

# Critical Thinking and Writing ENGL 2

Spring 2026 Section 03 In Person 3 Unit(s) 01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026 Modified 01/26/2026

## Contact Information

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## Course Information

English 2 fulfills the general education requirement for critical thinking and writing and will give you opportunities to explore different writing styles and rhetorical strategies, as you develop your own writing voice. The semester will progress through three segments: Memoir writing, Inquiry writing, and Persuasive writing, with three essays assigned respectively; and we'll write almost every day, frequently sharing our work in class. We'll learn from important models, reading and discussing short texts together; but most of what you study will be up to you – your personal interests and what you write about them supplying our primary content for discussion. I value honesty, curiosity, risk-taking, and fun (!); and the intellectual level of this course depends entirely on the investment and engagement you bring to it (I cannot emphasize that point enough).

## 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>).

## Important Classroom Policies

### Important Class Policies:

LATE/MAKE-UP WORK - In-person peer review is a critical element of our course, so 1st drafts must be on time and in class to receive full credit for the Otherwise, I'll accept late work... to a point. But **I don't give written feedback on late work** (come to my office hours to discuss); and I don't accept work by email attachment (all essays must be submitted via Turnitin in the appropriate Canvas module). Students may revise and resubmit any essay until May 7th.

ATTENDANCE: In-class participation is worth 30% of your final grade; so showing up is important. Save absences for "emergencies" and follow up with classmates about what you've missed; importantly, keep up with our Canvas site where there will be opportunities to makeup *some* classwork for *partial* **Check your email and Canvas announcements daily to stay informed.**

CELL PHONES (!!!) & DIGITAL DISTRACTIONS: If you're too distracted by your screen to pay attention in class, maybe you shouldn't be in class...? Seriously. For 75 minutes, twice a week, you're expected to be *present* and aware that your screen problem is everyone's problem... because it takes you away from us. Since COVID, cell phone addiction has become so grim and out of control, I have to put my foot down. Of course, you MAY use phones/iPads/computers for appropriate in-class activities; and if you need your phone for an urgent reason (family or work), just let me know ahead of time – I'm not unreasonable. Otherwise, **put your phone away.** Doodle or draw, instead:).

A.I. (!) & PLAGIARISM: **A.I. use is strictly forbidden in this course, including Grammarly, except when explicitly instructed by the professor to use it (which will happen).** Otherwise, using A.I. or another person's ideas, words, or artistic/scientific/technical work, without giving proper credit is considered plagiarism. A student who copies or paraphrases published work (from the internet, print, or otherwise) without properly identifying their sources is committing plagiarism. A student who submits work generated or revised by A.I. is committing plagiarism. Instead, see what happens when you **own your voice and become proud of your writing**, at whatever stage of growth.

TRIGGER WARNING: Sensitive topics may arise, personal or political, as we have open discussions about assigned texts and each other's writing throughout the semester. Every student should feel comfortable voicing their point of view, as well as demonstrate tolerance and curiosity for understanding the diverse point of views among us. **Leave judgements at the door, and be kind.** Please note: no audio or video recordings are permitted without permission from the entire class.

## Program Information

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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 Goals

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- Confidence in reading, thinking, writing and presentation skills
- Awareness of rhetorical devices and strategies
- Discrimination of information and resources
- Advanced research skills: in library and on the field
- Appreciation for when to use A.I. and when not to use it
- Engaged and curious about your world
- "Happy" life values=)

## Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

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### 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

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**Required Course Materials:** an 8 ½ x 11" writing notebook and blue or black writing pen are required every class session; keep a pocket-folder devoted to English 2; occasionally, laptops will be required in class; otherwise, all course materials are available on our Canvas site.

## Course Requirements and Assignments

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### Course Requirements & Grades (%):

*Detailed instructions with specific criteria will be provided for all assignments.*

**30% - IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION & PREPAREDNESS:** Energetic discussions are vital to our learning community, so come prepared and participate eagerly. This requirement includes all in-classroom activities: listening; frequent writing and sharing of work with peers; engagement with classmates in small group, as well as whole class discussions; completion of reading or research homework – ready for class! (I may give pop quizzes, if too many students start slacking.)

**50% - ESSAY WORK:** Three original essays are required, including at least two drafts, and in-class peer review:

1. Memoir Essay (>1000 words) - Convey a meaningful personal story or experience. 1<sup>st</sup> Draft Due Thursday, February 19<sup>th</sup>
2. Inquiry Essay (>1200 words) - Investigate a topic that interests you and bring something new to the table. 1<sup>st</sup> Draft Due Thursday, March 26<sup>th</sup>
3. Persuasive Essay (>1000 words) - Take a stand on an issue that's important to you. 1<sup>st</sup> Draft Due Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>

**10% - ESSAY PRESENTATION** - Each student will give a five to ten-minute presentation on *either* their Inquiry Essay *or* their Persuasive Essay. Due Dates vary.

**5% - MEDIA PRESENTATION** - Each student will have five minutes (!) to present a favorite song, TV show, or video game to the class. Due Dates vary.

**5% - FINAL REFLECTION & PORTFOLIO**– To complete English 2, all SJSU students are required to submit a written reflection about their learning at the end of the semester, along with a portfolio of completed work. Due Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, by 11:59PM.

## ✓ Grading Information

### ENGLISH 2, GRADES AT A GLANCE:

REQUIREMENTS	A (+/-)	B(+/-)	C(+/-)
<b>IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION</b>  <b>30%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <i>Almost always</i> in class; prepared and engaged with learning activities.</li> <li>· Reading, research, and writing homework <i>almost always</i> done on time for class discussion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <i>Often</i> in class; prepared and engaged with learning activities.</li> <li>· Reading, research, and writing homework <i>often</i> done on time for class discussion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <i>Sometimes</i> in class; prepare and engaged with learning activities.</li> <li>· Reading, research, and writing homework <i>sometime</i> done on time for class discussion.</li> </ul>

<p><b>ESSAYS*</b></p> <p><b>50%</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Requirements are fully satisfied</li> <li>· Meaningful participation with <u>in-class</u> peer review; 1<sup>st</sup> draft is complete and on time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Shows solid effort to satisfy requirements</li> <li>· Solid participation with <u>in-class</u> peer review; 1<sup>st</sup> draft has some substance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Some requirements are satisfied</li> <li>· Some peer review effort.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ESSAY PRESENTATION</b></p> <p><b>10%</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Enthusiastic, well- prepared, &amp; well- informed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Some enthusiasm, preparedness, &amp; information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Little enthusiasm, preparedness, or information.. but you got up there</li> </ul>
<p><b>MEDIA PRESENTATION</b></p> <p><b>5%</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Enthusiastic, well- prepared, &amp; well- informed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Some enthusiasm, good information &amp; preparedness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Little enthusiasm, preparedness, or information.. but you got up there</li> </ul>
<p><b>FINAL REFLECTION &amp; PORTFOLIO</b></p> <p><b>5%</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· All requirements met; instructions followed vigilantly</li> <li>· Reflection is specific and meaningful, illustrating lessons of English 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Most requirements met; followed most instructions</li> <li>· Reflection alludes to <i>some</i> specific and meaningful content from English 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Some requirements met; many instructions missed</li> <li>· Little substance to reflection about English 2</li> </ul>

\*see individual assignments for complete grading criteria

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

COURSE CALENDAR (Subject to change!) SPRING 2026

### JANUARY

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> Class Introduction

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> Syllabus Review

Thursday. 29<sup>th</sup> Langston Hughes, "Salvation"  
Ryan Van Meter, "First"

### FEBRUARY

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> "Memoir Essay" & AI (in class)  
David Sedaris, "Let It Snow"

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> Jenny Lawson, "Stanley The Magical Talking Squirrel"  
Matthew Treacy, "She"

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> Lidia Yuknavitch, "Woven"

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> Memoir Topics Due  
Jaquira Diaz, "Beach City" (in class)

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> Philip Lopate, "On...Turning Oneself Into A Character"

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> MEMOIR ESSAY 1<sup>ST</sup> DRAFT DUE IN-  
CLASS PEER REVIEW

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> Memoir Essay 2nd Draft Due via TurnItIn on Canvas  
Roko Belic, *Happy* (in class)

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> "Inquiry Essay" & AI (in class)

### MARCH



Tuesday	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Exposure Labs, <i>The Social Dilemma</i>	
Thursday	5 <sup>th</sup>	Amy Cuddy, "Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are"	(in class)
Tuesday	10 <sup>th</sup>	Choose ONE from list: see Canvas Modules	
		Helen Fisher "Why We Love, Why We Cheat"(in class)	
Thursday	12 <sup>th</sup>	<u><a href="#">Inquiry Essay Topic Due</a></u>	
Tuesday	17 <sup>th</sup>	Peer Reviewed Article Due	
Thursday	19 <sup>th</sup>	Cultural Artifact Due	
Tuesday	24 <sup>th</sup>	Field Research Due	

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> INQUIRY ESSAY 1ST DRAFT DUE** **IN-**  
**CLASS PEER REVIEW**

**\*\*\* SPRING BREAK MARCH 30<sup>TH</sup> – APRIL 3<sup>RD</sup> \*\*\***

## APRIL

Tuesday	7 <sup>th</sup>	<u><a href="#">Inquiry Essay Presentations!</a></u>	
Thursday	9 <sup>th</sup>	<u><a href="#">Inquiry Essay Presentations!</a></u>	
		<u><a href="#">Inquiry Essay 2nd Draft Due via Turnitin on Canvas</a></u>	
Tuesday	14 <sup>th</sup>	"Persuasive Essay" & AI (in class)	
Thursday	16 <sup>th</sup>	Purdue OWL, "Using Rhetorical Strategies for Persuasion"	
		Laura Rowley, "As They Say, Drugs Kill"	
		Alice Walker, "Am I Blue?"	
Tuesday	21 <sup>st</sup>	Andrea Dworkin, "Why Women Must Get Out of Men's Laps"	
		Chuck Klosterman, "Monogamy"	
		<u><a href="#">Persuasive Essay Topic Due</a></u>	
Thursday	23 <sup>rd</sup>	<u><a href="#">Persuasive Essay Resources Due</a></u>	
Tuesday	28 <sup>th</sup>	<b><u>PERSUASIVE ESSAY 1<sup>ST</sup> DRAFT DUE</u></b>	<b>IN-</b>
		<b><u>CLASS PEER REVIEW</u></b>	
Thursday	30 <sup>th</sup>	Final Reflection & Portfolio Instructions (in class)	
		Grades & Course Evaluations (in class)	

**MAY**

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> Persuasive Essay Presentations!

[Persuasive Essay Final Draft Due via Turnitin on Canvas](#)

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> Persuasive Essay Presentations!

*LAST CLASS MEETING*

**ALL COURSEWORK DUE by 11:59PM on Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup>**

**FINAL REFLECTION & PORTFOLIO must be submitted via**

**"ENGLISH 2 ASSESSMENT" COURSE ON CANVAS**

***HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!!!***