

## ENGLISH 130-1 "WRITING FICTION" FALL 2013

(This syllabus can be found online at: <http://www.sjsu.edu/english/ENGLgreensheets/2013ENGLfall/index.html>)

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**Course Description and Objectives:** English 130 focuses on the craft of writing literary short fiction. Students will learn the basic techniques and conventions of character development and narrative structure through close readings of exemplary creative work and by writing stories designed as exercises in the aesthetics of short fiction as well as writing original stories. **Literary Fiction:** For this course you only are allowed to write literary fiction – *realism*, fiction about **real, human people** in credible circumstances and situations that take place in **our actual world**, and about the attendant emotions, desires, and internal and external conflicts that drive those people and create those situations. It is fiction written **for adult humans** that is designed to be memorable, complex, and true about life and what it means to be living in the real world.

To that end, you will **not** be writing about: zombies, vampires, wizards, witches, werewolves, mutants, shape-shifters, space-colonists, time-travelers, dimension-hoppers, monsters, talking animals, conscious-but-inanimate objects (such as toasters or shoes that think), artificial intelligences, ninja turtles, or . . . *zombies*. Ask yourself: Would the characters and situations you plan to write about fit well in a video game, comic book, monster flick, or a fantasy or sci-fi movie? If so they will not fit well in this course – **and will not be accepted for credit**.

**Course Student Learning Objectives (SLO):** The Department of English and Comparative Literature has established the following Student Learning Objectives (SLO) for its baccalaureate courses, such as English 130: Students will demonstrate the ability to 1) read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric; 2) show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature; 3) write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject; 4) develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively; 5) articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts.

### Required Texts:

Chopin, *The Awakening and Selected Stories of Kate Chopin* (Signet Classics)  
Hemingway, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro and Other Stories* (Scribner's)  
Sophocles, *The Three Theban Plays*, translated by Robert Fagles (Penguin Classics)

### Assignments and Correspondence to SLO, Grading, and Due Dates:

Four (4) written assignments, as follows:

1. **Sept. 16<sup>th</sup>: Aesthetic Statement and Modeled Story due, worth 30 points** (10 for the Aesthetic Statement; 20 for the Modeled Story), 6-12 pages. Meets SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.
2. **Conflict Story, following Sophocles' narrative structure, worth 20 points, 6-12 pages. Due in final form one week after its workshop date.\*** Meets SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

3. Story (separate from the Modeled and Conflict stories), worth 20 points, 6-12 pages. Due in final form one week after its workshop date\*  
Meets SLO 1, 2, 3, and 4.
4. Four (4) 1-2 pp. critiques written as a Lead Discussant during the workshop segment, each critique worth 7.5 points for a total of 30 points.  
Each critique is due at the story's workshop\*  
Meets SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

\*Your workshop and Lead Discussant dates will be set well in advance.

**All due dates are absolute. Failure to hand in an assignment on its due date will result in a lowered grade. Your workshop stories (Assignments 2 and 3 above) must be distributed no later than the class meeting before the workshop date or else you will lose your workshop turn as well as lose the benefit of my critiquing your story before it is due, which remains one week after your scheduled workshop date - no exceptions.**

The four assignments comprise 100 points. The points represent percentages which graduate, in accordance with University policy, as follows: 100–98 = A+; 97–94 = A; 93–90 = A-; 89–87 = B+; 86–84 = B; 83–80 = B-; 79–77 = C+; 76–74 = C; 73–70 = C-; 69–67 = D+; 66–64 = D; 63–60 = D-; 59–0 = F.

The Department of English and Comparative Literature reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the official SJSU Catalog (“The Grading System”). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure. In English and Comparative Literature courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of the ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.

**Course Procedures:** You must turn in to me a hard copy of each assignment on its due date.

**\*\*Emailed assignments are not accepted and will be treated as failing to meet the due date.\*\***  
You must distribute hard copies of your workshop stories to the assigned Lead Discussants and to me; however, you may email your workshop stories to everyone else in the class. **Manuscript Preparation and Procedures:** 1) All assignments must be typed in 12-point in a readable font style, and must be double-spaced, paginated, and on standard white, 8.5” by 11” paper. Make certain that your name is on the first page and that you title your stories. 2) All assignments must be your own work, and Assignments 1, 2, and 3 must be written exclusively for this course. By University policy, you may not hand in any work for which you were previously given credit in another course, including mine should you happen to be a former student or currently enrolled in another course of mine this semester. 3) Adherence to the fundamental tenets of literary is expected. This includes the correct usage of grammar, punctuation, and spelling. **Failure to do so will result in a grade reduction, as per department policy, as stated above.** You must have - and be able to articulate - viable aesthetic reasons for deviating from proper usage, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

**Concerning Attendance:** I *strongly advise* your making a friend in the class from whom you can get handouts and notes for any lecture or discussion you should happen to miss and to distribute the required hard copies of your workshop story should you not be able to attend class the meeting before your workshop turn. I will not distribute your workshop story for you, so if you are absent the meeting before your workshop date you

must make another arrangement or else lose your turn, as indicated above. I cannot conduct private tutorials with you, either by email or during office hours, in order to replicate what you missed by not attending class. Please do not ask me to do so. However, after you've caught up on the reading and thoughtfully considered your friend's notes, feel free to ask me specific questions should you need clarification.

**Please do not ask for special treatment of any kind or to be exempted from any course policy or procedure.**

**University Policies:** You are responsible for reading the SJSU academic policies available online (<http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>). **Academic Integrity Policy** (<http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-1507.html>); **Add/Drop Deadlines** (<http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-1189.html>); **Late Drop Policy** (<http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-1455.html>). [Note: **Tuesday Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup> is the last day to Drop without a transcript notation, and Tuesday Sept. 10<sup>th</sup> is the last day to Add courses and register late.**] **Campus Policy in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act:** If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please see me as soon as possible. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities register with the Accessible Education Center (AEC) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/aec/>) to establish a record of their disability.

**The Center for Literary Arts (CLA) Fall 2013 Schedule.** All events are free and begin at 7:00 p.m. (but for the lone exception as noted). It is expected that you will attend as many of these events as possible.

Sept. 18 (Wed.) Aleksandar Hemon Reading and Book Signing, MLK Library 225/229

Sept. 19 (Thur.) Aleksandar Hemon In Conversation with Peter Orner, 1:00 p.m. MLK 225/229

Sept. 30 (Mon.) Nick Taylor and Alan Soldofsky Reading and Book Signing, MLK 225/229

Oct. 15 (Tues.) Sandra Tsing Loh Reading and Book Signing, SJSU University Theatre

Oct. 30 (Wed.) Tom Barbash Reading and Book Signing, MLK Library 225/229

Nov. 20 (Wed.) Barbara Jane Reyes Reading and Book Signing, MLK Library 225/229

Dec. 04 (Wed.) Tommy Mouton and other Steinbeck Fellows reading, MLK Library 225/229

For more information see <http://www.litart.org> or call the Event Hotline: (408) 924-4600.

### **Class Schedule:**

Aug. 21 Course overview. Preliminary discussion of Narrative Point of View.

26 Chopin, "The Story of an Hour" (p. 217) and "The Kiss" (p. 225)

28 Chopin, "At the 'Cadian Ball'" (p. 178) and "The Storm" (p. 267)

Sept. 02 **Labor Day (campus closed).**

04 Chopin, "A Shameful Affair" (p. 162). Preliminary discussion of Opening Paragraphs.

09 Hemingway, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" (p. 3)

11 Hemingway, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" (p. 121)

16 Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*

**AESTHETIC STATEMENT AND MODELED DUE SEPTEMBER 16<sup>th</sup>.**

18 Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*

Sept.	23	Sophocles, <i>Oedipus the King</i> . Discussion of <u>Conflict</u> .
	25	Workshop (Round I).
	30	Workshop (I).
Oct.	02	Workshop (I).
	07	Workshop (I).
	09	Workshop (I).
	14	Workshop (I).
	16	Workshop (I).
	21	Workshop (I).
	23	Workshop (I).
	28	Workshop (I).
	30	Workshop (Round II).
Nov.	04	Workshop (II).
	06	Workshop (II).
	11	<b>Veteran's Day (campus closed).</b>
	13	Workshop (II).
	18	Workshop (II).
	20	Workshop (II).
	25	Workshop (II).
	27	<b>No class.</b>
Dec.	02	Workshop (II).
	04	Workshop (II).
	09	Workshop (II).
	12	<b>Final Examination, 9:45 - 12:00pm, Thursday, December 12<sup>th</sup>.</b>