

First Year Writing

ENGL 1A

Spring 2026 Section 38 In Person 3 Unit(s) 01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026 Modified 01/26/2026

Contact Information

Instructor: Ryan H. Smith [he/him]

Office Location: FOB 110

Email: ryan.smith@sjsu.edu

Office Hours: In-person and [via Zoom \(https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/9559123677\)](https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/9559123677), by appointment. Subject to change.

Class Day/Time: T/TH 1:30 PM-2:45 PM

Classroom: Sweeney Hall 410

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

Classroom Protocol

While engaging with peers and assignments, students are to be respectful of the unique characteristics and qualities that make each of us who we are. In class, discussion is welcome and encouraged, but comments found to be intentionally offensive, disrespectful, or combative are not allowed. Likewise, in-class

discussions, texts/readings/viewings, and projects/activities may include materials that can be contentious and even potentially upsetting to you or others. We may encounter materials that differ from and perhaps challenge our ideas, beliefs, and understanding of reality. Students are encouraged to discuss issues about such materials with me. If for any reason such material causes you alarm, I encourage you to speak with me directly at your earliest convenience.

Excused absences: If you miss a day of class, then you miss it. If assignments are due the day you missed, you need to have any possible extensions arranged and approved with me beforehand. In-class writings cannot be made-up or turned in at a later date, as I partially track participation using those writings. Anyone seeking an excused absence must provide to me documentation from a legal, medical, or academic source (this includes athletics, clubs, etc) stating when and why you were absent.

Restroom breaks: If you need to use the restroom at any point during class, there is no need to ask, wait, or otherwise make a show of it. Simply leave and go do your business.

Cell phones/Recording devices: If you need to use your cell phone to search something, text, etc, by all means. We all understand this is a classroom, however, and we're not here to engage with your cell phone activity (music, videos, orders, games, etc). You're spending money to be here and this is my place of employment- be courteous to your peers and to me. If you need to take a call or something else that would interrupt class, quietly step outside. Additionally, any recording devices in use during class time without prior consent from the university, is unlawful and prohibited. Please see accommodations notice below.

Food and drink: I don't mind if you need to have a snack in class because reasons. Drinks are always fine, too (no alcohol, of course). What I do mind is bringing/ordering an entire meal to class. Show up late if you need to finish eating or bring enough food for everyone (I have zero allergies, FYI).

Accommodations Notice: any student that needs accommodations or assistive technology due to a disability should work with the [Accessible Education Center \(AEC\) \(\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/aec/), and the instructor. If you have special needs or accommodations requests, see me as soon as possible. Failure to do so may result in interruption or slowing of accommodations process.

SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The university emphasizes responsible citizenship and an awareness of ethical choices inherent in human development. Academic honesty and fairness foster ethical standards for all those who rely on the integrity of the university, its courses, and its degrees. University degrees are compromised and the public is defrauded if faculty members or students knowingly or unwittingly allow dishonest acts to be rewarded academically. This policy sets the standards for such integrity and shall be used to inform students, faculty, and staff of the university's Academic Integrity Policy.

STUDENT ROLE

The San José State University Academic Integrity Policy requires that each student:

1. know the rules that preserve academic integrity and abide by them at all times, including learning and abiding by rules associated with specific classes, exams, and course assignments;

2. know the consequences of violating the Academic Integrity Policy;
3. know the appeal rights and procedures to be followed in the event of an appeal;
4. foster academic integrity among peers.

You can access the SJSU's comprehensive academic integrity policy here:

<https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/SJSU-Academic-Integrity-Policy-F15-7.pdf>
[\(https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/SJSU-Academic-Integrity-Policy-F15-7.pdf\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/SJSU-Academic-Integrity-Policy-F15-7.pdf)

CSU COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement and Protocol

All students must submit their COVID-19 vaccination requirements and comply with the Presidential [Directive 2021-02 \[pdf\]](https://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/PD%20081821%20Student%20COVID%2019%20Policy%20REVISED%208%2016%2022.pdf) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/PD%20081821%20Student%20COVID%2019%20Policy%20REVISED%208%2016%2022.pdf>) and [CSU COVID-19 Policy](https://calstate.policystat.com/policy/11030468/latest/?mkt_tok=NjYzLVVLUS050TgAAAF_qklzrMX8plxxAqtcwpY5ITMSBKropI0_7T_g0vBzrchVR00_JHe-8CQyIQypJKMzenwjL7ca-X5aYcTPKu_pDSWxE5wvJWQgEAav5Ptv) (https://calstate.policystat.com/policy/11030468/latest/?mkt_tok=NjYzLVVLUS050TgAAAF_qklzrMX8plxxAqtcwpY5ITMSBKropI0_7T_g0vBzrchVR00_JHe-8CQyIQypJKMzenwjL7ca-X5aYcTPKu_pDSWxE5wvJWQgEAav5Ptv). This requirement includes completing the COVID- 19 vaccine primary series and booster shot, when eligible.

- SCCPHD has a link for potential vaccine access: <https://vax.sccgov.org/> (https://vax.sccgov.org/?mkt_tok=NjYzLVVLUS050TgAAAGGRzdb6plnIRezjtpGag7teUw9PZUO8xoh1zyt_JK4UHi2r_EccgwwHSPmAyGC3zLKHWRPr6a-TNnMc0V2ultSD7IKfp-idTEaTGY2w7dwwCA). This site will help you determine whether you are currently eligible for a vaccine.

Please note: While masks are not required inside our classroom at this time, if anyone so chooses to wear a mask while in class their choice will be honored and respected. If guidelines change and masks are required in class again, there will be a zero-tolerance policy for anyone who refuses to wear a mask.

Should you test positive for COVID (or any contagious illness) at any point during the semester, please contact me ASAP, so that we can make any necessary accommodations. The CDC recommends you remain home for a minimum of 5 days until you test negative- this recommendation needs to be taken seriously.

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 Goals

Course Format

This course meets on campus, in-person. I will use Canvas, the SJSU Learning Management System, to publish instructional materials, agendas, readings, activities, and assignments. In Canvas, you will submit your drafts, assignments, and reading responses with peer responses. Because of this, **you will need regular access to the Internet and a computer, as well as your SJSU email account.**

To produce and share your work, you will need software that allows you to save files as .doc or .docx, or .pdf. Canvas gives you access to Google docs for collaborations, as well as presentation software. Canvas includes video and audio recording abilities with Panopto. If you need help to access these technologies, please contact the Student Technology Service Desk.

As a student, you are entitled to free access to Microsoft Office, so visit [this link to the Microsoft Office \(https://ischool.sjsu.edu/post/microsoft-office\)](https://ischool.sjsu.edu/post/microsoft-office) 365 website if that is something you need (you must use your SJSU email, which you can access by visiting [this link to the most popular one SJSU applications \(https://one.sjsu.edu/\)](https://one.sjsu.edu/) and then by clicking on "My Email G Suite").

Course Management Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the Canvas course website. I will use Canvas messaging and announcements to update you, so it is your responsibility to check regularly for emails from me via Canvas. They will populate in your sjsu.edu email account (which you will need to set-up access for), in your Canvas inbox, and in any other email you link in Canvas.

ENGL 1A - Course Description

ENGL 1A

First Year Writing 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.

Section 38

In this course, we'll explore how the relationship between food and lived experiences can inform many facets of our lives. Utilizing different writing styles, tonality, verbiage, and maybe even some demonstrations, we'll see how the broader topic of "food" lends itself to multimodal elements as part of the

writing experience. By exploring the history of food through trends, traditions, as well as cultural and societal conventions, you'll begin to understand how we rhetorically argue what food means to us and how it currently affects our writing sensibilities more than ever. The goal of this course is to help you develop your voice, and also to articulate it effectively and persuasively by understanding the rhetorical situation of audience, purpose, and context, and by using the rhetorical strategies you learn and observe from others.

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>)

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 8000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form.

Course Materials

Required Readings and Materials

On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction, 30th Anniversary Edition by William Zinsser. ISBN 9780060891541

If You Can't Take the Heat: Tales of Food, Feminism, and Fury by Geraldine DeRuiter. ISBN 9780593444481

(Both available for purchase or rental, online or in-person at the [Spartan Bookstore](https://sjsu.bncollege.com/) (<https://sjsu.bncollege.com/>.)

Supplemental articles, readings, etc. (available through Canvas/online, unless otherwise noted.)

A laptop or desktop computer with internet connectivity. (Laptops and iPads may be checked out from the SJSU [Student Computing Service](https://library.sjsu.edu/student-computing-services/lending-policies) (<https://library.sjsu.edu/student-computing-services/lending-policies>)) at no cost.)

Writing utensils and college ruled paper.

Resources

SJSU Resources

The University provides all students several resources to help you successfully learn in this course. The services provided include counseling and psychological care, mentoring and tutoring, access to food and housing, to technology, and writing support. Please visit the links below for more information about these services.

SJSU Library

Our library liaison is [Peggy Cabrera](https://libguides.sjsu.edu/prf.php?account_id=41832) (https://libguides.sjsu.edu/prf.php?account_id=41832). She is available to help you find resources to do your work in this course. She has set up for students a [library resource page](https://libguides.sjsu.edu/english) (<https://libguides.sjsu.edu/english>) for the Department of English and Comparative Literature. The tutorials on this page will help you to understand academic research processes and tools, and they will help you to develop an eye for the most valuable resources for your work.

SJSU Writing Center

Located on the 2nd floor of the King Library, the Writing Center offers appointments with tutors who are well trained to assist you as you work to become a better writer. The Writing Center offers both one-on-one tutoring and workshops on a variety of writing topics. All services are free. To make an appointment or to refer to the Center's online resources, visit the Writing Center website.

SJSU Peer Connections

Peer Connections is your online, campus-wide resource for mentoring (time management, note taking, study skills, getting involved, etc.), tutoring (undergraduate writing, lower division Math, Science, History, Humanities, etc.), supplemental instruction (review and study sessions for select courses), and learning assistants in classes across campus. All services are free. Make appointments to meet with a tutor or mentor by visiting Spartan Connect (Links to an external site.) For more information on services, online workshops, and a step-by-step guide to making an appointment, please visit the Peer Connections website.

- [Accessible Education Center](https://www.sjsu.edu/aec/) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/aec/>)

- [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\) \(https://www.sjsu.edu/counseling/\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/counseling/)
- [Information Technology \(https://www.sjsu.edu/it/self-service/index.php\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/it/self-service/index.php)
- [Peer Connections \(https://www.sjsu.edu/peerconnections/index.php\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/peerconnections/index.php)
- [SJSU Cares \(https://www.sjsu.edu/sjsucares/\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/sjsucares/)
- [Spartan Food Pantry \(https://www.sjsu.edu/sjsucares/get-assistance/spartan-food-pantry.php\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/sjsucares/get-assistance/spartan-food-pantry.php)
- [Student Technology Resources \(https://libguides.sjsu.edu/sttc\)](https://libguides.sjsu.edu/sttc)
- [Student Wellness Center \(https://www.sjsu.edu/medical/index.php?utm_source=studenthealth&utm_medium=301&utm_campaign=studenthealth-reorg\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/medical/index.php?utm_source=studenthealth&utm_medium=301&utm_campaign=studenthealth-reorg)
- [Writing Center \(https://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/)

Course Requirements and Assignments

Course Requirements, Time Commitments, & Assignments

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.

ENGL 1A is a 3-unit course. That means we are signing up to do a minimum of 9-hours of study per week just for this class. 2½ hours will be class time. The remaining 7½ hours a week, you will work on your own or with your peers to prepare for class and complete reading and writing assignments. This class requires a minimum of 8,000 words, at least 4,000 of which must be in revised final draft form. I have designed the work using this math to guide us. I will refer to it often to help you manage this workload over the semester.

Dish Demonstration: cooking, baking, or preparing your best dish - (GELOs 2, 3, 4)

Using your preferred video recording technology, record yourself making the dish you're best known for. Demonstrations should make preparation of the dish accessible for all viewers in their own kitchen, while also breaking down the finer points in a written step-by-step recipe.

Tasting Menu: Three course meal with descriptions - (GELOs 1, 3, 4)

Design a menu (with descriptions) based around three dishes you know how to make, one of which holds special meaning to your lived experience. Defend menu inspiration, design and dish choices, as well as begin thinking about how you can prepare one of these dishes in real time.

Meaningful Dish: the history of a food dish that means something to your life - (GELOs 3, 5)

Highlight both the objects and moments that have helped to create a meaningful dish to your life within a 1000-word photo essay.

Restaurant Criticism: Channel your inner food critic - (GELOs 2, 3, 5)

Referencing examples of restaurant criticisms, explore a new restaurant to you, organizing your thoughts, feelings, and experience around your visit, reviewing it critically and thoroughly.

In-class writings: Selection of writings from prompts given in class - (GELO 5)

Students will engage in writing activities in response to prompts given in class (no make-ups). You will also participate in peer review activities.

Workshops - (GELO 2, 4)

Small groups and entire class workshops will provide focused critique and analysis of existing works, mediums, and students' proposed writing projects.

Reading Responses - (GELO 1)

Students will reflect on and ask questions about that week's readings as they pertain to their own lived experiences.

Class participation

Discussions, peer reviews of presentations, attendance, etc.

Extra Credit

At instructor's discretion.

Grading Information

Determination of Grades

Grading, Late Policy, and Missed Work

This course must be passed with a C- or better, as a CSU graduation requirement. **This is a course following the standard A-F scale, utilizing minimal grading (with the exception of in-class writings and your final major assignment).** You must submit all work on time. Any unexcused late work will be graded down a full letter grade once, after the announced deadline has passed. If there is a reason you cannot make a deadline (because life happens) contact me BEFORE THE DEADLINE, so that we may mitigate the situation with a plan of action.

Misuse of these policies by any one student may result in having this option removed for all students. Extra credit may be offered at various points throughout the semester at my discretion. **All proposed regular assignment deadlines will be Mondays @ 11:59 PM PST with work uploaded to Canvas (unless otherwise indicated).** Deadline dates and times are subject to change, but I will notify the class of any proposed changes in advance. While some assignments can be made-up for more points, others cannot as they are time-sensitive items and/or reflect your attendance/participation. Without prior notice, if you can't make it to class you forfeit those points for that day, so be wise about your time and responsibilities for the semester. Additionally, if you are more than 10-minutes late to class or leave early, you lose partial points for that day's In-class Writing.

Standard grading scale:

97-100% = A+

94-96% = A

90-93% = A-

87-89% = B+

84-86% = B

80-83% = B-

77-79% = C+

74-76% = C

70-73% = C-

67-69% = D+

64-66% = D

60-63% = D-

59% or less = F

Use of generative AI (including sites like Grammarly) on written assignments/components will probably result in a high AI score through Turn It In software licensed through Canvas. To be plain, a high AI score will result in a lower grade in this class. If I get a report showing a high AI score, the burden of proof is on the student to show they did not use AI, but I'm always willing to adjust grades with sufficient evidence.

AI grading scale:

0-25% AI score = possible 100-80% grade
26-50% AI score = possible 79-70% grade
51-75% AI score = possible 69-60% grade
76+% AI score = possible 59% < grade

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

ABSOLUTELY SUBJECT TO CHANGE (like for real- expect this to change)

* : Extra Credit

UNIT 1: Forming a Critique	Week 1	HELLO! In class: Introductions, syllabus, Canvas (all the fun stuff!) For next class: Update Canvas account, set up SJSU email; Reading Response #1
	Week 2	DUE: Reading Response #1; updated Canvas account, SJSU email In class: Discuss RR #1; The Components of a Critique; Bad Thesis activity For next class: Reading Response #2
	Week 3	DUE: Reading Response #2 In class: Writing exercise; Lateral Reading; How and where to source information; MLA formatting; discuss RR #2 For next class: Reading Response #3 *CLA Event, Feb. 5: Danzy Senna, Hammer Theatre @ 6:30 PM

	Week 4	DUE: Reading Response #3 In class: Writing exercise; Adobe Express presentation/scanvenger hunt; discuss RR #3 For next class: Reading Response #4; Restaurant Criticism
UNIT 2: Family and Meaning	Week 5	DUE: Reading Response #4; Restaurant Criticism In class: Writing exercise; Small group presentations; Slang/Language Broker activity; discuss RR #4 For next class: Reading Response #5 *CLA Event, Feb. 5: Venita Blackburn, Hammer Theatre @ 6:30 PM
	Week 6	DUE: Reading Response #5 In class: Writing exercise; Archives tour; discuss RR #5 For next class: Reading Response #6
	Week 7	DUE: Reading Response #6 In class: Writing exercise; Meaningful Dish examples; discuss RR #6 For next class: Reading Response #7
	Week 8	DUE: Reading Response #7 In class: Writing exercise; Small group or class workshop/activity; discuss RR #7 For next class: Reading Response #8; Meaningful Dish +Cinequest Film Festival, Mar. 10-22, various locations/times
UNIT 3: Building Meaning for an Audience	Week 9	DUE: Reading Response #8; Meaningful Dish In class: Writing exercise; Small group presentations; AMA Day; discuss RR #8 For next class: Reading Response #9
	Week 10	DUE: Reading Response #9 In class: Writing exercise; Student Manifestos; discuss RR #9; Tasting Menu examples For next class: Reading Response #10
		SPRING BREAK
	Week 11	DUE: Reading Response #10 In class: Writing exercise; "What Are We Arguing?" activity; Small group or class workshop/activity; discuss RR #10 For next class: Reading Response #11; Tasting Menu

UNIT 4: Demonstrate Your Skills	Week 12	<p>DUE: Reading Response #11; Tasting Menu</p> <p>In class: Writing exercise; small group presentations; discuss RR #11</p> <p>For next class: Reading Response #12</p> <p>*FYW Digital Literacy Showcase, Apr. 17: Digital Humanities Center, MLK Library @ 2-4 PM</p>
	Week 13	<p>DUE: Reading Response #12</p> <p>In class: Writing exercise; Dish Demonstration examples; discuss RR #12</p> <p>For next class: Reading Response #13</p> <p>*CLA Event, Apr. 23: Kim Addonizio, Hammer Theatre @ 6:30 PM</p>
	Week 14	<p>DUE: Reading Response #13</p> <p>In class: Writing exercise; Portfolio; Small group or class workshop/activity; discuss RR #13</p> <p>For next class: Reading Response #14; SOTES</p>
	Week 15	<p>DUE: Reading Response #14; SOTES</p> <p>In class: Final questions, discuss RR #14; Portfolio; PaRtY???</p> <p>*Reed Magazine, Issue 159 Gala: Student Union Theatre @ 5 PM</p>
	Week 16	<p>Last regular day of classes is Monday, May 11</p>
FINAL	19 May	<p>DUE: Portfolio, Dish Demonstration, revisions/late work, extra credit.</p> <p>Final Exam: all above work due by 11:59 PM (NO IN-PERSON CLASS)</p>