

San José State University
College of Humanities & Arts
Department of English & Comparative Literature
English 1A: First-Year Writing, Section 15
Fall 2019

Instructor:	Mark Dowdy
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Office Hours:	Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., or by appointment
Class Days/Time:	Mondays and Wednesdays, 9 - 10:15 a.m.
Classroom:	Boccardo Business Center 122
Prerequisites:	Prerequisite: Completion of <i>Reflection on College Writing</i>
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	English 1A satisfies Written Communication I, GE Area A2.

Course Format

As a hybrid course, English 2 meets both in person and online. You will need a computer in order to submit assignments, participate in peer editing, read announcements from your instructor, and access the course syllabus and other documents.

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

This class meets twice a week, and I hold office hours on the days I teach class. There will be plenty of opportunities to speak with one another in person, and I encourage you not to be shy. You can also reach me through email (see above.)

Our online interaction, however, will occur on the Canvas learning management system. On this site, you will find the course syllabus, homework/writing assignments, discussion boards, and page-building tools. Lastly, I will communicate with the class-at-large by making announcements on Canvas. While I will use the MySJSU messaging system for critical, time-sensitive information, I will mostly communicate with the class through Canvas. I expect you to check the Canvas course page before every class.

Course Description

English 1A is an introductory writing course that helps students understand the writing process and the goals, dynamics, and genres of written communication. Through interpretation and analysis of texts, students learn to think clearly and write effectively as they give form and coherence to complex ideas. Students practice these skills by writing for various audiences and rhetorical situations.

To earn graduation credit in this category, you must complete the semester course with a grade of C- or better.

Course-Specific Theme: Navigating/Crossing Borders

This section of English 1A will focus on the theme of Navigating/Crossing Borders. The essays you write, the readings you are assigned, and the in-class and out-of-class assignments you complete will all focus on the role of borders, both in the literal sense of geographic/spatial boundaries, but also in the imaginative sense, as, for example, the boundaries that determines one's generational, cultural, or linguistic identity. We will be reading *Spare Parts: Four Undocumented Teenagers, One Ugly Robot, and the Battle for the American Dream*, this year's campus-wide reading, a book that explores the borders of ethnic and national identity (are the boys who build the robot Mexican? Are they American? Both?) as well as the boundaries that separate different levels of education (they are high school students participating in a contest sponsored by the University of California at Santa Barbara). Finally, our concern in this course with navigating and crossing borders will be reflected in the other text assigned for this class: *The World Is a Text: Writing About Visual and Popular Culture*. This book, which provides a critical framework for our inquiries into borders as well as practical guidance for writing college essays, encourages students to write about popular culture. Rather than the lofty academic or literary concerns associated with many college writing assignments, your attention will be directed to popular culture (movies, tv, social media, celebrities, sports, technology, etc.). Thus, the border between so-called "low" and "high" culture will be navigated and crossed throughout this semester.

GE Learning Outcomes (GELOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. demonstrate the ability to read actively and rhetorically;
2. demonstrate the ability to 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. demonstrate an ability to integrate their 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.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Reflecting on Your Own Learning: English 1A Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

By completing this coursework, you will have made considerable progress in developing yourself as a reader and writer. At the end of the fall term, you will assemble and reflect on your work to gauge and define your progress. Your reflection essay will present your portfolio to your instructor and one other English 1A faculty member; you will demonstrate to us your own ability to:

Read to learn:

- annotate a reading selection to develop a summary and response in your writing (GELO1);
- identify audience and purpose in texts from several genres (GELO 1,3,4);
- explain how genres work to serve audience and context (GELO 1, 3).

Read to write:

- identify rhetorical appeals and devise strategies for an effective appeal to a specific audience (GELO 1, 3);
- develop a text to effectively appeal to a specific audience (GELO 1, 3);
- identify the choices a writer has made to produce a text (GELO 1, 3, 4);
- use readings as models for your own writing strategies (GELO 1, 4);
- concisely, accurately explain and critique information and ideas from your reading (GELO 1, 3, 4);
- use information gleaned from your reading as evidence in your text and cite that information (GELO 1, 4);
- use quotation and summary to create context for your writing (GELO 1, 4, 5).

Write with an increased awareness of the process:

- discuss specific strategies for prewriting and revision that have worked for you (GELO 2);
- repurpose acquired skills and information to tackle new writing problems (GELO 2).

Read and write with an increased awareness of the language you use:

- identify new sentence forms and imitate them (GELO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5);
- analyze and discuss the structure of sentences and the grammatical choices you make (GELO 2, 3, 5);
- identify editing issues in your own writing (GELO 2, 5);
- identify and apply effective strategies for editing your work (GELO 2, 5);
- identify and apply effective proofreading strategies (GELO 2, 5);
- reflect on and assess your own writing, process and product, to support continued language and writing development (GELO 2, 3, 4).

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook

The World Is a Text: Writing About Visual and Popular Culture (Updated Compact Edition), Jonathan Silverman and Dean Rader. (Broadview Press. Print Edition. ISBN: 978-1-55481-379-7). Available at Spartan Bookstore.

Spare Parts: Four Undocumented Teenagers, One Ugly Robot, and the Battle for the American Dream, Joshua Davis. (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux; print edition) ISBN: 978-0-374-53498-1). All incoming SJSU first-year students should receive a free copy of this text. If you have not received one, please let me know so that we can arrange to find you a copy.

Other Readings

There will be numerous other readings as well as required viewing and listening to films, videos, and music recordings. Access to all of these media will be made available through Canvas.

Other technology requirements / equipment / material

You will need a computer in order to submit assignments, participate in peer editing, read announcements from your instructor, and access the course syllabus and other documents.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Writing Assignments:

As a writing course, you will be expected to produce 8,000 words in this course. Of these, 4,000 must be revised and edited. For each of the writing assignments below, I will provide a scoring guide along with essay guidelines. These will be posted on Canvas.

- **Personal Essay (2,000 words total; 1,000 words revised and edited; GELOs 1-5):** This assignment asks you to write a personal essay in which you imagine yourself as a text. (See “How Am I a Text? Writing Personal Essays,” in *The World Is a Text*.) **Due Dates: First Draft, 9/16; Final Draft, 9/23.**
- **Profile Essay (2,000 words total; 1,000 words revised and edited; GELOs 1-5):** This essay asks you to profile a person prominent in popular culture. This person may be an entertainer, an athlete, a business icon, or anyone other figure from popular culture. Your task with this profile will be to read this person as a text, locating the borders that define this person as unique. **Due dates: First Draft, 10/9; Final Draft, 10/16.**
- **Film Analysis: “Underwater Dreams” (2,000 words total; 1,000 words revised and edited; GELOs 1-5):** This analysis will draw from the semiotic approach you have studied in *The World Is a Text* in order to analyze “Underwater Dreams,” a documentary film about the four young men featured in *Spare Parts*. You will be making use of your knowledge of this book as you evaluate the film’s treatment of four young engineers who defy common stereotypes of four Latinx young men. **Due dates: First Draft, 11/4; Final Draft, 11/11.**

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- **Letter to the Editor (1,000 words total; 500 words revised and edited; GELOs 1-5):** This essay will ask you to identify a highly contested issue related to the theme of borders, identify your own position in the debate, and write a brief persuasive essay in which you attempt to persuade readers to adopt your point-of-view. **Due dates: First Draft, 11/20; Final Draft, 12/2.**
- **Podcast (1,000 words total: 500 words revised and edited; (GELOs 1-5):** This final assignment will require you to create a 3-minute podcast along with a 500-word script. Your podcast will be a condensation of one of either your Personal Essay, Profile, or Film Analysis. **Due date: Final Draft (Script + Audio File), 12/9.**

Participation

In addition to writing in-class and out-of-class essays, English 1A will also participate in the following:

1. Homework/Outside Activities: You will need to complete much of the work for this course outside of the classroom by deadlines announced in class and posted on Canvas. For example, I may assign a reading response as homework, or I might require the class to post items in the discussion boards on Canvas.

2. Class Discussions: Your contributions to class discussions are essential to creating a classroom community. You should strive to contribute to most class discussions, demonstrating an ability and willingness to listen to myself and your peers as well as the capacity to bring yourself and your experiences to the reading assignment. During these discussions, it is imperative that you direct your attention to those speaking and refrain from looking at your cell phone or computer (

3. Group Projects: I will assign group projects throughout the semester. These projects will enable you to work with one another in teams to create visual/audio presentations. During the month of November, the class will work on a major group presentations addressed to the following theme: “The Borderlands in Popular Culture.” In addition to these activities, the class will occasionally conduct in-class debate sessions.

4. Peer Review: We will be conducting peer review/workshop sessions both though Canvas and during class time. The process will begin with Canvas, where I will be assigning you into small groups. Be sure to upload your respective first drafts to Canvas by the posted deadline. Once you and your fellow group members have uploaded your essays, you will be able to review and respond to one another’s drafts. Both the individual who wrote a particular essay and myself will be able to review your feedback via Canvas. Please provide feedback 24 hours prior to the scheduled in-class workshop session. On the class day devoted to workshop, you will have opportunity to give one another additional feedback and to ask follow-up questions. Please bring an addition hard copy of your draft to the workshop session so that you and your peers can mark up your manuscript.

IMPORTANT! Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/ studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Final Examination or Evaluation

For the culminating activity of this course, you will submit End-of-the-Semester Portfolio and Reflection to Canvas by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, December 13th. The class will NOT meet in person.

Grading Information

Instead of using weighted grades, we will be using a Grading Contract in English 1A. The contract below tells you what you need to do in order to receive a B in English 1A. By working hard and meeting all 13 requirements enumerated in the contract, you will assure yourself a B for the course.

On the next four pages, you will find the requirements for our Grading Contract. Please read this section carefully and ask me to clarify anything that you're not sure about. This Grading Contract is also on Canvas.

In order to receive a B in English 1A, you must:

1. Complete ALL assigned drafts of each essay (both rough and final) and submit them to Canvas by the posted deadline.
2. Turn in final drafts that have been carefully proofread. Your final drafts do not need to be flawless and error-free, but they should reflect an effort to present your work in the best possible light.
3. Submit final drafts that demonstrate significant revision. Fixing grammar, spelling, and typos or reformatting your final draft are all critically important (see Requirement #2 above), but they are not the same thing as revision. Throughout the academic year, the class will review effective revision techniques and apply them to our own writing.
4. Avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism occurs when you present the words or ideas of another person as your own, whether you intended to do so or not. Oftentimes, it results from the improper citation of sources. In its most egregious forms — copying and pasting passages from published writings, purchasing an essay on the internet, hiring a ghost writer — plagiarism constitutes a flagrant act of dishonesty that can result in severe academic consequences, up to and including expulsion. To prevent unintentional forms of plagiarism, we will devote considerable time in English 2 towards incorporating and citing outside sources.
5. Participate in 85% of scheduled in-class activities. You will receive notice of these activities on Canvas at least one class period before the scheduled activity.
6. Contribute to your assigned group's scheduled in-class presentation. This includes research, writing, and editing, as well as presenting before the class.

7. Engage regularly in class discussions, demonstrating an ability and willingness to listen to myself and your peers as well as the capacity to bring yourself and your experiences to the topic at hand. You don't have to speak up during every class session, but you do need to make an effort to participate on a consistent basis.
8. Complete and submit 85% of homework assignments by the due date.
9. Provide thoughtful, detailed feedback to peers during workshops. This requires attending the scheduled workshops during class time and submitting feedback on Canvas by the posted deadlines.
10. Show courtesy and respect to your peers and instructor at all times. This includes paying attention when someone else (one of your peers or myself) is speaking to the class.
11. Refrain from using your laptop, cell phone, or tablet UNLESS directed to use them. Since we live in the digital age, we will sometimes use phones or laptops/mobiles. When we do, I will notify you on Canvas at least one class period before the scheduled group activity. Unless the class is specifically making use of technology, you should remove your electronic devices from your desk.
12. Avoid being tardy by arriving to class on time throughout the semester and on a consistent basis.
13. Submit a complete End-of-the-Semester Portfolio and Reflection Essay that meets all outlined requirements by the due dates at the end of the semester.

Deductions

For each of the numbered items above that you do not meet, your grade will be lowered by one-half letter. For example, a student who met 12 of the 13 requirements above would receive a B-, a student who met 11 of the 13 requirements would receive a C+, and so on.

A Solemn Pledge from Your Writing Instructor

If you are facing severely difficult circumstances that will affect your ability to complete the requirements for this course, please notify me as soon as possible. Even if you cannot meet all 15 of the above requirements to receive a B, you can *still* succeed in this course and satisfy the A2 Written Communication requirement by receiving at least a C-, provided that you contact me in a timely fashion and inform me of your situation. Hopefully, none of you will face unusually difficult circumstances this academic year, but in the event that you do, I pledge to work with you to make the best of the situation.

Scoring Higher than a B in this Course

Receiving a B in a college course is quite commendable. It shows a commitment to one's own education and to the lifelong task of self-improvement. There is no shame in a B.

However, I also understand and respect the desire to push one's self to produce exceptional work and to be rewarded for it. With this in mind, here are the requirements for a receiving a grade higher than a B:

Exceptional Writing Projects: For each your major writing projects (major essays and a podcast), your grade will be elevated by 1/2 letter if your project is of exception quality. An essay or podcast that meets this standard will be distinguished by thoughtful revision, judicious copy editing, thoughtful presentation, and thorough proofreading.

One-hundred percent Completion of Assignments: If you complete 100% of your in-class assignments and homework on time, your grade will be elevated by one-half letter.

Attendance and Write-up of Borderlands- or Spare Parts-related event: Throughout the semester, there will be a number of events on campus related to the Borderlands theme and to *Spare Parts*, the campus-wide reading for the 2019-20 academic year. Here is a list of events scheduled for this semester for the [Borderlands](#) theme and for [Spare Parts](#). If you attend one of these events and write a 500-word report on it (I will provide you with specific writing guidelines ahead of time), you can elevate your overall grade by 1/2 letter. **Please note that you can only elevate your grade once by attending and writing about one of the course-related events on campus this semester.**

Examples:

- If you met all 13 of the above requirements and submitted an exception personal essay, you would receive a B+.
- If you met all 13 of the above requirements and submitted an exceptional personal essay AND profile essay, you would receive an A-.
- If you met all 13 of the above requirements and submitted exceptional personal AND profile AND film analysis essays, you would receive an A.
- If you completed all 13 of the above requirements AND completed 100% of in-class assignments/homework, you would receive a B+.
- If you completed all 13 of the above requirements AND completed 100% of in-class assignments/homework AND submitted an exceptional podcast, you would receive an A-.

What You Can Expect from Me

For this contract to work, I have to hold up my end of the bargain as well. Here is what you can expect from me:

Feedback: Since we are using a Grading Contract, I will not be assigning letter grades to individual essays. I will, however, distribute a qualitative scoring guide specific to that particular essay, and within two weeks of submission, I will provide written and/or audio feedback on Canvas to all of your major writing assignments. In my responses to your essays, I will comment on the following:

- The rhetorical elements of your writing (audience awareness; use of genre conventions; the appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos).
- Any patterns of error in grammar, spelling, usage, or formatting that I discover. I won't mark up every mistake that I encounter. Instead, I will point out things to consider for future writing assignments.
- Style and clarity in your writing. There's an old line from a song that goes, "It ain't what you do, it's the way that you do it." Style and clarity have less to do with "correctness" in writing and more to do with effective communication.
- Organization, both globally (the overall arrangement of a piece of writing) and locally (the structures of paragraphs and sentences).
- Your use of readings and other outside sources in your writing.
- Finally, what I found to be the strongest aspects of your essays.

Advance Notice: In addition to posting deadlines for all major assignments on the syllabus and on Canvas, I will notify you of any changes to the Tentative Schedule for the class (see below) as far in advance (no later than the preceding class session) as possible.

Availability: I will keep regular office hours and will be available by appointment (see above). In addition, I will respond to Canvas messages in a timely fashion (24 hours during the work week/48 hours on weekends).

Courtesy: Just as I expect courtesy from you (both to your peers and to me), you should expect the same from me. This includes taking the time to learn your names within the first two weeks of the semester.

Openness: Got a suggestion? Did a particular activity work well, or did you find it less than helpful? I am open to suggestions. By sharing your insights with me, you can help me improve yours and other students' experiences in this class.

Statement of Agreement: You will find this contract on the course Canvas site, where you will be asked to review the contract, post any questions, and sign your agreement to the specified requirements in this Grading Contract.

Classroom Protocol

Cell phones, laptops, and mobile devices should be stowed and kept out of sight during class. While you will be using computers frequently outside of the classroom, you won't need to bring a laptop to class.

You are paying a lot of money to attend a brick and mortar university rather than an online course, and I encourage you to get the most out of it by interacting with the rest of the class. There will be frequent class discussions as well as small group work. In some cases, I will appoint different students to lead classroom activities.

University Policies (Required)

Per [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' Syllabus Information web page at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>". Make sure to visit [this page](#), review and be familiar with these university policies and resources.

English 1A, Fall 2019, Course Schedule

Below is the tentative schedule for the class this semester. Please keep in mind that as the course unfolds, there will be inevitable changes to it. Whenever any changes are made, I will notify the class on Canvas.

Date	Tentative Schedule of Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
W 8/21	• Introduction. Overview of syllabus; discussion of how technology will be used in the class.
M 8/26	• Read "A Dark Consensus about Screens and Kids Begins to Emerge in Silicon Valley" prior to class. • Benchmark Essay (bring computer/tablet).
W 8/28	• Read WIT, Introduction and Chapter 1: "The Study of Signs (and Texts)," by class time. • Reading (available on Canvas): Read "How to Tame a Wild Tongue," by Gloria Anzaldua.
M 9/2	Labor Day: Campus Closed
W 9/4	• Read WIT, Chapter 2: "Texts, the World, You, and Your Essays" by class time.
M 9/9	• Read WIT, Chapter 3: "Reading the World as a Text: Three Case Studies on Interpretation" by class time.
W 9/11	• Read WIT, Chapter 11: "How Am I a Text? Writing Personal Essays" by class time
M 9/16	• First draft of Personal Essay due. • PR #1: Bring hard copy of your first draft of Personal Essay to class.
W 9/18	• Read SP pages 3-14 by class time.

Date	Tentative Schedule of Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
	Abbreviations: SP: <i>Spare Parts</i> WIT: <i>The World Is a Text</i> PR: Peer Review HW: Homework
M 9/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Draft of Personal Essay due (post on Canvas by 11:59 p.m.)
W 9/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading (available on Canvas): Read “The Profile Essay,” by Bruce Ballenger by class time.
M 9/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read SP pages 15-53 by class time.
W 10/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read SP pages 54-86 by class time.
M 10/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read SP pages 89-120 by class time.
W 10/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First draft of Profile Essay due. • PR #1: Bring hard copy of your first draft of Profile Essay to class.
M 10/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read SP pages 120-49 by class time.
W 10/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Draft of Profile Essay due (post on Canvas by 11:59 p.m.)
M 10/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read WIT, Chapter 18: Writing about Movies.
W 10/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read SP pages 153–80 by class time.
M 10/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish reading SP, pages 183-224, by class time.
W 10/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Activity: Writing for listeners — strategies for composing texts that are read aloud.
M 11/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First draft of Film Analysis: “Underwater Dreams,” due. • PR #1: Bring hard copy of your first draft of Film Analysis: “Underwater Dreams,” to class.
W 11/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class Presentations: The Borderlands in Popular Culture
M 11/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Draft of Film Analysis: “Underwater Dreams,” due (post on Canvas by 11:59 p.m.)
W 11/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class Presentations: The Borderlands in Popular Culture
M 11/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Activity: Writing for listeners — strategies for composing texts that are read aloud.
W 11/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First draft of Letter to Editor/Social Media Post due. • PR #1: Bring hard copy of your first draft of Letter to Editor/Social Media Post Analysis to class.

Date	Tentative Schedule of Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
	Abbreviations: SP: <i>Spare Parts</i> WIT: <i>The World Is a Text</i> PR: Peer Review HW: Homework
M 11/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class Presentations: The Borderlands in Popular Culture
W 11/27	<p style="text-align: center;">Non-instructional day: Campus open, but no classes held.</p>
M 12/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Draft of Letter to Editor/Social Media Post due (post on Canvas by 11:59 p.m.)
W 12/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Activity: Assembling Portfolios
M 12/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Podcast (500-word script + audio file) due by class time.
	<p>Culminating Activity for English A: Post Writing Portfolio + Reflection on Canvas by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, December 13th. (Final Exam Schedule)</p>