

# SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

## Department of English and Comparative Literature English 1A Sections 74 & 77, Fall 2019

### First-Year Writing: What Counts as Art

#### COURSE AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor:	Dr. Erik L. Johnson
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Office Hours:	Tues. & Thurs. 1:45–2:45 pm and Thurs. 6–7 pm (CL 414H) Other days/times by appointment (in person or by Skype/Zoom)
Class Days/Time:	Tues. & Thurs. 3–4:15 pm (section 77) Tues. & Thurs. 4:30–5:45 pm (section 74)
Classroom:	SH 348 (section 77); BBC 130 (section 74)
Prerequisites:	Completion of <i>Reflection on College Writing</i>
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	GE Area 2: Written communication 1

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION

English 1A is an introductory course that will prepare you to join scholarly conversations across the university. You will prepare to do this by developing reading skills, rhetorical sophistication, and writing styles that allow you to give form and coherence to complex ideas for various audiences—learning, for instance, how to balance opinion and analysis in your writing. In this section, we will first approach these skills through readings and exercises that raise questions about what exactly counts as “art.” Please understand, though, that this is not a formal course on art history or art theory, though many readings touch on these topics. In the course of the semester, you will take increasing ownership of this theme, and I hope you will bring a range of personal interests and disciplinary perspectives to your essays.

Interest in fine art is growing globally, with seven different world-record auction prices in the multi-millions set just this spring, and public art projects (like The Heidelberg Project in Detroit and Art Box San José) as well as the creation of city “art districts” have played a significant role in urban renewal projects large and small. But throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, some of the Western world’s sharpest critics and philosophers have struggled to define what exactly art is without relying on personal taste or repeating the ideas of one artistic movement. To do so, they have deployed not only a range of arguments but also a range of rhetorical appeals (for instance, to character, reason, emotion, and context), and have interwoven opinion, analysis, and research. We will study some of their writings, as well as writings about writing, as you practice doing the same.

“Art,” Marshall McLuhan wrote in 1967, “is anything you can get away with.” What counts as art to you may be an oil painting or graffiti, a comic book, a garden, or a dance. Its value could reside in its cultural or

historical importance, or perhaps you believe that art is a matter of how certain combinations of colors or certain chords of music affect the human brain. In-class writing and occasional short homework assignments will emphasize rhetorical skills, from description to structuring an argument, that will help you to organize ideas and express them persuasively. The three major out-of-class essays—1) a rhetorical analysis of a text or artwork you consider a “manifesto”; 2) an argumentative personal essay rooted in an artistic experience you have had; and 3) an illustrated essay, your choice of either a researched profile of an artist, or an ethnographic account of an art form—are designed so you will have some flexibility to take either a more personal or more analytical approach to the term’s work.

## ENGLISH 1A LEARNING OUTCOMES (GELO)

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

1. Read actively and rhetorically.
2. Perform the essential steps in the writing process (pre-writing, organizing, composing, revising, and editing) in a self-aware fashion.
3. Articulate 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. Write clearly and persuasively using college-level language with an appropriate level of stylistic and grammatical sophistication.

## CANVAS & REQUIRED TEXTS/ READINGS

Required readings will be posted on Canvas and/or distributed in class. This is an in-person class, but a laptop or tablet with keyboard and access to Canvas (via the Internet) will be required to complete and submit in-class assignments. Please plan to bring laptops or tablets to class; you can borrow Mac or PC laptops from Student Computing Services in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library. Student Computing Services is open Wednesday through Saturday; the phone number is 408-808-2470.

I will send messages to the class regularly through Canvas. Make sure that you have access to the Canvas site for English 1A section 74 or 77 via Canvas and that you receive Canvas announcements at your sjsu.edu email. Check your email for these announcements regularly.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Essay 1: Rhetorical Analysis (1,000–1,250 words). Analysis of the rhetorical strategies in a text or artwork that you consider an artistic “manifesto.” *Topic proposal* due **Tuesday, 9/10 in class**. *Draft for peer review* due by **Monday, 9/16 at 6 pm**; *finally revised essay* due by **Wednesday, 9/25 at 6 pm**.

Essay 2: Personal argumentative essay based on an artistic experience you have had (1,250–1,500 words); contextualized by light reference to sources (citing at least 3 sources; only one general reference source and only one artwork count toward this minimum). *Proposal* due **Thursday, 10/3**, in class; *draft for peer review* due by **Monday, 10/14 at 6 pm**; *finally revised essay* due by **Friday, 10/25 at 6 pm**.

Essay 3 (illustrated essay): Your choice of EITHER a profile of an artist OR an ethnographic account of an art form (in either case, 1,750–2,000 words, plus one or more illustrations); lightly sourced (citing at least 5 sources, not counting texts that have been assigned on the syllabus; only one “background” source and two “exhibit” sources will count toward the 5-source minimum). *Proposal* due **Tuesday, 10/29 in class**; *draft intro & outline* for intro workshop due **Thursday, 11/7 in class**; *full draft for peer review* due **Wednesday, 11/13 at 6 pm**; *Finally revised essay* due by **Monday, 11/25 at 6 pm**.

**Portfolio & Reflective Essay:** Your portfolio will include two new and two pre-existing components. The two new components are: 1) a reflective critical essay of 500–600 words discussing your progress as a writer since completing the *Reflection on College Writing*; and 2) an “appendix of evidence” supporting the claims made in your reflective essay. The pre-existing components are: 1) your *Reflection on College Writing*; 2) one major assignment produced during our course. *Complete portfolio* due according to the final exam schedule listed on the course schedule. **However, if you choose to revise an earlier assignment for extra credit as part of your portfolio, the deadline for uploading the revision on Canvas is Wednesday, 12/11 @ 5 pm.**

**Participation:** Will include regular, informed engagement in class, full participation in peer review sessions, as well as a brief 3–5 minute “art sharing” presentation (students will sign up for dates after Essay #1; everyone will go once) in which students share one art object with the class and explain why it interests them. Take this as chance to shape the direction of the course and to try out possible subjects for your second and third essays!

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. In other words, you should expect to spend 9 hours a week on this 3-unit course (2-1/2 hours in class and 6-1/2 hours on homework). If you are able to calendar that amount of work time each week it will greatly improve your chances of success.

## GRADING INFORMATION

### Grading Scale

Grades will be numerical. Plus or minus grades may be given to indicate that an assignment has met the letter-grade specific criteria outlined below to a greater (plus) or lesser (minus) degree.

Grade	Percentage	General Criteria (assignments will also have specific rubrics)
A plus	96 to 100%	
A	93 to 95%	An A paper will pose an original argument that is credibly supported, have a clear logical organization, and use language to communicate the students’ ideas effectively.
A minus	90 to 92%	
B plus	86 to 89 %	
B	83 to 85%	A B paper will pose an argument that is credibly supported, have a clear logical organization, and use language to communicate the students’ ideas with little possibility of misunderstanding.
B minus	80 to 82%	
C plus	76 to 79%	
C	73 to 75%	A C paper will meet the minimum requirements of the assignment but shows significant weakness in one fundamental area—the argument may be unclear or insufficiently unsupported, the structure illogical, or the language difficult to understand.
C minus	70 to 72%	
D plus	66 to 69%	
D	63 to 65%	A D paper reads as a complete continuous essay and was clearly written by the student to address the assignment prompt, but shows weakness in more than one of the fundamental areas listed above.
D minus	60 to 62%	

## Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Percentage of Grade	Learning Objectives
Essay 1: Rhetorical Analysis*	20%	1–3, 5
Essay 2: Personal Argumentative Essay*	20%	1–5
Essay 3: Illustrated Essay (Profile or Ethnography)*	25%	1–5
In-class writing & collected homework	10% **	2, 3, 5
Participation (including peer review)	15%**	1, 3, 4
Portfolio & Reflective Essay*	10–15% ***	1–3, 5

\* Regardless of the numerical grade, you will not be able to pass the course if you have not submitted all three essays and the portfolio.

\*\* We will do much in-class writing, as well as, just as importantly, peer review throughout the quarter. If you miss sessions, you may lose points in the “In-Class Writing & Collected Homework” and “Participation (including peer review)” categories. I have indicated days I am likely to collect in class writing on the syllabus to help you in planning, but there may also be surprise activities.

\*\*\* EXTRA CREDIT: The total adds up to more than 100%. At the end of the semester, you will have the opportunity to earn extra credit of up to 5 points on your final course grade by undertaking a substantial revision to any ONE of the essays from the semester in the course of preparing your portfolio.

Because this course meets GE learning objectives, it must be passed with a C- or better as a CSU graduation requirement.

### Late Work

If you cannot meet a deadline, email me requesting an extension as early as possible, but no later than two days before the assignment is due, so that I will have time to review and respond to the request. Out-of-class assignments turned in one day or more after a listed deadline without an extension that agreed to in writing will be penalized three points off for each day past the deadline. For example, a mark of 85 (B) for a paper turned in one day late would drop to 82 (B–), two days late to 79 (C+), and so on.

Since this is a course on writing process, draft deadlines are as important as final deadlines. Therefore, these penalties apply to delivery of drafts as well as to delivery of final copies. So, if the same 85 (B) paper were turned in one day late in draft and one day late in final form it would also receive a 79. Also, if you deliver drafts in a timely fashion you will receive feedback from me and from your peers that will improve your performance on final copies! If you miss deadlines, you may not receive or have time to act on this feedback.

In-class writing cannot be made up. When I calculate final scores for the in-class writing and homework category, I will drop your two lowest scores.

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES & RESOURCES

**Office Hours and Instructor Availability:** I am happy to see you in office hours or at other scheduled times to discuss assignments, course material, or other aspects of your academic or intellectual life. You can come to my office hours without emailing ahead. If you do email ahead, I will let you know the best time to come to minimize the time you will spend waiting. If you want to see me in person at other times, or to talk via Zoom, email me to set up an appointment suggesting several times when you are available.

Outside of office hours, emailing [erik.johnson@sjsu.edu](mailto:erik.johnson@sjsu.edu) is the best way to reach me. I will generally respond to student emails within 24 hours. If you email me after 5 pm, I may not see your email until the next day.

**SJSU Writing Center:** The San José State University Writing Center offers a variety of resources to help students become better writers, and all of its services are free for SJSU students. The Writing Center offers drop-in tutoring sessions in Clark Hall, Suite 126, and scheduled appointments on the second floor of the MLK Library. Online tutoring via Zoom is also available! For more information, see the website at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/> or call the Center at (408) 924-2308.

**Peer Connections:** SJSU Peer Connections in the Student Services Center, suite 600, also offers general and subject-specific tutoring, strengths coaching, and workshops. Peer Connections tutors are veteran SJSU students who can help you with time management, study skills, and building a toolkit for college success. For more information and current offerings, see <http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/> or call 408-924-2587.

**Accessible Education Center:** If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, you should initiate a request through the Accessible Education Center (AEC), website: <http://www.sjsu.edu/aec/> and phone: (408) 924-6000. You are also welcome to email, come to office hours, or make an appointment to discuss such arrangements with me. I will be happy to work with you and the AEC.

**Academic Integrity:** All work delivered in this course must be your own, produced specifically for this course, and produced specifically for the assignment in question. If you draw on the ideas or language of others in written work, you must, by University policy, specifically acknowledge your indebtedness. If you have questions about the appropriate acknowledgment of sources please contact me.

**Other policies and services:** Additional information relevant to all courses is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

# English 1A: First-Year Writing / Fall 2019, secs. 74 & 77

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Reminders about and adjustments to this schedule will be communicated in Canvas announcements and in class; make sure you receive Canvas announcements by email and check your sjsu.edu email regularly.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	8/22	Welcome! / Syllabus overview / The Brillo Box debate & assumptions about art / Prose editing exercise (in-class writing, credit only)
2	8/27	Reading is writing!: Critical reading & effective note-taking / Writing summaries <b>Before class:</b> Read Berger, <i>Ways of Seeing</i> , chap. 1
2	8/29	Rhetorical appeals & situations / Overview of Rhetorical Analysis (Essay 1) <b>Before class:</b> Submit annotated Berger & paragraph summary on Canvas; read Hughes, "A bastion against cultural obscenity"
3	9/3	Identifying & formulating thesis statements (in-class writing, marked) <b>Before class:</b> Read Freeland, "Gender, genius, and Guerilla Girls"; read McCloud, <i>Understanding Comics</i> (selections)
3	9/5	Pre-writing degree zero (brainstorming, freewriting, mind-mapping) and converting notes to writing / ( <i>possible arts excursion</i> ) <b>Before class:</b> complete thesis statement Owlet
4	9/10	Advanced writing skills: techniques of description (in-class writing, marked) <b>TOPIC PROPOSAL FOR ESSAY #1 DUE IN CLASS</b>
4	9/12	Pre-writing toolkit: outlining, argument charts, index cards; Flow: paragraphs & transitions
		<b>DRAFT OF ESSAY #1 DUE BY MON. 9/16 @ 6 PM</b>
5	9/17	Giving focused & effective feedback; peer review of essay #1
5	9/19	Transitions, continued: From phrases to strategies; reverse outlining
6	9/24	Description & narration (strong verbs) ( <i>possible arts excursion</i> )
		<b>FINALLY REVISED ESSAY #1 DUE BY WED. 9/25 @ 6 PM</b>
6	9/26	Intro of Personal Argumentative Essay (Essay 2) / Advanced writing skills: voice markers; balancing analysis, evaluation, & opinion / start "translation" exercise <b>Before class:</b> Find and bring in to share a full (more than two paragraph) <i>negative</i> review of an artwork (of any kind) that you liked (or used to like)
		<b>Completed "translation" exercise due on Canvas by Fri. 9/27 @ 5 pm</b>
7	10/1	Intro to art sharing (I'll model) / art sharing schedule / ( <i>possible arts excursion</i> ) <b>Before class:</b> Read, "Making the Memorial," by Maya Lin; Alain de Botton, <i>Architecture of Happiness</i> ;
7	10/3	Art sharing day #1 / <i>Review</i> : thesis statements (in-class writing, marked) / basic elements of citation & research notes <b>TOPIC PROPOSAL FOR ESSAY #2 DUE IN CLASS</b>
8	10/8	Art sharing day #2 / Finding & evaluating online sources (in-class activities) / citing online sources
8	10/10	Art sharing day #3 / Integrating sources into writing: paraphrase vs. quotation
		<b>DRAFT OF ESSAY #2 DUE BY MONDAY 10/14 @ 6 PM</b>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
9	10/15	Peer review of Essay #2
9	10/17	Art sharing day #4 / Rhythm: sentence style & balance
10	10/22	Art sharing day # 5 / Introduction of Essay #3 (illustrated essay) / visual and verbal / captions & credits <b>Read:</b> Review Berger and McCloud (bring both readings to class)
10	10/24	Art sharing day # 6 / Research questions and approaches: ethnography vs. profile <b>Read:</b> Schjeldahl, "T. C. Cannon's Blazing Promise"; Cotter, "Money, ethics, art: Can museums police themselves?"
		<b>FINALLY REVISED ESSAY #2 DUE BY FRIDAY 10/25 @ 6 PM</b>
11	10/29	Art sharing day # 7 / <i>Review:</i> rhetorical appeals (in-class writing, marked) <b>Read:</b> Roskill, "Forgery and its detection: the hand of Han van Meegeren"; Panero, "The art market explained" <b>TOPIC PROPOSAL FOR ESSAY #3 DUE IN CLASS</b>
11	10/31	Art sharing day # 8 / Research techniques workshop: mock interviews (guest subject/s) / In-class writing (mock interview notes, marked)
		<b>Mock interview notes (begun in class) due on Canvas by Friday 11/1 @ 6 pm</b>
12	11/5	Art sharing day # 9 / The research circle / research techniques: ethnography, interviews, primary sources / taking research notes / types of sources (the BEAM taxonomy) and relation to research questions
12	11/7	Speed dating: the introduction writing workshop <b>DRAFT INTRODUCTION + OUTLINE OF ESSAY #3 DUE IN CLASS FOR WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES</b>
13	11/12	Art sharing day #10 / Texts in conversation: your own voice and sources' voices / <b>Before class:</b> bring a potential source related to Essay #3 to class you are ready to share and place in the BEAM taxonomy
		<b>DRAFT OF ESSAY #3 DUE WEDNESDAY 11/13 @ 6 PM</b>
13	11/14	Peer review of essay #3
14	11/19	Art sharing day # 11 / The sense of an ending: the conclusion writing workshop
14	11/21	Art sharing day # 12 / "Focused reads" principle of editing & self-editing exercises (in-class, credit only)
		<b>FINALLY REVISED ESSAY #3 DUE MONDAY 11/25 @ 6 PM</b>
15	11/26	Art sharing day # 13 / Portfolio prep & editorial board activities explained; groups assigned
16	12/3	"Editorial board" portfolio group presentations 1
16	12/5	"Editorial board" portfolio group presentations 2

#### PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION DATES:

**For sec. 77 (T/Th 3 pm) Portfolios due on Canvas by Wed. 12/11 @ 5 pm**

**For sec. 74 (T/Th 4:30 pm) Portfolios due on Canvas by Tues. 12/17 @ 5 pm**

***Both sections:* If you are revising an essay for possible extra credit (optional) as part of the portfolio process, the *revision* is due on Canvas by Wed. 12/11 @ 5 pm**