Creative Writing Section 04

ENGL 71

Spring 2025   In Person   3 Unit(s)   01/23/2025 to 05/12/2025   Modified 02/01/2025

🖥 Course Description and Requisites

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

GE Area(s): C1 Arts

Grading: Letter Graded.

✳ Classroom Protocols

::Classroom Expectations

Class sessions are brief and require your full attention. To ensure a productive learning environment, please follow these guidelines:

- Technology Use:

  - Cell phones must be set to silent and stored out of sight upon entering the classroom. All earpieces or earbuds should be removed.
  - Laptops and tablets may only be used to access course readings and assignments. Activities such as checking email, browsing social media, or gaming are not permitted.
- Respectful Participation:
  Students are expected to actively and respectfully participate in class discussions, listen attentively to others, and offer comments that are appropriate and constructive.

- Professionalism and Courtesy:
  I expect students to demonstrate consideration and courtesy toward their peers and instructor. Professors should be addressed appropriately, and all communication—both in person and via email— should be professional.

- **Disruptive Behavior**:
  Disruptive actions, such as inappropriate use of technology or disrespectful conduct, may result in being asked to leave the classroom.

:: Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. I understand that illnesses and emergencies happen in everyone's life, but this class is designed to be interactive and participatory. You can't participate if you aren't here. According to [University policy F69-24 (https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf)](https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf): "Students should attend all meetings of their classes, not only because they are responsible for material discussed therein, but because active participation is frequently essential to ensure maximum benefit for all members of the class."

:: Tardiness

Punctuality is important for maintaining a positive and productive classroom environment. I provide crucial information and reminders at the beginning of each class, and arriving late can cause students to miss valuable content that contributes to their success in the course. To minimize disruption and ensure that all students receive the full benefit of each session, please make every effort to arrive on time.

- Students who arrive more than **five minutes late** will be marked as **tardy**.
- **Frequent tardiness** (more than **three instances**) may result in a **grade penalty** or being marked absent for the day.
- If you know you'll be late, please **inform me in advance** (via email or Canvas) whenever possible.

Note: If you are consistently late due to circumstances beyond your control (e.g., work schedule), please reach out to me so we can discuss possible accommodations.

:: Late Policy

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

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

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

▤ Program Information

Welcome to this General Education course.

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

The General Education Program has three goals:

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

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

English Program Information

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

Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance:
- A = excellent;
- B = above average;
- C = average;
- D = below average;
- F = failure.

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

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)
Upon successful completion of an undergraduate degree program in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will be able to:
1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric.
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.

4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, including structures of power.

Department Information:

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

◎ Course Goals

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

◳ Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

GE Area C1: Arts

Area C: Arts and Humanities courses help students to respond subjectively as well as objectively to aesthetic experiences and to develop an understanding of the integrity of both emotional and intellectual responses. C1 Arts courses emphasize the integration of history, theory, aesthetics, and criticism.

GE Area C1 Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of a C1 course, students should be able to:

1. identify aesthetic qualities and processes that characterize works of the human intellect and imagination;
2. explore and articulate their own subjective aesthetic and intellectual responses to such works;
3. analyze the role and impact of the creative arts in culture and on the interrelationship of self and community; and
4. research and apply relevant aesthetic criteria and/or artistic conventions in effective written responses to works of art.

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

▤ Course Materials

: Required Texts and Materials

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

Course Requirements and Assignments

:: Reading

Reading is one of the most vital elements of a writer's growth and development. As author Annie Proulx famously said, *"Writing comes from reading, and reading is the finest teacher of how to write."* This course emphasizes the practice of reading as a writer—not just for enjoyment but as a means to sharpen your craft.

You will be encouraged to engage deeply with texts by blending your emotional response (*How does this make me feel?*) with critical analysis (*What choices has the writer made to evoke this feeling?*). By examining how authors use language, structure, and other formal elements, you will gain insights to inform and strengthen your own writing. Reading in this way transforms it from a passive activity into an active, creative process that directly supports your development as a writer.

:: Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation are critical to your success in this class. Each class session builds on the last, and missing class can severely impact your understanding of the material and your grade.

- **Attendance:** I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. If you are absent, it will affect your grade. Excessive absences may lead to failure of the course.

- **Participation:** Active participation is expected from every student during class. This includes engaging in workshop discussions, offering constructive feedback to peers, contributing to lecture material, and commenting thoughtfully on assigned readings. Additionally, you will be involved in group work where you will collaborate with your peers to analyze and discuss the readings in depth. The more you engage, the more you'll contribute to our collective learning experience. If you are present but not participating, this will negatively impact your grade.

While I understand that everyone has occasional off days, consistent participation is expected.

:: In-Class Writing Exercises

Writing exercises are beneficial because they can help spur our imaginations and help us grasp elements of craft. For this reason, work diligently on them. These writing exercises may contain a germ; they can grow into a poem, essay, or story.

:: Creative Writing Prompts

These exercises are designed to spark creativity and help you explore different aspects of craft. Each prompt will begin in class and be completed outside of class. You will submit your completed work by the following class session. If you miss class, you will still need to complete the prompt independently; however, no make-up work will be available for missed in-class time. Regular participation and timely submission of these prompts will contribute to your overall grade.

:: Major Writing Assignments

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

:: Workshops

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

:: Writing Portfolio

This Portfolio Components assignment consists of two parts: **Creative Work** and a **Writer's Memo.** For the Creative Work, students will submit revised versions of a workshopped poem, a self-portrait poem, and a short story or nonfiction piece, showcasing significant revisions alongside their original drafts to demonstrate growth. In the Writer's Memo, students will reflect on their writing journey, discussing their process, risk-taking, insights gained, and engagement with feedback, while incorporating mentions of assigned readings, class discussions, in-class writing exercises, and writing prompts, concluding with a self-assessment of their progress.

✔ Grading Information

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined by the SJSU Catalog (Grades-Letter Grading). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A+/A/A- = excellent; B+/B/B- = above average; C+/C/C- = average; D+/D/D- = below average; F = failure.

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

How I Grade

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

- Unless I make changes and announce otherwise, the final course grade breaks down as follows:
    - Writing Prompts (70): 70 points
    - 1 Poem (workshop, written critiques, participation, artist statement): 110 points
    - Short Story (workshop, written critiques, participation, artist statement): 160 points
    - Nonfiction (workshop, written critiques, participation, artist statement): 110 points
    - Final Portfolio (includes one revision, self-reflection, and self-portrait poem): 100 points
    - Attendance and Participation: 100 points
        - If you are present and active in class, you will get a boost on your final grade. If you are not active and miss many sessions, your final grade will be affected.
- *Your grade in Canvas is not representative of your grade in this course: I factor in overall performance (participation, professionalism, attendance, etc.). No grade haggling. I do not negotiate grades. If you are concerned with your grade (especially by midterm) and want to know how to do better in the future, I welcome appointments to discuss possible strategies for improvement.*

SJSU Academic Integrity Policy

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

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

ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) TOOLS USAGE

In this Introduction to Creative Writing course, the focus is on developing your unique voice, creativity, and critical thinking as a writer. All assignments must reflect your own work, intellectual effort, and personal expression. The use of artificial intelligence tools—such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, Quillbot, or any similar systems—to generate, rewrite, or significantly alter your work is strictly prohibited. These tools can interfere with your creative process, changing your tone, style, and ideas in ways that detract from your own artistic development.

Using AI to complete assignments or modify your work undermines the creative writing process, which is central to your growth as a writer. This constitutes a violation of the University's Academic Integrity Policy and will be treated as plagiarism.

To protect the integrity of your work in this age of AI, I encourage you to maintain a comprehensive draft history for each assignment. This is the easiest way to demonstrate your personal effort and creative process. Any submissions that show evidence of AI usage will require an instructor conference, either in person or via Zoom.

If you have any questions about what constitutes a violation of this policy or need clarification, please reach out to me.

🏛 University Policies

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

📅 Course Schedule

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

Week	Date	Readings, Assignments, and Due Dates
One	Mon Jan 27	Go over Course Syllabus, Expectations, and Introductions
One	Wed Jan 29	- Lecture: Focus on Sound DISCUSS: How to Read a Poem - READING DUE: Lisa Parker's "Snapping Beans" - READING DUE: Diane Lockward's "Linguini" - READING DUE: Galway Kinnell's "Blackberry Eating" - Writing Prompt #1: Writing Food-Inspired Poetry

Two	Mon Feb 3	- Lecture: Figurative Language and Imagery [READING DUE: Gary Soto's "Oranges"](#) [READING DUE: Julia Copus' "The Backseat of My Mother's Car"](#) [READING DUE: Regina Barreca's "Nighttime Fires"](#) [Writing Prompt #2: Childhood Memories](#) - Sign Up Students for Poetry Workshops
Two	Wed Feb 5	[READING DUE: Kennedy's "Nude Descending a Staircase](#) [READING DUE: Victoria Chang's "Edward Hopper's Office at Night"](#) [READING DUE: Sexton's "The Starry Night"](#) [Writing Prompt #3: Art Gallery Visit for Ekphrastic Poetry](#)
Three	M Feb 10	[Lecture: Forms, Line Breaks, Enjambment, Stanzas](#) [READING DUE: Edward Hirsch's "Fast Break"](#) [READING DUE: Sylvia Plath's "Alicante Lullaby"](#) [READING DUE: Jennifer Franklin's "Memento Mori: Apple Orchard"](#) - GROUP 1 Submits Workshop Poem
Three	W Feb 12	- Go over Self-Portrait Poem - Writing Workshop Guidelines - How to Evaluate Peer Poetry - In-Class Writing: The Self-Portrait - In-Class Writing: The Object Poem - GROUP 2 Submits Workshop Poem
Four	M Feb 17	[Poetry Workshop: Group 1](#) - Group 3 Submits Workshop Poem
Four	W Feb 19	[Poetry Workshop: Group 2](#) Group 4 Submits Workshop Poem
Five	M Feb 24	[Poetry Workshop: Group 3](#)

Five	W Feb 26	• [Poetry Workshop: Group 4](#)
Six	M Mar 3	• Lecture: The Short Story • [READING DUE: The Neuroscience of Your Brain on Fiction](#) • [READING DUE: Alice Walker's "The Flowers"](#)
Six	W Mar 5	• [READING DUE: Sandra Cisneros's "Eleven"](#) • [Writing Prompt #4: Character Sketch](#)
Seven	M Mar 10	• [READING DUE: Brett Anthony Johnston's "Encounters with Unexpected Animals"](#) • [How to Write Dialogue (formatting)](#) • [Writing Dialogue](#) • [HW: Eavesdropping](#) • Sign up students for fiction workshops
Seven	W Mar 12	• [READING DUE: Ken Liu's "The Paper Menagerie"](#) • [Writing Prompt #5: Conflict!](#)
Eight	M Mar 17	• [VERY IMPORTANT HANDOUT: How to Format Short Story](#) • READING DUE: Short Story TBA • **Group 1 Submits Workshop Story**
Eight	W Mar 19	• [The Importance of Description and Details (Show, Don't Tell)](#) • [Show, Don't Tell (Fiction Edition)](#) • [READING DUE: Katie Folk's "Shueyville"](#) • **Group 2 Submits Workshop Story**
Nine	M Mar 24	• [Fiction Workshop: Group 1](#) • **Group 3 Submits Workshop Story**
Nine	W Mar 26	• [Fiction Workshop: Group 2](#) • **Group 4 Submits Workshop Story**

Ten	M Mar 31	• SPRING BREAK
Ten	W April 2	• SPRING BREAK
Eleven	M April 7	• [Fiction Workshop: Group 3](#) • Group 5 Submits Workshop Story
Eleven	W April 9	• [Fiction Workshop: Group 4](#) • Group 6 Submits Workshop Story
Twelve	M April 14	• [Fiction Workshop: Group 5](#)
Twelve	W April 16	• [Fiction Workshop: Group 6](#)
Thirteen	M April 21	• [LECTURE: Why Creative Nonfiction](#) • [READING DUE: Roxane Gay's "Hunger" (excerpt found here)--start reading at Section](#) • [Writing Prompt #6: Body Image](#)
Thirteen	W April 23	• [READING DUE: Hiram Perez's "Partido"](#) • [READING DUE: Amy Tan's "Fish Cheeks"](#) [Writing Prompt #7: Turning Shame Into Strength: Embracing What Makes You Unique](#) Group 1 Submits Workshop Nonfiction Piece
Fourteen	M April 28	• [Read out loud and discuss in class: Junot Diaz's "The Money"](#) • [READING DUE: Suzanne Farrell Smith's "Men Come Here"](#) • Group 2 Submits Workshop Nonfiction Piece
Fourteen	W April 30	• [Nonfiction Workshop: Group 1](#) • Group 3 Submits Workshop Nonfiction

Fifteen	M May 5	• [Nonfiction Workshop: Group 2](#) • Group 4 Submits Workshop Nonfiction
Fifteen	W May 7	• [Nonfiction Workshop: Group 3](#)
Sixteen	M May 12	• [Nonfiction Workshop: Group 4](#)
	M May 19	• [Final Writing Portfolio Assignment](#) ○ DUE by 1pm