

Fall 2019

Course offerings listed below are subject to change. All courses may not be listed here.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Please consult the online class schedule for specific days and times of these courses.

<https://sunspot.sdsu.edu/schedule/search>

ENGL 600

Introduction to Graduate Study

A. Matos

An introduction to the advanced study of literary texts, media, and culture in an academic setting. Graduate students will familiarize themselves with the overarching demands and responsibilities of being an academic, while also developing familiarity with current trends and developments in the fields of literary, media, and cultural studies. This course will be geared towards scholarship and professionalization in the field. Classes will consist of rigorous workshops and introductions to theoretical areas of inquiry. Graduate students will develop skills including but not limited to: a) Identifying and using library and electronic sources; b) Writing for specific academic journals; c) Crafting abstracts and conference proposals; d) Engaging in academic conversations; e) Crafting a book review; f) Reading and critiquing literary theories; and g) Writing a reader's report for an academic journal. The final weeks in this course will take place "on the field," and graduate students will be expected to attend talks offered on campus, interview faculty members in the department, and observe classes taught by professors and GTAs.

ENGL 625

Literature of the U.S. (Big Books)

J. Pressman

Why go big? And, why is "super-size" an American convention? This course reads famous big books— novels whose ambition are represented in their physical heft and formal experimentalism— from American literature. We focus on big experimental novels of the 19th, 20th, and 21st—centuries that engage scale as a thematic topic and formal device, and we do so from a position of a contemporary society obsessed with big-data, scaling up, and the seemingly infinite Web. The trend towards bigness is not new, but the digital age of big data offers an opportunity to consider how and why big-ness serves as an important critical category and historical genre for American literature. We use the precious opportunity of a graduate seminar to take the time needed to read long books carefully and collectively.

ENGL 626

Postcolonial Women Writers

L. Edson

A study of postcolonial women's writing produced in a wide variety of cultural contexts. The course is organized around major contemporary political, social, and cultural issues: (1) tensions between tradition and modernity; (2) postcolonialism, displacement, transnationalism; (3) contemporary voices; and (4) postcolonialism, marriage, and polygamy. Primary texts include Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* (Nigeria), Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (Zimbabwe), Maryse Condé's *Desirada* (Guadeloupe), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (Nigeria), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (Nigeria), and Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter* (Senegal). Primary texts are read in tandem with theoretical and critical essays. Oral presentations, reading journal, mid-term and final papers.

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medium for Chicano and Chicana cultural workers. After covering works such as Elia Robledo Durán's *Joaquín, niño de Aztlán* (1972) and Nephtalí de León's *I Will Catch the Sun* (1973), we will move into the 1990s, which, owing to a number of factors, witnessed the second great explosion of Chicano/a children's literature. In our discussion of works by Gloria Anzaldúa, Pat Mora, Luis Rodríguez, Francisco Jiménez, and many others (including Gary Soto, I guess), we will unpack the methods used by these authors to engage with and respond to an array of social concerns. Eventually we will close out the semester with literature produced in the 21st century (including work by Juan Felipe Herrera, who will be at SDSU on November 6). To inform our work with the assortment of primary texts which we will engage, we will read an array of secondary critical and theoretical pieces on subjects such as Chicano/a history, movements within Chicana/o literature and culture, children's literature in general, and the politics of art.

ENGL 750F **MFA SEMINAR: Fiction Writing** **S.P. Martin**
The Short Story

This workshop will focus exclusively on the short story. You will be expected to write two separate short stories and submit them for workshop discussion, revising one of them at the end of the semester. What's a short story? Obviously, this term includes a wide range of aesthetic and thematic strategies. But for the purposes of this workshop, the term will not include flash fictions, sudden fictions, long stories, parts of novellas, or parts of novels. Short stories that are meant to be parts of a book-length short story sequence will be acceptable, provided that they can function as completely independent works. I will expect your stories to be roughly 2,500-10,000 words in length, and I will provide models of various aesthetic strategies throughout the semester to enhance our discussions. All assigned readings for this class will be taken from recent issues of selected literary magazines. Special emphasis will be placed on enhancing your chances of publishing in these journals, and others like them.

ENGL 750F **MFA SEMINAR: Fiction Writing Workshop** **A. Wilder**
Mondays **Novel/novella Workshop**

This workshop is specifically designed for students beginning or continuing work on a novel or novella. There is always the question when one begins a book: how much big-picture planning is appropriate, and fruitful, versus letting the thing reveal itself. Some novelists work with outlines; others disdain them. In this class you will be encouraged to find your own balance between automatic writing and the more analytical work of plotting and structuring your book; ideally the two coevolve, the skeleton growing along with the skin. The class proceeds from the premise that major works of fiction depend upon continuity, making the time and space to write every day. To that end, students who have not already done so will be expected to create a sustainable daily writing practice, producing and editing 30-50 pages of new material by semester's end. We will work in small groups, one-on-one, and as a collective, thinking rigorously and deeply about the books under development by peers. In addition, you will read, listen to, re-read, dissect a novel of your choosing and present your discoveries to the class. Come with an idea, a partial draft, or nothing but the readiness to begin.

ENGL 750F **MFA SEMINAR: Fiction Writing Workshop** **A. Wilder**
Wednesdays **The Short Story**

This workshop will focus exclusively on the short story. Arguably the gross anatomy of an MFA in fiction, short story workshops allow writers to experiment with forms, techniques, voices, styles, subject matter before (or after) committing to a longer-form fiction. You will write two separate short stories for a total combined length of 5,000-15,000 words, and will revise one at the end of the semester. You will be expected to read and re-read your peers' work with extreme care while at the same time risking the original critical insights that lead to a discovery-oriented workshop. There will be periodic readings and 1-2 page style imitations assigned.

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ENGL 750P MFA SEMINAR: Poetry Writing Workshop B. Falconer

This class is a traditional poetry workshop, focusing on your poetry and providing commentary on your work in a friendly, constructive atmosphere. Our purpose this semester will be to create a community that will closely read poems both your own and those by others. In reading works of others we will consider how they can influence us and improve our writing. In short: the focus of this semester will be on you, your poetry, the development of your craft.

ENGL 791A SEMINAR: MFA Manuscript (Poetry) S. Alcosser

As Robert Frost famously suggested, the poems in a single-author collection should function together in such a way that they create a work of art that is, forgive the expression, greater than the sum of its parts, that each page contributes to the whole, building upon and challenging the reader's expectations. Some books do this by developing a narrative or delving deeper into the speaker's psyche, while others offer a complex and nuanced meditation on a theme. There are many and often complementary ways to structure a volume; the point is that poetry books are more than fifty pages of your favorite poems, and during this workshop, we will consider how poems offer a sense of coherence while also threatening that coherence, how they support and contradict each other to create a more dynamic experience for readers. We will generate new work and look at poems that you have written during your time at SDSU to find the recurring images, as well as formal, narrative, and thematic threads. In building your own books, we will discuss titles, order, sections, epigraphs, and revisions, among countless other topics on the subject. By the end of the course, each of you will have a chapbook or full-length collection of poems that reflects the ideas and insights from the semester. Fiction and Poetry MFA/Mas with a portfolio of poems may contact professor to be considered for this one-on-one tutorial.

ENGL 791B SEMINAR: MFA Manuscript (Fiction) S. P. Martin

This class will focus on the development of your final writing project here at SDSU, a short novel, or novella or collection of short stories (90-150 pp). The first sixty pages will be carefully developed in the Fall 2019 semester and the remainder in Spring 2020. Sample novellas and short story collections will be studied, but most of the class will involve one-on-one conferences instead of classroom instruction and discussion. The result, at the end of Spring 2020, will be a short novel, novella or short story collection of publishable quality. This two-semester class is required for all third-year fiction students to complete their MFA program of study.

ENGL 796 Fiction International Internship S-P Martin (CR/NC course)

ENGL 796 Poetry International Internship S. Alcosser (CR/NC course)

Poetry International welcomes MFA, MA and undergraduate students to serve as interns. Interns may work offline or online, compiling our archival project, which includes the works of authors such as Nobel Prize, Pulitzer Prize, National Book Award, as well as many new and innovative poets. For MFA students, the internship can count as a literature course requirement and can be repeated at least one time during your program of study.