

**San José State University**  
**English Department**  
**Engl 68b: American Lit 1865 to Present, Section 1, Fall 2014**

**Course and Contact Information**

<b>Instructor:</b>	D. Mesher
<b>Office Location:</b>	FOB 220
<b>Telephone:</b>	408-924-4440
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:d.mesher@sjsu.edu">d.mesher@sjsu.edu</a>
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:00-8:30, 4:30-5:00
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30 – 11:45
<b>Classroom:</b>	BBC 128

**Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging**

Course materials such as the syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on my faculty web page at <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/d.mesher> . Written assignments for this class will be submitted on the Canvas learning management system course website (<http://sjsu.instructure.com> ). You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU to learn of any updates.

**Course Description**

This course surveys American literature from the end of the Civil War to the present, introducing students to the major writers and literary movements of the last 150 years, the central themes and concerns expressed, and the historical and cultural background needed to make sense of social and artist developments during that time.

**Student Learning Objectives (SLO)**

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.

Assignments in this course are based on the expectation that students will spend 4-5 hours per week preparing for a 3-unit course.

## Required Texts/Readings

### Textbooks

Volumes C, D, and E of the *Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 8th Edition. Ed. Nina Baym, et al. ISBN: 978-0393913101. Available at the bookstore and at online booksellers.

### Other Texts

In addition to the *Norton Anthology of American Literature*, students should have access to a dictionary, thesaurus, and composition handbook (from English 1A or 100W, for example). That dictionary, incidentally, should not be reserved for essays alone. Students are expected to look up any unfamiliar words encountered in the texts that are not explained in the notes, and to be able to define them when called upon to do so in class.

### Library Liaison

Toby Matoush, toby.matoush@sjsu.edu , 408-808-2096

## Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

**Preparation and Participation:** Students should come to class having read the day's assignment and prepared to discuss it. Opportunities for such contributions may take the form of small-group or full-class discussions; in either situation, individual students may be called upon by the instructor to answer a question, interpret a passage, or express an opinion.

**Quizzes:** In order to ensure that you get credit for the hard work you do in reading and reflecting on the works assigned for this course, there will be frequent quizzes (on average, one every two or three class meetings). I think of quizzes as one of the best ways for you to measure how carefully you are reading the texts, and how much of that reading you retain (at least for a day or so). The quizzes will cover significant information from that day's reading assignment, though that information may not be the sort readily accessible to you in plot summaries, outlines, or synopses, but only through personally experiencing the text for yourself. If you read well ahead of the assigned schedule, be sure to review your notes and come to class with a fresh and detailed impression of the works. A pattern of doing poorly on these quizzes should be taken as an indication that you are not doing the reading, or not reading attentively enough, or not reading with the care and analysis necessary to be successful as an English major and devotee of literature.

**Written Work:** There will be two explication assignments (500 words and counting 10% of the final mark each), a midterm exam counting 15%, a final examination counting 25%, and an essay counting 20%;

students may choose to revise and resubmit their essays within two weeks, and the original and revised grades will be averaged. There will also be frequent quizzes, which will help determine the remaining 20%, along with participation in class discussions, the timely completion of readings and written work, and other short assignments. Grading will be on a 100-point scale for each assignment. For the final mark, 100-97 will be an A+, 96-94 an A, 93-90 an A-, 89-87 a B+, 86-84 a B, 83-80 a B-, 79-77 a C+, 76-74 a C, 73-70 a C-, and so on.

### **Assignments and Grading**

1. Class participation, quizzes, other short assignments, and timely completion of work: 20%
2. Explication assignments (500 words each): 10% x 2 = 20%
3. Midterm exam: 15%
4. Essay (1500 words; may be revised and resubmitted): 20%
5. Final exam: 25%

### **English Department Statements on Grading**

In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. Grades issued will represent a full range of student performance and will adhere to the following SJSU academic standards of assessment:

The “**A**” essay will be well organized and well developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will show the student’s ability to use language effectively and construct sentences distinguished by syntactic complexity and variety. Such essays will be essentially free of grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors.

The “**B**” essay will demonstrate competence in the same categories as the “**A**” essay. The chief difference is that the “**B**” essay will show some descriptably slight weaknesses in one of those categories. It may slight one of the assigned tasks, show less facility of expression, or contain some minor grammatical, mechanical, or usage flaws.

The “**C**” essay will complete all tasks set by the assignment, but show weakness in fundamentals (usually development), with barely enough specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. The sentence construction may be less mature, and the use of language less effective and correct than the “**B**” essay.

The “**D**” essay will neglect one of the assigned tasks and be noticeably superficial in its treatment of the assignment—that is, too simplistic or short. The essay may reveal some problems in development, with insufficient specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. It will contain grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The “**F**” essay will demonstrate a striking underdevelopment of ideas and insufficient or unfocused organization. It will contain serious grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the 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 this course, as in all English Department courses, the instructor will comment on and grade the quality of writing (grammar, organization, clarity, specificity, etc.) 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.

**Submission of written work:** The two explication assignments and the essay must be double-spaced (and without a cover page), otherwise follow standard MLA format (except that your name should not appear anywhere), and be submitted online only, through the course Canvas page (at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>), by the beginning of class on the days they are due. Work should be submitted in RTF (Rich Text Format), though Microsoft Word files are also acceptable. Other formats should not be submitted, including PDF and, in particular, Apple's iWork Pages format. Work submitted via Canvas is automatically sent to Turnitin.com, as well, to check for plagiarism. Late work will only be accepted by prior arrangement. Do not email or leave at my office any work for this class, unless I specifically ask you to do so; and please do not leave email or other messages for me on Canvas. Corrected work will be returned online (in your Canvas account) in PDF format. Please keep a copy of all work submitted on disk, and retain all graded work returned until the end of the semester; English majors should save the graded copies of their essays in all department classes, since these will be required for the portfolio in their senior seminar. Students should anticipate a significant delay in the return of late work. Please note that many people find it harder to proofread work on a computer screen than in printed form and, if that is true in your case, you may want to print out your final draft and make corrections to that, before submitting the finished file online.

NOTE that [University policy F69-24](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F69-24.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F69-24.pdf> states that "Students should attend all meetings of their classes, not only because they are responsible for material discussed therein, but because active participation is frequently essential to insure maximum benefit for all members of the class. Attendance per se shall not be used as a criterion for grading."

## **Classroom Protocol**

Please treat everyone – classmates, guests, and even the instructor – with respect and courtesy at all times, and comport yourself accordingly, in the classroom, and while entering or leaving it. During class, electronic devices, including phones, tablets, and laptops, may only be used for purposes related to classwork at that moment, such as note-taking; please remember that University policy recognizes any unauthorized use of a cell phone or other technological device during an examination as grounds for failing the examination. Even during breaks, please refrain from eating in the classroom, and avoid other activities and behavior that might distract or upset others.

## **University Policies**

### **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> . Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the [Academic Calendars webpage](http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/) at [http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic\\_calendars/](http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/) . 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/> .

## **Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material**

[University Policy S12-7](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf), <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf>, requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course and the following items to be included in the syllabus:

- “Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.”
  - It is suggested that the greensheet include the instructor's process for granting permission, whether in writing or orally and whether for the whole semester or on a class by class basis.
  - In classes where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests should be obtained as well.
- “Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.”

In this course, prior consent by the instructor and other students must be obtained before any audio or video is made, and use of that recording must be limited by whatever restrictions are requested by those recorded.

## **Academic integrity**

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf> 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/>.

## **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](http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf) at [http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD\\_1997-03.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf) requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Accessible Education Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/aec) (AEC) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aec> to establish a record of their disability.

## **Accommodation to Students' Religious Holidays**

San José State University shall provide accommodation on any graded class work or activities for students wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays before the add deadline at the start of each semester. If such holidays occur before the add deadline, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed. See [University Policy S14-7](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf>.

## Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the [Academic Success Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/> located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

## SJSU Peer Connections

Peer Connections, a campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring, strives to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. You are encouraged to take advantage of their services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals.

In addition to offering small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses, consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics including preparing for the Writing Skills Test (WST), improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving your first semester at SJSU, and other related topics. A computer lab and study space are also available for student use in Room 600 of Student Services Center (SSC).

Peer Connections is located in three locations: SSC, Room 600 (10th Street Garage on the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and San Fernando Street), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. Visit [Peer Connections website](http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu) at <http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu> for more information.

## SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the [Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook. (Note: You need to



have a QR Reader to scan this code.)

## SJSU Counseling Services (Optional)

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic

issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit [Counseling Services website](http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling> .

## Engl 68b: American Lit since 1865, Fall 2014—Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to modification. If you miss class, please check for changes on the class web page at [www.sjsu.edu/people/d.mesher](http://www.sjsu.edu/people/d.mesher). A fiction explication will be due on September 11th, a poetry explication on October 30th, and the essay on November 18th; the midterm exam will take place on October 14th, and the final exam will take place on December 16th.

August	26	Tuesday	Introduction
	28	Thursday	Twain, C121-5; Harte, C353-60; Bierce, C399-405; Garland C737-46
September	2	Tuesday	James, C421-459
	4	Thursday	Jewett, C526-33; Freeman, C653-72
	9	Tuesday	Chopin, C561-91
	11	Thursday	<b>Fiction Explication Due;</b> Chopin, C592-622
	16	Tuesday	Chopin, C622-52
	18	Thursday	Hopkins, C728-735; Gilman, C792-804
	23	Tuesday	Crane, C946-89
	25	Thursday	<b>No class;</b> Winnemucca, C508-17; Oskison, 1037-41; Eastman, C1127-29
	30	Tuesday	Washington, C675-97; Du Bois, C885-901
October	2	Thursday	Chesnutt, C699-728
	7	Tuesday	Lazarus, C522-5; Cahan, C748-890
	9	Thursday	Sui Sin Far, C865-73; Wharton, C828-36; London, C1047-58
	14	Tuesday	<b>Midterm</b>
	16	Thursday	Robinson, D41-3; A. Lowell, D192-7; Williams, D304-13; Pound, D316-20; HD, D352-57
	21	Tuesday	Frost, D231-50; Stevens, D283-95
	23	Thursday	Eliot, D368-72; Cummings, D636-46; Hughes, D871-880; Cullen, D893-7
	28	Tuesday	Fitzgerald, D659-689
	30	Thursday	<b>Poetry Explication Due;</b> Hurston, D530-49; Wright, D899-907
November	4	Tuesday	Faulkner, D794-812; Hemingway, D826-42
	6	Thursday	Roethke, E42-50; Bishop, E80-83; R. Lowell, E316-322; Brooks, 325-6; Wilbur, 345-7
	11	Tuesday	<b>No Class: Veterans Day</b>
	13	Thursday	Williams, E93-122
	18	Tuesday	<b>Essay Due;</b> Williams, E122-55
	20	Thursday	Miller, E238-68
	25	Tuesday	Miller, E268-303
	27	Thursday	<b>No Class: Thanksgiving</b>
December	2	Tuesday	Cheever, E157-65; Malamud, E194-206; O'Connor, E437-44
	4	Thursday	Ginsberg, E500-3; Rich, E568-73; Snyder, E598-9; Plath, E625-31; Komunyakaa, E1044-9
	9	Tuesday	Tan, 1121-30 ; Cisneros, E1131-9; Lahiri, E1223-39; Díaz, E1240-8
	16	Tuesday	<b>Final Exam, 9:45-12:00</b>