

Dr. Mostafa Jalal  
San José State University  
Course: English 2-34: Critical Thinking & Writing  
Class Number: 24272  
Spring Semester 2022  
Sweeney Hall 413  
TR 1:30-2:45pm

Department of English and Comparative  
Literature  
Office: Faculty Office Building 224  
Office Hours: T 11:00am-1:00pm, and by  
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## **English 2: Critical Thinking & Writing American Literary Renaissances**

### **Course Description:**

This course of Critical Thinking & Writing is an introduction to academic rhetorical analysis and writing skills through an exploration of unique and varying perspectives on American literary renaissances. Renaissance means a rebirth—a reawakening. How do we define and understand this in context to American literary culture? How can we ascertain and determine periods of American Renaissance? Moreover, what can we learn from studying them? This class explores the intellectual and cultural revolutions that have occurred in American literature since its foundation. By voyaging through canonical and non-canonical texts by notable authors such as Emerson, Thoreau, Poe, Whitman, Dickinson, Frost, Stevens, Eliot, Roethke, Sexton, and Plath, students will gain a comprehensive understanding of the inception and evolution of high art and philosophy that has shaped the creation and definition of American identity.



Alfred Bierstadt, "Looking Down Yosemite Valley, California"

Through an active practice of writing modes, students will develop the critical thinking and writing skills designed for English 2 and will become proficient in effectively writing and revising original work. CTW builds on what we have already learned about composition and advances our understanding of the writing process. Here, we will largely focus on furthering our understanding of academic research. Students will explore film and new media, review a complete work of literature, learn about and create the fundamental building blocks of a research project, including how to compose a rhetorical précis, annotated bibliography, and a formal research proposal. These lessons and assignments will ultimately lead to a final research paper that will contain well-supported arguments from scholarly sources. Students will also actively participate in a multi-modal, digital dimension of this course on Canvas via weekly posts and discourse. We will learn the fundamentals of writing in an elevated setting—and, perhaps most importantly, we will deliberately aim to discover how to write beautifully.



Over the course of this semester, students will read creative, critical and complex texts that are relevant to this broader theme and will produce insightful, original and individual work that responds to and furthers our understanding of this topic. This course, CTW, will largely focus on critical readings, discourse, and clear, cohesive writing. We will learn how to enter and encounter these critical texts, discuss how and why they are written, and write effective, logical, and well-composed papers that respond to the theses presented by these authors. We will discover the fundamentals of writing, the rhetorical situation, and the mechanics of forming organized and thorough essays. Critical Thinking & Writing is a cornerstone of academic knowledge, and we will learn the skills of rhetorical analysis and the writing process, including revision, as we practice reading critically and thinking comprehensively.

### **English 2 Course Details:**

English 2 is an introductory writing course that focuses on the relationship between language and logic when composing arguments. Building on the skills acquired in English 1A, you will learn various methods of effective reasoning and appropriate rhetorical strategies to help you invent, demonstrate, and express arguments clearly, logically, and persuasively.



**Student Learning Objectives:**

At the end of CTW, students will:

- A. 1: Locate and evaluate sources, through library research, and integrate research through appropriate citation and quotation.
- B. 2: Present effective arguments that use a full range of legitimate rhetorical and logical strategies to articulate and explain their positions on complex issues in dialogue with other points of view.
- C. 3: Locate, interpret, evaluate, and synthesize evidence in a comprehensive way in support of your ideas.
- D. 4: Identify and critically evaluate the assumptions in and the context of an argument.
- E. 5: Distinguish and convey inductive and deductive patterns as appropriate, sequencing arguments and evidence logically to draw valid conclusions and articulate related outcomes (implications and consequences).

**Required Texts and Resources:**

- A. Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (with readings). (ISBN: 978-0393631685).
- B. Levine, Robert S., et al. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature: Shorter Ninth Edition (Volume 1: Beginnings to 1865)*. (ISBN: 978-0393264524)
- C. Levine, Robert S., et al. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature: Shorter Ninth Edition (Volume 2: 1865 to the Present)*. (ISBN: 978-0393264517)
- D. Access to the Purdue OWL: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>
- E. Printing and viewing resources for course readings, videos, assignments, and other material that are posted on Canvas.



**Course Details:**

This is a reading- and writing-intensive course and we will be learning the foundational rules and mechanisms of composition while actively reading and observing examples of composed texts. We will have weekly readings and in-class activities pertaining to the many lessons of this course. In addition to the reading and writing assignments, students may collaborate on group work that furthers our understanding of the core curriculum. *Students will also have opportunities to revise pre-submitted and submitted drafts and versions of essays which demonstrate the recommended and suggested changes by fellow peers and instructor.*

**Reading Assignments:**

In this class, we will be reading a series of creative, critical and complex texts. *They may often be challenging, so you should be prepared to read them more than once if necessary to fully understand their concepts.* Please be prepared to come to class with questions and comments to contribute to our discussion. Some of these reading assignments may focus on the mechanics, techniques and notions of language, rhetoric, and writing. These will be valuable in our discourse and practice of constructing, drafting, finalizing, and revising essays. Reading assignments are due on the day they appear on the course calendar and schedule. Please be responsible and do the readings beforehand.

**Writing Assignments:**

*Each of the three essays will be examples of polished, revised versions that have been peer- and instructor-reviewed. Essays should have a clear and concise thesis, a well-organized paragraph structure, and proper formatting.*

- A. Renaissance Narrative (2-3 pages): Please consider the larger theme of this course. What is your understanding of the term “renaissance” and how do you find it fits into the historical context of American literary culture? Which authors or texts highlight these notions for you? Which moments of cultural rebirth do you enjoy? (LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
- B. Rhetorical Analysis of Film or New Media Paper & Presentation (Essay #1, 5-7 pages): Please select a form of film, such as a documentary or movie, or a form of new media that focuses on a matter relevant to our topic and compose a thorough rhetorical analysis. (LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
- C. Literature Review Paper (Essay #2, 8-10 pages): Consider a full piece of literature—a book of any genre—that captures a unique view of American literary and cultural renaissance, and provide a full, thoughtful review detailing how matters are represented, its significance to our discourse, and how it furthers or challenges your formulated notions of our topic. (LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
- D. Rhetorical Précis, Annotated Bibliography, and Research Proposal (Project, 8-10 pages): Now that you have analyzed and reviewed new media and literature pertaining to our topic, please begin to construct the structure of your overall research project for this course. Your Rhetorical Précis, Annotated Bibliography of scholarly courses, and Research Proposal will lay the groundwork for your upcoming seminar essay. (LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
- E. Final Research Paper (Essay #3, 10-12 pages): All of your work and research over this term accumulates to this moment: this is your opportunity to process and synthesize information to compose a unique, original and meaningful research paper. You are to present your thesis in a robust, well-organized and well-supported argumentative essay that embodies your own perspective of our topic. (LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
- F. Reading Response Questions for thought and discussion. Please post or link an article, essay, book chapter, or periodical that furthers classroom discussion about our topic. You are to post one per week and summarize what it includes and entails. These may be scholarly sources, which you can use for your other assignments. (LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
- G. Final Class Portfolio (LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
- H. In-class peer-review and critique of essays for revision. (LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
- I. In-class activities and writing assignments. (LO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

**Attendance:**

*Come to class—you know that.* Roll will be taken at the beginning of class, every class. If you arrive after roll has been called, it is your responsibility to notify me. This is a class where attendance is mandatory and missed classes may affect your grade. It is a good idea to make friends and exchange contact information with one or more of your classmates to confer about that day’s lessons. You should also contact me to review details of the class lecture. As a general rule for this course, if you have three absences, you may want to consider withdrawing from this class, as you may have missed a significant portion of the essential lessons. If you miss more than three classes, your grade may be significantly affected. If emergencies arise, please contact me via email or come by my office hours to discuss.

**Participation:**

Participation is key to classroom success. I encourage you to interact, ask questions, provide insightful comments and contribute to the overall classroom discussion. *While attendance is mandatory, just attending does not automatically accrue participation points. A participation grade is unique to your attendance record.* Please be courteous and respectful of others while in the classroom and practice proper classroom etiquette and refrain from using mobile devices and laptops during lectures and discussions. You may use these devices for certain in-class activities when appropriate. (This applies when we resume F2F classes; you may of course use all technology while we complete our classes remotely).

**Conferences:**

In lieu of regular class meetings on days when individual conferences are scheduled, we will instead prepare to meet one-on-one to discuss your current performance and grades in private. These meetings serve two primary goals: to

critique a paper draft and to evaluate your overall progress as a writer. As with your attendance, these conferences are also mandatory. Please schedule a conference when dates and times are announced in class.

**Canvas and Technology:**

If you have not already done so, please visit SJSU’s Canvas software. Here you will be able to find a special site devoted exclusively to our course. On this site, you will find files containing this syllabus and other class handouts as they become available. Additionally, we will regularly use the Discussion Board to host your Reading Response Questions. You will also be able to communicate with fellow classmates, providing insight, answers or compounding questions when necessary. I will keep track of your participation and may use some of the material, including any linked texts, you and your classmates post as a starting place for in-class discussions.

**Class Grades:**

- A. Renaissance Narrative (2-3 pages): 5%
- B. Rhetorical Analysis of Film or New Media Paper (Essay #1, 5-7 pages): 15%
- C. Literature Review Paper (Essay #2, 8-10 pages): 15%
- D. Rhetorical Précis, Annotated Bibliography, & Research Proposal (8-10 pages): 15%
- E. Final Research Paper (Essay #3, 10-12 pages): 30%
- F. Reading Response Questions: 10%
- G. In-class peer-review, activities and assignments: 5%
- H. Participation: 5%

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

**Paper and Revision Policy:**

All drafts of out-of-class papers must be prepared on white, 8½ x 11” paper, double-spaced with one-inch margins (please note that this is not always the default setting on writing applications, so adjust these settings accordingly). Hand-written drafts will not be accepted. In addition, each draft must conform to MLA or APA conventions of citation and format; we will discuss this in class. Please use an appropriate font such as Times New Roman or something similar in 11- or 12-point sizes. Please anticipate any technical occurrences or long print queues and prepare to print your papers ahead of time. *Being late to class because of printing issues is not a valid excuse. Please refer to each paper assignment’s guidelines for submission details.*

*All assignments and papers are due at the beginning of class on their selected dates. Any assignments submitted after the beginning of class are considered late. Late work will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made for valid reasons.*

If you receive a C or less on any final draft, you may revise that paper and turn it in later for another reading. At that time, I will reconsider your overall grade for your assignment in light of such factors as the extent and quality of your revision in contrast to your original submission. *In order to exercise this option, you must see me to set a due date for your revision. Similarly, late revisions will not be accepted.*

Please remember that final drafts are always your responsibility: you make the final decisions concerning your essays, regardless of any advice or suggestions you receive. *The idea of revising your papers is not just to correct errors (although that is a large part), but to also improve your work and write better texts. This often means that*

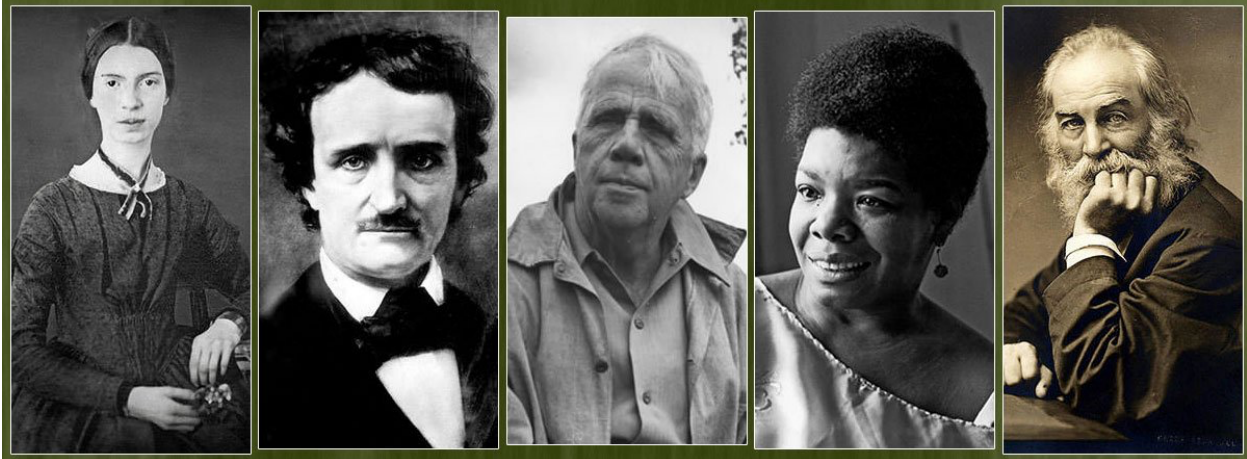
*you may have to rise beyond a typical correction of errors and significantly re-visualize your paper's purpose and approach.*

Please note that required drafts preceding final submissions of essays are graded on a pass/fail basis. If a draft is not ready when it's due, you will receive a failing grade for the draft. *For this reason, it's important to fully complete the drafting process to compose a successful final paper.*

**University Policies:**

The following link contains university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, student success resources, etc. <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo>.







**Course Calendar and Schedule:**

This is a tentative schedule for this semester. Reading and writing assignments can and likely will change to better suit the needs of our class discussions. Please be sure to attend class regularly and visit our course information on Canvas to note any changes to the syllabus.

*\*In order to preserve course flexibility, only major assignment dates appear in the calendar below. A more detailed assignment calendar may be provided as the quarter progresses, and these calendar dates may be adjusted. Additionally, if and when schedule permits, we will try to visit the university's Writing Center and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library.*

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**Week 1:**

Welcome to class  
Introduction of course & syllabus

**Week 2:**

Introduce Favorite Work of Literature assignment  
What is rhetoric? Review *They Say/I Say* preface & chapter 1  
Entering the conversation and understanding the rhetorical situation & context  
Read and discuss: Native American Oral Literature  
Continue discussion of rhetoric: Aristotelian appeals & rhetorical triangle

**Week 3:**

Review and present on Favorite Work of Literature  
Introduce Renaissance Narrative Reflection  
Discuss Native American Oral Literature  
Discuss sentence clarity, paragraph unity & structure  
Review *They Say/I Say* chapter 2  
Read and discuss: Selections by Christopher Columbus, John Smith, Roger Williams, and Edward Taylor  
Selecting words: language variety & word choice  
Read and discuss: Selections by Jonathan Edwards, Benjamin Franklin, Olaudah Equiano, and Phyllis Wheatley

**Week 4:**

Begin draft work; peer critique of Renaissance Narrative Reflection  
Discuss selections by Jonathan Edwards, Benjamin Franklin, Olaudah Equiano, and Phyllis Wheatley  
Discuss thesis statements & topic sentences  
Review *They Say/I Say* chapters 3 & 4  
**Renaissance Narrative Reflection due**  
Read and discuss: Selections by Ralph Waldo Emerson

**Week 5:**

Introduce Rhetorical Analysis of Film/ New Media Paper & Project  
Discuss selections by Ralph Waldo Emerson  
Discuss forming & structuring essays  
Discuss organizing paragraphs  
In-class activity  
Begin draft work; peer critique draft of Rhetorical Analysis Paper  
Discuss Synthesizing & mapping arguments

Read and discuss: Selections by Henry David Thoreau

**Week 6:**

Begin conferences  
Continue draft work; peer critique draft of Rhetorical Analysis Paper  
Discuss selections by Henry David Thoreau  
Exploring evidence and evaluating credibility for supporting arguments  
Review *They Say/I Say* chapter 5  
Read and discuss: Selections by Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe

**Week 7:**

Discuss Information Literacy  
Discuss selections by Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe  
Draft work; peer critique draft of Synthesis and Argumentative Paper  
Discuss secondary & scholarly sources  
**Begin Rhetorical Analysis of Film/New Media Presentations**  
Read and discuss: Selections by Walt Whitman

**Week 8:**

**Continue Rhetorical Analysis of Film/New Media Presentations**  
Introduce Literature Review Paper  
Discuss selections by Walt Whitman  
Continue in-class writing assignment  
Review *They Say/I Say* chapter 6  
Read and discuss: Selections by Herman Melville and Frederick Douglass

**Week 9:**

**Continue Rhetorical Analysis of Film/New Media Presentations**  
Discuss selections by Herman Melville and Frederick Douglass  
Begin draft work; peer critique draft of Literature Review Paper  
Begin conferences  
Review *They Say/I Say* chapter 7  
Read and discuss: Selections by Emily Dickinson

**Week 10:**

**\*Spring Recess—March 28-April 1: Academic Holidays**  
**Cesar Chavez Day, March 31: Academic Holiday**

**Week 11:**

Discuss selections by Emily Dickinson  
Begin draft work; peer critique second draft of Final Critical Paper  
**Literature Review Paper due**  
Review *They Say/I Say* chapter 8

**Week 12:**

In-class research assignment  
Finding, evaluating and comparing scholarly sources  
Introduce Research Components: Rhetorical Précis, Annotated Bibliography, and Research Proposal  
Discuss selections by Emily Dickinson & new selections by Walt Whitman

Review *They Say/I Say* chapters 9 & 10

**Week 13:**

Review *They Say/I Say* chapters 11 & 12  
Discuss strategies and techniques for revision  
Draft work; peer critique draft of Research Components: Rhetorical Précis, Annotated Bibliography, and Research Proposal  
Review overall research projects  
Read and discuss: Selections by Henry James, Kate Chopin, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman

**Week 14:**

**Research Components: Rhetorical Précis, Annotated Bibliography, and Research Proposal due**  
Introduce Final Research Paper  
Discuss strategies for strong research projects  
Review overall research projects  
Begin conferences  
Review *They Say/I Say* chapters 13 & 14  
Discuss strategies and techniques for revision  
Read and discuss: Selections by Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois, Stephen Crane, Amy Lowell, and Gertrude Stein

**Week 15:**

Review *They Say/I Say* chapters 15 & 16  
Peer critique draft of Final Research Paper  
Draft work; peer critique second draft of Final Research Paper  
Discuss strategies and techniques for revision  
Read and discuss: Selections by Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens, and Richard Wilbur

**Week 16:**

Review *They Say/I Say* chapter 17  
Draft work; peer critique second draft of Final Research Paper  
Read and discuss: Selections by Theodore Roethke, Anne Sexton, and Sylvia Plath  
Review Learning Objectives: Now what can we do with what we have learned?  
Wrap-up of course

**Week 17:**

Finals Week  
**Final Research Paper & Final Portfolios due**

***\*Classes for the Spring 2022 semester end on Monday, 16 May 2022.***