

Creative Writing Section 05

ENGL 71

Spring 2024 3 Unit(s) 01/24/2024 to 05/13/2024 Modified 02/06/2024

Course Description and Requisites

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

:: Classroom Behavior

Class sessions are short and require your full attention. Cell phones should be on silent and put away when entering the classroom; all earpieces should be removed. Laptops or tablets may be used to access course readings and assignments; with that said, no other work should be done, no checking email, no social media, no gaming. Note: I reserve the right to ask you to leave the classroom if you are being disruptive.

Students are expected to participate respectfully in class, to listen to other class members, and to comment appropriately. I also expect consideration and courtesy from students. Professors are to be addressed appropriately and communicated with professionally.

:: Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. I understand that illnesses and emergencies happen in everyone's life, but this class is designed to be interactive and participatory. You can't participate if you aren't here. According to [University policy F69-24 \(https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf): "Students should attend all meetings of their classes, not only because they are responsible for material discussed therein, but because active participation is frequently essential to ensure maximum benefit for all members of the class."

:: Tardiness

I give crucial information and reminders about the course at the beginning of class, so being late is not only disruptive but means that students may miss information that is important to their success. Students who are frequently more than five minutes late will be marked absent.

:: Late Policy

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class for which they are due.

Late Workshop Drafts: It is unprofessional to upload your workshop drafts late. Because of this, *late submissions will lose one letter grade for each day they are late. I reserve the right to cancel a workshop if it is deemed that the writer has not given his/her/their peers reasonable time to provide good feedback.*

If you are absent or late on your workshop day, your grade will automatically be lowered by one letter (meaning if you are an A in the course, your grade will be lowered to a B). If you foresee problems with the schedule, make an appointment to talk to me ASAP. The workshop can not be made up, unless there is an unexpected emergency, such as an unexpected hospitalization or death in your immediate family. Excused absences must be accompanied by a doctor's note or other official document.

Program Information

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.

Department Information:

Department Name: English and Comparative Literature

Department Office: FO 102

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

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

Department phone number: 408-924-4425

Course Goals

This course will be a basic introduction to the study and practice in the writing of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Through the reading of selected texts, students will gain a better understanding of craft and technique. In addition, this course will be an introduction to the writing workshop. In the writing workshop, students will be expected to develop as critics, and as writers be expected to be open to criticism.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

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 Texts and Materials

- There is **no required** textbook for this course; instead, I have uploaded poems, short stories, and essays onto Canvas. You will be required to read these poems, stories, and essays. You must bring these readings to class, for I will be asking you specific questions and pointing out key passages from the text.
- A journal for class notes, writing exercises, daily observations, workshop responses, etc.
- Dictionary and Thesaurus. Being writers, it is important to know what words mean and to vary your word choice. You should own both. There are free apps available.
- Access to a desktop, laptop, or tablet.

Course Requirements and Assignments

:: Course Requirements and Assignments

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 three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

:: Course Structure

Our class is broken into three units: poetry, fiction, and nonfiction. During each unit, we will discuss certain craft elements and then we will create our own work for workshop.

:: Reading

Reading is maybe the single most important part of a writer's training. This course asks you to practice reading as a writer, since this will ultimately strengthen your own work. You will be encouraged to bring together your emotional side (How does this make me feel?) with your analytical side (What formal choices has the writer made that could explain the way I'm feeling?).

:: Attendance and Participation

I will be taking attendance during each class session, and your attendance (or lack thereof) does significantly affect your grade. It is possible to fail the class simply from excessive absences.

In addition, I expect your full participation in the class when you are there, or that will also affect your grade. I expect that each student will engage in our workshop discussions, as well as any additional lecture material. The more you have input into the class, the more we'll all learn. Of course, if you're absent, you can't participate at all. I don't expect everyone to be "on" each and every class day -- we all have our off days -- but I do expect regular participation from each student.

If you participate in class, you'll receive full credit for your attendance; if you don't, you won't.

For the attendance policy, I make no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. If you are aware that there are issues that will prevent you from regularly attending this class, then I strongly suggest that you reconsider taking this class, since poor attendance will severely affect your grade.

Lateness and leaving class early will be considered partial absences. Please arrive on time and stay for the entire period. If you must leave early, please let me know before class begins.

:: In-Class Writings and Group Work

In-Class Writings and Group Work are beneficial because they can help spur our imaginations and help us grasp elements of craft. Failure to turn in in-class exercises will lower your score. Attendance is also a factor here, as you obviously can't do an in-class exercise if you're absent. Class exercises for classes you miss will not be possible to make up. The value of each in-class writing exercise will vary, depending on how many we do during the semester. I would anticipate each one being worth 3-5 points.

:: Reader Responses (3)

During the semester, you will have three reader responses to complete (one for each genre). These responses are intended to foster in-class dialogue and exchange, and to promote active analysis of the texts we read.

:: Major Writing Assignments

Over the course of the semester, you will be expected to produce one poem, one short story, and one short nonfiction piece, all of which must be edited into final drafts for your portfolio. Your pieces are due to Canvas one week before your assigned workshop. **Late submissions will not be workshopped.**

:: Workshops

You will have three workshops: *you are required to workshop one poem (1-2 pages in length), one short story (5-8 pages) OR two flash fiction stories (5-8 pages total), and one essay (3-4 pages)*. You will need to post your work to Canvas one week before you are scheduled to be workshopped. This will give your peers time to thoroughly read and comment on your work. You will read your peers' work, providing both written and oral constructive feedback. We will discuss workshop etiquette further in class, but consider this: your classmates are putting a lot of trust in you to read and respond to their creative work, many of which will be very personal. In the interest not only of being a good student, but also a good person, this will be an opportunity for each of us to practice empathy, understanding, and criticizing in a constructive, rather than destructive, fashion.

:: Writing Portfolio

At the end of the semester, you will submit a final writing portfolio that consists of edited, final versions of your creative work. It is crucial that all pieces be substantially revised from their earlier, workshopped drafts. The quality of your revisions will be a significant factor in your portfolio grade. You will reflect on your work in this course (review the learning objectives) and assess your work in a self-reflection.

✓ Grading Information

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined by the SJSU Catalog (Grades-Letter Grading). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A+/A/A- = excellent; B+/B/B- = above average; C+/C/C- = average; D+/D/D- = below average; F = failure. Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a + or - grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

How I Grade

I expect good work. I expect work that is genuine and meaningful. Creative writing is a subjective field but it is very clear when a writer is creating work without real effort.

- Unless I make changes and announce otherwise, the final course grade breaks down as follows:
 - 1 Poem (workshop, written critiques, participation): 100 points
 - Short Story (workshop, written critiques, participation): 150 points
 - Nonfiction (workshop, written critiques, participation): 100 points
 - Final Portfolio (includes revisions, self-reflection, and self-portrait poem): 100 points
 - Attendance and Participation: 100 points
 - If you are present and active in class, you will get a boost on your final grade. If you are not active and miss many sessions, your final grade will be affected.
 - In-Class Writings and Group Work: TBD (around 50 points)
 - Reader Responses: 10 points each (x 3) =30 points total

- *Your grade in Canvas is not representative of your grade in this course: I factor in overall performance (participation, professionalism, attendance, etc.). No grade haggling. I do not negotiate grades. If you are concerned with your grade (especially by midterm) and want to know how to do better in the future, I welcome appointments to discuss possible strategies for improvement.*

SJSU Academic Integrity Policy

A student's commitment to learning, as evidenced by his or her enrollment at San Jose State University, and the University's Academic Integrity Policy require all students to be honest in their academic course work. Faculty are required to report all infractions to the office of Judicial Affairs. The policy on academic integrity can be found [here \(https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/SJSU-Academic-Integrity-Policy-F15-7.pdf\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/SJSU-Academic-Integrity-Policy-F15-7.pdf). The SJSU rules against plagiarism are set forth in the SJSU Catalog, which defines plagiarism as the act of representing the work of another as one's own (without giving appropriate credit) regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements.

Plagiarism at SJSU includes, but is not limited to: (1) the act of incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts thereof, or the specific substance of another's work, without giving appropriate credit, and representing the product as one's own work. It is the role and obligation of each student to know the rules that preserve academic integrity and abide by them at all times. This includes learning and following the particular rules associated with specific classes, exams, and/or course assignments. Ignorance of these rules is not a defense to the charge of violating the Academic Integrity Policy.

ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) TOOLS USAGE

Since reading, writing, and critical thinking skills are integral to the learning outcomes of this course, all assignments should be prepared by you, the student. Therefore, any use of artificial intelligence systems, such as ChatGPT, to complete essays or other assignments constitutes a violation of the University's [Academic Integrity Policy \(https://sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-7.pdf\)](https://sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-7.pdf). AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.

Criteria

Criteria for Grading Participation in Workshops

1. **Active Engagement:** Assess how actively and constructively students engage in the workshop discussions. Are they offering meaningful feedback, asking questions, and actively participating in group discussions?
2. **Preparation:** Consider whether students come prepared for the workshop sessions. Do they bring their written pieces or assignments for peer review? Are they familiar with the work of their peers and ready to provide feedback?
3. **Respectful and Constructive Feedback:** Evaluate the quality of the feedback provided by students. Are their comments respectful, constructive, and aimed at improving the work being discussed? Do they offer specific suggestions for improvement?

4. **Critical Thinking and Analysis:** Assess the depth of critical thinking and analysis demonstrated by students during the workshop. Do they provide insightful observations about the strengths and weaknesses of the work being reviewed?
5. **Collaboration and Listening Skills:** Consider how well students collaborate with their peers and whether they actively listen to feedback given to their own work. Do they engage in meaningful discussions, acknowledging and considering different perspectives?

Workshop Participation Rubric

Criteria	A (50-46)	B (45-40)	C (39-35)	D (34 and below)
Active Engagement	Actively engages in discussions, offers insightful feedback, and asks thought-provoking questions, contributing significantly to the workshop.	Engages in discussions, provides constructive feedback, and participates in group activities, enhancing the workshop experience.	Participates in discussions and activities but may not consistently contribute meaningfully.	Rarely engages or contributes to discussions, often remaining silent or offering minimal input.
Preparation	Consistently comes prepared with completed work for review and actively participates in reviewing peers' work, showing a clear understanding of the assigned readings and objectives.	Generally comes prepared with work for review and engages in the process, demonstrating a basic understanding of the assigned readings and objectives.	Sometimes comes prepared but may lack a complete understanding of the assigned readings or objectives, impacting participation.	Frequently unprepared, failing to bring work for review or demonstrate understanding of the assigned readings or objectives.
Quality of Feedback	Provides insightful, specific, and constructive feedback that helps improve the quality of peers' work, offering clear suggestions and commendations.	Offers constructive feedback that contributes to improving peers' work, though may occasionally lack depth or specificity.	Provides feedback that may be vague or lacks constructive elements, offering limited suggestions for improvement.	Offers minimal or unhelpful feedback that does not contribute to improving peers' work.
Critical Thinking	Demonstrates advanced critical thinking skills, analyzing writing pieces thoroughly, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and offering nuanced perspectives.	Shows adequate critical thinking skills, analyzing writing pieces and identifying some strengths and weaknesses, though analysis may lack depth.	Demonstrates limited critical thinking, with analysis that may be superficial or lacks depth, impacting the workshop discussion.	Lacks critical thinking skills, providing little to no analysis of writing pieces or failing to identify strengths and weaknesses.

Criteria	A (50-46)	B (45-40)	C (39-35)	D (34 and below)
Collaboration	Collaborates effectively with peers, actively listening to feedback, engaging in respectful discussions, and considering diverse viewpoints.	Collaborates well with peers, actively listening and engaging in discussions, though interactions may occasionally lack depth or inclusivity.	Participates in discussions but may struggle to collaborate effectively or show openness to diverse viewpoints.	Demonstrates poor collaboration skills, dismisses or ignores peers' feedback, or disrupts group interactions.

Notes on Grading:

- A (50-46): Consistently demonstrates exceptional engagement, preparation, feedback quality, critical thinking, and collaboration.
- B (45-40): Generally meets expectations with solid engagement, preparation, and constructive contributions.
- C (39-35): Demonstrates basic engagement and effort but may need improvement in certain areas.
- D (34 and below): Requires significant improvement in engagement, preparation, feedback quality, critical thinking, and collaboration.

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

Schedule/Calendar below is subject to change. Always check Canvas for the most up to date information on assignments, readings, and due dates.

Week	Date	Readings, Assignments, and Due Dates
One	W January 23rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go over Course Syllabus, Expectations, and Introductions

Two	M January 29th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture: Sound • In-Class Reading/Analysis: Wilfred Owen's "Dulce Et Decorum Est" (https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46560/dulce-et-decorum-est). • In-Class Writing Activity: Idea to Image
Two	W January 31st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture: Figurative Language and Imagery • Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Gary Soto's "Oranges" (https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47538/history-lesson-56d2280d442a7). ◦ Martin Espada's "My Father as a Guitar" ◦ Regina Barreca's "Nighttime Fires" ◦ In-Class Group Work: Questions on "My Father as a Guitar" and "Nighttime Fires"
Three	M February 5th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ George Bilgere's "Like Riding a Bicycle" ◦ Julia Copus' "The Backseat of My Mother's Car" • In-Class Writing: Recovering Memories (3 points)
Three	W February 7th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Natalie Goldberg's "Be Specific" ◦ William Stafford's "Traveling Through the Dark" ◦ Maxine Kumin's "Woodchucks" • READING RESPONSE #1 DUE: Questions on Natalie Goldberg's "Be Specific," William Stafford's "Traveling Through the Dark," and Maxine Kumin's "Woodchucks"
Four	M February 12th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture: Forms, Line Breaks, Enjambment, Stanzas • Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Edward Hirsch's "Fast Break" ◦ Natasha Trethewey's "History Lesson" ◦ Sharon Olds' "I Go Back to May 1937" • In-Class Group Work: Questions on Sharon Olds and Natasha Trethewey (3 Points) • GROUP 1 Submits Workshop Poem

Four	W February 14th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go over Self-Portrait Poem • Writing Workshop Guidelines • How to Evaluate Peer Poetry • In-Class Writing: The Self-Portrait • In-Class Writing: The Object Poem • GROUP 2 Submits Workshop Poem
Five	M February 19th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poetry Workshop -- Group 1 • Group 3 Submits Workshop Poem
Five	W February 21st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poetry Workshop -- Group 2 • Group 4 Submits Workshop Poem
Six	M February 26th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poetry Workshop -- Group 3
Six	W February 28th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poetry Workshop -- Group 4
Seven	M March 4th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements of Fiction: Plot • Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Alice Walker's "Flowers" (https://www.d.umn.edu/~cstroupe/handouts/5270/walker_flowers.pdf) ◦ Brett Anthony Johnston's "Encounters with Unexpected Animals"
Seven	W March 6th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Ken Liu's "The Paper Menagerie" (https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1573410/files/73561106?module_item_id=14541854)
Eight	M March 11th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements of Fiction: Character and Dialogue • Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ How to Write Dialogue (formatting) ◦ Danielle Evans' "Virgins" ◦ VERY IMPORTANT HANDOUT: How to Format Short Story
Eight	W March 13th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements of Fiction: Point of View • Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Junot Diaz's "How To Date A Brown Girl (black girl, white girl, or halfie)"

Nine	M March 18th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Nathan Ballingrud's "Sunbleached" (https://www.nightmare-magazine.com/fiction/sunbleached/). • Group 1 Submits Workshop Story
Nine	W March 20th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ TBA • Group 2 Submits Workshop Story
Ten	M March 25th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiction Workshop -- Group 1 • Group 3 Submits Workshop Story
Ten	W March 27th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiction Workshop -- Group 2 • Group 4 Submits Workshop Story
Eleven	M April 1st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPRING BREAK
Eleven	W April 3rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPRING BREAK
Twelve	M April 8th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiction Workshop -- Group 3 • Group 5 Submits Workshop Story
Twelve	W April 10th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiction Workshop -- Group 4 • Group 5 Submits Workshop Story
Thirteen	M April 15th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiction Workshop -- Group 5
Thirteen	W April 17th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiction Workshop -- Group 6
Fourteen	M April 22nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Creative Nonfiction • Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Roxane Gay's "Hunger" (hardcopy) ◦ In-Class Writing: Body Image
Fourteen	W April 24th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Robert Ramirez's "The Barrio" • In-Class Writing: Memory

Fifteen	M April 29th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Joey Franklin "Working at Wendy's" • In-Class Writing: Description of a place • Group 1 Submits Workshop Nonfiction
Fifteen	W May 1st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Junot Diaz's "The Money" • Group 2 Submits Workshop Nonfiction
Sixteen	M May 6th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonfiction Workshop -- Group 1 • Group 3 Submits Workshop Nonfiction
Sixteen	W May 8th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonfiction Workshop -- Group 2 • Group 4 Submits Workshop Nonfiction
Seventeen	M May 13th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonfiction Workshop -- Group 3
Seventeen	Thursday, May 16th 12:15-2:30pm	<p><i>**Final Workshop will take place during Finals Week. Our class will meet on Thursday, May 16th 12:15-2:30pm**</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonfiction Workshop -- Group 4 • Final Portfolio is Due on Sunday, May 19th by 12pm (noon).