

Critical Thinking and Writing

ENGL 2

Fall 2025 Section 18 In Person 3 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/20/2025

Contact Information

Instructor: Jillian Murphy

Email: jillian.murphy@sjsu.edu

Office: FO room 221

Canvas Inbox recommended for all communication.

Note: DO NOT try to reach me by leaving comments on Canvas assignments. Canvas will not notify me!

Office Hours

In person

Monday, Wednesday, 12:15 PM to 1:15 PM, My Office (FO 221)

on Zoom

by appointment

Message me on Canvas to meet on Zoom

For all Zoom appointments use the following link: <https://sjsu.zoom.us/my/jillian.murphy>

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>).

Our Class Policies

Course Theme

Aristotle called rhetoric “the ability, in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion.” Cicero declared it “speech designed to persuade.” Burke defined it as “[the] use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents.” In every case we see that influence is at the core of rhetoric.

In this course we will study influence through the modern figure of the “influencer,” a professional whose goals of persuasion are tied to marketing a product, service, or their own brand online. What rhetorical strategies do influencers rely on to argue the value of a fast fashion brand? A VPN? A meal delivery service? A lifestyle? How are the strategies of these “human agents” furthered by nonhuman agents like social media or search engine algorithms? What are the social and political contexts that enable these arguments and how do influencers capitalize on them?

As we tease apart the elements of influencer rhetoric, we will also build our own arguments about the ethics and value of this new economy. How have our lives been changed by this new form of marketing? In what ways does it bring value? How should it be regulated? Who is responsible for the negative effects of social media and influencer culture?

Our goal by the end of this course is not only to “see the available means of persuasion” for ourselves, but also to consider the ethics and impact of persuasion and the ways our own influence can shape the world around us.

Learning Environment

As college students, you are responsible for your success in this course. You should be attentive to instruction, engaged in discussions and activities, and caught up with all coursework. Participation is key to our collaborative learning environment, so I expect you to be civil and respectful toward me and the other students in the class.

Please note: sometimes projects and class discussions include material of a sensitive nature. In this course, students may encounter materials that differ from and perhaps challenge their ideas, beliefs, and understanding of reality. Students are encouraged to discuss issues about such material with the instructor.

Lectures and Announcements

This is an in-person class, and as such instruction, guidelines, grading information, advice, announcements, and updates will be given during class sessions. Students should plan to be on-time and present for every class session. Major assignments will be scored on the concepts and writing strategies taught during class time. It is your responsibility to keep up with class material or visit office hours for help.

Office Hours

Being available during scheduled office hours to help students with their writing or new concepts is one of the best parts of my job. Visit drop-in office hours as much as you need. If you are in class during that time, message me on Canvas to schedule a meeting over Zoom, though my availability may be much more limited.

Assignment Guidelines

All assignments have their own instructions and grading policies, outlined on the prompt. Make sure to read and understand each assignment well before the due date.

If you have questions about an assignment, reach out to me or a classmate with enough time to complete the work correctly, or request an extension (see Extensions, below).

Hyperlinks will not be accepted as submissions for coursework (unless an exception is specified). Make sure you understand how to submit a .doc, .page, or .pdf. Work submitted incorrectly will be scored down according to the late policy.

I can only grade an assignment once. Familiarize yourself with the extension policies and make sure that the copy you submit is the one you want graded. Re-written/re-submitted work without an extension will be scored down according to the late policy.

Plagiarism and AI

In line with university policies, plagiarism is not permitted in our class. Students will learn and follow guidelines for citing outside sources in MLA. Our class will focus on practicing skills of critical thinking, ethos building, audience engagement, and unique authorial voice, so students who rely on LLM ("AI")

tools at any point in the writing process will be at a disadvantage and should expect lower scores. This includes tools like Grammarly. Need help? Use a human!

Projects that cite fabricated sources and hallucinated information or heavily plagiarize will receive a failing grade. For questions, clarification, or help, visit me in office hours.

Late Policy

Late work will be graded down 10% (one letter grade) for each calendar day it is turned in after the deadline, starting with the due date. It is your responsibility to turn in thoughtful and complete work by the deadline listed or correctly request an extension (see: Extensions, below).

Note: The Portfolio Final Draft cannot be turned in late.

Assignments more than 5 days late can be turned in for 50% credit at any point in the semester up until the day of our final class meeting, 12/8, at 11:59pm. This late work will not receive feedback, so visit office hours if you would like feedback on this work.

To earn late credit, assignments must be complete; incomplete late work will earn a 0.

Participation and Absent Policies

This course is offered in-person, so I have designed instruction and activities for each class session that will prepare students for our major essay assignments and my approach to grading. Students should expect to attend all class meetings and take advantage of the following policies to catch up on any missed materials and assignments.

To earn full points for in-class work, students must be present and participating and must turn in work before the end of class. Students must be present in class to earn credit for group work. Students who do not submit work to Canvas before the end of the class period (including replying to group work with their name) will get a late penalty.

Absent students can make up work as follows:

1. Connect with a trusted classmate to get notes, announcements, and clarification on the in-class assignments you missed. Read the full module for the week and note any questions about materials.
2. Complete the day's assignment in full, individually, within 3 calendar days of the missed class to earn 70% of the participation points.
3. To make up the in-class portion of the participation points and earn full credit (the last 30%), visit me in office hours within 2 weeks of your absence to show your understanding of the topics we covered and ask any clarifying questions you have.

After 3 calendar days points of an assignment missed due to absence will be docked in accordance with the late policy (outlined above). If you are too ill to complete your work within that period, message me on Canvas ASAP and we will check back in when you are well.

Extensions

Students can request an extension (for up to 1 week) on take-home work by filling out the Extension Request Form and submitting it to the assignment before the original deadline. I do not require an explanation or doctor's note, but you must complete and submit the form correctly and on time to receive the extension, and it is your responsibility to keep track of your assignments and new deadline. If you request the extension right before the assignment is due, there will be a delay in its approval.

The new deadline you set for your extension (up to 1 week from the assignment deadline) will serve as your due date for the assignment, and after it passes the late policy will apply. Note that Canvas will no longer alert you to this due date. To extend an extension, submit another request before this new deadline. Extensions cannot exceed 1 week past the original assignment deadline.

Work turned in late (including due to an approved extension) will be graded after all on-time work has been graded. To get feedback sooner, visit me in office hours. As always, it is your responsibility to keep up with the pace of the class. If you are struggling, don't hesitate to reach out.

Note: All late work besides the Final Portfolio, including due to an approved extension, is due by 12/8 at 11:59pm. Students cannot request an extension on the Final Portfolio.

Extra Credit

Students with exceptional contributions to our in-class collaborations can earn 1 extra credit point per class session, with a maximum of 15 points for the semester.

Questions

For questions about any of our class policies, message me on Canvas or visit me during office hours

Parental Leave

I, Jillian Murphy, have designed the activities and assignments for this course and will instruct until my parental leave begins in early October. On October 6, Sophie Aust will take over all instruction for the course. Professor Aust may choose to amend/simplify activities and policies to suit the needs of the class. We will discuss this transition at length in our class sessions this semester.

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)

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

Coursework will be completed digitally through Canvas. You will need to have a laptop or tablet with internet access in order to submit work in-class and for homework. If this is a concern, email me and we will figure out a solution.

All course materials are available digitally at no cost. If you have any trouble accessing a text, message me asap.

Reading assignments may be added or removed (with notice) based on our needs as a group.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Essay: Contextual Analysis

Rough Draft Due: 9/8

In-Class Peer Review Workshop: 9/8

Final Draft Due: 9/22

Word count: 1000

Points: 200

Essay: Persuasive Research

Rough Draft Due: 10/6

In-Class Peer Review Workshop: 10/6

Final Draft Due: 10/20

Word count: 1200

Points: 200

Oral Presentation: Meme Analysis

Rough Draft Plan Due: 11/3

In-Class Peer Review Workshop: 11/17

Presentations: 11/17, 11/19, 11/24

Word count: 1200 (with multimodal materials)

Points: 250

Portfolio: Final Reflection

Rough Draft Due: 12/1

In-Class Peer Review Workshop: 12/1

Final Draft Due: Wed, 12/10 3:00pm

Word Count: 600

Points: 100

Homework and Classwork: Participation

Students will have regular reading and writing homework to prepare before each week of class. We will also complete writing, analysis, and group work in class. All assignments will be turned in on Canvas. See the section on Class Policies (above) for details about absences, late work and extensions.

Links will not be accepted as submissions for homework or in-class assignments.

Word count: 4000+

Points: 250

✓ Grading Information

Criteria

Type	Weight	Topic	Notes
Contextual Analysis	20%	1000 words	GELO 1-4 (Focus on GELO 2 and 3)
Persuasive Research Essay	20%	1200 words	GELO 1-4 (Focus on GELO 1 and 4)
Oral Presentation	25%	1200 words	GELO 1-4 (Focus on GELO 1, 2, 3, 4)
Portfolio	10%	600 words	GELO 2 and 4
Homework and Classwork	25%	4000+ words	GELO 1-5

Breakdown

Grade	Range	Notes
A	93% to 100%	
A-	90-92%	
B+	87% to 89%	

Grade	Range	Notes
B	83% to 86%	
B-	80% to 82%	
C+	77% to 79%	
C	73% to 76%	
C-	70% to 72%	
D+	67% to 69%	
D	63% to 66%	
D-	60% to 62%	
F	0% to 59%	

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

Week 1 (8/20): Welcome!

Week 2 (8/25): (homework due) Rhetoric

Week 3 (9/1): Class Essay

Week 4 (9/8): (Analysis Rough draft due) Peer Review

Week 5 (9/15): (homework due) Pathos

Week 6 (9/22): (Analysis final draft due) Metacognition

Week 7 (9/29): (homework due) Research

Week 8 (10/6): (Research rough draft due) Peer Review

Week 9 (10/13): (homework due) Argument

Week 10 (10/20): (Research final draft due) Reflection

Week 11 (10/27): (homework due) Oral Argument

Week 12 (11/3): (Presentation rough draft due) Peer Review

Week 13 (11/10): (homework due) Check-in

Week 14 (11/17): (Presentations due) presentations

Week 15 (11/24): (homework due) presentations

Week 16 (12/1): (rough draft due Wednesday) Portfolio

Week 17 (12/8): Final Class

Final (Portfolio Final Draft due): Wed, December 10 3:00 PM