

Critical Thinking and Writing Section 03

ENGL 2

Fall 2024 3 Unit(s) 08/21/2024 to 12/09/2024 Modified 08/21/2024

Contact Information

- Instructor: Dr. Kristian O'Hare
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- Office Location: [Faculty Office Building_\(FOB\) 215](#)
(https://www.google.com/maps/place/Faculty+Offices+Building/_@37.3346036,-121.8848429,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x808fccb90f698713:0xc1c8bc36cc853ee6!8m2!3d37.3345994!4d-121.8826542?shorturl=1)
- Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12-1pm in office / Wednesdays 12-1pm ([Zoom](#) (<https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/8719216308>)), or by appt.
- Class Meeting Time/Location: TuTh 9-10:15am / Boccardo Business Center Room 221

Course Description and Requisites

English 2 is a course that 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.

GE Area(s): A3. Critical Thinking and Writing

Prerequisite(s): Completion of GE Area A2 with a grade of "C-" or better.

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

Letter Graded

Classroom Protocols

ENGL 2

This course is open to all students needing to fulfill GE Area A3 (Critical Thinking). 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-Specific Theme: Advocacy, Censorship, and the Power of Persuasion

This course is centered on the exploration of advocacy, censorship, and the persuasive power of language and media in shaping public opinion and social justice. Over the semester, students will engage in critical thinking and rhetorical analysis, examining how various forms of communication—written, visual, and digital—are used to influence, challenge, and reflect societal values.

In the first unit, students will build foundational skills in critical thinking and reading, focusing on how misinformation and conspiracy theories can distort public discourse and lead to actions like censorship and book banning. The second unit will deepen their understanding of rhetoric through the analysis of documentary films, exploring how visual storytelling is used as a tool for advocacy and social change. In the final unit, students will apply their research and argumentative skills to the contentious issue of book banning, constructing a well-reasoned, evidence-based essay that advocates for their position on this critical topic.

By the end of the course, students will have developed a nuanced understanding of how language, media, and rhetoric intersect with social justice issues, and how these tools can be harnessed to advocate for change in a complex, often polarized world.

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.

Attendance Policy and Late Work

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. I understand that illnesses and emergencies happen in everyone's life, but this class is designed to be interactive and participatory. You can't participate if you aren't here. An absence may be excused with proper documentation. Please see [University Policy F69-24 \(https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf), "Students should attend all meetings of their classes, not only because they are responsible for material discussed therein, but because active participation is frequently essential to ensure maximum benefits for all members of the class."

Please note that recurring absences will harm your participation grade because you will not be able to make-up in-class activities/assignments.

Tardiness

It is also very important that you arrive to class on time. When you are late you miss important information, and walking in late disrupts another person's learning. If you arrive more than 15 minutes late, you will be marked absent. If you do arrive late, enter the room quietly, take a seat near the door, and do not disrupt the work we are doing.

Late Work

Your paper is due **ON or BEFORE** the due date. You can turn it in any time until the due date. After that, **the grade drops 10 points per day.**

Classroom Behavior

Class sessions are short and require your full attention. Cell phones should be on silent and put away when entering the classroom; all earpieces should be removed (not even one earpiece is allowed). Laptops or tablets may be used to access course readings and assignments; with that said, no other work should be done, no checking email, no social media, no gaming. Note: I reserve the right to ask you to leave the classroom if you are being disruptive.

Students are expected to participate respectfully in class, to listen to other class members, and to comment appropriately. I also expect consideration and courtesy from students. Professors are to be addressed appropriately and communicated with professionally.

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.

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>).

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 A3: Critical Thinking and Writing

Area A3 courses develop students' understanding of the relationship of language to logic. By engaging students in complex issues requiring critical thinking and effective argumentation, A3 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 A2 (Written Communication I) with a minimum grade of C- is a prerequisite for enrollment in Area A3. Completion of Area A3 with a grade of C- or better is a CSU graduation requirement.

GE Area A3 Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of an Area A3 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 Practice: Students will write a minimum of 6000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form.

Course Materials

- There is **no required** textbook for this course; instead, I have uploaded all assigned readings onto Canvas in Modules. You must have these readings in class, for I will be asking you specific questions and pointing out key passages from these texts. In addition, I will include lectures on grammar and mechanics, so you are responsible in reviewing these lectures; you should consider these slideshows as you would a grammar textbook, for they will help improve your writing in this course.
- I have provided a list of recommended books at the SJSU bookstore. Your final paper/presentation will be using one of these recent challenged or banned books. Refer to Essay #3 Assignment for more specifics.

- A journal (either paper or digital) for class notes, writing exercises, daily observations, workshop responses, etc.
- Dictionary and Thesaurus. Being writers, it is important to know what words mean and to vary your word choice. There are free apps available.
- Access to a desktop, laptop, or tablet.

Course Requirements and Assignments

:: Essays

Throughout the semester, you will be required to write three (3) essays. The topic(s) and guidelines for each of the assigned essays will be posted in the course schedule (Modules) and in Assignments. All essays must be submitted into Canvas for credit on the specified due date. The set of instructions outlines my expectations and the purpose behind the assignment. I will also include a rubric that will break down the specific parameters for failing, passing, or exceeding in terms of performance.

:: Reading

Reading will be assigned for every class. You are responsible for doing the reading before we meet each week. Not only must you read a lot of material, but also you must read deeply, beyond the surface, and understand the material. Failure to keep up with the reading will cause you to fall behind and seriously dent our ability to hold meaningful discussions in class.

:: In-Class Work

Active participation is a crucial part of success in this class. Students will be expected to work in small groups and participate in group discussions, peer reviews, and other in-class activities. Be prepared for unannounced quizzes or activities on the readings or classroom discussion. Students must be present for all in-class activities to receive credit for them. In-class work cannot be made up. Peer-review sessions require that students provide constructive feedback about their peers' writing. In general, students are expected to contribute constructively to each class session. If you miss a peer-review session, your essay will be graded down one full letter grade.

:: Class Participation

The success of our course depends on each of you being prepared to participate. Please make sure to bring copies of all reading materials to class on the day that we'll be discussing them (either on your laptop or tablet or, preferably, a hard copy). Effective participation entails being an engaged reader.

Effective participation entails being an engaged listener and balanced contributor. If you tend to talk a lot in class, please try to leave room for other students to speak. If you tend to be quiet in class, please make an effort to add to our conversation. Participation can take many forms, including:

- offering a comment or reflection about the readings during class
- posing a question or responding to others' questions
- identifying a passage or section that you find difficult to understand

- sharing an insight from your writing assignment
- listening carefully and respectfully to other student's contributions.

:: Writing Portfolio

At the end of the semester you will compile a portfolio of your writing that documents how you met the learning goals of the course.

:: Assignment Word Count and Learning Goals

ASSIGNMENTS	WORD COUNT	GELO
Essay #1*: Analyzing the Impact of Misinformation or a Conspiracy Theory on Public Discourse	500-750	2-5
Essay #2*: Rhetorical Analysis of Documentary Film	750-1000	2-5
Essay #3*: The Banned Books Argumentative Research Project	1000-1200	1-5
In-Class Writings, at-home writings, Prewriting Activities, Group work, Peer Review Workshops	3000 Words	2-5
Portfolio Self-Reflection and Bibliography	500	1-5

* - *assignment requires rough draft and final draft*

✓ Grading Information

The department's standard grading scheme consists of the following: "Requirements for particular assignments will vary, but in all cases essay grades will reflect the paper's effectiveness, which is broken down into three major areas: content (this includes maturity and sophistication of thought), organization, and expression.

- An "A" range essay is organized and well-developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment, written in a unique and compelling voice. It will show the student's ability

to use language effectively with a solid command of grammar, mechanics, and usage.

A "B" range essay demonstrates competence in the same categories as an "A" essay, but it may show slight weakness in one of these areas. It will respond to the topic suitably and may contain some grammatical, mechanical or usage errors.

A "C" range essay will complete the requirements of the assignment, but it will show weaknesses in fundamentals, such as development. It may show weakness in mastery of grammar, mechanics, usage, or voice.

A "D" range essay will neglect to meet all the requirements of the assignment or may be superficial in its treatment of the topic. It may lack development or fail to stay on topic. It may contain grammatical, mechanical, and/or usage errors that interfere with reader comprehension.

An "F" essay does not fulfill the requirements of the assignment.

A+ (100-98); A (97-94); A- (93-90); B+ (89-87); B (86-83); B- (82-80); C+ (79-77); C (76-73); C- (72-70); D+ (69-67); D (66-63); D- (62-61); F (<60)

Your grade in Canvas is not representative of your grade in this course: I factor in overall performance (participation, professionalism, attendance, etc.). No grade haggling. I do not negotiate grades. If you are concerned with your grade (especially by midterm) and want to know how to do better in the future, I welcome appointments to discuss possible strategies for improvement.

Breakdown

Unless I make changes and announce otherwise, the overall breakdown of graded assignments will be calculated as followed:

- Writing Assignment #1/Group Work: Identifying and Analyzing Misinformation or Conspiracy Theory: 20 points
- Writing Assignment #2: Deconstructing Visual Rhetoric: 10 points
- Writing Assignment #3: Let's Talk Moms For Liberty: 10 points
- Writing Assignment #4: Start Work on Essay #3: 10 points
- Essay #1: 100 points
- Essay #2: 100 points
- Essay #3: 100 points
- Self-Reflection/Assessment Portfolio Submission: 20 points
- Participation: 100 points
 - Attendance, Discussion, In-Class Writing Activities, and Group Work

SJSU Academic Integrity Policy

A student's commitment to learning, as evidenced by his or her enrollment at San Jose State University, and the University's Academic Integrity Policy require all students to be honest in their academic course work. Faculty are required to report all infractions to the office of Judicial Affairs. The policy on academic integrity can be found [here \(https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/SJSU-Academic-Integrity-Policy-F15-\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/SJSU-Academic-Integrity-Policy-F15-)

[Z.pdf](#)). The SJSU rules against plagiarism are set forth in the SJSU Catalog, which 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.

Plagiarism at SJSU includes, but is not limited to: (1) 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. It is the role and obligation of each student to know the rules that preserve academic integrity and abide by them at all times. This includes learning and following the particular rules associated with specific classes, exams, and/or course assignments. Ignorance of these rules is not a defense to the charge of violating the Academic Integrity Policy.

ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) TOOLS USAGE

Since reading, writing, and critical thinking skills are integral to the learning outcomes of this course, all assignments should be prepared by you, the student. Therefore, any use of artificial intelligence tools, such as ChatGPT, to complete essays or other assignments constitutes a violation of the University's [Academic Integrity Policy](https://sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-7.pdf). AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.

Students should keep a comprehensive draft history as a precaution as this is the easiest way to protect the integrity of your work in the age of AI as a college student. Any submissions that contain evidence of AI usage will require an instructor conference in person or via Zoom.

If you have questions about what constitutes a violation of this statement, please contact me.

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

Schedule/Calendar below is subject to change. Always check Canvas for the most up to date information on assignments, readings, and due dates.

Week	Date	Readings, Assignments, and Due Dates
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One	Thurs August 22nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go over Course Syllabus, Expectations, and Introductions
Two	Tues August 27th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit 1: Critical Thinking and Reading - Misinformation, Disinformation, and Conspiracy Theories Critical Reading Guidelines for Critical Thinking/Writing WATCH: Exploring the links between political polarization and declining trust in news media Media Bias Chart
Two	Thurs August 29th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misinformation, Disinformation, and Fake News Separating Fact from Fiction WATCH: John Oliver's Ep. Misinformation INFOGRAPHIC: Spot Fake News FACT-CHECKING RESOURCES
Three	Tues Sept 3rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WATCH: How a social media and misinformation "hall of mirrors" impacts Democracy <p>Reading Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following Elon Musk's lead, Big Tech is surrendering to disinformation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrating Quotes
Three	Thurs Sept 5th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twitter and TikTok Lead in Amplifying Misinformation, Report Finds Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Truth About the Birth Control Misinformation Flooding Social Media
Four	Tues Sept 10th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> INFOGRAPHIC: Conspiracy Theories WATCH: John Oliver Ep. Conspiracy Theories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get into Groups and begin work on Identifying and Analyzing Misinformation or Conspiracy Theory Assignment

Four	Thurs Sept 12th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ○ WATCH: The Psychology Behind Conspiracy Theories • ○ Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Anyone can fall for 'fake news,' conspiracy theories: The psychology of misinformation" • Writing Assignment #1 DUE by 11:59pm
Five	Tues Sept 17th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing First Draft • Lecture: PIE Method • Lecture: Comma Splices, Fragments, and Run-On's
Five	Thurs Sept 19th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Review Essay #1
Six	Tues Sept 24th	<p>Unit 2: Rhetorical Analysis - Documentary Films as Tools for Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESSAY #1 DUE • LECTURE: Rhetoric • INFOGRAPHIC: Rhetorical Appeals • Watch: <i>Policing the Police 2020</i> (part 1)
Six	Thurs Sept 26th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish <i>Policing the Police 2020</i> • GROUP WORK: Focus on Rhetorical Appeals\
Seven	Tues Oct 1st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WATCH: Kids Caught in the Crackdown • GROUP WORK: Visual and Auditory Elements
Seven	Thurs Oct 3rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WATCH: Separate, But Unequal • Writing Assignment #2: Deconstructing Visual Rhetoric
Eight	Tues Oct 8th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DUE: Writing Assignment #2: Deconstructing Visual Rhetoric Watch: <i>Through the Night</i>

Eight	Thurs Oct 10th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-Class Work on Rhetorical Analysis Essay
Nine	Tues Oct 15th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture: The Rhetorical Analysis Essay • HANDOUT: Rhetorically Accurate Verbs • HANDOUT: Transitional Words and Phrases • SAMPLE ESSAY: Rhetorical Analysis of "Super-Size Me"
Nine	Thurs Oct 17th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEER-REVIEW: ESSAY #2
Ten	Tues Oct 22nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-Class: Go over ALA's Banned Books website, introduction to topic, and watch <i>The ABCs of Book Banning</i>
Ten	Thurs Oct 24th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WATCH: 60 Minutes Story on Book Banning • See the full list of 97 books parents tried to ban from Beaufort, South Carolina school library shelves
Eleven	Tues Oct 29th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WATCH: War of words: The fight over banning books • Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ What's behind the national surge in book bans? A low-tech website tied to Moms for Liberty ◦ Writing Assignment #3: Let's Talk Moms For Liberty
Eleven	Thurs Oct 31st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WATCH: How One Queer Friendly Book Club Thrives in the Era of Book Bans • Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Book challenges are fueled by parents' objections to LGBTQ themes ◦ Nearly 30% of Gen Z adults identify as LGBTQ, national survey finds
Twelve	Tues Nov 5th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The History of Book Banning • Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The Republicans' Project 2025 is disastrous for books

Twelve	Thurs Nov 7th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-Class Writing: Start Work on Essay #3
Thirteen	Tues Nov 12th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The Dangerous Lesson of Book Bans in Public School Libraries
Thirteen	Thurs Nov 14th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WATCH: Library book ban attempts are at an all-time high. These librarians are fighting back • Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Libraries can help end the culture wars. That's why they're under fire.
Fourteen	Tues Nov 19th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counterargument • Reading Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Don't Say Rape: How the Book Banning Movement Is Censoring Sexual Violence
Fourteen	Thurs Nov 21st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WATCH: Authors of top banned books discuss censorship ABCNL • DISCUSS: My Young Mind Was Disturbed by a Book. It Changed My Life. • Writing Assignment #4: Start Work on Essay #3
Fifteen	Tues Nov 26th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NO CLASS MEETING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ *Can Meet Online Via Zoom w/ Students on Final Papers
Fifteen	Thurs Nov 28th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanksgiving Holiday-NO CLASS
Sixteen	Tues Dec 3rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEER-REVIEW SUBMIT: ESSAY #3
Sixteen	Thurs Dec 5th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last Class Meeting: Go over E-Portfolio and Student Evals (SOTES)

Seventeen

Friday
Dec
13th

- Final Paper and Portfolio DUE by 11:59pm