

ENGLISH GRADUATE NEWSLETTER

Volume L, Number 14

April 2024

SJSU DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND
COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Introducing New Faculty

Vee Lawson



Vee Lawson (they/them) earned their PhD in Rhetoric and Writing, specializing in digital cultural rhetorics, from Michigan State University. Their dissertation research examined how an online forum formed to snark on fundamentalist media reversed a trend towards bullying and targeted hate by reinventing itself as a story-based community. Likewise, their ongoing research interests center on storytelling, rhetorical intimacy, and feminist/queer/trans community formation online. Their recent work can be found in *constellations* and the *Routledge Handbook of Queer Rhetorics*. When not writing, they enjoy being in the backcountry or catching up on whichever Star Trek is currently airing.

Spring Office Hours

MA Advising

Revathi Krishnaswamy
revathi.krishnaswamy@sjsu.edu
virtual office hours: M 11:45-12:30; 6:45-7:30 and by appointment

MFA Advising

Prof. Nick Taylor
Nicholas.taylor@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: TH 2-4 in FOB 106 and by appointment on Zoom



Revathi Krishnaswamy

MA Advisor & Graduate Coordinator



Nick Taylor

Director of Creative Writing and
MFA Program Coordination

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Important Policies

Continuous Enrollment and 1290R

Course Requirements per S17-5, University Policy, Required Enrollment for Culminating Graduate Students, apply to graduate students who have completed all degree program requirements except the culminating experience (thesis, project and/or comprehensive exam). Such students must enroll in the 1- unit UNVS or departmental 1290R for the purpose of continuing enrollment. Appointments for the 1290R open in MySJSU shortly after the last day to add classes.

See: <https://www.sjsu.edu/cgs/docs/forms/1290R%20FAQs%20rev%2009.27.21.pdf>

Students do not need the 1290R if they are enrolled in any other course. Note that the course attached to a culminating experience involving a thesis (or project) and a comp exam is given a "CR" upon successful completion of both components. Should the completion of one or both components continue into a subsequent semester(s), the course will carry a grade of "RP" (Report in Progress) and the student will need the 1290R for continuous enrollment for each semester used to complete the component or components.

Note that the 1290R is not a regular course. The \$280 special session course fee is much cheaper than requiring registration of a course at regular session tuition cost.

Registration for Fall 2024

MySJSU should give you appointment times and information on how to register for next semester's courses in May. Registration for continuing graduate students will begin in late April. Registration for new graduate students begins in June. It is important that you register as early as possible. If there are not enough people signed up for a course, even a graduate course could be cancelled.

Regarding Writing Workshops: MFAs need to be sure and sign up for any workshops they need for their degree as soon as possible. Due to high demand, the fiction workshop (ENGL 241) will be accessible by permission only. Ass codes are available from the English Department Office (english@sjsu.edu) and will be distributed according to the following priority order: 1) Incoming Fiction Primary students; 2) Continuing Fiction Primary and Fiction Secondary students; 3) Approved MFA students (send work sample to nicholas.taylor@sjsu.edu for review). After a certain point, space permitting, the fiction workshop will be opened up to all graduates on a first come, first served basis, regardless of program (MA, MFA, or graduate students from other departments). Fiction Secondary students who cannot find space in ENGL 241 are encouraged to take the upper-division undergraduate fiction workshop, ENGL 130 (this course will be counted as one of the two required secondary-genre workshops).

All MA students are required to take ENGL 201 and ENGL 297, which are offered only in the Fall.

Students planning to apply for TAs should complete 259, which is also offered only in the Fall.

MFA students planning to graduate in May or August 2025 must take ENGL 291, MFA Literary Practicum, in Fall 2024. Note that ENGL 291, which is required for graduation, is offered only in the Fall semester.

Contact your advisor if you have any questions.

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Fall 2024 Schedule of Classes

At least 21 of the 30 units of classes required for the MA program should be in 200-numbered English courses. Of the 30, only 6 units can be taken as credit/no credit independent study of thesis units. Upper-division English coursework (100 level) may count for graduate students if you have received permission of the instructor as well as the MA or MFA Coordinator. Classes taken outside the department will not count except in unusual circumstances. Get prior approval from your advisor before you take such courses.

Here are the courses, faculty, and meeting times for our Fall 2024 graduate course offerings:

| | | | | |
|-------------|---|---------------|--------|------------------------|
| English 201 | R | 16:00 - 18:45 | HGH227 | Professor Urcaregui |
| English 215 | T | 16:00 - 18:45 | online | Professor Stork |
| English 228 | W | 16:00 - 18:45 | FO104 | Professor Eastwood |
| English 240 | M | 19:00 - 21:45 | FO104 | Professor Martinez |
| English 241 | R | 16:00 - 18:45 | FO104 | Professor Taylor |
| English 242 | T | 19:00 - 21:45 | online | Professor McClurg |
| English 259 | W | 19:00 - 21:45 | FO104 | Professor Moriarty |
| English 281 | M | 16:00 - 18:45 | FO104 | Professor Spangler |
| English 291 | R | 19:00 - 21:45 | FO104 | Professor Taylor |
| English 297 | R | 19:00 - 21:45 | online | Professor Krishnaswamy |

Fall 2024 Course Descriptions

English 201

Methods and Materials of Literary Research

R 16:00 - 18:45 (Professor Urcaregui)

English 201: Materials and Methods of Literary Research meets in-person Thursdays 4-6:45 p.m. in Hugh Gillis Hall 227. The course provides a foundation for graduate students and advanced undergraduate majors to read, write, and research at the graduate level. Together, we will familiarize ourselves with various research methods within the discipline of literary studies and practice writing across multiple academic genres (including an abstract and annotated bibliography, a conference paper, and a journal article) as well as within alternative-academic, digital, and public-facing spaces (such as book reviews, op-eds, and blog posts). In the first half of the semester, we will develop our close reading and analysis as we read Cristina García's *Dreaming in Cuban*, a work from the Multiethnic American Literature MA exam list, alongside relevant works of theory and criticism. In the second half of the semester, you will design and develop your own original research project on a text of your choice: first, by familiarizing yourself with relevant scholarship; then by developing your own original interpretation and contribution; and finally by writing, revising, and presenting your ideas. The course will emphasize

researching and writing as a process and will rely heavily on peer-review, feedback, and revision. By the end of the course, you will have a foundational skillset to participate in ongoing conversations within literary studies, and we will celebrate your original research with a class mini-conference!

English 215

Myth and Symbolism

T 16:00 - 18:45 (Professor Stork)

This course covers a wide range of world mythologies, fairy tales and symbolist poetry. Past courses have included topics such as: the classic Western fairy tales, medieval romance, Norse sagas, werewolves, fairy lovers, Egyptian love poetry, a man and his donkey, the undead, snake women, invisible knights, Sun Wukong (the Monkey King from China), the Vedic scriptures, Zoroastrianism and Japanese folk tales. Within this wide range of possible topics I aim to curate a selection of texts that will introduce students to the ancient texts, oral traditions and earliest sources for these enduring stories. In addition, we read from a selection of theorists who explain the appeal of such stories from folkloric, psychoanalytic, structural, and anthropological perspectives. Students can choose from a myriad of possible research topics.

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English 228

Genre Play: The Uses of Form in the Early Modern English Literature

W 16:00 - 18:45 (Professor Eastwood)

Genre, or form, is not static, as one might think. Rather, forms are dynamic, shifting categories that are historically determined. Meanings are shaped through genre "play," complex intersections among author, culture, form and genre, and therefore, studying genre can reveal important nuances about literary texts and the cultures that produce them. In this course, we will explore current genre theory, and interrogate the various ways in which early modern authors deploy form and genre, and we will analyze the ways in which they function in literary texts. We will look specifically at dramatic modes (comedy, tragedy, history, and romance), the pastoral (both in poetry and prose), the epic, the epithalamion, and the sonnet. Authors we will cover will include Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare, Philip Sidney, and John Donne.

English 240

Poetry Writing Workshop

M 19:00 - 21:45 (Professor Martinez)

ENGL 240 is a seminar on poetics and poetry writing as preparation for the graduate thesis. Includes theory and practice of major trends in contemporary poetry. Addressing issues and reading text addressing neurodiversity, the sacred and the profane (as understood by Simone Weil and George Bataille), writing poetry navigating Maurice Merleau-Ponty's ideas of the visible and invisible, SJSU's Fall 2024 Eng. 240 Graduate Workshop in Poetry will, overall, seek to comprehend trauma and the limits of language. Readings will include recent work from award-winning writers Cynthia Cruz, Mary-Alice Daniel, Amanda Gunn, Kim Hyesoon, Luke Johnson, Jos Charles, Paisley Rekdal, Brian Teare, Jasminne Mendez, JJJJJerome Ellis and more. Intensive workshop experience. May be repeatable for credit for up to 12 units.

English 241

Fiction Writing Workshop

R 16:00 - 18:45 (Professor Taylor)

This is the most advanced fiction workshop offered at SJSU. Experimentation, risk-taking, and stretching of all kinds will be encouraged. Students submit two original pieces of fiction for plus a significant revision in lieu of a final exam. We will read several craft texts and an anthology of published short stories chosen by the class. Registration priority goes to MFAs with a primary concentration in fiction, followed by those with a secondary concentration in fiction, and finally graduate students in other programs. If you are not in the MFA program, you must submit a writing sample to the instructor before you may register.

English 242

Nonfiction Writing Workshop

T 19:00 - 21:45 (Professor McClurg)

Few literary objects so consistently defy easy categorization as much as The Essay: is it a genre or anti-genre? Is it a mode or a form? Is it alive or dead? Is it simply a way of seeing the world and does it operate from a place of knowing or unknowing? In this course, we will track the personal essay from its earliest iterations to its most recent lyric variations, noting how it changes, adapts, and continuously reinvents itself over time. While this is a workshop in which you are welcome to write in any form of Creative Nonfiction you wish, we will keep the essay as our primary object of study, and use it as a point of entry to further our understanding of Creative Nonfiction more broadly.

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English 259

Seminar in Composition Studies

W 19:00 - 21:45 (Professor Moriarty)

How do people write? How do people learn how to write? And, most importantly for our purposes here, how can we — and should we — teach writing? Composition theorists have been looking into and arguing about these questions — and many others — for years, and this course will immerse you in their debates. Through extensive readings and discussions, as well as papers and presentations, you will learn how to analyze and evaluate competing descriptions of the writing process; how to recognize and evaluate the range of approaches to teaching composition; how to examine assumptions underlying current theory and practice in writing instruction; how to explore assumptions and implications of composition and rhetorical research; and how to identify key problems and issues surrounding current research in composition and rhetoric. English 259 is a prerequisite or co-requisite for Teaching Associates and is highly recommended for any student, MA or MFA, who contemplates teaching writing as part of a career.

English 281

Special Topics

M 16:00 - 18:45 (Professor Spangler)

This class will explore some of the ways in which refugees, asylum-seekers, and transnational immigrants have been represented through literature, theatre, and film. It will take a contemporary focus (post 1980), and look at migrant experiences to the United States and Western Europe through narrative-based works. Some of the texts we will consider include: Viet Thanh Nguyen's (ed) *The Displaced: Refugee Writers on Refugee Lives*, Christy Lefteri's *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, Andrew Lam's *Perfume Dreams: Reflections on the Vietnamese Diaspora*, Charles Yu's *Interior Chinatown*, Maxine Hong Kingston's *Woman Warrior*, Luis Alberto Urrea's *The Devil's Highway*, Javier Zamora's *Solito*, Bisi Adigun's *The Playboy of the Western World – A New Version*, and Nina McConigley's *Cowboys and East Indians*, among others. If you have any questions, reach out to Dr. Matthew Spangler at matthew.spangler@sjsu.edu.

English 291

Literary Practicum

R 19:00 - 21:45 (Professor Taylor)

This 4-unit CR/NC practicum course is required for graduate students in the final year of the MFA program. The course prepares students for the program's two culminating experiences: the MFA exam and the thesis. Guided by the instructor, students will form a thesis committee, customize their exam reading lists, and draft the thesis proposal in advance of the fall submission deadline. ENGL 291 also provides professional development opportunities via panels of literary professionals such as agents and editors, as well as recent program graduates and other early-career professionals. Students in this course should also plan to attend the Thursday evening readings presented by the Center for Literary Arts.

English 297

MA Comprehensive Exam Prep

R 19:00 - 21:45 (Professor Krishnaswamy)

This is not a typical graduate seminar on a defined, delimited literary topic with the usual assignments. It is a workshop aimed at presenting general guidelines, dispelling myths and misunderstandings, reviewing materials, and offering hands on practice to help you prepare for the comprehensive MA exams. Our goal is to understand how the exam is set up, what is expected, and how best go about preparing so that you can create an effective study plan for yourself. We will review major periods, movements, authors, themes, theoretical approaches and key concepts in class. Class work will emphasize (a) honing close reading and textual analysis skills, (b) using appropriate literary/critical/theoretical terminology, and (c) connecting the text to the historical/literary context. We will also examine sample exam questions and critique answers to get a clearer understanding of what kind of questions to expect, how to prepare your answers, and how to present your response. While this class will definitely give you many useful tips and tools, intensive independent study outside of class is absolutely essential for gaining the kind of in-depth knowledge necessary to do well on the exams. In other words, you should not expect to pass the exams simply because you take this course!

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MA/MFA Reminders and Guidelines

Thesis Reminders



MA/MFA students planning to write a thesis next year should take note of the following timeline and plan accordingly: Those planning to take thesis units (English 299) in Spring 2025 with intent to graduate in May will be required to submit thesis proposals for approval by November 1, 2024.

This means you should ideally do your preliminary research over the summer to identify your area/ topic of interest so that you can discuss this with potential advisors/readers early in the fall semester in order to form your thesis committee and prepare your proposal for formal submission by November 1.

If your proposal is approved, use the winter break to work on your thesis. In Spring 2025, plan to submit your draft to your thesis director by February 1 and a revised draft to your 2nd and 3rd readers by April 1 to allow sufficient time for further feedback and revision. Planning ahead and following the timeline is critical to ensuring your thesis is of high quality and you are able to finish in time for May graduation.

For MA and MFA students planning to write a thesis next year, please be familiar with the latest MLA Handbook.

Graduate Studies will expect your thesis to be consistently formatted in whatever style you choose. They will not allow you to mix styles, and they will expect you to be up to date, or they will require you to revise before they accept your thesis.

MFA students should note that MFA theses must be accompanied by a 2000 - 3000 word (approximate length) preface, in which the author provides a literary context for her/his work, including literary influences, stylistic and theoretical influences, the influence of historical events, cultural and/or linguistic background, etc. It is hoped that the proposal-writing process will help MFAs to flesh out their ideas for their preface.

MA Exam Guidelines

Guidelines and reading lists for the MA Exams are now available on our website: <https://www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/ma/comp-exam.php>

Note that Part 1 is an in-class exam that you will take as part of English 297, a required course offered only in the fall. Please enroll in 297 if you plan to take Part 1 in the Fall. Part 2 is a take-home essay exam in 3 specific areas, administered via Canvas. You must indicate which three areas you wish to be examined in when you sign up for the exam.

The Fall 2024 Part Two exam will be given out on Friday, October 25th (9:00 AM) and will be due on Monday, October 28th, (5:00 p.m.).

MA students should email MA advisor, Professor Krishnaswamy (Revathi.Krishnaswamy@sjsu.edu) by May 1st to sign up for Part 2 in the Fall. Be sure to specify which three areas you wish to be examined in.

MFA Exam

To sign up for the MFA exam, students should first have successfully achieved MFA candidacy status and have formed a three-person thesis committee.

The MFA exam will be distributed on Friday, October 25th, (9:00 a.m.) and will be due on Monday, October 28th, (5:00 p.m.).

Contact the MFA advisor, Professor Nick Taylor (Nicholas.taylor@sjsu.edu) by August 31st to receive a link to sign up.

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MA/MFA Reminders and Guidelines (continued)

MA Language Requirement

The MA Program requires demonstrated proficiency in a language, other than English, equivalent to 2 semesters or 3 quarters of college-level coursework. If you have not already satisfied this requirement at the time of admission, you may be admitted to conditional standing, but you will need to satisfy the requirement by completing the required number of units OR by passing [a test given by the World Languages Department](#) before graduating from the MA program. For questions about this requirement, or to satisfy this requirement in a language other than French, German, or Spanish, please contact the MA Advisor.

Conditionally Classified Students

Conditionally classified students must complete required undergraduate course work before enrolling in graduate seminars. When you are eligible for classified status, see your advisor to file the necessary form (found at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/forms/>). The change is not automatic.

MFA Thesis Reading Event

The MFA in Creative Writing's annual public MFA thesis reading is to be scheduled on Saturday, May 13th, 2:30 - 4:00 pm. A Zoom link will be available from Professor Taylor after May 1. Following the reading, there will be an **in-person reception and celebration** at a downtown San Jose venue TBA, 4:30 – 6:30 PM.

Students receiving their MFAs in May and August 2024 will read from their thesis projects.

Join Reed Magazine!

Join a 155-year legacy—and earn marketable credits toward your degree! English 133—Reed Magazine, California's oldest literary journal—eagerly encourages graduate students to enroll. This unique, four-credit course exposes students to the work of thousands of writers and offers real-world experience in editing and promoting a publication that has held fast through world war, cultural revolution, and the turns of two centuries. See www.reedmag.org.

For an add code, contact Editor in Chief Helen Meservey at helen.meservey@sjsu.edu.



Recent Reed Achievements Include the Following:

Reed Magazine has begun digitizing past issues and preparing to release issues 152, 153, 154 on the Scholarworks database. The issues should be available online by the end of next month.

The number of submissions increased during the last submission round to 3740 submissions, a 76 percent increase! Generating, reading, and judging the submissions took an enormous amount of work, student devotion, and teamwork.

Reed Magazine has several new podcasts coming out. The first will drop on Feb. 28 and will feature CLA featured author Colin Winnette, who also judged the 2024 John Steinbeck Award for Fiction. More information and links can be found at reedmagazine.org.

Reed Magazine received a steady stream of visitors at the Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference in Kansas City. Several hundred copies of the magazine were distributed.

Reed Magazine will also have a table and readers at the 2024 Sonoma Community Writers Festival on April 4 at Sonoma State university. We invite members of the Spartan Community to come check out the festival.

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Electronic Theses Or 298D Option

Graduate Studies is now accepting theses electronically and making them available to the public via open access on the web.

For those of you who hope to publish your thesis, we suggest you file a form to see that your thesis is "embargoed." That means it will still be available electronically within the library (just as the hard copies of our alumni's theses are available to visitors to the MLK library), but will not be available to people who do not have access to the SJSU library. Currently Graduate Studies' policy is that you

can request an embargo for a set number of years (three) and then file an additional form to have the thesis embargoed further. The graduate faculty encourages those of you with the desire to later publish part or all of your thesis to protect your creative and intellectual property.

For those of you with no desire to publish your thesis materials in print form, open access will provide you with the immediate and ultimate distribution of your scholarship (or creative

work). MFA candidates are able to submit a 298D Departmental Thesis. A Departmental Thesis is not submitted to the Graduate College thesis office but instead to the English Department for final approval. The Departmental Thesis, though submitted in digital form, will not be uploaded to the ProQuest or Scholar Works digital thesis depositories. This option is recommended for students who wish to protect their copyright of their creative work for future publication.

Graduate Conference

A one-day conference where SJSU English graduate students will present on topics related to Literary/Cultural Studies, Rhetoric, and Creative Writing.

When: April 26th, 2-4 p.m.

Where: Sweeney Hall 229

Presenters/Presentations:

- Aly Gerdes, "Rhetoric Analysis of Blood and Guts in High School"
- Peggy Pollard, "'Unto the Seventh Generation': The Abused Child in Modern and Contemporary Irish Lit and Film"
- Lana La Framboise, "Creating Realities: Practicality, Aesthetics, and Complexity in Poetry"
- Ryan Steel, "New Sincerity in the 21st Century"
- Michelle Jones, "The Natural, the Supernatural, and the Ultrarational: An Ecocritical Analysis of the Other in Njal's Saga"
- Leslie Lyshkov, TBD
- Ellie Wong, "Recognition and Moral Judgment in Mrs. Dalloway"

Please come and support your students/classmates!

Refreshments will be provided!

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Brag Time!

Graduate Faculty, Student, and Alumni Accomplishments

Cassie Blair

Cassie Blair's short story "SPLITTING," published in *The Quarter(ly)*: Vol. VIII (print), was nominated for the Pushcart Prize.

Jane Berg

Jane Berg's short story titled "The Wedding Dancers" was published in Issue 32 (Fall 2023) in *Superstition Review*.

Samantha Denny

Samantha Denny had a nonfiction piece published on the *Porridge Magazine* website in their "Comfort Foods" collection.

Mara Olivas

Mara Olivas, recipient of the Rico-Ressman scholarship in December 2023 had a short story, "The Man Who Fed Dilophosaurs" reprinted in Apex Magazine's latest issue in January 2024: <https://apex-magazine.com/short-fiction/the-man-who-fed-dilophosaurs/>. Mara's short story, "The Prine of Oakland" has also earned a spot on Tenebrous Press' shortlist for their "Brace New Weird Vol. 2" anthology for stories published in 2023: <https://tenebrous-press.com/blog/2024/2/19/the-brave-new-weird-vol-2-shortlist-is-here>.

Important Dates for Spring 2024

- April 1** Deadline for applications for 2024-2025 GA due to the Graduate Coordinator.

Deadline for December 2024 graduates to file their "Request for Candidacy" forms (requires MA or MFA advisor's signature).
- April 5** Deadline for submitting MFA Thesis Proposals to the Department Graduate Committee.
- April 17** Deadline for May 2024 graduates to submit signed theses to the Graduate Studies Office or to the English Department for Departmental Thesis (298D).
- May 1** Last day to sign up for the Fall 2024 MA Part 2 Exams
- July 1** Last day to submit your thesis or dissertation to ProQuest for publication. Visit the Graduation Admissions and Program Evaluations website for a list of [Thesis and Dissertation deadlines](#).