



# ENGLISH GRADUATE NEWSLETTER

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

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Alan Soldofsky Director of Creative Writing

## FALL OFFICE HOURS

MA Advising: Professor Brada-Williams' drop-in office hours this semester are Mondays 1-2 PM and Wednesdays 3:30 to 4:30. Additional times are available by appointment. Please feel free to call or to stop by her office at FO 102. Phone: 924-4439; email: [Noelle.Brada-Williams@sjsu.edu](mailto:Noelle.Brada-Williams@sjsu.edu). Professor Soldofsky's hours are Monday, Tuesday, & Wednesday 2:30-3:30; and Thursday p.m. by appointment in FO 106. His office phone is 924-4432 and his email is [alan.soldofsky@sjsu.edu](mailto:alan.soldofsky@sjsu.edu)



## CRISTINA GARCIA ON CAMPUS IN SPRING 2016

Cuban American author Cristina Garcia will be the Connie L. Lurie Visiting Author in Spring 2016 when she will teach the Graduate Workshop in Fiction (English 240) on Tuesdays. She first gained prominence with her 1992 novel, *Dreaming in Cuban*. She has published six novels, including *Monkey Hunting* and her latest, *The King of Cuba* (2013). She has also been active in a range of

other genres, producing journalism, three books for young readers, a book of poetry, drama, and two edited collection.

### ENGLISH GRADUATE SEMINARS FOR SPRING 2016

204	16	R	16:00	18:45	Katherine Harris
225	16	M	16:00	18:45	Adrienne Eastwood
240	16	M	19:00	21:45	Alan Soldofsky
241	16	T	16:00	18:45	Lurie Chair Christina Garcia
242	16	R	19:00	21:45	Thomas Moriarty
253	16	W	16:00	18:45	Paul Douglass
256	16	W	19:00	21:45	William Wilson

#### **English 204 Seminar in Modern Approaches to Literature, Professor Harris Modernists and the Beardstair Project: Building a Digital Project**

For this semester, we will explore the changing field of Digital Humanities by adding to an ongoing digital project, Project Beardstair. In the third phase of the Beard-Stair Project (3.0), in Spring 2016, graduate students will build on four years of scholarly research, digital building and coding, and scholarly publishing of three rare literary and artistic books from the Modernist Period. This course is a continuation of the Spring 2013 course (see course website:

<https://beardstair.wordpress.com/> ) and will culminate in producing a digital scholarly edition that will be archived and displayed in King Library. The topic of this course and the focus of study will be three artists' books, slim volumes lavishly illustrated in color and produced in limited runs (1910-1935), a genre of early twentieth-century book that was inspired during the Modernist literary period. By decadently illustrating two writings by British Victorian authors ("The Sphinx" by Oscar Wilde and "Sebastian Van Storck" by Walter Pater), eccentric artist Alastair was instrumental in re-defining the idea of Victorian Classicism and fin de siècle Decadence, both movements that capped the British Nineteenth-Century. The third book for this digital project, "The Ballad of a Barber" by Aubrey Beardsley, introduces the Modernist penchant for revising nineteenth-century Aestheticism, a movement that focused on "art for art's sake." The project title, a combination of Beardsley and Alastair, became Project Beardstair to privilege the illustrators rather than the authors.

During this graduate course, we will continue to research the history of Modernist literature and print culture and even delve into bookbinding and paper-making. We will immerse ourselves in the newly instantiated genre of artist's books and learn how best to represent the history, culture, value of these mixed media books in a digital environment. Previous sets of teams have established already how best to represent the history, culture, value of these mixed media books in a digital environment. By building on the pilot course from Fall 2011 and the graduate course in Spring 2013, we will pick up where those students left off with the research, writing, construction, building, and disseminating of the digital project. Students in the Spring 2013 course, though they did get to the point of encoding the scans and transcripts of the book, were not able to make the final step of creating a digital scholarly edition that meets current standards in literary scholarship. Instead, the Spring 2013 graduate students published a peer-reviewed journal article with the leading digital pedagogy open access journal: "[BeardStair: A Student-Run Digital Humanities Project History, Fall 2011 to May 16, 2013.](#)" *Journal of Digital Humanities* 4 (2013).

A WORD ABOUT DIGITAL HUMANITIES: Digital Humanities has been living in libraries and academic departments for fifty years under the name of Humanities Computing. In the last five years, though, Digital Humanities has become a hotbed of debate on issues around open access, scholarly communication, digital literacy, educational technology, preservation, archives. By collaborating with multiple disciplines on these questions, Digital Humanists are beginning to grapple with some of the major issues surrounding the future of libraries and the curation of our cultural heritage.

The assignments will approximate real-world scenarios such as collaborating in a group, managing a digital project, and learning basic mark-up languages. Many of our readings will come from blog discussions about Digital Humanities (e.g., the hotly-debated blog posts and comments on Archives Next). In addition to using open access journals, we will rely on an anthology that is freely available online as well as available for purchase in print; please choose whichever format best suits your learning style. By the conclusion of the course, we will have added to Project Beardstair and will (ideally) submit it for review by NINES, a peer-review entity for nineteenth-century digital projects. In essence, students will immerse themselves in the burgeoning field of Digital Humanities in order to contribute to a real-world scholarly publication.

**English 225: Seminar in Shakespeare, Professor Eastwood  
Not of an Age, but For All Time**

While it is always edifying to read and study Shakespeare, his influence on other writers is not as often explored. In this course, students will get the opportunity to study Shakespeare in relation to his contemporaries and also to modern (i.e., 20-21<sup>st</sup> century) texts that respond to his works. 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 (20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> Century British or American) novel that alludes to Shakespeare, reframing his themes for our age. It is my hope that this approach will help to emphasize the ways in which Shakespeare's works continue to resonate in this post-postmodern global era.

**English 240: Graduate Poetry Workshop, Professor Soldofsky  
Poems From Page To Stage: Narrative Poetry, Dramatic Monologues, And Verse Drama**  
(Non-poetry track students may take this course for literary research credit with permission).

In this MFA-level poetry workshop, we will explore varieties of narrative poetry and dramatic monologues, including various modes of "verse-drama." We will read and write poems built upon narrative conventions, concentrating in particular on poems that construct a narrative persona. We will sample works that reflect the evolution of the dramatic monologue from the Elizabethan to the postmodern era. As readings for the course, we will explore narrative poems and dramatic monologues that can serve as models for our own work. Beginning with a few passages from Shakespeare and Andrew Marvell, we'll move on to sample Robert Browning, Edgar Arlington Robinson, W. B. Yeats, Robert Frost, Ezra Pound, and T. S. Eliot. Then on to the postmodern era where we'll read a few works by Randall Jarrell, John Berryman, Robert Lowell, and Elizabeth Bishop. And more recent experimental postmodern works by such writers as Ai, Carol Ann Duffy, Terrance Hayes, Juan Felipe Herrera, Denis Johnson, David Mura, Michael Ondaatje, and Patricia Smith. Poetry-track students will complete a final manuscript of short narrative and narrative-lyric

poems plus one two-page long work of dramatic monologue and or short piece of verse-drama. Students taking the course as literary research will write two full-length analytical papers (10 – 15 pages). All students will practice close-reading of poetry written in the workshop and also read critical essays on narrative poetry and dramatic monologue. All students will give individual presentations on published narrative poems and dramatic monologues by poets read in the course. Non-Poetry track students applying to be in the workshop should submit a small sample of their poetry to the instructor prior to enrolling. The course is also recommended to screenwriters and playwrights who desire to strengthen their awareness of dialogue and voice in their writing. 3-units.

### **English 241, Fiction Writing Workshop, Lurie Chair Christina Garcia**

The theme of this workshop is narrative strategies and we're going to analyze, in-depth, what constitutes momentum for your stories and novels. We'll focus on issues of voice, structure, characterization, research, and iconography and how they can contribute to the movement(s) of your pieces. The required books are: *Autobiography of Red* by Anne Carson, *Pedro Páramo* by Juan Rulfo, and *The Periodic Table* by Primo Levi. Additional short stories may be assigned. That said, our priority will be reading and critiquing your works-in-progress. Each writer will submit two to three stories, or excerpts of longer works (up to eighty pages total), for class discussion. Creative responses to texts as well as brief, weekly assignments—designed to amplify your own fictive possibilities—will supplement readings and critiques.

### **English 242: Nonfiction Workshop, Professor Moriarty**

In this writing workshop, we will read, discuss, and have the opportunity to write in all the genres of Creative Nonfiction, with a special emphasis on the short essay. We will discuss and critique each other's work, read pieces from well-known practitioners, and explore nonfiction's many shapes, forms, and possibilities.

### **English 253: Seminar in Period Studies in American Literature, Professor Douglass. “Modernism and/as Postmodernism”**

Labels for literary periods often have murky origins, and then confound us by metamorphosing and even inverting their meanings. “Modernism” in literary study once meant the period occurring mainly between the two World Wars, foreshadowed in Symbolism, Imagism, Cubism, Futurism, Vorticism, and Dadaism. Modernism was a revolt against realism and the flip side of Naturalism. It was experimental, *avant-garde*, and *difficult*. It embraced the energies of modern technology and urban culture, while often reviling the deadness of modern life. Modernist poetics drew from the nascent science of psychology to create prose and poetry that emulated the flow of human consciousness (Joyce, Woolf, Eliot). American Modernists found kinship with French, Greek, Italian, Irish, and English writers, and often considered themselves part of an international movement that was “cosmopolitan.” But in the 1950s and 1960s, Modernism was redefined by writers of Beat Literature, Magic Realism, and Theater of the Absurd, who recast their iconoclastic Modernist predecessors as cultural conservatives. “Postmodern” writers undercut Modernism's elitism and its (supposedly) naïve belief in unmediated meaning. After the 1980s, “Modernism” was also sometimes redefined as a literature of the clash between high and low culture, often characterized by misogyny, anti-Semitism, and racism.

When did Modernism end? Has Postmodernism ended? English 253 asks these questions, and more generally, “What do the terms ‘Modernism’ and ‘Postmodernism’ mean—and to whom?” Authors to be considered include Amy Lowell, Ezra Pound, Sherwood Anderson, e.e. cummings, W.C. Williams, H.D., Gertrude Stein, T.S. Eliot, Jean Toomer, Hart Crane, William Faulkner,

Langston Hughes, John Steinbeck, Allen Ginsberg, Robert Coover, John Barth, Jennifer Egan, and Anne Carson.

### **English 256: Seminar in 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Literature, Professor Wilson.**

The seminar centers on the literary modernism in the early twentieth century and its ramifications for the fiction and poetry that appeared in its aftermath. We will read D.H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*; James Joyce, *Ulysses*; Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*; Evelyn Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited* (if available); selected poems of W.B. Yeats, selected WWI poets, W.H. Auden, Louis MacNeice, Philip Larkin, Seamus Heaney, Paul Muldoon, Mebdh McGuckian, and others. Two seminar presentations, one short critical explication, one research paper.

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

Graduate students may take a limited number of undergraduate upper division courses for graduate credit. Please look over the entire department schedule of classes for courses that may be of specific interest to you but which we are not offering at the graduate level in the spring semester. Courses taken outside the department will not count except in unusual circumstances. Get prior approval from your advisor before you take such courses. Upper-division undergraduate English course work can count if you secure the approval of both the instructor and the graduate advisor to take the class as a graduate student (with assignments and standards befitting your advanced level). Four upper division courses that may be of interest to Grad students this Spring include Professor Shannon Miller's course on Milton, English 147 (TR 12-1:15), Professor Karim's class on African American Literature, English 165 (TR 12-1:15), and two courses offered by Professor Krishnaswamy: English 177 Fiction Since 1900 and her Special Topics Course, English 181: Satire in the Age of Terror. This is the first time this last course has been offered and it is hard to imagine a class that could be more timely. Dr. Krishnaswamy's classes meet Mondays and Wednesdays (177 at 9 AM, 181 10:30-11:45).

### **CONDITIONALLY CLASSIFIED MA STUDENTS**

Conditionally classified students must complete their required undergraduate course work before enrolling in graduate seminars. A list of upper-division literature courses approved for conditionally classified students is available in the rack outside the English department and is posted on the Department website. Be sure to take only courses from this list. When you are eligible for classified status, the change is not automatic; you need to apply. The form is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/forms/>. Bring this form and a print out of your grades from Mysjsu when you contact your adviser.

### **CHANGE IN "RP" OR "REPORT IN PROGRESS" POLICY FOR THESIS WRITERS**

Students who do not complete their thesis within the semester for which they have enrolled in 299 units are given an "RP" for Report in Progress. Students who receive an "RP" will need to enroll in a one-unit class until they complete their thesis.

### **GRADUATE FORMS**

The university is constantly updating the various forms required of graduate students. To ensure that you have the most up to date version, go directly to <http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/forms/>. Note that the "petition for advancement to candidacy" has to be signed off by your advisor and turned

into GAPE the semester before graduation and you have to submit the application to graduate early in the semester that you plan to graduate (February 10 for May 2016 graduation).

### **MA & MFA FOREIGN LANGUAGE EXAMS**

Both degree programs require a level of fluency in a second language equivalent to two years of college study of a language. If within five years of filing your program (achieving Candidacy), you have completed the fourth semester (or sixth quarter) of an approved university-level foreign language course sequence with a grade of “B” or better, you have already satisfied this requirement. Please bring that to the attention of your adviser when you file for candidacy. Students who have taken coursework longer than five years previous to filing for candidacy or who have acquired their language skills and knowledge outside of an academic institution can satisfy the foreign language requirement in French, German, or Spanish, by taking the following steps:

1. Contact a language advisor (see below) and request authorization to take a foreign language placement test administered in our Media Center.
2. If the placement test results show a level of 4th semester or higher, the student will take a proficiency exam administered by a faculty member in the World Languages department in order to confirm his or her level and discuss a path to improvement, if needed.
3. If placement test results show a lower than 4th semester language level, the student will have to take the appropriate level language course, based on a conversation with the appropriate World Languages faculty member.

<b>Examiner</b>	<b>email</b>	<b>phone</b>
Professor Jean-Luc Desalvo	<a href="mailto:jean-luc.desalvo@sjsu.edu">jean-luc.desalvo@sjsu.edu</a>	924-4620
Professor Romey Sabalius (German):	<a href="mailto:romey.Sabalius@sjsu.edu">romey.Sabalius@sjsu.edu</a>	924-4616
Professor Eleanor Marsh (Spanish):	<a href="mailto:eleanor.marsh@sjsu.edu">eleanor.marsh@sjsu.edu</a>	924-4614

(it is usually best to call Professor Marsh or meet her in person in office hours)

*Evidence of a first-language literacy other than English also satisfies the requirement.* For answers to questions about this requirement, or to satisfy this requirement in a language other than French, German, or Spanish, please contact Professors Brada-Williams or Soldofsky for more information.

### **THE MFA THESIS PROPOSAL PROCESS**

Before you can enroll in Thesis Units (ENGL 299), you must write a thesis proposal, which first must be approved by the faculty members who you have recruited to be on your Thesis Committee. Once your committee has signed your Thesis Proposal form, the proposal will be sent to the Department Graduate Committee for approval. This committee is a group of half a dozen tenure-line faculty members who meet regularly to discuss the department’s MA and MFA programs. In general, the first reader (or Thesis Director) should be a tenure-line faculty member in your primary genre. The Director is the person you will work with most often while you are writing and revising your thesis. He or she will also help you draft and submit your Thesis Proposal.

Usually the second and third readers will review the finished manuscript only once, whereas the Director may read the manuscript twice (or more). Many MFAs have chosen literature faculty members as their third or sometimes second readers. You might even ask a writer or professor from another school who you know and/or has an interest in your work to serve on your committee. Note

however that the University guidelines require a majority of the committee (i.e., two people) to be SJSU faculty. Allow plenty of time to recruit your committee. Faculty are very busy, and sometimes your first choices may not have time to serve. Be flexible. All three committee members must sign off on your proposal before you send it on to the Graduate Committee.

### **THE NEW THESIS PROPOSAL FORM CONSISTS OF THREE SECTIONS:**

#### Part 1: Content

The candidate must provide a summary (in approximately 500 words or less) of the project's content, style, and literary goals (works their project has the most resemblance to or affinities with).

#### Part 2: Influences/Bibliography

A. The candidate will write a concise descriptive introduction to an annotated bibliography listing works that have influenced the project. (Under 100 words)

B. The candidate will provide an annotated bibliography of works that are most like or most influential on the project proposed. In the annotations, students should succinctly describe each individual work's affinity or influence on their project in concrete terms. (The annotated bibliography and its introduction will be the basis of the Preface section you are required to include in your finished thesis manuscript.)

#### Part 3: Writing Sample

Attach a writing sample from your thesis project. The sample should be a representative selection from the work, showing its character and style, in the area of 10 to 12 pages in length.

### **KEEP INFORMED**

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/)

### **SOME IMPORTANT DATES FOR 2015-2016:**

- Dec. 11:** Deadline for signing up to take the Spring 2016 MFA Comprehensive Exam. Recommended for May, August, and December 2016 MFA graduates.  
**Sign up link:** [https://sjsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_2i3hKgmZmoiyJ2B](https://sjsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2i3hKgmZmoiyJ2B).
- Jan. 14:** Deadline to submit reading lists to sign up for the Spring MA exams (see the "Guidelines" at <http://www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/ma/macomps.html>)
- Jan. 18:** Deadline for December 2016 graduates to submit thesis for publication or embargo



- Feb. 6:** Deadline for August 2016 graduates to file their “Request for Candidacy” forms (requires MA or MFA Advisor’s signature).
- Feb. 6:** Spring MA comprehensive exam, Part 1, SH 229, 9-12:30.
- Feb. 10:** Deadline for May 2016 graduates to submit application for award of Master’s Degree to the Graduate Studies Office. (or Graduation Date Change Request).
- Feb. 13:** Spring MA comprehensive exam, Part 2, SH 229, 9-12:30.
- Feb. 19:** MFA Comprehensive Exam Distributed (9:00 A.M.)
- Feb. 22:** MFA Comprehensive Exam Due (5:00 P.M)
- April 1:** Approximate deadline for December 2016 graduates to file their “Request for Candidacy” forms (requires MA or MFA Advisor’s signature).
- April 1:** Deadline to have Thesis Proposals for Fall 2016 299 units submitted to the Graduate Coordinator.
- April 1:** Deadline for applications for 2016-2017 TA and GAsships due to the Graduate Coordinator.
- April 8:** Deadline for May 2016 graduates to submit signed theses to the Graduate Studies
- May 14:** MFA Graduation Reading, 2:30 p.m., MLK Library 225-229.
- June 10:** Deadline for August 2016 graduates to reactivate or file application for graduation.
- June 13:** Last day for May 2016 graduates to submit approved MA and MFA theses for thesis for electronic publication or embargo
- July 1:** Thesis Review deadline for August 2016 graduates to submit approved theses to Graduate Studies.