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*Alexis Cutchin, Evan Brown, and Lydia Row
Photograph by Sara Garcia*

SJSU Technical Writing Students Win the Dr. Kenneth M. Gordon Memorial Scholarship

By Devina Martinez and Anthony Ngo

The Department of English and Comparative Literature congratulates Professional and Technical Writing students Alexis Cutchin, Evan Brown and Lydia Row for receiving the 2019–2020 Dr. Kenneth M. Gordon Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship is open to students who are currently enrolled in a technical communication program in Northern California. Participants must turn in an application containing a personal statement, official transcripts, one or more letters of recommendation, and three samples of their technical communication work. Scholarship winners receive awards ranging from \$500 to \$1000 each; they are also eligible for a free student membership in the Society for Technical Communication, an organization that sets out to help its members develop their technical communication skills by teaching them best practices.

One of the major contributing factors for these students winning this award was their initiative. By utilizing the resources offered to them, all three of these students were able to submit the best version of their work. Associate Professor and PTW Program Director Mark Thompson highlights one quality that

separates these students from the other applicants: A key component is “how much time [students] are willing to spend on an assignment. [They] can do something well and get a decent grade, but compared to something that is actually great, [they’re] really going to have to sit down and really think through it and do multiple versions. To me, that’s what I look for, it’s not about the first draft, it’s about the final version and the drive to get there.” This year is the first time that the scholarship has been offered to SJSU students. After Professor Thompson learned about it at a conference, he jumped on the opportunity to spread the word.

One of the main requirements of the scholarship is to submit writing samples. Luckily, one of the primary goals of the Professional and Technical Writing Program at SJSU is to prepare students for work after graduation. This includes plenty of work that can be used in portfolios. The classes that students take in the program include Professional Technical Writing, Editing for Writers, Introduction to Career Writing, and Visual Rhetoric and Digital Document Design for Writers. These classes help students build a strong foundation in technical communication. Assistant Professor Sara West highlights this strength of the program. She says, “I think we have a really special emphasis on trying to get students producing a lot of portfolio pieces. Not just one thing at the end of the class, but many throughout the semester.”

The program is constantly evolving to match the demands of the field, and Professor Thompson is always keeping his ear to the ground for these changes. He says, “I am making sure that we are constantly monitoring what’s going on in the industry and then updating the curriculum to keep track of that.” With the amount of effort these instructors put into this program, it isn’t surprising to see their students winning. Yet, this award would never have been won without the individual efforts from these students.

This scholarship has given the winners a lot to consider. For Lydia, winning this scholarship has given her a confidence boost, especially as she looks to the future. She says, “It makes me more confident, especially in finding work. Before this, I felt like a beginner, but now I feel a bit more seasoned.”

For Evan, this win has helped clear some of the doubts that he had about his work. As someone who is very detail-oriented, he says, “I reviewed my work over and over to make sure it was free of errors. I wanted this to be the best representation of what I can do, and I’m glad that they recognized my effort.”

This scholarship is much more than just a monetary award for these students. They have started to build up the confidence and experience that they will definitely need for the future.

The best advice our three winners can give other technical writing students is to ask their professors for help. “Without them, I wouldn’t have been able to get it,” Alexis says. “Ask your professors about scholarships, and ask them for help. They’ll give you all the tools you need to get the right information, and if your work is good, you’re sure to win.” As Professor Thompson highlighted, this was the first year that our students were offered the scholarship, and already, we have three award recipients. The program will continue to enrich each student’s writing abilities, and hopefully, in the upcoming years, more technical writing students will apply for scholarships such as this one.

Interested students can find more information about the Society for Technical Communication and Dr. Kenneth M. Gordon Memorial Scholarship at <http://www.stc.org>. In addition, prospective majors can contact the Director of Professional and Technical Writing, Dr. Mark Thompson, at mark.thompson@sjsu.edu for more information about the program.

Grammy Award-Winning Band, Mumford & Sons, Wins the Steinbeck Award

By Andrea Mitchell and Stephanie Salgado

In the Bing Concert Hall at Stanford University, San José State University professor and director of the Martha Heasley Cox Center for Steinbeck Studies, Nick Taylor, presented British folk-rock band Mumford & Sons with the John Steinbeck Award on Wednesday, September 18. The proceeds for the award ceremony went to the Steinbeck Gentlemen of the Road Service Fellowship created by Professor Taylor and Stanford Professor Gavin Jones. The new Steinbeck Fellowship will allow students from SJSU and Stanford to participate in service projects embodying the ideals of Steinbeck. Mumford & Sons represents Steinbeck’s ideals through their organization, Gentlemen of the Road, which “fights for social justice and common good around the world.”

The British band Mumford & Sons is known for their folk-rock music and Grammy-winning album *Babel*. Their lead single, “I Will Wait,” is their most successful hit, named the 13th best song of 2012 by *Rolling Stone* magazine. In 2009, Mumford & Sons founded the Gentlemen of the Road, an organization dedicated to supporting global and local issues while bringing other artists with them to perform shows in underprivileged communities where concerts might not usually be held. In addition to the millions of dollars in charitable donations, the band wants to reach out in communities to bring people together. Professor Taylor says, “People helping strangers who just happen to be in their community—that’s just something that [Marcus Mumford] and the band members feel that they could credit Steinbeck for.”



*Mumford & Sons receiving Steinbeck Award
Photograph by Joel Simon/Stanford University*

The John Steinbeck Award ceremony began with radio host Rita Houston interviewing Mumford & Sons about the significance of receiving the John Steinbeck Award. Marcus Mumford, the lead singer, gave a heartfelt speech about how John Steinbeck’s stories helped influence him and his career. Crediting the famous author for inspiring songs like “Dust Bowl Dance” and “Rose of Sharon,” the band played those and other songs during the ceremony. Professor Taylor says, “Community was something really important to Steinbeck. [He] presented a lot of models for his reader of ways humans need each other. We do best when everyone in our community does best

—this is something Mumford & Sons has internalized.” Mumford & Sons is dedicated to humanitarian services throughout their tours, helping raise money for local charities and projects.

The band was nominated when one of the Steinbeck board members received a letter from a previous pupil saying how she was working on tour with Mumford & Sons. She felt that they would be a great candidate for the Steinbeck Award. The board members agreed. This made the members of Mumford & Sons the youngest recipients and the first British recipients of the Steinbeck Award, but that didn’t matter to the board. “The award is about Americanness being a state of mind,” says Professor Taylor.

The Steinbeck Gentlemen of the Road Service Fellowship is about the mindset of Americanness by helping strangers in our communities. The new program’s pilot group will include three students from SJSU and three students from Stanford who will earn a fellowship stipend, so they don’t have to work and can focus on community service for part of the summer. The Steinbeck Studies director describes that the ideal applicant would be familiar with Steinbeck’s work and understands through Steinbeck the context of what it would mean to have endured tough times, referencing migrant workers from *The Grapes of Wrath* as an example. “The band was really into this idea and decided they wanted the proceeds from the ceremony to go towards it,” says Professor Taylor.

This single event has generated enough money to support the fellowship for multiple years. Professor Taylor and the band are hoping to grow the program in the future. He goes on to say how Mumford & Sons is excited to come back to see how the fellowship develops. Applications for the fellowship should be available before Spring 2020 for SJSU students. For more information on this fellowship, see “New Steinbeck Fellowship Brings Together Students of SJSU and Stanford” later in this newsletter.



*Mumford & Sons preparing to perform
Photograph by Joel Simon/Stanford University*

Dr. Meghan Gorman-DaRif Joins San José State Campus This Fall

By Natalie Knows His Gun-Wong and Yulissa Ferreira



Photo of and provided by Meghan Gorman-DaRif

This fall, Dr. Meghan Gorman-DaRif joins SJSU’s Department of English and Comparative Literature as an assistant professor with a passion for teaching and spreading awareness about postcolonial literature. Dr. Gorman-DaRif is specifically interested in postcolonial literature coming out of India and Kenya—an interest she developed while taking a global novel class while working towards her Master’s degree. As a Middlebury College alumna with a Master’s degree in Education from UMASS Amherst and a Ph.D. in English from UT Austin in Texas, she is well accomplished and arrives with many years of teaching experience. She has also taught English at both the high school and university levels prior to coming to SJSU and is currently teaching ENGL 123B: Literature for Global Understanding: Africa and ENED 353: Methods of Teaching English this fall.

Dr. Gorman-DaRif’s interest in postcolonial literature is what initially inspired her to teach at SJSU. “I really loved the opportunity of the job to do world literature and to have that defined a little bit broadly,” she says. In addition, Dr. Gorman-DaRif’s transition to SJSU has been a positive experience

because her fellow instructors are just as passionate about teaching as she is. Once she arrived at SJSU, Dr. Gorman-DaRif noted, “Everybody was talking not about their own work but about their teaching and their students,” which was something that she optimistically took as an indication that her fellow instructors are genuinely happy with teaching their students.

Now that she is at SJSU, Dr. Gorman-DaRif is excited to be able to teach classes specifically for English majors. This is something that Dr. Gorman-DaRif has been enjoying this semester, and she reports having been “very impressed” with her students who have come to class both eager to discuss the texts and ready to hear new ideas. Dr. Gorman-DaRif encourages students’ participation in her classes since discussion allows them to share their own perspectives with others and also allows her “to see familiar texts in new lights.” As an advocate for sharing ideas in the classroom, Dr. Gorman-DaRif also enjoys recommending books to her students for further learning. She says, “It’s a pleasure and a privilege to be able to share what you care about with others, and it is especially rewarding when students get engaged with the books and come to class excited to share their perspectives.”

In addition to encouraging class discussion, Dr. Gorman-DaRif focuses on drawing her students’ attention to a text’s historical context to show them how the text interacts with the time period that it comes out of. This emphasis on a text’s historical background reflects Dr. Gorman-DaRif’s own particular interest in exploring themes of resistance to colonial structures in postcolonial texts in order to examine how such resistance is “thought through and represented through time.”

Dr. Gorman-DaRif takes this approach to studying texts herself, as her own research into postcolonial literary works is combined with a study of the historical movements behind them. Currently, Dr. Gorman-DaRif is working on a book that explores how novels portray both the Mau Mau Uprising in Kenya and the Naxalite Movement in India. She also discusses how these portrayals “intervene into thinking about both historical and contemporary forms of violence through their changing depictions” of the two movements.

Writing this book has fueled Dr. Gorman-DaRif’s interest in the interconnectedness between India and East Africa—after all, studying the interrelatedness between worlds is essential to understanding post-

colonial literature. Exploring postcolonial texts is all about seeing the bigger picture and requires a conscious effort to examine the ways in which different worlds shape and impact one another—something that Dr. Gorman-DaRif understands and advocates for. It is therefore understandable when Dr. Gorman-DaRif shares her optimism for the future of the field of postcolonial literature: “It’s amazing now to see how exponentially the field is expanding not only from different voices from different countries, but also now there’s more of a vested interest in reading in translation.”

Dr. Gorman-DaRif’s passion for postcolonial literature is tangible, making it easy to see why she has made it her mission to interest more students in the subject. Dr. Gorman-DaRif first recognized the importance of spreading awareness about postcolonial literature while she was teaching high school English. She observed that students often only study one postcolonial text and cites *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe as an example. While she maintains that *Things Fall Apart* is an excellent postcolonial novel, Dr. Gorman-DaRif also explains that when students are given a single example, they are “not fully aware of all the different ways in which our worlds are linked together and impact each other.”

As an English professor at San José State University, Dr. Gorman-DaRif hopes to combine her love for teaching with her passion for studying postcolonial literature by sharing this interest with her students. The most important takeaway Dr. Gorman-DaRif hopes for students to leave her classes with is “to understand complexity” because “the actual lived experience of the world is much more contradictory and difficult, and ambiguous” than many may initially believe.

We are delighted to welcome Dr. Meghan Gorman-DaRif to the English department and look forward to seeing the impact that her teaching will have on her students as she encourages them to have a deeper understanding of the world around them.

Sherri Harvey Gives English 2 a Facelift

By Kimberly Chan and Alycia Low

San José State University Instructor Sherri Harvey is using her seven years, and counting, of experience as a travel writer to teach her English 2 students how to find their voice. Her love

for writing, passion for giving the voiceless a voice, and interest in sustainability stem from her childhood and her excursions around the world. While the general goal of English 2 courses is for students to critically examine the connections between logic and language in arguments, Harvey structures her English 2 courses around the discovery of one’s voice and the question, “How can I make a difference in sustainability?”



Photo of and provided by Sherri Harvey

At the beginning of the semester, Harvey’s students pick a topic involving sustainability that interests them and go on to analyze tweets from President Trump as well as various poems and articles, so the students are exposed to different perspectives about their sustainability issue.

Throughout the semester, Harvey teaches her students various Adobe Creative Cloud applications and uses these tools to teach them about digital storytelling, an emerging practice through which students use digital tools to tell compelling and engaging narratives. “We are so lucky to have these [Adobe] tools because here we are on the verge of digital enlightenment. Embracing technology rather than fighting it is really important,” says Harvey.

Jacqueline Giang, a first-year business major in Harvey’s English 2 class, says, “It’s not a class full of lectures but doing activities and using examples in

order to see rhetoric used in all sorts of media. After that, it would be some sort of assignment of trying it yourself.” Giang’s research project focuses on coral reef bleaching, and she plans on creating a website to raise awareness on how to save the reefs.

Similarly, Justin Barragan, a first-year computer science student in Harvey’s English 2 class, also plans to make a website for his project, which concentrates on the Green New Deal. Barragan describes Harvey as “an engaging, thought-provoking, and somewhat of an unconventional” instructor with clear expectations and insightful course content.

While Harvey has much knowledge to impart to her class, she likes to give her students the freedom to write and develop their own philosophies. Harvey observes that her students often struggle to find their voice initially. She hopes to provide opportunities for students to find their passions and give them a safe space to confidently share their ideas. “It’s important for them to know they have a voice, but how they find that voice is a process,” says Harvey.

This semester was also a great opportunity for students to see how sustainability and saving the environment affect policies and change. For example, during the UN Climate Action Summit 2019, Harvey and her students were able to engage with and analyze 16-year-old Greta Thunberg’s powerful speech. As a class, Harvey’s students determined the various rhetorical devices Thunberg used to logically, ethically, and emotionally appeal to her audience.

If there’s one thing Harvey enjoys about teaching, it’s seeing her students have those lightbulb moments where they see how they’ve changed from non-interactive students to creators. Students were eager to contribute their thoughts and participate in a lively discussion surrounding Thunberg’s effectiveness. Harvey notes that overall the students are highly receptive to her sustainability-focused English course, being engaged, alert, and interested in her work outside of the classroom as well.

If there’s one piece of advice Harvey would offer to instructors interested in incorporating their work into the classroom, it’s that “there should be an overlap between the things that motivate [the instructors] and the way they motivate their students.” The classes should be structured around things the teacher is passionate about.

At her core, passion is the reason why Harvey is where she is today. “Do what you love. Go outside and play. Explore the world. Have a natural curiosity. You’ve got nothing unless you’re curious about the

world around you,” says Harvey. Believing she was destined to be a writer, Harvey began to get curious about culture and diversity when she was a young girl after being exposed to cross-cultural interactions in her own home. Harvey finds that teaching gives her the best of both worlds: working with language and people. Through her work inside and outside of the classroom, Harvey is following her passions and sharing those with her students in hopes that they will develop their own. Harvey’s inclusion of her work inside the classroom allows students to work with her to accurately portray real-world issues.

Like her students, Harvey is constantly researching conservation issues. What makes the gears in her brain turn are the creative ways she and her students can tell a narrative about something relevant today. Harvey plans to travel and take photos of the orangutans in Borneo, raising awareness on their critically endangered status and writing about the importance of their protection. Be on the lookout for more of Harvey’s updates and English courses centered on different environmentally focused topics!

Professor Selena Anderson Wins Rona Jaffe Foundation Award for Work in Fiction

By Javad (Jake) Keikha and Jennifer Tran

In August of 2019, San José State University Assistant Professor Selena Anderson was awarded the Rona Jaffe Foundation Award for Fiction. The Rona Jaffe Foundation, founded by novelist Rona Jaffe in 1995, awards grants to support emerging women writers based on their previous work. Nominations for each grant are solicited from critics, writers, editors, and literary professionals, and are then considered by a private selection committee.

With works appearing in *Glimmer Train*, *Kenyon Review*, *BOMB Magazine*, and more, Anderson has made a name for herself in the world of fiction writing and continues to establish herself with this win. Anderson says, “Winning the RFJ award is a fantastic vote of confidence. It’s great to have folks out there who support my work and feel that it’s necessary. I’m also very humbled and honored to be in the sisterhood of women writers who have won the award and have gone on to write beautiful books.”

Despite teaching Creative Writing (ENGL 71) and leading a fiction workshop for M.F.A. students

(ENGL 241), writing has not been the only major aspect of her life thus far. Recently, Anderson has been on maternity leave but continues to maintain her life as a writer. She maintains a positive attitude throughout this new chapter of her life as she describes how “each of these identities: being a professor, writer, and now mother brings her a lot of joy.” As a writer, this award has impacted her life in a significant way, giving her the chance to continue pursuing her work. Time off has provided Anderson with “uninterrupted time to write and revise.” A major milestone in her life, this award has granted her the opportunity to also “meet some folks she’s long admired” and pursue her goals.



Photo of and provided by Selena Anderson

As both beginning and seasoned writers come to understand, the writing process can prove challenging and sometimes daunting. For Anderson, the most difficult part of the writing process is “getting started again after a dry spell.” As an avid reader, Anderson does plenty of research before she writes, but the majority of her material “comes from the first- or second- hand experience and from eavesdropping.” She also has “a gift for overhearing just the right thing and letting imagination take over.”

In her field, Anderson is drawn to writers “who do dope things with language and metaphor.” The type of characters she’s most drawn to are those who

are facing a dilemma in their lives and have a certain twist to them, ones that “surprise her in some way.”

For someone with such talent and success as a professor and writer, her ultimate piece of advice for those looking to go into this field is to “read with purpose.” Her experience over the years and knowledge that she has attained from her research influences her writing. Reading with purpose for her is about individuals finding their interests through the reading they do and planting a seed in their minds about what intrigues them as writers.

This isn’t Anderson’s first literary award, having previously won the Transatlantic/Henfield Prize while completing her M.F.A. at Columbia University in 2007, as well as the Inprint Joan and Stanford Alexander Prize in Fiction in 2016. With such an impressive history, Anderson is without a doubt a literary success. Anderson personally believes that literary success involves making enough money to support yourself and having people read your work uncoerced. Perhaps most importantly, Anderson’s view of literary success is when “a stranger reads your stuff and feels the jitters. And if you’re writing the stories you’ve been waiting for, you’re winning.”

Bay Area Native Dr. Daniel Rivers Joins SJSU

By Alexis Cutchin and Jamie Dequine

Please join the College of Humanities and the Arts in welcoming Dr. Daniel Rivers to a dual appointment in both the Humanities Department and the Department of English and Comparative Literature. Dr. Rivers is the new Assistant Professor of American Studies and Literature at San José State University; he will be teaching a selection of courses in cultural studies, environmental humanities, and literature.

Prior to joining SJSU, Dr. Rivers completed his undergraduate degree at Sonoma State University and received his Master’s degree from New York University in Humanities and Social Thought. He completed his Ph.D. in Cultural Studies and English at Claremont Graduate University. Subsequently, Dr. Rivers acted as a visiting professor of American Studies at Miami University. He has also been a lecturer in Women’s and Gender Studies at Cal State Fullerton, a lecturer in Gender and Interdisciplinary Studies at Sonoma State University, and a lecturer in Rhetoric at the University of San Francisco.



Daniel Rivers
Photo by April Anderson

A Bay Area local himself, Dr. Rivers grew up in Livermore in the East Bay. He contributes his decision to come to SJSU on its positive and inclusive representation of the Bay Area population. He says, “Being from the Bay Area, and being invested in the Bay Area, to have a

campus that reflects the positive aspects of the Bay, and so proudly, was a big appeal for me.” Dr. Rivers also says that the Steinbeck Center largely influenced his decision to join SJSU’s faculty. He says, “The Steinbeck Center was also a big draw for me. He is a big part of my research as well. He writes about the living world, as well as environment and culture, which is sort of the trifecta of my research.”

So far, SJSU has lived up to Dr. Rivers’s favorable expectations. He recalls his first impression of the campus, “It was big! I really like how the campus is embedded in the city; that was a real appeal. I just also thought it was beautiful. Also, it seemed like the perfect location to apply my two platforms of interest, you know. I loved the eclectic mix and diversity of it. It seems like you get a little piece of everything here.”

Dr. Rivers goes on to explain the positive impact SJSU’s student population has had on him. He says, “Again, I just love the CSU system, especially a big CSU like this one, that draws from a pool of residential and commuter students, supplying a diverse and thorough representation of the Bay Area as a whole.” He continues, “I’m just really enjoying the students; I find them really friendly and awake. Specifically, they just really show up in the classroom, attentive and ready to learn. I really value their eagerness to learn, and even more so, their willingness to share their thoughts and opinions. People are present here; it’s intentional learning.”

Dr. Rivers’s areas of focus amalgamate a variety of topics. His research uses feminist, decolonial, queer, and critical race approaches to ecology and culture to examine how popular thinking about nature and the natural world has shaped the development of California’s landscapes and the health of its human and nonhuman inhabitants. His work on settler cultures of domesticity and grizzly bear

eradication in California is forthcoming in *American Quarterly* in June 2020. Dr. Rivers says, “In addition to unpacking the ways that white settlers transformed the California grizzly into a symbol of imperial manliness, this article analyzes creative and political discussions of the untamed outdoors, which framed Native nations and wild grizzlies as threats to a properly domesticated, and commercially productive, U.S. California.”

His writing has been published in several places, including the *Journal of Transnational American Studies*, *Apogee*, *Women’s Studies*, and *Joyland Magazine*. He is also guest editor of the recent special issue of *Women’s Studies* titled “Futures of Feminist Science Studies.” Dr. Rivers explains how his intrigue with feminist studies developed, saying, “My work in Feminist Science Studies (FSS) grew out of my interest in histories of evolutionary thought, and it informs my approach to analyzing relationships of power among ecology and culture.”

Currently, Dr. Rivers is working on a book project that “broadens his pre-existing scope of inquiry to examine how practices of imagining nature, the unnatural, the human, and the other-than-human have shaped regional approaches to agriculture, activism, housing, urban development, and literary expression throughout California’s colonization.” He elaborates, “Right now, I’m really interested in California authors and histories of imagining the landscape, and how that imagination can be beneficial or an erasure, and I intend to bridge that gap, or at least examine it.” Dr. Rivers is optimistic about his future endeavors at SJSU, as well as the impact he can have on the campus population and vice versa.

New Steinbeck Service Fellowship Brings Together the Students of SJSU and Stanford

By Victor Flores and Bryan Sit

A new Steinbeck Fellowship is being developed by San José State University English Professor Nick Taylor and Stanford University English Professor Gavin Jones. The new fellowship is called the Steinbeck Gentlemen of the Road Fellowship. Professors Nick Taylor and Gavin Jones met when Professor Gavin Jones came to SJSU to do research on Steinbeck for his book. This fellowship will be the first that the two have done together.



Photo of and provided by Nick Taylor

Three students from SJSU and three students from Stanford will be chosen to form a cohort. The planned cohort will be guided by Professor Taylor and Professor Jones and will be involved with possible service projects over the 2020 summer session. These planned projects are very similar to service-learning courses, which will embed community involvement as a main part of the curriculum. Students will be possibly mentoring and teaching children of migrant field workers and working with the families of farmworkers in Steinbeck Country. Students in the fellowship are expected to commute to and from areas considered Steinbeck Country, such as Salinas and other areas within Monterey County. Monterey County faces the unique issue of having migrant farmworkers and the children of these farmworkers studying in U.S. schools. Farm work for these migrant farmworkers is seen as the only hope for them to lead better lives in America. Monterey Country has a Migrant Education Program in place, but more assistance is always welcome.

Born and raised in Salinas, John Steinbeck was raised with modest means and began writing poems and stories around the age of 14. Steinbeck formed a deep love for the Salinas Valley at a young age, which greatly influenced his later writing. Steinbeck dropped out of college and worked as a manual laborer before achieving success as a writer. He wrote over 31 books throughout the course of his career. His most well-known novels include *Of Mice and Men* (1937), *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), and *East of Eden* (1952). His works often deal with social and economic issues, marginalized farmworkers, the environment, and politics. Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, which is about a family who

migrated from the Oklahoma Dust Bowl to California, won a Pulitzer Prize and a National Book Award. During the Second World War, Steinbeck also served as a war correspondent—a journalist reporting from the frontlines of war. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1962.



Photo of and provided by Gavin Jones

The Steinbeck Gentlemen of the Road Fellowship is being created to help writers utilize their knowledge and skills as writing students to give back by helping members of the community, similar to how Steinbeck lived his life. According to Professor Taylor, each member of the cohort will be assigned a different location for an approximate eight-week duration. Writing curriculum will also be included for students to reflect on their experiences during the fellowship. Professors Taylor and Jones want students to emulate the work that Steinbeck did in Steinbeck Country—“They [the students] could use the skills they are learning as college students to help the children of field workers,” says Professor Taylor.

Professors Taylor and Jones met up recently in September at Stanford University, where they awarded the Steinbeck Award to the British rock band Mumford & Sons at their concert. While at the concert, the two planned and agreed to set up the fellowship. In return, Mumford & Sons agreed to fund the Steinbeck Gentlemen of the Road Fellowship. Stipends of \$5,500 to \$7,700 will be funded to students of the program.

Any enrolled student attending SJSU is eligible to apply, but students with English backgrounds will be largely preferred as this fellowship will be largely tailored to the Department of English and Comparative Literature. Applications are expected to be submitted online and a writing sample will most like-

ly be needed. Applicants will be able to apply in the Spring 2020 semester. Details are subject to change, and more information will be shared at a later date.

The Homeless Spartans: C.J. Prusi's Article about Homelessness Among Students

By Vy Anh Tran and Marissa Allen

Many San José State students are struggling with food and shelter according to “Thousands of Silicon Valley College Students Struggle with Homelessness, Hunger,” an article written for *San José Inside* by C.J. Prusi, a student in the SJSU’s Creative Writing M.F.A. program.



Photo of and provided by C.J. Prusi

Prusi’s article was published by *San José Inside* (a subsidiary of *Metro*) on its website in September 2019. This article gives the reader a first-hand look at the homeless crisis at SJSU. As a student, Prusi has a closer point-of-view of his peers than outsiders, and his article reflects this knowledge. His article explains that as the cost-of-living in the Silicon Valley increases, it becomes more difficult for students to maintain a stable living situation. “It’s not like how it used to be when you can work yourself through college with a part-time job,” says Prusi, explaining the state of many students’ financial situations.

Though not homeless himself, Prusi occasionally

stayed on campus overnight in the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library (MLK) due to his busy schedule and long commute by public transportation. MLK is open 24-hours for students during the weekdays of the academic year and is the only public building on campus where students can stay overnight. The overnight stays were difficult for Prusi, but he knew that he was one of the fortunate ones because he had a home, even with the long commute. His experience with the difficulties of finding a place to sleep on or near campus prepared him for his meeting with the Student Homeless Alliance.

After spending a night in MLK, Prusi encountered the Student Homeless Alliance (SHA), one of the main focuses of his article. That morning, members of the organization were offering free coffee and snacks to students. Prusi stopped to partake and found out that SHA was a student-run organization that campaigned to improve the livelihood of SJSU students with housing and food insecurities. As a tired student himself, though not in as bad of a situation as many others, Prusi sympathized with SHA’s cause. He would meet members of the organization several more times as they set up tables and held protests on campus. Prusi’s editor from *San José Inside* knew about Prusi’s overnight stays in the library and his interactions with SHA, so the editor suggested that Prusi write an article on San José State’s homeless students—with a focus on SHA. Prusi agreed.

The article explains that there is more than one type of homelessness and that most homeless students do not fit the “street sleeper” image most people have of a homeless person. Being able to identify the specific issues of the students is the first step to helping them—and SHA is working to raise awareness on those issues. The two things students need the most are food and shelter where they can sleep. Students with food insecurity are those who do not have the money or equipment to feed themselves. Students with shelter insecurity are those that do not have a home, those with unreliable shelter, or those in danger of being evicted. “A permanent place on campus for safe naps as well as a university open kitchen where students can prepare their meals on campus could provide students with higher levels of nutrition and sleep, the main ingredients for both academic success and mental well-being,” says Prusi.

Because students with these difficulties vary in appearance, they can blend in with their school peers. Most homeless students look like ordinary students because they want to keep that image of

normalcy. Many students do not want their peers to know about their troubles, as Prusi discovered while trying to obtain information for his article. “One challenging aspect [of talking to students] is that most struggling students don’t want to burden others by sharing their struggles,” he says. “[Students with housing and food difficulties] feel that other people have it worse, so they should not complain.” This way of thinking means many students do not ask for the help they need. But SHA is working to change that by asking the university to implement measures to help these students.

After a recent meeting between SHA and SJSU officials, the university is taking steps to help with the homeless crisis among students; however, these steps need time to take effect. In the meantime, many students still need help. Though individuals cannot solve the homeless crisis by themselves, showing solidarity and raising awareness on the issues can make a difference. Prusi’s article shows empathy from one student to his peers. He says, “I know despite all my difficulties, I come from privilege. And maybe someone less fortunate than me is thinking the same thing. And it keeps going downwards. Maybe if we all speak out from where we’re at, we can meet in the middle.”

A Labor of Love: Dr. Allison Johnson’s New Book, *The Scars We Carve*

By Sara Garcia and George Mattimoe

Dr. Allison M. Johnson, an assistant professor of American literature here at San José State, recently published a scholarly monograph called *The Scars We Carve: Bodies and Wounds in Civil War Print Culture*. Her first published work came from a love of history and persistence at getting her writing published despite difficulties including a competitive market.

Dr. Johnson double majored in English and History at UC Riverside followed by getting her M.A. and Ph.D. in English at UCLA. Her love for American history started when she was young. She says she “[has] always been interested in [the Civil War] and how we understand and experience it.” Her passion for history came from her father, who himself is an American history professor. She says, “Part of my interest in American history is growing up

being surrounded by [history].” Dr. Johnson’s love of American history inspired her to focus on her writing, which she recently published in her book, *The Scars We Carve*.



Photo of and provided by Dr. Allison Johnson

The book evokes the imagery of men and women’s physical bodies during the Civil War. Dr. Johnson says, “One of the things I look at in my book is how violence affects the bodies, in particular, of the people who participated in the war.” Instead of focusing more on commonly known literature, Dr. Johnson’s work includes the images that were found in newspapers, journals, poems, and even in left-handed writing penmanship contests for people whose arms were amputated during the war. Her book explicitly centers on how the symbolic bodies of African-American soldiers and women sculpted places in the public and political worlds for the real bodies of women and black men. In her book, Dr. Johnson describes not only the conflicts but also the physical experience that the Civil War cost to all the people who suffered.

Furthermore, Dr. Johnson’s blog states how her book is a “fundamental shift in the way we define the American Civil War.” Her book focuses on writings published in the popular press, which was the primary source of information during the war. Dr. Johnson says, “Periodical literature, poems, and stories published in newspapers focus on bodies, wounds, amputations: the physical cost of the war.” She elaborates by saying, “There was also a scholarly consensus that Civil War literature downplayed the destruction, violence, and the physical effects of the war, instead focus[ing] on the cause of the Union or the Confederacy in that the sacrifice was noble. [The literature wasn’t] paying attention to the

sacrifice itself.” Dr. Johnson states that scholars had looked at American Civil War literature a certain way for a long time, but now, it’s time to focus on the overlooked texts of the time as seen in *The Scars We Carve*.

Dr. Johnson began her revision process in 2013, when she finished her dissertation on Civil War literature. She wrote it with the idea that it might be a book one day, and in April 2016 that dream started to become a reality. She started to email various publishers with her self-described elevator pitch. “It was just a paragraph,” says Johnson, “a paragraph that gave [publishers] a general idea of my writing.”

After some emails and rejections, Louisiana State University (LSU) Press decided to pick up Dr. Johnson’s pitch. For six months, there were no notes or words due to the publisher’s experts reviewing the manuscript to make sure everything was accurate. Finally, in September, an email was sent to Dr. Johnson with a contract.

For the next two years, Dr. Johnson revised her manuscript while balancing a teaching career. She was lecturing at UCLA and a local community college all while revising her manuscript. Most feel overwhelmed with the process of multitasking across several activities; however, Dr. Johnson found that balance because “multitasking is part of the job.” It was not an easy task either, as Dr. Johnson essentially rewrote her dissertation in working on this book. “There is so much that has been edited,” Dr. Johnson says. “It was based on [my dissertation], but so much has changed.” In finishing her book, she completed an entirely new contribution to the English field.

By December 2018, the manuscript was complete and ready for the final stages of editing and printing. “I held the finished book a week before it was released,” says Dr. Johnson. “It was really cool to actually hold it [in my hands].” On April 10, 2019 *The Scars We Carve* was released to the public.

With a process that is so time consuming and demanding of the creator, it does not phase Dr. Johnson as she is already at work on her second book. Some of the inspiration comes from “the third chapter about the left-handed penmanship contest,” as Dr. Johnson elaborates. LSU Press is set to work with Dr. Johnson again on this next book. As Dr. Johnson did with *The Scars We Carve*, she wants to emphasize the importance of re-evaluating literature and looking at history with a critical eye in mind, saying, “It is important to add to the collective knowledge.”

The Scars We Carve is currently available online.

Professor of Comparative Literature, José Villagrana, Joins Faculty

By Christian Navarro and Mikaela Sorber

We are proud to welcome Dr. José Villagrana into our SJSU faculty as a professor of English and Comparative Literature. After having obtained his B.A. in English and a minor in Spanish at Northwestern University, Dr. Villagrana continued his education and earned his Ph.D. at the University of California, Berkeley. While attending graduate school, he created a foundation for his career as a professor by teaching as well as lecturing several reading and composition courses. Although at first glance both institutions may appear similar, Dr. Villagrana says the English Department at San José State University has an advantage—they include Comparative Literature in their department. Villagrana anticipates a curriculum that is not strictly centered on English but includes England’s encounters and relationships to the world as well as how the language was affected.



Photo of and provided by Dr. José Villagrana

Ironically, Dr. Villagrana’s fascination with English literature began in his high school Spanish classes. While these classes were designed for students already proficient in Spanish, it wasn’t long before Dr. Villagrana discovered his interest in literature. Once confident in his Spanish reading skills, he transitioned his newly discovered passion to other forms of literature. “Being bilingual is more difficult for going through things because your other

language isn't necessarily as valued right off the bat because it's an English Department," he says. "So, you have to in some ways either ignore or not adapt a part of you that's really important."

Dr. Villagrana, born and raised in Santa Maria, California, recalls his bilingual upbringing introducing new challenges. He says, "Every time I get to read something new or read something again and write about it, it's so hard that through the process, I learn something new." While many people see these challenges as something to overcome, Dr. Villagrana saw an opportunity for a more enriched learning experience: "What felt like a loss initially then became something that I was able to cultivate and say 'I want my knowledge of Spanish to work alongside my knowledge of English. I want to show how reading in one language relates to another.'"

Once in the postgraduate field, Dr. Villagrana used his bilingual skills as a gateway to improved learning. He says his enjoyment for teaching—and learning—paired with the energy he receives from students allows him to step outside his normal reserved side and into the educator role. In addition, the freedom to pursue personal research also proved to be very exciting. "I realized I could bring my skills and upbringing in the Spanish language and ask questions that really aren't being asked right now in English," he says.

As an educator, Dr. Villagrana sees the Department of English and Comparative Literature at San José State University as a gateway to introduce non-English literature texts into the curriculum. Dr. Villagrana mentions that comparing classic English texts from Shakespeare to non-English texts from Native American, Spanish, Japanese, and Portuguese cultures will give a different interpretation. Dr. Villagrana's focus as a professor of English is not only to incorporate different forms of literature but also to build reader confidence. Additionally, in order to expand learning sources, Dr. Villagrana wishes to put emphasis on collaborative learning. He says, "Students write down what peers say, collecting ideas, and I want every student to know that having a conversation with one another is really good."

As such, in Shakespeare I, he encourages the collaboration between students to actively think about a passage from the play, which creates a much more ambivalent approach to a subject that often proves very difficult among students. With the amount of drive and knowledge backing Dr. Villagrana's experience, there is no doubt that he will leave a positive

influence on SJSU's English Department. We are thrilled to have him on our team of dedicated faculty members. Dr. Villagrana says, "It is perfectly fine to face challenges. But in some ways, even though you don't know what the moving parts of the challenge were, you're prepared to meet the challenges."

Dr. Villagrana currently teaches Beginnings to the "American" Experience (ENGL 50), Introduction to Shakespeare's Drama (ENGL 78), and Shakespeare I (ENGL 144).

First Technical Writing Club Becomes Official at SJSU

By Emily Greulich and Jelena Cheyiam

Our campus recognizes over 450 student organizations, but this doesn't mean that there is something for everyone—or even every major. Seniors Antoinette Traub and Ellie Vengala decided to take action after realizing what they believed to be a critical organization missing from the selection. You're not reading a typo; the first technical writing club at SJSU launched this semester.

"I really wanted to be involved in school," says Traub, who transferred to SJSU last semester as a technical writing major, "But, I'm not a creative writer. In the English Department, we only have a Poets and Writers Coalition. I felt that there really wasn't a place for me."



*Antoinette Traub and Ellie Vengala
Photo by Alycia Low*

Vengala, on the other hand, started here as a freshman in 2016. Coming into the university not knowing a lot of English majors, she hoped to join a club that fit her interests. The problem she faced was similar to Traub's, "I'm not really a poet or a creative writer. So much respect to them, but I wanted something different."

Traub and Vengala worked together during the transfer orientations in summer 2019, where they were approached by Dr. Mark Thompson, director of the Professional and Technical Writing Program at SJSU. He thought they would be interested in a club he had been trying to get off the ground for the past six years. It was exactly what the two incoming seniors had been searching for: a technical writing club at SJSU. The two jumped at the opportunity to lead it.

The Young Professional Technical Writing Offensive, or TYPO for short, has three major goals: hosting professional and technical writing conferences at SJSU, providing opportunities for students to work with others outside of their major through building apps, and forming connections between students, alumni, and employers as a social club.

One of the driving reasons Traub, Vengala, and Dr. Thompson felt the need to create a club for technical writers was the overwhelming amount of professional and technical writers and SJSU alumni who are eager to engage with current students. In a traditional class, it is difficult to host every speaker who wants to come. "With a student organization, we have the ability to host these events," says Traub. Technical writing is a rapidly growing field, and it is difficult to know where to start. Having speakers come to work with students and do mock interviews is a great way to prepare these students for work after college. By engaging with fellow technical writers through such organizations and alumni, students are able to benefit by networking for free.

In spite of this team's passion for and competency to create TYPO, they still faced many obstacles in becoming a recognized organization. After an arduous journey, the technical writing club is now official.

The possibilities for the club's future projects appear endless. "No matter what major you're in, every form of every major will need technical writing," says Traub. Their projects will depend on the variety of majors they attract. With a wider diversity of majors, the team will be able to be more creative with their collaborations.

"We really like that this writing overlaps other fields as well," adds Vengala, "It gives a new perspective." Both students agree that they enjoy being able to learn from and collaborate with other majors and contribute their skills to any project. SJSU is brimming with a variety of STEM student organizations, from programming to graphic design, all of which are welcome into their club. Traub (president) and Vengala (treasurer) look forward to working on future projects with students of any major.

"I feel like I've been waiting my whole college career for a club like this," says Vengala, "At least we'll make it happen for future tech writing majors."

Audrey and Alec Bring Years of Experience to the English Department Office

By Elizabeth Rosser and Callie Jorgensen

Audrey Struve and Alec Giurlani joined the Department of English and Comparative Literature office staff in Summer 2019, bringing years of administrative experience between the two of them. As an administrative analyst and administrative support coordinator, respectively, their responsibilities range from handling student affairs to streamlining department processes—two things Struve and Giurlani handle with ease. They bring fresh perspectives to their roles in a department that houses almost 100 faculty members and helps students from all majors in the university.



*Audrey Struve and Alec Giurlani
Photo by Victor Flores*

Struve moved from the Art Department after a reorganization by Dr. Shannon Miller, the dean of the College of Humanities and the Arts. Struve has over

twenty years of experience working with finances and program management. She received her Master's degree in Public Administration from Notre Dame de Namur University. After graduate school, she worked as a coordinator of "Poetry Out Loud" for the Santa Clara chapter, ran the Santa Clara County Poet Laureate Program, managed grantmaking programs, and then worked at SVCCreates from August 2012 to December 2017. After her time at SVCCreates, she decided it was time to put her skills to work at SJSU. Regarding the switch from the Art Department to the English Department, Struve says, "I'm very impressed with how open and welcoming everyone is; everyone goes out of their way to help students because we serve such a broad student base."

Giurlani graduated in the Fall of 2018 with his degree in Creative Arts from SJSU. He knew that he wanted to work with students and faculty—and was able to finish his degree and choose his classes accordingly. While a student, Guirlani worked as a student assistant in the Design Department. On returning to SJSU as the administrative support coordinator, he says, "I was not even thinking about being an advisor. I was just really good at my job, and I loved it. And I thought hey, why not just make a career out of it?" Guirlani has seven years of experience working in administrative and support roles here at the university.

Struve is the English Department office's administrative analyst, the same position she had during her time in the Art Department. She manages hires, monitors budgets, schedules courses, and works directly with students and faculty. She says a lot of her work is to "try to streamline processes and try to figure out the best way to get through the volume of work quickly." Like Struve, Giurlani also works closely with faculty and students as the administrative support coordinator. He is the first face students and faculty see when they walk into the office with questions. He says, "Most of my role is helping students and being their main contact for that, just reaching out and making sure that if they're having trouble, helping them out and giving them the right resources." When he isn't helping students, he is fixing the copier in the mailroom.

Both Struve and Giurlani are involved in improving technological processes in the department. For example, they're currently working with the Dean's office to streamline paperwork processes with DocuSign, an electronic signature software. Over the summer, Giurlani helped implement Spar-

tan Connect, an appointment system that helps the department save money and streamline the process of students meeting with their advisors.

Regarding their futures in the English Department, they have a myriad of ideas. Struve intends to improve the office with her "respect and appreciation skill-set that I bring as well as my administrative skills and a can-do attitude." Giurlani hopes to soon start laying the foundation for a mentor program in the English Department, "so people who graduated can connect with some of our current English students and give them advice for what to expect after you graduate and how to get internships."

They both look forward to helping with graduation in December. In addition, Struve says she's looking forward to "learning more about the classes and getting to know people." Giurlani is already holding graduation workshops and helping students stay on track to graduate. They look forward to getting to know the faculty and students personally as they assist them throughout the semester. Both bring fresh perspectives and positive attitudes to the English Department office in addition to their years of experience.

M.F.A. Alumna Shares Journey to Publication

By Antoinette Traub and Ellie Vengala

San José State University M.F.A. alumna Kym Cunningham published *Difficulty Swallowing*, a collection of nonfiction essays, on September 15, 2019. This is her second publication following a poetry chapbook, *l'appel du vide*, which was published in February 2018. Cunningham graduated from SJSU in 2017 and is currently working toward her Ph.D. in poetry at the University of Louisiana in Lafayette.

The professors she encountered during her M.F.A. training at San José State University were instrumental to her writing. For her poetry, Cunningham credits Alan Soldofsky in helping her "tease out aspects" and broadening her horizons. Cathleen Miller, who had been her advisor, offered Cunningham support in structuring her essays for her thesis, which became her new nonfiction book, *Difficulty Swallowing*. Three years of editing, consulting professors, and writing new essays turned her master's thesis into the book it is today. "It's kind of an extension of my thesis," says Cunningham. "My

thesis was originally a hybrid between nonfiction and poetry, but it wasn't working, so I stuck to a collection of essays for the final product."



Photo of and provided by Kym Cunningham

Switching between genres is no easy task, but Cunningham proves that it is possible. "The actual physical process of writing nonfiction takes a lot of time. But the amount of time you spend editing and fixing a poem also adds up. I'm still working on poems I wrote years ago, and they're not right yet. With nonfiction, I'm more likely to get to a stopping point," she says.

While attending the M.F.A. program at SJSU for nonfiction, she was also the lead nonfiction editor of *Reed Magazine*. As the lead nonfiction editor, she learned how to edit and understand the nonfiction genre through other writers' works as well as her own. It's important to acknowledge that every genre has its positives and negatives, but Cunningham urges writers to let their writing grow along by challenging themselves by trying new genres.

For Cunningham, writing is a never-ending process. Experimenting with writing proves fruitful in unexpected ways; Cunningham has used certain sections from previous poems and has interwoven them within her essays. Part of her writing process is a "constant regrouping of ideas," where she revises her writing into other works instead of abandoning the words after the first attempt. Mixing elements of writing is an excellent way to keep creations fresh—reinventing the context in which a phrase was written in can work out in unexpected ways.

Cunningham gave two sound pieces of advice for writers: "Send your work everywhere," she says. It's important to find a publisher that's right for the writer, their book, and shares the writer's ideals. Cunningham submitted her manuscript to nearly 50 publishers before it was accepted. She notes that feedback is imperative to any aspiring author and that a good publisher also provides support in editing and supporting the writer's creation in new ways. "My publisher, Atmosphere Press, helped me understand how to look through the reader's eyes and restructure *Difficulty Swallowing* as a whole from how it was originally," says Cunningham.

Her second piece of advice is more relevant to aspiring Californian writers and others who have a long commute: "In California, you have to drive everywhere—and it always takes forever. But I've found that some of my best ideas and writing come from the time spent in my car, on a journey. Because if you're stuck in traffic, and you can't do anything else, you might as well be writing." She recommends using the dictation settings on a phone to send text messages to yourself, and later combing and culling through the phrases to see if any of it can be used. Cunningham is adamant against throwing away pieces of writing; she believes that any phrase, piece, or idea can be used somewhere in a piece, even if it isn't immediately clear where. When you've thought about it long enough, she says, "Leave your work alone for a while. That makes it less frustrating to come back and finish."

Take a page out of Cunningham's book and keep on growing, writing, and publishing as much as possible. *Difficulty Swallowing* is available now for purchase on Amazon.

Spring 2020 Course Descriptions

ENGL 21: Mystery and Detective Fiction

Colton Saylor, TR 3:00–4:15

Examines mystery or detective fiction from its inception in the 19th century and follows it across the globe as the genre has been taken on and developed by a variety of cultures. GE Area: C2

ENGL 22: Fantasy and Science Fiction

Tanja Nathanael, Online

During this course we will examine texts that explore the frontiers of the imagination in both fantasy and science fiction. As British fantasy author Neil Gaiman has observed, the British tend to be more successful fantasists due to their comparatively long mythic history, while American writers have excelled in the genre of science fiction, due in part perhaps from an inherited historical ideal to explore the frontier. And yet, as we will discover, there are exceptions to this understanding in both cases. Additional themes of subgenre, gender, and diverse voices will also be explored.

ENGL 30: Literature and the Environment

Daniel Rivers, MW 3:00–4:15

Explores the ways in which writers and literary texts engage environmental issues and represent the natural world and humanity's place in it, paying close attention to issues of ecology, the landscape, conservation, sustainability, and human intervention/interference. Possible areas of inquiry include nature writing, ecofeminism, ecocriticism, environmental justice, postcolonial environments, and the Anthropocene. GE Area: C2

ENGL 50: Beginnings to the "American" Experiment

José Villagrana, TR 10:30–11:45

Exploration of Anglo-Saxon, Medieval, Renaissance, and Early Colonial Writings in Britain and America.

Class engages literary text, literary history, and historical events that shape the literature of the period.

ENGL 60: The Emergence of "British" and "American" Literatures (1680 to 1860)

Allison Johnson, TR 1:30–2:45

This course explores the circulation of ideas, literary texts, and peoples back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean from the Restoration period in England up to the outbreak of the American Civil War. We will chart the literary effects of British imperialism, witness the birth of a distinctly American identity and literature, and examine literary depictions of the transatlantic slave trade from both sides of the pond.

ENGL 60: The Emergence of "British" and "American" Literatures (1680 to 1860)

Colton Saylor, TR 12:00–1:15

Exploration of Restoration, Early American, Romantic, American Romantic, and Victorian writings in Britain and America. Class engages literary text, literary history, and historical events that shape the literature of the period. Prerequisite: ENGL 1A

ENGL 70: 1860–Present: Emerging Modernisms and Beyond

Michael Tod Edgerton, MW 3:00–4:30

This course will survey the matrix of revolutionary Modernist movements as they weave through philosophy, literature, and the other arts. We'll look at how a self decentered by the Copernican Revolution and a world transformed by the Industrial Revolution lead to the structuralist and historicist trends in thought and the abandonment of traditional forms across the arts: The deaths of God, Man, and Art; Pound's call to "make it new"; Romantic currents and counter-currents from Symbolism to the Historical Avant-Garde movements of Europe, to the High Modernism of Britain and America, and down to such ultra- and post-Modernist American trends as the New York School and Language Poetry.

ENGL 71: Creative Writing

Michael Tod Edgerton, MW 4:30–5:45

We'll look at a variety of literary genres and forms, writing processes and procedures in the course of our adventures in making art with words. We'll explore the genre conventions of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction before moving between and beyond them to exciting new territory. We'll move our processes off the blank page to compositional strategies that begin with and/or include other texts or art works, such as literary collage, erasure, ekphrasis, and multimedia writing. Classes will be divided between discussion of model texts (mostly PDFs) and constructive critique of student work. Email Michael.Edgerton@sjsu.edu with any questions.

ENGL 71: Creative Writing

Aamina Ahmad, MW 1:30–2:45

Kristian O'Hare, TR 12:00–1:15

Sherri Harvey, TR 3:00–4:15

Leanne Lindelof, TR 4:30–5:45

Joseph Navarro, F 9:30–12:15

Examinations of works of poetry, creative nonfiction and short fiction as expression of human intellect and imagination, to comprehend the historic and cultural contexts, and recognize issues related to writing by men and women of diverse cultural traditions. Students will also write poetry, creative nonfiction, and a short fiction. GE Area: C2

ENGL 100A: Writing Competency Through Genres

Alesya Petty, TR 9:00–10:15; 10:30–11:45

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 be in "student group" WST2 or WSTF to take 100A.

ENGL 100W: Writing Workshop

Kathleen McSharry, MW 3:00–4:15

Advanced workshops in Reading and Composition.

ENGL 100W: Writing Workshop

Nancy Stork, TR 10:30–11:45

A writing workshop designed to make you an excellent prose stylist and thoughtful critic of poetry, prose and drama. The final project is a textual history of a poem published before 1850.

ENGL 100WB: Written Communication: Business

Laimin Lo, M 9:00–11:45; W 9:00–11:45

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

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

ENGL 101: Introduction to Literary Criticism

Katherine D. Harris, 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

Linda Mitchell, MW 9:00–10:15

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

ENGL 103: Modern English

Nancy Stork, TR 1:30–2:45

A linguistically-based, historically-informed introduction to modern English grammar. We cover it all: from phonemes and morphemes to adverbial phrases and nominal clauses. If you think you do not enjoy grammar, please let me try to change your mind!

ENGL 106: Editing for Writers

Sara West, MW 10:30–11:45

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

ENGL 110: Visual Rhetoric and Digital Document Design for Writers

Mark Thompson, TR 12:00–1:15

Combines visual rhetorical theory with design techniques to teach writers about the visual aspects of written and digital communication. In this hands-on course, students will design documents, including a poster, a book chapter, infographics, and promotional materials for local nonprofits. We will also learn about website design and infographics.

ENGL 112A: Children's Literature

Tanja Nathanael, Online

During this course students acquire an understanding of how children's literature functions in an interna-

tional context and how cultural diversity may be reflected in children's books. This course will focus on a range of contemporary transnational literatures, either originating from or set in various locales around the world. In the study of these texts, students will gain insight into diverse human experiences, helping to broaden their perspectives by offering windows into other cultures. Thematically, we will focus on borders and how by crossing borders or through the journey itself protagonists strengthen or redefine individual, cultural, and national identities.

ENGL 112B: Literature for Young Adults

Daniel Hendel De La O, F 9:30–12:15

Study of selected literary material, representing a variety of cultures, chosen to motivate secondary school readers.

ENGL 115: The Bible as Literature

Mary Warner, MW 4:30–5:45

This course approaches the Bible, this signature work of Western Civilization, from the perspective of literature. We examine key portions of the Bible, exploring its subjects, themes, literary styles, and genres, and its vast influence on Western Literature. Students will write two essays—one connected to TANAK/Old Testament and one related to the Christian Foundational Writings/New Testament. Key Quotes activities and Sustained Silent Writing assist our comprehensive exploration of the Bible. As part of the 4th credit enhancement, students will be able to explore in depth a Biblical book of their own choosing. Every "respectable" English major should be familiar with the Bible!

ENGL 116: Myth in Literature

Nancy Stork, TR 9:00–10:15

A survey of early surviving myths from the following traditions: Norse, Celtic, Greco-Roman, Egyptian, Zoroastrian, Sanskrit, African, and Chinese. Consideration of gods, goddesses, mythical creatures, folk religions and other elements that contribute to what we consider mythology.

***ENGL 117B: Global Film,
Literature, and Cultures***

Meghan Gorman-DaRif, F 9:30–12:15

The 2017 Executive Order seeking to ban entry to the United States of foreign nationals from seven Muslim-majority countries is the latest sign of growing Islamophobia in the US and abroad. This course considers theory, film, and literature related to the themes of Orientalism and Islamophobia, in an attempt to look beyond borders and across time periods to understand different cultures, histories, and experiences.

***ENGL 122: Topics in Comparative
World Literature***

Balance Chow, MW 1:30–2:45

An exemplary theme as treated in various literatures in different languages, e.g., war, love, freedom, religious experience. May be repeated when course content changes. Prerequisite: One year of college level foreign language or instructor consent.

***ENGL 123D: Literature for Global
Understanding—Asia***

Meghan Gorman-DaRif, TR 1:30–2:45

This course examines literature in English produced during the colonial and postcolonial period from a variety of perspectives and cultures in India, with special attention to how authors engage in their texts with historical events and cultural struggles, including colonialism and the fight for independence, partition and religious conflicts, the caste system, and women's rights. This course is not meant to be a complete survey in Indian literature, but instead aims to introduce students to some of the themes that have emerged in Indian writing in English over the last seventy years, and the historical, political, and social contexts from which such writing emerges.

ENGL 127: Contemporary Theatre

Kathleen Normington, MW 9:00–

10:15
European and American playwrights from 1950 to the present and important theatre practices for this period. GE Area: V.

ENGL 130: Writing Fiction

Keenan Norris, TR 3:00–4:15

In the fiction workshop, students will examine how literary fiction works. Some questions students will begin to uncover include the following: What makes a character unforgettable? What makes for a musical sentence? What makes a scene transport the reader in such a way that they forget that they are reading? What is it about a story that evokes an emotional response in the reader? How do writers create and reinvent these moments? Through lecture, discussion, assigned reading, writing exercises, and peer feedback, students will investigate elements of craft including plot and story structure, characterization, point of view, and voice among other topics to write and revise two short stories.

ENGL 130: Writing Fiction

Jill Logan, MW 12:00–1:15

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

ENGL 131: Writing Poetry

**Michael Tod Edgerton, MW 12:00–
1:15**

“Poetry isn’t merely a more beautiful way to communicate ideas or experiences or feelings,” writes Matthew Zapruder in *Why Poetry?* before quoting Paul Valéry, “A poem is really a kind of machine for producing the poetic state of mind by means of words.” Just what is that state of mind, you ask? Come, take a deep-dive into the rich ends of the stanza, line, and word and find out for yourself! Take this class and become, if only for the semester (but maybe for life), a rigorous and serious reader and writer of poetry. We will read essays by poets on the various styles, techniques and value (personal, social, ethical, political...) of poetry, as well as, of course, a ten-ton ship-full of poems. This is a reading-and-writing-intensive seminar cum workshop cum mad scientist laboratory (count on it being a ship’s ton of work) that will wreck you in the sea of language to drown in the infinite pleasures of the poetic state of mind.

ENGL 133: Reed Magazine

Cathleen Miller, T 3:00–5:45

Reed Magazine is the oldest literary journal west of the Mississippi. In the spring semester we'll focus on the production aspects of publication: copyedit and proofread the submissions chosen in the fall; design, layout and print the journal. We'll also look at ways to market *Reed* by tabling at conferences and events and selling advertising. And last but not least, we'll organize the *Reed* Gala to celebrate the debut of our new issue! *Reed* is undoubtedly one of the most important classes you can take to provide marketable skills on your resumé to help you garner a job post-graduation.

ENGL 135: Writing Nonfiction

Cathleen Miller, TR 12:00–1:15

Advanced writing workshop in creative nonfiction. In this class we will experiment with four subgenres of nonfiction: the personal essay, travel writing, profiles, and feature articles. In addition we'll discuss strategies for publishing your work. Prerequisite: English 71. Repeatable twice for credit.

ENGL 144: Shakespeare 1

José Villagrana, TR 9:00–10:15

Major plays such as *Twelfth Night*, *Henry IV, Part I* and *Hamlet*. Prerequisite: Upper division standing.

ENGL 145: Shakespeare and Performance

Adrienne Eastwood, 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. Students will respond to each Shakespearean play text through both writing and oral interpretation, integrating speech and dramatic performance with an understanding of the complexities of plot, characterization, and dramatic form. *Required for the English Single-Subject Credential

ENGL 152: Studies in British Drama before 1800

Adrienne Eastwood, MW 10:30–11:45

Queer Identities from Street to Stage

For centuries, queer folk have been attracted to the theater. After all, it's a transformative place where commoners become kings, men become women, and anything is possible. Join me in this exploration of queer identities as they appear on and around the early English stage. From the Elizabethan era through the Restoration, we will read plays by Marlowe, Shakespeare, Middleton and Dekker, Heywood, Behn—all of which engage queerness either through gender or sexuality.

ENGL 167: Steinbeck

Susan Shillinglaw, TR 12:00–1:15

This course considers Steinbeck's career and creative vision, with a focus on his ecological, social, and political ideas. Journal, reading groups, field trip, presentations. Texts: *To a God Unknown* (1933), *The Long Valley* (1938), *Tortilla Flat* (1935), *In Dubious Battle* (1936), *Of Mice and Men* (1937), *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), *Cannery Row* (1945), *East of Eden* (1952), and *Travels with Charley* (1962).

ENGL 168: The American Novel

Susan Shillinglaw, TR 10:30–11:45

Writer John Steinbeck best articulated his views on human engagement in a 1955 essay, "Some Thoughts on Juvenile Delinquency," published in the *Saturday Review*: "I believe that man is a double thing," he wrote, "a group animal and at the same time an individual. And it occurs to me that he cannot successfully be the second until he has fulfilled the first." Often we consider things the other way around: know thyself before connecting to others. In this section of 168, we will consider the shifting dynamic among

self, family and community as reflected in major American works. We'll also discuss literary history: Romanticism, Realism, Sentimentalism, Naturalism, Modernism, Post Modernism. Texts: Hawthorne, *Blithedale Romance*; Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*; Crane, *Maggie*, *Girl of the Streets*; Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*; Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*; Morrison, *Sula*; Yezierska, *Bread Givers*; Silko, *Ceremony*.

ENGL 169: Ethnicity in American Literature

Allison Johnson, TR 3:00–4:15

This course explores the influence of ethnic diversity on American literature by focusing on lines, including but not limited to borderlines, the color line, and timelines. Paying close attention to strategies of representation and resistance, we will examine the polyvocal literary and cultural fabric of the United States.

ENGL 172: The Arts in U.S. Society

Liz Linden, M 3:00–5:45

Study of American arts and artists in their aesthetic, social, and political contexts, focusing on 20th and 21st centuries. Arts examined include architecture, poetry, music, visual arts, dance, theatre, performance art, and fiction. Special emphasis on issues of cultural diversity. GE Area: S. Prerequisite: Passage of the Writing Skills Test (WST) or ENGL/LLD 100A with a C or better (C- not accepted), completion of Core General Education and upper division standing are prerequisites to all SJSU studies courses. Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended.

ENGL 173: Thinking About Contemporary World Arts

Liz Linden, MW 12:00–1:15

Victoria Rue, TR 1:30–2:45

An interdisciplinary course on contemporary arts and culture which investigates connections between arts disciplines and world cultures. The course uses critical and creative thinking as the lens to focus on issues in the arts, especially personal and cultural identities. GE Area: V. Prerequisite: Passage of the Writing Skills Test (WST) or ENGL/LLD 100A with

a C or better (C- not accepted), completion of Core General Education and upper division standing are prerequisites to all SJSU studies courses. Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended.

ENGL 182: Women in Literature

Katherine D. Harris, TR 9:00–10:15

In this current climate, women are being bombarded with expectations about their bodies, social roles, representations of identity, and more. For this semester, we'll venture across historical and geographical boundaries to understand how "women" represent resilience and power especially in the face of the #MeToo movement. We'll participate in the Red Dress project, attend a performance of the *Vagina Monologues*, work with SJSU's Gender Equity Center, and explore Women's History Month in March. Our texts may include *The Golden Notebook*, *Woman of Colour*, *The Bluest Eye*, *Orlando*, *The Passion of New Eve*, *Alien* (1979 movie), *The Testaments* (sequel to *The Handmaid's Tale*), *The Watchmen* (new HBO series), *Fun Home* (graphic novel).

ENGL 183: Major Authors

Balance Chow, MW 9:00–10:15

One major author's works. Author changes each semester. Toni Morrison will be the focus of this semester's course.

ENGL 241: Fiction Writing Workshop

Keenan Norris, T 7:00–9:45

This is the most advanced fiction workshop offered at SJSU. It is designed for students pursuing writing as a vocation. Students enrolled in the MFA Program in Creative Writing have registration priority. If there is extra space, graduate students in other disciplines and Open University students may enroll with instructor permission. The majority of our class time will be spent discussing student work. We will also read a variety of short stories and longer prose work. The class is divided into four loosely thematized parts, based around the concepts of voice, character-building, story structure and reflection/revision. We will take a tour of different styles of creative writing, learning what's been invented, and we'll do a lot of our own new writing as well. Additionally, we will discuss aspects of the writing profession. Topics include finding time to write, managing time, revision, genre, using material, finding an agent or publisher, and networking.

Students will workshop their own work on at least three instances during the term (2,000–5,000 words) and will also be required to provide respectful, constructive, detailed written feedback to their classmates when their classmates are the focus of the workshop. We'll also read the work of acclaimed writers every week and we will examine what we've read through in-class discussion and group book reports (each group will be responsible for one report to the class) to “open up” the work from an artist's vantage point.

The objectives of this course are to study and work toward establishing our voice(s) as writers, to learn in nuanced fashion the deep lives of our characters, and to competently structure our stories.

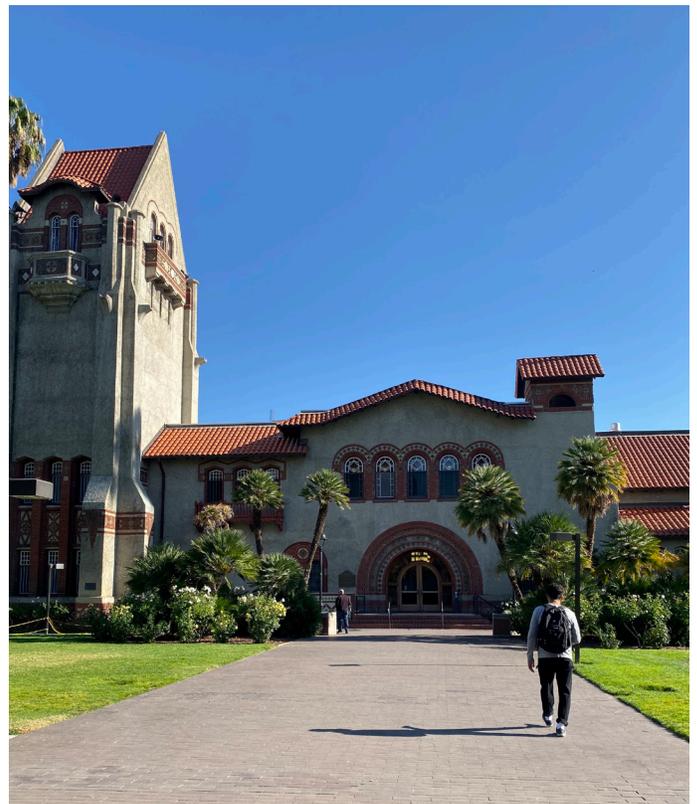
ENGL 254: Seminary in Genre Studies of American Literature

Susan Shillinglaw, T 4:00–6:45

Conservation Classics: How do we consider the world? We will read and discuss several “classics” in conservation and consider the questions they raise: how to participate fully in the places one inhabits; how to respect and conserve those places of the heart; how to turn contemplation into action; and how to consider ways in which these “classics” are

urgently relevant today, as we confront a world in crisis. Readings will be selected from the following list: Austin, *The Land of Little Rain*; Williams, *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place*; Steinbeck, *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*; Carson, *Under the Sea Wind*; Jeffers, Selected poems; Oliver, Selected poems; Leopold, *Sand Country Almanac*; Stegner, *Angle of Repose*; Faulkner, “The Bear”; Berry, *Hannah Coulter*; Abbey, *The Monkey Wrench Gang*; Dungy, *Black Nature: Four Centuries of African American Nature Poetry*; Powers, *The Overstory*.

Note: As the undergraduate newsletter, we include only graduate courses that are submitted by faculty members. For a full listing of graduate classes, please see the Graduate Newsletter or the online course catalogue.



*Tower Hall
Photo by Sara Garcia*

Letter from the Chair, Noelle Brada-Williams

It is hard to believe that as I write this, that the semester is almost over. The semester got off with a bang with the Reed Gala in the Hammer Theater that hosted author Jonathan Franzen and authors featured in the 152nd edition of Reed Magazine. The Center for Literary Arts, under the direction of Dr. Selena Anderson, not only co-sponsored the Gala but brought a wide range of authors to campus. We also had a



Photo of and provided by Noelle Brada-Williams

number of events sponsored by grants from the College of Humanities and the Arts centered around the concept of Borderlands, including the visit by journalist Sonia Nazario, author of *Enrique's Journey*. One of these events I am now preparing for is the 45th anniversary of the *Aiiieeeee! Anthology of Asian American Literature*, one of the earliest anthologies of Asian American literature in existence. At this event, we will celebrate with two of the original editors, Lawson Inada and Shawn Wong, and will participate in a discussion led by poet Marilyn Chin.

Probably the most memorable moment for me this year was listening to CLA guest Tyehimba Jess read one of his poems from his Pulitzer-prize winning collection, *Olio*, called the “Bert Williams / George Walker Paradox.” This poem consists of two parallel ghazels (consisting of couplets ending with a common word) running side by side down the page in the voice of the two African American performers from the era of minstrel shows. Part of their paradox, as Jess explained, is that they became very famous for performing in these one-dimensional and stereotypical representations of African Americans, and yet they were able to use their earnings to support three-dimensional theatrical self-representations by African Americans. Jess led the audience in a dance by keeping his cursor on the projected screen while he read in the voice of one performer and then the other, sometimes repeating a line, sometimes breaking off midline to start somewhere else in the poem, reading the poem backwards and forwards, reading down and then working back up the page. Jess made the poem like an instrument in which he could play any tune he wanted, and it would still produce deep, contextualized meaning.

And when he finished the reading, he showed us how you could tear this page out of his book along a perforated line and fold it from side to side, forming a cylinder, or top to bottom, like a piano roll in a player piano that could continue to make meaning without ceasing. He then showed how the whole thing could become a Möbius strip! He turned an insight in to the work of these late 19th, early 20th century performers—that they had turned their one-dimensional roles into a way of producing three-dimensional African American art—itself into a literal, tangible analogy to illustrate his point. After I finished picking my jaw off the floor of the Forager Café venue where he spoke, I realized that Tyehimba Jess had changed the way I would conceive of the possibilities of poetry forever.

Our department motto is “where practicality meets passion” and that was on display last Friday night when we had our 3rd annual Alumni mixer and career panel. We had four alumni speak to a mix of students and alumni, including Sean Bui, the California Teacher of the year for 2019, a Content strategist from Google, the Communications Director for the College of Engineering, and the head of Content Marketing for a new start up. We had a very lively and engaged question and answer session with the audience. If you missed the event but would still like to know more about career paths for English majors, we livestreamed the event on Facebook and you can still find the video on the English Department Facebook page.

Be sure to sign up for classes with Professors Cathleen Miller and Balance Chow as the Spring semester will be your last chance to take classes with them as they are both retiring in 2020. Professor Chow is offering English 183, a one of a kind class focused on the work of Toni Morrison, and English/Comparative Literature 122, Topics in Comparative World Literature. Other class offerings that you may want to look out for as they are unlikely to be offered again during your short time with us as a student include English 115, The Bible as Literature with Dr. Mary Warner, English 182, Women's Literature with Professor Harris, and English 152, Studies in British Drama Before 1800, with Professor Adrienne Eastwood. Be sure to grab your chance to take one or more of these electives.

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