

First Year Writing

ENGL 1A

Spring 2026 Section 48 In Person 3 Unit(s) 01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026 Modified 01/21/2026

Contact Information

Welcome to Stretch English!

Contact info:

kristin.fitzpatrickezell@sjsu.edu

Office Hour Information:

I will hold office hours on Zoom on Wednesdays from 9:30-11:10 a.m.

This is the office hour link: <https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/2239875288>

Appointments are recommended and drop-ins are always welcome. There will also be time built into class meetings where we will talk about your projects.

Course Information

Meeting time and location:

T/TH at 3:00 in Dudley Moorhead Hall 347

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

Course Policy on Generative AI

In this course, no usage of AI tools will be allowed. This includes tools such as Grammarly, Chat GPT, and other generative AI tools. The reason for this is that these tools often hinder the creative thinking process that is so important, especially in the early “invention” stages of a writer’s process. All steps of prewriting, drafting, peer reviewing, revising, and editing must be shown, explained, and presented. No use of AI tools is allowed at any point in the process. Please trust your own abilities and challenge yourself to create your own unique work.

This is a multimodal class, so “writing” for us is not just text on the page. You will be completing handwritten and hand drawn assignments, on paper and on the whiteboard with markers. In addition, you will complete multimodal assignments electronically. You will make videos, slide presentations, and oral presentations by yourself and in groups. You will be responsible for leading discussions, so you will be expected to keep up with readings and keep your own notes. You won’t always need to turn in your notes, but taking notes will be crucial to prepare you for discussions and presentations.

Community Agreements

At the beginning of the course, we will spend some time creating community agreements. These are agreements we will make together and put in writing so that we have a shared understanding of what we all need in order to learn effectively and safely. This includes all kinds of safety: physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and creative safety. We will write down the agreements we make about concerns like listening, respecting each other, helping each other do our best in a collaborative environment.

Everyone will be expected to follow the community agreements throughout the semester. If issues arise with class members not following the agreements, we will work together to resolve them. Please speak up about any issues as soon as they arise.

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

All reading materials for this course are provided for free. Please do not buy any reading materials.

The **FREE** required book is [Can Deliberation Cure the Ills of Democracy? \(https://csu-sjsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CALS_SJ0/tu4ck5/alma991014311103002919\)](https://csu-sjsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CALS_SJ0/tu4ck5/alma991014311103002919). By James S. Fishkin. Please note that the MLK Library has an ebook available that you can read anytime. You will need to log in with your SJSU One credentials. The book is also widely available at public libraries.

This is the link to the book:

https://csu-sjsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?context=L&vid=01CALS_SJ0:01CALS_SJ0&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&tab=Everything&docid=alma991014311103002919

We will also use *The New York Times* as our main required text, which you can subscribe to for free here: <https://library.sjsu.edu/nyt-online>

The only personal information you need to provide is your SJSU email address, and possibly your graduation year and alternate email address. You do not need to enter payment information, because your free pass is valid until you graduate or stop attending SJSU.

All other course readings will be provided on Canvas or in the classroom.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Major assignments are listed below. Each project is the culminating assignment of a particular module, or unit, in Canvas. Several smaller assignments will be completed as part of the reading and prewriting/designing process for each major project. All major assignments will relate to the assigned readings and will require incorporation of and analysis of ideas from those texts.

Project #1: Multimodal Rhetorical Analysis of a published argument about deliberative democracy

Project #2: Multimodal Media Literacy Proposal to help solve a community problem

Project #3: Multimodal Presentation about an organization that uses deliberative democracy to address particular community problems

Project #4: Final Portfolio Reflection Project

✓ Grading Information

English 1A

Kristin FitzPatrick Ezell

Grading Contract:

In this class, we will work as a learning community to develop our approaches to reading and writing different types of texts. We will experiment with unfamiliar strategies, and at times we will feel unsure about the direction of our work and our comprehension of the work of others. We will develop writing processes to help us, including prewriting, drafting, workshopping, and revising. We will rely on each other for feedback and support, but we will also take charge of our own learning and success. What does that mean in terms of grading?

This class is meant to improve your skills and experiences as college-level writers, drawing from each of your unique funds of knowledge. Therefore, **we will not be using a traditional grading system. Instead, you will be largely responsible for your own grade.**

The default grade for this course is a “B+.” If you do all that is asked of you in the manner and spirit in which it is asked, if you work through the processes we establish and the work we do throughout the semester, if you continue to improve those processes in order to gain more intensity and engagement in your writing, then you will receive a “B+.” If you miss in-class activities, turn in assignments late, fail to increase your work’s intensity, or fail to submit assignments, your grade will be lower.

You will not be graded, at least not in a traditional sense, on any assignment. Instead, you will receive feedback from your peers and writing coach for each major assignment. All work (major and minor assignments) will be awarded one point for completion and meeting requirements. **Revised assignments MUST be revised significantly in order to receive credit. Any final draft that is not significantly revised will receive a grade of 0.**

You are guaranteed a “B+” if you meet the following conditions:

1. You complete 88% of all in-class and out-of-class minor assignments, including in-class reading responses and outlines and drafts of all major assignments. Note: In-class assignments cannot be made up as the result of an absence.
2. You prioritize attendance and participate in in-class activities.
3. You abide by the classroom protocol/community agreements we establish as a writing/learning community.
4. You work cooperatively and collegially in groups. We will come up with parameters for constructive criticism and a shared vocabulary for discussing potentially sensitive subjects.
5. You complete all major and minor assignments on time.
6. You may turn in one major assignment late per semester. Late work must be submitted within 48 hours of the initial due date.
7. All submissions are complete. Any incomplete assignments or assignments that do not meet the requirements of the prompt will be deemed "missed." You will not receive credit for missed work.
8. You receive a 1/1 on all minor assignments and 10/10 on all major essays/writing projects.
9. You provide thoughtful peer feedback during class workshops and commit yourself to other collaborative work.
10. You honor the writing process and complete all steps thereof (e.g. reading/researching, prewriting, drafting and revising). Revisions should indicate significant changes – extending or changing up the thinking or organization – not just editing or changing words.

****NOTE: The B+ grade is contingent on your behavior as an engaged member of our learning community.**

"A" Grades:

The grade of A depends on the quality of and progress demonstrated in your final portfolio reflection. To receive an "A" as your spring semester grade, you will first need to qualify for the default grade of B+. Additionally, you will need to receive the commendation "exceeds expectations" on your final portfolio reflection.

Grades Lower Than "B+": "B," "C," "D," or "F" grades occur when you fail to complete the required 88% of minor assignments in the semester or to engage in class activities, including workshops and discussions, or you miss one or more major assignments. You are not eligible for a "B+" unless you have met the guidelines outlined above. If you are falling behind or feeling overwhelmed, please contact me before you miss an assignment. I am here to support you, and I want you to succeed.

Plea: I (Kristin FitzPatrick Ezell), as the administrator of our contract, will decide in consultation with you (the student) as to whether a plea is warranted in any case. You must come to me as soon as possible (before breaching the contract), in order to make fair and equitable arrangements. You may use a plea for any reason, but only once. The plea is not an "out clause" for anyone who happens to not fulfill the contract in some way; it is for rare and unusual circumstances out of the control of the student.

CONTRACT AGREEMENT: By staying in this course and attending class, you accept this contract and agree to abide by it. I (Kristin FitzPatrick Ezell) also agree to abide by the contract and oversee it fairly and impartially.

This grading contract was adapted from Dr. Amanda Emanuel Smith's sample grading contract, which was adapted from Professor Angela Clark-Oates's ENGL 220D syllabus, Dr. Ti Macklin's ENGL 10/11 syllabus, and the scholarship of Dr. Asao Inoue and Professor Peter Elbow.

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.

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Course Schedule

Course schedule (subject to change):

Week	Focus	Readings	Assignments
		to be completed by the week's start if not otherwise noted	are all due before class on the date specified (unless otherwise noted)

Week 1: 1/22	Introduction to course and Module/Unit 1	None	none
Week 2: 1/27-29	Develop Project #1	<p>"We are Doing Democracy Here" (article about young voters)</p> <p>Independents Reach New High as Young Voters Avoid Labels</p> <p>https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/14/polls/gallup-independent-voters.html?searchResultPosition=2</p> <p>Set up free New York Times subscription here</p> <p>"Did Usher Write His Own Commencement Speech? (Yeah!)</p> <p>(New York Times article about writing process)</p> <p>Book chapters in <i>Can Deliberation Cure the Ills of Democracy?</i> Chapter 1, beginning through "Toward a More Advanced Democracy"</p>	<p>Compare the ideas in the young voter video and article to those you usually hear about young voter behavior.</p> <p>Choose a 1-2 minute clip from the video that taught you the most about writing strategies. Play the clip for the class and explain what you learned.</p>
Week 3: 2/3-2/5	<p>Complete First Draft of Project #1</p> <p>February 5: Library Information Session</p>	<p>Read rhetorical analysis materials and materials from Deliberative Democracy Lab</p> <p>Book chapters: Chapter 1, "Madison's Vision" through "Phantom Opinions"</p>	<p>Reading Reflection</p> <p>Outline for project (handwritten)</p>

Week 4: 2/10-2/12	Revise Project #1	Selected sources for your project Book chapters: finish reading chapter 1	First Draft of Project #1
Week 5: 2/17-2/19	Complete Project #1/Finish Module 1, Begin Module 2 Develop Project #2	Book chapters: Chapter 2 through "To What Effect?"	Final Draft of Project #1
Week 6: 2/24-26	Develop Project #2	Book chapters: Chapter 2 through "Four Forms..."	Topic Idea for Project #2
Week 7: 3/3-3/5	Complete First Draft of Project #2	Book chapters: chapter 2 through "Participation as a Value"	Outline for Project #2
Week 8: 3/10-3/12	Revise Project #2	Book chapters: finish reading chapter 2	First Draft of Project #2
Week 9: 3/17-3/19	Finish Module 2, Begin Module 3	Book chapters: chapter 3 through "The Deliberations of a Random Sample"	Final Draft of Project #2
Week 10: 3/24-26	Develop Project #3	Book chapters: finish reading chapter 3	Outline for Project #3
Spring Break 3/31-4/2	None	None	None
Week 11: 4/7-4/9	Complete First Draft of Project #3	Book chapters: chapter 4, part 1 (first half)	First Draft of Project #3

Week 12: 4/14-16	Revise Project #3	Book chapters: chapter 4, part 2 (second half)	Final Draft of Project #3 Presentations of Project #3 Reports on presentations
Week 13: 4/21-23	Finish Module 3, Begin Module 4 Develop Project #4	Book chapters: chapter 5, part 1 (first half)	Presentations of Project #3 Reports on presentations Outline for Project #4
Week 14: 4/28-4/30	Develop Project #4	Book chapters: chapter 5, part 2 (second half)	First Draft of Project #4
Week 15: 5/5-5/7 5/7 is the last class meeting conference/consultation week	Revision and Conference/consultation week	Revisit previous readings	Almost-final draft of Project #4 Peer Review Report
Week 16:	Final Portfolio Reflection Project (Project #4) due on Wednesday, May 13 at 5:15 p.m.	Revisit previous readings	Final Draft of Project #4 by Wednesday, May 13 at 5:15 p.m.