SJSU SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Humanities and the Arts · English & Comparative Literature

Creative Writing Section 03

ENGL 71

Fall 2023   3 Unit(s)   08/21/2023 to 12/06/2023   Modified 08/22/2023

👤 Contact Information

- **Instructor: Dr. Kristian O'Hare**
- **Email: kristian.ohare@sjsu.edu**
- **Office Location: [Faculty Office Building (FOB) 215](#)**
- **Office Hours: MW 9-10 AM (In-person) and Tuesdays 1-2pm (Zoom)**
- **Class Meeting Time/Location: MoWe 10:30AM - 11:45AM / Sweeney Hall 413**

🖥 Course Description and Requisites

Examinations of works of poetry, creative nonfiction and short fiction as expression of human intellect and imagination, to comprehend the historic and global cultural contexts, and recognize issues related to writing of diverse cultural traditions. Students will also write poetry, creative nonfiction, and a short fiction.

GE Area(s): C2. Humanities

Letter Graded

✳ Classroom Protocols

:: Classroom Behavior

Class sessions are short and require your full attention. Cell phones should be on silent and put away when entering the classroom; all earpieces should be removed. Laptops or tablets may be used to access course readings and assignments; with that said, no other work should be done, no checking email, no social media, no gaming. Note: I reserve the right to ask you to leave the classroom if you are being disruptive.

Students are expected to participate respectfully in class, to listen to other class members, and to comment appropriately. I also expect consideration and courtesy from students. Professors are to be addressed appropriately and communicated with professionally.

:: Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. I understand that illnesses and emergencies happen in everyone's life, but this class is designed to be interactive and participatory. You can't participate if you aren't here. An absence may be excused with proper documentation. [University policy F69-24 (https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf)](https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf): "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 ensure maximum benefit for all members of the class."

:: Late Policy

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class for which they are due.

Late Workshop Drafts: It is unprofessional to upload your workshop drafts late. Because of this, *late submissions will lose one letter grade for each day they are late. I reserve the right to cancel a workshop if it is deemed that the writer has not given his/her/their peers reasonable time to provide good feedback.*

If you are absent or late on your workshop day, your grade will automatically be lowered by one letter (meaning if you an A in the course, your grade will be lowered to a B). If you foresee problems with the schedule, make an appointment to talk to me ASAP. The workshop can not be made up, unless there is an unexpected emergency, such as an unexpected hospitalization or death in your immediate family. Excused absences must be accompanied by a doctor's note or other official document.

Program Information

Welcome to this General Education course.

SJSU's General Education Program establishes a strong foundation of versatile skills, fosters curiosity about the world, promotes ethical judgment, and prepares students to engage and contribute responsibly and cooperatively in a multicultural, information-rich society. General education classes integrate areas of study and encourage progressively more complex and creative analysis, expression, and problem solving.

The General Education Program has three goals:

Goal 1: To develop students' core competencies for academic, personal, creative, and professional pursuits.
Goal 2: To enact the university's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and justice by ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to serve and contribute to the well-being of local and global communities and the environment.
Goal 3: To offer students integrated, multidisciplinary, and innovative study in which they pose challenging questions, address complex issues, and develop cooperative and creative responses.

More information about the General Education Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) can be found on the GE website. (https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php)

English Program Information

The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi: 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. 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.

Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a +(plus) or -(minus) grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)
Upon successful completion of an undergraduate degree program in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will be able 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, 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 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, including structures of power.

Department Information:

Department Name: English and Comparative Literature
Department Office: FO 102
Department Website: www.sjsu.edu/english (https://www.sjsu.edu/english)
Department email: english@sjsu.edu (mailto:english@sjsu.edu)
Department phone number: 408-924-4425

◎ Course Goals

This course will be a basic introduction to the study and practice in the writing of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Through the reading of selected texts, students will gain a better understanding of craft and technique. In addition, this course will be an introduction to the writing workshop. In the writing workshop, students will be expected to develop as critics, and as writers be expected to be open to criticism.

▁▂▃ Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

GE Area C2: Humanities

Area C Arts and Humanities courses help students to respond subjectively as well as objectively to aesthetic experiences and to develop an understanding of the integrity of both emotional and intellectual responses. C2 Humanities courses encourage students to analyze and appreciate works of philosophical, historical, literary, aesthetic, and cultural importance.

GE Area C2 Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of a C2 course, students should be able to:

1. analyze and understand works of philosophical and humanistic importance, including their temporal and cultural dimensions;
2. explore and articulate their own subjective aesthetic and intellectual responses to such texts;
3. analyze and assess ideas of value, meaning, and knowledge, as produced within the humanistic disciplines; and
4. research and write effective analyses of works of the human intellect and imagination

Writing Practice: Students will write a minimum of 1500 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline.

📘 Course Materials

: Required Texts and Materials

- There is **no required** textbook for this course; instead, I have uploaded poems, short stories. and essays onto Canvas. You will be required to read these poems, stories, and essays. You must bring these readings to class, for I will be asking you specific questions and pointing out key passages from the text
- A journal for class notes, writing exercises, daily observations, workshop responses, etc.
- Dictionary and Thesaurus. Being writers, it is important to know what words mean and to vary your word choice. You should own both. There are free apps available.
- Access to a desktop, laptop, or tablet.

☰ Course Requirements and Assignments

:: Course Requirements and Assignments

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.

:: Course Structure
Our class is broken into three units: poetry, fiction, and nonfiction. During each unit, we will discuss certain craft elements and then we will create our own work for workshop.

:: Reading

Reading is maybe the single most important part of a writer's training. This course asks you to practice reading as a writer, since this will ultimately strengthen your own work. You will be encouraged to bring together your emotional side (How does this make me feel?) with your analytical side (What formal choices has the writer made that could explain the way I'm feeling?).

:: Written Responses to Assigned Readings

Most written responses on assigned readings will take place during class with group discussion questions.Responses will take place in Canvas (in Collaborations).

:: In-Class Writing Activities and Out-of-Class Writing Prompts

Writing exercises and prompts are beneficial because they can help spur our imaginations and help us grasp elements of craft. For this reason, work diligently on them. These writing exercises may contain a germ; they can grow into a poem, essay, or story. The weekly writing prompts will be given in class and posted on Canvas (in Modules).

:: Major Writing Assignments

Over the course of the semester, you will be expected to produce one poem, one short story, and one short nonfiction piece, all of which must be edited into final drafts for your portfolio. Your pieces are due to Canvas one week before your assigned workshop. **Late submissions will not be workshopped.**

:: Workshops

You will have three workshops: *you are required to workshop one poem (1-2 pages in length), one short story (5-8 pages) OR two flash fiction stories (5-8 pages total), and one essay (3-4 pages).* You will need to post your work to Canvas one week before you are scheduled to be workshopped. This will give your peers time to thoroughly read and comment on your work. You will read your peers' work, providing both written and oral constructive feedback. We will discuss workshop etiquette further in class, but consider this: your classmates are putting a lot of trust in you to read and respond to their creative work, many of which will be very personal. In the interest not only of being a good student, but also a good person, this will be an opportunity for each of us to practice empathy, understanding, and criticizing in a constructive, rather than destructive, fashion.

:: Class Participation

This is a discussion-based course, not a lecture-based one. This means participation is very important to the success of the class. You add value to the class by reading the assigned workshop and published pieces, participating in discussions, writing insightful critiques, and carefully listening. It is my fervent wish that everyone participate actively in our conversations. Participating in a discussion is a skill that can, and should, be learned.

:: Writing Portfolio

At the end of the semester, you will submit a final writing portfolio that consists of edited, final versions of your creative work. It is crucial that all pieces be substantially revised from their earlier, workshopped drafts. The quality of your revisions will be a significant factor in your portfolio grade. You will reflect on your work in this course (review the learning objectives) and assess your work in a self-reflection.

✔ Grading Information

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined by the SJSU Catalog (Grades-Letter

Grading). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A+/A/A- = excellent; B+/B/B- = above average; C+/C/C- = average; D+/D/D- = below average; F = failure. Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a + or - grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

How I Grade
I expect good work. I expect work that is genuine and meaningful. Creative writing is a subjective
field but it is very clear when a writer is creating work without real effort.

- **Unless I make changes and announce otherwise, the final course grade breaks down as follows:**
  - **1 Poem (workshop, written critiques, participation): 100 points**
  - **Short Story (workshop, written critiques, participation): 150 points**
  - **Nonfiction (workshop, written critiques, participation): 100 points**
  - **Final Portfolio (includes revisions, self-reflection, and self-portrait poem): 100 points**
  - **Writing Prompts: TBA**
  - **In-Class Writings, Group Work, Participation: Factors into your final grade. If you are present and active in class, you will get a boost on your final grade. If you are not active and miss many sessions, your final grade will be affected.**
- **No grade haggling: I do not negotiate grades. If you are concerned with your grade and want to know how to do better in the future, I welcome appointments to discuss possible strategies for improvement.**

SJSU Academic Integrity Policy

A student's commitment to learning, as evidenced by his or her enrollment at San Jose State University, and the University's Academic Integrity Policy require all students to be honest in their academic course work. Faculty are required to report all infractions to the office of Judicial Affairs. The policy on academic integrity can be found here (https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/SJSU-Academic-Integrity-Policy-F15-7.pdf). The SJSU rules against plagiarism are set forth in the SJSU Catalog, which defines plagiarism as the act of representing the work of another as one's own (without giving appropriate credit) regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements.

Plagiarism at SJSU includes, but is not limited to: (1) the act of incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts thereof, or the specific substance of another's work, without giving appropriate credit, and representing the product as one's own work. It is the role and obligation of each student to know the rules that preserve academic integrity and abide by them at all times. This includes learning and following the particular rules associated with specific classes, exams, and/or course assignments. Ignorance of these rules is not a defense to the charge of violating the Academic Integrity Policy.

ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) TOOLS USAGE

Since reading, writing, and critical thinking skills are integral to the learning outcomes of this course, all assignments should be prepared by you, the student. Therefore, any use of artificial intelligence
systems, such as ChatGPT, to complete essays or other assignments constitutes a violation of the
University's Academic Integrity Policy. (https://sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-7.pdf) AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.

🏛 University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9 (PDF) (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the Syllabus Information (https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

📅 Course Schedule

Important note about a possible work stoppage during the semester

The California Faculty Association (the labor union of Lecturers, Professors, Coaches, Counselors, and Librarians across the 23 CSU campuses) is in a difficult contract dispute with California State University management. It is possible that we will call a strike or other

work stoppage this term. I promise to promptly inform you of any schedule disruption. Our working conditions are your learning conditions; we seek to protect both. For further information go to www.CFAbargaining.org (http://www.cfabargaining.org/).

Schedule/Calendar below is subject to change. Always check Canvas for the most up to date information on assignments, readings, and due dates.

Week	Date	Readings, Assignments, and Due Dates
One	M Aug 21st	- Review Syllabus and Canvas - Introductions - In-Class Writing: Bad Poem
One	W Aug 23rd	- In-Class Reading/Analysis: Wilfred Owen's "Dulce Et Decorum Est" (https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46560/dulce-et-decorum-est) - In-Class Writing Activity: Idea to Image **Due: Writing Prompt #1 (Go in Fear of Abstractions) -- by 12pm on Sunday, August 27th**
Two	M Aug 28th	- Reading Due: - Natasha Trethewey's "History Lesson" (https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47538/history-lesson-56d2280d442a7) - Julia Alvarez's "How I Learned to Sweep"(https://www.ronnowpoetry.com/contents/alvarez/HowILearned.html) - Carol Ann Duffy's "Valentine" - In-Class Writing: Images
Two	W Aug 30th	- Reading Due: - Gary Soto's "Oranges" - Garrett Hongo's "Yellow Light" - Li-Young Lee's "Eating Alone" (https://poets.org/poem/eating-alone) **DUE: Writing Prompt #2 (Family) -- by 12pm (noon) Sunday, September 3rd**
Three	M Sept 4th	**LABOR DAY -- NO CLASS MEETING**
Three	W Sept 6th	**GROUP 1 Submits Workshop Poem** **Reading Due:** - Edward Hirsch's "Fast Break" - Julia Copus' "The Backseat of My Mother's Car"(https://poetryarchive.org/poem/back-seat-my-mothers-car/) - Natalie Diaz's "My Brother at 3AM" (https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/56355/my-brother-at-3-am) - Regina Barreca's "Nighttime Fires"(https://muse.jhu.edu/article/428616/pdf) - In-Class Writing: Recovering Memories **DUE: Writing Prompt #3 (Childhood Memory) by 12pm (noon) Sunday, September 10th**
Four	M Sept 11th	- Go over Self-Portrait Poem - Writing Workshop Guidelines - How to Evaluate Peer Poetry **Group 2 Submits Workshop Poem**
Four	W Sept 13th	**Poetry Workshop -- Group 1** **Group 3 Submits Workshop Poem**
Five	M Sept 18th	**Poetry Workshop -- Group 2** **Group 4 Submits Workshop Poem**
Five	W Sept 20th	**Poetry Workshop -- Group 3**

Six	M Sept 25th	• **Poetry Workshop -- Group 4**

Six	W Sept 27th	• Reading Due:
		  ◦ [Alice Walker's "Flowers" (https://www.d.umn.edu/~cstroupe/handouts/5270/walker_flowers.pdf)](https://www.d.umn.edu/~cstroupe/handouts/5270/walker_flowers.pdf)
		  ◦ [Elizabeth Tallent's "No One's a Mystery" (https://faculty.weber.edu/jyoung/English%202500/Readings%20for%20English%202500/NoOnesaMystery.pdf)](https://faculty.weber.edu/jyoung/English%202500/Readings%20for%20English%202500/NoOnesaMystery.pdf)

Seven	M Oct 2nd	• Reading Due: ◦ [Junot Diaz's "Fiesta 1980"](#)
Seven	W Oct 4th	• Reading Due: ◦ [Ken Liu's "The Paper Menagerie" (https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1573410/files/73561106?module_item_id=14541854)](https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1573410/files/73561106?module_item_id=14541854) • **Due: Fiction Writing Prompt #1 (Your Experience as Story) by 12pm Sunday, Oct 8th**

Eight	M Oct 9th	• Reading Due:
		  ◦ [TC Boyle's "The Hit Man" (https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1573410/files/73874020?module_item_id=14756779)](https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1573410/files/73874020?module_item_id=14756779)
		  ◦ [Brett Anthony Johnston's "Encounters with Unexpected Animals" (https://www.esquire.com/entertainment/books/a13018/encounters-with-unexpected-animals-story-0312/)](https://www.esquire.com/entertainment/books/a13018/encounters-with-unexpected-animals-story-0312/)

Eight	W Oct 11th	• Reading Due: ◦ [Sarah Gailey's "Homesick" (https://firesidefiction.com/issue36/chapter/homesick/)](https://firesidefiction.com/issue36/chapter/homesick/) • **Due: Fiction Writing Prompt #2 (Character Sketch) by 12pm Sunday, Oct 15th**

Nine	M Oct 16th	• Reading Due:
		  ◦ [Celeste Ng's "Girls, At Play" (https://blreview.org/fiction/girls-at-play/)](https://blreview.org/fiction/girls-at-play/)
		  ◦ [Adam Johnson's "Trauma Plate" (https://barcelonareview.com/33/e_aj.htm)](https://barcelonareview.com/33/e_aj.htm)
		• **Group 1 Submits Workshop Story**

Nine	W Oct 18th	• Reading Due:
		  ◦ [Ray Bradbury's "There Will Come Soft Rains" (https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1573410/files/73561105?module_item_id=14541860)](https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1573410/files/73561105?module_item_id=14541860)
		  ◦ [Alexander Weinstein's "Rocket Night" (https://lascauxreview.com/rocket-night/)](https://lascauxreview.com/rocket-night/)
		• **Due: Fiction Writing Prompt # 3 (Conflict) by 12pm Sunday, Oct 22nd**
		• **Group 2 Submits Workshop Story**

Ten	M Oct 23rd	• **Fiction Workshop -- Group 1** • **Group 3 Submits Workshop Story**
Ten	W Oct 25th	• **Fiction Workshop -- Group 2** • **Group 4 Submits Workshop Story**
Eleven	M Oct 30	• **Fiction Workshop -- Group 3** • **Group 5 Submits Workshop Story**
Eleven	W Nov 1st	• **Fiction Workshop -- Group 4** • **Group 6 Submits Workshop Story**

Twelve	M Nov 6th	• **Fiction Workshop -- Group 5**
Twelve	W Nov 8th	• **Fiction Workshop -- Group 6**
Thirteen	M Nov 13th	• Reading Due: ○ Roxane Gay's "Hunger" (hardcopy) • In-Class Writing: Body Image
Thirteen	W Nov 15th	• Reading Due: ○ [Judith Ortiz Cofer's "More Room"(https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1573410/files/73886155?module_item_id=14764879)](https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1573410/files/73886155?module_item_id=14764879) ○ [Chris Wiewiora's "A Taste in Every Bite"(https://goodmenproject.com/featured-content/taste-in-every-bite-ndgt/)](https://goodmenproject.com/featured-content/taste-in-every-bite-ndgt/) • **Due: Nonfiction Writing Prompt #1 (Narration and Description) by 12pm Sunday, Nov 19th**
Fourteen	M Nov 20th	• Reading Due: ○ [Amy Tan's "Fish Cheeks" (https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1573410/files/73561112?module_item_id=14541895)](https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1573410/files/73561112?module_item_id=14541895) ○ [Jasmine Sawer's "Mother Tongue" (https://wigleaf.com/202303mtongue.htm)](https://wigleaf.com/202303mtongue.htm) ○ [Scaachi Koul's "There's No Recipe For Growing Up" (https://www.buzzfeed.com/scaachikoul/looking-for-my-mother-at-the-bottom-of-a-pot)](https://www.buzzfeed.com/scaachikoul/looking-for-my-mother-at-the-bottom-of-a-pot) • In-Class Writing: Family and Cultural Identity Through Food • **Group 1 Submits Workshop Nonfiction**
Fourteen	W Nov 22nd	• Reading Due: ○ [Anne Panning's "Candy Cigarettes" (https://brevitymag.com/nonfiction/candy-cigarettes/)](https://brevitymag.com/nonfiction/candy-cigarettes/) ○ [Ryan Van Meter's "First" (https://www.craftliterary.com/2020/07/29/first-ryan-van-meter/)](https://www.craftliterary.com/2020/07/29/first-ryan-van-meter/) ○ [Rachael Peckham's "The Origin of Sausage" (https://brevitymag.com/nonfiction/the-origin-of-sausage/)](https://brevitymag.com/nonfiction/the-origin-of-sausage/) • **Due: Nonfiction Writing Prompt #2 (Memory) by 12pm Sunday Nov 26th** • **Group 2 Submits Workshop Nonfiction**
Fifteen	M Nov 27th	• **Nonfiction Workshop -- Group 1** • **Group 3 Submits Workshop Nonfiction**
Fifteen	W Nov 29th	• **Nonfiction Workshop -- Group 2** • **Group 4 Submits Workshop Nonfiction**
Sixteen	M Dec 4th	• **Nonfiction Workshop -- Group 3** • **Group 5 Submits Workshop Nonfiction**
Sixteen	W Dec 6th	• **Nonfiction Workshop -- Group 4**
FINAL	F Dec 15th	***Final Workshop will take place during Finals Week. Our class will meet on Tuesday, December 12th 9:45am-12pm*** • **Nonfiction Workshop -- Group 5** • **Final Portfolio is Due on Friday, December 15th by 11:59pm.**