**English 1B: That’s How We Do It—**



**American Customs and Rituals**

**San José State University, Spring 2009**

**Instructor: Daniel Hendel De La O**

**Section and Course Number: 65/22714**

**Time and Place: Tu/Th 3-4:15 PM/BBC 120**

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**Course Theme**

This semester's 1B course will examine America's unique customs and rituals. Because American society is pluralistic, it is not often thought of as being a ritualized culture. But from birth to death, Americans do indeed mark significant events and passages in their lives in unique ways. For instance, what do events, such as prom night and Super Bowl Sunday, say about us as a nation? While some human experiences transcend race, gender, nationality, and class to shape common practices, other rituals are as unique as the individuals who practice them. We will read a diverse assemblage of texts exploring how our customs and rituals define us as a people.

**Required Materials**

* Course Reader (Available the first week in February from Maple Press: 481 East San Carlos Street; Open M-F 8:30 AM-5 PM; Phone 408.297.1000)
* *All Over but the Shoutin’* by Rick Bragg (ISBN: 0679774025)
* *The Norton Field Guide to Writing* by [Richard Bullock](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/search-handle-url?%5Fencoding=UTF8&search-type=ss&index=books&field-author=Richard%20Bullock) (ISBN: 0393977765)
* Three blue books
* One yellow book

**Course Guidelines**

English 1B is the second course in SJSU’s two-semester lower-division composition sequence. Beyond providing repeated practice in planning and executing essays, and broadening and deepening students’ understanding of the genres, audiences, and purposes of college writing, English 1B differs from English 1A in its emphasis on persuasive and critical writing, its requirement for fewer but longer essays, and its introduction to writing informed by research. Students will develop sophistication in writing analytical, argumentative, and critical essays; a mature writing style appropriate to university discourse; reading abilities that will provide an adequate foundation for upper-division work; proficiency in basic library research skills and in writing papers informed by research; and mastery of the mechanics of writing.

Prerequisites:

Passage of Written Communication 1A or approved equivalent course and passage of the English Proficiency Test (EPT), unless exempt.

Objectives:

Building on the college-level proficiencies required in English 1A, students shall achieve the ability to write complete essays that demonstrate advanced proficiency in all of the following:

* Clear and effective communication of meaning
* An identifiable focus (argumentative essays will state their thesis clearly and will show an awareness, implied or stated, of some opposing point of view)
* An appropriate voice that demonstrates an awareness of audience and purpose
* Careful attention to review and revision
* Effective and correct use of supporting materials, including independent research (e.g. quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, and citing sources)
* Effective analysis, interpretation, evaluation, and synthesis of ideas encountered in multiple readings
* Effective organization and development of ideas at paragraph and essay levels
* Appropriate and effective sentence structure and diction
* Command of conventional mechanics (e.g. punctuation, spelling, reference, agreement)

**Course Content**

Writing:

Assignments shall emphasize those skills and activities in writing and thinking that produce 1) the persuasive argument, and 2) the critical essay, each of which demands analysis, interpretation, and evaluation. Writing assignments shall give students repeated practice in prewriting, organizing, writing, revising, and editing. Six to eight essays, appropriately sequenced throughout the semester and totaling a minimum of 8000 words, are required; at least one of these essays shall be informed by research. This minimum requirement excludes the final examination, journal writing, quizzes, and any brief or informal assignments. However, it can include the diagnostic essay and assignments that require major revisions to a previously graded or reviewed draft. A major revision is defined as a rethinking or reworking of an assignment and not a simple “correcting” of mechanical errors noted on the original. At least three (but no more than four) essays shall be written in class.

Students shall receive frequent evaluations of their writing from the instructor. In evaluating student writing, instructors shall comment on specific features of individual papers. Comments shall encourage and acknowledge student success as well as note errors and suggest ways to correct them.

Reading:

Reading shall include useful models of writing for academic, general, and specific audiences; readings shall be used consistently with the course goal of enhancing ability in written communication and reading. The majority of the reading shall be devoted to analytical, critical, and argumentative essays. Other types of texts, including poetry, drama, and fiction may also be assigned. Instructors shall help students develop and refine strategies for reading challenging, college-level material.

Research:

English 1B shall include an introduction to the library and to basic research strategies, including locating materials, using them effectively (e.g. quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing), and citing them properly. A traditional research paper or a series of short essays in which library research informs the student’s position or thesis is required.

Diversity:

Assignments (both reading and writing) shall address issues of race, class, and gender when appropriate, and the perspectives of women and diverse cultural groups shall be incorporated into course instruction and materials in an inclusive and comprehensive manner whenever possible.

The University Essay Final Exam:

A common essay final, graded holistically, shall count 20% toward the course grade. A single university-wide final will be developed around two college-level reading passages each semester by the English Department Composition Committee. All faculty members teaching individual sections will grade the examination holistically under controlled conditions. *Students must take the final exam in order to pass the course.*

**Participation**

As there is a participation component to you grade, active involvement in class is very important. Additionally, you are responsible for all materials assigned, presented, and discussed in class. You are expected to study the material beforehand and come prepared to discuss the readings in class. The use of laptops during class is restricted to note taking only. *If you come to class after the first 20 minutes, please wait for an appropriate moment to enter so as not to disturb the class.*

**Class Blog**

I have created a class blog (http://threepointeau.blogspot.com/) as a centralized place for assignments, reminders, documents, important dates, links, and general class information. It also contains an easy-to-reference archive of the course work. In addition, this website will be the location of the course’s e-Reader (eR). These Web articles will be required to complete some assignments. On the homepage, click on “San Jose State University: English 1B” to be routed to our page. Feel free to use the “Comments” function in each posting; it is often a helpful way to communicate with classmates. Gmail users also have the option of subscribing to the blog to keep up to date on all posts.

**Class Policies**

* All writing assignments are due on the dates indicated on the Website, which contains the most up-to-date schedule and information.
* A missed writing assignment can be turned in no later than the following class meeting after the due date; however, it will be lowered one letter grade. Writing assignments will not be accepted beyond the following class meeting after the initial due date.
* The research paper will not be accepted late.
* Without prior notification, missed in-class essays and presentations cannot be made up; if you must miss your presentation date, make prior arrangements with a classmate to switch days.

**Academic Dishonesty**

Presenting the ideas or writings of another as one’s own is plagiarism. Any act of plagiarism will result in automatic failure on the assignment and possible failure in the course and/or dismissal from the university. For this and every other course at SJSU, be familiar with the “Policy on Academic Integrity” in the SJSU Catalog.

**Disability Services**

If you require course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Students with disabilities that require special accommodations should register with the SJSU Disability Resource Center to receive additional resources.

**Outside Tutoring**

You are always welcome to see me during office hours; however, if additional help is required, I strongly suggest utilizing SJSU’s excellent Writing Center (Clark Hall, Suite 126; 408.924.2308; www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/). Appointments are required, so plan accordingly.

**English 1B Learning Objectives**

* Learning Objective 1: Students shall write complete essays that demonstrate the ability to refine the competencies established in Written Communication 1A (as summarized below).

1A Student Learning:

* + Students should be able to perform effectively the essential steps in the writing process (prewriting, organizing, composing, revising, and editing).
  + Students should be able to express (explain, analyze, develop, and criticize) ideas effectively.
  + Students should be able to use correct grammar (syntax, mechanics, and citation of sources) at a college level of sophistication.
  + Students should be able to write for different audiences (both specialized and general).
* Learning Objective 2: Students shall write complete essays that demonstrate the ability to use (locate, analyze, and evaluate) supporting materials, including independent library research, and identify key concepts and terms that describe the information needed.
* Learning Objective 3: Students shall write complete essays that demonstrate the ability to synthesize ideas encountered in multiple readings.

**Standards for Presentation of Work**

All typed work must be in MLA format. Look for online samples of presentation standards early in the semester. *Unstapled work will NOT be accepted.*

Please follow this heading for all typed work:

Name

ENG 1B, Sec. 65

Assignment

Date

**Grading**

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the official SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System"). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure. A passing grade in this course signifies that the student has developed those writing, reading, and research abilities necessary for upper-division work.

In English Department courses, instructors comment on and grade the quality of student writing, as well as the quality of the ideas being conveyed. All student writing will be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.

**Course Work**

Class sessions will employ a combination of lectures, group discussions, presentations, and writing workshops that will cover a range of activities, including analyzing, interpreting, outlining, revising, and editing. Again, all submitted work must be in MLA format.

Your assigned writing coursework will total at least 8,000 words; it includes:

* **Diagnostic Essay**: This in-class essay will be my first opportunity to evaluate your writing.
* **Comparative Analysis Essay**: In this in-class comparative analysis essay, you will compare and contrast our readings about life and death customs and rituals.
* **Biographical Essay**:You will write a personal essay based upon our readings about social class customs and rituals.
* **Editorial Essay**: In this in-class editorial essay, you will share your perspective on the nature of men and women based upon our readings about relationship customs and rituals.
* **Narrative Analysis Essay**:You will write a narrative analysis essay examining storytelling techniques in our readings about family customs and rituals.
* **Persuasive Essay**: You will write a persuasive essay based upon our readings about social class customs and rituals.
* **Process Essay**: Your in-class process essay will be based upon our readings about recreational customs and rituals, and will examine how Americans pursue some of their favorite pastimes.
* **Nonfiction Analysis Essay**: You will write a nonfiction analysis essay based upon Rick Bragg’s *All Over but the Shoutin’.*
* **Final Exam**: As noted above, your final will be a common, department-wide written exam. *It will take place on Saturday, May 9th.* No make-ups or early exams will be allowed; you must take the exam in order to pass this class.
* **Research Paper**: In a 10-page research paper, you will investigate a unique American subculture, such as surfers, bikers, gamers, or hip hop. It will require not only to study a subculture, but to temporarily submerge yourself in it.
* **PowerPoint Presentation**: You will create a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation and class hand-out based upon some aspect of American customs and rituals (e.g. high school graduation, death customs, holiday traditions). *You will also be responsible for providing your own laptop*.
* **Reflective Journals**: You will write six 1 ½-page responses to either one of the week’s assigned readings, an in-class discussion topic, or a customs and rituals-themed topic of your choice. You may also be asked to share these responses during class discussion.

**Grading Break-Down**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Point Value** | **Word Count** | **Learning Objectives** |
| Diagnostic Essay | 15 | 700 | 1 |
| Comparative Analysis Essay\* | 20 | 700 | 1,3 |
| Biographical Essay | 20 | 1000 | 1-3 |
| Editorial Essay\* | 20 | 700 | 1-3 |
| Narrative Analysis Essay | 20 | 1000 | 1-3 |
| Persuasive Essay | 20 | 1000 | 1-3 |
| Process Essay\* | 20 | 700 | 1-3 |
| Nonfiction Analysis Essay | 20 | 1000 | 1-3 |
| Research Paper | 80 | 3500 | 1-3 |
| Final Exam | 80 | N/A |  |
| PowerPoint Presentation | 15 | N/A |
| Reflective Journals | 60 (6 @ 10 pts each) | N/A |
| Participation | 10 | N/A |
| **Totals** | **400** | **10300** |

\**In-class essays*

**Course Schedule**

Note that this schedule is subject to change. Always consult ThreePointEau (http://threepointeau.blogspot.com/) for the most up-to-date information and schedule.

# Key: AOS (*All Over but the Shoutin’*); CR (Course Reader); eR (eReader)

**Week 1: Introduction**

Th 1.22 IN-CLASS: Syllabus review; Introductions; Class discussion—“America’s Customs and Rituals”

**Week 2: Writing Basics**

Tu 1.27 READ: AOS, p. xi-22

IN-CLASS: Diagnostic essay (bring a blue book)

Th 1.29 READ: AOS, p. 23-51

IN-CLASS: Book discussion; Lecture—“Steps of the writing process, Pt. I”; Preview—Research Paper

**Week 3: Writing Basics**

Tu 2.3 READ: AOS, p. 52-78

IN-CLASS: Book discussion; Sample PowerPoint presentation; Presentation sign- ups; Lecture—“Steps of the writing process, Pt. II”

NOTE:Last day to drop without a “W”

Th 2.5 READ: AOS, p. 79-117

IN-CLASS: Book discussion; Lecture—“Steps of the writing process, Pt. III”; Preview—Journals

**Week 4: Life and Death**

Tu 2.10 READ: AOS, p. 118-156; CR—**“Margaret, and mystery” by Rick Bragg; “Delivering Lily” by Phillip Lopate**

IN-CLASS: Reading discussion; Presentations; Preview—Comparative Analysis Essay

NOTE:Last day to add courses and register late

Th 2.12 READ: CR—**“On Being a Cripple” by Nancy Mairs; “The Love of My Life” by Cheryl Strayed**

IN-CLASS: Reading discussion; Presentations

JOURNAL 1 ASSIGNMENT: eR—“**Birthdays All Over” by Burt Wolf from Salon.com**

DUE: **Journal 1**

**Week 5: Life and Death**

Tu 2.17 READ: AOS, p. 157-184; **“Findings and Impressions” by Stellar Kim; “Behind the Formaldehyde Curtain” by Jessica Miford**

IN-CLASS: Reading discussion; Watch—*The Bridge* (Steel, 2006 USA)

Th 2.19 READ: AOS, p. AOS, p. 185-222

IN-CLASS: **Comparative Analysis Essay**

**Week 6: Coming of Age**

Tu 2.24 READ: CR—“**Go Carolina” by David Sedaris; “Field Trips” by Stuart Dybek; “Masks” by Lucy Grealy**

IN-CLASS: Reading discussion; Presentations; Preview—Biographical Essay

Th 2.26 READ: AOS, p. 223-254; CR—“**Auditorium” by Caroline Kettlewell; “Indian Education” by Sherman Alexie**

IN-CLASS: Watch—*Welcome to the Dollhouse* (Solondz, 1996 USA)

**Week 7: Coming of Age**

Tu 3.5 READ: CR—“**Refresh, Refresh” by Benjamin Percy; “Graduation” by Maya Angelou; “Love in the Time of Liquor” by Koren Zailckas**

IN-CLASS: Reading discussion; Watch—“Binge Drinking Mom” from *30 Days*

Th 3.7 READ: AOS, p. 255-291

IN-CLASS: Library Session (Meet in a TBD location in the MLK library)

JOURNAL 2 ASSIGNMENT: Respond to eR—“What Girls Want” by Caitlin Flanagan from *The Atlantic Monthly*

DUE: **Journal 2**

**Week 8: Relationships**

Tu 3.10 READ: CR—“**Talk in the Intimate Relationship: His and Hers” by Deborah Tannen; “I Want a Wife” by Judy Brady**

IN-CLASS: Reading discussion; Presentations; Preview—Editorial Essay

DUE: **Biographical Essay**

Th 3.12 READ: CR—“**The Truth About Lying” by Judith Viorst; “Romance: Meeting Girls is Easy” by Donald Miller**

IN-CLASS: Reading discussion; Watch—*When Harry Met Sally* (Reiner, 1989 USA)

JOURNAL 3 ASSIGNMENT: Respond eR—“Star-Crossed Love” from *This American Life* (60 min. audio file; choose “Full Episode”)

Due: **Journal 3**

**Week 9: Relationships**

Tu 3.17 READ: CR—“**The Way Up to Heaven” by Roald Dahl; “Beverly Home” by Denis Johnson; “Old Faithful” by David Sedaris**

IN-CLASS: Reading discussion; Presentations; Preview—Nonfiction Analysis Essay

Th 3.19 READ: AOS, p. 292-229

IN-CLASS: **Editorial Essay**

**Week 10: Spring Break**

Tu 3.24 **NO CLASS: Spring Break**

Th 3.26 **NO CLASS: Spring Break**

**Week 11: Family**

Tu 3.31 **NO CLASS: Cesar Chavez Day**

Th 4.2 READ: CR—**“Rooster at the Hitchin' Post” by David Sedaris; “Pruning Generations” by David Mas Masumoto**

IN-CLASS: Watch—“I’m the Black Sheep” from *True Life*; Preview—Narrative Analysis Essay

DUE: **Nonfiction Analysis Essay**

**Week 12: Family**

Tu 4.7 READ: CR—**“This Blessed House” by Jhumpa Lahiri; “Terwilliger Bunts One” by Annie Dillard**

IN-CLASS: Reading discussion; Presentations

Th 4.9 READ: CR—**“Raising Cain” by Debora J. Dickerson; “Three Fathers” by Kevin Sweeney; “Bumping into Mr. Ravioli” by Adam Gopnik**

IN-CLASS: Watch—***Dear Zachary: A Letter to a Son About His Father*** (Kuenne, 2007 USA)

JOURNAL 4 ASSIGNMENT: Respond eR—“Family Legend” from *This American Life* (60 min. audio file; choose “Full Episode”)

DUE: **Journal 4**

**Week 13: Social Class**

Tu 4.14 READ: CR—**“Bienvenidos a Newport Beach” by Firoozeh Dumas; “Selling in Minnesota” by Barbara Ehrenreich, p. 121-149**

IN-CLASS: Reading discussion; Presentations; Preview—Persuasive Essay

DUE: **Narrative Analysis Essay**

Th 4.16 READ: CR—**“Selling in Minnesota” by Barbara Ehrenreich, p.150-191**

IN-CLASS: Watch—*People Like Us: Social Class in America* (Alvarez/Kolker, 2000 USA)

**JOURNAL 5 ASSIGNMENT: eR—“Social Networking and Class Warfare”**

**by** [**Steven Levy**](http://services.newsweek.com/search.aspx?q=Author:%5E%22steven%20levy%22$&sortDirection=descending&sortField=pubdatetime&offset=0&pageSize=10) **from *Newsweek***

**DUE: Journal 5**

**Week 14: Recreation**

Tu 4.21 READ: CL—**“Erotica and Pornography” by Gloria Steinem; “Against Exercise” by Mark Grief**

IN-CLASS: Reading discussion; Presentations; Preview—Process Essay

DUE: **Persuasive Essay**

Th 4.23 READ: CL—**Prologue from *Friday Night Lights: A Town, a Team, and a Dream* by H.G. Bissinger; Excerpt from *Joe DiMaggio: The Hero’s* *Life* by Richard Ben Cramer**

IN-CLASS: Reading discussion; Presentations

**Week 15: Recreation**

Tu 4.28 READ: CL—**“Food is Good” by Anthony Bourdain; “Satin Worship” by Holly Welker**

IN-CLASS:Reading discussion; Presentations

Th 4.30 **IN-CLASS:** Watch—*Trekkies* (Nygard, 1997 USA)

JOURNAL 6 ASSIGNMENT: eR—“World of Warcraft—Not Just for Nerds” by Jenna Busch from The Huffington Post

DUE: **Journal 6**

**Week 16: Closing**

Tu 5.5 IN-CLASS: Final Exam Prep; Writer’s workshop

DUE: **Bring in four (4) copies of the first three (3) pages of your research paper**

Th 5.7 IN-CLASS: Guest speaker TBA

Sa 5.9 **FINAL EXAM: 10 AM at a location TBA (bring a yellow book)**

**Week 17: Closing**

Tu 5.12 IN-CLASS: Course review, Research paper presentations

DUE: **Research Paper**