

**San José State University**  
**English 71—Creative Writing, Fall 2013**  
**GE Area C2: Humanities & Arts, Letters**

Instructor: Kelly Harrison

Office: FO222, 924-4496

Section: 8 , Thur 4:30-7:15pm,  
Clark Hall 111 “The Incubator Classroom”

Office Hours: Th 3:00-4:00, and after class

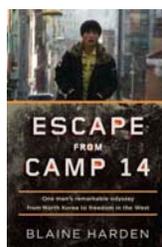
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### REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS



*The Making of a Story*,  
Alice LaPlante.  
ISBN: 978-0-393-06164-2  
\$29.95 (softcover or hardcover)



*Escape from Camp 14*  
Blaine Harden  
ISBN: 13: 9780143122913  
\$8.97 (paperback)

*Reed Magazine*  
No. 66  
Published Fall 2013



- College-level dictionary
- Lined binder paper, 8.5x11, for in-class writing. **Do not** use smaller paper—they get lost easily.
- Blue or black pens for in-class writing, colored pen (green, purple) for workshops
- Internet access and email

### RECOMMENDED TEXTS

- *Zen and the Art of Writing*, Ray Bradbury (Roberts may have used copies)
- *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*, Stephen King
- *Writing Fiction* by Gotham Writers' Workshop
- *Telling True Stories: A Nonfiction Writer's Guide from the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University* by Mark Kramer and Wendy Call

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduction to Creative Writing is a 3-unit, lower-division course designed, adopted, implemented, and administered by the Department of English & Comparative Literature at SJSU in accordance with the University's General Education Program Guidelines to fulfill Core General Education requirements in the Letters area of Humanities & the Arts. In this course, we will read and write poetry, creative non-fiction, and short fiction. The course will be taught using a combination of discussion and writing workshops. In the discussion, we will closely read and analyze published works of creative writing. In the writing workshops, you will analyze and critique the creative work of fellow class members. For this class, we will produce an ebook (.epub format) using your work.

### LAPTOP, CELLPHONE, TABLET, TECHNOLOGY POLICY

You are expected to be present in both mind and body. You can't do that if you're checking Facebook or texting a friend. If you must take a call because of an emergency, leave the classroom. **Anyone using a phone, tablet, or other tech device during a quiz or assessment will receive an F (0 points) for that assignment.** We will use technology in the class. Our job is to understand when that use is appropriate.

## ACADEMIC POLICIES

You are responsible for reading the SJSU academic policies available online:

<http://www.sjsu.edu/english/comp/policy/index.html>

## STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES (SLOs)

In the Department of English and Comparative Literature, 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, and/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 the 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.

Specifically, in English 71 you will:

6. Develop an appreciation of literary works as expressions of human intellect and imagination, and as representations of diverse human cultures;
7. Develop the ability to write literary works that express intellect and imagination and that represent diversity in human cultures
8. Respond to literature through clear and effective communication in both written and oral work;
9. Read and respond to texts with both analytical acumen and personal sensibility;
10. Appreciate how literary works illuminate enduring human concerns while at the same time representing their particular cultures;
11. Write works of poetry, creative non-fiction, and short fiction that are of interest and value to the writer, to other students in the course, and to a diverse reading audience.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Creative Writing (60% of course grade, 600 points):** Each student will write, revise, workshop, and submit the following new writing. (SLOs 3, 4, 6, 7, 11)
  - “Self-Portrait” diagnostic & revision
  - 2 creative nonfiction pieces (approximately 2-4 pages each)
  - 1 fiction piece (approximately 5-10 pages)
  - 4-5 poems of various lengths and forms
2. **Quizzes, Reading Responses, Workshops, Anthology, Participation (25% of course grade, 250 points):** Includes participating in daily discussions, in-class writing and critique, asking questions, responding to other students’ work in workshop and online, doing in-class activities. **These assignments cannot be made up if you are not in class.** Writers read like writers. As you read the works in this class, I expect you to mark up the text and prepare for class discussions. (SLOs 6-10)
3. **CLA Literary event (5%, 50 points):** You will attend at least one on-campus literary event and write a 2-page **review** (not a summary) of the event that focuses on your experience of the event. Use “I” and describe your reactions. See [www.litart.org](http://www.litart.org) for schedule. Most events will be announced in class, too. (SLOs 3, 5, 6, 8, 10)
4. **Campus Reading Event (5%, 50 points):** You will attend one of the campus events around the reading (*Escape from Camp 14*) and write a 2-page critique. The schedule is available online: [www.sjsu.edu/reading](http://www.sjsu.edu/reading). Some events will be announced in class. (SLOs 3, 5, 6, 8, 10)
5. **Final Exam (5%, 50 points):** Thursday, December 12 at 1715-1930 (5:15-7:30pm). This will be a FUN! performance reading of your own work.

Total points determine your grade as follows:

A = 930 points +	B- = 800-829	D+ = 670-699
A- = 900-929	C+ = 770-799	D = 630-669
B+ = 870-899	C = 730-769	D- = 600-629
B = 830-869	C- = 700-730	F = below 600

The Department of English 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.

## GRADING

A: Creative writing that receives an “A” is likely to:

- Fulfill all assignment requirements
- Demonstrate a compelling plot, idea, event (significance)
- Function well as a whole (structure)
- Demonstrate an engaging voice that incorporate strong word choices (style)
- Engage the writer as well as the reader (sincerity)
- Lack clichéd or over-used language
- Incorporate unusual/unique associations that fit the tone of the piece (originality)
- Lack spelling and punctuation errors, typos, etc.

B: Creative writing that receives a “B” is likely to:

- Fulfill most of the assignment requirements
- Demonstrate some significance
- Function generally well as a whole
- Demonstrate a generally engaging voice
- Incorporate some strong word choices
- Use some concrete imagery
- Mostly lack clichéd or over-used language
- Mostly lack spelling and punctuation errors, typos, etc.

C: Creative writing that receives a “C” is likely to:

- Neglect some aspects of the assignment requirements
- Be derivative of other works
- Not completely function as a whole (some parts may be underdeveloped)
- Incorporate some strong, and some weaker, word choices
- Lack concrete imagery
- Include clichéd or over-used language
- Have some spelling and punctuation errors, typos, etc.

D: Creative writing that receives a “D” is likely to:

- Not fulfill the assignment requirements
- Not function as a whole
- Be a cursory response that demonstrates lack of motivation
- Show poor understanding of the assignment

F: No response or paper turned in one week past due.

## LATE ASSIGNMENTS

You are adults and responsible for attending class and turning in assignments on time. If you must miss class, contact a **classmate** about what we covered. **Do not email me** asking me what we discussed or if you missed “anything important”. (You did.) Instead, contact a classmate for that material.

It’s OK to email me if you need clarification on an assignment or need to arrange an appointment to meet in person. Please use standard English (including capitals and punctuation) in all emails to me. Please do not use text messaging or chat abbreviations (like cul8r, u, i). Treat your communications with me as you would with an employer. Yes, I’m an English teacher, and yes, I expect professional language skills from college students! Get names, emails, and optionally cellphones from three classmates.

**You cannot make up in-class writing, workshops, quizzes, or other class work.** If you turn in an assignment late, you will lose 10% for each day the assignment is late. That is, an A becomes a B after one day, and then a C after two days. **Each day is a calendar day, not a class session!** If turning in

something late, you must write at the top the day the assignment was due, the day you are turning it in, and the percentage grade reduction. Example: “Due 10/14, turned in 10/16, -20%”

**I will not take any assignments more than one week late. I do not accept emailed assignments. Assignments will be posted online (blog) or uploaded to turnitin.com. The timestamp on the assignment is used to determine lateness.**

## **PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism means passing someone else’s work off as your own, such as:

- using a story or poem or part thereof written by someone else
- using web page text directly in your papers without citing
- having someone else write all or part of your assignments

Any assignment containing plagiarized passages will receive an F grade automatically, and I will report the incident to university officials who may elect to expel you from the university.

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Plagiarism or cheating on any portion of any assignment, including copying more than seven consecutive words from a web site, will result in a failing grade for assignment and possibly the course. All student work is subject to review at <http://www.turnitin.com> to identify possible sources of plagiarism. Students found guilty of academic dishonesty will be reported to the proper authorities and may result in a grade of NC.

**→→→→TURNITIN.COM Class ID: 6769265 password: sjsu**

## COURSE SCHEDULE

MS = Making of a Story; EC = Escape from Camp 14

Week/ date	Classwork	Homework (listed on date assigned, due following class)
1 22 Aug 13	INTRODUCTION The incubator room orientation Anthology project The class collection project, blogs Self-portrait assignment	The Self-Portrait assignment Register with turnitin.com MS: "Shitty First Drafts" pg 574, ch 1, part 1, "The Basics" EC: Intro-Ch5
<b>CREATIVE NONFICTION</b>		
2 29 Aug 13	<b>DUE: Self-portrait to turnitin.com</b> What is Creative Nonfiction? Beginnings & hooks. Writing as discovery. Discuss EC text Significance, structure, style, sincerity, originality	MS: Ch 2, "Keeping a Notebook" pg 40 Selzer, "The Knife" pg 533 Ch 11, & 14 parts 1 (nonfiction)  EC: Ch6-10 Work on draft of nonfiction piece. Upload to turnitin.com.
3 5 Sept 13	<b>Due: Draft to Canvas</b> Stephen King excerpt (audio book) Discuss "The Knife" and EC Story structure/shape, memoir	MS, ch4&9, part 1 (shape & plot) EC: Ch11-15 Read class drafts, prepare for workshop
4 12 Sept 13	<b>Due: Nonfiction Workshop #1</b> Plot in non-fiction, creative journalism Voice and POV	MS ch 12, part 1 (emotion/sense) MS, ch 6, part 1 (POV) EC: Ch16-20
5 19 Sept 13	<b>DUE: Nonfiction #1 to turnitin.com</b> Dialogue (format, making it real vs reality) & Details	MS, ch3, part 1 (details), O'Brien "The Things They Carried" pg 131 ch8, part 1 (dialog), MS ch10, part 1, (character) EC: finish book
6 26 Sept 13	<b>Nonfiction Workshop #2 in groups</b> Discuss EC	MS, Johnson, "Emergency" pg 47, MS, ch7, part 1 (unreliable narrator)
<b>FICTION</b>		
7 3 Oct 13	<b>DUE: Nonfiction #2</b> The unreliable narrator Short story structure	MS, ch 5, part 1 (show/tell) MS Busch, "Ralph the Duck" pg 521 "The Carver Chronicles" D. T. Max pg 578, Carver "The Bath" pg 591 and "A Small, Good Thing" pg
8 10 Oct 13	Carver chronicles	Reed Magazine--variety MS, ch13, part 1 (failure), Hemingway "Hills Like White Elephants" pg 356

9 17 Oct 13	<b>Due: 2-page story intro to Canvas</b> Flash Fiction (handouts)	MS “The Swimmer” Cheever pg 330
10 24 Oct 13	<b>Due: Fiction draft to Canvas</b> Review significance, structure, style, sincerity, originality	Read fiction pieces & prepare for workshop
11 31 Oct 13	<b>Workshop Fiction</b>	Revising Begin poetry (handouts) Read Miscarriage, Bitch, and First birth/First week poems
<b>POETRY</b>		
12 7 Nov 13	<b>DUE: Fiction piece to turnitin.com</b> Poetry forms	Poetry packets (My beloved to Did you come...)
13 14 Nov 13	<b>Due: Anthology piece</b> <b>Production Day</b>	Read rest of poetry packet Write poems for workshop
14 21 Nov 13	<b>Due: Poetry workshop #1 (printed)</b> Re-creations Self-portrait revisions Experimental poetry Extended metaphors (songs, handouts)	Preparing for a public reading Polish your portfolio
15 28 Nov 13	THANKSGIVING!	Think of the turkey.
16 5 Dec 13	<b>DUE: Self-Portrait revision</b> <b>turnitin.com</b> Practice performance reading <b>DUE: Poetry Portfolio</b>	
<b>FINAL EXAM. Thursday, December 12 at 1715-1930 (5:15-7:30pm) READING</b>		

**THE BLAKE SNYDER BEAT SHEET (available online at <http://www.blakesnyder.com/tools/>)**

PROJECT TITLE:

GENRE:

DATE:

1. Opening Image (1): Opposite of final image. Shows character change.
2. Theme Stated (5): What is the movie/story about?
3. Set-Up (1-10): We meet all the A-list characters
4. Catalyst (12): Call to Adventure. Something is done TO the character to motivate them.
5. Debate (12-25): No one wants to change. The character would rather not accept the Call/Catalyst
6. Break into Two (25): Protagonist decides to act, plot point. (Act 2 begins).
7. B Story (30): Help the protagonist “get” the story
8. Fun and Games (30-55): Promise of the premise. This is the pitch, best part of film.
9. Midpoint (55): False victory or false defeat. Stakes are raised. Usually a public party/celebration. Clock ticks.
10. Bad Guys Close In (55-75): We see the danger approaching. Characters usually don’t see it.
11. All Is Lost (75): Death. Protagonist is worse off than in the beginning.
12. Dark Night of the Soul (75-85): Hero can’t go back, doesn’t want to move forward but does anyway.
13. Break into Three (85): Main story and subplots merge. (Act 3 begins)
14. Finale (85-110): Protagonist prevails. World is changed.
15. Final Image (110): Opposite of opening image, must show the change.

**Write a piece based on the following prompt:**

1. Read (aloud) the poem “Self-Portrait” by Adam Zagajewski.
2. Notice the details included in the text.
3. Notice the order and organization of details—how they are arranged in the text.
4. Write a poem of at least 250 words that is your self-portrait. Select interesting details as Zagajewski has done, arranging them in such a way as to reveal interesting things about yourself.

**Adam Zagajewski**  
**(translated from the Polish by Clare Cavanagh)**  
**SELF PORTRAIT**

Between the computer, a pencil, and a typewriter  
half my day passes. One day it will be half a century.  
I live in strange cities and sometimes talk  
with strangers about matters strange to me.  
I listen to music a lot: Bach, Mahler, Chopin, Shostakovich.  
I see three elements in music: weakness, power, and pain.  
The fourth has no name.  
I read poets, living and dead, who teach me  
tenacity, faith, and pride. I try to understand  
the great philosophers--but usually catch just  
scraps of their precious thoughts.  
I like to take long walks on Paris streets  
and watch my fellow creatures, quickened by envy,  
anger, desire; to trace a silver coin  
passing from hand to hand as it slowly  
loses its round shape (the emperor's profile is erased).  
Beside me trees expressing nothing  
but a green, indifferent perfection.  
Black birds pace the fields,  
waiting patiently like Spanish widows.  
I'm no longer young, but someone else is always older.  
I like deep sleep, when I cease to exist,  
and fast bike rides on country roads when poplars and houses  
dissolve like cumuli on sunny days.  
Sometimes in museums the paintings speak to me  
and irony suddenly vanishes.  
I love gazing at my wife's face.  
Every Sunday I call my father.  
Every other week I meet with friends,  
thus proving my fidelity.  
My country freed itself from one evil. I wish  
another liberation would follow.  
Could I help in this? I don't know.  
I'm truly not a child of the ocean,  
as Antonio Machado wrote about himself,  
but a child of air, mint, and cello  
and not all the ways of the high world  
cross paths with the life that—so far—  
belongs to me.

## Understanding the THREE-ACT structure

Syd Field, author of *Screenplay* and *The Screen Writer's Workbook*, outlined a structure that most screenplays follow, meaning the standard screenplay can be divided into three parts: Setup, Confrontation, and Resolution.

**Act I** comprises the first quarter of the screenplay. (For a normal movie, Act I is 15-30 minutes.)

**Act II** comprises the next two quarters of the film. (Act II is roughly 60 minutes.)

**Act III** comprises the final quarter of the film. (Act III is 15-30 minutes.)

**"Plot Point"**--The three acts are separated by plot points, a reversal/event that thrusts the plot in a new direction. Later screenplay gurus have built on Field's theory by stating that Plot Point #1, which leads into Act II, is the moment when the hero takes on the problem.

### The Three-act Paradigm:



**Act I** (Setup) comprises the first quarter of the screenplay.

**Exposition**--The part of a story that introduces the characters, shows some of their interrelationships, and places them within a time and place. This part of the story introduces the main character, the dramatic premise, and the dramatic situation.

**Main character**--the person in the story who has a need/objective to fulfill and whose actions drive the story

**Dramatic premise**--what the story's about

**Dramatic situation**--the circumstances surrounding the action

**Inciting Incident**--an event that sets the plot of the film in motion. It occurs approximately halfway through the first act.

**Act II** (Confrontation) comprises the next two quarters of the film.

**Obstacles**--In the second act, the main character encounters obstacle after obstacle that prevent him from achieving his dramatic need.

**First Culmination**--a point just before halfway where the main character seems close to achieving his or her goal/objective. Then, everything falls apart, leading to the midpoint.

**Midpoint**--a point approximately halfway through the film where the main character reaches his/her lowest point and seems farthest from fulfilling the dramatic need or objective.

**Act III** (Resolution) comprises the final quarter of the film. (For a two hour movie, Act III would be the final 30 minutes.)

**Climax (Second Culmination)**--The point at which the plot reaches its maximum tension and the forces in opposition confront each other at a peak of physical or emotional action.

**Denouement**--The brief period of calm at the end of a film where a state of equilibrium returns.

Episode of HOUSE

#### Act 1 (10min)

Scene 1: Soldiers in a tank, IED, crash. House wakes up from this dream

Scene 2: Cutty makes House take soldier as a client. House is freaked out about "dreaming" about patient.

Inciting Incident: Soldier has tons of symptoms, Q=gulf-war syndrome or something else?

#### Act 2 (20min)

Scene 1: Patient history, obstacles = symptoms that don't add up to specific diseases.

Scene 2: Sleep study, Chase & Cameron have sex in sleep room. Foreman enters, discovers patient alone and suffering from bad breath due to vaginosis bacteria in mouth.

Scene 3: Possible cancer. House asks Wilson to biopsy salivary glands. Wilson does scan on head.

First Culmination: Diagnosis of cancerous brain tumors

Scene 4: Decision to operate on brain. During surgery, tumors have disappeared.

#### Act 3 (10min)

Scene 1: Review of symptoms, including new "paralysis". Chase discovers DU in urine. MDs argue over diagnosis. House leaves to get some sleep.

Scene 2: MDs ask patient Qs in writing b/c patient is deaf. MDs get idea. House can't sleep.

Climax: Paralysis is ascending to respiratory system. MDs stuck. Need more info. Cutty pages staff b/c patient is dying. House is bleeding. House is dreaming again.

Scene 3: Answer = genetic disease that can be corrected by surgery. Patient lives.