

San José State University
English and Comparative Literature 254
Seminar in Genre Studies of American Literature:
Short Story Collections, Cycles, Sequences and Novels of
Linked Stories

Section 1, Fall 2012

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Office Hours:	Tuesday and Thursday 3-4:30 PM and additional times by appointment
Class Days/Time:	Tuesday 7 – 9:45 PM
Classroom:	FO 104 (English Seminar Room)
Prerequisites:	Classified Graduate Standing
Faculty Webpage	http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/awilliams/index.html

Course Description

Many key works of twentieth-century American literature seem to straddle the border between a short story collection and a novel. Writers such as Jean Toomer and Sandra Cisneros have used genre-bending styles to represent ethnic American communities and experiences. This course will explore both the impact of ethnic Americans in shaping the genres between short story collections and novels and the impact of these boundary-defying genres on ethnic American literature. It will be a semester-long examination of the interrelationship of form and content. While we will discuss the various definitions of these forms, the emphasis of the class will be on exploring the aesthetic and political uses of these author's choices, rather than on determining set genre definitions.

MA Program Student Learning Outcomes

In this course, students will demonstrate the first four of the five MA program learning outcomes:

MA 1: an appropriate level of expertise in literary history, literary theory, and rhetoric.

MA 2: high-level proficiency in literary research and in the synthesis of research.

MA 3: critical and analytical skills in the interpretation and evaluation of literary texts.

MA 4: a command of written academic English, including the abilities to a) organize and present material in a cogent fashion, b) formulate and defend original arguments, c) employ effectively the language of their discipline and d) write under time constraints.

Course Content Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

CLO1: Discuss the importance of the short story cycle and related genres within American literary history

CLO2: Understand the specific contribution of ethnic American writers to these genres and their impact of the form on their work

CLO3: Demonstrate the ability to carry out small and large research projects

CLO4: Deliver a conference-style presentation in preparation for future contributions to our academic discipline.

Ten Required Texts:

- Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street*. New York: Vintage, 1984. ISBN: 978-0-679-73477-2
- Louise Erdrich. Newly Rev. Ed. *Love Medicine*. New York: Harper Collins, 1984/2009. ISBN: 978-0-06-178742-3.
- Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior/China Men*. New York: Everyman's Library, 1976/1980. ISBN: 978-1-40000-4384-2
- N. Scott Momaday. *Way to Rainy Mountain*. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1969. ISBN: 0826304362
- Gloria Naylor. *The Women of Brewster Place: A novel in Seven Stories*. New York: Penguin, 1980. 978-0-14-06690-6
- Tomas Rivera, *And the Earth Did Not Devour Him*. Houston, TX: Arte Publico Press, 1971/Trans. 1987. ISBN: 978155
- Jean Toomer. *Cane*. 1923. Norton Critical 2nd Edition. New York, Norton, 2011. ISBN:9780393931
- Lois-Ann Yamanaka, *Wild Meat and the Bully Burgers*. New York: Picador, 1996. ISBN: 0-312-42464-7
- Karen Tei Yamashita. *Tropic of Orange*. Minneapolis, MN: Coffee House P, 1997.
- A reader with various articles of criticism will be available at Maple Press on East. San Carlos between 10th and 11th streets.

Classroom Protocol

Participation is not just attending classes but engaging in the class topics and reading assignments and being ready and able to thoughtfully discuss both the readings and the comments made in class. At the graduate level, much of what you will learn will be from your fellow classmates. It is your responsibility to treat everyone inside the classroom with respect. Coming late, using electronic devices such as phones for activity unrelated

to the classroom, or not giving another student your full attention when it is their turn to speak constitutes not just a breach of proper behavior, but a breach of your commitment to this class.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester's [Catalog Policies](http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html) section at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>. The last day to drop without a "W" for Fall 2012 is September 4th. The [Late Drop Policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes. Information about the latest changes and news is available at the [Advising Hub](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

Assignments and Grading Policy

Presentation on a work of criticism [MA SLO 2,3, 4]. Due dates based on what week (2nd through 13th) that you sign up for.	Write a one-page review and orally present an overview of a work of criticism in order to inform our class discussion. A written handout for the class is recommended.	10%
Proposal and Annotated Bibliography [MA SLO 2, 3, 4]. Due Nov. 13th.	One-page proposal (for long research paper) plus min. of 10 annotated bibliographic entries	20%
Presentation on a literary text you read on your own [MA SLO 1 & 3]. Due Nov. 27th.	A 5 minute presentation on a book you choose for week 14	5%
Research Paper [MA SLO 1, 2, 3, 4]. Due. Dec. 18th.	15-20 page essay	40%
Research presentation [MA SLO 1, 2, 3 & 4]. Dec. 4th or 18th.	10-20 minute presentation on a condensed/edited version of your research paper	10%
Participation [MA SLO 1 & 3]. Ongoing due dates.	Participation in 15 classes, including prepared questions and comments on each week's readings	15%

Academic integrity

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [University's Academic Integrity policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm), located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm>, requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the

office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The [Student Conduct and Ethical Development website](http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include your assignment or any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Disability Resource Center](http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/) (DRC) at <http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/> to establish a record of their disability.

A sampling of additional texts that may impact the categories of short story cycle or novels of linked stories (these are your choices for the week 14 reading assignment):

Sherman Alexie, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (1994)
Sherwood Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919)
Djuna Barnes, *Nightwood* (1937)
Robert Olen Butler, *A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain* (1992) or *Severance* (2006)
Willa Cather, *The Troll Garden* (1905)
Edwidge Danticat, *Krik? Krak!* (1996)
W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) (mix of fiction and nonfiction)
William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* (1935), *Go Down Moses* (1942), or *The Unvanquished* (1938)
Jessica Hagedorn, *Dogeaters* (1990) or *Dream Jungle* (2003)
Ernest Hemingway, *In Our Time* (1925/1930)
Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896)
James Joyce, *Dubliners* (1914)
Maxine Hong Kingston, *Woman Warrior* (1976)
Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Interpreter of Maladies* (1999)
---. *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008)
Toshio Mori, *Yokohama, California* (1949)
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Storyteller* (1981) (mix of fiction and nonfiction)
Toni Morrison *A Mercy: A Novel* (2008)
Tim O'Brien, *The Things they Carried* (1990)
Gertrude Stein, *Three Lives* (1909)
John Steinbeck, *The Pastures of Heaven* (1932)
Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club* (1980)
John Updike, *Too Far to Go* (1979)
Sylvia Watanabe, *Talking to the Dead* (1994)
Eudora Welty, *The Golden Apples* (1949)
Karen Tei Yamashita, *I Hotel* (2010)

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If any changes need to be made to the schedule, students will be given a week's notice in class and via email.

Table 1 Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	August 28 th	Introduction. Before class, have read Suzanne Ferguson, "Sequences, Anti-Sequences, Cycles, and Composite Novels: The Short Story in Genre Criticism." <i>Journal of the Short Story in English</i> . 41 (Autumn 2003), available at http://jsse.revues.org/index312.html . We will finalize text choices for week 14 today. Sign up for presentation on a work of criticism during weeks 2-13.
2	Sept. 4 th	Read Jean Toomer, <i>Cane</i> (1923). Plus Charles Scruggs, "Textuality and Vision in Jean Toomer's <i>Cane</i> " (277-296 of NC edition).
3	Sept. 11th	Read Karen Tei Yamashita, <i>Tropic of Orange</i> . (1997) plus Johannes Hauser, "Structuring the Apokalypse: Chaos and Order in Karen Tei Yamashita's <i>Tropic of Orange</i> " <i>PhiN. Philology im Netz</i> . (Vol 37, 2006) at http://web.fu-berlin.de/phin/phin37/p37t1.htm
	Sept. 12th	See Karen Tei Yamashita at SJSU!
4	Sept. 18th	Read N. Scott Momaday, <i>Way to Rainy Mountain</i> (1969). Read Momaday, "The Man Made of Words" and selections by Berner and Oandasan (all in reader).
5	Sept. 25th	Read Tomas Rivera, <i>And the Earth Did Not Devour Him</i> (1971) and excerpts from Ingram and Dunn & Morris (in the reader).
6	Oct. 2nd	Read Maxine Hong Kingston, "No Name Woman" section of <i>China Men</i> and <i>China Men</i> up through "The Laws" (5-19, 213-381).
7	Oct. 9th	Finish reading <i>China Men</i> (382-541). Read Rocio Davis, "Introduction: Asian American and Asian Canadian Short-story Cycles" (in reader).
8	Oct. 16th	Read Gloria Naylor, <i>The Women of Brewster Place</i> (1980). Read Laura Nicosia's "Gloria Naylor's <i>Brewster Place</i> : Evolution of a Genre: (pdf available from Prof.).
9	Oct. 23 rd	Read <i>House on Mango Street</i> (1984). Also read James Nagel's "Sandra Cisneros's <i>Cuentitos Latinos: The House on Mango Street</i> " in reader.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
10	Oct. 30 th	Read first half of Louise Erdrich, <i>Love Medicine (1984-2009)</i> though “The Red Convertible”(1-189). Read Michelle Pacht, excerpts from <i>The Subversive Storyteller: The Short Story Cycle and the Politics of Identity in America</i> (in reader).
11	Nov. 6th	Finish <i>Love Medicine (including the first 32 pages of the P.S. section)</i> . Read Hertha D. Sweet Wong, “Louise Erdrich’s <i>Love Medicine</i> : Narrative Communities and the Short Story Cycle” (in reader).
12	Nov. 13th	Read Lois Ann Yamanaka <i>Wild Meat and the Bully Burgers</i> (1996) to page 158. Proposal and Annotated Bibliography Due.
13	Nov. 20th	Finish <i>Wild Meat and the Bully Burgers</i> (1996). Read Rocio Davis, “Short Story Cycle and Hawai’i Bildungsroman: Writing Slef, Place, and Family in Lois-Ann Yamanaka’s <i>Wild Meat and the Bully Burgers</i> ” (in the reader).
14	Nov. 27th	Read a text of your own choosing from the assigned list above and prepare a 5 minute (max!) presentation on it. Only one student per text so be sure to get your choice confirmed. You should have also read at least one additional piece of criticism on this text when you make your presentation. Recommended reading: title story and part two of Jhumpa Lahiri’s <i>Unaccustomed Earth</i> .
15	Dec. 4 th	Research Presentations (Day 1)
Final Exam week	Dec. 18 th , 7:45 to 10 PM	Research Presentations (Day 2). Research Paper Due.