

San José State University
Department of English and Comparative Literature
English 71
Spring 2013

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Sec 05 MW 15:00-16:15 CL 316

Office hours: Monday and Wednesday 13:45-14:45, and by appointment.

Course Description:

Introduction to Creative Writing (English 71) is a 3-unit lower-division course designed, adopted, implemented, and administered by the Department of English & Comparative Literature at San Jose State University in accordance with the University's General Education Program Guidelines to fulfill Core General Education requirements in the Letters area of Humanities & the Arts. It is also an elective in the English major, a requirement in the Creative Writing minor, and a pre-requisite for taking upper division Creative Writing workshops.

In this course you will read, discuss, and write poetry, creative nonfiction, and fiction. Class meetings will feature a combination of discussion and writing workshops. We will discuss and analyze published works of creative writing that will serve as models for your own writing. We will workshop—that is, analyze and critique—your creative work, and you are required to participate in all workshops dedicated to the discussion of class members' work.

English Department Student Learning Objectives:

- SLO 1: Students will demonstrate the ability to 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;
- SLO 2: Students will demonstrate the ability to show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature;
- SLO 3: Students will demonstrate the ability to write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject;
- SLO 4: Students will demonstrate the ability to develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively;
- SLO 5: Students will demonstrate the ability to articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts.

GE Area C2 Letters Student Learning Objectives:

- SLO 1: Letters courses will enable students to recognize how significant works illuminate enduring human concerns.
- SLO 2: Letters courses will enable students to respond to significant works by writing both research-based critical analyses and personal responses.
- SLO 3: Letters courses will enable students to write clearly and effectively. Writing shall be assessed for correctness, clarity, and conciseness.

Course Text:

Sellers, Heather. *The Practice of Creative Writing*. 2nd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2013.

You will need a blank notebook for a writing journal. Additional readings will be provided. Bring *The Practice of Creative Writing* and your notebook to every class meeting.

Course Objectives:

- Decipher and understand the form and content of assigned literary works;
- Comprehend the historical and cultural contexts of assigned literary works;
- Recognize the accomplishments of and issues related to writing by men and women representing diverse cultural traditions;
- Acquire through both individual and collaborative/workshop efforts of a written and oral nature the skills necessary for reading, discussing, analyzing, interpreting, and—most importantly—emulating and writing works of poetry, creative non-fiction, and short fiction;
- Communicate such skills with clarity and precision;
- Develop an appreciation of literary works as expressions of human intellect and imagination, and as representations of diverse human cultures;
- Develop the ability to write literary works that express intellect and imagination and that represent diversity in human cultures;
- Respond to literature through clear and effective communication in both written and oral work;
- Read and respond to texts with both analytical acumen and personal sensibility;
- Appreciate how literary works illuminate enduring human concerns while at the same time representing their particular cultures;
- 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 Assignments, Grading Percentages, and Related Learning Objectives:

• Narrative Poem	2%	DSLO 3; GESLO 3
• Flash Fiction	4%	DSLO 3; GESLO 3
• Lyric Poem	6%	DSLO 3; GESLO 3
• Flash Nonfiction	8%	DSLO 3; GESLO 3
• Prose Poem	10%	DSLO 3; GESLO 3
• Recipe Revision of Poem or Flash	12%	DSLO 3; GESLO 3
• Revised Recipe Poem or Flash	12%	DSLO 3; GESLO 3
• Short Fiction or Nonfiction	12%	DSLO 3; GESLO 3
• Revised Fiction or Nonfiction	12%	DSLO 3; GESLO 3
• Workshops	15%	DSLO 1, 5; GESLO 1, 2, 3
• In-class work and homework	5%	DSLO 1, 2, 5; GESLO 1, 2
• Diagnostic Self Portrait	2%	DSLO 3; GESLO 3

The specifics of each assignment will appear on the assignment sheets.

Grading is A-F: A=excellent; B=above average; C=average; D=below average; and F=failure. A+ ≥ 97%, A ≥ 93%, A- ≥ 90%, B+ ≥ 87%, B ≥ 83%, B- ≥ 80%, C+ ≥ 77%, C ≥ 73%, C- ≥ 70%, D+ ≥ 67%, D ≥ 63%, D- ≥ 60%, and F < 60%.

Creative writing is evaluated according to general standards used to determine how well a piece of writing *works*. These include: 1) Textual and/or technical competence and eloquence. 2) Imaginative risk. 3) Energy and freshness of language. 4) Effective use of metaphor and other forms of figurative language. 5) Clarity and precision of detail. 6) Capacity for mixed feelings and uncertainty. 7) Effective use of grammar, syntax, rhythm; also meter, rhyme, and other elements of poetic style and form. 8) Naturalness and believability. 9) Appropriateness of style to subject. 10) Compelling audience interest.

Late Work:

Unless you make arrangements prior to the class meetings in which they are due and cite compelling reasons, all out-of-class assignments must be turned in when indicated on the schedule, and you will be penalized one-third of a letter grade for each day they are late. I do not accept email submissions. If you miss a day on which your piece is scheduled to be workshopped, there is no guarantee of a make-up day. If you do not post your piece in time for the class to read it before your scheduled workshop, you will lose your turn. No regular in-class work may be made up, including that missed because you were tardy.

San Jose State University Policies and Resources:

For information on university policies, including those for academic integrity, and on university resources, go to <http://www.sjsu.edu/english/comp/policy/index.html> and scroll down to the heading "University Policies."

Schedule:

This schedule is a plan. As Robert Burns put it, "the best laid schemes o' mice an' men [and presumably women] gang aft a-gley," so be prepared for changes. You are responsible for all material covered and assigned in class, whether it appears on the schedule or not. Keep in touch. Complete reading assignments for the class date on which they appear. Print out the reading assignments on Desire 2 Learn (D2L) and bring to class.

- Jan 23 Instructor's expectations and assumptions made plain;
Class introductions.
- Jan 28 **Reading: Introduction: How Creative Writing Works (1-8);**
Focus (11-26);
Reading to Write (27-65);
GROUPS ASSIGNED;
LISTS ASSIGNED.
- Jan 30 **Reading: Building Blocks (66-113);**
NARRATIVE POEM ASSIGNED.
- Feb 4 **Reading: Images (117-171);**
Bring Narrative Poem work-in-progress for in-class work;
LISTS DUE.
- Feb 6 NARRATIVE POEM DUE;
FLASH FICTION ASSIGNED.
- Feb 11 **Reading: Energy (172-204);**
Bring Flash Fiction work-in-progress for in-class work.
- Feb 13 FLASH FICTION DUE;
LYRIC POEM ASSIGNED.
- Feb 18 **Reading: Tension (205-263);**
Bring Lyric Poem work-in-progress for in-class work.
- Feb 20 LYRIC POEM DUE;
FLASH NONFICTION ASSIGNED.
- Feb 25 **Reading: Pattern (264-303);**
Bring Flash Nonfiction work-in-progress for in-class work.
- Feb 27 FLASH NONFICTION DUE;
PROSE POEM ASSIGNED.
- Mar 4 **Reading: Insight (304-358);**
Bring Prose Poem work-in-progress for in-class work.
- Mar 6 **Reading: Revision (359-404);**
PROSE POEM DUE.

- Mar 11 Reading: Recipes (407-452).
- Mar 13 Reading: Selections from *The Practice of Creative Writing*;
RECIPE REVISION OF FLASH OR POEM ASSIGNED.
- Mar 18 Reading: Selections from *The Practice of Creative Writing*;
SHORT STORY OR SHORT NONFICTION ASSIGNED.
- Mar 20 Reading: Workshop Etiquette (D2L);
Workshop Logistics (D2L);
RECIPE REVISION OF FLASH OR POEM DUE FOR WORKSHOP.
- Mar 25-
Mar 29 *SPRING RECESS*
- Apr 1 *CESAR CHAVEZ DAY*
- Apr 3 WRITING WORKSHOP—RECIPE FLASH OR POEM.
- Apr 8 WRITING WORKSHOP—RECIPE FLASH OR POEM.
- Apr 10 WRITING WORKSHOP—RECIPE FLASH OR POEM.
- Apr 15 WRITING WORKSHOP—RECIPE FLASH OR POEM.
- Apr 17 WRITING WORKSHOP—RECIPE FLASH OR POEM;
SHORT STORY OR SHORT NONFICTION DUE.
- Apr 22 Reading: Molly Giles (D2L);
REVISED RECIPE FLASH OR POEM DUE.
- Apr 24 WRITING WORKSHOP—STORY OR NONFICTION.
- Apr 29 WRITING WORKSHOP—STORY OR NONFICTION.
- May 1 WRITING WORKSHOP—STORY OR NONFICTION.
- May 6 WRITING WORKSHOP—STORY OR NONFICTION.
- May 8 WRITING WORKSHOP—STORY OR NONFICTION.
- May 13 POST-SEMESTER DIAGNOSTIC SELF PORTRAIT ASSIGNED;
REVISED SHORT STORY OR SHORT NONFICTION DUE.
- May 16 Final: 12:15-14:30
Post mortem on the semester;
All graded work returned;
POST-SEMESTER DIAGNOSTIC SELF PORTRAIT DUE.