

San José State University
Department of English & Comparative Literature
English 1A, First-Year Writing, 76, Fall 2017

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Christie McCullen
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Office Hours:	Mondays & Wednesdays 10:30AM-Noon, or by appointment
Class Days/Time:	Mondays & Wednesdays/1:30-2:45PM
Classroom:	DMH 354
Prerequisites:	Reflection on College Writing
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	GE Area 2 Writing Communication 1

Canvas and MYSJSU Messaging

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

Course Description

ENGL 1A 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. To model these reading and writing skills, this particular section of English 1A will focus on texts from investigative journalists (specifically those from ProPublica, <https://www.propublica.org/>).

GE Learning Outcomes (GELO)

Upon successful completion of the course, you 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, audience, context, 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.

Required Texts/Readings (Required)

Textbook

Can I Use I?: Because I Hate, Hate, Hate College Writing by Catherine Prendergast (ISBN 13: 9780986145711). This book can be purchased online or at the Spartan Bookstore/Barnes & Noble.

Other Readings

Additional assigned readings can be found on Canvas in the “Files” and “Writer’s Help 2.0” tabs. In addition, you will be selecting some readings for your Series Synthesis Research Essay from ProPublica’s “Investigations” page - <https://www.propublica.org/investigations/>

Other technology requirements / equipment / material

- Paper or electronic copies of the readings assigned for each class
- Loose leaf paper for in-class writing assignments
- A small stapler

English 1A Course Requirements and Assignments

- Note #1: SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, **you are expected to spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit** (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on.
- Note #2: Please see the Course Schedule (page 5, below) for due dates of drafts and prewriting exercises. In addition to those due dates listed in the schedule, expect short homework assignments between each class that take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. Christie will add those due dates to the Course Schedule and the project’s prompt at the start date of each new project.

Regular Homework Assignments and Project Participation – 10% of final grade

This class is a participatory workshop, meaning that in order to learn theory and skills, you need to practice writing every class and in between class. As such, each assignment below describes a larger project that includes a series of in-class activities, homework assignments, drafts, and final essays. You will be given more detailed descriptions of the entire project, as well as its homework assignments, as we get closer to that project’s time frame. Because each project involves a series of prewriting and drafting assignments, you will be graded on your participation in these activities and assignments as well. To be considered for a participation grade, you should turn in all assignments for the project when you turn in your final essay for the project. I will review all of these materials, as well as the notes I make about your completed homework during class, to determine your participation grade. Therefore, please stay up to date on homework and come to class prepared for in-class activities. As such, please write your homework assignments on loose leaf paper so that you can staple it all to your final draft. If you use electronic files for homework assignments, you can label those files (using the same name used on the Course Schedule below) and email me a bundle if all of those files in a folder labeled accordingly: Last Name_Participation_Name of Essay Assignment. If you miss class, please contact a homework buddy immediately. If you do not hear from your buddy within 24 hours then you may contact me for homework instructions. Write your homework buddies names and contact information here:

Early Reflection on Your Writing Process – 5% of final grade

Write a short essay that helps me understand what you struggle with in your writing process. In order to make your difficulties clear to me, you have to not only state what the issue is, but you also have to *describe* and *explain* the issue. When I have a clear understanding of what those difficulties are and why you have them, I can offer suggestions for how to overcome those issues. If we work together to identify and address those issues, your areas of struggle will become your areas of growth this semester. Your essay should be 400-500 words.

Reading Memos – 10% of final grade

Each time you read an article with an asterisk symbol (*) next to its title on the schedule, you should also write a reading memo for the article using the Reading Memo Format (on Canvas in the “Files” tab). Bring a paper or electronic version to class to show me that you completed it. For readings from Prendergast, complete the memo by filling in the Prendergast Memo Table (also on Canvas in the “Files” tab). This is an ongoing table that you will add to each time we read chapters from Prendergast’s book *Can I Use I?* Your notes in this table will help you write your Portfolio Self-Reflection Essay.

Annotated Bibliographies for ProPublica’s “Machine Bias” Series – 10% of final grade

Write “annotated bibliographies” for 4 articles in ProPublica’s “Machine Bias” series. Annotated bibliographies are summaries of an author’s argument. A thorough summary of an argument includes the author’s research question, assertion, evidence, logic, and argument. Each annotated bibliography should be 200-250 words. Because there are 4 articles in this series, your total word count should run between 800-1000.

Stakeholder Invitation Letter – 20% of final grade

Write a letter to an acquaintance who you think would be interested in the ProPublica essays that you are focusing on for your research project in this class. You want to invite them into the conversation that is happening in that ProPublica series, showing them how they are related to the topics covered in that series and explaining what’s at stake for them in knowing more about the findings of the investigation. Rather than summarizing the articles you are referring to, you want to use your writing to create a bridge between the ProPublica investigation and your audience. You want to prompt your audience to realize their investment in the ProPublica investigation and then read the whole series because of their stakes in it. Your letter should be between 500-700 words.

Series Synthesis Research Essay for a ProPublica Investigations Series – 20% of final grade

Because many of the ProPublica series exceed 20 articles, ProPublica wants each series to include a synthesis essays that potential readers can read to give them a sense of the topics covered, critical questions asked, and patterns found in the investigations for that series. This essay must do three things. First, it must entice potential readers. Second, it must ground the findings through one poignant story contained in the investigation. Third, it must articulate a common thread that pulls all of the separate articles together (e.g., a central research question or consistent finding). Because these investigations are dense and complex, there are multiple strands that tie most of the articles together. Rather than explaining all of those potential themes, your job is to discuss one common thread and use examples from various articles to support your claims about the common themes. Your essay should cite at least 10 separate articles in that series. The final essay should be 2000-3000 words long.

Infographics Project for a ProPublica Investigations Series – 20% of final grade

ProPublica’s “Data” webpage links to a number of infographics, charts, and applications related to their investigations. Paired with longer written text, these visuals tell the same story with different methods. In this project, you will work with your Investigations Team Members to create infographics that illustrate key findings, or patterns in findings, in the ProPublica Investigations Series that you researched for your Series Synthesis Essay. As a team, you will decide which part of the series’ larger story you want to tell through several infographics. Then, each team member will create one infographic and write one-two paragraphs that explain the meaning of their infographic and how it relates to the story that your group wants to tell. You will then work together with your team to stitch each person’s paragraphs together to ensure that you are telling one cohesive story. You will elect one-two people in your group to give a presentation of your infographics and the story they tell (11/29). You will be graded on the quality of both your individual parts and the whole team’s project.

Portfolio Self-Reflection Essay – 5% of final grade

Write a reflective essay that explains how you have developed as a writer throughout this class. Referring to the English 1A Learning Outcomes (on the syllabus), summarize your writing abilities by analyzing and explaining what strategies you used to achieve those outcomes in your writing process. The essay should be 500-600 words in length.

Assignment	Word Count	GELO
Early Reflection Your Writing Process	400-500	2, 3, 5
Reading Memos	3000 (in total)	1, 5
Annotated Bibliographies	800-1000	1, 2, 3, 5
Stakeholder Invitation Letter	500-700	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Series Synthesis Research Essay	1800-2200	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Infographics Project	1000-1200	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Portfolio Self-Reflection Essay	500-600	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Final Examination or Evaluation

A portfolio of your ongoing development as a writer will be due on final exam date (12/18, 12:15-2:30PM). It will be uploaded onto Canvas. You will be given more information on what goes in the portfolio in early November. Until then, please save an electronic file of all of your final drafts.

Grading and Revising Graded Essays

This course must be passed with a C- or better as a CSU graduation requirement. Requirements for particular assignments will vary, but in all cases essay grades will reflect the paper’s effectiveness, which is broken down into three major areas: **content** (this includes maturity and sophistication of thought), **organization**, and **expression**.

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

- An “A” range 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” range 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” range 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” range 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.

The prompt for each essay will include a specific rubric for that essay. In the classes leading up to the deadline for your final draft, we will reflect on the rubric and use it in peer review activities. When you turn in your final draft to me, I will use the essay’s specific rubric and the general criteria above to give your essay a letter grade. I will also share feedback on how to improve your grade. If you choose, you will have one week to revise your essay based on my feedback. Your revised copy should include a Post-Grade Revisions Cover Sheet (on Canvas in the “Files” tab) and the revised text should be highlighted according to the instructions on the cover sheet. If your revisions adequately address my feedback, I will improve your letter grade (up to one whole letter grade).

Determination of Final Grades

Final grades will be calculated at the end of the semester, based on the weights for different assignments listed above. A+ = 100-98, A = 97-93, A- = 92-90, B+ = 89-88, B = 87-83, B- = 82-80, C+ = 79-78, C = 77-73, C- = 72-70. You must earn a C- or better to fulfill this writing requirement for graduation.

Classroom Protocol

Because this is a workshop where you’ll be learning collaboratively and building off of the skills gained in previous classes, coming to class prepared is imperative for your personal success and the success of your peers. Coming to class prepared and respectfully participating means showing up on time, completing all homework assignments before class starts, bringing all homework and reading assignments to class, only using electronic devices for accessing reading materials, and listening carefully to one another for what you can learn. As such, late work will not be accepted. Please let me know if you anticipate difficulty reaching a particular deadline.

University Policies

Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs’ [Syllabus Information web page](#) contains university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc.:

<http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/index.html>.

English 1A Fall 2017 Course Schedule

Note #1: The schedule is subject to change. I will give you notice through Canvas when changes are made.

Note #2: Always bring paper or electronic copies of the assigned readings for the day.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	8/21	SEMESTER BEGINS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PURPOSES

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	8/23	1ST DAY OF CLASS – INTRODUCTIONS TO THE COURSE AND EACH OTHER Read (before class): The syllabus Bring (to class): Questions about the syllabus Bring : Our course book, Prendergast’s <i>Can I Use I?</i>
2	8/28	OVERVIEW OF WRITING PROCESS AND PROPUBLICA Due: Early Reflection on Your Writing Process Read : Prendergast (1-2) Read : Angwin et al. – The Tiger Mom Tax* Bring : Reading memos for today’s reading
2	8/30	ACTIVE AND RHETORICAL READING Read : Angwin et al. – Minority Neighborhoods Pay Higher Car Insurance Premiums than White Areas with the Same Risk* Read : Angwin & Mattu - Amazon Says It Puts Customers First* Bring : Reading memos for today’s readings
3	9/4	LABOR DAY – NO CLASS TODAY Start reading for Wednesday’s class
3	9/6	ACTIVE AND RHETORICAL READING Read : Angwin & Larson - Machine Bias. There’s Software Used Across the Country to Predict Future Criminals. And it’s Biased Against Blacks* Read : Angwin et al. - What Algorithmic Injustice Looks Like in Real Life* Read : Prendergast (21-25) Bring : Reading memos for today’s readings
4	9/11	PARAPHRASING Due: Draft of Annotated Bibliographies Read : Prendergast (33-49) Bring : Reading memos for today’s readings
4	9/13	INTRODUCTION TO INQUIRY PROCESS Read : Descriptions of every ProPublica Investigations Series, https://www.propublica.org/investigations/ Read : Prendergast (3-7) Bring : Completed Investigations Worksheet, Side 1 Bring : Reading memos for today’s readings

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
5	9/18	RHETORICAL SITUATION Due: Revised Annotated Bibliographies Read: Prendergast (26-32 and 76-79) Bring: Completed Investigations Worksheet, Side 2 Bring: Reading memos for today's readings
5	9/20	QUESTION-BASED WRITING Read: 1 st essay in your ProPublica Investigations Series (scroll to bottom of list)* Read: Angwin & Grassegger - Facebook's Secret Censorship Rules Protect White Men from Hate Speech But Not Black Children* Read: Prendergast (8-20) Bring: Reading memos for today's readings Bring: PDF of the essay to discuss in class
6	9/25	QUESTION-BASED WRITING Read: 2 essays from your ProPublica Investigations Series* Read: Prendergast (102-106) Bring: Reading memos for today's readings
6	9/27	USING EVIDENCE FOR ARGUMENTS Read: 1 essay from your ProPublica Investigations Series* Read: Angwin et al. - Despite Disavowals, Leading Tech Companies Help Extremist Sites Monetize Hate* Bring: Reading memos for today's readings
7	10/2	MAKING ARGUMENTS COMPELLING, BELIEVABLE, AND CREDIBLE Read: 1 essay from your ProPublica Investigations Series* Read: Prendergast (102-106) Listen: Debatable* (podcast), http://www.radiolab.org/story/debatable/ Bring: Reading memos for today's readings (and the podcast)
7	10/4	MAKING ARGUMENTS COMPELLING, BELIEVABLE, AND CREDIBLE Due: Draft Stakeholder Letter Essay Read: Prendergast (59-63 and 89-92) Bring: Reading memos for today's readings
8	10/9	PARAGRAPHING Due: Revised Stakeholder Letter Essay Read: Prendergast (50-54 and 69-72) Bring: Reading memos for today's readings

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
8	10/11	ARTICULATING QUESTIONS Due: Final Stakeholder Letter Essay Read: Prendergast (97-101) Bring: Reading memos for today's readings
9	10/16	RESEARCHING AS A SYNTHESIZING PROCESS Read: 2 essays from your ProPublica Investigations Series* Bring: Reading memos for today's readings
9	10/18	ORGANIZING SOURCES AND TYPES OF EVIDENCE Read: 1 essay from your ProPublica Investigations Series* Read: Bizup's BEAM Bring: Reading memos for today's readings
10	10/23	IDEA MAPPING Read: 2 essays from your ProPublica Investigations Series* Read: Prendergast (55-58) Bring: Reading memos for today's readings
10	10/25	WRITING AS A WAY OF FINDING MEANING Read: 1 essay from your ProPublica Investigations Series* Read: Prendergast (64-68) Bring: Reading memos for today's readings
11	10/30	WORKSHOPPING Due: Draft Series Synthesis Research Essay (Writer-Centered) Read: Prendergast (80-83 and 120-126) Bring: Reading memos for today's readings
11	11/1	REVISING AS A WAY OF TELLING Due: Revised Series Synthesis Research Essay (Reader-Centered) Read: Prendergast (73-75 and 84-88) Bring: Reading memos for today's readings
12	11/6	PROFESSIONALIZING Due: Revised Series Synthesis Research Essay (Reader-Centered) Read: Prendergast (93-96, 107-119) Bring: Reading memos for today's readings
12	11/8	REVISITING RHETORICAL SITUATION Due: Final Draft of Series Synthesis Research Essay (for Christie)

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
13	11/13	TELLING THROUGH VISUALS Read: TBD Bring: Draft of your individual infographic (hand-drawn or electronic) Bring: Your individual paragraph explaining your infographic
13	11/15	TELLING THROUGH VISUALS—REVISING Read: TBD Bring: Revised individual infographic (hand-drawn or electronic) Bring: Revised individual paragraph explaining your infographic Upload: Your infographic and paragraph onto your team’s Google Doc
14	11/20	STITCHING TOGETHER, WRITING COLLABORATIVELY Read: TBD Bring: Your suggested revisions for your group’s total Infographic Project
14	11/22	DAY BEFORE THANKSGIVING—NO CLASS At home: Work on revisions for Infographics Project through Google Docs At home: Work on revisions to Series Synthesis Research Essay
15	11/27	SPEAKING TO TELL Read: TBD Bring: Revised Google Doc
15	11/29	PRESENTATIONS Bring: Your presentations for the Infographics Project
16	12/4	PRESENTATIONS Bring: Your presentations for the Infographics Project Bring: Completed self-reflection prewriting handout
16	12/6	REFLECTING ON LEARNING OBJECTIVES Read: Prendergast (127-130) Bring: Draft of self-reflection essay for portfolio
17	12/11	REVISING AND PROFESSIONALIZING Due: Revised Series Synthesis Research Essay & Revision Explanation Letter Bring: Revised self-reflection essay for portfolio
Final Exam	12/18	PORTFOLIOS Portfolios due on Canvas, 2:30PM