

**San José State University**  
**Department of English and Comparative Literature**

**English 7: Critical Thinking, Section 1**

**Instructor:** Professor Williams  
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**Office Hours:** M/W 10:30-11:30  
**Class Days/Time:** M/W 12:00-1:15  
**Classroom:** BBC 128  
**GE/SJSU Studies Category:** Qualitative Reasoning (A3)

**Departmental Course Description**

English 7 fulfills the General Education requirements in Qualitative Reasoning (A3). This course integrates the study of reasoning with texts that express the concerns of our diverse culture, so that the student 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 of critical thinking by analyzing and discussing culturally oriented readings, which will be a substantial part of the course rather than incidental or supplemental to it.

**University Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives (SLO)**

The goal of this course is to enable students to critically analyze assumptions, evidence, and arguments in a multi-cultural context. The student learning objectives for this course as defined by general education guidelines are as follows:

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).

**NOTE:** The following formal assignments and exams address the following SLOs:

- Essay #1: Argument Analysis SLO: 4 and 5
- Essay #2: Research-Informed Argument: The Pitch SLO: 2
- Essay #2: Research-Informed Argument SLO: 1-4

- Exam #1: Reasoning and Fallacies SLO: 4 and 5
- Exam #2: Argument Analysis SLO: 4 and 5
- Exam #3: Final Exam SLO: 2, 4, 5

### Information available online

You are responsible for reading the following information online at <http://www.sjsu.edu/english/comp/policy/index.html>

- Course guidelines
- Academic policies (academic integrity, plagiarism, accommodations to religious holidays, and ADA and AEC policies)
- Adding and dropping classes
- Recording lectures
- Estimation of Per-Unit Student Workload
- Student Technology Resources

### Required Texts/Materials

*Writing Logically, Thinking Critically*, Seventh Edition, Sheila Cooper and Rosemary Patton, Pearson, 2012. ISBN 10: 0-205-11912-3 or ISBN 13: 978-0-205-11912-7.

*Rereading America: Cultural Contexts for Critical Thinking and Writing*, Ninth Edition, Gary Colombo, Robert Cullen, and Bonnie Lisle, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2013. ISBN 978-1-4576-0671-7.

Large examination booklets, at least two.

Index cards, either 3X5 or 4X6.

Access to a computer, a printer, and an email account.

**Recommended Text:** A current, college-level handbook, such as *The Everyday Writer*, by Andrea Lunsford.

### Course Content

**Writing:** Substantial writing assignments are to be integrated with critical thinking instruction. Writing will lead to the production of argumentative essays, with a minimum of 3000 words required, and which will receive written feedback from peers and the instructor. Students shall receive frequent evaluations from the instructor, with substantive comments that address the quality and form of writing. All writing (essays, homework assignments, in-class assignments, etc.) will be assessed for grammar, clarity, concision, and coherence.

**Reading:** Readings shall include useful models of arguments or position papers about issues of diversity, such as gender, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Readings will also include information on the validity of deductive reasoning, the strength of inductive reasoning, and a consideration of common fallacies in both. Identification and assessment of deductive and inductive reasoning, including formal validity, and fallacies will be assessed.

**Grading:** A-F. See below for more details.

### Professional Policies and Classroom Protocol

I respect you and our work, so I will give you and the subject my full attention. I respect diversity of people and ideas, even when there are disagreements. Though I enjoy my work, I take it seriously, offering you constructive criticism and support on your work in class and on your assignments. I am available during my office hours so that you can see me about your work or any issues you may have with the class. I will treat you as an adult and expect you to behave as one. The following are specific expectations I have of you:

- You will respectfully respond to both the readings and your colleagues. This class focuses on provocative and challenging readings, and sometimes you may disagree with them or your colleagues' opinions. Your challenge in this class is to voice your own opinion in a convincing yet tactful and logical manner.

- You will be on time to class and stay the entire time. Arriving late or leaving early will result in decreased participation points.
- All electronic devices will be turned off and stowed before entering class, unless you have an exception from the AEC. Using electronic devices during class without prior permission will result in zero participation points for the day.
- You will not talk or text while someone else is speaking. Not only is this rude, but it is distracting to those around you. This behavior will earn you zero points for the day, and you may be asked to leave.
- You will come to class prepared to participate, having read the assigned readings for the day, completed any homework, and prepared questions or comments about the assigned readings. Failure to do so will be evident in your participation grade.
- You will bring your book(s) or printed excerpts from which we have assigned readings for the day to class, or you may be asked to leave class. Relying on others for material you are responsible for is an unfair imposition on your colleagues and will not be tolerated. (If you have difficulty in obtaining the required materials, let me know immediately.)
- If you miss a class, ask a classmate what you missed, including assignments, before contacting me.
- If you miss two or more consecutive classes due to illness or other serious issues, please contact me via email to let me know as soon as possible. Even a legitimate absence can become troubling if left undisclosed too long.

### **Assignments and Grading Policy**

There will be two essays and three exams for this class. The essays are designed to give you practice in analyzing and developing your own arguments and responding to the arguments of others. You will follow MLA guidelines for formatting and citing sources, and your writing must demonstrate both an understanding of the principles of critical thinking we are studying and a command of grammar, syntax, paragraphing, and essay form. The exams are designed to assess your understanding of the concepts taught throughout the semester.

**Readings:** All readings must be done prior to coming to class for the day they are assigned. Be prepared to discuss the readings in class, bringing pertinent questions or making insightful comments.

**Essays:** There will be two essays (and drafts that build to the final product) assigned for this class.

- You will receive essay assignments in class or via email, detailing all of the requirements, including due dates and word count requirements.
- Essays will follow MLA guidelines for formatting and citations; failure to follow MLA guidelines will result in point deductions.
- All essays must be turned in on time, at the beginning of the class on the day they are due. I do not accept emailed or faxed essays.
- Late essays will not be accepted for full credit.
- The penalty for late essays is a 10-point (10%) deduction for each calendar day late, until the next class meeting. After that, late essays will not be accepted and will receive a grade of F.
- In addition to turning in the hard copy of the essay, essays must be uploaded to [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) **prior** to coming to class on the day they are due. Keep the emailed receipt of uploading from turnitin.com. Failure to upload the essay will result in a grade of F.
- Uploading the essay up to five days late will result in a point deduction, up to a 10-point (10%) deduction. After five days late, the essay will receive a grade of F.
- Peer-edited essays must be turned in with the final essay or there will be a 10-point (10%) deduction.

**Please note:** Essays will be graded with a rubric that will be discussed in class prior to the due date. Essays and rubrics will be commented upon and marked to help you improve your writing and thinking. It is your responsibility to

understand all comments and show improvement in subsequent assignments. So if you don't understand the comments, please ask!

All written work (essays, reader responses, homework assignments) must demonstrate competency in the grammatical, syntactical, and mechanical conventions of Standard English in order to receive a passing grade. In this course, a grammatically, syntactically, and mechanically competent piece of writing is one that contains no more than two errors that impede clear transmission of meaning and does not repeat an error marked on a previous assignment.

**Exams:** There will be three exams for this class. You will receive information in class on what will be covered for each exam with ample time to study. One exam will cover deductive and inductive reasoning, fallacies, and terms. The other two exams will ask you to analyze arguments, and the final exam will also ask you to assess and participate in a written debate. You will stay in class for the duration of the exam.

**NOTE:** Exams cannot be made up unless you provide written documentation of an emergency or compelling reason for missing the exam. You must notify me via email as soon as possible of missing an exam. Exams must be made up within one week; if not made up within one week, you will earn a zero for the exam.

There is a 48-hour waiting period to see me about an essay or exam grade.

Keep all of your graded work throughout the semester.

**Workshops:** The essays will be workshopped in class prior to the essay due date.

- Workshops are mandatory and worth higher participation and homework points than most other days and homework assignments.
- The workshop protocol will be distributed and discussed in class prior to the first workshop.
- A completed rough draft will be finished prior to the workshop; outlines, incomplete, electronic, and/or handwritten essays are not acceptable.
- Workshops cannot be made up.

**Homework:** There will be homework assigned every week in class or via email.

- You will bring a question and/or thoughtful comment on the readings for every class meeting that has assigned readings, written on an index card. This assignment is worth up to two points per day. To earn full credit, the question/comment must be relevant and show your thoughtful consideration of the readings, connections you make between the readings and other readings, or insight on the topics of readings.
- All other homework must be typed and turned in on time by the due date and will be used for class participation and/or used to help develop out-of-class essays/projects.
- Homework cannot be made up, and you must attend class to submit homework for the day.

**Class Participation:** Your presence in class is necessary for participation. Class participation will be made up of in-class exercises, quizzes, and discussions based on the readings and homework. Class participation and homework are assessed on a point basis. Points are cumulative for the semester, and will be turned into a letter grade by dividing the number of points earned by the total number of points possible. Though most days will be worth five points and in-class essay workshops are worth ten points, points do vary each class period, based on activities.

See the scale below for attributes of different grade levels for homework and class participation:

- A = Regular, helpful questions and comments; fully engaged; all tasks completed fully, accurately, and demonstrate competent writing;
- B = Occasional, pertinent questions and comments; good listening; all tasks completed; demonstrates competent writing, though may contain a minor error;
- C = Infrequent, tangential questions or comments; attentiveness questionable; most tasks completed; demonstrates fair writing, perhaps including a major error or a few minor errors;
- D = Rare interaction; disengaged from discussion; not prepared for class; tasks incomplete; demonstrates weak writing, including several errors;
- F = Regularly absent, physically or mentally; tasks incomplete or mismanaged; demonstrates weak writing, including errors that impede meaning.

In-class activities **cannot be made up** if you miss a class, regardless of the reason.

There is **no** extra credit for this class.

## Grading System to Determine Course Grades

Essay #1: Argument Analysis	1200-1500 words	12%
Essay #2: Research-Informed Argument, The Pitch	100-250 words	5%
Essay #3: Research-Informed Argument	1250-1500 words	25%
Exam #1: Deductive and Inductive Reasoning and Fallacies	250 words	8%
Exam #2: Argument Analysis	750-100 words	10%
Exam #3 (Final): Debate Analysis, Assessment, and Participation	1000 words	25%
Class Participation and Homework:	variable	15%

**Grading: A-F**, based on a percent scale: 93-100=A, 90-92=A-, 87-89=B+, 83-86=B, 80-82=B-, 77-79=C+, 73-76=C, 70-72=C-, 67-69=D+, 63-66=D, 60-62=D-, 0-59=F.

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.

The following are the criteria by which essays are typically evaluated in first-year writing and writing-intensive 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. It may show weakness in mastery of grammar, mechanics, usage, or voice.

A “D” essay 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.

An “F” essay does not fulfill the requirements of the assignment.

## SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the Writing Center website: <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook.

Because our class focuses on critical thinking in argumentation and is a writing-intensive course, clear writing is crucial to your success in this course in all written assignments! Please take advantage of the excellent tutoring available at the Writing Center for all of your writing needs, such as planning, organizing, developing, revising, editing, style, and grammar.

## SJSU Counseling Services

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit [Counseling Services website](http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>.

## English 7, Critical Thinking, Spring 2015, Course Schedule

*The instructor reserves the right to modify readings, assignments, and deadlines as necessary. All changes will be communicated in class or via email with fair notice.*

**Table Course Schedule**

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	January 26  January 28	Before coming to class, watch the Introduction to Critical Thinking Video at <a href="https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/wi-phi/critical-thinking/v/intro-to-critical-thinking">https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/wi-phi/critical-thinking/v/intro-to-critical-thinking</a> ; Brief syllabus review; Introduction to logic and argument; Email exchange; Check your email or Canvas for the Fallacies Handout and print and bring it to the next class.  <u>Fallacies Handout</u> . Activity: identifying fallacious appeals.
2	February 2  February 4	<i>Writing Logically, Thinking Critically (WLTC)</i> : Chapter 6, "Fallacious Arguments"; fill in your Fallacies Handout. <i>Rereading America (RA)</i> : pages 1-15. Homework (HW): Bring a fallacy to class to present. Be prepared to explain why it is a fallacy.  <i>WLTC</i> : Fallacies.
3	February 9  February 11	<i>WLTC</i> : Chapter 7, Inductive Reasoning, 175-88. Watch the video on the difference between deductive and ampliative reasoning here: <a href="https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/wi-phi/critical-thinking/v/intro-to-critical-thinking">https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/wi-phi/critical-thinking/v/intro-to-critical-thinking</a> . HW: Create an example of inductive reasoning to present to class or in small groups.  <i>WLTC</i> : Chapter 7, Deductive Reasoning, 150-74. View the video on validity here: <a href="https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/wi-phi/critical-thinking/v/validity">https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/wi-phi/critical-thinking/v/validity</a> . Activity: diagram syllogisms.
4	February 16  February 18	Hypothetical Syllogisms; Prepare for exam.  <b>Exam #1</b> : Logic and Fallacies; Check your email for the following assignments and handouts: <u>Essay #1 Assignment</u> ; <u>Argument Analysis</u> ; <u>Argument Analysis Checklist</u> ; <u>Student Analysis Samples</u> . Bring any questions to the next class session.
5	February 23  February 25	<i>RA</i> : "Learning Power: The Myth of Education and Empowerment," 103-10 and "From <i>Report of the Massachusetts Board of Education</i> ," Mann. <i>WLTC</i> : Chapter 3, The Structure of Argument. Activities: summarizing and analyzing the reading and the Student Analysis Sample(s).  <i>RA</i> : "Against School," Gatto. Activity: analyzing premises and conclusions.
6	March 2	<i>RA</i> : "From <i>Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work</i> ," Anyon. Activity: Analyzing evidence and assumptions. Review <i>WLTC</i> , Inductive Reasoning.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
	March 4	<i>RA</i> : "Idiot Nation," Moore. <i>WLTC</i> : Chapter 2, "Inference: Critical Thought." Activity: Analyzing inferences, judgments, and facts. Check your email for the <u>Workshop Protocol Handout</u> and bring any questions to the next class session.
7	March 9  March 11	<i>RA</i> : "College At Risk," Delbanco.  <i>RA</i> : "True Women and Real Men: Myths of Gender," 375-80. <i>WLTC</i> : Review Analyzing Images, 42-50.
8	March 16  March 18	<u>Workshop Essay #1</u> ; <i>WLTC</i> : 206-08, including sources, avoiding plagiarism  <b>Essay #1 DUE</b> ; <u>Essay #2 Assignment: Research-Informed Argument: The Pitch</u> ; Lecture: Stasis Theory
9	March 23 March 25	<b>Spring Break!!</b> Over the break, read <i>WLTC</i> : Chapter 4, "Written Argument." <i>RA</i> : "How the Americans Understand the Equality of the Sexes," Tocqueville, and "Weeping for the Lost Matriarchy," McGowan. Be prepared to discuss the differences in gender roles and expectations on first day back from break.
10	March 30  April 1	Activity: Discussion of gender roles over time and in different cultures, based on readings done over break. <u>Workshop Essay #2: The Pitch</u>  <b>Essay #2: The Pitch DUE.</b> <i>RA</i> : "'Two Ways a Woman Can Get Hurt': Advertising and Violence," Kilbourne. <i>WLTC</i> : Review sample analysis, 89-90, and "examining ads," 44-45 to prepare for Exam #2. HW: Conduct primary research—details forthcoming.
11	April 6  April 8	<b>Exam #2:</b> Argument Analysis. Bring large examination booklets, pens, and a non-electronic dictionary.  <i>WLTC</i> : Chapter 1, "Thinking and Writing: A Critical Connection." Activity: Present your primary research. Check your email for <u>Essay #2 Assignment: Research-informed Argument</u> , and bring any questions to the next class session.
12	April 13  April 15	<b>Library day!</b>  <i>RA</i> : "From Fly-Girls to Bitches and Hos," Morgan; "'Bros Before Hos': The Guy Code," Kimmel; and "The End of Men," Rosin.
13	April 20  April 22	<i>RA</i> : "Land of Liberty: American Myths of Freedom," 617-24 and The Declaration of Independence, The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States, and The Bill of Rights, 624-31. <i>WLTC</i> : Chapter 5, "The Language of Argument: Definition."  <i>RA</i> : "Freedom is Intended as a Challenge," Wolf and "The Decline of American Press Freedom," Applebaum.
14	April 27	<i>RA</i> : "Slavery in the Land of the Free," Bales and Soodalter. <i>WLTC</i> : Chapter 8, "The Language of Argument: Style."

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</b>
	April 29	<i>RA</i> : "The New Jim Crow," Alexander.
15	May 4	<u>Workshop Essay #2</u> . Review <i>WLTC</i> , 201-08.
	May 6	<b>Essay #2 Due</b> . Activities: reflecting on writing and process and preparing for debates.
16	May 11	<i>RA</i> : "Whether from Reason or Prejudice: Taking Money for Bodily Services," Nussbaum. Activity: debate on legalizing prostitution.
	May 13	<i>RA</i> : "George Orwell...Meet Mark Zuckerberg," Andrews. Activity: debate on internet privacy.
<b>Final Exam:</b>	<b>Thursday, May 21st, 9:45-12:00</b>	<b>Exam #3: Final</b> , Analyze, assess, and argue in a written debate, 1000 words. Bring large examination booklets, pens, and a non-electronic dictionary.