

San José State University
Department of English & Comparative Literature
English 297, Comprehensives, Fall 2017

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Office Hours:	M 1:00-3:00 & by appointment
Class Days/Time:	M 7:00-9:45
Classroom:	BBC 221

MYSJSU Messaging

You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU (or other communication system as indicated by the instructor).

Course Description

This is not a typical lit seminar on a defined or delimited topic with the usual assignments. It is conceived more like a workshop and aims to offer general guidelines as well as hands on practice to help you prepare for the comprehensive MA exams. Our main goal therefore will be to understand how each part of the exam is set up, what is expected, and how best to study. Basic information about the MA exams can be found on the English department website: <http://www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/ma/macomps.html>

Our main focus will be on learning to analyze literary texts in context. This will include (a) honing close reading and textual analysis skills, (b) using appropriate literary/critical/theoretical terminology, and (c) connecting the text to the historical/literary context.

We will also examine sample exam questions and critique answers to get a clearer understanding of what to expect, how to plan/prepare, and how to present your response. While we will of course review major periods, movements, authors, themes, theoretical approaches and key concepts in class, intensive independent study outside of class is absolutely essential for gaining the kind of in depth knowledge necessary to do well on the exams. In other words, you should not expect to pass the exams simply because you take this course!

MA Exam Dates for Fall 2017:

Consecutive Saturdays, **November 4th (part 1) and November 11th (Part 2).**

Recommended Texts (supplement to the reading list of primary texts/authors)

1. The Norton Anthologies (British Lit, American Lit, Theory & Criticism): Focus particularly on intros to periods/literary movements/authors
2. Turco, Lewis Putnam. *The Book of Forms: A Handbook of Poetics* (for poetry analysis required in the Part 1 exam, section 3)

Assignments:

You will be assigned group oral presentations as well as written work (both in and out of class) on which you will get plenty of feedback.

Course Number / Title, Semester, Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	8/28	<p>Introduction to course</p> <p>The MA exam http://www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/ma/macomps.html</p> <p>Text and Context: close reading/analysis, literary terminology, historical/literary context.</p> <p>Part 1: Chronological orientation, close reading of poetry; mostly Brit and early American 3 sections: classical/medieval/early mod, 17th and 18th centuries, close reading/poetry</p> <p>Part 2: Genre emphasis, ability to use literary theory 3 sections – poetry Brit/American, fiction/drama Brit/American, World lit.</p> <p>Form Groups and Sign up for presentations</p> <p>Homework: Prepare your reading list Print and look over the sample exams http://www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/ma/macomps_samples.html</p>
2		Labor Day No class

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
3	9/11	<p>Part 2 – Poetry</p> <p>Group Presentation: Romantics/Transcendentalists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Overview of period/lit movements ➤ Major poets ➤ Main themes ➤ Key concepts <p>Workshop: Analyze sample response Close reading poetry analysis Respond to sample question</p>
4	9/18	<p>Part 2 -- Poetry</p> <p>Group Presentation: Victorian through Modern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Overview of period/lit movements ➤ Major poets ➤ Main themes ➤ Key concepts <p>Workshop: Close reading poetry analysis Respond to sample question</p>
5	9/25	<p>Part 2: Fiction</p> <p>Group Presentation: (Gothic) Realism, Naturalism, Modernism (19th century-early 20th century)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Overview of period/lit movements ➤ Major authors ➤ Main themes ➤ Key concepts <p>Workshop: Analyze sample response Respond to sample question</p>
6	10/2	<p>Part 2: World Lit</p> <p>Group Presentation: Postmodernism, (Post)colonialism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Overview of period/lit movements ➤ Major authors ➤ Main themes ➤ Key concepts

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		Workshop: Analyze sample response Respond to sample question Overview of Part 2
7	10/9	Part 1 Guest Lecture: Professor Nancy Stork Beowulf, Sir Gawain & the Green Knight, Chaucer Group Presentation: Classical, Medieval, Early Modern <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Overview of period/lit movements (poetry, drama, epic) ➤ Major authors ➤ Main themes ➤ Key concepts Workshop: Respond to sample response
8	10/16	Part 1 Group Presentation: 17th-18 th C, early American <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Overview of period/lit movements ➤ Major authors ➤ Main themes ➤ Key concepts Workshop: Analyze sample response Respond to sample question
9	10/23	Part 1 Guest Presentation: Professor Adreinne Eastwood Close Reading of Poetry
10	10/30	Final Review for Part 1
11	11/6	Final Review for Part 2