

# Writing Poetry Section 01 ENGL 131

Spring 2023 4 Unit(s) 01/25/2023 to 05/15/2023 Modified 01/24/2023

## Contact Information

Instructor(s):	J. Michael Martinez
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## Course Description and Requisites

Workshop in verse forms. Study of traditional and contemporary models. May be repeated twice for credit.

Prerequisite: ENGL 71 (or equivalent) or instructor consent.

Letter Graded

## \* Classroom Protocols

**Participation:** while there may be lectures, the course will be organized as a single continuous discussion requiring everyone to voice their opinion. I allow for two excused absences before reducing 2.5% off one's overall final grade.

The quality of your class participation will be judged through the following: your effort at completing short assignments and, as necessary, sharing them; the effort you put into responding to the workshoped writing of your peers and your willingness to share your thoughts with the workshop as a whole; and the effort you bring to reading critically.

*All required readings, whether online or in our books, must be brought to class.*

In class, you are being asked to respond to each other and to questions raised in class: I WILL NOT TOLERATE ANY DISRESPECTFUL CONVERSATION OF ANY MANNER WHETHER IN CLASS OR ONLINE. Participation is essential to this course: we will work both in large and small groups.

**Reading Like a Writer:** during the semester you will pair up with a colleague to present some opening thoughts on the day's reading. Both of you must speak/present. Both of you will receive the same grade. A good discussion will include the following:

1. Introduction to the Author—Biography, Important Notes, Etc.
2. CONCISE Summary of Poem/Essay
3. Identification of the Author's Use of Prosody we are studying. This should be a close-reading that pays attention to a SPECIFIC passage of text and explicates the writing for significance of language, imagery, tone, etc. I will assign one such technique or point of emphasis; you must choose another interesting feature of the Poem/Essay.
4. A discussion of the Poem/Essay's significance, with special attention to the deeper questions the events and reflections prompt.

You must prepare a visual aid for this presentation. You may make a Powerpoint presentation. I will be evaluating these Presentations for their depth and sophistication, your abilities to engage the class, your speaking dynamics—volume, clarity, rate, etc., and your overall professionalism.

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

## Program Information

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The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi: In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System").

Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance:

- A = excellent;
- B = above average;
- C = average;
- D = below average;
- F = failure.

Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a +(plus) or -(minus) grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

### **Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)**

Upon successful completion of an undergraduate degree program in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will be able to:

1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric.
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.
4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, including structures of power.

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### **Department Information:**

**Department Name:** English and Comparative Literature

**Department Office:** FO 102

**Department Website:** [www.sjsu.edu/english](https://www.sjsu.edu/english) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/english>)

**Department email:** [english@sjsu.edu](mailto:english@sjsu.edu) (<mailto:english@sjsu.edu>)

**Department phone number:** 408-924-4425

## Course Goals

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Workshop in verse forms. Study of traditional and contemporary models. May be repeated twice for credit.

In his "Materia Poetica," the poet Wallace Stevens wrote, "The relation of art to life is of the first importance especially in a skeptical age since, in the absence of a belief in God, the mind turns to its own creations and examines them, not alone from the aesthetic point of view, but for what they reveal, for what they validate and invalidate, for what they support and give."

In English 131, our primary goal is to learn how to employ language to sculpt the art we name "Poetry." We will turn to our creations and examine them from a variety of critical perspectives so we may become better informed artists, so you may get a taste of the vocation of "the poet." We will read classical and contemporary poetry, essays on prosody and poetics, and, most importantly, we will write. We'll use class

workshops, peer-review, and multiple drafts and revisions to achieve that goal. The course is demanding, and based on a certain kind of intense, exigent reading, requiring prolonged— in fact, repeated— attention to specific poems. We will see poetry as an artistic practice: as the great Paul Celan writes, “Attentiveness is the prayer of the soul.” We will be attentive and practice the process of poetry.

The questions this course engage may include the following issues: representations of power or ideology embedded in characterizations of sex and gender, class, race, and nationality, etc.; the reader’s implied relation to the text alongside authorial “intent,” when that can be established; whether ethics matter in relation to the creation and reception of literature; what roles expression and emotion play in the generation and interpretation of texts; whether literary or their corresponding cinematic texts, as art objects, are independent of external relations and depend purely upon a unique system of internal relations; how realms of “fact” and “fiction” may be mediated particularly through conventions/genre demarcations (sonnet, prose poem, field poetics, etc.), among other questions.

We will explore the art of writing poetry with the aim of coming toward an understanding of knowledge production. It is a class about asking questions concerning difficult issues—both about the works themselves and how we, as a society, produce them.

## Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

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

- recognize and write in a variety of poetic forms, including the sonnet, pantoum, free verse, lyric verse, prose poetry, and free verse.
- write complex poetic images.
- draft multiple versions of a poem.
- close read a poem deeply, far beyond its surface intention.

## Course Materials

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Texts/Readings (selections available on CANVAS)

- Black Peculiar by Khadijah Queen. ISBN: 1934819204
- The Lumberjacks Dove by GennaRose Nethercott. ISBN: 9780062853677
- DIWATA by Barbara Jane Reyes ISBN: 9781934414378
- Tertulia by Vincent Toro ISBN : 0143135341
- A Physical Journal/Daybook
- Poetry Course Readings: on Canvas as PDFs or Links.

## Course Requirements and Assignments

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### Important Due Dates

- **Jan 30:** In-Class Exercise #1
- **6<sup>th</sup>:** In-Class Exercise #2 due
- **Feb 8<sup>th</sup>:** Group Presentations Assigned;
- **13:** In-Class Exercise #3
- **Feb 15:** In-Class Exercise #4
  - Group January Presents
- **Feb 20:** Group February Presents
- **Feb 22:** Group March Presents
- **Feb 27:** Group April Presents
- **Mar 8:** Group May Presents
- **Mar 15:** Group June Presents
- **Apr 3:** Group July Presents
- **Apr 5:** Group August Presents
- **May 15<sup>th</sup>:** Last Day of Instruction - Last Day of Classes
- **131 Finals Day:** Final Portfolios Due

## Grading Information

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4 Sketches (from In-Class Exercises)	20%
4 Final Portfolio Revisions of your sketches	15%
Workshopping with <i>Critical Friends</i> : weekly exercises	4 poems of your choice from our 15%
Comments/critique of your peer's work	10%
The revisions of your workshopped poetry	10%
Presentations	10%
Class Participation	10%
Reflection Essay (part of your Final Portfolio)	10%

Grades given conform to the English Department and university grading policy. The Department of English is committed to the differential grading scale as defined in the official SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System"). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure.

## University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

## Course Schedule

# English 131 Writing Poetry, Spring 2023

*(As the course progresses, we may get off schedule--this is natural--as such, our daily assignments may be revised as necessary with fair notice given by email or in class).*

Please be sure to have completed the assigned reading **before** that day's class.

WEEK ONE:  Jan 25	<p><b>First Day of Class:</b> Course Overview, Introductions, Objectives</p> <p>· Analysis and discussion of Mathias Svalina's "Waistoid" series.</p> <p><b>In-Class Exercise #1:</b> Image and Found Language Poem Prompt.</p>
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<p>WEEK TWO:</p> <p>Jan 30</p>	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Prose:</li> <li>· Infinite and Finite Games (Canvas)</li> <li>· "Poetic Sensibility: What is it and Why We Need it in 21<sup>st</sup> Century..." (Canvas)</li> <li>· Poetry: <i>Canvas</i>:</li> <li>· Arthur Sze, "First Snow",</li> <li>· Carl Phillips, "Luna Moth,"</li> <li>· Mary Oliver "At Black River"</li> <li>· Selah Saterstrom "Eraser"</li> </ul> <p>In-Class Exercise #2: "Living Object" Poem Prompt</p> <p><u>DUE</u>: In-Class Exercise #1</p>
<p>Feb 1</p>	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Poetry: <i>Canvas</i>:</li> <li>· John Keats "Ode to a Nightingale"</li> <li>· Francis Ponge "Rain" (PDF)</li> <li>· C.K. Williams Packet (PDF)</li> </ul> <p>In-Class Exercise #3: "The Hidden World of Things" Poem Prompt</p>
<p>WEEK THREE:</p> <p>Feb 6</p>	<p>Open Workshop Day</p> <p><u>DUE</u>: In-Class Exercise #2</p>
<p>Feb 8</p>	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Poetry: <i>Canvas</i>: Rainer Maria Rilke links and PDF</li> </ul> <p>In-Class Exercise #4: "The Poet Contemplates" Poem Prompt</p> <p>-</p> <p><u>Group Presentation Dates Assigned</u></p>

<p>WEEK FOUR:</p> <p>Feb 13</p>	<p><b>Read:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <b>Poetry:</b> <i>Canvas</i>:</li> <li>· Gerard Manley Hopkins "The Windhover," "As Kingfishers Catch Fire" (Link)</li> <li>· Lewis Carroll "Jabberwocky,"</li> <li>· Eric Baus, "The Forest Formed Gills" (Link),</li> <li>· Saul Williams "DNA/Coded Language" and "Sha-Clack-Clack" (Canvas)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>DUE:</u> In-Class Exercise #3</b></p>
<p>Feb 15</p>	<p><b>Read:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <b>Poetry:</b> <i>Canvas</i>:</li> <li>· Brian Teare "Genius Loci" (Link),</li> <li>· Richard Siken, "The Torn Up Road" (Link),</li> <li>· Paul Celan "Flower" and "Vinegrowers" (Links),</li> <li>· Craig Santos Perez "ginen the micronesian kingfisher [i sihek]" (Link),</li> <li>· Rita Dove "Parsley" (Link)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>DUE:</u> In-Class Exercise #4</b></p> <p>Group "January" PRESENTERS:</p> <p>§</p> <p>§</p>
<p>WEEK FIVE:</p> <p>Feb 20</p>	<p><b>Read:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <b>Poetry:</b> <i>Canvas</i>:</li> <li>· Julia Alvarez "Bilingual Sestina" (Link),</li> <li>· Sandra Lim "Pantoum"(Link),</li> <li>· Evie Shockley "Pantoum: landing, 1976" (Link),</li> <li>· Aimee Nezhukumatathil "Red Ghazal" (Link),</li> <li>· Yusef Komunyakaa "Ghazal, After Ferguson"(Link),</li> </ul> <p>Group "February" PRESENTERS:</p> <p>§</p> <p>§</p>

Feb 22	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Prose: <i>Canvas</i> "A BRIEF GUIDE TO THE PROSE POEM" (Link)</li> <li>· Poetry: <i>Canvas</i>: Zachary Schomberg "The Fire Cycle" (Link)</li> </ul> <p>Group "March" PRESENTERS:</p> <p>§</p> <p>§</p>
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<p>WEEK SIX:</p> <p>Feb 27</p>	<p>Read: <i>Canvas</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Book: <i>The Lumberjacks Dove</i> by GennaRose Nethercott, Sections 1-2.</li> </ul> <p>Group "April" PRESENTERS:</p> <p>§</p> <p>§</p>
Mar 1	<p>Read: <i>Canvas</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Book: <i>The Lumberjacks Dove</i> by GennaRose Nethercott, Sections 1-2</li> </ul>
<p>WEEK SEVEN:</p> <p>Mar 6</p>	<p>Read: <i>Canvas</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Book: <i>The Lumberjacks Dove</i> by GennaRose Nethercott, Sections 3-End.</li> </ul>
Mar 8	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Book: <i>Tertulia</i> by Vincent Toro, ½ PDF.</li> </ul> <p>Group "May" PRESENTERS:</p> <p>§</p> <p>§</p>

WEEK EIGHT: Mar 13	<p>Read: <i>Canvas</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Book: <i>Tertulia</i> by Vincent Toro, second ½ of PDF.</li> </ul>
Mar 15	<p>Read: <i>Canvas</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Book: <i>DIWATA</i> by Barbara Jane Reyes</li> </ul> <p>Group "June" PRESENTERS:</p> <p>§</p> <p>§</p>
WEEK NINE: Mar 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Workshop Ethics</li> <li>· Workshop Group One</li> </ul>
Mar 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Workshop Group Two</li> </ul>
WEEK TEN: Mar 27-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Spring Break</li> </ul>

WEEK ELEVEN: April 3	<p>Read: <i>Canvas</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Book: <i>Black Peculiar</i> by Khadijah Queen</li> </ul> <p>Group "July" PRESENTERS:</p> <p>§</p> <p>§</p>
April 5	<p>Read: <i>Canvas</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Book: <i>Black Peculiar</i> by Khadijah Queen</li> </ul> <p>Group "August" PRESENTERS:</p> <p>§</p> <p>§</p>



WEEK TWELVE: April 10	Workshop Group One  Discuss of Final Portfolio and Contents.
April 12	Workshop Group Two
WEEK THIRTEEN: April 17	Workshop Group One
April 19	Workshop Group Two
WEEK FOURTEEN: April 24	Workshop Group One
April 26	Workshop Group Two
WEEK FIFTEEN: May 1	NO CLASS: NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAY
May 3	Workshop Group One
May 8	Workshop Group Two
May 10	Workshop
May 15	Student Poetry Reading
131 Finals Day	FINAL PORTFOLIO DUE