San José State University  
College of Humanities & Arts  
Department of English & Comparative Literature  
English 2: Critical Thinking and Writing, Section 20  
Spring 2021

Course and Contact Information

Instructor(s): Mark Dowdy, Ph.D.  
Office Location: Online on Zoom  
Email: mark.dowdy@sjsu.edu  
Office Hours: Tuesdays, via Zoom, from 12-2 p.m. (or by appointment).  
https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/81498515556?pwd=NkZ0c0Y3UWdkWTRLUElieGpSeTZHzQT09  
Passcode: 634615  Meeting ID: 814 9851 5556

Class Days/Time: Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:00 - 1:15 p.m.  
Classroom Zoom Link:  
https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/88536712260?pwd=MIE2R2Y2eG9saTI4Qk9qbWMvU092UT09  
Passcode: 185246  Meeting ID: 885 3671 2260


Prerequisites: ENGL 1A (with a grade of C- or better)

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

Course Description

English 2 is an introductory writing course that focuses on the relationship between language and logic when composing arguments. Building on the skills acquired in ENGL 1A, students learn various methods of effective reasoning and appropriate rhetorical strategies to help them invent, demonstrate, and express arguments clearly, logically, and persuasively.

Course-Specific Theme: Arguments about Music

This section of English 2 will focus on the conversations people have with one another about music. We will examine both arguments made about music as well arguments made within music itself or by its producers. The purpose of this inquiry, however, goes beyond simply talking and writing about music. Instead, it concerns itself with how music and musicians often generate and respond to larger debates within our society. The symbol to the left, for example, was used by the late recording artist Prince from 1993-2000 in an
attempt to bypass trademark restrictions placed upon his actual birth name by Warner Bros. During a lingering contract dispute with the media conglomerate, Prince created and distributed this symbol in order to publicize his grievance, claiming that the contractual obligations placed upon him reduced him to the status of a “slave.” In a more recent example, Lil Nas X’s smash hit “Old Town Road” has spurred a debate over whether the song should be classified as hip hop, country, or something else entirely. The song has also led to a broader discussion about the large number of African-American men who were actual cowboys on the American frontier (1 in 4 were black).

Music, then, invites a larger discussion. When we argue about music, we are not just arguing about whether we like a song or a composition or an artist (though we probably have our opinions in those areas!). We are also making arguments that can extend into the realms of science, history, law, business, politics, psychology, and culture. All of the coursework for this section of English — essays, readings, homework, and in-class activities — will ask you to think not only about music but about the arguments it makes and the arguments that are made about it.

**Course Format: Online, Synchronous Learning in a Flipped Virtual Environment**

This semester, in response to the ongoing covid-19 pandemic, this course will be conducted online. Classes will be synchronous and will meet twice a week according to the schedule posted above. In addition, the course format will be flipped. Therefore, instead of listening to lectures, you can expect to work in small groups with your peers, checking in with me and the rest of the class periodically. Since all course materials will be posted on Canvas and most class sessions will be conducted via Zoom, you will need a computer (desktop, laptop, or tablet) equipped with a camera and a microphone in order to participate in the course. You will also need a reliable internet connection. Finally, the course will periodically make use of a Mozilla Hub, a VR environment assessable to most web browsers and smart phones. When the class meets in a Hub, you will notified at least one week in advance via the Canvas messaging system.

**Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging**

In addition to bi-weekly Zoom/Hub sessions, I will also hold weekly virtual office hours on Tuesdays from 12 - 2 p.m. and by appointment. You can also reach me through email (see above.)

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.

**General Education Course Learning Outcomes (GELO)**

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:
1. locate and evaluate sources, through library research, and integrate research through appropriate citation and quotation;
2. present effective arguments that use a full range of legitimate rhetorical and logical strategies to articulate and explain their positions on complex issues in dialogue with other points of view;
3. locate, interpret, evaluate, and synthesize evidence in a comprehensive way in support of your ideas;
4. identify and critically evaluate the assumptions in and the context of an argument;
5. distinguish and convey inductive and deductive patterns as appropriate, sequencing arguments and evidence logically to draw valid conclusions and articulate related outcomes (implications and consequences).
Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:
1. synthesize and analyze multiple points of view
2. articulate and support one's own position regarding various issues
3. adjust writing to multiple audiences, purposes, and conventions
4. become conscientious and responsible writers, both for college and beyond
5. learn to access and become involved with the discourses of the university community
6. develop questioning abilities that move them beyond the passive acceptance of new materials to thinkers who can hold those materials up to genuinely informed scrutiny

Required Texts/Readings

Textbooks: For readings about rhetoric, composition, and argumentation, we will be using open educational resources (OER). These are available online for free. While I may introduce other texts (and will provide you with the necessary access), we will mostly use the following:

Excelsior Online Writing Lab (OWL): Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License: https://owl.excelsior.edu/

Other Readings: For music-related readings, we will be reading the following (available either on Canvas or through hyperlinks on the web):

• Amiri Baraka/Leroi Jones, selections from Blues People and Black Music (available on Canvas).
• Rian Malan, “In the Jungle” (available on Canvas).
• Ben Sisario, “Little Nas X added Billy Ray Cyrus to ‘Old Town Road.’ Is It Country Enough for Billboard Now?” (available online): https://nyti.ms/2YTjIB1
• Laura Snapes, “Phil Spector Defined the Toxic Music Svengali — a Figure that Persists Today” (available online): https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/18/phil-spector-toxic-svengali-music-industry
During the semester, I may introduce other texts, most likely from periodicals. When I do, I will provide you with the necessary access (either through the Canvas or the web) and will provide you with at least a week’s advance notice.

**Viewings:** For class discussion purposes, you will need to view the following two documentary films (see Course Schedule below).

- Sam Cullman (director), *The Lion’s Share* (available on Netflix).

**Library Liaison**

DeeAnn Tran deeann.tran@sjsu.edu.

**Course Requirements and Assignments**

The [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), Course Syllabi (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) requires the following language to be included in the syllabus: “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.”

**Writing Assignments:**

As a writing course, you will be expected to produce 6,000 words in this course. Of these, 4,000 must be revised and edited. For each of the writing assignments below, I will provided a scoring guide along with essay guidelines. These will be posted on Canvas.

**Essay #1 — Critical Synthesis: Writing about a Music-Related Controversy**

*Estimated word count: 2,500-3,000 (total); 1,250-1,500 (peer reviewed and revised)*

*Assignment type: out-of-class essay*

*GE Learning Objective: GELO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5*

This essay will require you to identify a music-related controversy and synthesize the arguments of the various stakeholders involved in it. In addition, you will need to evaluate the assumptions, values, beliefs, and rhetorical strategies underlying the various stakeholders’ arguments and stake your own position within the debate.


*Estimated word count: 2,500-3,000 (total); 1,250-1,500 (peer reviewed and revised)*

*Assignment type: out-of-class writing*

*GE Learning Objective: GELO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5*

This essay will require that you write a proposal (i.e. argument about the future) based on the conclusions you draw from Essay #1: Critical Synthesis. While your Critical Synthesis relied upon inductive logic (drawing general conclusions based on specific circumstances), your Persuasive Essay will rely on deductive logic (applying general principles to specific examples).

**Essay #3 — Multimodal Music Review: Reaction to Hearing a Work of Music for the First Time**

*Estimated word count: 2,000 (total); 1,000 (peer reviewed and revised)*

*Assignment type: out-of-class writing*

*GE Learning Objective: GELO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5*
This essay is inspired by current popularity of song reaction videos on YouTube. These videos feature music listeners’ spontaneous reactions to a song they are hearing for the first time. For this assignment, you will record your own reaction to an unfamiliar song or musical composition and write an essay in which you reflect on your initial reaction, conduct research on the artist/song/genre, and write a follow-up review addressed to the audience you identify for this work of music.

Essay #4: Writing Portfolio

Estimated word count: 1,000-1,500 (total); 500-750 (revised)
Assignment type: in-class writing/out-of-class writing
GE Learning Objective: GELO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

This course will culminate in the creation of an End-of-the-Semester Writing Portfolio. In it, you will assemble a representative selection of essays that you have written this past semester. Along with this portfolio, you will submit a 500-750-word reflection that evaluates the progress you have made, during the past semester, towards meeting GELO # 1: “Students shall locate and evaluate sources, through library research, and integrate research through appropriate citation and quotation.”

Oral/Multimodal Project

Presentation on Music Reaction

Assignment type: Oral presentation using visual media
Duration: 4-6 minutes (points deducted for going under or over assigned time frame)
GE Learning Objective: GELO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

This presentation will be based on your Multimodal Music Review. It will be conducted on Zoom and will require the use of visual media (e.g. a Powerpoint/Prezi or a detailed infographic). While you will not be required to submit a script for this assignment, you are strongly advised to work with one, since points will be deducted for presentations that go under or over the assigned time frame of 4-6 minutes.

Participation

Participation points will be awarded for the following activities:

1. Canvas assignments: Each week you will need to complete both out-of-class and in-class activities available on Canvas learning modules. Most of the time, these activities will be based on required readings.

2. Group Projects: I will assign group projects throughout the semester. These projects will enable you to work with one another in teams to create visual/audio presentations. In addition, groups will frequently present to the class during Zoom sessions.

3. First Drafts of Essays: In order to receive full credit for first drafts, you only need to meet two requirements: 1) your draft must meet the required word count and 2) it must be submitted by the scheduled time and due date.

4. Peer Review: For each essay, we will be conducting peer review/workshop sessions. These activities consist of live, synchronous Zoom sessions and follow-up work completed individually using Canvas learning modules.

Final Examination or Evaluation

For the culminating activity English 2, you will complete and submit your Writing Portfolio (see Writing Portfolio above). This portfolio will be due by Midnight on May 20.
Feedback: For each major writing assignment, I will distribute a qualitative scoring guide specific to that particular essay, and within two weeks of submission of the final draft, 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; discernment of context; critical thinking and logical persuasion).

- 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.

Late Policy: For each weekday late, essays will be be graded down by 5%, a reduction that amounts to five points per weekday late for first drafts and 1/2 letter per weekday late for final ones. In addition, those who submit first drafts late will receive zero points for the live, synchronous component of Peer Review. Late homework assignments will be graded down by 50%. However, once the class has completed a scheduled module (for example, the Critical Synthesis Module), late homework will no longer be accepted for it.

Extra Credit: No extra credit activities will be available for this class.

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.

**Technology Requirements**

Students are required to have an electronic device (laptop, desktop or tablet) with a camera and built-in microphone. SJSU has a [free equipment loan program](https://www.sjsu.edu/learnanywhere/equipment/index.php) available for students.

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have access to reliable Wi-Fi during tests. If students are unable to have reliable Wi-Fi, they must inform the instructor, as soon as possible or at the latest one week before the test date to determine an alternative. See [Learn Anywhere](https://www.sjsu.edu/learnanywhere/equipment/index.php) website for current Wi-Fi options on campus.

**Recording Zoom Classes**

After each weekly Zoom meeting, I will post a link to a recording of the session on Canvas in as timely a fashion as possible (within 48 hours). You may stream Zoom recordings from this course for studying purposes, but please do not download them or share them with persons outside of the class. I retain the copyright to these recordings.

These sessions will be recorded for instructional or educational purposes. You are not required to turn your camera on during these sessions, but you are welcome to do so. The recordings will only be shared with students enrolled in the course through Canvas. The recordings will be deleted at the end of the semester. If, however, you would prefer to remain anonymous during these recordings, then please speak with me about possible accommodations.

Students are prohibited from recording class activities (including class lectures, office hours, advising sessions, etc.), distributing class recordings, or posting class recordings. Materials created by the instructor for the course (syllabi, lectures and lecture notes, presentations, etc.) are copyrighted by the instructor. This university policy ([S12-7](https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf)) is in place to protect the privacy of students in the course, as well as to maintain academic integrity through reducing the instances of cheating. Students who record, distribute, or post these materials will be referred to the Student Conduct and Ethical Development office. Unauthorized recording may violate university and state law. It is the responsibility of students that require special accommodations or assistive technology due to a disability to notify the instructor.

**Zoom Classroom Etiquette**

- **Mute Your Microphone:** To help keep background noise to a minimum, make sure you mute your microphone when you are not speaking.
- **Activate your camera when you are speaking and during breakout sessions.**
- **Be Mindful of Background Noise and Distractions:** Find a quiet place to “attend” class, to the greatest extent possible.
• Avoid video setups where people may be walking behind you, people talking/making noise, etc.
• Avoid activities that could create additional noise, such as shuffling papers, listening to music in the background, etc.
• Position Your Camera Properly: Be sure your webcam is in a stable position and focused at eye level.
• Limit Your Distractions/Avoid Multitasking: You can make it easier to focus on the meeting by turning off notifications, closing or minimizing running apps, and putting your smartphone away (unless you are using it to access Zoom).
• Use Appropriate Virtual Backgrounds: If using a virtual background, it should be appropriate and professional and should NOT suggest or include content that is objectively offensive or demeaning.

University Policies
Per University Policy S16-9 (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs’ Syllabus Information web page (https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php). Make sure to visit this page, review and be familiar with these university policies and resources.

English 2 / Critical Thinking and Writing, Spring 2021, Course Schedule

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

Course Schedule (Required - Delete the word “Required” in final draft)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/27</td>
<td>• Introduction; overview of syllabus; discussion of how technology will be used in the class. (Zoom link is available on course Canvas page.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2    | 2/1  | • Essay #1 — Critical Synthesis: Writing about a Music-Related Controversy assigned.  
• Create a new Portfolium project.  
• Post Flipgrid Introduction. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2    | 2/3  | **No class scheduled.** Note from Professor Dowdy: “I will be traveling on 2/3, so there will not be an online Zoom class scheduled for this day. To prepare for the next class on Monday, 2/8, please complete the following:”  
  • Read the following sections from the Excelsior Online Writing Lab: [Toulmin Argument](https://owl.excelsior.edu/argument-and-critical-thinking/organizing-your-argument/organizing-your-argument-toulmin/), [Toulmin Infographic](https://owl.excelsior.edu/argument-and-critical-thinking/organizing-your-argument/organizing-your-argument-toulmin-infographic/), and [Sample Toulmin Argument](https://owl.excelsior.edu/argument-and-critical-thinking/organizing-your-argument/organizing-your-argument-sample-toulmin-argument/).  
  • Read “Using Toulmin’s Model of Argumentation,” by Joan Karbach (available on Canvas). While this essay is written for an audience of educators, it is also quite useful for students of rhetoric.  
  • Watch [Copyright Criminals](https://youtu.be/R16J7JLxTqk) by class time (available on YouTube): https://youtu.be/R16J7JLxTqk  
  • Complete related activities on Canvas. |
| 3    | 2/8  | In-class work on the first three parts of a Toulmin Argument: Claim, Grounds, and Warrant.  
  • Group work on music-related controversies.  
  • Before class read Ben Sisario, “Little Nas X added Billy Ray Cyrus to ‘Old Town Road.’ Is It Country Enough for Billboard Now?” (available online): [https://nyti.ms/2YTjIB1](https://nyti.ms/2YTjIB1) |
| 3    | 2/10 | Before class read Rian Malan, “In the Jungle,” Introduction (pages 3-4) and Part One: A Story about Music (pages 5-17) (available on Canvas). |
  • In-class activity: writing a Critical Essay |
| 5    | 2/22 | Before class watch *The Lion’s Share* (dir. Sam Cullman; available on Netflix).  
  • In-class activity: writing a Synthesis |
| 5    | 2/24 | Evidence  
  • Library Research Session |
| 6    | 3/1  | Logical fallacies  
  • Arguments by deduction and induction |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>• Group Presentations: Music-Related Controversies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3/8</td>
<td>• Group Presentations: Music-Related Controversies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 7    | 3/10  | • Due date for first draft of Essay #1 — Critical Synthesis: Writing about a Music-Related Controversy.  
• Peer Review. |
• In-class Activity: writing a Proposal  
• Before class read Amiri Baraka/Leroi Jones, selections from *Blues People* and *Black Music* (available on Canvas). |
| 8    | 3/17  | • Due date for final draft of Essay #1 — Critical Synthesis: Writing about a Music-Related Controversy.  
• Return to Toulmin Argument: Claim, Grounds, Warrant, Backing, Qualifier, Rebuttal.  
• Before class Wesley Morris, “Why Is Everyone Always Stealing Black Music?” (available online): https://nyti.ms/2HJNT6F |
| 9    | 3/22  | • Aristotelian Argument  
• Before class read the follow sections from the Excelsior Online Writing Lab:  
  [Aristotelian Argument](https://owl.excelsior.edu/argument-and-critical-thinking/organizing-your-argument/organizing-your-argument-aristotelian/),  
  [Aristotelian Infographic](https://owl.excelsior.edu/argument-and-critical-thinking/organizing-your-argument/organizing-your-argument-aristotelian-infographic/), and  
  [Sample Aristotelian Argument](https://owl.excelsior.edu/argument-and-critical-thinking/organizing-your-argument/organizing-your-argument-sample-aristotelian-argument/).  
• Before class read Perry A. Hall, “African-American Music: Dynamics of Appropriation and Innovation” (available online) (available on Canvas). |
| 9    | 3/24  | • Before class read Steve Albini, “The Problem with Music” (available online):  
  https://thebaffler.com/salvos/the-problem-with-music; and  
  “The Internet Has Solved the Problem with Music” (available online)  
<p>| 3/29 - 4/2 | Spring Recess — No classes scheduled. |
| 3/31 |       | Cesar Chavez Day — Campus Closed |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>4/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Before class read “Phil Spector Defined the Toxic Music Svengali — a Figure that Persists Today,” by Laura Snapes: <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/18/phil-spector-toxic-svengali-music-industry">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/18/phil-spector-toxic-svengali-music-industry</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Peer Review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Essay #3 — Multimodal Essay: Reaction to Hearing a Work of Music for the First Time assigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In-class activity: writing a Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rogerian Argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Definitional Arguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Due date for first draft of Essay #3 — Multimodal Essay: Reaction to Hearing a Work of Music for the First Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Peer Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4/28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>5/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Due date for final draft of Essay #3 — Multimodal Essay: Reaction to Hearing a Work of Music for the First Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>5/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Individual Presentations: Reaction to Hearing an Artist/Work of Music for the First Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>5/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Individual Presentations: Reaction to Hearing an Artist/Work of Music for the First Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>5/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Individual Presentations: Reaction to Hearing an Artist/Work of Music for the First Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>5/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In-class/Online Writing Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>5/20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>