

Creative Writing Section 02

ENGL 71

Fall 2024 3 Unit(s) 08/21/2024 to 12/09/2024 Modified 09/23/2024

Contact Information

Instructor:	Ume Ali (OO-me ah-LEE)
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Office Hours:	W 1:30 - 2:30pm FOB 213
Class Days/Time:	MW 10:30 - 11:45am
Classroom:	BBC 128

Course Information

Course Description

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 write poetry, creative nonfiction, and short fiction.

Conduct

Writing can be an extraordinarily vulnerable exercise. Compassion is one of the most important aspects of a writing workshop. This class is a safe space to experiment with voice, style, and subject matter. We are here to support each other's writing journeys and help build each other's confidence as well as reach writing goals. Be respectful of each other in your critiques and be respectful of yourself.

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

* Classroom Protocols

Classroom Protocol

In English 71, much of the learning happens in class. Therefore, it is imperative that you attend each class session and participate in class activities and discussions. Class participation entails: (1) demonstrating that you've completed the readings, (2) contributing to discussions, and (3) completing in-class assignments.

***Class discussions will sometimes include material of sensitive nature. In this course, students may encounter materials that differ from, and perhaps, challenge their understanding of reality, their ideas, and their beliefs. Students are encouraged to discuss issues that may arise from such material with **me**.

***If you have special needs or accommodation requests, message me as soon as possible. Failure to do so may result in your forfeiture of the accommodations you may deserve.

☐ 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 Goals

English 71 GE Learning Outcomes (GELOs)

Upon successful completion of this GE course, students will be able to:

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 an appreciation of literary works as expressions of human intellect and imagination, and as representations of diverse human cultures;
7. Develop the ability to write literary works that express intellect and imagination and that represent diversity in human cultures;
8. Respond to literature through clear and effective communication in both written and oral work;
9. Read and respond to texts with both analytical acumen and personal sensibility;
10. Appreciate how literary works illuminate enduring human concerns while also representing matters specific to a particular culture;
11. 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 Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Through this course, students will:

1. Appreciate the wide breadth of contemporary writing in poetry, fiction, and nonfiction;
2. Express themselves creatively in poetry, fiction, and nonfiction;
3. Associate reading as a crucial component to writing;
4. Consider writing as contributing to a larger community both inside and outside the university;
5. Place their own creative output within the larger contemporary writing community.

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 Materials

Conduct

Writing can be an extraordinarily vulnerable exercise. Compassion is one of the most important aspects of a writing workshop. This class is a safe space to experiment with voice, style, and subject matter. We are here to support each other's writing journeys and help build each other's confidence as well as reach writing goals. Be respectful of each other in your critiques and be respectful of yourself.

Required Texts

No textbook. Links to free online and digital texts will be provided throughout the semester.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Course Requirements

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. 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)

Reading Responses

Each week students will be assigned a playlist of craft articles and creative pieces for class discussions. Typically, playlists will go live on Friday. Students should arrive at Monday's class having read all of the playlist items. Unless otherwise noted, reading responses must be posted as a reply to the playlists by Wednesday. Responses must include interpretations of creative pieces, analysis of stylistic elements.

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 500 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 500 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.

Grading Information

Minimum Grading Policy

This course uses the minimum grading method of assessment. This means, the minimum score for all assignments is 50%, and no zeroes will be given (as long as work is submitted). Hopefully, this encourages us to attempt and submit all work (regardless of quality). Notice that **process papers** (outlines, drafts, revisions) are worth 40% of the final grade. This is intentional so that we put more effort into revision,

iterating on components of the essay, rather than worrying about one big final grade. For example, a crappy first draft of an intro paragraph earns an automatic 5/10, completing it well (according to the rubric below) may earn the remaining 5 points for a total score of 10/10. Revising the intro and improving it, provides an opportunity to earn another 10 points for revision. The whole point of minimum grading, then, is to place emphasis on revision rather than assigning a weighty grade to an end product.

5 pt Rubric				
Points	5	4	3	2.5
Description/Criteria	Completed assignment according to prompt. Clear, focused, organized, insightful response.	Mostly clear, additional details/insight would be helpful.	Some engagement with prompt, some ideas presented. Could more be more focused, main idea needed.	Minimal or missing work.

10 pt Rubric						
Points	10	9	8	7	6	5

Description/Criteria	Excellent, thoroughly completed work. Clear focus. Responded to all parts of prompt, organized response in logical manner, with a beginning, middle, and end.	Very strong ideas. Additional details/insight would be helpful to overall response. Good focus. Structure could be more intentional, thoughtful.	Additional detail/insight would be helpful to strengthen presentation of ideas. Responds to the prompt, though response can be structured in a more organized and coherent manner.	Shows some demonstration of understanding the prompt, response seems to address some components of the prompt while missing aspects. Some thoughts and insights presented. More clarity/focus needed.	Minimal engagement with the prompt. Some scattered thoughts. Response needs focus/clarity.	Did not attempt, complete, or address the prompt.

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](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 the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

***Schedule is tentative and subject to change at any given time. It is the student's responsibility to check Canvas for updated assignment deadlines and assigned work.

Week	Date	Readings, Assignments, Discussions, Deadlines <i>(all assignments/readings are due on the date in which they are listed and should be completed before class.)</i>
1	Aug 21	Introductions & Ice Breaker Syllabus

2	Aug 26	Poetry 101
2	Aug 28	Discussion: Imagism Canvas Playlist Section I (please read all poems in the first section), Aquarium + Astigmatism by Amy Lowell
3	Sept 2	Labor Day Holiday! No Class!
3	Sept 4	Due: First RR (reading response) Discussion: Image Poem Playlist (continued) (continue elements of poetry discussion)
4	Sept 9	Due: Image Poem Draft (must be submitted before class) Group presentations of poetry analysis Assign groups for Workshop, exchange work
4	Sept 11	Small Group Workshop Reading for next class: <i>Birches</i> by Robert Frost (https://poets.org/poem/birches)
5	Sept 16	Discussion: <i>Birches</i> Visual Explication in Groups
5	Sept 18	Conclude Imagism Unit
6	Sept 23	Begin Protest Poetry Unit Read BEFORE class: Protest poetry craft essays + Section I (Canvas)
6	Sept 25	Discussion: Second half of Protest Poetry Playlist

7	Sept 30	Due: RR#2 Portfolio Assessment
7	Oct 2	Due: Protest Poem Workshop "The Opposites Game" Brendan Constantine https://boykeats.tumblr.com/post/660807071903711232
8	Oct 7	Due: Poetry Portfolio Poetry Reading + Celebration
8	Oct 9	Begin Fiction Unit Discussion: A Short Story Theory "How to Write Flash Fiction" in Canvas Modules Flash Fiction and Plot Readings: <i>The Lottery</i> by Shirley Jackson
9	Oct 14	Discussion: Fiction Craft + Readings (Kincaid, Chopin) How to Let Plot Guide Your Short Story Basic Plot vs Voice Due: 150 word imitation story (groups)
9	Oct 16	Discussion: <i>Symptoms</i> by Ross Wilcox Characterization Due: The Likable Loser (300 word story)

10	Oct 21	<p>Discussion: <i>A Temporary Matter</i> by Jhumpa Lahiri</p> <p>Pacing in Short Fiction</p> <p>Due: RR 3 for <i>A Temporary Matter</i> by Jhumpa Lahiri</p>
10	Oct 23	<p>Discussion: Narrative Voice</p> <p>Readings: The Husband Stitch by Carmen Maria Machado</p> <p>Embrace the Nelson</p>
11	Oct 28	<p>Due: Narrative Plot</p> <p>Discussion: Unreliable Narrators</p> <p>“What is an unreliable narrator?” MasterClass</p> <p>“In a Grove” by Ryunosuke Akutagawa</p>
11	Oct 30	<p>Due: Fiction Draft I</p>
12	Nov 4	<p>Fiction Workshop I</p> <p>Small Groups</p> <p>Fiction reflection</p>
12	Nov 6	<p>Excerpt from “The Gangster We Are All Looking For” by Le Thi Diem Thuy</p> <p>Fragmented narratives, nonlinear narratives</p> <p>Discussion: Setting</p> <p>Setting Craft Essay</p> <p>The Yellow Wallpaper by Charlotte Perkins Gilman</p> <p>Pacing, flashback</p>
13	Nov 11	<p>Veterans Day Holiday! No Class!</p>

13	Nov 13	<p>Begin Nonfiction Unit</p> <p>In Class: "Why I Write"</p> <p>"Chop Suey" and Inner Story Activity</p>
14	Nov 18	<p>Due: Fiction Final</p> <p>Discussion: Nonfiction (continued)</p> <p>Readings: "Intro to CNF"</p> <p>"Mother Tongue" Amy Tan</p>
14	Nov 20	<p>Discussion: Steps for Effective Nonfiction Writing</p> <p>"Voice in Creative Nonfiction" by Sue Silverman</p> <p>"What I learned from a fitting room disaster" by Scaachi Koul</p>
15	Nov 25	<p>Discussion: Nonfiction Playlist (continued)</p> <p>Due: RR4</p> <p>"Our therapists will tell us..." by Max Hunt</p>
15	Nov 27	<p>Thanksgiving Holiday! No Class!</p>
16	Dec 2	<p>Due: Nonfiction Draft I</p> <p>Discussion:</p> <p>"Me Talk Pretty One Day"</p> <p>"How I Found Poetry in Childhood Prayer"</p>
16	Dec 4	<p>Nonfiction Workshop I</p>
17	Dec 9	<p>Due: Nonfiction Final</p> <p>Presentations + Party</p>