# Argument and Analysis
## ENGL 1B

Spring 2026   Section 19   In Person   3 Unit(s)   01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026   Modified 02/16/2026

# 👤 Contact Information

David Koehn

david.koehn@sjsu.edu

# 🕐 Course Information

English 1B is a composition course that develops college-level writing and critical thinking. This section centers on the idea that we live in a myth-infused technological era. By exploring mythic metaphors — Babel, Sisyphus, the Golem,  and the Ship of Theseus — we will investigate how artificial intelligence, digital identity, and algorithmic systems shape the modern world. Students will have repeated practice in prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing, and repeated practice in reading closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes.

GE Area(s): C2. Humanities

Prerequisite: ENGL 1A or ENGL 1AS with a C- or better.

We live amid modern myths: tech giants become gods, algorithms become monsters, and language fragments across screens. This course uses classical metaphors—Babel, Sisyphus, the Golem, and the Ship of Theseus—to examine how we communicate, miscommunicate, and reconstitute identity in the digital age. We'll write critically and creatively about AI, misinformation, burnout, and digital identity.

## Key Course Features:

- AI as writing support: Use Grammarly, ChatGPT, Claude, etc. transparently. No full generation of assignments. Cite your tools like sources.
- Agentic prose: Focus on active voice, clarity, and precision. We'll use The Elements of Style as our prose bible.
- Portfolio model: Students collect and reflect on their best work throughout the term.

- Modular grading: Success is defined by consistent effort, revision, and participation—not just single submission scores.
- Canvas as the hub: All discussions, reflections, and minor assignments submitted here.
- Nonfiction emphasis: We'll primarily use current articles (2023–2024) and contemporary media (TV/film) rather than long traditional texts.

## Generative Artificial Intelligence (Chat GPT)

*What you should know about AI Platforms*

Large language models, like Chat GPT, perform intensive mining, modeling, and memorization of vast stores of language data "scraped" from the internet.  They have been trained to learn language patterns and to predict the most probable next word or sequence of words based on the context they receive.  In other words, it imitates or mimics what humans have put on the internet (think about that for a minute).  AI writing platforms have become savvy enough to write essays, create apps, help with excel, and nearly any conceivable writing situation that relies on linguistic patterns. In this class, we'll practice learning and thinking with them. ChatGPT, like all generative AI systems, is a tool. Tools are used by humans to accomplish specific tasks. Thinking of it that way helps unlock its potential, but also avoid its pitfalls.

# OUR CLASS POLICY ON GENERATIVE AI

AI tools must be used in this course to support brainstorming, outlining, reviewing, and language polishing. When you use AI tools like ChatGPT, clearly state where and how in a footnote or endnote (e.g., "Used ChatGPT to generate outline structure"). Do not submit AI-generated full drafts—your voice matters. Violations will be handled per the SJSU Academic Integrity Policy.

Generative AI programs like ChatGPT and Grammarly can and should be used as resources in this class. As a writing community, we've decided that while they can be integrated into our writing process (brainstorming, generating and organizing ideas, polishing drafts, etc.), we should not use them to write our papers for us. Our work should represent our own ideas and our own ways of articulating them.

## SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The university emphasizes responsible citizenship and an awareness of ethical choices inherent in human development. Academic honesty and fairness foster ethical standards for all those who rely on the integrity of the university, its courses, and its degrees. University degrees are compromised and the public is

defrauded if faculty members or students knowingly or unwittingly allow dishonest acts to be rewarded academically. This policy sets the standards for such integrity and shall be used to inform students, faculty, and staff of the university's Academic Integrity Policy.

## STUDENT ROLE

The San José State University Academic Integrity Policy requires that each student:

- know the rules that preserve academic integrity and abide by them at all times, including learning and abiding by rules associated with specific classes, exams, and course assignments;
- know the consequences of violating the Academic Integrity Policy;
- know the appeal rights and procedures to be followed in the event of an appeal;
- foster academic integrity among peers.
- You can access the SJSU's comprehensive academic integrity policy here:

https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/SJSU-Academic-Integrity-Policy-F15-7.pdf

## Key Policies

- **Engagement**: Active participation is required; engagement will largely be measured by responses to peer work.

- **Late Work**: Late submissions will be accepted with a deduction of 5% per day (including weekends). The late penalty may be waived with prior notice or documented emergency. Please communicate with me as soon as possible if you anticipate difficulties meeting a deadline. Missing smaller assignments will have a limited impact on your overall grade, higher-value assignments carry significant weight and late submissions on these will more substantially affect your final course grade. See Canvas for a complete schedule of assignments and their respective point values.

**Academic Integrity**: All work must be your own; plagiarism will result in course failure. Refer to the SJSU integrity policy.

# 🖥 Course Description and Requisites

English 1B is a writing course that focuses on argumentation and analysis. Through the study of literary, rhetorical, and professional texts, students will develop the habits of mind required to write argumentative and critical essays. Particular emphasis is placed on writing and reading processes. Students will have

repeated practice in prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing, and repeated practice in reading closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes.

*Satisfies 3B. Humanities (Formerly Area C2).*

**Prerequisite(s):** ENGL 1A or ENGL 1AS with a C- or better.
**Grading:** Letter Graded

**Note(s):** ENGL 1B is not open to students who successfully completed ENGL 2.

# ✳ Classroom Protocols

**Theme:** *Modern Myths, AI, and the Human Condition*
**Location/Time:** Clark Building 238/ TU & TH 10:30 AM - 11:45 AM

**Instructor:** David Koehn
**Email:** david.koehn@sjsu.edu
**Office Hours:** by appointment | https://calendar.app.google/A4dB28qM67ZueGMr7
**Course Dates:** January 20, 2026–May 11, 2026

**AI use is encouraged:** Use the SAID (Student AI Disclosure) tool to document your AI use on assignments.

# ▤ Program Information

**Welcome to this General Education course.**

SJSU's General Education Program establishes a strong foundation of versatile skills, fosters curiosity about the world, promotes ethical judgment, and prepares students to engage and contribute responsibly and cooperatively in a multicultural, information-rich society. General education classes integrate areas of study and encourage progressively more complex and creative analysis, expression, and problem solving.

The General Education Program has three goals:

> **Goal 1:** To develop students' core competencies for academic, personal, creative, and professional pursuits.
> **Goal 2:** To enact the university's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and justice by ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to serve and contribute to the well-being of local and global communities and the environment.
> **Goal 3:** To offer students integrated, multidisciplinary, and innovative study in which they pose challenging questions, address complex issues, and develop cooperative and creative responses.

More information about the General Education Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) can be found on the GE website (https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php).

# ◎ Course Goals

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# 📊 Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

GE Area 3B: Humanities

Across the disciplines in Area 3 coursework, students cultivate and refine their affective, cognitive, and expressive faculties by studying works of the human intellect and imagination. Area 3 courses help students to respond subjectively as well as objectively to aesthetic experiences and to develop an understanding of the integrity of both emotional and intellectual responses. In their intellectual and subjective considerations, students develop a better understanding of the interrelationship between the self and the creative arts and the humanities in a variety of cultures.

3B (Humanities) courses encourage students to analyze and appreciate works of philosophical, historical, literary, aesthetic, and cultural importance. Students may take courses in languages other than English in fulfillment of 3B if the courses do not focus solely on skills acquisition but also contain a substantial cultural component. This may include literature, among other content. Theater and film courses may be approved if they emphasize historical, literary, or cultural considerations. Logic courses may be accepted if the focus is not solely on technique but includes the role of logic in humanities disciplines.

GE Area 3B Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of a 3B course, students should be able to:

1. analyze and understand works of philosophical and humanistic importance, including their temporal and cultural dimensions;
2. explore and articulate their own subjective aesthetic and intellectual responses to such texts;

3. analyze and assess ideas of value, meaning, and knowledge, as produced within the humanistic disciplines; and
4. research and write effective analyses of works of the human intellect and imagination.

**Writing requirement**

3B classes require a minimum of 1500 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline.

# 📘 Course Materials

## Required Materials & Key Course Readings - with publicly available access

- *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White (any edition)
- Access to Canvas and Google Drive
- Stable internet for video/media/article access

# ☰ Course Requirements and Assignments

## Major Assignments

### Essay 1 – Babel and Breakdown (Rhetorical Analysis)
*Prompt:* Choose a contemporary artifact (article, speech, media) that demonstrates communicative failure or social fragmentation. Use rhetorical analysis to explore how and why the breakdown occurs. Feel free to use the articles/media provided in the course.

### Essay 2 – Sisyphus and the Algorithm (Causal Argument)
*Prompt:* Make a claim about how algorithmic systems contribute to burnout, monotony, or perceived meaninglessness in work or education. Support your claim using research and analysis of digital systems. Feel free to use/reference the articles/media provided in the course.

### Essay 3 – The Ship of Theseus and Identity (Comparative Analysis)
*Prompt:* Compare two texts (one visual, one written) that raise questions about identity in the digital age. What do they suggest about authenticity and continuity of the self in AI-mediated environments? Feel free to use the articles/media provided in the course.

### Essay 4 – The Golem and Ethical Control (Stakeholder Argument)
*Prompt:* Identify an emerging technology that may outgrow its intended use. Write a position paper considering the ethical stakeholders involved and make a recommendation for regulation or design. Feel free to use the articles/media provided in the course.

### Final Portfolio – Reflection and Revision

Submit selected revised essays + a 500–750 word reflection on your writing growth, process, and voice.

No single assignment determines your final grade. Consistency, improvement, and participation are rewarded.

# ✔ Grading Information

| Assignment | Word Count | % of Course Grade |
|---|---|---|
| Participation | n/a | 15% |
| Discussion | 2500 | 25% |
| Paying Attention (incl. process materials) | 1500 | 15% |
| Essays: Connecting, Reflecting, Arguing (including process materials) | 1500 | 30% |
| Final Portfolio | 1000 | 15 |

# 🏛 University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 (PDF) (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), 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 the [Syllabus Information (https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php)](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

# 📅 Course Schedule

Location/Time: Clark Building 238/ TU & TH 10:30 AM - 11:45 AM