

San José State University
Department of English and Comparative Literature
English 135-01: Writing Nonfiction
Spring 2018

Instructor: Dr. Tom Moriarty
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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursdays 2:00-2:45, and by appointment
Class Days/Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:00PM – 4:15PM
Classroom: Sweeney 435
Prerequisites: English 100W

Copies of all course materials, such as the syllabus, major assignment handouts, readings, and Powerpoints may be found on Canvas.

Course Description

This course is a creative writing workshop course in nonfiction. In this class, you will learn how to write nonfiction stories from initial proposals to final polished drafts (and public readings). The key to your success in this workshop, and as a writer in general, is serious and constant work. So plan to be part of a “community of writers” this semester, constantly reading, writing, revising, and giving extensive feedback to other writers throughout the semester.

Department Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)

As stipulated by the English and Comparative Literature Department’s Curriculum Committee, students who earn a B.A. from this department 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
- show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature
- write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject
- develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively
- articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts.

Pedagogical Approach

This course operates as a seminar/workshop, with lotsa discussion and not too much lecture. You are expected to come to class prepared to participate every single day.

Additional Information available online

You are responsible for reading the following information online at <http://www.sjsu.edu/english/comp/policy/index.html>

- Course guidelines
- Academic policies (academic integrity, plagiarism, ADA and AEC policies)
- Estimation of Per-Unit Student Workload
- Recording policies
- Adding and dropping classes

Required Texts/Materials

REED MAGAZINE (#150)

Printouts and photocopies throughout the semester.

Classroom Protocol

Students are expected to arrive on time and be ready to work at the beginning of class. Please turn off your cellphones during class.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Because this is a 4-unit course, students can expect to spend a minimum of twelve hours per week preparing for and attending classes and completing course assignments. This course will have integrated into the syllabus the following 1-unit enhancement: extensive self-directed reading outside of class and consideration of that reading through a series of short blog posts.

One Writing project	100 pts.
Another Writing project	200 pts.
A Third Writing project	250 pts.
Workshop participation, which includes written comments on drafts and in-class discussions of your colleagues' work and assigned readings	200 pts.
Public (and Semi-Public) Readings of Your Work	100 pts.
Writers Reading for Craft Posts	100 pts.
Queries and Quizzes	50 pts.

Projects

You will submit about 9,000-10,000 words of polished, revised prose this semester. All three of your projects should be at least 2,000 words long, with some of them being longer so you can reach your 9,000-word minimum requirement. Two of the three projects must include some sort of research, and only one may be written solely from personal experience. All of the projects may be written in first, second, or third person, or a combination of points of view. You must do projects in at least two different genres (i.e. profile, biography, opinion, essay, narrative, etc.). And, you are welcome to do projects on your own or with one or two partners (you'll still write the same number of words).

You will also write ten short (200-250 word) posts for our Writers Reading for Craft assignment.

And you will read a piece of your work at our final public reading (our final exam activity).

All printed assignments and projects (except those completed in class) must be typed, use a normal font (12pt. Times New Roman), and submitted in the proper format (i.e. a query letter, a manuscript).

All assignments are due on their announced due dates. Late projects will be penalized one full letter grade for each day the project is late. Quizzes cannot be made up. Late homework is not accepted.

Grading Policy

Grades on projects will be assigned numerical scores and weighted according to the project. Final grades will be reported as A+/A/A-/B+/B/B-/C+/C/C-/D+/D/D-/F.

The department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale 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.

All projects and assignments are due at the start of class on the announced due dates. Late projects will be penalized one full letter grade for each day the project is late. Quizzes and exercises may not be made up.

In a participatory class like this one, participation is crucial and will be graded accordingly. In its simplest form, good participation is defined as active contribution to class discussion and workshop sessions, including giving and receiving well thought out and considered feedback.

Workshops

Workshops are the heart of this course. You are expected to be prepared for every workshop (which means you've read the manuscript, thought about it, and written down extensive ideas about it), and you are expected to talk in class every day. 20% of your grade comes from workshop participation and absences will affect your workshop grade.

Students are welcome to disagree with one another during class discussions; however, all our dialogue must be conducted with respect for each individual's opinions and work, and all discussions must be rated PG-13. In addition, please refrain from using your cell phones during class.

Student Technology Resources

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

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>. 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

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 at <http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu> for more information.

Spring 2018 Course Schedule

Please note that this schedule is subject to change with fair notice. You will be notified well ahead of time of any changes.

Week of	Tuesday	Thursday
Jan 22		Welcome and Introduction to the Course. Poetry vs. Fiction vs. Nonfiction. The Many Genres of Nonfiction. HW: Think about your first project. Prepare your pitch.
Jan 29	Pitch meeting. Proposals and Query Letters. Introduce Writers Reading for Craft Assignment. HW: Draft query. Bring in five copies.	Draft of First Query due. Query workshop. HW: Revise query. Bring in 25 copies.
Feb 5	First Query due. Fun with queries. How to workshop. HW: Work on Project #1.	Gathering Information. Leads HW: Work on Project #1.
Feb 12	Meet with Your Workshop Groups Transitions HW: Work on Project #1. Read drafts, make notes for full-class workshop.	Full-Class Workshop (4 writers) HW: Work on Project #1. Read drafts, make notes for full-class workshop.
Feb 19	Full-Class Workshop (4 writers) HW: Work on Project #1.	Meet with Your Workshop Groups HW: Finish draft of Project #1. Bring in five copies.
Feb 26	Full draft of Project #1 due. Feedback and editing workshop. HW: Revise, edit, and wrap up first project. Bring in one paper copy to submit. Think about Project #2 ideas.	First Project due. Readings with 1/3 of the class. Pitch meeting. HW: Write query. Bring in 25 copies.
Mar 5	Second Query due. Fun with queries. HW: Work on Project #2.	Structure HW: Work on Project #2.
Mar 12	Descriptions and Dialogue HW: Work on Project #2. Read drafts, make notes for full-class workshop.	<i>No Class. Instructor at Conference.</i>

Mar 19	Full-Class Workshop (4 writers) HW: Work on Project #2.	Meet with Your Workshop Groups HW: Work on Project #2. Read drafts, make notes for full-class workshop.
Mar 26	<i>Spring Break</i>	<i>Spring Break</i>
April 2	Full-Class Workshop (4 writers) Work on Project #2.	Meet with Your Workshop Groups HW: Finish draft of Project #2. Bring in five copies.
April 9	Full draft of Project #2 due. Feedback and editing workshop. HW: Revise, edit, and wrap up second project. Bring in one paper copy to submit. Think about Project #3 ideas.	Second Project due. Readings with 1/3 of the class. Pitch meeting. HW: Write query. Bring in 25 copies.
April 16	Third Query due. Fun with queries. HW: Work on Project #3.	Endings HW: Work on Project #3.
April 23	Meet with Your Workshop Groups Anecdotes, Humor and Pathos HW: Work on Project #3. Read drafts, make notes for full-class workshop.	Full-Class Workshop (4 writers) HW: Work on Project #3. Read drafts, make notes for full-class workshop.
April 30	Full-Class Workshop (4 writers) HW: Work on Project #3.	Meet with Your Workshop Groups HW: Finish draft of Project #2. Bring in five copies.
May 7	Full draft of Project #3 due. Feedback and editing workshop. HW: Revise, edit, and wrap up third project. Bring in one paper copy to submit. Think about what you'll read for final Reading.	<i>Last Regular Class Meeting</i> Third Project due. Readings with 1/3 of the class. HW: Prepare and practice for Public Reading
May 14		FINAL EXAM PERIOD Public Reading Friday, May 18 2:45PM-5:00PM

Also, regular homework includes reading for and writing Writers Reading for Craft Posts throughout the semester.