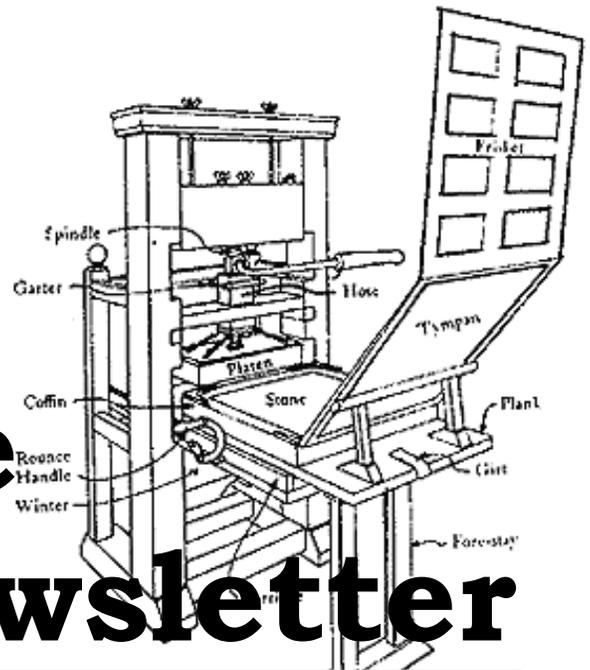


# English Graduate Newsletter



San José State University

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Noelle Brada-Williams, MA Advisor

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Alan Soldofsky, Director of Creative Writing

## **DEADLINES: AUGUST AND DECEMBER GRADUATES**

If you are planning to graduate in August or December of 2008, you should already have filed your approved program (i.e. been formally advanced to candidacy). If you missed the deadline, please see your advisor 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. Forms for both are available at their website: <http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/>. For August graduates, the deadline is June 9. For December Graduates, the deadline is September 22. August graduates must present their completed theses to Graduate Studies by July 9, 2008. December graduates must submit completed theses to Graduate Studies by November 13, 2008.

## **PROGRAM APPROVAL DEADLINE: MAY 2009 GRADUATES**

If you plan to graduate in May 2009, you will need to file your approved program ("Departmental Request for Candidacy" form) by October 1. 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 program, fill out the official form and get your advisor's signature.

## **REGISTRATION FOR FALL 2008**

The Schedule of Classes for fall will give you detailed information on how to register for next semester's courses. Registration for graduate students will begin in June. **It is important that you register as early as possible.** Contact your advisor if you have any questions.

## ENGLISH GRADUATE SEMINARS FOR FALL 2008

201	T	1900-2145	Fleck
201C	T	1900-2145	Soldofsky
203	T	1600-1845	Engell
227	M	1900-2145	Eastwood
232	R	1900-2145	Harris
240	R	1600-1845	Karim
241	W	1900-2145	Taylor
242	R	1600-1845	Miller
255	W	1600-1845	Shillinglaw
256	M	1600-1845	Wilson
259	M	1900-2145	Cullen

### **201 Materials and Methods of Literary Research (Prof. Fleck)**

#### Graduate School Boot Camp

In this required course, students will practice the skills necessary for survival in the SJSU Masters Program. Students will learn the basics of bibliography and the resources available for conducting thorough literary research. An introduction to literary history and a smattering of theoretical approaches will be included as well. Students will make several presentations, work together on several group projects, and complete one longer essay.

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

This course introduces Creative Writing graduate students to the resources, traditions, techniques, and culture associated with the field of Creative Writing both inside and outside academia. The class will study the role of the individual writer within the literary and academic communities, and explore various forms of literary activity that commonly support "the literary life." 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 201C students will learn to use dominant and alternative literary magazines and publishers, book review indexes, academic journals, and online and other electronic resources. Students will produce a brief annotated bibliography of a contemporary writer, write a book review (for a magazine you have researched), a personal essay, a conference paper, and a book proposal. By means of this course, they will learn to apply their knowledge of these of real-world tasks to their own writing, in their other courses, and in fulfilling the MFA requirements. This course is a co-requisite for students in the MFA program to be taken with their first graduate writing workshop or first graduate literature seminar. The course fulfills the Graduate Studies requirement in written communication.

### **203 Narrative Craft and Theory (Prof. Engell)**

We will study several short stories and one novel by each of the following: Nathaniel Hawthorne, Charles Chesnutt, Willa Cather, Eudora Welty, and T.C. Boyle. (The five novels are *The Blithedale Romance*, *The Marrow of Tradition*, *My Antonia*, *The Optimist's Daughter*, and *The Tortilla Curtain*.) We will focus on learning about the differences in the narrative craft of the story and the novel through studying both short and book-length fiction as created by each writer. Though we will discuss developments in narrative theory, the primary emphasis will be on craft. Every student will deliver five focused oral presentations, each accompanied by a handout and a short two-page critical essay. Every student will write two pieces of fiction 5-12

pages long, each of which will emulate the narrative style and techniques of one of the author's studied. This is a course designed for both M.F.A. and M.A. students.

### **227 Seminar in Comedy. "Men's Parts, Women's Roles: Transvestite Comedy through the Restoration" (Prof. Eastwood)**

Until 1660, all theatrical roles were played by men. So, when Romeo and Juliet breathlessly say goodbye on the balcony, the audience accepts the performance of femininity offered by the boy under the dress. But in Shakespeare's comedies, the performance of gender becomes itself the focus, as the playwright gives us characters like Rosalind, Portia, and Viola who, while playing the role of "women," assume "male" identities, and try to pass (with varying degrees of conviction) as men. In Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl*, the title character was based on a well-known actual 17<sup>th</sup> century transvestite—Mary Firth—who roamed the streets of London dressed as a man. When women took the stage in 1660, they played male roles as well, acting in "breeches parts," as well as the traditional female characters.

This course approaches the dramatic mode of comedy from a critical perspective that takes such issues into account and historicizes them. Some questions that will guide our reading include: Do these performances destabilize gender difference, or reaffirm it? How much of a role does sexual desire play in such performances? How might these performances have responded to social controversies over the role of women in the early modern period? What is the relationship between cross-dressing on the street and cross-dressing on stage? What is the relationship between role-playing on stage, and the development and transformation of sexual identity? Since we will be reading plays by men and women, how might the gender of the author shape the performance of gender by her/his characters on stage?

Beginning with a solid grounding in the genre of comedy, we will read plays from the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The reading list will probably include (but won't be limited to) the following: Shakespeare: *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Other Authors: Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl* (and Moll Firth's autobiography); Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Maid's Tragedy*; Ben Jonson's *Epicene or the Silent Woman*; Aphra Behn's *The Widow Ranter*; Thomas Southerne's *Sir Anthony Love or the Rambling Lady*; Charlotte Charke's *The Art of Management* (and her autobiography); Henry Fielding, *The Historical Register for the Year 1736*; Charles Shadewell, *The Humors of the Army; or the Female Officer*; Critical texts by Judith Butler, Marjorie Garber, Stephen Orgel, Kathryn Shevelov, and others.

### **232 British Romanticism: Madness and British Romanticism (Prof. Harris)**

"Hail, awful Madness, hail!" – Thomas Penrose, "Madness" (1775; 1808)

According to Thomas Arnold, in *Observations Concerning . . . Madness* (1782-86) "[s]ome of the most powerful causes of . . . Insanity are –*religion,–love,–commerce*, and the various passions which attend the desire, pursuit, and acquisition of riches,–every species of *luxury*,–and all violent and permanent attachments whatever" (15, 25). By 1798, the definition of madness was revised to include the social, political and cultural upheaval that was caused by the Industrial Revolution and the disintegration of Enlightenment reason. Advances in science and technology as well as experimentation in literary genres signaled this change and the acceptance of insanity as a medical condition sparked a debate about the disease's victims and society's responsibility. In other words, madness became a disease caused by all facets of British society. In this course, we will investigate the demarcations of madness in poetry, novels, short stories and historical accounts published 1780 to 1837. We will begin with Arnold's *Observations* and literary accounts of that famous insane asylum, Bedlam/Bethlem. Arnold proposes that the British are more susceptible to madness (or

insanity) because its citizens are allowed to better themselves by "acquiring opulence." This, in turn, gives "birth to the desires, fears, anxieties, disappointments, and other affections which accompany the pursuit, or possession, of riches" (21). We'll see if this is true. Authors may include Charlotte Smith, William Wordsworth, Samuel T. Coleridge, Felicia Hemans, Mary Shelley, Percy Shelley, Dorothy Wordsworth, Lord Byron, William Blake, Mary Lamb, Sir Walter Scott, Mary Robinson, Lady Caroline Lamb, among others. This course serves as both an introduction to Romantic studies as well as an exploration of particular themes within its literature. Assignments include brief essays, weekly reading responses, an oral presentation and a long research essay.

#### **240 Poetry Writing Workshop: Poetry as Spiritual Journey (Prof. Karim)**

In this graduate poetry workshop we will attempt to understand and realize in our work, the close link between poetry and the journey of the spirit. We will draw inspiration from poetry of many great spiritual and religious traditions--from poet-mystics like Rumi and Hafez of Iran, to Basho of Japan, to the great Chinese poets Lao Tzu and Li Po as well as Christian mystics such as St. Thomas of Aquinas and Blake. Beyond the explicitly spiritual and religious poets, we'll also read the works of other contemporary poets who transform the human experiences of love, loss, death, joy, revelation, and beauty and capture them in language and various poetic forms. We will have a daily practice of poetry writing and will have regular workshop of poems. We will also visit several sites of spiritual contemplation--these might include visits to the Buddhist Church of San Jose, Filoli, the Coast, or Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco. By the end of the course, you will have amassed a formidable collection of poems, and a journal where you've reflected on the spiritual journey of your writing practice.

#### **English 241: Fiction Writing Workshop (Prof. Taylor)**

This course is a graduate fiction writing workshop. Participants will submit work on a regular schedule, with each student having his or her work discussed at least three times over the course of the semester. For pedagogical reasons, students are strongly encouraged to submit short stories. One of the three submissions may be a substantial revision. Regular assigned readings of published work will supplement our discussion.

English 241 is a course required for students in the MFA program whose primary or secondary genre is fiction. Students in the MA program who write fiction at the advanced level may also be admitted (space permitting) with the instructor's permission. The course may be repeated twice for credit. Conditionally classified graduate students must also obtain the instructor's permission to enroll in the course.

#### **242 Nonfiction Writing Workshop (Prof. Miller)**

In this course we will explore the many facets of Creative Nonfiction, a genre that mixes the accuracy of factual reportage with the techniques of fiction writing and the reflective insights of the essayist. The various works we write in this class will leave a nonfiction record of our worlds as we see them today, experimenting with memoir, biography, travel writing and features. Students will be assigned short pieces each week to prime the creative pump and generate new ideas. Workshops will be devoted to critiquing your work in a supportive, constructive environment. And as the MFA is a professional degree, we will begin your metamorphosis into becoming a professional writer.

#### **255 California Visions: Conquering, Questing, Conserving (Prof. Shillinglaw)**

California is the golden land, where padres and miners and immigrants found visionary space—or did not. Focusing on key 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century texts (and two films), we will discuss the peoples

and visions of California and how land use, water rights, ethnic diversity, and ecological sensibilities shaped the state. Texts may include: *The Literature of California*, Hicks, Houston, Kingston, Young; *Ramona*, Helen Hunt Jackson; *The Octopus*, Frank Norris; *The Big Sleep*, Raymond Chandler; *The Day of the Locust*, Nathanael West; *Big Sur*, Jack Kerouac; *Cannery Row*, John Steinbeck; *China Men*, Maxine Hong Kingston. Selected readings from *Cadillac Desert*, Marc Reisner; *Slouching Toward Bethlehem*, Joan Didion; and Robinson Jeffers's poetry. Films students should be familiar with include *Chinatown* and *Mulholland Drive*.

### **256 Twentieth Century British Literature (Prof. Wilson)**

The first half of the course will be devoted to a study of novels by Conrad, Joyce, Lawrence, Woolf, Beckett, and Amis. The second will cover the poetry of Yeats, Auden, Thomas, Larkin, Heaney, McGuckian, Carson, and Muldoon.

### **259 Seminar in Composition Studies (Prof. Cullen)**

English 259 is a prerequisite or co-requisite for Teaching Associates and is highly recommended for any student, M.A. or M.F.A., who contemplates teaching writing as part of her or his career. The course will address a broad range of topics in composition studies, including how students write and revise, how teachers evaluate compositions, and how instructors can design effective courses for a diverse student community. The seminar will address both highly practical issues (grading, plagiarism, holistic scoring, etc.) and those with a more theoretical flavor (liberating education, second-language acquisition, and many more). The focus will be on college composition, but individual students may investigate writing instruction at other levels. The required reading load will be relatively light by graduate seminar standards, so expect to do very substantial independent research. Major assignments will include a seminar paper/project and a presentation or two to the class. Students will also be required to observe at least two college writing classes.

### **A NOTE ABOUT COURSES LIKELY TO BE SCHEDULED FOR SPRING 2008:**

Offerings planned for Spring 2008 include 204, 208, 240, 241, and two courses taught by Professors Brada-Williams and Douglass from among the 253, 254, 255 series. Three to six additional courses will be selected from the following: 202, 211, 216, 217, 226, 229, 233, and 257. It is our goal to have this list narrowed down by the September newsletter (in time for May 2009 graduates to submit accurate Requests for Candidacy by the October 1 deadline).

### **CONDITIONALLY CLASSIFIED GRADUATE STUDENTS**

Conditionally classified students must complete required undergraduate course work before enrolling in graduate seminars. A list of upper-division literature courses approved for conditionally classified students is available from Professor Brada-Williams. When you are eligible for classified status, the change is not automatic; see your advisor to file the necessary form (found at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/Current/Forms.html>).

### **APPROVED COURSES FOR THE ENGLISH MA AND MFA**

Except for undergraduate courses you have to take if you are a conditionally classified student, most graduate work will consist in 200-numbered English classes. Courses taken outside the department will not count except in unusual circumstances. Get prior approval from your advisor before you take such courses. A limited number of upper-division undergraduate English courses can count towards the degree but you must secure the cooperation of the instructor and notify the graduate advisor of your plans. Again, get approval in advance.

## **ENGLISH GRADUATE LISTSERV**

To subscribe to the EngGrad listserv, follow the directions at this website:

<http://lists.sjsu.edu/mailman/listinfo/enggrad>. Key information is sent out on the listserv. Joining the listserv is essential for all MA and MFA students.

## **PH.D. AND OTHER FUTURES**

The department would very much like to know about your plans after graduation. Are you returning to an old job? Looking for a teaching gig in the area? Applying to Ph.D. programs? Please let your advisors know what you are planning and how things are working out. For MA's graduating this May, stopping by the coordinator's office (FO 110) for an informal "exit" interview should be considered a necessary part of your preparations for graduation. Letting us know about your future plans helps us to evaluate the program and assess how well we are preparing students for their chosen paths.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND OTHER INFORMATION**

Important dates and other useful information will be posted on the English Graduate Bulletin Board in the first-floor hall of the Faculty Office Building. New information will be posted as we receive it. The latest version of "The MA in English: A Guide for Students," a six-page brochure is available in the rack outside the English office. The Guide answers most questions about the program. It is also available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/ma/mafaq.html> The SJSU Graduate Studies Office also publishes important deadlines, rules, and information for graduate students: <http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/>

If you are interested in help developing proposals for conference papers or submitting your work for publication, let us know. A number of faculty in the department are eager to be of assistance. You might begin by contacting the professor you originally wrote the paper for, a faculty member who works in the field covered by your research, or the graduate advisor for suggestions as to where you might submit your work and how to best work up a proposal or submission cover letter.

## **TEACHING ASSOCIATES AND GRADUATE ASSISTANTS**

We received roughly double the applications for TA and GA positions as we did last year. The competition was amazingly tough this year. Teaching Associate Positions were awarded to Charanya Arjun, Maria Judnick, Matt McCoy, Tanja Nathanael, Georgia Saratsiotis, and Candice Wynne. In addition, Ben Jonas, Gary Shapiro, Stacey Knapp, and Mary Williams will continue on for a second year as TA's. Graduate Assistant positions were awarded to Vince Bergamo, Josh Cembellin, Lara Hubel, Tommy Mouton, Heather Stanger, and Gary Wong.

## **GRADUATE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS**

In January, Mary Williams presented her paper, "Thresholds and Reveries: Hawthorne's Mastery of Liminal Space" at the Hawaii International Conference on Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities. Stephanie Chan, a recent graduate of the M.F.A. program, and current M.F.A. students Mark Heinlein and Evelyn So were named finalists for the 2008 Edwin Markham Prize for Poetry. Tanja Nathanael will present her paper "Crossing Borders: Icelandic Children's Literature and the American Market" at the Children's Literature Association's conference in June. Also, her book review of Fridrik Erlings' *Benjamin Dove* will be published in this quarter's edition of *Bookbird*. Heather Stanger has been nominated by the department to the university-wide Bertha Kalm award for most promising first year student. At the Department Awards Ceremony, Alanna

Callaway will be given the Harvey Birembaum award for her thesis and Thomas Hewitt will be awarded the Mara Steffey scholarship for his work throughout his MA.

## IMPORTANT DATES

- May 9:** Potluck to celebrate the completion of Alanna Callaway's Thesis at the Graduate Coordinator's house.
- June 9:** Deadline for August 2008 graduates to file or reactivate application for graduation at the Graduate Studies Office.
- June 6:** Last day to for May 2008 graduates to submit MA and MFA thesis copies for binding.
- July 6:** Last day for August 2008 graduates to submit approved thesis to Graduate Studies.
- Sept. 1:** Last day for August 2008 graduates to submit MA and MFA thesis copies for binding.
- Sept. 5:** Last day to drop courses.
- Sept. 12:** Deadline for December 2008 graduates to submit M.F.A. thesis to thesis director
- Sept. 22:** Deadline for December 2008 graduates to file or reactivate application for graduation at the Graduate Studies Office.
- Sept. 30:** Deadline for December graduates to submit M.F.A. thesis to second and third readers.
- Oct. 1:** Deadline for May 2009 graduates to file Departmental Request for Candidacy form.
- Oct. 3:** Deadline to sign up to take the Fall 2008 MFA & MA Exams. (Recommended that May 2009 MFA graduates take the Fall MFA exam).
- Oct. 31:** Deadline to submit thesis proposals for Spring 2009 299 credits to Department Graduate Committee.
- Nov. 13:** Last day for December 2008 graduates to submit signed MA and MFA thesis to Graduate Studies Office.
- Nov. 1:** MA Comprehensive Exam, Part 1, 9-12 AM, FO 104.
- Nov. 7:** MFA Comprehensive Exam distributed (9 AM).
- Nov. 8:** MA Comprehensive Exam, Part 2, 9-12 AM, FO 104.
- Nov. 10:** MFA Comprehensive Exam due (5 PM).
- Jan. 16:** Last day for December 2008 graduates to submit MA and MFA thesis copies for binding.

