

**English 71: Intro to Creative Writing, Fall 2022**  
**Department of English & Comparative Literature**  
**San José State University**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Ume Ali (OO-me ah-LEE)
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<b>Office Hours:</b>	M W 9:00 - 10:00am FOB213 (Zoom <a href="#">link</a> )
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	10:30 - 11:45am
<b>Classroom:</b>	BBC 123
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Completion of GE Area A2 Written Communication
<b>GE/SJSU Studies Category:</b>	GE Area C2 Humanities

“Write what should not be forgotten.” - Isabel Allende

“If you intend to write as truthfully as you can, your days as a member of polite society are numbered.” - Stephen King, *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*

“Write what disturbs you, what you fear, what you have not been willing to speak about. Be willing to be split open.” - Natalie Goldberg

“In a time of destruction, create something.” - Maxine Hong Kingston

“A poet's work . . . to name the unnamable, to point at frauds, to take sides, start arguments, shape the world and stop it from going to sleep.” - Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*

### **Course Description**

Examinations of works of poetry, creative nonfiction, and short fiction as expression of human intellect and imagination, to comprehend the historic and global cultural contexts, and recognize issues related to writing of diverse cultural traditions. Students will write poetry, creative nonfiction, and short fiction.

### **Conductn**

Writing can be an extraordinarily vulnerable exercise. Compassion is one of the most important aspects of a writing workshop. This class is a safe space to experiment with voice, style, and subject matter. We are here to support each other's writing journeys and help build each other's confidence as well as reach writing goals. Be respectful of each other in your critiques and be respectful of yourself.

## Technology Intensive Course

This is an onsite course, meetings will be held in person at the designated place and time listed above. However, this course also heavily utilizes Canvas, the SJSU learning management system, to publish instructional materials, lessons, and activities. Many assignments will be submitted on Canvas; students will have access to and may be asked to comment on each other's posts. Thus, you will need regular access to the internet and a computer. To produce and share your work, you will need word processing software (any software that allows you to save files in pdf or .docx format). Canvas will give you access to Google docs for collaborations. If you need help to access these technologies, please contact the Student Technology Service Desk [here](https://www.sjsu.edu/it/support/service-desk/index.php). (https://www.sjsu.edu/it/support/service-desk/index.php)

## Required Texts

No textbook. Links to free online and digital texts will be provided throughout the semester.

## Course Content

### ***Diversity:***

SJSU studies place emphasis on diversity (in reading material, authors, and audiences). You will engage in integrated reading and writing assignments to construct your own arguments on complex issues that generate meaningful debate.

### ***Writing:***

Writing assignments give you repeated practice in all phases of the writing process: prewriting, organizing, writing, revising, and editing. This class requires a minimum of 8,000 words, at least 4,000 of which must be in revised final draft form. English 1A classes require multiple assigned essays.

### ***Reading:***

There will be a substantial amount of reading for this class, some of which will come from assigned texts and some of which will be from sources you locate on your own.

### ***Workshop:***

The ability to give and receive constructive criticism is crucial to your development as a writer. We will do so with the tact and decorum that such work demands, especially in the workshop setting. Your ideas may be challenged, but we will strive to ensure that such challenges are neither personal nor malicious.

### ***Revision:***

Throughout the semester, we will be exploring the specific craft elements which make storytelling effective and interesting. As we study the work of famous authors, we will also revise our own writing, and reflect on our own writing styles. This will allow us to hone our personal voices via metacognitive exploration. W

## Course Requirements

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, you are expected to spend a minimum of 45 hours for each unit of credit (normally 3 hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, and completing assignments. These activities and assignments include:

1. 1 poetry portfolio
2. 1 short fiction piece
3. 1 nonfiction essay
4. Process papers (peer critique, literary event paper, drafts, and revision notes)
5. Engagement (journal, workshop comments)

### ***Poetry Portfolio:***

You will produce a portfolio which consists of 3 revised poems, including all drafts and revision notes, to show the progress you have made in subsequent versions of your final pieces. Each poem should include its own reflection (roughly 200 words) in which you discuss the specific changes you made and the significance of said revisions. In other words, justify your creative process.

### ***Fiction Story (1500 words):***

You will produce a short story whose genre, style, topic, voice, etc will be all of your own choosing. You will also provide a 200 word explanation of the specific craft elements you are employing in your writing, as well as a justification for how those chosen stylistic elements are effective.

### ***Nonfiction Essay (1500 words):***

You will produce a personal narrative essay. You will also provide a 200 word explanation of the specific craft elements you are employing in your writing, as well as a justification for how those chosen stylistic elements are effective.

### ***Process papers:***

Process papers include peer critiques, any drafts you write for each genre piece, revision notes, as well as the literary event paper. Each student is required to attend at least one literary event during the course of the semester (events can be found at the Center for Literary Arts [website](#)). After you attend the event, please write a paper discussing the significance of the event. More details will be provided.

### ***Engagement:***

Students will respond to in-class writing exercises in a composition notebook. This will also be where you brainstorm ideas for your creative pieces. I will collect the journal twice during the semester for grading purposes. Students will also earn engagement (or participation) credit for actively engaging with the reading material, with their peers, and with their own writing. As this is an in-person course, participation **will primarily be based on your attendance, your writing efforts, and your willingness to contribute to class discussions and workshops**. You are not expected to be correct or accurate. Our classroom environment should be a safe place where we all can inquire and speak with impunity, as long as there is honesty and an eagerness to learn. If you're absent, you can't participate at all.

### **Small Groups**

During the Poetry unit we will have Small Group Workshops. Everyone will bring 7 copies of their poem to class (one for you, one for me, one for each member of your group.) I will assign you to groups, with whom you will workshop your poems..

### Large Groups

For the longer genres, we will workshop 3-4 writers per class, as a large group. We will sign up for slots during class. You will be required to workshop your longer pieces (Short Story and Personal Essay). You will need to post your work to Canvas one week before you are scheduled to be workshopped. This will give your peers time to thoroughly read and comment on your work. You may sign up for large group workshops [here](https://tinyurl.com/y4xfs9k7). (<https://tinyurl.com/y4xfs9k7>)

While we are workshopping:

- Listen to your classmates and be careful not to interrupt. It is frequently difficult to formulate responses in front of peers, and even slight interruptions can derail the thoughts of the person speaking.
- Focus your comments on the work and never on the author. It should be as if we're discussing a manuscript that arrived with no name on it.
- It is not acceptable to issue insults or to praise sarcastically. Likely, some of the work we read will not meet your exact taste. That should not prevent you from delivering a sound analysis of its strengths and weaknesses.

If your manuscript is being workshopped:

- Remain silent until the conclusion of the discussion. Do not nod or shake your head to questions raised about your piece. If we cannot determine what was intended by a particular passage, this should alert you to something that's not yet being communicated in the writing. Let this feedback guide your revision.
- Take notes. Even if what we're saying does not sound useful in the moment, later on you may read through our comments and discover one or two to be of value.

### Peer Critiques

You will submit a critique letter for each of your classmates for the Large Group critiques. (Small Group critiques will be done in class.) For each manuscript that you critique, you'll need to make comments on the manuscript itself and to submit a single-spaced critique letter addressed to the author.

When critiquing a manuscript:

- Read it once without marking it, while asking yourself what the author is trying to accomplish, and how the piece might improve and become what it seeks to be. Then go back and read it again, annotating it to show what works well and what doesn't work so well.
- List the elements of the manuscript that are working well. Compliment parts that are effective

or that elicit a particular emotional reaction from you.

- Question the way in which the work proceeds. What isn't quite clear? What needs more development?

**Assignments** All assignments should be typed in 12-point font, one-inch margins, in Times New Roman font, and MLA format. For example, if you are writing dialogue in a scene, please refer to the MLA style for appropriate spacing rules etc..All assignments will be submitted on Canvas.

Owl Purdue Online Creative Writing Resource:

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject\\_specific\\_writing/creative\\_writing/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/creative_writing/index.html)

Assignment	Word Count	Points	% of Final Grade	GELO
Process	-	20	20	3-5, 9
Fiction piece	1500	100	20	4,7,11
Nonfiction piece	1000	100	20	4,7,11
Poetry portfolio	500	100	20	4,7,11
Engagement	-	200	20	1, 4-6, 8-10

### Grading Policy

**This course must be passed with a C- or better as a CSU graduation requirement.** Requirements for particular assignments will vary, but in all cases, essay grades will reflect the paper's strengths in clarity, organization, effective argumentation, effective use of sources, and grasp of language. All assignments are graded on an A-F scale. The following are the criteria by which essays are typically evaluated in first-year writing courses:

An "A" paper is organized and well-developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment, written in a unique and compelling voice. It will show the student's ability to use language effectively.

A "B" paper demonstrates competence in the same categories as an "A" essay, but may not be fully developed in one or more of those areas, and suitably responds to the topic.

A "C" paper will complete the minimum requirements of the assignment, may not effectively develop or present ideas and evidence.

A "D" paper will neglect to meet all the requirements of the assignment, and may be superficial in its treatment of the topic. It may lack development of or focus on the topic, which can interfere with overall coherence.

An “F” paper does not fulfill the requirements of the assignment.

### **English 71 GE Learning Outcomes (GELOs)**

Upon successful completion of this GE course, students will be able to:

1. Decipher and understand the form and content of assigned literary works;
2. Comprehend the historical and cultural contexts of assigned literary works;
3. Recognize the accomplishments of and issues related to writing by men and women representing diverse cultural traditions;
4. Acquire through both individual and collaborative/workshop efforts of a written and oral nature the skills necessary for reading, discussing, analyzing, interpreting, and—most importantly—emulating and writing works of poetry, creative nonfiction, and short fiction;
5. Communicate such skills with clarity and precision;
6. Develop an appreciation of literary works as expressions of human intellect and imagination, and as representations of diverse human cultures;
7. Develop the ability to write literary works that express intellect and imagination and that represent diversity in human cultures;
8. Respond to literature through clear and effective communication in both written and oral work;
9. Read and respond to texts with both analytical acumen and personal sensibility;
10. Appreciate how literary works illuminate enduring human concerns while also representing matters specific to a particular culture;
11. Write works of poetry, creative nonfiction, and short fiction that are of interest and value to the writer, to other students in the course, and to a diverse reading audience.

### **Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)**

Through this course, students will:

1. Appreciate the wide breadth of contemporary writing in poetry, fiction, and nonfiction;
2. Express themselves creatively in poetry, fiction, and nonfiction;
3. Associate reading as a crucial component to writing;
4. Consider writing—their own and others’—as contributing to a larger community both inside and outside the university;
5. Place their own creative output within the larger contemporary writing community.

### **Library Liaison**

Peggy Cabrera, Librarian for English Department

Email: [Peggy.Cabrera@sjsu.edu](mailto:Peggy.Cabrera@sjsu.edu)

Phone: 408-808-2034

### **Canvas and MYSJSU Messaging**

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on Canvas Learning Management System course login website at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for

regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU at <http://my.sjsu.edu> to learn of any updates.

### Late work

Major assignments will be graded down a full letter grade for each day they are late, and may only be submitted up to **two days (or a whole week) late**. In case of extenuating circumstances, please communicate with me **in advance**, and I may be willing to work out a new deadline for you. All assignments must be turned in for a passing grade.

### Classroom Protocol

In English 71, much of the learning happens in class. Therefore, it is imperative that you attend each class session and participate in class activities and discussions. Class participation entails: (1) demonstrating that you've completed the readings, (2) contributing to discussions, and (3) completing in-class assignments.

\*\*\*Class discussions will sometimes include material of sensitive nature. In this course, students may encounter materials that differ from, and perhaps, challenge their understanding of reality, their ideas, and their beliefs. Students are encouraged to discuss issues that may arise from such material with **me**.

\*\*\*If you have special needs or accommodation requests, message me as soon as possible. Failure to do so may result in your forfeiture of the accommodations you may deserve.

### University Policies

University-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. can be found at:

<http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/index.html>

### Covid-19 Campus Policy

On December 22, 2021, the CSU announced that all CSU campuses will require students, faculty and staff accessing university facilities to receive a COVID-19 vaccine booster shot to remain in compliance with the CSU's vaccination policy. The CSU's new requirement calls for boosters to be received by February 28, 2022, or six months after an individual received the final dose of the original vaccination, whichever is later. Medical and religious exemptions may apply. **At SJSU, all booster-eligible students who are registered for hybrid or in-person classes are required to update their vaccination status and upload a record of their booster shot by January 31, 2022.** Further information can be found at:

<https://www.sjsu.edu/healthadvisories/vaccination.php>

### General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student:

As members of the academic community, students accept both the rights and responsibilities incumbent upon all members of the institution. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with SJSU's policies and practices pertaining to the procedures to follow if and when questions or concerns about a class arise.

See University Policy S90–5 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf>. It is recommended that students seek clarification or discuss concerns with their instructor.

**Course Schedule:**

**\*\*\*Schedule is tentative and subject to change at any given time. It is the student’s responsibility to check Canvas for updated assignment deadlines and assigned work.**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Readings, Assignments, Discussions, Deadlines</b> <i>(all assignments/readings are due on the date in which they are listed and should be completed <b>before</b> class.)</i>
1	Aug 22	<b>Introductions &amp; Ice Breaker</b> Skits
1	Aug 24	<b>Discussion:</b> Imagism Canvas Playlist (please have completed all the readings in the Image Poetry discussion board on Canvas before class)
2	Aug 29	<b>Due:</b> Image Poem <b>Discussion:</b> Lineation
2	Sept 31	<b>Small Group Workshop</b>
3	Sept 5	<b>Due:</b> Metaphorical Poem <b>Discussion:</b> Meter Canvas Playlist
3	Sept 7	<b>Small Group Workshop</b>
4	Sept 12	<b>Due:</b> Structured Poem <b>Discussion:</b> Volta Canvas Playlist
4	Sept 14	<b>Small Group Workshop:</b>

5	Sept 19	<b>Discussion:</b> Descriptive Meditative Poems Canvas Playlist
5	Sept 21	<b>Due: Poetry Portfolio:</b> Begin Fiction Unit Discussion: Flash Fiction and Plot Readings on Canvas
6	Sept 26	<b>Discussion:</b> Craft Talk Characterization, Dialogue Readings on Canvas
6	Sept 28	<b>Discussion:</b> Readings on Canvas
7	Oct 3	<b>Due:</b> Fiction Draft
7	Oct 5	<b>Large Group A</b>
8	Oct 10	<b>Large Group B</b>
8	Oct 12	<b>Large Group C</b>
9	Oct 17	<b>Large Group D</b>
9	Oct 19	<b>Large Group E</b>
10	Oct 24	<b>Large Group F</b>
10	Oct 26	<b>Discussion:</b> Craft Talk Voice, Flashback Readings on Canvas
11	Oct 31	<b>Due: Fiction Final</b> Begin Nonfiction Unit

		Discussion: Personal Narrative, Travel Essays, & the Blog Readings on Canvas
11	Nov 2	<b>Discussion:</b> Craft Talk Reflexive Writing Readings on Canvas
12	Nov 7	<b>Nonfiction Large Group A Workshop</b>
12	Nov 9	<b>Nonfiction Large Group B Workshop</b>
13	Nov 14	<b>Nonfiction Large Group C Workshop</b>
13	Nov 16	<b>Nonfiction Large Group D Workshop</b>
14	Nov 21	<b>Nonfiction Large Group E Workshop</b>
14	Nov 23	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>
15	Nov 28	<b>Nonfiction Large Group F Workshop</b>
15	Nov 30	<b>Due:</b> Final Nonfiction Essay
16	Dec 5	<b>Last Day</b>
17	Dec 12	No Final Exam