

Graduate Newsletter

Volume L, Number 15

April 2026

MA Advising



Allison M. Johnson
Director of MA Program and
Graduate Coordinator
allison.johnson@sjsu.edu
Virtual office hours: 11 AM – 12 PM
& by appointment

MFA Advising



Nick Taylor
Director of Creative Writing and
Graduate Coordinator
nicholas.taylor@sjsu.edu
Virtual office hours: T 2–3:15 PM
& by appointment

Welcome New Faculty!

Rena Perez



Rena Perez earned her BA in English/Language Arts Teacher Education and MA in Rhetoric and Composition from Central Florida University. She recently finished her doctorate in Rhetoric and Composition at Miami University of Ohio. Her research focuses on the role of sensemaking and processes for change through teaching about and writing across different levels of higher education. As the Graduate Assistant Director of the Howe Writing Across the Curriculum Program with the Howe Center for Writing Excellence, Prof. Perez helped to design and lead professional development programs for writing instructors. She will teach ENG 259 in the Fall.

Important Policies

Conditionally Classified Students

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

Important Courses

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

Continuous Enrollment

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

Deadlines for MA and MFA Graduates

Please consult the GAPE website for current candidacy and graduation deadlines: www.sjsu.edu/gape/deadlines/index.php. Note that if you are planning to graduate in December 2026, you should have filed your official "Petition for Advancement to Graduate Candidacy" by April 1, 2026. Applications (or reactivations of applications) for December 2026 graduation must be filed by September 1, 2026. The relevant forms can be found at the GAPE forms website: www.sjsu.edu/gape/forms/index.php.

Enrolling for Fall 2026

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

Writing Workshops

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

Taking Undergraduate Classes

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

MA Language Requirement

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

Deadline to sign up for Fall 2026 MA exam – May 1, 2026

Full details including deadlines and reading lists:

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

Fall 2026 Schedule of Classes

Here are the tentative courses, meeting times, and faculty for our Fall 2026 graduate course offerings.

Course	Day	Location	Time	Professor
ENGL 201	T	FOB 104	4–6:45 PM	Meghan Gorman-DaRif
ENGL 228	M	Online	7–9:45 PM	Alli Johnson
ENGL 233	M	Online	4–6:45 PM	Andreas Bassett
ENGL 240	W	FOB 104	7–9:45 PM	J. Michael Martinez
ENGL 241	R	FOB 104	4–6:45 PM	Nick Taylor
ENGL 242	W	FOB 104	4–6:45 PM	Keenan Norris
ENGL 259	T	FOB 104	7–9:45 PM	Rena Perez
ENGL 291	T	Online	4–6:45 PM	Brook McClurg
ENGL 297	T	Online	4–6:45 PM	Revathi Krishnaswamy

Fall 2026 Course Descriptions

ENGL 201: Methods and Materials of Literary Research

T 4–6:45 PM FOB 104 (Professor Gorman-DaRif)

This course provides a foundation for MA students through an intensive introduction to methods of graduate level scholarship. We will practice formal analysis, review research techniques—including the use of databases, annotation of sources, and compilation of bibliographies—and develop writing strategies for various genres standard in the field, including abstracts, conference papers, and articles. This will be a fast-paced and challenging course, but one that will prepare students for the work of graduate level English studies.

ENGL 228: Seminar in Genre Studies

M 7–9:45 PM Online (Professor Johnson)

How British was the 19th-century American novel? How did American novels influence British writers? What concerns did novelists, regardless of nationality, share? In a fight between Nathaniel Hawthorne and Charles Dickens, who would win? This transatlantic course will seek to answer (some of) those questions. We will chart the ascendancy of the novel on both sides of the Atlantic, paying particular attention to the genre as a vehicle for social change as well as issues of gender, race, selfhood, and industrialization.

ENGL 233: Seminar in Period Studies of British Literature

M 4–6:45 PM Online (Professor Bassett)

Shakespeare & Co.

This graduate seminar will read Shakespeare's works "over the shoulders" of his contemporaries, and in the process, explore how authors of the English Renaissance reciprocally borrowed, riffed off, and influenced each other in their literary pursuits.

ENGL 240: Poetry Writing Workshop

W 7–9:45 PM FOB 104 (Professor Martinez)

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

ENGL 241: Fiction Writing Workshop

R 4–6:45 PM FOB 104 (Professor Taylor)

This is the most advanced fiction workshop offered at SJSU. Experimentation, risk-taking, and stretching of all kinds will be encouraged. Students submit two original pieces of fiction plus a significant revision in lieu of a final exam. We will read several craft texts and an anthology of published short stories chosen by the class. Registration priority goes to MFAs with a primary concentration in fiction, followed by those with a secondary concentration in fiction, and finally graduate students in other programs. If you are not in the MFA program, you must submit a writing sample to the instructor before you may register.

ENGL 242: Nonfiction Writing Workshop

W 4–6:45 PM FOB 104 (Professor Norris)

Nonfiction writing as preparation for thesis. Study and critique of canonical and contemporary nonfiction. Intensive workshop experience.

ENGL 259: Seminar in Composition Studies

T 7–9:45 PM FOB 104 (Professor Perez)

Study of current approaches to composition.

ENGL 291: Literary Practicum

T 4–6:45 PM Online (Professor McClurg)

This course prepares Creative Writing graduate students to take the MFA exam and develop and begin writing an MFA thesis, customize the MFA exam reading list, prepare to take the MFA comprehensive exam, draft the thesis abstract and thesis preface.

ENGL 297: MA Comprehensive Exam Preparation

T 4–6:45 PM Online (Professor Krishnaswamy)

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

MA/MFA Reminders and Guidelines

Stay informed!

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

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

MFA Exam

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

The MFA exam will be distributed on Friday, October 23rd (9:00 a.m.) and will be due on Monday, October 26th (5:00 p.m.).

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

Thesis Process

Thesis proposals must come to the Graduate Committee at least five weeks before the end of the semester preceding the semester in which you will enroll for 299 credits. If you plan to write your thesis or project in the Fall 2026 term, you must get your proposal to the Graduate Committee no later than April 1, 2026. If you plan to write your thesis or project in the Spring 2027 term, you must submit your proposal by Nov 1, 2026.

After you have secured a thesis advisor or "first reader," and the thesis advisor has read and approved your proposal, you may submit your proposal electronically to the chair of the Graduate Committee (allison.johnson@sjsu.edu). Be sure to cc your thesis advisor in the email so that the Graduate Coordinator knows that the first reader has approved the proposal being submitted to the Graduate Committee.

When preparing your thesis, please be familiar with the latest MLA Handbook. Graduate Studies will expect your thesis to be consistently formatted and will not allow you to mix styles. If you don't follow up-to-date guidelines, they will require you to revise before they accept your thesis.

Guidelines for MFA thesis and thesis proposals: www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/mfa/thesisguidelines.php

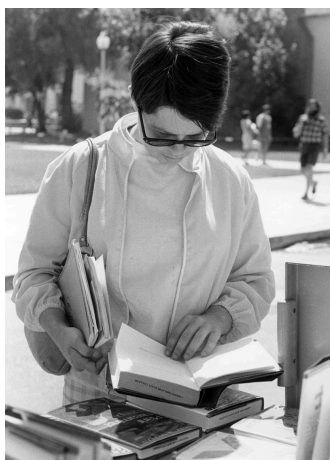
Guidelines for MA thesis and cover sheet: www.sjsu.edu/english/graduate/ma/thesis.php

MA Exam Guidelines

Guidelines and reading lists for the MA Exams are available on our website:

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

Note that Part 1 is an in-class exam that you will take as part of ENGL 297, a required course offered only in the fall. Please enroll in 297 if you plan to take Part 1 in the Fall. Part 2 is a take-home essay exam in 3 specific areas, administered via Canvas. You must indicate in which three areas you wish to be examined when you sign up for the exam. The Fall 2026 Part Two exam will be given out on Friday, October 23rd (9:00 AM), and will be due on Monday, October 26th (5:00 p.m.). MA students should email the MA advisor, Professor Johnson (allison.johnson@sjsu.edu) by May 1st to sign up for Part 2 in the Fall.



An SJSU student browses books in 1967.

Courtesy San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives.

Important Dates & Deadlines in Spring 2026

- April 1** Deadline to submit thesis proposals for Fall 2026 credits.

- April 1** Deadline to submit Departmental Request for Candidacy Form for December 2026 graduates.

- April 20** Deadline for May 2026 graduates to submit signed theses to the Graduate Studies Office (ENGL 299) or Department of English (ENGL 299D).

- May 1** Last day to sign up for Fall 2026 MA Part 2 exams.

- May 8** English Department Awards Ceremony, Student Union Theater, 6–7:30 pm.

- May 9** MFA Thesis Reading and Celebration, Student Union Theater, 2–5 pm.

- May 11** Last Day to Enroll in 1290R for Spring 2026.

- May 20** Degree Conferral.

Join Reed Magazine!



Join a 155-year legacy—and earn marketable credits toward your degree! English 133—Reed Magazine, California's oldest literary journal—eagerly encourages graduate students to enroll. This unique, four-credit course exposes students to the work of thousands of writers and offers real-world experience in editing and promoting a publication that has held fast through world war, cultural revolution, and the turns of two centuries. See www.reedmag.org. Email Editor-in-Chief Helen Meservey for add code: helen.meservey@sjsu.edu.

Graduate Student and Alumni Accomplishments!

Marilyn Hilton

MFA student Marilyn Hilton's poem, "Red balloon," appeared in the winter 2026 issue of *Quartet Journal*.



Adnan Adnan

MFA alum ('15) Adnan Adnan's homage to Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Bull In The World*, will be published by Wingless Dreamer Publisher in April 2026. *Grit & Gratitude: The Perseverance Powerhouse* will be published by AM Publishers in July 2026.

Erin Kelley

A short story, "The Griefing," by Erin Kelley, a 2025 graduate of the MFA program, will appear in the Spring issue of *Cetera Magazine*.



Katherine Hamilton

MFA student Katherine Hamilton is a finalist in this year's *SJSU Grad Slam*. She will present her arts-based research project on April 14 at 2 pm. She was also accepted as a fellow for the Rooted & Written Conference Class of 2026.

MFA student Nica C. Tanaka and her concept of the Living Memoir were featured in *Thorn & Bloom Magazine*, Issue 05. Titled "In Conversation with Nica C. Tanaka," the Q&A describes how non-linear narratives and avant-garde principles bridge the literary with digital media and art installation.

