

Creative Writing Section 03

ENGL 71

Spring 2023 3 Unit(s) 01/25/2023 to 05/15/2023 Modified 01/23/2023

Contact Information

Instructor: Professor Ume Ali (OO-me ah-LEE)

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Office Hours

Wednesday, 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM, FOB 213

Zoom appointments:

Meeting ID:

718 854 2378

Meeting link:

<https://sjsu.zoom.us/my/ume.ali> (<https://sjsu.zoom.us/my/ume.ali>)

Course Description and Requisites

Examinations of works of poetry, creative nonfiction and short fiction as expression of human intellect and imagination, to comprehend the historic and global cultural contexts, and recognize issues related to writing of diverse cultural traditions. Students will also write poetry, creative nonfiction, and a short fiction.

GE Area(s): C2. Humanities

Letter Graded

Program Information

Welcome to this General Education course.

SJSU's General Education Program establishes a strong foundation of versatile skills, fosters curiosity about the world, promotes ethical judgment, and prepares students to engage and contribute responsibly and cooperatively in a multicultural, information-rich society. General education classes integrate areas of study and encourage progressively more complex and creative analysis, expression, and problem solving.

The General Education Program has three goals:

Goal 1: To develop students' core competencies for academic, personal, creative, and professional pursuits.

Goal 2: To enact the university's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and justice by ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to serve and contribute to the well-being of local and global communities and the environment.

Goal 3: To offer students integrated, multidisciplinary, and innovative study in which they pose challenging questions, address complex issues, and develop cooperative and creative responses.

More information about the General Education Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) can be found on the [GE website](https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php). (<https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php>)

English 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 Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

GE Area C2: Humanities

Area C Arts and Humanities courses help students to respond subjectively as well as objectively to aesthetic experiences and to develop an understanding of the integrity of both emotional and intellectual responses. C2 Humanities courses encourage students to analyze and appreciate works of philosophical, historical, literary, aesthetic, and cultural importance.

GE Area C2 Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of a C2 course, students should be able to:

1. analyze and understand works of philosophical and humanistic importance, including their temporal and cultural dimensions;
2. explore and articulate their own subjective aesthetic and intellectual responses to such texts;
3. analyze and assess ideas of value, meaning, and knowledge, as produced within the humanistic disciplines; and

4. research and write effective analyses of works of the human intellect and imagination

Writing Practice: Students will write a minimum of 1500 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline.

☰ Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, you are expected to spend a minimum of 45 hours for each unit of credit (normally 3 hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, and completing assignments. These activities and assignments include:

1. Weekly Response to Readings (RR)
2. Poetry Portfolio
3. 1 Short fiction piece
4. 1 Nonfiction essay
5. Process papers (peer critique, literary event paper, reflections, drafts, and revision notes)
6. Engagement (journal, workshop comments, overall participation in class and online)

Poetry Portfolio:

You will produce a portfolio which consists of 2 revised poems, including all drafts and revision notes, to show the progress you have made in subsequent versions of your final pieces. Each poem should include its own reflection (roughly 200 words) in which you discuss the specific changes you made and the significance of said revisions. In other words, justify your creative process. Part of this will also be submitted to the department for assessment.

Fiction Story (max 1000 words):

You will produce a short story whose genre, style, topic, voice, etc will be all of your own choosing. You will also provide a 300 word explanation of the specific craft elements you are employing in your writing, as well as a justification for how those chosen stylistic elements are effective to your piece.

Nonfiction Essay (max 1000 words):

You will produce a personal narrative essay. You will also provide a 300 word explanation of the specific craft elements you are employing in your writing, as well as a justification for how those chosen stylistic elements are effective to your piece.

Process:

The process of writing is just as important as the finished product. As such, drafts, revisions, peer critiques and reflections for each genre piece, as well as the literary event paper count towards process points. Each student is required to attend at least one literary event during the course of the semester (events can be found at the Center for Literary Arts [website](#)). After you attend the event, please write a paper discussing the significance of the event. More details will be provided.

Engagement:

Students will respond to in-class writing exercises in a composition notebook. This will also be where you brainstorm ideas for your creative pieces. I will collect the journal twice during the semester for grading purposes. Students will also earn engagement (or participation) credit for actively engaging with the reading material, with their peers, and with their own writing. As this is an in-person course, participation will primarily be based on your attendance, your writing efforts, and your willingness to contribute to class discussions and workshops. You are not expected to be correct or accurate. Our classroom environment should be a safe place where we all can inquire and speak with impunity, as long as there is honesty and an eagerness to learn. If you're absent, you can't participate at all.

Small Group Workshops

Students will share their creative pieces for each genre in small group workshops. unit we will have Small Group Workshops. You will submit your poem electronically on Canvas and complete workshop feedback as edits on a docx. I may require you to print copies, in those cases more details will be provided. I will assign you to groups, with whom you will workshop your poems.

While workshoping:

- Listen to your classmates and be careful not to interrupt. It is frequently difficult to formulate

responses in front of peers, and even slight interruptions can derail the thoughts of the person

speaking.

- Focus your comments on the work and never on the author. It should be as if we're discussing a manuscript that arrived with no name on it.

- It is not acceptable to issue insults or to praise sarcastically. Likely, some of the work we read will not meet your exact taste. That should not prevent you from delivering a sound analysis of its strengths and areas of improvement.

If your manuscript is being workshopped:

- Remain silent until the conclusion of the discussion. Do not nod or shake your head to questions raised about your piece. If we cannot determine what was intended by a particular passage, this should alert you to something that's not yet being communicated in the writing.

Let this feedback guide your revision.

- Take notes. Even if what we're saying does not sound useful in the moment, later on you may read through our comments and discover one or two to be of value.

Peer Feedback

Peer feedback is written prior to the workshop, 200 words of your understanding of a peer's work, with special focus on specific craft strengths of the piece, as well as areas of improvement.

When critiquing a manuscript:

- Read it once without marking it, while asking yourself what the author is trying to accomplish, and how the piece might improve and become what it seeks to be. Then go back and read it again, annotating it to show what works well and what doesn't work so well.

- List the elements of the manuscript that are working well. Compliment parts that are effective or that elicit a particular emotional reaction from you.

- Question the way in which the work proceeds. What isn't quite clear? What needs more development?

Assignments All assignments should be typed in 12-point font, one-inch margins, in Times New Roman font, and MLA format. For example, if you are writing dialogue in a scene, please refer to the MLA style for appropriate spacing rules etc.. All assignments will be submitted on Canvas.

✓ Grading Information

Assignment	Word Count	Points	% of Final Grade
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Process	200	20	20
Fiction piece	1000	100	20
Nonfiction piece	1000	100	20
Poetry portfolio	500	100	20
Engagement	-	200	20

Grading Policy

This course must be passed with a C- or better as a CSU graduation requirement. Requirements for particular assignments will vary, but in all cases, essay grades will reflect the paper's strengths in clarity, organization, effective argumentation, effective use of sources, and grasp of language. All assignments are graded on an A-F scale. The following are the criteria by which essays are typically evaluated in first-year writing courses:

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>). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

When	Topic	Notes
Week 1		<p>Introductions & Ice Breaker</p> <p>Syllabus</p>
Week 2		<p>Monday</p> <p>Discussion: Imagism Canvas Playlist I (please read all poems on Canvas before class), Elements of poetry</p> <p>Wednesday</p> <p>Due: First RR (reading response)</p> <p>Discussion: Image Poem Playlist II</p> <p>(continue elements of poetry discussion)</p> <p>In class writing exercise.</p>

When	Topic	Notes
Week 3		<p>Monday</p> <p>Due: Image Poem</p> <p>Small Group Workshop</p> <p>Wednesday</p> <p>Discussion: Confessional Poetry Playlist I</p> <p>In Class writing</p>
Week 4		<p>Monday</p> <p>Discussion: Confessional Poetry Playlist II</p> <p>In class writing</p> <p>Wednesday</p> <p>Due: RR</p> <p>Assign Assessment prompt for Confessional Poem</p>
Week 5		<p>Monday</p> <p>Due: Confessional Poem</p> <p>Small Group Workshop</p> <p>Wednesday</p> <p>Poetry Reading and End of Poetry Unit Celebration</p> <p>Due: Poetry Portfolio</p>
Week 6		<p>Monday</p> <p>Begin Fiction Unit</p> <p>Discussion: Readings: <i>The Lottery</i> by Shirley Jackson</p> <p>A Short Story Theory</p> <p>"How to Write Flash Fiction" in Canvas Modules</p> <p>Flash Fiction and Plot</p> <p>Wednesday</p> <p>Discussion: Fiction Craft + Readings (Kincaid, Chopin, LeGuin)</p> <p>Intros and opening lines, Setting</p> <p>In class writing exercise</p>

When	Topic	Notes
Week 7		<p>Monday</p> <p>Due: RR</p> <p>Discussion: Continue Fiction Craft + Readings (Wilcox)</p> <p>Narrative Voice</p> <p>In class writing exercise</p> <p>Wednesday</p> <p>NO CLASS MEETING</p> <p>Work on Fiction draft</p>
Week 8		<p>Monday</p> <p>Due: Fiction Draft I</p> <p>Discussion: Continue Fiction Craft + Readings (Lahiri)</p> <p>Flashback, Flash forward</p> <p>Wednesday</p> <p>Fiction Workshop</p> <p>Small Groups</p>
Week 9		<p>Monday</p> <p>Discussion: Scene, Dialogue</p> <p>Wednesday</p> <p>Due: Fiction Draft II</p> <p>Small Group Workshops</p>
Week 10		SPRING BREAK!