and/or cultural or environmental context from one or more texts from unit one. As a group, your team will develop a visual representation of your topic to be printed and displayed at the International Steinbeck Conference from March 22-24. This visual representation will be accompanied by a 350-400 word artist statement from your team that unpacks the motivations, choices, research insights, and textual connections that go into your installation. More information will be available on Canvas in late-February.

Final Project: Steinbeck Today, Steinbeck Tomorrow (15%)

This final project for this course asks you to undertake a critical, creative, or archival engagement with Steinbeck's work. You will develop your project across the final unit of the course, and submit a proposal and research summary along the way. Your final project can take the form of a) traditional interpretive analysis paper or b) a creative project.

If you pursue an analysis paper, your work should significantly incorporate at least 2 texts from the course (including at least 1 creative and 2 contextual or analytical texts. These supplementary texts can range in type, but should include at least 1 research-based source from a peer-reviewed journal, a research organization, or a book published by a University Press. You should also consider consulting the Steinbeck Center archive, and making an appointment with Peter Van Coutren, the Center's archivist. Archival projects are encouraged to work in a more reflective, and less argumentative mode, that incorporates your own perspective as a student of Steinbeck's life and works.

The second option is a creative project. This project can take the form of a piece of creative writing, a digital humanities project (such as a StoryMap, a website, or podcast), visual art installation, a comic book, a lesson plan, or some other mode of creative engagement. All projects will need to be proposed beforehand to gain instructor feedback and approval. (Please note: paper

collages will not be approved unless the student can demonstrate a substantial engagement with the genre and its contexts.). Finished creative projects should be accompanied by a 300-500 word artist’s statement that illustrates connections among the project and its research material, as well as some process-reflections on the work of developing and revising/refining the creative project. Though the creative production will comprise the majority of this project, the artist’s statement should incorporate at least 1 class text and at least 2 pieces of contextual research the shape your engagement with Steinbeck’s work, its contexts, and its legacy.

Students pursuing either option will be required to submit a research summary and project outline on Week 14. More details on this project will be distributed during the semester

✓ Grading Information

Grading Breakdown:

Category	Percentage of Total Grade
Classroom Participation	15%
In-Class Responses	15%
Canvas Reading Responses	30%
Classroom Facilitation	15%
Gallery Project	10%
Steinbeck Today, Steinbeck Tomorrow Project	15%

Class Department Grading Standards:

- Seminar 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 differential grading scale defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System") is as follows: Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure.
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In written assignments, this scale is based on the following criteria:

A plus = 97 to 100 percent

A = 93 to 96 percent

A minus = 90 to 92 percent

B plus = 87 to 89 percent

B = 83 to 86 percent

B minus = 80 to 82 percent

C plus = 77 to 79 percent

C = 73 to 76 percent

C minus = 70 to 72 percent

D plus = 67 to 69 percent

D = 63 to 66 percent

D minus = 60 to 62 percent

- A = Excellent: The "A" essay is articulate and well developed with fluid transitions and a clear and persuasive use of evidence, which is drawn from the literary text itself, lecture materials (when appropriate), and research materials. An "A" essay contains a fresh insight that teaches the reader something new about the subject matter.
- B = Above average: The "B" essay demonstrates a good understanding of its subject, a clear and persuasive use of evidence, a certain level of ease of expression, and solid organization. However, it usually lacks the level of originality and creativity that characterizes the insight found in an "A" essay.
- C = Average: The "C" essay makes a good attempt at all the assignment's requirements. It has a reasonable understanding of its subject matter but its ideas are frequently simplistic or over-generalized. The writing style is also more bland and repetitive than the style shown by "A" and "B" essays and it often contains flaws in grammar, punctuation, spelling and/or word choice. It may also use textual evidence out of context.
- D = Below average: The "D" essay is poorly organized and generally unclear. It has inappropriate or inadequate examples, is noticeably superficial or simplistic, and/or contains some serious mechanical and grammatical problems. A "D" essay may also reveal some misunderstanding of the assignment requirements.
- F = Failure: An "F" essay has not addressed the requirements of the assignment and is unacceptable work in terms of both form and content.

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

Week/Lesson/Module	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines <i>(If appropriate, add extra column(s) to meet your needs.)</i>	Learning Outcomes
		UNIT 1: STEINBECK's ORIGINS	
1	Wed 1/25	Review Syllabus and Classroom Expectations	

2	Mon 1/30	<p>The Land Don't Stretch: Steinbeck's Climate Novel</p> <p>Reading Due: John Steinbeck, <i>To a God Unknown</i>, finish Ch 14, to p.80</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Analyze and discuss various covers of TGU</p>	
2	Wed 2/1	<p>Reading Due: <i>To a God Unknown</i>, finish Ch 21, to p 140.</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Class Facilitation 1: _____</p>	
3	Mon 2/6	<p>Reading Due: <i>To a God Unknown</i>(finish)</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Class Facilitation 2: _____</p>	
3	Wed 2/8	<p>Mad at the World: a Perspective on John Steinbeck</p> <p>Reading Due: William Souder, <i>Mad at the World: A Life of John Steinbeck</i>, finish Chs. 1-6, to pg 116.</p>	
4	Mon 2/13	<p>Steinbeck's Turn Toward California Farmworkers</p> <p>Reading Due: John Steinbeck, <i>In Dubious Battle</i>, finish Ch. 7, to p. 105</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Discuss Steinbeck Studies Gallery Project</p>	
4	Wed 2/15	<p>Reading Due: John Steinbeck, <i>In Dubious Battle</i>, finish Ch. 11, to p. 163</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Class Facilitation: _____</p>	
5	Mon 2/20	<p>Reading Due: John Steinbeck, <i>In Dubious Battle</i>, finish</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Class Facilitation _____</p>	

5	Wed 2/22	<p>Steinbeck's Successes, Friendships, and Controversies in the 1930s</p> <p>Reading Due: William Souder, <i>Mad at the World</i>, Chs 7-10, pgs. 117-206.</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Class Facilitation _____</p>	
6	Mon 2/27	<p>Steinbeck's Reportage on California Migrant Labor</p> <p>Reading Due: John Steinbeck, <i>The Harvest Gypsies</i> (finish)</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Brainstorm ideas for Gallery Project</p>	
6	Wed 3/1	<p>"Write Big!": Steinbeck's Epic of Labor, Migration, and the Environment</p> <p>Reading Due: John Steinbeck, <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>, Chs 1-6, to p. 60</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Look at <i>the Grapes of Wrath</i> manuscript</p>	
7	Mon 3/6	<p>Reading Due: <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>, finish Ch 16, to p. 192</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Class Facilitation, _____</p>	
7	Wed 3/8	<p>Reading Due: <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>, Chs, finish Ch 19, to p. 240</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Class Facilitation, _____</p>	

8	Mon 3/13	<p>Reading Due: <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>, finish Ch. 26, to p. 405</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Submit topics for Gallery Project (Groups working on Grapes of Wrath are encouraged to read ahead)</p>	
8	Wed 3/15	<p>Reading Due: <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> (finish) & William Sounder, <i>Mad at the World</i>, Ch 11, "I'll Be There," p. 207-232</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Class Facilitation, _____</p>	
9	Mon 3/20	No Reading Due: In Class Workshop of Gallery Projects	
9	Wed 3/22	No Reading Due: Attend International Steinbeck Conference	
10	Wed 3/30	SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS!	
		UNIT 2: AFTER THE FAME, STEINBECK'S LATER WORK AND LEGACY	
11	Mon 4/3	<p>The Moon is Down: a Novella That Inspired the Resistance</p> <p>Reading Due: John Steinbeck, <i>The Moon is Down</i> (finish)</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Class Facilitation: _____</p>	
11	Wed 4/5	<p>Behind the Iron Curtain: Steinbeck in Russia</p> <p>Reading Due: John Steinbeck, <i>A Russian Journal</i>, finish Ch. 4, to p. 68</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Class Facilitation: _____</p>	

12	Mon 4/10	<p>Reading Due: <i>A Russian Journal</i>, finish</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Class Facilitation: _____</p>	
12	Wed 4/12	<p>After the Fame: Steinbeck in Later Life</p> <p>Reading Due: William Souder, <i>Mad at the World</i>, finish Chs, 12, 13, 14, & 16 (p. 233-319 & 343-371)</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Classroom Facilitation: _____</p>	
13	Mon 4/17	<p><i>Travels With Charley: A Road Trip and a Troubled Nation</i></p> <p>Reading Due: John Steinbeck, <i>Travels with Charley</i>, finish p. 151</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Check in about final project. One page prospectus due to Canvas by 11:59PM on Friday 4/21</p>	
13	Wed 4/19	<p>Reading Due: <i>Travels with Charley</i>, finish</p> <p>In-Class Check-In: Check in about final project. One page prospectus due to Canvas by 11:59PM on Friday 4/21</p>	
14	Mon 4/24	<p><i>The Winter of Our Discontent</i>: Steinbeck's final novel</p> <p>Reading Due: <i>Winter of Our Discontent</i>, finish Ch. 9, to p. 153</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Check in about final project. One page prospectus due to Canvas by 11:59PM on Friday 4/21</p>	
14	Wed 4/26	<p>Reading Due: <i>Winter of Our Discontent</i>, finish Ch. 14, to p. 220.</p>	

15	Mon 5/1	Reading Due: <i>Winter of Our Discontent</i> , finish	
15	Wed 5/3	<p>Reading Due: No Reading Due, Focus on Final Project</p> <p>Homework: Final Project Research Summary Due to Canvas by 11:59PM on Friday 5/5</p>	
16	Mon 5/8	In-Class Activity: Semester Overview Discussion; Workshop Final Projects	
Final Exam	Wed 5/15 5-7:30	Final Project Showcase	