



English Department Graduate Newsletter



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DEADLINES: AUGUST AND DECEMBER GRADUATES

If you are planning to graduate in August or December of 2001, you should have filed your approved program (i.e. been formally advanced to candidacy) by Feb. 1. If you missed this deadline, please see me immediately. Remember, you need to file your program nearly two semesters before you plan to graduate. Remember, too, that you must apply for graduation (at the Graduate Studies office, 10th St. Garage) early in the semester you plan to graduate. For August graduates, the deadline is June 13. August graduates must present their completed theses to the Graduate Office by July 2.

PROGRAM APPROVAL DEADLINE: MAY 2002 GRADUATES

If you plan to graduate in May 2002, you will need to file your approved program very early in the fall. To be on the safe side, you should file before the close of this spring semester. Course descriptions for the fall seminars and a tentative list of spring offerings are included in this issue of the newsletter. Once you have determined what courses you will take to complete your 30 units, see me to fill out the official form.

REGISTRATION FOR FALL 2001

The Schedule of Classes for fall will give you detailed information on how to register for next semester's courses. Touch-tone registration for graduate students will begin in mid-May. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU REGISTER AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE; the budget will again be tight and underenrolled seminars may be canceled early in the registration process. If you have any questions about your schedule for the fall, please get in touch with me before the end of the spring semester.

ENGLISH GRADUATE SEMINARS FOR FALL 2001

200 Poetry R 1900-2145 Pollock

201 Materials and Methods M 1900-2145 Williams

201C M&M for MFA T 1900-2145 Soldofsky

217 English Renaissance R 1600-1845 Grant

230 18th-Century British T 1900-2145 Rice

233 Victorian W 1900-2145 Wilson

241 242 CW Non-Fiction W 1600-1845 Iversen

259 Composition Studies M 1600-1845 Cullen

(Seminars for Spring 2001 will probably include 201, 204, 225, 227, 241, 253, 254, 256)

200 Poetry (Prof. Pollock)

We'll begin the semester with Mary Oliver's, *A Poetry Handbook*, as a review of the basic elements of poetry, and then proceed to a quick survey of the overall evolution of poetic styles from medieval to modern times. The central focus of the seminar thereafter will be on the theories of "New Criticism" and the application of those theories to lyric poetry, with particular attention to the sonnet as a genre. We'll study critical works by Cleanth Brooks and I.A. Richards and the sonnets of Shakespeare, Donne, Wordsworth, E.B. Browning, John Berryman, and Vikram Seth, in addition to selected critical works and poems by other writers as well. The aim of the course will not be to give the student an exhaustive knowledge of the sonnet as such, but more generally to challenge his or her analytical skills, at the same time developing the student's sense of historical perspective and critical acumen in dealing with poetry as an art form.

201 Materials and Methods of Literary Research (Prof. Williams)

This course introduces graduate students to the resources, techniques, and standards of scholarly work in the discipline of literary studies. Together we will study the role of the individual scholar within the academic community, and explore various forms of scholarly activity. Students will learn to find, utilize, and evaluate electronic resources, bibliographies, indexes and scholarly journals and other publications. Students will also be provided with a rudimentary introduction to contemporary literary theory. This course is required of all English M.A. students and should be taken as early as possible.

201C Methods and Materials of Literary Production (Prof. Soldofsky)

English 201C introduces Creative Writing graduate students to the resources, traditions, techniques, and standards for writing poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. The class includes the study of the individual writer's role within literary and academic communities. The class also will explore various forms of literary activity, and will provide information about current practices which comprise "the literary life." Students will learn to find and evaluate dominant and alternative literary magazines and publishers, book review indexes, academic journals, and online and other electronic resources. They will discover ways to apply their knowledge of these resources which are useful in their own writing, in their other courses, and in fulfilling other requirements for the MFA. A creative writer's work is both a personal journey toward increasingly masterful artistic expression as well as an increasing understanding of what the literary world requires of a writer as a professional. In order to succeed the student in an MFA program needs to understand how the interlocking networks within the literary, academic, and publishing communities function. To gain such an understanding, students will accomplish the following objectives in this course:

- Explore the traditions, conventions, sub-genres, and schools, associated with contemporary poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction.**
- Explore the literary tradition as it has evolved in Northern and Central California.**
- Examine the role of the creative writer within academia.**
- Become familiar with a wide range of literary journals, publishers, and electronic resources for creative writers.**
- Examine evolving genres and new literary forms and forums.**
- Gain a familiarity with some common professional forums and networks for creative writers within academe.**

- Gain familiarity with various avenues for publication and other professional activity.

This course is required of all M.F.A. students and should be taken as early as possible.

217 English Renaissance (Prof. Grant)

A study of lyric poetry and drama, of Platonism and passion, a study of the courtier and the poet and their attitudes towards women, language, and reality. We begin with *The Courtier* by Castiglione and end with reality-with love, incest, and death in John Ford's *'Tis a Pity She's a Whore*. Students who have had little background in Renaissance literature should read or review "The Sixteenth Century" as well as the works of Donne, Jonson, and Webster in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Any edition will do. Students will give a few seminar reports, take one midterm, and write a critical paper.

230 Eighteenth-Century British Literature (Prof. Rice)

Richardson and Fielding. We will study the rise of the English novel, focusing on the work of two writers who were personally, artistically, and philosophically antagonistic: Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding. Richardson was the pessimistic tragedian with a Calvinistic vision and a commitment to circumstantial and psychological realism. Fielding was the optimistic writer of comedies with a benevolent Pelagian vision and a sympathy for broad, panoramic canvases. Between the two, they set the course of the English novel. Texts: *Pamela* (Penguin), *Clarissa* (Riverside), *Joseph Andrew and Shamela* (Penguin), *Tom Jones* (Penguin)

233 Victorian Literature (Prof. Wilson)

A study of significant literary texts of the Victorian Age. We will read *Great Expectations*, *Daniel Deronda*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the poetry of Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, the Pre-Raphaelites, Hopkins, and Hardy. Art, music, and critical prose will supplement the above readings.

242 Creative Writing: Non-Fiction (Prof. Iversen)

Creative Writing has been called "the most urgent genre." How has this genre changed -- or not changed -- in recent years? Students in this writing and reading course will explore the art of creative nonfiction including memoir, personal essay, literary journalism, humor, and nature writing. From Plutarch to Walter Benjamin to Mary Karr, we'll discuss classic as well as innovative or controversial examples of creative nonfiction and how to use these as models or springboards. We'll explore the difference between fiction and nonfiction and review literary approaches to language, including

metaphor, dialogue, voice, diction, style, structure, and point of view. Students will work toward completion of a final portfolio.

255 Twentieth-Century American Literature (Prof. Shillinglaw)

West of the West: Imagining California: This course will examine the diverse voices and visions of California literature. Focusing on 19th- and 20th- century texts, we will compare regions, issues (water rights, the environment, migration patterns, ethnicity, etc), peoples, and visions. Texts include: John Rollin Ridge, *The Life and Adventures of Juaquin Murieta*; Frank Norris, *The Octopus*; Wallace Stegner, *Angle of Repose*; T. Coraghessan Boyle, *The Tortilla Curtain*; John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*; Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*; Houston, Jeanne and James D., *Farewell to Manzanar*. Gerald Haslam's *Many Californias* will be used for additional readings.

Research project and oral reports on individual writers.

[N.B. We are in the process of renaming this course "Topics in American Literature"]

259 Composition Studies (Prof. Cullen)

Current Approaches to Composition: Professor Cullen has taught composition for two decades, written or collaborated on a modest number of books for college writers, and directed the composition program for the English Department at a large urban university; come find out if he has learned anything besides how to write about himself in the third person. English 259 will address a broad range of topics, including how student writers compose and revise, how teachers evaluate compositions, and how instructors can design courses to accommodate a diverse student community. We will examine the styles, genres, and audiences available to student writers. We will address both highly practical issues (preventing plagiarism, surviving holistic scoring sessions) and those with a more theoretical flavor (liberating education, second-language acquisition). The required reading load will be light, so expect to do lots of independent research.

CONDITIONALLY CLASSIFIED GRADUATE STUDENTS

Conditionally classified students must complete their required undergraduate course work before enrolling in graduate seminars. When you are eligible for classified status, the change is not automatic; you need to see me to file the necessary form.

COURSE SELECTION

Remember that courses taken outside the English department normally will not count toward the English M.A. program. Please check with me before you take such courses. You will need special approval to include such a course in your official program. Usually upper-division literature courses offered by the department will count, if they also carry

English major credit and if you have a compelling reason to take an upper-division rather than a graduate course. If you plan to take any upper-division courses, again, check with me in advance.

STUDENT HONORS

Congratulations to **Katie Rodger** (M.A. Dec. 2000) whose thesis, an edition of the correspondence of Edward "Doc" Ricketts, not only won top honors at the College of Humanities and the Arts Research Competition but won again at the University level. She will be representing San Jose State University in the CSU-wide competition April 27 and 28. Katie is currently serving as Director of the Steinbeck Research Center while Susan Shillinglaw is on leave. Kudos is due as well to **Doug Heckman** (M.A. Dec. 2000) whose thesis, a novel entitled *Traveler's Advisory*, was chosen as this year's English department's Outstanding Thesis. [P.S. If you already knew that, like *congeries*, *kudos* is plural in form but grammatically singular, you are just the kind of person our program is seeking.]

ARE YOU APPLYING TO PH.D PROGRAMS?

We would like to know which of our graduates go on to Ph.D. work and what success they find in the application process? If you are applying to Ph.D. programs, let me know how it is working out for you. This information might be useful to those who follow in your footsteps.

ENGLISH GRADUATE GROUP

In previous years this organization of English graduate students has arranged study groups and readings and even hosted conferences. In the past year, however, the group has been inactive. If you are interested in serving as an officer and reviving the organization, please contact me. Meanwhile, the undergraduate group, the English Society, has become quite active and there is talk of possibly merging the two groups. There will be an organizational meeting on April 9 at 6 p.m. in FO 104 for all interested graduate and undergraduate students to discuss directions the organization may take. If you can't make that meeting, consult the *Graduate Bulletin Board* for announcements. Better yet, join the English Department list server and receive information about department activities via email. To join, send an email message to: listproc@listproc.sjsu.edu. In the body of the text, type this: SUBSCRIBE EngDept [your first name] [your last name].

NEW GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR MASTER'S THESES

Thesis writers and their advisors should know that the Graduate Studies Office has

revised (as of May 1999) the "General Instructions for Master's Theses," the document that sets the rules for thesis style, format, binding, etc. Copies are available at the GSO and on the GSO website. Note, too, that starting this semester all theses must be submitted to the GSO on disk.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT DATES

June 13: Last day for August graduates to file application for graduation at the Graduate Studies Office (10th St. Garage)

July 2: Last day for August graduates to submit theses to the Graduate Studies Office.

Sept. 5: Last day for August graduates to submit thesis copies for binding to Graduate Studies Office.

Sept. 28: Last day for December graduates to file application for graduation at the Graduate Studies Office.

Oct. 1: Last day for May 2002 graduates to file their official programs with Professor Keesey. To be safe, complete this task in May 2001 before the summer break.

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