

English 1A – Composition
Fall 2005, San José State University
Section 12: T/Th 9:00-10:15am, SH 347

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Friday 12-1

Course Description & Student Objectives:

English 1A is the first course in SJSU's two-semester lower-division composition sequence; it provides an introduction to baccalaureate-level composition, with attention to the "personal voice" and personal experience, on the one hand, and the more formal attitudes and demands of writing at the university (expository and argumentative essays), on the other. Students will develop college-level reading abilities, rhetorical sophistication, and writing styles that give form and coherence to complex ideas and feelings. We will use written texts as writing samples and examples of ideas. We will also look at each other's work, making helpful comments and suggestions for the writer. Our sources will be written, spoken, inferred, visual or artistic -- each one of these being languages themselves.

Required Texts & Materials

- Maasik, *Signs of Life in the USA*. 4th ed.
- Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference*. 5th ed.
- Dictionary (*Webster's* or equivalent college-level)
- Notebook (Bound)
- Computer disk or flash drive
- Email account

Grading Policy and Requirements

10% Participation
10% Writing Exercises & Journal
60% Essays (4)
20% Final Exam

Participation

Participation in English 1A is required. We will have a lot of reading, group work and class discussion so your preparation for class is imperative (and will be obvious). The readings will come from *Signs of Life* and other readings that are supplied as handouts. Our work begins immediately. Please have the textbooks by our next class meeting. Bring *Signs of Life* with you to every class meeting unless you are told otherwise.

Journal

All journal writing (informal, ungraded) should be done in a spiral bound notebook that will contain only notes, writings and materials from this course. Bring this journal with you to every class because we will write in it at every meeting. On occasion, I will collect these journals to review your progress (which will be indicated by a check mark in my grade book). If you do not want me to read the contents on a particular page, fold that page.

Writing Exercises

Written Exercises are due at the beginning of each class. These exercises need to be typed in 12pt font and double-spaced with one inch margins. While the writing exercises do not receive a letter grade, the quality of your efforts will be recorded and applied toward your final course grade. Each Writing Exercise receives a ✓-, ✓, ✓+, U (unsatisfactory), NC (no credit).

Unsatisfactory Writing Exercises will be revised and resubmitted for credit. Please note that I do NOT accept assignments via email.

Essays

Each essay varies in purpose and will focus on differing sets of academic writing skills. By the time we reach the last essay, you will have learned about both the major and minor elements of writing. Each essay is based on readings from *Signs of Life* and a series of progressive writing exercises (about four per essay) that will help you to create a first draft. Each essay will receive a letter grade based on the Departmental Grading Policy below.

Rough drafts of essays should be typed and double-spaced. On due dates for rough drafts, you need to bring two copies: one to turn in and the other for your group workshop. Final drafts of essays must be carefully revised, typed and double-spaced on 8 1/2 x 11" white paper in 12 point font with one inch margins. Keep all notes, writing exercises, drafts and final copies of essays. Some of these materials will be turned in with the final draft of each essay. (Be sure to save drafts on the computer as different documents.)

Final Exam

The university-wide departmental final exam for all English 1A students will be held on Saturday, December 3rd from 8:00 A.M. to 10:00 A.M. This exam is mandatory—make arrangements now!

Late Assignments/Essays

Since this is a workshop course, you need to be prepared at every class meeting with the readings and your written exercise. If you cannot meet a deadline, you must contact me prior to our class meeting to discuss the situation. Otherwise, there are steep consequences for submitting late assignments and essays:

- *Writing Exercises*: For every day that a writing exercise is late (due at the beginning of each class), you will be penalized one grade step on the final draft of that essay (A becomes an A-).
- *Rough Drafts*: Failure to come to workshops with 2 printed copies of your rough draft will result in a loss of one grade step on the final draft of your essay (A becomes an A-).
- *Final Drafts of Essays*: All essays must be handed in on time, otherwise you will lose one full letter grade for each day that the essay is late (A becomes a B).

Departmental Grading Policy

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. Courses graded according to the A, B, C, No Credit system shall follow the same pattern, except that

NC, for No Credit, shall replace D or F. In A, B, C, No Credit courses, NC shall substitute for W (Withdrawal) because neither NC nor W affects students' grade point averages. *Note: A grade of C- is not a passing grade in this course. Any final grade falling below a C will be recorded as a NC.*

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

Although this is an A, B, C, No Credit course, final drafts of essays will be graded on the A-F scale. Essays in this class will be graded according to the following SJSU academic standards for assessment:

- The “**A**” essay will be well-organized and well-developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will show the student’s ability to use language effectively and to construct sentences distinguished by syntactic complexity and variety. Such essays will be essentially free from grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors.
- The “**B**” essay will demonstrate competence in the same categories as the “A” essay. The chief difference is that the “B” essay will show some weaknesses in one of those categories. It may neglect one of the assigned tasks, show less facility of expression, or contain some minor grammatical, mechanical, or usage flaws.
- The “**C**” essay will complete all tasks set by the assignment, but show weaknesses in fundamentals, usually development, with barely enough specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. The sentence construction may be less mature, and the use of language less effective and correct than the “B” essay.
- The “**D**” essay will neglect one of the assigned tasks and be noticeably superficial in its treatment of the assignment—that is, too simplistic or too short. The essay may reveal some problems in development, with insufficient specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. It will contain grammatical, mechanical, and/or usage errors that are serious and/or frequent enough to interfere substantially with the writer’s ability to communicate.
- The “**F**” essay will demonstrate a striking underdevelopment of ideas and insufficient or unfocused organization. It will contain serious grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

Classroom Environment

Respect your fellow students and I: Attend class, arrive on time (excessive tardiness will affect your participation grade) and do not partake in disruptive behavior. Turn off cell phones or put them on silent mode during the class period.

Email

I will amass a class email list and will occasionally send out information regarding our meetings or the readings. (Please provide an email address that you check regularly.) When emailing me, please consider it a formal communication: include the appropriate salutation, your name and your question/comment. Know that long conversations over email are not fruitful (merely because of the

limitations of the technology). If you have an extended question or dilemma, please visit me during office hours.

Course Website -- <http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/harris/>

As we move along in the semester, course materials will be posted on the course website. After you have entered, simply click on **English 1A** to print copies of lost documents, find the campus computer rooms, check my office hours, find grammar quizzes or double-check the meaning of “plagiarism.”

Plagiarism

Plagiarism means representing any idea, expression of an idea, or work of another as if it were your own, on essays, exams, or other assignments. Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic standards and the rules of every university, including SJSU. Plagiarism is dishonest, since you steal the language and ideas of the person who honestly worked hard to produce this text. Sometimes students resort to plagiarism because of feelings of desperation caused by leaving the assignment to the last minute. Whenever in doubt, speak to me. Turning in plagiarized work may result in immediate failure in the course and could result in dismissal from SJSU, since I am required to report all cases of plagiarism to the appropriate university authorities. See King Library’s definition, University policy and tutorial: http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info_comp/plagiarism.htm

Random plagiarism checks will be performed by asking students to submit various written exercises or essays to Turnitin.com, a service which scans documents for all references to Web sources and other essays (from paper mills).

LARC (Learning Assistance Resource Center)

The Learning Assistance Resource Center is an on-campus facility that provides peer tutoring for SJSU students. LARC offers assistance with writing, and if you feel as if you need intensive help beyond what I can offer during office hours, please request a writing tutor. The Center is located in The Student Services Center in the 10th Street Parking Garage, Room 600. The phone number is (408) 924-2587.

Disabled Student Services

Students who require assistance due to a disability should contact the Disability Resource Center as soon as possible. The Center is located at Admin. 110, and its phone number is (408) 924-5990. In addition, please contact me: I can assist you, and we can make any necessary accommodations.

English 1A
Composition I
Fall 2005

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you have access to a computer at home? Yes No
(If not, become familiar with SJSU's computer labs.)

2. *Briefly* summarize the important policies presented on this syllabus.

3. Write one or two sentences defining plagiarism.

By signing below, the individual acknowledges receiving (and reading) a copy of the class syllabus that details the schedule of work, participation requirements, grading criteria and other important information. The individual also acknowledges his/her understanding of plagiarism and its consequences.

Name: _____ Signature: _____