

# GRADUATE newsletter

SJSU | DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND  
COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

1

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## Fall Office Hours

### MA Advising



Allison M. Johnson

Graduate Coordinator

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Virtual office hours: TR 1-2 PM & by  
appointment

### MFA Advising



Nick Taylor

Director of Creative Writing and  
Graduate Coordinator

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Virtual office hours: T 2-4 PM & by  
appointment

## Welcome New Faculty!

### Andreas P. Bassett



**Andreas Bassett** earned his BA in English from Portland State University and his MA and PhD in English from the University of Washington. His research interests include early modern drama, book history, and Native American literature. Prof. Bassett's dissertation examines the experiences of early modern book buyers and how those experiences shaped textual interpretations of Renaissance drama as a distinct genre. In addition to this work, he is also a published poet and is working on his first novel. Note to MFA students: he's interested in serving on committees! Potential graduate course topics include "Fakespeare," or plays falsely attributed to the Bard, and an exploration of early modern book history enriched by direct engagement with Prof. Bassett's private collection of 16th- to 18th-century books.

# Important Policies

## Conditionally Classified Students

Conditionally classified students must complete required undergraduate course work before enrolling in graduate seminars. When you are eligible for classified status, see your advisor to file the necessary form (found at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/forms/>). The change is not automatic.

## Important Courses

All MA students are required to take ENGL 201 and ENGL 297, which are offered only in the Fall. Students planning to apply for TAships should complete 259, which is also offered only in the Fall.

## Continuous Enrollment

University Policy requires that graduate students be continuously enrolled until they finish their culminating experiences (such as theses and exams). Note that students must finish their theses while they are enrolled in 299 units (or in UNVS 1290R, which is basically just a fee, not a class).

## Deadlines for MA and MFA Graduates

Please consult the GAPE website for current candidacy and graduation deadlines: [www.sjsu.edu/gape/deadlines/index.php](http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/deadlines/index.php).

Note that if you are planning to graduate in December 2025, you should have filed your official "Petition for Advancement to Graduate Candidacy" by April 1, 2025. Applications (or reactivations of applications) for December 2025 graduation must be filed by September 1, 2025. The relevant forms can be found at the GAPE forms website:

[www.sjsu.edu/gape/forms/index.php](http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/forms/index.php).

## Enrolling for Fall 2025

MySJSU should give you appointment times and information on how to register for next semester's courses in May. Registration for continuing graduate students will begin in late April. Registration for new graduate students begins in June. It is important that you register as early as possible. If there are not enough people signed up for a course, even a graduate course can be cancelled.

Regarding Writing Workshops: MFAs need to be sure to sign up for any workshops they need for their degree as soon as possible. Due to high demand, the fiction workshop (ENGL 241) will be accessible by permission only. Add codes are available from the English Department Office ([english@sjsu.edu](mailto:english@sjsu.edu)) and will be distributed according to the following priority order: 1) Incoming Fiction Primary students; 2) Continuing Fiction Primary and Fiction Secondary students; 3) Approved MFA students (send work sample to [nicholas.taylor@sjsu.edu](mailto:nicholas.taylor@sjsu.edu) for review). After a certain point, space permitting, the fiction workshop will be opened up to all graduates on a first come, first served basis, regardless of program (MA, MFA, or graduate students from other departments). Fiction Secondary students who cannot find space in ENGL 241 are encouraged to take the upper-division undergraduate fiction workshop, ENGL 130 (this course will be counted as one of the two required secondary-genre workshops).

## MA Language Requirement

The MA Program requires demonstrated proficiency in a language other than English, equivalent to 2 semesters or 3 quarters of college-level coursework. If you have not already satisfied this requirement at the time of admission, you may be admitted to conditional standing, but you will need to satisfy the requirement by completing the required number of units OR by passing a test given by the World Languages Department before graduating from the MA program. For questions about this requirement, or to satisfy this requirement in a language other than French, German, or Spanish, please contact the MA Advisor.

## Deadline to sign up for Fall 2025 MA exam – May 1, 2025

Full details including deadlines and reading lists:

<https://www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/ma/comp-exam.php>

## Fall 2025 Schedule of Classes

Here are the tentative courses, faculty, and meeting times for our Spring 2025 graduate course offerings.

Course	Day	Location	Time	Instructor
ENGL 201	R	Online	4-6:45 PM	Maite Urcaregui
ENGL 224	M	Online	4-6:45 PM	Adrienne Eastwood
ENGL 233	M	Online	7-9:45 PM	Revathi Krishnaswamy
ENGL 240	M	FOB 104	7-9:45 PM	J. Michael Martinez
ENGL 241	R	FOB 104	4-6:45 PM	Keenan Norris
ENGL 242	W	FOB 104	4-6:45 PM	Brook McClurg
ENGL 254	T	FOB 104	4-6:45 PM	Daniel Rivers
ENGL 259	T	FOB 104	7-9:45 PM	Ryan Skinnell
ENGL 291	R	FOB 104	7-9:45 PM	Nicholas Taylor
ENGL 297	R	Online	7-9:45 PM	Revathi Krishnaswamy

At least 21 of the 30 units of classes required for the MA program should be in 200-numbered English courses. Of the 30, only 6 units can be taken as credit/no credit independent study of thesis units. Upper-division English coursework (100 level) may count for graduate students if you have received permission of the instructor as well as the MA or MFA Coordinator. Check the schedule for upper division undergraduate course offerings that may be of interest, and which will not be covered by the Graduate Curriculum. Conditionally classified students must complete their required undergraduate course work before enrolling in graduate seminars. When you are eligible for classified status, the change is not automatic; you need to contact the MA Coordinator, file the necessary form, and await approval. Classes taken outside the department will not count except in unusual circumstances. Get prior approval from your advisor before you take such courses.



## Fall 2025 Course Descriptions

### ENGL 201: Methods and Materials of Literary Research

R 4-6:45 PM Online (Professor Urcaregui)

The course provides a foundation for graduate students and advanced undergraduate majors to read, write, and research at the graduate level. Together, we will familiarize ourselves with various research methods within the discipline of literary studies and practice writing across multiple academic genres (including an abstract and annotated bibliography, a conference paper, and a journal article) as well as within alternative-academic, digital, and public-facing spaces (such as book reviews, op-eds, and blog posts). In the first half of the semester, we will develop our close reading and analysis as we read Cristina García's *Dreaming in Cuban*, a work from the Multiethnic American Literature MA exam list, alongside relevant works of theory and criticism. In the second half of the semester, you will design and develop your own original research project on a text of your choice: first, by familiarizing yourself with relevant scholarship; then by developing your own original interpretation and contribution; and finally by writing, revising, and presenting your ideas. The course will emphasize researching and writing as a process and will rely heavily on peer-review, feedback, and revision. By the end of the course, you will have a foundational skillset to participate in ongoing conversations within literary studies, and we will celebrate your original research with a class mini-conference!

### ENGL 224: Studies in English Early Modern Literature

M 4-6:45 PM Online (Professor Eastwood)

ShakesQueer and Co: The Grad Seminar

Have you ever wondered about the apparently androgynous subject of Shakespeare's Sonnet 20—"the master-mistress" of the speaker's "passion"? Or what it might have meant to watch a play in which the main character, who would have been played by a man, plays a woman, who—for at least part of the action—plays a man? Well, now is your chance to take a fresh look at some old texts! ENGL 224 will turn a queer eye on some of the more interesting early modern English texts by Shakespeare and his contemporaries! In addition to some critical gender theory and some historical grounding, the course will read and discuss homoerotics in Lyly's *Galatea*, Marlowe's *Edward II*, Jonson's *Epicoene, or The Silent Woman*, and Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl*, alongside some of Shakespeare's queerest hits: *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Richard II*. Let's look at queerness as it manifests on the stage and overflows into the street!



## ENGL 233: Seminar in Period Studies of British Literature

M 7-9:45 PM Online (Professor Krishnaswamy)

This course focuses on British literature in the 20th century and beyond. At the beginning of the 20th century, Britain was the most powerful empire in the world, the British monarch ruled over a quarter of the world's population, and my ancestors on the Indian subcontinent were British subjects, some engaged in anticolonial struggles against Britain. By end of the 20th century, Britain had fought two world wars, lost its empire, become part of the EU, and experienced an influx of immigrants from former colonies while the English language became the dominant lingua franca of the world. Twenty-five years into the 21st century, Britain has Brexit-ed the European Union in an assertion of nationalism, voted for a Prime Minister of Indian origin, and opposes Russian imperialism in Ukraine while registering nostalgia for its own empire. What do these massive transformations and contradictions tell us about the changing nature of British identity and what role has literature played in creating, propagating, reinforcing, challenging, or subverting changing representations of national identity? We will seek answers to these questions by exploring the relationship between nation and narration. Our discussions will revolve around five core topics: (i) Empire and War (ii) The Irish Question (iii) The Woman Question (iv) Language, Power, and the Book, (v) Modernism and its discontents.

## ENGL 240: Poetry Writing Workshop

M 7-9:45 PM FOB 104 (Professor Martinez)

Each week, our English 240 workshop will explore a different poetic theme—the body, rites and rituals, place and home, food and family, dreaming, reflection. For inspiration, students will read and discuss a variety of poems from writers offering differing approaches to the week's theme. In addition to primary readings drawn from literature, particularly modernist poetry, “experimental” poetry, digital poetics, and the fragment, we will also devote time to 20th-century art: modern performance, avant-garde cinema (Maya Deren, Stan Brakhage, Kenneth Anger, Andrew Busti), and music (John Cage, Steve Reich, My Bloody Valentine).

## ENGL 241: Fiction Writing Workshop

R 4-6:45 PM (Professor Norris)

This class is divided into two thematics, ghosts and dreams. The “ghosts” represent memory, how we are visited by history and our personal experiences and how we as storytellers metabolize these memories in the narratives that we create. The “dreams” represent imagination as it is manifested in experimentation with different narrative structures and surprises and the pure virtuosity of language. Within this two-part prism, we will take a tour of different styles of creative writing. We'll look deeply at the ghosts and dreams of writers past and present, learning what's been invented, what's trending, and, ultimately, we will press forward with writing that is informed by other literature but that is all our own.

Additionally, we will discuss aspects of the writing profession, with visits from literary professionals to-be-announced. Topics of these discussions will include finding time, managing writing time, finding and building literary community, finding an agent or publisher, and networking.

Students will workshop their work as many as three times during the term (2,000-5,000 words) and will also be required to provide written feedback to their classmates when their classmates are the focus of the workshop. The objectives of this course are to study and work toward establishing our voice(s) as writers, to learn in nuanced fashion the deep lives of our characters, and to learn how to creatively corral history and the unknown.

## ENGL 242: Nonfiction Writing Workshop

W 4-6:45 PM FOB 104 (Professor McClurg)

This workshop will focus on the reading and writing of Creative Nonfiction. We will explore several modes and subgenres, including but not limited to, Memoir, Essay, Lyric, Reportage, and hybrid texts. We will balance our reading of literary works with craft and critical essays, while using formal experimentation and structural play to help shape and reshape your works in progress. We will also interrogate the generic borders of Creative Nonfiction, considering the ethical implications—to facts, to those we write about, amongst others—that complicate our writing practices. This class will contain both discussion and workshop.

## ENGL 254: Seminar in Genre Studies of American Literature

T 4-6:45 PM FOB 104 (Professor Rivers)

Environmental Horror and "the Unnatural"

Though it is still a recent topic of study and discussion, environmental horror (or “ecohorror”) has a long history in literature, film, and popular culture. By placing this history in conversation with contemporary trends in the genre, this class asks students to think about how fear and horror have shaped popular thinking about nature and the “unnatural” within and beyond the US. Questions we’ll consider include: How have cultural anxieties shaped the stories we tell about animals, monsters, and the environment? And how might reckoning with ecohorror change the ways we’re capable of imagining and responding to climate change, environmental injustice, and their underlying causes? Throughout the semester, we’ll also discuss how queer, trans, BIPOC, and migrant authors have used tropes of monstrosity and fearful environments to create new modes of identification and creative exploration. And we’ll ask how contemporary artists and writers are using the genre to respond to the political and environmental legacies of settler colonialism, industrial pollution, militarism, and racial capitalism. Novels and films for the class will include some (maybe all) of the following: HG Wells’ *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), *Cat People* (1942), *The Creature from the Black Lagoon* (1954), *Jaws* (1975), Octavia Butler’s “*Bloodchild*” (1984), Bong Joon Ho’s *The Host* (2006), Samantha Schwebelin’s *Fever Dream* (2014), Jeff Vandermeer’s *Annihilation* (2014), *The Girl with All the Gifts* (2016), Sylvia Moreno Garcia’s *Mexican Gothic* (2020), and/or Stephen Graham Jones’ *The Only Good Indians* (2020), among others.

## ENGL 259: Seminar in Composition Studies

T 7-9:45 PM FOB 104 (Professor Skinnell)

In this course, we will study current approaches to studying and teaching writing. Specifically, we will examine perspectives about writing that inform its instruction: what writing is, how it is studied, how people learn, how writing is taught, how it should be taught, and whether or not it even can be taught. Our overarching goal will be to understand writing/composition as a complex, situated act in order to chart possibilities for developing and improving our work as teachers and scholars. The course will focus on situating issues associated with teaching writing in theoretical frameworks of rhetoric and composition studies, and we will discuss practical teaching issues, as well.

## ENGL 291: Literary Practicum

R 7-9:45 PM FOB 104 (Professor Taylor)

This 4-unit CR/NC practicum course is required for graduate students in the final year of the MFA program. The course prepares students for the program's two culminating experiences: the MFA exam and the thesis. Guided by the instructor, students will form a thesis committee, customize their exam reading lists, and draft the thesis proposal in advance of the fall submission deadline. ENGL 291 also provides professional development opportunities via panels of literary professionals such as agents and editors, as well as recent program graduates and other early-career professionals. Students in this course should also plan to attend the Thursday evening readings presented by the Center for Literary Arts.

## ENGL 297: MA Comprehensive Exam Preparation

R 7-9:45 PM Online (Professor Krishnaswamy)

This is the required, 2-unit Exam Preparation Course for the MA Exams, Part One and Two. We will begin with an historical and theoretical perspective covering all of your choices for Part Two of the Exam. We will conclude with intensive work on literary terminology and the close reading and explication of early modern English poetry. Part One of the Exam, consisting of 25 multiple choice questions on literary terminology and a poetry explication, will be given on the last day of class, in November. Students may also opt to take both Parts of the Exam in the following Spring semester.

## Join Reed Magazine!



Join a 155-year legacy—and earn marketable credits toward your degree! English 133—Reed Magazine, California's oldest literary journal—eagerly encourages graduate students to enroll. This unique, four-credit course exposes students to the work of thousands of writers and offers real-world experience in editing and promoting a publication that has held fast through world war, cultural revolution, and the turns of two centuries. See [www.reedmag.org](http://www.reedmag.org).

For an add code, contact Editor in Chief Brook McClurg at [brook.mcclurg@sjsu.edu](mailto:brook.mcclurg@sjsu.edu).

## Important Dates & Deadlines in Spring 2025

<b>April 1</b>	Deadline to submit thesis proposals for Fall 2025 credits.
<b>April 1</b>	Deadline to submit Departmental Request for Candidacy Form for December 2025 graduates.
<b>April 21</b>	Deadline for May 2025 graduates to submit signed theses to the Graduate Studies Office (for University Thesis, ENGL 299) or to Department of English (for Departmental Thesis, ENGL 299D).
<b>May 1</b>	English Department Awards Ceremony.
<b>May 1</b>	Last day to sign up for Fall 2025 MA Part 2 exams.
<b>May 10</b>	MFA Thesis Reading and Celebration, MLK Library 5th Floor Schiro Room, 2-5pm.
<b>May 12</b>	Last Day to Enroll in 1290R for Spring 2025.
<b>May 23</b>	Degree Conferral.

## MA/MFA Reminders and Guidelines

### Stay informed!

Please be sure to sign up for the google group for our English Graduate Program. To sign up, send a blank email to: [enggrad-group+subscribe@sjsu.edu](mailto:enggrad-group+subscribe@sjsu.edu). Key information is sent out via the google group that is essential for all MA and MFA students. Program descriptions, course descriptions, the most recent Newsletter, and other documents are posted on the English Department website: [www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate](http://www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate).

The SJSU Graduate Admissions and Program Evaluations (GAPE) Office website publishes important deadlines, forms, and information for current students at: [www.sjsu.edu/gape](http://www.sjsu.edu/gape).

### Spring 2025 Graduate Student Conference

Our department's third annual Graduate Student Conference is happening April 25 from 12:30 to 3:30. This year, the conference will be completely online and will feature graduate students from all over the world. Be sure to join us via Zoom to support your fellow SJSU students and hear insights from students from other programs. For more information, contact the organizer at [allison.johnson@sjsu.edu](mailto:allison.johnson@sjsu.edu).



## Thesis Reminders

MA/MFA students planning to write a thesis next year should take note of the following timeline and plan accordingly: Those planning to take thesis units (English 299) in Spring 2026 with intent to graduate in May will be required to submit thesis proposals for approval by November 1, 2025. This means you should ideally do your preliminary research over the summer to identify your area/ topic of interest so that you can discuss this with potential advisors/readers early in the fall semester in order to form your thesis committee and prepare your proposal for formal submission by November 1. If your proposal is approved, use the winter break to work on your thesis. In Spring 2026, plan to submit your draft to your thesis director by February 1 and a revised draft to your 2nd and 3rd readers by April 1 to allow sufficient time for further feedback and revision. Planning ahead and following the timeline is critical to ensuring your thesis is of high quality and you are able to finish in time for May graduation.

For MA and MFA students planning to write a thesis next year, please be familiar with the latest MLA Handbook. Graduate Studies will expect your thesis to be consistently formatted in whatever style you choose. They will not allow you to mix styles, and they will expect you to be up to date, or they will require you to revise before they accept your thesis.

MFA students should note that MFA theses must be accompanied by a 2000 - 3000 word (approximate length) preface, in which the author provides a literary context for her/his work, including literary influences, stylistic and theoretical influences, the influence of historical events, cultural and/ or linguistic background, etc. It is hoped that the proposal-writing process will help MFAs to flesh out their ideas for their preface.

## MA Exam Guidelines

Guidelines and reading lists for the MA Exams are now available on our website:  
<https://www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/ma/comp-exam.php>

Note that Part 1 is an in-class exam that you will take as part of English 297, a required course offered only in the Fall. Please enroll in 297 if you plan to take Part 1 in the Fall. Part 2 is a take-home essay exam in 3 specific areas, administered via Canvas. You must indicate which three areas you wish to be examined in when you sign up for the exam.

The Fall 2025 Part Two exam will be given out on Friday, October 24th (9:00 AM) and will be due on Monday, October 27th, (5:00 p.m.).

MA students should email MA advisor, Professor Johnson ([allison.johnson@sjsu.edu](mailto:allison.johnson@sjsu.edu)) by May 1st to sign up for Part 2 in the Fall. Be sure to specify which three areas you wish to be examined in.

## MFA Exam

To sign up for the MFA exam, students should first have successfully achieved MFA candidacy status and formed a three-person thesis committee.

The MFA exam will be distributed on Friday, October 24th (9:00 a.m.), and will be due on Monday, October 27th (5:00 p.m.).

Contact the MFA advisor, Professor Nick Taylor ([nicholas.taylor@sjsu.edu](mailto:nicholas.taylor@sjsu.edu)), by August 31st to receive a link to sign up.

# Graduate Student and Alumni Accomplishments!

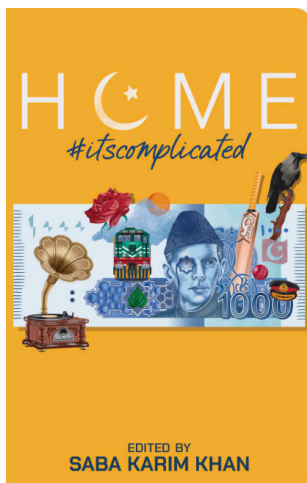


## Mara Olivas

*Xicanx Futurism: Gritos for Tomorrow* (forthcoming from Riot of Roses) will feature current MFA student Mara Olivas's short story, "Tēzcatlipōca, or The Body You Made." Her novelette, *¡Sangronas! Un Lista de Terror* (also published under the penname M.M. Olivas) was listed on the preliminary ballot of the Stoker Award for long fiction. Olivas's debut novel, *Sundown in San Ojuela* (Lanternfish Press 2024) was featured on the American Booksellers Association's Indie Next List for December 2024 and included in a [New York Times](#) column about new horror.

## Katherine Hamilton

MFA student Katherine Hamilton received a RSCA fellowship for a hybrid project that redefines the "evolution of the Silicon Valley" to include its agricultural roots and the contributions of the immigrants who formed our diverse communities.



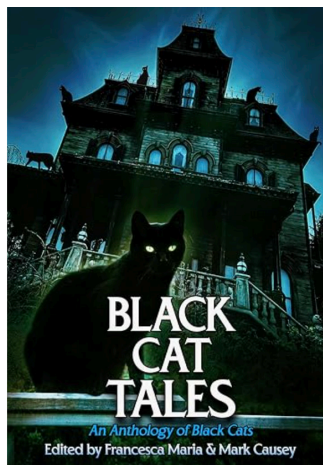
## Seher Vora

Seher Vora, MFA class of 2022, published a nonfiction essay titled "Home is Not a Place" in the anthology, *Home #itscomplicated* (Liberty Books 2025).

# Graduate Student and Alumni Accomplishments!

## Cassie Blair

Recent MFA graduate Cassie Blair's short story "Cleaning Girls" was published in the Winter Issue (6:3) of *Chestnut Review*. You can read or listen to the story [here](#).

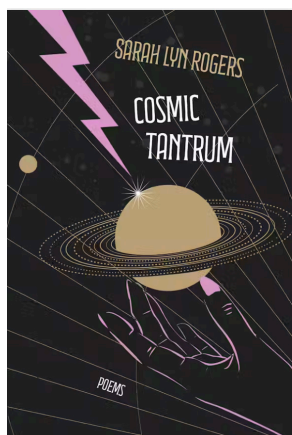


## Daniel Bulone

MFA alum Daniel Bulone's short story "Jamaica's Last Patrol" will be published in the upcoming anthology *Black Cat Tales* this June.

## Erin Kelley

Current MFA Erin Kelley will publish a flash nonfiction piece titled "Mrs. Murry, The Sex Bomb" in the spring issue of *Windmill: The Hofstra Journal of Art & Literature*. It will appear under her pen name, Erin Mayes.



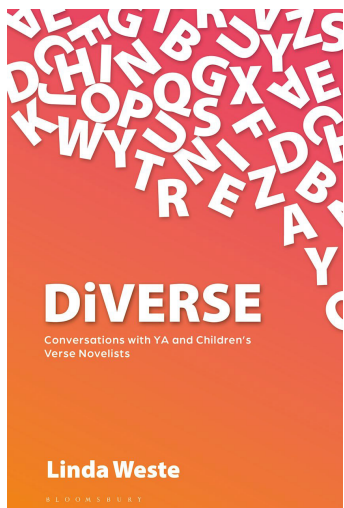
## Sarah Lyn Rogers

MFA alum Sarah Lyn Rogers' debut full-length poetry collection, *Cosmic Tantrum*, was published in February by Curbstone Books, an imprint of Northwestern University Press.

# Graduate Student and Alumni Accomplishments!

## Sophie Aust

Sophie Aust, a current MFA student, will publish a short story, "Saint Emmi," in *White Wall Review* this summer.



## Marilyn Hilton

Current MFA Marilyn Hilton contributed to Linda Weste's anthology *DiVERSE: Conversations with YA and Children's Verse Novelists* (Bloomsbury), released in January 2025. Her first traditionally published romance novel, *Home to You*, is forthcoming in October 2025 from Pelican Books Group. In addition, Hilton's poem, "Good pain," won first place in the Los Gatos poetry contest. The poem, which won the adult category, was selected by Los Gatos poet laureate William Ward Butler.

## Jake Ohlhausen

Jake Ohlhausen, a first-year screenwriting student, produced a short film called *Margie* that is featured on the YouTube site, Deformed Lunchbox. It got over 18,000 views in the first month. You can view it [here](#).

