

# Critical Thinking and Writing

## ENGL 2

Spring 2026 Section 19 In Person 3 Unit(s) 01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026 Modified 01/21/2026

### Contact Information

---

Instructor: Dr. Colton Saylor

Email: [colton.saylor@sjsu.edu](mailto:colton.saylor@sjsu.edu)

Please give me 24 hours to respond to an email. If I do not respond within that window, please feel free to message again

### Office Hours

Tuesday, Thursday, 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM, Office Hours Link: <https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/8767305039?pwd=VWdZNGhFWitEazVFVit0aHhwZVp4UT09>

Pass code for Zoom: 009822

All Office Hours will be on Zoom; Waiting Room will be activated, meaning I will let students in one at a time

### Course Description and Requisites

---

Focuses on the relationship between language and logic in composing arguments. Students learn various methods of effective reasoning and appropriate rhetorical strategies to help them invent, demonstrate, and express arguments clearly, logically, and persuasively.

*Satisfies 1B. Critical Thinking and Writing (Formerly Area A3).*

**Prerequisite(s):** Completion of GE Area 1A with a grade of C- or better.

**Grading:** Letter Graded

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

### Classroom Protocols

---

# ENGL 2

This course is open to all students needing to fulfill GE Area A3 (Critical Thinking). It is not open to students who have successfully completed ENGL 1B.

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

## Course Content

**Theme:** Technology and Society

You don't need me to tell you that technological innovations are re-shaping every facet of our lives. Even so, there are layers of this influence can be difficult to notice on an every day level. In our class, we will explore our relationships to technology through a variety of texts and genres. Our discussions will cover such topics as tech's place in the classroom, AI's influence on definitions of humanity, and the relationship between tech and capitalism. Ultimately, you will be expected to generate your own argumentative research paper on a tech topic of your choice.

**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. Assignments emphasize those skills and activities in writing and thinking that produce the persuasive argument and the critical essay, each of which demands analysis, interpretation, and evaluation. Writing assignments give you repeated practice in prewriting, organizing, writing, revising, and editing. This class requires a minimum of 6000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form.

**Logic:** You will learn methods of argument analysis, both rhetorical and logical, that will allow you to identify logical structures (such as warrants, evidence, qualification, rebuttal; enthymemes and syllogisms) and distinguish common logical fallacies.

**Reading:** In addition to being writing intensive, ENGL 2 is also a reading course. You will read a variety of critical and argumentative texts to help develop your skills for understanding the logical structure of argumentative writing.

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

## 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 2 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 2, 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>).

## Absence Policy

Attendance is **absolutely crucial** to succeed in this class.

That being said, please do NOT excuse absences with me over email.

If you are absent, please note that I DO NOT review what was missed over email. Instead, you can catch up with what you missed via any of the following options:

- email another person in the class
- review the slides that I post to Canvas
- schedule an office hours appointment with me

## AI Policy

In this class, we are working together to become better writers, readers, and thinkers. In that spirit, no use of any artificial intelligence will be allowed on any of your assignments. I know some of you use programs like Grammarly or Quill to check your assignments before submitting, but as these are also examples of AI, they are also not permitted in this class. I do not deduct points specifically for grammar mistakes, and I am more concerned with you writing in your own original voice. Despite their marketing, these programs damage that voice rather than enhance it.

I will be using turnitin.com (SJSU's approved plagiarism detector) to help me check assignments for any use of AI. As I know turnitin is not perfect, I'll also be using my own knowledge of our course, our texts, and common sense.

Any usage of AI in any capacity to complete an assignment will be treated as plagiarism.

# Major Essays

Our class will have two major essays: the Visual Analysis paper and the Argumentative Research paper. Our class will devote multiple weeks building up to each paper. This process will include a Peer Review Workshop (where you will share a draft of at least 50% completion with another colleague).

Each paper will have a rough draft submission deadline (this date will fall after our Peer Review Workshop). This due date is a hard deadline, meaning it cannot be extended. For each of these rough draft submissions, I will be providing detailed annotations, audio feedback, three Areas of Improvement (Aols), and a grade (out of 100, in 2.5% increments).

Each paper will also have a final draft submission deadline. This second submission is optional: if you are happy with your first grade, for example, you do not have to resubmit a revision of the paper. Otherwise, this second and final draft will be due at a later point in the semester (marked on our syllabus schedule). I will be grading these revisions primarily based on the three Aols that I provided to the first draft. If the revision shows improvement in these areas, the new grade will be higher (how high depends on how well the feedback is implemented). A revised submission can either receive the same grade as the previous draft or a higher grade--it can never be lower (unless the revised paper includes plagiarized content).

## Late Work

Rough drafts for each of our major essays are due on the due date specified on the syllabus--no exceptions.

Final drafts for Essay #1 will be deducted at a rate of 5% per day late.

Final drafts for Essay #2 will not be accepted after the specified due date as the semester will have ended.

Late submissions for credit/half credit/no credit assignments will receive half credit.

## 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 A3: Critical Thinking and Writing

Area A3 courses develop students' understanding of the relationship of language to logic. By engaging students in complex issues requiring critical thinking and effective argumentation, A3 courses develop students' abilities to research and analyze important topics and to construct their own arguments on issues that generate meaningful public debate and deliberation. Courses include explicit instruction and practice in inductive and deductive reasoning as well as identification of formal and informal fallacies of language and thought. Completion of Area A2 (Written Communication I) with a minimum grade of C- is a prerequisite for enrollment in Area A3. Completion of Area A3 with a grade of C- or better is a CSU graduation requirement.

### GE Area A3 Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of an Area A3 course, students should be able to:

1. locate, interpret, evaluate, and synthesize evidence in a comprehensive way, including through library research; and integrate research findings into oral and written arguments through appropriate citation and quotation;
2. use a range of rhetorical and logical strategies to articulate and explain their positions on complex issues in dialogue with other points of view;
3. identify and critically evaluate the assumptions in and the contexts of arguments; and
4. use inductive and deductive logic to construct valid, evidence-supported arguments and draw valid conclusions.

**Writing Practice:** Students will write a minimum of 6000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form.

## Course Requirements and Assignments

---

### Assignment Word Count and Learning Goals

All assignments due to Canvas unless otherwise instructed.

### Assignment Word Count and Assignment GELO

Assignment	Word Count	Learning Goals	Grade %
Essay # 1: Theoretical Analysis Paper*	1,250-1,500	1-4	22.5
Essay # 2: Argumentative Research Paper*	1,500-1,750	1-4	25
Diagnostic Response	500	1-2	5
Tech Article Rhetorical Situation	250	1-3	2.5
Library Portal Training	N/A	1	2.5
Tech Commercial Toulmin Analysis - Presentation	N/A	1-3	5
Tech Commercial Toulmin Analysis - Write-up*	750	1-3	5
Wall-E Film Responses (2)	500 (250x2)	1-3	5 (2.5% x2)
Tech Invention Group Presentation	N/A	1-4	10
JSTOR Activity	250	1	2.5
Peer Review Workshop Reflections	500 (250x2)	1-3	5 (2.5% x2)
Final Paper Presentations	N/A	1-4	5

Self-Reflection Essay*	500	1-4	5
------------------------	-----	-----	---

\* - assignment requires rough draft and final draft

**Bolded** – letter-grade assignments

**Writing Portfolio:** At the end of the semester you will compile a portfolio of your writing that documents how you met the learning goals of the course.

## ✓ Grading Information

---

We will have two different kinds of assignments in this class: **letter-graded** and **credit/half-credit/no credit**.

A **credit/half-credit/no credit** assignment is meant to help you practice and/or reflect on a concept from our class. In general, I will grade these assignments based on the following criteria

**Full Credit:** the assignment is completed on-time, hits the required word count, and follows the instructions on the assignment description

**Half-Credit:** the assignment is submitted late OR the assignment does not meet word count OR the assignment does not follow the description's instructions (could be a combination of any of these three)

**No Credit:** the assignment is not submitted OR the assignment is submitted using AI in any capacity

We will have two **letter-graded** essays. In class, I will discuss specific requirements that each genre of essay demands, but in general, I grade essays based on the following three areas:

**Thesis** - a strong thesis has a clear and (in our case) argumentative stance and detailed supporting reasons that forecast the essay's general content and structure. A paper with a strong thesis makes it easy to identify what you're arguing and gives your reader a clear picture of how your essay will specifically and uniquely make that case

**Analysis** - strong analysis means both the inclusion of effective evidence to support your claim as well as clear and specific discussion of that evidence. In a strongly argued paper, each example/point you include from each piece of evidence feels unique in how it builds up your stance but still cohesive with the rest of your essay.

**Structure** - a paper with a strong sense of structure excels at two levels: the global (the essay as a whole) and the local (each paragraph). At a global level, strong structure means logical arrangement of paragraphs (intro, body, rebuttal, conclusion) in a way that clearly guides the reader from one section to the next (by use of strong topic sentences and, when appropriate, transitions). At a local level, strong structure means arranging each sentence in your paragraph in such a way that each new idea builds logically from the previous ones. In a body paragraph, for example, this means using topic sentences, inclusion of evidence/examples, analysis and/or discussion of those examples, and finally the lead-out of that paragraph.

Your grades for these papers will be out of 100 in 2.5% increments

An A range paper (90-100) is strong in all three of these areas (how high or low in the range depends on how strong or weak these areas are).

An B range paper (80-87.5) is strong in two of these areas, but weak in the third (here again, how or low in the range depends on the strength and/or weaknesses in all three areas)

An C range paper (70-77.5) is strong in one of these areas but weak in the other two (same note as above regarding where in the range the grade falls)

An D range paper (60-67.5) is weak in all three areas

An F grade (0-57.5) will only be given to a non-submitted assignment, a paper guilty of plagiarism (such as AI-use), or a paper submitted so late that the penalties take it to under a 60%.

Final Course Grade Breakdown (I round up or down to the nearest tenth of a decimal point)

A+ (97-100); A (93-96); A- (90-92); B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82); C+ (77-79); C (73-76); C- (70-72); D+ (67-69); D (63-66); D- (60-62); F (<60)

## University Policies

---

Per [University Policy 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) 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 with fair notice: you are responsible for any changes made in class or through email.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	1/22	<p><b>In Class:</b> Introduction</p> <p><b>On Canvas:</b> Diagnostic Response, due 1/24, 11:59PM</p>
2	1/27	<p><b>In Class:</b> Introduce Arguments; Discuss Claim, Reasons, and Assumptions/Warrants; "Cell Phones in the Class"</p> <p><b>On Canvas:</b> Library Training, due 1/29, 11:59PM</p>

2	1/29	<p><b>Read before Class:</b>  <a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/10/opinion/school-tech.html">"Get Tech Out of the Classroom Before It's Too Late,"</a> (<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/10/opinion/school-tech.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/10/opinion/school-tech.html</a>)</p> <p><b>In Class:</b> The Rhetorical Situation (Or Genre, Purpose, Author, Audience, Context, Degree of Advocacy)</p> <p><b>On Canvas:</b> Tech Article Rhetorical Situation due 2/2, 11:59PM</p>
3	2/3	<p><b>Read before Class:</b> <a href="https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/toulmin.html">"What is the Toulmin Method?"</a> (<a href="https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/toulmin.html">https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/toulmin.html</a>)</p> <p><b>In Class:</b> Introduce Toulmin Arguments; Assign Tech Commercial Toulmin Analysis Presentations</p>
3	2/5	<p><b>In Class:</b> Practice using Toulmin Method to analyze commercials</p>
4	2/10	<p><b>In Class:</b> Tech Commercial Toulmin Analysis Presentations, Day 1</p>
4	2/12	<p><b>In Class:</b> Tech Commercial Toulmin Analysis Presentations, Day 2</p> <p><b>On Canvas:</b> Toulmin Analysis of Tech Commercial Write-ups due 2/14, 11:59PM</p>
5	2/17	<p><b>In Class:</b> Basic essay structure; Introduce Visual Analysis; Assign Visual Analysis Essay</p>
5	2/19	<p><b>Read before Class:</b> <a href="https://www.technologyreview.com/2017/08/15/100020/eliminating-the-human/">"Eliminating the Human," David Byrne</a> (<a href="https://www.technologyreview.com/2017/08/15/100020/eliminating-the-human/">https://www.technologyreview.com/2017/08/15/100020/eliminating-the-human,/</a></p> <p><b>In Class:</b> Discuss article; introduce <i>Wall-E</i></p>
6	2/24	<p><b>In Class:</b> Watch first half of <i>Wall-E</i> (dir. Andrew Stanton)</p> <p><b>On Canvas:</b> <i>Wall-E</i> Film Response #1 due 2/25, 11:59PM</p>
6	2/26	<p><b>In Class:</b> Watch second half of <i>Wall-E</i> (dir. Andrew Stanton); discuss film</p> <p><b>On Canvas:</b> <i>Wall-E</i> Film Response #1 due 2/27, 11:59PM</p>
7	3/3	<p><b>In Class:</b> Thesis Workshop #1</p>
7	3/5	<p><b>In Class:</b> Peer Review Workshop #1 (50% rough draft)</p> <p><b>On Canvas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PRW Reflection #1 due 3/6, 11:59PM</li> <li>- Rough Draft of Essay #1 due 3/9, 11:59PM</li> <li>- Final Draft of Essay #1 due 3/27, 11:59PM</li> </ul>

8	3/10	<b>In Class:</b> Assign Tech Invention Group Presentation; Group work time
8	3/12	<b>In Class:</b> Group work time
9	3/17	<b>In Class:</b> Tech Invention Presentations, Groups 1-3
9	3/19	<b>In Class:</b> Tech Invention Presentations, Groups 4-6
10	3/24	<b>In Class:</b> Introduce Argumentative Essays; Assign Argumentative Research Paper
10	3/26	<b>In Class:</b> JSTOR Workshop  <b>On Canvas:</b> JSTOR Activity due 3/28, 11:59PM
11	3/31	<b>NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK</b>
11	4/2	<b>NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK</b>
12	4/7	<b>Read before Class:</b> <a href="https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/common_writing_assignments/argument_papers/body_paragraph.html">"Logic in Argumentative Writing"</a> ( <a href="https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/argument_papers/body_paragraph.html">https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/argument_papers/body_paragraph.html</a> )  <b>In Class:</b> Introduce syllogisms; discuss deductive and inductive reasoning
12	4/9	<b>Read before Class:</b> <a href="https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/logic/logical_fallacies.html">"Logical Fallacies"</a> ( <a href="https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/logic/logical_fallacies.html">https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/logic/logical_fallacies.html</a> )  <b>In Class:</b> Discuss Informal Fallacies; Informal Fallacy Activity
13	4/14	<b>In Class:</b> Thesis Workshop #2
13	4/16	<b>In Class:</b> Peer Review Workshop #2  <b>On Canvas:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Workshop Reflection #2 due 4/17, 11:59PM</li><li>- Rough Draft of Essay #2 due 4/21, 11:59PM</li><li>- Final Draft of Essay #2 due 5/10, 11:59PM</li></ul>
14	4/21	<b>In Class:</b> Assign Final Paper Presentations; Discuss Adapting a Paper into a Presentation

14	4/23	<b>In-Class:</b> Review Assessment Portfolios; begin drafting Self-Reflection Essay  <b>On Canvas:</b> Self-Reflection Essay due 5/8, 11:59PM
15	4/28	<b>In Class:</b> Final Paper Presentations, Day 1
15	4/30	<b>In Class:</b> Final Paper Presentations, Day 2
16	5/5	<b>In Class:</b> Final Paper Presentations, Day 3
16	5/7	<b>In Class:</b> In-Class Office Hours; In-Class Writing Time
	5/14	ePortfolios due 5/14, 3:00PM