

# ENGLISH GRADUATE NEWSLETTER

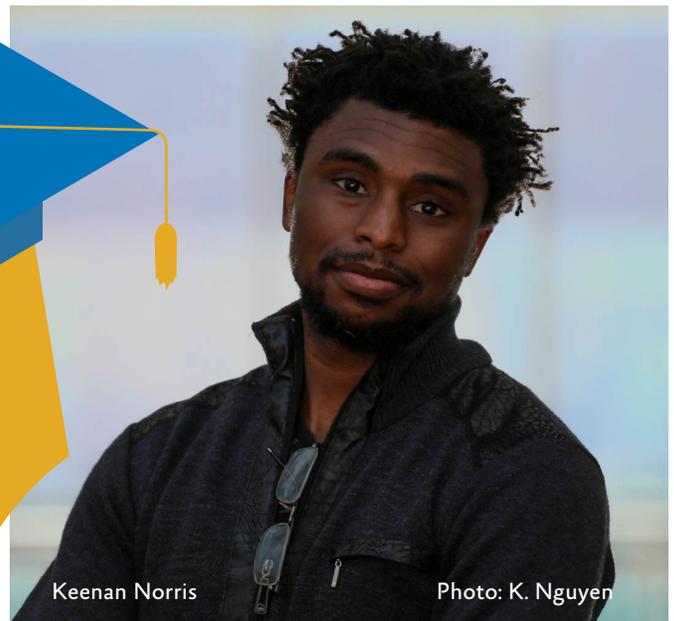
San José State University

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Revathi Krishnaswamy, Graduate Coordinator

Alan Soldofsky, Director of Creative Writing



Keenan Norris

Photo: K. Nguyen

## Spring Office Hours and Summer Contacts

The MFA Advisor, Professor Soldofsky, has office hours 3-4:30 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and also by appointment Thursday in the PM. The MA Advisor, Professor Krishnaswamy, has drop-in office hours on Wednesdays from 1-3 and is available to meet by appointment Monday through Friday.

The best way to contact Professors Krishnaswamy and Soldofsky over the summer is usually via email ([Revathi.Krishnaswamy@sjsu.edu](mailto:Revathi.Krishnaswamy@sjsu.edu) and [Alan.Soldofsky@sjsu.edu](mailto:Alan.Soldofsky@sjsu.edu) respectively). We will be checking email intermittently as some of our summer plans involve travel or other pursuits that will make it impossible to get back to people immediately. We will be back with regular office hours when the Fall semester starts—classes begin August 21.

## Registration for Fall 2018

MySJSU should give you appointment times and information on how to register for next semester's courses in May. Registration for graduate students will begin in June. **It is important that you register as early as possible.** If there are not enough people signed up for a course, even a graduate course could be cancelled. Contact your advisor if you have any questions. MFAs need to be sure and sign up for any workshops they need for their degree as soon as possible. After a certain point writing workshops are opened up to all graduates on a first come, first served basis, regardless of program (MA or MFA).

## Introducing New Faculty: Keenan Norris

It is with great pleasure that we announce the arrival of Professor Keenan Norris to our creative writing faculty this fall. Dr. Norris finished his PHD at the University of California Riverside and his MFA at Mills College for English and Creative Writing. Dr. Norris has taught community college for the past 13 years and is eager to continue impacting students' lives by "delving into the issues of race, gender, and literary craft." Hailing from Highland and Rialto, California, Dr. Norris takes the change in scenery in stride. "I love the downtown vibe of our campus," he admitted, "I look forward to teaching MFA students, undergraduates, and working with former community college students who have matriculated on to University." Dr. Norris has written two books: *Brother and the Dancer* and *Born by the River: Richard Wright, Barack Obama, and 'Chi-Raq.'* His short story "Twice Good" will also appear within issue 151 of *Reed Magazine*.

## Course Requirements

All MA students are required to take English 201 and English 297 (students entering the program in Fall 2017 or later, must be enrolled in 297 to take the comprehensive exam).

## New Department Chair: Noelle Brada Williams

As of March 14, 2018, Professor Noelle Brada-Williams has stepped down from her position as associate chair and graduate coordinator in place of a new role. This spring, Professor Noelle Brada-Williams was elected to serve a four-year term as the chair of the Department of English and Comparative Literature. "I'm excited to meet a larger range of students outside of my own classes," Professor Brada-Williams explained, "My goal is for everyone to get the most out of their college career."

Professor Richard McNabb has graciously taken on the position of associate chair and Professor Revathi Krishnaswamy will serve as the MA advisor and graduate coordinator.

## Fall 2018 Graduate Courses

At least 21 of the 30 units of classes required for the MA program should be in 200-numbered English courses. Of the 30, only 6 units can be taken as credit/no credit independent study of thesis units. Upper-division English coursework (100 level) may count for graduate students if you have received permission of the instructor as well as the MA or MFA Coordinator. Classes taken outside the department will not count except in unusual circumstances. Get prior approval from your advisor before you take such courses.

Here are the courses, faculty, and meeting times for our nine Fall 2018 graduate course offerings:

Class	Day	Time	Professor
201 Materials and Methods of Literary Research	M	4:00-6:45 PM	Revathi Krishnaswamy
225 Seminar in Shakespeare	W	4:00-6:45 PM	Adrienne Eastwood
240 Poetry Writing Workshop	M	7:00-9:45 PM	Alan Soldofsky
241 Fiction Writing Workshop	T	7:00-9:45 PM	Keenan Norris
242 Nonfiction Writing Workshop	T	4:00-6:45 PM	Susan Shillinglaw
256 Seminar in 20th Century British Literature	R	7:00-9:45 PM	William Wilson
259 Seminar in Composition Studies	R	4:00-6:45 PM	Ryan Skinnell
291 Literary Practicum	W	7:00-9:45 PM	Nick Taylor
297 Comprehensive Exam Preparation	M	7:00-9:45 PM	Revathi Krishnaswamy

## Fall 2018 Course Descriptions

### English 201: Materials and Methods of Literary Research, M 4:00-6:45 PM (Professor Krishnaswamy)

This course is designed to introduce graduate students to the basic elements of research in the field. We will hone close reading/textual analytical skills and review basic research techniques including how to use data bases, bibliographies, writing, revising, formatting, footnoting etc. But our main objective will be to learn about various theoretical approaches/methods used in the field and practice applying them to specific literary texts and cultural artifacts. As such, we will delve deep into the complex field of Critical Theory, which cuts across other disciplines like philosophy, psychology, sociology, economics, political science, history, and biology. Focusing on theories/methodologies employed by literary scholars and critics of the 20th century, we will try to understand major intellectual schools such as New Criticism, Structuralism, Deconstruction, New Historicism, Marxism, Feminism, Postcolonialism etc., and engage with fundamental questions about language, literature, reading, and writing. While the course will challenge you to engage with a great deal of complex material, it will give you a deeper understanding of the field and equip you with the tools you will need as a professional.

### **English 225: Seminar in Shakespeare, W 4:00-6:45 PM (Professor Eastwood)**

*"Not for an Age, but for All Time": Shakespeare and Creative Influence*

While it is always edifying to read and study Shakespeare, his influence on other writers is less frequently explored. In this course, students will get the opportunity to study him in relation to his contemporaries and also in relation to modern texts that respond to his works. In this course, students will study several of Shakespeare's plays in depth, including a critical history of major essays about them. In addition, I will be pairing each play with a different text that either directly or indirectly responds to it: either a different play on a similar theme by one of Shakespeare's contemporaries, or a modern (20th – 21st Century British or American) novel that alludes to Shakespeare, reframing his themes for our age. This approach will help to emphasize the ways in which Shakespeare's works continue to resonate in this post-postmodern global age.

### **English 240: Poetry Writing Workshop, M 7:00-9:45 (Professor Soldofsky)**

This fall's Graduate Poetry Workshop will focus on the theme of Surrealism, Postmodernism, and Satire. We'll read and practice emulating Modernist and Postmodernist master poets whose work provides models for the modes of poetry this workshop will explore. We'll read Classical satire; works by European and Latin American surrealists (in translation); Modern poets such as Hart Crane, Marianne Moore, and Wallace Stevens; and Postmodern poets such as Robert Bly, John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, Frank O'Hara, Ron Padgett, Victor Hernandez Cruz, James Tate, Mary Ruffle, Terrance Hayes, Juan Felipe Herrera, Paul Beatty, Matthea Harvey, and Dorrienne Laux. We'll explore how Satire has evolved in the 20th and 21st centuries, examining works by these poets, and writing satires and surrealistic-style poems in the class. Each class member will complete a portfolio of 8 poems, and also complete an in-class presentation. MA students are welcome to enroll in the class, and can select either to complete a poetry manuscript or write two critical research papers during the semester. The class satisfies a workshop requirement for MFAs whose primary or secondary focus is poetry. The course is 4 units, and thus requires a culminating project in addition to the poetry portfolio. The culminating project can be a short poetry sequence, a performance poetry piece (on video or live performance), a critical paper, or a work of mixed media (video, drawing, painting, or sound) or collage. The culminating project will be accompanied by a short critical introduction. MA students and students outside of the English Department should submit three sample poems and/or a sample of a short critical paper on poetry prior to enrolling in the course. Enrollment is by permission only (MFA students whose primary or secondary genre focus is poetry will have automatic enrollment priority). The course is capped at 16. Email writing samples as an attachment to the instructor at [Alan.Soldofsky@sjsu.edu](mailto:Alan.Soldofsky@sjsu.edu). The English Department office staff will provide permission codes to qualified MFA and MA students who plan to enroll.

### **English 241: Fiction Writing Workshop, R 4:00-6:45 PM (Professor Keenan Norris)**

Fiction writing as preparation for thesis. Study of canonical and contemporary fiction and fiction produced by students. Intensive workshop experience. Priority registration goes to MFAs with a primary concentration in fiction, followed by those with a secondary concentration in fiction, and finally graduate students in other programs. If you are not in the MFA program, you must submit a writing sample to the instructor before you may register. English 241 is repeatable twice for credit.

### **English 242: Nonfiction Writing Workshop, T 4:00-6:45 PM (Professor Shillinglaw)**

Nonfiction writing as preparation for thesis. Study and critique of canonical and contemporary nonfiction. Intensive workshop experience. May be repeatable for credit for up to 12 units.

### **English 256: Seminar in Twentieth Century British Literature, R 7:00-9:45 PM (Professor Wilson)**

Study of selected British writers since 1900, focusing on the fiction of Lawrence, Joyce, Woolf, Greene, Waugh, and the poetry of Hardy, Yeats, Auden, Larkin, Heaney, Boland, McGuckian, and Muldoon. Assignments include one presentation, one short essay, and one research paper. With prior permission of graduate advisor may be repeatable once for credit. Prerequisite: Classified standing or instructor consent. Note: This course satisfies graduate-level GEAR in this master's program.



Virginia Woolf © Culture Club/Getty Images

### **English 259: Seminar in Composition Studies, R 4:00-6:45 PM (Professor Skinnell)**

How do people write? How do people learn how to write? And, more importantly, how can we—or should we—teach writing? Through course readings and class discussions, you will become acquainted with the history of writing studies and the different theoretical strands that inform the contemporary practice of teaching writing. We will also focus on the practical aspects of writing instruction such as syllabus design, course management, writing assessment, and assignment sequences. English 259 is a prerequisite or co-requisite for Teaching Associates and is highly recommended for any student, MA or MFA, who contemplates teaching writing as part of a career.

### **English 291: Literary Practicum, W 7:00-9:45 PM (Professor Taylor)**

This course prepares Creative Writing graduate students to take the MFA exam and develop and begin writing an MFA thesis, customize the MFA exam reading list, prepare to take the MFA comprehensive exam, draft the thesis abstract and thesis preface.

### **English 297: MA Comprehensive Exam Preparation M 7:00-9:45 PM (Professor Krishnaswamy)**

This two-unit class will help MA students with exam preparation through the taking of sample exams, discussion of test-taking techniques, and the sharing of your collective research into key terms, periods, and movements in literature.

### **Additional Courses of Interest for the English MA and MFA**

A limited number of upper-division undergraduate English courses can count towards the degree but you must secure the approval of both the instructor and your graduate advisor in advance of signing up for the class. Some classes that will be offered in the Fall at the upper-division undergraduate level are English 125, European Literature from Homer to Dante, with Professor Linda Mitchell; English 144, Shakespeare, with Professor Cindy Baer; English 145, Shakespeare and Performance, with Professor Adrienne Eastwood; English 167, Steinbeck, with Professor Susan Shillinglaw; English 169, Ethnicity in American Literature, with Professor Allison Johnson; English 176, The Short Story, with Professor Sam Maio; and English 190, the honors colloquium, with Professor Adrienne Eastwood. English 167, Steinbeck, is a class that you will not get at the graduate level and yet it draws on our unique resources of both the Martha Heasley Cox Center for Steinbeck Studies at SJSU and the expertise of the director of the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas, Professor Shillinglaw.

### **MA Foreign Language Requirement**

The MA Program requires demonstrated proficiency in a language, other than English, equivalent to 2 semesters or 3 quarters of college-level coursework completed with a grade of B or higher. If you have not already satisfied this requirement at the time of admission, you may be admitted to conditional standing, but you will need to satisfy the requirement by taking the required number of units and achieving the required grade OR proving your language knowledge via a test given by the World Languages Department before graduating from the MA program. For questions about this requirement, or to satisfy this requirement in a language other than French, German, or Spanish, please contact the MA Advisor.

## 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 Krishnaswamy. 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/gape/forms/>).

## Electronic Theses

Graduate Studies is now accepting theses electronically and making them available to the public via open access on the web. For those of you who hope to publish your thesis, we suggest you file a form to see that your thesis is “embargoed.” That means it will still be available electronically within the library (just as the hard copies of our alumni’s theses are available to visitors to the MLK library), but will not be available to people who do not have access to the SJSU library. Currently Graduate Studies’ policy is that you can request an embargo for a set number of years (three) and then file an additional form to have the thesis embargoed further. The graduate faculty encourages those of you with the desire to later publish part or all of your thesis to protect your creative and intellectual property. For those of you with no desire to publish your thesis materials in print form, open access will provide you with the immediate and ultimate distribution of your scholarship (or creative work).

## English Graduate Google Group

Please be sure to sign up for the google group for our English Graduate Program. To sign up, send a blank email to: [enggrad-group+subscribe@sjsu.edu](mailto:enggrad-group+subscribe@sjsu.edu). Key information is sent out via the google group that is essential for all MA and MFA students. Program descriptions, course descriptions, the most recent Newsletter, and other documents are posted on the Department website: <http://www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/>. The SJSU Graduate Studies Office website publishes important deadlines, forms, and information for current students at: [http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/current\\_students/deadlines/](http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/current_students/deadlines/).



Photo: J. Lamb

**Reed Magazine staff with Professor Cathleen Miller on April 10, 2018**

## Theses Reminders

MA/MFA students planning to write a thesis next year should take note of the following timeline and plan accordingly: Those planning to take thesis units (English 299) in Spring 2019 with intent to graduate in May will be required to submit thesis proposals for approval by November 2, 2018. This means you should ideally do your preliminary research over the summer to identify your area/topic of interest so that you can discuss this with potential advisors/readers early in the fall semester in order to form your thesis committee and prepare your proposal for formal submission by November 2. If your proposal is approved, use the winter break to work on your thesis. In Spring 2019, plan to submit your draft to your thesis director by February 1 and a revised draft to your 2nd and 3rd readers by April 1 to allow sufficient time for further feedback and revision. Planning ahead and following the timeline is critical to ensuring your thesis is of high quality and you are able to finish in time for May graduation.

For MA and MFA students planning to write a thesis next year, please be familiar with the latest *MLA Handbook*. Graduate Studies will expect your thesis to be consistently formatted in whatever style you choose. They will not allow you to mix styles, and they will expect you to be up to date, or they will require you to revise before they accept your thesis. MFA students should note that MFA theses must be accompanied by a 2000 - 3000 word (approximate length) preface, in which the author provides a literary context for her/his work, including literary influences, stylistic and theoretical influences, the influence of historical events, cultural and/or linguistic background, etc. It is hoped that the proposal-writing process will help MFAs to flesh out their ideas for their preface.

## MFA and MA Exam Schedules

MFA students planning to graduate in Fall 2018 should sign up for the Fall 2018 MFA Exam by **May 15, 2018**. The exam will be distributed on September 28 (9:00 a.m.) and will be due on October 1 (5:00 p.m.). To sign up for the exam, a student should first have successfully achieved MFA candidacy status and have formed a three-person thesis committee. Contact [Professor Soldofsky](#) to receive a link to sign up.

The MA exams for the Fall semester will be on November 10, 2018 (part 1) and November 17, 2018 (part 2). MA exam-takers will need to send [Professor Krishnaswamy](#) a completed reading list (click on the "Guidelines" at <http://www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/ma/macomps.html> to find your own version of the form) and receive your special MA exam ID number.

## The Frankenstein Bicentennial

2018 marks the 200th anniversary of the publishing of Mary Shelley's novel, *Frankenstein*, an astonishingly timely narrative that explores fundamental questions about the limits of science, the ethics of new technologies, and the danger of trying to control the natural world. The work also has an immense legacy in film and other forms. Additionally, while Mary Shelley is not the first English woman to publish, she is one of the most lauded women writers of the early 19th century. The importance of this masterpiece for San Jose – home to Silicon Valley – and San Jose State University is also obvious. During 2018, the university and its regional partners, Santa Clara University and University of San Francisco, will host The Frankenstein Bicentennial in a series of events. Organized by Professor Katherine Harris, the project brings together STEM fields with Humanities & the Arts at San Jose State and partner universities, engaging almost every discipline and major in the process. The project's events will address timely issues of our world in Silicon Valley and the advent of technology – a critical topic with questions important to our academic, regional, and world communities. Check out the April film festival (April 6, 12, & 20) and the Deep Humanities one-day symposium (May 1). All events are free. For more details on upcoming events go to <https://frankenstein200yrs.wordpress.com/upcoming-events/>.

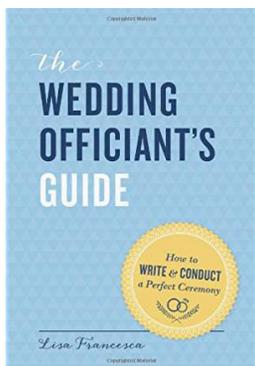


## Graduate Student Achievements

MA student **Jessie Fussell** presented a paper, "'Honourable Freedom': Queer Time in Christina Rossetti's *Monna Innominata*," at the INCS (Interdisciplinary Nineteenth Century Studies) 2018 Conference, in March.

MA student **Christopher Forkin** also attended the INCS conference and moderated the panel "Colonial and Imperial Cycles and Suspensions" on Sunday March 4. He recommends the organization's events to interested students.

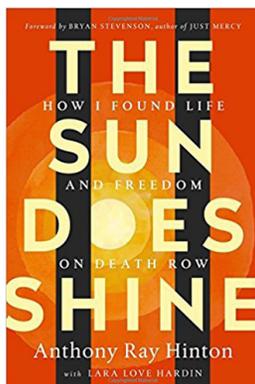
MFA student **Sherri Harvey** has three recent publications to her credit: *Belly of the Beast* [Dime Show Review](#) | March 2018; *Something Special in the Air* | Snapdragon: Journal of Art & Healing | March 2018; *Elephants on Parade* | Animal Literary Magazine | February 2018.



After four years of watching book sales go toward paying down her advance, **Lisa Francesca** received her first real royalty check for her book, *The Wedding Officiant's Guide* (Chronicle Books).

**Anne Cheilek** has a poem appearing in the Winter 2018 edition of *DMQ Review* and another in the forthcoming issue of *Porter Gulch Review*.

**Helen Meservey**, MFA student and managing editor of *Reed Magazine*, received a bronze award in the Funny Travel category in the twelfth annual Solas Awards, sponsored by Travelers' Tales (publisher of *The Best Travel Writing* series) for her nonfiction narrative, "A Cuernavaca Caper." Photo: K. Nguyen



Idea Architects, a Santa Cruz-based literary agency for which MFA student **Julia Dunn** works as Editorial Assistant, is excited to release *The Sun Does Shine* by Anthony Ray Hinton with Lara Love Hardin on March 27. Julia encourages everyone in the English Department to pick up a copy.

MA student **Alyssa Long**, recipient of the Harvey Birenbaum Prize in Fall 2017, is using the prize money to create a college scholarship in the same amount for students in the literacy intervention program that she teaches (with other colleagues) at Fremont High. Alyssa says she is "excited to pass on the possibility of further education to others."

*Reed Magazine* Managing Editor, **Helen Meservey** (center) works with editing staff members, **Talia Adry** (left), and **Lily Dayton** (right) on this year's issue. Photo: J. Lamb



## Important Dates in 2018-2019

- May 12** MFA Thesis Reading, 2:30 - 5:00 p.m., MLK 225/229.
- May 15** Last day to sign-up for the Fall 2018 MFA Exam.
- May 24** [College of Humanities & the Arts Commencement](#), 1:30PM, Event Center at SJSU.  
Department reception to follow commencement.
- June 11** Last day for May 2018 graduates to submit approved MA and MFA theses for electronic publication. (Remember to select the “embargo” option.)
- June 29** Deadline for August 2018 graduates to submit approved theses to Graduate Studies.
- Aug. 21** Fall semester begins.
- Sept. 10** Deadline for December 2018 graduates to file or reactivate application for graduation with GAPE.
- Sept. 17** Last day for August 2018 graduates to submit approved MA and MFA theses for electronic publication. (Remember to select the “embargo” option.)
- Sept. 28** MFA Comprehensive Exam distributed (9 AM).
- Oct. 1** MFA Comprehensive Exam due (5 PM).
- Oct. 1** Deadline for May 2019 graduates to file Departmental Request for Candidacy form.
- Oct. 8** Deadline for December 2018 graduates to submit MFA thesis completed draft to thesis committee members.
- Oct. 26** Deadline to submit thesis proposals for Spring 2019 credits to Grad Committee.
- Oct. 31** Probable Deadline for December 2018 graduates to submit approved thesis to Graduate Studies. Check [GAPE website](#) for deadlines.
- Nov. 10** MA comprehensive exam, Part 1, SH 229, 9-12:30.
- Nov. 17** MA comprehensive exam, Part 2, SH 229, 9-12:30.



**SJSU President Mary Pappasian** in conversation with Pulitzer Prize winning poet, **Peter Balakian** at the Hammer Theatre on **Legacy of Poetry Day**, April 12, 2018.

Photo: Center for Literary Arts