

American Literature, Film, & Culture Section 01

ENGL 117A

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

Course Description and Requisites

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

Prerequisite(s): Passage of the Writing Skills Test (WST) or ENGL/LLD 100A with a C or better (C- not accepted), completion of Core General Education and upper division standing are prerequisites to all SJSU studies courses. Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended.

Note(s): All of SJSU Studies courses require completion of the WST and upper division standing.

Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

You are required to be courteous and professional to both classmates and the professor. Most people take this as a requirement in their daily lives and this statement does not need to be reiterated here. However, people sometimes forget that the classroom is a professional setting and rules that govern a business meeting apply here. For example, devices such as cell phones need to be put away; coming to class late is unacceptable. While you may use a laptop to take notes in class, you may not waste class time by texting or performing non-course related activities on a phone or computer. If an emergency arises that requires your absence from class, please contact the professor. Simply prioritizing your education behind other time commitments does not constitute such an emergency. Participating in class discussions and listening to and taking notes on class lectures are absolutely necessary for the successful completion of this course. Protocol for written work requires that all quotations must be enclosed in quotation marks or, when more than three lines, put in an indented block. Full citation of the original author and source must also be included. For all papers, review a writing handbook for help with quote integration, formatting & proper citation (most of you will have purchased one for your Freshman composition classes). The professor will be happy to discuss issues related to writing and composition in office hours. Our university

defines plagiarism as the act of representing the work of another as one's own without giving appropriate credit, regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements.

Plagiarism includes:

1.2.1 knowingly or unknowingly incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, parts of sentences or paragraphs, or the specific substance of another's work without giving appropriate credit, and representing the product as one's own work; 1.2.2 representing another's artistic or scholarly works, such as computer programs, instrument printouts, inventions, musical compositions, photographs, paintings, drawings, sculptures, novels, short stories, poems, screen plays, or television scripts, as one's own. (SJSU Academic Senate Policy "F15-7" page 5)

This policy covers work produced by ChatGPT which will be reported to the office of Student Conduct like any other form of plagiarism.

Program Information

Welcome to this General Education course.

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

The General Education Program has three goals:

Goal 1: To develop students' core competencies for academic, personal, creative, and professional pursuits.

Goal 2: To enact the university's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and justice by ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to serve and contribute to the well-being of local and global communities and the environment.

Goal 3: To offer students integrated, multidisciplinary, and innovative study in which they pose challenging questions, address complex issues, and develop cooperative and creative responses.

More information about the General Education Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) can be found on the [GE website](#).

English Program Information

The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi: In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System").

Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance:

- A = excellent;
- B = above average;
- C = average;
- D = below average;
- F = failure.

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

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Upon successful completion of an undergraduate degree program in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will be able to:

1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric.
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.
4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, including structures of power.

Department Information:

Department Name: English and Comparative Literature

Department Office: FO 102

Department Website: www.sjsu.edu/english (<https://www.sjsu.edu/english>)

Department email: english@sjsu.edu (<mailto:english@sjsu.edu>)

Department phone number: 408-924-4425

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

GE Area S: Self, Society, and Equality in the U.S.

SJSU Studies courses -- Areas R, S, and V -- help students integrate knowledge between and among disciplines. In Area S courses, students study the interrelationships of individuals, racial groups, and cultural groups to understand and appreciate issues of diversity, inclusion, inequalities, and justice in the United States.

GE Area S Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of an Area S course, students should be able to:

1. describe how identities are shaped by cultural and societal influences within contexts of equality and inequality. Examples include, but are not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, disability status, age, generation, regional origin, national identity, language, and intersectionalities;
2. analyze historical, economic, political, or social processes that shape diversity, equality, and structured inequalities in the U.S. and reflect on one's own identities and positions within these structures;
3. evaluate social actions which have or have not led to greater equality and social justice in the U.S.; and
4. engage in constructive interactions about social issues in the U.S. within the framework of equality and inequalities.

Writing Practice: Students will write a minimum of 3000 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline.

Course Materials

Five Required Texts to Purchase or Borrow plus Additional Texts to Read on Canvas:

Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (ISBN-13: 978-0061120060)

Hua Hsu, *Stay True: A Memoir* (ISBN-13: 978-0385547772)

Viet Thanh Nguyen, *The Sympathizer* (ISBN-13: 978-1543618020)

John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* (ISBN 9780143039433)

Anzia Yezierska, *The Breadgivers* (ISBN-13: 978-0892552900)

Recommended for Purchase:

Andrew Lam, *Birds of Paradise Lost* (ISBN-10: 1597092681, ISBN-13: 978-1597092685)

August Wilson, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (reading this is required but an electronic copy is available from our library)

4 Blue or Green Books

You can also use small packs of clean, stapled paper for our in class exams.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Research Paper Proposal and Annotated Bibliography	1-page proposal (about 350 words) plus an annotated bibliography of 3 sources	15%
Research Paper (GE 1-4, E 1, 3, 4 & 5)	8-12 page analysis w/ research 2,800-4,200 words	30%
Midterm (GE 1, 2, , E 1 & 3)	5 I.D.'s and one comparative essay	20%
Final Exam (GE 3 &4; E 1 & 3)	5 I.D.'s & 1 comparative essay	20%
Reading Quizzes & other in-class or other short Canvas assignments (various SLO's)	Reading quizzes, discussion posts, class discussions, etc. These are generally "check off" assignments in that if you do all that is required, you get 100% of the credit. Thus these are lower stakes than the other assignments and will allow you space to try out ideas before you work on them in the lengthier assignments.	15%
Total		100%

✓ Grading Information

Coursework includes reading assignments (see schedule below), a research paper proposal and annotated bibliography (15%), the 8 to 12 page research paper (30%), a midterm (20%) and final (20%). Frequent quizzes, discussion posts, and in-person discussions or writing assignments will also be assigned on a weekly basis (collectively the canvas and in-class participation assignments will make 15% of the courses grade). **Late paper policy:** keeping in mind the many emergencies and unforeseen events that can occur in the average SJSU student's life, I have a very generous extension policy. As long as you give me the request in writing—print or email—(complete with a new deadline) *before* the paper's due date, most requests for an extension will be granted. **If the original deadline is passed by a student who has not received an extension or an extended deadline has been passed, 10% of the total points possible will be taken off for lateness up to one week.** Extended or late papers will be graded AFTER on-time student work. Note that *doing the reading and being able and willing to respond* to the comments and questions of both the professor and your fellow students on a daily basis is a requirement of the course. Reading quizzes and other in-class assignments will be given to ensure that students are indeed completing and understanding the readings. These cannot be made up. Due dates for all major papers and the time for the midterm and final exam are listed on the reading and assignment schedule at the end of the syllabus.

Breakdown

See the rubrics for each assignment in Canvas.

Criteria

In written assignments for English 117A, this scale is based on the following criteria:

A [90-92=A-, 93-96=A, 97-100=A+] = Excellent: The "A" essay is articulate and well developed with fluid transitions and a clear and persuasive use of evidence, which is drawn from the literary text itself, lecture materials (when appropriate), and research materials. An "A" essay contains a fresh insight that teaches the reader something new about the subject matter.

B [80-82=B-, 83-86=B, 87-89=B+] Above average: The "B" essay demonstrates a good understanding of its subject, a clear and persuasive use of evidence, a certain level of ease of expression, and solid organization. However, it usually lacks the level of originality and creativity that characterizes the insight found in an "A" essay.

C [70-72=C-, 73-76=C, 77-79=C+] = Average: The "C" essay makes a good attempt at all the assignment's requirements. It has a reasonable understanding of its subject matter but its ideas are frequently simplistic or over-generalized. The writing style is also more bland and repetitive than the style shown by "A" and "B" essays and it often contains flaws in grammar, punctuation, spelling and/or word choice. It may also use textual evidence out of context.

D [60-62=D-, 63-66=D, 67-69=D+] = Below average: The "D" essay is poorly organized and generally unclear. It has inappropriate or inadequate examples, is noticeably superficial or simplistic, and/or contains some serious mechanical and grammatical problems. A "D" essay may also reveal some misunderstanding of the assignment requirements.

F = Failure: An "F" essay has not addressed the requirements of the assignment and is unacceptable work in terms of both form and content.

University Policies

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

Course Schedule

English 117A

American Film, Literature and Culture: Migrations Fall 2023 Course Reading and Viewing Schedule

The schedule may vary depending on the needs of the class or scheduling issues. Any changes will be reported in class and via the email you have registered with MySJSU.

Week	Readings & Assignments
1: August 25 Introduction	Introduction to course and view silent film, <i>Hungry Hearts</i> , in class
2: September 1 Early Immigrant narratives	Have read all of Anzia Yezierska, <i>The Bread Givers</i> .
Thursday September 7 at 7 PM	Hua Hsu whose bestselling memoir, <i>Stay True</i> , won the Pulitzer Prize, will visit San Jose State as a guest of the CLA
3: September 8 Contemporary Narratives of Movement	Have read all of Hua Hsu's <i>Stay True: A Memoir</i>

Week	Readings & Assignments
4: September 15 The Great Migration	August Wilson's play, " <i>Ma Rainey's Black Bottom</i> " (available online via library), and excerpts from Du Bois, Locke, Hughes, McKay and Brown in Canvas. Watch " <i>Ma Rainey's Black Bottom</i> " in class
5: September 22 Art of the Harlem Renaissance	Have read all of <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> by Hurston.
6: September 29 The Great Depression and Migration	Watch film, <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> Have read first half of <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> (through chapter 18/page 230)
7: October 6 Cinematic images of migration	Finish reading <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> . Watch film version of <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> , in class.
8: October 13 More California Narratives of Labor and Movement	Have read excerpts from Carlos Bulosan, <i>America is in the Heat</i> and Maxine Hong Kingston, <i>China Men</i> (on Canvas).
9: October 20 MIDTERM	Proposal and Annotated Bibliography due. MIDTERM IN CLASS (on first eight weeks of reading & viewing-- emphasis on GE 1 & 2, E 1 & 3). Bring blue or "green" books
Thursday, October 26, 7 PM	San Jose native, SJSU alumna, and rising star K-Ming Chang will read from her debut collection of stories, <i>Bestiary</i>
10: October 27 Origins of the Vietnamese Diaspora	View Bui's <i>Green Dragon</i> in class. Have read <i>The Sympathizer</i> , Viet Nguyen (first half)
11: November 3 Exile and Home	Finish <i>The Sympathizer</i> .

Week	Readings & Assignments
12: November 10 Migrants Within the Americas	Have read Helena Maria Viramontes " <i>Cariboo Cafe</i> " and an excerpt from <i>Unaccompanied</i> by Javier Zamora (on Canvas). See film <i>El Norte</i> in class.
13: November 17 Immigrants in the Multiverse	Research Paper draft due (GE 3 & 4, E 1, 3, 4 & 5). View Film: <i>Everything Everywhere All at Once</i> in class
14: November 24	No class-Thanksgiving Holiday
15: December 1	Have read short stories including Jhumpa Lahiri's "The Third and Final Continent" Final version of the research paper due. Review for final.
Final Exam: Friday December 8, 2023 7:15-9:30 AM	Final Exam (GE 3 & 4, E 1 & 3): 7:15-9:30AM. Bring "blue" or "green books."