

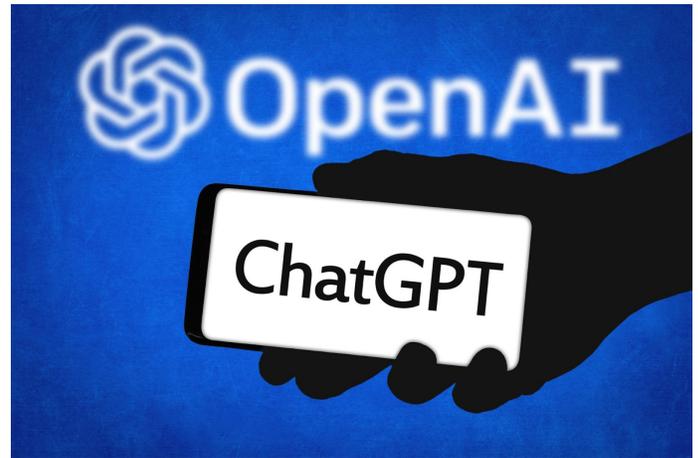
### Table of Contents

<i>Dr. Sara West Explores ChatGPT's Ethics and Potential</i>	1
<i>Meet The Newest on Campus, Dr. Maite Urcaogui</i>	2
<i>Dr. Tanja Nathanael Advocates for Climate Literacy in Children's Education</i>	4
<i>Climate Disasters and Postcolonial Studies: Inside the Classroom with Dr. Gorman-DaRif</i>	5
<i>Steinbeck Center Displays Student Work at International Steinbeck Conference</i>	6
<i>Investigative Journalist Jean Guerrero Joins SJSU for Spring Semester 2023</i>	7
<i>The Inspiration and Research Process for Allison Johnson's The Left-Armed Corps</i>	8
<i>Professor Norris Publishes Travel Essay, A State of Extremes</i>	10
<i>Reed Magazine Archives Its 156-Year History</i>	11
<i>Former TAs Publish New Book Chapter, "Teaching Teaching as a Process"</i>	12
<i>Course Listings</i>	14
<i>Letter from the Chair</i>	20



### **Dr. Sara West Explores ChatGPT's Ethics and Potential**

*Jordan Hiestand and Nicole Nigh*



*Provided by Adobe Stock*

Since ChatGPT was launched on November 30, 2022, it has been at the forefront of many people's minds in education; some educators have prohibited its use in their classes, while other educators and students have begun to explore its potential. With technology constantly advancing, society must equally consider the ethical implications of new technology along with its potential.

For those unfamiliar with this new technology, ChatGPT is a generative AI (artificial intelligence) that can generate human-like content with responses from its information base. ChatGPT caught Assistant Professor of Professional and Technical Writing Dr. Sara West's interest due to her content creation research. Because of her research focus, Dr. West was asked, along with the Department of Education's Dr. Roxana Marachi, to participate in a QuickBites session on the ethics of ChatGPT, where they discussed the ethical dilemmas and potential of this emerging technology. QuickBites is an initiative from the SJSU College of Humanities and the Arts that produces sessions on current issues and invites guests to contribute. Dr. West also discussed ChatGPT—and how it might be used in writing courses—in multiple Writing Across the Curriculum workshops during the Spring 2023 semester. Throughout Dr. West's many ChatGPT discussions, she both explores the possibilities and challenges the AI's appeal with thoughtful, ethical questions, and plausible theories of its consequences.

Even in its infantile stages, ChatGPT appears to be an impressive generative AI in terms of its ability to analyze a prompt and respond. However, the secret behind ChatGPT's success is much simpler than one may think. During their QuickBites session, Dr. West and Dr. Marachi identified the current pitfalls of ChatGPT, many of which stem from its shortcomings in pattern recognition. Dr. West revealed that the technology relies on pattern recognition, a powerful tool requiring pre-existing information. ChatGPT uses pattern recognition to create content based on probability. In other words, the AI creates human-like responses based on the likelihood of what words should come next. Unfortunately, this method can only imitate human-like responses. As a result, some of the content generated by ChatGPT is weakened by its unnatural diction and inaccuracies. Additionally, because ChatGPT creates text using pattern recognition, it does not (at the time of writing this article) have the ability to search the internet. Therefore, its responses may contain inaccurate information that it presents as facts.

While its content may be lacking, the form and formatting of ChatGPT's responses are notably accurate. For example, if you ask ChatGPT to write a business letter, you could use the generated format as a template to write a letter with your content. In addition, Dr. West has experimented with ChatGPT's form and genre and even used it for tone analysis during in-class activities. As a result, she acknowledges that ChatGPT can help professors convey a tone or genre to students without writing out or searching for genre-specific content themselves. For the tone activity, it would have been difficult to find text that was similar enough in content for comparison but conveyed a variety of different tones. By using ChatGPT, Dr. West was able to generate the same paragraph in multiple tones so that students could identify and analyze style differences. She also used this activity as an example during her Writing Across the Curriculum workshops. Therefore, under certain circumstances, ChatGPT can play a helpful role in academics.

There is much room for improvement for ChatGPT. Dr. West foresees ChatGPT becoming mainstream and possibly even integrating into software such as Microsoft Word (which, at the time of revising this article, has begun to happen in the form of Microsoft Copilot). For instance, consider all the times you've written an email, and the email system predicts your next words or phrases. These predictive text features could be part of ChatGPT's expansion. However, these seemingly helpful contributions could cause confusion if ChatGPT cannot produce accurate information.

With AI technology that relies on pattern recognition becoming more prominent, people could run into the problem of an AI-created Mandela Effect due to its iterative nature. Suppose ChatGPT was to become more integrated into society and used as a search engine. If ChatGPT utilizes its content as a source, it could further distort inaccuracies and create a higher probability of false information being distributed. Should people believe the information it provides, this phenomenon is a consequence that could change how society looks at news and media and the way we communicate. Although ChatGPT



*Provided by Sara West*

may play a significant role in the future, its limitations reduce its primary usage to entertainment purposes for now. However, Dr. West notes that she expects that AI technology like ChatGPT will eventually be able to access specific information from outside sources. For example, Bing's AI chatbot can "cite" its sources with footnotes, indicating that this version is at least on some level capable of more than just generative text. Since this type of AI technology seems to have the generative part down, we should expect it to become a more accurate content creator in the future.

Dr. West and Dr. Marachi's QuickBites discussion provides valuable insight into how we should approach new technology. Instead of trusting technology based on its capabilities, we should question its ethics and potential consequences. You can access Dr. West and Dr. Mariachi's QuickBites session on the SJSU website or YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kOsZYMU7sk>

## ***Meet The Newest on Campus, Dr. Maite Urcargui***

***Danny Ramirez and Jarret Valverde***

Joining San José State University as an assistant professor of the Department of English and Comparative Literature this year is Dr. Maite Urcargui. She graduated from the University of California, Santa Barbara, in 2022 with a Ph.D. in English and emphases in Black Studies and Feminist Studies. In her first few semesters on campus,

Dr. Urcalegui has already brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to our campus.

Raised in Emmett, Idaho, with her father immigrating from the Basque country and her mother a paraeducator, Dr. Urcalegui found a passion for teaching at a young age. She looks back at the women who taught her English in high school as the formative inspirations for her career path, and her eventual decision to pursue a B.A. in English Language and Literature, a secondary teaching credential from Gonzaga University, an M.A. in English Language and Literature from the University of Colorado Boulder, and the aforementioned Ph.D.



*Provided by Maite Urcalegui*

Now at San José State University—which sits on the ancestral lands and unceded territory of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area—Dr. Urcalegui’s extensive academic career and research allow her to bring a unique and newfound perspective to the department. Having focused on feminism, queer issues and representation, critical race theory, and increasing the awareness of Latinx as a new and progressive terminology, she felt passionate about her decision to join San José State University. As one of the many predominantly Latinx-serving CSUs, it was important for her to be a part of a school that reflects the values and research she cares for so deeply. Because she is a first-generation American on her father’s side, many of the first-generation barriers, citizenship troubles, and separations from family have inspired her professional teaching and research.

Dr. Urcalegui’s eagerness to analyze how visual culture shapes national discourse on citizenship by demonstrating inequalities and inconsistencies has driven much of her work both

in and outside of the classroom. She is currently working on a new project tentatively titled *Seeing Citizenship: Picturing Political Belonging in Multiethnic US Literature*, which explores newfound meaning to community and challenges readers to envision alternative forms of political and social belonging in all aspects of life. Through her time in Santa Barbara, Dr. Urcalegui researched many comics, queer theory, and citizenship issues as she began to link how one related to the other. She has reanalyzed the perspective she wants to take and has added a completely new chapter to analyze Asian American experiences with racism and legislation in the process of gaining citizenship. Dr. Urcalegui hopes that through a grant from the Library of Congress, she can begin archival work through their prints and photographs division to really complete the extensive literature review she has already done. As of right now, Dr. Urcalegui does not have a release date but is eager to publish her amazing new work very soon.

Dr. Urcalegui’s impact on campus has quickly spread. To pair with her progressive outlook and sharp insights, she is also looking to expand the content of literature studied on campus with her usage of comic books and other visual media in her classes. In her English 165 class, she is using the medium of comic books to educate students about Latinx issues and identities in the world today. Through the study of comic books, Dr. Urcalegui is able to explore how literature and art come together in a multimodal media to navigate a nuanced political and cultural understanding of what it means to be Latinx.

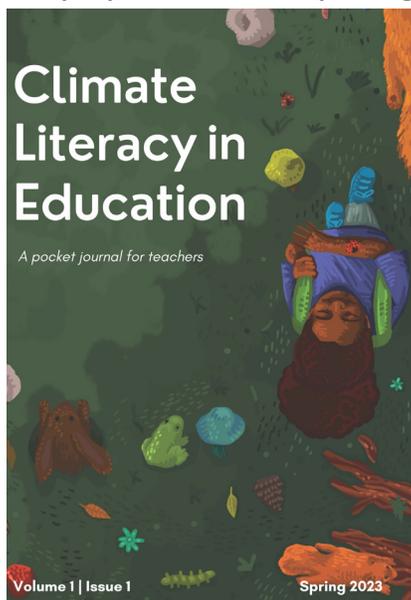
Though she has only completed two semesters at SJSU, Dr. Urcalegui is already becoming a student favorite within the English department. Her passion for the subject matter within her coursework is unavoidable, and the love for comics extends well beyond the classroom. The queer and feminist emphasis within her classes is also well received as these principles come across seamlessly and facilitate a welcoming learning space that pushes its students to be thoughtful. With a clear lifelong love for teaching and a challenging yet captivating approach to her classes, Dr. Urcalegui is an easy recommendation from anyone who has had the pleasure of taking one of her classes so far. Welcome Dr. Maite Urcalegui to San José State University!

# Dr. Tanja Nathanael Advocates for Climate Literacy in Children's Education

Dylan Khieu and Kevin Nguyen

Dr. Tanja Nathanael teaches courses in fantasy and science fiction and children's literature courses and has been working towards integrating climate literacy into the next generation's education. Dr. Nathanael's instruction of ENGL 112A: Children's Literature introduces adult readers to stories inspired by diverse cultures that are meant to teach kids about their connection to the world around them. One of those connections, of course, is to the climate. In Spring 2023, she published an editorial in *Climate Literacy in Education*, a new editorial collective that seeks to provide teachers and parents with the literary material to educate children about humanity's effect on the planet.

According to Dr. Nathanael, the goal of climate literacy is to promote awareness around the ways people may disrupt the natural order through both deliberate mass destruction and oblivious everyday action and storytelling is an effective



Retrieved from *Climate Literacy in Education*. Cover artwork by Taylor Goetsch

way to target the attitudes that cultivate awareness of the larger issue. Children's literature proves to be a good place for introducing these stories, as Dr. Nathanael emphasizes that stories written for children are important to the cultural consciousness because they reach beyond their intended audience. Children's literature is a genre designed to be read by all ages and provides an opportunity for authors to spread awareness to an older generation that lacked the opportunity to become climate literate, making them better equipped to engage with messages about human impact. Dr. Nathanael finds value in authors promoting climate literacy through the medium of children's books because these books have a dual audience by tradition, as parents read stories to their children.

In Dr. Nathanael's editorial, "Andri Magnason's *The Story of the Blue Planet: Towards Ecotopia*," Dr. Nathanael presents the themes and techniques that the piece uses to address humanity's environmental impact. She draws a connection between the motif of climate ignorance in *The Story of the Blue Planet* and the role of the average reader in the greater ecosystem. She explains that the characters in the story do not actively loathe or hold antipathy towards their surroundings; rather, they exist in a state of inaction and obliviousness. For example, in Magnason's picture book, the young characters hunt seals for food without considering their role in the habitat—it is simply a part of their daily life. To Dr. Nathanael, this mirrors our own ignorance of unsustainable food systems, an act of survival or indulgence with no trace of malice. Dr. Nathanael demonstrates this further through a personal anecdote about her past love of eating Chilean sea bass. A friend once kindly educated her about the rampant overfishing of the animal and the possibility of its extinction. Now she refrains from this luxury, keeping in mind that a purchase would support companies who do not adhere to a renewable model of hunting. The harm inflicted on the environment is rarely intentional, but human impact is often overlooked in favor of personal interests. However, by using literature to explore situations where humans are detrimental to the world around us—both real and hypothetical—it leads the reader to address the possibility of their own climate ignorance. Acknowledging climate ignorance is one of the first steps we must take in fostering a positive and holistic relationship with nature.

Dr. Nathanael believes that it is important to include lessons of climate literacy in the stories we tell the next generation because they will carry these values into adulthood. The narratives that children remember will inform their worldview later in life and will affect their actions and opinions on future policies concerning climate change. Dr. Nathanael says the element of storytelling makes the humanities important to the discussion of climate change. The humanities' place is not to develop the important facts and figures that measure climate change's effects but to provide the public with the human experience—the social and personal consequences—of what is happening. Stories help students understand their connection with nature, providing an illustration of how they affect the environment and how the environment affects them in turn, which they will go on to share with others.

Dr. Nathanael advocates for including climate literacy in books and education as a way of encouraging children to develop a less "human-

dominant” perspective and learn sustainable practices to mend humanity’s relationship with nature. No single person—young or old—possesses the power to save the entire world, but the process begins by understanding the effects of climate change, saving our own little corner of it, and continuing a tradition of storytelling that will share this message with others. For students interested in how the stories we read in our youth affect our relationship with the world, consider registering for Dr. Nathanael’s class ENGL 112A: Children’s Literature. Dr. Nathanael initiates conversations about climate literacy in children’s literature with stories such as Salman Rushdie’s *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* and Hisae Iwaoka’s *Saturn Apartments, Vol. 1*. To learn more about the role of the arts in climate education, please visit ClimateLit.org, the website affiliated with *Climate Literacy in Education*. The program includes information about climate literacy from Dr. Nathanael and other scholars dedicated to helping parents and teachers educate the future generation about their role in keeping our world healthy through the arts and humanities. For students interested in engaging themselves with climate literacy, announcements for online climate literacy events can be found on Twitter at @climate\_lit.

## ***Climate Disasters and Postcolonial Studies: Inside the Classroom with Dr. Gorman-DaRif*** ***Yamile Alvarado-Mendoza and Jennifer Lopez-Suar***

COVID-19 changed the world as we knew it, including the way classes are taught, and three years into the pandemic, we are seeing a shift in literature as well. Dr. Meghan Gorman-DaRif, along with Dr. Pallavi Rastogi and Dr. Liam O’Loughlin, co-edited a special issue of the *South Asian Review*, “Writing South Asia in Disastrous Time,” *Volume 44, Issue 1*, printed in January 2023. Dr. Gorman-DaRif was asked to co-edit based on her interpretation of how disaster fiction and postcolonial studies intersect: climate crises are directly caused by humanity working as a global force and that such crises disproportionately affect the global south.

Dr. Gorman-DaRif is an expert in South Asian and East African contemporary fiction; at SJSU, her undergraduate and graduate courses discuss what matters to the people living in the era of the Anthropocene and how capitalism, when looked at as a global force, affects them. Dr.

Gorman-DaRif provides her classroom with a unique perspective on cultures that are quickly changing due to globalization. Her current and future courses are further examinations of the ideas brought forth in the special issue.

Disaster fiction, according to Dr. Gorman-DaRif, has ties with the postcolonial era as the rise in the number and severity of catastrophes can be linked to colonization. Climate crises are disasters that have a long history, and they continue to happen in the “postcolonial present”—the aftereffects of those who were once in power.

South Asia, the region that is the focus of the journal and the special issue, is particularly vulnerable to climate change due to the history of colonialism. Dr. Gorman-DaRif says postcolonial studies and disaster fiction pose the questions of “who’s in charge, who has control, who doesn’t, whose land is it, who’s getting access to certain privileges” and could the devastating loss of human life have been averted? She believes that disaster fiction acts as a doorway to a new way of thinking about contemporary disasters like climate change, COVID-19, and even capitalism. As she says, “We can start thinking about how [climate crises] impact people based on where they live, what kind of privilege they have, what kind of class they’re in... so those things work together very closely.”

Dr. Gorman-DaRif’s research and passion for South Asian literature and historical events can be seen in her course materials and teachings. In the Spring 2023 semester, Dr. Gorman-DaRif taught ENGL 100W: Writing Workshop and ENGL 123D: Global Literature for Understanding—Asia. The course materials for both undergraduate courses intersect with her past research and expertise: Kenyan writing and, related to this recent special issue, Indian literature.

To think about the impacts of contemporary disasters, Dr. Gorman-DaRif broke down her classes into four stages: the anti-colonial, the liberation or independence, the critique of “nation,” and finally, the post-nation or “beyond the borders” of the nation. Dr. Gorman-DaRif has a strong interest in postcolonial fiction—her most focused research area at the moment—which influenced her to incorporate Aravind Adiga’s *White Tiger* and Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* towards the end of her Indian literature course (ENGL 123D). She mentions how these two novels “think and respond to the contemporary moment” by highlighting India’s independence and its integration into globalized systems of capitalism while also mentioning the damaging impacts colonial capitalist modernity has had on India’s population.

For her graduate students, Dr. Gorman-DaRif added her current favorite book, *The Hungry Tide* by Amitav Ghosh, as a reading in ENGL 201: Methods and Materials for Literary Research and ENGL 228: Seminar in Genre Studies, which focused on the genre of postcolonial realism. Dr. Gorman-DaRif uses *The Hungry Tide* to further explore the interrelationship between postcolonial fiction and disaster fiction and how both genres are “similarly engaged in those questions of power and politics, nation-states, and global power relations.” The text focuses on environmental disasters such as cyclones and their impact on marginalized communities living in vulnerable conditions. It’s no surprise why Dr. Gorman-DaRif favors this text, not only because it looks back on history but because it also addresses how human desires (e.g., a place of belonging and livelihood) conflict with environmental conservation issues—all of which connect to disaster. With the rise in natural disasters, Dr. Gorman-DaRif hopes that the disaster fiction genre will “help us understand the world and the disaster that is capitalism.”

She went on to mention Helon Habila’s *Oil on Water* as an example of a text in which capitalism is a disaster. Although *Oil on Water* focuses on how companies continue to take resources from African countries even post-independence, it also engages with the effects that capitalism had on the Niger Delta communities and how it led to both ecological disaster and humanitarian conflict.

Dr. Gorman-DaRif is currently working on two projects that are related to the topic of disasters. Her writing focus on how contemporary postcolonial



Provided by Meghan Gorman-DaRif

fiction represents the impact of global capitalism on the postcolonial world and on how it tries to find places for resistance. She further explains that her book project research covers topics like pirates, Maoists, and freedom fighters. Her second project emerged after

attending a conference last year and focuses on the Indian Ocean and its archipelagos.

Here at SJSU, Dr. Gorman-DaRif will continue to share her expertise with students in the English department through a Global Anglophone course, which will be offered as a graduate-level course in the Fall. In the meantime, check out the special issue in *Volume 44, Issue 1* of the *South Asian Review*, “Writing South Asia in Disastrous Time.”

## **Steinbeck Center Displays Student Work at International Steinbeck Conference**

*Krysta Lynea Sanchez*

San José State University hosted this year’s International Steinbeck Conference at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library on March 22–24, 2023. The three-day event was held at the Martha H. Cox Center for Steinbeck Studies on the library’s fifth floor. The last time the International Steinbeck conference was held in person at SJSU was in 2019, so the University and Steinbeck Center were overjoyed to host the conference once more. The three days were filled with both in-person and video-streamed lectures and seminars from Steinbeck scholars, as well as a keynote address from author Ron Rash. The event was organized by Professor Daniel Rivers, Director of Martha Healey Cox Center for Steinbeck Studies, whose academic work focuses on the intersection of literature, the humanities, and environmental studies. Professor Rivers’ scholarship is interdisciplinary and engages works from various authors—including John Steinbeck. This semester Professor Rivers is the instructor for a Steinbeck-focused course. The students in this course participated in the conference by creating posters that centered around their interpretations of Steinbeck’s work.

These poster projects weren’t the first that Professor Rivers had assigned: previously, students created posters that explored themes related to sustainability, colonialism, and fire in California. Due to the success of the previous poster projects, Professor Rivers felt that a similar poster project would be a good addition to the work that was presented by the other scholars. For this conference, each poster was made by a group of students to portray a certain theme, a particular novel, or Steinbeck’s influence on another artist. These posters were accompanied by a short artist’s statement, in which students reflected on the project and how their research helped them to create the display piece.

For the creation of their Steinbeck Conference posters, student teams used outside

research and knowledge they gained through course readings. Each poster reflected a specific angle that the students felt was important to Steinbeck and his works. Student teams then brought their research and ideas to life by creating poster installments on Pixlr and Canva, two open-access graphic design platforms. Once the posters were created, the students were able to print their posters in the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library's Rapid Prototyping Lab. The posters were then clipped onto cardboard display boards and showcased around the Martha Healey Cox Center for Steinbeck Studies.

Two of the four teams ventured into the world of Steinbeck's individual books: one team chose *The Grapes of Wrath* and the other chose *Harvest Gypsies*—a collection of Steinbeck's Dust Bowl journalism. Both books look into the world of the lives of migrant workers and farmers in California during the 1930s and up to World War II. The third group decided to look into the religious aspects that Steinbeck incorporated into his novels. This group analyzed three of Steinbeck's novels (*To a God Unknown*, *In Dubious Battle*, and *The Grapes of Wrath*). The last group decided to look at another artist outside of, but related to, Steinbeck's work: photographer Dorothea Lange, whose photographs were taken during the Great Depression. Both Lange and Steinbeck portrayed the suffering that occurred during this period through their work—Lange through her photographs of Dust Bowl migrants and Steinbeck through many of his stories and novels, including *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Of Mice and Men*.



Provided by Krysta Lynea Sanchez

Before the conference, Professor Rivers shared their take on the student installations from this year's Steinbeck class: "I'm excited and I have a wonderful class this year. We've got sharp readers and thinkers who think about gender, race, and further topics [so] I'm feeling good! Yeah, I'm excited!" Professor

Rivers has been the director of the Martha Healey Cox Center for Steinbeck Studies for the past year and a half and has been a professor at SJSU for the past three and a half years. About the Steinbeck class and public engagement, they say, "So often people think of English and Humanities majors and wonder 'how do they apply to the real world?' With the Steinbeck class this semester we are getting those majors to meet the public and beyond. We are teaching these students that there are entire careers in the public engagement side of literature. It's hard to see outside the direct line of English to teaching, which is great, but I want them to think outside of the classroom as well. With this course, I am connecting the classroom to public humanities."

Students in the course were excited—and a bit nervous—to have their work on display in front of so many prominent Steinbeck scholars. Jennifer, a student in the Steinbeck class, said, "I hope the conference attendees will like [our project] and will be able to see the angle we're aiming for." When asked about how she felt about her team's participation in the poster project she stated, "I enjoyed. . . working in a group to make a poster that reflects our thoughts and how we feel about Steinbeck's works."

Of course, the students had nothing to worry about. Despite the mixed feelings about their installations, the attendees enjoyed the posters at the conference. They were impressed by the students' creativity and range of interpretations of Steinbeck's work. Overall, the conference was a success and it concluded with all remembering the works of Steinbeck and keeping his legacy alive.

If you want to learn more about the Steinbeck Center and its events, please visit <https://www.sjsu.edu/steinbeck/>.

## **Investigative Journalist Jean Guerrero Joins SJSU for Spring Semester 2023**

**Dorothy Chin and Aleksandra Gorka**

Jean Guerrero has been many things: a foreign correspondent, an investigative journalist, and an author. Now, this *LA Times* columnist and author is adding "teacher" to her collection of hats. In Spring 2023, Guerrero joined SJSU as the Lurie Author-in-Residence, a program that invites nationally and internationally known authors to the position of "visiting artist/scholar" to teach and provide mentorship for one semester. Guerrero decided to give back because she felt ready and

inspired to provide students with what she was given in the past—mentorship and guidance. Teaching is a kind of symbiotic relationship for her: she teaches her students but also learns from them. Guerrero feels inspired by every class she teaches because she loves reading other people’s work, listening to their thoughtful opinions on writing, and reading pieces written from a variety of perspectives and backgrounds. Teaching for the Spring 2023 semester was an enriching experience.

Jean Guerrero herself was influenced by a teacher early in life. Guerrero started writing as a child. In high school, inspired by her teacher, she started treating writing as a way of healing and dealing with personal trauma. Writing is, for her, more than a career—it is a chance to transform and heal while contributing to social change. Her teacher said that through writing, she could turn the bad things in her life into good. Guerrero learned that memoirs could be therapeutic not only to the author but to the readers as well. She believes that by reading about other people’s experiences, readers can heal and come out stronger and more self-aware. Knowing that one is not alone in the struggle, despite whatever is happening, brings peace and relief.

Her first book is one such memoir; *Crux: A Cross-Border Memoir* won a PEN Literary Award and was named one of NPR’s Best Books of 2019. Her second book, *Hatemonger: Stephen Miller, Donald Trump and the White Nationalist Agenda* was named “a vital book for understanding the still-unfolding nightmare of nationalism and racism in the 21st century” by Francisco Cantú, author of *The Line Becomes a River*. Her writing is featured in *Vanity Fair*, *Politico*, *The Nation*, *Wired*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Best American Essays 2019* by Rebecca Solnit, and more. She won the 2022 Best Commentary award from the Sacramento Press Club. While working at KPBS as an investigative border reporter, she won an Emmy. She has also contributed to NPR, PBS NewsHour, and more.

Going from a foreign correspondent to an opinion writer was a challenge for Guerrero. Journalists are trained to keep themselves out of their writing in most of their education and professional experience. Changing that training by accepting “having the right to an opinion” and becoming comfortable sharing that opinion is, in Guerrero’s opinion, the biggest challenge. As an opinion writer, Guerrero believes that her role as a journalist is to contribute to social change. As an influential Latina writer, she has a rare opportunity to give a voice to those still underrepresented. Being in a position to share people’s stories and spread awareness for

important societal issues is more than an opportunity—it’s a responsibility.

Guerrero wants to shed some light on topics such as white supremacy and nationalism. Sharing her own perspective and story gives people the feeling of being represented and heard. Guerrero mentions in her memoir *Crux* that she always wanted to write about people and their

struggles. Writing about politics feels like a natural progression—after all, politics are the platform where a lot of these issues are being created, as well as a potential platform for future change.

It is a popular opinion that journalism is a dying industry, but Guerrero wishes more people would do what she does: bring society’s attention to subjects of underdeveloped societal issues. After all, Guerrero says, “If journalism dies, democracy dies with it, the country dies.” The idea that journalism is a dying industry has been around since Guerrero was learning how to write. Journalism might be changing, but according to Guerrero, it is nowhere close to dying.

Jean Guerrero’s time with SJSU might have been brief, but it certainly was impactful. Her experience with writing opinion pieces almost certainly helped her students overcome the same hurdles she faced. Her class, English 242, was an inspiring experience for both the students (one of whom is an author of this piece) and Guerrero herself. As the semester comes to an end, we only wish that our work together could last longer.



Provided by Jean Guerrero,  
photographed by Stacy Keck

## ***The Inspiration and Research Process for Allison Johnson’s *The Left-Armed Corps****

***July Simeona and Sara Talbot***

San José State University English professor Dr. Allison Johnson’s new book, *The Left-Armed Corps: Writings by Amputee Civil War Veterans*, published in May 2022, collects the writings of Civil War veterans who had their right arms amputated

due to injuries sustained from battle. Consisting of newspaper articles, diaries, poems, and letters, *The Left-Armed Corps* illustrates how these injured veterans acclimated to life after the war. As Dr. Johnson explains, these writings came about from a contest organized by William Oland Bourne. As a hospital volunteer, Bourne saw these traumatic injuries firsthand. Bourne organized several nationwide penmanship contests calling for left-handed writing samples to show that these veterans could financially provide for themselves despite such injuries. The collected writings attest not only to the adaptability of these veterans but also to their fortitude.

Dr. Johnson wrote a prior book that touched on Civil War injuries, *The Scars We Carve: Bodies and Wounds in Civil War Print Culture* (published in 2019), but her interest in the Civil War goes back to her early childhood when her father, an American historian, told her stories of Union soldiers and the history they underwent. She also half-jokingly, half-seriously attributes her fascination with the Civil War to the 1990 film *Dances with Wolves*, starring Kevin Costner as a Union Army soldier.

As for *The Left-Armed Corps*, Dr. Johnson happened upon the book's subject unintentionally. While conducting research for her graduate dissertation at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C., librarians presented her with a box containing letters from Civil War soldiers. The box was part of the William Oland Bourne Collection and was filled to the brim with papers. After browsing the documents and letters, Dr. Johnson was fascinated by these left-handed writers. She wanted to discover the history behind these left-handed men joining this penmanship competition. Out of the almost 540 veterans that entered the competition, Dr. Johnson was able to track down and trace the life and history of 333 of them.

To find out what happened to these men, Dr. Johnson took to the internet. She scoured Ancestry.com to find the lineage of the men and went through birth records and death certificates (when she could find them). She looked up digitized newspapers from around the time of the competition. She took a deep dive into census records to understand how these soldier's lives turned out.

Dr. Johnson often encountered obstacles in her research. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, she couldn't look through the military pension records like she was hoping to do. Oftentimes, the digitized documents were mistranscribed and the writing samples were hard to read since the veterans were writing with their left hands when they had previously been right-handed. At times, Dr. Johnson

typed out her own transcripts of entry pieces to maintain accurate documentation for the book. She also did research into the military operations of the Civil War, creating a reference list of battles and locales described in these veterans' narratives. The copious footnotes in the book attest to her research labor.

For some of the men participating in the competition, Dr. Johnson could find no trace of what became of them either before or after the competition. Dr. Johnson believes that the names attached to those competition entries could have been pseudonyms. She says that she spent "a lot of time looking for 333 guys...finding out where they were born, when they were born, when they died, what their jobs were, all that kind of stuff. So that was really fun... but it was also really sad...when I [found] out some of them died soon after [the war] because of illness."

All the research that Dr. Johnson put into this original box of documents culminated in *The Left-Armed Corps*:

*Writings by Amputee Civil War Veterans*. The

book itself describes the lives of the men that Dr. Johnson could find, from birth to death, and even has writing samples that some of the veterans produced. The book is arranged in chapters, with the first three describing the trials of soldierly life. Chapter four contains grisly first-hand accounts of amputations. The next three chapters deal with the competition, and the last chapter focuses on the veterans who wrote about their lives following their amputations.

Dr. Johnson expects to continue her research in Washington D.C. this summer by looking through military pension records. She hopes to discover new information or leads on what happened to the other entrants in the competition. Ultimately, she wishes this new research can culminate in a second volume of *The Left-Armed Corps*. Dr. Johnson says she wants readers to understand that "people didn't just respond one way to the violence and the [Civil War]...These veterans believed that their sacrifice was extremely important in the history of the nation."

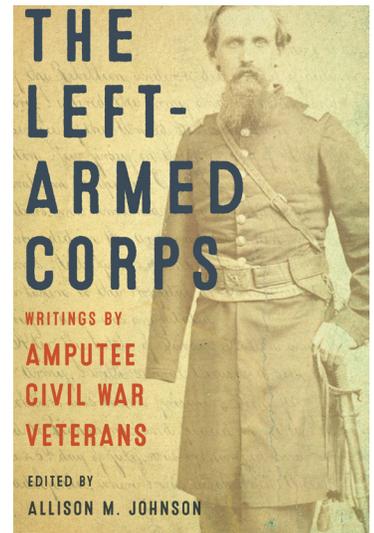


Image of Alonzo L. Mabbett, courtesy of Arthur Mabbett. Cover design by Mandy McDonald Scallan.

*The Left-Armed Corps: Writings of Amputee Civil War Veterans* is available on the Louisiana University Press website at <https://lsupress.org/books/detail/the-left-armed-corps/> and on Amazon.

## **Professor Norris Publishes Travel Essay, A State of Extremes**

**Katie Hayden and Daniela Sanchez Martinez**

Professor Keenan Norris, an associate professor of creative writing here at San José State University, published a travel essay earlier this year titled “An *Alta Journal* Special Report: A State of Extremes” in the *Alta Journal*, a quarterly publication that focuses on California and the West.

The article, which follows Professor Norris’s travels to community colleges from Southern California to Northern California, was inspired by both the works of John Steinbeck and Professor Norris’s desire to voice the disparities within the communities that surround California Community Colleges (CCC). In the January 2023 essay, he delves into topics relating to the racial and economic inequalities that CCC and their surrounding communities face.

Though Professor Norris has taught at SJSU for five years now, he has a lengthy background with community colleges. Before coming to SJSU, he taught at community colleges for fifteen years, including nine years teaching full-time and a five-year tenure at Evergreen Valley College, a community college here in San José. He also worked as an adjunct professor at numerous community colleges all over California.

Professor Norris also serves as the coordinator for SJSU’s Steinbeck Fellows Program, which is a program that awards writers a \$15,000 fellowship to help complete their significant writing project. It is no surprise that he was inspired by Steinbeck’s travel writings when putting together his *Alta Journal* article. In fact, his interest in Steinbeck reaches back to his teenage years. During this part of his youth, he read *Travels with Charley: In Search of America*, published in 1962. He was interested in the format of the book, which contains a series of essays from Steinbeck’s travels throughout the United States. The book focused on the political and social situations of the places he traveled, and Professor Norris wanted to do something similar as he traveled to various California Community Colleges.

Inspired by Steinbeck’s work and writing style, Professor Norris moved forward with investigations. As Professor Norris mentions, he

wanted to create a travel essay that is written in a “quasi journalistic [and] quasi personalistic essay mode.” In the article for the *Alta Journal*, he writes about his experience of what he had seen while he had worked in the CCC system. In particular, he focuses on the economic and social changes that have occurred throughout the state of California, including the increasing gap between social classes as a result of the pandemic and the effects of the state’s devastating wildfires, to name a few.



*Provided by Keenan Norris*

While Professor Norris clearly has experience with several specific community colleges, for his article he decided to focus on certain community colleges throughout the state because he says that these “community colleges [are] microcosms of the larger communities that... make up California as a whole.” “An *Alta Journal* Special Report: A State of Extremes” follows Professor Norris’ journey, beginning at San Diego City College, moving to East Los Angeles College, then Fresno City College, and finally, Columbia College. Professor Norris states how often community colleges are reflective of the communities around them and how they can show some of the economic and social disparities they face. For instance, Professor Norris’s comparison of the country club to San Diego City College demonstrates how the city focuses on appealing to the wealthy rather than providing efficient funds for free education.

Professor Norris wanted to create a balanced perspective of the educational structure of the colleges. In his investigation, he interviews a number of people ranging from administration to faculty to students. He felt that it was important to hear from various stakeholders to better understand the experiences and the pressures that they face. Explaining what a part of the pressure is, he states, “[it is the] economic division that reads onto race

and ethnic origin,” which he states that the Black and Latino communities often deal with.

Ultimately, with this article, Professor Norris wants to do his part to redress the economic and racial issues around California and cast a light on what he feels is the most important tier in the educational system (CCC) “because it’s the base of the system.” He states that the issues that community college students face are the same issues students attending other colleges in the country can experience. Discussing how these issues are not exclusive to one system is the beginning of removing the educational elitism that places the concerns of community colleges on the back burner.

Professor Norris’s work on this article is a small window into his future work. He is currently working on a collection of essays that focuses on his experiences working at CCC. This collection builds on “An *Alta Journal* Special Report: A State of Extremes” by focusing again on CCC, with a central goal of providing further insight into the campuses and communities that surround them.

To read Professor Norris’s article, you can find it on the *Alta Journal* website at <https://www.altasonline.com/dispatches/a42287002/california-community-colleges-unequal-opportunities-keenannorris/>. To keep up with his publications and future projects, visit his website at [www.keenannorris.com](http://www.keenannorris.com).

## ***Reed Magazine Archives Its 156-Year History***

***Peter Buscaglia and Brandon Turner***

*Reed Magazine* is one of the oldest magazine organizations in California. It plays a major role in showcasing the diverse heritage of California as well as works by artists from around the world. They’ve recently published two Pushcart Prize-winning pieces by Kurt Luchs and Joseph Sigurdson and have featured writings of notable literary figures such as Pulitzer-winning William Finnegan, US Poet Laureate Robert Hass, and PEN/Faulkner-winner T.C. Boyle.

*Reed Magazine*’s main goal right now is to create a digital archive of all its past and present issues. This project is being led by the Editor-in-Chief Helen Meservey, and M.F.A. student Mariah Pompa, who serves as the Director of Reed Magazine’s Archivist Society.

*Reed Magazine* wants to digitize all of its issues for the enjoyment of its readers. The Reed Magazine team has been asked many times by alumni if they could receive extra copies of specific issues. Unfortunately, the *Reed Magazine* team

doesn’t always have every issue in their possession. This is where the archiving project comes into play: by uploading all the existing *Reed Magazine* issues, the team can grant access to everyone across the board.

The archiving process begins with the archiving team, led by Mariah Pompa, recording dates and issues by hand and then uploading the dates and issues to a database. Scans are then taken of the pages and the process begins again. As a way of managing the large workload, the task is given to the team by Meservey as a student assignment, ending with a report presented in class each semester.

Like many, *Reed Magazine* faced a few challenges adjusting to the pandemic. Editors had to physically mail issues to students for them to review and complete their assignments since they were unable to meet in person. Team members needed to use Zoom to collaborate, and their work/school schedules made collaboration difficult. Additionally, *Reed Magazine* mainly depends on tabling and literary events to market and sell its volumes. *Reed Magazine* gains opportunities by interacting and networking with other literary magazines and organizations. The inability to travel and congregate in public settings made it difficult to maintain and grow their readership. To tackle this challenge, *Reed Magazine* put more focus on building its online presence. This is followed by *Reed Magazine*’s efforts to archive its volumes, which should make for better audience outreach.

Now that in-person meetings and events have resumed, things are looking much brighter. While there was a bit of an adjustment period to getting used to working in person again, Pompa says that it provided much-needed social interaction and was overall a “great source of friendship.” Additionally, *Reed Magazine* has been focusing on fundraising to offset rising printing costs, purchasing a digital scanner for archiving old volumes, and aiding their commitment to attend local and national literary events once again to make up for the pandemic.

A large commitment of *Reed Magazine* has been to showcase a diverse set of writers and artists from marginalized communities that may be overlooked by other publications. Pompa noted that digitizing their physical archive gives them a chance to highlight the ways that they’ve both succeeded and failed to do so. Pompa says, “Part of looking at the archive is looking at past works and views because we have books that date back to like 1980. As you can imagine, views were very different in 1980 about race, gender identity, anything really like [that]. Part of [what was presented in] the archive

reports that people gave was...[a] little blurb about what was happening at the time, politically, socially.”

The further one looks back in time, the greater the differences in the discourse surrounding race, sexuality, and gender identity compared to now. Pompa goes on to say, “It’s important to recognize... what we published [in the past]. That’s what was the mindset of the time, so it’s part of our history.”



Provided by Reed Magazine

By archiving past work, the *Reed Magazine* team provides readers the chance to take a look at past perspectives and gain insight into the times.

In the future, the *Reed Magazine* team and Archivist Society plans to continue with the project and finish digitizing all past issues in its collection. Currently, there isn’t a deadline for this project, as the team is primarily focused on creating new magazine issues. In addition, the project will take some time due to its large scope and the work/school schedules of various team members. Still, they are committed to continuing the project.

As part of their renewed ability to attend literary events, the *Reed Magazine* team attended the March 2023 Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference and Bookfair in Seattle, Washington, which is considered one of the largest literary events in the nation. They networked with many other literary magazines and organizations. With this major conference, *Reed Magazine* looks to be back in full swing.

Customers looking to obtain Issue 156 can visit their website at <https://www.reedmag.org/> to learn more. Furthermore, check out their Instagram and Twitter under the handle @reedmagazine for updates on upcoming issues and events. Lastly, if interested, submissions for Issue 157 will open June 1, 2023.

## Former TAs Publish New Book Chapter, “Teaching Teaching as a Process”

Juventino Ceja Mendoza, Aileen Murakami, Kristell Nunez

In January 2023, Dr. Ryan Skinnell and 14 former SJSU teaching associates (TAs) published a chapter in the edited collection *Threshold Conscripts: Rhetoric and Composition Teaching Assistantships*, edited by William J. Macauley Jr., Leslie R. Anglesey, Brady Edwards, Kathryn M. Lambrecht, and Phillip K. Lovas, and available through the WAC Clearinghouse. Their chapter, titled “Teaching Teaching as a Process: San José State University’s TA Program and the Development of Pedagogical Thinking,” focuses on how SJSU’s TA program prepares new teachers for their work as teaching associates and perhaps for their future careers.



Provided by Ryan Skinnell

The project began to come together in Spring 2021 when Dr. Ryan Skinnell, who as the Assistant Writing Program Administrator coordinates the TA program, heard about a call for proposals and reached out to former and current TAs to ask if any of them would be interested in co-authoring a chapter. The collaboration took place from Spring 2021 to 2023, primarily via Zoom and Google Docs, due to the pandemic. Along the way, there were many triumphs and challenges. Condensing the work of fourteen people into a seven-page chapter was rather difficult. The group worked diligently to ensure that their writing was cohesive and allowed everyone to have a say. Dr. Skinnell wrote the introductory paragraph and thesis. His primary role though was as a facilitator for the TAs, who did the majority of the work.

The resulting chapter focuses on SJSU’s TA program, which allows graduate students to design and teach their own introductory writing course. Because many new TAs are new to teaching, they complete English 259: Seminar in Composition Studies, where they are taught to analyze and evaluate approaches to studying and teaching composition. The goal of their chapter is to “define

and reflect on how SJSU’s TA program invites new teachers into the teaching process.” Dr. Skinnell notes that teaching first-year writing has quite a learning curve and says, “It’s easy to forget how much you had to learn to do this job”—and this was one of the key ideas that the authors sought to highlight in their chapter. The chapter introduces three key components of the program: curriculum support (through English 259), formal professional development (training, workshops, and feedback/assessment practices), and informal professional development (coffee meetups, group chats, etc.).

Former TA and current SJSU instructor Ume Ali, who spent two years working as a TA during the pandemic, provided insight into the group’s writing process.



*Provided by Ume Ali*

First, she notes, the TAs wrote a proposal highlighting how to define the program and explained how the program effectively integrated TAs into professional development opportunities and provided evidence of how those opportunities were successful. Each TA reviewed the proposal and added information about their personal experiences. Then,

common themes were sorted into values of the TA program, formal and informal components, successes, and results. From there, the TAs formed groups of three and divided the work. Ali and her group worked on the formal aspects of TA training by taking ENGL 259 and meeting with Dr. Skinnell throughout. Afterward, the TAs worked together to revise the article for publication.

Jillian Murphy, a current instructor at SJSU, started as a TA in 2017 and spent two years in the TA program. She’d been recommended to the SJSU TA program by a professor she had worked with during her undergraduate career at Santa Clara University. Murphy notes that the process of writing the chapter began with the TAs brainstorming ideas on a collaborative Google Document. They all threw ideas out and, from those, picked out the topics they thought would best communicate the highlights of the TA program. Murphy focused on the topic of curricular support.

Another current SJSU instructor and former TA, Amber Sylva, knew that the program was a perfect fit since her goal was to become a college instructor. Sylva worked as a TA from Fall 2019 to Spring 2021. The TA program helped her develop teaching styles through new pedagogies and reflecting on the curriculum and teaching styles. Sylva’s role in the chapter involved composing and revising a section.



*Provided by Amber Sylva*

The value of the collaboration was that it gave the authors the ability to figure out what was most important, with the added advantage of being able to bounce ideas off each other and Dr. Skinnell. Once the main writing was done, editing involved constant rewriting by everyone until each section met their standards. Editing also involved removing things there wasn’t room for and adding details to things that needed more clarification.

The main challenge of a collaborative chapter was, of course, the process of the authors figuring out how to write something that felt authentic and communicated their experiences in the program without sounding disorganized. Although there were a lot of compromises, each TA prioritized that they wanted readers to be able to hear that there were many writers writing about their experiences and that it wasn’t just one simultaneous experience.

Overall, Dr. Skinnell and the TAs learned how rewarding it is to work in a collaborative setting among various time zones and media during the pandemic. They enjoyed reflecting on all that the program had given them: professional development, long-lasting experiences, and a community of colleagues and friends.

You can access “Teaching Teaching as a Process: San José State University’s TA Program and the Development of Pedagogical Thinking” through the WAC Clearinghouse here: <https://wac.colostate.edu/books/perspectives/threshold/>.

## Fall 2023 Course Descriptions

### ***English 100W (Section 01) - Writing in the Discipline***

Instructor: Dr. Maite Urcaregui  
Course Type: In Person  
Course Day(s): Tuesday, Thursday  
Time: 1:30 P.M.–2:45 P.M.

English 100W: Writing in the Discipline is a writing and literature course designed for English majors to develop advanced proficiency in college-level reading and writing. In Fall 2023, English 100W we will explore the theme of “Reading Intersectionality” to guide our reading and writing across forms and genres. We will read and analyze texts across forms and genres—with a particular emphasis on poetry as well as prose (both fiction and non-fiction as well as novels and short stories), drama, and graphic novels—to explore how authors attend to diverse and divergent experiences of identity, power, and privilege in their work and to develop a reading and writing practice that is attentive to the relationship between literary form and forms of social difference. English 100W will build on the understanding of the various forms and genres, audiences, and purposes of college writing that students have developed in their lower-division composition courses to move toward an advanced understanding and application of the discourse and methods specific to the field of English literary studies. Students will practice close reading literary texts, writing and revising informal and formal essays of literary analysis, and peer review and writing workshops. This class will be a collaborative setting in which students are encouraged to develop their own voice as emerging literary scholars and writers!

### ***ENGL 100W - Writing Workshop***

Instructor: Kathleen McSharry  
Course Type: Online  
Course Day(s): Monday, Wednesday  
Time: Multiple sections, 12:00 P.M.–1:15 P.M.;  
1:30 P.M.–2:45 P.M.

Integrated writing and literature course to develop advanced proficiency in college-level reading and writing that broadens and deepens understanding of forms and genres, audiences, and purposes of college writing developed in lower-division composition courses while developing mastery of the discourse and methods specific to the field of English literary studies. Repeated practice in close reading of literary texts, writing and revising

informal and formal essays of literary analysis, and peer review of other students’ writing.

### ***ENGL 100WB - Written Communication: Business***

Instructor: Jennifer Bean  
Course Type: In Person  
Course Day(s): Monday, Wednesday  
Times: Multiple sections, 10:30 A.M.–11:45 A.M.; 12:00 P.M.–1:15 P.M.; 3:00 P.M.–4:15 P.M.;  
4:30 P.M.–5:45 P.M.

Written communications for business majors; includes a minimum of 8,000 words of writing spaced throughout the semester.

### ***ENGL 100WB - Written Communication: Business***

Instructor: Sian Sloan  
Course Type: In Person  
Course Day(s): Tuesday, Thursday  
Times: Multiple sections, 9:00 A.M.–10:15 A.M.;  
10:30 A.M.–11:45 A.M.; 1:30 P.M.–2:45 P.M.

Instructor: Kirsten Shwartz  
Course Type: Online  
Course Day(s): Tuesday, Thursday  
Times: Multiple sections, T 6:00 P.M.–8:45 P.M.;  
TH 6:00 P.M.–8:45 P.M.

Written communications for business majors; includes a minimum of 8,000 words of writing spaced throughout the semester.

### ***ENGL 101 - Introduction to Literary Criticism***

Instructor: Revathi Krishnaswamy  
Course Type: In Person  
Course Day(s): Monday, Wednesday  
Time: 12:00 P.M.–1:15 P.M.

Study and application of various historical and contemporary approaches, including foundational twentieth-century theory as well as contemporary approaches. Applications of critical models to various literary, visual, and digital texts.

### **English 103 - Modern English**

Instructor: Linda C. Mitchell

Course Type: In Person

Course Day(s): Monday, Wednesday

Time: 10:30 A.M.–11:45 A.M.

This course provides a survey of the growth and structure of Modern English including its phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Material in the course will also focus on some recurring problems of “usage” and/or “correctness,” regional and social varieties of English, language development, and the historical development of English, especially as it affects the language today.

### **ENGL 103 - Modern English**

Instructor: Professor N. Stork

Course Type: Online

Course Day(s): Tuesday, Thursday

Time: 9:00 A.M.–10:15 A.M.

Finally, a commonsense explanation of grammar that you can take with you the rest of your life! Explore the amazingly simple grammatical foundations of English and learn how they grow complex over time and space as language evolves to meet our needs. Practical, insightful and open to all sorts of new linguistic phenomena! Outdated and current slang will also be analyzed per student demand.

### **ENGL 105 - Advanced Composition**

Instructor: Professor Tom Moriarty

Course Type: Online

Course Day(s): Tuesday, Thursday

Time: 1:30 P.M.–2:45 P.M.

ENGL 105 is an advanced writing workshop. Using rhetorical theory as our guide, we will produce three projects for multiple audiences – in multiple genres – ranging from the academic to the popular, from essays and arguments to memes and tweets for Twitter, TikTok, and other forms of social media. We will also prepare and present a rhetorical analysis of a genre and work on stylistic clarity and grace.

### **ENGL 106 - Professional and Technical Editing**

Instructor: Rebecca Kling

Course Type: Online

Course Day(s): Monday, Wednesday

Time: 10:30 A.M.–11:45 A.M.

Copy editing, substantive editing and reorganization of

technical documents. Review of grammar and punctuation to ensure technical mastery and ability to justify editing decisions. Graphics editing, access aids and professional skills of an editor.

### **ENGL 107 - Technical Writing**

Instructor: Mark Thompson

Course Type: In Person

Course Day(s): Tuesday, Thursday

Time: 10:30 A.M.–11:45 A.M.

Survey of technical and professional writing. Students learn how to write and design persuasive documents that get real things done in the real world. Projects include resumes, instructions (video and print), presentations, user manuals, and augmented reality apps. Includes learning digital tools used to author and publish writing in the current tech landscape such as DITA, Augmented Reality (AR), SnagIt, Adobe Premiere, and Madcap Flare.

### **ENGL 110 - UX Design and Visual Communication**

Instructor: Mark Thompson

Course Type: In Person

Course Day(s): Tuesday, Thursday

Time: 12:00 P.M.–1:15 P.M.

In this class we look at technical communication from a visual standpoint. How do we design documents and computer screens to be easy on our readers? Class projects include designing websites, prototyping app interfaces for commercial drones, authoring digital brochures, and building user experiences (UX) with tech from the ground up. Class tools will include AI, Photoshop, InDesign, and Figma.

### **ENGL 112A - Children's Literature**

Instructor: Tanja Nathaneal

Course Type: Online, asynchronous, check-ins are required on a weekly basis.

Theme: Crossing Borders

“Touch the sea and at once you are joined to its farthest shore.” – Salmon Rushdie

During this online asynchronous course students acquire an understanding of how children's literature functions in an international context and how cultural diversity may be reflected in children's books. This course will focus on a range of contemporary transnational literatures, either originating from or set in various locales around the world. In the study of these texts, students will

gain insight into diverse human experiences, helping to broaden their perspectives by offering windows into other cultures. Thematically, we will focus on borders and how by crossing borders or through the journey itself protagonists achieve a heightened awareness of their identities and their impact on the world. In light of this, we will also explore themes of emerging eco-citizens and the environment, especially as it relates to climate change. We will also observe representations of home, what is learned in the journey away from and return to home, or when one seeks a new home. With these concepts in mind, texts will be evaluated as literature with the goal of building greater cross-cultural understanding.

The course is designed to meet the subject matter requirement for those considering a teaching credential. The information and curriculum approaches we will explore should be helpful for elementary, middle, and/or secondary levels of instruction. Nevertheless, this is a literature course, not an educational methodology course.

### **ENGL 112A - Children's Literature**

Instructor: Professor Roohi Vora  
Course Type: In Person  
Course Day(s): Tuesday, Thursday  
Time: 10:30 A.M.–11:45 A.M.

Study of literature for elementary and intermediate grades, representing a variety of cultures. Evaluation and selection of texts.

### **ENGL 112B - Literature for Young Adults**

Instructor: Professor Mary Warner  
Course Type: In Person  
Course Day(s): Monday  
Time: 4:30 P.M.–7:15 P.M.

In ENGL 112B, we read *After the First Death*, *Speak*, *Whale Talk*, *Witness*, *Prisoner of Azkaban*, and *We Were Here*. Two additional texts--*Literature for Today's Young Adults* and *Adolescents in the Search for Meaning*--introduce YA literature genres, demonstrate the complexity of the best YA lit, and provide author/ book resources Book Talks, a book to film paper, and a unit of study/annotated bibliography requirement deepen student knowledge of YA Literature. The 4th credit enhancement includes the options of field experience and creating a blog devoted to sub-genre of YA Lit.

### **ENGL 113 - Gothic and Horror Fiction**

Instructor: Katherine D. Harris  
Course Type: In Person  
Course Day(s): Tuesday, Thursday  
Time: 9:00 A.M.–10:15 A.M.

Study of the rise of the Gothic from the 19th Century into the 20th & 21st centuries. Texts may include novels, short stories, games, episodic television, movies, graphic novels, etc.

### **ENGL 117A - American Literature, Film, & Culture**

Instructor: Faith Kirk  
Course Type: In Person  
Course Day(s): Friday  
Time: 9:30 A.M.– 12:15 P.M.

Using both film and literature, the course examines narratives that create and define cultural identities in the United States. A variety of cultural moments in the history of North America as depicted in both film and literature as well as the artistic practices used to shape those representations will be discussed.

### **ENGL 123B - African Literature**

Instructor: Dr. Meghan Gorman-DaRif  
Course Type: In Person  
Course Day(s): Tuesday, Thursday  
Time: 12:00 P.M.–1:15 P.M.

This course examines literature in English produced during the postcolonial period from a variety of countries and cultures in Africa, with special attention to how authors engage in their texts with the contexts of colonialism and resistance, systems of education, and the intersections of race and gender. The course readings include texts reflective of Bildungsroman in Africa, women's writing after Independence, and contemporary fiction addressing environmental crises and the legacies and shifting forms of racist structures of power. This course is not meant to be a complete survey in African literature, but instead aims to introduce students to some of the themes that have emerged in postcolonial African fiction over the last fifty years, and the historical, political, and social contexts from which such writing emerges.

### **English 125 - Homer to Dante**

Instructor: Linda C. Mitchell

Course Type: In Person

Course Day(s): Monday, Wednesday

Time: 9:00 A.M.–10:15 A.M.

This course offers an introduction to some of the major literary works of the first 2,000 years of Western Culture—works of great genius and superb craft. They are as much a part of our heritage as that which we receive from our parents. Our goal this semester is to take possession of that heritage—like heirs who have come of age—by understanding how these works are connected to each other and to us via a series of parallel and contrasting patterns of ideas and experiences that form a path of human continuity across time and place. Students will engage and explore the texts from a variety of contexts and viewpoints: textual, literary, political, social, and cultural; become familiar with a range of critical approaches to the texts; and demonstrate a working knowledge of the texts' influences within the Western literary tradition.

### **English 130 - Writing Fiction**

Instructor: Keenan Norris

Course Type: In Person

Course Day(s): Monday, Wednesday

Time: 12:00 P.M.–1:15 P.M.

In the fiction workshop, students will examine how literary fiction works. Some questions students will begin to uncover include the following: What makes a character unforgettable? What makes for a musical sentence? What makes a scene transport the reader in such a way that they forget that they are reading? What is it about a story that evokes an emotional response in the reader? How do writers create and reinvent these moments? Through lecture, discussion, assigned reading, writing exercises, and peer feedback, students will investigate elements of craft including plot and story structure, characterization, point of view, and voice among other topics to write and revise two short stories.

### **ENGL 130 - Writing Fiction**

Instructor: Nicholas Taylor

Course Type: In Person

Course Day(s): Tuesday, Thursday

Time: 12:00 P.M.–1:15 P.M.

Workshop in short stories or other short fiction. Beginning the novel in individual cases. May be repeated twice for credit.

### **ENGL 131 - Writing Poetry**

Instructor: J. Michael Martinez

Course Type: In Person

Course Day(s): Tuesday, Thursday

Time: 10:30 A.M.–11:45 A.M.

Workshop in verse forms. Study of traditional and contemporary models. May be repeated twice for credit.

### **ENGL 133 - Reed Magazine**

Instructor: Helen Meservey

Course Type: In Person

Course Day(s): Friday

Time: 9:30 A.M.–12:15 P.M.

Student-edited and managed literary magazine. Contents selected from local, national and international submissions. Students urged to work on the magazine for the two semesters required for publication. Open to all majors. May be repeated once for credit.

### **ENGL 135 - Writing Nonfiction**

Instructor: Brook McClurg

Course Type: In Person

Course Day(s): Monday, Wednesday

Time: 1:30 P.M.– 2:45 P.M.

Advanced creative writing workshop in literary nonfiction. Study of legacy and contemporary models.

### **ENGL 140A - Old English**

Instructor: Professor N. Stork

Course Type: Online

Course Day(s): Tuesday, Thursday

Time: 10:30 A.M.–11:45 A.M.

Wesað hæle, mine leorning-cnihtas! (May you be healthy and whole, my young, learning knights!) Learn to read Old English (not Shakespeare, but the language of *Beowulf* and the Anglo-Saxon Charters, Charms and Riddles). No prior knowledge needed! Your biennial chance -- only offered every second year so grab it now!

### **ENGL 145 - Shakespeare and Performance**

Instructor: Dr. Adrienne L. Eastwood

Course Type: Online

Course Day(s): Monday, Wednesday

Time: 10:30 A.M.–11:45 P.M.

In this course, we will examine in-depth several of Shakespeare's plays specifically addressing issues of performance and interpretation. Placing each play in the context of its original performance during Shakespeare's time, and its life on stage and screen in the ensuing centuries, encourages an engagement with the ways in which re-imagining Shakespeare's works helps them retain their vitality and cultural relevance.

### **ENGL 153 - Studies in the British Novel Before 1900**

Instructor: Katherine D. Harris

Course Type: In Person

Course Day(s): Tuesday, Thursday

Time: 1:30 P.M.–2:45 P.M.

Study of the origin, evolution, and spread of the British novel through the 18th and 19th centuries in a global context.

### **ENGL 165 - Topics in Ethnic American Literature**

Instructor: Noelle Brada-Williams

Course Type: In Person

Course Day(s): Tuesday, Thursday

Time: 1:30 P.M.–2:45 P.M.

Focus: Asian American Literature

The course will examine literature written by Asian Americans from the 20th and 21st centuries across a variety of literary forms such as poetry, short stories, and graphic novels. It will explore representations of a broad range of communities, time periods, and personal identities (including class, ethnicity, gender, and sexual identity) with an eye not only to understanding some of the history and breadth of Asian American experience, but how authors utilize and reshape literary techniques.

### **ENGL 169 - Ethnicity in American Literature**

Instructor: J. Michael Martinez

Course Type: In Person

Course Day(s): Tuesday, Thursday

Time: 12:00 P.M.–1:15 P.M.

Study of expressions of ethnic and racial identity in American literature, with close attention to strategies of representation and resistance. Selected texts primarily arise out of the lived experiences of people of color,

including Native Americans, Black Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinx Americans.

### **ENGL 181 - Special Topics**

Instructor: Amanda Emmanuel Smith

Course Type: Online

Course Day(s): Monday, Wednesday

Time: 9:00 A.M.–10:15 A.M.

Special Topic: (Re)inventing the (post)human

Our humanities departments have long maintained an anthropocentric worldview that sees the human as the highest "life" form on earth, in the universe. And we humans have done much to ensure our own preservation: we've put people in space and made and prolonged life through in vitro fertilization, cloning, and interspecific organ donations. We've even generated artificial intelligence and digitized our bodies, blurring the line between (hu)man and machine. But, what if, in initiating these techno-scientific advancements, we've unwittingly created our own end? When Harold Bloom famously asserted that Shakespeare had "invented the human," he was surely referring to the extent to which the writer had "fleshed out" his characters, rendering them whole. But he was also suggesting that being human wasn't necessarily a fixed or inherent state. Instead, it was one that had been created and could presumably be undone.

In this class, we will read two novels and one novella: Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, Jeanette Winterson's *Frankissstein*, and Karen Russell's *Sleep Donation*. In them, we will encounter enslaved clones, sultry sexbots, autonomous brains, and zombie-like insomniacs. These are works that, like Shakespeare's, (re)invent the human and challenge our long-held ideas about humanity. Drawing from recent, and largely posthumanist, theory, we will evaluate whether we will be able to survive the techno-centric world we have now constructed.

### **ENGL 182 - Women, Gender, and Sexuality in Literature**

Instructor: Dr. M. Tod Edgerton

Course Type: Online

Course Day(s): Monday, Wednesday

Time: 3:00 P.M.– 4:15 P.M.

"I speak of [the 'erotic'] as an assertion of the lifeforce of women [of the feminine, of humans]; of that creative energy empowered, the knowledge and use of which we are now reclaiming in our language, our history, our dancing, our loving, our work, our lives."  
(Audre Lorde, *The Uses of the Erotic*)

This course will celebrate diversely-experienced bodies and sexualities, problematizing essentialized and binary-oppositional models of gender and sexuality, reading critically and rewriting creatively the language of sexed, gendered, racialized, and sexualized bodies. We will explore an “erotics of reading” (thinking of Lorde, from my epigraph, and of Susan Sontag) to plumb the manifold “pleasures of the text” (thinking of Roland Barthes) in our reading and writing to enjoy more fully the sensual-material elements—the aesthetic properties—of literary texts and the ways in which they “think feelingly” (Dickinson) about intersectional aspects of sexed bodies, gendered subjectivities, desire, love, and life. Assignments will include both more and less formal engagements with the texts that (in the light of my epigraph) activate critical-theoretical, personally reflective, and creative responses. As such, our reading and writing assignments will function as modes of critical investigation, creative experimentation, and personal empowerment.

We will focus on 20th and 21st C. texts of poetry, fiction, nonfiction, hybrid, and drama. The cis and trans women, genderqueer, and queer male writers I’m currently considering for our reading list (no promises...) include Octavia Butler, micha cárdenas, Jos Charles, Ching-In Chen, Caryl Churchill, Natalie Diaz, Marguerite Duras, Jean Genet, Jack Halberstam, Cathy Park Hong, bell hooks, Bhanu Kapil, Audre Lorde, Carole Maso, Carmen Maria Machado, Cherrie Moraga, Maggie Nelson, Suzan-Lori Parks, Trace Peterson, Paul B. Preciado, Claudia Rankine, Adrienne Rich, Fabian Romero, Noah Ross, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Gertrude Stein, Rosmarie Waldrop, Jeanette Winterson, and C.D. Wright. Graduate students are welcome. Feel free to email [Dr. Michael.Edgerton@sjsu.edu](mailto:Dr.Michael.Edgerton@sjsu.edu) with any questions.

### **English 201 - Materials and Methods of Literary Research**

Instructor: Dr. Maite Urcaregui  
Course Type: In Person  
Course Day(s): Monday  
Time: 4:45 P.M.–6:00 P.M.

English 201: Materials and Methods of Literary Research is a graduate-level seminar that offers students an introduction to literary studies as an academic discipline and way of thinking. Together, we will explore and develop various methodologies for participating within and contributing to the study of literature by reading secondary criticism and theoretical texts alongside literature. We will read across literary forms and genres—including poetry, prose (non-fiction and fiction as well

as novels and short stories), drama, film, and graphic narrative—as we develop our close reading, critical thinking, and argumentative writing. While this course is a graduate course, advanced undergraduate students and honors students are encouraged to participate. If you are interested in participating, please email Dr. Urcaregui at [maite.urcaregui@sjsu.edu](mailto:maite.urcaregui@sjsu.edu).

### **ENGL 259 - Seminar in Composition Studies**

Instructor: Ryan Skinnell  
Course Type: Hybrid (In Person & Asynchronous)  
Course Day(s): Thursday  
Time: 4:00 P.M.–6:45 P.M.

In this course, we will study current approaches to studying and teaching writing. Specifically, we will examine perspectives about writing that inform its instruction: what writing is, how it is studied, how people learn, how writing is taught, how it should be taught, and whether or not it even can be taught. Our overarching goal will be to understand writing/composition as a complex, situated act in order to chart possibilities for developing and improving our work as teachers and scholars. The course will focus on situating issues associated with teaching writing in theoretical frameworks of rhetoric and composition studies, and we will discuss practical teaching issues, as well. This is a graduate-level course that can be taken by advanced undergraduate students with instructor permission.



*Photo by Nicole Nigh*

## Letter from the Chair, Noelle Brada-Williams

On the evening of April 20th I attended the “Exploring Careers in the Humanities” event sponsored by SJSU’s College of Humanities and the Arts and the Career Center. ABC 7 News journalist and SJSU alumnus Dustin Dorsey interviewed four alumni from our College of Humanities and the Arts, including two people from English, one from Philosophy and one from Linguistics. All four talked about how their time in college prepared them for their careers. Specifically, they emphasized the critical thinking and communication skills they had developed through their coursework. Another key point the panel made was to take advantage of the network you are building at SJSU. Three out of the four panelists plus the moderator all found jobs through connections they had made while at San José State—either fellow students or faculty. Amirissa Mina, who is now Director of Human Resources at Beautycounter, said she actually got started in Human Resources at the urging of a former classmate who knew her work from English 129! Amirissa also pointed out that people with educations in fields like English have an advantage in the workplace because the kind of reading and writing we do tends to make us more self-reflective, more empathetic, and able to interpret problems and come up with creative solutions. The Philosophy alumnus, who now works for a law firm focused on patent law, noted that strong communication skills become even more important as you progress in your career and need to lead others. I have certainly found this to be true in my own career as managers have to be able to provide clear instructions to those they supervise and frequently have to produce written and oral evaluations of the people they manage.

Both of the English alumni on the panel had had to work full time while they went to school, but they managed to find time to get involved in activities on campus. I urge you to do the same as your college years provide you a unique opportunity to make lifelong connections with people who could potentially be your friends and colleagues for years to come. SJSU already produces more



*Provided by Noelle Brada-Williams*

employees of Silicon Valley than any other school in the nation. Start your networking for your post-graduation future now. To help you with this, we plan to increase the number of department socials we do to one every semester, so be looking for the announcement of our Fall 2023 Department Social as soon as you return next Fall. We had some great food and lots of faculty at our Spring 2023 social, but I would like to see more students attend since they are really meant for you.

In general, I want to urge you all to take advantage of the things that add value to your tuition, not just as networking opportunities but as experiences that can enrich your life. For example, this month, in addition to the Career panel, I attended poet and essayist Hanif Adurraqib’s appearance as a guest of the Center for Literary Arts. Hearing him made me rethink the connection of sound and language. I wanted to go home and create all new play lists. Then I watched both creative writing and dance students perform an amazing multidisciplinary collaboration at the Poetic Alchemy performance at the Hammer on April 17th (led by Professor Martinez). As I write, there are still plenty more events to come this semester with two more CLA guests, the Legacy of Poetry, and our Department Awards Ceremony, just to name the ones that are currently marked on my own calendar. As a student you have a standing invitation to the cultural life of the university. If a single event could reshape the way you look at the world or give you a life-changing connection, can you risk missing it?

We will be doing a virtual English-specific alumni career panel right after Memorial Day, once all of the activities of finals and graduation are off your plate. Please join us!

-- Noelle Brada-Williams

### NEWSLETTER STAFF

**Copyediting:** Jordan Hiestand, Jennifer Lopez-Suar, Angelica Cornejo, Aleksandra Gorka, Aileen Murakami, Kevin Nguyen, Jarret Valverde

**Graphics:** Nicole Nigh, Peter Buscaglia, Juventino Ceja Mendoza, Dorothy Chin, Danny Ramirez-Hernandez

**Course Descriptions:** Yamile Alvarado-Mendoza, Katie Hayden

**Layout:** July Simeona, Kristell Nunez, Krysta Lynea Sanchez, Brandon Turner

**Proofreading:** Sara Talbot, Dylan Khieu

**Managing Editor:** Dr. Sara West