

# Creative Writing Section 01

## ENGL 71

Fall 2023 3 Unit(s) 08/21/2023 to 12/06/2023 Modified 08/29/2023

### Course Description and Requisites

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

GE Area(s): C2. Humanities

Letter Graded

### \* Classroom Protocols

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**Participation:** To qualify as participation, you are expected to come to class having read the readings/assignments due that day. You should be prepared to listen carefully to your peers, ask questions, and offer your own insight. Your input is important to the class.

**Workshop Submissions:** You will have (3) workshop submissions this semester. Given the number of students in this class, we will employ a small group workshop model. You will upload your piece (as a google doc attachment) to the discussion board thread on the Sunday before we are to engage in workshop (by 11:59pm). Since our workshops are on Thursdays this semester, this will give your peers a few days to read your work and prepare comments.

**Peer Review:** We will be doing small group peer review in lieu of traditional workshop. You must be present to engage in workshop and you will have prepared in advance. In a typical workshop, we would annotate the document and write a letter of approximately 1/2 to 1-page responding to the work. Your critique should include both positive and critical comments. You should approach this rhetorically, however, and present the information as carefully as you would hope people would be with you. We will discuss strategies to help with this.

**Reading Responses:** You will write two posts per week for 12 of the weeks in this semester; one that is your response to the readings, and one response to your classmates. (There are 16 total weeks of class. You can decide which weeks you won't comment.) I will count your best 10 (comment and response) toward a grade. These responses can be about **ANY** of the readings for class **but MUST be posted by 11:59pm the night before we discuss that work in class** (e.g. If you wish to discuss something we are going to discuss Tuesday, you should be posting by 11:59pm the night before).

**Attendance:** Given that your participation is so vital to this course, you are expected to show up to each scheduled class. Any assignments/activities given in those meetings cannot be made up at a later date. It is your responsibility to contact a classmate for notes. There is no need to contact me about missed assignments or readings as they are all outlined in Canvas.

**Assignments:** All assignments are due by 11:59 pm on the day they are assigned unless otherwise noted by me.

**Late Assignments:** Due to the nature of this course--namely, that for workshop you must show up with work to be reviewed, and prepared to review someone else's work--it matters that your stories and notes are submitted on time. Stories or assignments turned in late will not be accepted.

**Conduct:** Writing is a vulnerable exercise, even more so at the beginning levels. Everything we discuss in class will be handled with the utmost respect and care. You will likely read work that deals with sensitive and/or controversial topics. We will handle these as carefully as we would like our own work to be treated. A creative writing course is unique in the world of academia--indeed the world at large--in that we often share thoughts, views and life experiences, that are most important to us. We will all work together to create

an atmosphere that is welcoming and inclusive for all.

**Accommodations/Assistive Tech:** If you need any special accommodations or assistance in technology due to disability, you should contact the Accessible Education Center and me.

**Academic integrity:** Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The Academic Integrity Policy F15-7 requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. **For this class, this includes absolutely no use of any AI or generative text apps or programs, unless discussed with me; your personal and original writing is fundamental to the work in this course.** Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. Visit the Student Conduct and Ethical Development website for more information.

**Title IX Disclosure and Mandatory Reporter Status:** In this course, the topic of sex (including sexual misconduct/sexual violence) may emerge either purposefully or inadvertently in readings, films, class discussions or other class materials. We recognize that such topics may be particularly upsetting for some; we encourage all students to seek the support they need. While making personal connections with the topics studied in any course can be a meaningful and important endeavor, please be aware of the following policy regarding confidentiality and disclosures of incidents of sexual misconduct/sexual violence.

As your instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help maintain a safe learning environment on our campus. In the event that you choose to write, speak or otherwise disclose information about having experienced sexual misconduct/sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking and specify that this violence occurred while you or the perpetrator were a SJSU student, federal and state laws require that I, in my capacity as a "responsible employee," must notify SJSU's Title IX and Gender Equity Officer. The Title IX and Gender Equity Officer will contact you to inform you of your rights and options and connect you with support resources, including possibilities for holding accountable the person who harmed you. Please be advised that you will not be forced to share information and your level of involvement will be your choice.

In Nonfiction workshops, we take for granted that the things being written about are true, which can possibly trigger the need for your professor to report to the above office in ways that fictional writings might not require. There are other craft elements, too, at your disposal, such as the use of second or third person POV, or aliases, and many more. These are useful tools that communicate clearly that this work is not about you (the author), and that you are not in any such distress. I say all of this in the spirit of meeting three concurrent allegiances: 1) I would like to connect anyone in distress with the resources that they need; 2) I am required by the school to do so if I learn of it; AND 3) I would also like this workshop to be a safe space for you to write about the subjects you'd like—both the easy and the complicated—without the need for further follow up that a student might not desire. Please see me if you would like further clarification.

This syllabus is subject to change throughout the semester.

## Program Information

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Welcome to this General Education course.

SJSU's General Education Program establishes a strong foundation of versatile skills, fosters curiosity about the world, promotes ethical judgment, and prepares students to engage and contribute responsibly and cooperatively in a multicultural, information-rich society. General education classes integrate areas of study and encourage progressively more complex and creative analysis, expression, and problem solving.

The General Education Program has three goals:

**Goal 1:** To develop students' core competencies for academic, personal, creative, and professional pursuits.

**Goal 2:** To enact the university's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and justice by ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to serve and contribute to the well-being of local and global communities and the environment.

**Goal 3:** To offer students integrated, multidisciplinary, and innovative study in which they pose challenging questions, address complex issues, and develop cooperative and creative responses.

More information about the General Education Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) can be found on the [GE website](https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php). (<https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php>)

English Program Information

The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi: In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System").

Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance:

- A = excellent;
- B = above average;
- C = average;
- D = below average;
- F = failure.

Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a +(plus) or -(minus) grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

### Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Upon successful completion of an undergraduate degree program in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will be able to:

1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric.
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.
4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, including structures of power.

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### Department Information:

Department Name: English and Comparative Literature

Department Office: FO 102

Department Website: [www.sjsu.edu/english](http://www.sjsu.edu/english) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/english>)

Department email: [english@sjsu.edu](mailto:english@sjsu.edu) (<mailto:english@sjsu.edu>)

Department phone number: 408-924-4425

## Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

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### GE Area C2: Humanities

Area C Arts and Humanities courses help students to respond subjectively as well as objectively to aesthetic experiences and to develop an understanding of the integrity of both emotional and intellectual responses. C2 Humanities courses encourage students to analyze and appreciate works of philosophical, historical, literary, aesthetic, and cultural importance.

### GE Area C2 Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of a C2 course, students should be able to:

1. analyze and understand works of philosophical and humanistic importance, including their temporal and cultural dimensions;
2. explore and articulate their own subjective aesthetic and intellectual responses to such texts;
3. analyze and assess ideas of value, meaning, and knowledge, as produced within the humanistic disciplines; and
4. research and write effective analyses of works of the human intellect and imagination

**Writing Practice:** Students will write a minimum of 1500 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline.

# Course Materials

## Required Text:

[Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within by Natalie Goldberg, Shambhala press \(https://www.amazon.com/Writing-Down-Bones-Freeing-Classics/dp/1570624240\)](https://www.amazon.com/Writing-Down-Bones-Freeing-Classics/dp/1570624240)

ISBN-10 : 161180308X

ISBN-13 : 978-1611803082

## Optional text (I will offer scans from this book as needed):

[Imaginative writing by Janet Burroway, Pearson \(https://www.amazon.com/Imaginative-Writing-Elements-Penguin-Academics/dp/032135740X/ref=sr\\_1\\_2?hvadid=598727349260&hvdev=c&hvlocphy=9032030&hvnetw=g&hvqmt=e&hvrnd=14484973559939984818&hvtargid=kwd-1835613968&hydadcr=8488\\_13545002&keywords=imaginative+writing+burroway&qid=1691082924&s=books&sr=1-2\)](https://www.amazon.com/Imaginative-Writing-Elements-Penguin-Academics/dp/032135740X/ref=sr_1_2?hvadid=598727349260&hvdev=c&hvlocphy=9032030&hvnetw=g&hvqmt=e&hvrnd=14484973559939984818&hvtargid=kwd-1835613968&hydadcr=8488_13545002&keywords=imaginative+writing+burroway&qid=1691082924&s=books&sr=1-2)

ISBN-10 : 0134053249

ISBN-13 : 978-0134053240

All other texts for this course will be found in Canvas.

# Course Requirements and Assignments

The writing assignments for this course will give you experience writing in several genres and in all phases of the writing process, including: prewriting, writing, revising, and editing. You will receive feedback from your peers and from your instructor, which you are welcome to take into account during your revision process. You are not required to.

The readings for this course have been curated for the beginning writer, with ideas of breadth and inclusion in mind. My hope is to introduce you to a broad range of styles, voices, and subject matter. This will help you along the path of creating your own distinct writerly voice.

Assignments Overview: You will create three original works, one of which will be revised significantly by the end of the semester. You will engage in peer review of these creative works to assist you in those revisions. You will also respond to the readings that we do each week, which will help inform our in class conversations. In lieu of a final exam, you will construct a portfolio of your best work for submission.

| Unit | Project Name                                    | CLO   | Word Count | % of grade |
|------|---|-------|------------|------------|
| 1    | Poetry Submission (4)                           | 1,2,4 | 50-500     | 5%         |
| 2    | Short Fiction Submission                        | 1,2,4 | 1000-1500  | 10%        |
| 3    | Creative Nonfiction Submission                  | 1,2,4 | 1800-2000  | 10%        |
| 1-3  | Peer Reviews, Drafts, Conferences (3 @ 5% each) | 3,4   | 200-300    | 15%        |

|        |  |         |         |      |
|--------|--|---------|---------|------|
| 1-3    | Reading Responses (24 total required. I will score your best ten of each (reading response and reply to peers).  | 1,2,3,4 | 150-300 | 20%  |
| 3      | Participation (In class work & discussion)   | 1,2,3   | N/A     | 15%  |
| 3      | Final portfolio:<br>-Revision of Unit 2 or 3 Submission<br>-Statement of Developing Aesthetic<br>-Example of your best peer Review<br>-Example of your best Reading Response | 1,2,3,4 |         | 25%  |
| Totals |  |         |         | 100% |

**Workload and Credit Hour Requirements:** Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course-related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practice. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

## ✓ Grading Information

### Breakdown

| Grade | Range    |
|-------|----------|
| A+    | 96%-100% |
| A     | 93%-95%  |
| A-    | 90%-92%  |
| B+    | 87%-89%  |
| B     | 83%-86%  |
| B-    | 80%-82%  |
| C+    | 77%-79%  |
| C     | 73%-75%  |
| C-    | 70%-72%  |

|    |         |
|----|---------|
| D+ | 67%-69% |
| D  | 63%-66% |
| D- | 60%-62% |
| F  | <59%    |

Assessing creative work can be different from other academic work. Here is generally how I will be grading your creative pieces:

A = Meets the minimum requirements of the prompt and is publishable with minor revisions.

B = Meets the minimum requirements of the prompt but needs more significant revisions.

C = Meets the minimum requirements of the prompt but needs substantial revisions.

D = Does not meet the minimum requirements of the prompt and is incomplete.

F = Nothing submitted for this assignment.

Your reading responses and peer feedback will be graded based on the quality of the input, the insightfulness of the critique and criticism, as well as the ability to present these in a manner that feels supportive to those receiving them. (We will spend time in class discussing best practices for how to do this.)

There is no extra credit for course.

There is no late work accepted for the work we do in class. For obvious reasons, you must be in class to get participation points.

Note: You must pass with a C- or better for credit.

## University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

## Course Schedule

| Week | Date | Tuesday        | Date | Thursday | Unit |
|------|------|----------------|------|----------|------|
| 1    | 8/22 | Unit 1: Poetry | 8/24 |          | 1    |

|   |      |  |      |  |  |
|---|------|--|------|--|--|
|   |      | <p>-Note: There are no readings to do in advance for this class. We will go over these in class.</p> <p>-Syllabus/Structure of this course</p> <p>-Opening writing exercise.</p> <p>-What is a Poem? By Mark Yakich (<a href="#">link to article</a>)</p> <p>-How to Read a Poem by Edward Hirsch</p> <p>-Intro to poetry (presentation)</p> <p>-William Carlos Williams</p> <p>-Sharon Olds</p> |      | <p>-Note: All readings are to be read <b>PRIOR</b> to class on the day they are listed.</p> <p>-Triggering Town (Ch 1-2)</p> <p>-Writing Poems- Starting out ch. 1</p> <p>-Generative Prompt: Dip. Rise. Dive.</p> <p>-Patrick Rosal Reading</p> |  |
| 2 | 8/29 |  | 8/31 |  |  |
|   |      | <p>-Poetry Analysis</p> <p>-The Line and poetry terms (presentation)</p> <p>-Alberto Urrea and Alcira Soust Scaffo</p> <p>-Read: Writing Down the Bones 1-50</p> <p>-Bring in one poem that you like (can be song lyrics!) for discussion: what are you responding to?</p>   |      | <p>-Read: Be Holding</p> <p>-Discuss Lyric Poetry transition to Prose Lyric</p>  |  |
| 3 | 9/05 | Short Prose Forms & Poetry Cont.   | 9/07 |  |  |
|   |      | <p>-“Fire and Ice” by Dinty Moore</p> <p>“In Pursuit of the Short Short Story” by T. Masih</p> <p>-“Beach City” by Jaquira Diaz</p> <p>-“Heating &amp; Cooling” excerpt – Finley (C.)</p> <p>-Five Stories by Lidia Davis (C.)</p> <p>-“The Cruelty We Delivered” by Sukrungruang (C.)</p> <p>-Read: Writing Down the Bones 51-100</p>   |      | <p>- Read and Discuss:</p> <p>-“All the Forces at Work Here” by Wilkins</p> <p>-“Eight Quarters” by A. Butcher</p> <p>-“Talk Big” by Martin</p> <p>Generative prompt: Re-imagining Space exercise ex. Fernandez “Erasing the Border”</p>         |  |
| 4 | 9/12 |  | 9/14 |  |  |

|   |       |   |       |  |   |
|---|-------|---|-------|--|---|
|   |       | <p>Hermit Crab Essays:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-“Drug Facts” by Trembath</li> <li>-“Trivial Pursuit” by Horrocks</li> <li>-“The Heart as a Torn Muscle” by Randon Billings Noble</li> <li>-“Pain Scale” by Eula Biss</li> <li>- “Write Like a Mother”</li> </ul> |       | <p>Revision Prompt: Strong Openings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-“Pain Scale” by Eula Biss</li> <li>- “Write Like a Mother”</li> </ul>        |   |
| 5 | 9/19  |   | 9/21  | <b>Workshop #1</b>   |   |
|   |       | <p>Getting our pieces ready for workshop. #1.</p> <p>Establish rules of workshop &amp; What we expect from response notes?</p>  |       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Upload your first piece to Canvas before class</li> <li>-Bring (3) hardcopies to participate in workshop.</li> </ul> |   |
| 6 | 9/26  | <b>Unit 2: Fiction</b>  | 9/28  |  | 2 |
|   |       | <p>Intro to Fiction: Definitions, trends and tools of production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-“The School” by Donald Barthelme</li> <li>-Saunders on Barthelme</li> <li>-Read: Writing Down the Bones 101-150</li> </ul>   |       | <p>“Scene vs. Summary” by Celia.</p> <p>“Omelas” excerpt by Ursula Leguin</p> <p>-Generative prompt: expand/contract</p>                                     |   |
| 7 | 10/03 |   | 10/05 |  |   |
|   |       | <p>“St. Lucy’s Home for Girls Raised by Wolves” by Karen Russel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Johnson</li> <li>-Eugenides on Johnson</li> </ul>   |       | Generative exercise POV  |   |
| 8 | 10/10 |   | 10/12 |  |   |



|    |       |   |       |  |          |
|----|-------|---|-------|--|----------|
|    |       | <p>-Read: Writing Down the Bones 150-100</p> <p>-Eugenides on Johnson</p> <p>"Borges and I" by Borges</p>   |       | <p>Revision Prompt: Strong Openings</p> <p>Generative prompt: expand/contract</p>  |          |
| 9  | 10/17 |   | 10/19 |  |          |
|    |       | <p>"Water Liars" by Barry Hannah</p> <p>"There There" by Tommy Orange (excerpt)</p>   |       | <p>Discuss Writing Down the Bones so far</p> <p>Activity from "Imaginative Writing"</p>  |          |
| 10 | 10/24 |   | 10/26 | <b>Workshop #2</b>   |          |
|    |       | <p>Truth and fact: fiction, nonfiction and faction: the new divide</p> <p>-“Perhapsing” by Knopp -“Split-Toning” by Edward -Discuss text</p> <p>-Read: Writing Down the Bones 100-150</p>   |       | <p>-Upload your Fiction piece to Canvas before class</p> <p>-Bring (3) hardcopies to participate in workshop.</p>  |          |
| 11 | 10/31 | <b>Unit 3: Creative Nonfiction</b>  | 11/02 |  | <b>3</b> |
|    |       | <p>- Distinctions of nonfiction: Essay, Narrative, Memoir, Autobiography, Reportage</p> <p>-“A Taxonomy of...” by Babine</p> <p>-Types of literary essays: Iconic voices / New forms</p> <p>-Read: Writing Down the Bones 150-200</p> |       | <p>-Intro: to Essai -A brief history of writing the “I”</p> <p>“Against joi de vivre” by Lopate</p> <p>Citizen by Claudia Rankine (excerpt)</p> <p>-Generative prompt: somewhere here, writing place, and incorporating research</p> <p>-Writing first memories prompt</p> |          |
| 12 | 11/07 |   | 11/09 |  |          |

|    |       |  |   |  |
|----|-------|--|---|--|
|    |       | <p>-On the ethical considerations of nonfiction</p> <p>- "Whose Story is it?"-Solnit</p> <p>Shipping Out" by DFW.</p> <p>-"The Ugly Tourist" by Kincaid</p> <p>Read: Writing Down the Bones 201-end</p>  | <p>- Discuss Book -New Journalism, Reportage, Literary Journalism</p> <p>-"Frank Sinatra has a Cold" by Talese</p> <p>-"The Falling Man" by Junod</p> <p>Optional: "Trial by Twitter" by Millea</p> <p>-Generative in-class prompt: Assembling, disassembling, reassembling</p> |  |
| 13 | 11/14 |  | 11/16   |  |
|    |       | <p>-On Creating Scenes:</p> <p>-"The Scene Beast is Hungry" by Hribal</p> <p>-In class writing assignmen - Discussion on Memory -"The Body of Memory" by Miller -</p> <p>"Fourth state of matter' by Joann Beard</p> <p>-Jill Christman on Joann Beard</p> | <p>"Spectrum" by Breit</p> <p>-Generative <i>Flaneur</i> exercise</p> <p>"Girls, Girls Girls" by</p> <p>-"No Name Woman" Kingston</p>   |  |
| 14 | 11/21 |  | 11/23   |  |
|    |       | <p>-"The Case for Reparations" by Ta-Nahisi Coates</p> <p>"Trial by Twitter" by Millea</p> <p>"The Marriage Cure"</p>  | <p>Happy Thanksgiving!</p>  |  |
| 15 | 11/28 | <b>Workshop #3</b>   | 11/30   |  |
|    |       | <p>Writing is rewriting: On Revision as Normal process</p> <p>On Publishing</p>  | <p>-Upload your Creative Nonfiction piece to Canvas before class</p> <p>-Bring (3) hardcopies to participate in workshop.</p>   |  |

| 16 | 12/05 | Last Class  | 12/08 | Final Exam  |  |
|----|-------|---|-------|---|--|
|    |       | <p>-A class reading (public or private, as the class decides)</p> |       | <p><b>Course Final</b> is a portfolio turn-in due:</p> <p>Friday, December 8 between 9:45am and Noon, via email.</p> <p>Your portfolio will contain:</p> <p>(3) Original pieces (1 from each unit of the course), (1) Revision of unit 2 or 3 piece, (3) Prompt responses, (1) Artist Statement of Developing Aesthetic</p> |  |