

First Year Writing

ENGL 1A

Spring 2026 Section 04 In Person 3 Unit(s) 01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026 Modified 01/25/2026

Contact Information

Professor Vento-Chun

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Office: Faculty Office Building 217

Office Hours

Tuesdays 12:45pm-2:45pm; by appointment or on Zoom.

What's up demons, it's me...ya boi. You may call me Professor Vento-Chun or Professor VC or just Professor. I am excited to be your instructor this semester and look forward to learning about and from you folks! I am a graduate student here at SJSU pursuing an MFA in writing. I have a B.A. degree in English from CSU East Bay. I have spent the majority of my career working in hospitality, primarily sales and distribution. I have too many hobbies, passions, and interest to list (that's hyperbole) but the most pertinent one for this class is that I love to write! However, I do not expect everyone in this class to love writing as much as I do. I hope that I can show y'all ways that writing can be useful to you and your future goals.

I plan to be in my office during our office hours, so please feel free to drop by. In general, it is preferable if you let me know you're coming so I don't step out for a walk or to make copies when I know you're coming. It also helps me make time/space for all my students. But if you just want to pop in, do it! If you'd prefer a Zoom meeting, just let me know so I can set it up.

I'm also available BY APPOINTMENT. Unless I have another specific commitment, I'm usually pretty flexible about meeting. Send me a message, and we can set up a time. You can do this even if all you want to do is chat.

It can sometimes take me a day or two to answer emails. It's not a "you" thing; it's a "me" thing. I'm always trying to juggle work, family, and personal responsibilities, and one of the tools I have at my disposal is boundaries. If you need a speedy reply, you can try to call my office, stop by office hours, or let me know in your subject line that you need a timely response.

**paragraph 1 and 2 are policies I have adopted from Professor Skinnell's 2024 Syllabus. Accessed on July 3rd, 2025.*

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

Diversity: SJSU is a diverse campus. As such, our course is designed to include an emphasis on a diverse range of voices and viewpoints. We will engage in integrated reading and writing assignments to construct our own arguments on complex issues that generate meaningful public discussions.

Writing: Writing is at the heart of our class. Our exploration of writing will allow us to prepare ourselves and each other for academic and real-world writing scenarios. Assignments give students repeated practice in all phases of the writing process: prewriting, organizing, writing, revising, and editing. Our class requires a minimum of 8000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form. More specific descriptions and instructions will be distributed for all major assignments in class.

Reading: There will be a substantial amount of reading for our class, some of which will come from texts I select (listed below) and some of which will be from sources you locate.

Final Experience: We will compile a portfolio at the end of the semester that includes selected examples of your writing produced for our class, as well as materials from your RCW Canvas course. We will talk more about the portfolio later in the semester.

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, 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 1A, 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.

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.

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>)

Attitude

Come to class with a positive attitude. Be respectful and mindful. Students are expected to participate in class but not in a way that interferes with other students' learning. Honest learning comes with controversial topics that are important to discuss but at no point in time should students implicate another student's morality and ethics when discussing difficult topics. If students participate in any hate speech, oppressive acts, or hostile behavior they will be removed from the class promptly.

Sick Policy

Please, do not come to class sick. Ya girl is too busy to get sick and if I could fail people who get me sick I would (This is a joke). Take time to rest and recuperate and don't get anyone else sick. I understand that it can be nerve wracking missing class and assignments but there is enough flexibility built into this course that you will be okay to miss a couple of classes. If/when you are sick and will miss class just shoot me an email to let me know and I will do my best to accommodate you from far, far away.

Distractions

Tech is allowed in my class along with anything else you need to be successful but if it becomes a distraction it will have to go. We need to be respectful of everyone's time and learning environment and I will not tolerate anything less.

We are all adults and things happen so if you need to make a call, send an email, or text please step outside to take care of it.

Food Policy

I feel like I shouldn't have to state this but other professors have told me horror stories so here it goes:

Please, eat! Feel free to bring not distracting/stinky snacks to class. If you need a larger/more substantial meal that's cool too but don't let it become a distraction, don't make a mess, clean up after yourself etc. Do not have a door dasher come into our classroom (yes, this has happened).

Communication

Students are expected to respond to professor request. If I am reaching out to you it is for your benefit. Email and Canvas are the primary ways of communicating with students. It is highly recommended that students have their emails forwarded to their phones. I will not hunt students down to communicate important information it is your responsibility to stay up to date. "Not seeing" an email or announcement will not be a sufficient excuse for missing deadlines, changes, or requests.

AI Policy

The university's current stance on the use of AI is as follows: "Submitting AI-generated work is categorically a violation of SJSU's academic integrity policy, which includes a definition of plagiarism as "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."

However, we *will* be working with AI in this class. Specifically, we will be using generative AI (yes, like ChatGPT) and learning how to use it ethically (can it be used ethically??), investigating use cases, etc. But you will have advance notice of these assignments. **It will be clear in the assignment instructions if you may use AI. If an assignment does not explicitly state that you may use AI it means you are not authorized to use it. An example of explicit will be: **AI use allowed for this specific assignment.** If it does not have that statment it means it is not allowed.**

My general rule of thumb is that if you must ask yourself "am I plagiarizing by using AI?" or "is this plagiarizing?" or "Am I allowed to use AI on this assignment?" you probably should not do it. But please contact me or come to my office hours if you need help understanding plagiarism or are ever unsure if something is or is not considered plagiarism.

If a student is suspected of using AI they will be asked to meet with the professor to discuss the assignment. The meeting is not to get anyone in trouble it is simply to understand, clarify, and rectify any mistakes. Depending on the outcome of the meeting the student may be asked to resubmit the assignment. If a student chooses not to meet with the instructor and is not communicative within 5 days the student will receive a 0 on the assignment and the professor will report them to the Student Conduct and Ethical Development department for Academic Integrity violation.

Plagiarism

Yeah, don't do it. For your sake and mine let's just avoid it, yeah?

The university has a strict policy regarding plagiarism, and you can access that policy by clicking the link below.

<https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/conduct-processes/academic-integrity.php>

San José State University defines plagiarism as 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.

Engaging in plagiarism could result in an automatic failing grade for the assignment, and reporting to the Office of Student Conduct.

Plagiarism can happen even without intent. Below are two links to help students avoid accidental plagiarism.

<https://library.sjsu.edu/writeandcite/plagiarism>

<https://library.sjsu.edu/start-your-research/i-need-help-avoiding-plagiarism>

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

I believe that education should be as affordable as possible which means I will not require any of my students to purchase textbooks. There are so many wonderful free materials accessible to us that we will not need to purchase a textbook(s). I will be providing all the reading materials online through canvas. There will be a variety of online materials and readings.

Cheryl E. Ball and Drew M. Loewe. Bad Ideas About Writing. West Virginia University Libraries Digital Publishing Institute. The book is open-source textbooks, which means they can be downloaded in whole or in part for free at <https://writingspaces.org/node/1706>

Other materials: Electronic device, pen or pencil, paper.

Course Requirements and Assignments

The semester will be broken down into 3 units. Each unit will focus on building specific skills that lend themselves to a larger writing project. Some of those skills will build upon themselves as the units progress.

Participation and in class assignments:

When students are in class they are expected to participate in a meaningful and genuine way. That means having more to say other than "I agree" or rephrasing/repeating another student. It can be difficult to generate an idea that feels new or insightful which is why students are also allowed to ask questions and still have that count as participation.

There will be many in class assignments that can't be made up if a student isn't present. Some of those assignments will be important scaffolding projects that are pertinent to unit 1, 2, & 3 essays. If a student is absent for those assignments, it is their responsibility to reach out to the instructor to discuss potential options for a make-up. This, however, does not guarantee that another option will be available. It is up to the discretion of the instructor to determine if a make-up assignment will be made available.

Unit 1 Essay: Cultural Artifact

This is a personal narrative essay where students will write about a cultural artifact that has had a significant impact upon their life. More instructions and prompt will be given in class.

This essay meets the CLO's 1, 2, and 5.

Requirements: 12pt font (TNR/Calibri/Arial), double spaced, 800-1000 words.

Unit 2 Essay: Rhetorical Analysis

After students have completed unit 1 they will use that same artifact in the unit 2 essay. In this essay they will analyze the rhetoric of the cultural artifact and determine how effective (or in effective) the artifact is at its specific goals. More information and essay prompt will be given in class.

This essay meets CLO's 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Requirements: 12pt font (TNR/Calibri/Arial), double spaced, 1000-1500 words.

Unit 3 Major Writing Assignments:

Instead of a third major essay unit 3 will be broken down into 3 assignments: Annotated Bibliography, SWOT Analysis, and a unit 3 presentation. This unit will focus on students chosen fields of study and give them the opportunity to transfer writing knowledge to those fields. The annotated bibliography will require students to thoughtfully research, compile, and analyze information. The SWOT analysis requires students to compile, criticize, and synthesize information. Finally the unit 3 presentation will take everything they learned from the annotated bibliography and SWOT analysis and develop an idea based upon their findings.

These major assignments meet CLO's: 1, 4, and 5.

Annotated Bibliography requirements: 5 approved sources, 100 words minimum per source, MLA or APA Format.

SWOT Analysis requirements: 12pt font (TNR/Calibri/Arial), double spaced, 450-600 words.

Presentation: Either solo or in approved groups. 5-7 minutes, presentation outline containing 50-100 word explanation of solution or 50-100 word argument. More information will be given on all three assignments.

Grading Information

Determination of Grades

Part of my teaching goals is to create a more demystified and collaborative classroom experience. One of the ways I intend to achieve that goal is to give my class the opportunity to discuss and vote on the grading policies. Now, don't get too excited, I can and will veto any idea that I find to be unreasonable. The goal here is for students to become more comfortable advocating for themselves, giving students the opportunity to think critically about systems, and ultimately to empower students during their educational journey.

I care wayyyyyyy more about growth, process, ability to learn, and genuine effort than I do about a perfect product. Writing is not taught to train people how to create a certain product; writing is taught to teach people how to learn, which means each essay grade will be determined by the growth from your first draft to your final draft. **Students will be allowed to revise 1 major essay or assignment after it has received a final grade and feedback from me. To be able to revise a final grade students will have to meet with me first.**

Late Work

Late work will only be accepted if the student has a discussion with the professor and receives permission from the professor. Rarely will a student be able to turn in a major assignment or a scaffolded assignment (example: essay drafts, outlines, etc...) in late but exceptions can be made with a conversation. Please note that the late work does not apply to in-class assignments, activities, and discussions.

If for any reason a student begins to fall behind in class and feels that they are in jeopardy of not passing please meet with me so that we can make a plan of action to remedy the situation.

General Grading Policies

Missing or receiving a zero on any major assignment (ex: unit 1 essay, unit 2 essay, unit 3 project) will inhibit students from passing the class. This also means that if a student uses AI on any of the major assignments they will be given a zero on the assignment and automatically fail the class.

Please note that a grade of at least C- is required to pass this course.

Extra Credit

Extra credit is dope and I plan to offer a lot of it!

Extra credit is an opportunity for me to incentivize the behavior and learning I want from you all! I look at it as also being a last chance for students to learn something new.

Grade Breakdown

Major Assignments: 25%

Weekly Writing Response: 20%

In Class Activities: 20%

Workshop/Peer Review: 20%

Extra Credit: 15%

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

1/26	During Class: Introductions, syllabus overview. Genre game.
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1/28	During Class: Finish Letter to Grandma. Class discussion: What are we doing and why are we doing it? Intro Reflection Letter.
2/2	Introduce unit 1 major essay.
2/4	TBD/discuss unit 1.
2/9	writing response.
2/11	In class activity.

2/16	Due: Unit 1 essay subject. During Class: Warm Up. ICR: Failure is Not an Option by Allison D. Carr page 76. Determine grading rubric.
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2/18	During Class: Genre Game
2/23	Due: Unit 1 essay check in. During Class: Warm up. Genre Game.
2/25	Due: unit 1 essay first draft.
3/2	TBD depending on class vote. Could be peer review day.

3/4	During Class: Workshop day.
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3/9	<p>Due: Unit 1 Major essay.</p> <p>During Class: Warm up. Essay discussion and reflection. Introduce Unit 2 major essay. What is Rhetoric?</p>
3/11	<p>During Class: Genre Game. Rhetorical Situation discussion.</p>
3/16	<p>During Class: Warm up. Practice identifying and analyzing rhetorical situations.</p>
3/18	<p>During Class: warm up. lyric analysis. Discussion Rhetorical appeals.</p>
3/23	<p>Due: Lyric/Figure rhetorical analysis.</p> <p>During Class: warm up. Practice identifying appeals.</p>
3/25	<p>Due: Rhetorical Analysis first draft.</p> <p>During Class: Warm up. ICA: Break up letter. MLA format. Why do we cite information? Search for sources. Writing day.</p>

3/30-4/3	<p>Spring break! No class!</p>
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4/6	During Class: Peer review/workshop day.
4/8	During Class: TBD. Research day?
4/13	Due: Rhetorical Analysis

4/15	Due: Professional annotated Bib. During Class: warm up. Annotated bib reflection. Professional SWOT analysis.
4/20	Due: Professional SWOT analysis. During Class: Professional SWOT reflection.
4/22	During Class: Warm Up. Work on portfolio and presentation.
4/27	Workshop.
4/29	Presentations

5/4	Presentations.
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	5/6	Presentations.
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	5/11	Portfolios and last minute work.
	5/13- 5/20	Finals week. No in person attendance.