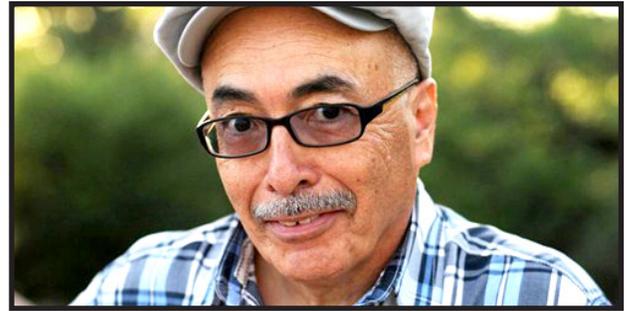


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### *The U.S. Poet Laureate Comes to SJSU*

By Mariana De La Cruz and Lorena Solorzano



In honor of National Poetry Month, San José State University has recently hosted the tenth annual Legacy of Poetry Day. The Legacy of Poetry Day always draws a myriad of guests: faculty, alumni, students, local poets, local poet laureates, and many more. Each year, the event presents a theme, and this year's theme was aptly titled, "Ways and Ways to San José: A History of Santa Clara/Silicon Valley." Held at the newly refurbished Hammer Theater, the event offered a wide selection of activities including music, short readings, and the newly added *Pachanga on the Paseo* event. What made this year's event especially different was the special guest appearance of the first Latino Poet Laureate of the United States, Juan Felipe Herrera.

Juan Felipe Herrera was raised in Fowler, California by migrant farm workers. Notably, Herrera captured the essence of his childhood and what it is like to be a Mexican in America. He uses both Spanish and English in his poems, providing the reader with rich, authentic prose that deviates from standard American poetry. Herrera's poetry grapples with the constant flux of negativity and positivity on Hispanics within American culture. Herrera's work focuses substantially on themes regarding immigration. His most recognized poetry collections include *Half the World in Light: New and Selected Poems*, *187 Reasons Mexicanos Can't Cross the Border: Undocuments 1971-2007*, and *Notes from the Assemblage*. Aside from reigning as the lead Poet Laureate, Juan Felipe Herrera also teaches at UC Riverside and is currently working on a project called *La Casa de Colores*.

While San José State has previously featured local Poet Laureates from California, Herrera's presence this year was most advantageous. Alan Soldofsky, one of the event's organizers and a renowned poet, revealed that



Herrera's appearance at this year's Legacy of Poetry Day was a "big deal" and a huge honor. He explains that this year's event catered to a much larger audience than previous ones. San José State University was fortunate enough to have Juan Felipe Herrera visit its campus and community to celebrate the joys of poetry.

Every April, we celebrate National Poetry Month along with the rest of the nation by hosting poetry readings and festivals to remember the impact of poetry in our lives. Poetry Month was first celebrated in 1996 with the Academy of American Poets and has been held ever since. San José State University's own legacy began with poet Edwin Markham, who graduated from San José State and is most known for his poem "The Man with the Hoe." The English Department at SJSU has not only produced acclaimed poets and novelists, but it is also honored to have distinguished faculty members who dedicate themselves to the education and progress of their students. It was due to the hard work of these students and instructors, like Professor Soldofsky, that the event was successfully organized.

Legacy of Poetry Day focused on celebrating SJSU's poetic heritage, which is clearly a long and remarkable one. A variety of outstanding poets from the Bay Area joined Herrera in the festivities to commemorate the importance of poetry. California Poet Laureate Emeritus Al Young, who was Lurie Author-in-Residence in 2002, began the readings. Some of the poets who followed include San Francisco Poet Laureate Alejandro Murguía and Santa Clara Poet Laureate Arlene Biala. The personal touch came from poetry readings by SJSU's own active publishing faculty as well as students and alumni.

Another innovative feature of the event was the collaboration between the English Department and the Television, Radio, Film and Theater Department. Guests were treated to a one-of-a-kind multimedia theatrical performance presented by the Department of Radio, Television, Film, and Theater. *Pachanga on the Paseo: A Roving Spectacle of Public Art* took place inside the Hammer Theater. The performance, which featured music, dance, and video performances, was directed by Kinan Valdez, who co-wrote the spectacle with playwright Luis Valdez. Poet Juan Felipe Herrera did the honors of blessing the Hammer Theater, which SJSU will co-manage and operate for the next three years. Overall the *Pachanga* was a vibrant and unique addition to the celebration of poetry.

This year the theme of Legacy of Poetry Day was "Ways and Ways to San José: A History of Santa Clara/Silicon Valley." In a place like Silicon Valley where innovation and progress rule, working together is key, and appropriately enough collaboration between departments and organizations is what made the event a success. The way to the festival was not without challenges, so it's safe to say that one of poetry's greatest legacies is its power to bring people together.

## Prepare for a Train Wreck: The Real Story of Lady Byron and Lady Caroline

By: Alyssa Cable and Nicole Castro

On May 9, 2016, SJSU's Center for Literary Arts will host an event celebrating the remarkable women in Lord Byron's life. Professor Paul Douglass and Julia Markus, the biographers of Lady Caroline and Lady Byron, will discuss the lives of these women and how they rose up to become prominent figures in the Romantic era. As the world may know, Lord Byron is best remembered for creating poetry that embodied 19th-century Romanticism. However, to the women who loved him, the famous poet only created misery and destruction. Lady Byron and Lady Caroline survived the tumultuous character of Lord Byron, but history books tell the story differently.

Since the end of their marriage, Annabella Milbanke had received a bad reputation. "There are a lot of people who have derived a great joy out of hating Lady Byron," said Douglass. Many biographers were under the impression that Lady Byron should have felt grateful to be the poet's wife, and that she was just too small-minded to understand the free spirit of a literary genius. In the recently published *Lady Byron and Her Daughters*, author Julia Markus corrects these misconceptions by giving readers a new biography with a twist: retelling the story through Annabella's perspective.



Markus sets the tone for Lord Byron and Annabella's relationship by giving a clear warning: "Readers, prepare for a train wreck." Both individuals entered the marriage for different reasons. For Annabella, the marriage was her way to save the poet from self-destruction. For Byron, the marriage was a method to hide his darkest secret, which was the fact that he was in love with his half-sister. In Markus' sympathetic biography, she shows some compassion for Byron but never loses sight of the abusive nature he had towards Annabella.

Lady Byron is not the only woman who has misguidedly received a bad reputation. Lady Caroline Lamb is infamous for being the insane, sex-crazed woman who was obsessed with Lord Byron. She was married to William Lamb when her affair with Lord Byron began. According

to Douglass, she was strongly portrayed as “the woman that Byron had the misfortune of meeting. And if she had been given the chance, she would have wrecked his life.” However, there was so much more to Lady Caroline than that mistaken belief.

As a child, Lady Caroline was well-educated. When she was just four years old, she knew how to draw a map of England and started to read. By the time she was five, she was speaking both French and Italian. And at six years old, she began to study music. In fact, she would later write songs that would be set to music and sold by Isaac Nathan, a friend of hers who had written a book of songs with Lord Byron called *Hebrew Melodies*. Lady Caroline’s first novel, *Glenarvon*, was published shortly after Lord Byron left his wife and daughter. The novel was based on the events of her affair with him and was not received well by critics. Despite the public backlash, Lady Caroline was not deterred. Her ambition drove her to continue writing, and she eventually published three additional novels. It was Lady Caroline who famously coined the phrase describing Byron as “mad, bad, and dangerous to know.”

Besides loving Lord Byron, both Annabella and Lady Caroline shared another thing in common: motherhood. In fact, it was their dedication and love for their children that brought these two women together. When Lord Byron left, Annabella was afraid that he would come back to take their daughter Ada away. So she spoke with Lady Caroline, seeking advice and hoping to acquire enough dirt on Lord Byron to help her keep Ada by being able to show the public that he was an unsuitable father, but it never came down to that. Lord Byron stayed away from Annabella, which enabled her to raise her daughter on her own. Ada Lovelace even grew up to become a mathematical genius that recognized the power of computers years before the first one was even built.

Lady Caroline also had a child from her marriage, where she proved to be a devoted mother. Her son was epileptic, and suffered from frequent seizures and severe mental problems. During that time, most families would send their children away if they were mentally challenged, but Lady Caroline decided against that. Instead, she chose to keep her son close at home, teaching him lessons and taking him places with her. She cared for her son and loved him, demonstrating how compassionate and admirable of a character she was.

In previous biographies, both Lady Byron and Lady Caroline were looked down upon, giving readers the implication that they were never good enough to be with the famous poet. But what history books have failed to do is highlight the women’s passion and devotion to altruism and social activism. Biographies that focus on these women shed light on the important individuals they were able to become once they stopped living in the shadow of the poet.

May 9, 2016 marks the 200th anniversary (to the day) of Lady Caroline Lamb’s first novel, *Glenarvon*. Join Professor Paul Douglass and Julia Markus as they discuss the women of the Regency era, the hardships and victories these women encountered, and how they emerged as some of the first great feminists of their time. The event takes place at 7:00 PM in the SJSU King Library, Room 225.

## 150 Years and Counting: Reed Magazine’s Upcoming Anniversary

By: Yesenia Chipman and Michael Ma

**R**eed Magazine, San José State University’s literary journal, isn’t kidding when it claims to be “the oldest literary journal west of the Mississippi.” The journal’s origins can be traced all the way to 1867, where it debuted as the Acorn back when SJSU was known as the California State Normal School. After going through a number of name changes, such as the Quill and El Portal, the name Reed finally came to be in 1948. It has been 68 years since its permanent name change. Reed still continues to thrive and make its presence known in the literary community. In October 2015, Reed Magazine hosted its first ever event at San Francisco’s LitQuake, which



featured readings by Daniel Arnold, Andrew Lam, Alan Soldofsky, and more Bay Area authors. They also secured their first booth at the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) Conference in Los Angeles in March, where they officially unveiled their new logo, a visual tribute to Reed’s long history. Now Reed is gearing up for its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the 70<sup>th</sup> issue being published next year.

So what can readers expect for the big anniversary? Cathleen Miller, editor-in-chief of *Reed*, as well as the director of the Center for Literary Arts and an associate professor here at SJSU, already has some plans brewing. A special 70<sup>th</sup> issue of *Reed*, as well as a big celebration at

their next booth at AWP in Washington D.C. next year, are already in the works. However, as far as for any more specific plans, “We’re still talking about it,” Professor Miller laughs. With a year to go, there’s of course still a lot of room for planning.

Being in publication for 150 years is a notable accomplishment for a literary magazine and one that credits many supporters for its long-lasting legacy. Professor Miller credits part of *Reed’s* legacy on the support given from the university, where most of *Reed’s* production is done, thanks to the English 133 class that allows students to participate in its creation. *Reed* is also used as a teaching tool on campus, further spreading its presence to new and experienced creative writers who are looking to submit and hopefully have their work published. “We’re lucky to have funding from the university and a steady staff from the [English 133] class,” Professor Miller says.

*Reed’s* major improvements over the years have also contributed to its legacy. Many of these improvements come from its head editors, such as Chris Fink, who instituted the John Steinbeck Award for Fiction, and Nick Taylor, who took *Reed* global by making submissions online. Professor Miller herself has made a number of improvements by spreading *Reed’s* presence online through an upgraded website, as well as establishing a stronger social media presence through Facebook, Twitter, and other services. She has also instituted the Gabriele Rico Challenge for Nonfiction and a new award that will begin taking submissions in 2016 titled the Mary Blair Award for Art in honor of Mary Blair, an SJSU alumna and notable animator.

Professor Miller’s goals for *Reed’s* future are always to keep *Reed’s* “reputation up” and upgrade its quality. She hopes to publish more high-profile writers, as well as to continue to publish unknown writers. An eBook version of *Reed* is also in the making as a way to connect with its international readers. “We already get submissions from all over world,” Professor Miller says, “but it’s hard for them to get access to *Reed*.” With the eBook, they will be able to have more international readers and hopefully more submissions with *Reed* being easier to access. As far as goals for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Professor Miller mainly wants “everyone talking about *Reed Magazine*.”

If anyone would like to become a part of the big 150<sup>th</sup> celebration issue, they are encouraged to submit their fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and art at [reedmag.org](http://reedmag.org) from June 1st to November 1st. For those interested in publishing, they can register for English 133 and help create *Reed’s* 70<sup>th</sup> issue. The 69<sup>th</sup> issue of *Reed* will be released on May 17 with a launch party at Books, Inc. that evening.

## Cristina Garcia: Distinguished Writer Inspires Her Students at SJSU

By: Ross Slaney and Ryan Madison

How many English students would be willing to write a creative piece on an element in the periodic table? How can you characterize an element such as gallium, and create powerful fictional rhetoric?



Many classes would be stumped by this block-inducing prompt, but with visiting professor Cristina Garcia, students are accustomed to the weekly challenge. Garcia was selected as a visiting professor this year due to her accomplished career as a writer. Following her career in media as a *TIME Magazine* bureau chief, she authored six novels and won numerous awards including the National Endowment for the Arts (2004), the Northern California Book Award (2008), and the Frontizera Award (2008).

Garcia is constantly on the move; she has been a visiting professor at nine different universities since 2005. A voracious appetite for literary accomplishment has swept her through a whirlwind of journalism, teaching, and fellowship opportunities. Thanks to the Connie L. Lurie Distinguished Visiting Author-in-Residence program, Garcia’s latest stop is at SJSU. She is teaching a graduate creative writing course, where she shares valuable insight gained from authoring six novels. Her most recent work, *King of Cuba*, released in 2013, has received critical acclaim and numerous award nominations. The novel features a fictional characterization of a Cuban dictator and contrasts it with the life of another elderly man who is a political refugee.

In this semester’s graduate-level fiction workshop, Garcia aims to impart wisdom earned from a lifetime working as a dedicated writer. In this week’s class, Garcia tells her students to research their element, “because they have properties that might suggest properties for your characters, or something unexpected for a plot point.” She believes that the most captivating plot twists in fiction writing come from the nuances of the characters and setting. To prepare for an upcoming novel, tentatively titled *Berliners Who*, she moved to Berlin and rented an apartment for three months where she took in the sights and sounds of the city life. In her opinion, there is no substitute for removing yourself from your comfort zone if you want to grow as a writer.

Garcia says she is “always coming up with prompts that get them [the students] out of their usual maze of pre-occupations,” which probably helps explain the periodic

table writing prompt her students are currently wrangling into submission. Garcia firmly believes that discovery is an essential part of developing your style as a writer, and that her role as a teacher is not to impose her style on her students, but to encourage her students' styles to flourish. She hopes encouragement will allow her writers to develop a unique style; "I want them, at the end of the year, to be more distinctly themselves than when they began."

Garcia's methods of teaching are designed to force students to adapt to the demands of the newest prompts as a way to grow their creative skills. One of her preferred teaching methods is to separate the class into small groups, where they bounce their ideas off of one another in a comfortable environment. She rejects the idea of working in large groups, believing that, "There's always a human tendency toward consensus." Discussing in large groups ends in a single "consensus" being accepted by the majority, ignoring the minority, and swaying others' opinions. By gathering in smaller groups, Garcia's students are better able to express their ideas without being overly swayed by majority rule, and are then able to think for themselves. It is this same style of teaching that shows her dedication to her students' individual growth over the semester.

The "maze of preoccupations" that Garcia refers to is especially inhibiting for college students. She says, "There's so much competing for our time nowadays...and there's no replacement for a good book...except for a nine-hour conversation with a really smart, good friend." According to Garcia, books act as a one-on-one conversation you have with your own imagination, providing introspection that cannot be found with other forms of media. Garcia wants her students to learn to "reclaim their time...don't let others set your agenda for you." She endeavors to have her students remember that they need to make time for themselves and for their minds to grow, and Cristina Garcia does her best to express this lesson to her students in order to improve their abilities as writers.

Cristina Garcia is an influential and successful writer, but she has also made time for teaching the next batch of writers all around the country. Thanks to the Lurie program here, Garcia is able to work on her newest novel while simultaneously shaping the minds of future SJSU writers. Her influence here at SJSU is powerful yet temporary, since next year she will no longer be in residence, and her experience and insights will accompany her to another school. The SJSU students here have appreciated her efforts and have improved from her insights. She has found her time here at SJSU enjoyable; "I have a particularly lively, funny class. It's really been a pleasure."

## Introducing Jennifer Johnson: A New Asset to the Department

By: Catherina Silva and Prescott Nicoll

As young students we enjoy the lazy professor, the easy "A," or any class that doesn't challenge us. However, as we mature and develop our academic capabilities, we become more interested and enthusiastic about becoming better learners. Jennifer Johnson, the department's newest addition, is coming this fall and is incredibly passionate about the many different ways literacies can benefit not just students, but the community as well.

"I'm really excited to come back home. Fall can't come soon enough!" Jennifer says on her return home to the Bay Area, where she attended UC Berkeley as an undergraduate. Her SJSU career will begin as an Assistant Professor of English Education where she will primarily be working with majors in the English department who are English Prep for Teaching. Important job right? She says, "In the state of California we have such a need for teachers, so it's a very interesting time to be in teacher education programs." Certainly the need for high-quality teachers in California is critical, but with Jennifer's devotion to education the future will be in good hands.

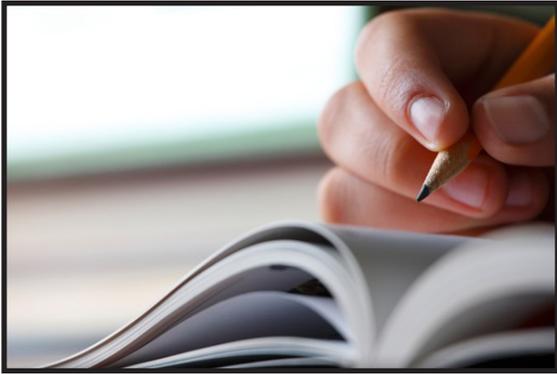
Currently, Jennifer is finishing up her dissertation at the Teacher's College of Columbia University, where she will turn that dissertation into a book and publish several articles about it. At Columbia, she is pursuing a PhD in English Education that will add to her Master's in Media, Culture, and Communication, and to a BA in Ethnic Studies. By her many diverse accomplishments, we can see just how much Jennifer Johnson is dedicated to literary arts and English education. Her background is in critical pedagogy, which means she strives to help students achieve "critical consciousness". This goal of teaching her students how to critically think about the world around them is motivated by her want to help shape current and future leaders of our society, and she believes this can be done through English education and literacy. One teaching style she finds very effective is the use of oral education, primarily through debate. What an asset she will be to the English department in helping find new and effective ways to teach students.

While here at San José State, Jennifer hopes to learn about her students' needs and interests to see how she can be the best of service to them as well as to the university, department, and her colleagues. Jennifer's presence will



be crucial as she helps teachers in various fields such as math, science, and physical education with using literacy to better their own practices of teaching. This unique approach to teaching aspiring teachers, even outside of English, is an essential skill that Jennifer is bringing to SJSU. She has found this method personally rewarding because she has been able to help teachers across the board.

Outside of her own academic work, Jennifer collaborates with various hip-hop artists in San José and New



York who promote literacy, such as Hip-Hop Congress. She works with them as they go to different schools and teach students literacy through music. Jennifer says, “There are a number of really incredible people there doing very interesting works around blending languages and thinking about critical literacy. How can we use literacy to think about the world around us? And if we identify that there are some things that need changing, how can we think about generating solutions to that in creative ways?”

Her interest in teaching literacies is shown by the number of questions she has about current practices, and in seeking ways to approach current problems—issues like technology advancing in the classrooms, how students’ identities are pitted against each other in a classroom, and about how people can access the literacies they need in order to make a happier and more fulfilling life for themselves. Jennifer’s advice to students is, “Patience, persistence, and perseverance. And not to lose one’s self either, that there are ways to be one’s whole self in academic spaces, that just because we walk into a classroom doesn’t mean that we have to check who we are. Rather, if we bring all of ourselves into our professions and to our academic life we can enrich our presence and our scholarship as well.”

Though SJSU is lucky to gain a new scholar, Jennifer is happy to be gaining a new academic home. “I come with an open mind about the possibilities. I feel honored to be among such a distinguished faculty who are wonderful people and have very innovative ideas about curriculum.”



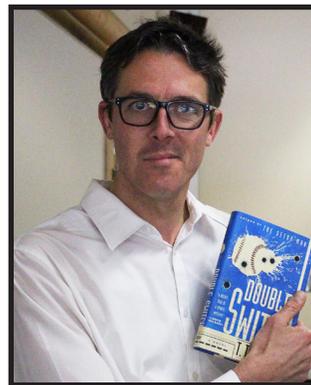
If you are interested in taking a course with Jennifer in the fall 2016 semester, she’ll be teaching English 109, Writing and the Young Writer; and English Education 353, Methods of Teaching English.

## *Big League Gumshoe: T.T. Monday’s Double Switch*

By: Isaac Paek & Joshua Regan

San José State is filled with many published professors, but within this group of faculty, T.T. Monday is a colleague that most would not recognize. It is the pseudonym (a fake name, like Lemony Snicket) of Professor Nick Taylor. Nick Taylor grew up in Los Angeles and went to college at the University of Virginia. Taylor went on to do his MFA in fiction writing there as well. He stayed there for twelve years before coming back to California in 2007, when he was hired at SJSU. It was at SJSU where he began writing crime novels. We sat down with him in the noisy student union in order to get to know him better.

Taylor is currently a professor at SJSU and author of four novels. His most recent work, *Double Switch*, was



released to the public on March 1, 2016. Always a baseball fan, he grew up loving the Los Angeles Dodgers, but when he moved to San José, he began to follow the San Francisco Giants and the Oakland A’s. When asked about why he chose to write a crime novel in the baseball setting, he said, “Well, they’re two things I wanted

to write about, and I thought ‘Why not do them together?’ There’s not a whole lot of logic to it.”

We delved more into the tips and tricks of writing and getting published. As students and aspiring writers, any tips from a published author who has a popular series would be valuable advice to keep. For example, when asked what the hardest part of writing a story is, Taylor responded with, “Keeping things together. The plot and the twist have to be intertwined without letting the reader know.” He said, “It is very difficult to keep track of who knows what and when. The part that I love is creating the characters.” He had to learn the ins and outs of the crime genre, how to place the plot, the twist, and who isn’t telling everything. *Double Switch* had a total of five different drafts. He said that he has a list of characters and plots that he wasn’t able to put into either of the first books and is already thinking about the third book in this series.

We asked him if there was a plan before *The Setup Man* to start a series. He told us that once *The Setup Man*

was published and the audience was created, the publisher asked him to do a second book. As for the book itself: written as the sequel to *The Setup Man*, *Double Switch* stands strong as a continuation of Professor Taylor's baseball-detective series. His fourth published work, and his second published under the pen name T.T. Monday, is a gritty baseball and crime novel, the story of relief pitcher and part-time private eye Johnny Adcock, a man who fully embodies the timeless and classic nature of the hard-boiled detective, as well as the celebrity and solidarity of being a player on a major league team. When we asked about where he got the name for his central character, Taylor said "[it] seemed like a badass detective name."

Adcock is a powerful character and serves as an interesting lens to view the world that Taylor has developed. Taylor is knowledgeable of the world he lives in, down to the minute details that make the novel come alive, bringing praise for his attention to detail and realistic depiction of the life of a ball player on the road. The other characters he writes, from the charming stylist Tiff Tate (Taylor's favorite character) to the center of Adcock's investigation, Yonel Ruiz, a Cuban baseball player in a rough situation, also shine beautifully throughout the story; they are well written and believable, with strong personalities that don't rely on dated clichés or stereotypes.

Setting-wise, Taylor's knowledge of baseball earned him praise for how realistic his depiction of the major league scene comes across. At the same time, it is never overbearing; everything is included in a way that any reader, regardless of whether they know anything about baseball, is able to understand and enjoy the sports aspect of the novel without having to be a fan. And as far as being a crime novel, *Double Switch* excels, thrilling and intriguing, capable of hooking the reader and pulling them into a dark side of America's favorite pastime.

*Double Switch* has received exceptional reviews on Amazon (standing at the time of writing at four and a half stars) and strong editorial reviews from reviewers and other published authors. Nick Taylor also receives excellent reviews from his students as a professor, and rightly so. This interview helped us understand what it takes to be writers, from the simpler aspects to the deeper difficulties and trials that a writer has to overcome to get published. Our interview left us with answers and thoughts aplenty; and we look forward to seeing what T.T. Monday has for us in the future.

## What Makes a Steinbeck Fellow

By Matisse Le and Anton Nguyen

The language in a piece of writing reflects on the author. There are many different voices used to communicate to our audiences. Whether it is a moody teenager's blog, a feminist criticism, or a conservative tabloid, these voices have their own value. Some voices are in the midst of discovery and some will never be heard. If a writer drafts something and no one



reads it, what is the point? On the surface, there are not a lot of resources for young writers. Many aspiring writers have to take whatever job they can find in order to stay afloat. Besides financial burden, inspiration can be a fickle mistress, and time is a limited resource. Where does the struggling writer find the money to support themselves and find time for their work? The Steinbeck Fellowship at

San José State University provides these resources, allowing selected writers to perfect their voice while polishing pieces of writing. We decided to ask past and present Steinbeck Fellows Jennie Lin, Sara Houghteling, and Cara Bayles about their experience and whether they had any advice for young writers.

Jennie Lin, current Steinbeck Fellow, has lived in places like Boston, Hartford, Anchorage, and San Francisco. Lin had this to say about living in many different places and how it affected her as a writer and as a person: "Wherever I have gone, the sense of being an outsider has followed me. I suspect this is the case with most writers—and those who want to write—that there is an urge to express what you have not been able to say up to this point, to make some little sound, to see if anyone is out there who can really hear you." Her experience as a minority living in many different places led her to start writing. Writing was a way to make herself heard where she otherwise did not have a voice. Lin also added that great writers "read and write a lot," meaning they are inspired by the works of others. Lin's work speaks for itself.

Sara Houghteling, 2005-2006 Steinbeck Fellow, says writers borrow ideas and historical events as inspiration. During residency in Paris through the Fulbright-Hays Program, she found the inspiration for her first novel. In an interview addressing her novel, *Pictures at an Exhibition*, she says that her characters are based on stories "borrowed from people [she] interviewed or had seen in documentaries," and used them to accurately portray a historical narrative. During a writing project, Houghteling says, the "writing process is fitful, caffeinated, and somewhat stressful," but is a great relief after all is said and done.



Writing being “the same thing as traveling” was one of the most important ideas that Cara Bayles, 2014-2015 Steinbeck Fellow, discussed when we sat down to talk to her. Bayles lived in Boston, Massachusetts and attended Wesleyan University and Boston University. She told us that she worked at a newspaper in Louisiana for a time before finally settling in San José. Living in Louisiana inspired the novel she completed during her time as a Steinbeck Fellow. According to Bayles, writers learn and grow by getting out of their comfort zone by “experiencing places that are unfamiliar” to the writer. She spoke of how she “kind of hate[s]” travel writing, but she found it was important to assign it to her students so they would sit back and observe for a while. “You have to get out of yourself,” she says. In other words, Bayles was teaching her students to find all the details they would not get from a quick glance. That way, it isn’t generic.

Her current novel is a criticism on modern media set in a fictional location in Louisiana, and how it affects everyone’s lives. Much like Steinbeck, she wants to write about what is important for the time. While the novel has yet to be published, Bayles expressed hope for the future. Bayles was rejected for grants and other fellowships, but her willingness to push herself and write a story the public needs at the moment reflected in the work she showed them.

Inspiration is the fundamental building block; it is the driving force of the different Fellows’ achievements. Lin’s writings come from the different experiences from the places she travels and lives in. Houghteling’s first novel came from her love of art and her experience living among Parisians. Bayles’ current novel is about the unreliability of news outlets. Steinbeck once said, “The writer must believe that what he is doing is the most important thing in the world,” and with this belief, writers will create their greatest works. These writers embody this idea. Life is not a destination but a journey. Writing is not a means to an end but a means for perpetual expression.

## Creative Writing Faculty Shares Publishing Advice

By: Jared Carrillo and David Schwabe

For many English majors, having a work of theirs published is a vital part of their aspirations. It’s no secret that the process of getting published is incredibly daunting, especially in creative writing. Many faculty members of the English department have all gone through this grueling trial. We were fortunate enough to sit down with professors Nick Taylor, Tommy Mouton, and Robert James to ask them about their own experiences in publishing. What we learned will certainly give valuable insight for writers as to what the process is like.



For many novice writers, it can be hard to tell when to stop revising. The endless pursuit of perfection and constant self-criticism all writers experience is even more prevalent in inexperienced writers. We asked the professors what they might say to a young writer who struggles with the notion that their work might not be good enough to get published.

Nick Taylor advised an adventurous attitude, saying, “Just go for it. You never know when your work might connect with an audience.” Tommy Mouton recommended that writers should seek feedback from a trusted source who will give honest, objective opinions. Robert James advised, “Wait until you’re confident, believe in yourself. Writers know.” While the approaches were different, it was clear that each professor held the belief that writers should trust their gut and believe in both themselves and their work.

Revision can be a vicious cycle of cutting, adding, and changing just about anything in which a flaw can be found. We asked the professors how they deal with the struggle of knowing when to stop revising before submitting work to publishers. James suggests your revising process is no longer helpful “[when you get to the] point of saturation and you feel like you’re duplicating or repeating yourself.” Taylor admits that, for him, “Revising stops when the deadline comes.” To him, the end of the revision process is an act of will, akin to surrendering. However, Mouton disagrees. “It’s up to the writer to know,” he says. “It’s like an athlete preparing for a triathlon. They put in the work, they train their body, and when they’re ready, they can feel it.” We gleaned from the professors that revision can be long and painful, but learning when to stop

is a necessary step in the growth of a young writer.

Moving from writing to submitting work and entering the process of getting published is an entirely different arena. Agents are key factors in determining whose work gets published. To Taylor, agents can be a mixed bag. “Make sure you’re ready. They can be a distraction,” he advised. “They’re looking for work they can sell. They need a complete manuscript.” Tommy Mouton likened agents to court attorneys: “You can try to get published without one, but it’s like defending yourself in court. You can try, but it’s not the best idea.” In his personal experience, he has seen agents as “gatekeepers who are looking for what [they] can sell.” Agents are a daunting step in the process, but we learned that they are just as much a stepping stone as they are an obstacle, as ultimately you will rely on them to get published.

Agents aren’t the only ones with a say in your work. The thought of submitting one’s work for editors to change can be frightening. Both Taylor and Mouton, however, have found editors to be extremely helpful. “In my first book, [the editor] cut one hundred pages without making substantial changes to the story,” recalled Taylor. “If their changes don’t significantly compromise your vision, accept them,” advised Mouton.

Robert James, however, has had negative experiences with editors—one in particular with a magazine that he had written an article for. “Basically, they rewrote the entire thing, and honestly, made it worse,” he says. “I didn’t want my name attached to what was essentially someone else’s work, so I refused to have it published.” In most cases, it appears as though editors are successful in tidying up one’s work without damaging it, but in the event that they do, the writer must make a decision to take the money and exposure, or remain true to their original ideas.

Perhaps the most grueling part of getting published is the inevitable avalanche of rejection. Each professor experienced his share of it, and many offered ways that rejection can be beneficial, a necessary mindset for writers to have. Tommy Mouton shed light on the unfortunate reality that publishing is first and foremost a business. “Most are just automated responses, but in the times that I’ve received actual feedback from real people, yes, it has been very beneficial.” Professor Taylor suggested that writers should listen to rejection and criticism, but still hold tight to their vision even in the face of rejection.

Despite rejection, young writers need to persevere even when it seems impossible. Many faculty members of the English department are proof that getting published is not as impossible as it can seem. Talking to these professors taught us that through willingness to listen, dedication, and a good attitude, it’s possible to see your publishing dreams realized.

## ***Happy Retirement, Gloria!***



Gloria & Virginia, Faculty Offices, circa 1979

Goodbye, Gloria! From your beginnings as an intrepid SJSU student, to your nearly 40 years as a lecturer, colleague, CFA rep, and friend, your contributions to the department and the university can’t be easily summarized in a newsletter blurb. Enjoy your well-earned retirement, you will be missed! And if you ever miss us too much, we’ll be happy to pass along a few stacks of freshman essays that need grading.

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# Course Descriptions

Fall 2016

(Note: These descriptions were accurate at the time of press, but class times can change. Consult the SJSU course catalog when you plan to register.)

## **ENGL 10: Great Works of Literature:**

### **TechnoLiterature**

Harris, Katherine, TR 9:00-10:15

Technology has completely overtaken our lives, from interaction between and manufacture of human beings to the daily use of technology. How has this shifted our culture, our literature, our legacy? This semester, we will explore literary representations of biotechnology (mad scientists!), society's reactions to technological impositions (Luddites and punks!) and techno un-literature (hypertextual madness!). Along the way, we will discuss literary elements, historical context, readers' reactions, and the techno/digi/cyborg world of TechnoLiterature. GE Area C-2 (Letters)

## **ENGL 20: The Graphic Novel**

Brada Williams, Noelle, F 9:30-12:15

This class focuses on the interplay of written and visual forms of narration in the illustrated texts that have come to be called "graphic novels," the styles and methods of which have come to have a profound impact on both literature and film production in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. English 20 will focus on a few of the graphic novel's obsessions: autobiography, war, and family—and the surprising frequency in which these three themes intersect.

## **ENGL 22: Fantasy and Science Fiction**

Stork, Nancy P, T 15:00-17:45

English 22 covers historical works of fantasy from the Norse, Celtic, and Chinese traditions: Sigurd the Dragon-Slayer, King Arthur, and King Monkey. We will also consider seminal works of science fiction: *The Time Machine*, *Rossum's Universal Robots*, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*. Shorter works will cover early Dracula and cyberpunk.

## **ENGL 56A: English Literature to the Late 18th Century**

Stork, Nancy, MW 10:30-11:45

This course is a survey of British Literature from its earliest works through the eighteenth century. The goals of the course are to help students to gain an overview of the major literary periods, genres, authors, and works of English literature. We will discuss these texts from a variety of perspectives, including the dynamic relationship between heroes and villains throughout early English history, considering what these representations reveal about the various societies that produced them.

## **ENGL 56B: English Literature Late 18th Century to Present**

Wilson, William, MW 16:30:00-17:45:00

Major literary movements, figures, and genres from the Romantic age to the present. Writers may include Austen, the Romantics, Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Dickens, the Brontes, George Eliot, Hardy, Yeats, Joyce, Lawrence, Forster, Woolf, T. S. Eliot, Auden, Beckett.

## **ENGL 68A: American Literature to 1865**

English, Karen, TR 9:00-10:15

A survey of major and significant texts, movements, and writers exemplifying the literature of the United States of America, from colonial days to the period of the Civil War. Required: Student presentations, short papers, and exams.

## **ENGL 68B: American Literature 1865 to Present**

Maio, Samuel J, MW 10:30-11:45

A survey of major and significant texts, movements, and writers exemplifying the literature of the United States of America, covering the period from the end of the Civil War to the present. Required: Student presentations, short papers, and exams.

## **ENGL 71: Creative Writing**

Engell, John F, TR 10:30-11:45; 12:00-13:15

English 71 is a workshop class and an introduction to writing and reading fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction at the university level. Each student will write a short story, several poems, and a creative essay. All student writing will be workshopped in class.

**ENGL 71: Creative Writing**

Schragg, E.D., MW 12:00-13:15

An introductory creative writing class that will focus on using universal elements of all great creative writing—moving images, energetic words, tension, pattern, and insight—to write, critique, and perform song lyrics. The class will analyze the building blocks of word play, rhythm, and rhyme in culturally diverse examples of rap, rock, and folk songs, and students will learn how to use those building blocks to create their own stories.

**ENGL 71: Creative Writing**

Ashton, Sally, TR 13:30-14:15

This course will introduce you to techniques writers in all literary genres use to craft works of memorable non-fiction, fiction, and poetry. In an era of so much competition for a reader's attention, how can you make words on a page or screen come alive? What are the strategies common to all effective creative writing? We will use short form readings, workshop, studio assignments and your own experimental writing to find out.

**ENGL 71: Creative Writing**

Goebel, Luke B., MW 15:00-16:15

Kirby, Sheree, W 18:00-20:45

Lindelof, Leanne, MW 16:30-17:45

Mouton, Tommy, TR 9:00-10:15

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**

Eastwood, Adrienne, MW 12:00-13:15

In this course we will grapple with the question: does Shakespeare still matter in the twenty-first century? Students will study several of Shakespeare's plays in depth, and then analyze modern film adaptations of those same works. Some of the pairings we will discuss include: *The Taming of the Shrew – 10 Things I Hate About You* (Dir. Gil Junger); *Othello – "O"* (Dir. Tim Blake Nelson); *Macbeth – Scotland PA* (Dir. Billy Morrissette); *Romeo and Juliet – Romeo + Juliet* (Dir. Baz Luhrmann) *Hamlet – Hamlet* (Dir. Almerayda, with Ethan Hawke). In each case, we will tease out the decisions made by each director in their attempt to remake or reinterpret Shakespeare's work.

**ENGL 100A: Writing Competency Through Genres**

St. Dennis, Allison R., TR 7:30-8:45

Sonntag, Owen, MW 12:00-13:15

Satisfies the WST requirement if passed with a C or better (C- or lower will not satisfy the WST). Prepares students for 100W through drafting, feedback, and revision to demonstrate writing competency. Develops ability to analyze written genres used in the students' chosen disciplines as well as write analytical and reflective essays. Prerequisite: Must have failed the WST at least twice. Note: A CR/NC option may not be used to satisfy the WST requirement.

**ENGL 100W: Writing Workshop**

Sparks, Julie, MW 10:30-11:45

Stork, Nancy P, MW 15:00-16:15

Advanced workshops in Reading and Composition, Creative Arts, English Studies, and Technical Writing.

**ENGL 100W: Writing Workshop**

Wilson, William A, TR 16:30-17:45

English 100W is an integrated writing and literature course designed to provide English majors with a firm foundation for the study of literature. Through close and careful reading of literary texts, students will develop the following: The ability to read, analyze, and interpret literary texts intelligently, and to respond to them critically both orally and in writing. Advanced proficiency in both traditional and contemporary research strategies and methodologies necessary for writing research-informed papers that communicate complex ideas effectively and appropriately to both general and specialized audiences; a rhetorically sophisticated writing style appropriate to upper-division university discourse; mastery of the conventions of standard English and manuscript format.

**ENGL 100WB: Written Communication: Business**

Kirby, Sheree, M 9:00-11:45

Hessler, John, M 18:00-20:45; T 18:00-20:45

W 18:00-20:45; R 18:00-20:45

Mujal, Carlos, R 18:00-20:45

Lindelof, Leanne, T 18:00-20:45

Landau, Linda, W 9:00-11:45

Lo, Laimin, F 9:30-12:15

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.

**ENGL 101: Introduction to Literary Criticism**

Harris, Katherine D, TR 10:30-11:45

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**

Mitchell, Linda C, MW 9:00-10:15; MW 13:30-14:45

This course provides a survey of Modern English phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, transformational grammar, and the universality of linguistic structures. Material in the course will also focus on some recurring problems of usage and/or correctness, regional and social varieties of English, the role of pragmatics in using language to communicate, and the historical development of English, especially as it affects the language today. The course also includes Reed-Kellogg Diagrams.

**ENGL 105: Seminar in Advanced Composition**

McNabb, Richard, TR 9:00-10:15

Advanced expository writing.

**ENGL 106: Editing for Writers**

Thompson, Mark A, MW 15:00-16:15

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 copy-editing, 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**

Thompson, Mark A, TR 12:00-13:15

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 include resumes and cover letters, proposals, instructions (video and writing), presentations, 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 Adobe InDesign, Snagit, and Madcap Flare. Required class for Professional and Technical Writing concentration.

**ENGL 108: Gaming and Narrative**

Harris, Katherine D, TR 13:30-14:45

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, to engage students in analyzing and to creating branching narrative structures. Requirement: Upper division standing.

**ENGL 109: Writing and the Young Writer**

Johnson, Jennifer, M 16:30-19:15

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

**ENGL 112A: Children's Literature**

Krishnaswamy, Revathi, MW 9:00-10:15; 10:30-11:45

Study of literature for elementary and intermediate grades, representing a variety of cultures. Evaluation and selection of texts.

**ENGL 112B: Literature for Young Adults**

Warner, Mary, T 16:30-19:15

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 and a unit of study/annotated bibliography requirement deepen student knowledge of YA Literature.

**ENGL 117A: American Literature, Film, and Culture**

Engell, John F, R 15:00-17:45

The focus of this class will be California Noir and Neo-noir, though strictly speaking not every literary work and film we will study in the class is “noir.” These works are typically “dark” in tone and subject. We will cover novels and their film adaptations, an original screenplay, a collection of essays and stories, and other works. NOVEL Frank Norris. MCTEAGUE (1899), FILM: Erich von Stroheim, director GREED (1925); NOVEL: Dashiell Hammett. THE MALTESE FALCON (1929), FILM: John Huston, director. THE MALTESE FALCON (1941); NOVEL: Raymond Chandler, THE LONG GOODBYE (1953), FILM: Robert Altman, director. THE LONG GOODBYE (1973); FILMS: David Lynch, director. MULHOLLAND DRIVE (2001), Roman Polanski. CHINATOWN (1974).

**ENGL 123A: Literature for Global Understanding:  
The Americas**

Karim, Persis M, TR 12:00-13:15

Course promotes global understanding by examining the cultures and literary arts of a selected region of the world, the Americas, and covers representative texts and authors from Latin America and the Caribbean/West Indies.

**ENGL 123C: Literature for Global Understanding:  
Oceania**

Meshor, David R, TR 15:00-16:15

Writers from the South Pacific (including Australia, New Zealand, Samoa, Fiji, and other island nations) have produced some of the most impressive fiction written in English over the past century or so. We will read six or seven novels or story collections by authors such as Miles Franklin, Joséph Furphy, Patrick White, David Malouf, Mudrooroo, Peter Carey, Witi Ihimaera, Keri Hulme, Albert Wendt, Sia Figiel, and others. (GE Area V, as well as World Lit for English majors.)

**ENGL 125: European Literature: Homer to Dante**

Mitchell, Linda C, MW 10:30-11:45

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 129: Introduction to Career Writing  
& Digital Publishing**

Thompson, Mark A, TR 10:30-11:45

In this course, students write to get published in the places that they read, drafting and revising about whatever they’re into: food, video games, fashion, high-tech, science—whatever. Students also write and produce English Department magazines, an in-class podcast series, the ProfTech website, and their own blog. 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.

**ENGL 130: Writing Fiction**

Maio, Samuel J, MW 13:30-14:45

English 130 is a fiction workshop class in which each student will write short stories. Each of these short stories will be workshopped in class, after which each story will be rewritten. Both drafts—pre- and post-workshop—will be included in each student’s end-of-semester Portfolio. In addition to writing short stories and revising them, each student will be responsible for helping to workshop all stories written by classmates. And each student will be responsible for reading a number of assigned, published short stories that will serve as models for writing successful short fiction.

**ENGL 130: Writing Fiction**

Taylor, Nick, TR 13:30-14:45

Prerequisite: English 71. This workshop focuses on the craft of fiction writing. We will begin the semester by reading works of contemporary short fiction. You will learn to read as writers, not critics (there is a difference!). Each student is required to submit two original short stories for review by the class. Lively participation and written commentary is required. In lieu of a final exam, you will turn in a substantial revision of one story.

**ENGL 131: Writing Poetry**

Karim, Persis M, TR 10:30-11:45

This course focuses on the work of the poet and the work of the poem. The poet's task is to envision, write, and revise using all the poetic tools necessary. What are they? Why choose one over the other? What are contemporary poets using today? The work of the poem is to become more than the sum of its parts, not merely well-chosen words, but art. Great expectations all the way around, but we'll get to work writing, reading, and discussing poetry, poetic device, your work and discoveries.

**ENGL 133: Reed Magazine**

Miller, Cathy A, T 15:00-17:45

Would you like to be part of *Reed Magazine's* 150th Anniversary issue? Students produce each edition of *Reed*, the West's oldest literary journal, founded in 1867. This course is ideally a two-semester sequence starting in the Fall term, when we'll focus on editorial duties, reading submissions, reviewing art, and communicating with submitters to gain hands-on experience in publishing. Note: enrollment is by instructor permission only. Please contact Prof. Miller to apply: [cathleen.miller@sjsu.edu](mailto:cathleen.miller@sjsu.edu).

**ENGL 140A: Old English**

Stork, Nancy P, MW 13:30-14:45

Wēs hæl! Your chance to study the actual language spoken in early medieval England. (History Channel "Vikings" fans take note—there has been some real Old English in this show). We will learn the basics of OE grammar and read selections from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Riddles and elegiac poetry as well as the Runic alphabet and an introduction to culture. Learn the language that inspired Tolkien to create the land of Rohan. This class is normally offered every other year so be sure to sign up now. If you complete this class and *Beowulf* in the spring, these two semesters can count as your language requirement for the English degree.

**ENGL 144: Shakespeare I**

Miller, Shannon M, TR 12:00-13:15

This course will introduce you to some of the major plays of William Shakespeare. Each play will be considered both within the context of the cultural and political atmosphere in early modern England and through the critical lenses provided by postmodern theories of literature. Students will gain a basic knowledge of Shakespeare's thematic questions and a solid understanding of the language he used to explore these themes. For example, we will discuss the construction of the family as a mini-commonwealth and the political impact that added to Shakespeare's dramatic productions. Similarly, we will consider the relationship between patriarchal and monarchical authority, and the ways in which related ideologies circulated among Elizabethans.

**ENGL 145: Shakespeare & Performance**

Eastwood, Adrienne, MW 9:00-10:15

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.

**ENGL 166: American Literature Since 1945**

Soldofsky, Alan D MW 13:30-14:45

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

**ENGL 167: Steinbeck**

Shillinglaw, Susan, TR 12:00-13:15

**Steinbeck.** This course considers Steinbeck's ecological awareness and social vision, both growing out of a layered sense of place. We will discuss the contemporary relevance of his critiques of/love of America and Americans. **Texts:** *To a God Unknown*, *The Long Valley*, *Tortilla Flat*, *Of Mice and Men*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Moon is Down*, *Cannery Row*, *East of Eden* and *Journal of a Novel*.

**ENGL 169: Ethnicity in American Literature**

Karim, Persis M, TR 15:00-16:15

Study of race and ethnicity in the literary arts of North America. Selected works of authors from such groups as African Americans, European Americans, Asian Americans, Chicanos, Latinos and American Indians.

**ENGL 176: The Short Story**

Maio, Samuel J, MW 12:00-13:15

Analysis and interpretation of selected short stories from the 19th century to the present.

**ENGL 178: Reading /Writing Creative Nonfiction**

Shillinglaw, Susan, TR 10:30-11:45

This course focuses on the art of creative nonfiction, what it means, who writes it well, and how to do it.

**Texts include:** Joan Didion, *Slouching Toward Bethlehem*; Hunter S. Thompson, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*; Miriam Pawel, *The Crusades of Cesar Chavez: A biography*; John Steinbeck, *Travels with Charley*; William Zinsser, *On Writing Well, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition*; Course reader.

**ENGL 180: Individual Studies**

Arranged with Instructor

**ENGL 183: Jane Austen**

Brada, Angela N, MW 12:00-13:15

We will both examine the work of Jane Austen in its late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century contexts and explore why her work has become some of the most widely adapted and imitated of all time.

**ENGL 190: Honors Colloquium**

Meshner, David R, TR 13:30-14:45

The Man-Booker Prize, awarded annually to the outstanding English-language novel from around the world (since 1969, and including American works since 2014) is perhaps the world's most prestigious literary award, after the Nobel Prize. The winners, and many of the nominees, become instant best-sellers in the UK, Australia, and elsewhere. We will be reading some of the greatest Booker Prize winners, from Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981, "The Booker of Bookers") and A. S. Byatt's *Possession* (1990), to Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* (2002) and Marlon James' *A Brief History of Seven Killings* (2015). Prerequisite: permission. Earn honors at graduation by completing this course with a B or better, having a 3.5 major and 3.0 overall GPA, and being admitted to the departmental honors program. In the past, students have been able to use this course to substitute for any major requirement.

**ENGL 193: Capstone Seminar**

Shillinglaw, Susan, TR 15:00-16:15

Seven ways of looking at an English Major: As essayist, as creative writer, as reader, as critic, as researcher, as book group participant, as graduate-with-a B.A.-in-literature-and-highly-employable. Texts include Anne Fadiman, *At Large and At Small*; Ismael Beah, *A Long Way Gone*; Joan Didion, *The Year of Magical Thinking*; Gerald Durrell, *My Family and Other Animals*; Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*.

**ENGL 199: Professional/Technical Writing Internship**

Thompson, Mark (Arranged)

This independent study requires that students secure a writing internship with a local business (while the department can't guarantee an internship, we can put students in touch with companies that have expressed an interest in SJSU interns). 120 hours of workplace experience are combined with academic readings in professional writing. In a final essay, students compare their workplace experience to the academic literature on workplace writing.

## A Letter from Shannon Miller, English Department Chair



It has been a wonderful election season for English majors, those with arcane or, let us say, inside knowledge about language and literature. In the lead up to clarity around the Republican party's presumptive nominee, Donald Trump, a March 2nd article in the *Washington Post* declared a "Pandemonium in the GOP."

As any student of Milton knows, "Pandemonium" was a word created by John Milton, and he uses it in Book 1 of *Paradise Lost* to describe the capital of the fallen angels in hell. The word means "the place of all devils." If one substitutes the meaning of the word into the title of the *Post* article, it suggests something about the GOP that the author might not have intended. Perhaps he or she wasn't an English major! It gets better. John Boehner's recent description of Ted Cruz as "Lucifer in the flesh" prompted the high priest of The Church of Satan to defend Lucifer with reference to "the positive, heroic aspects of the character as portrayed by Milton in his epic, *Paradise Lost*" (ABC News, April 30).

These examples are certainly fun, showing how students of literature are able to understand such references or, in the case of "Pandemonium in the GOP," discern unintended inside jokes. But they also illustrate the ways in which art is also, perhaps always, political—whether literature, music, or dance. This year's highly celebrated Broadway hit, *Hamilton* embodies that fusion of art and politics in a surprisingly prescient way. The musical relates the story of Alexander Hamilton, born a "bastard" in the Caribbean who grows up to be a "scholar" and a "founding father." Enacting the energy that propels a figure who jointly authors the Federalist Papers and constructs the United States' financial structure—all in hip hop songs—the musical is unexpected, frame-shifting, and intellectually challenging. It is also joyful, a component of the arts that we acknowledge too little of the time. We have become so focused on the utility of majors, and thus of university study itself, that we often only consider what a major can help one accomplish, what jobs it may qualify one for.

How wonderfully unexpected and unanticipated, then, is a headline from a recent *Washington Post* article: "The next hot job in Silicon Valley is for poets" (April

7). The article describes how writers have become central in the process of constructing virtual assistants, the next generation of voice-activated programs like Siri. Because poets, fiction writers, and trained readers of fiction have a more complex understanding of character, they are essential in creating believable composite personalities "who" need quirks, but can't be too artificial or idiosyncratic. And these skills come not just from writing fiction or poetry, but from reading. As I have mentioned before in this column, reading literary fiction has been shown to make people more empathic and thus able to "navigat[e] complex relationships" (*The Guardian*, Oct. 8, 2013). That empathy, then, makes us better people, but it also provides such readers with unique job skills in an ever evolving job market.

Unanticipated, unexpected, but ultimately obvious. That defines the contribution of the humanities, and the skills that we attain as literature and writing majors. Our empathy, our understanding, and our abilities will make us—in the long run—major contributors to the ever evolving challenges of the job market. We will shift conversations, we will alter expectations, and we will add back the joy and the unexpected to our national economy and our national discourse. Here, Hamilton again becomes an excellent touch point. Just as humanities majors do, this play upends expectations. It reconfigures who is in charge of setting the conversation, of establishing history. A play detailing how a penniless immigrant becomes the Secretary of the Treasury shows how profoundly our perspective can be shifted. In a wonderful moment in the show, and counter to current political discourse, two major characters declare: "Immigrants: we get the job done." The show, which effectively shows how "outsiders" built the United States, prompts us to re-conceptualize the story of our country. That ability to shift perspective, to challenge conventions, and to rewrite our story lies with us. It is a job that we, like Alexander Hamilton, should take up with energy, enthusiasm, and commitment. And, like immigrants portrayed in the show, we will "get the job done."

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