

First Year Writing

ENGL 1A

Spring 2026 Section 34 In Person 3 Unit(s) 01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026 Modified 01/20/2026

Contact Information

Instructor: Anne Cheilek

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Office Hours: Monday and Tuesday 1:30 - 2:30 pm, or by appointment (in person or over Zoom)

Course Information

Class format: In person

Class Days/Time: Tuesday and Thursday 12:00 - 1:15 pm

Classroom: Hugh Gillis Hall 221

Course materials such as the syllabus, handouts, notes, and assignment instructions can be found on the Canvas course website. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through Canvas to learn of any course updates.

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.

Satisfies 1A. Written Communication I (Formerly Area A2).

Prerequisite(s): Completion of Reflection on College Writing

Grading: Letter Graded

Classroom Protocols

For a class like this one, much of the learning happens in class. Therefore, it is essential that you are in class every day, on time, and ready to participate in class activities and discussions. If you know that you will be absent on a certain day, please let me know via email. In some cases, it may be possible for you to make up some participation points by completing the in-class assignments you missed.

Show respect for others at all times, in both your language and behavior. Part of this class may involve disagreeing with your classmates, but we will do this respectfully and courteously. If you have a question at any time about what is appropriate, please contact me for guidance.

It is important to me that all students feel welcome and comfortable in my classroom. If you have a problem with the classroom environment, or the behavior of one of your classmates, please speak to me privately about the issue so that it may be resolved.

Do not hand in any assignments that you are not willing to share: peer review is an integral part of this class.

Time Commitment

Success in ENGL 1A 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. This computes to about nine hours per week for this class. This time includes in-class instruction, preparation/studying, writing assignments, and other course-related activities.

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 1A: Written Communication I

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 others. Area 1A is a prerequisite for Area 1B: Critical Thinking. Completion of Area 1A with a grade of C- or better is a CSU graduation requirement.

GE Area 1A Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of an Area 1A 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 requirement

Area 1A courses require a minimum of 6000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form.

Course Materials

There is no textbook for this course. Selected readings will be available on Canvas. Students will be responsible for selecting and locating additional resources in support of their writing projects.

Materials students are required to bring to each class meeting include:

- laptop or computer with internet connectivity and word processing software (laptops may be checked out from [the SJSU Student Computing Service](#) at no cost)

- notebook just for this class with pages that can be removed and handed in
- pen or pencil

Library Liaison:

Our library liaison is [Peggy Cabrera](#). She is available to help you find resources to do your work in this course. She has set up for students a [library resource page for the Department of English and Comparative Literature](#). The tutorials on this page will help you to understand academic research processes and tools, and they will help you to develop an eye for the most valuable resources for your work.

Course Requirements and Assignments

There are four categories of writing assignments in this course: major writing assignments, short writing assignments (SWAs), in-class writing, and final portfolio and reflection. In addition, your class participation will count toward your final grade.

A. Three Major Assignments:

1. A "conflict narrative" that examines the role of interpersonal argument in the student's experience. The objective of this assignment is to delve into argumentation techniques and explore how rhetorical strategies affect and are affected by real-world events. This is a 1000-word assignment, and will build on assignments we produce in class. (GELO 1, 2, 3)
2. A research project on how robots and AI are impacting a profession you are interested in pursuing in the future. You will conduct library research and present your findings in a survey paper — researched and cited academic writing. This assignment should total 1000 words. (GELO 1, 2, 4, 5)
3. The last major assignment of the semester is a personal essay that builds on an in-class writing prompt of the student's choice. A personal essay is a short work of autobiographical nonfiction that discusses inner thoughts and experiences, relating them to some kind of insight or universal truth. The structure is highly variable in personal essays, but you should try to begin with a hook, and make some kind of point at the end that will bring your thoughts together. This assignment should be written in informal language—trust your own voice. This assignment should total 1000 words. (GELO 2, 3, 4, 5)

B. Short Writing Assignments (SWAs)

Ten writing exercises will be assigned as homework over the course of the semester. These assignments form the building blocks of your major projects. (GELO 1, 3, 4, 5)

C. In-Class Writing

You will engage in daily writing activities in response to prompts given in class. In addition, you are responsible for completing peer reviews of your classmates' work. These are graded C/NC and will form part of your participation grade. Feedback available upon request. (GELO 2, 3, 5)

D. Final Portfolio and Reflection

At the end of the semester, you will curate a final portfolio of selected writing from the semester, accompanied by a 500-word reflection paper that discusses excerpts from both first and final essay drafts to demonstrate how you applied concepts and processes learned in class. This assignment will include a bibliography of the work cited in the Reflection. (GELO 2, 3, 4, 5)

✓ Grading Information

This course must be passed with a C- or better, as a CSU graduation requirement. Your grade will be calculated in the following way. The course total is 1000 points:

- Writing Project 1 — 20% or 200 pts. [for project breakdown, see below]
- Writing Project 2— 25% or 250 pts.
- Writing Project 3 — 20% or 200 pts.
- Short Writing Assignments (SWAs) — 15% or 150 pts.
- Participation — 15% or 150 pts.
- Final Portfolio and Reflection — 5% or 50 pts.

I grade writing on effort and improvement. While I provide feedback on grammar, I do not grade on it, unless a student does not correct errors I have marked in previous drafts.

Writing Projects will receive letter grades according to the following criteria:

- The “A” writing assignment is organized and well-developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment’s requirements. There is evidence of considerable engagement with the topic and effort put in towards the mastery of details as well as structure.
- The “B” writing assignment responds to the topic suitably, but it may not be as fully developed or as comprehensive as an “A” essay. There is evidence of some engagement with the topic and effort put in towards the mastery of details as well as structure.
- The “C” writing assignment will complete the minimum requirements of the assignment, but it may not be fully developed in fundamentals or in details.
- The “D” writing assignment will neglect to meet all the requirements of the assignment or may be superficial in its treatment of the topic. It may lack development or fail to stay on topic. It may contain errors that interfere with reader comprehension.

Major projects are broken down into five stages: project proposal, first draft, revision reflection, revision memo, and final draft. In most cases, they are weighted as follows:

1. Brief outline explaining your plan. (40 points)
2. First draft. (60 points)
3. Revision reflection (10 points)
4. Revision memo (30 points)
5. Final draft. (60 points)

Participation is a crucial part of this class. In particular, discussions of material and peer review are key parts of the learning process. Therefore, it is essential that you are in class every day, on time, and ready to participate in class activities and discussions. If you know that you will be absent on a certain day, please let me know via email.

If you cannot make a deadline, please contact me BEFORE THE DUE DATE. Unless an arrangement has been determined in advance, **late work will not receive full credit**. Grades for late assignments (those without prearrangements) will be reduced by 10% for the first week it is late, and an additional 10% thereafter.

The following grading scale will be used:

Range	Grade
97-100	A+
93-96	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
65-66	D
Below 65	F

I do not round grades, but I do offer many opportunities to add points through extra credit or selected assignment rewrites.

ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) TOOLS USAGE:

Since reading, writing, and critical thinking skills are integral to the learning outcomes of this course, all assignments should be prepared by you, the student. Therefore, any use of artificial intelligence systems, such as ChatGPT, to complete essays or other assignments constitutes a violation of the University's Academic Integrity Policy. (<https://sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-7.pdf>)

AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.

Many students have recently come to rely on AI tools such as Grammarly to "polish" their writing before turning it in. **Do not use these tools in this class.** I do not grade on grammar, and want to see your authentic writing so that I can help you move your skills forward.

Please talk to me if you have any questions about this policy. My goal is to help you improve your skills and confidence, not to punish you for infractions of the policy.

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 following schedule is subject to change with advance notice in class or through a Canvas Announcement. All assignments can be found on Canvas, unless otherwise noted.

Week	Date	Topics, Assignments, Deadlines
1	Thurs 1/22	Introductions, syllabus review, expectations. <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Discuss and practice freewriting.· Introductory homework assigned

2	Tues 1/27	Unit 1 begins: Thank You For Arguing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Writing Project 1 introduced (WP-1) · SWA-1 assigned
	Thurs 1/29	Argumentation Unit continues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · SWA-1 due · SWA-2 assigned, WP-1 proposal assigned
3	Tues 2/3	Argumentation Unit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · SWA-2 due, SWA-3 assigned
	Thurs 2/5	Argumentation Unit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · SWA-3 due, peer review practice · WP1 first draft assigned
4	Tues 2/10	Argumentation Unit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · WP1 first draft due; peer review; revision reflection.
	Thurs 2/12	Argumentation Unit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · levels of revision, titles
5	Tues 2/17	Argumentation Unit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · WP1 revision letter assigned
	Thurs 2/19	Argumentation Unit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · WP1 revision letter due · SWA-4 assigned

6	Tues 2/24	Argumentation Unit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · SWA-4 due · WP1 final draft assigned
	Thurs 2/26	Argumentation Unit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · mini debate
7	Tues 3/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · WP1 final draft due Unit 2 begins: To Prove You Are Not A Robot - Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · WP2 introduced, library tools discussed · SWA-5 assigned
	Thurs 3/5	Research Unit - assessing source credibility
8	Tues 3/10	Research Unit - summary, paraphrase, quote
	Thurs 3/12	Research Unit - essay structure 1 - organize info
9	Tues 3/17	Research Unit - body paragraphs and topic sentences
	Thurs 3/19	Research Unit - thesis statements and hooks
10	Tues 3/24	Research Unit - project work day
	Thurs 3/26	Research Unit - first draft due; peer review
11	Tues 4/7	Research Unit - project work day
	Thurs 4/9	Research Unit - project work day

12	Tues 4/14	Research Unit. Final draft due Unit 3: Personal Essay Introduced WP3 introduced. WP-3 proposal assigned
	Thurs 4/16	Personal Essay Unit · Project Work Day
13	Tues 4/21	Personal Essay Unit · Project Work Day
	Thurs 4/23	Personal Essay Unit · Write first draft in class
14	Tues 4/28	Personal Essay Unit · Peer review / project work day
	Thurs 4/30	Personal Essay Unit · Revision planning Final Portfolio introduced
15	Tues 5/5	Personal Essay Unit - Write final draft in class
	Thurs 5/7	Personal Essay Unit - Finish up Final Portfolio - project work day
Final	May 19	Final Portfolio due