

San José State University
Department of English and Comparative Literature
Spring 2015
English 7, Critical Thinking
Section 5
T/TR 1:30 – 2:45
SH 238

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W

and by appt.

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Course prerequisite: English 1A

GE/SJSU Studies Category: Area A3

Course Description: English 7 integrates the study of reasoning with texts, both academic and popular, that express the concerns of our diverse culture so that students can become aware of, and sensitive to, the role of cultural and individual assumptions in reasoning.

Students will be introduced to the basic concepts of critical thinking: definition of terms, statements of assumptions, the process of inductive and deductive reasoning, distinctions between fact and opinion, use of evidence to support premises, recognition of standards of proof, common fallacies, and misleading logical and rhetorical devices. Students should be especially aware of the role that language plays in persuasive aspects of reasoning. Students will learn these skills by analyzing and discussing culturally oriented readings which will be a substantial part of the course rather than incidental or supplemental to it.

Required Texts:

Asking the Right Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking, Eleventh Edition, Browne, Neil and Stuart Kelley.

Course Reader, Maple Press

Recommended: *The Everyday Writer*, Fifth edition, Lunsford, Andrea

Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the mechanics of rational analysis – recognizing, analyzing, evaluating, and engaging in effective reasoning. The course will give students the opportunity to practice such analysis on a range of cultural and academic topics as well as compose written analyses using the skills they have learned.

GE Program Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1: Students should be able to locate and evaluate sources through library research, and integrate research through appropriate citation and quotation.

SLO 2: Students should be able to present effective arguments that use a full range of legitimate rhetorical and logical strategies to articulate and explain their positions on complex issues in dialog with other points of view.

SLO 3: Students should be able to effectively locate, evaluate, and synthesize evidence in a comprehensive way in support of one's ideas.

SLO 4: Students should be able to identify and critically evaluate the assumptions in and the context of an argument.

SLO 5: Students should be able to effectively distinguish and convey inductive and deductive patterns as appropriate, sequencing arguments and evidence logically to draw valid conclusions and articulate related outcomes (implications and consequences).

Grading Procedure:

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the official SJSU *Catalog* ("The Grading System"). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure.

In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of the ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. Thoughtful responses with an attention to detail exemplify excellence. Individual essays will be graded on an A-F scale according to the following department academic standards:

The "A" essay will be well organized and well developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will incorporate research materials effectively and correctly, as appropriate to the assignment. It will show the student's ability to use language effectively and to construct sentences distinguished by syntactic complexity and variety. Such essays will be essentially free of grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors.

The “B” essay will demonstrate competence in the same categories as the “A” essay. The chief difference is that the “B” essay will show some descriptably slight weaknesses in one of those categories. It may slight one of the assigned tasks, show less facility of expression, or contain some minor grammatical, mechanical, or usage flaws.

The “C” essay will complete all tasks set by the assignment, but show weaknesses in fundamentals, usually development, with barely enough specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. The sentence construction may be less mature, and the use of language less effective and correct than the “B” essay.

The “D” essay will neglect one of the assigned tasks and be noticeably superficial in its treatment of the assignment—that is, too simplistic or too short. The essay may reveal some problems in development, with insufficient specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. It will contain grammatical, mechanical, and/or usage errors that are serious and/or frequent enough to interfere substantially with the writer’s ability to communicate.

The “F” essay will demonstrate a striking underdevelopment of ideas and insufficient or unfocused organization. It will contain serious grammatical, mechanical, and/or usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The [Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/) is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/>.

Information available online

Students are responsible for reading the following information online at

<http://www.sjsu.edu/english/comp/policyforsyllabi.html>

- Course guidelines
- Academic policies (academic integrity, plagiarism, ADA and DRC policies)
- Adding and dropping classes
- Recording lectures
- Student workload

Classroom Protocol:

English 7 is a participatory course that requires students to have read assigned readings before class begins. Students will have the opportunity to exchange ideas during class discussions as well as during small group discussions. Students may be called on to offer input so must be prepared.

Homework, Quizzes, and Written Assignments:

Students must be in class to complete quizzes and turn in homework. No work will be accepted via e-mail, and no work may be made up without prior consent of the instructor.

Late Assignments:

Students must be in attendance to complete in-class assignments. Written assignments cannot be handed in late without prior consent of the instructor; any assignment arriving after the class period has ended is considered late.

Grading scale:

Quizzes/In-class assignments (5):	50 pts
Workshops/peer evals (2):	50 pts
Midterm (short answer – 400 – 500 words)	50 pts
Essays (2)	200 pts
Revision essay	50 pts
Final exam	100 pts

COURSE SCHEDULE

Tr 1/22 Course introduction, syllabus

T 8/27 SOTU address (handout)

Tr 1/29 Review SOTU

*in-class assignment

T 2/3 Thinking critically

Great thinkers

ATRQ, Chapters 1 and 2

Tr 2/5 ATRQ Chapter 3

“We Should Do Something,” CR

*Essay 1 assigned

T 2/10 Appeals

ATRQ, Chap 4

CR, articles TBD

*Quiz

Tr 2/12 ATRQ, Chap 5

CR, articles TBD

T 2/17 Deductive/Inductive reasoning

Essay update

Tr 2/19 Workshop Essay #1

T 2/24 Politics – what can you believe? (handouts)

*Essay #1 DUE

*Peer evaluation DUE

Tr 2/26 Politics continued

*Extra credit opportunity

T 3/3 Drugs – to legalize or not to legalize?

“Buzzkill,” CR

Tr 3/5 Drugs continued (handouts)

T 3/10 ATRQ, Chapters 6 and 7

Tr 3/12 Visual rhetoric

T 3/17 Midterm review

Tr 3/19 Midterm

3/23 – 3/27 SPRING BREAK

T 3/31 CEASAR CHAVEZ DAY, CAMPUS CLOSED

Tr 4/2 The changing face of Silicon Valley

“California Screaming,” CR

*Essay #2 assigned

T 4/7 “Valley Boys,” CR

“The Man Who Wired the World,” CR

*Quiz

Tr 4/9 Writing/Thinking recap

T 4/14 Workshop Essay #2

Tr 4/16 Editing/Revising

T 4/21 Editing/Revising continued

*Essay #2 DUE

*Peer evaluation DUE

*Revision essay assigned

Tr 4/23 Propoganda? You decide

*in-class exercise

T 4/28 ATRQ Chapters 8 and 9

Tr 4/30 ATRQ Chapter 10

Income inequality (handouts)

*Revision essay DUE

T 5/5 “Proposal to Strengthen Minimum Wage,” CR

*Quiz

Tr 5/7 The working poor (handouts)

T 5/12 Review for final

Tr 5/21 FINAL EXAM 12:15 – 2:30