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*Helen Meservey and Sherri Harvey with Oprah Winfrey
Photo from Sherri Harvey*

SJSU Instructors Share Their Experience on 2019 Oprah Cruise

By Yvette Ackerman and Daisy Lopez

San José State University English Department Instructors Helen Meservey and Sherri Harvey got the assignment to cover *The Oprah Magazine Girls'* Getaway cruise from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, to the Bahamas and back. This opportunity came through networking and would provide the instructors with an experience they'll never forget.

Meservey and Harvey attended the cruise with the intention of finding photography and story opportunities. Both instructors found themselves also exploring the Everglades, jet skiing, swimming in the ocean, hiking, and biking on the island together. Their main objective was to cover the friendship-themed cruise and their experience among the 2,700 women, 60 men, and Oprah's team on board. Because Meservey and Harvey were considered media on the cruise, they were able to mingle and make connections with other media passengers that were searching for their own stories. Harvey later elaborated on these new connections: "We had such a great opportunity to meet some of the other writers and photographers on the cruise, and so we met people from *USA Today*, *People Magazine*, a couple independent writers, [and] we met a travel blogger."

Among these new connections and new experiences, Meservey and Harvey divulged that they did indeed meet the self-made legend, Oprah Winfrey. Harvey says: "She's [Oprah] a complete powerhouse of a human being in



terms of connecting with other people and being a major influencer and major motivator.”

In a lot of ways, being able to cover a story like this was a dream come true. Just last year, Harvey finished her Master of Fine Arts degree in Creative Nonfiction with a concentration in Travel Writing at SJSU; she is always looking to improve herself as a writer and this experience is a massive accomplishment. Harvey proudly explained, “This is really big for both of us; this idea that we were going to get paid to go away and travel and write is something that I think both of us have been working for our whole lives. We are both teachers, but we have also been writers our whole lives, so to finally get recognition for that on a public platform feels very much like the pinnacle of success.”

Meservey and Harvey met in graduate school. When asked about their meeting, Harvey points out just how important it is to make connections in the classroom: “You know, I think when you’re in grad school, or school in general, I think it’s a great idea to make connections in the classroom that you may or may not realize have such an important influence on your own writing after you finish school.” These connections that Harvey mentions are the reason that the opportunity to cover the cruise story arose. In this case, their connection came in the form of Elizabeth Harryman, a professional acquaintance who is the Travel Editor for *Westways Magazine* in Los Angeles.

According to Meservey, their relationship with Harryman began with a personal interest for horses. Harvey is a teacher, writer, photographer, and equestrian. Harvey contacted Harryman to ask if she and Meservey could meet to take pictures of Harryman’s horses, discuss story-coverage ideas, and catch-up on conversation. Meservey recalls it being a crazy approach to networking, but a fun way nonetheless. Meservey says, “Our instincts about her [Harryman] were right; she’s gracious and helpful, smart and delightful.”

While Meservey and Harvey were in Los Angeles to pitch a few story ideas for *Westways Magazine*, Harryman offered them a different story to pursue: *The Oprah Magazine Girls’ Getaway Cruise*. Before Harryman could finish her statement, Meservey recalls Harvey ecstatically saying, “We’re packed! When are we going?”

Excitement about the opportunity increasingly motivated both Meservey and Harvey. But they would still encounter challenges to work around. To prepare for covering the cruise, Meservey says, “I had to leave the day after my classes started, and I take very seriously my students’ time. So, the challenge was making sure to give them enough to feel like they were still moving forward even though we were missing that first week of class.”

Harvey also commented on what she plans on bringing away from her experience with Oprah and incorporating into her classroom by saying, “She [Oprah] is

really a proponent and supporter of mindfulness and of being mindful... I think in the classroom as well, having a mindful attitude is something that we all need to do a little bit more of because all of us are on our phones all the time, so being present and in the moment even in the classroom, and especially in the classroom, is something she stressed a lot and I try to reiterate in the classroom day in and day out.” Harvey is always trying to find ways to connect to her students about things to ensure that they are as engaged as possible. Admirably, she is constantly striving for ways to make natural connections with her class in this busy, technological era.

Among the themes of friendship and mindfulness, Meservey also found a strong presence of women positivity. Meservey says, “I have admired her [Oprah] as a success story, as a person with such force for positivity in the world, and the fact that she’s woman from a disadvantaged background who has achieved such phenomenal success just tickles me to no end.” Actually being in Oprah’s company and being a part of the audience she was addressing caused Meservey to finally feel and understand the mania of Oprah’s fan base and her leadership. During this experience Meservey says, “I felt connected to her in a way that I never ever did.”

Harvey also made a point to emphasize that the story she and Meservey were searching for was not about Oprah, but about friendship. Harvey comments that, “The whole ship, the whole trip, was planned around the idea of Oprah being the godmother of this ship and we were on there because we were getting away together as friends.” This cruise was more than just a chance to meet Oprah Winfrey. It was intended to highlight just how important recognizing and appreciating friendships are. Meservey and Harvey were able to see how strong their bond as friends is and how they are each other’s support system.

For Meservey, her friendship with Harvey provided a connection of shared sensibilities, inspiration, and enjoyment. Meservey said, “The night that we had our photographs taken with Oprah, we dressed up. I made an appointment for Sherri and I to get our hair did; we’re both like these goofy tomboys and were staggering around arm-in-arm in our smart dresses just yucking it up. Being with her and enjoying this unprecedented experience was the best part.”

It’s vital for all individuals to form these authentic friendships and networks that can be bountiful in experiences and opportunities. Meservey and Harvey shared an amazing trip together while exploring friendship, women empowerment, and mindfulness as they further strengthened their writing. Due to her querying into new opportunities, Harvey will be traveling this summer to write and report about orangutans in Sumatra, Indonesia. It’s safe to assume there will be many more great things to come from Meservey and Harvey in the future.

New Hybrid Supplemental Writing Course in Development

By Monica Kim and Violet Weiler

Professors and instructors in the English Department recently received funding from the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs to develop a new hybrid supplemental writing course that will debut in Spring 2020. Faith Kirk was involved in Phase 1 of Development, while Allison St. Dennis, Mark Dowdy, Joseph Navarro, Jada Patchigondla, and Amanda Smith are involved with Phase 2. The hybrid format of this course will provide students with a resource and support system to develop their writing skills, as well as their ability to balance school and life. Since the course is supplemental, students will be able to enroll in the course in conjunction with ENGL 1A or Stretch English.

The faculty developing this course didn't want it to follow a rigid "lecture, then quiz" format. St. Dennis, coordinator of the current course pilot, says, "We wanted it to be instead where they would learn a concept and then apply that concept to the new writing situation to generate something new." In order to facilitate a more personal learning experience, this course will consist of at-home online modules along with in-person meetings with a small cohort and an instructor once a week. The modules are composed of engaging videos, which include pop culture references as well as writing exercises. By inspiring a level of engagement and interest in the material, the course seeks to maintain relevance in the everyday lives of modern students.

This course will primarily benefit ENGL1A and Stretch English students who are retaking an English course or looking for extra support in their writing. It provides an "at your own pace" style of learning for students in order to fit within their individual schedules. The course modules are built around providing future skills so that students will be able to adapt to different writing requirements across various disciplines. Likewise, it serves as an outreach to students who may have the technical skills to pass their classes but need a bit of guidance in completing their work on time by offering a more personal learning experience.

The origins of this hybrid course follow Chancellor White's executive order EO1110, which was an announcement to all CSUs that universities should be designing supplemental programs to help students finish their first year. Priority should be placed on facilitating the completion of students' obligatory first year courses, and as St. Dennis remarks, "If you have to repeat classes it slows down your time to graduate so this initiative is to improve time to graduation and is an effort towards equity. Not all students have the same resources and some students are freer to just be students than others, so if we can offer some sources that will help them finish their

work, that evens the playing field." Therefore, facilitating a smooth path to graduation in spite of any particular student's circumstances is of utmost importance. The hybrid format allows flexibility for students to get extra support and successfully pass their classes. From the beginning, there has been widespread encouragement in developing this course.

The development of this course has taken place in phases over the past year. Phase One began last academic year when St. Dennis, Kirk, Dowdy, and Patchigondla won a curriculum development grant from the College of Humanities and Arts to create a supplemental instruction online module. The team conducted surveys among English professors and students regarding writing performance in certain areas. Based on this collected data, four online modules were created in order to home in on learning goals that interested both students and faculty. The team then piloted these modules in their own classes, selecting a group of students to participate.

After Phase One was initiated, Writing Program Administrators Richard McNabb and Cindy Baer continued to conduct research because the faculty developing this course are always looking for ways to improve and cater the course to student needs. St. Dennis, Kirk, Dowdy, and Patchigondla are continuing to develop the course and have brought on Joseph Navarro and Amanda Smith as well. Phase Two, a pilot course, is currently taking place. Some modifications made after Phase One include more shortened modules and the addition of weekly meetings with an instructor. These adaptations are intended to nurture skill development beyond improved writing. The pilot will be conducted over eight weeks and will feature pre- and post-interviews. This will allow for more feedback to be collected, thus improving the actual course when it launches this fall.

If all goes well, this hybrid writing course will be offered as a 1-unit supplement to ENGL1A or Stretch English in Spring 2020. This will be a great opportunity for incoming students who are looking for extra guidance with not just their English classes, but also life skills that will help them throughout their entire college career and beyond.

Students who are interested can contact Allison St. Dennis for more information.

English Department Celebrates New 5-Year RSCA Grant Winners

By Ana Guzman and Kyle Adona

The Central Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity (RSCA) program is developed by The Center for Faculty Development. Their goals are to promote and support faculty members in their varying forms of research, scholastic endeavors, and creativity.

The RSCA program has recently developed a new grant that offers faculty members a 5-year plan for long-term forms of research. The most recent three awardees for the English Department for this new grant include professors Katherine D. Harris, Nicholas Taylor, and Revathi Krishnaswamy.

To qualify for this 5-year RSCA grant, awardees must submit a detailed proposal that outlines their plans and goals. Some of the information includes what they plan to research, activities they may participate in to achieve success, and the creative undertakings they will take.

Professor Katherine D. Harris was eager to explain the goals of her research. Her research delves into the 1800s print culture, exploring the literature of rare magazines and books, also known as annuals. Professor Harris states that her research will focus on how “the British Empire gets it wrong” in determining good literature. Her other future plans include traveling to India to conduct further research at their historical libraries. She plans to explore how India combines their engraving styles with British techniques within the aforementioned century-old annuals. The trip would last for 6 months and is still in the planning phase.



*Dr. Katherine D. Harris
Photo provided*

This improved RSCA grant offers Professor Harris more opportunities to connect research to her teachings, which in turn, affects her students as well. “Being able to explore new areas at this stage of my career, it rein-

vigorates me to come back to the classroom with more interesting things to say,” Harris says.

Another recipient is Professor Nicholas Taylor. Professor Taylor is the Associate Professor of English and the Director of the Martha Heasley Cox Center for Steinbeck Studies here at San José State. The purpose for Professor Taylor’s 5-year grant is to conduct research for his next writing projects.

His next writing work will revolve around Jane Stanford, the wife of Lee Stanford, founder of Stanford University. The following project after that would be based on James Flood, one of the Bonanza Kings, who made himself a millionaire after finding silver mines in Nevada.



*Professor Nicholas Taylor
Photo provided*

As a novelist, Professor Taylor has written and published several books. His constant tango with his publishers gives him a fresh perspective on the nuances of writing, researching, and publishing. This constant exposure allows him to have new insight, which in turn enriches the classroom experience.

This grant will not only help Professor Taylor with his future endeavors, but it will also help by giving students a glimpse into the publishing process. Professor Taylor explains this influence on the students by saying that not only does he grow as an author, but his students grow too because Professor Taylor shares his experience on the process of publishing a book.

Revathi Krishnaswamy is a professor of English and Comparative Literature and another recipient of the 5-Year RSCA grant. She has numerous publications and presentations under her belt, dealing with issues such as cultural globalization, postcolonialism, and comparative world literature and theory.

“The project builds on and extends this previous scholarship in new directions,” she says. Through ad-

ditional publications and rigorous research, Professor Krishnaswamy plans to make the culmination of her new research into a scholarly book titled *World Literature from the Silk Road World System*, a challenging analysis of western concepts and theories with a critical focus on “the literature of the ancient Silk Road and its lasting legacy.” Her other goals with this project include the development of an alternative method in studying world literature and theory.

Some of Professor Krishnaswamy’s recent works include her contribution in the development of the Deep Humanities & Arts Initiative in Spring 2018, a conversation that discusses the salvation and threat that technology offers to the world.



Dr. Revathi Krishnaswamy
Photo from San José State University

Her research will greatly broaden the horizon of future students in their scholastic endeavors. The research would have a ripple effect between both her undergraduate- and graduate-level courses, demonstrating that her pursuit for greater knowledge will have a lasting impact on the student body as a whole.

With the new and improved RSCA grant offering new opportunities to expand research beyond a small window, the future is filled with new prospects. Although the grant offers more time, the awardees of this grant still have their work cut out for them. Their endeavors remain a shining example of the English Department’s scholastic pursuits, proving that the biggest risk is not taking any RSCA at all.

Award-Winning Playwright among SJSU Faculty

By Victoria Ngo and Sabrina Lim

Most people know Edwin Sams as a professor in the Department of English and Comparative Literature at San José State University. However, Professor Sams also dabbles in playwriting. Recently, his play *The Circle Rules* won the second week of the eighth annual Short Play Festival under the contest *Boo!* at The Players Theatre in Greenwich Village, New York City. Professor Sams’ play is about a fictional version of Houdini, who disrupts a seance to battle witches. Drawing from research from his past chapbook titled *Red Magic: Houdini’s Secret*, as well as his interests in urban legends, folklore, and superstitions, Sams presented *The Circle Rules* onstage in October 2018.

While creating *The Circle Rules*, stagecraft was a significant part of Sams’ creative process. He references a scene in the play where the women attack Houdini with their fans: “So they’re snapping fans and slashing fans in his face and that played really well on stage.” Thinking about how this story will translate onstage and to an audience is what shapes the scenes in the story and brings the play to life in his head.

Presenting the play in New York City at The Players Theatre was another feat on its own. Since Sams was working full time at San José State University during the production of the play, he had to have some help. Using Facebook, Sams reached out to a friend who resided in New York to see whether he’d be willing to help with the play’s production. The only catch? They hadn’t spoken for 40 years. To Sams’ surprise, his friend Chris Deatherage agreed to be the representative of his play.



Photo from The New York Times

Chris Deatherage had a significant role in the production process of the play. Having roughly 40 years of experience on the scene, Deatherage is no stranger to New York City theatre. He became director and producer while Sams stayed in the Bay Area and taught his four classes in the fall. Deatherage had authority over the stage costumes and the actors. Sams says of Chris, “I mostly deferred to

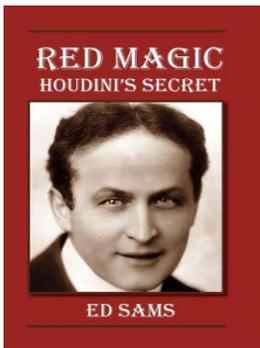


Photo from Website-
WildaboutHoudini.com

him ... [and] I would say he did a really good job." As stressed as Sams was feeling about not being able to be in New York during this time, his friend reassured him that it was running smoothly, and it turned out even better than what Sams initially envisioned.

Out of the four showings the play had, Sams was able to watch one of them and brought his wife Sally out as well. Everyone who came to watch the plays was

given a voting slip that they'd later use to submit their two favorite plays. Out of all the plays shown during the second week, Sams' play earned the most votes and won. It was extra special because Sams' mother would often audition for plays in the very same Greenwich Village that Sams' *The Circle Rules* debuted in. Additionally, most contestants for the festival are locals. For Sams, being an out-of-towner and winning was a memorable moment of his career as a playwright.

Professor Sams is currently teaching here at San José State University in the English Department and is still writing his chapbooks: his collections of short stories and other writings. He entered his book of poems, *Unpoems*, to a poetry publication called World Tech Communications that will publish it later in 2019. His advice to any aspiring writer is this: "Don't throw anything away, and keep plugging away."

SJSU Hosts TC Camp 2019 for Professional Technical Writers

By Pragati Chaplot Jain and Roy Thompson

On April 26 and 27, San José State University (SJSU) hosted TC Camp 2019, a two-day technical communication event for aspiring and experienced technical writers to network, teach, learn, and grow in an unconference style.

In an unconference, attendees vote on the topics they'd like to discuss on the day of the event and promptly break into groups organized by the topics they chose. This is opposed to the classic conference format, where who will be speaking and what will be presented are decided months before the event, usually with little input from attendees. The unconference allows for an experience that is more like a discussion among peers than a lecture.

Following this format, this year's TC Camp offered an API training day, workshops, lightning talks, different unconference sessions, and opportunities to network with sponsors and vendors. The event drew a diverse and talented group of Silicon Valley's finest technical writing

professionals, educators, and aspiring technical writers from different universities across the Bay Area.

The SJSU faculty and students responsible for bringing the event to campus were Dr. Mark Thompson, assistant professor and director of the Professional and Technical Writing program; the Martha Heasley Cox Center for Steinbeck Studies; and the Poets and Writers Coalition.

Reflecting on the event, Dr. Thompson expresses his belief in the value of such events coming to campus. "Lots of technical writers are there, so there are networking opportunities. There's only so much we can do in school. Events like this can help with the transition from school to actually working," he says.

Bringing his own value to the event, Dr. Thompson also hosted a workshop about strategies new writers can use when interacting with subject-matter experts (SMEs) on the job. Other workshops included the pre-conference API Day, conducted by two professors from the University of California, Berkeley, and a free workshop on Adobe FrameMaker conducted by Matt Sullivan, Tech Comm Tools and Adobe Technical Communication Partner.

For SJSU students, many of the workshops—on different topics like Git (a tool used by software developers to track changes to source code), user-centered (UI/UX) design principles, and suggested practices for information taxonomy—provided hands-on experience with skills that they would use on the job. In his keynote address, Gavin Austin, the principal technical writer at Salesforce, shared how chatbots and artificial intelligence (AI) are being used as extra tools to solve competitive content requirements across internal Salesforce teams. He also shared some valuable insights on how technical writers can reuse content to improve and build memorable customer experiences.

Started in 2013 by Liz Fraley, TC Camp 2019 marks the sixth year of the event. Six years ago, Liz attended an ACM Data Science event that followed the unconference format. There, she saw attendees networking, teaching, and learning from one another—a stark contrast from the conferences she was used to attending. Liz noted that attendees of the ACM Data Science event were more approachable, relaxed, and shared great, informative conversations. As Liz explains, "We wanted to see if it would work for the writers."

Sharing some TC Camp success stories, Liz explains that in the past, TC Camp has often proven to be a great opportunity for students to learn and connect with other technical writers through active participation. As students volunteer for different roles at the event, they make themselves known in Silicon Valley's growing technical communication industry. And even if they are not learning something, they are developing their social skills. Liz clarifies, "People in TC Camp like to know who you are and what you do."

While TC Camp 2019 has passed, there will be more local technical writing events. Dr. Thompson shares some tips to follow before showing up to your next event:

- Do background research to gain context.
- Get a good night's sleep.
- Bring a notebook.
- Come willing to be social, even if that's not your thing.

For more information about TC Camp, visit the website at www.tccamp.org.

The Writing Center: Dedicated to San José State for Over a Decade

By Alondra Ibarra and Sarika Kanhere

The Writing Center is loved by students and faculty alike—and for good reason. For the past 12 years, the Center has taught invaluable writing skills to students across majors, disciplines, and grade levels. What started out as an English tutoring service is now a two-location, multi-service resource capable of serving thousands of students every year. Its recent offering of online tutoring—a blessing for the thousands of Spartans with long commutes—is just one example of how the Center has expanded throughout the years. The Writing Center has grown immensely, but one thing has never changed: its dedication to San José State.

In 2007, Dr. Linda Mitchell created the Writing Center at the request of Former Provost Carmen Sigler and the Dean of the College of Humanities and the Arts. With Dr. Mitchell's prior experience working at the University of Southern California's Writing Center during her graduate studies, she proved to be the perfect candidate. Those who know Dr. Mitchell know she is not one to back down from a complex project. "First of all, I'm a builder," she says. "I build things."

And build the Writing Center she did, starting with a single room, empty but for a chair and a desk. Dr. Mitchell served as director for six years, devoting that time to continuously improving and expanding its services in order to help the ever-growing number of students who needed them. In 2013, she appointed Michelle Hager as the new director. Hager had joined the Writing Center in 2009 and worked as assistant director prior to 2013. In addition to cultivating the Center's online appearance, she also created the course-embedded writing tutor program in collaboration with Dr. Tom Moriarty, director of the Writing Across the Curriculum program. Course-embedded tutoring has enabled tutors to tailor their expertise to specific classes—a service that both students and faculty greatly appreciate.

Hager has continued to carry on the Writing Center's commitment to SJSU students. "We've always had high standards for our student writing tutors," Hager says. In order to provide students with the best service possible, tutors are expected to be "well-trained writing experts." Before working with students, tutors undergo an intensive training process that often takes months to complete. In these training sessions, tutors learn how to advise students on grammar, organization, formatting, style, and more, and the training continues throughout their time at the Center. The dedication of its tutors reflects the Writing Center's unwavering commitment to San José State.

As the number of staff and the demand for tutoring sessions continued to grow, Hager expanded the Writing Center's services across campus. Now, tutoring is available by appointment at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library and for drop-in at its original location in Clark Hall 124. "Luckily," Hager comments, "the University Administration agreed that Writing Center expansion was a high priority." Thanks to San José State's continued support, the Writing Center has been able to meet Spartans' varied and diverse needs.

More recently, the Writing Center has demonstrated its dedication to students learning English as a second language through its Multilingual Writing Support Services. Currently leading this initiative is Multilingual Writing Support Services Coordinator Amy Russo. Russo, who joined in Spring 2018 and has a Master's in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), is working to ensure that the Writing Center can better serve the multilingual students of San José State. Utilizing her specialized knowledge, the Center now provides staff members and tutors with training specifically designed to help them assist multilingual students.

Another way the Writing Center has been able to reach more students has been by making themselves more accessible. No longer strictly appointment-based, the Center now offers drop-in sessions in Clark Hall 124 and online tutoring services conducted through the Zoom platform. San José State is known for being a commuter school—many Spartans have hectic schedules and live hours away from campus. Online and drop-in tutoring services are just a few of the many ways the Writing Center is continuing to adapt to accommodate SJSU students' needs.

As much as it has grown in the past years, the Writing Center's expansion is far from over. As more students attend tutoring sessions, workshops, and other events, new tutors and assistants are joining the Center to assist them. The Center currently employs around 20 tutors in addition to student assistants and other staff members. In the coming semesters, Hager hopes for the center to grow to "perhaps a staff of 40." She also plans to get tutors more involved outside of the regular tutoring schedule through increased embedded tutoring and additional writing re-

treats. In the midst of all this change, though, one thing is sure to stay the same—the Writing Center’s commitment to serving San José State.

New English Department Analyst Daphne Purisima Settles In

By Elektra Febonio and Anthony Lazrovich



Daphne Purisima
Photo by Elsabete Kebede

The English Department is excited to welcome new Administrative Analyst Daphne Purisima. Number crunching and the English Department are two things that seem worlds apart to most people. Not for Purisima, who functions daily in a world where the two subjects blend into one.

Administrative analysts are quickly becoming a highly sought after and necessary component for all successful businesses. As an administrative analyst, Purisima is a necessary component for the department. She will act as a type of overseer with an especially keen eye for finding opportunities that could make department operations more streamlined. Her primary goal is to get the department running as efficiently as possible, so she must have her hands in almost every area to properly perform her duties.

According to Purisima, her main areas of focus in the English Department are budgeting and office management. In terms of measuring department efficiency, Purisima will initially look at foot traffic, utilization of technology, and the amount of supplies the department goes through. Finance is definitely at the heart of her role as department analyst, but it encompasses much more than simple budgeting.

Purisima must see the department—employees, bud-

get, programs, technology, everything—as a single organism, like a body with all its parts. By doing this, she can determine the best possible actions for the department to take that not only maximize fiscal efficiency, but also take into account department morale and employee relations. This ability to find and maintain an organization’s perfect balance is what sets Purisima apart from regular accountants or admins. It’s what makes her an analyst.

This distinction is never clearer than when she is focusing on the office management side of her job. Part of Purisima’s expertise is people and relations because interoffice conflicts and problems are among her main responsibilities. On the surface, budgeting and office disputes feel very unrelated, and they are to most people. For Purisima, they’re all components of the “machine” that need to operate perfectly. All are equally important to the whole, even if some are more demanding. Purisima believes her most difficult and demanding responsibility is “conflict resolution. All parties must first calm down... Only then, a productive and nonjudgmental resolution/compromise can be attained.”

Purisima has replaced Debbie Mullin, who is now the Academic Resources Manager of San José State University’s College of Social Sciences. Mullin was recognized in her previous position for improving efficiency in the English Department by establishing a self-serve appointment system and for reducing incoming phone calls by 90%. Mullin’s new position now includes overseeing the College of Social Sciences’s budget, supervising the college’s staff, and acting as a liaison for human resources. For the English Department, filling a position left by such an outstanding faculty member can be a bit daunting, so the department is thrilled to have found such a capable and experienced analyst to take the reins.

Purisima’s previous position was as an Administrative Support Coordinator at the Department of Chemistry here at San José State University. She earned her degree in Biology with a minor in Chemistry, so much of her experience was gained within the Department of Chemistry. Other hats that Purisima has sported on campus are Student Assistant for the Arts Department and CPR Instructor. Being a well-rounded individual is one of the key characteristics needed for her new role, and her diverse background definitely qualifies Purisima as such.

Purisima brings with her a highly specialized skillset and invaluable experience that will have the English Department running with easy efficiency. She has the perfect mix of intelligence and tenacity to excel in her new role and, judging by her words, we all expect great things from Purisima. “When you strive for perfectionism, you learn the skill of attention to detail. Attention to detail will be recognized and rewarded,” says Purisima, as advice for students.

All this adds up to one thing: Purisima is a welcome addition to any department and will doubtlessly flourish

in San José State University's English Department. If you haven't had a chance to meet Daphne yet, stop by the English Office to say hello.

SJSU Alumnus Finds Success as a Technical Writer

By Katherine Kim and Michelle Li

San José State University (SJSU) alumnus Ali Ahsan finds success as a technical writer at Palo Alto Networks, a leading cybersecurity company based in Santa Clara. Their services have been used by big corporate names such as Amazon and Google. Ahsan shares how SJSU's professors and coursework provided him with the fundamentals he needed for success.

Ahsan graduated from SJSU in Spring 2018, earning a B.A. in English with a concentration in Professional and Technical Writing. Ahsan's role as a junior technical writer at Palo Alto Networks requires him to understand the functionality of the hardware he writes about. He has been granted special clearance, which allows him to interact directly with engineers and prototypes of the software they produce. "Most of my time goes into learning and investigating what the product is," Ahsan says. Surprisingly, the actual writing is one of the less strenuous tasks of his job. "In the grand scheme of things, it's smaller in the duties that I have. It's the easiest." A typical day in the office involves lengthy periods of inquiry, research, and experimentation with the company's products and services.

Although Ahsan faces many challenges as a new technical writer, SJSU's Professional and Technical Writing program has prepared him for the fast-paced environment he is now in. It has also helped him secure his position at the company by giving him the insight he needs to craft a compelling résumé that highlights his skills and achievements. One of the program's core classes, Professional and Technical Writing (ENGL 107) with Dr. Mark Thompson, especially helps in this respect; the course spends a unit on constructing cover letters and résumés. Dr. Thompson even offered feedback on Ahsan's résumé while Ahsan was applying for jobs; he advised Ahsan to tailor it to the job he was seeking.

The professional writing course, Intro to Career Writing (ENGL 129), has fundamentally changed the way he writes. The class was helpful because it made Ahsan realize how writing done in an academic setting drastically differs from writing done in a professional setting. It taught him how to write concisely and use fewer words for effective communication. In addition, Editing for Writers (ENGL 106) reinforces the importance of adhering to a style guide. (Palo Alto Networks' company style guide spans 200 pages.) "It was the one class that really emphasizes a sense of consistency," Ahsan says. He also

recalls Visual Rhetoric and Document Design (ENGL 110) to be an especially helpful class because it allowed him to become familiar with Adobe InDesign and Illustrator, two software programs he frequently uses for his work. Although his position focuses more on research and investigation and less on actual writing, Ahsan emphasizes how he still has freedom to be creative, just in a different sense—through documentation designs and layouts.

A core, non-technical writing English course that has also helped Ahsan is Modern English (ENGL 103) with Dr. Linda Mitchell, whom he calls a phenomenal teacher. "I actively use and apply a lot of things I learned from her class," he says. His technical documents have never been sent back by his editor for review. Ahsan credits Dr. Mitchell for his strong grammar and writing skills.

Ahsan stresses the flexibility of the technical writing degree. Degree holders are not limited to just technical writing professions—they can venture into more creative fields, such as copywriting and marketing, which the program gives them experience for. "The professional writing aspect is often overlooked," Ahsan says. Positions such as editors, copywriters, and even marketing positions are viable options.

Ahsan's greatest learning curve came from the technical facet of his work as he familiarized himself with the jargon. The biggest frustration came from not knowing everything and having to question so much. "The frustration will never end," Ahsan says. "Being in the dark and not knowing something, or being confused, is just an aspect of the job." His frustration is, however, "countered by a lot of excitement and enjoyment—the learning is satisfying." Ahsan even looks forward to working at Palo Alto Networks every day and doesn't dread the approach of Monday mornings.

His greatest advice for current SJSU students looking to find similar success is to get serious about the work they're doing now and internalize what they learn. "[The program] really gives you a great advantage and a head start. It gives you a lot of resources and experience so that the actual work will be familiar." The classes are designed so that students can get adequate practice of what it's like in the real world through projects and assignments.

As a final note, Ahsan says to make connections: "Professors can give you letters of recommendations [and] it's good to have those connections." Without the help from the program's outstanding professors, finding success in the workplace can be extremely challenging. Ahsan, however, has SJSU's Professional and Technical Writing program to thank for preparing him for success.

For more information about the Professional and Technical Writing program, contact Dr. Thompson at mark.thompson@sjsu.edu.

Series Highlights Intersection of Humanities with the Dark Side of Silicon Valley

By Serena Simoes and Reza Jalalian



Photo by SJSU College of Humanities and Arts

It may seem as if the Humanities and STEM majors are worlds apart. However, some people within the College of Humanities and the Arts have made it a goal to change this and bridge the two fields by hosting a series of talks known as the Deep Humanities Symposium. Dr. Revathi Krishnaswamy, Professor of English, introduced this effort. By means of this series, Dr. Krishnaswamy hopes to “give students in the Humanities a ‘voice’ in Silicon Valley, because the ethics in Silicon Valley have largely been unaddressed by the engineers and technologists.” The symposium was initially launched because of the bicentennial celebration of English novelist Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, which was created, managed, and cultivated by Professor Katherine D. Harris and Dean Shannon Miller. *Frankenstein* is a novel that contains a compilation of narratives that are meant to warn readers of the dangers of unregulated inventions. This bicentennial celebration led to the creation of the Deep Humanities Symposium, focusing on drawing parallels between the concept of unregulated technological effects and how those who are in the Humanities and the Arts can help combat this and draw attention to an often-ignored phenomenon.

This past fall semester, there were three speakers at the symposium: Cordelia Fine, Tobias Reese, and Margaret O’Mara. They addressed many of the pressing issues that are currently facing Silicon Valley. All notable professors, psychologists, and philosophers, these speakers discussed topics ranging from the unknowns of funding toward many beloved tech startups, to how we are artificially and biomedically changing ourselves, to the inequalities between men and women in STEM fields. These problems even boil down to social justice issues: women sometimes have to work twice as hard to get the same prestigious positions as their male colleagues. Dr. Krishnaswamy emphasizes the importance of English majors being just as involved as engineering majors when it comes to analyzing these problems and coming up with valid solutions. She also says that these “social respon-

sibilities” and questions regarding ethics are not meant to attack or dismiss technology, but rather to address the fact that “technology should be better and address ethical questions as well.”

The goal is to get the audiences thinking about their future, as well as the future of others growing up in this area. Getting different ideas flowing in the minds of students could eventually lead to positive solutions.

To get this series started, Dr. Krishnaswamy contacted the right kinds of qualified speakers by finding people who “[go] outside the box,” or people who can challenge the audience and raise more of these kinds of ethical questions before it’s too late and we start to feel the consequences of these technologies. She noted that one of her favorite talks was from Cordelia Fine. Fine was able to speak about the politics of Silicon Valley, and what is hidden from the general public. As people living here, we only see the shiny product—but what has supported the funding for these entrepreneurs? An issue that has seldom been discussed: the history of development in the Bay Area with emphasis on labor from Asia and the Middle East.

In the future, Dr. Krishnaswamy hopes to see more faculty and students included in technological research projects. She is excited to see more student involvement in the speaker series and to create even bigger discussions that challenge and question the work of those in technological fields to make sure they don’t have consequences in the future.

The Interns Behind Humanities and the Arts

By Evan Brown and Raytao Xia

United by shirts of royal Spartan blue, 16 brilliant minds intern together as a marketing team, collaborating to promote the best of the College of Humanities and the Arts. Walking around SJSU, you have likely seen their work. Posted at Hammer Theatre are life-sized posters of upcoming plays, seen in hallway bulletin boards are fliers for Dr. Freedman’s lecture on Emoji literacy, and archived in the virtual world is *Expressions*, the College’s official blog. Yes, complete with best English practices for effective communication, each of these documents comes from the Humanities and the Arts (H&A) Marketing team.

They work in the cozy confines of Washington Square Hall 117, a modest classroom that holds their equipment and materials from past semesters. Students typically work from Monday to Thursday, putting in 8 to 20 hours a week. In addition to normal weekday hours, all-hands team meetings are held every Friday from 10:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. Overseen by director Sheryl Spann, the team



*The H&A Marketing and Communications Team
Photo by SJSU College of Humanities and Arts*

English majors typically write and edit for the editorial staff, but students are free to apply for any position they wish; the H&A Marketing team is happy to teach a willing learner. So that there is an overlap in personnel, new interns sometimes train with current interns who are about to graduate. Anyone who enjoys writing and wants to develop their skills through this internship may provide samples of their work with their application.

The H&A Marketing team thrives on reliable individuals, no matter what position they work in. A diligent team is critical for tackling the many everyday tasks. “For me, reliability is crucial,” Derick Truong, an English student and editorial member, says. “Because we get hit with last-minute deadlines, we have to take on multiple projects or pick up where someone else left off. But that’s okay; we’re supposed to have each other’s backs. Web and Graphic Design have a lot of copy that needs editing.” Editorial members create ad blasts, press releases, and copy for events if it’s not already provided.

The team workload ebbs and flows depending on College events. *Expressions*, the seasonal blog and magazine that endorses H&A activities, requires extra attention close to release time. H&A Marketing has been particularly busy this spring as they prepare the summer 2019 issue of *Expressions*, the only issue that circulates in print (the fall, winter, and spring issues are published online only).

H&A Marketing’s biggest client, Hammer Theatre, keeps the team plenty busy among other deadlines—from brochures, to programs, to shadow boxes (big posters that appear outside Hammer), to other materials. Truong predominately writes and edits copy for these Hammer documents.

Beyond Hammer’s affairs, though, he is helping update websites across the entire College for an improved online presence. Each website will eventually receive revamps—both aesthetically and textually—one department at a time. Future interns will likely have a share in this project, too; there will be plenty to do.

Student interns have grown immensely in their soft and hard skills from working in H&A Marketing. In the way of interpersonal communication, editorial members

constantly get practice interviewing others for quotes to include in their marketing materials. While interviewing may be challenging for some, Truong says that this challenge has actually been fun for him. He has seen growth in his interpersonal skills, getting more comfortable in interview settings by meeting interviewees face to face, and drafting his questions ahead of time.

Additionally, interning for H&A Marketing has also taught editorial members how to adapt their writing style. “In terms of writing for deadlines, the internship is a lot like a class,” Truong says, “[but] I don’t really write to fulfill an assignment. I can’t write like I do for essays in English composition. Because I write for the Hammer, I write in a way that achieves our purpose of communicating effectively.”

Honing these skills has served former interns well in the professional world. Spann recalls where some of her interns have been hired since graduating: one now creates graphics and art for the San Francisco 49ers, and another is helping a startup company in Berlin, Germany.

Next fall, the internship will become a lab-based class: HA 187. The paycheck will go away, but the invaluable experience will remain. Students will still work cross-collaboratively with many different parts of the university. Furthermore, this class setup will give students more opportunities to be mentored. “Sure, money is great, but school credit is just as great,” Truong says. “I expect high turnover; a lot of students will be able to experience the class and [their school and work] schedules will be more stable.” HA 187 will have four sections to reflect four facets of the internship: editorial staff, graphic design, videography, and photography. English majors are encouraged to enroll in the editorial staff section, but they are welcome to enroll in any section of interest. HA 187 will provide English students valuable pre-professional experience, and they’ll earn class credit in the process. Keep your eye out for the H&A Marketing class in the next course catalog.

Organizers Reflect on 2019 Steinbeck Conference

By Melikah Hayes and Shauna White

On May 1–3, a sea of John Steinbeck scholars and fans gathered at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library for the 2019 International Steinbeck Conference. This year’s theme was “Steinbeck and the Twenty-First Century: Identity, Influence, and Impact.” The participants discussed how his works still affect us today.

The conference is held at San José State University (SJSU) once every three years. The keynote speaker this year was Professor Susan Shillinglaw, renowned Steinbeck expert. Her speech was followed by presentations from William Souder, Steinbeck biographer, and Nick Taylor, director for Steinbeck Studies at SJSU. Speeches from major session scholars followed—they spoke about their own research and experience with various Steinbeck works. Interviews with the president of the International Society of Steinbeck Scholars, Luchen Li, and the conference director, Nick Taylor, offer insight on the conference’s theme on Steinbeck’s identity, influence, and impact.



John Steinbeck

Photo from storytellingarts.org

Li believes this conference is dedicated to Steinbeck because Steinbeck wrote stories about people from different walks of life—stories so accurate they still affect us today. Li says, “His [Steinbeck’s] writing was inclusive and his mindset was very broad.” Li, who was born and raised in China, grew up reading Steinbeck novels, which led him to major in American and British literature in college.

Now, Li meets with many scholars around the world, and they all have a common interest in American literature, especially Steinbeck. Li also has a personal friendship with the San José State University Steinbeck Center and knows Professors Susan Shillinglaw, Paul Douglass, and Nick Taylor, who are all close friends and colleagues. Li says, “These professional connections and academic

interest all filled my lifetime commitment to Steinbeck studies.”

Li’s knowledge was enriched through Steinbeck’s works, which he says influenced him in many ways. He emphasizes that in Steinbeck’s stories, characters deal with real-life hardships, though they still maintain hope throughout, which keeps them inspired. Steinbeck’s stories brought Li a different insight on worldviews and new cultural aspects, and increased his intelligence. His favorite novels from Steinbeck are *The Winter of Our Discontent* and *To a God Unknown*. Li says that for him, the highlight of the conference was his appreciation for how Steinbeck brought attendees together: “We are so different as individual scholars, but one thing for sure is we share Steinbeck through his writings. It’s always exciting, energizing, and motivating when you return to your place knowing there are so many scholars out there that share the same values and interest as you.”

Professor Nick Taylor shares Li’s sentiment that the scholars’ presentations make the International Steinbeck Conference so valuable. Taylor, a novelist and fiction writer, has been the director for Steinbeck Studies since 2012 and has organized the 2013, 2016, and 2019 Steinbeck Conferences. This year’s scholars presented papers on Steinbeck’s relevance. Taylor says that some even argued that Steinbeck’s work has influenced the #MeToo movement. “Steinbeck’s not known as a feminist author. He’s not read as an anti-feminist author, either,” Taylor states, acknowledging just how innovative Steinbeck scholars can be.

Over the stretch of three days, dozens of presenters shared their Steinbeck research and ideas. Presenter Jim Kent, a sociologist and businessman, spoke about how Steinbeck’s *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, published in 1951, gave birth to the concept of social ecology. This theory about the natural relation of people to one another inspired Kent to develop new business practices in the right-of-way industry. Kent’s company has assisted many large corporations in successfully completing projects in small towns by involving citizens’ concerns and considerations in the development process by applying this Steinbeck-inspired theory.

Another highlight of this year’s conference was a tour through “Steinbeck Country” in Salinas and Monterey led by Professor Susan Shillinglaw. She has led numerous Steinbeck tours, but this is the first year she is incorporating it as part of the conference. Taylor states, “I can’t think of a better tour guide . . . She knows everything about Steinbeck.”

Steinbeck experts and scholars aren’t the only participants in the conference—students from the San José area also attended—but Steinbeck’s influence is felt by students across the country. Taylor points out that Steinbeck’s novel *Of Mice and Men*, published in 1937, is still very popular in U.S. schools for its ability to address eth-

ical questions that have no clear answer, offering young students new viewpoints to consider. He states that *Of Mice and Men* “gives English teachers in middle school and high school the opportunity to say, ‘See, kids, life isn’t as simple as you think. Let’s talk about the ethics of this experience.’” Steinbeck’s other novels embrace moral and ethical themes, including workers’ rights and income inequality. Taylor suggests that Steinbeck’s *In Dubious Battle* and *Grapes of Wrath* remain popular because they continue to prove his work’s social relevance.

This year’s conference brought scholars and students from around the world together in Steinbeck’s honor and celebrated the ways in which his legacy still lives on. It offered the unique opportunity for scholars familiar with his work to share their insights and for those interested in his work to hear new perspectives. Go check out the conference in 2022 so you can see how inspirational Steinbeck’s literary work is—he may even inspire you.

The Strikethroughs are Back-to-Back Bowling Champions

By **Elsabete Kebede**



SJSU Student Union Bowling Center
Photo by Daisy Lopez

Inside the SJSU Student Union Bowling Center, victory is in the air. High-fives are exchanged and the theme song from *Rocky* is playing in the background. Yes, you guessed it. It’s the English Department’s very own bowling team and their celebration of their latest win in the Fall Faculty Bowling Championship. The Strikethroughs, a four-member team that features professors Jennifer “Dr. J” Johnson, Thomas “Shoe Money” Moriarty, Ryan “Interrobang” Skinnell, and Mark “Blatz” Thompson, continue their reign as back-to-back champions for the faculty bowling league at SJSU.

When SJSU opened its brand new bowling alley in Spring 2018, it created a space for the campus community not only to bowl but also to socialize. Emails were cir-

culated throughout campus to pique interest for a faculty league, and when the group of four caught wind of this, they decided to go for it. In the league’s short existence, there have been three seasons and 10 teams have played at least once within that timeframe. The Strike Throughs were one of the first to join, and as the team nears their one-year anniversary, they don’t seem to have plans to stop. They’ve “created a dynasty of sorts,” Moriarty says.

The dynamic between Skinnell and Moriarty is lighthearted, and the same could be assumed for the rest of the team. It’s clear that, while being in a competitive league, the team of casual bowlers doesn’t take themselves too seriously. They often joke and poke fun at themselves: “If we weren’t bowling champions, we would probably be fired, but this keeps us here,” Moriarty says.

Skinnell agrees and adds, “In fact, Thompson looks like he is on his way for tenure this year, and we assume it’s because of the bowling.”

Social mixers for student organizations and outings with friends and family typically foster a positive social environment. The faculty bowling league at SJSU is no different: It offers a space for participants to strengthen current friendships and cultivate new ones.

University life can be incredibly busy with lectures, grading, and other side projects. Despite working in the same building, it can be difficult for colleagues to keep in contact as the semester progresses.

“The four of us were friends before we did this but, that said, there would be long stretches when we wouldn’t really see each other [for] weeks at a time,” Skinnell says.

Setting a time for some friendly competition, though, has benefited the team: “Now we have at least an hour a week that we see each other and sort of catch up,” Skinnell says. “I think it has reinforced our friendships.”

In addition to reinforcing current friendships, joining the league has allowed the Strikethroughs to meet people across campus. This includes (but isn’t limited to) people from the IT Department and from Counseling and Psychological Services. “The connections and getting to know people across campus is very nice. You can walk and there are hundreds of people and you don’t really know anybody,” Moriarty says. “It’s kind of nice to stop and chat for a minute.”

For those who are concerned that their skill level might not measure up in order to join the league, set those worries aside—no previous experience is necessary. “You don’t have to be good. You really don’t,” Skinnell says. However, there is room for improvement. Moriarty points out that Johnson has definitely improved her skills and is currently the only member on the team to throw with a curve, which is an impressive skill.

Although the team is capped at four players, those who are on the fence about joining may test it out by becoming a spare. If becoming a substitute won’t suffice, another option is to create a new team.

“There is room for other teams, so if [someone] want-

ed to put together a team, we would welcome a rival team in the English Department,” Skinnell says. Although The Strike Throughs invite a little bit of healthy competition, there are other reasons as well: “I’d also like the opportunity to trash talk [faculty] in the hall,” Moriarty says. “It’s hard to trash talk about academics, but [trash talking about] bowling is perfect.”

While joining the bowling league has benefited the members of The Strike Throughs by building comradery, their participation has also sparked enjoyment throughout the English Department. “I think the rest of the department is amused by us,” Moriarty says. “They’ll take photos of us and send it out to the whole department.”

The team also enjoys updating their colleagues on the current happenings of the team. “One of the things we try every semester is, [when] we have an opening day meeting, we always ... slip a little slide into the PowerPoint to tell that we won again,” Moriarty says.

For those interested in joining, feel free to email Larry Aldama, manager of the SJSU Bowling Alley, or reach out to either Skinnell or Moriarty. The only requirement in joining is paying the \$50 fee that covers costs for entrance, trophies, and shoes. The Faculty Bowling League meets every Friday at the Bowling Alley in the Student Union at noon.

A Year in the Life of Center for Literary Arts by Annie Herrington & Mat McKenzie



*CLA Event at MLK Library, (left to right) Vanessa Hua,
Kirsten Chen, R.O Kwon
Photo by Cora Wilson*

The Center for Literary Arts (CLA) was founded in 1986 by Alan Soldofsky with the intention for the South Bay to have a “premier literary reading series” and in hopes of “fostering an appreciation” for literature in a culturally and socially diverse population. Thirty-three years later, the goal of this non-profit organization remains the same—inclusivity throughout the community. Thirty-three years later, the CLA is still going strong.

In 2018, Professor Cathleen Miller went on sabbatical, leaving the assistant director of the CLA, Dr. Selena Anderson, in charge of the CLA this past academic year.

Dr. Anderson’s excitement and optimism for this organization’s past and future are apparent. The goals Dr. Anderson holds for this non-profit is “to spread an interest in contemporary literature within a very diverse region. I want our reading series and author lineup to reflect San Joséans of all walks of life, and to engage people who may not otherwise see their stories in canonical literature.”

Accordingly, Anderson strives to find various authors—authors of color, authors within the LGBTQ+ community, female authors, senior authors, and others—so that this community can have a wide range of literature, created by and for all kinds of people.

As a Texas native, Dr. Anderson says this opportunity has given her an “appreciation of the political history of San José and just the raw talent of local authors.” This has established a larger goal for the organization to become nationally recognized. Part of the local, raw talent for the CLA comes from San José State University’s own English department. Graduate students act as volunteers and student assistants for the program. The undergraduate students attend the events, set up their laptops, and write or “bust out” free poems on demand for attendants at the event. The attendants give the undergrads words or ideas they want in their poem, and the undergrads take down the attendants’ information so that they can send these individuals their customized poem via email.

So far during the 2018-2019 school year, the CLA has expanded the number of total events from four to seven. These extra events are meant to support and collaborate with more local authors, with the intent to offer bilingual poetry and community workshops in the future. Another opportunity the CLA wants to provide is bringing writers, readings, and workshops into senior centers, offering senior memoir writing to further expand the organization and its literary influence. The CLA wants to partner with other organizations within the community in hopes of engaging the public to get involved. A main objective of this past academic year is to get local people interested and better acquainted with who and what the CLA is in order to gain community inclusivity within its diversity.

This public outreach is not just directed to students, as Dr. Anderson remarks that she “always wants to lift local writers whenever [she] can,” and has teetered with finding a connection to the CLA and the less-fortunate members of the San José community. Speaking further around this narrative, Dr. Anderson goes on to say, “I think there’s a lot of people who are interested in writing poems, for example, but they’ve never done a workshop. I think they’d be interested in doing it, and it’s something I want to be able to provide for people.” Steps have already been put into place to cater towards this, as more than

50% of the CLA events are free to the public, making them easily accessible to all.

Among the events hosted by the CLA, Dr. Anderson regards the Analicia Sotelo reading as her favorite of this year. Taking place back in February 7 at the San José Museum of Arts, the event invited guests to enjoy treats such as a spoken-word performance from Asha Sudra, the aforementioned free personal poem booth, and a live reading from Sotelo's novel *Virgin*. Incredible CLA productions such as these have Dr. Anderson excited for the variety of events already in line, and the growth of the organization this past year.

The CLA's social media presence has grown with the organization simultaneously and has been instrumental in drawing a younger audience. They have redesigned the website, and an update is scheduled later this year. Active Facebook and Twitter accounts, coupled with a newly created Instagram account, have proven pivotal in attracting more people to the CLA.

Under the guidance of Selena Anderson and countless others, the Center for Literary Arts' growth has been substantial this past year. With a great reception from the community it holds dear, the CLA is poised to deliver on these expectations and more for not only itself, but the city. For more information about upcoming CLA events, follow them on Twitter [@CLA_SanJose](https://twitter.com/CLA_SanJose).



Photo by Daisy Lopez

Announcement: English Department Honors Program Fall 2019

Undergraduates interested in obtaining Honors at graduation from the English Department should be advised that in Fall of 2019, we will be offering students ENGL 281 (Special Topics Graduate Seminar) in lieu of ENGL 190 (Honors Seminar). The topic this year is “Big Books of the 19th Century” with Professor Allison Johnson (Tuesdays, 4:00–6:45 p.m.). The course description is as follows:

“This class is for serious students seriously into exploring and examining the big books of the nineteenth century. We're in it for the long haul, so don't bother with SparkNotes or summaries. We will track the evolution of the novel on both sides of the Atlantic, paying close attention to the circulation of texts and ideas. Students will conduct original research into publication history and the history of printing, and become familiar with major trends and movements that shaped American and British literature between 1800 and 1900.”

Students who qualify (GPA at 3.5 in the major and 3.0 overall) may contact Professor Johnson to obtain permission to take her course for Honors credit.

Course Descriptions for Fall 2019

ENGL 20: The Graphic Novel

Edwin Sams, F 9:30–12:15

In English 20 we shall study how pulp literature—comic books, comic strips, underground comix, etc.—influenced the development of graphic novels and how the graphic novel has influenced literary novels and popular films. By studying works from diverse cultures and marginalized communities, as well as learning the historical and cultural backgrounds from which they were produced, we shall explore how this new genre expresses enduring human concerns.

ENGL 30: Literature and the Environment

Daniel Rivers, MW 9:00–10:15

This course will examine how writers have used fiction, poetry, theater, essays, and film to make sense of their relationships with the landscapes and ecological networks they inhabit. Along with examining the political life of U.S. nature writing, this class will ask how literature has both contributed to and challenged popular thinking that locates “nature” as something separate from the daily realities of modern life. Throughout the semester, our readings will challenge us to use global, transnational, and inter-species approaches to analyze how world-shaping forces such as colonialism, industrialization, tourism, migration, and consumer culture have influenced humans’ relationships with, and understandings of, life on earth. Though this class will be global and intercultural in scope, our readings will place a particular emphasis on the political ecology of

California, including topics such as wilderness conservation, biodiversity, drought and water use, environmental justice, agriculture in the central valley, and other-than-human life.

ENGL 50: Beginnings to the American Experiment

Adrienne Eastwood, MW 10:30–11:45

This course introduces you to English literature from its early beginnings through the 18th century, with some emphasis on the beginnings of literature in America. With each text, we will consider the relationships between the literary artifact and the culture that produced it. Lectures and discussions will be organized around themes designed to address social and political aspects of the various cultures we will study. We will specifically address the themes related to heroes and monsters/villains, courtship, marriage, gender construction, and colonization.

ENGL 50: Beginnings to the American Experiment

José Villagrana, TR 12:00–1:15

Exploration of Anglo-Saxon, Medieval, Renaissance, and Early Colonial Writings in Britain and America. Class engages literary text, literary history, and historical events that shape the literature of the period.

ENGL 60: The Emergence of “British” and “American” Literatures (1680–1860)

Allison Johnson, TR 9:00–10:15

This course explores the circulation of ideas, literary texts, and peoples back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean from the Restoration period in England up to the outbreak of the American Civil War. We will chart the literary effects of British impe-

rialism, witness the birth of a distinctly American identity and literature, and examine literary depictions of the transatlantic slave trade from both sides of the pond.

ENGL 70: Emerging Modernisms and Beyond

Kathleen McSharry, TR 3:00–4:15

Exploration of Modernist and twentieth-century writings in Britain and America. Class engages literary text, literary history, and historical events that shape the literature of the period.

ENGL 71: Introduction to Creative Writing

Michael Tod Edgerton, TR 4:30–5:45

We'll look at a variety of literary genres and forms, writing processes and procedures in the course of our ADVENTURES IN MAKING ART WITH WORDS. We'll explore the genre conventions of POETRY, FICTION, and NONFICTION before moving between AND BEYOND them TO EXCITING NEW TERRITORY. We'll move our processes off the blank page to compositional strategies that begin with and/or include other texts or art works, such as literary COLLAGE, ERASURE, EKPHRASIS, and MULTIMEDIA WRITING. Classes will be divided between discussion of model texts (mostly PDFs) and constructive critique of student work.

Email Michael.Edgerton@sjsu.edu with any questions.

ENGL 71: Creative Writing

Aamina Ahmad, MW 1:30–2:45

John Damm, MW 3:00–4:15

Leanne Lindelof, TR 9:00–10:15

Jill Logan, MW 12:00–1:30

Robert James, F 9:30–12:15

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

ENGL 78: Introduction to Shakespeare's Drama

José Villagrana, TR 9:00–10:15

Reading of five or six representative plays. The Elizabethan era, dynamics of performance and close analysis of the plays. GE Area: C2

ENGL 100W: Writing Workshop

Kathleen McSharry, TR 10:30–11:45; 1:30–2:45

Allison Johnson, TR 12:00–1:15

Advanced workshops in Reading and Composition.

ENGL 100WB: Written Communication: Business

John Hessler, MW 3:00–4:15; 4:30–5:45; M 6:00–8:45; W 6:00–8:45

Laimin Lo, M 9:00–11:45; W 9:00–11:45

Carlos Mujal T 6:00–8:45

Sara West, MW 10:30–11:45

This hands-on course is designed to simulate actual business communication scenarios (oral and written) that are encountered by business professionals daily during the course of their careers. Assignments will enable students to practice and immediately apply both practical and theoretical aspects of organizational communication directly in real-life work situations. Communication mechanics and style

(practical), and the appropriateness of messages and methods based on specific organizational situations (theoretical) will be emphasized.

English 101: Introduction to Literary Criticism

Katherine Harris, TR 12:00-1:15

Do you see hidden meanings in literary texts? Movies? Games? There are many possible readings of all literary and visual texts. Even your own identity governs your interpretation of the material. For this course, we will discover and apply critical models to various literary, visual, and digital texts. Critical models will include foundational twentieth-century theory as well as contemporary approaches to literature (Feminist, Queer, Marxist, Post-Colonial, and Digital Humanities theories). Though we will apply these critical models to texts across several historical periods and literary genres, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* will be our ur-text. Co-requisite: Engl. 100W

ENGL 103: Modern English Grammar

Cynthia Baer, MW 12:00–1:15 PM

In this course we will explore “Modern English Grammar” as a plastic and plural languaging capacity that we daily use to transact in increasingly multilingual and multimodal 21st century environments and economies. In our exploration we will observe the growth and structure of modern English, including its phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. We will attend particularly to the daily adaptations of grammar as we negotiate social spaces and purposes with varied audiences and across media. Our goal will be to under-

stand the complexities of modern literacy as it is transacted among various users of varied Englishes. Prerequisite: Upper division standing.

ENGL 103: Modern English

Linda Mitchell, MW 9:00–10:15

The growth and structure of modern English, including its phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. Attention to social and regional varieties, with implications for language development and literacy among native and nonnative speakers.

ENGL 105: Seminar in Advanced Composition

Ryan Skinnell, TR 9:00–10:15

Advanced expository writing.

ENGL 106: Editing for Writers

Sara West, MW 1:30–2:45

In this class, we cover all the fundamentals that writers need to know about editing and working as a professional editor. This includes proofreading and copyediting, as well as sentence-level and document-level editing. The basics? Fix gnarly sentences. Make ugly paragraphs pretty. Learn how to work with other writers. Learn how to get editing jobs. Gain the confidence to explain your edits and defend them against the howling mobs! Required class for Professional and Technical Writing concentration.

ENGL 107: Professional Technical Writing

Mark Thompson, TR 10:30–11:45

In this survey of technical and professional writing, you'll learn how to write and design persuasive documents that get real things done in the real world. Projects in-

clude resumes and cover letters, proposals, instructions (video and writing), presentations, augmented reality apps, and user manuals for phone apps. We also learn a number of digital tools used to author and publish writing in the current tech landscape, such as SnagIt, DITA, and Madcap Flare. Required class for Professional and Technical Writing concentration.

ENGL 108: Gaming & Narrative

Katherine Harris, TR 1:30-2:45

This course studies the relationship between literary [narrative theory and games](#), especially plots that branch and fork to produce different stories with different endings. From experimental writing to video games, how have game/books changed or reinvented the possible spaces of narrative? How can knowledge of narrative possibilities (theory) enrich our understanding of games? This course surveys a wide variety of interactive narrative material, including print, film, and software, engaging students in analyzing and attempting to create branching narrative structures. Our ur-text is *House of Leaves*. And, yes, we're going to do some gaming! Participants pick a class game in the first few weeks of the semester. Heavy gamers & newbies welcome: <https://gamingnarrative108.wordpress.com/>

ENGL 109: Writing and the Young Writer

Shama Ball, W 4:30–7:15

This course is designed to strengthen participants' writing skills in both creative and expository genres and to develop participants' knowledge and skills as future teachers of writing.

ENGL 112A: Children's Literature

Daniel Hendel De Lao, MW 10:30–11:45
Study of literature for elementary and intermediate grades, representing a variety of cultures. Evaluation and selection of texts.

English 112B: Literature for Young Adults

Mary Warner, T 4:30–7:15

In ENGL 112B, we read *After the First Death*, *Speak*, *Whale Talk*, *Witness*, *Prisoner of Azkaban*, and *We Were Here*. Two additional texts—*Literature for Today's Young Adults* and *Adolescents in the Search for Meaning*—introduce YA literature's genres, demonstrate the complexity of the best YA lit, and provide author/book resources. Book Talks, a book to film paper, and a unit of study/annotated bibliography requirement deepen student knowledge of YA Literature. The 4th credit enhancement includes the options of field experience and creating a blog devoted to a sub-genre of YA Lit.

ENGL 120: Theatre History

Kirsten Brandt, MW 9:00–10:15

Examines the historical roots, many manifestations, and diversity of theatrical performances with particular attention to theatre's role within and between cultures.

ENGL 123B: Literature for Global Understanding, Africa

Meghan Gorman-DaRif, TR 1:30-2:45

This course examines literature in English produced during the colonial and postcolonial periods from a variety of countries and cultures in Africa, focusing on how the texts engage with the contexts of colonialism, systems of education, and the English language itself as a medium for self-ex-

pression. This course is not meant to be a complete survey in African literature, but instead aims to introduce students to some of the themes that have emerged in African fiction over the last fifty years, and the historical, political, and social contexts from which such writing emerges.

ENGL 125: European Literature: Homer through Dante

Linda Mitchell, MW 12:00–1:15

This course offers an introduction to some of the major literary works of the first 2,000 years of Western Culture—works of great genius and superb craft. They are as much a part of our heritage as that which we receive from our parents. Our goal this semester is to take possession of that heritage—like heirs who have come of age—by understanding how these works are connected to each other and to us via a series of parallel and contrasting patterns of ideas and experiences that form a path of human continuity across time and place. Students will engage and explore the texts from a variety of contexts and viewpoints: textual, literary, political, social and cultural; become familiar with a range of critical approaches to the texts; and demonstrate a working knowledge of the texts' influences within the Western literary tradition.

ENGL 127: Contemporary Theatre

Kathleen Normington, TR 12:00–1:15

European and American playwrights from 1950 to the present and important theatre practices for this period.

ENGL 128: Scriptwriting

Buddy Butler, TR 10:30–11:45

Writing in dramatic form: plot structure, characterization, content and theme. Analysis of plays. Exercises in writing.

ENGL 129: Introduction to Career Writing

Sara West, MW 9:00–10:15

Meet the Cat-loving SJSU Professor Who Got Her Entire Class Published in the Top-Read Newsletter on Campus!

In this course, students write to get published in the places that they read and to practice in the types of writing they might do in the workplace. We'll work on skills for writing for copywriting, creative nonfiction publications, social media, and marketing and communications. Students also write and produce the English Department newsletter, a short video or podcast episode, and their own blogs. Expand your portfolio, learn some new skills, and march boldly forth with a publishable work in hand. Required class for the Professional and Technical Writing concentration.

English 130: Writing Fiction

Keenan Norris, TR 12:00–1:15

In the fiction workshop, students will examine how literary fiction works. We will read and write in the genre of fiction with specific, though not sole, focus on the short story. Some questions students will think critically about include the following: What makes a character compelling? What makes for great line-by-line writing? How is narrative momentum created and sustained? What is it about a story that evokes an emotional response in the reader? How do writers create and reinvent these moments? Through lecture, discus-

sion, assigned reading, writing exercises, and peer feedback, students will investigate elements of craft including plot and story structure, characterization, point of view, and voice among other topics to write and revise two short stories.

ENGL 130: Writing Fiction

Nicholas Taylor, MW 10:30–11:45

Workshop in short stories or other short fiction. Beginning the novel in individual cases. May be repeated twice for credit.

ENGL 131: Writing Poetry

Samuel Maio, MW 12:00–1:15

Workshop in verse forms. Study of traditional and contemporary models. May be repeated twice for credit.

ENGL 133: Reed Magazine

Cathleen Miller, T 3:00–5:45

Student-edited and managed literary magazine. Contents selected from local, national and international submissions. Students urged to work on the magazine for the two semesters required for publication. Open to all majors. May be repeated once for credit.

ENGL 135: Writing Nonfiction

Cathleen Miller, TR 1:30–2:45

Advanced creative writing workshop in literary nonfiction. Study of traditional and contemporary models. May be repeated twice for credit.

ENGL 142: Chaucer

Nancy Stork, TR 1:30–2:45

Chaucer's language and major poetic works. *The Legend of Good Women*, *The Canterbury Tales*, and *Troilus and Cressida*.

ENGL 144: Shakespeare I

José Villagrana, TR 10:30–11:45

A study of racialization in early modern England and beyond, this course engages with religious conversion, geohumorism, lineage, and colonialism in the works of Shakespeare and his fellow Elizabethan dramatists.

ENGL 145: Shakespeare and Performance

Adrienne Eastwood, MW 12:00–1:15

In this course, we will examine in-depth several of Shakespeare's plays, specifically addressing issues of performance and interpretation. Placing each play in the context of its original performance during Shakespeare's time, and its life on stage and screen in the ensuing centuries, encourages an engagement with the ways in which re-imagining Shakespeare's works helps them retain their vitality and cultural relevance. Paying particular attention to modern productions, we will analyze the ways in which production elements such as setting, casting, staging, costumes, editing, and individual performances shape and create meaning (or fail to do so) for the audiences of today. Placing these plays within this context of performance will raise larger issues about the complex relationships between the Shakespearean canon and its ever-changing audiences. Students will respond to each Shakespearean play text through both writing and oral interpretation, integrating speech and dramatic performance with an understanding of the complexities of plot, characterization, and dramatic form.

*Required for the English Single-Subject Credential

English 149: Bigger 6: British Romanticism Beyond the Canon (1785–1835)

Katherine Harris, TR 9:00-10:15

Typically, British “Bromanticism” valorizes the six white, male authors of 1798–1835 (Byron, Keats, P. Shelley, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake). What about all the women? Or the immigrants? Or the colonial inhabitants? For our class, instead, we will study the representation of British Romanticism in a global context alongside those “Big 6.” In addition, we’ll handle and examine all types of rare print materials 1785–1835. Have you ever handled a delicate newspaper or book published in 1801? Or closely examined the engravings from *Frankenstein*? Or read an account of slavery by a former slave?

ENGL 150: The Victorian Age

Revathi Krishnaswamy, TR 12:00–1:15
Study of major British authors and poets from 1837 to 1900, tracing changes in philosophy, religion, society and culture represented in their works.

ENGL 165: Topics in Ethnic American Literature

Keenan Norris, TR 1:30–2:45
This course will focus on literature that derives from the African and Afro-Latin, European and Asian diasporas of the Americas, with specific focus on texts that concern the dilemmas, conflicts, politics, psychic effects, communities and philosophies that have emerged out of American urban experience. The stories of urban America’s displaced and disenfranchised are an especially significant aspect of American and world literature.

ENGL 166: American Literature Since 1945

Samual Maio, MW 1:30–2:45

Major works of American literature since 1945, including writers such as Barth, Reed, Kingston, Lowell, Rich, Pynchon, and Ozick.

ENGL 169: Ethnicity in American Literature

Keenan Norris, TR 3:00-4:15

Study of race and ethnicity in the literary arts of North America. This class will examine selected works of authors from such groups as African Americans, European Americans, Asian Americans, Chicanos, Latinos and American Indians. GE Area: S
Prerequisite: Passage of the Writing Skills Test (WST) or ENGL/LLD 100A with a C or better (C- not accepted), completion of Core General Education and upper division standing are prerequisites to all SJSU studies courses. Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended.
*This course description was written prior to current norms of nomenclature that have been adopted by some of these racial and ethnic groups.

ENGL 172: The Arts in U.S. Society

Elizabeth Linden, MW 1:30–2:45

William McCraw, W 3:00–5:45

Study of American arts and artists in their aesthetic, social, and political contexts, focusing on 20th and 21st centuries. Arts examined include architecture, poetry, music, visual arts, dance, theatre, performance art, and fiction. Special emphasis on issues of cultural diversity. GE Area: S

ENGL 173: Thinking About Contemporary World Arts

Victoria Rue, T 3:00–5:45

An interdisciplinary course on contemporary arts and culture which investigates connections between arts disciplines and world cultures. The course uses critical and creative thinking as the lens to focus on issues in the arts, especially personal and cultural identities. GE Area: V

ENGL 230. Seminar in Eighteenth-Century British Literature

Cynthia Baer, W 4:00–6:45

“The novel as a species is messy, digressive, inclusive, circumstantial, temporal, particular, and subjective. . . . The novel vigorously rejects traditional notions of what literature was; it carves out new literary space,” says Mikhail M. Bakhtin. Seminar participants will collaborate to explore the rise of this “transgressive form”—with its focus on seduction, harlotry, transvestism, marriage markets; its pageant of female characters and women writers. We will read and discuss a common list of novels. To contextualize these, each participant will present a text from a supplementary list of rhetoricians, essayists, journalists, and satirists of the period.

ENGL 259: Seminar in Composition Studies

Thomas Moriarty, W 7:00–9:45

How do people write? How do people learn how to write? And, most importantly for our purposes here, how can we—and should we—teach writing? Composition theorists have been looking into and arguing about these questions—and many others—for years, and this course will immerse you in their debates. Through

extensive readings and discussions, as well as papers and presentations, you will learn how to analyze and evaluate competing descriptions of the writing process; how to recognize and evaluate the range of approaches to teaching composition; how to examine assumptions underlying current theory and practice in writing instruction; how to explore assumptions and implications of composition and rhetorical research; and how to identify key problems and issues surrounding current research in composition and rhetoric. English 259 is a prerequisite or co-requisite for Teaching Associates and is highly recommended for any student, MA or MFA, who contemplates teaching writing as part of a career.

ENGL 281: Big Books

Allison Johnson, T 4:00–6:45

This class is for serious students seriously into exploring and examining the big books of the nineteenth century. We're in it for the long haul, so don't bother with SparkNotes or summaries. We will track the evolution of the novel on both sides of the Atlantic, paying close attention to the circulation of texts and ideas. Students will conduct original research into publication history and the history of printing, and become familiar with major trends and movements that shaped American and British literature between 1800 and 1900.

Letter from the Chair, Noelle Brada-Williams

Three of your classmates presented papers at the recent International Steinbeck Conference held at the Martha Heasley Cox Center for Steinbeck Studies here at San Jose State. Undergraduates Gabriele LaFrank spoke on “The Black Sheep of ‘The White Quail,’” Megan DeGroot read “How do I Get to be a Boy?: Steinbeck’s Exploration of Gender non-conformity,” and Ana Hans presented “What Is Truth Really?,” an examination of conceptions of truth in *Log from the Sea of Cortez* and *Cannery Row*. All three had been students in a class on Steinbeck (English 167) and their ideas had all germinated in a journal assignment. The insightful and critical analyses would have fit into any professional context. Audience members mistook them for graduate students. I’m sure the listeners could have easily assumed they were faculty members based on the strength of their presentations, if not for their age. During the question and answer portion of the panel, Professor Nick Taylor, novelist and Steinbeck Center Director, contributed to a lively discussion, providing insight from his own perspective as a writer on Steinbeck’s craft and writing choices. Professor Susan Shillinglaw, the panelists’ teacher and the former Steinbeck Center Director, contributed to the discussion with her encyclopedic knowledge of Steinbeck’s life and work. As I told my colleagues, the amazing synergy in that room between craft and scholarship, combined with the achievements of our students, was like a pure distillation of what we do best in this department.

Next Fall we are very fortunate to have three new faculty members. Dr. José Villagrana will be teaching English 50 and 144. His scholarship examines religious thought and English and Spanish relations in the early modern period. Dr. Megan Gorman-DaRif will be teaching English 123B, African Literature, and the methods course for teacher credential candidates. Her research focuses on representations of violence in both African and Asian literatures. She has also been a high school teacher in California. Dr. Daniel Rivers is a joint hire between



Dr. Noelle Brada-Williams

English and the Humanities Department. For his first semester with us, Professor Rivers will be teaching one class, our brand-new GE course on Environmental Literature (English 30). I want to thank the many students who came to meet the applicants for these positions and who gave feedback to the department to help us to make these important hires.

With the good fortune of getting new faculty, we also have the sad duty to say goodbye to others. Professors Paul Douglass and William Wilson are retiring after this semester, as is lecturer and poet Sally Ashton, who has frequently taught majors in English 130, the poetry writing workshop, and served as a judge on our many creative writing awards. Professor Jennifer Johnson will be taking a new job at Cal State Sonoma next Fall. We will miss them all, but rest assured that other faculty will be stepping up to make sure that students are not adversely affected by these losses. For example, in the Fall, Professor Mitchell will be taking on advising for Teacher Prep students—and Professor Thompson, in turn, will be taking on the advising for Creative Writers that is now done by Professor Mitchell.

Congratulations to the many of you who are graduating this semester. Please stop by the department and sign your name to the “Book of Alumni” that we will have at the front desk. If you put down an email address that we can reach you at in the future, we will be able to invite you to future alumni mixers. We are hoping to have an event a semester to encourage alumni networking. More San Jose State alumni work in Silicon Valley than students of any other university. If you stay in touch and foster connections with other alumni, letting each other know about job openings or the kinds of skills that are needed in your industry, you’ll all have an unbeatable recipe for success. I also hope you pick up one of our “Department of English and Comparative Literature” wristbands. Not only will they make a great accessory to your cap and gown, but I imagine people hanging them from their rearview mirrors so that you can all be reminded of where you have been at the same time as you are looking ahead to your future.

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