

English 1B: On Faith and Faithlessness
San José State University, Spring 2014

Instructor: Daniel Hendel De La O
Course: Composition 2 (GE C3; 3 Units)
Course Information: Section 16 (20352)
Meetings: Mo/We 9:00 – 10:15 AM, Clark Hall 238
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*It is only when men begin to
worship that they begin to grow.*
—President Calvin Coolidge

*I don't believe in God,
but I'm very interested in her.*
—Arthur C. Clarke

Course Theme

This semester's 1B course will examine the human phenomena of spirituality. We will examine various facets of spirituality and faith, including:

- What drives humans to believe in something larger than ourselves?
- How do spirituality and faith both simultaneously divide and unite us?
- What is the difference between being spiritual and being religious?
- Can one be moral without being religious?
- What happens when spiritual and secular interests intersect in society?
- How can religion and science coexist?
- Are all religions viewed equally?
- How are those who believe (and those who don't) portrayed in the media?
- What place, if any, should spirituality have in our politics?
- How does our society regard non-believers?
- Does the existence of God need to be proven?

This semester, we will read a diverse assemblage of texts exploring these issues and others. An open mind, and a willingness to express your thoughts, will serve you well in this venture.

Required Materials

All books are available in an electronic edition (e.g. Kindle, Nook), though pagination may vary from print editions.

Books:

- *Blue Like Jazz: Nonreligious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality* by Donald Miller (ISBN: 0785263705)

Audio:

- *Letting Go of God* by Julia Sweeney (ASIN: B000MM107I)*

Writing guide:

The Everyday Writer with Exercises (5th Edition) by Andrea A. Lunsford (ISBN: 1457612674)

**Available as a compact disc; also available as a digital download from iTunes and Audible.com*

Course Description

English 1B is the second course in SJSU's two-semester lower-division composition sequence. Beyond providing repeated practice in planning and executing essays, and broadening and deepening students' understanding of the genres, audiences, and purposes of college writing, English 1B differs from English 1A in its emphasis on persuasive and critical writing (with less attention paid to the personal essay), its requirement for fewer but longer essays, and its introduction to writing informed by research. Students will develop sophistication in writing analytical, argumentative, and critical essays; a mature writing style appropriate to university discourse; reading abilities that will provide an adequate foundation for upper-division work; proficiency in basic library research skills and in writing papers informed by research; and mastery of the mechanics of writing.

Prerequisite:

Passage of Written Communication 1A (C or better) or approved equivalent.

Course Goals

Building on the college-level proficiencies required in English 1A, students shall achieve the ability to write complete essays that demonstrate advanced proficiency in all of the following:

- Clear and effective communication of meaning
- An identifiable focus (argumentative essays will state their thesis clearly and will show an awareness, implied or stated, of some opposing point of view)
- An appropriate voice that demonstrates an awareness of audience and purpose
- Careful attention to review and revision
- Effective and correct use of supporting materials, including independent research (e.g., quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, and citing sources)
- Effective analysis, interpretation, evaluation, and synthesis of ideas encountered in multiple readings
- Effective organization and development of ideas at paragraph and essay levels
- Appropriate and effective sentence structure and diction
- Command of conventional mechanics (e.g., punctuation, spelling, reference, agreement)

Student Learning Objectives

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) are as follows:

- SLO 1: Students shall write complete essays that demonstrate the ability to refine the competencies established in Written Communication 1A.
- SLO 2: Students shall write complete essays that demonstrate the ability to use (locate, analyze, and evaluate) supporting materials, including independent library research, and identify key concepts and terms that describe the information needed.
- SLO 3: Students shall write complete essays that demonstrate the ability to select efficient and effective approaches for accessing information utilizing an appropriate investigative method or information retrieval system.
- SLO 4: Students shall write complete essays that demonstrate the ability to synthesize ideas encountered in multiple readings.

- SLO 5: Students shall write complete essays that demonstrate the ability to incorporate principles of design and communication to construct effective arguments.
- SLO 6: Students shall write complete essays that demonstrate the ability to identify and discuss issues related to censorship and freedom of speech.

SJSU Academic Policies

You are responsible for reading SJSU's academic policies which are available online @www.sjsu.edu/english/comp/policyforsyllabi.html.

Estimation of Per-Unit Student Workload

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of forty-five hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Recording Policies

Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.

Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.

The Everyday Writer and LearningCurve

The new fifth edition of Andrea A. Lunsford's *The Everyday Writer with Exercises* contains an access code for LearningCurve (<http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/beta/everydaywriter5e/learningcurve/92533>) an online adaptive quizzing program. LearningCurve quickly deciphers what you already know and helps you practice what you don't yet understand. It also provides you immediate feedback after each question, as well as cross references to additional instruction in *The Everyday Writer*.

Purchasing options:

- Print editions may be purchased at the Spartan Bookstore (ISBN: 9781457600043) or from Bedford/St. Martin's online (<http://bedfordstmartins.com>)
- To purchase an electronic edition (which includes access to LearningCurve), visit the Spartan Bookstore (ISBN: 9781457633423) or Bedford/St. Martin's online (<http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/everydaywriter5e/>)
- If you own a used copy of *The Everyday Writer*, a new LearningCurve access code must be purchased from either the Spartan Bookstore (ISBN: 9781457643637) or Bedford/St. Martin's online (<http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/everydaywriter/lc>)
- If you own an edition older than the 5th, you will need to purchase a new LearningCurve access code from either the Spartan Bookstore (ISBN: 9781457643637) or Bedford/St. Martin's (<http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/everydaywriter/lc>)

If you have any questions or problems logging in, please contact Bedford/St. Martin's Technical Support. You may reach a representative via:

- Phone: 1.800.936.6899—*for fastest service*
- Email: BFW.TechnicalSupport@macmillan.com
- Online: <http://www.macmillanhighered.com/techsupport>

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the Writing Center website @ <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>.

Next Generation Learning Spaces

This semester, we are fortunate to have as our home, Clark Hall 238. This room is one of only a few “Next Generation Learning Spaces” on campus. These classrooms come specially equipped with state-of-the-art audio, visual, and lecture capture technology. This technology facilitates better collaboration and communication between students and instructors/speakers, on and off campus. As there is a presentation component to this class, you are highly encouraged to take full advantage of these tools.

Class Protocols

- In an effort to make you a better editor of your own work, I will sometimes make sentence-level corrections to only one page or paragraph of your essay. You should assume that the corrections I've made are applicable to your entire essay.
- All writing assignments are due on the dates indicated on EauZone, which contains the most up-to-date schedule and information.
- In order to assist you in keeping track of your grade, I have provided you with a blank grading log. It can be found inside the chart under the “Course Work” section of this syllabus.
- I will not accept *any* assignments that are unstapled.
- Late assignments must be emailed to me no later than the following class after the due date. However, they will be lowered one letter grade—*I will not accept an assignment beyond this point.*
- Assignments submitted via email, will be graded as any other. However, no marked-up hard copy will be returned to you.
- Without prior notification, missed in-class essays and presentations cannot be made up. If you must miss your presentation date, make prior arrangements with a classmate to switch days.
- You will automatically be docked 5 points off your final draft grade for coming to class on a writers workshop day without an essay.
- There is a participation component to your grade. Though only 10 points, it could mean the difference between letter grades. To receive all or most of these points, it is important that you actively engage in the classroom experience (e.g. frequently asking questions and/or commenting). Simply attending class is not sufficient to garner full points, as they are based on active participation, not attendance.
- *If extra-credit is offered, it will only be once, so please stay up-to-date on your assignments.*
- The use of laptops during class is restricted to note taking only—*absolutely no social media during class time.*

- I consider it highly disrespectful to sleep in class. If you fall asleep in class, you will be awoken and asked to leave.
- If you come to class after the first 15 minutes, please wait for an appropriate moment to enter so as not to disturb the class. Likewise, please do not pack up before our class time is over—*I'll be sure to get you out of class on time.*
- I am always happy to correspond via email. However, please:
 - Indicate your section number in the subject line or somewhere in the body. This helps me reply to your email more quickly.
 - Email me individually rather than as a reply to a group message because I can easily miss these responses.
 - Note that due to the high volume of email I receive daily, it may take me a day (or two) to respond.
 - Do not message me to ask what happened in class on the day you were absent. As soon possible, obtain the email addresses of at least two other members of the class. They should be able to fill you in on any relevant information.
 - Do not contact me if you miss class unless it affects an in-class essay or presentation.

MLA Style

As is standard in American English classes, all typed work must be submitted in MLA Style. Samples are located in both *The Everyday Writer* and online at EauZone. Again, unstapled work will never be accepted. Please follow this sample heading for all typed work:

Name

1B: Section number

Assignment

Date

Editing Marks Guide

Here is a guide to some of the editing symbols (some standard, some my own) you'll be seeing on your papers this semester.

Symbol	Meaning	Symbol	Meaning
^	Insert	AWK	Awkward phrasing
↑	Fix spacing issue—usually when text is not properly double-spaced	ITL	Either add or remove italics
→	Indent 1x	FRAG	Fragment
→ →	Indent 2x	HEAD	Issue with page header
+	Good point	CS	Comma splice
?	Meaning unclear	RO	Run-on sentence
#	Add space	SP	Spelling
" "	Add quotation marks	SV	Subject-verb agreement
¶	Start new paragraph	TC	Title case
⓪	Delete	TNR	Change font to Times New Roman
2x	Double-space	WC	Word choice

Notes on Writing about Religion

- Traditionally, Western writers have followed specific rules when writing about religion. Here are some general rules to take note of when writing about religious issues:
- Capitalize “god” when used as a proper noun (e.g. “By his mid-twenties, Zach had fully devoted himself to God.”)
- Do not capitalize “god” or “gods” when writing in general terms: “Ares was the Greeks’ god of war.”
- The names of deities or major spiritual figures are always capitalized (e.g. Allah, Jesus Christ, Isis, Buddha).
- Traditionally, pronouns referencing Christianity’s God are capitalized as a sign of respect (e.g. “God, in His divine wisdom, ordered Moses to ...”). However, MLA does not follow this. Additionally, non-religious writers may object to this practice. For the purposes of this course, adherence to this particular tradition is optional.
- Capitalize the name of Christianity’s most sacred text, the Bible—but it should not be italicized.
- Other sacred religious texts are also always capitalized (e.g. the Torah, the Vedas), but not italicized.
- When “biblical” is used as an adjective (e.g. “in biblical times”), it is written with a lowercase b, except when it is used as the first word in a sentence (e.g. “Biblical cities typically ...”).
- Islam’s most sacred text is properly spelled as the “Qu’ran,” but “Koran” and “Quran” are also acceptable.
- Customarily, historical dates in the West were based upon a system in which Jesus’ year of birth was marked as Year One; anything before that was BC (Before Christ) and anything after that was AD (Anno Domini). Having adopted a more multicultural view of history, contemporary writers now use BCE (Before Common Era) and CE (Common Era). Thus, Julius Caesar was assassinated in 44 BCE, while Columbus reached the New World in CE 1492. Use these contemporary designations for the purposes of this class.

EauZone

I maintain the EauZone (eauzone.blogspot.com) as a centralized location for assignments, reminders, documents, important dates, links, and general class information. It also contains an easy-to-reference archive of the course work. In addition, this website will be the location of the course’s eReader (eR). These Web articles are required to complete some assignments.

On the homepage, click on “English 1B: On Faith and Faithlessness” under “Spring 2014 Courses” to be routed to our page. Feel free to use the “Comments” function in each posting; it is often a helpful way to communicate with classmates.

Grading Criteria

Essays will be graded by the following criteria:

- An “A” essay is organized and well-developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment, written in a unique and compelling voice. It will show the student’s ability to use language effectively with a solid command of grammar, mechanics, and usage.
- A “B” essay demonstrates competence in the same categories as an “A” essay, but it may show slight weakness in one of these areas. It will respond to the topic suitably and may contain some grammatical, mechanical or usage errors.

- A “C” essay will complete the requirements of the assignment, but it will show weaknesses in fundamentals, such as development. It may show significant weakness in mastery of grammar, mechanics, usage, or voice.
- A “D” essay will neglect to meet all the requirements of the assignment or may be superficial in its treatment of the topic. It may lack development or fail to stay on topic. It may contain grammatical, mechanical, and/or usage errors that interfere with reader comprehension.
- An “F” essay does not fulfill the requirements of the assignment.

Course Work

Class sessions will employ a combination of lectures, group discussions, presentations, and writing workshops that will cover a range of activities, including analyzing, interpreting, outlining, revising, and editing.

All typed essays are approximately three full pages (750 words) and must be in MLA Style. Also, unless otherwise noted, all typed essays must always include a works cited page. Your semester’s coursework is comprised of:

Item	Description	SLO	Word Count*	Writers Workshop	In-class Essay	Point Value	Grade Log
<i>Diagnostic</i>	This in-class essay will be my first opportunity to evaluate your writing.	1-4	400		✓	0	
<i>Short Answer Responses</i>	In-class, you will write a series of short answer responses to a variety of religious-themed stories.	2-4	400		✓	20	
<i>Synthesis</i>	This essay asks you to synthesize a variety of texts to create a snapshot of contemporary America’s views on atheism.	2-4	750			20	
<i>Persuasive</i>	You will write a persuasive essay about the current debate over evolution vs. creationism.	1-4	750			20	

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Item	Description	SLO	Word Count*	Writers Workshop	In-class Essay	Point Value	Grade Log
<i>Close Read</i>	For this essay you will conduct a close reading a popular religious-themed meme.	2-4	400		✓	20	
<i>Comparative Analysis</i>	Here, you will compare and contrast Julia Sweeney's loss of faith in <i>Letting Go of God</i> with Donald Miller's revived faith in <i>Blue Like Jazz</i> .	1-4	750			20	
<i>Annotated Works Cited</i>	For this assignment, you will organize and evaluate the sources for your research paper.	2	150			20	
<i>Research Paper</i>	Your 10-page research paper will focus on the representation of spirituality in a major television show.	1-5	2,500	✓		60	
<i>Process Analysis</i>	Your 4-page final assignment asks you to reflect on your growth as a writer and thinker over the course of English 1B.	1-4	1,000	✓		30	
<i>Multimedia Presentation</i> **	You and two classmates will create a 10-minute multimedia presentation based upon a spirituality-related topic.	1-5				15	

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Item	Description	SLO	Word Count*	Writers Workshop	In-class Essay	Point Value	Grade Log
<i>Reflections</i>	You will write 6 two-page reflections based upon a variety of topics related to contemporary spirituality.	2-6	3,000			60 [6x10]	1.
							2.
							3.
							4.
							5.
							6.
<i>Participation</i>	Note that points are garnered by active participation in class, not attendance.					15	
Total word count: 10,100			Total points: 300				/300

*One typed page in MLA Style is approximately 250 words; one handwritten page is approximately 200 words.

**You must provide your own laptop; Macs will require an Apple-specific adaptor to connect to the university's projection system.

Final grade calculations:

A+	300 - 290	B+	268 - 260	C+	238 - 230
A	289 - 281	B	259 - 251	C	229 - 221*
A-	280 - 269	B-	250 - 239	No Pass	220 - 0

*At least 221 points must be earned to receive course credit

Course Schedule

Note that this schedule is subject to change. Always consult EauZone for the most up-to-date information and schedule. Consider any hard copy of this syllabus only a rough guide and out-of-date.

All assignments, including in-class essays, are due or take place on Wednesdays.

Key:

eR (eReader)

DB (Dropbox)

BLUE (*Blue Like Jazz*)

LETTING (*Letting Go of God*)

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January	
Week 01: Mo 27/We 29	Class: Syllabus review; Introductions

February	
Week 02: Mo 03/We 05	Class: Lectures—"Engaging Writing as a Process 2.0" "Next Generation Learning Spaces: A Guide" Due: REFLECTION 01
Week 03: Mo 10/We 12	Readings: DB—"Young Goodman Brown" by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Excerpt from <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i> by Fyodor Dostoevsky, "The Rapture" by Skip Horack, Excerpt from <i>The Secret Life of Bees</i> by Sue Monk Kidd, "NippleJesus" by Nick Hornby, "This Blessed House" by Jhumpa Lahiri, Excerpt from <i>Snow</i> by Orhan Pamuk, "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" by Gabriel Garcia Márquez, "The Nine Billion Names of God" by Arthur C. Clark Class: DIAGNOSTIC; Watch—"God's Close-Up" from <i>This American Life</i> (2007); Multimedia presentation assignments Lecture—"Building a Better Multimedia Presentation"
Week 04: Mo 17/We 19	Readings: Class: SHORT ANSWER RESPONSES; Reading discussion; Multimedia presentations; Guest speaker (TBA); Lecture—"Essay Outlines 101" Due: REFLECTION 02
Week 05: Mo 24/We 26	Readings: eR—"Education, Not Indoctrination': Atheists Protest Texas Homeschool Convention as Promised" (Christian News Network), "10.5 Tips When Coming Out to Family or Friends as an Atheist" (We Are Atheism), "Atheist Group Sets Up Chicago Display Protesting Christmas Scene and Celebrating Bill of Rights" (The Raw Story), "Bill O'Reilly Debates Atheist Over Obama Swearing in on Bible at Inauguration, Jan 18, 2013" (Fox News), "CNN's Wolf Blitzer Tells Atheist Tornado Survivor: 'You Gotta Thank the Lord'" (The Raw Story), "Diana Nyad, Atheist, Teaches Oprah a Thing or Two about Belief, Awe, and Wonder" (Huffington Post), "Five Facts about Atheism" (Pew Research Center), "How to Talk to an Atheist about Christianity" (Crisis Magazine), "Religion in America's States and Counties, in 6 Maps" (<i>Washington Post</i>), "The Genesis of Alabama's Only High School 'Freethinkers Club'" (Southern Education Desk), "eBay Kills Eve Brannon's 'Take an Atheist Leader to Church' Ad Again and Again" (Huffington Post) Class: Reading discussion; Multimedia presentations; Watch—"Lisa the Skeptic" from <i>The Simpsons</i> (FOX); Lecture—"Twelve Essential Grammar Rules to Know" Due: SYNTHESIS ESSAY

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March	
Week 06: Mo 03/We 05	Readings: eR—"Texas Public Schools are Teaching Creationism" (Slate), "The Growing Partisan Divide on Evolution" (Moyers & Company), Creationism Versus Evolutionism: When Will this Debate Ever End?" (Huffington Post), "Public's Views on Human Evolution" (Pew Research Center), "Creationists Cite 'Academic Freedom' to Teach Beliefs in Schools" (Al Jazeera America), "How Evolution Gets Used and Abused in the Science-Religion Debate" Class: Reading discussion; Multimedia presentations; Library research session (TBA); Lecture—"On Wordiness" Due: PERSUASIVE
Week 07: Mo 10/We 12	Readings: eR—"My Take: Jesus Would Believe in Evolution and So Should You" (CNN), "Evolution vs. Intelligent Design: Six Bones of Contention" (<i>National Geographic</i>), "Evolution is False: Public Schools Should Teach Intelligent Design" (PolicyMic), "Creationism vs. Evolution: An American Problem, an American Opportunity" (NPR) Class: Reading discussion; Multimedia presentations; Guest speaker (TBA); Lecture—"Spirituality on Small Screen" Due: REFLECTION 03
Week 08: Mo 17/We 19	Readings: LETTING—0:00-2:06:30; eR—"What Exactly is a Meme?" (Gizmodo), "How to Do a Close Reading" (Harvard College Writing Center) Class: CLOSE READ; Writers workshop; Multimedia presentations Due: REFLECTION 04
Week 09: Mo 24/We 26	No Class—Spring Break
Week 10: Mo 31	No Class—Cesar Chavez Day

April	
Week 10: We 02	Readings: BLUE—p. 1-240 Class: Reading discussion; Multimedia presentations, Lecture—"Constructing a Research Paper: A How-To" Due: REFLECTION 05
Week 11: Mo 07/We 09	Class: Reading discussion; Multimedia presentations Due: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS
Week 12: Mo 14/We 16	Class: Multimedia presentations; Guest speaker (TBA) Due: REFLECTION 06
Week 13: Mo 21/We 23	Class: Writers workshop; Multimedia presentations Due: RESEARCH PAPER (UP TO PAGE 4; BRING TWO COPIES)
Week 14: Mo 28/We 30	Class: Writers workshop; Multimedia presentations Due: RESEARCH PAPER (UP TO PAGE 8; BRING ONE COPY)

May	
Week 15: Mo 05/We 07	Class: Multimedia presentations Due: RESEARCH PAPER (FINAL DRAFT)
Week 16: Mo 12	Class: End-of-class review Due: PROCESS ANALYSIS

