

ENGL 1A-29: First Year Writing, Fall 2022

Instructor:	Timothy Cech
Email:	timothy.cech@sjsu.edu
Class Days/Time:	Monday and Wednesday 9:00am-10:15am
Classroom:	Boccardo Business Center 130
Office Location:	Faculty Office Building 213 ZOOM
Office Hours:	Monday 10:30-11:30am, Wednesday 10:30-11:30am, and/or by appointment
Prerequisites:	Completion of Reflection on College Writing
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	A2: Written Communication

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Course Description

English 1A is an introductory course that prepares students to join scholarly conversations across the university. Students develop reading skills, rhetorical sophistication, and writing styles that give form and coherence to complex ideas for various audiences, using a variety of genres.

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Course Format

Our shared inquiry (or quest) will occur in-person this semester, barring any safety policies ordered by the university. We are also embarking on technology intensive journey, making a laptop or device with access to stable internet connection necessary for our campaign. All assignments will be submitted through our course Canvas page.

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Course Management and Communication

It is essential that we regularly check our university and Canvas email accounts for any updates about course meetings, assignments, and class agenda-related announcements. Equally important is reaching out via email or Canvas messaging when necessary. The customary turnaround time for email replies is anywhere between 24-48 hours, but oftentimes it may occur sooner than that. If we should require an in-person meeting during office hours or a virtual meeting outside of office hours at a time then we may arrange that through email.

Course documents such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the [Canvas Learning Management System course login website](#). We are all responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system and announcements tab through Canvas to learn of any updates or revisions to our course agenda. For help with using Canvas see [Canvas Student Resources page](#).

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Course Goals

A stranger with a complicated past comes to small town to solve a mystery...

A hero journeys into a strange land to heal a blighted kingdom...

A student enrolls in a required first year writing course at a university...

Who is speaking? To whom are they speaking? Why are they speaking? And what exactly do they want from us?

In this course we will be charged with studying, producing, and critiquing the procedural elements of mythmaking as deployed in popular culture and modern discourse: its forms, its functions, its foibles. Of particular emphasis is the necessary rhetorical features of **purpose**, **context**, and **audience**. Although our course material uses mythmaking as a guide, this is not a semester-length workshop in creative writing. Our objective is the study and practice of what qualifies effective, persuasive, assertive, and evaluative writing throughout various modes of communication. Together our quest will concern the means and processes by which a rhetor considers purpose, occasion, and audience toward effective (and/or ineffective) mythmaking within societal and pop cultural contexts: benefits and liabilities of modern mythmaking as it relates to ethical reportage, credible information venues, and civil argument.

The readings and assignments scheduled in the syllabus will help guide our collaboration on how to question mythmaking within personal, social, cultural, and institutional contexts. Most importantly, on this shared quest we investigate the inherent tension and contradiction posed between mythmaking and documenting objective fact through analyzing the rhetorical features of persuasion and argumentation.

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GE Learning Outcomes (GELO)

Upon successful completion of this GE course, students 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**, **context**, **audience**, and **rhetorical appeals**.
4. Integrate your ideas and those of others by explaining, analyzing, developing, and criticizing ideas effectively in several genres.
5. Demonstrate college-level language use, clarity, and grammatical proficiency in writing

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Course Content

Diversity: SJSU studies include an emphasis on diversity. Students will engage in integrated reading and writing assignments to construct their own arguments on complex issues that generate meaningful public debate. Readings for the course will include writers of different genders and from different socio-economic classes.

Writing: Writing assignments will give students repeated practice in all phases of the writing process: prewriting, organizing, writing, revising, and editing. This class requires a minimum of 8000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form.

Reading: There will be a substantial amount of reading for this class, some of which will come from assigned texts and some of which will be from sources you locate on your own.

Revision and Reflection: At the end of the semester, you are required to turn in a portfolio that consists of selected examples of writing you produced for our class and a reflection on your revision process.

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Required Readings and Materials

Textbooks? Where we are going, we don't need textbooks.

Yet having said that, this course is reading intensive. All required readings and materials will be provided free through Canvas as PDFs which survey a multitude of genres featuring a diversity of perspectives, positions, and purposes.

Materials we are required to bring to each class meeting include:

- a **device** capable of running word processing software;
- any make and model of letter-sized **paper**;
- and an analog writing instrument of the **pen or pencil** variety.

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Technological Equipment

The only required software for our mythic quest is a reliable web browser and a word processor capable of saving files in **.doc or .docx formats**. In-class and outside-of-class work will be submitted to our Canvas page. The platform (as well as our collective workflow) is rather unkind to file extensions other than **.doc or .docx formats**. Therefore, it bears stating again: **assignments are to be submitted only as .doc or .docx files**.

We will have opportunities to use tools that may benefit the scope and vision of our compositional quests, particularly during one of our late-stage challenges. These tools are entirely optional, so please consider them as complimentary cosmetics for our inventory. It is important to note that the following software is free to all enrolled quest members in good academic standing:

Adobe Creative Cloud

<https://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/software-tools/teaching-tools/video-creative/adobe/students.php>

Microsoft 360

<https://portal.office.com/>

[TUTORIAL NOTE: Use your university email address and SJSUOne password to access software for free.]

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Course Requirements and Assignments

This journey requires three major projects to be completed: a **personal narrative**, a **critical essay**, and a **multimodal artifact project**. Each project will refine an essential component of critical thinking.

We will discuss these major assignments throughout the semester. Major and minor assignments will cover informal and formal writing produced in multiple modes: written, oral, aural, spatial, and visual. [Weekly reading and writing assignments](#) are designed to guide us through the stages of essay construction.

Success in this course is based on the expectation that we will spend a **minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course** for each unit of credit (AKA three hours per unit per week). Accounting for these hours includes attending class, studying course materials, participating in course-related activities, and completing assignments.

Being as this class requires a minimum of 8,000 words written by semester's end, at least 4,000 of which must be in revised final draft form, the course has been designed so that we may successfully complete our journey together while satisfying institutional requirements, restoring peace to the land, and, conceivably, embarking on our next-gen adventure post-ENGL 1A.

To that aim, our activities and assignments on this mythic quest include:

- **Personal Myth and Media Narrative:** 20%, or 200pts (GELO 2, 4, 5)
Choose a pop culture artifact (film, album, poem, novel, video game, short story, tabletop RPG, comic book, etc.) that had a significant bearing on your personal development, one that has fundamentally influenced your relationship to reading and writing. We will construct a 1500-2000 word essay describing the artifact's cultural, social, historical, mythical, and/or personal value in rhetorical literacy.
- **Demythologizing Technological Frontiers Critical Essay:** 20%, or 200pts (GELO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
Research and write a 2000-word critical analysis on a conspiracy theory and how disinformation attempts to legitimize itself through rhetorical appeals. More importantly, we must investigate the mechanisms by which conspiracy theories are constructed, engineered, and disseminated. This essay tasks us with identifying and critiquing the use of rhetorical appeals and features, with particular emphasis paid to agenda, purpose, context, assumed credibility, and genre. This essay will require 3 sources drawn from scholarly databases and peer-reviewed research articles.
- **Subculture Shark Tank Multimodal Project:** 20%, or 200pts (GELO 2, 3, 4, 5)
Choose a subculture you feel is not receiving nearly as much support or exposure as it requires, and create a multi-genre project that humanizes the group through counternarrative. The objective of this challenge is to rectify misconceptions or mischaracterizations of a misunderstood contingent within the social matrix through use of empirical evidence. This assignment involves 3 distinct elements: a 1000–1500-word pitch proposal, a 1000-1500-word research-based prospectus, and an original multimodal artifact.
- **Short Writing Assignments (in-class and outside-of-class):** 20%, or 200pts
Weekly reading assignments and self-reflective responses. Prompts will range between 150-300 words.
- **Participation:** 10%, or 100pts
Actively engaging with course material at the group level. As this is an in-person course, participation will primarily be based on our involvement in daily discussions, responses to quick writes, and our verbal participation in large and small group class discussions.
- **SJSU Writing Program Portfolio:** 10%, or 100pts
Curate a final portfolio of selected process pieces and assignments will be completed over the semester, accompanied by a reflection paper that uses excerpts from both first and final essay drafts to demonstrate how you applied rhetorical concepts learned in class.

Grading Information

Requirements for each assignment will vary, but in all cases, grades will reflect the paper's global effectiveness and display an awareness of **purpose, context, and audience**.

The grading criteria for each major essay/project will be weighed proportionally to the following stages of development and construction:

1. **Brainstorm/Outline/Proposal:** 25% of essay's total value, or 25pts
2. **Initial Draft:** 25% of essay's total value, or 25pts
3. **Revision Letter:** 25% of essay's total value, or 25pts
4. **Revised and Edited Draft:** 25% of essay's total value, or 25pts

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

The "A" writing assignment is organized and well-developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment's requirements, 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.

The "B" writing assignment demonstrates competence in the same categories as an "A" essay, but it may not be fully developed in one or more of the previously stated areas. It will respond to the topic suitably and may contain some grammatical, mechanical, or usage errors.

The "C" writing assignment will complete the minimum requirements of the assignment, but it may not be fully developed in fundamentals. It may show weakness in mastery of grammar, mechanics, usage, or voice.

The "D" writing assignment 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.

Unless an arrangement has been determined in advance, **late work will not receive full credit**. Such assignments will incur a 10% total point reduction for every two days they are late. Assignments will not be accepted for credit two weeks following the deadline.

Extra credit opportunities will be available in the form of optional side quests within our major and minor assignments. These will be indicated wherever applicable within the assignment prompts.

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A plus</i>	<i>960 to 1000</i>	<i>96 to 100%</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>930 to 959</i>	<i>93 to 95%</i>
<i>A minus</i>	<i>900 to 929</i>	<i>90 to 92%</i>
<i>B plus</i>	<i>860 to 899</i>	<i>86 to 89 %</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>830 to 859</i>	<i>83 to 85%</i>
<i>B minus</i>	<i>800 to 829</i>	<i>80 to 82%</i>
<i>C plus</i>	<i>760 to 799</i>	<i>76 to 79%</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>730 to 759</i>	<i>73 to 75%</i>
<i>C minus</i>	<i>700 to 729</i>	<i>70 to 72%</i>
<i>D plus</i>	<i>660 to 699</i>	<i>66 to 69%</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>630 to 659</i>	<i>63 to 65%</i>
<i>D minus</i>	<i>600 to 629</i>	<i>60 to 62%</i>

This course must be passed with a C- or better as a CSU graduation requirement, so we should be advised to plan our quest progress accordingly and mindfully.

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Classroom Protocol

We will need to arrive to class on time and prepared. In the event of absence, it is courteous to send an email. Attendance will be monitored for health and safety. During in-class discussions and freewrites, be mindful and respectful of each other so that we can create a safe and secure learning environment. Questions and comments are essential to a rewarding classroom experience, so I encourage us all to ask questions and gain clarity within the classroom.

Lastly, this course emphasizes process over product. Completing the shorter assignments will naturally lead to success with the larger assignments.

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](#), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](#) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>).

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Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center offers a variety of free resources to assist students with more effective mechanical, grammatical, and syntactical usage. Consider it an NPC village where we may replenish our HP and MP or respec our skills. The center offers XP building tutorials through writing resources, workshops, and one-on-one and small-group tutoring sessions, supporting students in all disciplines and at all levels.

The SJSU Writing Center has two in-person locations at Clark Hall, Suite 126 and MLK Library, 2nd floor. Workshops and tutoring are also available through online platforms. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the Writing Center website at sjsu.edu/writingcenter.

English 1A-07, Fall 2022

Course Schedule

The following schedule is subject to change with advance notice through a Canvas Announcement.

Note: Due dates for all assignments are by 8:59am the day of class.

Course Schedule

Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
M 8/22	In-Class: Syllabus, etiquette, norms, and agreements The Rhetoric of Trading Cards Co-Op Quest Interview your partner: Backstory, Stats, Alignment, Proficiency, Visual representation
W 8/24	<u>Due by beginning of class:</u> Submit: trading card of your partner Read: Bradbury + “How Final Fantasy VII Taught me to Write” Write: Short Writing Assignment (SWA) 1 In-Class Agenda: Introduce the Personal Narrative essay Mythmaking: Hero’s Journey, Story Circle, Quest Narrative Outlines
M 8/29	<u>Due by beginning of class:</u> Read: “Writing the Natural Way” + “Life Stories and Personal Mythmaking” Write: SWA 2 In-Class Agenda: Mind-mapping, idea-bubbling, and clustering the multiverse of your experiences Co-Op Quest Writing is like..., vol. 1
W 8/31	<u>Due by beginning of class:</u> Read: “Superman and Me” + “Shitty First Drafts” Write: SWA 3 + DRAFT OUTLINE AND ESSAY PROPOSAL In-Class Agenda: Genre + Hermit Crab essay, Outlines + Structure, Subjectivity + Objectivity Explaining fandom to an extraterrestrial
M 9/5	LABOR DAY – NO CLASS!
W 9/7	<u>Due by beginning of class:</u> PERSONAL NARRATIVE ESSAY INITIAL DRAFT Read: “What is Academic Writing?”

Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
	<p>In-Class Agenda: Beginnings and Endings, Introductions and Conclusions, “nutshell paragraph” and the anecdotal ending</p>
M 9/12	<p><u>Due by beginning of class:</u> Read: “What’s That Supposed to Mean? Using Feedback on Your Writing” Write: SWA 4</p> <p>In-Class Agenda: Workshop Small groups share feedback: praise notes and moments of confusion</p>
W 9/14	<p><u>Due by beginning of class:</u> Read: “Murder! (Rhetorically Speaking)” + Scanlan Write: PEER FEEDBACK LETTER + SWA 5</p> <p>In-Class Agenda: Revising structure, Rebuilding the puzzle, redrawing the map Martini Glass, “climbing the mountain,” Freytag’s pyramid, inverted pyramid, Fictian Curve, and organizational principle <i>besides</i> the five-paragraph essay</p>
M 9/19	<p><u>Due by beginning of class:</u> Read: “Video Games Will Never Be Art” by Roger Ebert + “A Journey to Make Video Games Into Art” by Laura Parker Write: SWA 6</p> <p>In-Class Agenda: Quest Co-op “The Hotdog Argument”</p>
W 9/21	<p><u>Due today:</u> REVISED PERSONAL NARRATIVE and DRAFT LETTER DUE by 11:59pm</p> <p>Read: “Exigency: What Makes My Message Indispensable to my Reader” + “Why People Latch Onto Conspiracy Theories, According to Science”</p> <p>In-Class Agenda: The Logos, Pathos, and Ethos of Conspiracy Theory</p>
M 9/26	<p><u>Due by beginning of class:</u> Read: “Three Ways to Persuade: Integrating the Three Appeals” + “The New Commandments” + “The Science of Reasoning With Unreasonable People” Write: SWA 7</p> <p>In-Class Agenda: Critique –What’s being added to the conversation? What’s being taken away? And must it stir controversy? Establishing a baseline</p>
W 9/28	<p><u>Due by beginning of class:</u> Read: “Back Packs vs. Briefcases: Steps Toward Rhetorical Analysis” Write: PROPOSAL for CRITICAL ESSAY</p> <p>In-Class Agenda:</p>

Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
	Opinion v. Research + Fact v. Fiction / Objectivity v. Subjectivity = The Bigfoot Argument Introduction to MLK Library databases and resources
M 10/3	<p><u>Due by beginning of class:</u> Read: “African fossils show...” + “British researchers find fossils...” + “Assessing Source Credibility for Crafting a Well-Informed Argument” Write: SWA 8</p> <p>In-Class Agenda: News source literacy; recognizing and reckoning with bias; Using persuasion to prompt action; Broadening the scope and complexity of critical analysis through sticky research.</p>
W 10/5	<p><u>Due by beginning of class:</u> Read: “Power and Resistance: A Case Study of Satire on the Internet” + “It Was Me” + “I am Godzilla, King of the Monsters, and I, too, had a relationship with Pete Davidson” + “Ways the Woke Mob has Affected Me Personally” Write: OUTLINE for CRITICAL ESSAY + SWA 9</p> <p>In-Class Agenda: Kairos; timing in argumentation; identifying tone, position, and embellishment Rhetorical devices; the underlying message and purpose within the content Irony, Satire, and Parody</p>
M 10/10	<p><u>Due by beginning of class:</u> Read: “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” + “Does the Internet Make You Smarter?” Write: INITIAL CRITICAL ESSAY DRAFT + SWA 10</p> <p>In-Class Agenda: Quest Co-op Complicating an essay with counterclaims; collaborative research efforts; summary v. synopsis v. criticism</p>
W 10/12	<p><u>Due by beginning of class:</u> Read: “Why do so many people still think aliens built the pyramids?” + “Why are writers the worst procrastinators?” + “Belonging Is Stronger than Facts’: The Age of Misinformation” Write: Peer Feedback Letter</p> <p>In-Class Agenda: How do we persuade an audience? The allure of speculation, logical fallacies, generalizations, and confirmation bias</p>
M 10/17	<p><u>Due by beginning of class:</u> Read: N/A Write: N/A</p> <p>In-Class Agenda: Conferences</p>
W 10/19	<p><u>Due by beginning of class:</u> Read: N/A Write: N/A</p> <p>In-Class Agenda:</p>

Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
	Conferences
M 10/24	<p><u>Due by 11:59pm:</u> REVISED DRAFT</p> <p>In-Class Agenda: Research Day</p>
W 10/26	<p><u>Due by beginning of class:</u> REVISED DRAFT LETTER</p> <p>In-Class Agenda: “An Introduction to and Strategies for Multimodal Composition” Compelling an audience to buy Dracula’s Castle</p>
M 10/31	<p><u>Due by beginning of class:</u> Read: “The Medium is the Message” Write: SWA 11</p> <p>In-Class Agenda: Multimodal project Introduction: Choice of media; constraints and opportunities; opinion or expository. Brainstorming and Outlining your project. The necessity for and the differences between a <i>proposal</i> and a <i>prospectus</i>: the idea and the plan</p>
W 11/2	<p><u>Due by beginning of class:</u> Read: “What’s going on with those Furry Nazis?” + “Even the Furies are fighting Fascists” + How the Furry Community became a safe space for youth” Write: Multimodal project proposal + SWA 12</p> <p>In-Class Agenda: Co-Op Quest WAR OF THE WORLDS: The Reboot, feat. Twitter essays, Instagram reportage, ARGs, Memes</p>
M 11/7	<p><u>Due by beginning of class:</u> Read: “Navigating Genres” + “These Are the Days of Our Lives” Write: SWA 13</p> <p>In-Class Agenda: Multimodal journalism Appealing to an audience, the ethics of reportage, mythos of scavenger hunting. Reverse-engineering and humanizing a puzzle through documentary geocaching</p>
W 11/9	<p><u>Due by beginning of class:</u> Read: “Wikipedia Is Good for you!?” Write: Multimodal project prospectus + SWA 14</p> <p>In-Class Agenda: Group workshops for the multimodal prospectus</p>
M 11/14	<p><u>Due by beginning of class:</u> Read: “Semiotics: The Study of Signs (and Texts)” Write: SWA 15</p>

Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
	In-Class Agenda: Semiotic Ad analysis
W 11/16	<u>Due by beginning of class:</u> Read: “You Can’t Escape Attention Economy” + “Why Did Someone Pay \$560,000 for a Picture of my Column?” Write: SWA 16 In-Class Agenda: Co-Op Quest Writing is like..., volume 2 Explain NFTs to a time traveler
M 11/21	<u>Due by beginning of class:</u> Multimodal project and Revised Multimodal Prospectus In-Class Agenda: Present class multimodal projects, round 1
W 11/23	In-Class Agenda: Present class multimodal projects, round 2
M 11/28	<u>Due by beginning of class:</u> TBD In-Class Agenda: TBD
W 11/30	Due today: Read: TBD Write: Portfolio Reflection Draft E-portfolio – Assembling a semester’s worth of greatest hits
M 12/5	Due today: Read: TBD Write: Annotated Bibliography Draft
W 12/14	Final Session NOTE: We meet from 7:15am-9:30am on this day SJSU Writing Program Portfolio DUE Reflection + Annotated Bibliography + Selected Essays from RCW and ENGL 1A