

Spring 2026

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 157.01 Comics and History

Tuesday – In-Person Class

J. THOMAS

Description Not Available

ECL 157.02 Comics and History

Thursday – In-Person Class

J. THOMAS

Description Not Available

ECL 158.01 Introduction to Horror Aesthetics

Mon. / Wed.– In-Person Class

P. SERRATO

This course explores the aesthetic features of an array of horror texts produced in different times and places. Specifically, we will focus on the critical and affective effects and implications of the stylistic, technical, and formal elements of horror texts. Our goal will be the development of a historically broad and theoretically sophisticated expertise in horror as a (surprisingly intentional and brilliant) mode of creative endeavor.

Requirements: A lot of in-class writing, a weekly coloring page, a midterm exercise, a final exercise, a creative project, and a group presentation. Texts likely to be covered include:

Literature

Dracula, Bram Stoker (1897)

Films

Halloween (1978, Dir. John Carpenter)

House of 1000 Corpses (2003, Dir. Rob Zombie)

The Babadook (2014, Dir. Jennifer Kent)

Smile (2022, Dir. Parker Finn)

28 Years Later: The Bone Temple (2026, Dir. Nia DaCosta)

Beetlejuice (1988, Dir. Tim Burton)

Web Series

Salad Fingers (2004 – present)

Creeptoons (2025 – present)

Video Games

Little Nightmares III (2025)

ECL 158.02 Introduction to Horror Aesthetics

C. GUTHRIE

In this introductory course, we will survey the criticism, history and theory of horror aesthetics in graphic novels, literature, and film. We will consider the formal and stylistic features of different horror texts, paying attention to the conventions of different horror genres and to the historical and cultural contexts of each work. Focusing on film adaptations, we will pair Jackson's horror classic, *The Haunting of Hill House* with Mike Flanagan's supernatural horror drama, Lindsay's novel with Peter Weir's Australian Gothic film, and du Maurier's *Don't Look Now* with Nicolas Roeg's occult-themed thriller.

Requirements: Include two exams and a creative project.

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ECL 159.01 **Introduction Child Literature Aesthetics** **P. SERRATO**
Mon. / Wed.– In-Person Class

English and Comparative Literature 159 introduces students to the study of children’s literature aesthetics. It is a course that explores children’s literature as an artistic medium that has experienced an amazing array of innovations and developments across time, place, and cultures. As we examine conventions and experiments in form, technique, and style, we will consider the effects of, and the reasons for, the evolving features of children’s literature as a medium of creative endeavor.

Requirements: A lot of in-class writing, a midterm exercise, a final exercise, a creative project, and group presentation.

ECL 220.01 **The Art of Literature** **TBA**
Description Not Available

ECL 220.02 **The Art of Literature** **E. FRAMPTON**
Food, Hunger, and Justice

We all eat; we all know hunger; we’ve all witnessed injustice. Food, whether abundant or scarce, ritualistically prepared or quickly devoured, is a facet of life from birth to death that unites all cultures. Writers and artists as diverse as Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell, Laura Esquivel, Frida Kahlo, Anthony Bourdain, and Kara Walker have explored our complex relationship to cooking and eating, which are also the focus of scholarship, popular television shows, podcasts, and social media. In this asynchronous, online class, we will have the pleasure of exploring writing, artwork, and popular culture through the lens of various engagements with food, hunger, and justice. Along the way, we just might also sample a few recipes and serve a few dishes ourselves.

ECL 220.03 **The Art of Literature** **J. PRESSMAN**
Introduction to the Art of Literature OF & FOR THE DIGITAL AGE

The standard course description for ECL 220 is: “Introduction to aesthetics, criticism, history, and theory of literature. Focus on literature as an artistic, creative, and technical medium.” This particular course focuses on the “technical medium” of literature, recognizing how literature is always embodied and dependent upon media—from books to computers and far more in between—and how new technologies change literary arts and practices.

Taught by a scholar of digital literature and co-founder of the Digital Humanities Initiative at SDSU, this course offers an introduction to the art of literature by focusing on literature *of and for* the digital age.

We pursue “born-digital” literature—literature made on the computer and intended to be on the computer (games, hypertext, Augmented-Reality, AI, and more) — as an entry-point for understanding how reading, writing, and publishing are integral aspects of digital culture. Through hands-on tools workshops in SDSU’s Digital Humanities Center, we experience how literature and literary study is absolutely vital to living and working in a digital age.

ECL 250.01 **Introduction to Literature of the U.S.** **TBA**

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Description Not Available

ECL 260.01 Introduction to British Literature P. HERMAN

In this class, we will both learn some of the history of English literature and explore its extraordinary variety using both canonical and non-canonical texts. We will be reading poetry, both personal and epic, plays, and popular fiction. We will also be reading a few important primary sources that inform the texts. While most of the works were written in English for England, we will occasionally veer outside for works that are extremely important for understanding the Renaissance (i.e., More's *Utopia*). Overall, we will look at how English literature from its very beginning adopted a critical stance toward the dominant culture, and we will see how this stance shapes works as various as *Beowulf*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Thomas More's *Utopia*, early modern drama, and Thomas Deloney's popular prose fiction. In short, students will not only learn about the foundations of English literature, but some of the ways to think and write about literature.

ECL 270.01 Introduction to Comparative Literature C. GUTHRIE

This modern and contemporary world literature course includes an eclectic mix of readings and films from Japan, Russia, Argentina, Nigeria, France, and the U.S. We will discuss the impact of Hamaguchi's film adaptation of Murakami's "Drive My Car" in connection with Murakami's short fiction, look at the challenges of immigration and assimilation in Adichie's novel, and consider questions about reality, fate, free will and life's purpose in Le Tellier's speculative fiction, *The Anomaly*. We will also explore permutations of the horror genre through Schwebelin's environmentally-themed novella *Fever Dream* and Ferris's graphic novel diary.

Requirements: This course will require one literary analysis, a creative presentation/paper, two short exams, and frequent in-class collaborative activities.

ECL 270 fulfills a GE requirement and is a required course for ECL majors. Format for the course will be lecture/discussion.

ECL 280.03 Introduction to Creative Writing TBA

Description Not Available

ECL 280.04 Introduction to Creative Writing TBA

Description Not Available

ECL 280.05 Introduction to Creative Writing TBA

Description Not Available

ECL 280.06 Introduction to Creative Writing TBA

Description Not Available

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ECL 305.01

Literature and the Environment

D. LEONG

Climate Change Fiction (CliFi)

This course offers an introduction to environmental literature through one of the most urgent and consequential issues of the 21st century – climate change. By focusing on the emerging genre of climate change fiction, or CliFi, we will explore how contemporary writers address the causes and consequences of climate change and their scientific, political, and cultural contexts. We will ask: What are the challenges and strategies of representing climate change? How do our approaches to and solutions for climate change intersect with systems of power (e.g., colonialism, capitalism) and categories of identity (e.g., race, class, gender)? How does climate change prompt us to think differently about the human, nature, technology, and justice? As we examine how our texts grapple with these questions, we will develop a better understanding of why literature matters in the context of the climate crisis.

ECL 306A.01

Children's Literature (and) Advanced Composition

S. SERRATO

(Taken concurrently with)

ECL 306W.01 and 02 Offered Online

ECL 306W.03 In-person

ECL 306A (Sections 01)

In this course, we will read children's literature with characters who engage, in different ways and forms, with the past. Whether through time travel, ghostly visitations, or even curses, we will explore the different avenues and reasons for young protagonists to understand history. We will consider why the past is so present in literature that is largely concerned with the future as children grow and come of age. Why are our child protagonists drawn to the past? What can they confront in history and why is that important for their development and identity? How can history inform our understanding of the past's relationship to our current moment? To answer these questions, and more, we'll consider intersections of childhood with trauma, race, culture, religion, and gender.

Potential texts include:

- *Displacement*, Kiku Hughes
- *The First State of Being*, Erin Entrada Kelly
- *Turning Red*, 2022 film
- *Ophie's Ghosts*, Justina Ireland

ECL 306W (Sections 01, 02, 03)

As we navigate the past, present, and future in ECL 306A, we will work on sharpening our abilities as critical readers, writers, and researchers. In this "W" portion of 306, we will focus on the skills needed to write on the children's literature we read in "A." In order to successfully craft written work on our "A" literature, and polish our skills as writers in general, we will be revisiting and discovering both foundational and advanced techniques of college-level essay development, doing so to develop into children's literature critics and scholars in our own right. Throughout the semester, we will undertake writing assignments that will strengthen the skills needed to successfully craft analytical essays that reflect careful engagement with literature and conventions of literary scholarship. In particular, we will work on navigating research specifically within the specialized scholarly field of children's literature, exploring and evaluating key journals, academic publishers, and research/ers in the field. Additionally, as we become more comfortable with academic writing, we will reflect on the ways in which the art and practice of writing can benefit practical and professional aspects of our lives. Through this process, we will develop our understanding of children's literature specifically and, more generally, literary analysis, research skills, incorporating and implementing evidence, and the process of writing and revising.

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ECL 308W.01

Literary Study

E. FRAMPTON

Offered Online

This class will answer many questions and concerns. Who is Terry Eagleton? What is the M.L.A.? When do you need an apostrophe? Where do I find a “peer-reviewed” essay? Why do some essays earn high grades while others don’t? What’s all the talk about “the singular they”? Is social injustice perpetuated by language and literature? How can I take a stand in life, even when writing about literature? In short, there are no dumb questions in this class. In order to answer these questions and have fun at the same time, we’ll read some influential literary work, including novels and poems, considering how different literary theories can provide useful tools for our own analysis of such work. We’ll also review some basics of academic writing, from grammar and punctuation to research and citation. There will be brief written assignments, a final research essay, a midterm, and a final exam. Participation in group Zoom discussions and online presentations is a key component of the course, helping to further develop your interpersonal and digital skills. By the end of the semester, you’ll be empowered with a clearer understanding of methods of literary analysis, concepts and terminology of literary study, research techniques, and the value of your voice.

This course will be taught asynchronously online, without regular class sessions in the classroom or on Zoom.

ECL 335.01

Chicana/o Literature

B. LARA

This course deconstructs the multi-layered landscapes within Chicana and Latina Literature’s genre and narratives. Through an exploration of the genres specifically, memoir, autotheory, poetry, short fiction, plays, and novels, this class will ground contemporary Chicana and Latina literature within histories of colonization, immigration, gender, labor, queerness, and resistance. Through these themes and more, we will examine how Chicana and Latina writers and their narratives confront, reshape, and reclaim these communities’ intersectional identities.

ECL 365B.01

African American Literature After 1900

D. LEONG

Black Women Writers and Abolitionism

This course will examine how black women writers in the 20th and 21st centuries revive and revise the principles of abolitionism to create bold new visions of freedom. We will ask: how can abolitionism help us to address issues like environmental racism, wealth and gender inequality, mass incarceration, and the use of surveillance technologies? How does the desire to “be free” affect the ways we relate to love, loss, and family? Is “equality” the same thing as “freedom”?

ECL 401.01 & .02 Childhood’s Literature

K. SHUMATE

Offered Online

[Description Subject to Change](#)

What were your favorite stories from childhood? Did you know that Dorothy’s shoes in L. Frank Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* were silver, not ruby? By following an historical timeline, we will visit Oz along with one of the most read books in the world—*The Hobbit*. And what childhood’s literature class would be complete without Harry Potter? We will explore with *The Hunger Games* by applying Monster Theory, and end the semester with a story of urban black childhood in *Ghetto Cowboy*. Other texts will include fairy tales and picture books. In relation to the above, the focus of this particular class is to visit or revisit these stories of our childhoods, the impact of these stories on our lives, and how we continue to view and respond to the world from these stories.

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ECL 401.01 & .02 Childhood's Literature

K. SHUMATE

Offered Online

Description Subject to Change

Warning of Possibly Objectionable Material: *The subject matter and texts that we will explore in this class will have ideas, scenes, images, and language that some students might find objectionable. These include—and are not limited to—violence, sexuality, racism, magic, spiritual beliefs, and the like. It is not my intention to offend anyone or make anyone feel uncomfortable; however, if these are areas about which you have personal concerns, this may not be the class for you. Please see me if you have further questions.*

Course requirements include readings, group projects, regular participation in discussions, quizzes, and a final presentation of the books and stories important to you during your childhood.

Required Texts

The Wizard of Oz with the W. W. Denslow illustrations, L. Frank Baum

The Hobbit, J. R. R. Tolkien

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, J. K. Rowling

The Hunger Games, Suzanne Collins G. Neri

Ghetto Cowboy, illustrated by Jesse Joshua Watson

Various Folklore and readings posted on Canvas

**English 401 Childhood's Literature is an Explorations course in the Human Experience, Humanities, C and helps you fulfill your upper division GE requirements. Open to all majors except English. English majors should enroll in English 501.*

ECL 440.01 African Literature

Q. BAILEY

The catalog suggests that this course will offer a 'Comparative study of African literature as well as Black Literature of North and South America and the Caribbean,' an area that includes about 90 countries and more than 25 non-sovereign territories. It's an area home to over 2 billion people. Instead of 'covering' all of this, which would take lifetimes, we're going to hone in on two countries, South Africa and Nigeria, exploring some of their writers and works and tracing the development of political, cultural, and aesthetic themes. Some of the works we will explore will be Athol Fugard, John Kani, and Winston Ntshona's "Sizwe Bansi is Dead," Miriam Tlali's "Between Two Worlds," Nadine Gordimer's "July's People," Sindiwe Magona's "Mother to Mother," Chinua Achebe's short stories, poems, and "Anthills of the Savannah," and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's short stories and "Purple Hibiscus."

ECL 470.01 Folk Literature

K. SHUMATE

Offered Online

What is Folklore?

Description Subject to Change

Folklore is not just fairy tales; in fact, Folklore is part of our everyday lives. If you cook using a recipe handed down in your family, there is probably a story that goes with it—that is folklore. If your family hangs stockings on the fireplace or opens Christmas presents on Christmas Eve, that is a folklore tradition. How did it get started in your family?

Other areas of folklore include:

- Material culture: folk art, vernacular architecture, textiles, modified mass-produced objects
- Music: traditional, folk, and world music
- Narrative: legends, urban legends, fairy tales, folk tales, personal experience narratives
- Verbal art: jokes, proverbs, word games
- Belief and religion: folk religion, ritual, and mythology
- Foodways: traditional cooking and customs, relationships between food and culture

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ECL 470.01

Folk Literature

K. SHUMATE

Offered Online

What is Folklore?

[Description Subject to Change](#)

We will explore several of these folklore categories throughout the semester, beginning with, of course, the narrative type. Students will read about, view movies & TV programs, and research folklore topics such as the outlaw hero, supernaturals, music, food, urban legends, conspiracy theories, and even folklore in technology such as what is the first thing you should do if your device freezes? Turn it completely off, count to ten, and reboot.

Course requirements: Include readings, research and explore various folklore topics for group projects, regular participation in discussions, quizzes, and a final presentation of food and folklore traditions in your family.

This course helps fulfill the Cultural Diversity Requirement. One explorations course in areas A, B, or C must be a course in cultural diversity, as indicated by an asterisk. Cultural diversity courses focus on the theoretical and practical factors of age, class, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, immigration, nation, race, religion, sexuality, socioeconomic status, and other significant markers of social identity. Courses meeting this requirement examine the complexity of diversity through an analysis of differential inequities, oppression, power, and privilege. Cultural diversity courses focus on non-dominant views and perspectives.

ECL 494.01

Modern Fiction of the U.S.

L. CHAMPION

Offered Online

The goal of this course is to explore Modern American Literature, works published between 1915-1945. We will analyze literature, enhance our abilities to interpret texts, and examine texts in relation to historical and cultural contexts. We will generate our own responses to the texts and engage in various literary approaches to interpreting texts. We will discover fresh ways to analyze literature, as well as ways to relate texts to various literary theories. More broadly, we will use the tools of literary analysis and critical thinking skills to ask and answer questions more perceptively and more logically. We will study works by authors such as William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, T.S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, and Robert Frost.

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 495.02

INTERNSHIP: Poetry International

B. FALCONER

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.

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ECL 495.02 **CR/NC Course**

INTERNSHIP: Poetry International

B. FALCONER

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 Blas Falconer bfalconer@sdsu.edu if you have questions.

ECL 498.01

Seminar: English Honors Thesis

T. ASIM

Description Not Available

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 503.02

Silverstein

J. THOMAS

Description Subject to Change

A course in textual analysis and both literary and cultural history, Topics in Children's Literature (Shel Silverstein: American Iconoclast: ECL 503) concerns the life and work of the seemingly contradictory, ever iconoclastic Renaissance man, Shel Silverstein. We will read from his poetry, cartoons, short plays, fairy tales, parables, and travel writing, watch his screen plays, and listen to his music, all the while thinking seriously about his relation to our dominant cultural values and ideology. Considering Shel's children's books alongside his work for Playboy, we will investigate the tensions inherent in one producing such varied cultural work, letting his often-bawdy work for adults inform our understanding of his sometimes cloying, sometimes rebellious, literature for children. [Important: Because Shel Silverstein wrote for Playboy and produced comics, plays, poetry, and songs intended for an adult audience, please enroll in this course ONLY if you're willing and able to engage works that some may consider pornographic in nature. In addition to works authored by Shel, we will engage, as a means of better contextualizing and understanding his life and work, Playboy magazine, including pictorials. Again, if exploring work explicitly designed to titillate, please consider another class. The amount of work in this latter category is small, but it will be present.]

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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 Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* and to Haruki Murakami's *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. We will also look at 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.

ECL 508W.03

Writing of Criticism

E. FRAMPTON

508W.04

Speaking Your Truth

Offered Online

Academic writing can be a struggle; it can also be empowering. This class will provide you with tools and strategies that will help you to find your voice in the process of writing about literature and culture and, as a result, to be more successful with it. Since literary scholars today must have an understanding of what's called "theory," we'll take a tour through aspects of this challenging field via British critic Terry Eagleton. Experience with techniques of research and citation is equally important to critics, and so we'll cover that too. Also essential is a thorough command of standards of English grammar, and we'll therefore review a few basics that often get neglected, while simultaneously addressing issues of linguistic justice. As a part of the process, we'll read some wonderful poems, essays, and the novels *Great Expectations* (1861) and *White Teeth* (2000), applying our studies and worldviews to the analysis of these. There will be brief written assignments, a final research essay, a midterm, and a final exam. Generous and tolerant participation in group Zoom discussions and presentations is an essential component of the course, helping to develop your interpersonal and digital skills.

This course will be taught completely asynchronously online, without meetings in the classroom or via Zoom.

ECL 510A.01

Literature of the Vikings

D. NAJORK

Tuesday – In-Person Class

The Vikings: From the Sagas to the Screen

This course explores the world of the Vikings through the Old Norse-Icelandic sagas and through the reception and reimagining of the Vikings in a variety of popular cultures. We will read sagas (in translation) about the settlement of Iceland, Ragnar Loðbrók, the Viking voyages to North America, shapeshifters and the undead, Hamlet, and more. Through these readings in the primary texts of the Vikings we will examine how the sagas blend myth and memory and history and fiction and construct ideas about identity, family, honor, fate, law/lessness, and the connections between the past and the present. We will also investigate the afterlives of the sagas and how the Vikings have been received and reinvented in popular culture (from 19th-century novels to contemporary manga and screen adaptations). Through these course materials students will consider how the Vikings have been remembered, romanticized, reinvented, and commercialized as well as how the Vikings have been used to think about and speak to a variety of cultural concerns.

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ECL 510B.02

Literature of AI

J. PRESSMAN

AI the buzzword these days, sparking fear, excitement, funding, and lots of hype. Yet, there is a long history of humans writing about “artificial intelligence,” writ large, across 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 and Shelley Jackson (the canonical digital hypertext *Patchwork Girl*, 1995). We learn about the first chatbot, ELIZA (1960s), engage Mark Marino’s *Hallucinate This: an authorized autobotography of ChatGPT*, and theorize our collaboration with “non-conscious cognizers” via literary scholar N. Katherine Hayles.

We learn about AI via canonical works of writing-- from philosophy to science fiction, cybernetic theory to cultural theory, digital literature to film. 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 519.01

Ethnic Literature of the U.S.

D. LEONG

Satire and Surrealism

This course will examine how ethnic writers in the U.S. use satire and surrealism to examine categories of difference, including those of race, gender, sexuality, and nationality. In doing so, we will take a close look at the politics and conventions of both genres and how they influence not only what a work of satire or surrealism can say but also how it says it. We will ask: What is the relationship between race and humor? Under what conditions do satire and surrealism reinforce structures of inequality and under what conditions do they challenge them? By tracking how the formal elements of satire and surrealism (e.g., irony, absurdity, exaggeration, horror, juxtaposition) shape and are shaped by their social and cultural contexts, we will better understand the relationships between race, power, and the literary imagination.

ECL 523.01

Literature of the U.S. 1860 – 1920

C. COLQUITT

Description Not Available

ECL 524.01

Literature of the U.S. 1920 – 1960

C. COLQUITT

Description Not Available

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ECL 525.01

Literature of the U.S. 1960 – PRESENT

T. GRAND PRE

Apocalyptic Fiction

Nukes, zombies, natural disasters, OH MY! Imagining and representing the end of the world is nothing new, but apocalyptic fiction has become an increasingly mixed bag of secular, topical, as well as speculative anxieties in recent years. Starting in the 1960s, we will examine visions of societal collapse, giving students a comparative understanding of apocalyptic fiction and how it has evolved with shifts in local as well as global politics concerning the United States, whether in relation to the Cold War, the Civil Rights movement, the War on Terror, or the broader urgencies of climate change. We will also consider the political upheavals that have accompanied technological advancements since the advent of the nuclear bomb—such as digital/information technologies, bio-weapons, and artificial intelligence. Finally, we will ask how the end of the world has been represented and interpreted differently across different media—novels, films, comics, and video games, to name a few. For a final creative project, students will produce an apocalyptic vision of their own, imagining how they think the world will end based on real or figural situations using one or several of the media we cover in class.

ECL 526.02

American Subterranean

B. NERICCIO

What happens when the American Dream flips itself inside out, when the neon billboard of liberty flickers and burns out, leaving us groping in the dark for meaning? That's where this class begins—not with the sunlit slogans of the republic, but in the crawlspaces and trapdoors where the real stories live. The American Subterranean is nightmare as mirror, comedy as confession, noir as national anthem. We will dig through texts, images, films, and fictions that refuse to behave—works that fracture, joke, scream, and seduce all at once.

This isn't a polite march through the canon. Think of it instead as psychoanalysis for a country addicted to its own myths. Dreams, after all, are never innocent—they are coded dispatches from the unconscious. So too with American culture: its novels, its films, its graffiti, its TV satires, its haunted photographs. Each is both an artifact and a symptom, and together they chart the hidden underside of "America," that fractured experiment in freedom, exploitation, comedy, and catastrophe. You won't be asked to memorize dates or recite grand names; you'll be asked to plunge into the shadows, to make sense of laughter that wounds, of beauty that unnerves, of language that refuses closure. By semester's end, you'll have your own map of the underworld—a passport stamped by ghosts, rebels, dreamers, and tricksters.

English majors, MALAS grad students, curious wanderers: bring your questions, your obsessions, your flashlights. The elevator to the basement is waiting.

ECL 527.01

Speculative Fiction

T. GRAND PRE

Hope, Fear, and the Worlds In-Between

Imagining utopia, as Ernst Bloch puts it, is as simple as "an anticipation of space adequate for human beings." But whether it is the escape of a daydream, the politics of urban planning, or the radical desire to overthrow a totalitarian regime, creating that secular paradise is never simple. What defines an ideal society, and for whom? Who is included or excluded? What form of government sustains it? And where will this society exist? From Thomas More's *Utopia*, to Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, to Toni Morrison's *Paradise*, such questions have evolved with the times—shifting in the 20th century from hopeful visions of better worlds to more cynical adaptations of our own. This course will explore a range of utopian and dystopian texts through the theoretical lenses of geocriticism, gender and sexuality, postcolonial studies, and ethnic studies, to name a few. For a final project, students will create a utopia or dystopia of their own using tools, theories, and media we have explored together.

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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 537.01

Milton

P. HERMAN

Students often mistake Milton for a boring misogynist whose works are, to put it kindly, less than relevant to the 21st century. Nothing could be farther from the truth, and in this course, we will discover how Milton's poems function as an "interrogation machine." His earlier poems (*Lycidas* and *L'Allegro / Il Penseroso* especially) ask important questions about the role of poetry and what sort of life one should lead, and his prose will intervene in some of the hottest topics of the day, which remain some of the hottest topics of our day, such as the limits of freedom of expression and worship, and exploring the best form of government, since the present one seems to be collapsing. The majority of the course will focus on *Paradise Lost*. But rather than reading viewing *Paradise Lost* as versified dogma or, as an earlier critic so memorably put it, as a "monument to dead ideas," we will see how this epic, as a result of the Restoration and the subsequent collapse of everything Milton worked for, risked his life for, and lost his vision for, puts everything on trial, with results that are neither conventional nor expected. Students are advised that this will not be a class in theology or in worshipping the transcendent text. We will not be looking at Milton as the culmination of a seamless and apolitical Christian tradition, or as an exemplar of orthodoxy. Instead, this class will look at John Milton as a historically situated author whose works intervene, and were meant to intervene, in the politics of his time, and whose major poetry is animated by the "poetics of incertitude."

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 span the twentieth century and beyond. In this course, we'll 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'll explore issues of economic disparity, race, gender, environmental impact, and national identity. Participation in group Zoom discussions and online presentations is required, helping to further develop your analytic and digital skills.

The class will be taught completely asynchronously online, without and class sessions on campus or via Zoom.

ECL 550.01

Queer Texts and Contexts

Y HOWARD

Description Not Available

Spring 2026

ECL 562.01

Digital Humanities

J. PRESSMAN

This is an exploratory learning experience in understanding how literature and literary studies change with new media technologies and practices. This course provides an introduction to media studies and theory as well as the umbrella term and emergent field known as “Digital Humanities.” Lead by a scholar of electronic literature and co-founder of the Digital Humanities Initiative at SDSU, students will study the latest in digital literary studies (from big data to critical code studies, info-visualizations to podcasting, AI and more); they will learn from a roster of experts who will visit class to share their cross-disciplinary knowledge; and, they will spend time in the Digital Humanities Center to make, play, and experiment. This course provides a foundation— or a bridge— for taking your English major out into the digital economy/ecology and recognizing the importance of a humanities education.

This course focuses on born-digital literature as an entry-point into understanding the importance of humanities research, education, and knowledge work in a digital age. We will learn how analog objects and infrastructures support and enable the digital and how archiving is a vital component to digital history. We will do this learning through an exciting, hands-on collaboration with SDSU’s Special Collections and the Digital Humanities Center.

ECL 563.01

Literature and Law

T. ASIM

[Description Subject to Change](#)

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, and Neo Noir. 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, far darker than others. Our texts will include novels, short stories, film, and TV episodes (yes, *Scooby Doo*, too).

ECL 564.02

World Literature

S. QI

[Thursday – In-Person Class](#)

In this edition of the course, we will focus on Modern Chinese Literature in the socioeconomic, cultural, and (geo)political contexts of modern Chinese history, from the rude awakening in the brave new world (late 1800s to the turn of the century), people/cultural renewal and the war-torn decades (first half of the 20th century) to the reawakening/revival (late 1970s-1990s), all the way to the early 21st century: the complex dynamics of tradition and change, native and foreign/Western ideas and texts (romanticism, modernism, existentialism, surrealism, postmodernism, and more), of dominance (language, culture, ideology) and resistance in China’s uneasy march toward modernity—as embodied in the selected literary texts.

Required Texts:

The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature, 2nd ed., Columbia U P, 2007. (affordable pre-owned copies available via eBay, Thrift Books, Amazon, and such online vendors)

Students have unlimited use of eBooks provided by university, plus all other required texts, via Canvas.

ECL 564.03

World Literature

Visiting Writer

Description Not Available

Spring 2026

ECL 565.01

Ecocriticism

D. NAJORK

Medieval Literature and Ecocriticism

In this course we will examine medieval European literature through the lens of ecocriticism to seek a better understanding of how different communities in the Middle Ages thought about the natural world around them. Through readings in ecocritical theory and medieval texts such as *The Book of Secrets*, bestiaries, lapidaries, the animal poems of Marie de France, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and others we will explore how medieval Europeans understood their place in nature and the ethical, social, and political implications of their interactions with the non-human world. These readings will reveal to us medieval representations and conceptualizations of animals, plants, water, wastelands, and various landscapes as well as how medieval people conceived of and confronted environmental crises.

ECL 570.01

Techniques of Poetry

M. MARSHALL

In this class we will explore the rich history of poetic form and trace these models into our contemporary context. We will pay close attention to the dialogue of form— how metrical verse forms like the villanelle and sonnet speak to shaping forms like the ode and pastoral, and how poets of the 20th and 21st centuries have continued and expanded the conversation by inventing new forms. This class will be reading and discussion-centered, but will feature opportunities to write poetry and to create an original poetic form.

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.

Spring 2026

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 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 activities designed to hone our ability to write compelling works of fiction. We'll write exercises and original fiction and analyze our writing in a workshop environment. We'll read published stories and write pastiches. All writing that is assessed will be performed in class, by hand.

Requirements: Reading: Essays and short stories. Writing: short story, pastiche, workshop.

ECL 581W.02 & .03

The Writing of Fiction

L. CHAMPION

Offered Online

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 581W.04

The Writing of Fiction

L. DALEY

Exploring the Craft of Children's Literature

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 584W.01

Writing Informal Essays

T. CUMMINGS

Spring 2026

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

ECL 584W.01

Writing Informal Essays

T. CUMMINGS

special attention to the way authors link their personal experiences to topics that impact others. 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 do to this takes time to master. So, while we remain interested in you and your life, we will strive to write with excellence in mind.

Requirements: Essays that are assessed will be written in class by hand, workshop, sentence project.

ECL 596.03

Selected Topics in Literature

Visiting Writer

Description Not Available