

First Year Writing

ENGL 1A

Spring 2026 Section 17 In Person 3 Unit(s) 01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026 Modified 01/25/2026

Contact Information

Instructor:	Ume Ali (OO-me ah-LEE)
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Office Hours:	W 12:00 - 1:00pm FOB 213 or Zoom (by appointment)
Class Days/Time/Classroom:	s17 MW 10:30 - 11:45pm BBC 223 s47 MW 1:30 - 2:45pm BBC 223
Prerequisites:	Reflection on College Writing (RCW)
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	GE Area A2 Written Communication

Course Information

Course Description

English 1A is a first-year writing composition course, an exploration of how we engage with and communicate our ideas/words. In this class we will explore fundamental rhetorical concepts and elevate our own writing processes. We will explore rhetorical styles and tools, and utilize these tools to both analyze and join social discourse. We will write two essays, one personal narrative (minor essay), and one

research paper (major final essay). These essays won't be assigned out of the blue. Rather, we will (wait for it) manifest them. That is, we will produce simpler smaller components of each essay, in the form of discussions or journal posts, which will culminate into portions of the final composition.

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

Classroom Protocol

In English 1A, much of the learning happens in class. Therefore, it is imperative that we attend each class session and participate in class activities and discussions. Class participation entails: (1) demonstrating that we've completed the readings, (2) contributing to discussions, and (3) submitting all assignments.

***Class discussions will sometimes include material of sensitive nature. In this course, students may encounter materials that differ from, and perhaps, challenge their understanding of reality, their ideas, and their beliefs. Students are encouraged to discuss issues that may arise from such material with **me**.

***If you have special needs or accommodation requests, message me as soon as possible. Failure to do so may result in your forfeiture of the accommodations you may deserve.

Canvas

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found in Canvas > Files. For the most updated information on discussions, deadlines, and assignments, please check this google doc. All lessons and assignments are tentative and subject to change. Deadlines and lesson plans will be updated as we move through the semester. Check back regularly!

University Policies

University-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. can be found at:

<http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/index.html>

General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student

As members of the academic community, students accept both the rights and responsibilities incumbent upon all members of the institution. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with SJSU's policies and practices pertaining to the procedures to follow if and when questions or concerns about a class arise. See University Policy S90–5 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf>. It is recommended that students seek clarification or discuss concerns with their instructor.

AI Policy

AI usage to compose any written work or portions of essays will result in an automatic zero for the assignment, without the possibility to redo the assignment.

Late work

Late work is **NOT** accepted.

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

GE Learning Outcomes (GELO)

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to

1. **Read** actively and rhetorically;
2. **Perform** the essential steps in the writing process (prewriting, organizing, composing, revising, and editing) and demonstrate an awareness of said performance;

3. **Articulate** an awareness of and write according to the rhetorical features of texts, such as purpose, audience, context, and rhetorical appeals;
4. **Integrate** your ideas and those of others by explaining, analyzing, developing, and criticizing ideas effectively in several genres;
5. **Demonstrate** college-level language use, clarity, and grammatical proficiency in writing.

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

Required Texts

No textbook. Free online and digital texts: Online Writing Lab (owl.purdue.edu), *The Norton Field Guide to Writing*, and *Bad Ideas About Writing* (available as free pdfs on Canvas > Files). Please download onto your device for easy offline access.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Course Requirements:

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, you are expected to spend a minimum of 3 hours per unit per week, studying, preparing for class, participating in course activities, and completing assignments. These activities and assignments include:

1. Projects
2. Process
3. Essays
4. Engagement

Assignments (all assignments will be submitted on Canvas).

Projects: We will write 5-10 prompt-based journal posts for our Advocacy Project. Posts should not simply summarize or repeat points raised in readings or class, but **should build upon those points to advance our discussion**. These posts are informal and meant to reveal how we are processing information and providing our personal insight. Advice for writing posts: be honest and keep it simple. Some of these posts will be uploaded to our project webpage and will be submitted as a URL.

Process: As this course is geared towards understanding writing as a process, not just a product, we will incorporate the necessary steps (pre-writing, writing, revising, reflecting etc.) to build effective writing habits which can be applied in any writing situation. We will brainstorm, outline, pre-write, write, workshop and revise. Components of this process (drafts, workshop feedback etc) will be submitted and assessed throughout the semester.

Essays: We will write one major essay, and many smaller essay responses. Essays aren't assigned with only a prompt and a deadline in the near future. Essays will be assessed for development and improvement rather than a finished product. Rather, we will produce the essay in steps, scaffolding the process for clarity and success. All work should be typed, double spaced, and in 12pt Times New Roman font.

Engagement: Students will earn engagement (or participation) credit for actively engaging with the material we cover in class, with their peers, and with their own work. As this is an in-person course, participation points are based on attendance, responses to daily discussion boards, quizzes, group activities, as well as your verbal participation in large and small group class discussions.

Grading Information

Minimum Grading Policy

This course uses the minimum grading method of assessment. This means, the minimum score for all assignments is 50%, and no zeroes will be given (as long as work is submitted). Hopefully, this encourages us to attempt and submit all work (regardless of quality). Notice that **process papers** (outlines, drafts, revisions) are worth 40% of the final grade. This is intentional so that we put more effort into revision, iterating on components of the essay, rather than worrying about one big final grade. For example, a crappy first draft of an intro paragraph earns an automatic 5/10, completing it well (according to the rubric below)

may earn the remaining 5 points for a total score of 10/10. Revising the intro and improving it, provides an opportunity to earn another 10 points for revision. The whole point of minimum grading, then, is to place emphasis on revision rather than assigning a weighty grade to an end product.

5 pt Rubric				
Points	5	4	3	2.5
Description/Criteria	Completed assignment according to prompt. Clear, focused, organized, insightful response.	Mostly clear, additional details/insight would be helpful.	Some engagement with prompt, some ideas presented. Could more be more focused, main idea needed.	Minimal or missing work.

10 pt Rubric						
Points	10	9	8	7	6	5
Description/Criteria	Excellent, thoroughly completed work. Clear focus. Responded to all parts of prompt, organized response in logical manner, with a beginning, middle, and end.	Very strong ideas. Additional details/insight would be helpful to overall response. Good focus. Structure could be more intentional, thoughtful.	Additional detail/insight would be helpful to strengthen presentation of ideas. Responds to the prompt, though response can be structured in a more organized and coherent manner.	Shows some demonstration of understanding the prompt, response seems to address some components of the prompt while missing aspects. Some thoughts and insights presented. More clarity/focus needed.	Minimal engagement with the prompt. Some scattered thoughts. Response needs focus/clarity.	Did not attempt, complete, or address the prompt.

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

Week	Date	Monday		Wednesday
	Jan 19		Jan 21	Welcome Module (due 1/25) Access Adobe Creative Cloud
1	Jan 26	First 1A Class Meeting! Introductions & Ice Breaker Intro to First Year Writing, what is our purpose? Syllabus, Class norms, Discord, Adobe Activity: Emailing your professor	Jan 28	Discussion: Audience, Purpose, Context "Rhetorical Situations" Purpose & Audience in Norton (pg 53-60) Small Group Activity: Zombie Apocalypse Due: Syllabus Contract
2	Feb 2	Discussion: Rhetorical Analysis In Class: Link Audience, Purpose, Context Assign: Profile Collage Project + Adobe check Rhetorical Artifact Scavenger Hunt (due at the end of class)	Feb 4	Due: Profile Collage + Share in small groups Adobe Express Scavenger Hunt

3	Feb 9	<p>Discussion: Branding Project (groups)</p> <p>Derive your brand's ethos (sustainability, equity, fair trade, unity etc)</p> <p>Create the aesthetic (design, materials etc)</p> <p>Due: Draft of Branding Ethos (ie mission statement)</p>	Feb 11	<p>Rhetorical Appeals</p> <p>Understanding Rhetorical Appeals Link</p> <p>Logos, Pathos, Ethos Video</p> <p>Zombie Apocalypse 2.0</p>
4	Feb 16	<p>Library Day</p> <p>Branding Project</p>	Feb 18	<p>Library Day</p> <p>Branding Project (Adobe Webpage due Sun 2/22)</p>
5	Feb 23	<p>Branding Project Presentations + Prizes</p>	Feb 25	<p>Discussion: Video Rhetorical Analysis</p> <p>Summary vs Analysis Activity (Super Bowl Ad)</p> <p>Groups: Rhetorical Analysis of Will McAvoy's monologue (from the pilot episode of "The Newsroom") text & video</p>
6	Mar 2	<p>Discussion: Begin Advocacy Project (AP)</p> <p>Social causes Gen Z care about</p> <p>Due Tuesday 3/4: Proposal</p>	Mar 4	<p>Discussion: Digital Storytelling + Graffiti (all links are listed on the weekly playlist for this week. Please arrive having read/watched all)</p> <p>Graffiti Activity (groups)</p> <p>Due Fri 3/7: AP Individual Graffiti Analysis on Adobe</p>
7	Mar 9	<p>AP: Ad Analysis</p> <p>Discussion: Print Ads (in groups)</p> <p>Due: Ad Analysis on Adobe (Tue night)</p>	Mar 11	<p>Discussion: Rhetoric of Memes</p> <p>Due: Meme Analysis on Adobe (Friday midnight)</p>
8	Mar 16	<p>Discussion: Political Cartoons: Criticism via Satire</p> <p>Media bias, blindspots, political leanings</p> <p>Group Activity</p>	Mar 18	<p>Due: Cartoon Analysis on Adobe (Friday by midnight)</p> <p>Discussion: Rhetorical analysis of "I'm Just Ken" Barbie</p> <p>Group Activity</p>

9	Mar 23	Group Presentations + Ken PR Reflection	Mar 25	Song Lyric Analysis due Friday
10	Mar 30	SPRING BREAK SPRING BREAK SPRING BREAK	Apr 1	SPRING BREAK SPRING BREAK SPRING BREAK
11	Apr 6	Assign Film Analysis Essay + Brainstorm	Apr 8	Discussion: Research + Annotated/Evaluative Bibliographies Due: Annotated Bib (due by the end of class)
12	Apr 13	Rewatch your chosen movie and take notes!	Apr 15	Thesis Workshop Activity
13	Apr 20	Due: Outline + Intro paragraph draft	Apr 22	Workshop Due Sunday night: Film Essay Draft
14	Apr 27	Intro to Portfolios Due: Self Reflection	Apr 29	Workshop
15	May 4	Self Reflection Workshop Work on Adobe Presentation	May 6	Final Adobe Presentations
16	May 11	Final Adobe Presentations	May 13	