

San José State University
School of Liberal Arts, Department of English and Comparative
Literature
ENGL 1A, Section 32 (42415), First-Year Writing, Fall 2019

Basic Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Michael Tod Edgerton /ej-er-tun/
Preferred pronouns:	He/him/his
Office Location:	Faculty Office Building (FOB) 223
Telephone:	408-924-4069
Email:	Michael.Edgerton@sjsu.edu (email is my preferred mode of communication)
Office Hours:	Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00pm – 2:45pm and by appointment
Class Days/Time:	Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:30am – 11:45am
Classroom:	Clark Hall 316
Prerequisites:	Reflection on College Writing
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	GE Area A2 Written Communication IA

Course Format

This is a “flipped” course, run mostly as a discussion seminar and writing workshop. This puts you in the driver’s seat as the primary agent of your own education (as is always truly the case, if differently, even in a traditional lecture course). You are responsible for coming to each and every class fully equipped with your reading and writing device, having fully prepared for class (see more below). **Approved devices include laptop and tablet computers only**; phones will not be permitted.

Almost, if not all, of our readings will be PDF files and online texts made available on our [Canvas course site](#) (use this direct link, go to the Canvas log in at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>, or go through your SJSU “One” resource page at <https://one.sjsu.edu>) and there will be lots of in-class writing, so **you will need to bring your computer—and power cord—to every class**. If you do not own a computer, it crashes, or you leave it at home one day, **you can check out a laptop from the M. L. King Library, on the fourth floor**, right off the elevator. This course requires a great deal of reading and writing, and while I will give you time in class to work on some assignments, this time is not in lieu of, but *in addition* to the six hours per week SJSU expects you to spend on homework for each of your three-credit courses.

Class Preparation

As I write above, you are responsible for coming to every class fully prepared to participate in all activities. **Active participation and extensive preparation are both key to your success in this course.** This will entail:

- 1) Carefully reading and following all assignment instructions on Canvas. If you have questions, re-read the instructions. If you are still unclear, ask me in class or email me at Michael.Edgerton@sjsu.edu.
- 2) Reading and preparing to discuss all assigned materials for a specific course meeting.

To fully prepare a reading for class, you must:

- A) Read *carefully and attentively* 100% of the assigned material.
- B) Highlight or underline key passages, such as definitions of terms, main arguments, important points, and supporting evidence. It is especially helpful to note points in the text about which you are confused or have a question, bringing these passages up in class for us to think about together.
- C) Write a short summary or captioning sentence(s) for the reading, including stating its main purpose or purposes (to persuade, to inform, to entertain and/or move the reader, to offer her/him/them insights into the writer's experience or culture, etc.).
- D) In your own words, list its main points and the evidence used to support it (this could include historical claims, statistics and other data, details that illustrate a narrative essay's points (e.g., about the author's relationship to her father, his experiences of transphobia, their understanding of romantic love and "successful" relationships, etc.).

Course Materials and Communications

As noted above, course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on our Canvas Learning Management System course website, which you can access directly at <http://sjsu.instructure.com> and through your OneSJSU page (<https://one.sjsu.edu>). In this class, we will be using Purdue University's [Online Writing Lab](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/index.html) ("OWL," for short) at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/index.html as our grammar and mechanics textbook (or "style manual," as it is formally called), as well as to reference the MLA Guide for in-text citation and Works Cited page formatting. Grammar and mechanics quizzes will be given on assigned OWL readings. You will use the "General Writing" section (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/index.html) for grammar and mechanics and the "[MLA Guide](#)" section for citations formatting. With citations, I recommend starting with the "[MLA In-Text Citations: The Basics](#)" (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_in_text_citations_the_basics.html) and "[MLA Works Cited Page: Basic Format](#)" (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_works_cited_page_basic_format.html) pages. More in-depth information and further examples can be found on the other pages of The MLA Guide section of OWL.

You are responsible for checking with the messaging system in Canvas and your SJSU email account on a daily basis for communications from your professors and the university. Always email your professors and other university staff from your SJSU account and not from your personal email.

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.

The theme of this course will focus on personal identity, American multiculturalism, and contemporary issues of social and political importance. Throughout the semester you will work to develop your writing abilities and shape your own unique voice as a prose writer. Reading, itself, is one of the essential skills to develop effective, persuasive, and enjoyable writing. Those people who read the most are inevitably those for whom writing comes more "naturally," and so we will work on our reading skills as a part of working on our writing. To this end, one of the primary elements and forms of composition we will focus on in this class is the analysis of model essays to help us better understand the structures, techniques, and strategies they employ to craft effective prose writing. You will use what you learn from them in your own essays, taking three major assignments (in addition to many smaller ones) through multiple stages of

revision. In the course of these revisions, you will review and constructively critique one another's work, helping one another to become better writers while improving your own writing in the process.

Course Learning Outcomes

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 different genres;
5. demonstrate college-level language use, clarity, and grammatical proficiency in writing.

Required Texts and Equipment

Textbook

Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL): https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html

Other Readings

Various model essays posted to Canvas for analysis and evaluation.

One another's essays posted to Canvas for peer analysis and evaluation.

Technology requirements / equipment / material

Laptop or tablet computer.

Adobe Reader. Download it free from Adobe.com: <https://get.adobe.com/reader>.

Microsoft Word, which you can download free as part of the entire MS Office suite at <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/education/products/office>. All your writing assignments need to be in ".docx" format. You can also use Google docs or Open Office, using "save as" to reformat your assignments, but I will only accept submissions of assignments in MS Word (.docx) format.

Course Requirements and Assignments

The [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), Course Syllabi (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>) requires the following language to be included in the syllabus:

"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."

In this class, you will be writing a personal, narrative essay; working on a group analysis of a visual image and then presenting it; writing your own visual analysis essay; writing an argumentative, persuasive essay on an issue of current social, cultural, and/or political importance; presenting that paper

to the class; and writing a reflective essay evaluating your own progress as a reader and writer over the course of the semester. As part of the writing process, you will have many prewriting assignments and write honest, but supportive critiques of your peers' essays. Participation is central to this course, and some of your participation points will come in the form of peer review workshops and class presentations, in addition to weekly participation in discussions (see more on this under "Participation" below).

Final Portfolio

You will submit, in a single Word document (.docx), all your revised and polished major assignments (listed above) as demonstration of your learning and development as a reader and writer in this course. Included in the portfolio will be your work from the Reflection on College Writing summer course, so keep that in a file on your computer—backed up in the cloud (Dropbox, Google Drive through your personal google or SJSU.edu email account, Microsoft OneDrive, etc.)—where you can easily find it, as well as a new essay reflecting on your progress as a writer since summer. You should create a an ENGL 1A file on your computer and in the cloud (I recommend downloading [Drop Box](https://www.dropbox.com) from <https://www.dropbox.com>, which saves it to your hard drive and, when you're connected to the Internet, to the cloud). More specific guidelines will be given on Canvas at the end of the semester.

Grading Policies and Procedures of Determination

General Essay Grading Rubric

While there may be slight variations in how I assess different assignments that are tailored to the specific goals of each, the following rubric outlines the major elements of most types of essays, and I will use this to grade your final major essay assignment drafts, just as you should use it to evaluate those drafts as you develop them through multiple stages and will be using it to evaluate your peers' essays as part of the composition and revision process. Remember this statement, repeat it as a mantra, as it is the central and guiding principle of your life as a composition student and future writer in any professional context or capacity, from business emails to professional presentations: **Writing is revision. Writing is revision. Writing is revision...**

Essay Grading Rubric

Competent: Unified/Coherent/Complete

If your essay meets these first three standards, you are writing *competently* and you will earn a grade of "C." (70-79)

1. Unity

- **Contains a center of gravity, a unifying and controlling purpose, a thesis or claim, which is maintained throughout the paper.**

Essays can be organized in many different ways. They may have an implicit or explicit thesis—or they may simply have a unifying purpose or theme. In a **unified** paper, every sentence and every word will contribute in some way towards the exposition and development of a single "main" idea. That is, every sentence and every word will relate to the "topic" or the "comment" of the thesis.

- **Organizes writing around a thesis or according to the organizational requirements of the particular assignment (e.g., summary, narrative, argument, analysis, description, etc.)**

Simply put, to “organize writing around a thesis” or other central point means that the essay reveals, under examination, some sort of overall organizational plan or strategy. Could this essay be outlined? Does it have a definite beginning, middle, and end? A clearly organized essay might use logical, spatial, chronological, or even associational order—but the strategy will suit the topic, the audience, and the purpose of the paper.

2. Coherence

- **Uses words and sentences, rhythm and phrasing, variations and transitions, concreteness and specificity to reveal and emphasize the relationship between evidence and thesis.**

To differentiate “Coherence” from “Unity” you should scale back your frame of reference: is some sort of organizational plan apparent *within* each paragraph? Has the writer used syntax and diction to create links *between thoughts/sentences*? Does the writer’s use of repetition, parallelism, figures, and rhythm help to emphasize main points OR does the writer’s choice of diction and syntax distract the reader from main ideas?

3. Complete and Polished

- **Follows length requirements, is finished, revised, and effectively proofread.**

Effective/Skillful/Persuasive

If you meet all of the competency standards above and, in addition, achieve coherence and exhibit audience awareness, you are writing *skillfully* and you will earn a grade of “B.” (80-89)

4. Evidence/Development

- **Explains how, why, or in what way evidence and/or detail supports point/claim/thesis/topic/ideas.**
- **Incorporates evidence from outside sources smoothly, appropriately, and responsibly.**

Whether the writer adds her own details and examples as evidence or incorporates someone else’s evidence with quotes and paraphrases, s/he will consistently incorporate and explain all these kinds of evidence. Few quotes will be left “hanging”; instead, they will be imbedded in the writer’s own sentences, usually with some explanatory remarks linking the quote to the topic or thesis. Coherence is the difference between a poem, a list, or an outline and a prose paragraph.

- **Develops appropriate, logical, and relevant supporting detail and/or evidence.**

This criterion asks you to note whether the student used examples and other evidence to support his/her argument or position or idea and whether that evidence is fairly used, accurate, and relevant in supporting his/her points. You are evaluating the *quality* of evidence and sources here.

- Includes more specific, concrete evidence (or details) than opinion or abstract, general commentary.

This criterion asks you to gauge *quantity* of evidence. Has the writer wasted most of the essay making general statements and assertions *about* the topic? Or, instead, has s/he used most of her words and sentences to clarify and define the argument, giving examples and explaining connections to assertions?

5. Audience Awareness

- **Demonstrates a sense that the writer knows what s/he’s doing and is addressing real people.**
- **Reflects a respect for values that influence ethos (e.g., common ground, trustworthiness, careful research).**

Audience awareness is probably most apparent in a writer's word choice—does the writer show respect and understanding by consistently choosing an appropriate level of formality and technicality? You may also want to examine the writer's choice of supporting examples and evidence—are they appropriate to the audience?

6. Presentation and Design

- Follows standard guidelines for English grammar, punctuation, usage, and documentation.
- Follows conventions for formatting that academic readers expect.

Distinctive

If you meet all of the competency standards, achieve coherence and exhibit audience awareness, and, in addition, demonstrate a high level of one or more features of superior writing, you are writing distinctively and will earn a grade of “A.” (90-100)

7. Distinction

- Your writing stands out because of one or more of the following characteristics: complexity, originality, seamless coherence, extraordinary control, ease and sophistication of both language, recognizable voice, compelling purpose, imagination, insight, thoroughness, and/or depth.

I like to compare the movement from Merely Competent (“C”) to Effective (“B”) to Distinguished (“A”) as the development from crawling to walking to dancing—without self-consciousness and with your own style—“moving” (i.e., writing) freely, fluidly, and in an expressive and compelling manner.

Ineffective

I do not even want to think about this, so I stick it at the bottom... If your paper does not meet even the basic competency standards, exhibiting major problems in either Unity or Effectiveness, you will earn a grade of “D” (60-69) or “F” (<60), and you should *immediately* schedule a conference with me. Incomplete “final” drafts will not be graded but assessed as a 0% F.

Grade Categories and Percentages, Word Counts, and General Education Learning Outcomes

Assignment/Category	Grade %	Word Count	GELO
Final Portfolio with Reflective Essay and Appendix	25%	750-1,000	1-3 and 5
Issues Argument 1	15%	1,000-1,500	1-5
Issues Argument 2	15%	1,000-1,500	1-5
All exercises and assignments, essay drafts, any quizzes, etc.	25%	Variable	NA
Opinion Editorial (Op-Ed)	10%	500-1,000	1-5
Oral Presentation	5%	300-750	3 and 5
Participation	5%	NA	NA

Letter Grade Definitions by Percentage

Grade	Percentage
<i>A plus</i>	96 to 100%
<i>A</i>	93 to 95%
<i>A minus</i>	90 to 92%
<i>B plus</i>	86 to 89 %

Grade	Percentage
<i>B</i>	83 to 85%
<i>B minus</i>	80 to 82%
<i>C plus</i>	76 to 79%
<i>C</i>	73 to 75%

Grade	Percentage
<i>C minus</i>	70 to 72%
<i>D plus</i>	66 to 69%
<i>D</i>	63 to 65%
<i>D minus</i>	60 to 62%

IMPORTANT POLICY NOTES:

- **This course must be passed with a C- or better as a CSU graduation requirement.**
- **NO late work or make-up assignments will be accepted,** and no extra credit will be given, as a rule. Exceptions may be made at my discretion, and late work, if accepted, may be penalized.
- **I reserve the right to add or change assignments, including pop quizzes, change the syllabus schedule, etc. at my discretion. I will notify you in class and through email.**

Participation and Classroom Protocol

As previously noted, participation is key to this course and is required of *all students*. If you’re a shy student, take this course as a challenge and opportunity to build your confidence and public-speaking skills. We all say something “wrong” or that makes us feel “stupid” sometimes—so what? It’s not the end of the world. It’s often, in fact, how we learn, and we are all learning and developing as readers and writers together. We will work collaboratively, helping one another to improve our skills. We will not judge but support one another, even as we debate controversial issues, evaluate one another’s performances, and critique one another’s arguments—all for our mutual betterment. Come fully prepared and ready to engage.

This class is not a lecture but a seminar, and I will be facilitating *your* discussions of readings, student essays and presentations, etc. Your physical and mental presence is therefore expected at *each and every* class meeting. This is *not* the kind of class you can miss and just get the lecture notes from a friend to catch up. *Every class will require your active participation. A writing course is a community of learners undergoing a process whereby they develop their reading and writing skills over time, through hard work and dedication.* Writing courses are by their nature time- and energy-intensive courses. Staying on track with homework assignments and being present (both physically and mentally) and actively contributing to class discussions and completing in-class writing or other assignments is *absolutely essential* to your success in this course.

You are therefore expected to arrive on time, fully-prepared, and ready to participate actively in each class meeting. To receive credit for contributions to discussions, **you must offer new insights or pose questions that lead to productive conversation, not just repeat what someone else has said.** This also means that you must come to class with all required assignments completed and reading and writing homework materials in hand (be that as a print-out or on your computer).

DO NOT be afraid to ask questions. Questions are the basis of all intellectual inquiry and discovery, and are the only way to clarify, e.g., assignment instructions, so ask away! I am here to guide and aid you, I am one of your learning resources, so do not be shy about consulting with me on your assignments, etc.

Discussion Guidelines

- Be RESPECTFUL (almost every other guideline is a subcategory of this all-important one!)
- No yelling, talking over, interrupting, or—obviously—no personal insults.
- Try to understand and be considerate of others’ perspectives, opinions, and feelings

- Come prepared so you can actively and substantively contribute to discussion (and not waste your classmates' time B.S.-ing). Read and write your assigned analyses/responses and bring those to class along with the reading so you have all of your materials, notes, and ideas at hand.
- Speaking of wasting others' time, don't just repeat what someone else already said. You can certainly extend it, offer a different perspective on it, etc., but don't just repackage it in different words and hope we don't notice.
- Let others speak. We don't want class to devolve into a situation where the same five people carry the conversation all the time. The popcorn method was a good suggestion for doing this, too (although "hot potato" and "tag" seem like more accurate analogies to me...but whatever). It's where one student starts out with a contribution and then randomly passes the discussion baton on to another person.
- To that end, BE COGNIZANT of yourself and of others. Always be "taking the temperature" of the room, and give others space to speak.
- And to *that* end: Don't Be Afraid of Silence. Sometimes a minute or two of silence gives more tentative people time to step up.
- Offer CONSTRUCTIVE critique. While our goal is to discuss, debate, and rigorously evaluate one another's reading and writing to help one another improve throughout the semester, we want to do this in as *supportive, encouraging, and positive* a manner as we can.
- Conversely, be open to criticism. It's the only way to learn, and becoming defensive can just shut out what others have to have offer you. We're not going to judge one another, but help everyone improve as much as we can.
- Stay on topic. Tangents are usually counterproductive.
- ACTIVELY LISTEN AND PARTICIPATE in discussions, don't zone out, drift off or get up and leave in the middle of class (use the bathroom beforehand). If you're going to be sick, of course, by all means run!
- Be CONFIDENT in your presentations of your analyses, interpretations, evaluations and critiques. It's fine to admit when you know you're going out on a limb, taking a stab in the dark, but if you feel you have a strong case to make for the strength or weakness of an argument or its evidence, for example, don't be afraid to say—and stand by—it. Even if you don't always feel that way, try to hold yourself with confidence—fake it 'til you make it! (Arrogance is something altogether different, and we want to avoid it.) The first step in gaining confidence in your ideas is to always ground them in the language, logic, and evidence of the text itself, in what's actually on the page.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9 (<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](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo>. Make sure to review these university policies and resources; it is your responsibility to know them.

Where academic integrity is concerned, I do not abide plagiarism and will call for the harshest punishment possible, which could range from failing the assignment, the entire course, or even being expelled from the university. Plagiarism is not only copying verbatim an entire paper, but even a sentence, even paraphrasing without citing the source of the information or idea. For the full definition and more information, see SJSU's [Academic Integrity Violations](http://info.sjsu.edu/static/schedules/integrity.html) page at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/schedules/integrity.html>.

Important Dates

Monday, September 2	Labor Day - Campus Closed
Tuesday, September 3	Last Day to Drop Courses without a “W” on your record
Tuesday, September 10	Last Day to Add Courses & Register Late
Monday, November 11	Veteran’s Day (Observed) - Campus Closed
Wednesday, November 27	Non-Instructional Day (no classes)
Thursday, November 28	Thanksgiving Holiday - Campus Closed
Friday, November 29	Rescheduled Holiday - Campus Closed
Monday, December 9	Last Day of Instruction - Last Day of Classes
Tuesday, December 10	Study/Conference Day (no classes or exams)
Wednesday - Tuesday December 11-17	Final Examinations
Wednesday, December 18	Final Examinations Make-Up Day (MU)
Friday, December 20	Grades Due from Faculty

Course Schedule, ENGL 1A First-Year Writing, Fall 2019

Week	Day	Date	Topics/Assignments (See Canvas for precise instructions)
1	Thur	8/22	Class Introduction
2	Tues	8/27	2020 Vision: Presidential Candidates and Election Issues Introduction
2	Thur	8/29	2020 Vision: Presidential Candidates and Election Issues Meet the Candidates: Joe Biden, Pete Buttigieg, and Corey Booker
3	Tues	9/3	2020 Vision: Presidential Candidates and Election Issues Meet the Candidates: Kamala Harris, Amy Klobuchar, and Beto O’Rourke
3	Thur	9/5	2020 Vision: Presidential Candidates and Election Issues Meet the Candidates: Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, and Andrew Yang
4	Tues	9/10	In-Class Writing: polish up “Candidate Evaluation” Op-Ed essay, FINAL DRAFT DUE on Canvas by 11:59pm
4	Thur	9/12	Primer on research
5	Tues	9/17	Discuss Democratic Debates from 9/12 and 9/13
5	Thur	9/19	AT-HOME ASSIGNMENT—NO CLASS MEETING
6	Tues	9/24	Researching the Issues: Health Care
6	Thur	9/26	Researching the Issues: Immigration
7	Tues	10/1	Researching the Issues: Gun Violence
7	Thur	10/3	Researching the Issues: Wealth Inequality
8	Tues	10/8	“2020 Issue” introduction and in-class online research Research guidelines and best practices
8	Thur	10/10	In-class research and writing on “2020 Issue 1” essay
9	Tues	10/15	In-class writing/consultations on “2020 Issue 1” essay

9	Thur	10/17	In-class peer reviews of “2020 Issue 1” essay
10	Tues	10/22	In-class writing/consultations on “2020 Issue 1” essay FINAL DRAFT DUE on Canvas by 11:59pm
10	Thur	10/24	2020 Issue 1 Oral Presentations
11	Tues	10/29	2020 Issue 1 Oral Presentations
11	Thur	10/31	2020 Issue 1 Oral Presentations
12	Tues	11/5	2020 Issue 1 Oral Presentations
12	Thur	11/7	In-class writing/consultations on “2020 Issue 2” essay
13	Tues	11/12	TBD
13	Thur	11/14	2020 Issue 2 Essay Peer Reviews
14	Tues	11/19	In-class writing/consultations on “2020 Issue 2” essay
14	Thur	11/21	In-class writing/consultations on “2020 Issue 2” essay FINAL DRAFT DUE on Canvas by 11:59pm
15	Tues	11/26	NO CLASS MEETING—HAPPY THANKSGIVING!
15	Thur	11/28	NO CLASS MEETING—HAPPY THANKSGIVING!
16	Tues	12/3	LAST DAY OF TUES-THUR CLASSES! HAPPY WINTER BREAK!
16	Thu	12/5	Final Portfolio Due by 11:59pm! NOTE: There is no Final Exam for this course. Your Final Portfolio takes its place.