

San José State University
Department of English & Comparative Literature
ENGL 1A: First-Year Writing, Section 90, Fall / 2017

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Aamina Ahmad
Office Location:	Faculty Office Building, Room 114
Telephone:	408-924-7199
Email:	aamina.ahmad@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	MW 12pm-1pm
Class Days/Time:	MW 600pm-715pm
Classroom:	Dudley Moorhead Hall, Room 354
Prerequisites:	Reflection on College Writing
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	GE Area A2 Written Communication I

ENGL 1A 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.

But what *is* a rhetorical situation? Every day, with or without realizing it, you participate in a series of rhetorical exchanges. Perhaps a friend is trying to persuade you to go for a pizza whilst your mom has been pressing for the health benefits of eating vegetables. When you turn on the TV perhaps Bill Maher has been trying to entice you into laughing at Fox News or perhaps Apple have convinced you the iPhone 8 is so great that it's time up upgrade?

In all of these scenarios rhetorical strategies are being used to encourage *you* to see things a certain way. In this class we are going to use and develop our **critical** reading and writing skills to better understand these strategies and how they work. We will **analyze** a range of texts (from essays to audio-visual texts) which will focus, to start with, on **education**; an area in which you have considerable experience and expertise already. We will consider: how education shapes us, how history and issues of identity impact our experience of education, why we're at college, who should pay for it, what should we be doing outside the classroom to educate ourselves and what does the growth of the 'University of Everywhere' mean for the future of institutions like SJSU? This theme will likely segue into other directions, depending on what we discover and what we wish to explore further – technology, race and representation, and the criminal justice system may well figure in our readings as we progress through the semester.

As we read we will assess how the rhetorical tactics the authors use work and how effective they are. As we try to understand how these authors use **language** to persuade an **audience** to agree with them we will also look at where these texts sit within a wider context – who are the authors responding to, who are they challenging, who do they agree with? This process of mapping where the text stands in relation to other opinions involves an open and inquiring approach to research, which will, in turn, prepare **you**, to enter into the conversation. Armed with a greater knowledge of the **context** of the debate and informed via a rigorous research process you will be able to use your own selection of rhetorical tools and tactics to present, to **advocate**, for *your* opinion. So whilst we will be looking at how others exercise influence over us through their words what I'm

most interested in is what YOU think, the process that has helped you arrive at this position and how you will, through your writing, convince us to see things from your perspective.

ENGL 1A Learning Outcomes (GELO)

Upon successful completion of the course, you will be able to:

- read actively and rhetorically;
- perform the essential steps in the writing process (prewriting, organizing, composing, revising, and editing) and demonstrate an awareness of said performance;
- articulate an awareness of and write according to the rhetorical features of texts, such as purpose, audience, context, and rhetorical appeals;
- integrate your ideas and those of others by explaining, analyzing, developing, and criticizing ideas effectively in several genres;
- demonstrate college-level language use, clarity, and grammatical proficiency in writing.

ENGL 1A Course Requirements and Assignments

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. I will not assign more work than this, but please bear in mind that we all work differently; some students may need more support from the writing center, or take more time to read assignments. However, if you are struggling with the assigned workload please come and see me to discuss strategies to address this.

One of our central themes in this class will be education. The following assignments will give you an overview of what we will be doing. However, these may be subject to amendment in their detail depending on how we move through the course. The diagnostic essay and informal assignments will take place in class; all other assignments will be completed outside of class.

Diagnostic essay to be completed in class.

This will be my chance to evaluate you at the start of the course. You will write a letter home about some aspect of life at SJSU, urging your audience to engage with this issue. You will then at the end of the course be asked to review this initial assignment and produce a revision and reflection on this – after this you will receive a grade for this assignment.

Personal Essay

This essay will be addressed to me, and will be a reflection on a particular aspect of your educational history, contrasted with one of several readings reflecting on the same theme. You will produce at least two drafts of this essay (submitted work must include process materials – notes, workshop, etc.).

Rhetorical analysis

You will pitch a proposal for a new ad campaign for SJSU, addressed to SJSU's President/Deans and marketing department, explaining the rhetorical appeals the ad will be making. You must reference at least two other ad campaigns for other higher ed. institutions for which you have completed a rhetorical analysis. You will produce at least two drafts of this essay (submitted work must include process materials such as notes, workshop, etc.).

Collaborative Presentation (multi-media)

Re-design an SJSU building/space. You will work with a partner to research the campus, analyzing its space and design, interviewing subjects about the utility of particular buildings. Then you will formulate a new design for a building or an outside space, making an argument to us, the users of this space, that your choices will be of benefit to us and SJSU.

Persuasive Writing

In this article, for a public audience (the NYT blog), you will advocate for some kind of urgent reform to some aspect of higher education; the essay should make effective use of rhetorical tools and research/evidence with which you support your claims (making use of peer reviewed articles). You will produce at least two drafts of this essay (submitted work must include process materials – notes, workshop, etc.).

Informal Writing Assignments

There will be regular, short writing assignments related to our readings in every class; these will be opportunities to practice the rhetorical moves you are mastering and to refine your sentences.

Canvas Discussions

You will be asked to post/contribute to Canvas discussions each week. These are to be submitted to the board by midnight Sunday night before class. These will be varied; you might be asked to share some writing, to comment on the work of others, or take part in an online conversation about a reading. Please enter posts in the text box (not attachments). **I do not accept late posts.**

In-Class Participation

This component is for ACTIVE participation. There is more below regarding what constitutes active in-class participation; suffice to say that this is an essential component of your final grade and can make the difference between receiving a C+ and a B- at the end of the course.

Final portfolio

At the end of the semester you will compile a portfolio of your writing that documents how you met the learning goals of the course.

Assignment Word Count and Learning Goals

Assignment	Word Count	GELO
Diagnostic Essay and Reflection	1000	2, 3, 5
Personal Essay	1000	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Rhetorical Analysis	1000	1, 2, 3,4, 5
Collaborative Presentation	1000	2, 3, 5
Persuasive Writing NYT Blog	1000	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Informal Writing Assignments	2000 overall	1, 2
Canvas Discussions and Active In-Class participation	1000	1, 2

Required Texts - check ISBNs

Curious Writer, Brief Edition, MLA Update, The -- Books a la Carte Edition, 5/E
Bruce Ballenger, *Boise State University*

ISBN-10: 0134724097

ISBN-13: 9780134724096

Publisher: Pearson

Copyright: 2018

Format: Unbound (saleable); 624 pages

Net Price: \$69.50

Suggested Retail Price: \$92.67

Available at San Jose Spartan Bookstore.

Other Readings

Additional readings can be found on Canvas.

Other Required Materials

You will work with pen and paper in this class; laptops are not required and can only be used with my permission.

Please make sure you have a journal/exercise book that you bring to every class meeting. You will use this journal for taking notes in class, for writing exercises, essay sketches and for sentence work.

Obviously, pens/pencils and highlighters will also be needed.

Please make sure you have a folder in which to keep your work, in particular annotated readings (we will be producing a number of these). If at any point you would like to discuss your progress with me, bring this folder to our meeting.

You will not need to bring the Ballenger to class but I will frequently ask you to read from it outside of class.

Course Management Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, and assignment instructions can be found on the Canvas learning management system course website. You are responsible for checking the messaging system through MySJSU to learn of any updates.

Grading Policy

The point breakdown for the class is as follows:

Assignment	Points Possible	As %
In-class Diagnostic Essay	50	5
Personal Essay	200	20
Rhetoric and Analysis	200	20
Persuasive Writing	200	20
Collaborative Assignment	100	10
Short informal assignments	50	5
Canvas Discussions	150	15
Active In-class participation	50	5
Total points	1000	100%

Grading Scale:

As Points:

1000-930	A	769-730	C
929-900	A-	729-700	C-
899-870	B+	699-670	D+
869-830	B	669-630	D
829-800	B-	629-600	D-
799-770	C+	599-0	F

As Percentages:

A = 93-100%	B+ = 87-89%	C+ = 77-79%	D+ = 67-69%
A- = 90-92%	B = 83-86%	C = 73-76%	D = 63-66%
	B- = 80-82%	C- = 70-72%	D- = 60-62%

To receive credit for GE Area A2, you must receive a C- or higher in ENGL 1A. If you are UGRM in English, you must earn a D- or higher in ENGL 1A to clear remediation.

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.

If you do not understand the reason you received a specific grade, please ask for clarification *at least 24 hours after receiving it, and at most one week after.*

Active Participation in Class Discussions: This accounts for 10% of your final grade. Class participation takes a number of forms from listening to your peers, contributing to discussion, completing in class assignments to workshopping. I expect you to participate in ALL these ways. The more you speak up in this class the more you will get from the class. Learning to express your ideas in a public forum is an important life skill and our class is a safe place to learn how to master this. It does not come easily to everyone but I expect to see improvements in this skill over the semester if you are to score well on class participation, i.e. hard as it might feel to speak up, I expect you to try.

Classroom Protocol

Attendance: According to [University Policy F-69-24](#), attendance is not a criterion for grading. What this means is that mere attendance, that is, just showing up, is NOT factored into your grade; what *is* factored into your grade is active participation and it is only for **active participation** (see above) that you will earn your participation points. You do not start with 100 points and then get points deducted. You start with nothing and build up from there. Being present *and* taking part is how you earn points, but more importantly this is how you learn. Assignments are also cumulative, with each one preparing you for the next. At any given point, class sessions and homework are likely to have been designed to help you complete your next major assignment. Missing class or skipping an assignment will certainly lower the quality of your performance and subsequently your grade. Finally, as we will discuss in this class, college is expensive – someone (you? Your family?) is paying for this class; let's honor that by making the work we do count.

In summary:

- (i) Absences will be detrimental to your performance and may lower your overall grade.
- (ii) Absences which are not excused **will incur lost points for that day.**

If you do not come to class, your grade **will be ADVERSELY AFFECTED.**

In addition, **IF YOU DO NOT ATTEND ON WORKSHOP DAYS FOR OUR WRITING ASSIGNMENTS YOU WILL LOSE A LETTER GRADE ON THE FINAL ASSIGNMENT.**

Excused Absences: I will make a reasonable effort to accommodate excused absences. Students with legitimate illnesses or circumstances beyond their control are allowed to make up work, but I require that you inform me via email ahead of class and that you provide documentation of the absence.

Deadlines: I regard late submissions as highly unprofessional and there will be penalties as a consequence. Please expect an automatic letter grade reduction for each day you are late. Excused absences do not excuse late work; please don't assume you have been given permission to turn in late work.

Punctuality: In addition to the statement on attendance, I ask that you arrive on time. If you know you are going to be late (as with an absence) tell me ahead of time.

Class interaction: As I have mentioned, I expect active participation. In whatever way you participate, I expect thoughtful and respectful interactions in this class. This means being alert, open and actively listening during discussion but it also means being respectful of your colleagues and their opinions. Please also note that I **expect** you to complete any assigned reading completing **BEFORE** class; without having completed the reading you will find yourself disadvantaged in discussions and informal class activities.

Online Discussions

Online discussions will be posted on Canvas every week (these may be based on reading you have completed from the text book or articles I ask you to post). By midnight of the Sunday before our Monday class, I expect you to have contributed something to the online discussion. These will count towards your participation grade. **I will not accept late discussion posts.**

Formatting and Delivery: Please hand your work in to me at the **beginning** of class. I will expect a digital copy to be posted on CANVAS BEFORE CLASS but I will always also ask that you hand in a hard copy, so be prepared to type and print out your assignments.

Assignments: All assignments (including informal assignments) handed in for grading should be Typed up, double spaced and in Times New Roman font, point 12, MLA format. All materials must be stapled.

Classroom Etiquette: Please do not sleep, text, do homework for other classes, play around with cell phones or socialize in a distracting manner during this class. You will get a great deal more from this class if you come prepared to really engage with the material we will be discussing.

Plagiarism: Don't do it. Make sure you understand what plagiarism is – if you have any doubts about how you are handling your material and sources please come and see me before you turn in your work. Academic dishonesty has serious repercussions for students. **Any assignment with the hallmarks of plagiarism will automatically be given an F grade.** Be honest with me and with yourself.

University Policies

University Policies: the link below contains university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc.: <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/index.html>.

Course Schedule

English 1A Fall 2017

Please note this schedule is subject to change – you will be informed of changes either via Canvas or email. Final deadlines are marked in **BLUE**. Workshop and key preparation dates are marked **in AMBER**. It would be best to put these dates into your calendars at the start of this class – please remember I do not accept late work. Please also remember missing a workshop date will automatically result in a letter grade deduction.

DB= discussion board; there will be 10 DB threads (dates are in the calendar).
There will be a number of short writing activities; dates are not yet assigned for these.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1		
1	8/23	Welcome to English 1A. Introductions. Reading: texts; what is a text? IMs Romeo and Juliet. Celebrity Weddings, Ads. The difference between summary and analysis. Identifying audiences and purpose.
2	8/28	DB 1 DUE. Before class read: Ballenger: Reading as Inquiry. Annotating assigned reading in class (TBC but possibly: Baldwin, Sherman Alexie, Amy Tan). Brainstorming for diagnostic essay.
2	8/30	Diagnostic Essay to be completed in class.
3	9/4	Labor Day – No class
3	9/6	DB 2 DUE. Before class read: Ballenger: Writing as Inquiry. Reading: <i>Are College Worth the Price of Admission?</i> Pre-writing strategies. Researching and reflecting on your own experience. Integrating analysis into your story. Using your readings. Structuring the personal essay – paragraphs, thesis statements and They Say, I Say structure when joining a conversation. Please note this is the last day to drop without a W grade.
4	9/11	DB 3 DUE Readings: <i>The New Liberal Arts</i> Before class: Ballenger: Writing the Personal Essay. Narrative strategies; active sentences, creating characters in your work, detail in your writing. The first draft; making a mess.
4	9/13	First Draft Personal Essay due; turn in on Canvas. No class but all assigned Canvas activities TBC, but must be completed on 9/13. Reading and discussion: <i>Kenyon Commencement Speech</i>
5	9/18	DB 4 DUE. Workshop of Personal Essay draft. Responding to notes and editing your own work.
5	9/20	Readings: <i>Two years are Better Than Four, Why do you Think they're called For-profit Colleges?</i> The rhetorical triangle; appeals. Naming what we've been reading. Logic, Pathos, Ethos. Sources and evidence. Conducting a variety of analyses in class.
6	9/25	Final Draft Personal Essay; turn in on Canvas, bring printed copy to class. Assignment preparation: Brainstorming ideas and identifying and researching the problem the proposal will rectify. Reading in class: <i>Hidden Intellectualism.</i>
6	9/27	DB 5 DUE. Before class read: Ballenger: Writing an Argument. Considering arguments, logical fallacies. Review: Considering the relationship between the articles we've been reading; mapping.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
7	10/2	Before class: read Ballenger: Writing a Proposal. Considering presentation modes. Reading: <i>Are too Many People going to college?</i>
7	10/4	Readings: <i>Blue Collar Brilliance</i> Mapping continued.
8	10/9	DB 6 DUE. First Draft of Rhetorical Analysis assignment. Workshop of Draft in class.
8	10/11	Reading/watch: <i>Ken Robinson, TED talk.</i> Where do things start to go wrong in our educational system? What do you know, what do you want to know? Let's map the questions that we still want to ask at this point (this is very early preparation for your final, persuasive writing assignment, NYT Blog).
9	10/16	Final Draft of Rhetorical Analysis assignment. Collaborative Project process begins; working in teams/roles. Preparing to collaborate. Breaking down assignment together. Practice assignment: a space analysis of a downtown restaurant you will conduct together.
9	10/18	Before class: find a time to explore a list of SJSU spaces. Read Ballenger: Writing beyond the Classroom. Reading: <i>The University of Everywhere</i> Research: gather material on existing school buildings outside SJSU for inspiration. Start considering your research process; interviews.
10	10/23	DB 7 DUE Reading: <i>School to prison pipeline</i> Discussion of other issues for which you'd like to advocate.
10	10/25	Before class: research blogs, newspapers, the research process for journalists, fact checking. Reading: <i>Why does the New Yorker fact check poetry?</i> Why are facts important? Are they?
11	10/30	DB 8 DUE Reading: blogs, a variety. Style and writing for the public: sentences, grabbing attention, They Say/I Say structure, the importance of evidence, selecting, quoting, your voice: ethos/persona.
11	11/1	Collaborative Project Presentations Begin –
12	11/6	DB 9 DUE Collaborative Project Presentations Begin
12	11/8	Collaborative Project Presentations Begin
13	11/13	Collaborative Project Presentations Begin
13	11/15	Activity: Real world policy problems for educators; right now people are sitting in a room trying to solve the following problems; let's do the same.
14	11/20	DB 10 DUE A chance to test out your NYT argument on a friendly audience. Thesis workshop.
14	11/22	Non instructional day
15	11/27	First Draft of NYT Blog. Workshop in class.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
15	11/29	Final Draft of NYT Blog assignment. In class surprise activity!
16	12/4	Topic review; what did we learn, what remains? What did we learn about ourselves as writers and readers?
16	12/6	Preparing the final portfolio – preparation of final reflection document in class to accompany diagnostic essay from week 2.
Final	12/19	Final Portfolio to be turned in.