

SPRING 2025

## 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 696.01 Prose Poetry / Flash Fiction

S. Alcosser

Description Not Available

### ECL 724.01 Irish Stories / Greek Myths

J. Shumaker

This course focuses upon Irish literature that plays off of Greek classics. In addition to Joyce's "Ulysses," there are modern plays such as Carr's "Bog of Cats" that rewrite Greek tragedies ("Medea" in Carr's case). Colm Toibin has written a novel taking off of Agammemnon's cycle of myths while Yeats and Heaney have written poems refiguring Greek myths.

Brian Friel's play "Translations" suggests that since the Irish were forced to learn English and drop Gaelic in the 1800s, Greek works became models for Irish writers rejected the English colonizers' canon. Also the high cultural value of Greek classics might have appealed to the Irish since they were denigrated by British and American cartoonists.

The course will follow a face-to-face seminar format stressing discussion. Students will give talks about Greek or Irish texts. They will also write discussion posts weekly. The seminar paper may be 20 pages long, or broken into two ten-page papers involving some library research addressing pertinent scholarship.

### 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 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 shorted 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

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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**                      **M. de la Pena**

This course, a six-unit combination of ECL 750F.01 and ECL 791B.01, will provide a supervised environment for MFA students to complete a book-length work of fiction. This work can take the form of a short novel, a novel-in-stories, or a collection of short fiction. There is no restriction on form or subject matter. **Students should have completed the first half of this work during the Fall 2024 semester.** We will focus on the second during the Spring 2025 semester. The final book should be 80-250 pages, double-spaced, twelve-point type. Typically, this class is taken during your third MFA year. This is a 3-unit course.

### **ECL 750F.03**                      **MFA SEMINAR: Fiction Writing**                      **S-P Martin**

This class will begin with a few representative texts, taken from recent issues of literary journals, as a review of basic fictional elements and as a way of introducing you to the aesthetic tendencies of contemporary publishing. We will then generate texts, which will be submitted to the class and me for workshop discussion according to a schedule we will devise in our first class meeting. You will make copies of these stories (or chapters of a novella or novel) for everyone in the class and one for me. You will submit two different rough drafts at scheduled times. A revised version of one of these drafts will be turned in at the end of the semester. Your revised text will be submitted for consideration to one of the journals we will be discussing during the semester. I will guide you in preparing your submission.

### **ECL 750P.01**                      **MFA SEMINAR: Poetry Writing**                      **B. Falconer** *Description Not*

*Available*

### **ECL 784.01**                      **SEMINAR: Creative Non-Fiction**                      **S-P Martin**

ECL 784 will consider creative nonfiction as a literary form. We will discuss various published creative nonfiction texts, and then you will generate two of your own works of creative nonfiction for workshop discussion. All styles and subject matter will be welcome. This class can be used to fulfill the "other genre" requirement for MFA fiction writers and poets. Or it can function as a Literature Research C class. Contact Prof. Martin at [shmartin@sdsu.edu](mailto:shmartin@sdsu.edu) if you have any questions.

### **ECL 790.01**                      **SEMINAR: MA Portfolio Workshop**                      **D. Leong** **(CR/NC Course)**

ECL 790 prepares students for the Spring 2025 portfolio defense as the culmination of the MA in English program.  
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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 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**      **M. de la Pena** (CR/NC Course)

This course, a six-unit combination of ECL 750F.01 and ECL 791B.01, will provide a supervised environment for MFA students to complete a book-length work of fiction. This work can take the form of a short novel, a novel-in-stories, or a collection of short fiction. There is no restriction on form or subject matter. Students should have completed the first half of this work during the Fall 2024 semester. We will focus on the second during the Spring 2025 semester. The final book should be 80-250 pages, double-spaced, twelve-point type. Typically, this class is taken during your third MFA year.

### **ECL 796.01**      **INTERNSHIP – Poetry International**      **S. Alcosser** (CR/NC Course)

**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](mailto:alcosser@sdsu.edu) if you have questions.**