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## SJSU Headed for Online Classes?

By Stacey Chang

State budget cuts to the CSU have made it harder for San Jose State University students to graduate on time. The 4-year graduation rate is at a low 8%, while the 6-year graduation rate is at a shocking 46%. SJSU, in order to help more students to receive the credits they need to graduate, wants to make a push towards more online classes.

An 18% budget cut to CSU means campuses have had to cut almost \$300 million out of their spending. San Jose State University was forced to cut the number of classes and sections, while increasing the number of students per class. Beginning this semester, the maximum unit cap was reduced from 18 units to 15 units. While students pay more for tuition, they get less individual learning out of overcrowded classrooms. Many students complain about being waitlisted for high-demand courses semester after semester. Others are forced to enroll in classes irrelevant to their immediate degree goals in order to reach the 12 units required to receive their financial aid.

Professors, too, are suffering; while the workload has increased, the pay has not. In August the SJSU administration announced a program to alleviate these mounting pressures. The SJSU Online Initiative is designed to offer “online education opportunities ranging from single courses to complete degree and certificate programs through the College of International and Extended Studies (CIES).” Trying to address the impacted classes in order to keep students moving towards graduation, the Online Initiative enrolls students in courses uploaded onto the online platform provided by CIES. As proposed, the program asks professors to teach an online version of high-demand courses as an overload—a teaching burden that is not to exceed 125% of their normal workload. Because the CIES is not part of regular sessions, the regular semester or yearly budget for departments is not affected. Thus, more students have access to high demand classes without any added money from SJSU’s regular sessions budget.

The special sessions CIES program offers completely online classes lasting 10 weeks. Students enrolled in a online section of a high-demand course would complete the same coursework in the regular session’s 16-week course. Financial aid may not cover tuition, and the tuition for these... courses is based on

per-unit costs, which are estimated to range from the mid- or high-\$300 range per unit. This means if the class is \$350 per unit, a 3-unit class would cost \$1050 and a 5-unit class, \$1750. But CIES is aware that these classes could be the difference needed to graduate a year early, and so students may be willing to pay more.

When the initiative was announced in August, professors were given until September 7 to sign their section of a high-demand class up for the program. The online classes were to begin in October. The initiative failed to launch any online sections from the Department of English and Comparative Literature in this first call for volunteers. Professors were unable to develop in such a short time a course that would “adhere to quality online course design and development guidelines” published by CIES.

There were also a number of unanswered questions about the program that could not be adequately answered in such a short time frame. Professors, who make money through their intellect, worry about the rights to their intellectual property; at least one request for proposal received by our department stipulates that the course content become SJSU property. Online instruction is also expensive, requiring as much as three times as much work from the instructor. While altruism—helping students expand their minds may be the main motivator for most is what motivates professors to teach – pragmatism dictates they be compensated for their labor. The instructor’s compensation through CIES does not guarantee the same benefits (since instructors hired by CIES are hired as “Volunteer Faculty” and therefore not covered by the contract that applies to teaching in regular session). Instructors are paid per student, up to a cap that varies depending on the instructor’s rank. The department receives a 19% cut in the revenue CIES takes in from student tuition, as it always has from special sessions (winter, summer) classes through CIES.

Money aside, professors have even more concerns about the Individual Online Course Offerings CIES has proposed. The quality of online courses continues to be debated; online courses exist, even in English departments, but the teaching platforms and strategies for this new medium are still evolving. The question persists: can we effectively teach and learn without physically meeting with students? In reading and writing classes, discussion and workshops are crucial, and have traditionally depended on face-to-face contact. Eye contact and reading the students’ body language allow the professor to deduce whether the class is following along.

A student can interject and ask questions whenever needed. The immediate and nuanced feedback possible in face-to-face instruction is difficult to reproduce in asynchronous environments. In a classroom, other students are able to respond to what one student says, allowing for rich class discussion. Workshops offer developing writers the insights into the work of their

peers and the feedback from real readers, but conducted online such workshops require more time to manage. Publishers are developing management tools to answer such challenges, but faculty needs to be trained to use these new teaching tools, and they need to rethink their own teaching roles and strategies as they experiment with the new instructional media and the learning styles they demand.

All of this takes time. Is online education part of our future here in the Department of English and Comparative Literature? Yes. Given the budget pressures and the increasing role of the computer in all of our communications, personal and professional, it is hard to see how it won’t be. Will the new medium for instruction require change? Yes. But it also offers rich possibilities for exploring anew what it is that we do and how we do it: How can style in writing or creativity be taught online and how will students interact and learn from one another? How will new writing environments affect the way we operate within writing communities and peer reviews? These are challenges our discipline faces in the wake of digital changes. But such disciplinary and pedagogical exploration demands careful study and exploration, and continued debate. The impracticality of the August-to-October push for Individual Online Course Offerings may have failed, but it has raised to our attention the challenges and possibilities now open to us. •

Faculty who want to explore online writing tools should contact Cindy Baer ([cindy.baer@sjsu.edu](mailto:cindy.baer@sjsu.edu)). There is a project afoot to test the Criterion Online Writing Service from ETS, and she is looking for guinea pigs.

## Online Learning Platforms Offer Cool, Convenient Learning

By James M. Coyle

Writing Web Copy for Your Startup. Tap Your Creative Unconscious: a Writer Workshop. Wild Writing with Laurie Wagner. Take My Word for it! A Mother-Daughter Creative Writing Adventure. These are among the writing classes you can take through Skillshare, a community marketplace for classes. Courses are offered in both online and hybrid formats.

Most of the writing classes mentioned above are taught by Laurie Wagner, a published writer, artist, and creativity coach who has been making things with her imagination, her hands and her heart for years. Wagner also teaches several classes on [writers.com](http://writers.com) and from her home in Alameda.

The Internet has long been touted as a democratic, grass-roots platform. More and more, through our

interactions on the internet, we are learning that we can learn from each other. Skillshare taps into that learning potential. Isidora Torres, the West Coast development intern at Skillshare, says that Skillshare offers an alternative from the traditional learning structure; Skillshare understands that students aren't molded from the same ball of clay; we individually shape and mold our own learning habits.

Skillshare classes do not transfer to a degree program; they do provide life-long learners with what they want to learn; and sometimes *who* they want to learn from.



Jacob Jett, a San Jose State student and current Skillshare student-advocate, talked about the value of Skillshare classes:

“It’s nice not working for a piece of paper, or paying huge tuition bills, and just getting some good old fashion knowledge on the cheap. These classes are taught by professionals who are on the ground floor for the changes that take place in the industry everyday so you get real insight. It’s also nice to study more unconventional topics you might not pick up at SJSU.”

The more unconventional topics you can find in the Skillshare marketplace range from Backpacking in Southeast Asia to Tying Neckties and Bow-ties. Online learning communities like Skillshare allow students all over the globe to engage in a fun, innovative learning environment where students are driven by their desire to learn, not earn a degree.

On Skillshare, you may choose to take a class purely online at your own convenience, or in the hybrid format where workshops are online and in community meeting places, like the local coffee shop.

Skillshare classes, or the other handful of online learning platforms, are not meant to replace your college education, they are meant to *supplement* it. Traditional universities are also experimenting within open, online learning environments, increasing access to elite institutions at no, or little, cost to participants.

Coursera, an online learning platform that hosts courses from top universities, taught by the university faculty, states succinctly the purpose of these new learning platforms: “Whether you're looking to improve your resume, advance your career, or just learn more and expand your knowledge, we hope there will be multiple courses that you find interesting.”

Another online platform edX, which was founded by Harvard and MIT, offers mostly research and science-based classes, like Solid State Chemistry, Introduction to Computer Science, and Circuits and Electronics, which is MIT’s first “X” course. A not-for-profit enterprise, edX was built around the 21<sup>st</sup> century student: instructional designers tailored their online platform specifically to interactive study via the web.

Classes on Skillshare, Coursera, and edX range anywhere from free to \$100. You can sign up there on websites: Skillshare.com, edX.org, and coursera.org. •

## An Internship with CommUniverCity San Jose

By Brian Beggs

*CommUniverCity Mission Statement: CommUniverCity builds community by engaging residents and students in service learning projects that accomplish neighborhood driven goals.*

The CommUniverCity headquarters is located off of McLaughlin Ave at McKinley Elementary in the Brookwood Terrace Neighborhood of San Jose. I was at a neighborhood committee meeting just about a year ago when we were updating the CommUniverCity Mission Statement. Among the attendees were local neighborhood community members, City of San Jose officials, project coordinators, SJSU professors and students, and volunteers. I fit into the last two categories of attendees as my internship at CommUniverCity began. Along with another SJSU student, I was tasked to write up a newsletter and brochure for CommUniverCity. We were taking English 199 and it was my first semester back at SJSU since graduating in 2009. I was definitely intimidated by my return to school, but because English 199 had a format more akin to the writing profession, my transition was greatly eased.

This internship opened to me the many ongoing projects organized by CommUniverCity—three of which I am still involved in to this day.

### Garden to Table

Run by CommUniverCity project coordinator and SJSU graduate student Zach Lewis, Garden to Table focuses on sustainable food production in an urban environment. Lewis hosts community fruit-picking teams that canvas local San Jose neighborhoods, engaging residents who want or need their fruit trees picked. Appointments are scheduled and teams are sent out to harvest these trees. These teams consist of volunteers, usually SJSU students or San Jose locals. For anyone who needs community service hours, these fruit-picking events are a wonderful mix of community

service, exercise, sustainable food harvesting. Also available through the Garden to Table project are the workshops that Lewis organizes. About once a month Lewis' workshops, open to anyone, introduce participants to urban gardening practices including bed construction, watering schedules for specific crops, and proper garden management. Lewis is the founder of many community gardens throughout San Jose, which that are maintained and harvested by local communities.

### **SJSU Day of Service**

Every November for the last five years, SJSU has hosted what is known as the SJSU Day of Service. It takes place on a Friday when hundreds of volunteers, mainly SJSU students, are organized into teams dedicated to complete their objective by the end of the day. Specific tasks: trash cleanup, curb repainting, landscaping. You can choose which task to sign up for. CommUniverCity plays a big role in the SJSU Day of Service, assigning leaders and volunteers to these teams from the ranks of the CommUniverCity organization. Last year, I was leading a group of volunteers who were tasked with gathering biographical information about local small businesses on East Santa Clara Street for the East Santa Clara Street Business Association (ESCBA). ESCBA, organized at City Hall, is a local affiliation of small businesses that support each other. The SJSU Day of Service allows SJSU and its students to reciprocate for the support that it receives from the local community.

### **Rails to Trails**

A small swath of land runs from Highway 101 at Silver Creek south to Santa Clara Street, then on to William Street and eventually to Coyote Creek near Interstate 280. This land was originally used as part of the rail transport system for a heavily agricultural economy of the City of San Jose in a time past. The line lies dormant and is now used only by pedestrians taking a shortcut through the neighborhood. Even in its current, rough condition, however, volunteers on just one part of the trail counted 72 users in a three-hour time period. Some years ago, residents of the Five Wounds/Brookwood Terrace neighborhoods, working with CommUniverCity, set a plan in motion to clean up and refurbish this string of land and develop it into a pedestrian accessible foot trail connecting to the planned Five Wounds BART Station. Project coordinator and retired SJSU Professor Terry Christensen facilitated a meeting of residents with Santa Clara County Supervisor George Shirikawa, along with Gustavo Caraveo, one of George's policy aides, to discuss the steps towards the acquisition of this land, possibly using the County Parkland Acquisition Fund. These funds will be used to purchase the land from the Valley Transit Authority, who currently owns the land.

Negotiations are ongoing with VTA and a positive sign is that the VTA has stated in writing that they

intend to preserve this land for public use in the future. If funds become available, the land would be purchased and deeded to the City of San Jose as part of its trail network—and the Five Wounds Trail would become an



*Off of Highway 101, just north of Santa Clara Street, this mural was painted, right along the planned Rails to Trails project site.*

important link between city trails to the east and west. San Jose City Councilman Sam Liccardo, who is also a member of VTA Board, has been a valuable advocate for the goals of the community while negotiating with VTA. The proposed trail will run south of Santa Clara Street to William Street before the construction of the BART station and north to Silver Creek after the construction of the BART station.

### **Community Service, Work Experience, Units**

What began as a simple way of earning more units turned into a true learning experience. I was exposed to the true level of poverty that exists right under our noses. I met the people who are actively trying to alleviate this poverty.

Imelda Rodriguez is the community organizer for CommUniverCity; her job is to oversee all of the project coordinators, giving them support and helping them to make the contacts they need throughout the community. Dayana Salazar, an Urban Planning Development professor at SJSU, is the liaison between CommUniverCity and SJSU. •

To learn more about CommUniverCity internship, you can speak with Professor Cindy Baer, who is in charge of the English 199 internships ([cindy.baer@sjsu.edu](mailto:cindy.baer@sjsu.edu)). For more information about volunteering for CommUniverCity, visit [communivercitysanjose.org](http://communivercitysanjose.org).

## Honors Colloquium Fall 2012: Exploring Memoirs

By Rachel Quintana

The sun was out but the classroom was dark, illuminated only by the bands of light that crept through the blinds. Just outside the classroom throngs of people surrounded huge pillars of balloons; party music blared through the panes of the windows and filled the class with an obnoxious, thumping rhythm. It was much cooler in here than outside and much less populated. In fact, there were only seven people in the class. I stuck out like a sore thumb, the only face to which these students could not put a name.

They moved a few of the desks into a circle and began to discuss an essay project. As we chatted before class, I already felt invited into their world. All were so friendly and enthusiastic about their work. They were writing about the way memory functions in memoir. This is the Honors Colloquium, English 190, and the topic this semester is memoir. The class is taught by Professor Adrienne Eastwood.

She walked into the room and laid some materials out on the desk before greeting everyone. She asked if everyone was prepared to turn in the essay upon the next class meeting. The answer was somewhat timid: yes. She told me, in the middle of class, that her approach to teaching in this class differs from what students experience in other classes. Most professors have to “play the hard ass,” she said, to make sure the students are getting the work done instead of avoiding it; “but I have a sort of pact with my students, and because this is an Honors class I assume that they’re going to get the work done,” she asserts.

One of the students chimed in, “Basically, what she’s saying is she loads us up with so much work that we have no time for anything else!” Everyone laughed.

Dr. Eastwood is not simply teaching the class, though. She is also participating in the assignments. As a matter of fact, she is writing an essay to counter her students’; her thesis asserts that the memoir genre does not exist because memory cannot be accepted as a reliable source of truth and accuracy.

I asked the seven students what sorts of things they do in the class. “We read memoirs outside of class and then come in to discuss the ways the authors construct and portray themselves within the work,” a student told me. The students discussed a new memoir every week and, as such, were required to be familiar with the texts in order to be prepared for class. This was a class filled with disciplined students; they eagerly engaged in the reading and discussion of memoirs. To apply for the class, students must have a GPA of at least 3.5 within the English major courses.

Late October was dedicated to reading memoirs in graphic-novel form. Then, in early November, Stephen

Elliot visited to discuss his memoir *The Adderall Diaries*. English 190 is incredibly work-intensive, but it gives students learning opportunities like these as only an Honors class can. It is a class in creativity, intense analysis, and training for the future.

The grading is harder and the assignments more challenging—truly, it is a labor of love—but the end result is a degree proving that the students have truly applied themselves to the best of their abilities and excelled in their field of study, graduating with honors.

The Honors program is coordinated by English professor Dr. Andrew Fleck. Visit <http://www.sjsu.edu/english/undergraduate/honors/> for the application form. For more information, email [afleck@email.sjsu.edu](mailto:afleck@email.sjsu.edu).

## The End Is Near, and It’s Just the Beginning

By Nicole Lesmeister

If you are graduating in May, the seemingly endless road of your education is now narrowing. You’re zeroing in on the homestretch. Excited? Frightened? Dreading paying back student loans? Suffering the curious medley of all three? You are not alone. Our department community offers us reward at the end of our journey. Literally. In cash. In celebration. In the job search. Did I mention cash?

### Department Awards

One way to take the edge off after paying for these last semesters’ tuition, books, and downing the copious Redbulls to get through the late-night essay-writing is to apply for department awards.

Professor Susan Shillinglaw, major advisor and organizer for the awards, has posted a list of them on the bulletin board in the Faculty Offices Building. Be sure to check the board to apply for awards before their due dates in April.

Some awards require professor nomination; however, Professor Shillinglaw invites you to ask a professor whom you feel you have made an impression on if he or she might nominate you.

Most awards, though, require no more daring than submitting a short story, essay, or poem that you’ve already written to its corresponding award.

There are 23 awards offered, each with its own category and requirements or standards for submission. One example is The Marjorie McLaughlin Folendorf Award for Creative Writing, which requires that the

applicant has taken 24 units at SJSU. Winners receive \$500.

If you are soon going to be stuck paying back student loans, put your education and skills to work early by earning your first dollars for your writing—*before* you graduate! Start today, culling your files for papers and poems, or spend the break thinking of what you might write!

### Your Graduation Ceremony

Graduation is a time for excitement, tears of joy, well wishes, and hysterical freak-outs. Professor Shillinglaw, in hopes that there will be less hysteria and more excitement, promises that the department graduation is always “delightful.”

Last year, the ceremony began with a slideshow of about 100 graduating English majors. About two to three photos of each student were displayed, and the scenes were very sentimental and exciting for the guests, a crowd that usually ranges from about 300-400 friends and family of the graduates. If you want a 2013 slideshow, start sending photos now! Professor Shillinglaw joins the department in encouraging all graduating English majors to attend the ceremony, which will be held on the Thursday or Friday preceding the large Saturday graduation. Many departments host such events and they are much more intimate than the all-University event.

Traditionally, the commencement address is given by a professor in our department. But last year, alumna Katie Roger gave the address. Students can nominate the speaker. The choice of speaker is one of the decisions discussed at the October graduation-planning meeting. If you missed that meeting, it is not too late to add your voice to the vote for this year’s speaker: a favorite professor, a favorite author—submit a name.

The ceremony is orchestrated by the publicity committee, which is made up of professors and students. Professor Shillinglaw would love to see more students involved. Students can help with every phase of planning and hosting the ceremony—and not just seniors. Those who aren’t graduating can work with the committee this year to give their upperclassmen a memorable send-off. Professor Shillinglaw offers that students suggest ideas such as career day, panels on graduate school, and perhaps music of their choice. More student involvement means getting the ceremony the students themselves want to experience.

### Your Job Search Begins Here

If you’re like me, you aren’t just concerning yourself with which photos of you will look best displayed on the slideshow screen, or how your hair is going to look after you toss your cap. You are thinking, “What next?”

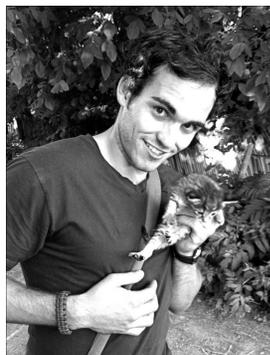
Professor Shillinglaw recommends persistence as you begin the intimidating task of job hunting. We all decided to be English majors for a reason and it’s up to

us to present that reason to our future employers. We are lucky to be graduating from a school in such an economically lucrative area as the Silicon Valley, so start preparing your writings for awards and spruce up those resumes. •

### Recent Alum Tells How to Land a Job

If news of a depressed job market has you down, here is a success story of one of our own. Scott Skinner, an SJSU English Alumnus of 2011, is a witness and an inspiration. Right after graduation, Scott’s literary butt was perched in a comfy office chair at the *San Francisco Chronicle*. He is now working in the hills of Georgia, Russia, teaching an ungodly number of classes and

changing the lives of thousands with his work in the Peace Corps. His advice? Persistence and stamina.



Trying to mask my raging envy in an email asking him advice on how to, well, *be him*, he kindly got straight to the point. “Plan ahead... start applying a few months before you graduate or take a few months off to travel and then

apply when you get back after the initial push has died down,” Scott says, because companies get a landslide of applications post-graduation, and you want to stand out.

“To find work, I applied everywhere.” Scott’s advice here is crucial; there are a lot of writing jobs out there offering a range of challenges to a range of writing talents, so dream big, but don’t set your sights on one job—you may be setting yourself up for disappointment. “Even places that weren’t hiring, I sent my resume,” Scott continued. “For the writing jobs, like the one I got at the *Chronicle*, I also sent writing samples. Then I just kept calling back once a week and basically annoyed them into giving me an interview.” •

Contact information for awards/graduation inquiries:

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## Our New Office Administrator, Pat Cunningham

By Evelyn Saleh

In the English Department's last publication, John Engell, currently on sabbatical, announced a new office administrator to help in the department. After a grueling year for the understaffed department, the search was finally over when we openly welcomed Pat Cunningham to the department.

"Godsend" and "wonderful addition" quickly became the refrain in the halls of the Faculty Office Building. I had the privilege of sitting down with Pat in the revamped office and was immediately drawn by her charisma and willingness to help others.

As a graduate student from San Jose State, Pat majored in Accounting and has 20 years of small office business and corporate accountant management experience. Upon returning to campus, she notes that the campus community has significantly improved: "When I attended SJSU it was a total commuter school. . . It is much more cohesive now," she says happily.

When I first walked into the office, I was greeted by Pat's warm smile and a nod to grab a seat as I waited for her to quickly finish some work that she had been waiting for all day. I could not help but notice the colors on the beautifully embroidered fabrics on the walls, the carpet on the floor in the center of the office, and the well-lit organized space surrounding her. The office has a liveliness to it. Paul Douglass, the department's interim chairperson was exchanging a short conversation with Pat on paperwork, which ended in a laugh.

When Pat started working in the department in May 2012, she "hit the ground running," says Persis Karim. "She immediately took care of many things to help keep the general order of the department running smoothly." Because of her business background, Pat feels that one of her duties for the English department is to bring "efficiency and support" to the students' and faculties' working environment. Her expertise "promised to have a transformative effect of how much and how fast business gets done," says Professor Douglass. Her accomplishments have exceeded that promise.

Pat has already ushered incoming summer and fall students into classes; cleaned house, replacing old furniture and modernizing technology, scanning documents to reduce paper clutter; she has undergone training herself and familiarized herself with new software; and she is working to set up a computer lab that, among others, students of English 129 will use in the future to produce this newsletter.

With so much to do inside a large department, the day-to-day schedule is unpredictable.

"It keeps me on my toes," Pat says. "Every day is very different, which is one of the things that's really

fun." When I asked her to take me to her favorite moment of the day, she laughed and said, "It depends on the day." But within chaos whether it be outside the office during rush hour, running errands around campus, she finds calm in her day. "It is utter chaos; it is calm." Even when she is "so busy you can't see straight," Pat finds her inner peace from observing the trees and buildings outside, reading a good book (one of her favorite is *Life of Pi*) or spending time with her family.



I ask her about the accounting major working among all these book people: what sorts of books does she read? "I have very eclectic taste and mostly tend towards autobiographies and memoirs, cooking chronicles." She also reads more intense non-fiction stories of post-apartheid South Africa and the

Beekman Boys chronicle.

As the holiday season approaches, Christmas especially is a rewarding time of the year for Pat, allowing her to be with family and friends. "It can be a stressful time too," she says. Every year, she hosts Christmas Eve and Christmas Day dinners for extended family. Everyone comes over for a formal sit down dinner including cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and a big Italian feast with pasta, meatballs, lasagna, macaroni dishes, and dessert. She jokes, "There's a lot of food at my house from December until January," especially with all of her sons' friends in town from college. The house and the kitchen are very chaotic, but luckily, her daughter helps with baking while she cooks.

So if you are wondering how Pat will be spending her holiday, just imagine her in her kitchen — that same Pat calm amid the chaos, that same efficient warmth, throughout the day, turning out meals for everyone. •

### Thanks, Pat, from a grateful faculty:

Persis Karim: “She made us all feel that we had someone to count on, someone who was helping to keep the general order of the department running smoothly. She’s very personable, generous and helpful, as well as extremely efficient. We are very fortunate to have her!”

Kelly Harrison: “She’s competent and efficient: If I ask her for something, she nearly always has it done and emailed to me before I can get back upstairs to my office!”

Paul Douglass: “Pat has come into her role with poise, verve, wit, perspicuity, and a warm touch that has made life in English & Comparative Literature instantly finer.”

Cindy Baer: “Pat’s efficiency has been stunning. She’s transformed the office—and not just the décor. Her good humor has made the whole atmosphere of the place brighter, more conducive to the work we do.”

## Persis Karim: Restoring Heart to Our Bus(y)ness

By Sabrina Van Metre

I was sitting outside Professor Persis Karim’s office, long before the thought of writing this article occurred, checking my watch every thirty seconds.

*It has been my turn for about six minutes now.* I was in a hurry, and her previous appointment was running late.

I was meeting with Karim to have her sign my graduation forms. As a nervous student, I walked into her office sputtering fragments of questions. Rather than rushing off a set of sputtering replies in return, she returned the simplest of questions: “Okay, what’s your name?”

I admit: I was caught off guard. Couldn’t she have just as easily read the top of the form I had handed her moments before? Of course, she could have just said,



“congratulations, good luck with your life,” but Karim is different.

Rather than treating me as one more student in the busy system, she listens and “tries to detect the needs of students.” She also prides herself on trying to “help facilitate a more positive and nurturing experience at SJSU.” She tells me with a modest smile, “years later I hear from students who tell me they couldn’t have gotten where they are without my help or support.”

You may have encountered her at San Jose State University as a professor, an advisor, a colleague, or a friend; however, Persis Karim is so much more. She is one of the best assets that students here at San Jose State have. She considers herself more than an academic advisor; she prides herself on being a mentor who enjoys encouraging the passion and plans of SJSU students. Ultimately, she considers herself a “human face” in the “increasingly bureaucratic and impersonal system where students find themselves at the mercy of rules and regulations meant to address budget cuts.” Her goal as an advisor, she says, is to “effectively serve students” and maintain a “good rapport” with them.

As an undergraduate at UC Santa Cruz, Karim pursued Interdisciplinary Community Studies, an innovative and multi-faceted major that involved the study of history, politics, sociology, and activism, to address social change. After working for several years as an editor, she decided to go to graduate school at the University of Texas Austin where she earned a Masters in Middle East Studies and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature. As an accomplished writer and editor of two anthologies, *Let Me Tell You Where I’ve Been: New Writing by Women of the Iranian Diaspora* and *A World Between: Poems, Short Stories, and Essays by Iranian-Americans*, she brings her diverse academic perspective to the classroom and to her students in advising.

As if riding a wave of nostalgia, she remembers that, when she was a student, college was less of a business and more of a learning process. “Thirty years ago, college was a different experience,” says Karim. “There were more disciplines, more classes, and more ways into discovering the world through academic study.” Reminiscent of her collegiate lifestyle, she now faces a budget-straitened reality that treats the college experience as a narrow pathway to graduation. Over-enrollment causes the University to treat students more like business partners rather than participants in a shared learning process.

Because students are increasingly pressured to graduate at a faster rate, more students need even more advising—thus the six-minute overrun on an appointment. As an advisor, Karim’s time is precious and limited. She compares herself to a medical doctor coping with an overtaxed medical system; her 15 minute appointment windows provide barely enough time to have a complete conversation with students. She finds herself “disheartened with the process by which the university has become much more preoccupied with a

business model approach and less of a student-centered approach to education” and she spends more of her advising time signing forms and helping students meet graduation deadlines than talking to them about their dreams and passions.

Karim told me that if she could redesign her job as an advisor, she’d have much more time to spend with students and would spend more time mentoring individuals. However, given how much work SJSU professors are already required to do, and the increase of rules and restrictions now placed on students, she sees the possibility of such a mentoring relationship slipping away.

The issue of SJSU faculty not having enough time for students has been made very clear to me this year. Another professor of mine is scheduling individual appointments over a week in advance, both in person and via Skype. As a student who is graduating in the spring, I also expect *all* of my classes to be tough, not just four out of five. Karim makes sure to avoid wasting students’ time and money. She teaches English 123A, Literature of the Americas and constantly keeps her students on their toes. Although the class itself is *interesting*, it’s Karim who makes the experience *riveting*.

Professor Karim draws on her UCSC background in activism as she illuminates the contexts of American Literature as well. She constantly calls our attention to on-campus activities and has even encouraged us to be well educated on the ever-so important Proposition 30, which promises to impact students and professors alike. Her activism communicates care for the well-being of her students, restoring a little heart to our now chronic busy-ness. •

## The Center for Literary Arts Presents Nick Flynn Stephanie Loureiro

I anxiously sat in the auditorium of the Engineering building, pulled out my notebook and pen and started jotting down observations. It was a decent turn out of about 50 people. The audience consisted mostly of middle-aged women but with a good mix of students as well.

After a few minutes, Andrew Altschul, the director for the Center for Literary Arts, stepped up to the podium and began the introduction to the evening’s presentation, telling the audience that we had made the right decision in attending, as opposed to staying in to watch the presidential debate. “I assure you that it [is] not nearly as exciting as listening to Nick read is going to be.”

That was October 3. It was my first time at a Center for Literary Arts event, and it was the first in this year’s series of events sponsored by San Jose State

University’s Center for Literary Arts, known as the Major Authors Series. The series invites authors to come speak, read, and sign their books here at the university or at locales in the surrounding areas. This specific event, co-sponsored by San Francisco’s literary festival, Litquake, featured Nick Flynn, a poet and memoirist whose memoir *Another Bullshit Night in Suck City*, hailed by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as a “near perfect work of literature,” was recently turned into the film *Being Flynn*, starring Robert DeNiro and Paul Dano.

After Professor Altschul’s brief introduction, Flynn took the podium. The listening began. Flynn read from



his earliest book, a collection of poetry published in 2000 entitled *Some Ether*. The poem he chose was one about California – more specifically, a man walking into a Santa Cruz café carrying a giant stone. The first line of the poem: “It nests in the hollow of my pelvis, I carry it with both

hands, as if offering my stomach, as if it were pulling me forward.” “Only in California,” Flynn, an East-Coaster, said jokingly of the poem he titled “20 Pound Stone.” With the laughter of the crowd the poem became more than words on a page: it engrossed me. I realized I was engaged in an act of listening collectively, with the author serving as guide to his own work.

And guide us is just what he did: he prefaced his next selection, an excerpt from *Another Bullshit Night in Suck City*, with an invitation to connect the two works. “They echo each other; share some of the same images. They complement each other,” said Flynn about his two books. Although one was a collection of poetry and the other a book of prose, Flynn beautifully flirts with the line between the two – making it easy for me to get lost in his words as he read from his memoir so eloquently that I began wondering if I had misunderstood him saying it was a book of prose.

The reading continued with the excerpts from *Another Bullshit Night*, which let the audience, most of whom had attended a screening of *Being Flynn* the night before, connect his words to the scenes that they had inspired for the film.

Flynn then rewarded the audience with a special treat—reading from his newest, unreleased book, *The Re-Enactments*, which hits stores January 2013. *The Re-Enactments* is a memoir he wrote while on the set of *Being Flynn*. During his reading of the memoir, he played a slide show of images he had taken while on the movie set. Many of the images were of his mother in the film, played by Julianne Moore, about to commit suicide. With each passing slide, his voice registered what a strong connection he has to the particular scene. With

each passing slide, the look on Moore's face growing more and more helpless, that the emotions contained in the lines of the poem grew stronger and more evident of what a toll this moment had on his life—and his writing.

When asked by an audience member why he chose to write about his book being made into a movie, he responded with a simple and honest, "It's just what I do. It's like asking a plumber why he fixed a toilet." A few members of the audience chuckled at his candor, engulfed briefly in the process of a writer.

Flynn ended the reading by sharing "Homily" – a poem he created by taking his favorite lines from his University of Houston students' poems and meshing them together. Although it was works from different students, Flynn's presentation of it as a solitary piece made it unbelievably seamless – as though it was solely his voice coming through with each line.

At the end of his reading, Flynn let the audience ask him questions about his books, writing, his father, and what the film process was like. One of the last questions he was asked was "what advice can you give to aspiring writers?" After a slight pause, he recalled something he had learned from writer Grace Paley: "Have a low overhead." He followed up with his own very practical advice: "Don't get into debt too deeply.

The CLA hosts many events throughout the semester including readings and interviews like Nick Flynn's, lectures, and seminars. Since 1986, the CLA sponsors a Major Authors Series—including five writers that have received the Nobel Prize, and 29 winners of the Pulitzer Prize. The CLA is part of the College of Humanities and Arts. It is funded by grants and donations alike. To learn more about the Center for Literary Arts or to view the schedule for upcoming events, visit [www.litart.org](http://www.litart.org).

### Events for Spring 2013

#### Jayne Anne Phillips

February 6, 7pm: Reading and Book Signing, MLK 225/229

February 7, 12pm: In Conversation with Cornelia Nixon, MLK 225/229

#### Susan Steinberg & Susan Straight

February 27, 3pm: Susan Straight @ Mt. Pleasant High School

February 27, 7pm: Joint Reading and Book Signing, MLK 225/229

#### Dana Giola

April 3, 7pm: Reading and Book Signing, ENGR 189

April 4, 1pm: In Conversation with Samuel Maio, Venue TBA

#### Carmen Giménez Smith

April 17, 3pm: Mt. Pleasant High School

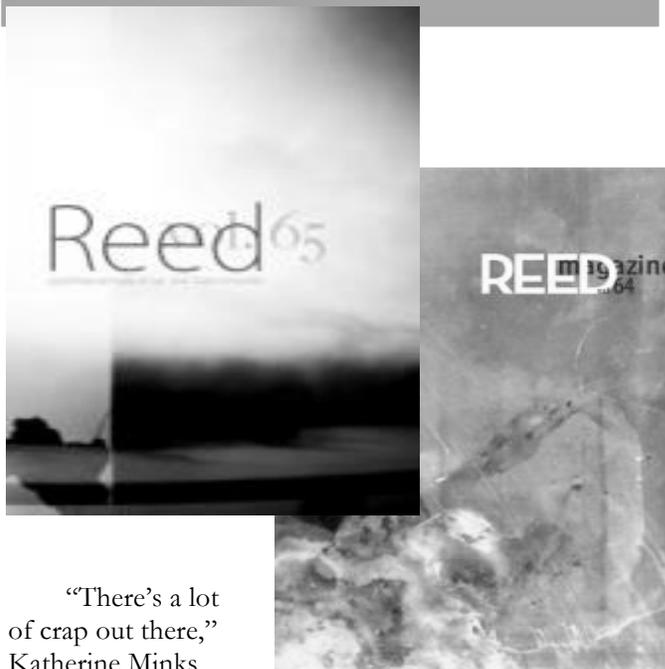
April 17, 7pm: Reading and Book Signing, MLK 225/229

Work as little as possible. You need a lot of time to find your way as a writer. Find a job where you can up your hourly wage. Or come from a rich family. Read a lot. Surround yourself with a community of other writers. Sit down and write every day."

The reading was filled with humorous anecdotes of Flynn's father, the movie his life inspired, and the way he comes up with inspiration for his work. Attending the Center for Literary Arts event left me – and other aspiring writers I'm sure – in a hopeful trance. Flynn's work, so honest and open, inspired me to try the same honesty in my own writing. •

## A Word from the Editor

Kevin Lin



"There's a lot of crap out there," Katherine Minks

grinned; "some writers aren't ready to send their works out yet, and consequently it turns out really bad."

Meet Minks, the new managing editor for *Reed Magazine*. If you're submitting to *Reed*, one of the oldest student literary journal publications (c. 1920s) west of the Mississippi, your work will ultimately be read, dissected, evaluated, discussed, and published by her and her team of editors – if accepted. *Reed Magazine's* editors consist of the majority of SJSU's English 133 course: *Reed Magazine*. This year, it is taught and supervised by Professor Cathleen Miller.

The submission period for *Reed* starts in June, and ends in November; and entries have been coming in fast. In the first three months, *Reed Magazine* had already received roughly 750 submissions for fiction, 300 for poetry, 40 for non-fiction, and 4 for art. While *Reed* does receive a good sum of its submissions from SJSU students and Bay Area writers, *Reed* also receives works from writers nationwide –ranging from new aspiring writers, to professionals. Although the magazine won't be published until the spring of 2013, Minks assures us

that she'll be at *Reed* from start to finish: screening, managing, and making the final decisions for how the publication ships.

And yet, there wasn't a tone of stress or worry in Minks' voice when I sat down with her; instead, she coolly explained the scale of the work she and her team has at hand. *Reed Magazine's* editors are divided into four teams, each one responsible for a certain genre of literature or art. The teams will go through each submission within their jurisdiction and divide the workload among the members. After each submission is read, the editors will judge the piece on a scale of one to ten, and bring together the pieces they thought were the best in the bunch. The selections are then winnowed down even further, as the editors huddle back into a group to go over each selected piece. While all of this is going on, there are still other members working on different parts of the magazine – the production team, the advertisement team, and the layout and design team. When the faculty advisor, Cathleen Miller, is not around, Minks, the managing editor, overlooks all of these fields – along with being a part of the poetry editors group. Next year, when Minks comes back, she will be in charge of finalizing the combined effort from her team into another issue that represents and lives up to the tradition of *Reed*.

"You sure this job isn't stressful for you?"

"Things are only stressful if you allow them to be,"

Minks responded, once again in her calm manner.

Although Minks is new to the world of editorial management, her background in similar work gives her an edge in the field. "I'm experienced with organizational jobs," Minks explains; "I do data analysis and coordination work for sororities and fraternities." Minks also explained that she has completed two BAs in Iowa – English and Anthropology – and is currently pursuing a creative writing degree as a graduate student at SJSU. If anything, becoming a managing editor for *Reed* is like combining those two familiar worlds: it provides a new working experience with elements of the old.

"So with you as managing editor for *Reed*, what can readers expect to be different about this issue in comparison to previous issues?"

"We may divide the magazine up into different genres, instead of mixing everything up. I think it helps the cognition of the reader not having to shift from different types of works, or having to figure out what they're reading. Other than that, we're maintaining a high standard for each work, being very critical, yet fair, to each piece that comes in."

When Minks mentions the word "critical," she smiles. "I'm very critical," she states, "and I will 'keep it real' in evaluating any piece." Minks explains that she has been reading, critiquing, and tearing up works from her writing friends for a while now – now putting that energy and response into *Reed*. Minks is not afraid to tell writers that their works need to be more polished or

have a stronger and clearer concept; hell, she will even flat out call for the removal of chunks of paragraphs in a story because they "suck." It's not because she's biased or wants to destroy the little bit of pride a writer clings to when presenting his story – she does it out of respect, out of care, and ultimately the desire to push works to the highest point they can reach. "If no one is raising the bar for you, they don't care for your work."

Minks, now working from the other side of the publishing world, offers a few tips for the writers out there looking to submit to *Reed Magazine*, or anywhere else. "Re-read your work thoroughly and then get someone else to read the mistakes you can't register in your head," Minks emphasizes over and over again. For poets specifically, she warns, "poetry often uses more abstract language, but the common issue poets have is that their work is far too abstract – there's nothing concrete about it to ground

the ideas floating around them." But above all else, make sure your work is ready: no half-hearted pieces and no second guessing yourself sending the piece out. Because when that submission is sent out, it's out for good away from the comfort of your desk and any further revisions.

So writers, can you meet the bar Minks has set for you? If you think you're good and ready, head over to *Reed's* website and make your submission.

Readers, you have nothing to worry about. This issue of *Reed* is looking like it has a lot of promise.

You've got Minks – look forward to it. •

**Contact *Reed Magazine*, to submit, to read archived issues, to purchase a copy:**  
(<http://www.reedmag.org/drupal/>)

## The Poets and Writers Coalition: A Literary Haven

Jonathan Tung

The moment Sharon Olds began to speak, she engaged us with a series of vivid images, musings, and rants about her son's ninth birthday party and her childhood as a "hellfire Calvinist." I found myself staring in awe: her clever words created poems that worked: using her fond memories of growing up in the Bay Area and attending Stanford University, she took us on a tour of her daily life, sometime stopping for a bit to add some funny anecdotes, such as the time she stared at a mirror and thought that it made her look fat.

How did I end up at this performance by a premier contemporary poet? In early October, I was invited to attend a poetry reading at the Le Petit Trianon Theater

across the street from San Jose City Hall. The event was hosted by Poetry Center San Jose (PCSJ), a non-profit organization devoted to the promotion of literary expression. The organization has been around since 1978, when it was founded by Naomi Clark and Nils Peterson, the latter currently serving on the PCSJ's Board of Directors. According to the organization's website, the PCSJ offers programs and workshops for aspiring poets – perfect for those poetry students who want to hone their writing skills. PCSJ also proudly supports our own Poets and Writers Coalition.

Not many folks around SJSU know much about the Poetry and Writing Coalition (PWC). It's a fairly young organization, founded in 2007. According to their WordPress blog, the PWC's primary mission is to “provide a venue for creative writers to discuss their work” in addition to informing its members of local events of interest to them.



Currently leading the charge as the club's president is second-year student Marta Wallien. When I asked her why she chose to join the PWC, she replied that she believed that it could create a sense of unity within the writers at school, especially those in the MFA program and the undergraduates who are

focusing on the Creative Writing concentration. “We just want to bring the community together [so] people can come and share their work, and have events [that] make literary events important again, [where] students can show their literary work, not just established authors. Even though we do have established authors who do readings as well, and who come and talk to students, too.”

Since its inception five years ago, the PWC has already attracted a lot of praise from teachers, professors, students, and fellow poets. “The writing faculty at SJSU are a great group of people,” says Jasper Haze, the programming chair of Poetry Center San Jose. “Sally Ashton, poet laureate of San Jose, and Alan Soldofsky, Director of Creative Writing at SJSU, have been very helpful and encouraging to me, and collaborating with Marta has perhaps yielded the most productivity with SJSU. Marta's drive, ambition, and her commitment to writing has been a joy to work with.” In fact, Marta's efforts for the club have helped make a big impact in the local writing community. In addition to hosting workshops and readings with the Poetry Center of San Jose, the PWC also hosts unique literary events like the “Lit Factory” booth, held on September 7 during South First Fridays in Downtown San Jose's SoFA district (located on South First Street between San Carlos and East Reed). “The booth was located in front of the art gallery Anno Domini,” Marta recalls, “Patrons

would come up to us and we would create poems and fiction for them on the spot, and that was a really fun event. I mean it got a lot of people out. People were really excited to get original poems written for them and original fiction written for them . . . which were specialized to what they wanted.”

Over the last month, the PWC has hosted a variety of fun events, including Poe-Slam with English professor Ed Sams on November 2 at the Spartan Memorial Chapel; followed by a very special Slam Poetry Fest on November 10, which featured two special guest poets from Seattle, Oscar McNarey and Casey Tonnelly. Currently, the PWC is at work planning an end-of-the-year event with Sally Ashton and will be inviting more guests as the rest of the year winds down.

If you're interested in improving your writing skills and want to make new friends who share similar interests, then check out the Poets and Writers Coalition.

You can contact the PWC by liking them on Facebook under “Poets and Writers Coalition @ San Jose State University.” Or you can always drop by Room F0102 and say hi to Marta.

## Bring Sound English to Kids in Need

Stephen Plodinec

“What are you going to do with *that*?” This is possibly the most common question posed to English majors. In a time when money is seemingly all-important, a degree in English is one that ranks low on the scale of money-making potential. It dwells with the arts at the foot of the charts. Most novels are not going to win any bread; neither do poems generally bring home much bacon. However, there are more lucrative paths for the English major.

Among the “legitimate” careers open to an English major is that of a high school English teacher. According to several sources, the average yearly salary for a high school teacher in the United States is approximately \$53,000. In the state of California it is around \$60,000, and the rate is \$3-6k higher still in metro areas, like San Jose. Hello, legitimacy!

Not only does teaching high school English earn a salary that will support the writing of novels or poems, it is a noble and necessary vocation. California's public school system Academic Performance Index, or API, is below Federal standards. With a college degree more important than ever, high school students need teachers

to prepare them to communicate their ideas with accuracy, concision, and precision.

The good news for English majors enrolled in a Bachelor's degree program is that after graduation, a teaching credential is the only thing between you and a roomful of people who need to be taught how to read and write well. Through the Secondary Education program, San Jose State's College of Education offers the very credential you need.

College graduates looking to earn a teaching credential make up a hugely diverse demographic. Some of these young graduates have time on their hands while some have to earn a living. The College of Education understands this, and offers something for everybody: three different tracks lead to the single-subject teaching credential. For those looking to jump into teaching as quickly as possible, a yearlong residency program is available. Students admitted to this program will go on an intensive 13-month journey beginning in June with preparative coursework, and continue through the entire school year assisting one mentor teacher. To delve into the teaching experience is to apply for and earn a teaching job with the school district. The student can teach provisionally while simultaneously earning his credential on a two-year timeline.

The most popular option, however, is the flexible program. Course sequence, scheduling, and unit load can be tailored to suit the student's specific needs. SJSU's Secondary Education website indicates that "students may choose to focus student teaching at one school in a yearlong experience, or divide their student teaching at different schools for each of the two semesters, for variety in school setting." This program is structured like the bachelor's degree program you are familiar with – learning takes place in classes, without a residency or internship. The program typically takes three semesters, if you carry a full-time load of 12-14 units. But, as the name implies, there are other options. Students can take courses part-time and there are internships available for credit.

Available to students participating in the flexible program is the Independence High School cohort experience, in which students spend a full-time semester taking seminars and student-teaching at Independence High School (IHS) in San Jose. The appropriately named school was founded in 1976, the year of the United States' bicentennial. IHS is the largest of 19 high schools in the East Side Union High School district, with enrollment above 3,500 students. The opportunity for teaching there is ripe. Not only is there room for you to teach during the cohort program – the student to teacher ratio is 26:1 – but IHS has a strong teaching tradition as the district's magnet school (a school with specialized courses or curricula) for high school students who are also interested in teaching. And with minority enrollment at 96%, you will be exposed to a wide variety

of cultures. You will learn to adapt and be able to teach many different types of people.

So, what *are* you going to do with that English degree? If you are interested in paving the road to success for a high school student while achieving success of your own, earning a teaching credential is the way to go. •

To learn more, visit [www.sjsu.edu/secondary](http://www.sjsu.edu/secondary) or stop by Faculty Office Building 127 and talk to Dr. Jonathan Lovell or Dr. Mary Warner to find out how you can take the first step to making a positive impact teaching English to high school students in California.

### *Start now to build your professional teaching network with* **The San Jose Area Writing Project:**

Their motto is "Teachers helping teachers." The **SJAWP** (San Jose Area Writing Project) is a [California Subject Matter Project](#), an affiliate of the [National Writing Project](#) and the [California Writing Project](#). An organization of, by, and for teachers, **SJAWP** is dedicated to improving the teaching and uses of writing at all grade levels (K–16) and in all disciplines. They offer Super Saturday programs and Professional Learning Communities (PLC) for veteran teachers and future teachers alike.

Here are some dates for upcoming events:

#### **Young Writers' Super Saturdays**

March 2, 2013: *Inquire & Explore*

May 4, 2013: *Young Adult Writer Alan Sotomer*

#### **PLC Cohort Meetings**

April 6, 2013, 1:30

PM–3:30 PM

May 11, 2013, 9:30

AM–12:30 PM

For more

information, visit San Jose Area Writing Project online at <http://www.sjwap.org>. Or speak with Dr. Jonathan Lovell in the Department of English and Comparative Literature.



# Technology and Tutoring at the SJSU Writing Center

Helina Martinez



Inside Clark Hall, through the glass doors into the Academic Success Center, past the computers and along the back wall, nestled between the Academic Advising and Retention Services Satellite Center and a hallway leading to the bathroom is the San Jose State University (SJSU) Writing Center, home to hidden opportunities for every English Major.

For those seeking help but not *quite* ready to sign up for tutoring, there is a plethora of online resources available on the Writing Center website. There are links to style and format guides—including MLA, APA, and the 16<sup>th</sup> edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* for all you editors out there—all listed under the “Documentation Styles” page. Under “Handouts” you’ll find the *Homegrown Handouts*: PDFs concerning everything from grammar and punctuation to the writing process itself.

And whom do we have to thank for the majority of these online resources?

Her name is Michelle Hager. You may recognize her as a teacher of English 1A or 1B. Maybe you’ve had her for Editing for Writers. Or maybe you’ve taken her adult or children’s literature classes, or her course Science Fiction and Fantasy, or any of the other classes she’s taught. Not only is she a lecturer in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, but Michelle Hager is also the Associate Director of the Writing Center and the person charged with maintaining the Center’s online presence. She is the one who—among other things—redesigned the Writing Center website to make it easier to navigate, directed the staff post pictures to humanize the center, and put up the helpful *Homegrown Handouts* for students.

In an effort to reach out to students, she has even created the Writing Center’s Facebook page and Twitter account (both of which are frequently updated, usually by Hager herself). “I love updating the Writing Center website and running our Facebook and Twitter pages,” she says. “It is important for the Writing Center to be involved with social media. Our Facebook and Twitter

pages allow us to disseminate information quickly to students. We inform students about our services, and we offer practical writing tips.” Something to be especially proud of here: The Writing Center’s use of social media has created connections not only to our own SJSU students, but to other Writing Centers across the nation and even the world. “I was contacted,” says Hager, “by an instructor at Baghdad University who wanted to start a Writing Center; she wanted to use our Writing Center as a model.”

If a PDF or an article linked on Facebook isn’t enough, and you need something a little more thorough, then the Writing Center can help you there, too. Go online, register, make an appointment, and then you can come on in at your designated time and receive the help of either a Writing Specialist (WS) or Assistant Writing Specialist (AWS) for some in-depth writing help. The AWS program is a fairly recent addition to the Writing Center repertoire, having come into existence only January of last year (2011). It was developed by both Michelle Hager and the Director of the Writing Center, Dr. Linda Mitchell, in order to draw in more lower-division clients and tutees. “We created the AWS program for a few reasons,” says Hager. “We wanted to hire exceptional lower-division students to become tutors at the Center and get excellent professional job experience.” A secondary goal they had was to hold on to quality tutors for longer periods of time. “If we hire a tutor when he or she is a senior, then that individual will only work with the Writing Center for one year until graduation; however, if we hire a tutor when he or she is at the sophomore level, then that student can work for the Writing Center for three or four years (or more if the student goes on to grad school at SJSU).”

The tutoring program may be the biggest draws plenty of students, and where you have students seeking tutelage, you are going to need tutors. Therein lies opportunity for the ambitious student. If you meet the rigorous qualifications (they’re difficult, but reasonable given the position), fit the hiring criteria, pass a series of difficult tests, and survive several tutoring sessions (some you observe, some you role-play with experienced staff specialists), then you too can be a Writing Center WS or AWS. While a list of qualifications and criteria for both positions are listed on the Writing Center website, the main difference between an AWS and a WS is that AWS is a position reserved specifically for lower division students who have not taken the WST or a 100W course. AWS queries should be sent to Hager, while Dr. Mitchell handles WS ones.

Opportunities to help and be helped are readily available for SJSU students both online and off. Whether you need a quick memory-refresher on MLA format, in-depth person-to-person help on an essay, or, for the qualified and clever, an actual job, the SJSU Writing Center can help. No matter which direction you go, the first step is just a click away.

## Course Descriptions

### **ENGL 22: Fantasy and Science Fiction**

Adrienne Eastwood: MW 9:00-10:15

This course explores utopian and dystopian worlds in Science Fiction from Plato's *Republic* to Alan Moore's *V for Vendetta*. Specifically, we will look at the ways in which the creation of fantasy worlds operates as a means for both social critique and as a device to bring about social change. Readings cover a range of historical periods and cultures, and include video games and graphic novels. Students of all levels and backgrounds welcome!

### **ENGL 22: Fantasy and Science Fiction**

Samuel Maio: MW 12:00-1:15

This course covers the essential themes and characteristics of prose fantasy and science fiction. We will read closely works from authors who established the foundations of both genres (E.T.A. Hoffmann, Edgar Allan Poe, Nikolai Gogol, Robert Louis Stevenson, Jules Verne, Tommaso Landolfi, and Franz Kafka) as well as contemporary authors (Italo Calvino, Ursula K. Le Guin, Julio Cortázar, Joyce Carol Oates, Carlos Ruiz Zafón, and Guillermo Martínez). [GE: Area C2 attribute. Cannot be taken for credit in the English major.]

### **ENGL 22: Fantasy and Science Fiction**

Balance Chow: MW 1:30-2:45

Students will examine the works of literary fantasy and science fiction to understand them as expression of human intellect and imagination; to comprehend their historical and cultural contexts; and to recognize their diverse cultural traditions. Both contemporary and historical works will be studied.

[GE: Area C2 attribute. Cannot be taken for credit in the English major.]

### **ENGL 56A: British Literature, Survey to 1800**

Adrienne Eastwood: MW 12:00-1:15

This course is a survey of British Literature from its earliest works through the eighteenth century. The goals of the course are to help students to gain an overview of the major literary periods, genres, authors, and works of English literature. We will discuss these texts from a variety of perspectives, including the dynamic relationship between heroes and villains throughout early English history, considering what these representations reveal about the various societies that produced them.

### **ENGL 56B: English Literature since 1800**

William Wilson: TR 4:30-5:45

A survey of the poetry, fiction, and drama in the English tradition from 1800 to the present. We will examine individual writers and works in the context of major literary movements from Romanticism to post-modernism. Two essays, midterm and final.

### **ENGL 68B: American Literature since 1865**

Balance Chow: MW 4:30-5:45

English 68B, an American Literature survey course intended for English majors in the lower division, covers materials from around 1865 to the present. Literary movements (e.g., Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance) contributing to the American canon will be examined in relation to the diversity of American society. Required: short papers, two exams, and oral presentations.

### **ENGL 68A: American Literature to 1865**

Karen English: TR 9:00-10:15

American Literature to 1865 includes all the pleasures of First American narrative, Puritan poetry and prose, Enlightenment comedy and autobiography, one sentimental novel plus those glorious American Romantics: Emerson, Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, Dickinson, Whitman, Thoreau, Fuller, and Douglass. Writing requirements are 6-8 one page essay/worksheets as well as a midterm and a final.

### **ENGL 71: Introduction to Creative Writing**

Robert James: MW 9:00-10:15; MW 10:30-11:45; TR 12:00-1:15

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

### **ENGL 71: Introduction to Creative Writing**

Sweeny Schragg: TR 3:00-4:15

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

### **ENGL 71: Introduction to Creative Writing**

Kate Evans: TR 3:00-4:15; R 6:00-8:45

We will read, discuss, and write poetry, short fiction, and creative nonfiction. Our focus will be the creative process.

**ENGL 71: Introduction to Creative Writing**

Samuel Maio: M 4:30-7:15; W 4:30-7:15

This course covers essential artistic elements of poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. Students study exemplary works from each genre—drawn from various cultures and time periods—to learn principles of form, structure, and technique. Students write original poems, fictive stories, and other prose pieces. We begin with a “literary boot camp” of brief Italian and French lyric forms of poetry. The course emphasizes revision and the students’ creative development. [GE: Area C2]

**ENGL 71: Introduction to Creative Writing (Online)**

Alan Soldofsky: T 6:00-8:45

This online creative writing workshop uses the eCampus learning management system. Students draft and revise original works of poetry, creative nonfiction, and short-fiction, learning the craft of writing in these genres through close reading of model texts, guided by the instructor. Students participate in online peer writing-groups and an online writing workshop led by the instructor. ENGL 71 is a prerequisite for upper-division creative writing workshops, and fulfills the C2 Letters area of general education.

**ENGL 78: Introduction to Shakespeare: William Shakespeare and Popular Culture**

Adrienne Eastwood:

We will grapple with the question: does Shakespeare still matter in the twenty-first century? Students study several of Shakespeare’s plays, and then analyze modern film adaptations of those same works. Pairings for discussion include: *The Taming of the Shrew* and *10 Things I Hate About You*; *Othello* and “O”; *Macbeth* and *Scotland, PA*; *Romeo and Juliet* and Luhrmann’s *Romeo + Juliet* *Hamlet* and Almereyda’s *Hamlet*. In each case, we will tease out the directorial decisions that remake or reinterpret Shakespeare’s work.

**ENGL 100W: Writing Workshop**

Nancy Stork: TR 9:00-10:15; TR: 1:30-2:45

An introduction to writing literary criticism for the English major. Extensive attention to poetic form, some short stories and a review of a local theater production. Intensive practice in writing beautiful, concise and emphatic prose.

**ENGL 100W: Writing Workshop**

Adrienne Eastwood: MW 3:00-4:15

English 100W is an integrated writing and literature course designed for English majors. Through close and careful reading of literary texts, students will develop not only an ability to analyze and interpret literary texts and respond to them critically in writing, but also advanced proficiency in research strategies and

methodologies, a rhetorically sophisticated writing style, and a mastery of the conventions of standard English and manuscript format. SOUNDS SUPER FUN, RIGHT?

**ENGL 101: Introduction to Literary Criticism**

Katherine Harris: TR 12:00-1:15

Do you see hidden meanings in literary texts? Movies? Games? There are many possible readings of all literary and visual texts. Even your own identity governs your interpretation of the material. For this course, we will discover and apply critical models to various literary, visual, and digital texts. Critical models will include foundational twentieth-century theory as well as contemporary approaches to literature (Feminist, Queer, Marxist, Post-Colonial, and Digital Humanities theories).

**ENGL 103: Modern English**

Michelle Hager: MW 9:00-10:15

In this course, we will break down the English language and examine it like a science. We will diagram sentences, discuss word origins, and examine social and regional dialects; we will study syntax, morphology, etymology, transformational grammar, and the universality of linguistic structures. Material in the course will also focus on some recurring problems of usage and correctness and the role of pragmatics in using language to communicate.

**ENGL 103: Modern English**

Nancy Stork: TR 10:30-11:45

A historically based, linguistically informed introduction to Modern English Grammar.

**ENGL 105: Seminar in Advanced Composition**

Cynthia Baer: MW 9:00-10:15

If Hemingway is right, if “Prose is architecture,” then the sentence is the bulwark of what writers do. Spend 16 weeks exploring the architectural splendor of the sentence: imitating, rewriting, describing, assembling, disassembling, reassembling sentences. We’ll study and practice sentence craft as we read and write about nature, taking in a full spectrum of literary genres—poetry, fiction, non-fiction—and rhetorical modes—to include environmental advocacy and science reporting.

**ENGL 107: Professional Technical Writing**

Kelly Harrison: R 6:00-8:45

We’ll learn the techniques, demands, and responsibilities specific to technical communications. You will prepare and present technical information effectively and efficiently to both general and specialized audiences—and you’ll do this using the Adobe Creative Suite thanks to the new partnership between SJSU and Adobe. This course requires substantial work outside of

class. A typical 3-unit class demands 10 hours of homework per week. Consider this a minimum.

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

Michelle Hager: MW 10:30-11:45

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

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

Clare Browne: F 9:00-11:45

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

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

Mary Warner: T 4:30-7:15

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's genres and provide author/book resources. Book Talks and a unit of study/annotated bibliography requirement further knowledge of YA Literature.

### **ENGL 117A: American Literature, Film, and Culture**

Kate Evans: T 6:00-8:45

Using both film and literature, course examines narratives that create and define cultural identities in the United States. A variety of both 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 117A: American Literature, Film, and Culture**

Edwin Sams: ???

This course focuses on "we the people" other than the Framers--Native Americans, Afro-Americans, Women, Latinos, Gays, Asians--through captivity narratives, slave narratives, historical fiction, nonfiction crime novels, and short stories, all accompanied with great American films. Quizzes, writing, research, and group projects will assess students' accomplishment of learning objectives. Satisfies Advanced GE in Area S.

### **ENGL 117B: Global Film, Literature, and Cultures**

Persis Karim: F 10:00-12:45

Using films and literary works, students will appreciate and understand the narratives (myths and other stories) that create and define cultural identity, explore cultural interaction, and illustrate cultural preservation and culture difference over time.

### **ENGL 123B: Literature for Global Understanding: Africa**

Persis Karim: TR 10:30-11:45

Course promotes global understanding by examining the cultures and literary arts of a selected region of the world, Africa, and covers representative texts and authors from North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa.

### **ENGL 123C: Literature for Global Understanding: Oceania**

Balance Chow: MW 9:00-10:15

English 123C examines the literary production and cultural heritage of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia, as well as New Zealand and Australia. Texts address topics such as navigation, migration, colonialism, genocide, ethnicity, language, class, gender, religion, cultural hybridity, modernity, globalization, war, tourism, ethnology, mythology, and indigenous movements. Presentations, short papers, research project, and exams required; satisfies Advanced GE in Area V.

### **ENGL 125: European Literature, Homer to Dante**

Bonnie Cox: MW 10:30-11:45

An introduction to some of the major literary works of the first 2000 years of Western Culture: 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. Daily reading responses, a midterm exam, a critical paper, and a final exam.

### **ENGL 129: Career Writing**

Cynthia Baer: TR 10:30-11:45

Explore a career in freelance writing of creative non-fiction. We will read selections from the *Best of American* series (*Travel, Sports, and Magazine*). You will research and write two essays, polish and package one for publication. You will also research, design, write and produce two in-house publications: *The Writing Life* and the department newsletter.

### **ENGL 130: Writing Fiction**

Andrew Altschul: M 4:30-7:15; T 4:30-7:15

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

### **ENGL 130: Writing Fiction**

Kelly Harrison: TR 3:00-4:15

Come prepared to write, read, and support each other in a workshop setting. We'll learn the craft of fiction and practice what we learn through writing exercises and journal writing. You'll learn to read closely for what works in a story and what doesn't, and you'll learn techniques to help fix the common problems in short fiction.

**ENGL 131: Writing Poetry**

Samuel Maio: MW 1:30-2:45

Students strengthen their poetic talents by learning and practicing new techniques principally drawn from the English metrical tradition. The goal is to develop individual voice and poetic styles. To that end, we will begin by examining the aesthetics of master poets from various time periods, concentrating on brief Italian and French lyric forms before moving on to the longer dramatic and narrative modes. Students will write metrical/formal poems as well as vers libre, much of which will be treated in workshop. [Repeatable for credit. Pre-requisite: English 71 or professor's consent.]

**ENGL 131: Writing Poetry: "Stand Up Poetry"**

Alan Soldofsky: R 4:00-6:45

An intermediate/advanced workshop: Students critique poems they write, while reading and analyzing diverse published poems. Texts teach students the craft of poetry in contemporary open form and also in traditional form. The workshop will emphasize "Stand Up Poetry": poems whose characteristics include wit, performability, clarity, use of natural language, a strong individual voice, and an emotional punch. Can be repeated up to 3 times for credit.

**ENGL 133: Reed Magazine**

Cathleen Miller: M 4:00-6:45

In the spring semester we will focus on the production aspect of Reed Magazine, the copyediting and proofreading of submissions, the design and layout of the journal. We'll also look at ways to market Reed by tabling at conferences and events, selling advertising and creating posters. And last but not least, we'll host a launch party to celebrate the debut of issue No. 66.

**ENGL 135: Writing Nonfiction**

Cathleen Miller: MW 12:00-1:15

Advanced writing workshop in creative nonfiction. In this class we will experiment with four subgenres of nonfiction: the personal essay, travel writing, profiles and feature articles. In addition we'll discuss strategies for publishing your work. Prerequisite: English 71. Repeatable twice for credit.

**ENGL 139: Visiting Authors**

Kate Evans: TR 12:00-1:15

We will study the works of the writers who are visiting campus this semester through the Center for Literary Arts (see: [www.litart.org](http://www.litart.org)). Includes possible meetings with visiting authors and attending various presentations.

**ENGL 145: Shakespeare and Performance**

Adrienne Eastwood: MW 4:30-5:45

This course examines several of Shakespeare's plays, specifically addressing performance and interpretation. Placing each play in the context of its

original performance during Shakespeare's time, students re-imagine Shakespeare's works to explore their vitality and continued cultural relevance. We will analyze the modern production elements—setting, casting, staging, costumes, editing—that shape and create meaning (or fail to do so) for today's audiences. Required for the English Single-Subject Credential.

**ENGL 166: American Literature since 1945**

Robert Cullen: TR 1:30-2:45

This course will explore "Families and Fathers" in American literature since 1945, though our discussions will extend well beyond that unifying theme. Likely texts include *Rabbit, Run* by John Updike; *The Ghost Writer* by Philip Roth; *Fences* by August Wilson; *Fuddy Meers and Rabbit Hole* by David Lindsay-Abaire; *Fun Home* by Alison Bechdel; *Run* by Ann Patchett; and *Sag Harbor* by Colson Whitehead.

**ENGL 183: Dickens in the Digital Age**

Katherine Harris: TR 10:30-11:45

In this course, we will explore Charles Dickens' writings in the context of nineteenth-century print culture, a rising industrialized nation, and that nation's imperialist ethos. In addition to reading physical facsimiles of a few of Dickens' serialized novels, participants will research Dickens' enduring impact on the nineteenth-century and beyond. Our concluding project will involve creating a digital scholarly edition of the original *Hard Times* serials currently held in the SJSU Special Collections. (Technical ability requirements: know how to email!)

**ENGL 193C: Capstone Seminar in Creative Writing and Self Reflection**

Susan Shillinglaw: MW 1:30-2:45

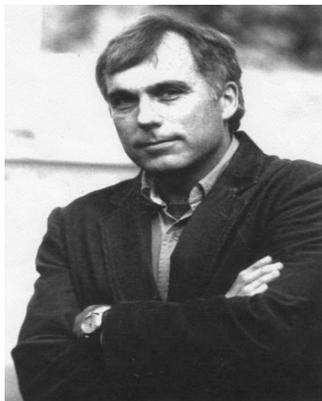
In this capstone seminar students reflect upon the English major and themselves as majors in English, compiling a folder of essays written as a student of literature. Students also reflect on a broad theme: for Spring 2013, ethics. We'll consider books that raise sharp ethical issues: J.M. Coetzee, *Disgrace* (rape); Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (the amoral hero); Aldo Leopold *Sand Country Almanac* and Wendell Berry's essays (land ethic); Ian McEwan's *Atonement*. Students will discuss and write familiar essays, using Anne Fadiman's *At Large and At Small* as models.

**ENGL 193C: Capstone Seminar in Creative Writing and Self Reflection**

Miller: MW 1:30-2:45

Culminating seminar for the Creative Writing Concentration, requiring students to reflect on experiences and revise work completed in several other courses taken in the Concentration. New writing done for the seminar will be included with revised work in a final Portfolio. Prerequisite: Upper division standing. For Creative Writing Concentration Credit only.

## A Letter from the Chair



*The Cathedriad,<sup>1</sup> or, Some Fragments Discovered In an Antique Filecabinet While the Editor Paused After a Difficult Journey In Rainy Weather Over the Summit of the Santa Cruz Mountains.*

...

*Prolegomenon:*

And after driving Highway Seventeen,<sup>2</sup>  
He'd cross the campus, broad and damp and green,  
And in a listless desultory mood  
Sit on his chair and dream, or muse or brood,  
While fiery Phoebus groans and. . . .

*From Cathedriad I:*

The chair he sat on was no burnished throne.  
Of modest black material it was sewn.  
The fabric stretched across the pinions tight—  
Chiaroscuro seat of dark and light,  
Of Sisyphean tasks the emblem meet—  
But that's a bit too much—a seat's a seat! . . . .

*From Cathedriad [II or III?]*

So when he greeted smiling Pat and Gabby,  
And gentle Marta, then he wou'd be happy.  
Not less did he give praise to Zeus the Brawny,<sup>3</sup>  
For the help and comradeship of Bonnie.  
But Poetic Justice and her Scale,  
Weighs others justly *more* in this Chair's Tale.  
I mean the ones who fill the seats in classes,

Who sometimes write their teachers down as a\*\*e\*,

Although such comments quickly are withdrawn!  
I'm confident in that—but going on.—  
The students really are the “thing wherein  
We'll catch the. . . .” [*Hundreds more lines of this—Ed.*]

*From Cathedriad VI: Encomium to Discipuli*

As brave Achilles struck, so strike our Majors,  
And glory in their Herculean labors!  
We marvel they their essays e'er complete,  
‘Midst “friending,” “tweeting,” World of Warcraft feats.

*From Cathedriad VII: Apostrophe to Discipuli*

Brave English Major! Child of Calliope!  
You were born for Metaphor and Colloquy!  
You navigate the “course” your Teachers set,  
While posting rants about your mounting debt—  
You somehow find the time in your long day  
To visit meetings of the CLA,  
Transpiring oft in the rooms of MLK,<sup>4</sup>  
And potlucks of Poets and Writer's Coalition,  
Which so improve the torpid disposition. . . .

*From Cathedriad IX*

Poets, writers, soldiers of literature—  
You feel provoked when people titter-at-you?  
Be not annoyed, dip not your pen in gall,  
Laugh best by laughing last—think large, not small;  
Though on occasions when you're feeling restive,  
You are excused for thinly veiled invective. . . .

*From Cathedriad: Peroration*

And now the Author of these humble lines,  
Hopes you will enjoy your time with Signs  
And Signifiers, Symbols, and Anaphora,  
Litotes, Oxymoron, and Diaphora,  
Prolepsis, Zeugma, Irony, Sublimity,  
All of which please take with magnanimity.  
When ruddy writhing Helios crests the hill. . . . [etc.]

*From Cathedriad: Benediction and Parting*

If sofas were sentient (yes, it's a conceit!),<sup>5</sup>  
They would periodically repeat  
A protest 'gainst their being sat upon  
By any but an English Major's patty-pan.<sup>6</sup>  
But he whose title straight derives from “Chair”—  
His “tale” is through, he's parked his derriere.

<sup>1</sup> The phrase “ex cathedra” refers to pompous announcements by those speaking from self-conscious authority derived from their offices (i.e., their thrones).

<sup>2</sup> *Highway Seventeen*: Here the perspicacious reader will begin to suspect the ruse of poet-editor.

<sup>3</sup> An odd epithet for the god, who is usually referred to as “cloud-gathering,” or “master of thunder.” Evidently the poet tortures the line for rhyme's sake.

<sup>4</sup> *CLA? MLK???* —the poet annoyingly fails to reveal these coded references.

<sup>5</sup> *conceit*: evidently this word means something other than smugness, but what?

<sup>6</sup> *patty-pan*: a nonsensical euphemism. Apparently the poet thinks, like Humpty Dumpty in *Alice in Wonderland*, that words mean whatever he tells them to mean.

## **Production Team**

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