

Argument and Analysis

ENGL 1B

Spring 2026 Section 12 In Person 3 Unit(s) 01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026 Modified 01/21/2026

Contact Information

Instructor: Mark Cunningham

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Office: FOB 106

Office Hours

In-Person:

Tuesday, Thursday, 11:00 AM to 11:30 AM, FOB 106

Online (Zoom), Mon/Wed 10:00-11:30 AM

I'm here to help you succeed, and always happy to speak with you. If you'd like to meet with me during office hours, please let me know ahead of time. And if my scheduled office hours don't work for you, please contact me and we can find a time on campus or online that works well for both of us.

Course Information

CLASS MEETINGS: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:00 - 10:15 AM

FIRST CLASS: Thurs. January 22, 2026

CLASSROOM: Dudley Moorhead Hall (DMH) 347

Nota Bene: This syllabus is a *human-made document*, and, like all things human, it is subject to change. All but inevitably, you'll see updates and revisions to this syllabus during our first several weeks of the course, and possibly later on.

Welcome to *English 1B: Writing for Humans*! I'm looking forward to meeting and working with each of you.

I'm a writer, editor, and teacher with numerous book and magazine publications (pen-name M. Allen Cunningham). My professional and creative journey as a writer has been unusual, so I bring a unique perspective to my teaching, which involves expanding how we think about our work as writers (and in this course we are all writers).

I've planned an invigorating semester with the hope that you'll soon find yourself approaching the writing process in new and rewarding ways, this spring and beyond.

What is this course all about? We live in a tumultuous and highly technologized time, and frequently we're encouraged to conform to the peculiar demands of our societal moment and its tools by abbreviating our own process of understanding in favor of an immediate response. But our capacity for thoughtful reading and writing can help us remember ourselves as infinitely complex, inquisitive, and individually expressive human beings who cannot be so easily reduced. Our meaningful work this semester will include renewing our understanding of the uniqueness and value of reading and writing for the individual, the student, and society at large. We'll analyze fascinating works of creative expression and philosophy, and in doing so explore large questions of perpetual importance in the human experience. And we'll mindfully formulate arguments focused on these questions, with the goal of engaging in deeper ways of understanding and communication. It will be invigorating.

Let's go!

—Mark Cunningham

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.

Satisfies 3B. Humanities (Formerly Area C2).

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

Grading: Letter Graded

Note(s): ENGL 1B is not open to students who successfully completed ENGL 2.

Classroom Protocols

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 3B: Humanities

Across the disciplines in Area 3 coursework, students cultivate and refine their affective, cognitive, and expressive faculties by studying works of the human intellect and imagination. Area 3 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. In their intellectual and subjective considerations, students develop a better understanding of the interrelationship between the self and the creative arts and the humanities in a variety of cultures.

3B (Humanities) courses encourage students to analyze and appreciate works of philosophical, historical, literary, aesthetic, and cultural importance. Students may take courses in languages other than English in fulfillment of 3B if the courses do not focus solely on skills acquisition but also contain a substantial cultural component. This may include literature, among other content. Theater and film courses may be approved if they emphasize historical, literary, or cultural considerations. Logic courses may be accepted if the focus is not solely on technique but includes the role of logic in humanities disciplines.

GE Area 3B Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of a 3B 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 requirement

3B classes require a minimum of 1500 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline.

Course Materials

Do we have an assigned textbook?

Yes. More than one, in fact.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White (4th Edition). You'll find many editions of this classic book, but preferable for our class is the Fourth Edition. Also preferable is that you have the book in paperback (many copies are for sale online for \$5 or less). E-book versions are OK too, but there's nothing like having the book in hand for reference during class discussion.
- *Where I Lived and What I Lived For* by Henry David Thoreau
- *They Say, I Say* by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein. This book is likely to prove helpful to you throughout your whole First Year Writing experience and beyond.

I've asked the SJSU campus bookstore to order these books, but you'll also find inexpensive copies readily available for order online.

ENGL 1B Course Readings

Much of our reading will consist of short stand-alone texts that I provide on paper and/or as PDFs.

Do I need any other materials to succeed in this course?

Yes:

- A notebook and writing implements (you'll be expected to take notes during all our class meetings)
- A readiness to read, write, and learn together! Bring your own inquisitive, engaged, and imaginative self to each class meeting and assignment.
- A dependable place to store our course materials, handouts, etc.
- A personal laptop, desktop computer, or chromebook. We will seldom use devices during class meetings, but you will need one for some writing you will do outside of class.

Course Requirements and Assignments

What's required to succeed in this course?

Read on!

- Engagement (~30-40% of final grade)
- Original Composition Drafts & Mindful Responses (~30-40% of final grade)
- Forums and Reflections (~10% of final grade)

- Final Project (~10% of final grade)
- Quizzes, etc (~10% of final grade)

ENGAGEMENT (~30-40% of final grade): *Engagement is critical to the learning we will do, and you will receive credit each week for your engagement. Lack of engagement will impact your grade. You should attend all class meetings and arrive on time, not only because you're responsible for material we'll discuss in class, but because active engagement is essential for the maximum benefit of all class members.* You will fulfill the Engagement requirement by attending class meetings on time, taking notes and participating constructively during class activities, completing reading assignments and attentively engaging with each text, offering constructive critiques of classmates' writing when called to do so and in keeping with peer critique guidelines, and participating in all discussions and forums.

ORIGINAL COMPOSITIONS & MINDFUL RESPONSES (~30-40% of final grade): You will fulfill this requirement by completing rough drafts during in-class writing sessions, and turning each writing assignment in *by the due date*. Writing assignments will include your Mindful Responses (averaging 500 words each) on class readings, your work on generative or analytical prompts, and also your longer essay drafts.

FORUMS, REFLECTIONS, & PEER FEEDBACK (~10% of final grade): You will fulfill this requirement by responding to all peer feedback assignments and forum, discussion, and reflection prompts by the due dates, and by demonstrating thoughtful engagement with classmates, and/or with texts in each response, including meeting minimum word counts.

FINAL PROJECT (~10% of final grade): You will fulfill this requirement by turning in, at the end of the semester, an edited and polished example of your ENGL1B writing, and a course reflection for the First-Year Writing Assessment. This assignment will document your awareness and fulfillment of our course learning goals. I will provide further details.

QUIZZES, ETC. (10% of final grade): You will fulfill this requirement by completing in-class and/or asynchronous quizzes by the due dates and with satisfactory results.

NO TECHNOLOGY USE DURING CLASS

In this course we will strive to be entirely present and attentive to one another in our shared physical space. Because chargeable gadgets work against our mindful presence in the classroom and serve mainly to distract us from our coursework and one another, the use of phones, tablets, laptops, and all other electronic devices is prohibited during class meetings. I ask that you silence and put away phones and other devices before entering the classroom.

On some occasions we may use electronic devices to access course material. At all other times, Seize the opportunity to go gadget-free for a blessed hour!

ATTENDANCE & TARDINESS POLICY

As noted in the Engagement requirement above: you should attend all class meetings and arrive on time, not only because you're responsible for material we'll discuss in class, but because active engagement is essential for the maximum benefit of all class members. Lack of engagement, consistent tardiness, and

consistent early departures will impact your grade. (Please note: Class rosters are often full and include waiting lists. Instructors are permitted to drop students who fail to attend the first scheduled class meeting and who fail to inform the instructor of the reason for the absence.)

***COURTESY AND RESPECT IN CLASS DISCUSSIONS, WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS AND FORUMS**

Students are expected to take part in a classroom environment conducive to learning. Disruptions to this are behaviors that a reasonable faculty member would view as interfering with normal academic functions. Examples include, but are not limited to: persistently speaking without being recognized; interrupting other speakers; behavior that distracts the class from the subject matter or discussion; peer criticism that is non-constructive due to its pointedly personal nature; in extreme cases, physical threats, harassing behavior, or personal insults. I expect students to engage thoughtfully with course content, and to remain respectful of their classmates' right to read, absorb, and respond independently to each text or item of visual content. Our class is a positive community environment, and in our group discussions, whole class discussions, and explorations of each text we will express ideas in the respectful manner of real dialogue and with regard to the wellbeing of our classroom community. In their in-person and online communication with instructors, students should demonstrate consideration and professionalism. Students are held to San Jose State University student conduct policies. These policies can be found at: <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/policies/>

CHEMICAL ODOR POLICY

For the wellbeing of yourself and our class community, if you arrive in class smelling strongly of cigarettes, vapes, or other chemical substances, you may be asked to leave the classroom.

LATE POLICY

All assignments have specific due dates, and it's your responsibility to track these. Late work will not be accepted. If at any point you have concerns about your progress in this course, please communicate with me. I'm here to help you succeed.

***PLAGIARISM & "A.I." POLICY**

Plagiarism: All work you submit for this course will be your own. Any work that is intentionally plagiarized will receive a failing grade. Because plagiarism is an extremely serious academic offense, this is a zero-tolerance policy. Plagiarism means using someone else's exact words (from a direct quote) or their ideas (in a paraphrase) as your own without proper citation. Or, as SJSU's Academic Integrity Policy puts it, plagiarism is "the act of representing the work of another as one's own without giving appropriate credit, regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements." It is also unacceptable to recycle your own work from other courses. See the SJSU Academic Integrity Policy here: <https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/SJSU-Academic-Integrity-Policy-F15-7.pdf>

"A.I.": Because the text generated by A.I. algorithms is never wholly original but relies on phrases harvested without credit from pre-existing texts on the Internet (a kind of *plagiarism by patchwork*), you are not allowed to use ChatGPT or any other generative "artificial intelligence" (AI) and/or Large Language Model tools at any stage of your work process for ENGL 1B, including preliminary stages. Doing so in this course is a violation of SJSU's Academic Integrity Policy, will be considered plagiarism, and will be subject to the

zero-tolerance policy outlined in the prior paragraph. Please note that using Grammarly is likely to put you at risk of violating this A.I. policy. In this course you will hone your writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills, and express your creativity – none of which a robot can do for you!

(Please note that different classes at SJSU might implement different AI policies, and it is your responsibility to abide by the expectations of each course.)

ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION AT SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with AEC to establish a record of their disability. The Accessible Education Center (AEC) proudly presents its vision of redefining ability at San Jose State University by providing comprehensive services in support of the educational development and success of students with disabilities. Learn more: <https://www.sjsu.edu/aec/index.php>

Grading Information

To pass a First-Year Writing course, students must earn a grade of C- or higher. The ENGL 1B grading process focuses on the *effort* and *progress* you demonstrate, with final grades to be determined by the following criteria:

A = 90-100% (Excellent): Meets all criteria for a B, and ... all written assignments are of *excellent* quality and clarity in content, meaning that the work is fully developed and free of formatting and spelling errors; shows evidence of exceptional growth of critical thinking and writing skills over the course of the semester. Engagement is consistently excellent.

B = 80-89% (Satisfactory): Written assignments are of *satisfactory* quality and clarity in content; thoroughness in participation; all work turned in by due date; shows evidence of growth of critical thinking and writing skills over the course of the semester. Engagement is consistently satisfactory.

C = 70-79% (Partly Satisfactory, Partly Unsatisfactory): A mix of *satisfactory* and *unsatisfactory* quality and clarity in the content of your written assignments, and in your participation; meeting the minimum requirements. Engagement is partly satisfactory, partly unsatisfactory.

D = 60-69%, F = 59% or below (Unsatisfactory): Written assignments are of *unsatisfactory* quality and clarity in their content; not meeting minimum requirements. Engagement is unsatisfactory.

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 is a tentative schedule to provide a general idea of how we will structure our time throughout the semester. Changes to this schedule are inevitable. ***

WEEK 1 - Thurs. 1/22:

Introductions, Reading, Course Theme(s)

WEEKS 2 - 7: *Read Well to Write Well*

Syllabus Overview

Course readings, discussions, and writing exercises

Elements of Composition

Composition #1: Interpretive Essay - drafting sessions and submission

Peer Feedback

WEEKS 8 - 12: *Further Analysis, Interpretation, & Synthesis*

Course readings, discussions, and writing exercises

Film Viewing

Composition #2: Critical Essay - drafting sessions and submission

(Week 11: SJSU Spring Recess)

WEEKS 13 - 17: *See What You Mean So You Say What You Mean*

Library Visit & Research Sessions

Composition #3: Argumentative Essay - drafting sessions and submission

Oral Presentations

Further Exploration, Practice, and Review

FINAL PROJECT / First-Year Writing Assessment due during Week 17