

First Year Writing

ENGL 1A

Spring 2026 Section 37 In Person 3 Unit(s) 01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026 Modified 01/21/2026

Course Information

ENGL 1A Course Content

Writing: Writing is at the heart of our class. Our exploration of writing will allow students to prepare for both academic and real-world writing scenarios. Assignments in Engl 1A will give students repeated practice in all phases of the writing process: prewriting, organizing, writing, revising, and editing. Students in Engl 1A are required to write a minimum of 8000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form. Specific descriptions and instructions for each assignment will be distributed in class and posted on Canvas.

Required Texts

- **There is no required textbook for Engl 1A. All reading will come from free online resources and links to existing publications.**
- We will also use podcasts, videos, and other multi-media texts, which will be posted on Canvas.

Theme: Our theme this semester is change. We'll ask questions together, such as:

- What are moments in your life that inspired transformation and growth?
- How are changing political beliefs and social trends shifting how you see the world?
- How is technology impacting your academic life? What does learning look like when ChatGPT can 'do' the work for us?
- How do we retain the messy process of human creativity when the world prioritizes speed and efficiency?

Course Requirements and Assignments

This Engl 1A Course will have four major writing assignments and a final portfolio project, along with other short assignments, journal writing, and reading responses throughout the semester.

The four major assignments are:

1. Personal narrative essay
2. Text Evaluation and Rhetorical Analysis Project (optional to partner)

3. Persuasive essay
4. Multimodal Composition
5. Final Portfolio and Reflection Essay (required for all Engl 1A students at SJSU)

My Policy about AI Use

This course is founded on the idea that AI cannot “write” because writing requires thinking and only humans can think. We will explore how AI can be a helpful **tool**, but like a calculator in a math class, a bot cannot replace YOUR human learning and understanding.

Assignments in Engl 1A are designed to require your ideas, your stories and your personal opinions in order to reach a passing grade. You will not be able to pass Engl 1A with Ms. Thorp by using AI to “do” your writing for you. I will use AI detection tools along with the information I gather about your writing style and voice to identify when students are generating text with AI vs. writing. Any assignment completed with AI-generated text will get an automatic failing grade.

However, it is ultimately up to you to decide whether or how to shortcut your own learning process through technology. To help you think about your own boundaries with AI, you will write a short personal AI ethics manifesto at the start of the semester and be required to reflect and report on any AI use when submitting final drafts of your major assignments.

A note about using Grammarly to ‘fix’ your mistakes: I would prefer that you not use AI tools to correct small ‘mistakes’ and instead express your own ideas in your own words, no matter how imperfect the draft may be. All rough drafts in English 1A will get full credit, so there is no need to use these tools for most of your writing this semester.

Using Grammarly can cause Turnitin to flag a paper as being created with AI-generated text. If you choose to use Grammarly, it is up to you to make sure that you don’t auto correct so much of your writing that you trigger the AI flag on Turnitin.

Academic Integrity

As a SJSU student, your commitment is to learning. The [University Academic Integrity Policy](#) requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. For more information, review the [Student Conduct and Ethical Development website](#).

Policy for late work

All assignments are due on time. Any assignment (including outlines and rough drafts) that is submitted late will automatically lose 10% of possible points. **Assignments will not be accepted more than seven days past the due date without permission from the instructor.**

Important Note: Life happens! If you have an emergency and can’t submit an assignment on time, reach out and let me know. I’m willing to be flexible, but only if you communicate with me proactively. I don’t want to hear the day after an assignment is due that you need an extension. It is my experience that letting

work drag out leads to continued missed deadlines and increases the odds of a student not passing. **If you find yourself falling behind, come talk to me so we can figure out a plan to get you back on track.**

Final Exam: There is no 'final exam' for Engl 1A. Instead, all SJSU students enrolled in Engl 1A are required to gather writing samples and write a portfolio essay at the end of the semester that is due on the date of the final exam as dictated by the SJSU schedule. For Spring 2026, the portfolio and reflection essay are due on **May 14 at 3pm**. No extensions are possible as this is the final exam date as per SJSU.

Time Commitment

Success in ENGL 1A 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. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Diversity and class discussions

SJSU is a wonderfully diverse learning environment, and this course is designed to build on the strength of our different backgrounds. However, our readings and class discussions may raise sensitive and challenging questions, and in preparation we will create norms for how to deal with potential conflict or inappropriate comments during the first week of the semester. I hope we will try to interact with each other from a place of mutual respect and learning, which requires both an open mind and an open heart. Although I doubt it will come to this, any behavior that threatens the learning environment and the safety of the classroom will not be tolerated.

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

We will use Canvas extensively for Engl 1A, so it is critical that students check Canvas regularly, including messages from the instructor. Be sure to check all messages and announcements every day. **Do not ignore or miss email messages from me or any of your professors!**

In person course

Tuesday, Thursday, 1:30 PM to 2:45 PM, Dudley Moorhead Hall Room 347

Course Description and Requisites

English 1A is an introductory course that prepares students to join scholarly conversations across the university. Students develop reading skills, rhetorical sophistication, and writing styles that give form and coherence to complex ideas for various audiences, using a variety of genres.

Satisfies 1A. Written Communication I (Formerly Area A2).

Prerequisite(s): Completion of Reflection on College Writing

Grading: Letter Graded

Classroom Protocols

Requirements and Important Information about Engl 1A with Ms. Thorp

Please bring your fully-charged computer, paper, and something to write with to every class. You will not be able to complete in class assignments with just a phone!

In class participation: Engl 1A is an in-person course and regular participation is essential to succeed. Attendance will be noted each day, and points will be assigned for the work we do in each class period. Engl 1A is an interactive class and in class work cannot be made up at home.

In class assignments cannot be made up without explicit permission from the instructor. Do not try to submit work for days that you missed class and assume that I won't notice you were absent. Students who have specific conflicts that prevent attending class should email me to discuss how to catch up on the work they missed.

My Teaching Philosophy

Engl 1A is a GE required course for every SJSU student and my goal is that ***every student will pass this class with at least a C-***. I believe that every student has the capacity to succeed in Engl 1A if they put in the work, regardless of their prior writing skills or experience. In short, you all belong in this college writing classroom, and you can do this!

If you are struggling, I am here to help you. Please reach out if you have questions, and be sure to respond to my email if I write to check in on you.

Success in Engl 1A requires five simple things:

- 1) **Do all assignments on time** and submit via Canvas at or before the due date
- 2) **Come to class prepared** and ready to participate in partner and group activities
- 3) **Engage in the writing process** by drafting, revising and re-writing each major assignment
- 4) **Read all communication through Canvas.** I expect you to keep up with all communication I send about Engl 1A, including both:
 - Canvas email messages
 - Announcements on the Canvas page for our course
- 5) **Reach out to me if you need help or fall behind.** Being a freshman is hard, and the struggle is real. If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed, don't ghost the class or stop doing your work. Instead, send me a message and we'll find a way to get you back on track. **Asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness!**

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 \(https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php\)](https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php).

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

GE Area 1A: Written Communication I

Written Communication I courses cultivate an understanding of the writing process and the goals, dynamics, and genres of written communication, with special attention to the nature of writing at the university. A grade of C- or better designates that a student has successfully oriented reading and writing practice in English to support college level research and learning and to share learning with others. Area 1A is a prerequisite for Area 1B: Critical Thinking. Completion of Area 1A with a grade of C- or better is a CSU graduation requirement.

GE Area 1A Learning Outcomes

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

1. demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the content, context, effectiveness, and forms of written communication;
2. perform essential steps in the writing process (prewriting, organizing, composing, revising, and editing);
3. articulate an awareness of and write according to the rhetorical features of texts, such as purpose, audience, context, and rhetorical appeals;
4. integrate their ideas and those of others by synthesizing, explaining, analyzing, developing, and criticizing ideas effectively in several genres; and
5. demonstrate college-level language use, clarity, and grammatical abilities in writing.

Writing requirement

Area 1A courses require a minimum of 6000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form.

Course Materials

All materials will be made available for free on Canvas. No textbook required.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Students will write a minimum of 8000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form.

Grading in Engl 1A Sect 04

Focus on the writing process: A central goal of Engl 1A this semester is for students to learn the writing process, so most major assignments will require drafting, writing, revising, and re-writing to earn full credit. A significant percentage of your final grade for major assignments will be based on revision, so engaging in the writing process is critical to getting a good grade in Engl 1A. We will spend time in class reviewing each other's writing and I will provide extensive comments on rough drafts in Canvas. All final drafts must reflect revision from initial drafts and show that the student has incorporated feedback received from peers and the instructor. (See University Grading System Policy F18-5 for more information about grading at SJSU).

Extra credit and revision

Extra credit: There are four required Reading Responses throughout the semester. Students can choose to do up to two additional Reading Responses from the bonus list on Canvas to gain extra points. Any extra Reading Responses are due by the date of the final exam: May 14 at 3pm.

Revision: To emphasize the writing process, all major assignments in Engl 1A will have multiple rough drafts and the final grade will include points for revision. Students may revise and resubmit any major assignment, but they must meet with me individually before submitting to discuss specific ways the writing could improve. Any assignment resubmitted without a prior meeting will not be regraded.

A note about grammar and Standard English rules

Every writer comes with their own unique voice, background, language skills and knowledge of grammar rules and conventions. In our exploration of language, voice, and rhetoric this semester, we will consider when and how to use different forms of English depending on the genre and purpose of your writing. For formal essays, we will be learning the rules and conventions of college writing and will review grammar and punctuation together as needed. If you struggle with issues such as grammar, essay structure, or punctuation, you are not alone. I'm happy to set up time to go over any specific questions you have.

Classroom Participation

In class work and participation is worth about 20% of your final grade in Engl 1A. As such, it is the easiest part of your grade to control. It will be difficult to pass Engl 1A this semester without coming to class. No notes or slide decks will be posted online for Engl 1A.

However, life happens: If you have extenuating circumstances that prevent you from coming to class (illness, family emergency, etc.), please let me know as soon as possible. (See F15-12, University Policy, Attendance and Participation for more information about SJSU policy on attendance). If you choose not to come to class and do not contact me to explain why you are absent, you will lose the points for that day's assignments and participation.

Note: In class assignments cannot be made up without permission from the instructor.

Points and Grades

Below is a breakdown of the number of words per assignment, the points per assignment and how the assignment relates to your final grade for the course. In addition, you can see how each assignment contributes to the course goals or "General Learning Outcomes" (GELO) for Engl 1A. Please note that the cumulative grade that displays on Canvas does not reflect the grade that you will get in Engl 1A, as it does not account for attendance and class participation.

Course Requirement	Point Total	% of Final Grade	GELOs covered
Participation and in class work	200	20%	GELO 1, 2
AI Intro Project	70	7%	GELO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Personal Narrative Essay	180	18%	GELO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Text Evaluation and Rhetorical Analysis	135	13.5%	GELO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Persuasive Essay	180	18%	GELO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Multimodal Composition	120	12%	GELO 2, 3, 4,
Final Reflection Essay and Portfolio	75	7.5%	GELO 2, 5
Reading Responses (4)	40	4%	GELO 1, 2, 3, 5
TOTAL	1000		

✓ Grading Information

Grading Information

Your final grade in the course will be recorded as a letter grade, ranging from A to F. I will use + and – grades to refine the evaluation within the letter-grade categories. **NOTE: The cumulative grade that displays on Canvas may not reflect the grade that you will get in Engl 1A, as there are points for attendance that will not show up online.**

Please note: As a GE course, students must receive a C- or higher in Engl 1A to get the Area A2 GE credit toward their degree. Students who do not earn at least a C- in English 1A must retake it.

NOTE! It is my highest goal that every student who comes to class regularly and submits their work will pass this Engl 1A course. If you are falling behind and worried about failing, don't ghost me! Instead, reach out and let's find a path forward towards successful completion.

Course grades will be using the following scale:

Grade	Points	Percentage
A	940 to 1000	94 to 100%
A -	900 to 939	90 to 93.9%
B +	870 to 899	87 to 89.9%
B	840 to 869	84 to 86.9%
B -	800 to 839	80 to 83.9%
C +	770 to 799	77 to 79.9%
C	740 to 769	74 to 76.0%

C -	700 to 739	70 to 73.9%
D +	670 to 699	67 to 69.9%
D	640 to 669	64 to 66.9%
D -	610 to 639	61 to 63.9%
F	BELOW 610	

Grade Criteria

Requirements for each assignment will vary, but in all cases, grades will reflect the assignment's effectiveness, which is broken down into four major areas: content, organization, revision, and language/style. Please see the rubrics for specific grading criteria for each assignment.

No one can do it alone! Take advantage of the help available at SJSU

SJSU has established many resources for getting academic and emotional help. Please take advantage of these free resources when you are feeling stressed or anxious about a writing assignment in Engl 1A (or other classes).

SJSU Writing Center is located in the Main Library on the Second floor and offers free 1:1 tutoring and workshops. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the Writing Center website at <https://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>.

SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit Counseling Services website at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>.

SJSU Peer Connections offers support and workshops on a wide variety of topics including improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving your first semester at SJSU, and more. Visit Peer Connections website at <https://www.sjsu.edu/peerconnections/index.php> for more information.

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](#), 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 [Syllabus Information web page](#).

.Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please be sure to register with the [Accessible Education Center \(AEC\)](#).

If you need accommodations or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible or see me during office hours. For more information, see the [Presidential Directive 97-03](#).

Accommodation to Students' Religious Holidays

San José State University shall provide accommodation on any graded class work or activities for students wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays before the add deadline at the start of each semester. If such holidays occur before the add deadline, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed. See [University Policy S14-7](#).

Technology Requirements for Engl 1A

You must bring a fully charged laptop or ipad with a keyboard to every class. You cannot complete the required work for Engl 1A on a phone. SJSU has devices and laptops available for free for students to borrow for the semester.

For information about how to borrow technology, visit the [SJSU Student Information Technology website](#). The student tech centers are located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

University Policies

Per [University Policy 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>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

See Canvas page for Section 37 for all course assignments and flow.