

# Critical Thinking and Writing

## ENGL 2

Fall 2025 Section 09 In Person 3 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/01/2025

### Course Information

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ENGL 2, Section 9 – Critical Thinking and Writing

Fall 2025 – MW 10:30–11:45 AM – DMH 347

#### Class

10:30–11:45 AM

Monday, Wednesday, 10:30 AM to 11:45 AM, DMH 347

### Course Description and Requisites

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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

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#### 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)

In this class, we build toward one powerful, research-driven argumentative paper through a scaffolded process that emphasizes rhetorical awareness, credible sourcing, and multimodal communication. Students will explore audience-first strategies using ethos, pathos, and logos to design and deliver a persuasive argument across multiple formats: a formal essay, a creative/multimodal piece (poster, podcast, video, demo, etc.), and a live presentation.

We will critically examine how people encounter arguments in today's media-saturated world—including on TikTok, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and podcasts—drawing on recent research from Pew and legal commentary from the NYSBA and NPR. This media analysis will inform our understanding of why multimodal writing matters: how information circulates, how audiences respond to form as much as content, and how writers can adapt their arguments accordingly.

AI tools will also be introduced to assist in brainstorming, audience analysis, citation generation, and revision—ethically and transparently. This is an initiation into how we use the magic of AI as a tool to achieve our communication goals and avoid having AI replace our own writing, thinking, and agency.

## 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>).

## Key Course Design Principles

### Audience-First Rhetoric

Students learn to craft arguments with a deep understanding of who they are writing for, using ethos, pathos, and logos to reach real-world readers and viewers. Every assignment asks, "Who is this for, and why would they care?" & "What outcome are you seeking?"

### AI as Rhetorical Assistant

Students may use tools like ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity, and Grammarly to:

- Brainstorm thesis ideas
- Analyze audience needs
- Generate MLA citations
- Revise for clarity and tone

AI use must be disclosed and ethically integrated—never used for full draft generation.

### **Multimodal Expression**

Students experiment with delivering their arguments in multiple genres: written essays, oral presentations, and creative formats like podcasts, posters, or videos. Why? Because today's arguments don't just live on paper—they live on TikTok, in YouTube comment sections, and through podcast storytelling.

### **Argument Portfolio**

All major deliverables (essay, multimodal, presentation, reflection) form a rhetorical portfolio demonstrating each student's evolving command of persuasive communication. Revision and reflection are central.

### **Specs-Based Grading & Rubrics**

The course uses modular grading based on clear rubrics and consistent effort. Students can revise most assignments. Final scores reflect engagement, growth, and communication success, not just perfection on a single submission.

### **Media-Driven Curriculum**

Core readings include current articles on how Americans consume news through TikTok, Facebook, X, Instagram, and podcasts, alongside short readings from vos Savant, Barzun, and Strunk & White. Students learn rhetoric by analyzing how it lives in today's feeds, not just classic essays.

### **Canvas as Collaboration Hub**

All submissions, peer feedback, and reflections happen in Canvas. Students also participate in pods—rotating peer groups—for structured feedback, collaboration, and workshop discussions.

## **Our Class Policy on Generative AI**

AI tools must be used in this course to support brainstorming, outlining, reviewing, and language polishing. When you use AI tools like ChatGPT, clearly state where and how in a footnote or endnote (e.g., "Used ChatGPT to generate outline structure"). Do not submit AI-generated full drafts—your voice matters. Violations will be handled per the SJSU Academic Integrity Policy.

Generative AI programs like ChatGPT and Grammarly can and should be used as resources in this class. As a writing community, we've decided that while they can be integrated into our writing process (brainstorming, generating and organizing ideas, polishing drafts, etc.), we should not use them to write our papers for us. Our work should represent our own ideas and our own ways of articulating them.

## **SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

The university emphasizes responsible citizenship and an awareness of ethical choices inherent in human development. Academic honesty and fairness foster ethical standards for all those who rely on the integrity of the university, its courses, and its degrees. University degrees are compromised and the

public is defrauded if faculty members or students knowingly or unwittingly allow dishonest acts to be rewarded academically. This policy sets the standards for such integrity and shall be used to inform students, faculty, and staff of the university's Academic Integrity Policy.

## STUDENT ROLE

The San José State University Academic Integrity Policy requires that each student:

- know the rules that preserve academic integrity and abide by them at all times, including learning and abiding by rules associated with specific classes, exams, and course assignments;
- know the consequences of violating the Academic Integrity Policy;
- know the appeal rights and procedures to be followed in the event of an appeal;
- foster academic integrity among peers.
- You can access the SJSU's comprehensive academic integrity policy here:

<https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/SJSU-Academic-Integrity-Policy-F15-7.pdf>

## Generative Artificial Intelligence (Chat GPT)

What you should know about AI Platforms

Large language models, like Chat GPT, perform intensive mining, modeling, and memorization of vast stores of language data “scraped” from the internet. They have been trained to learn language patterns and to predict the most probable next word or sequence of words based on the context they receive. In other words, it imitates or mimics what humans have put on the internet (think about that for a minute). AI writing platforms have become savvy enough to write essays, create apps, help with excel, and nearly any conceivable writing situation that relies on linguistic patterns. In this class, we'll practice learning and thinking with them. ChatGPT, like all generative AI systems, is a tool. Tools are used by humans to accomplish specific tasks. Thinking of it that way helps unlock its potential, but also avoid its pitfalls.

## 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 Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

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### 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

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### Required Materials

- Vos Savant, Marilyn. The Power of Logical Thinking. St. Martin's Press, 1997.
- Barzun, Jacques. Simple and Direct. Harper Perennial, 2001.
- Strunk, William, and E. B. White. The Elements of Style. Longman, 2000.
- Weekly readings (linked in schedule)

# Course Features

- **AI as Lens and Tool:** Students are encouraged to use AI tools (Grammarly, ChatGPT, Claude, etc.) with full disclosure in their process writing.
- **Reading/Viewing Journal:** Weekly responses submitted via Canvas as text posts, infographics, podcasts, or video essays.
- **A Focused Research Project:** A final essay and multimodal presentation with an annotated bibliography.

## Course Requirements and Assignments

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### Final Research Essay

Develop a 6–8 page argumentative essay that takes a clear stance on a contemporary issue. Incorporate credible, peer-reviewed sources, and use rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos) effectively. Your argument must be grounded in audience awareness and include at least one addressed counterargument. All sources must be cited in MLA format. Drafts will be reviewed and revised.

### Annotated Bibliography

Gather 6–8 credible sources related to your research topic. For each, provide an MLA citation followed by a 100–150 word annotation explaining the source’s credibility, key points, and usefulness to your argument. AI tools may assist in summarization or citation formatting, but your evaluation must be original.

### Multimodal Argument Project

Translate your argument into a creative format: options include a podcast, short video, visual poster, interactive demo, or song. Your goal is to effectively reach a new audience using rhetorical principles that match the medium. This project must be accompanied by a brief creator’s statement (250–300 words) explaining your design choices and intended audience impact.

### Live Presentation

Prepare and deliver a 5-minute live presentation of your argument. Focus on clarity, persuasion, and tone. Visual aids are encouraged. Practice sessions will be held in advance. Presentations will be peer-reviewed.

### Reflection Letter

Write a 1–2 page reflective letter discussing your growth as a writer and thinker in this course. Describe how your use of rhetorical strategies, audience awareness, and AI tools evolved. Be specific about what you learned from peer feedback, revision, and each assignment.

**Modular Grading:** Points and feedback for each module without traditional letter grades until the final portfolio.

## Grading Information

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Grading Structure (Modular, Process-Based):

Component	Description	%
Final Research Essay	Revised, polished MLA paper	30%
Multimodal Expression	Podcast, demo, poster, or performance	20%
In-Class Writing & Drafts	Thesis, outline, bib, peer reviews	20%
Participation	Attendance, discussion, group work	15%
Presentation	5-min persuasive oral pitch	10%
Final Reflection	Letter describing personal growth	5%

## University Policies

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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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### Weekly Schedule Overview

Week	Dates	Focus	Readings	Deliverables
1	Aug 20 & Aug 25	Intro to Rhetoric & Audience	Barzun Ch. 1; Persuasion, Rhetoric, Research, Argument and Critical Analysis in a Multimodal Format: <a href="#">"So you want to be a Sorcerer in the age of Mythic Powers (the AI Episode)"</a>	Audience Profile



2	Aug 27 & Sep 1 Δ(Labor Day, No Class)	Logos & Logical Fallacies	Vos Savant Pt I; <a href="#">Code Switch Podcast: TikTok Self-censorship</a>	Thesis Generator
3	Sep 3 (No class: "Jumpstarting Digital Literacy" event this fall. <a href="#">You can get more information here</a> ) & Sep 8	Research & Source Credibility	Sep 3 (No class: "Jumpstarting Digital Literacy" event this fall. <a href="#">You can get more information here</a> ) - Attendance counts as credit in class.  Barzun Ch. 2; NYSBA: <a href="#">"TikTok Ban &amp; the First Amendment"</a> ;	Annotated Bibliography (AI ok)
4	Sep 10 & Sep 15	Outlining & Argument Structure	Vos Savant Pt II, Pew: <a href="#">"How Americans Get News on TikTok, X..."</a>	Argument Map
5	Sep 17 & Sep 22	Evidence & Reasoning	Barzun Ch. 3; Pew: <a href="#">"How Americans Navigate Politics on TikTok..."</a>	First Paragraphs Draft
6	Sep 24 & Sep 29	Emotional Appeal – Pathos	Vos Savant Pt III, <a href="#">Thoroughline: Edward Said and Palestine</a>	Pathos Paragraph Expansion
7	Oct 1 & Oct 6	Ethos, Credibility & Style	Barzun Ch. 4; NPR: <a href="#">"Supreme Court Upholds TikTok Ban"</a>	Peer Style Edit
8	Oct 8 & Oct 13	Counterarguments & Refutation	Vos Savant Pt IV; <a href="#">Posters as Persuasion</a>	Revised Outline
9	Oct 15 & Oct 20	MLA & Draft Workshop	Barzun Ch. 5	Full Rough Draft
10	Oct 22 & Oct 27	Clarity, Revision & AI Editing	Vos Savant Pt V & VI	AI Revision Pass
11	Oct 29 & Nov 3	Multimodal Composition	Barzun Ch. 6; Pew: <a href="#">"Podcasts as a Source of News"</a> ; <a href="#">Podcast: Mamdani &amp; Daddy</a>	Multimodal Draft
12	Nov 5 & Nov 10	Peer Feedback & Gallery Walk	None	Feedback Letters

13	Nov 12 & Nov 17	Presentation Rehearsal	Review prior materials	Practice Pitches
14	Nov 19 & Nov 24	Final Presentations	None	Live Presentation
15	Nov 26 $\Delta$ (Non-instructional Day) & Dec 1	Course Wrap-up	None	Final Paper + Reflection Letter
16	Dec 3 & Dec 8	Optional Revision Conferences	None	Optional Final Revisions