

# ENGLISH GRADUATE NEWSLETTER

San José State University

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Revathi Krishnaswamy, Graduate Coordinator

Alan Soldofsky, Director of Creative Writing



2019 Pulitzer Prize winner, **Forrest Gander** reads at [Legacy of Poetry](#) on April 17, 2019. Photo: T. Paredes

## Introducing New Faculty:

### Meghan Gorman-DaRif

It is with great pleasure that we welcome Dr. Meghan Gorman-DaRif to the English Department this Fall. Dr. Gorman-DaRif completed her PhD in English at the University of Texas at Austin in 2018, focusing on contemporary world/global Anglophone fiction. Her work centers specifically on representations of the Mau Mau Uprising in Kenya and the Naxalite Movement in India, and how contemporary global politics influence and inform them. Previous to her doctoral study she taught high school English in California and Massachusetts, and completed a summer MA program in English at the Breadloaf School of English in Vermont. She is currently working at the Writing and Communication Center at MIT in Boston, so she is thrilled to be returning to California after many years in less temperate climates, as is her dog Ellie.



### José Juan Villagrana

Dr. José Juan Villagrana came to study early modern literature after noticing how religious differences among his Mexican immigrant community in his hometown on the Central Coast of



California formed unlikely racial and political affinities and tensions. Since then, he has pursued research on religious thought and Anglo-Spanish relations in the early modern period. His current book project, "Doomsday Poetics: Apocalyptic Racialization in the Early Modern World," shows how Spain and England created new racial genealogies of themselves and the people they colonized based on apocalyptic texts to broadcast a sense of ethno-racial supremacy. His areas of teaching and research include early modern race studies, colonialism, disability, and religion. He enjoys engaging with students about their connection to literature and their professional paths. When he's not teaching and writing, he enjoys playing funk and soul on the guitar, going for walks, and spoiling his nieces and nephews.

## Spring Office Hours and Summer Contacts

The MFA Advisor, Professor Soldofsky, has office hours 3:00-4:30 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and also by appointment Thursday in the PM. The MA Advisor, Professor Krishnaswamy, has drop-in office hours on Wednesdays from 1:00-3:00 and is available to meet by appointment Monday through Friday.

The best way to contact Professors Krishnaswamy and Soldofsky over the summer is 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.

## Important Policies

### Continuous Enrollment and 1290R:

Per S17-5, University Policy, Required Enrollment for Culminating Graduate Students, graduate students who have completed all degree program requirements except the culminating experience (thesis, project and/or comprehensive exam) must enroll in the 1-unit UNVS or departmental 1290R for the purpose of continuing enrollment. Appointments for the 1290R open in MySJSU shortly after the last day to add classes. See: <http://www.sjsu.edu/cgs/current-students/policies/ContinuousEnrollmentGuidelines/index.html>

For students whose culminating experience is or includes a comprehensive exam not connected to an "RP" course: Appointments for 1290R cannot be system generated; request for appointment must come to Graduate Studies from the graduate advisor. The "RP" grade and a filed graduation in the current or future semester will generate an automatic appointment.

Note that no student can receive an appointment with a "CR" grade in the culminating experience course. Nor can an appointment be given to a student whose filed graduation date is in a previous semester. Students do not need the 1290R if they are enrolled in any other course.

Note that the course attached to a culminating experience involving a thesis (or project) and a comp exam is given a "CR" upon successful completion of both components. Should the completion of one or both components continue into a subsequent semester(s), the course will carry a grade of "RP" (Report in Progress) and the student will need the 1290R for continuous enrollment for each semester used to complete the component or components.

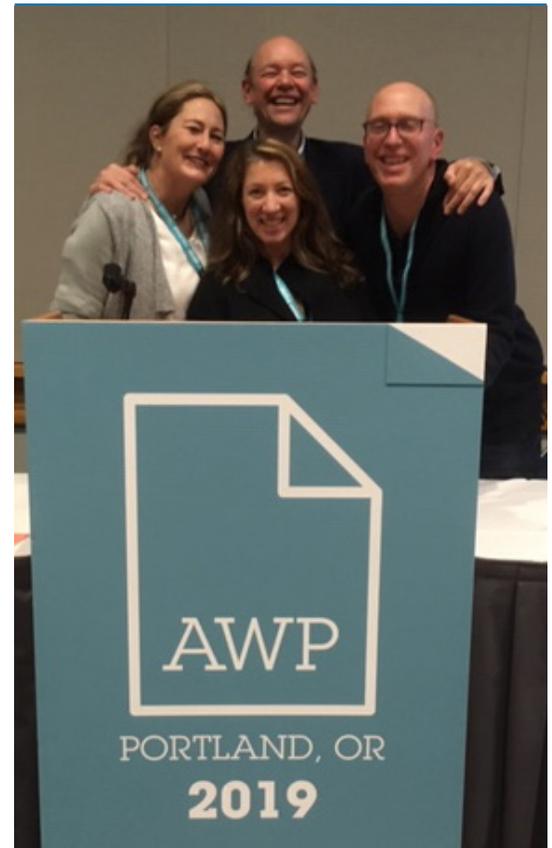
### Registration for Fall 2019

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).

### 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).



#### AWP Conference 2019

**Helen Meservey** moderated and was a presenter on a travel writing panel on travel writing, "Not All Who Wander Are Lost: Finding the Heart of Travel Writing," that also included presentations by **Sherri Harvey** (MFA, 2018) and recent SJSU Lurie Visiting Author **Don George** as well as former SJSU creative writing lecturer **Dan White**.

## Fall 2019 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 2019 graduate course offerings:

Class	Day	Time	Professor
201 Materials and Methods of Literary Research	M	7:00-9:45 PM	Adrienne Eastwood
215 Seminar in Myth and Symbolism	T	7:00-9:45 PM	Nancy Stork
230 Seminar in 18th Century British Literature	W	4:00-6:45 PM	Cindy Baer
240 Poetry Writing Workshop	M	4:00-6:45 PM	Sam Maio
241 Fiction Writing Workshop	M	7:00-9:45 PM	Selena Anderson
242 Nonfiction Writing Workshop	R	4:00-6:45 PM	Cathleen Miller
259 Seminar in Composition Studies	W	7:00-9:45 PM	Tom Moriarty
281 Special Topics	T	4:00-6:45 PM	Allison Johnson
291 Literary Practicum	R	7:00-9:45 PM	Alan Soldofsky
297 MA Comprehensive Exam Preparation	R	7:00-9:45 PM	Nancy Stork

## Fall 2019 Course Descriptions

### English 201: Materials and Methods of Literary Research, M 7:00-9:45 PM (Professor Eastwood)

Use and evaluation of resource for literary research; problems in critical writing and literary history. Required for all English Masters students (to be taken as early as possible after achieving Classified standing). Note: This course satisfies graduate-level GWAR in this master's program.

### English 215: Seminar in Myth and Symbolism, T 7:00-9:45 PM (Professor Stork)

This course will cover a wide range of texts, many of which are useful for the MA Comprehensive Exam. We begin with the classic fairy tales and a consideration of folklore and oral traditions. Then we will read selections from Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur*, and Chaucer. We will also look at Symbolist poetry, including T. S. Eliot's *The Wasteland* and other modern poets who evoke mythologies of the past.

### English 230: Seminar in 18th Century British Literature, W 7:00-9:45 PM (Professor Baer)

"The novel as a species is messy, digressive, inclusive, circumstantial, temporal, particular, and subjective. . . . The novel vigorously rejects traditional notions of what literature was; it carves out new literary space," says Mikhail M. Bakhtin. Its origins lie between the end of Britain's Civil War (in 1660) and the beginning of the French revolution (1789). In this seminar we will organize as a collaborative research team to explore the rise of this "transgressive form"—with its focus on seduction, harlotry, transvestism, marriage markets; its pageant of female characters and women writers. We will read and discuss a set of common seminar texts—all novels. To contextualize these, each seminar participant will read and present a text from a supplementary list of rhetoricians, essayists, journalists, and satirists of the period.

### English 240: Poetry Writing Workshop, M 4:00-6:45 PM (Professor Maio)

Poetics and poetry writing as preparation for thesis. Includes theory and practice of major trends in contemporary poetry. Intensive workshop experience. With prior permission of graduate advisor may be repeatable once for credit. Prerequisite: Graduate standing and admission via portfolio acceptance to the Writing Focus.

### English 241: Fiction Writing Workshop, M 7:00-9:45 PM (Professor Anderson)

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, R 4:00-6:45 PM (Professor Miller)

Professor Miller returns from her Fulbright Scholarship at the University of Manchester, and shares what she's learned from teaching in England and Finland. In class we'll discuss writing for a global audience, a topic of importance in the digital age, and how we can use these tools for international discourse and advocacy. Students will be given prompts each week for two-page assignments. Other than that, they'll be free to bring into workshop essays on topics of their choosing, including chapters of their thesis. In addition, we'll read a couple of nonfiction British authors, and look at how their voice differs from ours.

### English 259: Seminar in Composition Studies, W 7:00-9:45 PM (Professor Moriarty)

Study of current approaches to composition. 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. Prerequisite: Classified standing or instructor consent.

### English 281: Special Topics, T 4:00-6:45 PM (Professor A. Johnson)

*Big Books: 19th-century American and British Novels*

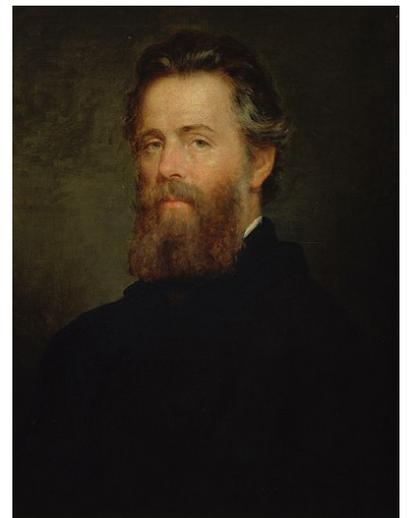
This course is for serious students seriously into exploring and examining the big books of the nineteenth century. We're in it for the long haul, so don't bother with SparkNotes or summaries. We will track the evolution of the novel on both sides of the Atlantic, paying close attention to the circulation of texts and ideas. Students will conduct original research into publication history and the history of printing, and become familiar with major trends and movements that shaped American and British literature between 1800 and 1900.

Readings include:

Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women*  
Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*  
Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*  
William Wells Brown, *Clotel*  
Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*  
Charles Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop*  
George Eliot, *Middlemarch*  
Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*  
Thomas Hardy, *Far From the Madding Crowd*  
Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*  
Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*  
Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*



Charlotte Brontë, 1850.  
Chalk on paper by George Richmond



Herman Melville, 1870.  
Oil painting by Joseph Oriel Eaton

### English 291: Literary Practicum, R 7:00-9:45 PM (Professor Soldofsky)

This course prepares Creative Writing graduate students to take the MFA exam. Students will develop and begin writing an MFA thesis, customize the MFA exam reading list, prepare to take the MFA comprehensive exam, and draft the thesis abstract and thesis preface. The class will also be reading a select few examples of first books (in genres of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry). The class meets mostly online using Canvas, but we will have live class meetings with literary agents, visiting writers, and editors on select dates. We will also meet at Thursday presentations by writers presented by the [Center for Literary Arts](#).

### English 297: MA Comprehensive Exam Preparation R 7:00-9:45 PM (Professor Stork)

This two-unit course will cover practical strategies for doing well on the MA Comprehensive Exam. To that end, we will read *Beowulf* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* with facing page translation. We will have presentations by professors from other time periods. Time will be devoted to writing and assessing practice essays from past exams.



### 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 2020 with intent to graduate in May will be required to submit thesis proposals for approval by November 1, 2019. 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 1. If your proposal is approved, use the winter break to work on your thesis. In Spring 2020, 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 2019 should sign up for the Fall 2019 MFA Exam by **May 21, 2019**. The exam will be distributed on September 27 (9:00 a.m.) and will be due on September 30 (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 16, 2019 (part 1) and November 23, 2019 (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.

## 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/>).

## MFA Thesis Reading and Defense

The MFA in Creative Writing's annual public MFA thesis reading is scheduled for May 11, 2:30 p.m., in the University Library rms. 225/229. Theses by students who have received their MFA degrees in December 2018, and will receive their MFA's in May and August 2018 will read from their thesis projects. Family and friends are invited. A reception will follow.

## Electronic Theses: New Plan B Option

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).

Starting in Fall 2020, MFA candidates will be able to select a **Plan B Thesis Option**. Plan B means enrolling in units for a Departmental Thesis. A Departmental Thesis is not submitted to the Graduate College thesis office but instead to the English Department for final approval. The Departmental Thesis, though submitted in digital form, will not be uploaded to the ProQuest or Scholar Works digital thesis depositories. This option is recommended for students who wish to protect their copyright of their creative work for future publication. The Departmental Thesis option will be available retroactively for students completing their degrees in May, August, and December 2019. And in May and August 2020.

## Professional Development Workshops for MA and MFA

This spring, five MA and MFA students in English and Comparative Literature spearheaded the Graduate Students' Profession Development Series. Julia Dunn, Alayna Mills, Amber Sylva, Alexis Rocha, and Andrew Van Wey organized seven workshops that covered topics such as "Preparing an Academic CV," "Navigating Conferences and Calls for Papers," and "Life After the MA/MFA." The students invited faculty from the department to share their expertise and experiences about the various topics with the goal of helping students develop knowledge about and strategies for building their professional profiles. In addition, the organizers hoped to build community in the graduate program and open opportunities for graduate student leadership for themselves and future students. In future semesters, the organizers are hoping to formalize the graduate student organization, offer additional workshops, and plan social gatherings to strengthen the community they've been building.

## Graduate Student and Alumni Accomplishments

MA students **Jessie Fussell** and **Olivia Lee** helped **Noelle Brada-Williams** publish the 9th volume of *Asian American Literature: Discourses & Pedagogies* (AALDP) as Assistant Managing Editors. Olivia Lee also published a book review "Review: A River of Stars by Vanessa Hua" in the AALDP. Jessie Fussell too published a book review "Review: The Incendiaries by R.O. Kwon" in the journal. The cover was designed by MA student, **Sung Yu**.



**Alan Soldofsky** published an article titled "Those to Whom Interesting Things Happen": William Carlos Williams, Kenneth Rexroth, Lew Welch, and Joanne Kyger, and the Genome of San Francisco Renaissance" in the *William Carlos Williams Review*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (2018). The article also includes readings of Gary Snyder and Philip Whalen poems. The URL is: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/willcarwillrevi.35.2.0164>. The journal is accessible online through the University Library.

Prof. Soldofsky gave a reading from his poetry at AWP for the literary journal *Puerto Del Sol* on March 28.

**Brian Wood** (MFA, 2015) will publish his first collection of short stories *Walking Dogs* with B.O.A. Editions this fall. The collection was a finalist for B.O.A.'s Short Fiction Prize.

MFA student **Lily Dayton**'s story "Digital Repository Limbo," about the dilemma that electronic theses pose for MFA students, appeared in the February issue of *Writer's Digest*. Lily also wrote a craft essay for the USC Annenberg Center for Health Journalism's website, "Keep These Seven Lessons in Mind When Interviewing Trauma Survivors": <https://www.centerforhealthjournalism.org/resources/lessons/keep-these-seven-lessons-mind-when-interviewing-trauma-survivors>

MFA student **Taylor Sezen** published a short piece "Sugar Cookie" published in November in an online journal called MORIA. <https://www.moriaonline.com/issue-two-2018-1/2018/11/19/sugar-cookie-by-taylor-sezen>

MFA student **Katy King** has a short story, "Bookshop," coming out this July in *Coffin Bell Journal*.

**Erica Goss** (MFA, 2007) author of the poetry collection *Night Court* (Glass Lyre, 2017) has won the Zócalo Public Square Poetry Prize. She will deliver a public reading of her poem at Zócalo's annual Book Prize award ceremony on May 2 at the National Center for the Preservation of Democracy in Los Angeles.

**Helen Meservey** moderated and was a presenter on a travel writing panel on travel writing, "Not All Who Wander Are Lost: Finding the Heart of Travel Writing," that also included presentations **Sherri Harvey** (MFA, 2018) and recent SJSU Lurie Visiting Author **Don George** as well as former SJSU creative writing lecturer **Dan White**.



**Helen Meservey** and **Sherri Harvey** have been contracted to produce a story for the AAA travel magazines, wherein they joined Oprah Winfrey for her Girls' Getaway Cruise in January. Their story is slated to run in October.

Photo submitted by H. Meservey and S. Harvey

## Important Dates in 2019

- April 1** Deadline for applications for 2019–20 GAships to the Graduate Coordinator.
- April 1** Thesis proposals for Fall 2019 credit due to the graduate committee
- April 1** Candidacy forms due to GAPE for December 2019 graduates.
- April 2** Thesis due to Graduate Studies for May 2019 graduates
- May 11** MFA Thesis Reading, 2:30 - 5:00 p.m., MLK 225/229.
- May 21** Last day to sign-up for the Fall 2019 MFA Exam.
- May 22** [College of Humanities & the Arts Commencement](#), 2:00PM, Event Center at SJSU.
- June 10** Last day for May 2019 graduates to submit approved MA and MFA theses for electronic publication. (Remember to select the “embargo” option.)
- July 1** Deadline for August 2019 graduates to submit approved theses to Graduate Studies.
- Aug. 21** Fall semester begins.
- Sept. 1** Deadline for December 2019 graduates to file or reactivate application for graduation with GAPE.
- Sept. 16** Last day for August 2019 graduates to submit approved MA and MFA theses for electronic publication. (Remember to select the “embargo” option.)
- Sept. 27** MFA Comprehensive Exam distributed (9 AM).
- Sept. 30** MFA Comprehensive Exam due (5 PM).
- Oct. 1** Deadline for May 2020 graduates to file Departmental Request for Candidacy form.



### Legacy of Poetry Reading - April 17, 2019

Left to right: MFA Creative Writing Director Alan Soldofsky, Pulitzer Prize finalist Arthur Sze, Pulitzer Prize winner Forrest Gander, poet Michael Tod Edgerton, and Santa Clara County Poet emeritus Sally Ashton gathered to read their award-winning poetry in Martin Luther King, Jr. Library. Photo: A. Conway