

Materials and Methods of Literary Research

ENGL 201

Fall 2025 Section 80 Fully Online 4 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 09/05/2025

Course Information

English 201: Materials and Methods of Literary Research provides a foundation for graduate students and advanced undergraduate majors to read, write, and research at the graduate level. Together, we will familiarize ourselves with various research methods within the discipline of literary studies and practice writing across multiple academic genres (including an abstract and annotated bibliography, a conference paper, and a longer form paper). In the first half of the semester, we will develop our close reading and analysis as we read Cristina García's *Dreaming in Cuban*, a work from the Multiethnic American Literature MA exam list, alongside relevant works of theory and criticism. In the second half of the semester, you will design and develop your own original research project on a text of your choice: first, by familiarizing yourself with relevant scholarship; then by developing your own original interpretation and contribution; and finally by writing, revising, and presenting your ideas. The course will emphasize researching and writing as a process and will rely heavily on peer-review, feedback, and revision. By the end of the course, you will have a foundational skillset to participate in ongoing conversations within literary studies, and we will celebrate your original research with a class mini-conference!

Thursday, 4:00 PM to 6:45 PM, Zoom

<https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/89511607850?pwd=Vq1M7LafbR5m4CStsHNo3oQbDmGhcH.1>
(<https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/89511607850?pwd=Vq1M7LafbR5m4CStsHNo3oQbDmGhcH.1>)

Please note that our class Zoom link is different from the office hours Zoom link above.

Course Description and Requisites

Use and evaluation of resource for literary research; problems in critical writing and literary history. Required for all English Masters students (to be taken as early as possible after achieving Classified standing).

Note: This course satisfies graduate-level GWAR in this master's program.

Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

Attendance

Regular attendance is vital to your learning and success in the course. I encourage you to attend as regularly as possible. We don't want to miss out on the opportunity to learn from/with you! If you are sick, or are unable to make it to class for whatever reason, you can catch up on the material you missed on our course Canvas page, via a friend/peer, and/or in my office hours or by appointment.

Preparation & Participation

We all have a responsibility and an opportunity to be an active participant in our own learning and to contribute to the knowledge that we'll create together in this class! Please come prepared to do so. This means that you've completed the assigned reading for the day in advance of class; you have access to those readings during our class discussion; and you are prepared to ask a question, raise a point, or direct us to an interesting quotation.

Engaging in Class Discussion & Building Community

Our class will require participation and collaboration and will take up complex issues, such as race and ethnicity, national identity, gender, sexuality, and sexual violence. I recognize that it can be challenging to discuss some of these topics in a public space like the classroom and that we all approach these topics and the texts we read from our own unique perspectives and experiences. I encourage you to engage in these discussions to the degree you feel comfortable, to connect what we read to your own life and to the world around you, and to listen to and learn from your peers with respect and care. We will continue to discuss our collective goals around engaging in class discussion and building community throughout the semester.

Course Communication & Emails

All course materials can be found on Canvas. Please check both our course Canvas and your email regularly to stay up to date. For help with using Canvas see [Canvas Student Resources page](https://www.sjsu.edu/cfeti/software/canvas/student-resources/index.php). (<https://www.sjsu.edu/cfeti/software/canvas/student-resources/index.php>).

Please be aware that I do not respond to emails outside of traditional business hours, M-F 9-5. I encourage you to also maintain professional boundaries around email and step away from it when you can/need. Unless it is a weekend or I am sick or away for travel, I should respond to your message within 48 hours. If you worry that I haven't seen or responded to your email, please do not hesitate to send me a follow up.

When you email me, please included a specific subject that states the purpose of your email as well as a greeting, message, and your name.

Academic Originality, Honesty, and AI

The literature we will be reading and discussing is so, so good, and it explores narratives and experiences that are often underrepresented and understudied. I want you to do justice to that literature by seriously engaging with it and developing your own original analysis of it. While you are welcome to collaborate with

resources like Grammarly to edit your work, you should also ensure that you do your own round of editing to not only catch what those virtual tools might have missed but also to develop your own editorial eye. You should not at any stage of your process use generative AI like ChatGPT to generate ideas, outlines/writing structures, or language/sentences. If for whatever reason you decide to ignore this and use ChatGPT, you must properly cite and credit the information, ideas, and language that you pulled. The model that AI like ChatGPT uses to generate material is fundamentally derivative and is also known to be inaccurate/incomplete and to reproduce misinformation, biases, and stereotypes. I want to hear your original ideas, arguments, and writing that can only be achieved by engaging with the texts we're reading and the writing process! Additionally, we want to make sure that the scholars and authors whose ideas we engage with are properly cited and credited to not only recognize their labor/talents/insights but also to build our own credibility as a writer.

It is your responsibility to know what plagiarism is, how to avoid it, and how to properly cite all sources. You should also be aware of SJSU's [Academic Integrity Policy](https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/conduct-processes/academic-integrity.php), (<https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/conduct-processes/academic-integrity.php>) and know that, as a faculty member, I am required to report all violations of this policy to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. If I suspect that you have plagiarized material or generated content with AI, I will not grade your work and will contact you regarding future steps.

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

Upon successful completion of the MA English program, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an appropriate level of expertise in literary history, literary theory, and rhetoric.
2. Demonstrate high-level proficiency in literary research and in the synthesis of research
3. Demonstrate critical and analytical skills in the interpretation and evaluation of literary texts.
4. Demonstrate a command of written academic English, including the abilities to
 - a. organize and present material in a cogent fashion,

- b. formulate and defend original arguments,
 - c. employ effectively the language of their discipline and
 - d. write under time constraints.
5. Demonstrate a reading knowledge of at least one foreign language.

Department Information:

Department Name: English and Comparative Literature

Department Office: FO 102

Department Website: www.sjsu.edu/english (<https://www.sjsu.edu/english>)

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

Department phone number: 408-924-4425

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon successful completion of English 201, students will be able to:

1. Select and analyze textual evidence to develop original ideas and interpretations (i.e., the process of close reading).
2. Discuss, evaluate, and critique ideas presented in literary texts, theory, and secondary criticism.
3. Develop persuasive, compelling arguments by conducting research; selecting, synthesizing, and organizing evidence; and revising writing at the global and local levels.
4. Contribute to ongoing scholarly conversations by putting literary texts in conversation with theory and criticism.

Course Materials

Because we only have one required text for this course, I do encourage to purchase the text so you have a hard copy to consult in class and can actively annotate and engage with it.

All other course readings will be available on Canvas.

Dreaming in Cuban

Author: Cristina García

ISBN: 9780345381439

Library Liaison

Peggy Cabrera is our English Department library liaison and is available for support if you have questions about library resources or need help with research.

Please email: peggy.cabrera@sjsu.edu

Course Requirements and Assignments

Participation: The graded portion of your participation will not be based on how much you talk in class but will instead be based on a series of informal activities that you will complete each week. *Participation assignments will not be excused unless there is an emergency or extenuating circumstance that you communicate with me. However, each students' lowest two participation grades will be dropped.*

Discussion Posts: You will be responsible for completing 5 discussion posts throughout the first half of the semester. These are a low-stakes way for you to begin to synthesize your ideas about the course reading and come prepared to share and discuss them in class.

Article Presentation: You will be paired with a classmate and asked to introduce us to some of the key concepts from an assigned reading and lead us in an informal activity and short class discussion around the text.

Major Writing Assignment Rough Drafts: You will receive credit based on completion for submitting all required rough drafts in advance of writing workshops and conferences. These rough drafts will be an opportunity for you to engage in the writing process, receive feedback on your work, and revise and improve your work for the final draft.

Paper 1: Close Reading Paper: You will respond to a prompt of your choice to develop an original interpretation of our shared text for the semester, Cristina García's *Dreaming in Cuban*. You will draw on close reading as a research methodology as well as relevant theoretical approaches and critical sources from both our class reading and your own research to develop a 6-8-page paper.

Paper 2: Conference Paper & Presentation: The conference paper will be the first iteration of your independent research project. You will submit a 6-8-page paper and will present a 15-20 minute version of it to the class.

Paper 3: Final Paper: This will be the final iteration of your independent research project, which you will develop into a 12-14-page paper based on feedback received on your conference paper and presentation.

Grading Information

Participation, 10%

Discussion Posts, 10%

Article Presentation: 10%

Major Assignment Rough Drafts, 10%

Paper 1: Close Reading Paper, 20%

Paper 2: Conference Paper & Presentation, 20%

Paper 3: Final Paper, 20%

Extensions & Late Work

I am happy to work with you if you anticipate that you may need extra time to submit your best work in an assignment. In order to avoid last-minute stress, please email me in advance of an assignment deadline to discuss an extension. If an emergency or other extenuating circumstance arises that makes this impossible, please contact me, and we can work out a solution. If late work is submitted, it will be graded at my discretion and may receive a deduction.

Incomplete Grades

You may not take an incomplete in the class unless you have attended at least 60% of the class and completed at least 60% of the assigned work.

University Policies

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

Note that I may adjust readings, assignments, and deadlines in the best interest of the class and our learning together. I will never add more work to this schedule, and all changes will be announced with advance notice.

When	Topic	Notes
Week 0	Course Introductions	<p>Thursday 8/21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ice Breaker• Visit from Professor Krishnaswamy, Graduate Program Director• Introduction to course• Complete course pre-survey in class
Week 1	What Is Literature & Does It Matter?	<p>Thursday 8/28</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Terry Eagleton "What Is Literature?" from <i>Literary Theory: An Introduction</i>• Jonathan Culler "What Is Literature and Does It Matter?" from <i>Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction</i>• Andrea O'Reilly Herrera's "Cristina García, Dreaming in Cuban" from <i>Reading U.S. Latina Writers</i>• Literary "show and tell": Bring in a piece of literature that matters to you and introduce the class to it!

When	Topic	Notes
Week 2	Historical Approaches	<p>Thursday 9/4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cristina García's <i>Dreaming in Cuban</i> "Introduction" and pp. 1-55 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content warning: this book depicts rape and sexual and physical violence against women. George Lambie's "The Cuban Revolution: Building a Participatory Democratic Process" from <i>The Cuban Revolution in the 21st Century</i> Andrea O'Reilly Herrera "Women & the Revolution in Cristina García's <i>Dreaming in Cuban</i>"
Week 3	Latinx & Ethnic Studies Approaches	<p>Thursday 9/11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> García's <i>Dreaming in Cuban</i> pp. 57-101 Gustavo Pérez-Firmat's "Introduction: The Desi Chain" from <i>Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban-American Way</i> Dana Murphy's "'She Will Remember Everything': Black Diasporic Feminist Healing Roots in Cristina García's <i>Dreaming in Cuban</i>" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charlie & Gerardo article presentation
Week 4	Psychoanalytic Approaches	<p>Thursday 9/18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> García's <i>Dreaming in Cuban</i> pp. 104-144 Sigmund Freud's "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming" Kimberle S. López's "Women on the Verge of a Revolution: Madness and Resistance in Cristina García's <i>Dreaming in Cuban</i>" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> G. & Haley article presentation
Week 5	Spatial & Environmental Approaches	<p>Thursday 9/25</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> García's <i>Dreaming in Cuban</i> pp. 144-209 George B. Handley's "Down Under: New World Literatures and Ecocriticism" Maia Gil' Adí's "Sugar Apocalypse: Sweetness & Monstrosity in Cristina García's <i>Dreaming in Cuban</i>" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avery & Caitlin article presentation Discuss Close Reading Paper
Week 6	Feminist Approaches	<p>Thursday 10/2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> García's <i>Dreaming in Cuban</i> pp. 213-245 Sandra K. Soto's "Gender" from <i>Keywords for Latina/o Studies</i> Laura Halperin's "Artistic Aberrance and Liminal Geographies in Cristina García's <i>Dreaming in Cuban</i>" from <i>The Intersections of Harm: Narratives of Latina Deviance and Defiance</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Angela and Rebekah article presentation

When	Topic	Notes
Week 7	Paper 1 Writing Workshop	<p>Thursday 10/9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Booth et al. "Research, Researchers, and Readers" from <i>The Craft of Research</i> In-class writing workshop Submit 2-page rough draft of Paper 1 that includes an introduction, thesis statement, and at least one body paragraph.
Week 8	Paper 1 Writing Conferences	<p>Thursday 10/16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No class Zoom meeting 1-on-1 writing conference with Dr. Urcaregui
Week 9	Developing a Research Project	<p>Thursday 10/23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No class Zoom. Watch asynchronous lecture on developing a research project Booth et al. "Asking Questions, Finding Answers" from <i>The Craft of Research</i> <p>Friday 10/24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit Close Reading Paper by 11:59 p.m.
Week 10	Developing & Structuring Arguments	<p>Thursday 10/30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Booth et al. "Making Good Arguments: An Overview," "Planning and Drafting," "Organizing Your Argument," and "Incorporating Evidence" from <i>The Craft of Research</i> In-class writing workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a tentative argument Building and developing an argument Structuring your writing and your process
Week 11	Project Proposal & Annotated Bibliography	<p>Wednesday 11/5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit Project Proposal & Annotated Bibliography by 11:59 p.m. <p>Thursday 11/6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No class Zoom. 1-on-1 writing conferences with Dr. Urcaregui

When	Topic	Notes
Week 12	Revising Your Writing & Preparing to Present	<p>Thursday 11/13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Booth et al. "Revising Style: Telling Your Story Clearly" from <i>The Craft of Research</i> Preparing to present your work Peer-Review workshop Submit 3-4 page rough draft of Paper 2: Conference Paper & Presentation by start of class
Week 13	Conference Papers & Presentations	<p>Thursday 11/20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-Class Conference Submit Paper 2: Conference Paper & Presentation before class and come prepared to present
Week 14		<p>Thursday 11/27</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No class due to Thanksgiving holiday
Week 15	Final Reflections & Preparations	<p>Thursday 12/4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss expansion & revision strategies Submit Paper 3 "rough draft" (revision & expansion outline) by end of class
Finals Week	Paper 3: Final Paper	<p>Tuesday 12/16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper 3: Final Paper due by 11:59 p.m. via Canvas. Note that no extensions will be granted.