

San José State University
Department of English & Comparative Literature
ENGL 1A: First-Year Writing, Section 17, Spring 2020

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Office Hours:	Tuesdays & Thursdays 10:30 – 11:45 am & by appointment.
Class Days/Time:	Tuesday & Thursday 12 – 1:15 pm
Classroom:	Sweeney Hall 348
Prerequisites:	Reflection on College Writing
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	GE Area A2 Written Communication I

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Faculty Web Page and SJSU Messaging

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the [Canvas Learning Management System course login website](#) at <http://one.sjsu.edu>. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through Canvas to learn of any updates.

ENGL 1A Section 17 Course Description & Learning Outcomes (GELO)

ENGL 1A – First Year Writing 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 learn to think clearly and write effectively as you give form and coherence to complex ideas. You will explore writing for various audiences and rhetorical situations.

Over the next sixteen weeks we will practice:

1. **reading** actively and rhetorically;
2. **performing** the essential steps in the writing process (prewriting, organizing, composing, revising, and editing) and demonstrate an awareness of said performance;
3. **articulating** an awareness of and write according to the rhetorical features of texts, such as purpose, audience, context, and rhetorical appeals;

4. **integrating** our ideas and those of others by explaining, analyzing, developing, and criticizing ideas effectively in several genres;
5. **demonstrating** college-level language use, clarity, and grammatical proficiency in writing.

What This Course Is NOT:

A literature course. While we will be discussing and analyzing works of non-fiction, fiction, hybrid texts, and beyond, our primary focus is not on the “literary merits” of Shakespeare, or whether you like the reading or not.

An “easy A.” Like all worthwhile courses, this one will be challenging. Without intellectual effort, a commitment to reflect and think hard about your own experiences, you may not gain much from this class. And, while my goal is to combine education and fun, this is a college level course with collegiate expectations and responsibilities. Successfully completing this course entails not just attendance but also spending significant time outside of the classroom reading, researching, writing, revising, and reflecting.

If you are a student who writes essays the night before they are due, who thinks a revision is just correcting grammar, and sticks to a standard five paragraph essay, this course is not for you.

However, if you are willing to take risks, to read and write beyond your comfort zone, to address failure as the best mentor and always be searching for new writing skills, then you will gain a lot from this course.

What This Course Is:

This is a college writing course. Therefore, we will be writing a lot. This is also a course about reading thoughtfully and critically, analyzing the effective (and ineffective) ways writers use tools to achieve their goals... or to fail spectacularly.

The theme of this course is: **FAILURE.**

Why? Because in life you will fail. In college you will fail. You will fail in professional situations and personal relationships and you will fail in writing, guaranteed. By ignoring failure, we give it power. But embracing failure as part of the process, learning from it, and revising, we grow as writers and resilient human beings.

Or, as Thomas Edison said:

“Negative results are what I want. They’re just as valuable to me as positive results. I can never find the thing that does the job best until I find the ones that don’t.”

Since theme of this course is **failure**, your two major writing assignments should seek to explore an aspect of **failure**. Failure is a very broad topic, and how you chose to approach it is up to you. However, some possible ways to explore failure could be:

- Try Harder: How Video Game Players Embrace Mistakes to Get Better.
- Fail Better: A Guide to What NOT to do During Your Freshmen Year of College.
- The Tacoma Narrows Bridge: How an Engineering Failure Led to the Collapse of a Bridge.
- Why Artists Thrive When They’re Free to Make Mistakes.
- Fail-History: Three Small Mistakes that Changed the World in a Big Way.
- How J.K. Rowling Hit Rock Bottom and Built Her Life Up from Nothing.

Ultimately, the topics you will be writing about in this course will be of your own research and design. There will be no prompts, only guidelines (page count, format, etc). What is important is that you discover topics YOU are interested in and passionate about (and involve an element of failure). You will need to be proactive and always thinking about interesting ideas, taking notes, jotting down interesting ideas, or asking questions.

Bottom line: enthusiasm shows! If you're not writing about a topic you're interested in, neither will others be interested in reading it.

Required Items:

- **The Coddling of the American Mind: How Good Intentions and Bad Ideas Are Setting Up a Generation for Failure** by Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt (ISBN: 978-0735224896).
- **On Writing: 10th Anniversary Edition** by Stephen King (ISBN: 978-1439156810).

Note: You will need to purchase a physical paper copy of these books and bring them to class on the required days we are discussing them. No eBooks or Kindle, .PDF, etc.

- **A Composition Journal (Mead, Roaring Spring, Rhodia, etc.).** We will practice weekly journaling. You will be expected to take notes in it during our discussions, write down ideas, outlines, and use this Writer's Journal to organize your thoughts. You will also submit this journal for occasional checks. Your Writer's Journal is a critical component of this course. Therefore, you must ensure that you do not lose it.

Additional texts & videos will be posted to Canvas and/or distributed in class. Students will need to check their email and visit Canvas regularly!

Phones, Computers, Tablets & Electronics

Access to a computer or tablet will be necessary to participate in Canvas discussions and submit assignments. Such devices may also be helpful when specified during class. However, **when class begins your electronics are to be away in your bag, no exceptions**. Use of electronics during class is considered a ZERO for the day's participation. Part of improving as a student and a writer is being engaged with the course content and actively listening. If you cannot give the classroom, your instructor, and each other your undivided attention for the full duration of class, find an alternative course.

ENGL 1A Course Content

This is a hybrid reading-writing course that will help you develop your ability to construct thoughtful, college-level composition, and to explore a variety of essay structures, from op-ed articles in the New York Times to long-form books like our texts, from web articles and listicles ("7 Reasons Why You Need X in Your Life!") to formal academic essays.

Course Rubric & Assignments

<u>Assignment</u>		<u>GELO</u>
Essay #1 + All Process Assignments	25 %	1-5
Essay #2 + All Process Assignments	25 %	1-5
Book Excerpt Presentation & In-Class Discussion	20 %	1-4
In-Class Participation, Daily Assignments, Discussion Contributions	20 %	1-5
Final Reflection Essay & Portfolio Submission	10 %	1, 2, 4, 5
Bonus Assignments During the Semester	10 %	1 - 5
	Max: 110%	

We have two major writing assignments (aka "Essays").

1. Hybrid Informative – Persuasive essay (1500 – 2000 words).
2. Hybrid Researched – Narrative Profile (1500 – 2000 words).

Combined, these writing assignments constitute 50% of your overall course grade.

However, writing is far more than just sitting at a computer and pressing keys. Writing is a process with many different steps to explore and practice. Therefore, our two writing assignments are broken down as thus:

Essay Steps & Learning Goals

<u>Step</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>GELO</u>
1	Research & Reading: Go out and find 3 pieces of writing related to your Topic of Interest.	5	1
2	Summarize & Analyze: Evaluate the effective writing techniques in one of these chosen pieces of writing.	5	1, 2
3	Proposal & Chat: Propose a topic you wish to write about and review other student topics.	10	1-4
4	Write & Edit: Write a complete Rough Draft & Submit it to your Writing group	15	1-5
5	Peer Review + Workshop Responses: Read, review, discuss, and submit feedback on your group members' essays.	20	1, 2, 4, 5
6	Writer's Memo: Reflect on what you hoped to accomplish with your essay, and what your challenges were.	15	1, 3, 5
7	Submit Revised Draft	40	1-5
		Max: 235 XP	

Requirements for particular assignments will vary, but essay grades will reflect the paper's effectiveness as a piece of academic writing.

The following are the criteria by which essays are typically evaluated in first-year writing courses:

- 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 or logic. It will show weakness in grammar, mechanics, usage, and/or voice.
- A “**D**” essay will neglect to meet most of 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.

Book Excerpt Presentation & In-Class Discussion

Learning isn't just listening to a lecture and falling asleep. Learning is active and often the best teachers are our peers. Therefore, all students will be responsible a group Book Excerpt Presentation & In-Class Discussion. In a group of 2-3 students you will:

- Summarize key points and concepts of the reading due for that day. Review the chapters, what the author was trying to convey, key takeaways. Consider: purpose, audience, genre, stance, media/design.

- Cite specific examples of effective writing that you think are important for growing writers. How was the author successful? What tricks did they use? What can we learn from these chapters? Consider: ethos, pathos, logos, kairos.
- Cite specific examples of ineffective writing that we might want to avoid. What would you have done differently?
- Lead the class on a journey into understanding the material from **your own unique experience**. Did something feel true to your life? Did something speak to you? Talk about how the book excerpt connects to your life (or don't).
- Lead an in-class discussion covering the reading. You can bring premade questions, topics, or just ask general reading-related questions to the class.

Your group will be the “Teacher for the day” and as such you may use whatever materials you see fit to present this information, such as a Google Slides or PowerPoint or paper handouts and activities. There is no “preferred format” but just what works for your group. Your goal is NOT to lecture, but to summarize information and then lead a discussion. Your group should be prepared to give a presentation for **10-15 minutes**, followed by a discussion of **30-45 minutes**.

Submission & Late Policy

Submission dates vary by assignment, so be sure to track them via the syllabus and Canvas. Weekly announcements will go out via email on Thursday, but do not count on them to spell out everything. **It is your responsibility to ensure that you are actively aware of what is required, and that you turn in the appropriate assignment on time.** All late assignments incur an automatic 5% penalty per day.

That said, life happens and we're all human. Therefore, if you think you will be late on an assignment, you should contact me to discuss it.

A note about submission format: all written assignments should follow MLA format, that means 12 pt. Times New Roman, double-spaced, with your name, the assignment title, etc. Please review MLA format, and/or use your word processor's MLA Essay format. Both Microsoft Word and Google Docs have MLA format built in.

Accepted file formats are: Microsoft .doc/.docx or Adobe PDF.

Classroom Protocol

Participation is essential to this course. Students will need to come to class on time, prepared, ready to ask and answer questions, engage with their peers and the instructor, contribute their own ideas and opinions, and nurture respectful discussions, even of sensitive and challenging topics.

In any setting of greater than one person, disagreements will occur. Patience and empathy are necessary. Behavior that threatens the learning environment and safety of the classroom will not be tolerated.

- A student seeking an **A-grade** will be: prepared for class on time, able to answer questions, lead discussions, take risks, make mistakes, show thoughtfulness in their comments, contribute their own ideas while encouraging peer interaction, display a strong drive to revise their writing, and submit all their assignments on time.
- A student seeking a **B-grade** will be: prepared for class on time, able to answer questions, take risks, make mistakes, show thoughtfulness in their comments, contribute their own ideas while encouraging peer interaction, and submit all their assignments on time.
- A student seeking a **C-grade** will be: prepared for class, able to answer questions, and will submit all their assignments.

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/>"

Reading

Reading, *ugh!* Why do we have to read? After all, few students enjoy assigned reading, and even the most exciting book loses about 50% of its fun when it's mandatory.

We have reading for two reasons.

First reason: we need to develop a common understanding, a "home base" that we can venture from and return to. Just like music or baseball requires orientation, rules, and examples of variation, so too does literacy. Writers need a basic framework to work from and to discuss writing. Reading provides that.

Second reason:

"If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others: **read a lot** and **write a lot**. **If you don't have time to read, you don't have time (or the tools) to write.** Simple as that."

—Stephen King, *On Writing*.

You cannot become a competent baseball player, a driver, a dancer, or *fill-in-the-blank* without participating in activities that develop those skills. Writing is no different. **To be effective at written communication, you need to read and evaluate effective (and ineffective) writing.**

On Spelling, Grammar, and "The Rules"

Students comes to a writing class with different skills levels, abilities, and confidences. Every effort will be made to respect the uniqueness of each student's voice. However, there are fundamentals of writing and composition that adventurers are expected to have a working understanding of. Therefore, **if you struggle with issues such as grammar or essay structure, or simply don't know what a paragraph is, you will need to seek out assistance at the University Writing Center.** It is an excellent resource (and FREE!) and every student should at least try to use it occasionally to strengthen the fundamental skills that are necessary for college-level composition.

ENGL 1 A, Sec 17 Spring 2020 Course Schedule

Assignments are due by 10am the beginning of class on the day listed.

Please note that this schedule is subject to change. Adjustments will be posted on Canvas with fair warning

READING KEY: The Coddling of the American Mind = CotAM, On Writing = OW

	Week	Date	Topics & Activities	Due:
Introduction	1	1/23	Introduction, Course Overview & Get to Know Each Other	Get: Textbooks Do: Syllabus Quiz Reading: Syllabus
	2	1/28	Purpose, Audience, Stance, Media & Design + Form Reading Presentation Groups	
		1/30	Narrative Arc / Hero's Journey	
Writing Assignment One – Informative & Persuasive	3	2/4	Group I: Reading Presentation & Discussion	HW: Assignment One, Step 1 Reading: CotAM 1-51
		2/6	<i>Shitty First Drafts</i> / Intro to Annotating	HW: Assignment One, Step 2 Reading:
	4	2/11	Group II: Reading Presentation & Discussion	HW: Assignment One, Step 3 Reading: CotAM 53-98
		2/13	Debriefing I: Crowdsourcing	
	5	2/18	Group III: Reading Presentation & Discussion	HW: Assignment One, Step 4 Reading: CotAM 99-162
		2/20	Ethos, Pathos, Logos, Kairos	
	6	2/25	Peer Review Workshop I	HW: Assignment One, Step 5 Reading:
		2/27	*** Open Writing Day ***	
	7	3/3	Group IV: Reading Presentation & Discussion	Reading: CotAM 163-212
		3/5	Blizzcon 2018 (Audience)	
	8	3/10	Group V: Reading Presentation & Discussion	HW: Assignment One, Step 4 (Revisions) Reading: CotAM 213-263
		3/12	Debriefing II: Mid-semester Reflection	
	9	3/17	Peer Review Workshop II	HW: Assignment One, Step 5 (Revisions)
		3/19	*** Open Writing Day ***	
Writing Assignment Final Revisions + Writer's Memo Due – 8pm				
Writing Assignment Two – Researched + Narrative Profile	10	3/24	Group VI: Reading Presentation & Discussion	HW: Assignment Two, Step 1 Reading: OW 1-66
		3/26	<i>TBD: To Be Determined</i>	Due: Assignment Two, Step 2
	11	3/31	<i>Spring Break</i>	HW: Assignment Two, Step 3 (Interview)
		4/2	<i>Spring Break</i>	
	12	4/7	Group VII: Reading Presentation & Discussion	Reading: OW 66-107
		4/9	<i>TBD</i>	
	13	4/14	Group VIII: Reading Presentation & Discussion	HW: Assignment Two, Step 4 Reading: OW 107-157
		4/16	*** Open Writing Day ***	
	14	4/21	Peer Review Workshop III	HW: Assignment Two, Step 5
		4/23	<i>TBD</i>	

	15	4/28	Group IX: Reading Presentation & Discussion	Reading: OW 157-220
		4/30	<i>TBD</i>	
	16	5/5	Group X: Reading Presentation & Discussion	Reading: OW 220-284
		5/7	*** Open Writing Day ***	
	5/13	<u>Final Exam & Portfolio Submission</u>		