

Argument and Analysis Section 84

ENGL 1B

Fall 2024 3 Unit(s) 08/21/2024 to 12/09/2024 Modified 08/21/2024

Contact Information

Dr. Michael Tod Edgerton

Email: Michael.Edgerton@sjsu.edu

Class Zoom link (Mondays & Wednesdays 10:30am - 11:45pm): [https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/87617600142?pwd=Ui85a3lGTjFLN0xqaG44aHpLeWsvQT09Links to an external site.
\(https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/87617600142?pwd=Ui85a3lGTjFLN0xqaG44aHpLeWsvQT09\)](https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/87617600142?pwd=Ui85a3lGTjFLN0xqaG44aHpLeWsvQT09Links%20to%20an%20external%20site.(https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/87617600142?pwd=Ui85a3lGTjFLN0xqaG44aHpLeWsvQT09))

Office hours will be after class on the same Zoom as class. I'm happy to stay after class for up to two hours if students are waiting to see me, but I won't wait past 12 noon to see if absent students pop in after class to check in--so if you miss class and need to speak with me directly after, Zoom in by 12:00.

Course Description and Requisites

English 1B is a writing course that focuses on argumentation and analysis. Through the study of literary, rhetorical, and professional texts, students will develop the habits of mind required to write argumentative and critical essays. Particular emphasis is placed on writing and reading processes. Students will have repeated practice in prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing, and repeated practice in reading closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes.

GE Area(s): C2. Humanities

Prerequisite: ENGL 1A or ENGL 1AS with a C- or better.

ENGL 1B is not open to students who successfully completed ENGL 2.

Letter Graded

Classroom Protocols

ENGL 1B

ENGL 1B is open to (1) students majoring in Marine Biology, Biochemistry, Geology, and Engineering (Aerospace, Biomedical, Chemical, Civil, Computer, Electrical, General, Industrial and Systems, Mechanical, and Software); and (2) transfer students who have completed GE Area A3 (Critical Thinking) requirement and still need to take a second semester of English composition for GE Area C2.

This course is not open to students who have successfully completed ENGL 2.

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

Satisfies GE Area C2: Letters

ENGL 1B Course Content

GENERAL PROGRAM FOCI

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. Writing assignments will give you repeated practice in prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. This class requires a minimum of 6000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form. Assignments include in-class writing as well as revised out-of-class essays.

Reading: In addition to being writing intensive, ENGL 1B is also a reading course. You will read a variety of literary, rhetorical, and professional works of the human intellect and imagination. Secondary materials will be read to help situate the historical and cultural contexts in which the primary texts were created. All the readings serve as useful models of writing for academic, general, and specific audiences.

Critical Thinking: In addition to focusing on how to write arguments, the course also teaches you how to analyze and evaluate texts critically. More specifically, you will practice evaluating arguments for purpose, audience, rhetorical strategies, conclusions; evaluating ideas by contextualizing your assumptions and values (historical, cultural, socio-economic, political); and evaluating your own understanding of ideas by identifying your own interpretative lens.

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

OUR SPECIFIC COURSE CONTENT

I've structured this course to build sequentially, developing skills in one module that you will use in the next. The course focuses on building your reading skills (in the strong sense of the word "reading," meaning not just taking in the literal information, but reading deeply and actively to *analyze, interpret,* and *associate* to the language of literary and visual texts.

Interwoven with reading well--which is to say closely and attentively to the actual text as it exists--our second major focus will be to strengthen our ability to articulate those readings in writing. From in-text annotations to shorter responses and longer, formal essays, you will work to more clearly, thoroughly, and precisely communicate your ideas about texts, laying out exactly how the specific "parts" and "structures" work to produce certain effects, from expressing emotions, telling stories, and exploring ideas to making political statements or even (intentionally or unintentionally) reproducing unconscious assumptions (stereotypes of an identity category being a common example).

TEXTS and TOPICS

We'll start with a module on explicating poetry. An explication of a poem entails the "close reading" (a synonymous term), more or less line by line, of the operations of the poem (how the poet's choices give rise to the poem's "meanings"). We'll read a variety of 20th and 21st C. poems, practicing and developing our reading skills. No reason to panic if you've always felt you "just don't get" poetry; a publishing poet, myself, you will learn to read poems with greater success in my class.

In our second module, we'll turn to the semiotics (the meaning-making "hows" and "whats," operations and designs, etc.) of the still image, looking at photographs and paintings to "read" their visual messages, expressions, implications, etc.

In our final module, we will use all of the skills we've built to turn to music videos, where you will write a third major essay on how the video expresses, embodies, contradicts, expands, or otherwise engages with the lyrics of its song.

You will write a substantive essay developed over different drafts for each of these three modules. In lieu of a final exam, we'll instead put together a final portfolio of your semester's work, writing a self-reflection on that work and your growth as a reader and writer this semester.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON EFFECTIVE ESSAYS (and final essay grading criteria):

You'll need to remember this throughout the semester--there are three essential components to writing well about texts, and these are the major criteria on which I grade your final essays.

1) **The text itself.** Always quote exact language. Look up words you're less familiar with for full definitions and common usage notes. Always read each specific word, line, stanza, sentence, etc. in context of the whole and of any references (historical, political, philosophical/religious, etc.) that the text presents. Everything must be based on and guided by the text in front of you.

2) **Precise, clear articulation of your ideas** in a logically-developed and -organized essay. If readers can't understand what you're trying to say, they certainly can't be persuaded that your interpretation of, say, Manet's famous painting *Olympia* is among the valid and valuable ones.

3) **Explain HOW the text does what you claim it does.** This is the one most students commonly neglect in their essays. You need not only to clearly express your interpretation of *this* image that's developed in *these lines* you've just quoted from a poem (or any text open to interpretation), you also have to tell us how it presents that image in such a way as to mean what you say it means. How does the specific choice of words (or visual elements in a photograph), in their precise order or arrangement, express X and/or Y idea or emotion. You could very well quote thoroughly and articulate clearly and completely your interpretation of the quoted material, but if you don't explain how you got from A to B, how the text operates to produce these associations, ideas, feelings, and or "meaning," then readers might understand your idea but simply not be able to "see it" in the text, thinking, "That's sounds good in itself, but I don't understand how she could get that from this song; the lyrics and interpretation just doesn't connect for me." **You must map your interpretative process, "dissecting" how the machinations of the text produce its meaning.** Without that, your reading may sound great while nonetheless feeling disconnected from the text you're analyzing. Here are two examples to illustrate my point.

EX1:

Let's say this is what a student wrote in an early draft:

The poem ends with this last stanza, after the two men have met, the morning after they hooked up:

the only thorn that night
rose with the sun
when he tossed my flower I'd bought him
to the street as I
bopped along invisibly beneath
his bedroom window.

The poem ends with a twist. After setting expectations for a happy ending to this love affair, where this night is the beginning of a great romance, the poem ends with the startling revelation that these two men will not be seeing one another again, and the speaker of the poem, on his way happily home the morning after their encounter, is suddenly deflated. The sharp sting of this moment is the proverbial "thorn" of the rose, and rejection can certainly be a painful part of romantic life. The lover's indifference is underscored again with the fact that he passes unseen, and no one will never love him.

This first example fails to effectively connect the student's interpretation to the text itself. What if someone read those lines and doesn't get the role of the "thorn"? Just what reveals that this is the end and not a beginning of a relationship? What in the poem says the speaker will *never* be loved? While the interpretation by itself makes perfect sense, it is not illustrating how the poem's language works to produce those ideas in the mind of the reader; the two are left hanging in separate corners, completely disconnected. In the next draft, realizing this error, our hypothetical student draws out these connections.

EX2:

The poem ends with a twist. After setting expectations for a happy ending to this love affair, where this night is the beginning of a great romance, the poem ends with the startling revelation that "the only thorn that night / rose with the sun, / when he tossed the flower I'd bought him / to the street as I / bopped along invisibly beneath / his bedroom window." Such language tells us these two men will not be seeing one another again, and the speaker of the poem, on his way happily "bop[ping]" home the morning after their encounter, is suddenly deflated when his lover tosses the rose out his window, an obvious act of disdain. The sharp sting of this moment is the proverbial "thorn" of the rose, its downside or danger (and whose downward trajectory is intensified by the ironic image of the sun rising), and rejection is certainly a painful part of romantic life. The lover's indifference is underscored again with the fact that, more than just physically unseen, the speaker, with his happy gait, is "invisible" to him; the man has not seen his worth, his character and heart, and will never love him.

This second version successfully reads some of the key elements in the lines, quoting *and* explicating them to clarify how we can tell that there is only an unhappy resolution to this one night stand that will be an end, not the beginning of any relationship. (She furthermore cuts the assumption--nowhere in the poem--that the speaker won't ever find love; he just won't, as far as we can know, find it with this person.)

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 1B 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 1B, 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 Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

GE Area C2: Humanities

Area C Arts and Humanities courses help students to respond subjectively as well as objectively to aesthetic experiences and to develop an understanding of the integrity of both emotional and intellectual responses. C2 Humanities courses encourage students to analyze and appreciate works of philosophical, historical, literary, aesthetic, and cultural importance.

GE Area C2 Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of a C2 course, students should be able to:

1. analyze and understand works of philosophical and humanistic importance, including their temporal and cultural dimensions;
2. explore and articulate their own subjective aesthetic and intellectual responses to such texts;
3. analyze and assess ideas of value, meaning, and knowledge, as produced within the humanistic disciplines; and
4. research and write effective analyses of works of the human intellect and imagination

Writing Practice: Students will write a minimum of 1500 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline.

Course Requirements and Assignments

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

PARTICIPATION in all class meetings with *CAMERAS ON* and working audio is REQUIRED--this is a discussion-oriented course, **not** a lecture. **You must be in a quiet space doing nothing else** but paying attention and being fully engaged in class--you can't be driving or otherwise "on the move," and you need to tell family and roommates to leave you alone.

A fully-functional computer with Adobe Acrobat DC (or DC Pro), working audio and camera is **required** for this online course. You will need to replace damaged or lost equipment immediately.

So, yes--cameras are required to be working and on in all class and office meetings. This equipment and its use are required for my section of the course. Have a backup plan in place in the event that you have spotty internet or other technical failures.

There are no required textbooks to buy; **all of our texts will be downloaded or linked from Canvas.** See the **Modules** page for assignments, which I will publish on a rolling basis.

Most of your weekly reading and writing assignments will be "credit for completion." This means that you will be given full credit for these assignments as long as you've done your best, thorough job, have followed all instructions, and have fully completed and submitted the assignments on time. This practice provides you with both a solid foundation for earning the required C or higher grade to meet CSU graduation requirements and, consequently, allows you to "fall" while learning "to ride" the proverbial bike with less stress about "messing up" or "getting it right" along the way and more focus on improving as you go. I design weekly assignments to function as a means of learning, developing intellectual skills, and growing as a critical reader and writer; I think it's anathema to learning to treat all assignments as a kind of "test" of what you can (or cannot) already do when their point is to develop those very abilities. (It is your final drafts of your essays that will show what you have so far learned, and which I will have higher expectations. See my "IMPORTANT NOTE" below.)

I will discuss the possibility of accepting late assignments on a case-by-case basis; if you miss an assignment, you should email me immediately at michael.edgerton@sjsu.edu and/or talk to me about it after the very next class.

All assignments must be submitted according to instructions, usually, if not exclusively, as PDFs uploaded to Canvas. Never "share" any files with me; only submit to Canvas. If Canvas is down, email me that information and upload as soon as possible after it's back up.

Always open, work on, and save all PDFs in Adobe Acrobat DC Reader or Pro. To avoid glitches with comments that may render your work unreadable (and your grade a "zero"), do not open PDFs in other programs, such as Google Docs.

ALL WORK MUST BE YOUR OWN! I have absolutely **ZERO tolerance for cheating of any kind**, and that includes using another intelligence, be it another person or an AI, to do the work of interpreting, thinking, analyzing, writing, editing, and/or translating your work for you. If you need to use a dictionary or thesaurus to help you write, that's fine. If you need to use Google translate to find the write English word or two, no worries, but you can't put whole sentences and even essays through editing or translating programs to help you translate improve or even write from scratch your essays and other assignments for you. **I WILL FAIL you for the assignment--and perhaps even the whole class--without hesitation if you cheat.**

✓ Grading Information

Our three major essays will focus on critically reading and writing about poetry, visual images, and music videos as interpretations of their songs. We have weekly annotated reading and writing assignments, which will be primarily credit-for-completion, giving you a good deal of padding for your grade while you build the "muscles" you need to do your best on each unit's final essay. Do all the work and you will almost definitely pass with the C grade or higher you need to fulfill the 1B portion of your SJSU writing requirement.

Grade Distribution:

Major Essay 1, 2, and 3: **20% each** (for a total of 60%)

Weekly homework and in-class assignments, quizzes, etc.: **20%**

Final Portfolio: **10%**

Substantive and active in-class participation (not just repeating someone else) and formal group/individual presentations: **10%**

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

The course schedule of assignments and due dates is available on Canvas. I publish them on a rolling basis, usually weekly.