

San José State University
College of Humanities and Arts/Department of
English & Comparative Literature
English 1A: First-Year Writing, Section 8
Spring 2017

Instructor: Mark Dowdy

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Office Hours: TTH 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., or by appointment

Classroom: Sweeney Hall 444

Class Days/Times: Fridays from 9:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Prerequisites: Directed Self-Placement

GE Category: Written Communication A2

Course Format

Classroom-based Course with Required Technology Enhancements

Students will need a home computer with dependable Internet connectivity to turn in homework and writing assignments, keep up with course communications, and access some of the texts discussed in this class.

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

This course relies on the Canvas learning management system. On this site, you will find the course syllabus, homework assignments, essay guidelines, and grades. In addition, the class will use other functions on Canvas, such as its 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. Please check the Canvas course page before every class.

General Course Description

English 1 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 develop clear thinking and effective writing that give form and coherence to complex ideas. In English 1A you will practice these skills by writing for various audiences and rhetorical situations.

Section-Specific Course Description

All of your writing and reading assignments for this section of English 1A will address a common theme: *the increasingly central role the internet and other forms of digital communication play in our day-to-day lives*. You will be asked to read and write about our new

digital world, our new state of digital “connectedness” that leaves many of us feeling less connected to other people. While you will reflect upon and discuss how we interact through technology today — through email, texting, chatrooms, social media, e-commerce, and other digital applications — your main focus will be on people. Is our increasing reliance on digital devices changing how we think? Is it changing how we socialize with one another? These are the kinds of questions we will be asking in this section of English 1A.

The bulk of this course's readings will come from two books: Sherry Turkle's *Reclaiming Conversation: the Power of Talk in a Digital Age* and Jaron Lanier's *You Are Not a Gadget: a Manifesto*. While both authors express views that are deeply skeptical about our current state of connectedness, neither are opposed to technological progress. Turkle, a professor at MIT, has studied the relationship between humans and technology since the 1970s; Lanier, one of the early developers of Atari gaming systems, is credited by many with the development of virtual reality. In addition to having in backgrounds in technology-related fields, both Turkle and Lanier emphasize the values of human empathy and creativity. They both note that our smart phones and laptops won't be going away anytime soon, but that we need to use and design them and the networks they operate on in ways that don't diminish ourselves.

But how we use them in a way that does not diminish but instead elevates ourselves? This is a central question for this section of English 1A, one that we will be addressing in our readings, essays, and class discussions. You will be asked to take a critical look at how you and practically everyone else you know experiences near constant connectivity. But asking you to be “critical” is not the same as asking you to bash the internet or social media. It means cultivating an awareness of how constant connectivity affects our day-to-day lives and considering what the far-reaching effects of this dependence might be. You don't have to agree with either Turkle or Lanier. In fact, you will be asked to come up with your own ideas on this subject, and to compare and contrast your views with those of others. But you will need to reflect upon your own use of these new technologies, and how they not only your relationship with friends and family and society at large, but also yourself.

Finally, because this course's concern with digital connectivity touches upon the themes of Creativity, Sustainability, and Global Engagement, this course will help you earn a badge integrated knowledge.

GE Learning Outcomes (GELO)

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. read actively and rhetorically.
2. perform the essential steps in the writing process (prewriting, organizing, composing, revising, and editing) and demonstrate an awareness of said performance.
3. articulate an awareness of and write according to the rhetorical features of texts, such as purpose, audience, context, and rhetorical appeals.
4. integrate your ideas and those of others by explaining, analyzing, developing, and criticizing ideas effectively in several genres.
5. use college-level language with clarity and grammatical proficiency.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of the course, you will be able to:

1. communicate meaning clearly and effectively.
2. identify focus, tailored to a particular audience and purpose.
3. perform effectively the essential steps of the writing process (prewriting, organizing, composing, revising, and editing).
4. explain, analyze, develop, and criticize ideas effectively.
5. use within your own essay supporting material drawn from primary and secondary sources, including appropriate citations.
6. organize individual paragraphs and entire essays.
7. construct sentences with accuracy, variety, and clarity.
8. use appropriate diction and tone.
9. control conventions of written English (e.g., punctuation, spelling, reference, agreement).

GE A2 Course Description

ENGL 1A fulfills your written communication general education requirement. Courses in GE Area 2 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. Students will develop college-level reading abilities, rhetorical sophistication, and writing styles that give form and coherence to complex ideas and feelings. A passing grade of C- or better signifies that the student is a capable college-level writer and reader of English.

Required Texts/Readings

- *You Are Not a Gadget: a Manifesto*, by Jaron Lanier. (Knopf 2010) ISBN: 9780307389978
- *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age*, by Sherry Turkle. (Penguin 2016) ISBN: 9780143109792
- SJSU Campus Handbook: *The Everyday Writer*, by Andrea Lunsford (This is provided through the Writer's Help tab on Canvas)
- Class handouts and readings available on Canvas

Other technology requirements / equipment / materials

- notebook
- pen/pencil
- paper
- exam booklets
- stapler

Library Liaison

Toby Matoush, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library

Voice: 408-808-2096

Website: <http://libguides.sjsu.edu/profile.php?uid=14949>

Email: Toby.Matoush@sjsu.edu

Course Requirements and Assignments

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 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.

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. Of your six graded writing assignments, four of them will be out-of-class essays.

In-class Essays

Benchmark Essay (500 words; in-class): Students will write an in-class diagnostic essay at the beginning of the semester. This assignment is for assessment only and will not receive a letter grade.

Reading Reflections 1 and 2 (500 words each; in-class): Students will write two in-class essays in which they respond to an assigned reading. The reading will be assigned to students prior to the day when the in-class essay is written.

Out-of-Class Essays

First Chair: Definitional Essay (750 words; out-of-class): Your first out-of-class essay will ask you to define the meaning of solitude. You will be encouraged to draw upon your personal experience as you consider the role of solitude in a digitally connected world. This essay will only have one draft, so be sure to give yourself time to revise, proofread, and edit before submitting it.

Second Chair: Causal Essay (2,000 words; out-of-class; required peer review): Your second out-of-class essay will ask you to make a cause-and-effect argument about digital connectivity. How has it changed the way individuals — whether friends, family, or romantic partners — interact with one another? This essay will require two drafts and a mandatory peer review session. Note: failure to participate in both the online and in-class components of peer review will result in a lowering of your essay grade by one full letter.

Third Chair: Evaluation (2,000 words; out-of-class; required peer review): Your third out-of-class essay will ask you to evaluate social media, online news sites (whether fake or real), and other ways in which digital media have replaced the public square of old. You will be addressing the following question: how successful has the internet been at creating a sense of community? This essay will require two drafts and a mandatory peer review session. Note: failure to participate in both the online and in-class components of peer review will result in a lowering of your essay grade by one full letter.

Fourth Chair: Proposal (2,500 words; out-of-class; required peer review): Your fourth and final out-of-class essay will be a proposal essay. You will be addressing the following questions:

Should we, as a society, change the way we integrate digital devices into our day-to-day lives? If yes, what changes do you propose, and why? If not, explain why you don't think we don't need to make any changes in the way we use technology. This essay will require two drafts and a mandatory peer review session. Note: failure to participate in both the online and in-class components of peer review will result in a lowering of your essay grade by one full letter.

Readings

The majority of the readings for this course will come from Turkle's *Reclaiming Conversation* and Lanier's *You Are Not a Gadget*. These readings are designed to stimulate class discussion as well as essay topics. There will also be additional readings that will be posted on Canvas.

Participation

In addition to the essays you write, your overall grade will be influenced by 1. Homework/Outside Activities, 2. Classroom Discussion, 3. Group Projects, and 4. Peer Review. At the beginning of the academic year, I will distribute a detailed scoring guide for participation. This scoring guide, or rubric, will assess your level of engagement in these four categories. I will post your mid-term Participation score on Canvas after eight weeks and the final participation scores during finals week.

Homework/Outside Activities: You will need to complete much of the work for this course outside of the classroom. At times this work will be required of the whole class. 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. Other times, however, you may choose to do homework or participate in outside activities of your own choosing. For example, you may complete additional, unassigned exercises from *Writer's Help*. When I assess your level of engagement with Homework/Outside Activities, I will consider both your completion of required assigned as well as your demonstrated willingness to take initiative and develop a sense of ownership over your own writing.

Classroom Discussion: Your contributions to class discussions help me determine whether you've done your required reading. Moreover, such contributions foster a deeper understanding of the text at hand for *all* of us. For this reason, you will be expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading for the day. Moreover, 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.

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 – one which follows the guidelines of the assignment, informs its audience in an engaging manner, and demonstrates group cohesion, focus, and purpose – will improve the overall participation score of each individual member.

Peer Review: We will be conducting peer review sessions both through Canvas and during class time. The process will begin with Canvas, where I will be assigning you into small groups. Please upload your respective first drafts to Canvas by the date listed on the schedule. Once you and your fellow group members have uploaded your essays, you will be able to review and respond to one another's drafts. On the class day devoted to peer review, you will have opportunity to give one another additional feedback and to ask follow-up questions. Please bring an additional hard copy of your draft to the peer review session so that you and your peers can mark up your manuscript. **Failure to attend or to participate adequately in a peer revision session (both online and in class) will result in a lowering of your essay's grade by one full letter.**

Final Examination or Evaluation

Although we won't have a final exam in this class, we will have a final exam activity. During this session, the class holds an in-class debate over the arguments made by Jaron Lanier in *You Are Not a Gadget: a Manifesto*.

Late Policy

Unless you contact me in advance and provide a valid excuse – problems with your printer don't count as one – I will deduct one-half-letter from an essay's overall grade for every day late. This includes first drafts.

Instructor Feedback

All students have the right, within a reasonable time, to know their academic scores, to review their grade-dependent work, and to be provided with explanations for the determination of their course grades. I will post the results of your graded work on Canvas and will provide written feedback on the hard copies of the essays you submit to me.

Grading Information

Determination of Grades: With each essay assignment, I will distribute a scoring guide specific to that particular essay. In general, the following are the criteria by which essays are typically evaluated in first-year writing courses:

“A” work will be well-organized and well-developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will show the student's ability to use language effectively and construct sentences distinguished by syntactic constructions at the college level and appropriate to the work's intended audience and purpose. Such work will be essentially free of grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors. Whether written or oral, “A” work succeeds in communicating ideas clearly and effectively to the target audience.

“B” work will demonstrate abilities in the same categories as “A” work. The chief difference is that “B” work will show notable weaknesses in one of these categories. It may inadequately fulfill parts of the assigned tasks, show less facility of expression and communication, or contain some grammatical, mechanical, usage, or delivery flaws that do not impede clear transmission of meaning.

“C” work will be generally competent and attempt to complete all tasks set by the assignment but show weaknesses in fundamentals, usually development or clarity, with barely enough specific information to illustrate the subject being addressed. The sentence construction, language, and/or delivery may be less effective and correct than “B” work, but will not seriously impede clear transmission of meaning.

“D” work will neglect one of the assigned tasks or directions and be noticeably superficial in development—that is, too brief or simplistic. The work may reveal some problems of development, detail, and/or audience. It will contain grammatical, mechanical, usage, and/or delivery shortcomings that are frequent and/or serious enough to impede clear transmission of

Essay and Course Grades

Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage
A+	98-100	B	84-87	C-	70-73
A	94-97	B-	80-83	D+	68-69
A-	90-93	C+	78-79	D	65-67
B+	88-89	C	74-77	F	64-0

meaning.

“F” work shows a disconnection with the course and a lack of understanding of the task and the writing conventions that are being taught. The writing is incoherent and riddled with sentence level errors. It is clear in this essay that the writer is not engaged in the class and/or the assignment.

Letter grades will be translated into the following percentages:

Weighted Percentages of Class Assignments

	Percentage of Grade	GELOs	CLOs
Reading Reflections	10%	1, 3, 4, 5	1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9
Definitional Essay	10%	1-5	1-9
Causal Essay	20%	1-5	1-9
Evaluation	20%	1-5	1-9
Proposal	25%	1-5	1-9

	Percentage of Grade	GELOs	CLOs
Participation and Homework	10%	1-5	1-9
Final Exam Activity	5%	1, 3, 4	1, 2, 4

Grading Information for GE/100W

This course must be passed with a C- or better as a CSU graduation requirement.

Classroom Protocol

To help foster a classroom environment in which everyone feels comfortable enough to participate, I will not tolerate blatant displays of disrespect towards your peers or towards me. There are ways to disagree with others respectfully and sincerely. In fact, we will be studying the art of effective communication throughout this course and learning how to debate with others in a spirit of honest and respectful inquiry. In the unlikely event that a student might exceed the bounds of civility, he or she will be asked to leave for the remainder of the class session.

“Smart” Phone Usage

Attendance is both a physical AND mental state of being. I won't interrupt class if I see you paying attention to your phone and ignoring the class, but I will take note of it and lower your overall Participation grade (10% of course total) by one full letter. Keep in mind that the theme of this course is digital connectedness. It would be certainly make sense to be mindful in how you use technology in a class that requires you to read and write about this topic.

Laptops

You may bring your laptops to class, but please keep them closed, unless otherwise instructed.

Headphones

The use of headphones during class time is prohibited.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' **Syllabus Information** web page at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

English 1A/First-Year Writing, Spring 2017, Course Schedule

	Date	Class Activities	Work To Complete <i>Prior To Coming to Class</i>
Week 1	Friday, January 27th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Introduction to Course * Essay 1 assigned * Diagnostic Essay (in-class, ungraded) 	N/A
Week 2	Friday, February 3rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discussion: Does being “connected” digitally make us less in touch with others? * Overview: Arguments of definition * Diagnostic Essay Returned 	* Read first two chapters of <i>Reclaiming Conversation</i> , pages 3-56
Week 3	Friday, February 10th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discussion: What do we mean by solitude? Does it benefit us? * Essay 1 due at beginning of class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Read <i>Reclaiming Conversation</i>, pages 59-99. * Complete and submit Essay 1.
Week 4	Friday, February 17th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discussion: How does our connectedness affect our relationships with family and friends? * Essay 2 Assigned * Overview: Arguments of Cause-and-Effect * Graded Submissions of essay 1 returned. 	* Read <i>Reclaiming Conversation</i> , pages 103-76.
Week 5	Friday, February 24th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discussion: How does our connectivity affect our romantic lives? 	* Read <i>Reclaiming Conversation</i> , pages 177-207.
Week 6	Friday, March 3rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Mandatory Peer Review: First draft of Essay 2 due. 	* Complete and submit first draft of Essay 2.
Week 7	Friday, March 10th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Essay 3 assigned * Overview: Arguments of Evaluation * Discussion: The role of the internet in the public sphere, part 1: What are the best uses for technology at work and at school? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Complete online component of Peer Review * Read <i>Reclaiming Conversation</i>, pages 211-289 * Complete and submit final draft of Essay 2.

	Date	Class Activities	Work To Complete <i>Prior To Coming to Class</i>
Week 8	Friday, March 17th	* Discussion: The role of the internet in the public sphere, part 2: Can we have a virtual town square?	* Read <i>Reclaiming Conversation</i> , pages 293-333.
Week 9	Friday, March 24th	* Discussion: How do we talk to computers?	* Read <i>Reclaiming Conversation</i> , pages 337-62.
Week 10	Spring Break: No Class	N/A	N/A
Week 11	Friday, April 7th	* Mandatory Peer Review: First draft of Essay 3 due. * Discussion: What is Web 2.0, and how does it affect personhood?	* Read <i>You Are Not a Gadget</i> , pages 1-23 * Read Nicholas Carr's "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" (Available on Canvas) * Complete and submit first draft of Essay 3
Week 12	Friday, April 14th	* Essay 4 assigned * Overview: Proposal Arguments	* Complete online component of Peer Review * Complete and submit final draft of Essay 3. * Read <i>You Are Not a Gadget</i> , pages 24-72
Week 13	Friday, April 21st	* Group Presentations	Read <i>You Are Not a Gadget</i> (specific pages tba)
Week 14	Friday, April 28th	* Group Presentations	Read <i>You Are Not a Gadget</i> (specific pages tba)
Week 15	Friday, May 5th	* Mandatory Peer Review: First draft of Essay 4 due * Graded in-Class Essay #2	* Complete and submit first draft of Essay 4.
Week 16	Friday, May 12th	Class Discussion: Setting the parameters for the debate over <i>You Are Not a Gadget</i> . Today, on the last day, the class will reform debate teams and beginning planning for the debate to be held during finals week.	* Complete and submit final draft of Essay 4. Finish reading <i>You Are Not a Gadget</i> (specific pages tba)

Final Exam Activity: Friday, May 24th, 7 a.m.: class debate over Lanier's *You Are Not a Gadget*.