

SPRING 2024

ENGLISH LITERATURE

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

Please consult the [My.SDSU online class schedule](#) for specific days and times of these courses.

ECL 625.01 Literature of the U.S. **SEXXY CINEMA**

Y. Howard

This is a sexuality studies seminar that will specifically engage with cinematic representations and audiovisual forms of sexual and erotic display. Genres and contexts that we will cover include (but are not limited to) sexploitation, blaxploitation, pornography, sex work, and censorship. We will be especially invested in examining the effect of texts that emphasize, rather than marginalize, sexual content and situate them in the contexts of racial, gender, queer, and feminist politics.

ECL 626.01 Film and Literature

H. Jaffe

This course is designed principally, though not exclusively, for MA students. (MFA students are welcome.)

I intend to show a different film during each weekly session. The films will be international, with subtitles when not in English, and often “canonical”; that is, major films that go back to the silent era. We will respond to these films as versions of filmic literature rather than technically, though technical responses will be welcome when pertinent. As in genre literature, the films will exhibit examples of Surrealism, Dada, German Expressionism, Italian Neo-Realism, etc.

One session each month will be devoted to your own exploration of filmic “literature” on the Internet.

I will ask you to write about the films in various ways as exposition—though I will also welcome creative responses in particular instances. Further, I will ask for notations on each film we view.

***Note:** Because of the extreme variability of the films we view, the class may be involved in discussions of graphic sexuality and/or the world in pain outside the class. If you have difficulties with either of these subjects you might want to think twice about enrolling in the course.

Also: Since we meet just once a week, no more than 2 absences will be permitted except with the professor’s permission. Questions welcomed: hjaffe@sdsu.edu.

SPRING 2024

ECL 725.01 Contemporary Short Story

S. Martin

This class will focus on 21st century short fiction, with emphasis on formal innovation and the continuing evolution of storytelling as an art form. Assigned readings will be selected from recent issues of literary journals to provide examples of what's being published right now, the kinds of texts today's editors tend to look for in selecting material. The concern will not be on establishing a new generation of canonical texts, but in exploring what happens in the stories themselves, and what these stories offer us in a doomed and dysfunctional social environment.

ECL 726.01 Science, Technology and Speculation

D. Leong

From 19th century attempts to legitimize slavery to the contemporary proliferation of biometric software, science and technology have long been used to justify social inequalities and preserve arrangements of power. These efforts are supported by the stubborn belief that science and technology are objective. Considered largely immune to human biases and desires, they are often represented as rational truths or practical knowledge with universally beneficial applications. However, as speculative fiction writers have made clear, science and technology are not only shaped by their social, political, and cultural contexts, but also depend on practices of speculation themselves. This course will examine works of speculative fiction that manipulate the conventions of science and technology to create fantastic or alternative realities. These imaginary spaces allow writers, artists, and filmmakers to experiment with different ways of building more ethical worlds. We will focus on writers and communities of color as they pursue these projects across a variety of genres (e.g., science fiction, alternate history, biopunk), topics (e.g., artificial intelligence, cybernetics, infrastructure studies) and aesthetic lenses (i.e., afrofuturism, techno-orientalism, environmental humanities). In doing so, we will better understand how speculative fiction can challenge the hierarchies of power/knowledge/identity with which science and technology are associated.

ECL 727.01 Tolkien's Hobbit

J. Thomas

A rather old-fashioned course about a charmingly old-fashioned novel, "Tolkien's Hobbit" is a study in literary influence and intertextuality. This seminar might otherwise be called, "Tolkien's Bookshelf," as it considers J.R.R. Tolkien's groundbreaking and genre-defining children's novel, *The Hobbit* (1937) by way of the foundational children's stories, novels, and fairy tales on which Tolkien built his still-influential fantasy. Our seminar begins with a careful reading of the first edition of *The Hobbit* (on reserve at the library), followed by a march through the texts that informed Tolkien's view of children's literature as a genre and served as a map to the "perilous lands" of Faërie itself. Among the texts we will read: Jules Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1864), George MacDonald's *The Golden Key* (1867) and *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872), E. Nesbit's *Five Children and It* (1902), Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* (1908), J. M. Barrie's *Peter and Wendy* (1911), E. A. Wyke-Smith's *The Marvellous Land of Snergs* (1927), and various fairy tales from both Andrew Lang's incomparable *The Coloured Fairy Books* (1889-1910) and Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1812-1857). We

SPRING 2024

will also explore several essays by Tolkien (“On Fairy-Stories” and “The Monsters and the Critics”), as well as a handful of Tolkien’s unfortunately neglected shorter works, “Leaf by Niggle” (1938–39), *Roverandom* (c. 1925), Farmer Giles of Ham (begun in 1937; published in 1949), *Smith of Wootton Major* (1967), and *Sellic Spell* (c. 1940), Tolkien’s imagined folk-tale antecedent to the Anglo-Saxon epic, *Beowulf*. The course will end with a reading of *The Hobbit*’s second and final edition (1951), which he revised to better fit his forthcoming novel, *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-55).

ECL 750F.01 MFA SEMINAR: Fiction Writing

H. Jaffe

This course is designed principally, though not exclusively, for MFA students. The notable difference from customary 750F courses is that we will use film rather than published short fiction to “incentivize” your writing.

The films will be international (Japanese, Tibetan, French, Italian, Mexican, etc), with subtitles when not in English. I will show a different film in DVD format each weekly session. Once a month I will turn the class over to you to display and discuss films, short visuals and writings from the Internet.

I will occasionally ask you to create within a film; that is to complete a scene in an alternative way, or to “turn” a character against the inclinations of the director.

The major assignment, due at the end of the term will be for every student to produce a screenplay (though without the technical appurtenances) or a theatrical play, or a series of short texts, each of which is based to some extent on the films you have viewed.

***Note:** Because of the extreme variability of the films we view, the class may be involved in discussions of graphic sexuality and/or the world in pain outside the class. If you have difficulties with either of these subjects you might want to think twice about enrolling in the course.

Also: Since we meet just once a week, no more than 2 absences will be permitted except with the professor’s permission. Questions welcomed: hjaffe@sdsu.edu.

ECL 750F.02 MFA SEMINAR: Fiction Writing

S. Martin

Students taking this ENGL 750F will also need to register for ENGL 791B both taught by Professor Martin this semester.

ENGL 750F (3 graded units) -- ENGL791B (3 units CR/NC)

SPRING 2024

ECL 750F.03 **MFA SEMINAR: Fiction Writing** **WRITING the YOUNG PROTAGONIST**

M. de la Pena

Though this class will function predominantly as a writing workshop (in which all types of original creative work will be welcome) we will also explore published work as a way of considering various fiction-writing components in the context of constructing the young protagonist (from birth to age 21). With this in mind we will study works with a wide array of intended audiences, from books written for young people through books targeting adult readers. I will bring in literature from various genres to help spark in-class discussions and generative writing exercises. You will be asked to participate in craft conversations as well as explore various fiction techniques and strategies. You will also be required to offer both written and oral feedback to your classmates during workshop. Our focus in this class will be writing and revising original works of fiction, but there will also be some discussion of the marketplace and the business side of the writing life.

ECL 750P.01 **MFA SEMINAR: Poetry Writing**

B. Falconer

Course Description: 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, among many subjects, prosody, syntax, metaphor, closure, and the line. 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.

ECL 784.01 **SEMINAR: Creative Non-Fiction**

B. Falconer

Course Description: In this course, we will focus on producing original creative nonfiction with an emphasis on different subgenres. To prepare for workshops, we will consider memoir, the personal essay, the lyric essay, flash nonfiction, among others, examining various formal elements such as narration, character, setting, plot, figurative language, point of view, and dialogue. In addition to exploring the subgenres and the literary devices within creative nonfiction, we will also touch on multimedia approaches, using image, sound, and video. The goal is to produce two original creative pieces and to thoughtfully critique peers' work.

SPRING 2024

ECL 790.01 SEMINAR: MA Portfolio Workshop (CR/NC Course)

D. Leong

ECL 790 prepares students for the Spring 2024 portfolio defense as the culmination of the M.A in English program. In the process, the course seeks to refine scholarly research and writing skills. This workshop-based class teaches the process of scholarly publication and provides students with opportunities to receive feedback during the revision process and to prepare for the oral component of the defense. Students will be expected to work intensively on their own essays and also to offer substantive feedback to others. Students should enter class with a substantive draft of their portfolio essay and be prepared to revise and refine from this foundation.

ECL 791B.01 SEMINAR: MFA Manuscript Fiction (CR/NC Course)

S. Martin

Students taking this ENGL 791B will also need to register for ENGL 750F both taught by Professor Martin this semester. ENGL 750F (3 graded units) -- ENGL791B (3 units CR/NC)

ECL 796.02 INTERNSHIP – Poetry International (CR/NC Course)

S. Alcosser

Poetry International is one of the oldest and most respected literary journals in the world that's specifically dedicated to poetry and poetics from around the world. A semester internship at *Poetry International* is always an exciting opportunity to gain experience in the practical management of a literary journal and a literary community—to make professional and personal connections with contemporary writers while producing a journal that the President of the Guggenheim Foundation Edward Hirsch called “a full and inventive anthology,” a reading experience that Fady Joudah described as “diving for pearls in pearl-infested waters.” The three-credit internship also satisfies requirements within the Undergraduate Creative Writing Minor / Certificate, and the Creative Publishing & Editing Minor /Certificate. Interns at *Poetry International* develop experience in various facets of production of the journal, focused primarily on: reading journal submissions through Submittable; participating in production of print and online material; mastering social media. Interns are also invited, but not required, to contribute to additional projects, such as editing the master file of the annual edition or enhancing the distribution network of *Poetry International*.

Interns are expected to: complete 5 hours of PI-related work per week, including one hour at a weekly Wednesday Round Table or team meeting from 2-3 pm. Contact Sandra Alcosser alcosser@sdsu.edu if you have questions.