Critical Thinking and Writing

ENGL 2

Spring 2026   Sections 17, 30   In Person   3 Unit(s)   01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026   Modified 02/02/2026

👤 Contact Information

Class Days/Time	Section 17: 10:30-11:45am Tuesday and Thursday
	Section 30: 1:30-2:45pm Tuesday and Thursday

Classroom	Section 17: Sweeney Hall 411 (https://www.sjsu.edu/map/index.php) Section 30: Industrial Studies 134A (https://www.sjsu.edu/map/index.php)
Instructor	Helen Meservey
Email	Canvas message and/or helen.meservey@sjsu.edu
Office	Faculty Office Building 127 (https://map.sjsu.edu/?id=2189#!bm/?ce/86185?ct/86185,86186,86187,86189,86190,86191,86271,86339,86341?m/974165?s/)
Virtual Office Hours	Office hours are virtual via Zoom (https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/82450343981?pwd=dlFWZkRNdCtuc1VhS1VYUUY3UWtLdz09) for spring 2026 11am-12pm Wednesday (except March 11 and April 1) and by appointment. Get help with Zoom here. (https://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/software-tools/teaching-tools/video-creative/zoom/index.php)
Canvas	http://sjsu.instructure.com
Library Liaison	*Peggy Cabrera* (mailto:%20peggy.cabrera@sjsu.edu) Phone: 408.808.2034

Instructor: Helen Meservey

Email: helen.meservey@sjsu.edu
Office: FOB 127

image.png (https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/82450343981?pwd=dlFWZkRNdCtuc1VhS1VYUUY3UWtLdz09)

Got questions about the course? Need clarification about an assignment? Noticing a schedule conflict? Anticipating an absence? Discovered the meaning of life?

Feel free to pop into my [Zoom (https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/82450343981?](https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/82450343981?pwd=dlFWZkRNdCtuc1VhS1VYUUY3UWtLdz09) [pwd=dlFWZkRNdCtuc1VhS1VYUUY3UWtLdz09)](https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/82450343981?pwd=dlFWZkRNdCtuc1VhS1VYUUY3UWtLdz09) office just about any Wednesday during the semester (office closed for drop-in Mar. 11 and Apr. 1). You don't need an appointment!

NB: If this hour doesn't suit your schedule, shoot me a note via Canvas Message (Inbox) with your availability, and we'll find a time that works.

🖥 Course Description and Requisites

Focuses on the relationship between language and logic in composing arguments. Students learn various methods of effective reasoning and appropriate rhetorical strategies to help them invent, demonstrate, and express arguments clearly, logically, and persuasively.

Satisfies 1B. Critical Thinking and Writing (Formerly Area A3).

Prerequisite(s): Completion of GE Area 1A with a grade of C- or better.
Grading: Letter Graded

Note(s): ENGL 2 is not open to students who successfully completed ENGL 1B.

✳ Classroom Protocols

ENGL 2

This course is open to all students needing to fulfill GE Area 1B: Critical Thinking and Writing (Formerly Area A3). It is not open to students who have successfully completed ENGL 1B.
Prerequisite: ENGL 1A or Stretch English (with a grade of C- or better)

Course Content

Diversity: SJSU studies include an emphasis on diversity. You will engage in integrated reading, Writing, and oral assignments to construct your own arguments on complex issues (such as diversity and ethnicity, class and social equality) that generate meaningful public debate. Readings for the course will include writers of different ethnicities, genders, and socio-economic classes.

Writing: You will write a series of essays informed by research and articulating fully developed arguments about complex issues. Assignments emphasize those skills and activities in writing and thinking that produce the persuasive argument and the critical essay, each of which demands analysis, interpretation, and evaluation. Writing assignments give you repeated practice in prewriting, organizing, writing, revising, and editing. This class requires a minimum of 6000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form.

Logic: You will learn methods of argument analysis, both rhetorical and logical, that will allow you to identify logical structures (such as warrants, evidence, qualification, rebuttal; enthymemes and

syllogisms) and distinguish common logical fallacies.

Reading: In addition to being writing intensive, ENGL 2 is also a reading course. You will read a variety of critical and argumentative texts to help develop your skills for understanding the logical structure of argumentative writing.

Oral: You will be presenting your arguments orally to class both as an individual and as part of a group.

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the Canvas Learning Management System course login website. You're responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU to learn of any updates. For help with using Canvas see Canvas Student Resources page.

Time Commitment

Success in ENGL 2 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

In ENGL 2, our learning culminates in a digital Reflection and Portfolio Assignment. In this assignment, we will gather samples of our writing that demonstrate our learning; we will write a reflection essay that explains what we have learned, how we learned it, and how we will use it in future learning; and we will submit our portfolio for consideration to other people in the first-year writing program. This is our chance to identify and articulate what we've learned and what we'll take forward with us into future learning/writing experiences.

Program Policies

First-Year Writing policies are listed at the following website: https://www.sjsu.edu/english/frosh/program-policies.php (https://www.sjsu.edu/english/frosh/program-policies.php).

Additional Policies and Protocols

Writing can be a solitary enterprise, but the critical thinking and habits of mind that go into such work can be developed and enriched in community. Thus, it is imperative that you attend class and participate in class activities and discussions. Class participation entails: (1) demonstrating that you've completed the readings, (2) contributing to discussions, and (3) completing in-class assignments and activities.

Electronic resources such as laptops, tablets, and phones may be used during class only to compose select assignments, or access course materials on Canvas. Please do your classmates and instructor the courtesy of avoiding social media and other distractions not related to our course pursuits during class.

Please note that no unexcused late work will be accepted. If you cannot make a deadline, you must contact me BEFORE THE DUE DATE. For your convenience, most assignments accommodate "submission windows," which allow you to turn in work for a few days after the posted deadline. Note that Canvas automatically deducts 5% per day after the posted due date.

If an assignment is due the day you are absent, submit it. If you are unable to submit it within the submission window, you must contact me to make arrangements. Note that some assignments and activities, such as Peer Review Workshops, cannot be made up.

Finally, if you are absent, you are responsible for finding out what you missed. You can do this by reviewing the weekly Canvas module, checking the syllabus, and asking a classmate for updates. Please do not email me with requests for updates.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be 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/"

IMPORTANT COURSE POLICIES

Use of AI in English 2 is permitted with conditions. Please refer to **AI_Policy.English 2** (see Start here: Week 1 module).

You are encouraged to use the tutoring services on campus, but all work in ENGL 2 is expected to be your own. If the instructor has reason to believe otherwise, he or she has the right to require additional evidence that the work is your original writing.

Statement of Plagiarism

The English Department adheres strictly to the rules against plagiarism as set forth in the SJSU Catalog. The Catalog defines plagiarism as follows:

The act of representing the work of another as one's own (without giving appropriate credit) regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements. "Content generated by an Artificial Intelligence third-party service or site (AI-generated content) without proper attribution or authorization would also be a form of plagiarism." (Center for Integrated Professional Development, Illinois State University (2023). Plagiarism at SJSU includes but is not limited to:

The act of incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts thereof, or the specific substance of another's work, without giving appropriate credit, and representing the product as one's own work; and

Representing another's artistic/scholarly works such as musical compositions, computer programs, photographs, paintings, drawing, sculptures or similar works as one's own.(available at http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html - Student Responsibilities - Discipline – Policy on Academic Dishonesty – 1.0 Definitions of Academic Dishonesty)

Should a student plagiarize in any ENGL 2 course, the instructor will report the student to the University's Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. Also, points will be deducted from the assignment/course depending on the severity of the policy violation.

How to avoid plagiarism. It is not always easy to recognize whether you are legitimately citing the work of others or whether you have "crossed the line" into plagiarism. To become acquainted with what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, the following SJSU website offers definitions, policies, and links to useful websites offering guidelines in plagiarism prevention. Students are fully accountable for understanding these policies. https://libguides.sjsu.edu/plagiarism/how-to-avoid-plagiarism

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the Canvas Learning Management System course login website. You're responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU to learn of any updates. For help with using Canvas see Canvas Student Resources page.

▤ Program Information

Welcome to this General Education course.

SJSU's General Education Program establishes a strong foundation of versatile skills, fosters curiosity about the world, promotes ethical judgment, and prepares students to engage and contribute responsibly and cooperatively in a multicultural, information-rich society. General education classes integrate areas of study and encourage progressively more complex and creative analysis, expression, and problem solving.

The General Education Program has three goals:

Goal 1: To develop students' core competencies for academic, personal, creative, and professional pursuits.
Goal 2: To enact the university's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and justice by ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to serve and contribute to the well-being of local and global communities and the environment.
Goal 3: To offer students integrated, multidisciplinary, and innovative study in which they pose challenging questions, address complex issues, and develop cooperative and creative responses.

More information about the General Education Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) can be found on the GE website (https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php).

📶 Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

GE Area 1B: Critical Thinking and Writing

Area 1B courses develop students' understanding of the relationship of language to logic. By engaging students in complex issues requiring critical thinking and effective argumentation, 1B courses develop students' abilities to research and analyze important topics and to construct their own arguments on issues that generate meaningful public debate and deliberation. Courses include explicit instruction and practice in inductive and deductive reasoning as well as identification of formal and informal fallacies of language and thought. Completion of Area 1A (Written Communication I) with a minimum grade of C- is a prerequisite for enrollment in Area 1B. Completion of Area 1B with a grade of C- or better is a CSU graduation requirement.

GE Area 1B Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of an Area 1B course, students should be able to:

1. locate, interpret, evaluate, and synthesize evidence in a comprehensive way, including through library research; and integrate research findings into oral and written arguments through appropriate citation and quotation;
2. use a range of rhetorical and logical strategies to articulate and explain their positions on complex issues in dialogue with other points of view;
3. identify and critically evaluate the assumptions in and the contexts of arguments; and
4. use inductive and deductive logic to construct valid, evidence-supported arguments and draw valid conclusions.

Writing requirement

This class requires a minimum of 6000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form.

📖 Course Materials

Much of the material we will read, view, and listen to in English 2 will be provided via hyperlink on Canvas. Other materials you will identify yourself in the process of research.

We will be exploring argumentation as it appears in journalism—mostly in the New York Times— and elsewhere in public discourse, especially in widely available publications and broadly accessible media.

📝 Course Requirements and Assignments

Essay: Analysis of Argumentation

An examination of how a speaker or writer (rhetor) uses language and rhetorical strategies and appeals to influence their audience; involves identifying and evaluating claims, evidence, reasoning, development.

Multimodal Presentation: Multimodal Remix

A remix of the research and conclusions from your analysis of argumentation into a multimodal presentation that asserts a claim, provides evidence, and persuasively explains sound reasoning.

Participation: Short Assignments and Classroom Activities

GELO reflections, discussion posts, classroom activities

Homework

Journals: Brief analytical and reflective responses to prompts associated with select readings and lecture materials.

Writing sample(s): Occasional brief responses to lecture materials

Portfolio: submitted to the English 2 program assessment team, a culminating portfolio of work you have completed in English 2 and a reflection essay considering this general education learning objective:

locate, interpret, evaluate, and synthesize evidence in a comprehensive way, including through library research; and integrate research findings into oral and written arguments through appropriate citation and quotation.

✔ Grading Information

Breakdown

Grade	Range	Notes
A+	97-100	
A	94-96	
A-	90-93	
B+	87-89	
B	84-86	

Grade	Range	Notes
B-	80-83	
C+	77-79	
C	74-76	
C-	70-73	
D+	67-69	
D	64-66	
D-	60-63	
F	0-59	
Analysis of Argumentation	25%	An examination of how a speaker or writer (rhetor) uses language and rhetorical strategies and appeals to influence their audience; involves identifying and evaluating claims, evidence, reasoning, development.
Developing an Argument	25%	A multimodal emix of the research and conclusions from your analysis of argumentation into a multimodal presentation that asserts a claim, provides evidence, and persuasively explains sound reasoning.
Participation	25%	Reflections Discussion posts Classroom activities
Homework	25%	Journals: Brief analytical and reflective responses to prompts associated with select readings and lecture materials. Writing sample(s) Portfolio: A culminating portfolio of work you have completed in English 2 and a reflection essay considering this general education learning objective: *locate, interpret, evaluate, and synthesize evidence in a comprehensive way, including through library research; and integrate research findings into oral and written arguments through appropriate citation and quotation.*

Criteria

Major assignments and essays are generally evaluated according to rubrics.

Most shorter assignments such as reflections and discussion posts are graded complete/incomplete.

🏛 University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 (PDF) (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information (https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php)](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

📅 Course Schedule

ENGL 2: Critical Thinking and Writing, Sections 17 and 30

SPRING 2026 Course Schedule

Schedule subject to change; any updates will be communicated with fair notice in class and via Canvas. Refer to Canvas modules for details on required reading and assignment submission windows..

When	Topic	Notes
Lecture/Discussion Week 1 | Jan. 22	Introduction and Welcome	Discussion Post 1
Lecture/Discussion Week 2 | Jan. 27-29	English 2 Overview	
Lecture/Discussion Week 3 | Feb. 3-5	Analysis of Argumentation	Journal 1 English 2 Writing Sample
Lecture/Discussion Week 4 | Feb 10-12	Analysis of Argumentation	Project 1 | Summary and Proposal Reflection 1
Lecture/Discussion/Workshop Week 5 | Feb. 17-19	Analysis of Argumentation	Project 1 | Peer Review Workshop
Lecture/Discussion/Workshop Week 6 | Feb. 24-26	Analysis of Argumentation	Project 1 | Process Draft Project 1 | Final Draft Reflection 2
Lecture/Discussion Week 7 | Mar. 3-5	Developing an Argument	Project 2 | Summary and Proposal Journal 2
Lecture/Discussion/Workshop Week 8 | Mar. 10-12	Developing an Argument	Project 2 | Storyboard

When	Topic	Notes
Halftime! Week 9 | Mar. 17-19 MLK Library	Developing an Argument	Thursday: Librarian Jane Dodge presents brief introduction to campus library and hands-on activities to support your work with Project 2. Project 2 | Text Draft Discussion Post 2
Lecture/Discussion Week 10 | Mar. 24-26	Developing an Argument	Project 2 | Revised Text Journal 3
Spring Break Week 11 | Mar. 30-Apr.		Spring Break
Lecture/Discussion/Workshop Week 12 | Apr. 7-9	Developing an Argument	Work-in-Progress Showcase Reflection 3
Workshop/Presentations Week 13 | Apr. 14-16	Developing an Argument	Project 2 | Peer Review Workshop
Workshop/Presentations Week 14 | Apr. 21-23	Developing an Argument	Project 2 | Final Draft Reflection 4
Presentations Week 15 | Apr. 28-30	Developing an Argument	Project 2 | Showcase Journal 4
Last Classes Week 16 | May 5-7	Portfolio, Reflection	English 2 Portfolio and final reflection essay Discussion Post 3 Brownies!
No Class Meetings Weeks 17 and 18 05/14/2026 3:00 PM - 3:00 PM English 2 Assessment Canvas Course	Final Deliverables	Final Deliverables Submit portfolio, including final reflection, to English 2 Assessment course