

First Year Writing

ENGL 1A

Fall 2025 Sections 37, 38, 39 In Person 3 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/26/2025

Contact Information

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Office Hours

Tuesdays & Thursdays 3:00-4:00pm, and by appointment
Clark Hall 408E

We can also meet virtually on Zoom when it's more comfortable for your schedules as well.

Course Information

Being and Belonging: Discovering and Understanding Cultural Myths

English 1A is first and foremost a first-year writing class, and we will be focusing on the craft and expertise of this art by learning about the nuances and strategies that make for beautiful and elegant writing at the college level.

As we satisfy the learning objectives of this course, we will compose a variety of writing exercises and assignments. We will learn how to write a personal narrative, learn more about the advanced methods of the rhetorical concept, discover about argumentation and research, including how to ascertain what scholarly sources are and navigate our library website to find them to include in our research papers as well.

We will also learn the fundamentals of close reading and how to analyze texts in smart and elevated ways. In this course, we will be discovering and understanding cultural myths. There are many that are relevant to our formative experiences as college students, including myths of justice, education and empowerment,

progress on the tech frontier, the American Dream and individual opportunities, gender, and race, and overall identity.

This course will largely focus on readings, discourse, and clear, cohesive writing. We will learn how to encounter and enter these texts, discuss how and why they are written, and write our own personal, intimate, and important papers responding to what we have found to be inspiring. We will discover the fundamentals of composition writing throughout it all.

Course Description and Requisites

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

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

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

Goals and Assignments:

We will complete regular readings, discussion posts, and assignments throughout this course. I always share prompts via Canvas and communicate them in classes as well. Please take a look at the announcements and modules throughout term, as more will be visible and accessible as the weeks

progress.

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. 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.

Writing Portfolio:

At the end of the term, you will turn in a writing portfolio for English 1A. We will discuss details closer to when this is due, which is around the same time for your final paper.

Participation Policy:

This is an active-learning and very engaging class, so please participate in consistent attendance. We will be completing regular in-class activities for each of these larger assignments. In order to receive credit for these essays, students must participate and complete the in-class writing exercises and drafting portion. Students who have missing portions of the in-class writing materials may not receive credit for the final versions of these assignments even if they are completed.

Late Policy:

Assignments are due on the dates specified. Some late assignments may only receive partial credit for completion if approved beforehand for appropriate reasons.

A.I. Policy:

We are here to genuinely learn how to become the best writers possible. To do this, we have to write our own materials. Assignments that are completed using any generative A.I. tools may not receive any credit.

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 Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

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

Required Texts and Resources:

1. Course readings will be provided for you throughout the semester.
2. Colombo, Gary et al. *Rereading America: Cultural Contexts for Critical Thinking & Writing*. Twelfth Edition. (ISBN: 978-1319244620).
3. Kaag, John and Jonathan Van Belle. *Thinking Through Writing: A Guide to Becoming a Better Writer & Thinker*. (ISBN: 978-069124599).
4. Printing and viewing resources for course readings, videos, assignments, and other material that are posted in Canvas.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Reading Assignments:

In this class, we will be reading a series of 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.* 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.

1. Personal Narrative Reflection (2-3 pages)
2. Rhetorical Analysis (Essay #1, 3-4 pages)
3. Cultural Myth Group Project (Presentation and Essay #2, 4-6 pages)
4. Final Critical Paper (Essay #3, 5-7 pages)
5. Discussion Posts
6. Writing Portfolio
7. Activities and Exercises

✓ Grading Information

Class Grades:

1. Personal Narrative Reflection (2-3 pages): 10%
2. Rhetorical Analysis Paper (Essay #1, 3-4 pages): 20%
3. Cultural Myth Group Project (Presentation and Essay #2, 4-6 pages): 20%
4. Final Critical Paper (Essay #3, 5-7 pages): 20%
5. Discussion Posts: 10%
6. Activities and Exercises: 20%

We will be completing regular in-class activities for each of these larger assignments. In order to receive credit for these essays, students must participate and complete the in-class writing exercises and drafting portion. Students who have missing portions of the in-class writing materials may not receive credit for the final versions of these assignments even if they are completed.

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

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

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 semester 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.*

***In the schedule below, I have detailed a suggested and advanced reading and writing schedule for you. It is purposefully very ambitious to help you learn and grow to your full potential. I encourage you to read at this accelerated pace and dive deeply into these texts and ideas. Because they are indeed deep, we will focus on a selection of them and read at a much more expanded pace within the classroom, discussing major points along the way. This does not mean we are not intellectually covering all of these works and ideas comprehensively within the scope of this course; you and I can discuss any text in robust detail during office hours and conferences. Furthermore, as you do read ahead, if there is a text you would like us to focus upon in class, please let me know and I will make sure we do just that.*

Week 1:

August 21

Introduction of Course & Syllabus

Student Introductions

Week 2:

August 26

Introduce Favorite Work of Writing assignment

Continue Student Introductions

August 28

Review and present on Favorite Work of Writing

Discuss: Writing from the Self: The "I" in Writing

Start Concentration on The Myth of Justice

Read and discuss: What are Cultural Myths and Dina Gilio-Whitaker's "The Land Before the Laws"

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 5

Week 3:

September 2

Continue discussion of Dina Gilio-Whitaker's "The Land Before the Laws"

In-class Activity

September 4

Introduce Personal Narrative Reflection

Draft work: Prewriting of Personal Narrative Reflection

Discuss: Integrating Your Interests

Read and discuss: Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozco and Carola Suarez-Orozco's "How Immigrants Become 'Other'"

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 5

Week 4:

September 9

Draft work: Writing of Personal Narrative Reflection

Discuss: Identifying a Critical Debate and Close Reading

September 11

Discuss: Thesis Formation and Defining a Strong Thesis

Read and discuss: Christiana Figueres and Tom Rivett-Carnac's "Two Worlds"

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 1

Week 5:

September 16

Draft work: Peer Review of Personal Narrative Reflection

Continue discussion of Thesis Statements

September 18

Personal Narrative Reflection due

Start Concentration on The Myth of Education and Empowerment

Read and discuss: Mike Rose's "I Just Wanna Be Average"

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 1

Week 6:

September 23

Introduce Rhetorical Analysis Paper

Discuss: The Rhetorical Concept – The Rhetorical Triangle and Aristotle's Appeals

Discuss: Forming & Structuring essays

September 25

Continue discussion of The Rhetorical Concept – The Rhetorical Triangle and Aristotle's Appeals

Discuss: Outlining and Introductions

Read and discuss: Nikole Hannah-Jones's "Choosing a School for My Daughter in a Segregated City"

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 3

Week 7:

September 30

In-class activity

Discuss: The Mechanics of Structure

Draft Work: Prewriting of Rhetorical Analysis Paper

October 2

Draft Work: Prewriting and Writing of Rhetorical Analysis Paper

Discuss: Topic Sentences

Read and discuss: Tara Westover's "From *Educated*"

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 3

Week 8:

October 7

Start Concentration on The Myth of Tech

Discuss: Audience

Draft work: Writing of Rhetorical Analysis Paper

October 9

Discuss: Peer Review

Read and discuss: Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen's "Our Future Selves"

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 4

Week 9:

October 14

Draft work: Peer Review of Rhetorical Analysis Paper

October 16

Rhetorical Analysis Paper due

Read and discuss: Jean M. Twenge's "Has the Smartphone Destroyed a Generation?"

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 4

Week 10:

October 21

Introduce Cultural Myth Group Project

In-class activity

October 23

Discuss: Argumentation: Premises, Conclusions, and Inferences

Continue in-class activity

Read and discuss: Tatiana Schlossberg's "The Tech We Throw Away"

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 2

Week 11:

October 28

Start Concentration on The Myth of Individual Opportunity

Start Presentations of Cultural Myth Group Project

October 30

Continue Presentations of Cultural Myth Group Project

Read and discuss: Gregory Mansios's "Class in America"

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 2

Week 12:

November 4

Continue Presentations of Cultural Myth Group Project

November 6

Continue Presentations of Cultural Myth Group Project (if needed)

Cultural Myth Group Project Due

Discuss: Scholarly Sources

Read and discuss: Mehrsa Baradaran's "From *How the Other Half Banks*"

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 6

Week 13:

November 11

Veteran's Day: Academic Holiday

November 13

Introduce Final Critical Paper

Discuss: Integrating Sources and Evidence

Draft work: Prewriting of Final Critical Paper

Read and discuss: Rutger Bregman's "Why We Should Give Free Money to Everyone"

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 6

Week 14:

November 18

Start Concentration on The Myths of Gender

Draft work: Writing of Final Critical Paper

November 20

Draft work: Writing of Final Critical Paper

Discuss: Editing and Revision

Read and discuss: Lisa Wade and Myra Marx Ferree's "How to Do Gender"

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 7

Week 15:

November 25

In-class activity

Discuss: Grammar, Syntax, and Active Voice

Read and discuss: Gina Rippon's "The Gendered Waters in Which We Swim – The Pink and Blue Tsunami"

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapters 7 & 8

November 27

Thanksgiving Day: Academic Holiday

****Thanksgiving Break—November 26-28: Academic Holidays***

Week 16:

December 2

Start Concentration on The Myths of Race

Start Student Conferences

Draft work: Peer Review of Final Critical Paper

December 4

In-class activity on Writing Portfolio

Discuss: Crafting Conclusion Paragraphs for Essays

Read and discuss: Linda Holtzman and Leon Sharpe's "Theories and Constructs of Race"

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 8

Week 17:

December (Finals Week)

Final Critical Paper due

Continue Student Conferences

Review Learning Objectives: How far have we come and where do we go from here?

Wrap-up of course

****Classes for the Fall 2025 semester end on Monday, 8 December 2025.***