

First Year Writing

ENGL 1A

Spring 2026 Section 03 In Person 3 Unit(s) 01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026 Modified 02/16/2026

Contact Information

Instructor: Jeff Lin

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Office Location: Faculty Office Building(FOB) 224 or through Zoom (<https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/2572932951>)

Office Hours: Monday through Thursday: 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM (additional times can be arranged by appointment)

Class Times: Monday and Wednesday from 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Classroom: Boccardo Business Center (BBC) 223

Course Information

This course introduces the techniques of collegiate English composition, emphasizing clear, effective writing and analytical reading. Students will learn to think critically about their own writing and will receive extensive support throughout the writing process. Areas of support will include close reading, textual analysis, finding and correctly incorporating credible, relevant source material, and acclimating to a college academic environment. Through personal narrative, informative writing, media analysis, and researched argument, students will learn to analyze rhetorical strategies, craft well-supported claims, and adapt their voice for different audiences and purposes.

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

Respectful Communication:

- Engage with classmates and the instructor in a respectful and courteous manner at all times
- Listen actively when others are speaking; do not interrupt or hold side conversations
- When sharing ideas or disagreeing with a point, do so thoughtfully and constructively, focusing on the idea rather than the individual
- Be compassionate; writing can be an incredibly vulnerable exercise; this class is a safe space to experiment with voice, style, and subject matter

Participation and Engagement:

- Contribute to class discussions by asking questions, offering insights, and responding thoughtfully to peers
- Attend in-class activities, peer review sessions, and group work with a willingness to collaborate and learn from others
- Avoid engaging in off-task activities, such as browsing unrelated websites, texting, or working on assignments from other classes

Use of Technology:

- Technology such as cellphones and laptops are allowed when used in manners productive to class activities but not when they act as a distraction
- If use of technology becomes a distraction to the student or to others, the instructor may ask that it be put away
- Headphones/AirPods are not permitted during class unless part of an approved activity
- Audio or video recording of class is not allowed without instructor permission
- If students require any form of technology as an accommodation, please inform the instructor to ensure it is supported appropriately

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 Goals

- Introduce students to college-level writing as a process of discovery, reflection, and growth
- Provide structured opportunities to practice writing across multiple genres
- Strengthen academic confidence by developing habits of respectful collaboration and active participation
- Encourage students to explore diverse perspectives and voices in order to broaden their own understanding and expression
- Support students in cultivating a writing voice that reflects their individuality and humanity while still demonstrating clarity and credibility
- Prepare students to carry forward the skills of critical thinking, analysis, and metacognition into future academic and professional writing tasks

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

They Say / I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing Fourth Edition by Gerald Graff & Cathy Birkenstein (ISBN: 0393631672)

Everything's an Argument with Readings Seventh Edition by Andrea A. Lunsford et. al (ISBN: 1457698641)

*All readings will be provided through Canvas

Course Requirements and Assignments

*Major assignment (must turn in to pass the class)

Learning Logs: Learning logs are a reflective journal meant to encourage students to actively process what they read, watch, or listen to. Instead of just absorbing information, they pause to summarize their understanding, connect it to their experiences, and consider new questions or directions for further inquiry. Logs should be a minimum of 100 words.

Discussion Posts: Students will respond to guiding questions that prompt them to think critically about the readings. They are expected to present their perspectives clearly and support their ideas with specific references to the text. In addition, students are required to respond to at least two other posts, using the opportunity to exchange insights and consider different perspectives. Responses should move beyond simple agreement or disagreement and should instead help further or challenge the ideas being presented. Discussion Posts should be a minimum of 250 words and responses a minimum of 100.

***Symbolism Narrative Essay:** Students will reflect on their own defining traits and select a symbol that embodies those same qualities. They will critically analyze the connection between themselves and the chosen symbol, providing evidence for how both embody the aforementioned traits. The goal of this assignment is to encourage self-reflection while practicing analytical thinking and clear, effective writing. Further details will be provided later during the class. The essay should be a minimum of 750 words.

***Media Analysis Essay:** Students will select a piece of media (advertisement, film scene, short-form video, etc.) and analyze the rhetorical strategies it uses to persuade its audience. The essay will identify the arguments being made, both explicitly and implicitly, and examine how rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, and logos) shape the message. Students will also evaluate the effectiveness of the rhetoric usage. The goal of this assignment is to develop skills in rhetorical analysis, critical thinking, and written argument by moving beyond “what” a piece of media says to explore “why” and “how” it communicates its message. Further details will be provided later during the class. The essay should be a minimum of 1000 words.

***Research Paper:** This multi-stage project asks students to investigate a controversial issue by researching and analyzing arguments from multiple perspectives. In Part 1 (Topic Proposal), students will select a controversy they feel relatively neutral about, explain why it interests them, and outline the key questions they hope to answer. In Part 2 (Annotated Bibliography), students will collect five credible sources and organize their entries to represent a logical argumentative structure: main argument, counterargument, rebuttal, and potential solutions. Each entry will include an MLA citation, a summary with a direct quote, and an evaluation of credibility. In Part 3 (Research Essay), students will use the skills learned throughout the course to craft an argumentative essay that presents the students' ultimate stance on the topic while engaging with multiple perspectives. Further details will be provided later during the class. Part 1 should be a minimum of 300 words, Part 2 should be 1500 words, and Part 3 should be 1750 words.

***Final portfolio:** The final portfolio is a mandatory component of all SJSU first-year writing classes and serves as both a culmination of the semester’s work and an assessment of students’ growth as writers. Further details will be provided later during the class. The final portfolio self-reflection should be a minimum of 500 words.

✓ Grading Information

Grading: Each of your assignments will receive points. 90% = A, 80% = B, 70% = C, 60% = D (600 total points possible)

*Major assignment (must turn in to pass the class)

**Assignment contains multiple parts that are graded independently

- 10 Learning Logs - 10 pts each (100 pts total)
- 6 Discussion Posts - 14 pts each (84 total)
- Composition 1* (Symbolism Narrative Essay) - 100 pts** (25/25/50)
- Composition 2* (Media Analysis Essay) - 100 pts** (25/25/50)
- Research Project* - 150 pts** (25/75/50)
- Research Portfolio* - 50 pts
- Participation - 66 pts

Extra Credit opportunity will be provided at various points throughout the semester.

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.