

English Department Newsletter

F A L L 2 0 1 1 I S S U E

JULIA SCHEERES A U T H O R - I N - R E S I D E N C E

New York Times best-selling author Julia Scheeres is the Spring 2012 visiting Lurie professor and author of *Jesusland*. Her new book, *A Thousand Lives*, was published in October 2011. San José State University graduate students will have the opportunity to take her nonfiction writing workshop in Spring 2012.

Writing Early, Writing Often.

The compulsion to write often satisfies an unmet need to be heard, understood, and known. As a young girl, Julia began writing early and often, documenting her every day and often-painful events in her diary. Julia says, "When I was a kid, I

kept a diary. I think part of growing up in a suppressive and depressive household was that my diary was my outlet. I confided in my diary a lot. And also, in grade school, I loved to write stories; whenever we had an English assignment to write a story, I would go on and on for pages." From this habitual writing, the narrative for her memoir *Jesusland* emerged.

Race, Religion and Rural Isolation in *Jesusland*.

In *Jesusland*, Julia's words vividly and pointedly document her struggles against the prevailing tides of "race, religion, and rural America," while growing up with her adopted brother David. Recalling the pain and isolation of her teenage years in a strict religious home, with the *Rejoice!* radio show continually on in the background, Julia paints a vibrant portrait of her father's brutality toward her adopted brothers. "When you're writing a memoir, it's the older, wiser person looking back on what happened in an earlier time in their life." She further notes, "I chose the roughly two-year timeframe that was the most dramatic of my book, which is my relationship with my broth-

er David, and how that was affected by race, religion, and growing up in rural America." The racism of country folks, her mother's disinterest, and the demands of

the Calvinist traditions left young Julia with a feeling of deep anger and loneliness. While the religion demanded the complete compliance of the children, and parental physical abuse was acceptable under the "spare the rod, spoil the child" doctrine, Julia had a mind of her own. At times, she was defiant—if she could not make her mother love her, she would find a way to irritate and enrage her. *Jesusland* is her gripping testimony to the human spirit and homage to her adopted brother, David.

Telling the Stories of *A Thousand Lives*.

"Don't drink the Kool-Aid." Most people over 40 have the 1978 aerial image of the 900-plus bodies lying in the Jonestown field seared in their memory. San José State stu-

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U N R A V E L I N G T H E W O N D E R S O F T H E W R I T T E N W O R D

How to Read Literature Like a Professor: A Lively and Entertaining Guide to Reading Between the Lines is not just another dreary textbook masquerading as an "entertaining" read. Rarely does a book come along that makes learning so accessible and purely delightful. Written by Thomas C. Foster in 2003,

this *New York Times* bestseller is a wildly captivating guide to understanding the deeper meaning that a piece of literature has to offer.

Foster, an English professor at the University of Michigan at Flint, teaches classic and contemporary fiction, poetry,

creative writing, and composition. In his book, he provides readers with the skills necessary to decipher any literary text. He discusses major literary themes, narrative devices, and literary models as they apply to numerous works of literature, including poems, short stories, novels, and

Continued on Page Three



JULIA SCHEERES, AUTHOR-IN-RESIDENCE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

dents may not. Jonestown was a religious settlement founded by the People's Temple leader, Jim Jones, in northwestern Guyana. On November 18, 1978, over 900 members died in Guyana. The media saw the mass suicide as a result of mindless followers obeying their leader.

As she researched religious leaders for her new novel, Julia Scheeres became fascinated with the story of Jim Jones and his church, the People's Temple. Julia spent the next year researching the various FBI papers, videos, and voice recordings from Jonestown. *A Thousand Lives* is the nonfiction result of her extensive research. The book follows the lives of five members of the People's Temple who were led by the charismatic Jim Jones to his new settlement in Guyana called Jonestown.

Scheeres combed over 2,000 pages of FBI files to get to the victims stories. Scheeres says, "It took me a year to read through the files and organize them. Two-thousand pages, that's like reading 150 three-hundred-page books...[it] can be excruciatingly boring most of the time...and then you'd come across something like 'oh the camp doctor is trying to develop a germicidal means to kill everyone' [and reading about] everything about botulism and streptococcal bacteria. Going through those

[documents] and having those 'aha!' moments amid a lot of dreary drudgework, then figuring out which five people [to write about] within the different demographics...old, white, black, middle class, lower income, and [deciding who to use] based on their availability as survivors to be interviewed or the amount of supporting documents they left behind." Many people were attracted to the People's Temple because they were unable to fit into society:

When asked what is the significance of the Jonestown tragedy for college students today, Julia says "Everybody has heard the term 'drinking the Kool-Aid' but they have no idea that it came from Jonestown...that phrase, which has made it into the lexicon, which hopefully people, after reading my book, will find offensive. [Jonestown congregants] weren't sheep. They fought Jim Jones tooth and nail for a year before the end—they did not go down there to die; they went there to create a better life for themselves and their families. People had sent their kids down there not

knowing that once people got to Jonestown, Jones would confiscate their passports...and then tell them 'you're not going home.' And there was no way out, there were no phones. That's what I find so heartbreakingly heartbreaking, is that they had no idea that when they went down to Jonestown that Jim Jones was planning to kill them. I found evidence from my research that he planned to kill his followers years before Jonestown. There are ample memos supporting this idea. He called it 'The Last Stand Plan.' Meanwhile, the rank and file believed that this [was] in their best interest and their kids' best interest." While preparing them for the mass suicide, Jones would tell the members he loved them, and they were committing revolutionary suicide. Julia says, "but they tell him 'we didn't come down here to die, we came here to thrive."

The Writing Process

The editorial process is a collaboration of the writer's generous creativity and the editor's keen eye for revisions. While writing *A Thousand Lives*, Julia did a lot of research on the congregants: "My editor cut a lot out. I read through dozens of notes. I couldn't snuff out these voices. My job was to let them be heard—finally. But my editor wisely said, 'You really have to hone and focus your narrative. It's very traumatic and profound stuff, but it's becoming baggy and too unfocused,' so I cut out a lot of those notes and voices." Taking out their words is, as editor Jessica Medford once said, like

"killing your little darlings." However, these were the voices of real people and Julia wanted to represent a thousand life stories. It took over a year of traveling, interviewing, and researching to find five representatives for the lives that were lost, but the outcome is a tremendous achievement.

Critical Thinking

**THESE WERE
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In *Jesusland* and *A Thousand Lives*, two predominant themes emerge: secrecy and loyalty. *Jesusland* shows how a divisive secrecy negatively affects the relationship between parents and their children. In *A Thousand Lives*, loyalty to Jones grows because of the imaginary enemy created by his convincing, passionate rhetoric. Jones' continual ranting over the speakerphones in the Guyana compound and the staging of violent attacks—creating illusions of imaginary enemies—made certain that critical thinking was impaired and minds were weakened in the Jonestown congregants.

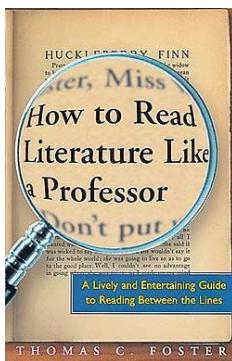
Scheeres says she hopes the "take away" from her work is highlighting the need for a healthy skepticism. Scheeres is a critical thinker and her body of work illuminates her questioning mind.

In her nonfiction writing workshop in Spring 2012, she says her goal for the class is to help students write gripping, true stories by focusing on the narrative building blocks of scenery, summary, and musing. She hopes students learn that pace and small, choice details can turn a bland read into a powerful one. She will discuss how to recreate the past in a personal essay or memoir, and how to craft vibrant journalism while adhering to ascertainable facts. In workshops, students will analyze submissions for structure, clarity, and emotion. Each class participant will be required to research and write two or more articles, which will be read and critiqued by the group.

Julia Scheeres has an M.A. in Journalism from the University of Southern California and has written for *The Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, and many other publications. Her memoir, *Jesusland*, was a *New York Times* and *London Times* bestseller. Her second book, *A Thousand Lives: The Untold Story of Hope, Deception, and Survival at Jonestown* was published in October. —Jill Stabl

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UNRAVELING THE WONDERS OF THE WRITTEN WORD (CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)



original work of literature.” Foster also incorporates references to popular sources such as the film *Ghostbusters*, the Bible, and even fairy tales such as *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* that are sure to attract a broader audience, including those outside the realm of academia.

Foster crafts an engaging atmosphere with his clever, conversational style. He launches into each chapter with a playful proclamation or question to connect the reader to the topic he is about to unearth. “There’s an ugly rumor circulating that English professors have dirty

even television. He threads the idea of intertextuality throughout the book, always reminding us that “there’s no such thing as a wholly

minds,” declares Foster in the opening of the chapter, “It’s All About Sex.” From there, he discusses the inclusion of sex in literature, sexual symbolism, and famous authors like D.H. Lawrence—who gladly employed the subject in their work. Reading the book simply feels as though you are involved in a casual (and often humorous) exchange with a good friend. In fact, you become so lost in his witty, lighthearted prose that you begin to forget his vocation.

Upon reaching the end of the book, you are reminded that Foster really *is* an English professor, and, true to his profession, he assigns you homework. He adds a popular short story so that you can put your newly acquired skills to the test and unravel the ultimate question: What does it all mean? Also included in the book is a list of secondary reading sources as well as a handy reading list of over 50 works.

In using mainly canonical works of literature, Foster produces a priceless text for English majors, especially those just beginning their college careers. Foster’s work is a spectacular summation of what they will encounter in their literature courses—and will be of great assistance in analyzing nearly any text. Also, understanding the meaning behind a work of literature is the first step to successfully writing about literature. By acquiring an introduction to literary basics, you will make the transition to college level reading and writing all the more enjoyable. So, to all you English majors out there, stroll on over to your local Barnes & Noble, pick up a copy, and begin unraveling the wonders of the written word. —Shannon Daly



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THE FIRST AMERICAN FLAPPER

Zelda Fitzgerald flicked the end of her cigarette into the ashtray on the mahogany table with an air of practiced tedium. Following an evening filled with impassioned pleas for attention, a fragile sense of calm sets in around her. Somewhat regretful, but generally vindicated, she stubs out her prop and inserts another into a pouting mouth. Dressed in black, hair still parted in a perfect wave, and vibrating as intensely as her red lipstick, she sparks a

match. Inhaling with the slow, experienced breaths of one used to filling her lungs with

smoke—and hot air—she lounges on the recliner, waiting impatiently for her husband to come out of his study. An artist in her own right, she understands the importance of his craft: just not the incessant neglect. She is his muse, his wife, the mother of their child. She drums her nails on the crocheted tablecloth. The shadows lengthening on the walls indicate the time: another Parisian night burns into morn-

ing.

This is how I imagine many nights passed in the first few years of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s marriage to Zelda. A tumultuous couple, they embodied the ideals of the “Roaring Twenties:” enjoying the rate at which the country seemed to change and partaking in events typical of the social climate. Zelda, born Zelda Sayre in Montgomery, Alabama to Minnie and Judge Anthony Sayre, was an energetic and impulsive child. Her desire for attention—a need that never waned—was offered freely by the Southern community that she grew up in. She enjoyed dancing,

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THE FIRST AMERICAN FLAPPER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE THREE)

especially ballet, and this talent brought her to the attention of Princeton drop-out and aspiring writer, Scott. Zelda's eccentric personality inspired and intrigued him, and, after the publication of his novel *This Side of Paradise*, the two were wed. Zelda became Scott's muse, and he often drew material from their exciting personal lives. However, their early marriage was fraught with financial and emotional troubles. Zelda and Scott lived frivolously in a whirlwind of parties and drinking that, short on cash, forced their move to France by mid-1920. It was here that they joined a variety of American expatriates and became a part of the Lost Generation.

Born to a family with a history of mental instability, Zelda's own mental health soon became an issue in the Fitzgeralds' marriage. Through various displays of jealous and erratic behavior that were sometimes detri-

mental to her physical well-being, Zelda's unpredictable nature became well-known in their social circles. Anxious for recognition of her own artistic talent and tired of living in her husband's shadow, Zelda decided to become her child-



SHE BECAME AN ICON FOR THE ERA IN HER OWN RIGHT; A BEAUTIFUL DRAMATIC, AND “FREE” WOMAN.

Save Me the Waltz. The Fitzgeralds' marriage was never the same again: Zelda spent the rest of her life in and out of mental facilities, and Scott left her for Hollywood to try his hand at screenwriting.

Zelda Fitzgerald embodied the fashionable, fiery, and fast-paced attitudes of the decade. She became an icon for the era in her own right; a beautiful, dramatic, and “free” woman. However, her marriage to Scott, which ended in bitter separation, added to her mental deterioration. Fitzgerald could not always give her the attention she craved, and her spirit could not be suppressed. Her novel is, therefore, important because it shows that Zelda was determined to be successful in her own right. In *Save Me the Waltz*, Zelda writes about cleaning up after endless parties and the emptying of ashtrays: “I just lump everything in a great heap which I have labeled ‘the past,’ and having thus emptied this deep reservoir that was once myself, I am ready to continue.” And she did, up until her death in 1948.

—Lauren McDermott

ZELDA BECAME SCOTT'S MUSE, AND HE OFTEN DREW MATERIAL FROM THEIR EXCITING PERSONAL LIVES.

hood dream: a prima ballerina. She practiced to exhaustion every day for months, and her mental and physical health quickly deteriorated. In 1930, Zelda was admitted to a hospital outside of Paris for a mental breakdown. She was forced to retire the notion of dancing and turned to writing and painting as creative outlets. In John Hopkins Hospital, Zelda wrote her only novel, a semi-autobiographical account of her marriage to Scott titled

REBEL WRITER: WRITTEN IN TRANSIT

I am performing a weeklong experiment. It involves logging words and sentences into an application using my phone, but it isn't Twitter or Facebook. There's no character limit, and I don't have any followers. I am writing an article on my phone—this article actually!

The idea came from a colleague, who doesn't have enough time to sit down in front of a computer to finish writing all the papers and assignments he has to juggle. So how does he get all his writing done? He writes wherever he can: on the bus, during his break, in between shots at the bar, and anywhere else he can find a couple of minutes to jot (or type) a few sentences. Then he takes what he's written and stitches it together in Word and "voila!" a full paper written without dedicating a large block of time to sit down and write it.

One definition of rebel is to break with the established custom or tradition, and I've taken it upon myself to be a rebel writer—writing when I

can, where I can. I'm writing this article in my car at stoplights, while in line at Safeway, and as I'm drinking at Tres Gringos in downtown San José on a Wednesday. No place is sacred as I write and compose.

Rebel writing is all about realizing a few

ideas or composing a few lines that happen while we're engaged in other activities: those moments when that perfect line pops into our head and completes a haiku or an Italian sonnet or what-have-you. It's not an easy task, but, then again, writing never is.

I'm writing amidst a drunken crowd with friends who are just as rowdy and drunk. Since we're on a truth-bender, I'm also a good many drinks in, but then I have an excuse: I'm a writer. Every person who realizes I'm not tweeting or updating my status or checking-in someplace wants to know what I'm

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writing about, and if they're in it. I smile and tell them a little bit, but just enough so they understand and before their eyes glaze over in disinterest. Sometimes it's enough to tell them that I'm a writer, but I emphasize being a rebel writer—you never know what will happen if you stand apart from the crowd; in my case, I earned a shot of Jameson from one of the bartenders!

EVERY PERSON WHO REALIZES I'M NOT TWEETING OR UPDATING MY STATUS OR CHECKING-IN SOMEPLACE WANTS TO KNOW WHAT I'M WRITING ABOUT, AND IF THEY'RE IN IT.

Time is a premium. A few minutes are worth hundreds, or thousands, of dollars depending on the occupation.

We're constantly asked to do more with less, and this isn't a fad—it's a trend. With tasks and tasks and tasks set upon us, who has the time to sit down and write?

So then as writers, and people, we must adapt to a lifestyle that is constantly outpacing us.

Most of us are already attached at the hip with these devices, these pieces of the future. Take a moment as you wait in line at the bank to write down how you feel like cattle herded into this line, that line, as you hear someone say "no sir, your credit score isn't high enough." Write a few lines of poetry about the enchanting blue-haired, dragon-tattooed Asian barista that always burns your half-caf, non-fat, extra whip zebra mocha.

Don't tweet, don't update status, and don't take yet another, perfectly filtered and framed photo of your carne asada Burritozilla. Instead, choose to be a rebel writer. Write down those witty remarks that you know would only start an argument. It might prove to be the start of your next great narrative!

—Manni Valencia

SPRING 2012 ENGLISH CLASSES

LOWER DIVISION COURSES**ENGLISH 07: CRITICAL THINKING**

MW 9:00 AM–10:15 AM
 MW 10:30 AM–11:45 AM
 MW 1:30 PM–2:45 PM
 TR 7:30 AM–8:45 AM
 TR 9:00 AM–10:15 AM
 TR 10:30 AM–11:45 AM
 TR 1:30 PM–2:45 PM

WILLIAMS, M.
 WILLIAMS, M.
 WILLIAMS, M.
 STRACHAN, R.
 STRACHAN, R.
 BAER, C.
 BAER, C.

Nature and meaning of critical thought, Western and non-Western. Relationship between logic and language. Examination of contrasting arguments on related subjects as a means for developing skill in analysis of prose. Prerequisite: ENGL 1A.

ENGLISH 10: GREAT WORKS OF LITERATURE

TR 10:30 AM–11:45 PM

CHOW, B.

Fiction, drama and poetry for non-English majors. Emphasis on critical appreciation of various literary forms. [No Credit for the English Major]

ENGLISH 22: FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION

MW 12:00 PM–1:15 PM

MAIO, S.

This course will cover the essential themes and characteristics of prose fantasy and science fiction through the close readings of works by authors from various times and cultures who established the foundations by identifying the artistic elements of both genres and understanding how these elements are used to effect a work's theme in relation to the author's historical, cultural, and political contexts. There will be much classroom discussion and several short writing assignments. [No Credit for the English Major]

TR 9:00 AM–10:15 AM

RICE, S.

TR 3:00 PM–4:15 PM

CHOW, B.

Students will examine works of literary fantasy and science fiction to understand them as expressions of human intellect and imagination; to comprehend their historical and cultural contexts; and to recognize their diverse cultural traditions. Both contemporary and historical works will be studied.

ENGLISH 40: CONTEMPORARY WORLD FICTION

TR 12:00 PM–1:15 PM

RICE, S.

A study of selected works of fiction in English and in English translation written since 1975. The course both focuses on international texts that address significant themes of our time and explores ways of reading and understanding literature. [No Credit for the English Major]

ENGLISH 56A: ENGLISH LITERATURE TO 1800

TR 3:00 PM–4:15 PM

EASTWOOD, A.

Major literary movements, figures and genres from the Anglo-Saxon period through the eighteenth century. Works and writers may include Beowulf, Sir Gawain, Chaucer, Spenser, Sidney, Shakespeare, Donne, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Swift, Fielding, Johnson, Boswell.

ENGLISH 56B: ENGLISH LITERATURE 1800 TO PRESENT

MW 4:30 PM–5:45 PM

WILSON, W.

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

ENGLISH 68A: AMERICAN LITERATURE TO 1865

TR 9:00 AM–10:15 AM

ENGLISH, K.

American Literature to 1865 samples offerings from First Americans' orature; slave narratives; canonical texts by the usual suspects: Bradford, Bradstreet, Emerson, Thoreau, Melville, Whitman, and Dickinson; the first American comedy *The Contrast*; and two novels about the dangers of seduction *The Coquette* and *The Scarlet Letter*. Written requirements include classwork, midterm, and final.

ENGLISH 68B: AMERICAN LITERATURE 1865 TO PRESENT

R 4:30 PM–7:15 PM

KARIM, P.

Survey of American literature. Emily Dickinson to present.

ENGLISH 71: INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE WRITING

MW 10:30 AM–11:45 AM

HARRISON, K.

MW 10:30 AM–11:45 AM

MCMILLIAN, J.

TR 10:30 AM–11:45 AM

ASHTON, S.

TR 3:00 PM–4:15 PM

ASHTON, S.

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. [GE: Area C2 attribute]

MW 3:00 PM–4:15 PM

MAIO, S.

M 4:30 PM–7:15 PM

MAIO, S.

This lower-division introductory course covers the essential artistic elements of poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. Students will study exemplary works from each genre—drawn from various cultures and time periods—in order to learn the basic principles of form, structure, and technique. Students will write original poems, fictive stories, and other prose pieces, a few of which shared with the class in the workshop segments of the course. We will begin with a “literary boot camp” of brief Italian and French lyric forms of poetry before moving to dramatic and narrative poetry as a transition to prose fiction and nonfiction. [GE: Area C2 attribute]

SPRING 2012 ENGLISH CLASSES

T 6:30 PM–8:45 PM

GRIESMANN, L.

This course provides an introduction to creative writing focusing on the genres of nonfiction, fiction, and poetry. Students first read and analyze selected texts from each genre to gain a basic understanding of craft. The course then follows a live workshop format with much emphasis on writing, editing, and revision. At the end of the class all students complete a portfolio containing original works of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry.

TR 4:30 PM–5:45 PM

EVANS, K.

In this course, we will read, discuss and write poetry, creative non-fiction, and short fiction. The focus of the class is experiencing and exploring the creative process.

UPPER DIVISION COURSES

ENGLISH 100W WRITING WORKSHOP ENGLISH

MW 10:30 AM–11:45 AM

BAER, C.

Critical writing demands close textual study, research into the conversations a text has generated among readers, and a rich repertoire of stylistic tools. In this course, you will practice close reading and learn to research and engage critical conversation, in order to write papers that put your voice in dialogue with other readers and students of literature.

TR 9:00 AM–10:15 AM

STORK, N.

An introduction to the analysis of poetry, prose, and drama. We will attend a production of the SJSU Theatre Department, then learn what makes English poetry so diverse in its forms and the English language such an interesting literary language. A textually based research project will include research into literary manuscripts, early editions, and bibliography.

TR 12:00 PM–1:15 PM

EASTWOOD, A.

W 6:00 PM–8:45 PM

WILSON, W.

Advanced workshops in reading and composition. Prerequisite: ENGL 1B (with a grade of C or better); completion of Core GE, satisfaction of Writing Skills Test and upper-division standing. Notes: Required of all English majors before they achieve senior standing.

ENGLISH 101 INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY CRITICISM

MW 9:00 AM–10:15 AM

BRADA-WILLIAMS, N.

Study of various historical and contemporary approaches to literature, including New Criticism, structuralism and post-structuralism, New Historicism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, post-colonialism, feminism, and queer theory. An emphasis will be placed on learning to apply these different methods of interpretation through a workshop format.

ENGLISH 103, MODERN ENGLISH GRAMMAR

MW 9:00 AM–10:15 AM

HAGER, M.

In this course, we will break down the English language and examine it like a science. We will diagram sentences, discuss word origins, and examine social and regional dialects; we will study 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, the role of pragmatics in using language to communicate, and the historical development of English, especially as it affects the language today. *Analyzing English Grammar*, by Thomas Klamer, will be our textbook, and it will guide our course of study throughout the semester.

TR 3:00 PM–4:15 PM

STORK, N.

A linguistically based, historically informed introduction to the intricacies of modern English grammar, from the phoneme to the nominal clause. A practical approach to spoken and written language.

ENGLISH 105, ADVANCED COMPOSITION

MW 10:30 AM–11:45 AM

GABOR, C.

Advanced expository writing. Prerequisite: Six units of lower division composition and completion of the Written Communication II requirement (ENGL100W). May be repeated once for credit with different instructor and department chair consent.

ENGLISH 106, EDITING FOR WRITERS

MW 3:00 PM–4:15 PM

HARRISON, K.

You will learn the various stages of text and graphics editing including copyediting, substantive editing, and reorganization of technical and business documents. Review of grammar and punctuation to ensure technical mastery and ability to justify editing decisions. Half of our class meetings will be in the Incubator Classroom. Be prepared to learn the latest editing techniques in online environments. Upper-division standing and strong grammar skills recommended.

ENGLISH 107, TECHNICAL WRITING

MW 6:30 PM–7:45 PM

HARRISON, K.

This rigorous course introduces you to the writing techniques and tools used by technical writers. You'll learn how to chunk content, organize information, create and follow a style guide, write standard content (process/procedures, descriptions, definitions, etc.), write and index printed and online content, and work with technology. Class meets in the Incubator Classroom; our learning will take advantage of the technology in this room. While the only prerequisite is upper-division standing, English 103 and strong grammar skills are strongly encouraged. This class requires substantial work outside of class.

ENGLISH 112A, CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

MW 9:00 AM–10:15 AM

KRISHNASWAMY, R.

This is an upper-division course designed to introduce the literature of childhood experience to adult readers. Although children are the central characters and the targeted readers, writers of this genre still structure their works using the same complex literary devices and themes found in adult literature. We will therefore apply standard literary techniques in analyzing the readings for this class.

SPRING 2012 ENGLISH CLASSES

The readings have been chosen keeping in mind several factors including quality of writing, relevance or appropriateness of ideas, complexity of treatment, as well as cultural and ethnic diversity. But the fundamental character of these readings is their literary merit and they are children's literature, not just children's books. Thus, many of the works we will study are considered to be classics not only because children enjoy them but also because they are rich in the themes and situations that make children's literature distinct and important: polarities between security at home and adventure abroad, between the need for belonging, love, approval and the desire for independence, between the temptation to keep things unchanged and the challenge of changing and growing up, between the sobering constraints of reality and the liberating power of fantasy. These books then invite serious contemplation of important issues through sustained imaginative ventures that display variety, originality, beauty, and craft. While the assigned readings are all chapter books, students will have opportunities to become familiar with picture books, fairy tales, and folk tales as well.

ENGLISH 112B, LITERATURE FOR YOUNG ADULTS

TR 4:30 PM–5:45 PM

HAGER, M.

Have you considered the significance of the Patronus charm in *Harry Potter*? Have you wondered what it'd be like to take a journey with Death—a sympathetic narrator who is “haunted by humans” (as in *The Book Thief*)? In English 112B, we will study literature that is written for a young adult audience. We will read selected poems and short stories in addition to the following novels: *After the First Death*, Robert Cormier; *The Book Thief*, Markus Zusak; *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, J.K. Rowling; *Speak*, Laurie Halse Anderson; *Whale Talk*, Chris Crutcher; and *Witness*, Karen Hesse. Through our study of young adult fantasy, realistic fiction, and historical fiction, we will discover the ways in which this genre addresses issues such as death, race, love, friendship, prejudice, religion, and sexuality. Even though the course is required for students who are planning to enter the English Single-Subject Credential program, this class is not a methodology course.

**COURSE
LISTINGS ALSO
AVAILABLE AT:**

sjsuengl129.pbworks.com

ENGLISH 115, THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE

TR 1:30 PM–2:45 PM

WARNER, M.

In this course we study the Bible from the perspective of literature, reading extensively from this signature work of Western Civilization. We examine key portions of the Bible, exploring its array of subjects, themes, literary styles, and genres, and its vast influence on much of Western Literature. Students will write three essays—two connected to TANAK (or the Old Testament) and one related to the Christian Foundational Writings (or the

New Testament). In addition to these essays, there will be a midterm, final exam, and weekly Sustained Silent Writing. No “respectable” English major should graduate without familiarity with the Bible!

ENGLISH 117, FILM, LITERATURE AND CULTURE

W 4:30 PM–5:15 PM

EVANS, K.

Using films and literary works, students will appreciate and understand the narratives that create and define cultural identity, explore cultural interaction, and illustrate cultural preservation and cultural difference over time. We also examine adaptation theory and the approaches to story-telling used in the two media (books and films). We will look at films and read texts that are written in, set in, or depict multiple time periods and world cultures. Which book/film pairings we will use in the spring are still under consideration by the professor but will likely include memoir, novels, and a graphic novel. In the past this class has read and viewed *The Motorcycle Diaries*, *Like Water for Chocolate*, *The Kite Runner*, *Orlando*, *Persepolis*, and *Lust, Caution*.

TR 9:00 AM–10:15 AM

BRADA-WILLIAMS, N.

Using film and literary narratives from a variety of countries, including *The Lives of Others* and *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, students will examine how viewing a film or other spectacle affects the viewer. How does being viewed—being under surveillance—affect us and, by extension, society?

ENGLISH 123B, GLOBAL LITERATURE - AFRICA

TR 9:00 AM–10:15 AM

KARIM, P.

This upper-division general education course introduces students to the literature of a region that has dominated the news headlines in the past year. We will have the opportunity to read literature and poetry from Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Iran, Lebanon, and Palestine, and to understand the ways that literature and culture have responded to, helped frame, and represent some of the struggles of the societies now experiencing great tumult and transition and who are engaged with the dramatic changes sweeping the entire region. We will read a number of literary texts that identify the struggles of many of these formerly colonial nations (Libya, Egypt, Tunisia) and the ways that they have struggled to both reclaim and renew themselves in the midst of struggles against dictatorship. We will also have the opportunity to read prose and poetry from other nations that are similarly struggling against conditions of oppression and against human rights abuses that have made freedom and democracy much more difficult. We will read novels by acclaimed Egyptian novelist Alaa Al-Aswany (*The Yacoubian Building*), Libya's Hisham Matar's *In the Country of Men*, and selected readings of short stories and poems from other parts of this region. We will also view the film version of *The Yacoubian Building* and the Iranian film, *Women Without Men*.

ENGLISH 123C, GLOBAL LITERATURE - OCEANIA

TR 1:30 PM–2:45 PM

CHOW, B.

This course examines the literary production and cultural heritage of Oceania—consisting mainly of Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific islands categorized as Melanesia (e.g., New Guinea and Fiji), Micronesia (e.g.,

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Guam), and Polynesia (e.g., Hawaii, Samoa, and Tahiti). Topics and issues such as navigation, migration, colonialism, genocide, ethnicity, language, class, gender, religion, cultural hybridity, modernity, globalization, war, tourism, ethnology, mythology, and indigenous movements will be exemplified in the writings of diverse writers selected from different parts of Oceania. In Spring 2012, the course will focus on *The Secret River* by Kate Grenville (Australia), *The Bone People* by Keri Hulme (New Zealand), *Kisses in the Nederends* by Epeli Hau'Ofa (Papua New Guinea/Fiji, Melanesia), *My Umba* by Emelihter Kihleng (Guam/Hawaii, Micronesia), *Melal* by Robert Barclay (Marshall Islands, Micronesia), *They Who Do Not Grieve* by Sia Figiel (Samoa, Polynesia), and *Breadfruit* by Celestine Hitiura Vaite (Tahiti, French Polynesia). Presentations, short papers, research project, and exams required; satisfies Advanced GE in Area V.

ENGLISH 125, EUROPEAN LITERATURE HOMER THROUGH DANTE

TR 10:30 AM–11:45 AM

STORK, N.

An introduction to foundational texts that continue to influence the English literary tradition. Authors and texts may include Homer, the Greek playwrights, Virgil, Ovid, Horace, the Bible, Saint Augustine and Dante. Texts will be read in standard, anthologized editions.

ENGLISH 129, INTRODUCTION TO CAREER WRITING

MW 1:30 PM–2:45 PM

BAER, C.

Explore a career in freelance writing of creative non-fiction. We will read selections from the *Best of American (Travel, Sports, and Magazine)* writing. You will research and write 3 essays, polish and package one for publication. You will also research, design, write and produce two in-house publications: *The Writing Life* and the *English Department Newsletter*.

ENGLISH 130, WRITING FICTION

MW 1:30 PM–2:45 PM

TAYLOR, N.

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.

T 6:00 PM–8:45 PM

EVANS, K.

The focus of this course is inventing and crafting fiction. Our primary focus will be the short story and flash fiction, but we will also address the novel. Through exploring various writing activities, work-shopping student pieces, and discussing the pieces of published writers, we will speak to the observable and the subtle aspects of fiction—for good writing entails both skill and mystery.

ENGLISH 131, WRITING POETRY

W 6:00 PM–8:45 PM

MAIO, S.

This course is intended for students to strengthen their poetic talents by learning and practicing new techniques principally drawn from the English metrical tradition. We will begin by examining the aesthetics of master poets from various time periods, concentrating on brief Italian and French lyric forms before moving on to the longer dramatic and narrative modes.

Students will write metrical/formal poems as well as vers libre, much of which will be treated in workshop. [Note: English 131 is repeatable for credit. Students must have completed satisfactorily English 71 “Introduction to Creative Writing” or obtain Professor Maio’s consent before enrolling. Select MFA—Poetry Concentration students may enroll upon both Professor Maio’s and Professor Soldofsky’s consent.]

TR 12:00 PM–1:15 PM

KARIM, P.

Workshop in verse forms. Study of traditional and contemporary models. May be repeated once for credit. Prerequisite: ENGL 71 (or equivalent) or instructor consent.

ENGLISH 133, REED MAGAZINE

M 4:00 PM–6:45 PM

TAYLOR, N.

Students in this course make up the editorial staff of Reed, San José State’s 64-year-old literary journal. With submissions from 40 countries and all 50 United States, Reed has become an internationally-recognized venue for contemporary writers and artists. In the Spring semester, we accomplish a variety of production tasks, including layout, promotion, distribution, and grantwriting. Note: Students may take English 133 twice for credit.

ENGLISH 135, WRITING NONFICTION

TR 4:30 PM–5:45 PM

SHILLINGLAW, S.

Advanced creative writing workshop in literary nonfiction. Study of traditional and contemporary models. May be repeated once for credit. Prerequisite: ENGL 71, ENGL 100W, ENGL 105, ENGL 129 or instructor consent.

ENGLISH 139, VISITING AUTHORS

R 6:00 PM–8:45 PM

EVANS, K.

In this course, students will have the opportunity to study literature written by writers who are visiting campus through our Center for Literary Arts. In addition to exploring the literary aspects of these writers’ works, we will also discuss the biographies and writing processes of these writers, examining what it might mean to live a literary life. For the Spring 2012 list of visiting writers, see: <http://www.litart.org>.

ENGLISH 141, MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

TR 1:30 PM–2:45 PM

STORK, N.

A wide range of texts from a wide range of cultures, all of them medieval. Texts may include the *Volsung Saga*, *Njal's Saga*, *Old English Riddles*, *Perceval*, other Arthurian romances, *Marie de France*, The letters of Heloise and Abelard and the incorrectly-titled “Art of Courtly Love.” Learn how courtly love was invented in the 19th century and see what the Middle Ages is really

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about.

ENGLISH 145, SHAKESPEARE AND PERFORMANCE

TR 9:00 AM–10:15 AM EASTWOOD, A.

Course examines in depth several of Shakespeare's plays, specifically addressing issues of performance. We will discuss each play in the context of its original performance during Shakespeare's time and its life on stage and screen in the ensuing centuries. Prerequisite: Upper division standing.

ENGLISH 149, THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

MW 12:00 PM–1:15 PM DOUGLASS, P.

Romanticism emerged from the period of the American and French revolutions. Wordsworth, for example, was in France in the aftermath of that revolution—and many other British writers of the Romantic era were imaginatively engaged with events in France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Austria, Switzerland, Greece, Albania, and Turkey. This course will focus on works of the period that reflect this fascination with political and social change (like those of Godwin, Wollstonecraft, Shelley, and Coleridge). Readings will also draw out major Romantic Period themes, like the turn toward psychology and perception, valorization of the individual, Orientalism, denunciation of tyranny, embrace of Nature, celebration of childhood, and confrontation with the "sublime." Works of the canonical male writers (Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, Byron) will be balanced by the poetry, drama, and prose of female writers, like Lamb, Smith, L.E.L., and Barbauld.

ENGLISH 151, TWENTIETH-CENTURY POETRY

MW 3:00 PM–4:15 PM SOLDOSKY, A.

Major British and American poets, including figures such as Yeats, Eliot, Pound, Frost, Auden, Stevens, Rich. Prerequisite: Upper division standing.

ENGLISH 163, AMERICAN LITERATURE 1865-1910

TR 12:00 PM–1:15 PM ENGLISH, K.

American Literature 1865-1910 will focus on fiction and autobiographical nonfiction from this era. We will read, discuss, and write about fiction by Charles Chesnutt, Kate Chopin, Jack London, and William Dean Howells. Our nonfiction texts are drawn from autobiographical writings by Booker T. Washington, Mark Twain, Zitkala Sa, and Helen Keller. Written requirements include 7-8 shorter and 2 longer analytical essays.

ENGLISH 169, ETHNICITY IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

TR 1:30 PM–2:45 PM KARIM, P.

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. Prerequisite: Completion of core GE, satisfaction of Writing Skills Test and upper division standing. For students who begin continuous enrollment at a CCC or a CSU in Fall 2005 or later, completion of, or corequisite in a 100W course is required.

ENGLISH 177, TWENTIETH-CENTURY FICTION

TR 10:30 AM–11:45 AM

CULLEN, R.

This course features works by some of the most important and respected writers of the past century as well as recent work of the very highest caliber. We begin with two landmarks of literary modernism, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*. We then move to the postmodern classic *The Crying of Lot 49* by Thomas Pynchon and *The Ghost Writer*, the first of Philip Roth's celebrated "Nathan Zuckerman" novels. The remaining texts suggest the immense variety and vitality of the genre since 1990: *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* by Haruki Murakami, *Written on the Body* by Jeanette Winterson, *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy, *Sag Harbor* by Colson Whitehead, and *Bitter in the Mouth* by Monique Truong. Two papers and a final exam.

ENGLISH 193, CAPSTONE SEMINAR

MW 12:00 PM–1:15 PM

COX, B.

This course allows students to assess and demonstrate how well they have met the department learning objectives. During the course of the semester, students will compile a portfolio of work from at least five other courses completed in the major as well as written work for this course; analyze, write a revision plan for, and then significantly revise one of the portfolio selections from a prior course in the major; write an introduction to the portfolio that comments on its contents, reflects on their experiences within the major, and assesses how well they have met the department learning objectives; read and respond regularly to assigned texts for the course; write a short essay on a book that has had an impact on their life; write a research-informed critical paper based on one or more of the assigned texts for this course; and write a five-year plan for "what's next" in their lives.

TR 3:00 PM–4:15 PM

SHILLINGLAW, S.

Culminating course for majors, requiring students to reflect on experiences in the major. Readings and discussions focus on literature and self-reflection. Each student submits a Portfolio of writing from at least five courses taken in major. Written work for seminar is added to Portfolio. Prerequisite: Upper division standing.

ENGLISH 193C: CAPSTONE SEMINAR IN CREATIVE**WRITING AND SELF REFLECTION**

F 4:30 PM–7:15 PM

ALTSCHUL, A.

Culminating seminar for the Creative Writing Concentration, requiring students to reflect on experiences and revise work completed in several other courses taken in the Concentration. New writing done for the seminar will be included with revised work in a final Portfolio. Prerequisite: Upper division standing. For Creative Writing Concentration Credit only.

GRADUATE COURSES**ENGLISH 203: NARRATIVE CRAFT AND THEORY**

W 4:00 PM–6:45 PM

TAYLOR, N.

In this graduate literature seminar, we will read American novels published in the last two years. Selections may include:

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Donoghue, Emma. *Room*.

Egan, Jennifer. *A Visit from the Goon Squad*.

Eugenides, Jeffrey. *The Marriage Plot*.

Patchett, Ann. *State of Wonder*.

ENGLISH 204: MOD. APPROACHES TO LITERATURE

M 4:00 PM–6:45 PM KRISHNASWAMY, R.

Study of modern approaches to the theory and practice of literary criticism. With prior permission of graduate advisor may be repeatable once for credit. Prerequisite: Classified standing or instructor consent.

ENGLISH 227: SEMINAR IN COMEDY

R 7:00 PM–9:45 PM EASTWOOD, A.

Study of the bases of the comic and their application in dramatic form. Prerequisite: Instructor consent.

ENGLISH 230: SEMINAR IN 18TH CENTURY LITERATURE

W 4:00 PM–6:45 PM BRADA-WILLIAMS, N.

The history of the early novel in English cannot be extricated from the development of the literary marketplace. We will read texts by some of the biggest selling authors of the eighteenth century and those that have had the largest enduring impact both on the marketplace and on the novel form such as: Aphra Behn, Daniel Defoe, Eliza Haywood, Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Charlotte Lennox, Frances Burney, and Jane Austen.

ENGLISH 233: SEMINAR IN VICTORIA LITERATURE

T 7:00 PM–9:45 PM WILSON, W.

Study of selected British writers from 1832 to 1900. With prior permission of graduate advisor may be repeatable once for credit. Prerequisite: Upper division standing.

ENGLISH 240: POETRY WRITING WORKSHOP

R 4:00 PM–6:45 PM SOLDOSKY, A.

Poetics and poetry writing as preparation for thesis. Includes theory and practice of major trends in contemporary poetry. Intensive workshop experience. With prior permission of graduate advisor may be repeatable once for credit. Prerequisite: Graduate standing and admission via portfolio acceptance to the Writing Focus.

ENGLISH 241: FICTION WRITING WORKSHOP

T 4:00 PM–6:45 PM ALTSCHUL, A.

Fiction writing as preparation for thesis. Study of canonical and contemporary fiction and fiction produced by students. Intensive workshop experience. May be repeatable twice for credit.

ENGLISH 242: NON-FICTION WRITING WORKSHOP

R 4:00 PM–6:45 PM SCHEERES, J.

This class is designed to help students write gripping true stories. We'll work on the narrative building blocks of scene, summary, and musing, and learn how pacing and small, choice details can turn a bland read into a powerful one. We'll talk about how much of the past you can recreate in personal

essay and memoir, and how to craft vibrant journalism while adhering to ascertainable facts. In workshops, students will analyze submissions for structure, clarity and emotion. Each class participant will be required to research and write two or more articles which will be read and critiqued by the group.: —J. Scheeres

ENGLISH 253: SEMINAR IN PERIODS - AMERICAN LITERATURE

M 7:00 PM–9:45 PM DOUGLASS, P.

Modernism and Postmodernism—English 253 probes what the term “Modernism” seems to have meant and to mean, and to whom. Authors to be read include Amy Lowell, W. C. Williams, Richard Aldington, H. D., Gertrude Stein, T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Jean Toomer, Hart Crane, William Faulkner, Langston Hughes, John Steinbeck, Robert Coover, John Barth, and Anne Carson.

ENGLISH 254: SEMINAR IN GENRES - AMERICAN LITERATURE

T 4:00 PM–6:45 PM ENGELL, J.

Focuses of a genre of American Literature such as poetry, the novel, the short story, drama, autobiography, the personal and/or philosophical essay. With prior permission of graduate advisor may be repeatable once

UPCOMING ENGLISH DEPARTMENT EVENTS

—RAE ARMANTROUT READING, MLK LIBRARY 225—

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 15, 2012 7PM-9PM

—YIYUN LI READING, ENGR 189—

THE JAMES D. HOUSTON MEMORIAL LECTURE

WEDNESDAY MARCH 7, 2012 7PM-9PM

—2011 LURIE VISITING WRITER JULIA SCHEERES— READING, MLK LIBRARY 225

THE 2012 LURIE DISTINGUISHED VISITING WRITER

WEDNESDAY MARCH 21, 2012 7PM-9PM

—JUAN FELIPE HERRERA READING, MLK LIBRARY 225—

WEDNESDAY APRIL 4, 2012 7PM – 9PM

—GEOFFREY WOLFF READING, MLK LIBRARY 225—

THE MARTHA HEASLEY COX LECTURE

TUESDAY APRIL 17, 2012 7PM – 9PM

FOR A DESCRIPTION OF THESE EVENTS GO TO:

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ENGLISH DEPARTMENT CHAIR, JOHN ENGELL

CHAIR'S LETTER: NOVEMBER 2011

Since early July the department office has been functioning without an Office Administrator. After more than four months, we have finally received permission from the Dean and Provost to prepare a search for a new Office Administrator/Secretary. Everyone currently working in the office—Associate Chair Bonnie Cox, Gabby Rabanal, and student assistants Maria Mesa and Marta Wallien (both students in the MFA program)—have been doing terrific work to assist faculty and students. I want especially to thank Bonnie for her inexhaustible energy and her wicked sense of humor in the face of considerable adversity. I hope a new Office Administrator/Secretary will begin work before the spring semester.



There are many other things I might say about developments in the department during the summer and fall of 2011. But here I will confine myself to thanking and praising faculty members for their excellent work. Enrollments in the department this fall are up over 10% from last year; nearly all of our classes are full; our Writing Program, our other General Education classes, the various strands of the undergraduate major, and the M.A. and M.F.A. programs are all flourishing. Leadership in these various programs is excellent.

Some difficult times lie ahead for the department. Public funding for public education including the CSU continues to decrease. Pressures to increase class sizes and therefore dilute the quality of education and add to the work load of already underpaid faculty are ubiquitous in public universities including the CSU. Some administrators are passive; others act precipitously and without full knowledge or understanding; a few combine these two forms of “leadership.” But I know our department does a superb job of teaching well over 5000 students each semester. We are fulfilling our mission in every way. I trust we will continue to do so.



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