

FALL 2011

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ENGLISH LITERATURE

ENGL 600 INTRODUCTION TO GRADUATE STUDY

J. THOMAS

T 7:00-9:40pm

This course is designed to familiarize you with the complex and rich world of English Studies, as well as the historical traditions that inform it. We will be reading a wide array of texts of varying degrees of difficulty. The course of study we are undertaking is not a subject that can be "mastered"--indeed, much of the critical theory produced in recent years resists the very idea of mastery. Instead of "mastering" these texts and the ideas they seek to communicate, we will seek to engage and interact with them, discovering how they might inform the work we undertake as students and scholars of English Studies.

ENGL 601 LITERARY STUDY MULTICULT WORLD

J. ROBINETT

W 7:00-9:40pm **Post-Colonial and Resistance Literature (The Study of Literature in a Multicultural World)**

This course will investigate selected issues in literature, cultural criticism, post-colonialism and imperialism. Readings include texts and essays that challenge dominant cultural views, and offer alternative visions and structures (literary and otherwise). We will be focusing on the Post Colonial literature, especially as it functions as a source of resistance to imperialism and a minority critique of dominant cultures. We will examine intersections of class, ethnicity, gender, and on the various avatars of colonialism/imperialism/nationalism and post-colonialism especially in China, India and Tibet. We will focus on the exploration of literature as the site where social and cultural values are inscribed and from which they are also derived. The destruction and re-shaping of cultural values and cultural identity under the influence of colonial powers and the fate of those constructions following the end of empire is central to our exploration. Readings may be supplemented during the semester, but the basic list of required texts includes:

Chinue Achebe	<i>Things Fall Apart</i>
Ama Adhe	<i>The Voice That Remembers</i>
Kirian Desai	<i>The Inheritance of Loss</i>
Palden Gyatso	<i>Autobiography of a Tibetan Monk</i>
Ha Jin	<i>War Trash</i>
ICT	<i>Like Gold That Does Not Fear the Fire</i>
Arndhati Roy	<i>The God of Small Things</i>
Chen Ran	<i>A Private Life</i>
Dai Sijie	<i>Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress</i>
Edward Said	<i>Culture and Imperialism</i>
James Welch	<i>Fools Crow</i>
Woser	<i>Tibet's True Heart</i>
Liu Xiaobo	readings

Possible additions to this may appear as handouts. Also, we may have time for movies and art.

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ENGL 602 LITERARY THEORY & CRITICAL PRACTICE

E. HICKS

W 4:00-6:40pm

NOT AVAILABLE

ENGL 604D SEM: 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

J. CUMMINS

T 3:30-6:10pm

Child, Culture, Nation

Now that we are well into the 21st century, we can look back over the 20th century and discern certain patterns and trends in children's literature. What can we determine about 20th-century culture through examining these patterns? Can we reach conclusions about American concepts of childhood, families, institutions, and of the nation itself through children's literature? Why did certain books become classics and what do these classics tell us about ideologies and agendas? Why are some books seen as iconoclastic and what cultural work do these texts do? In all the books we read, how are attitudes toward gender, class, sexuality, and race solidified or challenged? How powerful, ultimately, is children's literature in creating—or subverting—norms and values?

We will examine an array of books in order to do our investigation. Proceeding somewhat chronologically, we will look at books considered to be “classics,” such as *Little House on the Prairie*; books that have been very popular with children and young adults, including breakthrough novels such as *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* and *The Outsiders*; and books that broke new ground in their representations of Americans, such as *American Born Chinese*. The titles listed above are possibilities and could change; in addition, the list is far from exhaustive. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions of titles, please email me at jcummins@mail.sdsu.edu.

ENGL 606A SHEL SILVERSTEIN

J. THOMAS

TH 4:00-6:40pm

Join us in SDSU's first ever graduate seminar exploring the life and work of Shel Silverstein! Jean Shepherd once wrote that Silverstein's cartoons were “not for children, of whatever age,” and the same can be said of this class, as we will engage, in addition to Silverstein's children's poetry and picture-books, Shel's decidedly more “adult” work, some of which is pretty raunchy. The course will examine Silverstein's early relationship with *Playboy* (as a cartoonist and writer of travelogues) and the role this relationship played in the development of his persona, “Uncle Shelby.” Rooted in history and aesthetics, the course will also ask us to think about the line between child and adult, the question of audience (real and implied), the marginal status of so-called “urchin poetry,” the mechanics of visual literature, and much more (including, of course, the holy trinity of race, gender, and class). Yes, a whole semester focusing on one author may seem daunting and repetitive, but consider Shel's artistic range: a songwriter, recording artist, playwright, screen writer, travel writer, cartoonist, illustrator, book designer, poet, satirist, and performance artist. Lots of variety. Students are required to take part in and sometimes lead class discussion, compose one short (7 to 8 page) paper placing two of Silverstein's works in conversation with one another, and produce a final project engaging his work more broadly (a project which can take many forms). This course is ideal for graduate students specializing in children's and contemporary American literature, but it's also perfect for MFA students interested in studying the craft of one of the 20th century's most successful and prolific writers.

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ENGL 696 SEMINAR: PROSE/POEM FLASH FICTION

M. CHIN

M 7:00-9:40pm

This class is an electrifying experience for both fiction writers and poets alike. First, we shall read various brilliant practitioners of the two border-crossing “genres,” invoking the magic of both past and living masters: from Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Ponge, Basho, Toomer, Hemingway to Simic, Russell Edson, Jamaica Kincaid, Lydia Davis, Amy Hempel, etc...

Then, of course, we will be required to create our own prose poems and flash fiction masterpieces!

This is a class created for M.F.A. level creative writing students, with solid knowledge of workshop procedures. M.A. students must submit a sampling of creative writing for admittance.

ENGL 696 CREATIVE WRITING: POETRY MANUSCRIPT

M. CHIN

T 7:00-9:40pm

This class is a required seminar for third year M.F.A. poetry students and is also a very helpful class for those who are ready to begin constructing their poetry thesis. The class shall begin with the study of other masterful poetry books and then move toward the workshopping of the students' own thesis-in-progress.

ENGL 696 CREATIVE WRITING: FICTION MANUSCRIPT

D. MATLIN

TH 4:00-6:40pm

This is a new course designed for third year MFA candidates with an emphasis on Fiction. This is Part 1 of a two semester Thesis course that is now required for all third year Fiction writers and Poets in order to graduate. The focus will be on Thesis Preparation: that is how to prepare the book you want to write. The course will consist of individual student tutorials with your mentor/professor and when necessary a full group seminar.

ENGL 700 SEMINAR: JOYCE

S. LITTLE

M 3:30-6:10pm

Critical reading and analysis of the major works by James Joyce: *Dubliners*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Ulysses*, and a brief introduction to *Finnegans Wake*. Survey of scholarship on Joyce and his work.

Because I see a seminar as a site where we will be exploring and sharing the knowledge we will be accumulating during the semester, the bulk of the class activities will consist of informal, brief oral and written reports and discussion of the assigned readings. Some reports may be a result of collaborative work. These reports will support your research interests and the final, formal seminar paper and presentation, which are the culminating projects for the class.

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ENGL 725 SEMINAR: GENDER, SEXUALITY & CHICANO LITERATURE P. SERRATO TH 7:00-9:40pm Gender & Sexuality in Chicano/a Literature, Film, & Performance

This course surveys the ways that gender and sexuality have been—and continue to be—issues of cultural, critical, and theoretical concern in Chicano/a literature, film, and performance from the nineteenth-century to the present day. In the course of our engagement with different texts produced in different contexts, we will track the multifarious shifts and developments that have taken place in the representation, construction, and deconstruction of gender and sexuality. Among other things, we will explore masculinist responses to socio-economic domination, feminist responses to intracultural misogyny and subordination, and the emergence of cultural productions/interventions informed by queer theory. In the course of exploring these shifts, students will be introduced to an array of primary and secondary texts that, besides empowering their understandings of Chicano/a literature, film, and performance, will prove useful for thinking about issues of gender and sexuality in other kinds of texts.

Working list of possible texts:

Literature

Juan Seguí,	<i>Personal Memoirs</i>
Jovita González,	<i>Dew on the Thorn</i>
Rudolfo Anaya,	<i>Bless Me, Ultima</i>
Rudolfo Gonzales,	<i>Yo Soy Joaquín</i>
Alma Villanueva,	<i>Ultraviolet Sky</i>
Yxta Maya Murray,	<i>Locas</i>
Luis Rodríguez,	<i>It Doesn't Have to Be This Way</i>
Benjamin Alire Saenz,	<i>Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood</i>
Oscar Acosta,	<i>The Revolt of the Cockroach People</i>

Film

Zoot Suit
Born in East L.A.
Machete

Art

Alma Lopez
Alma Lopez
Hector Silva

Performance

Luis Alfaro
Butchtlalis de Panochtitlán
Culture Clash

Music

Lydia Mendoza
Lysa Flores

Criticism & Theory

Ramón Saldivar,	<i>Chicano Narrative</i>
José Esteban Muñoz,	<i>Disidentifications</i>
Alicia Arrizón,	<i>Latina Performance</i>
Gloria Anzaldúa,	<i>Borderlands</i>
Ricky Rodríguez,	<i>Next of Kin</i>
Kaja Silverman,	<i>Male Subjectivity at the Margins</i>
Judith Halberstam,	<i>Female Masculinity</i>
Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa,	<i>This Bridge Called My Back</i>
Carla Trujillo,	<i>Chicana Lesbians</i>
Frederick Aldama,	<i>Brown on Brown</i>

For a finalized reading list, feel welcome to email the instructor (pserrato@mail.sdsu.edu) over the summer break.

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ENGL 726 SEMINAR: POSTCOLONIAL WOMEN WRITER

L. EDSON

T 3:30-6:10pm

A study of postcolonial women's writing produced in a wide range of cultural contexts. Authors to be studied include Tsitsi Dangarembga (Zimbabwe), Buchi Emecheta (Nigeria), Maryse Conde (Guadeloupe), Assia Djebar (Algeria), Mariama Ba (Senegal), and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (Nigeria). Primary texts to be supplemented with theoretical and critical articles by Nawal el Saadawi, Fatima Mernissi, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Ketu Katrak, Penina Mlama, Evelyne Accad, and others.

REQUIREMENTS: Oral presentations, reading journal, mid-term and final papers.

ENGL 750F MFA SEMINAR: FICTION WRITING

H. JAFFE

T 7:00-9:40pm

Short Short Narratives

(Probable texts)

Thomas Bernhard,

The Voice Imitator

Arthur Rimbaud,

Illuminations

Franz Kafka,

Parables and Paradoxes

Harold Jaffe,

Induced Coma

This course is designed principally for MFA students (MA students may also enroll after consulting with me). Each participant will be required to submit a minimum of four individual, abbreviated texts, usually with a specific word count (100, 250 or 500 words, for example.)

As time permits, there will be occasional brief or collaborative "prompts" and possibly even films, to explore brief narrative in a different context.

A characteristic session will consist of four submissions; the class will be divided in half, with either half addressing a different text and the writer of that text presiding. The instructor will shuttle from one discussion group to the other, commenting as necessary.

Every class member will be responsible for 10 written commentaries during the course of the semester, and these commentaries along with the instructor's will be passed to the writer whose text has been critiqued.

Specifically, each participant will be asked to comment carefully and at reasonable length on the short short fiction that s/he chooses to address. The commentary must accomplish three overlapping purposes: describe the text, offer remedial suggestions where necessary, and briefly summarize. The commentaries will also be sent to me electronically.

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ENGL 750F MFA SEMINAR: FICTION WRITING TH 7:00-9:40pm

H. JAFFE

This course is designed principally for MFA students (MA students may also enroll after consulting with me) who are writing short or extended fiction or creative nonfiction. Each participant will be required to submit a minimum of three individual texts, or self-contained segments of a lengthier work.

In addition, as time permits, there will be occasional brief or collaborative “prompts” and possibly even films, to explore narrative in a different context.

A characteristic session will consist of four submissions; the class will be divided in half, with either half addressing a different text. Each discussion will begin with a student-critic delivering a fairly brief (five to ten minutes) commentary on the particular text. The instructor will shuttle from one discussion group to the other, commenting as necessary.

Every class member will be responsible for 10 written commentaries during the course of the semester, and these commentaries along with the instructor's will be passed to the writer whose text has been critiqued.

Specifically, each participant will be asked to comment carefully and at reasonable length on the fiction or creative nonfiction that s/he chooses to address. The commentary must accomplish three overlapping purposes: describe the text, offer remedial suggestions where necessary, and briefly summarize. The commentaries will also be sent to me electronically.

I am prepared to alter the reading and critiquing format, depending on input from the class.

ENGL 750F MFA SEMINAR: FICTION WRITING M 3:30-6:10pm

S-P. MARTIN

This seminar will be all about you, all about your fiction, all about improving it and ultimately publishing it. Outside readings will be kept to a minimum, introduced only to study various aesthetic techniques. The rest of the class will focus on stories and segments of novels you submit for discussion. All styles and approaches will be welcome, traditional and non-traditional alike, in a respectful, friendly but rigorous atmosphere. We will also focus on the publishing process, how to connect with editors and agents, how to build networks of support with colleagues, how to survive as a fiction-writer.

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ENGL 750P MFA SEMINAR: POETRY WRITING

S. ALCOSSER

W 3:30-6:10pm

Flannery O'Connor, who claimed her greatest moment of celebrity was teaching a chicken to walk backwards, described her writing process this way: "I write every day for at least two hours, and I spend the rest of my time largely in the society of ducks."

Our methods for pursuing the ineffable are unique. John Clare wrote poems on the crown of his hat, Robert Frost on the sole of his shoe. Beloved contemporary poet Jean Valentine said after a stroke, following months of silence, poetry came back to her, and she picked up her lipstick and began to write on the windshield of her car.

In seven private conferences and small tutorials, we'll design an individual reading list as well as writing prompts and meticulously discuss your individual poems. You'll write each day on the surface of your choice, upload poems and reading responses once a week to Blackboard, and present poems biweekly to a group of equally passionate writers and readers.

Our goal: to complete a first chapter of a publishable manuscript. Often writers find their entire manuscript composed tearlessly during the sixteen weeks of this workshop.

ENGL 750P MFA SEMINAR: POETRY WRITING

M. CHIN

T 4:00-6:40pm

Special Workshop: The Poem Sequence

In this class we shall explore the art of the poem sequence. First, we shall investigate the history of the poem sequence, going as far back as Martial, Shakespeare and Donne and to favorite modernists as Dickinson, Eliot, Stevens, Williams, etc...Contemporary practitioners shall include a rich sampling—Rich, Tate, Charles Wright, Ashbery, etc... Meanwhile, the class poets must write their own individual sequences to be critiqued throughout the semester. Be prepared for a rigorous class that includes serious discussions of craft issues.

ENGL 750P MFA SEMINAR: POETRY WRITING

S.KOWIT

M 3:30-6:10pm

An advanced poetry writing workshop in which students will use model poems as springboards for their own new work and will then revise and polish those new poems under the critical guidance of fellow workshop participants. We will discuss the spectrum of contemporary prosodic theories and fashions, and participants will be encouraged to grow increasingly conscious of their own poetic voice, themes, predilections and strategies. The goal will be for participants to raise their level of linguistic precision, sharpen their musical ear, expand their mastery of both closed and open forms, and deepen the emotional and spiritual source from which their work springs.