

# San José State University

Department of English and Comparative Literature

ENGLISH 71-03 (27450): Introduction to Creative Writing

T/TH @ 4:30-5:45 PM Course Google Meet: <https://meet.google.com/gvy-snuf-iqf>

Syllabus (live document, subject to changes) [SJSU Syllabus Policy](#)

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## Basic Course & Contact Info

Instructor: Rachelle Escamilla, MFA  
Pronouns: She/Her/They/Them  
Email: [rachelle.escamilla@sjsu.edu](mailto:rachelle.escamilla@sjsu.edu)  
Office Hours: R @ 6-7 PM Google Meet: Online SJSU Office Hour:  
<https://meet.google.com/rvj-hyop-srw>  
Course Google Meet: T/TH 4:30-5:45 PM: <https://meet.google.com/gvy-snuf-iqf>  
Prerequisites: Reflection on College Writing  
GE/SJSU Studies Category: GE Area C2 Letters

## Course Description

Examination of works of poetry, creative nonfiction and short fiction as expressions of human intellect and imagination, to comprehend the historic and cultural contexts and recognize issues related to writing by ~~men and women~~ PEOPLE of diverse cultural traditions. Students will write poetry, creative nonfiction and short fiction (edited from the Course Description).

## Course Requirements

“Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.”

## Required Texts and Equipment

BUY Paperback Fiction: [Parable of the Sower](#) by Octavia Butler  
BUY Poetry [Heaven is All Goodbyes](#) by Tongo Eisen-Martin  
BUY Nonfiction [All the Agents and Saints](#) by Stephanie Elizondo Griest

### PROVIDED excerpts:

Access links via Canvas

### Equipment:

Access to Internet

Canvas through SJSU

SJSU Library

Google Meet / Calendar

Google Drive / Google Docs

Youtube

Open source video / audio platforms

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## Course Format

We will meet during our scheduled class time via Google Meet. I will place all agendas, assignments, links and information to Canvas.

Typical Agendas:	<u>Day 1 Agenda</u>	<u>Day 2 Agenda</u>
	Writing Warm Up	Writing Warm Up
	Reading Packet	Workshop
	Lecture	Homework
	Homework	

## Assignments Details & Grading

### Readings & Media (Read, Watch & Annotate) 0 Points

Students will be given weekly reading or viewing assignments where they will be required to take good notes, use what they've learned from lectures to annotate the poetry and store their notes for reference later. These assignments have no point value, but they are cumulative and part of the scaffold of learning.

### Participation in Workshops 100 Points

Students are expected to attend class and actively participate in class discussions, performances and workshops. Students are allowed 3 missed classes before their grade is affected. The point system for this particular assignment is Full Credit (100 Points), Half Credit (50 Points) and Zero credit. See Course Schedule and Lecture Details for detailed information. Everything will be uploaded to Canvas.

- Poetry Workshop 1A
- Poetry Workshop 1B
- Poetry Workshop 1C
- Fiction Workshop 1A
- Fiction Workshop 1B
- Fiction Workshop 1C
- Nonfiction Workshop 1A
- Nonfiction Workshop 1B
- Nonfiction Workshop 1C

### Emulations (Read, Annotate, Write, Analyze, Embody) 250 Points

6 Assigned Emulations (5 required, 50 Points Each)

Students will be asked to create works of poetry that emulate the works that they are reading/viewing. This will be an informed creation. These pieces will be dispersed for workshop.

- Poetry Emulation 1 & 2
- Fiction Emulation 1 & 2
- Nonfiction Emulation 1 & 2

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### **Writing Warm-up Portfolio 250 Points**

Every class students are offered writing warm-up prompts and are given time to write. At the end of the semester, students will turn in a portfolio containing 10 (25 points each) of their favorite self-edited pieces.

### **Cumulative Final Portfolio (400 Points)**

Cover letter (50)  
Course Assessment (50)  
Poetry 3-8 Pages (100)  
Fiction 3-8 Pages (100)  
Nonfiction 3-8 Pages (100)

This course is worth 1000 points.

A = 900-1000

B = 800-899

C = 700-799

D = 600-699

F = below 600

### **Late Work**

Late work will not be accepted unless the student has sent a formal extension request via email at least one week prior to the due date. I reserve the right to reject an extension request.

### **Extra Credit**

There may be opportunities for extra credit, I will provide opportunities based on need.

### **Escamilla's Classroom Community, Disclaimer & Trigger Warnings**

My first goal is to create a safe space for all students during their learning process -- that said, this course deals with a number of very difficult and or graphic subjects, topics, and sometimes explicit language within the context of culture and struggle. We also delve into personal accounts that may or may not trigger some students. Sometimes these concepts are supposed to be difficult and talking through that difficulty is part of the process. Students are free to express themselves in this course as they see fit -- it is not a traditional classroom style and I am not a traditional teacher. The topics can be graphic as can the language. If students feel uncomfortable or triggered they are free to leave the discussion and the classroom. If there are larger concerns about content, information, or the graphic and explicit language -- please make an appointment to see me. It is imperative that students feel safe in our classroom.

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### English 71 GE Course Goals (GELOs):

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~~ PEOPLE 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 the ability to write literary works that express intellect and imagination and that represent diversity in human cultures.
7. Respond to literature through clear and effective communication in both written and oral work.
8. Read and respond to texts with both analytical acumen and personal sensibility.
9. Appreciate how literary works illuminate enduring human concerns while also representing matters specific to a particular culture.
10. Write works of poetry, creative nonfiction and short fiction that are interest and value to the writer, to other students in the course and to a diverse reading audience.

### Emailing Me

When you email me, please put your last name and the course number in the subject line of the email, otherwise your emails will go to Spam.

### Participation & Attendance

#### [Policy F15-12](#)

“Students are expected to attend all meetings for the courses in which they are enrolled as they are responsible for material discussed therein and active participation is frequently essential to ensure maximum benefit to all class members. In some cases, attendance is fundamental to course objectives; for example, students may be required to interact with others in the class. Attendance is the responsibility of the student. Participation may be used as a criterion for grading when the parameters and their evaluation are clearly defined in the course syllabus and the percentage of the overall grade is stated.”

### Escamilla's Attendance & Participation Policy

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You are adults and are the arbiters of your own education. There will be daily writing assignments that will count towards your final grade, as well as participation & workshop points that will be doled out during class, so it's best you attend class. I make room in the point system for 3 absences. When you are absent please do not email me about your absence, it's unnecessary - I was a student, I understand the difficulties of such a life. No need to add to your anxiety. Do, however, email a classmate or check Canvas/Google folder / course schedule updates / weekly emails for any notes you've missed. If you're really behind or would like instructions on what you've missed, please make an appointment to see me during office hours.

## Class Preparation & Communication

1. Read and annotate reading or media assignments
2. Participate in class discussions or group discussions
3. Assignments must be completed and turned in on time unless you've written for an extension.
4. Send a formal extension request via email at least 1 week before a due date for consideration. This is a case-by-case granting.

## Course Schedule (Details available on Canvas Syllabus)

Wk	Assignments	Notes
1	Writing Warm-up 1, Course Introduction, Read Packet A Part 1; Watch Video 1; Lecture; Workshop Rules, procedures and guidelines.	Tongo / Coates
2	Writing Warm-up 2, Read Packet A Part 2; Watch Video 2; Lecture; Poetry Emulation 1 Assigned, Poetry Workshop 1A	Tongo / Coates
3	Writing Warm-up 3, Read Packet A Part 3; Watch Video 3; Poetry Workshop 1 ; Poetry Emulation 2 Assigned	Tongo / Coates
4	Last Black Man in San Francisco; Poetry Workshop 1C	Transition
5	Writing Warm-up 4, Read Packet B, Part 1; Watch Video 4; Lecture; Fiction Emulation 1 Assigned, Fiction Workshop 2	Butler / Shange
6	Writing Warm-up 5, Read Packet B, Part 2; Watch Video 5; Lecture; Fiction Workshop 2	Butler / Shange
7	Writing Warm-up 6, Read Packet B, Part 3; Watch Video 6; Fiction Workshop 2; Fiction	Butler /

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	Emulation 2 Assigned	Shange
8	For Colored Girls; Fiction Workshop 2	Transition
9	One-on-one student meetings and workshops	Transition
10	Spring Break	
11	Writing Warm-up 7, Read Packet C, Part 2; Watch Video 7, Lecture; Nonfiction Workshop 3	Zurita / Griest
12	Writing Warm-up 8, Read Packet C, Part 3; Watch Video 8, Lecture; Nonfiction Emulation 2 Assigned Nonfiction Workshop 3	Zurita / Griest
13	Writing Warm-up 9, Read Packet C, Part 3; Watch Video 9, Lecture; Nonfiction Emulation 2 Assigned Nonfiction Workshop 3	Zurita / Griest
14	Nostalgia for the Light	Transition
15	Writing Warm-up 11, Final Assigned; Make-up Workshops or Additional Workshops	Final Prep / Anthology
16	Final Overview; Student Meetings	Final Prep / Anthology
17	Final Due on Dec 10th	Finals