Department of English and Comparative Literature, San José State University
English 109: Writing and the Young Writer
Section 1, Spring 2022

Instructor: Dr. Bronwyn LaMay   Class Schedule: Thursday, 4:30-6:45 PM, Sweeney Hall 229

Email: bronwyn.lamay@sjsu.edu   Office Hours: Thursday, 6:45-7:45 PM or by appointment

Phone: 510-681-5219   Office: FOB 111 & online by appointment

Course Description

"The people who come to see us bring us their stories. They hope they tell them well enough so that we understand the truth of their lives. They hope we know how to interpret their stories correctly."

- Robert Coles, *The Call of Stories*

"We should welcome certain kinds of errors, make allowance for them in the curricula we develop, analyze rather than simply criticize them. Error marks the place where education begins."

- Mike Rose, *Lives on the Boundary*

"Actually, I've always considered myself a writer but I didn't know what a writer was in school. Now I think a writer is just a person. Someone who goes through experiences and feels like people should know about them."

- Nate, 11th Grade Student, East San José

(Image created by my nephew, Owen LaMay)

This course is designed to strengthen participants' writing skills in both creative and expository genres and to develop participants' knowledge and skills as future teachers of writing.

Learning Objectives

Students will have the opportunity to:
- Reflect on and describe their own writing process
- Demonstrate collaborative communication skills through participation in the writing workshop process
- Demonstrate facility in creative composition in a variety of genres
- Investigate and apply a variety of methods of prewriting, drafting, responding, revising, editing and evaluating
- Employ a variety of software applications to produce both print documents and multimedia presentations
- Recognize and use a variety of writing applications (short story, biographical, autobiographical, expository, persuasive)
- Demonstrate awareness of audience, purpose and context
- Recognize and use a variety of narrative and non-narrative organizational patterns
- Demonstrate and evaluate oral performance in a variety of forms

Required Texts/Readings

All required readings for this course will be on Canvas.

Course Writing and Field Work

Writer's Notebook: There will be **weekly, short, in-class opportunities for informal writing** that will relate to our readings, our identities as writers, our field work, and other topics we discuss. I will ask you to share these with me, and my response will always be non-evaluative. Their purpose is to help us think and build dialogue, and to create opportunities for us to share our stories, values and experiences, and grow together as a community of writers.

All **out-of-class writing and field work opportunities** are noted below. The first two will include a draft that we will workshop in class. The drafting and workshop process will pose an opportunity for you to develop a deeper sense of your revision process. I will also ask you to reflect on each final piece of your work. Please make an office hours appointment with me if you would like additional support.

1. Self-Reflection on Writing (15% of your grade)

This paper will ask you to write and reflect on your experiences and associations with writing (both in and out of school), and how these have shaped your views of yourself as a writer, and what it means to *be* a writer. What draws you to a class like this? What, to you, counts as writing? What larger conversations do you want to enter, and where do you want to belong? How might these and other questions inform any of *your* future work with students, or your sense of what they need to develop identities as writers?

2. Linguistic Identity: A Genre-Blend (20% of your grade)

This paper will ask you to blend your story with the voices of others we have read to this point in the course to explore the connection between language and identity. (You are also welcome to bring in authors from your reading outside of the course.) What is the significance of linguistic identity, and why does language tie so deeply to our ways of perceiving the world and ourselves? How does language shape *you*? What is your language story? You may discuss and share experiences with learning a language or losing a native tongue, linguistic racism, Standard English and "academic language," Bay area lingo and the connection between language and *place*, or any way that language defines you or anywhere your story takes you.

3. Mini-Lesson (10% of your grade)

This is an opportunity for you to work in pairs (or trios) to create a 15-minute mini-lesson, based on your emerging inquiries into writing pedagogy, to initiate or integrate into one of our classes between weeks 10 and 15 (April 7 - May 12). You may choose any topic that you believe would be useful for the class and should create a rough lesson plan prior to the class period that you will share with us.

4. Writing Inquiry Portfolio (25% of your grade)

This semester you will need to observe a total of 5-10 hours of a class that is devoted to writing, in alignment with the 45 hours of "Early Field Experience" that are prerequisite for admission to the credential program. You can do this in a few ways. You might prefer to select your own teacher and site. You might also ask me for teacher contacts; I know some wonderful writing teachers who would welcome you into their classrooms. Additional options will be provided if we remain online as the semester unfolds.

☐ Annotated Lessons Log (10%)

This log is for you to think and reflect on the lessons you're observing in your field work.

☐ Portfolio Presentation (15%)

This presentation will occur on the final day of class in lieu of an additional research project. You will tie together course content and scholarly research with your field work and personal journey as a writer and writing teacher. The purpose is for you to provide us with insight into your inquiries into writing pedagogy over the course of the semester. Your presentation should be multimodal and include a visual element. More information will come at a later date.

☐ Portfolio Reflection (10%)

This reflection on your portfolio and your evolving thinking about writing throughout the course should include moments captured in your Writer's Notebook and other papers previously submitted, as well as moments observed in your field work. What does it mean to be a writer? What counts as writing? How have your views changed during the semester? More information to follow.

Grading and Assessment

Grade Determination. Requirements for particular assignments will vary, but in all cases your grade will reflect the quality of your writing and work. Student writing should be distinguished by organization, content, style, intentional and thoughtful grammar and punctuation, and APA formatting and style. For APA style guidance, check out the Purdue Online Writing Lab at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html.

- "A" work is thoughtful, organized and well-developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the writing's purpose, written in a unique and compelling voice. It will show the student's ability to use language effectively with a solid command of grammar and mechanics.
- "B" work demonstrates competence in the same categories as an "A" essay, but it may not be as thoughtfully developed in one of these areas. It will respond to the purpose suitably and may contain some grammatical or mechanical errors.
- "C" work will complete the requirements, but it will be minimally developed. It may also miss opportunities for thoughtful development in grammar, mechanics, usage, or voice.
- "D" work will not meet all the requirements or may be superficial in its treatment of the topic and purpose. It will not show thoughtful development. It may contain grammatical, mechanical, and/or usage errors that interfere with reader comprehension.
- An "F" does not fulfill the requirements of the assignment.

Feedback on Written Work. I will offer feedback on your written work to help you process and apply what we learn and discuss in class, or to see and reflect on your "writerly" process. Feedback is intended to help you grow. It is best when it is a dialogue between us. You are welcome to share your thoughts in response to my feedback.

Due Dates. All major assignments should be submitted online via Canvas, ideally before the start of class. Please communicate with me if you need to extend a due date.

Participation. This will be based on your contributions to the learning we do together as a class each day, and it can take a number of forms, including journaling, active listening, discussion, peer and group work, and in-class activities. I invite you to participate and engage in all of these ways. The more you participate, the more you will grow.

Attendance cannot be used as a criterion for grading, but it's tough to participate if you aren't in class. :)

Calculating Your Grades. You will be graded according to the following breakdown.

Grading Component	Percentage of Course Grade
1st Written Piece & Reflection: "Self-Reflection on Writing"	15%
2nd Written Piece & Reflection: "Identity - A Genre Blend"	20%
Mini-Lesson	10%

Writing Inquiry Portfolio	25%
Writer's Notebooks, Peer Workshops, & Participation	30%

You will receive a letter grade at the end of the semester, based on the following calculations:

93-100% A	83-86% B	73-76% C	63-66% D
90-92% A-	80-82% B-	70-72% C-	60-62% D-
87-89% B+	77-79% C+	67-69% D+	0-59% F

Class Expectations

Participation Through Dialogue and Active Listening. This course seeks to promote an active learning process through individual and shared writing, collective inquiry, dialogue, interaction, and engagement. In this course we will delve into some difficult and sometimes controversial themes. Some discussions, readings, and assignments may evoke strong convictions, emotions, or experiences. It is important to me that the classroom community is a safe space for us to share these. All of us are responsible for our role in creating this space by approaching course topics and one another with honesty, sensitivity, and thoughtful inquiry.

Expectations for class participation include careful, attentive listening to peers, active engagement in class, a respect for the privacy and confidentiality of others, and a willingness to explore new or controversial concepts as you evaluate and/or relate to ideas in the readings to class discussions. *Your voice is valued.*

Class Preparation. Please stay current with the reading assignments. All readings are due on the dates listed in the class schedule. Please complete the reading before class and come prepared to participate. Bring a digital or print copy of the reading to class with you.

Please also come to every class ready to *write* -- to journal, to explore or connect ideas, to analyze sources, to respond to others' writing, and to workshop drafts of your different assignments.

Online Learning. This semester we will begin in a digital classroom; this means we will work synchronously online. Key to fostering a dynamic learning environment, in which we can delve deeply into important issues, is the need to see and interact with one another. For this reason, the expectation for the course will be for videos to remain on while we are together synchronously. This is not a lecture course, which means we will engage in many activities that require active engagement. Please come prepared to have your camera on, if at all possible. That being said, you are adults; if you need to go do something, go ahead and mute your camera and return as soon as you can! Just don't forget to mute!

Shared Writing & Writing Workshop. At various points in this class, we will read one another's writing with the same respect and care that we read any author who is listed on the syllabus. Sometimes

you may be asked to share small pieces of work anonymously. Sometimes you will be asked to share with partners or a small writing group. Sometimes you will be asked to share part of your work with me in a 1:1 conference. You are welcome to ask to share your work at any point in the class. From time to time, I may also share excerpts of my writing. The purpose is to build a community of shared writing, where we read and write in response to each other as we build the class conversation.

Writing is personal. For this reason, it is crucial that we are mindful of how we respond to one another's work. Our response or critique needs to be constructive, considerate, and careful in tone.

Technology Etiquette. Please avoid texting, emailing, websurfing and other tasks that keep you from being fully present in class. *The class will be its best if we are all having the same conversation.* Please remove ear buds and keep cell phones silenced and put away, and use your laptops only for in-class work and activities. *No social media, please!*

Attendance and Late Work. If you are absent, please email me so I can check in with you on class developments and send you any materials you missed. If you know in advance that you will be absent, please *email me as soon as you know*. Don't forget to check Canvas to see if there is something you missed.

There will be many in-class assignments and activities that will count towards your grade. If you miss a class, there is not an authentic way to make it up. Late papers are also discouraged. They will be marked down unless your absence is excused. This is intended not to punish you, but to be fair to other students who also have many things on their schedules.

Academic Integrity. [University Academic Integrity Policy F15-7 [pdf]](#) asks that you are honest in all of your academic coursework. This value is at the heart of all academic endeavors. While there are many ways to argue a position or ask others to engage with your views, the non-negotiable here is that your work is uniquely *yours.*

Course Evaluation. You will be asked to submit a formal evaluation of this course during the last class. However, please do not save feedback for the final evaluation form. You are welcome to share your comments as the course unfolds.

Students' Rights and Resources

Rights to Language: This course takes up the **NCTE Resolution, "Students' Rights to Their Own Language"** as a fundamental stance. In 1972, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) adopted this resolution on language and students' dialects.

> *We affirm the students' right to their own patterns and varieties of language—the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style. Language scholars long ago denied that the myth of a standard American dialect has any validity.*
> *The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another. Such a claim leads to false advice for speakers and writers, and immoral advice for humans. A nation proud of its diverse heritage and its cultural and racial variety will*

preserve its heritage of dialects. We affirm strongly that teachers must have the experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the rights of students to their own language.

Rights to Name & Pronoun: Students have the right to be addressed and referred to in accordance with their personal identity. In this class, you will have an opportunity to indicate your preferred name and pronouns, though neither is compulsory. Instructor will address and refer to all students accordingly and will support classmates in doing the same.

Rights to Disagree: James Baldwin famously stated, "We can disagree and still love each other unless your disagreement is rooted in my oppression and denial of my humanity and right to exist." This course is situated in a critical genealogy that centers lives and experiences that have often been kept at the margins of society. While we will likely read texts and engage in discussions that will cause discomfort and even disagreement, the line of appropriateness for any comment will be drawn, by the instructor, at the "oppression and denial" of humanity. Accordingly, throughout the course, please act with general respect and openness, feel free to disagree; however, embrace the limits of your own knowledge and ask honest questions, instead of demanding predetermined answers. I sincerely aim to treat all student's experiences of the course with sincerity and respect; I also emphasize that discomfort is a prime locus for learning. Please never hesitate to reach out via email with any concerns you might have.

Accessible Education Center is online at http://www.sjsu.edu/aec/ and on Facebook. You can also reach them at 408-924-6000 (voice) or by email at aec-info@sjsu.edu. AEC is the office that handles requests for accommodations ([http://www.sjsu.edu/aec/current students/accommodation-information/index.html](http://www.sjsu.edu/aec/current-students/accommodation-information/index.html)). Their office is in the Administration Building (110), and they offer a variety of services to facilitate access for students at SJSU:
- **Accessible Software and Training** ([http://www.sjsu.edu/aec/current-students/center foraccessible-technology/accessible-software-and-training/index.html](http://www.sjsu.edu/aec/current-students/center-foraccessible-technology/accessible-software-and-training/index.html))
- **Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services** ([http://www.sjsu.edu/aec/current-students/deaf and-hardof-hearing-services/index.html](http://www.sjsu.edu/aec/current-students/deaf-and-hardof-hearing-services/index.html))

Gender Equity Center is online at http://www.sjsu.edu/genec/ and provides a variety of spaces and services including drop-in social spaces, free condoms, pads, and tampons, a lactation room, as well as events throughout the year. They are located in the Student Union, First Level, Room 1650. You can also reach them at 408-924-6500 or via email at [sjsugenec@gmail.com.](mailto:sjsugenec@gmail.com)

MOSAIC Cross Cultural Center is online at http://www.sjsu.edu/mosaic/ and on Facebook. They provide support and services for students from historically underrepresented groups, including educational and leadership opportunities through programming and training, a resource library and database of speakers, funding opportunities, and a space to study or connect. You can find them on the 1st floor of the Student Union Main Building. You can also reach them at 408-924-6255 or via email at [mosaic@sjsu.edu.](mailto:mosaic@sjsu.edu)

Pride Center is online at http://www.sjsu.edu/pride/ and provides support on campus to LGBTIQQA students. Their library has a variety of resources and the space is also available for meeting, studying, or socializing. They are located in the Student Union in the Main Section on the 1st Level.

Student Counseling and Psychological Services is online at http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling/ and is located in the Student Wellness Center, Third Floor (300B). You can schedule an appointment by calling 408-924-5910 or email them at counseling.services@sjsu.edu. You can also access their after hours crisis service by calling their main number, and pressing 4. If you are experiencing an emergency you can also reach the police at 911, campus police at 408-924-2222, the County Suicide and Crisis Line at 855- 278-4204, or text ANSWER to 839863 to get a response from the Crisis Call Center.

Student Health Center is online at http://www.sjsu.edu/studenthealth/. In addition to general medicine, they also have a Wellness and Health Promotion Unit which provides support relating to nutrition, substance abuse, body image, sleep, sexual health, and violence prevention. Appointments can be made online, or you can call them at 408-924-6122.

SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. It offers one-on-one support, as well as workshops each semester on different writing topics. You can make an appointment by visiting the Writing Center website, or you can find many online resources to help you at www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter.

Free Online Writing Lab Resources:
- Purdue University's Online Writing Lab - https://owl.purdue.edu/
- Excelsior Online Writing Lab - https://owl.excelsior.edu/

University Policies

University-wide policy information relevant to all courses is available on the Syllabus Information Page at https://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo. This includes information on accommodations, academic integrity, counseling services, technology support, and so forth.

Class Schedule of Readings and Assignments

*Note: Assignments and due dates may change, depending on the shape things take once we get started. Any adjustments to the schedule or assignments will be communicated to you at least one class in advance.

Week 1

January 27	**Focus #1: A Writing Community in a Culture of Schooling - A Clash of Values** In-Class Reading: Excerpts from Graff & Birknestein's *They Say, I Say*, & Peter Elbow's "Writing for Teachers" and "Methodological Believing" ➔ What are your associations with writing, both in and out of school? Do you, or have you ever, considered yourself a writer? What does it *mean* to be a writer? ➔ What is needed to build a culture and community for student writing, where students can develop a sense of themselves as a writer? What is the traditional model of "schooling," and how do the values clash? ➔ What is the difference between writing for communicative and evaluative purposes? Which do schools emphasize? Which do writers do? ➔ What does it mean to *write* our way into a larger conversation, and to feel a sense of legitimacy, belonging, and authentic participation?

Week 2

February 3	Read Before Class: Robert Yagelski, "Writing as Praxis" In-Class Excerpts: Paulo Freire, "The Importance of the Act of Reading" ➔ How are reading and writing more than academic skill sets? ➔ What is revision? Why is revision a potentially radical concept? ➔ What are in-school and out-of-school literacies, and how can they connect? What does it mean to read, write, and revise the word-world? What, essentially, is "praxis?"

Week 3

February 10	Read Before Class: Maja Wilson's "Why I Won't Be Using Rubrics to Respond to Students' Writing, & Nicole Sieben's "Building Hopeful Secondary School Writers through Effective Feedback Strategies" In-Class Excerpts: Elizabeth Ellsworth's "Situated Response-Ability to Student Papers" ➔ What is *engagement*, and how should we define it? How can students develop defenses and engagement patterns based on their experiences with school? How can teachers meaningfully engage with students and with their writing? ➔ What is "voice" in student writing? How does it connect to authority and power? ➔ What are different types of feedback, and what are their purposes? What kind of feedback is most helpful for developing novice writers?

Week 4

February 17	**Focus #2: Writing & Identity** Read Before Class: Chapters 1 & 2 from Tom Newkirk's *Minds Made for Stories* In-Class Excerpts: Donald Murray's "All Writing is Autobiographical" ➔ What is the significance of "story" and personal narrative? ➔ How do most K-12 writing curricula treat the narrative genre? How can we reconceptualize it in more purposeful and transformational ways? ➔ How are our "minds made for story?" How does narrative connect to *all* written genres, and why does genre-blending *happen?* View in Class: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED Talk, "The Danger of Single Story" **Please bring copies of draft to class: "Self-Reflections on Writing"** **Writing groups → Workshop time**

Week 5

February 24	Read Before Class: Choose from Amy Tan's "Mother Tongue," Julia Alvarez's "La Gringuita - On Losing a Native Language," or Trevor Noah's "Chameleon" Read Before Class: Zapata & Laman, "I write to show how beautiful my languages are: Translingual Writing Instruction in English-Dominant Classrooms" ➔ What is linguistic identity? What is your language story? ➔ How do linguistic bias and privilege shape how we use language? ➔ How can language be inclusive or exclusive? How do students use it to navigate social situations and cultural spaces? ➔ What is translanguaging, and what classroom practices support it? **Please submit final "Self-Reflections on Writing" & reflection**

Week 6

March 3	Read Before Class: June Jordan, "No One Mean More to Me than You and the Future Life of Willie Jordan" Excerpts in Class from bell hooks' "Language," from *Teaching to Transgress* ➔ What is Standard English? Who sets the Standard? ➔ What is vernacular, and how is it often misunderstood? ➔ What is problematic about privileging "academic language" in a way that messages its superiority? How is language interconnected with power?

Week 7

March 10	**Guest Speaker: Marty Brandt, English Teacher at Independence High School, Teacher Consultant at San José Area Writing Project** Read Before Class: John Warner, "Our Writing 'Crisis'" & "The Five-Paragraph Essay" from *Why They Can't Write: Killing the Five-Paragraph Essay and Other Necessities* ➔ What is "academic writing?" Why is it so difficult for many students, and how can we treat it accordingly? ➔ Where did the traditional five-paragraph model originate, and what is it good for? What are its limitations? What are the myths and real demands of "college writing?" ➔ How can the first-person and third-person voice work together? How can writing in the first (and second) person help students find their academic voice?

Week 8

March 17	Read Before Class: Chapters 4 & 5, "Why Me Revision" & "Revising Narrative Truth," from Bronwyn LaMay's *Personal Narrative, Revised: Writing Love and Agency in the High School Classroom* ➔ What is "writing love," and how does our definition of love connect to agency? ➔ Why do our self-stories matter? How do we write ourselves as characters in our lives? What is self-story revision? ➔ How does writing connect with social-emotional learning, and how can we re-story our traumas to author our lives with more agency? **Please bring copies of draft to class: "Linguistic Identity: A Genre-Blend" Writing groups → Workshop time**

Week 9

March 24	**Focus #3: Developing Student Writers - Practical & Radical Pedagogies** **Guest Speaker: Andy Robinson, Drama Teacher at East Palo Alto Academy High School** Read Before Class: Chapters 1 (by Django Paris & Samy Alim) & 7 (by Casey Wong & Courtney Peña) from *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies* ➔ What is culturally relevant teaching? How does it tie to culturally sustaining pedagogy and to writing? ➔ How can writing connect to drama and theater? ➔ What is the value when students write and perform their own work? **Final "Linguistic Identity: A Genre-Blend" Paper & Reflection Due**

Thursday, March 31 - Spring Break, No Class

Week 10

April 7	**Guest Speaker: Rodrael Guadalupe, Restorative Justice Coordinator at Oakland Unified School District** Read Before Class: Vasudevan, Shultz, & Bateman's "Rethinking Composing in a Digital Age: Authoring Literate Identities through Multimodal Storytelling" In-Class Excerpts: Chapter 1 from Danah Boyd's *It's Complicated - The Social Lives of Networked Teens* ➔ What are the key principles of media literacy, and how do they connect to students' digital literacies? ➔ How do we use writing and images to perform identity on social media? ➔ What identities do *you* perform on social media, and for what audience(s) and purpose(s)? ➔ What are multimodal literacies, and what counts as "writing?" ➔ Why is it important to broaden the definition of "writing" and "literacy" to include visual, digital, and oral forms of communication?

Week 11

April 14	**Guest Speaker: Dr. Andrea Lunsford, Former Director of the Stanford Writing Center** Read Before Class: Chapters 1 & 2 from Chris Hall's *The Writer's Mindset: 6 Stances That Promote Authentic Revision* ➔ Why is writing about *process* more than *product?* What is meant by a writing "stance?" ➔ What is a 1:1 writing conference? What is "metacognition," and how can a teacher facilitate and surface the acts of thinking that underlie student writing? ➔ What is a college writing center? Why is it collaborative rather than corrective? How can it positively impact the culture of an educational institution?

Week 12

April 21	***We will meet remotely this week. A Zoom link will be provided.** Read Before Class: Chapter 4 from Chris Hall's *The Writer's Mindset: 6 Stances That Promote Authentic Revision* ➔ How can we help young writers write with their audience in mind? How can this shape their sense of purpose? ➔ What are some strategies for helping writers *read* and take ownership over their texts? ➔ What does and doesn't work for peer revision with kids? What are some strategies for building peer conferences and student-driven writing conversations?

Week 13

April 28	**Guest Speakers: Kate Flowers, English Teacher at Santa Clara High School & Jane Gilmore, Director of Young Novelist Workshops at San José Area Writing Project** Read Before Class: TBD ➔ What is the San José Area Writing Project, and what programs does it offer for Bay area teachers and students? ➔ What is the National Writing Project, and what is its philosophy? How does it differ from traditional approaches to teaching writing in the K-12 classroom?

Week 14

May 5	**Guest Speaker: Tom Shea, Creative Writing Teacher at New Valley Continuation High School** Read Before Class: Selection from Mark Salzman's *True Notebooks - A Writer's Year at Juvenile Hall* In-Class Excerpts: Jason Reynolds' *Long Way Down* ➔ How does creative writing fit in the world of alternative education? ➔ How can we engage students with poetry? How do we ask them to write poetry? ➔ What is the InsideOUT Writers program, and what is its impact?

Week 15

May 12	Read Before Class: Selection from Asao Inoue's *Above the Well - An Antiracist Literacy Argument from a Boy of Color* ➔ What impact can students' experiences and associations with writing have on their self-concept and identity as learners and thinkers? How can this play out in their lives? ➔ How can we write and teach writing as antiracist work? **Writing Inquiry Portfolio Presentations → Sharing & Workshopping**

Week 16-17

Thursday, May 19 - Finals Week/No Class 　*(Please set up office hours with me if you need to!) **Monday, May 23 - Final Writing Inquiry Portfolios Due by 5:00 PM**