

# Creative Writing

## ENGL 71

Fall 2025 Section 03 In Person 3 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/22/2025

### Contact Information

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- Instructor: Dr. Kristian O'Hare
- Email: [kristian.ohare@sjsu.edu](mailto:kristian.ohare@sjsu.edu)
- Office Location: [Faculty Office Building \(FOB\) 215](https://www.google.com/maps/place/Faculty+Offices+Building/@37.3346036,-121.8848429,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x808fccb90f698713:0xc1c8bc36cc853ee6!8m2!3d37.3345994!4d-121.8826542?shorturl=1)  
(<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Faculty+Offices+Building/@37.3346036,-121.8848429,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x808fccb90f698713:0xc1c8bc36cc853ee6!8m2!3d37.3345994!4d-121.8826542?shorturl=1>)
- Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:20-10:20 am in office / Wednesdays 12-1 pm (Zoom), or by appt.
- Class Meeting Time/Location: TuTh 10:30am-11:45am / Boccardo Business Center Room 120

### Course Description and Requisites

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Examinations of works of poetry, creative nonfiction and short fiction as expression of human intellect and imagination, to comprehend the historic and global cultural contexts, and recognize issues related to writing of diverse cultural traditions. Students will also write poetry, creative nonfiction, and a short fiction.

GE Area(s): C1 Arts

Grading: Letter Graded.

### \* Classroom Protocols

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#### Classroom Expectations & Community Guidelines

Our class time is brief and valuable, so we'll work together to create a respectful, engaged, and supportive learning space.

#### Technology Use

- Cell phones must be silenced and put away upon entering the classroom. Earpieces or earbuds should be removed.

- Laptops and tablets may be used only for course-related activities (readings, notes, assignments). Checking email, browsing social media, gaming, or unrelated web use is not permitted during class.

### Respectful Participation

- Be present and engaged. Listen attentively, respond thoughtfully, and contribute constructively to discussions and workshops.
- Approach all peer and published work with curiosity and generosity, offering feedback that is specific, respectful, and rooted in helping the writer grow.

### Professionalism & Courtesy

- Treat peers and your instructor with respect—in both spoken and written communication.
- Address professors appropriately and keep all communication professional.

### Disruptive Behavior

- Inappropriate use of technology, disrespectful conduct, or repeated disruptions may result in being asked to leave class.

### Our Classroom Community

In this class, we are a community of writers. We support each other as peers and as artists. The classroom is a judgment-free space—free of the impulse to harshly judge our own work or that of others. We respect confidentiality: what is shared in class stays in class. We listen as carefully as we speak, ask questions that invite dialogue, and allow our curiosity to guide us. We hold each other—and ourselves—to a standard of kindness.

## Attendance

**Attendance is mandatory.** I understand that illnesses and emergencies happen in everyone's life, but this class is designed to be interactive and participatory. You can't participate if you aren't here. According to [University policy F69-24 \(https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf): "Students should attend all meetings of their classes, not only because they are responsible for material discussed therein, but because active participation is frequently essential to ensure maximum benefit for all members of the class."

### Tardiness

Punctuality is important for maintaining a positive and productive classroom environment. I provide crucial information and reminders at the beginning of each class, and arriving late can cause students to miss valuable content that contributes to their success in the course. To minimize disruption and ensure that all students receive the full benefit of each session, please make every effort to arrive on time.

- Students who arrive more than **five minutes late** will be marked as **tardy**.
- **Frequent tardiness** (more than **three instances**) may result in a **grade penalty** or being marked absent for the day.

- If you know you'll be late, please **inform me in advance** (via email or Canvas) whenever possible.

**Note:** If you are consistently late due to circumstances beyond your control (e.g., work schedule), please reach out to me so we can discuss possible accommodations.

## Late Policy

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class for which they are due.

**Late Workshop Drafts:** It is unprofessional to upload your workshop drafts late. Because of this, *late submissions will lose one letter grade for each day they are late. I reserve the right to cancel a workshop if it is deemed that the writer has not given his/her/their peers reasonable time to provide good feedback.*

*If you are absent or late on your workshop day, your grade will automatically be lowered by one letter (meaning if you are an A in the course, your grade will be lowered to a B). If you foresee problems with the schedule, make an appointment to talk to me ASAP. The workshop can not be made up, unless there is an unexpected emergency, such as an unexpected hospitalization or death in your immediate family. Excused absences must be accompanied by a doctor's note or other official document.*

## Program Information

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Welcome to this General Education course.

SJSU's General Education Program establishes a strong foundation of versatile skills, fosters curiosity about the world, promotes ethical judgment, and prepares students to engage and contribute responsibly and cooperatively in a multicultural, information-rich society. General education classes integrate areas of study and encourage progressively more complex and creative analysis, expression, and problem solving.

The General Education Program has three goals:

**Goal 1:** To develop students' core competencies for academic, personal, creative, and professional pursuits.

**Goal 2:** To enact the university's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and justice by ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to serve and contribute to the well-being of local and global communities and the environment.

**Goal 3:** To offer students integrated, multidisciplinary, and innovative study in which they pose challenging questions, address complex issues, and develop cooperative and creative responses.

More information about the General Education Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) can be found on the [GE website. \(https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php\)](https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php)

### English Program Information

The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi: In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well

as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System").

Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance:

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

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

### Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

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

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

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### Department Information:

**Department Name:** English and Comparative Literature

**Department Office:** FO 102

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

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

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

## Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

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### GE Area C1: Arts

Area C: Arts and Humanities courses help students to respond subjectively as well as objectively to aesthetic experiences and to develop an understanding of the integrity of both emotional and intellectual responses. C1 Arts courses emphasize the integration of history, theory, aesthetics, and criticism.

## GE Area C1 Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of a C1 course, students should be able to:

1. identify aesthetic qualities and processes that characterize works of the human intellect and imagination;
2. explore and articulate their own subjective aesthetic and intellectual responses to such works;
3. analyze the role and impact of the creative arts in culture and on the interrelationship of self and community; and
4. research and apply relevant aesthetic criteria and/or artistic conventions in effective written responses to works of art.

**Writing Practice:** Students will write a minimum of 1500 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline.

## Course Materials

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### Required Texts and Materials

- There is **no required** textbook for this course; instead, I have uploaded poems, short stories, and essays onto Canvas. You will be required to read these poems, stories, and essays. You must bring these readings to class, for I will be asking you specific questions and pointing out key passages from the text.
- A journal for class notes, writing exercises, daily observations, workshop responses, etc.
- Dictionary and Thesaurus. Being writers, it is important to know what words mean and to vary your word choice. You should own both. There are free apps available.
- Access to a desktop, laptop, or tablet.

## Course Requirements and Assignments

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### Reading

Reading is one of the most vital elements of a writer's growth and development. As author Annie Proulx famously said, *"Writing comes from reading, and reading is the finest teacher of how to write."*

In this course, we'll practice reading like writers—not just for enjoyment, but as a way to sharpen our craft. You'll be encouraged to blend your emotional responses (*How does this make me feel?*) with critical analysis (*What choices has the writer made to create this feeling?*). By studying how authors use language, structure, and other formal elements, you'll gain insights you can apply directly to your own work. Reading in this way transforms it from a passive pastime into an active, creative process that fuels your growth as a writer.

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### Attendance and Participation

This class is built on shared discussion, collaboration, and community. Each class session builds on the last, and your presence—and active involvement—are essential.

- **Attendance:** I will take attendance at the start of each class. Absences will affect your grade, and excessive absences may result in failing the course.
  - **Participation:** Participation means more than showing up—it means contributing thoughtfully. This includes engaging in workshops, offering constructive peer feedback, asking questions, sharing ideas during discussion, and collaborating in group activities. If you're present but not participating, it will negatively affect your grade.
  - While we all have occasional "off" days, consistent participation is expected. Our learning is richer when every voice is in the conversation.
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### Journal Assignments (9 total)

Over the semester, you'll complete **nine creative writing journals** (see course schedule). These are short, focused exercises that let you:

- Practice specific craft techniques
- Respond to prompts
- Generate raw material you can later develop into longer works

Some journals will be done in class (handwritten or typed); others will be completed at home and submitted online.

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### Major Writing Assignments

You will complete:

- **One poem** (1–2 pages)
- **One short story** (1000-1500 words) OR **two flash fiction pieces** (500-750 words each)
- **One short nonfiction piece** (500-750 words)

Each piece must be edited into a final draft for your portfolio. Drafts are due to Canvas one week before your assigned workshop. Late submissions will not be workshopped.

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### Workshops

You will participate in **three workshops**—one for each genre we study. Workshops are your chance to:

- Share your work with the class
- Receive constructive feedback from peers
- Practice giving supportive, specific, and actionable feedback

Workshop pieces must be posted to Canvas **one week before your scheduled date** so peers have time to read and respond. Feedback should be both written and oral. We will go over workshop etiquette in class, but here's the heart of it: writing is personal, and sharing it is an act of trust. Respond with empathy, respect,

and curiosity.

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## Writing Portfolio

Your **final portfolio** has two parts:

1. **Creative Work** – Revised versions of:

- Your workshopped poem
- Your self-portrait poem
- One revised short story *or* nonfiction piece (your choice)  
Include the original drafts alongside the revisions to show your process and growth.

2. **Writer's Memo** – A reflective essay discussing:

- Your writing process
- Risks you took in your work
- Insights gained from readings, discussions, and feedback
- How your work has evolved over the semester  
Conclude with a self-assessment of your progress as a writer.

## ✓ Grading Information

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The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined by the SJSU Catalog (Grades-Letter Grading). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A+/A/A- = excellent; B+/B/B- = above average; C+/C/C- = average; D+/D/D- = below average; F = failure. Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a + or - grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

### How I Grade

I expect good work. I expect work that is genuine and meaningful. Creative writing is a subjective field but it is very clear when a writer is creating work without real effort.

- Unless I make changes and announce otherwise, the final course grade breaks down as follows:
  - Journals (9): 45 points
  - 1 Poem (workshop, written critiques, and participation): 100 points
  - Short Story (workshop, written critiques, and participation): 150 points
  - Nonfiction (workshop, written critiques, and participation): 100 points
  - Final Portfolio (includes one revised poem, one revised story or nonfiction piece, self-reflection, and self-portrait poem): 100 points
  - Attendance and Participation: 100 points
    - If you are present and active in class, you will get a boost on your final grade. If you are not active and miss many sessions, your final grade will be affected.

- *Your grade in Canvas is not representative of your grade in this course: I factor in overall performance (participation, professionalism, attendance, etc.). No grade haggling. I do not negotiate grades. If you are concerned with your grade (especially by midterm) and want to know how to do better in the future, I welcome appointments to discuss possible strategies for improvement.*

## SJSU Academic Integrity Policy

A student's commitment to learning, as evidenced by his or her enrollment at San Jose State University, and the University's Academic Integrity Policy require all students to be honest in their academic course work. Faculty are required to report all infractions to the office of Judicial Affairs. The policy on academic integrity can be found [here \(https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/SJSU-Academic-Integrity-Policy-F15-7.pdf\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/SJSU-Academic-Integrity-Policy-F15-7.pdf). The SJSU rules against plagiarism are set forth in the SJSU Catalog, which defines plagiarism as the act of representing the work of another as one's own (without giving appropriate credit) regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements.

Plagiarism at SJSU includes, but is not limited to: (1) the act of incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts thereof, or the specific substance of another's work, without giving appropriate credit, and representing the product as one's own work. It is the role and obligation of each student to know the rules that preserve academic integrity and abide by them at all times. This includes learning and following the particular rules associated with specific classes, exams, and/or course assignments. Ignorance of these rules is not a defense to the charge of violating the Academic Integrity Policy.

### ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) TOOLS USAGE

#### Academic Integrity and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

In this Introduction to Creative Writing course, your goal is to develop your own voice, creativity, and critical thinking as a writer. All assignments must be your original work—reflecting your ideas, style, and effort.

The use of artificial intelligence tools—such as ChatGPT, Claude, or similar programs—to generate, rewrite, or significantly alter your work is not allowed. These tools can dilute your tone, shift your meaning, and interfere with the process of finding your own voice.

#### A Note on Grammarly and Similar Editing Tools

You may use Grammarly or similar tools **only after completing a full draft on your own**. Use them to check spelling or grammar—not to rewrite sentences or choose alternate phrasing. You are responsible for accepting or rejecting each suggestion.

If you use Grammarly, you must:

- Keep your original draft for submission alongside the edited version.
- Be able to explain what changes you made and why.

Using AI in place of your own creative work undermines the purpose of this class and violates the University's Academic Integrity Policy; it will be treated as plagiarism.

To protect the integrity of your work:



- Keep a clear draft history for each assignment.
- Bring questions about “gray areas” to me before you submit your work.

## University Policies

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

## Course Schedule

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*Schedule/Calendar below is subject to change. Always check Canvas for the most up to date information on assignments, readings, and due dates.*

Week	Dates	Overview
One	Thurs August 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-one-overview?module_item_id=16823858">Week One Overview</a> (<a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-one-overview?module_item_id=16823858">https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-one-overview?module_item_id=16823858</a>).</li> </ul>
Two	Tues Aug 26 & Thurs 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-two-overview?module_item_id=16823861">Week Two Overview</a> (<a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-two-overview?module_item_id=16823861">https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-two-overview?module_item_id=16823861</a>).</li> </ul>
Three	Tues Sept 2 & Thurs Sept 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-three-overview?module_item_id=16823862">Week Three Overview</a> (<a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-three-overview?module_item_id=16823862">https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-three-overview?module_item_id=16823862</a>).</li> </ul>
Four	Tues Sept 9 & Thurs Sept 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-four-overview?module_item_id=16826782">Week Four Overview</a> (<a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-four-overview?module_item_id=16826782">https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-four-overview?module_item_id=16826782</a>).</li> </ul>
Five	Tues Sept 16 & Thurs Sept 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-five-overview?module_item_id=16828567">Week Five Overview</a> (<a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-five-overview?module_item_id=16828567">https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-five-overview?module_item_id=16828567</a>).</li> </ul>

Six	Tues Sept 23 & Thurs Sept 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-six-overview?module_item_id=16828568">Week Six Overview</a> (<a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-six-overview?module_item_id=16828568">https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-six-overview?module_item_id=16828568</a>).</li> </ul>
Seven	Tues Sept 30 & Thurs Oct 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-seven-overview?module_item_id=16828571">Week Seven Overview</a> (<a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-seven-overview?module_item_id=16828571">https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-seven-overview?module_item_id=16828571</a>).</li> </ul>
Eight	Tues Oct 7 & Thurs Oct 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-eight-overview?module_item_id=16828809">Week Eight Overview</a> (<a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-eight-overview?module_item_id=16828809">https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-eight-overview?module_item_id=16828809</a>).</li> </ul>
Nine	Tues Oct 14 & Thurs Oct 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-nine-overview?module_item_id=16828857">Week Nine Overview</a> (<a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-nine-overview?module_item_id=16828857">https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-nine-overview?module_item_id=16828857</a>).</li> </ul>
Ten	Tues Oct 21 & Thurs Oct 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-ten-overview?module_item_id=16828869">Week Ten Overview</a> (<a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-ten-overview?module_item_id=16828869">https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-ten-overview?module_item_id=16828869</a>).</li> </ul>
Eleven	Tues Oct 28 & Thurs Oct 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-eleven-overview?module_item_id=16828871">Week Eleven Overview</a> (<a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-eleven-overview?module_item_id=16828871">https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-eleven-overview?module_item_id=16828871</a>).</li> </ul>
Twelve	Tues Nov 4 & Thurs Nov 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-twelve-overview?module_item_id=16828872">Week Twelve Overview</a> (<a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-twelve-overview?module_item_id=16828872">https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-twelve-overview?module_item_id=16828872</a>).</li> </ul>
Thirteen	Tues Nov 11 & Thurs Nov 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-thirteen-overview?module_item_id=16828873">Week Thirteen Overview</a> (<a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-thirteen-overview?module_item_id=16828873">https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-thirteen-overview?module_item_id=16828873</a>).</li> </ul>
Fourteen	Tues Nov 18 & Thurs Nov 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-fourteen-overview?module_item_id=16828878">Week Fourteen Overview</a> (<a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-fourteen-overview?module_item_id=16828878">https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-fourteen-overview?module_item_id=16828878</a>).</li> </ul>
Fifteen	Tues Nov 25 & Thurs Nov 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-fifteen-overview?module_item_id=16828879">Week Fifteen Overview</a> (<a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-fifteen-overview?module_item_id=16828879">https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-fifteen-overview?module_item_id=16828879</a>).</li> </ul>

Sixteen	Tues Dec 2 & Thurs Dec 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-sixteen-overview?module_item_id=16828881">Week Sixteen Overview</a> (<a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-sixteen-overview?module_item_id=16828881">https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1614889/pages/week-sixteen-overview?module_item_id=16828881</a>).</li></ul>
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