

First Year Writing

ENGL 1A

Fall 2025 Sections 64, 65 In Person 3 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/21/2025

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Raina Levesque

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

Class Schedule & Location:

Section 64: T/Th 12:00-1:15, Clark Building 306

Section 65: T/Th 3:00-4:15, Dudley Moorhead Hall 347

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 English 1A course will center around readings and writing assignments that discuss the role of imagination in creating the future. Through an analysis of readings on this topic from a variety of genres, some questions we will discuss include: What is imagination? 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 imagination more generally, allowing us to reflect on the imagination we use every day and its impact on our personal, academic, and professional lives.

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

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 three major writing assignments that include smaller scaffolding assignments: a genre analysis (approx. 1000 words for each draft), a critical analysis (approx. 1000 words for each draft), and a critical synthesis (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>)

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\(also%20known,course%20and%20the%20course's%20instructor.\)](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.

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: Genre Analysis	Topic	Assignments
Week 3	Theme: What is imagination? Skill: Identifying & Analyzing Rhetorical Situations	Rhetorical Analysis #1
Week 4	Theme: What is imagination? Skill: Identifying & Analyzing Genres	Rhetorical Analysis #2
Week 5	Theme: What is imagination? Skill: Evaluating Sources	Genre Analysis (First Draft)
Week 6	Theme: What is imagination? Skill: Genre Analysis Revision	Peer Review Activity Genre Analysis (Final Draft)

Unit 2: Critical Analysis	Topic	Assignments
Week 7	Theme: Reimagining Intelligence Skill: Writing Summaries	Summary Assignment
Week 8	Theme: Reimagining Intelligence Skill: Critical Reading	Evaluation Assignment

Week 9	Theme: Reimagining Intelligence Skill: Writing Critical Analyses	Critical Analysis (First Draft)
Week 10	Theme: Reimagining Intelligence Skill: Critical Analysis Revision	Peer Review Activity Critical Analysis (Final Draft)

Unit 3: Critical Synthesis	Topic	Assignments
Week 11	Theme: Reimagining Life Skill: Synthesizing Research	Synthesis Chart
Week 12	Theme: Reimagining Life Skill: Evaluating Research	Synthesis Assignment
Week 13	Theme: Reimagining Life Skill: Writing Critical Syntheses	Critical Synthesis (First Draft)
Week 14	Theme: Reimagining Life Skill: Critical Synthesis Revision	Peer Review Activity Critical Synthesis (Final Draft)
Week 15	Theme: Reimagining Life Skill: Multimodal Genre Remixing	Genre Remix Assignment Final Self-Reflection