

Dr. Mostafa Jalal  
San Jose State University

English 1A-05  
Fall 2020  
Class Number: 42052  
Synchronous Online Class  
TR 7:30-8:45am

Department of English and  
Comparative Literature  
Office: Faculty Office Building 224  
Office Hours: T 11am-1pm, and by  
appointment  
Email: mostafa.jalal@sjsu.edu

### **First-Year Writing: Writing About Nature**



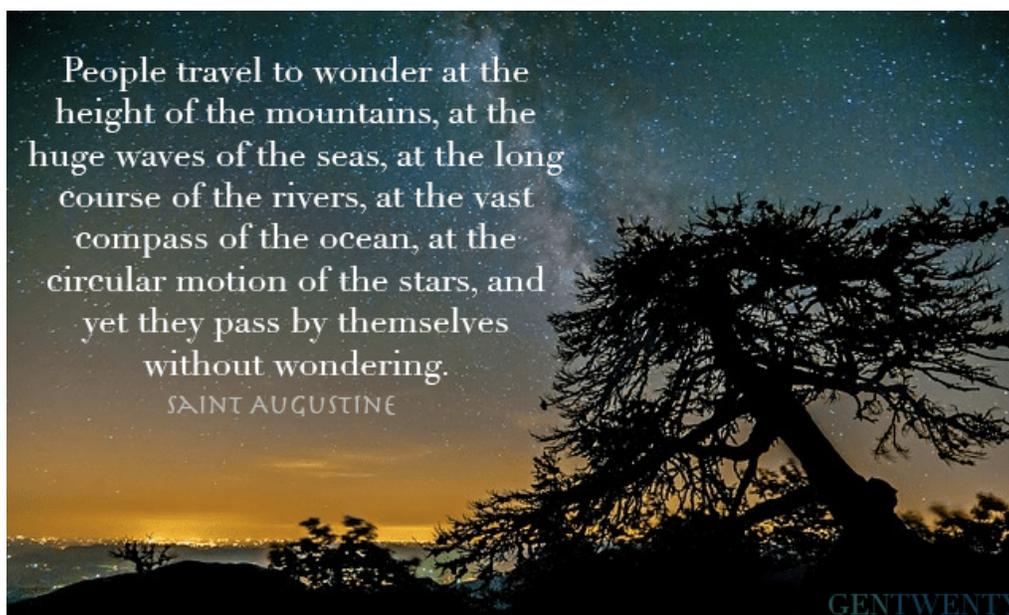
#### **Course Description:**

This class of first-year writing is an introduction to academic rhetorical analysis and writing skills through an exploration of unique and varying perspectives on nature. The concept of “nature” contains both common and mysterious qualities, and the term exceeds far beyond our regular use of the word. There are tangible forms of nature we know, such as our planet, its climate, weather, locations and resources, and flora and fauna. There are also many intangible aspects that remain commonly unknown, including questions of psyche and theories of the larger universe. Students will discover what others have sought, and possibly found, in their own explorations of perspectives on nature. Students will thoughtfully consider facets of these notions by questioning our place in nature, where we have been and where we are aiming to go, what constitutes “nature” and what do we mean by “human nature,” whether these ideas have changed, and why these notions remain at the forefront of our formation as individuals. Over the course of this class, students will read creative, critical and complex texts that are relevant to this broader theme and will produce insightful, original and individual work that responds to and furthers our understanding of this topic.

This course will largely focus on critical readings, discourse, and clear, cohesive writing. We will learn how to encounter and enter these critical texts, discuss how and why they are written, and write effective, logical, and well-composed essays that respond to the theses presented by these authors. We will discover the fundamentals of writing, the rhetorical situation, and the mechanics of forming organized and thorough essays. Thinking critically and writing are cornerstones of academic knowledge, and we will learn the skills of rhetorical analysis and the writing process, including revision, as we practice reading critically and thinking comprehensively about our place and purpose within nature.



At the end of this course, students will have gained a further understanding of nature, its influences on, and places in, English texts, and its role in providing varying perspectives to those who seek larger answers. We will aim to consider these elements as we sharpen our analytical and authorial skills in our own expedition of becoming better academic readers and writers.



**Faculty Web Page and Canvas Messaging:**

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, and assignment instructions can be found on the Canvas learning management system course website. You are responsible for checking the messaging system through MySJSU to learn of any updates.

**Course Description:**

ENGL 1A 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.

**GE Learning Outcomes (GELO):****ENGL 1A Learning Outcomes (GELO)**

Upon successful completion of the course, you will be able to

- read actively and rhetorically;
- perform the essential steps in the writing process (prewriting, organizing, composing, revising, and editing) and demonstrate an awareness of said performance;
- articulate an awareness of and write according to the rhetorical features of texts, such as purpose, audience, context, and rhetorical appeals;
- integrate your ideas and those of others by explaining, analyzing, developing, and criticizing ideas effectively in several genres;
- demonstrate college-level language use, clarity, and grammatical proficiency in writing.

**Course Requirements and Assignments:**

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in University Policy S12-3 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

**Reading:**

English 1A is a reading intensive course, and you will be required to complete reading assignments frequently. Reading is a crucial component of the class, as one must read effective writing to become an effective writer. All reading must be completed by the beginning of each class period. Many of our in-class activities and major assignments will relate to the assigned selections. In addition, you must submit reader responses, which will be turned in periodically throughout the semester (as noted on the schedule).

**Writing:**

This is a composition course—every class period will involve a written component. Writing assignments will give you repeated practice in all phases of the writing process. This class requires a minimum of 8000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form. You must complete all major assignments (all essays and the multimodal project) to pass the class.

**Peer Edit Workshops:**

Workshops are an important part of the writing process; they give you the opportunity to get valuable feedback from your peers. Bring three copies of your essay, in rough draft, on each workshop date as listed on the class schedule. You must turn in all workshop materials with the final copy of the essay. If you miss a workshop, your essay will be graded down one full letter grade.

**Class Participation:**

We will complete daily work in class that goes toward your participation grade; you will not be able to complete these assignments if you do not come to class. I expect you to attend class daily and come on time. Absences and lateness will affect your grade because you will be missing class material and/or in-class activities. In addition, class participation does not simply mean that you are physically present in class. You must have all class materials, contribute to discussions, actively listen to your peers, and take notes as necessary.

**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.

**Required Texts and Resources:**

- A. Weisser, Christian R. *Sustainability: A Bedford Spotlight Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. (ISBN 978-1319056612).
- B. Graff, Gerald, Cathy Birkenstein, and Russel Durst. *They Say/I Say*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. with Readings. (ISBN: 978-0393631685).
- C. Access to the Purdue OWL: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>
- D. Printing and viewing resources for course readings, videos, assignments, and other material that are posted on Canvas.

**Reading Assignments:**

In this class, we will be reading a series of creative, critical and complex texts. *They may often be challenging, so you should be prepared to read them more than once if necessary to fully understand their concepts.* Please be prepared to come to class with questions and comments to contribute to our discussion. Some of these reading assignments may focus on the mechanics,

techniques and notions of language, rhetoric, and writing. These will be valuable in our discourse and practice of constructing, drafting, finalizing, and revising essays. Reading assignments are due on the day they appear on the course calendar and schedule. Please be responsible and do the readings beforehand.

### **Writing Assignments:**

*Each of the three essays will be examples of polished, revised versions that have been peer- and instructor- reviewed. Essays should have a clear and concise thesis, a well-organized paragraph structure, and proper formatting.*

- A. Personal Narrative Reflection (2-3 pages): Having read examples of narratives about nature, please consider an experience of your own. This can be a childhood memory, a family trip, an artifact or place that has piqued your interest, or a natural phenomenon that has inspired you. Please write a personal narrative reflection that contains your own perspective and story.
- B. Rhetorical Analysis (Essay #1, 3-4 pages): Consider one of the texts we have read in class thus far and provide a coherent, meaningful analysis of the text that details the author's thesis, the text's rhetorical situation, and Aristotle's appeals.
- C. Synthesis and Argument (Essay #2, 4-6 pages): Take one or more of the texts we have reviewed in class thus far and formulate a unique argumentative essay that supports or challenges the text(s). This essay should draw upon supporting evidence from the text(s) and relevant scholarly sources.
- D. Final Critical Paper (Essay #3, 5-7 pages): For this final assignment, please compose a thoughtful and thoroughly researched essay that details your views and perspectives on a particular notion or idea about nature. Have we encountered similar views in our class readings? Have we read texts that challenge these views? Find and discuss these concepts in your essay with supporting evidence from scholarly sources.
- E. Writing Portfolio
- F. In-class peer-review and critique of essays for revision.
- G. In-class activities and writing assignments.

### **Attendance:**

*Come to class—you know that.* Roll will be taken at the beginning of class, every class. If you arrive after roll has been called, it's your responsibility to notify me. It's a good idea to make friends and exchange contact information with one or more of your classmates to confer about that day's lessons. You should also contact me to review details of the class lecture. University policy F69-24: "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 benefit for all members of the class."

### **Participation:**

Participation is key to classroom success. I encourage you to interact, ask questions, provide insightful comments and contribute to the overall classroom discussion. *While attendance is mandatory, just attending doesn't automatically accrue participation points. A participation grade is unique to your attendance record.* Please be courteous and respectful of others while in the classroom and practice proper classroom etiquette and refrain from using mobile devices and

laptops during lectures and discussions. You may use these devices for certain in-class activities when appropriate.

### Conferences:

In lieu of regular class meetings on days when individual conferences are scheduled, we will instead prepare to meet one-on-one to discuss your current performance and grades in private. These meetings serve two primary goals: to critique a paper draft and to evaluate your overall progress as a writer. As with your attendance, these conferences are also mandatory. Please schedule a conference when dates and times are announced in class.

### Canvas and Technology:

If you have not already done so, please visit SJSU's Canvas software. Here you will be able to find a special site devoted exclusively to our course. On this site, you will find files containing this syllabus and other class handouts as they become available. Additionally, we will regularly use the Discussion Board. You will also be able to communicate with fellow classmates, providing insight, answers or compounding questions when necessary. I will keep track of your participation and may use some of the material, including any linked texts, you and your classmates post as a starting place for in-class discussions.

### Class Grades:

A. Personal Narrative Reflection (2-3 pages):	10%
B. Rhetorical Analysis Paper (Essay #1, 3-4 pages):	15%
C. Synthesis and Argumentative Paper (Essay #2, 4-6 pages):	20%
D. Final Paper (Essay #3, 5-7 pages):	30%
E. Reading Response Questions:	15%
F. In-class peer-review, activities and assignments:	5%
G. Participation:	5%

<b>93-100% = A</b>	<b>73-76 = C</b>
<b>90-92 = A-</b>	<b>70-72 = C-</b>
<b>87-89 = B+</b>	<b>67-69 = D+</b>
<b>83-86 = B</b>	<b>63-66 = D</b>
<b>80-82 = B-</b>	<b>60-62 = D-</b>
<b>77-79 = C+</b>	<b>0-59% = F</b>

### Late Policy:

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class for which they are due. **NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

**University Policies:**

The following link contains university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, student success resources, etc.

<http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo>.

**Course Calendar and Schedule:**

This is a tentative schedule for this quarter. Reading and writing assignments can and likely will change to better suit the needs of our class discussions. Please be sure to attend class regularly and visit our course information on Canvas to note any changes to the syllabus.

*\*In order to preserve course flexibility, only major assignment dates appear in the calendar below. A more detailed assignment calendar may be provided as the quarter progresses, and these calendar dates may be adjusted. Additionally, if and when schedule permits, we will try to visit the university's Writing Center and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library.*

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**Week 1:**

August 20

Introduction of course & syllabus

**Week 2:**

August 25

Introduce Favorite Work of Writing assignment

August 27

Review and present on Favorite Work of Writing

Entering the conversation and understanding the rhetorical situation & context

Read and discuss: Jeremy Caradonna, "from Sustainability: A History" and Henry David Thoreau's "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For"

**Week 3:**

September 1

Continue discussion of Thoreau's "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For"

September 3

Introduce Personal Narrative Reflection

Draft work; peer critique of Personal Narrative Reflection

Discuss sentence clarity, paragraph unity & structure

Read and discuss: John Muir's "The American Forests" and Rachel Carson's "The Obligation to Endure"

**Week 4:**

September 8

Draft work; in-class writing of Personal Narrative Reflection  
Discuss sentence clarity, paragraph unity & structure

September 10

Selecting words: language variety & word choice  
Read and discuss: Aldo Leopold's "Thinking Like a Mountain" and David Suzuki's  
"The Sacred Balance: Rediscovering Our Place in Nature"

**Week 5:**

September 15

Draft work; peer critique draft of Personal Narrative Reflection  
Discuss thesis statements & topic sentences

September 17

**Personal Narrative Reflection due**

Introduce Rhetorical Analysis Paper  
Read and discuss: World Commission on Environment and Development's "Our  
Common Future: From One Earth to One World (Brundtland Report), JR Thorpe's  
"What Exactly is Ecofeminism?" and Carolyn Merchant's "Earthcare: Women and  
the Environment"\*

**Week 6:**

September 22

Conferences  
Forming & structuring essays

September 24

Continue conferences  
Synthesizing & mapping arguments  
Read and discuss: Al Gore's "Climate of Denial" and Roger Scruton's "How to Think  
Seriously about the Planet: A Case for Environmental Conservatism"

**Week 7:**

September 29

In-class writing assignment

October 1

Draft work; in-class writing & research activity  
Exploring evidence and evaluating credibility for supporting arguments  
Read and discuss: Jim Manzi and Peter Wehner's "Conservatives and Climate  
Change" and Mark Buchanan's "How to Sell Conservatives on Climate Change"

**Week 8:**

October 6

Discuss Information Literacy

Draft work; peer critique draft of Rhetorical Analysis Paper

October 8

Review secondary & scholarly sources

Draft work; peer critique draft of Rhetorical Analysis Paper

Read and discuss: Lindsay Abrams's "Hurricane Katrina's Unheeded Lesson: The Climate Refugee Crisis We Still Won't Address," David Biello's "How Did the BP Oil Spill Affect Gulf Coast Wildlife?"

**Week 9:**

October 13

In-class writing assignment

October 15

**Rhetorical Analysis Paper due**

Introduce Synthesis and Argumentative Paper

Read and discuss: Allison Singer's "Fracking: The Solution? Or the Problem?" and Heather Brady's "4 Key Impacts of the Keystone XL and Dakota Access Pipelines"

**Week 10:**

October 20

Draft work; peer critique draft of Synthesis and Argumentative Paper

October 22

Conferences

Read and discuss: Elizabeth Kolbert's "The Sixth Extinction," Jared Diamond's "The Last Americans: Environmental Collapse and the End of Civilization" and Julia Whitty's "Animal Extinction: The Greatest Threat to Mankind"\*

**Week 11:**

October 27

In-class writing assignment

October 29

Draft work; peer critique draft of Synthesis and Argumentative Paper

Read and discuss: Kendra L. Smith's "The Cities of the Future Will Be Smart, Sustainable, and Efficient," and Prince Charles of Wales's "On the Future of Food"

**Week 12:**

November 3

In-class writing assignment

November 5

Draft work; peer critique draft of Synthesis and Argumentative Paper  
Read and discuss: Fritjof Capra's "Ecology and Community," and Peter Poschen and Michael Renner's "Green Jobs"

**Week 13:**

November 10

Continue Draft work; peer critique draft of Synthesis and Argumentative Paper

November 12

**Synthesis and Argumentative Paper due**

Introduce Final Critical Paper  
Draft work; begin draft of Final Critical Paper  
Read and discuss: Scott Carlson's "Whatever Happened to the Drive for Campus Sustainability?" and "Jeff Sutton's "Why Social Media and Sustainability Should Go Hand in Hand"

**Week 14:**

November 17

Draft work; in-class writing assignment

November 19

Draft work; in-class writing assignment  
Read and discuss: The United Nations Panel on Global Sustainability's "Resilient People, Resilient Planet: A Future Worth Choosing," and Bill McKibben's "A Moral Atmosphere"

**Week 15:**

November 24

In-class activity  
Read and discuss: Michael Moyer and Carina Storrs's "How Much is Left? The Limits of Earth's Resources," and Amanda Williams's "Why Sustainable Tourism Should Matter to You"

November 26

Thanksgiving Day: no class

***\*Thanksgiving Break—November 25-27: Academic Holidays***

**Week 16:**

December 1

Draft work; peer critique draft of Final Critical Paper

December 3

Draft work; peer critique second draft of Final Critical Paper

Read and discuss: Bob O'Brien's "Our National Parks and the Search for Sustainability," and Jack Hanna's "What Zoo Critics Don't Understand"

***Week 17:***

December (Finals Week)

**Final Critical Paper due**

Review Learning Objectives: How far have we come and where do we go from here?

Wrap-up of course

***\*Classes for the Fall 2020 semester end on Monday, December 7, 2020.***