

Fall 2020

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 J. Pressman

This course offers an introduction to graduate study in literature, meaning that this class introduces you to the advanced study of literature and also to the practice of participating in the Academy. We will focus on the fundamentals of literary scholarship and professionalization. You will develop familiarity with literary theory and current trends in literary and cultural studies. You will learn about the real and overarching responsibilities of being an academic today. You will practice skills associated with the profession which you will use in your graduate career and beyond, including:

- a) developing a thesis (argument) that intervenes in contemporary critical conversations
- b) crafting abstracts and conference proposals
- c) developing an effective and engaging literature course
- d) crafting an online presence and professional identity

Classes will consist of discussion, workshops, guest visitors, and also “fieldwork”—attending talks on campus, interviewing faculty members in the department, and observing classes taught by professors and GTAs. This course will help you get the most out of your graduate program and prepare you to take your MA education beyond SDSU to do impactful work on behalf of the humanities in and for our twenty-first century contemporary culture.

ENGL 604B British Literature Q. Bailey “Poetry and the Other”

This seminar will focus primarily on the poetry of the British Romantic period, with some forays into the Victorian and Modernist eras. We'll be guided by a key question—What can poetry know about the Other?—and will explore how such knowledge is created within a poem. Our primary focus will be the poetry of William Wordsworth but we'll also likely delve into the works of contemporaries such as Charlotte Smith and Samuel Taylor Coleridge as well as later writers like Charles Baudelaire, Christina Rossetti, and T.S. Eliot. We'll bring in a variety of critical approaches—from manuscript and historical studies to the philosophical explorations of Derrida and Levinas—but will primarily be guided by thinking about how particular poems situate, understand, and present the encounter with the stranger, the foreigner, or the outcast.

ENGL 604D Edward Gorey & Nonense J. Thomas

Edward Gorey and Nonsense, will study the life and work of illustrator and poet Edward Gorey. Gorey is the author of works like *The Gashlycrumb Tinies: A Very Gorey Alphabet Book* ("F is for Fanny sucked dry by a leech") and *The Curious Sofa: A Pornographic Work by Ogdred Weary* (which you have to see to believe), and illustrator of T.S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (which inspired the musical *Cats*) among other works. Gorey is a master of drawing—and casting in verse—images of staid, Edwardian manor houses and elegant motorcars and complex topiaries (check out his *The Evil Garden* or *The Remembered Visit*) and faceless horrors and insectoid grotesqueries (*The Insect God*) and be-sneakered creatures instilling vague disquiet (*The Doubtful Guest*). He's a weird one, Mr. Gorey. In this seminar, we will read his works, study his peers (Dr. Seuss, Shel Silverstein, Maurice Sendak), and trace his influences (Edward Lear, among a host of others). A class on poetry, illustration, book design, visual culture, childhood, theory, and any number of other subjects: *ENGL 604D Edward Gorey and Nonsense* will be one for the ages.

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ENGL 626

Comparative Literature

D. Leong

“The Environmental Humanities: Method, Meaning, and Matter”

As an analytical framework and an area for interdisciplinary research, the environmental humanities engage a diverse set of concerns pertaining to the representation and theorization of nature. While environmental considerations have long been of interest to humanities scholars, this interest did not coalesce into a coherent field until the early 2000's. During this period, developments in science and technology, combined with an expansion of environmental precarity, forcefully revealed the limitations of our previous concepts of nature. The challenges of analyzing the increasingly unpredictable behavior of non-human objects (e.g., weather patterns or pesticides), while attending to the uneven distribution of environmental risks and resources, called for new reading and writing practices. This course will follow recent developments in the environmental humanities as they respond to the ecological challenges of our current moment. We will begin by examining some of the foundational texts of the environmental humanities (i.e., method), before tracking their embrace of the postcolonial and anti-racist approaches central to environmental justice (i.e., meaning). We will conclude with an investigation of the field's turn towards posthumanism, animal studies, and the new materialisms (i.e., matter). By reflecting on some of the major influences on ecocritical thought, we will aim for more nuanced understandings of how human activity both relates to and creates the natural world.

ENGL 630

Form and Theory of Poetry

B. Falconer

In this class, we'll be playing with “formal poetry,” from its roots in such traditional forms as the sonnet and sestina, to contemporary forms, like erasures and golden shovels. Of course, whether poets are working in more “traditional” modes or more contemporary hybrid forms, all poetry is based on the idea of working within (and against) limitations. More important than knowing and following the various “rules” of a form is being sensitive to the ways in which the formal elements (i.e., meter, repetition, stanza, turns) work with and/or against a poem's subject. *An Exaltation of Forms* (Finch and Varnes) will be our primary resource, but we will turn to multiple texts for supplemental materials.

ENGL 725

Inventing Americans: Keywords

M. Borgstrom

What might the nineteenth century teach us about the cultural world of the twenty-first? How might the twenty-first century help illuminate the work of earlier eras? This class will consider such cross-temporal connections by focusing on four keywords central to both eras: Liberty; Movement; Innovation; Progress. Through discussions of a range of primary and secondary texts, the course will pay particular attention to the underlying tensions between the desire to affirm a democratic self and the social realities of the nineteenth century—challenges we continue to wrestle with today. In so doing, we will look closely at the ways that literature helps us to navigate these issues by virtue of the affective attachments that texts engender and the social potential they make possible. Although most of our primary readings will be centered in the nineteenth century, Toni Morrison's work will provide the touchstone for these considerations. Earlier authors may include Hannah Crafts, Rebecca Harding Davis, Emily Dickinson, Frederick Douglass, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Julia Ward Howe, Herman Melville, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Henry David Thoreau, Harriet E. Wilson, and Walt Whitman (among others).

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ENGL 750P

MFA SEMINAR: Poetry Writing Workshop

B. Falconer

When I was a graduate student years ago, Edward Hirsch urged our class to think of the various poetic devices and elements as keys on a piano. The more practiced we became, he said, working across the entire keyboard, the greater repertoire of songs we could perform. With this analogy in mind, this argument against complacency and mannerisms, we will examine our own impulses, where we are most comfortable, and with a strong appreciation of the poetic foundations, explore those areas that we have neglected. Generating new work, we will consider various poetic theory. By the end of the semester, we will have built upon what we already know while challenging ourselves to write the foreign, the unfamiliar, with the hope of ultimately expanding the range of what we can say and how we say it.

In addition to reading canonical texts, we'll be reading four contemporary poetry books*:

Cyborg Detective, Jillian Weise
A Fortune for Your Disaster, Hanif Abdurraqib
Space Struck, Paige Lewis
Rue, Kathryn Nuerenberg

*Note: Required reading is subject to change.

ENGL 750P/ ENGL 791A

MFA SEMINAR: Preparation of Poetry/Prose Manuscript

S. Alcosser

This seminar will help you assemble a chapbook or book, discover how to place it in the world, and even more challenging, make a life as a working poet. It will provide a welcoming and constructive place for poets and prose writers to give shape to a poetry or prose poetry/flash fiction manuscript. Aside from the first and last day of class when we meet as a group, you will have a series of private conferences to discuss the shape and arc of your manuscript and individual poems within that manuscript. You will be assigned a reading list to accompany you in your pursuit. Together we will discuss, and you will research, publication opportunities, as well as a professional path for your writer's life after graduation.

All MFAs who wish to prepare and circulate a poetry or prose poetry/flash fiction manuscript for publication will be allowed to take this tutorial as either 750P or 791a.

ENGL 791B

SEMINAR: MFA Manuscript (Fiction)

S. P. Martin

(CR/NC course)

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 2020 semester and the remainder in Spring 2021. 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 2021, 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.

*Note: Required reading is subject to change.

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ENGL 796 Pedagogy Practicum

Y. Howard

(CR/NC course)

This course is intended for graduate students teaching English 220 and English 280 to develop pedagogical skills and talk about approaches to teaching. It will be run as a workshop-style seminar where we will discuss theories and strategies associated with college-level teaching. While we will read critical essays and articles on pedagogy, the class will provide opportunities to hear a range of perspectives from guest speakers and engage in dialogues about experiences in the classroom in order to grow as successful instructors.

ENGL 796 Fiction International Internship

S-P Martin

(CR/NC course)

Description Not Available

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 recipients of the 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 may be repeated at least one time during your program of study.

Interns are required to spend a minimum of four hours per week in the office and one hour in an intern meeting every Wednesday from 2-3 pm.