

Critical Thinking and Writing

ENGL 2

Fall 2025 Section 13 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

Cultural Myths: Exploring and Engaging Established Notions of Society

English 2 is designed to further our understanding and skills in critical thinking and university-level writing, which we have previously learned in English 1A. Similar to it, we continue to focus upon on the craft and expertise of this art by learning about the nuances and strategies that make for beautiful and elegant writing at this elevated stage. We will also be focusing on readings to further grow and mature our critical thinking skills. I will teach you to be the most advanced critical thinkers and writers you have been thus far.

As we satisfy the learning objectives of this course, we will compose a variety of writing exercises and assignments. We will learn how to further compose personal writing, learn about the importance of the visual rhetoric and how it's more pertinent in our lives today more than ever, 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 foster the growth of our fundamental skill 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 mature our progress as university-level critical thinkers and writers throughout it all.

Course Description and Requisites

English 2 is a course that focuses on the relationship between language and logic in composing arguments. Students learn various methods of effective reasoning and appropriate rhetorical strategies to help them invent, demonstrate, and express arguments clearly, logically, and persuasively.

GE Area(s): A3. Critical Thinking and Writing

Prerequisite(s): Completion of GE Area A2 with a grade of "C-" or better.

Note(s): ENGL 2 is not open to students who successfully completed ENGL 1B.

Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

ENGL 2

This course is open to all students needing to fulfill GE Area A3 (Critical Thinking). It is not open to students who have successfully completed ENGL 1B.

Prerequisite: ENGL 1A or Stretch English (with a grade of C- or better)

Course Content

Diversity: SJSU studies include an emphasis on diversity. You will engage in integrated reading, Writing, and oral assignments to construct your own arguments on complex issues (such as diversity and ethnicity, class and social equality) that generate meaningful public debate. Readings for the course will include writers of different ethnicities, genders, and socio-economic classes.

Writing: You will write a series of essays informed by research and articulating fully developed arguments about complex issues. Assignments emphasize those skills and activities in writing and thinking that produce the persuasive argument and the critical essay, each of which demands analysis, interpretation, and evaluation. Writing assignments give you repeated practice in prewriting, organizing, writing, revising, and editing. This class requires a minimum of 6000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form.

Logic: You will learn methods of argument analysis, both rhetorical and logical, that will allow you to identify logical structures (such as warrants, evidence, qualification, rebuttal; enthymemes and

syllogisms) and distinguish common logical fallacies.

Reading: In addition to being writing intensive, ENGL 2 is also a reading course. You will read a variety of critical and argumentative texts to help develop your skills for understanding the logical structure of argumentative writing.

Oral: You will be presenting your arguments orally to class both as an individual and as part of a group.

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.

Time Commitment

Success in ENGL 2 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 2, 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.

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)

GE Area A3: Critical Thinking and Writing

Area A3 courses develop students' understanding of the relationship of language to logic. By engaging students in complex issues requiring critical thinking and effective argumentation, A3 courses develop students' abilities to research and analyze important topics and to construct their own arguments on issues that generate meaningful public debate and deliberation. Courses include explicit instruction and practice in inductive and deductive reasoning as well as identification of formal and informal fallacies of language and thought. Completion of Area A2 (Written Communication I) with a minimum grade of C- is a prerequisite for enrollment in Area A3. Completion of Area A3 with a grade of C- or better is a CSU graduation requirement.

GE Area A3 Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of an Area A3 course, students should be able to:

1. locate, interpret, evaluate, and synthesize evidence in a comprehensive way, including through library research; and integrate research findings into oral and written arguments through appropriate citation and quotation;
2. use a range of rhetorical and logical strategies to articulate and explain their positions on complex issues in dialogue with other points of view;
3. identify and critically evaluate the assumptions in and the contexts of arguments; and
4. use inductive and deductive logic to construct valid, evidence-supported arguments and draw valid conclusions.

Writing Practice: Students will write a minimum of 6000 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. Cultural Myth Narrative Reflection (2-3 pages)
2. Visual Rhetorical Analysis Group Project (Presentation and Essay #1, 3-4 pages)
3. Synthesis & Argumentation Paper (Essay #2, 4-6 pages)
4. Final Research Paper (Essay #3, 5-7 pages)
5. Discussion Posts
6. Writing Portfolio
7. Activities and Exercises

Grading Information

Class Grades:

1. Cultural Myth Narrative Reflection (2-3 pages): 10%
2. Visual Rhetorical Analysis Group Project (Presentation and Essay #1, 4-6 pages): 20%
3. Synthesis & Argumentation Paper (Essay #2, 4-6 pages): 20%
4. Final Research 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

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

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 and Point of View in a Rhetorical Stance

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 Cultural Myth Narrative Reflection

Draft work: Prewriting of Cultural Myth Narrative Reflection

Discuss: Integrating Your Interests and Acknowledging Multiple Perspectives

Read and discuss: Visual Portfolio: Reading Images of Justice

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 5

Week 4:

September 9

Draft work: Writing of Cultural Myth Narrative Reflection

Discuss: Identifying a Critical Debate, Close Reading, and Analytic Questions

September 11

Discuss: Thesis Formation and Defining a Strong Thesis, the Practice of a Working 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 Cultural Myth Narrative Reflection

Continue discussion of Thesis Statements

September 18

Cultural Myth Narrative Reflection due

Start Concentration on The Myth of Education and Empowerment

Read and discuss: Visual Portfolio: Reading Images of Education and Empowerment

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 1

Week 6:

September 23

Introduce Visual Rhetorical Analysis Group Project

Discuss: The Concept of Visual Rhetoric

Discuss: Forming & Structuring essays, Argumentative Structures, and Methodology

September 25

Continue discussion of Visual Rhetoric

Discuss: Outlining and Introductions, Hooks and Motivations

Read and discuss: Sherry Turkle's "Education: Attentional Disarray"

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 3

Week 7:

September 30

In-class activity on Visual Rhetoric

Discuss: The Mechanics of Structure

Draft Work: In-class activity on Visual Rhetorical Analysis Group Project

October 2

Draft Work: In-class activity on Visual Rhetorical Analysis Group Project

Discuss: Transitions and Topic Sentences

Read and discuss: Peggy Orenstein's "Blurred Lines, Take Two"

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 3

Week 8:

October 7

Start Concentration on The Myth of Tech

Discuss: Audience and Techniques for Peer Review

Draft Work: In-class activity on Visual Rhetorical Analysis Group Project

October 9

Discuss: Peer Review at its Best

Read and discuss: Kenneth Goldsmith's "Let's Get Lost"

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 4

Week 9:

October 14

Start presentations on Visual Rhetorical Analysis Group Projects

October 16

Continue presentations on Visual Rhetorical Analysis Group Projects

Read and discuss: Visual Portfolio: Reading Images of Wired Culture

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 4

Week 10:

October 21

Continue presentations on Visual Rhetorical Analysis Group Projects

October 23

Continue presentations on Visual Rhetorical Analysis Group Projects (if needed)

Visual Rhetorical Group Projects Due

Introduce Synthesis & Argumentation Paper

In-class activity

Discuss: Argumentation: Premises, Conclusions, and Inferences

Read and discuss: Yuval Noah Harari's "Big Data, Google, and the End of Free Will"

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 2

Week 11:

October 28

Start Concentration on The Myth of Individual Opportunity

Draft work: Prewriting of Synthesis and Argumentation paper

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

Draft work: Writing of Synthesis and Argumentation paper

November 6

Draft work: Peer Review of Synthesis and Argumentation paper

Discuss: Scholarly Sources, Strategies on Summary, Paraphrase, Quote, and Rogeting

Read and discuss: Mehrsa Baradaran's Visual Portfolio: Reading Images of Individual Opportunity

Read and discuss: *Thinking Through Writing* Chapter 6

Week 13:

November 11

Veteran's Day: Academic Holiday

November 13

Synthesis & Argumentation Due

Introduce Final Critical Paper

Discuss: Integrating Sources and Evidence

Draft work: Prewriting of Final Critical Paper

Read and discuss: Diana Kendall's "Framing Class, Vicarious Living, and Conspicuous Consumption"

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: Visual Portfolio: Reading Images of Gender

Visual Portfolio: Reading Images of Race

Start Concentration on The Myths of Race

Read and discuss: Reading Images of Race

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 Student Conferences

Draft work: Peer Review of Final Critical Paper

December 4

In-class activity on Writing Portfolio

Discuss: Crafting Conclusion Paragraphs for Essays, Strategies for Satisfying Conclusion Paragraphs and Completing Essays, The Perfect Essay

Read and discuss: Linda Holtzman and Leon Sharpe's "Theories and Constructs of Race" and Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozco and Carola Suarez-Orozco's "How Immigrants Become 'Other'"

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.***