

# First Year Writing

## ENGL 1A

Fall 2025 Sections 60, 61, 62, 63 In Person 3 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/14/2025

### Contact Information

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Instructor(s): Christopher Dizon

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Email: Christopher.J.Dizon@sjsu.edu

Office Hours: By appointment Tuesdays via Zoom @8am to 10am

Classroom: Clark 238

### Course Description and Requisites

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English 1A is an introductory course that prepares students to join scholarly conversations across the university. Students develop reading skills, rhetorical sophistication, and writing styles that give form and coherence to complex ideas for various audiences, using a variety of genres. GE Area: A2

Prerequisite: Completion of Reflection on College Writing

Letter Graded

### Classroom Protocols

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#### ENGL 1A Course Content

Diversity: SJSU is a diverse campus. As such, our course is designed to include an emphasis on a diverse range of voices and viewpoints. We will engage in integrated reading and writing assignments to construct our own arguments on complex issues that generate meaningful public discussions.

Writing: Writing is at the heart of our class. Our exploration of writing will allow us to prepare ourselves and each other for academic and real-world writing scenarios. Assignments give students repeated practice in all phases of the writing process: prewriting, organizing, writing, revising, and editing. Our class requires a minimum of 8000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form. More specific descriptions and instructions will be distributed for all major assignments in class.

Reading: There will be a substantial amount of reading for our class, some of which will come from texts I select (listed below) and some of which will be from sources you locate.

Final Experience: We will compile a portfolio at the end of the semester that includes selected examples of your writing produced for our class, as well as materials from your RCW Canvas course. We will talk more about the portfolio later in the semester.

### **Time Commitment**

Success in ENGL 1A is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

### **Final Examination or Evaluation**

In ENGL 1A, our learning culminates in a digital Reflection and Portfolio Assignment. In this assignment, we will gather samples of our writing that demonstrate our learning; we will write a reflection essay that explains what we have learned, how we learned it, and how we will use it in future learning; and we will submit our portfolio for consideration to other people in the first-year writing program. This is our chance to identify and articulate what we've learned and what we'll take forward with us into future learning/writing experiences.

### **Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging**

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the Canvas Learning Management System course login website. You're responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU to learn of any updates. For help with using Canvas see Canvas Student Resources page.

### **Program Policies**

First-Year Writing policies are listed at the following website: <https://www.sjsu.edu/english/frosh/program-policies.php> (<https://www.sjsu.edu/english/frosh/program-policies.php>)

## 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).

## Course Goals

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What does it mean to be a writer of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? How can we adapt traditional methods of communication and persuasive rhetoric through modern means? Can we frame our reading, writing, and critical thinking processes in a manner that perpetuates the spirit of play through gamification and the use of digital media? This course aims to answer these questions while preparing students to effectively persuade in an ever-changing world of technology. As students contend with the pillars of the writing process through multimodal means, they will embrace a personalized learning experience through the emphasis on digital literacy.

To practice rhetorical communication in a variety of modes, we'll practice writing in a range of diverse genres. In this course, you will explore an issue that matters to you through three major projects: a personal narrative/rhetorical analysis, an argumentative essay, and a multimodal presentation. Each writing project will refine an essential component of successful communication while introducing skills and strategies that are crucial for each task. Lastly, students will create digital translations of their texts and use rhetorical devices to connect with their intended audience, practicing revision across various genres.

In addition, shorter writing assignments and collaborative work supplement the goal of each project, intensifying rhetoric through a gamified lens. As we proceed through the writing process concerning each project, students will practice effective communication through the use of rhetorical appeals and gamified situations. From this perspective, we will analyze writing, reading, and thinking as "players" within a distinct "game." Students will sharpen this perspective to catalyze active learning. Moreover, our examination of the writing process and its connection to metacognition will act as an assessment of our work and foster strategies for critical dexterity and adaptive learning.

## Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

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**General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs):**

### **GE Area A2: Written Communication**

Written Communication I courses cultivate an understanding of the writing process and the goals, dynamics, and genres of written communication, with special attention to the nature of writing at the university. A grade of C- or better designates that a student has successfully oriented reading and writing practice in English to support college level research and learning and to share learning with C- or better is a CSU graduation requirement.

### **GE Area A2 Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of an Area A2 course, students should be able to:

1. demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the content, context, effectiveness, and forms of written communication;
2. perform essential steps in the writing process (prewriting, organizing, composing, revising, and editing);
3. articulate an awareness of and write according to the rhetorical features of texts, such as purpose, audience, context, and rhetorical appeals;
4. integrate their ideas and those of others by synthesizing, explaining, analyzing, developing, and criticizing ideas effectively in several genres; and
5. demonstrate college-level language use, clarity, and grammatical abilities in writing.

**Writing Practice:** Students will write a minimum of 8000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form.

## Course Materials

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Students will not be required to purchase a textbook for this class.

Alternatively, we will be working with John Zimmer's "Rhetoric: The Public Speaking Game," an app available through Apple's App Store, or Google Play.

Reading assignments and texts will be provided via Canvas. The reading scheduled in the syllabus will activate our understanding of what defines good writing. With our study of genres and templates, we will examine how to adjust our writing and thinking to achieve a particular outcome. We'll also analyze each other's work as a means of understanding how models of texts and reading influence the writing process. Since we'll be working with texts digitally, students should be prepared to bring a laptop or smart device to act as writing tools that will support collaborative work.

## Other technology requirements/equipment/material

- Students will need access to a laptop/computer/smart device to access media during in-class sessions.
- Students will also utilize a variety of digital applications to conduct writing activities, rhetorical exercises, and critical analysis with platforms such as Miro, Figjam, Hypothesis, and more.
- Access to steady wi-fi for Zoom sessions, office hours, and discussion board posts.

## Course Requirements and Assignments

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Students will write short posts in response to reading assignments alongside in-class collaborative work and each major writing project. Each post should be around 250 words. Reflective writing assignments and discussion board posts account for 30% of the total grade. We will also compose three major writing projects in the critical analysis essay, the argumentative essay, and a multimodal presentation. Each project will be composed in stages and will be worth 20% of your grade. Lastly, a comprehensive project that synthesizes the learning goals will be assessed with the creation and submission of the e-portfolio.

All written work submitted in this course must be originally produced by you, the student. If you utilize an outside source, you must properly cite the source in the assignment.

Generative artificial intelligence tools—software that creates new text, images, computer code, audio, video, and other content—have become widely available. Well-known examples include ChatGPT for text and DALL•E for images. This policy governs all such tools, including those released during our semester together. You may use generative AI tools on assignments in this course, within the following limitations. If you do use generative AI tools on assignments in this class, you must properly document and credit the tools themselves. Cite the tool you used, following the pattern for computer software given in the specified style guide. Additionally, please include a brief description of how you used the tool. If you choose to use generative AI tools, please remember that they are typically trained on limited datasets that may be out of date. Additionally, generative AI datasets are trained on pre-existing material, including copyrighted material; therefore, relying on a generative AI tool may result in plagiarism or copyright violations. Finally, keep in mind that the goal of generative AI tools is to produce content that seems to have been produced by a human, not to produce accurate or reliable content; therefore, relying on a generative AI tool may result in your submission of inaccurate content. It is your responsibility—not the tool's—to assure the quality, integrity, and accuracy of work you submit in any college course. If you use generative AI tools to complete assignments in this course in ways that I have not explicitly authorized, I will apply the San Jose State University Code of Academic Integrity as appropriate to your specific case. In addition, you must be wary of unintentional plagiarism or fabrication of data. Please act with integrity, for the sake of both your personal character and your academic record.

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

## ✓ Grading Information

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### Labor-Based Grading Contract

#### Overview:

This course uses a labor-based grading contract, which means your final grade is determined by the amount of work (labor) you complete rather than the subjective quality of your writing. The focus is on your effort, engagement, and commitment to the writing process. This approach values growth, persistence, and participation, creating a more equitable and supportive learning environment for all students.

#### What Counts as Labor:

- **Assigned Readings and Reflections:** You are expected to complete all assigned readings and submit thoughtful reflections or responses as specified in the syllabus.
- **Drafts and Workshops:** For each major essay, you must submit all required drafts by the deadlines and actively participate in peer review and writing workshops.

- **Revisions:** Every essay must be revised at least once after receiving instructor or peer feedback. Revisions should demonstrate meaningful engagement with the feedback provided.
- **Conferences and Group Sessions:** Attendance at all scheduled individual conferences and group writing sessions is required. These meetings are opportunities for personalized feedback and collaborative learning.
- **Participation:** Regular, on-time attendance and active participation in class discussions, activities, and group work are essential components of your labor.

#### **Grade Structure:**

##### **To earn a B (3.0):**

- Attend class regularly (no more than 5 absences).
- Participate actively in discussions and peer review.
- Submit all major assignments (drafts and final versions) on time.
- Complete all informal writing and homework assignments.
- Revise assignments thoughtfully in response to feedback.
- Adhere to assignment guidelines (length, format, etc.).
- Respond respectfully to instructor and peer feedback.

##### **To earn a higher grade (B+ or A):**

- Complete all requirements for a B.
- Submit all assignments on time with no more than 3 absences.
- Demonstrate significant revision and growth in your writing.
- Complete additional "level-up" or enrichment assignments (such as extra drafts, reflections, or research).
- Participate in optional writing conferences or workshops.

##### **To earn a lower grade (C or below):**

- Miss more than 5 classes or repeatedly arrive late.
- Miss deadlines for major assignments or fail to submit required work.
- Show minimal engagement in revision or peer feedback.
- Fail to participate in class activities.

#### **Additional Notes:**

- You may renegotiate the contract if extenuating circumstances arise, but you must communicate with the instructor promptly.
- Feedback will focus on your writing's strengths and areas for improvement, not on assigning letter grades to individual pieces.

- The contract is designed to encourage risk-taking, revision, and collaboration.

**Student Acknowledgment:**

By continuing in this course, you agree to the terms of this contract. If you have concerns, please discuss them with the instructor.

**Why Labor-Based Grading?**

This grading system is designed to:

- Encourage risk-taking and experimentation in your writing without fear of penalty for “mistakes.”
- Promote a growth mindset by rewarding effort and persistence.
- Foster a collaborative and inclusive classroom community where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

**Purpose:**

This contract is designed to foster growth as a writer by focusing on your effort, participation, and revision, rather than solely on the quality of your finished products. If you meet the terms below, you are guaranteed at least a B (or equivalent) in the course.

- If you have questions or concerns about the contract or your progress, please reach out to me early so we can work together to ensure your success.

## Major Writing Projects

### Personal Narrative/Rhetorical Analysis (25 points)

- Outline and draft proposal: 5 points
- Partial draft: 5 points
- Full draft: 5 points
- Draft letter: 5 points
- Digital Translation: 5

### Argumentative Essay (20 points)

- Outline and draft proposal: 5 points
- Partial draft: 5 points
- Full draft: 5 points

- Draft letter: 5 points

## Multimodal Presentation (20 points)

- Outline and proposal: 5 points
- Draft + Peer Review: 5 points
- Reflection: 5 points
- Presentation: 5 points

## Minor Assignments (25+ points)

Every week, short assignments are distributed as scaffolding tasks that fold into larger projects. Typical assignments include readings and reflective prompts. In addition, collaborative in-class work will be assigned with a short writing reflection to complement the learning goals associated with each major project. Each assignment should be completed before class. An extra credit assignment will also be available as limited "side quests" to enhance specific skills in writing, analysis, and rhetoric.

## Portfolio (10 points)

- Annotated Bibliography: 5
- Reflection Essay: 5

Total points possible: 100+

### Determination of Final Grades

- Points are awarded for each major project following a sequence of the process.
- Late submissions for each major project are subtracted a point for each day it is overdue.
- Full credit is awarded to a project/assignment/activity with developed content and timely submission.
- Current grades are available on Canvas
- Feel free to contact me via email if you have a question about an assignment or the progress of your overall final grade

While minor assignments may be accepted occasionally, draft materials on peer review workshop dates cannot be made up. Similarly, missed attendance for in-class collaborative work and reflections will be marked as incomplete. However, if an emergency occurs, please let me know in advance, and we will work together to find a solution.

- A=An "A" will be worth 90 to 100 percent of the points possible.
- B= A "B" will be worth 80 to 89 percent of the points possible.
- C= A "C" will be worth 70 to 79 percent of the points possible.
- D= A "D" will be worth 60 to 69 percent of the points possible.
- F = An "F" will be worth 0 to 59 percent of the total points possible



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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# English 1A / First Year College Writing, Fall 2025, Course Schedule

*The schedule is subject to change. However, you will be notified in advance of any sudden shifts or transitions.*

## Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	Wed 8/20	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Class Introduction</li><li>• Activate Adobe Student Accounts</li><li>• In-Class Exercise: "Airplane Synthesis"</li><li>• Homework: Anne Lamont's "Shitty First Drafts" + Infinite Freedom + Control is an Illusion</li></ul>
2	Mon 8/25	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Writing Process</li><li>• Pre-writing + Concept Maps: "Mind-mapping Emotions"</li><li>• Project 1 Overview: The Personal Narrative/Rhetorical Analysis</li></ul>
2	Wed 8/27	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visual Rhetoric + Digital Literacy + Genre conventions</li><li>• Quiz</li><li>• Dolly Parton Meme Exercise</li><li>• Homework: Complete class exercises, read Project 1 essays, compose Project 1</li></ul>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
3	Mon 9/1	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labor Day Holiday: No class meeting</li> </ul>
3	Wed 9/3	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital Literacy Workshops in the Student Union Ballroom</li> <li>• Homework: Complete class exercises + Consider and compose Project 1</li> </ul>
4	Mon 9/8	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arguing about Genres: Mt. Rushmore Exercise and Quotation Sandwiches</li> <li>• <b>Project 1: Outlines + Proposals due</b></li> </ul>
4	Wed 9/10	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translingualism + Codeswitching: Explaining Fandom to Dinosaurs</li> <li>• Feynman Technique + Wiki-How</li> <li>• Homework: Read Project 1 Student Essays + Compose Project 1</li> </ul>
5	Mon 9/15	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wiki-How Presentations</li> <li>• Rhetorical Repetition: Anaphora, Epistrophe, Anadiplosis</li> </ul>
5	Wed 9/17	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Project 1: Personal Narrative/Rhetorical Analysis Rough Draft + Peer Review due</b></li> <li>• Homework: Revise Project 1, Complete the class exercises, and consider a topic for Project 2</li> </ul>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
6	Mon 9/22	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logic: Enthymemes + Syllogisms</li> <li>• Arguing with Evidence: Assess Student Essays + Digital Translation</li> </ul>
6	Wed 9/24	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital Translations: Project 1</li> <li>• Ethos + The Argumentative Essay + Ask the Expert</li> <li>• <b>Due: Project 1: Personal Narrative/Rhetorical Analysis Revision + Draft Letter due</b></li> <li>• Homework: Read Argumentative Essays</li> </ul>
7	Mon 9/29	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rhetorical Devices 2</li> <li>• Fictional Presidents + Logical Fallacies</li> </ul>
7	Wed 10/1	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rogerian Rhetoric</li> <li>• In-class exercise</li> <li>• <b>Project 2: Argumentative Essay Outline + Proposal due</b></li> <li>• Homework: Complete class exercises and consider a topic for Project 2</li> </ul>
8	Mon 10/6	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pathos: Why You Mad?</li> <li>• Rogerian Rhetoric: Dream Job + PIP</li> </ul>
8	Wed 10/8	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tag Team Rhetoric</li> <li>• <b>Project 1: Digital Translation due</b></li> <li>• Homework: Complete class exercises, consider a topic for Project 3</li> </ul>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
9	Mon 10/13	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Multimodal Approach: Analyzing Advertisements</li> </ul>
9	Wed 10/15	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Socratic Method</li> <li>• Midterm Review</li> <li>• Homework: Complete class exercises and compose Project 2</li> </ul>
10	Mon 10/20	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust No One: Multiple Choice Exam</li> </ul>
10	Wed 10/22	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oral Exam: "WWR."</li> <li>• Homework: Complete class exercises and compose Project 2</li> </ul>
11	Mon 10/27	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Art of Diplomacy: Rogerian Revisions</li> </ul>
11	Wed 10/29	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Project 2: Rough Draft + Peer Review</b></li> <li>• Revise Project 2, Complete class exercises</li> </ul>
12	Mon 11/3	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-class exercise: Food War</li> <li>• Project 3 Overview: The Multimodal Presentation</li> </ul>
12	Wed 11/5	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-class exercise: What makes a good Multimodal Presentation?</li> <li>• Homework: Consider a topic for Project 3</li> </ul>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
13	Mon 11/10	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Class Meeting Veteran's Day</li> </ul>
13	Wed 11/12	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rhetoric: The Public Speaking Game</li> <li>• <b>Project 3: Multimodal Presentation Outline + Proposal due</b></li> </ul>
14	Mon 11/17	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>E-Portfolio Overview</b></li> <li>• Annotated Bibliography</li> <li>• Reflection Essay</li> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• <b>Due: Project 2: Argumentative Essay Revision + Draft Letter</b></li> </ul>
14	Wed 11/19	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Due: Project 3: Multimodal Presentation Rough Draft + Peer Review</b></li> <li>• Homework: Revise Project 3, compose and collect e-portfolio materials</li> </ul>
15	Mon 11/24	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Due: Project 3: Multimodal Presentation Revision + Draft Letter</b></li> <li>• Presentations begin: Group 1</li> </ul>
15	Wed 11/26	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Class Meeting: Thanksgiving Holiday Break</li> </ul>
16	Mon 12/1	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multimodal Presentations: Group 2</li> </ul>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
16	Wed 12/3	<b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multimodal Presentations: Group 3</li> <li>• Homework: Compose and collect e-portfolio materials</li> </ul>
17	Mon 12/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Objectives:</b></li> <li>• Last Class Meeting + Group 4 Presentations</li> <li>• Final Exam: ???</li> <li>• <b>Due Monday, December 15th {no class meeting on 12/15/25}:</b></li> <li>• E-Portfolio: Reflection Essay, Annotated Bib, Major Project</li> </ul>