

First Year Writing

ENGL 1A

Spring 2026 Section 30 In Person 3 Unit(s) 01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026 Modified 01/21/2026

Contact Information

Instructor: Sara Cook

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Office Hours: Tuesdays + Thursdays, noon - 1pm (and by appointment)

[Faculty Offices Building, \(<https://www.sjsu.edu/map/index.php>\)](#) room 109

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

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

Most of our work will be accessed through a course reader. The reader can be purchased at Maple Press, which is walking distance from campus: 330 S. 10th Street.

<https://maplepress.net/readers/>

You are required to bring the course reader to class everyday, unless otherwise notified.

Other materials will be posted on Canvas throughout the semester. Notice of any additions will be sent via Canvas.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Important information specific to this section of English 1A:

Course Description:

This semester we will bolster our critical reading, writing, and thinking skills by reflecting on what it means to be in the place you are now: in college, as a new adult. We will reflect on your educational journey to develop your agency and goals for college; we will read and write about issues affecting your generation, and we will explore an issue affecting a community you are a part of through a research project that will culminate in an Adobe Express web page.

Course Policies:

- Reading: Good reading is foundational to good writing. Class activities and discussions are based on the reading; sometimes we will read in class, and sometimes you will be asked to read at home. It is pertinent that you have the reading completed on the corresponding date on the schedule -- I cannot emphasize the importance of this enough. I expect you to read slowly, attentively, and to annotate your texts.
- Peer Review Workshops: Peer workshops are a chance for you to test drive your writing and are very important to the writing process. You must attend! If you choose not to attend a peer review workshop, you will forfeit one letter grade on the assignment.
- In-class work, participation, and learning: This is a seminar course and therefore participation is necessary: your contributions are important to our communal growth as thinkers and writers. **Almost every class session will contain some writing or learning exercise that you will earn credit for while in class; conversely, you will not earn this credit if you choose not to come to class.** If you must miss class, please contact me ahead of time. If you are absent from class but submit the in-class work to Canvas during class time, you will earn half credit.
- AI tools, like ChatGPT:
 - You may not use generative AI tools (like ChatGPT) to create any writing for you in this class.
 - You MAY use AI tools, like Grammarly, to spellcheck and help with minor clean-up of text.

- All formal assignments submitted in this class via Canvas will be run through the Turnitin plagiarism and AI detection tool. If you misrepresent anything as your own work without clearly placing borrowed language in quotation marks or referencing from whom or what an idea or fact has come, that is considered plagiarism, and you will fail the assignment and be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. If you are unsure about whether something may be plagiarism or another form of academic dishonesty, please reach out to me to discuss it.
- For reference, here is [SJSU's Academic Integrity Policy](#) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/SJSU-Academic-Integrity-Policy-F15-7.pdf>).

- Digital distractions:
 - Cell phones AND laptops should be stowed and out of reach during class.
 - Please do not wear earbuds or headphones during class while anyone is talking (other students, or me).
 - If it helps you, you may use your earbuds/headphones to listen to something during solo in-class writing (i.e. when no one is talking).
 - For the majority of the first two months of the semester, our classroom will be screen-free. Reading and writing work will largely happen on paper, in class.

Classroom Protocol:

In this class I expect you to:

1. Commit yourself. Academic work is what you make of it.
2. Come to class on time. Tardiness is disruptive and disrespectful.
3. If you are not using your cell phone or laptop for a class activity, they should be silenced and **stowed, out of reach**.
4. Engage yourself in our class. If you are doing anything other than being present in our class work, I will ask you to leave our meeting.
5. Take responsibility for your actions, positive and negative. Remember teachers do not “give” grades, you earn them.
6. Communicate with me. I am here to help you, but I have no way of knowing if you are unclear about an assignment or otherwise need help unless you tell me. If you have questions about the work, speak up in class, come to see me in my office, or send an email.

My Professional Policies

1. I do not accept late work.
2. I do not accept work via email (unless I specifically request it).
3. In-class work cannot be made-up.
4. I reserve the right to publish your work to the class as part of our workshop activities.
5. Please come to my office hours for any help you want; that is what I am here for!

✓ Grading Information

Grading: A-F. A passing grade in the course signifies that the student is a capable college-level writer and reader of English. **This course must be passed with a C- or better as a CSU graduation requirement.**

Grading Methods:

In this course, you will perform writing work in different contexts, and each context will be graded by a grading method that is equitable for that context. The following is a breakdown of which grading method will be used in which writing context:

Major Assignments: You have three major assignments in this course (2 essays and a research project) and they will be graded using a minimum grading scale, where 50% is the lowest grade a student may earn on any and all assignments (vs. 0%). If a student does not complete or submit an assignment, they will still earn a 50%.

Homework: Homework is graded on a 0 to 10 or 20 point scale and is graded for completeness. If you do not submit the homework, or it does not address the directions, that homework assignment will earn a zero. There is a rubric posted with each homework assignment, detailing the grading criteria.

In-class Writing/Work: Often we will perform extemporaneous writing in class. In-class writing earns full credit, regardless of the quality of the writing you submit. If you do not submit any writing during the assignment window, that assignment will earn a zero. If you are absent from class but submit the in-class writing during the assignment window, you will earn half credit.

Grade Calculation:

A+ = 100-97%	A = 96-93%	A- = 92-90%
B+ = 89-87%	B = 86-83%	B- = 82-80%
C+ = 79-77%	C = 76-73%	C- = 72-70%
D+ = 69-67%	D = 66-63%	D- = 62-60%
F = 59-0%		

Assignment	Word Count	% of Grade
A personal, persuasive essay	1200	20%

Research project: - Synthesis essay of secondary research (10%) - Adobe Express web page (20%)	2000	30%
Homework	2000	15%
In-class work and learning	2500	30%
Portfolio	600	5%

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

This schedule is subject to change.

Tuesdays	Thursdays
	1/22: Introduction
1/27: "Shitty First Drafts" (Course reader) The Rhetorical Situation	1/29: The Rhetorical Situation (continued)
2/3: "Claiming an Education" (Course reader) Thesis Statements	2/5: The Ladder of Abstraction

2/10: In-class writing (Letter of recommendation + using concrete language)	2/12: Evidence In-class writing
2/17: Essay 1: Mini-Workshop In-class writing	2/19: Essay anatomy: Introductions and body paragraphs Introduce research project
2/24: Essay anatomy: transitions and conclusions	2/26: REVIEW Brainstorm research project ideas
3/1 (Sunday): 1st draft of essay 1 due by midnight 3/3: Essay 1: Peer review workshop (penalty if you choose not to attend)	3/5: Optional meetings with me (in our classroom) 3/6 (Friday): Deadline to apply for the Digital Literacy Showcase
3/8 (Sunday): FINAL draft of essay 1 due by midnight 3/10: Start research project	3/12: Research; In-class writing
3/17: Field trip! Meet in the King Library (during class time), room 213.	3/19: In-class writing: Synthesizing sources Discuss synthesis essay
3/24: Primary research: brainstorming ideas for research project	3/26: Secondary research: Sources for contextual information
3/31: Spring Break	4/2: Spring Break

<p>4/7: Integrating quotations, review In-class writing</p> <p>Essay 2: Rough draft due by midnight</p>	<p>4/9: In-class workshop with Adobe Ambassador Raymond Lam</p>
<p>4/14: Essay 2: Peer review workshop (penalty if you choose not to attend)</p>	<p>4/16: TBA</p> <p>4/17 (Friday): Digital Literacy Showcase, 2-4pm, Digital Humanities Center in the MLK Library</p>
<p>4/21: Optional meetings with me (in our classroom)</p> <p>Synthesis essay: Final draft due by midnight</p>	<p>4/23: Storyboarding In-class writing</p>
<p>4/28: Optional meetings with me (in our classroom)</p>	<p>4/30: Research project: Peer review workshop (penalty if you choose not to attend)</p>
<p>5/5: Webpage exhibitions! (Penalty if you choose not to attend)</p> <p>Express Webpages: Final draft due by midnight</p>	<p>5/7: Drafting portfolios</p>