

Spring 2027

ENGLISH LITERATURE

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

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

ECL 501.01 Literature of Children

J. THOMAS

Because children's literature, perhaps more than any other literary genre, operates directly in the process of interpellation—of inscribing gender roles, class consciousness, etc.—this course constructs children's literature as a cultural apparatus that creates for its readers representations of race, class, and gender that are often problematic, often laudable. Thus, in addition to attending to structural and aesthetic matters, we will investigate the historical moment in which the texts on our syllabus were produced, as well as the implicit and explicit ideologies within them. Furthermore, we will discuss how the reception of these texts may have changed over time. I will encourage oppositional reading strategies in order for you to cultivate the ability to read with and against canonized texts and the institutions that canonize them. Among the texts we'll explore are Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, Mildred Taylor's *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, and J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*.

ECL 502.01 Adolescence in Literature

L. DALEY

Adapting Girlhood: Taking *Merci Suarez* from the Page to the Stage

In the unique course collaboration between the children's literature program and the theatre department, students will learn how to adapt the middle-grade novel *Merci Suarez Changes Gears* by Meg Medina for the stage. This interactive course will require students to tap into their research skills as they learn to become theatre dramaturgs. While creativity and performance are a major part of the course, most students will be a part of the adaptation process, rather than performing on stage. Students of all creativity levels are encouraged to join!

ECL 503.01 Topics in Children's Literature

P. SERRATO

Chicanx Children's Literature

This semester we will investigate the history, politics, accomplishments, and overall significance of Chicanx children's literature. To establish some of the stakes involved in the representation of ethno-cultural identities and formations in children's (and other) texts, we will first explore some (generally racist) portrayals of Mexicans and other Latinxs in early twentieth century U.S. children's literature. We will then examine the proliferation of Chicano/a children's texts in the 1970s, considering how and why, amidst the Chicano Movement, the genre of children's literature came to constitute a crucial medium for Chicano and Chicana cultural workers. After covering works such as Elia Robledo Durán, Débora Ana Rodríguez, and Jonás Robledo's *Joaquín, niño de Aztlán* (1972), Tomás Rodríguez Gaspar and Sue Brown's *La Aventura de Yolanda / Yolanda's Hike* (1974), and Nephtalí de León's *I Will Catch the Sun* (1973), we will move into the 1980s and investigate the broadening spectrum of critical and aesthetic possibilities that writers for children began exploring in the years after the Movement. We will then venture into the 1990s, which witnessed the second great explosion of Chicanx children's literature. In our discussion of works by Gloria Anzaldúa, Pat Mora, Luis Rodríguez, Francisco Jiménez, and many others, we will delineate the methods used by these authors to engage with and respond to an array of social concerns. Eventually we will close out the semester with literature produced in the 21st century, including work by Juan Felipe Herrera,

Celia Pérez, Raúl the Third, and Isabel Millán. To inform our work with the assorted picture books, novels, and multimedia programming that will constitute our primary texts, we will read an array of secondary critical and theoretical pieces on subjects such as Chicano/a history, movements within Chicana/o literature and culture, children's literature in general, and the politics of art.

ECL 503.02 Topics in Children's Literature
Intro to Teaching Children's Literature

L. DALEY

Calling all teachers! In this course, you will be introduced to the skills and research needed to teach children's literature in the college classroom. The purpose of this course is to allow you to dream up your "perfect" children's literature course, while learning how to design a 15-week syllabus, practicing effective teaching methods, and cultivating research skills. This course may also be helpful to K-12 teachers looking to develop a children's literature curriculum for their classroom. Final project will be a compilation (portfolio style) of course assignments.

ECL 508W.01 Writing of Criticism

C. GUTHRIE

This course will explore key movements of literary theory, how they have developed over time, and how they have shaped the discipline of Literary Studies. We will examine theory and criticism as tools that can develop our close reading skills and research methodologies as we develop our own interpretations and contribute to ongoing conversations within Literary Studies. Having learned these theories, we will apply them to several fictional works, including Haruki Murakami's *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. We will also consider practical issues for ECL majors: how to locate the best critical articles on a particular work, how to incorporate other people's insights into your own ideas, and how to cite your sources appropriately in a well-considered research paper.

Requirements include two exams, a research paper/creative project to be presented in class, and in-class activities.

ECL 508W.02 Writing of Criticism
508W.03 Speaking Your Truth in the Age of AI
Offered Online

E. FRAMPTON

Academic, scholarly, and professional writing have entered a new era, in which they can be farmed out to artificial intelligence. As a result, writing in which an original, authentic, unique, human voice comes through will be increasingly valuable in the years ahead. One emphasis of this class will therefore be on developing a recognition of what you, yourself, can express orally and in writing that cannot be replicated by AI. The class is required of all English majors, and it also satisfies the SDSU writing requirement for many students with other majors. It will provide you with tools and strategies that will help you to find, honor, and express your own, personal voice and, as a result, to be more successful with articulating your thoughts and feelings in a wide range of academic, professional, political, and personal contexts. In conjunction with this, we will be learning about literary criticism and theory, research techniques, and the British literary tradition within the nineteenth-century colonial and the twentieth-century postcolonial periods. Generous and tolerant participation in three, flexibly scheduled, small-group, recorded, Zoom sessions is a fundamental aspect of the course, helping to further develop your digital, analytic, and interpersonal communication skills. Aside from that, **the course is asynchronous online, without any live meetings in a classroom.**

ECL 510A.01 Chaucerian Afterlives**D. NAJORK****Tuesday – In-Person Class**

As Candace Barrington and Jonathan Hsy observe in *A New Companion to Chaucer*, multiple generations across geographical space, time, and textual media have created their own image of Geoffrey Chaucer (d. 1400) and have adapted his works to new cultural moments. The first generation of poets after Chaucer, including Thomas Hoccleve (d. 1426), referred to him as a “father” and subsequent generations of English poets, such as John Dryden (d. 1700), viewed Chaucer as the “father” of an English poetic tradition. In this course we will explore how Chaucer’s reputation as a patriarch of an anglophone literary tradition has been – and continues to be – created and challenged through reception and how it has changed over time. Throughout the course you will engage with Chaucer’s works in their original contexts as well as through a variety of adaptations and translations of Chaucer across times, places, cultural milieux, and media. This is a T/TH hybrid class. This class will meet one day a week in person and one day a week asynchronously online. In-person class meetings will focus on lectures with some discussion. On asynchronous online class days students will focus more on collaboration and discussion, but additional content (lecture videos/audio, links to other materials) will be provided.

ECL 510B.01 Visions and Revisions**C. COLQUITT**[Description Not Available](#)**ECL 525.01 Literature of the U.S. 1960 – PRESENT****J. THOMAS**

This course charts a rough map of American literature, developing, as we do, a rigorous understanding of the concerns and debates that currently characterize the study of American literature. Since it’s impossible to “cover” all of American literature, we will explore texts that speak to or resonate with a general idea familiar to you all: *the American Dream*. That is, in addition to discussing and analyzing the assigned texts and their authors, we’ll consider how each text relates to, articulates, or complicates our idea of the American Dream, while noting how the American Dream has changed—and what parts of it have lingered—over the history of our nation. Towards these ends, we will read a diverse body of texts, including book-length collections and novels such as *The Black Riders and Other Lines* by Stephen Crane, *Black Folktales* by Julius Lester, and *Parable of the Sower* by Octavia E. Butler, plus shorter works by Maria White Lowell (“An Opium Fantasy”), Louisa May Alcott (“Perilous Play”), Mary C. Hungerford (“An Overdose of Hasheesh”), and Mark Twain (“Concerning Tobacco”).

ECL 526.01 Redneck Lit**L. CHAMPION****Class, Place, and Identity in American Writing**

This course examines literary and cultural representations of poor and working-class communities, particularly in the American South. Through literary texts, music, and pop culture, we will examine recurring themes and subjects explored in connotations of “redneck.” We will also look at ways stereotypes are either challenged, reinforced, or both.

ECL 527.01 Speculative Fiction
Have We Ever Been Human?

D. LEONG

What makes us human? Is it a set of characteristics like consciousness, free will, and biographical memory? Is it our DNA or intellect? Or is it our capacity for self-deception, shame, and greed? These questions have become increasingly important as we grapple with advances in genetic science, biotechnology, and artificial intelligence and the networks of wealth and power that support them. Our definitions of the human are not only essential to modern science and technology, they also determine how their resources and risks are distributed. To address these connections, speculative fiction writers have developed strategies for making the human (and humans) seem weird, marvelous, frightening, alien, and strange. In doing so, they help us to confront our attachments to the human and the forms of power, knowledge, and identity they justify. How has genetic science transformed our ideas about species and race? How do biotechnology and artificial intelligence challenge our understanding of creativity, agency, and cognition? Are gender, sexual orientation, and class properly human characteristics? Through close examination of contemporary speculative fiction, this course will explore as a central question: Have we ever really been human?

ECL 527.03 Introduction to Literary Theory

J. PRESSMAN

This class offers an introduction to some of the most impactful thinkers and texts of twentieth and twenty-first century literary theory—the ideas that have shaped the way scholars and intellectuals think, argue, and teach. These powerhouses (including Derrida, Foucault, Barthes, Benjamin, Cixous, Adorno, Hayles, Butler, Baudrillard) are often referenced but rarely taught. In this class, we read carefully and closely seminal works of twentieth-century literary theory from different movements: the New Criticism, Structuralism, Post-structuralism, Psychoanalytic, Marxist, feminist, post-colonial, queer theory, and more. The goal is to provide students with a foundation for understanding how literature is discussed in scholarly and critical discourse but also to blow your minds with the brilliance of these theorists and the ways in which literary theory infiltrates and impacts culture.

ECL 533.01 Shakespeare

P. HERMAN

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the depth and range of Shakespeare's dramatic achievement over the course of his career as a playwright (he also wrote non-dramatic verse and he acted as well as made a lot of money as a share-holder of his dramatic company). We will read plays from the beginning of Shakespeare's career (*The Taming of the Shrew*) and from the end (*The Tempest*), and we will be looking at a range of genres (comedy, history, tragedy, and what would much later come to be known as "romance"). We will be paying attention to how these plays challenge generic expectations, and how they engage various early modern contexts (some of which we will read).

ECL 544.01 Postcolonial British Literature

E. FRAMPTON

Offered Online

Since the June 1948 arrival in Tilbury, England of the Empire Windrush, carrying hundreds of West Indians to their new home, Britain has been reinvented by communities of people from its various former colonies. This evolution has been warmly welcomed by some and violently resisted by others; but it has undeniably altered the landscape of British cultural life – much as the British Empire had previously altered the rest of the globe irreversibly. The

confrontations, conflicts, tragedies, harmonies, and mutations of colonialism and postcolonialism are constructed, digested, and articulated in writing that spans the twentieth century and beyond. In this course, we will consider some historical conditions and writing from the heyday of British imperialism and then go on to read a selection of work by writers of diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds who have been significant contributors to the changing cultural and literary scene of Britain and its former colonies. We will explore issues of economic disparity, race, gender, environmental impact, and national identity. Participation in three, small-group, recorded, Zoom discussions and the contribution of one online presentation is required, helping to further develop your analytic, digital, and interpersonal communication skills. **Aside from these, the class is asynchronous online, without any live meetings in a classroom.**

ECL 560.02 AI Literature

J. PRESSMAN

AI is the buzzword these days– sparking fear, excitement, funding, and hype. Yet, there is a long history of humans writing texts about “artificial intelligence,” crossing centuries and genres. Literature is the human record of imagining the future, reflecting on the past, and critiquing the present; literary studies offers a means of exploring what it means to be human, how intelligence renders us human (or not), and what “artificial intelligence” might mean.

This class contextualizes contemporary discourse about AI by reading across four and half centuries of texts: from René Descartes “Meditations” (1641) to Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) to H.G. Wells’ *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1898). We read pioneering cybernetic and computational thinkers of the mid-twentieth century– Alan Turing, J.C.R. Licklider, and Joseph Weizenbaum– alongside born-digital literature by Emily Short, Amaranth Borsuk, and Shelley Jackson. We learn about the first chatbot, ELIZA (1960s), engage Mark Marino’s *Hallucinate This: an authorized autobotography of ChatGPT*, theorize our collaboration with “non-conscious cognizers” via N. Katherine Hayles.

From philosophy to science fiction, cybernetic theory to cultural theory, digital literature to film, we learn about AI via canonical works of writing. This course provides a historical and theoretical foundation for grappling with one of the biggest issues of our time by reading, carefully and closely, the longer history of AI Literatures.

ECL 563.01 Literature and Law

T. ASIM

Literature & Law will focus on crime and detective fiction, spanning more than a century of the figure of the detective (official and amateur alike). In a broad survey of culture, race, gender, and historical period, our tour of detectives, criminals, and the texts in which they appear will take us to 1840’s Paris, all the way to the palm-tree lined streets of the Florida Keys. We will explore the major eras and authors, including Victorian vices, Golden Age manor house mysteries, the deliciously creepy this-place-is-haunted Gothic, American hard-boiled Noir, Neo Noir, and Post-Modern dread. In tracking the social constructs of justice, police forces, private detectives, and the nature of punishment, we will attempt to sleuth out the most distressing elements of our societies, and in this way, we may arrive at a fundamental truth: that the world exists in shades of gray, some far darker than others. Our texts will include novels, short stories, film, and TV episodes (yes, *Scooby Doo*, too).

ECL 564.01 Jewish Fiction and Identity

P. HERMAN

This seeks to explore the varieties of Jewish identity in some of the seminal texts of Yiddish literature (in translation) and then, American-Jewish literature. What does it mean to be Jewish? And in particular, what does it

mean to be Jewish in America? In other words, how does the immigrant experience, and then, the Holocaust, shape American-Jewish literature? How do you balance tradition and assimilation? How do you balance the weight of history with one's own experience? How do subsequent generations deal with the Holocaust? With antisemitism? How does define Jewish identity today? We will also look at how the Jewish fictive imagination is dealing with 10/7 and the aftermath. We will read, among others, Sholem Aleichem, Abraham Cahan, Anzia Yezierska, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Art Spiegelman, and Philip Roth. As of this writing, the list of works about 10/7 remains unsettled, but will include episodes of *Fauda*, Israeli short stories, and excerpts from Howard Jacobson's novel, *Howl*.

ECL 564.02 World Literature **Thursday – In-Person Class**

S. QI

In this edition of the course, we will be reading several clusters of important authors/texts from various cultures and time periods: 1) plays by Euripides, Eugene O'Neill, and Cao Yue; 2) fiction by Franz Kafka, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Lu Xun, and Can Xue; and 3) plays by Bertolt Brecht, Samuel Beckett, Gao Xingjian, and Wei Minglun. We will explore the transcultural and intertextual resonances between/amongst the selected works: thematic, modal, generic, and stylistic (the tragic, the absurd, the satirical, and more) while paying particular attention to how sociohistorical, cultural, and literary conditions have shaped the (re)production and reception of the selected works, including theatrical productions/adaptations.

All assigned texts are provided—eBooks from the university library or pdf copies accessed via course Canvas.

ECL 566.02 Legends of Troy **(in Medieval Literature)**

D. NAJORK

In the Middle Ages many European cultures and regimes imagined the destruction of Troy and the subsequent diaspora of the Trojan people to be foundational to their own origins and legitimacy. For example, in the early 12th century Geoffrey of Monmouth suggests in his *History of the Kings of Britain* that Brutus of Troy founded Britain and that King Arthur is descended from the royal lineage of the Trojans. While Homer's *Iliad* was little known in medieval Europe (except through the abbreviated version in the *Ilias Latina*), there were many popular texts circulating that purported to be eyewitness accounts of the Trojan War. These texts were translated into multiple European languages and inspired new pseudo-historical works, romances, and poetry all reimagining the tragic destruction of Troy. In this class we will read excerpts from some of the major classical sources on the Trojan War and its aftermath (including Virgil's *Aeneid*) that were known in medieval Europe as well as texts by Chaucer, Lydgate, Benoît de Sainte-Maure, and other anonymous writers. Through these readings students will examine how medieval European writers used the myths of Troy to explore their own constructions of history, politics and conflict, morality and spirituality, gender and sexuality, and more.

ECL 571.01 Techniques of Short Story

M. MARSHALL

This course will trace the trajectory of sudden to flash to microfiction and all the hybrid forms in between— a movement that author Stuart Dybek calls “a continuum of infinite gradations that spans the poles of fiction and poetry, the narrative, and the lyric.” Through various writing exercises, guided discussions, and workshops, we will examine ways in which writers such as Maggie Nelson, Osama Alomar, and others harness the power of brevity and concision to do in two pages what a novel does in two hundred. We will focus closely on technique and craft with the goal of composing and revising two works of short fiction by the semester's end. Writers of all experience-levels are welcome!

ECL 576B.01 Literary Publication and Editing Workshop M. MARSHALL

Publishing can be an exciting and rewarding career. However, understanding the industry and its many facets can be daunting. This course will aim to demystify some aspects of the publishing and editing industry while giving you the information and practice necessary to find your way into the work. The first weeks of the course will be devoted to the central questions underlying the literary publishing world: What is literary citizenship and why does it matter? Who are we as artists and creative thinkers and how do we situate within the larger context?

Why are diversity and editorial ethics important in the industry? We will then take a deeper dive into copyediting, including editorial style and language editing. Our final goal will be to work toward understanding what it takes to build a literary journal and to realize our own vision for launching one. Throughout the semester, we will welcome special guests with experience relevant to the literary publishing and editing industry.

ECL 579.01 Living Writers

M. MARSHALL

Derek Walcott's *Fortunate Traveler* asserts, "...literature is an old couch stuffed with fleas." This course aims to counter his assertion by examining the texts of living writers who are working to maintain literature's livelihood. Guest authors will visit the class to conduct discussions, writing workshops, and readings centered on their work and experience in the literary world. This course provides the rare opportunity to work closely with visiting authors while exploring multiple genres and mediums, including poetry, prose, and creative nonfiction. Active participation and inquiry will expand your perception of literature and strengthen your ability as a writer and reader. This course promises to shake the fleas from static written word.

Writers of all experience-levels and genres are welcomed and encouraged.

ECL 580.01 The Writing of Poetry

M. MARSHALL

Poetry is one of our oldest art forms. Over its many years of existence it has been defined in countless different and often contradictory ways... Mary Oliver called it, an attitude, a prayer. Audre Lorde asserted, it is a vital necessity of our existence, while Tristan Tzara considered it a dossier of human imbecility for the guidance of future professors.

Our challenge this semester will be to define poetry in our own terms and explore the vast voices, structures, sounds, and images this ancient form offers up. We will examine both classic and contemporary poets, as we trace poetry's lineage from oral art to Instagram, and mine their expertise while we create our own poems and share them in a workshop setting. We will pay close attention not just to the music and meaning of individual poems, but also to the sequencing and thematic threads in recent collections by Katie Farris, Joshua Burton, and others, with the goal of producing a demi-chapbook by the semester's end. Writers of all experience-levels are welcome.

ECL 581W.01 The Writing of Fiction

T. CUMMINGS

Tell me a story. No, tell me a good story

We tell stories every day, but few are memorable. How can we write stories that affect our readers? In this class, we'll participate in a number of activities designed to hone our ability to write compelling works of fiction. These include in-class writings, pastiches, creating an original work of fiction, giving and receiving feedback, and workshopping each other's writing. Alongside these activities, we will read published and unpublished stories and essays on writing.

Class sessions will include a variety of activities: in-class writing, lecture, workshop, and discussion. For discussion, we will have small and whole group discussions about the works of fiction and non-fiction we read.

Requirement: All assessment activities will be performed in class, on paper.

ECL 581W.02 The Writing of Fiction **Exploring the Craft of Children's Literature**

L. DALEY

Have you ever wanted to write a children's picture book? Or develop a magical world of middle-grade fiction? Or devise a coming-of-age narrative for a young-adult novel? In this course, students will learn the basics of writing fiction for young and young-adult readers. Through a series of writing exercises and in-class workshops, students will develop skills on how to write strong characters, climactic plotlines, and descriptive settings. This course is not about becoming a professional creative writer. Rather, it is about learning the skills of creativity, communication, style, and voice. Writers of all levels are welcomed.

We will watch selected online videos and listen to podcasts about the craft of writing from experts in the field, in addition to reading selected children's literature excerpts from influential works.

Final projects will be a compilation (portfolio style) of course assignments.

ECL 581W.03 & .04 The Writing of Fiction **Offered Online**

L. CHAMPION

The Writing of Fiction will focus on fiction writing. Students will learn the craft of fiction writing and learn how to critique fiction writing. Students will learn the basic fiction writing tools and learn to read short stories as a writer. Students will write original short stories and critiques of short stories written by their peers. They will learn how to employ the elements of fiction writing in their own work and how to evaluate how others use the elements of fiction writing.

PLEASE NOTE: This is an online course, which means the course is presented online, via Canvas. You should have a good understanding of Canvas and be comfortable with technology. You'll need to upload and download files, submit documents online, and have a general understanding of contemporary technology.

ECL 584W.01 Writing Informal Essays

T. CUMMINGS

Creative non-fiction is one of the most popular and powerful forms of writing in the contemporary world. No wonder: It offers authors the chance to explore meaningful events in original ways, bringing their own sensibility to pertinent issues. And we got a lot of issues these days. They are often what we spend our time reading about in this overly eventual world, and they are also what publishers are seeking for publication.

In this writing class, alongside the writing of our own essays, we will focus on reading a set of published essays in order to pay special attention to the way authors link their personal experiences to topics that impact others. How to link the quotidian to the meaningful? The banal to the amazing? It is perhaps obvious to think that an informal element to writing an essay entails including personal experience, but the ways that we join the personal to the

global is less obvious. What may be interesting to you could be uninteresting to anyone but your close associates. For intrigue and insight, we write about our life events in ways that are framed by the world to show how they both are highly impactful. How to do this takes time to master. So, while we remain interested in you and your life, we will strive to write with excellence in mind.

Requirement: All assessment activities will be performed in class, on paper.