

San José State University
Department of English and Comparative Literature
English 71, *Introduction to Creative Writing*,
Section 02 Spring 2014

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Office Hours:	Tuesdays 3-4pm; Thursdays 10:30-11:00; appt.
Class Days/Time:	T/Th 12-1:15pm
Classroom:	BBC 122
GE Category:	Letters area of Humanities & the Arts

Faculty Web Page and Email

Copies of the course materials such as the syllabus, major assignment handouts, etc. may be found on my faculty web page at <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/sally.ashton> or accessible through the Quick Links>Faculty Web Page links on the SJSU home page. You are responsible for regularly checking your sjsu email account.

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. Also note that this course is an elective in the English major and Creative Writing minor. It is a pre-requisite for taking upper division Creative Writing workshops.

In this course, we will read, discuss, and write poetry, creative non-fiction and short fiction. The course will be taught using a combination of reading, discussion, written responses, and writing workshops. In the discussion, contemporary and historical published works will be closely read and analyzed. In the writing workshops, creative work written by class members will be analyzed and critiqued for revision. Written responses will display analytical acumen, personal sensibility, and serious engagement with the text.

Prerequisites: I recommend at *minimum* the **completion of English Composition 1A** or equivalent. Excellent composition skills are the basis for any Creative Writing.

Departmental Student Learning Objectives

In the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will demonstrate the ability to: (SLO's)

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.

English 71 Course Goals:

Students enrolled in Introduction to Creative Writing will learn to:

- 1) Decipher and understand the form and content of assigned literary works;
- 2) Comprehend the historical and cultural contexts of assigned literary works;
- 3) Recognize the accomplishments of and issues related to writing by men and women representing diverse cultural traditions;
- 4) 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 nonfiction, and short fiction;
- 5) Communicate such skills with clarity and precision;
- 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 also representing matters specific to a particular culture;
- 11) Write works of poetry, creative nonfiction, and short fiction that are of interest and value to the writer, to other students in the course, and to a diverse reading audience.

Required Texts/Readings: ALL texts and materials listed are required for class participation. BRING THEM to each class.

Textbook

- *Imaginative Writing*. Burroway, Janet; ISBN 13: 978-0-205-75035-1
- Course Reader (purchased from Maple Press *after* first class)

Other equipment / material requirements required

- 1 Mead Composition Book, College Ruled. (Marble) This course ONLY
- 1 double-pocket folder: This course ONLY
- Stapler: **All work stapled before class**

- Regular internet access
- The ability to print 6 copies of assignments for workshop, often 24pages/workshop.

Classroom Protocol

Come to class on time; don't check or send texts while in class; use common sense and collegial behavior. College students are adults; behave like one. Please do not eat in class.

Assignments and Grading Policy

WRITING AND WORKSHOP Each student will revise and submit the following new writing. This includes bringing copies for workshop and participating *in* workshop. (SLO #3, 4)

Self-Portrait Diagnostic Incoming, outgoing. (2)

Creative Nonfiction: Memoir piece (approximately 4 linked vignettes)

Short-short (<500 words)

Setting Sketch (2 pages)

Fiction: Short story (approximately 4 pages, 1-2 scenes)

Character Sketch (2 pages)

Conversion piece (2 pages)

Poetry: 3 poems (English Sonnet; Ghazal; Free Verse). Poems to be presented in a final, revised Portfolio at the end of the semester with a 2 page Reflection.

Daily Reading: Selections chosen from our texts, visiting authors, and selected outside material are required not only for your success in this class, but your success as a writer.

Regular written responses are required. (SLO # 1, 2, 5)

Journal: You are required to keep a well-organized journal/notebook in which you will do assigned creative writing activities inside and outside class. You will also record your responses to the assigned readings here. You are urged to write down quotes from your readings that you may want to share with your classmates. You can also use your journal to develop drafts of new material or simply to react to what is working in your imagination as you respond to ideas and work presented by others in the course. Your notebook is due as indicated on the syllabus. **You will be graded on the quality and quantity of your entries.** (SLO #1, 2, 3, 5)

2 Literary Event Response Papers: You must attend two literary events this semester on or off campus. Write a 1-2 page paper that focuses on your personal response to the event: What did you like and why? What did you learn? What surprised you and why? What did you find interesting and why? What questions did it raise? Would you attend a similar event again? Why or why not? Etc. At the top left of your paper list the title of the event, and the day, time and location. (SLO 1, 3, 5) For information about literary events see: (SLO # 3, 5)

Active Classroom Participation: see definition at "Grading" (SLO #1, 2, 5)

Poetry Reading: Each student will give an in-class performance/reading from their final poetry packet at the end of the semester. (SLO 1, 2)

RESOURCES FOR LITERARY EVENT SCHEDULES:

- www.litart.org (Center for Literary Arts at SJSU)
- <http://www.pcsj.org/calendar.html> (Poetry Center San Jose)
- <http://www.sjsu.edu/english/events> (English Department Events listed)
- <http://www.livesv.com/categories/index/6/0/LITERATURE> Bay Area Literary Events
- <http://poetryflash.org/> Northern CA literary events including the Bay Area

Assignment Format

All prose assignments handed in (except the journal/notebook) should be **typed 12 pt. font and double-spaced with page numbers**. Poetry is single spaced. Multi-page assignments must be **stapled**. Your name, my name, the assignment title, and the date *single-spaced* should be included at the top Left of the first page(MLA format). Failure to adhere to these simple regulations will damage your grade in the course. Please buy a stapler. (LO 3, 5)

Class Workshop Procedures: For each unit (poetry, fiction, nonfiction) the class will divide into groups of approximately five students each. These will serve as your workshop groups. Your workshop group will consist of different students each unit, so you will get to read work by all of your classmates. Every time you turn in a piece of your work, you will bring enough copies for everyone in your workshop group *and* your teacher *and* yourself (six copies, usually). We will critique the pieces at home (writing directly on the manuscripts) and discuss them in workshop groups during the following class period. At the end of the discussion, you will get to keep the marked-up copies of your work. I have **zero tolerance** for late arrival to Workshop: you will be asked to leave. (LO 1)

Extra Credit Attending ONE additional approved author reading with written response. (LO 2; diversity) Extra credit will *not* change a grade from failing to passing. Counts as one quiz.

Grading:

Grades will be based on the quality and quantity of writing you do as well as the quality and constructiveness of the criticism offered during the workshops.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT GRADING STATEMENT: In English Department courses, instructors comment on and grade the quality of writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. *All* your writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.

Grades given conform to the English Department and university grading policy. The Department of English is committed 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.

Creative writing, though subject to the instructor's individual subjectivity, can be 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.

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

- Fulfill all assignment requirements
- Demonstrate complex, unique and/or insightful approach
- Function well as a whole
- Demonstrate engaging voice
- Incorporate strong word choices
- Incorporate, where appropriate, striking imagery
- Lack clichéd or over-used language
- Incorporate unusual/unique associations that fit the tone of the piece
- Lack spelling and punctuation errors, typos, etc.

- B: Creative writing that receives a “B” is likely to:
- Fulfill the assignment requirements
 - Demonstrate insightful approach
 - 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:
- Meet 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 and/or poor understanding of the assignment

F: No response.

(Note: Graded assignments will be based on this criteria, which will be discussed in class. All assignments, graded and non-graded, will receive written feedback from instructor based on this criteria, as applicable.)

Final grades in this section will be the product of the following factors based on a 4pt scale where 4=A:

- Fiction* 20%
 - Poetry* 20%
 - Non-fiction* 20%
 - Journal 20%
 - Class participation*, Quizzes, Conference,** 20%
- Poetry Reading, Self-Portraits, and Event Papers
- *Full participation in scheduled Workshop effects *BOTH* genre grade *and* participation grade;

Active Participation equates to engaging in class discussion, asking questions, and completing work done outside of class, including homework, reader responses, and close reading. In-class exercises and quizzes also make up the participation grade.

- A –fully engaged; provides regular and helpful questions and comments
- B –active listening; occasional, pertinent questions and comments
- C –attentiveness questionable, little questions or comments posed (cont’d)
- D –unprepared for class, disengaged
- F –regularly absent, both physically and mentally

**A minimum of one meeting in my office, scheduled by YOU, is required during the semester before the last full week of classes. (see below)

GOOD teacher/BAD teacher: Attendance and Classroom Policies

Meet with Me! I'm hanging out in my office hours just for YOU! Try and come in throughout the semester to discuss your prose and poetry. An appointment is recommended even during office hours so you don't have to wait around. Take advantage of some one-on-one time.

Late Work. Late work receives a reduction of 1 grade if turned in at the next class session. Anything later will be graded an "F." **If** the paper is turned in after the class period on the assigned due date, the essay will be graded down half a letter grade. **If** you are sick or have to miss class for any other reason on the day something is due, arrange to have a classmate turn it in if you do not want a grade reduction. **For** extenuating circumstances, I must be contacted *before* the due date to consider an extension.

No Work by Email. No work in my mailbox. No exceptions. I do not accept work by email or in my campus mailbox. If you need to miss a class session, ask a classmate to turn in your classwork and to collect handouts and assignments for you. Otherwise, turn in the paper as "late" next class session.

Your Responsibility If You're Absent. If you miss class, contact a classmate to get notes, assignments, etc. It is your responsibility to figure out what's going on and to show up prepared the next class session. Please do not ask me to do extra things for you if you choose not to come to class.

Always bring your journal and required texts to class. These are required for participation. If you're not prepared to contribute to the class, be prepared to be asked to leave for the day.

Homework format: (this includes all written work *outside* the Journal)

- * All work must be typed, double spaced
- * Use a 12-point Times Roman font
- * Use standard MLA essay heading format.
- * Papers must be single-sided for the teacher (but copies for classmates for peer revision may be double-sided)
- * Staple your papers BEFORE class. I do not accept unstapled work.(no paper clips, bent corners)

Be Fully Present No electronic devices are to be on/used/visible during class.

Infractions will result in being dismissed from class.

Student Technology Resources (Optional)

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and 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. More information found here <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/>

Peer Connections (Optional)

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) and the Peer Mentor Program have merged to become Peer Connections. Peer Connections is the new campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring. Our staff is here to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. Students are encouraged to take advantage of our 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. See the Peer Connections website for more information <http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/>

SJSU Writing Center (Optional)

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The [Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/) is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/>.

Introduction to Creative Writing
English 71 Section 1
Fall 2013 Course Schedule
 Sound & Sense, Sense & Syntax

The schedule is subject to change with advance notice in class and follow-up email.
 Check it.

Abbreviations used in Schedule:

“IW”: *Imaginative Writing*; “CR”: course reader

BRING assigned texts and Journal to EVERY class.

Date	Homework Readings, Assignments DUE this date	Topics and Considerations Discussed in Class this date
Th 1/23	Purchase all materials: Texts; Required Journal; Pocket Folder EMAIL me TONIGHT: sashton1a@gmail.com	Introduction to the course Sound & Sense, Sense & Syntax Review Syllabus Questionnaire Bios, 3X5
Tues 1/28	Purchase Course Booklet from Maple Press, 481 E. San Carlos AND all other required materials: BRING TO CLASS. 3X5 picture ID card Reading: IW Chapter 1 pp. 1-12	IMAGE Assign Daily lines : Observations using 5 senses, 10-13 syllables. In class writing p. 12 1.6; p. 13 Image Assign “Self Portrait” Journal instructions
Th 1/30	Due: Self Portrait Due , 2 copies per assigned format. Reading: IW Chapter 2 pp. 13-21 and Dillard pp 25-26 Journal: Daily lines per 1/28	IMAGE WORKSHOP Journal work Reading discussion, Journal writing, small group work.
Tues 2/4	Reading: IW pp. 88-100 and Hampl pp. 176-179 Journal: Daily lines as per 8/27 and IW p.111 Try This 4.11 “Humiliation”	CHARACTER : Chapter 4 Conflict and Desire QUIZ Assign Character Sketch In-Class Assign OVERHEARD LINES
Wed 2/5	LITERARY EVENT: Christina Garcia, Fiction	7pm reading and book signing MLK Rm 225/229

Date	Homework Readings, Assignments DUE this date	Topics and Considerations Discussed in Class this date
Th 2/6	LITERARY EVENT: Christina Garcia, Fiction	1pm Conversation MLK Rm 225/229
Th 2/6	DUE: Character Sketch draft, 5 copies Reading: IW Marquez pp. 114-118 and p. 209 The Workshop Journal: Daily Lines : overheard line of dialog;	CHARACTER: Conflict & Desire, contd. Workshop JOURNAL : Self-check Grade
Tu 2/11	Due: Character Sketch final copy, stapled Reading: IW pp.132-144 and Didion p.144-146 Journal: p. 135 (5.1) drawn on separate sheet and stapled in = map <u>and</u> writing and Daily Lines as 2/6	SETTING: Chapter 5 Discuss Reading Responses, Author Event requirements. 5.4 Assign: Setting Daily Lines Assign Setting: 5.2
Th 2/13	Due: Setting draft , 5 copies Reading: IW Carter pp. 154-155 Journal: Daily Lines, Sensory observations re: your setting RR: Carter	SETTING: Workshop
Tu 2/18	Due: Setting , final copy, stapled. Reading: IW pp. 167-176 and Hemingway pp. 283-284 RR Hemingway and Daily Lines as 2/13	STORY: Chapter 6 Character, plot, setting Assign Short-Short (CR) Komunyakaa 158; Powell links
Wed 2/19	LITERARY EVENT: Dean Powell, Poetry	7pm reading and book signing MLK Rm 225/229
Th 2/20	Due: Short-short draft / 2 copies only Reading: CR E.E. Miller; IW Hass 185; Komunyakaa 158; Daniel 169; French 171; Journal: RR	STORY Flash Workshop Assign daily lines with no Adjectives, adverbs, but Strong Verbs(no counting) Nick Flynn
Tu 2/25	Due: Short-short , final copy Reading: IW pp. 230- 236(setting) and CR Nick Flynn Journal: IW p. 230 “Warm-up:” Daily Lines as per 2/25 RR: Flynn	CREATIVE NONFICTION: Chapter 8 Memoir and Personal Essay 8.2 7.1 “F, N, P” Assign Memoir: one vignette scene by 3/4

Date	Homework Readings, Assignments DUE this date	Topics and Considerations Discussed in Class this date
Th 2/27	NO CLASS: <i>AWP Convention</i>	
Tues 3/4	Due: Journal; and Vignette Scene, typed. Reading: IW pp. 196-202 and 106-110 Yamanaka Journal: RR: Yamanaka/Flynn	DEVELOPMENT: Chapter 7 Quiz 2 Craft Elements
Th 3/6	Reading: IW pp.236-241 and Sedaris pp. 26-30; Atwood 250-252 Journal: Choose one: 8.3 or 8.4 RR Sedaris/Atwood typed, turned in	CREATIVE NONFICTION-Fact & Truth In-class writing
Tues 3/11	Due: Memoir draft, 2 copies: 1 copy stapled to 2 blank sheets. Reading: IW 268-269; CR Lish	Peer Review/ Flash Workshop 7.11 Scene and Summary
Th 3/13	Due: Edited draft; one copy stapled on top of Tuesday's flash reviewed and annotated piece: Do all the following: 7.10 and 7.11 and 7.14 on flash draft. Reading: IW pp. 204-205 revision and CR McDuffie Journal: Journal: IW pp. 206-207; 7.9 and RR McDuffie	CREATIVE NONFICTION- Techniques Small group work Handout: Alameddine/Miller?
Tues 3/18	No Class, but.... Have you scheduled your appt yet?	Class cancelled to comp for 2 required out of class author events.
Wed 3/19	LITERARY EVENT: Cathleen Miller, Non-fiction	Noon reading and book signing MLK Rm 225/229
Th 3/20	Due: Memoir final with self-critique attached; separate stack flash drafts with revisions. Reading: IW pp. 264-268 and Handout Alameddine Journal: IW p. 264 Warm up RR Alameddine/Miller	FICTION Story and plot "The emotions of fiction are autobiographical but the facts never are." --Richard Yates In class writing Assign Short story
3/24- 3/28	SPRING BREAK!	

Date	Homework Readings, Assignments DUE this date	Topics and Considerations Discussed in Class this date
Tues 4/1	Due: First Literary Event Paper Reading: IW pp. 53-61 and McGuane pp. 69-76 Journal: RR McGuane and 3.13	VOICE: Chapter 3 Point of view: first and third limited. Assign conversion
Wed 4/2	LITERARY EVENT: Steinbeck Fellows	Reading 7 PM, MLK 225.
Th 4/3	Reading: IW pp. 268-270 and CR E.L. Doctorow, "Edgemont Drive" RR Doctorow and p. 291 "Accomplishing a draft"	FICTION Backstory and flashback In class writing
Tues 4/8	Due: Conversion , 2 pages and Short Story Draft 1 , 6 copies: My copy mark which page to critique. Before you Compose: Reading: IW Wolff pp. 284-287 AND Journal: RR. Wolff	FICTION- Scene and Summary Elements of literary prose review Read from journal "Accomplishing a draft" 9.9 Iambic Pentameter
Tues 4/8	LITERARY EVENT: Rabih Alameddine, Fiction	7pm reading and book signing MLK Rm 225/229
Th 4/10	Reading: IW 207-211 and Careful reading and in-line written critique of each of small group's drafts. Journal: 2 lines of iambic Pentameter	FICTION Workshop; Editing Quiz 3 Elements of Fiction
Tues 4/15	Due: Short Story with self-critique attached Reading: IW pp. 306-308 and Stern p. 311 Typed and handed in: IW p. 311 "Try this" A replacement poem.	POETRY INTRODUCTION Video/ In class writing/ Neruda Density and Intensity Iambic Pentameter
Th 4/17	Reading: IW 295-298 and CR "Meter/Scansion" Addonizio and CR poems Roethke and Jarman Journal: Daily lines- Convert 5 former daily lines to iambic pentameter	METRICS AND SCANSION Beyond iambic pentameter A dance: breaking, leaping, turning
Tues 4/22	Reading: CR Sonnet pages, description and poems. Journal: 4 lines in iambic pentameter, one each ending on bed, light, head, night RR: favorite Sonnet	SONNET In-class exercise Assign Sonnet ; review poetry workshop and portfolio protocol.

Date	Homework Readings, Assignments DUE this date	Topics and Considerations Discussed in Class this date
Wed 4/23	LITERARY EVENT: Joy Harjo, poetry and memoir	7pm reading and book signing MLK Rm 225/229
Th 4/24	Due: Sonnet, 6 copies	Workshop Sonnet Homonyms/homophones Daily lines: 5 pairs of lines, each pair ending in a different homophone.
Tues 4/29	Reading: IW 302-305 & CR Ghazal Journal: Daily Lines per 11/14 RR: Which ghazal do you admire the most and why?	GHAZAL Assign Ghazal & Weekend Prompts Leaping; image vs. idea Discuss Weekend Prompts
Th 5/1	Due: Ghazal, 6 copies Journal: Daily Lines with a LEAP, can use earlier lines. (5 total)	Workshop Ghazal
Tues 5/6	Reading: IW pp. 301-302 and 309-310 and IW Poems: Trowbridge p. 80; Oles p. 119; Kooser 122; McHugh 156; Kumin 187; Lee 188. Journal: RR Choose your favorite poem above and describe why. Discuss the poem in terms of linebreak, leap, turn, image, sound art.	FREE VERSE- The poetic line 10.9 Revision of Self-Portrait. Assign Free Verse Poem Erasure
Thurs 5/8	Free Verse Poem, 6 copies Reading: IW pp. 211-218 Journal: Type out fave poem 12/3. Save. Separate into sentences. Save. Break poem into 3 word lines. Save. Break poem into lines of 10-13 syllables. Save. Staple doc into your journal. RR: Read all 4 versions aloud. Discuss the effect of all 4 forms of line break. Which works best?	Revision Revising Poetry Workshop free verse Discuss Final Poetry Packet format Handout: Self-Portrait originals
Tues 5/13	LAST DAY OF CLASS Due: JOURNAL Literary Event Paper #2 Any extra credit; Revision of "Self Portrait"	Quiz: Poetry Forms Workshop: Poetry Drafts/Reading
	FINAL: TBA. Find on mysjsu Due: Revised Poetry Packet with 2 page reflection. Required presentation.	YOU, on time. Do not be late. Final period ends when presentations are complete.

Student Technology Resources (Optional)

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and 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 digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

SJSU Writing Center (Optional)



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): <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.

SJSU Peer Connections (Optional)

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 10th 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.

ENGL 71: Introduction to Creative Writing
WRITING DIAGNOSTIC PROMPT

Instructions:

Read the writing sample directions below:

1. Read the poem "Self-Portrait" by Adam Zagajewski (aloud if possible).
2. Notice the details included in the poem. Make a list of them.
3. Notice the order and organization of details; how they are arranged in the text.
4. Write a poem or a 250-500 word prose piece that is your self-portrait, modeled on the Adam Zagajewski poem. Select specific details for your self-portrait as Zagajewski has done, arranging them in such a way as to reveal interesting things about yourself.
5. Save your response in a Word file labeled "Your Name: Pre-Course Writing Sample."
6. Put your student number on the top left-hand corner of the page. **DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THE PAGE CONTAINING THE TEXT OF YOUR SELF-PORTRAIT.**
7. Print 2 copies.
8. Attach a cover sheet to your self-portrait assignment containing your name, SJSU ID number, date, and the section number of the course.

DUE: _____ (Must be typed using a readable font, such as Times New Roman)

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 philosopher—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.

—Adam Zagajewski (translated by Clare Cavanagh)