San José State University
College of Humanities & Arts
Department of English & Comparative Literature
English 1A: First-Year Writing
(theme: “Getting into Higher Education”), Section 26
Spring 2019

Instructor: Dr. Mark Dowdy
Office Location: Faculty Offices 215
Telephone: (408) 924-5063
Email: mark.dowdy@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. or by appointment
Class Days/Time: Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:00 - 4:15 p.m.
Classroom: Boccardo Business Center (BBC) 121
Prerequisites: The Reflection on College Writing is a prerequisite to English 1A.
GE/SJSU Studies Category: English 1A satisfies Written Communication I, GE Area A2. To earn graduation credit in this category, you must complete the semester course with a grade of C- or better.
Course Format
As a hybrid course, English 1A meets both in person and online. You will need a computer with dependable Internet connectivity in order to turn in homework and writing assignments, keep up with course communications, and access the documents (such as the syllabus) associated with this class.

How Will Your Professor Communicate with You?
This class meets twice a week, and I hold regular office hours. There will be plenty of opportunities to speak with one another in person, and I encourage you not to be shy. You can also reach me through email (listed above.)

Most of our online interaction, however, will occur on the Canvas learning management system. On this site, you will find the course syllabus, homework/writing assignments, discussion boards, and page-building tools. Lastly, I will communicate with the class-at-large by making announcements on Canvas. While I will use the MySJSU messaging system for critical, time-sensitive information, I will mostly communicate with the class through Canvas. I expect you to check the Canvas course page before every class.

Catalog Description of English 1A
ENGL 1A is an introductory writing course that will help you understand the writing process and the goals, dynamics, and genres of written communication. Through interpretation and analysis of texts, you will learn to think clearly and write effectively as you give form and coherence to complex ideas. You will explore writing for various audiences and rhetorical situations.

Description of This Section of English 1A
This summer, you began preparing yourself for the college experience by attending orientation and completing your Reflection on College Writing course, among other requirements. Now that you are here, what do you plan to do? How can you make the most of your time in college? What drew you to the university in the first place? What do you hope to get out of your college experience? These questions will form the basis of our investigation into what the university is, how it works, and how you can make it work for you this year.

On the surface, the topic of our course is fairly practical and straightforward. Together, we will seek to figure out how the university is organized and how it works so that you can navigate it more effectively. However, our investigation will also challenge us to think about more abstract questions. What is the purpose of a university education in the U.S. and in a global context anyway? What does the university, as an institution, value? What are the ideologies at work in the university about culture, difference, equality, gender, race, and socio-economic opportunity?

Finally, this class will involve some soul searching too. You will need to think about what you bring to the university and what the university can offer you in return. You will spend time reflecting on what kind of student you were in the past, what kind of student you are now, what you hope to accomplish, and how you can use the university to meet those goals.

To pursue this exploration of higher education, this course will be organized into 3 units, each of which will ask you to explore a specific inquiry question. The first, Unit 1, will focus on your experience making the transition from high school to college. During this unit, you will be asked to read and reflect on the following questions: What is higher education to me? How does it differ from high school? And what do I hope to achieve from it? The next, Unit 2, will direct your attention to the campus community and ask you to examine how San Jose State University works as an institution to serve its students. During Unit 2, you will be asked to read and reflect on the following questions: What can SJSU do for me? How does it contribute to my education? What are its obligations to me, and mine to it? The final inquiry, Unit 3, will be the culmination of your thoughts and reflections about higher education throughout the academic year. In it, you will ask the following question: What is the purpose of higher education in the 21st century, and what role do my peers, teachers, and myself play in creating it?
What We Will Be Doing in English 1A …

Writing Assignments:
As a writing course, you will be expected to produce 8,000 words in this course, 4,000 of which must be revised and edited. These writing assignments will include both in-class and out-of-class essays.

Critical Reading and Reflection essays
   Estimated word count: 2,000 words
   Assignment type: in-class essays
   GE Learning Objective: GELO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Each of these three in-class essays will begin a new unit organized around a set of inquiry questions. Critical Reading and Reflection 1 will begin Unit 1 and will ask you to consider the following questions: What is higher education to me? What do I hope to achieve from it? And how does it differ from high school? Critical Reading and Reflection 2 will begin Unit 2 by building on the previous course unit with a new set of inquiry questions: What can SJSU do for me? How does it contribute to my education? What are its obligations to me, and mine to it? Finally, Critical Reading and Reflection 3 will begin Unit 3, the final unit of the academic year, by asking you to address the following inquiry questions: What is the purpose of higher education in the 21st century, and what role do my peers, teachers, and myself play in creating it? These three in-class essays will be completed during class time. You will have the option of writing your essay on paper or using a computer or mobile device.

Data-Driven Analyses
   Estimated word count: 2,250 words
   Assignment type: out-of-class writing
   GE Learning Objective: GELO 2, 3, 5

Each of the three units will also include a data driven analysis. For Unit 1, you will write a Personal Essay, which will require you to reflect on your journey to SJSU and to describe it to an audience comprised of your classmates. In Unit 2 you will begin to explore the people of SJSU by completing the Interview Project. This assignment will require you to identify a suitable interview subject, compose questions for this person, and, finally, conduct an interview. Finally, Unit 3 will include a Ethnography Project, a multi-modal group assignment in which you will work with a team of your peers to research and present upon one of the student organizations here at SJSU. By "multi-modal" I
mean that this presentation will include more than just words, spoken or written: it will require you to include a visual component in the form of video, images, audio, or other multimedia elements using a platforms such as Power Point or Prezi.

**Major Essays**

- **Estimated word count:** 3,000 words
- **Assignment type:** out-of-class writing
- **GE Learning Objective:** GELO 2, 3, 4, 5

Each of the three units will also conclude with a major essay. The first of these, the **Public Forum Essay** will require that to write a letter to the editor of a major newspaper. In this letter, you will respond you articulate your response to a article from the editor’s publication that addresses an issue facing college students today. The next major essay will be a **Profile** of an employee at SJSU. To complete this assignment, you will need to identify someone who works at the university, set up an interview with him or her, and write an essay in which you focus on specific qualities of this person in order to tell a larger story. The final major essay, the **Critical Essay**, will culminate all of the work you have done in English 1A throughout the semester. For this assignment, you will 1) identify a critical issue facing higher education, 2) take a clear position (thesis) on this issue, and 3) write a letter to the president of the university supporting your position with both research and personal observations.

**End-of-the-Semester Portfolio**

- **Estimated word count:** 750 words
- **Assignment type:** in-class writing/out-of-class writing
- **GE Learning Objective:** GELO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

When you took **Reflection on College Writing** this past summer, you created a portfolio of your writing. In English, you will continue to use writing portfolios in order to reflect upon your own writing practices. This course will culminate in the creation of an **End-of-the-Semester Portfolio**. In it, you will assemble a representative selection of essays that you have written this past semester. By submitting exceptional essays in your Writing Portfolio (see Grading Contract below), you improve your chances of receiving a grade higher than a B in this course.

**Participation**

In addition to writing in-class and out-of-class essays, English 1A will also participate in the following:

1. **Homework/Outside Activities:** You will need to complete much of the work for this course outside of the classroom. This includes completing Canvas learning modules that you will be able to complete at your own pace. These modules are designed to reinforce the lessons from class and to help you meet the GELOs/CLOs for this course (see above). In addition to these self-paced modules, there will also be homework assignments that need to be competed by a given deadlines. For example, I may assign a reading response as homework, or I might require the class to post items in the discussion boards on Canvas.

2. **Class Discussions:** Your contributions to class discussions are essential to creating a classroom community. You should strive to contribute to most class discussions, demonstrating an ability and willingness to listen to myself and your peers as well as the capacity to bring yourself and your experiences to the reading assignment. Since we will be reading a Malcolm Harris’s *Kids These Days* together as a class, you will also participate in activities based on this book. These activities include scheduled quizzes.

3. **Group Projects:** I will assign multi-modal group projects throughout the semester. These projects will enable you to work with each other to create visual and audio responses (infographics, podcasts, etc.) to the stories we will be reading throughout the semester. A successful group project will receive full credit by meeting the following criteria: following the written guidelines of the assignment; informing its audience in a, polished, engaging manner; and demonstrating group cohesion, focus, and purpose.
4. Workshops: We will be conducting workshop sessions both through Canvas and during class time. The process will begin with Canvas, where I will be assigning you into small groups. Be sure to upload your respective first drafts to Canvas by the posted deadline. Once you and your fellow group members have uploaded your essays, you will be able to review and respond to one another’s drafts. Both the individual who wrote a particular essay and myself will be able to review your feedback via Canvas. Please provide feedback 24 hours prior to the scheduled in-class workshop session. On the class day devoted to workshop, you will have opportunity to give one another additional feedback and to ask follow-up questions. Please bring an addition hard copy of your draft to the workshop session so that you and your peers can mark up your manuscript.

Overview of Assignments

**Unit 1:** Critical Reading and Reflection 1; Personal Essay; Essay for a Public Forum.

**Unit 2:** Critical Reading and Reflection 2; Interview Project, Profile Essay.

**Unit 3:** Critical Reading and Reflection 4; Ethnography Project, Critical Essay.

**Culminating Activity:** End-of-Semester Portfolio

---

**Expected Workload for a 3-Unit Course**

Success in this course 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**

Faculty members are required to have a culminating activity for their courses, which can include a final examination, a final research paper or project, a final creative work or performance, a final portfolio of work, or other appropriate assignment. English 1A will meet this requirement with a writing portfolio (“End of the Semester Portfolio”) due at the end of the semester.

---

**How I Will Evaluate Your Work and Assign Grades**

**Grading Contract**

Instead of using weighted grades, we will be using a Grading Contract in English 1A. The contract below tells you what you need to do in order to receive a B in English 1A. By working hard and meeting all 15 requirements enumerated in the contract, you will assure yourself a B for the course. Moreover, if your **End-of-Semester Portfolio** exhibits exceptionally strong writing, you may receive a grade higher than a B.

On the next four pages, you will find the requirements for our Grading Contract. Please read this section carefully and ask me to clarify anything that you’re not sure about. This Grading Contract is also on Canvas, where you will need to sign and submit as your first homework assignment.

In order to receive a B in English 1A, you must:
1. Complete ALL assigned drafts of each essay (both rough and final) and submit them to Canvas by the posted deadline.

2. Turn in final drafts that have been carefully proofread. Your final drafts do not need to flawless and error-free, but they should reflect an effort to present your work in the best possible light.

3. Submit final drafts that demonstrate significant revision. Fixing grammar, spelling, and typos or reformatting your final draft are all critically important (see Requirement #2 above), but they are not the same thing as revision. Throughout the academic year, the class will review effective revision techniques and apply them to our own writing.

4. Avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism occurs when you present the words or ideas of another person as your own, whether you intended to do so or not. Oftentimes, it results from the improper citation of sources. In its most egregious forms — copying and pasting passages from published writings, purchasing an essay on the internet, hiring a ghost writer — plagiarism constitutes a flagrant act of dishonesty that can result in severe academic consequences, up to and including expulsion. To prevent unintentional forms of plagiarism, we will devote considerable time in English 1A towards incorporating and citing outside sources.

5. Participate in 85% of scheduled group activities. You will receive notice of these activities on Canvas at least one class period before the scheduled group activity.

6. Contribute to your assigned group’s scheduled in-class presentation. This includes research, writing, and editing, as well as presenting before the class.

7. Engage regularly in class discussions, demonstrating an ability and willingness to listen to myself and your peers as well as the capacity to bring yourself and your experiences to the topic at hand. You don’t have to speak up during every class session, but you do need to make an effort to participate on a consistent basis.

8. Complete and submit 85% of homework assignments by the due date.

9. Finish the four self-paced online learning modules by the last day of instruction (December 10th, 2018).

10. Provide thoughtful, detailed feedback to peers during workshops. This requires attending the scheduled workshops during class time and submitting feedback on Canvas by the posted deadlines.

11. Show courtesy and respect to your peers and instructor at all times. This includes paying attention when someone else (one of your peers or myself) is speaking to the class.

12. Refrain from using your laptop, cell phone, or tablet UNLESS directed to use them. Since we live in the digital age, we will sometimes use phones or laptops/mobiles. When we do, I will notify you on Canvas at least one class period before the scheduled group activity. Unless the class is specifically making use of technology, you should remove your electronic devices from your desk.

13. Score a cumulative average of 60% or higher for all ten of the scheduled reading quizzes for Malcolm Harris’s *Kids These Days*. While 60% may seem like a low threshold for receiving a guaranteed B in the course, the ideas presented in this book are challenging. For most people (myself included), this is not “an easy read.”

14. Avoid being tardy by arriving to class on time throughout the semester and on a consistent basis.
15. Submit a complete, fully revised Portfolio that meets all outlined requirements by the due dates at the end of the semester.

**Deductions**

For each of the numbered items above that you do not meet, your grade will be lowered by one-half letter. For example, a student who met 14 of the 15 requirements above would receive a B-, a student who met 13 of the 15 requirements would receive a C+, and so on. Please note that you can still raise a grade that has been lowered by submitting an exceptionally strong portfolio at the end of the semester.

**Late Essays**

If you contact me via the Canvas messaging system prior to the posted deadline, you may submit ONE late essay during the Fall 2018 semester and ONE late essay during the Spring 2019 semester (up to one week). This includes meeting the deadlines for both first and final drafts.

**More Serious Considerations: a Solemn Pledge**

If you are facing severely difficult circumstances that will affect your ability to complete the requirements for this course, please notify me as soon as possible. Even if you cannot meet all 15 of the above requirements to receive a B, you can still succeed in this course and satisfy the A2 Written Communication requirement by receiving at least a C-, provided that you contact me in a timely fashion and inform me of your situation. Hopefully, none of you will face unusually difficult circumstances this academic year, but in the event that you do, I pledge to work with you to make the best of the situation.

**Scoring Higher than a B in this Course**

Receiving a B in a college course is quite commendable. It shows a commitment to one’s own education and to the lifelong task of self-improvement. There is no shame in a B.

However, I also understand and respect the desire to push one’s self to produce exceptional work and to be rewarded for it. With this in mind, here are the requirements for a receiving a grade higher than a B:

**Final Grade of B+:** In addition to meeting all 15 of the requirements for receiving a B in this course, students who receive a B+ will receive a cumulative score of 80% or higher for all reading quizzes based on Malcolm Harris’s *Kids These Days*.

**Final Grades of A- or Higher:** In addition to meeting the requirements for receiving a B+ in this course, students who receive an A- or higher will submit an exceptionally strong final portfolio. The final drafts included in these Portfolio will be distinguished by thoughtful revision, judicious copy editing, and thorough proofreading. We will devote considerable class time throughout the academic year to learning how to revise, copy edit, and proofread one’s own writing in order to present your best possible written work.

**What You Can Expect from Me**

For this contract to work, I have to hold up my end of the bargain as well. Here is what you can expect from me:

**Feedback:** Since we are using a Grading Contract, I will not be assigning letter grades to individual essays. I will, however, distribute a qualitative scoring guide specific to that particular essay, and within two weeks of submission, I will provide written and/or audio feedback on Canvas to all of your major writing assignments. In my responses to your essays, I will comment on the following:

- The rhetorical elements of your writing (audience awareness; use of genre conventions; the appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos).
• Any patterns of error in grammar, spelling, usage, or formatting that I discover. I won’t mark up every mistake that I encounter. Instead, I will point out things to consider for future writing assignments, including the final Portfolio.

• Style and clarity in your writing. There’s an old line from a song that goes, “It ain’t what you do, it’s the way that you do it.” Style and clarity have less to do with “correctness” in writing and more to do with effective communication.

• Organization, both globally (the overall arrangement of a piece of writing) and locally (the structures of paragraphs and sentences).

• Your use of readings and other outside sources in your writing.

• Finally, what I found to be the strongest aspects of your essays.

Advance Notice: In addition to posting deadlines for all major assignments on the syllabus and on Canvas, I will notify you of any changes to the Tentative Schedule for the class (see below) as far in advance (no later than the preceding class session) as possible.

Availability: I will keep regular office hours and will be available by appointment (see above). In addition, I will respond to Canvas messages in a timely fashion (24 hours during the work week/48 hours on weekends).

Courtesy: Just as I expect courtesy from you (both to your peers and to me), you should expect the same from me. This includes taking the time to learn your names within the first two weeks of the semester.

Openness: Got a suggestion? Did a particular activity work well, or did you find it less than helpful? I am open to suggestions. By sharing your insights with me, you can help me improve yours and other students’ experiences in this class.

How Do I Earn Credit for GE Area A2?
To satisfy your CORE GE Area A2 and to move on to CORE GE Area A3, you must pass this course with a C- or better. A C- grade in the course signifies that you are a capable college-level writer and reader of English.

Statement of Agreement: You will find this contract on the course Canvas site, where you will be asked to review the contract, post any questions, and sign your agreement to the specified requirements in this Grading Contract.

See University Policy F13-1 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F13-1.pdf for more details on your right to understand your grades. In your section syllabus, your instructor outlines specifically our grading practices for the year: information on feedback practices, relative weights of assignments, and the grade calculations.

Where You Can Find Information About All the University Policies
The Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs (GUP) maintains university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. You may find all syllabus-related University Policies and resources information listed on GUP’s Syllabus Information web page at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/
English 1A, Spring 2019, Course Schedule

Below is the tentative schedule for the class this semester. Please keep in mind that as the course unfolds, there will be inevitable changes to it. Whenever any changes are made, I will notify the class on Canvas.

Please note that the due dates for major assignments are in **bold face and italics**.

**Week 1**

**Monday, January 28th**
Today, on our first day of class, we will go over the syllabus and introduce ourselves to one another. I will also assign your first two homework assignments: 1) to create a “What my friends think I do” meme about college, and 2) to read chapter 4 of *College Rules!*

**Wednesday, January 30th**
*What to do prior to class:* Complete your meme assignment and read chapter 4 of *College Rules!*
*What we will be doing during class:* Group work involving meme assignment, discussing chapter 4 of *College Rules!*, and going over the assignment sheet for your first two essays: Critical Reading and Reflection 1 and Personal Essay.

**Week 2**

**Monday, February 4th**
*What to do prior to class:* Read and reflect on the writing prompt for Critical Reading and Reflection 1 (CRR1).
*What we will be doing during class:* Write Critical Reading/Reflection Essay 1. You may choose to write this in-class essay on a laptop/mobile device (yes, today is an acceptable day to use a laptop in class). If you prefer, you may also use a pen and paper.

**Wednesday, February 6th**
*What to do prior to class:* Bring laptop or mobile device to class.
*What we will be doing during class:* Going over guidelines for Personal Essay, learning about Excelsior Online Writing Lab, working on an editing exercise, and assigning Peer Review partners for next week’s workshop.

**Week 3**

**Wednesday, February 11th**
*What to do prior to class:* Read “How to Tame a Wild Tongue,” by Gloria Anzaldua (available on Canvas).
*What we will be doing during class:* Classroom investigation: the experience of reading “How to Tame a Wild Tongue,” by Gloria Anzaldua.

**Wednesday, February 13th**
*What to do prior to class:* **Complete the first draft of your Personal Essay and submit it to Canvas.**
What we will be doing during class: Holding our first Mandatory Workshop.

Week 4

Wednesday, February 18th

What to do prior to class: Complete Workshop responses for both of your peers. Please submit your responses in the text box for your partner's essay. Remember: you only need to indicate the number for each peer response question. You don't need to repeat the question itself.

What we will be doing during class: This class will focus on what it means to revise, copy edit, and proofread. Bring your latest version of your Personal Essay and bring a laptop or mobile device.

Wednesday, February 20th

What to do prior to class: Complete and submit final draft of Personal Essay on Canvas.

What we will be doing during class: We will discuss your next assignment: Social Media Post.

Week 5

Monday, February 25th

What to do prior to class: Read "The Subtle Ways Colleges Discriminate Against College Students" and create a double-entry journal for it.

What we will be doing during class: Group activity: Analyzing Alvin Chang's argument.

Wednesday, February 27th

What to do prior to class: Find a news article from the Washington Post’s “Grade Point” and post a 2-part response (summary; analysis) online.

What we will be doing during class: sharing responses to reading; assigning Peer Review groups for your Social Media Posts.

Week 6

Monday, March 4th

What to do prior to class: Complete the first draft of your Social Media Post and submit it to Canvas.

What we will be doing during class: Holding our second Mandatory Peer Review session.

Wednesday, March 6th

What to do prior to class: Read “Introduction” to Malcolm Harris’ Kids These Days.

What we will be doing during class. Discuss “Introduction” to Malcolm Harris’ Kids These Days.

Week 7

Monday, March 11th

What to do prior to class: Submit final draft of Social Media Post and submit it to Canvas.

Read chapter 3 of College Rules!
What will we be doing during class: Discuss next assignment: Profile Essay; class activity — “Charting the University.”

Wednesday, March 13th

What to do prior to class: Read chapter 1 of Kids These Days.
What we will be doing during class: Group work related to reading.

Week 8

Monday, March 18th

What to do prior to class: Read chapter 18 of College Rules, “Active Reading.” Upload first draft of Profile to Canvas.
What we will be doing during class. Assigning groups for the Ethnographic project and Third Peer Review session and going over the assignment.

Wednesday, March 20th

What to do prior to class: Read Chapter 2 of Kids These Days.
What we will be doing during class: Discussion: Why is college so expensive?

Week 9

Monday, March 25th

What to bring prior to class: Continue reading/taking notes for Chapter 2 of Kids These Days.
What we will be doing during class: Discussion, pt. 2: Why is college so expensive?

Wednesday, March 27th

What to do prior to class: Read chapter 3 of Kids These Days.
What we will be doing during class. Group activities.

Week 10

Monday, April 1st and Wednesday, April 3rd

Spring Break: No classes scheduled.

Week 11

Monday, April 8th

What to bring prior to class: Complete first draft of Profile and submit to Canvas by Midnight. More work with the elements of Profile.

Wednesday, April 10th

What to do prior to class: Review peer's essays and give feedback on Canvas.
What we will be doing during class: Holding our Third Peer Review Session.

Week 12

Monday, April 15th
What to do prior to class: Finish Chapter 4 of *Kids These Days.*

What will we be doing during class: Introduction: Writing a Rhetorical Analysis

Wednesday, April 17th

What to do prior to class: Begin reading chapter 5 of *Kids These Days.* Read chapter 21 of *College Rules!*

What we will be doing during class. Class activity: summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting.

Week 13

Monday, April 22nd

What to do prior to class: Submit first draft of Critical Essay on Canvas; finishing reading chapter 5 of *Kids These Days.*

What we will be doing during class. Creating KWL+ reading logs.

Wednesday, April 24th

What to do prior to class: Read and respond to your peer’s drafts online on Canvas; this includes completing the Peer Response form provided to you for this assignment.

What we will be doing during class: Holding our final Mandatory Peer Review Session.

Wednesday, May 1st

Week 14

Monday, April 29th

What to do prior to class: Read chapter 6 of *Kids These Days.*

What we will be doing during class: Reviewing writing prompt for Critical Reading and Reflection #3.

Week 15

Monday, May 6th

What to do prior to class: Complete and submit final draft of your Critical Essay on Canvas. Read “Conclusion” and “Final Word” of *Kids These Days.*

What we will be doing during class: Class discussion: final words on *Kids These Days.* Assembling the elements of your Writing Portfolio.

Wednesday, May 8th

What to do prior to class: Review Study Questions.

What we will be doing during class: In-class essay Critical Reading and Reflection #2.

Week 16

Monday, May 13th

What to do prior to class: Complete Self-Reflection assignment. Deadline to complete Self-Paced Online Learning Modules.
What we will be doing during class: Creating ePortfolios on Canvas, returning final draft of Critical Essay.

Final Exam; or Culminating Activity: Please submit the link to your Canvas Writing Portfolio by 5 p.m. on Monday, May 20th.