

ENGLISH GRADUATE NEWSLETTER

Volume L, Number 11

May 2022

SJSU DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND
COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Introducing New Faculty

Maite Urcaregui



Maite Urcaregui (she/her/hers) will receive her Ph.D. in English with doctoral emphases in Black Studies and Feminist Studies from the University of California, Santa Barbara, in June. She specializes in Latinx and multiethnic U.S. literatures, critical race and ethnic studies, feminist and queer theories, visual studies, and comics studies. Her research and teaching focus on the relationship between visual aesthetics and literary form, exploring how authors and artists represent and reconfigure identity, build community, and imagine more just futures. Her current project, tentatively titled *Seeing Citizenship: Visual Poetics & Racial Politics in Multiethnic U.S. Literatures*, examines how visual culture shapes national discourses around citizenship. She analyzes how multiethnic

U.S. authors employ image to critique citizenship's inconsistencies and inequalities and to envision alternative formations of political belonging and community. She is also co-editing with Dr. Fernanda Díaz-Basteris a collection of essays titled *Undisciplining Latinx Comics* with Rutgers University Press. Her previous publications include "A revelation not of the flesh, but of the mind: Performing Queer Textuality in Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*" in *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Sexuality in Comic Book Studies* (2021), "(Un)documenting Single-Panel Methodologies and Epistemologies in the Non-Fictional Cartoons of Eric J. García and Alberto Ledesma" in *Prose Studies* (2020), and "Intersectional Feminism in Bitch Planet: Comics, Fandom, and Activism Beyond the Page" in *Gender and the Superhero Narrative* (2018). She is looking forward to joining the Department of English and Comparative Literature at San José State University and working with its incredible faculty and students. She is especially excited to teach a graduate course on "Racial Formations and Literary Form" in the spring. Outside of work, she enjoys cooking with her partner, pestering their cat, listening to *LeVar Burton Reads*, and hiking.

Jessica Hollander

Jessica Hollander is a Visiting Associate Professor specializing in creative writing, fiction writing, and contemporary literature. Her story collection "In These Times the Home is a Tired Place" won the Katherine Anne Porter Prize and was published by the University of North Texas Press, and her chapbook "Mythical Places" won the Sonder Press Chapbook Competition and was published by Sonder Press. She has published over sixty stories in literary journals, including in *The Georgia Review*, *The Gettysburg Review*, *The Cincinnati Review*, *The Journal*, *Quarterly West*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, and *West Branch*. She has over twelve years of teaching experience, most recently as an Associate Professor at the University of Nebraska-Kearney. She received her MFA from the University of Alabama.



Spring Office Hours

MA Advising

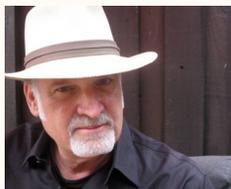
Revathi Krishnaswamy
revathi.krishnaswamy@sjsu.edu
virtual office hours: M 3-4, W 11:45-12:30

MFA Advising

Prof. Alan Soldofsky
alan.soldofsky@sjsu.edu
M and W 3:15-4:30 pm.
and Th by appointment



Revathi Krishnaswamy
Graduate Coordinator



Alan Soldofsky
Director of Creative Writing and
MFA Program Coordination

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Important Policies

Continuous Enrollment and 1290R

Course Requirements per S17-5, University Policy, Required Enrollment for Culminating Graduate Students, apply to graduate students who have completed all degree program requirements except the culminating experience (thesis, project and/or comprehensive exam). Such students 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: <https://www.sjsu.edu/cgs/docs/forms/1290R%20FAQs%20rev%2009.27.21.pdf>

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 2022

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). All MA students are required to take English 201 and English 297. Students planning to apply for TAships should complete 259, which is also offered only in the Fall.

Fall 2022 Schedule of Classes

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 Fall 2022 graduate course offerings:

English 201	R	16:00 - 18:45	HGH 227	Professor Gorman-DaRif
English 208	M	16:00 - 18:45	online	Professor Krishnaswamy
English 215	T	16:00 - 18:45	online	Professor Stork
English 240	W	19:00 - 21:45	HGH 227	Professor Martinez
English 241	W	16:00 - 18:45	CL 225A	Professor Hollander
English 242	T	19:00 - 21:45	online	Professor Arnold
English 254	T	19:00 - 21:45	online	Professor Johnson
English 259	M	19:00 - 21:45	online	Professor Moriarty
English 291	R	19:00 - 21:45	CL 111	Professor Soldofsky
English 297	R	19:00 - 21:45	online	Professor Stork

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Fall 2022 Course Descriptions

English 201

Methods and Materials

R 16:00 - 18:45 (Professor Gorman-DaRif)

This course provides a foundation for MA students through an intensive introduction to methods of graduate level scholarship. We will practice formal analysis of a variety of texts, including poetry, review research techniques, including the use of databases, annotation of sources, and compilation of bibliographies, and develop writing strategies for various genres standard in the field, including abstracts, conference papers, and articles. We will also collaboratively develop a study guide of literary terms, theoretical lenses common to the field, and literary periods to serve as reference for other courses as well as prepare students for the MA exam. This will be a fast-paced and challenging course, but one that will prepare students for the work of graduate level English studies.

English 208

Seminar in Comparative Literature

M 16:00 - 18:45 (Professor Krishnaswamy)

Decolonize! Literature, History, Theory

What exactly do we mean when we say Western Civilization, Classical Literature, British Literature, American Literature or English Literature? How were these areas of study constituted, their canons established, their literary history constructed, and their disciplinary practices institutionalized? What role did literary criticism and critical theory play in these processes? Taking a broad comparative approach to these questions, we will (i) examine the structures of power that shape literary production and consumption, (ii) consider the long legacy of eurocentrism (and androcentrism), (iii) deconstruct established definitions, conventional narratives, dominant ideologies, and (iv) learn about world-wide efforts to “decolonize” literature and literary studies. This course aims to be not only informational but also transformational. The questions we ask, the ideas we consider, and the materials we read are intended to defamiliarize and disturb established conceptions of literature, literary history and literary theory.

I therefore expect you to bring along the knowledge you have accumulated from prior literature classes so you can test it against this course. Intellectual curiosity, academic rigor, openness of mind, commitment to work hard, tolerance for difficulty, ambiguity, and uncertainty are essential to succeed in the class. The course will be taught mostly synchronously, using Canvas and Zoom. The course satisfies the 4-unit GVAR requirement for both MFA and MA students.

English 215

Myth and Symbolism

T 16:00 - 18:45 (Professor Stork)

This seminar will explore various types of mythic texts and the growth of Symbolist Poetry in the late 19th and 20th century. We will look at fairy tales, medieval romance, fantasy, poetry and myths from other cultures. The origins of mythology as a way of expressing cultural concerns will be approached from a theoretical perspective, starting with Sir James Frazer’s “Golden Bough” in the 19th century and moving through 20th and 21st critics such as Propp, Malinowski, Geertz, Campbell. Myth’s origins in folk tale, oral tradition, the borders of science, ritual, religion and human psychology will all be considered.

English 240

Poetry Workshop

W 19:00 - 21:45 (Professor Martinez)

Each week, English 240-01 workshop will explore a different poetic theme —the body, rites and rituals, place and home, food and family, dreaming, reflection. For inspiration, students will read and discuss a variety of poems from writers offering differing approaches to the week’s theme. In addition to primary readings drawn from literature, particularly modernist poetry, “experimental” poetry, digital poetics, and the fragment, we will also devote time to 20th century art: modern performance, avant-garde cinema (Maya Deren, Stan Brakhage, Kenneth Anger, Andrew Busti), and music (John Cage, Steve Reich, My Bloody Valentine).

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English 241

Fiction Workshop

W 16:00-18:45 (Professor Hollander)

This course is devoted to establishing a strong creative community, where we develop a safe space to submit our own writing, give helpful feedback to each other, and enter into conversations about craft and the writing process. Each student will submit three self-contained stories or chapters of 10-20 double-spaced pages over the course of the semester, and every week students will provide detailed feedback to their classmates' writing, including close analysis of particular assigned literary strategies. Students will also stretch themselves with course readings and exercises that engage them with diverse fiction techniques, experimenting with time and structure, image and motif, viewpoint, and style and language. We will read works by authors such as Haruki Murakami, Katherine Vaz, Kelly Link, Donald Barthelme, George Saunders, Claire Vaye Watkins, Sherman Alexie, and Ramond Queneau. As we carefully track and dissect writers' artistic choices, we will learn to articulate how the use of techniques shape theme and meaning and apply what we learn to our own writing.

English 242

Nonfiction Workshop

T 19:00-21:45 (Professor Arnold)

Creative nonfiction has often been described as "true stories, well told." But what separates such texts from fiction? In this class, students will read, study and practice writing various types of creative nonfiction, including but not limited to, memoir, essays, narrative reporting, and criticism. In addition to thinking about well-known models of the genre, students will explore various ways to approach writing using factual material in order to make their prose style more stylish, memorable, and compelling. Class will be split between discussion and workshop.

ENGL 254

The American Novel

T 19:00 – 21:45 PM (Professor Johnson)

Beginnings to 1900, charts the development of the form in the early republic, its growth as a vehicle of social change and forum for marginalized voices and groups, and its portrayal of racial and gender identities.

English 259

Seminar in Composition Studies

M 19:00-21:45pm (Professor Moriarty)

How do people write? How do people learn how to write? And, most importantly for our purposes here, how can we — and should we — teach writing? Composition theorists have been looking into and arguing about these questions — and many others — for years, and this course will immerse you in their debates. Through extensive readings and discussions, as well as papers and presentations, you will learn how to analyze and evaluate competing descriptions of the writing process; how to recognize and evaluate the range of approaches to teaching composition; how to examine assumptions underlying current theory and practice in writing instruction; how to explore assumptions and implications of composition and rhetorical research; and how to identify key problems and issues surrounding current research in composition and rhetoric. 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.

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English 291

Literary Practicum

R 19:00-21:45 (Professor Soldofsky)

This course prepares Creative Writing graduate students to begin their 8 units of "Cumulative Experience" (to fulfil final MFA graduation requirements). ENGL 291 is a course you are required to take, usually one or two semesters before your scheduled graduation date. The course is done partially as an Independent Study. In 291 we will guide you through the first half (first 4 units) of your culminating experience requirements. During your 291 semester you will:

- Submit your Advancement to Candidacy forms the Graduate College (if you haven't done so).
- Sign up for your graduation date (if you haven't already done so).
- Recruit your thesis director and the other two readers on your thesis committee;
- Complete your MFA thesis proposal (if you have not yet done so);
- Prepare for the MFA comprehensive exam; begin writing an MFA thesis (if you're ready to do so).

In 291 you can expect to customize your MFA exam reading list, with the assistance of your MFA thesis committee, whose members grade your MFA exam. If you haven't finished writing your thesis proposal, you'll be guided through the process. If you need help, you'll also be guided through the process of forming your full Thesis Committee. Students taking 298 will divide into thesis-writing groups by genre. We'll use Canvas for you to post and receive comments on your thesis proposal in-progress. You'll also be guided through drafting your thesis abstract and thesis preface as well as portions of your thesis project. Class members will have the opportunity to workshop each other's drafts-in-progress on Canvas.

Class members will also have the opportunity to read a few recommended examples of first books in your primary genre. There will also be special sessions when we bring in guest speakers such as a panel of literary agents and editors on announced Thursday dates during the Fall semester. The 291 Practicum meets mostly online via Canvas and includes a few small group meetings on Zoom. There will also be a few in-person full class meetings. The first in-person meeting will be on August 25. We will also meet on select evenings to attend in-person presentations by writers hosted by the Center for Literary Arts.

English 297

Comprehensive Exam Prep & Part 1 Exam

R 19:00-21:45 (Professor Stork)

This is the required, 2-unit Exam Preparation Course for the MA Exams, Part One and Two. We will begin with an historical and theoretical perspective covering all of your choices for Part Two of the Exam. We will conclude with intensive work on literary terminology and the close reading and explication of early modern English poetry. Part One of the Exam, consisting of 25 multiple choice questions on literary terminology and a poetry explication, will be given on the last day of class, in November. Students may also opt to take both Parts of the Exam in the following Spring semester, 2023.

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MA/MFA Reminders and Guidelines

Thesis 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 2023 with intent to graduate in May will be required to submit thesis proposals for approval by November 1, 2022.

This means you should ideally do your preliminary re- search 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 2023, 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

MA Exam Guidelines

Guidelines and reading lists for the MA Exams are now available on our website: <https://www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/ma/comp-exam.php>

Note that Part 1 is an in-class exam that you will take as part of English 297, a required course offered only in the fall. Please enroll in 297 if you plan to take Part 1 in the Fall. Part 2 is a take-home essay exam in 3 specific areas, administered via Canvas. You must indicate which three areas you wish to be examined in when you sign up for the exam.

The Fall 2022 Part Two exam will be given out on October 14th (9:00 AM) and will be due on October 17th, (5:00 p.m.).

MA students should email Professor Krishnaswamy Revathi. Krishnaswamy@sjsu.edu by May 1st to sign up for Part 2.

MFA Exam

To sign up for the MFA exam, students should first have successfully achieved MFA candidacy status and have formed a three-person thesis committee.

The MFA exam will be distributed on October 14, (9:00 a.m.) and will be due on October 17th, (5:00 p.m.).

Contact Professor Soldofsky (Alan. Soldofsky@sjsu.edu) by August 28th to receive a link to sign up. Contact Professor Soldofsky to receive a link to sign up.

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MA/MFA Reminders and Guidelines (continued)

MA Language Requirement

The MA Program requires demonstrated proficiency in a language, other than English, equivalent to 2 semesters or 3 quarters of MA Foreign Language Requirement 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. 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 Event

The MFA in Creative Writing's annual public MFA thesis reading is scheduled on Saturday, May 15, 2:30 - 4:00 pm. A Zoom link will be available from Professor Soldofsky after May 1. Following the reading, there will be an **in-person reception and celebration** at a downtown San Jose venue TBA, 4:30 - 6:30 PM.

Students receiving their MFAs in May and August 2022 will read from their thesis projects.

Join Reed Magazine!

Join a 155-year legacy—and earn marketable credits toward your degree! English 133—Reed Magazine, California's oldest literary journal—eagerly encourages graduate students to enroll. This unique, four-credit course exposes students to the work of thousands of writers and offers real-world experience in editing and promoting a publication that has held fast through world war, cultural revolution, and the turns of two centuries. See www.reedmag.org.

For an add code, contact Editor in Chief Helen Meservey at helen.meservey@sjsu.edu.



Electronic Theses Or 298D 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 are able to submit a 298D 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.

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Brag Time!

Graduate Faculty, Student, and Alumni Accomplishments

Natalie Wollenweber

MFA student Natalie Wollenweber published a story in *Corvid Queen*, a journal from Sword and Kettle Press:

<https://corvidqueen.com/stories/girl-house-sea-natalie-wollenweber>

Ume Ali

MFA student Ume Ali's "*When The Locust Invasion Comes to Your Town*" has been accepted for publication in the upcoming print issue of Mizna.

Phuong Pham

MFA student Phuong Pham, who writes under the penname "Khải Đơn" published two poems, "*Grandpa's Grave*" and "*Sour Soup*," in diaCRITICS:

<https://dvan.org/2022/01/two-poems-by-khai-don>

Phuong Pham also has two poems "*Casual Casualty*" and "*Eliminated*" accepted by Justice in Southeast Asia Lab of

University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Southeast Asian Studies:

<https://seasia.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/218/2022/01/Khai-Don-v3.pdf>

and a nonfiction piece "*Outdrink*" accepted by The Audacity, Roxane Gay Books.

Danielle Allen

MFA student Danielle Allen published a personal essay in the January issue of the *American Journal of Nursing*.

Victoria Thorpe

MA student Victoria Thorpe has been accepted in the first cohort of the Recited Verse Virtual Residency: <https://recitedverse.com>

Victoria's Recited Verse project will focus on working with students in Engl 60 to recite and record the poetry of Phillis Wheatley.

Important Dates in 2022

- April 1 Deadline for applications for 2020–21 GAships to the Graduate Coordinator.
- April 1 Candidacy forms due to GAPE for December 2022 graduates.
- April 5 Thesis proposals for Fall 2022 due to Graduate Committee
- April 24 Thesis due to Graduate Studies for May 2022 graduates
- May 15 Last day to sign-up for the Fall 2022 MA-Part 2 and MFA Exams.
- June 8 Last day for May 2022 graduates to submit approved MA and MFA theses for electronic publication. (Remember to select the "embargo" option.)
- July 1 Deadline for August 2022 graduates to submit approved theses to Graduate Studies.
- August 21 Fall semester begins.
- October 14-17 MA-Part 2 and MFA Comprehensive Exam