

San José State University
College of Humanities and Arts

Department of English and Comparative Literature
English 103, Modern English Grammar,
Section 2, Fall 2019

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Cynthia M. Baer
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Office Hours:	MW 1:30 – 2:45 p.m.
Class Days/Time:	MW 12:00 – 1:15 p.m.
Classroom:	Clark Hall 111
Prerequisites:	Upper-Division Standing

How Will I Participate in the Learning Activities of This Course?

We will conduct our studies in the campus learning management system, Canvas. Therefore, to complete this course of study, you will need regular access to Internet connectivity and a computer. Please bring to class a laptop or tablet to participate in the classroom activities and submit assignments. You can also check out a device through the library's [Student Computing Services](#).

Canvas Messaging

Course materials such as syllabus, supplementary readings and resources, and assignment instructions can be found on at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. Please set your Canvas account to receive regular notice of updates.

What Is English 103?

In this course we will explore “Modern English” as a plastic and plural languaging system that we daily use to operate increasingly multilingual and multimodal 21st-century environments and economies. In our exploration we will thus observe the growth and structure of modern English, including its phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. We will attend particularly to the daily adaptations of grammar as we negotiate social spaces and purposes with varied audiences and across media. Our goal will be to understand the complexities of modern literacy as it is transacted among various users of varied Englishes.

What Will We Study in This Class?

*“Every day, perhaps several times a day, each of us speaks or writes in ways that challenge conventional uses of English.” Anne Curzan and Michael Adams, *How English Works**

In this class we will organize ourselves as language researchers to compile and describe a corpus of English texts. You will each contribute to the corpus one or more sample texts that you are curious about, one or more sample texts that get you curious about *how English works*.

The text I have chosen for this course sets up this question in its title. It is, as the authors describe it in Chapter 1, the perfect guide for our study: “Each chapter of this text equips you to poke around, explore, and analyze an aspect of the English language. As you see how each aspect of English works, you will increase your understanding of how the language as a whole works” (Curzan and Adams 2).

For the first three weeks, we will build our corpus, each of you contributing your sample texts. These texts might be tweets, emails, websites, poems, song lyrics, music videos, podcasts, novels, essays, journal articles, newspaper reports, newspaper op-eds, blogs, graphic novels, plays. The texts can be contemporary or historical, conservative in their use of language or innovative; they can be from commercial, civic, academic, or popular culture and for commercial, civic, academic, or popular audiences; they can serve our leisure, political, commercial, or academic purposes; they can be print or digital, using various combinations of modalities for communication.

In the fourth week of class, you will set up study teams, define your corpus study, and begin your analysis of your team’s samples. You will spend a good eight weeks of the course on this analysis of your team’s corpus.

In the final three weeks of the course, you will workshop the presentations of your research and compose a final reflection essay on the project.

In our final weeks, each team’s project will present to the class one piece of a very large puzzle: given the Grammar of ___[fill in the name of your corpus]___, what can we learn about *how English works*?

How Does This Course Help Me Toward My Goals in English Studies?

In the mission statement for a BA in English, the department established the following goals for all its undergraduate majors.

Students will demonstrate the ability to

1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric.
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.
4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts.

In this course you will make progress toward each of these learning outcomes. As an ethnographer of modern English, the work you do will ask you to 1) locate, evaluate, and organize a corpus of texts for our study, 2) read and analyze closely the corpus of texts to define them as interesting samples of modern English from a variety of genres, media, cultures, and periods, 3) define and articulate the relations among culture, history, and language practices in the texts we select for study, and 4) write daily to learn the analysis of language you will apply in your project, as well as compose both a presentation project and a final reflection that demonstrates your ability to adjust your writing style to our research occasion.

What Text Should I Purchase to Guide Me in This Study?

You will use the Curzan and Adams text on a daily basis, so please purchase it now if you have not already done so. Plan to bring the text to class with you every day we meet.

Curzan, Anne and Michael Adams. *How English Works, A Linguistic Introduction*. Third Edition.

- [Paper back](#), \$133.48 on Amazon, ISBN-13: 978-0205032280. (You can rent this text for 31.20.)
- [E-textbook](#), \$69.99 on Amazon, ASIN: B00HZUR2V8. (You can rent this text for 39.99.)

Other Readings

Canvas will host the archive of texts we choose to study as well as any other reading or viewing materials we need to do our work. Links to those materials will be provided within the Canvas prompts of our weekly schedule and daily discussions.

Other technology requirements / equipment / material

As mentioned before, you will need a laptop or tablet in class every time we meet so that you can participate in activities conducted through Canvas. You will also need word processing and presentation software. The Microsoft suite available through the campus will do for this project. You are welcome to use other software so long as we can all access the files you end up producing and sharing.

Library liaison

[Peggy Cabrera](#) is the library liaison for the Department of English and Comparative Literature.

How Will I Demonstrate What I Learn in This Study?

The close study of how a language works requires a consistent commitment of time and attention to detailed research and analysis. The workload for our study as I have designed it is in keeping with the unit-load assigned to the course. In this four-unit course, you will dedicate, 12 hours a week “three hours per unit per week . . . for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities” (SJSU policy). Put in this kind of time on anything and you are bound to learn something. I have organized the work so that you will have plenty of opportunity to demonstrate to our research group the lessons you are learning through the work we engage together.

Daily Contributions to Our Study in Canvas

By 7 a.m. on both Monday and Wednesday, you will submit a response to a discussion prompt in Canvas. This prompt will direct you to read and apply what you read to a specific learning task. This is our learning method. By sharing your daily posts to Canvas in class, you will learn from each others’ observations, speculations, analyses, guesses, questions. And together we will, day to day, acquire new capacity to do the work of describing how English works.

Two Midterm Exams

Twice during the term I will set for you an examination of your accumulated knowledge and analytical-descriptive capacity as a language researcher. These are check points for us. They help us to assess your growth as a language researcher and to modify your study and practice as needed to achieve your goals as a learner-researcher. Thus, the examination process will include 1) taking the exam, 2) getting my feedback on your exam responses, 3) revising your exam, and 4) reflecting on your progress to date and outlining your next steps as a learner-researcher.

Presentation of the Team’s Research

Along with your team, you will prepare a presentation of your research in a multimodal format that allows us to review samples with you and follow your analyses and conclusions. You will prepare a 5-minute stand-alone presentation: that is, we will be able to view it and use it on our computer screen. (This is not a live oral presentation, in other words.) Video, infographic, slide show (with audio)—you will, as a team, decide on a mode of presentation appropriate to your study.

Final Reflection on Your Individual Progress as a Language Researcher

This team presentation will be followed by a final reflection on your individual progress as a language researcher: What have you individually learned and how have you individually grown as a language learner through the work you have done with your team? This final reflection essay will define and document your learning, sharing that learning with the class to advance our own continued learning about how we learn language. This reflection essay is the culminating

activity for the course. It is due on the day of the final exam, along with a 2-minute oral presentation on the topic “My most important discovery as a language learner.”

How Will My Progress Be Assessed?

The course will be graded by contract. A contract grading system requires that you regularly monitor and describe your own progress, culminating in the team’s project and your final reflection essay. The goal of grading by contract is to emphasize the cumulative effect of a learning experience over individual artifacts (exams, papers, projects) of your learning: Your goal in a contracted learning community is to apprentice yourself within the community, to join its members as we engage in a designed learning experience guided by a faculty mentor. The contract spells out the terms of your work with the community, its norms and practices, expectations and standards. This agreement allows you to advance your own educational goals and measure your own learning outcome, but also contribute your learning to advance the learning of others.

The contract is not a unilateral document. In our two weeks of classes, we will work together to establish the norms and standards of the group. Our bottom line will be defined by our common purpose: What advances our study of how English works? What disrupts our collective progress as language researchers? All the work you do will be measured against the norms and standards that realize our common research goals. You will succeed in this system if, every time you begin, execute, and complete a task, you allow yourself to be guided by our shared purpose as language researchers: How is the work I am about to do, am doing, have done increasing my own and my fellow researchers’ understanding of how English works?

The default grade in a course graded by contract is a B.

You will earn a B in the course if:

- You submit on time 85% of the daily discussions.
- You submit on time to the class all project milestones and drafts for scheduled project reviews.
- You provide to the class a complete response to each assignment prompt.
- You apply what we are reading and discussing in class to observe, to describe, and to analyze *with increasing accuracy* the sample texts we study.
- You submit work that advances our collaborative study—that is, work that contributes useful observations, curiosities and questions, confusions or insights about how English works and that advances our ability to account *accurately* for what we know about how English works.

Earning an A is the result of an exceptional contribution to our collective learning and your own.

There are two ways you can make an exceptional contribution:

- 1) Your presentations and essays provide the class with insights that are exceptional in their value to our growing capacity to observe, distinguish, and account for how English works.
- 2) Your reflection essay demonstrates a compelling achievement in a your personal capacity to engage such language study.

Students or the professor can nominate work for this exceptional status in the class. Students must present such nominations in writing. Students can self-nominate.

Earning less than a B is the result of failing to meet the terms of this contract.

If less than 85% of the daily discussions are submitted on time; if responses to prompts are incomplete; if work does not meet collaborative expectations; or if work is missing, then the final course grade will fall below the B.

We will negotiate and sign this grading contract before the course drop deadline, by which time we will agree on the further norms and values that will help us to meet and to evaluate work using the contract.

One norm we will find a way to observe together is timeliness: Work must be submitted on time to be useful to our shared learning. In general late work does not meet the basic term of the contract: that work be useful to the group. This is particularly true in the case of the daily assignments. Daily assignments submitted late will not earn credit. Drafts and essays submitted late will necessarily be less useful to the group and reduce points awarded by contract. We will work out together in class a points system for assignment grading that takes into account all the terms of the contract.

Determination of Course Grades

- Your final grade in the course will be recorded as a letter grade, ranging from A to F. I will use + and – grades to refine the evaluation within the letter-grade categories.
- An F will indicate a failure to make any progress toward studying and crafting sentences.
- There are plenty of opportunities to learn defined in the work I have laid out in this syllabus. I can't imagine any of us having the bandwidth for extra credit!

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Possible Points</i>
<i>A plus</i>	<i>More than 100%</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>95 to 100%</i>
<i>A minus</i>	<i>90 to 94%</i>
<i>B plus</i>	<i>88 to 89 %</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>85-87%</i>
<i>B minus</i>	<i>80 to 84%</i>
<i>C plus</i>	<i>76 to 79%</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>73 to 75%</i>
<i>C minus</i>	<i>70 to 72%</i>
<i>D plus</i>	<i>66 to 69%</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>63 to 65%</i>
<i>D minus</i>	<i>60 to 62%</i>
<i>F</i>	<i>Less than 60%</i>

How We Will Work Together to Get the Most Out of Our Collaboration

In class during the first two weeks, we will talk more about the grading contract, refine it, commit to it. As part of that exercise, we will discuss our expectations for participation, attendance, arrival times, behavior, safety, cell phone use. We will work together to define these norms of our community so that we can collaborate effectively. I look forward to our work together!

University Policies

Please familiarize yourself with University Policy governing instruction. You can find these policies at [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>. Topics covered include academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc.

ENGL 103, Modern Grammar Course Schedule

This schedule will be modified as we do this work together to optimize our studies. This is my best guess at daily activities, designed to help you anticipate the learning process and the kind of work you will do week to week. I will post on the Canvas homepage for our course a weekly updated schedule. Expect it to vary from this.

Prepare for class activities and deadlines listed by doing the Reading/Assignments outlined.

Week	Date	Reading and Assignments to Prepare for Our Class Session	Class Activities and Submissions
1			
	21 Aug	Read HOMEPAGE in Canvas; post to discussion of syllabus, 4 th -unit project, and grading contract.	Share posts to First Day Discussion of syllabus, project, and grading contract. View Texting Is Killing Language. JK!!!
2	26 Aug	Read Chapter 1, A Language Like English; view videos in Canvas discussion and post your response.	Share your posts. Hunt for samples to share with your table. Do analysis task in Canvas: post, share, reply, reflect.
	28 Aug	Read Chapter 2, Language and Authority. Post lines that help you to extend your thinking about the 4 th -unit project and about our growing corpus.	Share your posts. Hunt for samples to share. Do analysis task in Canvas: post, share, reply, reflect.
3	02 Sep	Read Chapter 3, English Phonology.	NO CLASS meeting today: Post to our Canvas archive the sample texts you are contributing to our corpus. Post lines from Chapter 3 that help you to think about the samples we've been gathering in class; share your observations, curiosities, and confusions.
	04 Sep	Read all texts posted to our corpus and the lines from Chapter 3. Identify texts that would work with yours to make a sample set to study.	Formulate teams. Share your posts and develop team inquiry questions and hypotheses for your team's study. What would be the name of your study: The Grammar of _____?
4	09 Sep	Read Chapter 4, English Morphology. Post to Canvas your curiosities and confusions.	Work in teams to share curiosities and to clarify confusions. Work as a class to develop inquiry tasks for exploring phonology and morphology in our sample sets.
	11 Sep	Post your response to two inquiry tasks based on the sample you posted to our corpus.	Share posts to identify lessons learned and curiosities raised by your observations and analyses of phonology and morphology in your samples.
5	16 Sep	Read Chapter 5, English Syntax, the grammar of words. Post lines that you are curious about or confused by.	Share your curiosities and confusions. Work in teams to clarify confusion and pursue curiosities through shared analysis as directed.
	18 Sep	Complete online tasks/analyses as directed. Post reflections.	Share tasks/analyses and reflections. Develop insights and questions for a whole class discussion.
6	23 Sep	Read Chapter 5, English Syntax, the grammar of words.	Work the puzzles in Canvas. Share results. Modify your practice.

	25 Sep	Apply Chapter 5 reading to the sample you posted to our corpus. Post to Canvas the observations and questions you have about the grammar of words in this sample.	Share your observations and questions in teams. Develop and deliver a 2-minute presentation to the class.
7	30 Sep	Read Chapter 6, English Syntax, phrases, clauses, and sentences	Work the puzzles in Canvas. Share results. Modify your practice.
	02 Oct	Cont. Chapter 6.	Work the puzzles in Canvas. Share results. Modify your practice.
8	07 Oct	Cont. Chapter 6, English Syntax, phrases, clauses, and sentences	Pose puzzles for your peers in Canvas. Workshop the results. Modify your practice.
	09 Oct	Cont. Chapter 6	Pose puzzles for your peers in Canvas. Workshop the results. Modify your practice.
9	14 Oct	Prepare for Exam 1	Complete and submit Exam 1.
	16 Oct	Read Chapter 7, Semantics	Review exam 1 in teams. Revise exam and reflect on lessons learned; share the confusions/curiosities you will take into the next round of study (and the next exam).
10	21 Oct	Read Chapter 8, Spoken Discourse	Find samples in your daily languaging adventures for quick study in Canvas during class.
	23 Oct	Cont. Chapter 8	Analyze and describe samples in Canvas. Share your descriptions. Modify your practice.
11	28 Oct	Read Chapter 9., Stylistics	Analyze and describe samples in Canvas. Share your descriptions. Modify your practice.
	30 Oct	Cont. Chapter 9	Analyze and describe samples in Canvas. Share your descriptions. Modify your practice.
12	04 Nov	Read Chapters 10 & 11, Language Acquisition & Language Variation. Post to Canvas golden lines for your team's study.	Share golden lines. Narrate your own language history.
	06 Nov	Read your team's histories	Post replies to the literacy narratives. Describe your own language learning from a researcher's POV.
13	11 Nov	Read Chapters 12 and 14, American Dialects and History of English, Modern and Future English	NO CLASS meeting: Post to Canvas golden lines from Chapters 12 and 14 for your team's study.
	13 Nov	Cont. Chapters 12 and 14.	Post your questions for exam 2.
14	18 Nov	Team Project Workshops	Read the project you were assigned. Post notes for the research team.
	20 Nov	Prepare for Exam 2	Complete Exam 2.
15	25 Nov	Team Project Workshops	Review exam 2 in teams. Present lessons learned from exam 2.
	27 Nov	Individual tasks for your team project.	NO CLASS meeting: Post to Canvas whatever your team has requested of you.
16	02 Dec	Post draft 1 of the project.	Review posted drafts in Canvas.
	04 Dec	Post first revision to the project	Review posted revisions in Canvas.
17	09 Dec	Post the second revision to the project.	Review posted revisions in Canvas.
	11 Dec	Compose your final reflection essay on the project.	Final Activity/Project and 2-minute presentation. Submit final individual reflection essay.