

# Poet Writ Workshop Section 01

## ENGL 240

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

### Contact Information

Instructor(s):	J. Michael Martinez
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Office Hours:	M/W, 2-3:30 and by appointment

### Course Description and Requisites

Poetics and poetry writing as preparation for thesis. Includes theory and practice of major trends in contemporary poetry. Intensive workshop experience. May be repeatable for credit for up to 12 units.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing and admission via portfolio acceptance to the Writing Focus.

Letter Graded

### \* Classroom Protocols

**Participation:** while there may be lectures, the course will be organized as a single continuous discussion requiring everyone to voice their opinion. Please be in touch with me if you are going to miss a seminar.

The quality of your class participation will be judged through the following: your effort at completing short assignments and, as necessary, sharing them; the effort you put into responding to the workshoped writing of your peers and your willingness to share your thoughts with the workshop as a whole; the effort you bring to reading critically; and, finally, how you contributed to our seminar's discussions.

*All required readings, whether online or in our books, must be brought to class.*

In class, you are being asked to respond to each other and to questions raised in class: I WILL NOT TOLERATE ANY DISRESPECTFUL CONVERSATION OF ANY MANNER WHETHER IN CLASS OR ONLINE.

Participation is essential to this course: we will work both in large and small groups.

### 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.

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### Department Information:

Department Name: English and Comparative Literature

Department Office: FO 102

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

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

Department phone number: 408-924-4425

## Course Goals

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### MFA Creative Writing Student Learning Objectives

- Students will 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).
- Students will demonstrate high-level of proficiency to write works of literature in a secondary genre concentration (fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, or scriptwriting).
- Students will demonstrate an appropriate level of knowledge of literary history, literary theory, and craft and theory of creative writing.
- Students will demonstrate critical and analytical skills in the evaluation and interpretation of literary texts.
- Students will 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) Effectively employ the language of their discipline; d) write under time constraints.

## Course Materials

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Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on [Canvas Learning Management System course login website](#). You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU on [Spartan App Portal](#) (or other communication system as indicated by the instructor) to learn of any updates.

*Texts and Readings: all our readings will be available as a PDF on Canvas or as a link to a website.*

- *A Physical Journal/Daybook*
- *Poetry Course Readings: on Canvas as PDFs or Links.*

## ☰ Course Requirements and Assignments

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In his “Materia Poetica,” the poet Wallace Stevens wrote, “The relation of art to life is of the first importance especially in a skeptical age since, in the absence of a belief in God, the mind turns to its own creations and examines them, not alone from the aesthetic point of view, but for what they reveal, for what they validate and invalidate, for what they support and give.”

In our course, we will examine how modern poetics and aesthetics advances investigations into perceptual practices with the goal of expanding our own individual art practices. We’ll use class workshops, peer-review, and multiple drafts and revisions to achieve that goal. The course is demanding, and based on a certain kind of intense, exigent reading, requiring prolonged— in fact, repeated— attention to specific poems. We will see poetry as an artistic practice: as the great Paul Celan writes, “Attentiveness is the prayer of the soul.” We will be attentive and practice the process of poetry.

Our workshop is one based on the Corcoran School of Art assignment, *80 Works*. As the Washington Post described, “For a generation deluged by the media with images and ideas, *80 Works* helps sift through the mess and sharpens focus.”

Focused on poetry and form, our workshop will run over the semester, thirteen more than the original Corcoran School of Art assignment. Ranging from classical syllabic and accentual verse to contemporary concrete, digital, installation and performance poetry, the many forms our class will investigate will attempt to speak to the diversity of poetics practiced today.

We will write poetry and generate art objects mirroring our theoretical concerns.

### Course Format: In-person

While an in-person seminar meeting will regularly occur on Wednesday, 7-9:45pm, requiring a computer and internet connectivity, students can also expect various classes to also contain an asynchronous component. I will be regularly assigning small group work and asking you to meet with me on Zoom one-on-one to check in about your participation and writing. Our class will be employing Canvas throughout the course.

**Reading Like a Writer:** during the semester you will pair up with a colleague to present some opening thoughts on the day’s reading. Both of you must speak/present. Both of you will receive the same grade toward extra credit. A good discussion will include the following:

1. Introduction to the Author—Biography, Important Notes, Etc.
2. CONCISE Summary of Poem/Essay
3. Identification of the Author’s Use of Prosody we are studying. This should be a close-reading that pays attention to a SPECIFIC passage of text and explicates the writing for significance of language, imagery, tone, etc. I will assign one such technique or point of emphasis; you must choose another interesting feature of the Poem/Essay.
4. A discussion of the Poem/Essay’s significance, with special attention to the deeper questions the events and reflections prompt.

You must prepare a visual aid for this presentation. You may make a PowerPoint presentation. I will be evaluating these Presentations for their depth and sophistication, your abilities to engage the class, your speaking dynamics—volume, clarity, rate, etc., and your overall professionalism.

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.

## ✓ Grading Information

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- 35% Final Portfolio
- 30% In-class exercises
- 10% Workshop and Workshop Comments
- 10% In-Class Presentation
- 15% Participation (including class discussion, preparation, attendance, class prompts, etc.).

Grades given conform to the English Department and university grading policy. The Department of English is committed to the differential grading scale as defined in the official 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.

## Breakdown

### Workload

As ENGL 240 is a 4-unit course, students can expect to spend a minimum of 12 hours per week doing the assigned and supplemental reading, writing, participating in online Canvas activities (synchronous and asynchronous) expected in this seminar, and completing required course activities. Careful time management will be essential to maintain the schedule of reading and writing necessary for success in this course and to comment on work posted by other students. You are urged to read ahead in the course calendar and read to select the poets you want to investigate to write your term-paper. 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 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

## University Policies

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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

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# English 240 Poetry Writing Workshop, Spring 2023

*(As the course progresses, we may get off schedule--this is natural--as such, our daily assignments may be revised as necessary with fair notice given by email or in class).* All "PDF" readings will be available on Canvas. While it is recommended to purchase the books we are reading for class, all the readings from our poetry books will also have PDF scans of the selections available on Canvas.

Please be sure to have completed the assigned reading before that day's class.

<b>WEEK ONE:</b>	<b>First Day of Class: Course Overview, Introductions, Objectives</b>
<b>Jan. 25</b>	<p>Introduction:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Syllabus and Assignments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. 80 WORKS and Class goals.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Infinite and Finite Games</li> <li>3. Group Activity—Our Flag Means Death.</li> </ol> <p><b>In-Class Exercise #1: Found language Image Poem</b></p>
<b>WEEK TWO:</b>	<b>Read: General Meter and Prosody</b>
<b>Feb. 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <b>Selections: <i>THE POEM'S HEARTBEAT: a manual of prosody</i> by Alfred Corn</b></li> <li>· <b>Selections: <i>Poetic Meter and Poetic Form Revised Edition</i> by Paul Fussell</b></li> <li>· <b>Selections: "POETRY COLLECTION 1" PDF on Canvas</b></li> </ul> <p><b>In-Class Exercise #2</b></p> <p><b><u>DUE:</u> IN-CLASS EXERCISE #1 (Found language Image Poem)</b></p>
<b>WEEK THREE:</b>	<b>Read: Prose Poetry</b>
<b>Feb. 8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Selections: <i>MODEL OF THE UNIVERSE: AN ANTHOLOGY OF THE PROSE POEM</i></b></li> <li>• <b>Selections: "POETRY COLLECTION 2" PDF on Canvas</b></li> </ul> <p><b>In-Class Exercise #3</b></p> <p><b><u>DUE:</u> IN-CLASS EXERCISE #2</b></p>
<b>WEEK FOUR:</b>	<b>Read: Surrealist and Dadaist Forms</b>
<b>Feb. 15</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <b>Selections: <i>TOWARD AN OPEN FIELD. POETS ON THE ART OF WRITING</i></b></li> <li>· <b>Selections: "POETRY COLLECTION 3" PDF on Canvas</b></li> </ul> <p><b>In-Class Exercise #4</b></p> <p><b><u>DUE:</u> In-Class Exercise #3</b></p>
<b>WEEK FIVE:</b>	<b>Read: Oulipo and Form</b>
<b>Feb. 22</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <b>Selections: <i>THE PENGUIN BOOK OF OULIPO</i></b></li> <li>· <b>Selections: "POETRY COLLECTION 4" PDF on Canvas</b></li> </ul> <p><b>In-Class Exercise # 5</b></p> <p><b><u>DUE:</u> In-Class Exercise #4</b></p>

<b>WEEK SIX:</b>	<b>Read: Concrete Poetry</b>
<b>Mar. 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <b>Selections: <i>Concrete Poetry: A 21st Century Anthology</i></b></li> <li>· <b>Selections: "POETRY COLLECTION 5" PDF on Canvas</b></li> </ul> <p><b>In-class Exercise: #6</b></p> <p><b><u>DUE:</u> In-Class Exercise #5</b></p>

<b>WEEK SEVEN:</b>	<b>Open Workshop on Collaborative Forms</b>
<b>Mar. 8</b>	
<b>WEEK EIGHT:</b>	<b>Read: Poetry in conversation with the Arts</b>
<b>Mar. 15</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <b>Selections: <i>Ekphrastic encounters: New interdisciplinary essays on literature and the visual arts</i></b></li> <li>· <b>"POETRY COLLECTION 6" PDF on Canvas</b></li> </ul> <p><b>In-class Exercise: #7</b></p> <p><b><u>DUE:</u> In-Class Exercise #6</b></p>
<b>WEEK NINE:</b>	<b>Read: Contemporary and World Forms</b>
<b>Mar. 22</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <b>Selections: "POETRY COLLECTION 7" PDF on Canvas</b></li> </ul>
<b>WEEK TEN: Mar. 29</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>

<b>WEEK ELEVEN:</b>	<b>Workshop</b>
<b>Apr. 5</b>	
<b>WEEK TWELVE:</b>	<b>Workshop</b>
<b>Apr. 12</b>	
<b>WEEK THIRTEEN:</b>	<b>Workshop</b>
<b>Apr. 19</b>	
<b>WEEK FOURTEEN:</b>	<b>Workshop</b>
<b>Apr. 26</b>	

<b>WEEK FIFTEEN:</b> May 03	<b>Workshop</b>
<b>Last Week:</b> May 10	<b>Class reading!!!!</b>

**FINAL PORTFOLIOS ARE DUE WHEN OUR FINAL IS SCHEDULED**