

First-Year Writing: Stretch English I

ENGL 1AF

Fall 2025 Section 12 In Person 3 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/21/2025

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Raina Levesque

Email: raina.levesque@sjsu.edu (<mailto:raina.levesque@sjsu.edu>)

Office Hours: Fridays 3:00-5:00pm (or by appointment) in our Zoom classroom

Class Schedule & Location:

Section 12: T/Th 10:30-11:45, Clark Building 306

Course Information

"Remember to imagine and craft the worlds you cannot live without, just as you dismantle the ones you cannot live within."

-Dr. Ruha Benjamin

Our Stretch course will be divided into two parts: Stretch I will focus on different kinds of literacy (such as information, media, & digital literacy) and different ways arguments are presented in the media, focusing on why literacy is important in understanding some of the most pressing issues we face in the world today. Some questions we will discuss include: What is literacy and why is it important, especially now? How has literacy been reimagined in the age of social media & A.I.? What are some blocks to literacy and how are different organizations working to overcome those blocks?

Once we have grasped the importance of literacy in Stretch I, then we will focus on the the equally important role of imagination in creating alternative futures in Stretch II. Some questions we will discuss include: What is imagination and why is it important, especially now? How can we use imagination to reimagine our own individual & collective identities? How are we using imagination to reimagine concepts like intelligence and life through new technology like A.I. & synthetic biology? What are the risks & benefits associated with these reimaginings?

We will also apply these questions to our own experience with literacy & imagination more generally, allowing us to reflect on the literacy & imagination we use every day and their impact on our personal, academic, and professional lives.

Course Description and Requisites

Stretch I is the first semester of a year-long ENGL 1A 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 various genres.

Prerequisite: Completion of Reflection on College Writing.

CR/NC/I Undergraduate

* Classroom Protocols

Assessment: You must receive at least 70% (a letter grade of C-) as a final grade to pass this course, distributed as follows:

- 20% In-class activities (including warm-ups!)
- 20% Reading assignments
- 50% Writing assignments
- 10% Self-reflection (*Note: This assignment will count as your final exam*)

Assignments:

- **In-class activities** (GELOs 1, 3): We will be conducting in-class activities, including warm-up activities in the beginning of each class, which will count towards your final grade; if you are late or absent, you will not be allowed to make up these activities.
- **Reading assignments** (GELOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5): You will be asked to complete weekly reading assignments that ask you to annotate texts & respond to reading reflection questions on Canvas.
- **Writing assignments** (GELOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5): You will be asked to complete two main writing assignments that include smaller scaffolding assignments: a literacy narrative (approx. 1000 words for each draft) and an op-ed assignment (approx. 1000 words for each draft).
- **Self-reflection** (GELOs 2, 3, 5). For your final exam, you will be asked to write a final self-reflection (approx. 500 words).

Attendance & Participation Policy:

- We will be conducting **in-class activities**, including **warm-up activities** in the beginning of each class, which will count towards your final grade; if you are late or absent, you will not be allowed to make up these activities.
- Each student will be allowed to **miss up to two classes** without deductions for missing the in-class activities in order to account for unexpected events.
- *Note: Exceptions are made to this policy only in rare circumstances. Please contact me if you need to miss a class and be ready to provide proof of illness or other unexpected event.*

Late Assignments Policy:

- You can submit assignments **up to three days (72 hours)** past their due date and time. No assignments will be accepted after this final deadline.
- If an assignment is **marked incomplete** due to missing requirements, you have **one chance to redo the assignment within 7 days** (with a late deduction of 1 point if completed within the 7 day period).
- *Note: Exceptions are made to this policy only in rare circumstances. Please contact me if you need an extension on an assignment and be ready to provide proof of illness or other unexpected event.*

Plagiarism Policy:

- Plagiarism will result in a **zero grade** for the assignment. This includes any assignments that receive a **score of 50% or higher** using the Turn it in plagiarism tool in Canvas, as well as any assignments that:
 - a) **include inaccurate information** from A.I. writing tools (also called "A.I. hallucinations")
 - b) **copy & paste full sentences** from A.I. writing tools.

Contacting Your Instructor:

- The best way to reach me is via email at raina.levesque@sjsu.edu (I will respond within 48 hours).
- You can also visit me during my office hours on Fridays 3:00-5:00pm (or by appointment) in our Zoom classroom.

Textbook Requirements:

- All reading materials for this course are provided for free on Canvas.

Technology Requirements:

- You will need access to the following technology: a laptop/tablet, Microsoft Word or a compatible word processing program, & reliable internet access.
- To prepare for the course: 1) Visit [SJSU IT Software Installation Page](#) and download Microsoft Word (for PC and Mac); 2) Download the free Grammarly grammar checker app found here: [Grammarly.com](https://www.grammarly.com)

Important Dates:

- First day of instruction: Wednesday, 8/20/25
- Waitlist ends: Friday, 8/29/25
- Instructor permission required to add a class: Saturday, 8/30/25
- Labor day (campus closed): 9/1/25
- Last day to add/drop a class via MySJSU: Tuesday, 9/16/25
- Veteran's day (campus closed): 11/11/25
- Thanksgiving break (campus closed): 11/27/25-11/28/25
- Last day to petition for withdrawal without an "F" (Failing grade) on transcript: Monday, 11/17/25
- Last day of instruction: Monday, 12/8/25

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>)

Stretch English Overview

The Stretch Calendar

Stretch I and II span the fall and spring terms: the fall and spring course are both required to complete the A2 coursework. You will be enrolled in the same section in spring semester (time, day, instructor) so you should plan on reserving this time slot in your spring schedule.

The A2 Milestone for Progress to Degree

The California State University system and SJSU expect all students to have completed their A2 requirement within the year. Please work with your instructor and all recommended support staff to achieve this milestone successfully.

Course Description

Stretch I and II, together, fulfill the Written Communication I requirement. Courses in GE Area A2 cultivate an understanding of the writing process and the goals, dynamics, and genres of written communication, with special attention to the nature of writing in the university. Students in these courses develop college-level reading abilities, rhetorical sophistication, and writing styles that give form and coherence to complex ideas and feelings. A grade of C-(minus) or better signifies that the student is a capable college-level writer and reader of English.

Stretch English is designed to give you more time to develop your reading and writing skills. By enrolling in this two-semester course, you are joining a learning community. You will study with the same classmates and writing instructor in both the fall and spring semesters. Staying with your class cohort both semesters accelerate your learning and gives you the chance to make strong relationships on campus.

Your instructor has prepared a syllabus outlining the specific assignments for your section of Stretch. Please refer to your section syllabus for more information about your instructor's expectations and the daily work to complete these assignments.

Time Commitment

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours on this course each semester (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 Stretch English, our learning each semester 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.

Grading in Stretch English

In the fall semester (ENGL 1AF), you will receive either a CR (credit) or a NC (no credit). To receive credit in the fall semester, you must honor your instructor's grading policy and demonstrate significant, measurable progress throughout the semester.

In the spring semester (ENGL 1AS), you will receive a letter grade for the course. You must earn a C- or better to earn graduation credit for GE Area A2.

Campus Resources for Writers

SJSU Writing Center

Located in Clark Hall, Suite 126, the Writing Center offers appointments with tutors who are well trained to assist you as you work to become a better writer. The Writing Center offers both one-on-one tutoring and workshops on a variety of writing topics. All services are free. To make an appointment or to refer to the Center's online resources, visit the Writing Center website.

SJSU Peer Connections

Peer Connections is your online, campus-wide resource for mentoring (time management, note taking, study skills, getting involved, etc.), tutoring (undergraduate writing, lower division Math, Science, History, Humanities, etc.), supplemental instruction (review and study sessions for select courses), and learning assistants in classes across campus. All services are free. Make appointments to meet with a tutor or mentor by visiting Spartan Connect ([Links to an external site.](#)) For more information on services, online workshops, and a step-by-step guide to making an appointment, please visit the Peer Connections website.

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 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.

Grading Information

Grading Policy:

This class uses a labor-based grading model, according to which grades are determined based on the amount of labor (i.e. time and work) involved. As a result, most assignments are graded credit/no credit, and you will only receive numerical point values for the revisions you make on your Final Drafts, and your final Self-Reflection. *Note: Please see [Labor-Based Grading \(https://barnard.edu/labor-based-grading#:~:text=Labor-based%20grading%20\(also%20known,course%20and%20the%20course's%20instructor.\)](https://barnard.edu/labor-based-grading#:~:text=Labor-based%20grading%20(also%20known,course%20and%20the%20course's%20instructor.)) to learn more about this grading model.*

Grading Contract:

In this course, you are guaranteed a B if you:

1. attend class regularly, missing no more than two classes;
2. participate in all in-class exercises and activities;
3. meet main criteria and due dates for all major assignments;
4. make substantive revisions when the assignment is to revise;
5. submit your Final Portfolio at the end of the semester.

In this system, you can earn the grade of B entirely on the basis of what you do—on your conscientious effort and participation. The grade of B does not derive from my judgment about the quality of your work with the exception that your work must meet my expectations for the quality of “baseline” engagement.

Grades higher than B, however, do rest on my judgment of quality. To earn higher grades you must complete the assignments at both a higher level of (1) effort and participation and (2) quality.

As an instructor, I commit to:

1. providing clear and reasonable criteria for all main assignments;
2. providing thoughtful, formative feedback for all assignments where revision is required in a timely manner;
3. creating availability for meetings with individual students who want to confer on drafts;
4. providing oral or written feedback to explain judgments of quality as necessary & seriously reconsidering judgements of quality if requested as part of a one-on-one meeting;
5. considering upon request extenuating circumstances to raise (but never lower) grades that do not meet students’ expectations based on the above contracts;
6. re-evaluating contract criteria in consultation with class members, if requested.

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

Unit 1: Literacy Narrative	Topic	Assignments
Week 3	Theme: What is literacy? Skill: Critical Thinking	Rethinking & Empathy Maps

Week 4	Theme: What is literacy? Skill: Information Literacy	Information Literacy Narrative
Week 5	Theme: What is literacy? Skill: Media Literacy	Media Literacy Narrative
Week 6	Theme: What is literacy? Skill: Digital Literacy	Digital Literacy Narrative
Week 7	Theme: What is literacy? Skill: Writing Literacy Narratives	Literacy Narrative (First Draft)
Week 8	Theme: What is literacy? Skill: Literacy Narrative Revision	Peer Review Activity Literacy Narrative (Final Draft)

Unit 2: Op-Ed	Topic	Assignments
Week 9	Theme: Arguments in the Media Skill: Analyzing Rhetoric	Rhetorical Analysis
Week 10	Theme: Arguments in the Media Skill: Analyzing Reasoning	Reasoning Analysis
Week 11	Theme: Arguments in the Media Skill: Analyzing Arguments	Argument Analysis
Week 12	Theme: Arguments in the Media Skill: Formulating Arguments	Argument Assignment

Week 13	Theme: Arguments in the Media Skill: Writing Op-Eds	Op-Ed (First Draft)
Week 14	Theme: Arguments in the Media Skill: Op-Ed Revision	Peer Review Activity Op-Ed (Final Draft)
Week 15	Theme: Arguments in the Media Skill: Remixing Genres	Op-Ed Remix Final Self-Reflection