College of Humanities and the Arts · English & Comparative Literature

Modern English Section 02

ENGL 103

Spring 2025   Hybrid   4 Unit(s)   01/23/2025 to 05/12/2025   Modified 01/27/2025

🕐 Course Information

Monday, Wednesday, 1:30 PM to 2:45 PM, Boccardo Business Center 205

🖥 Course Description and Requisites

The growth and structure of modern English, including its phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. Attention to social and regional varieties, with implications for language development and literacy among native and nonnative speakers.

Prerequisite: Upper division standing.

Letter Graded

✳ Classroom Protocols

Generative AI

In this course, you shouldn't use generative AI to complete assignments. Here's why:

1. One of the key learning outcomes in this course is an understanding of English grammar. While generative AI is reasonably good at analyzing sentences in Standard Academic English, it isn't perfect, especially when working with texts that use world Englishes, AAVE, or other "non-standard" forms of English (we'll unpack this in class!). Thus, to meet this learning outcome, you'll need to learn the fundamentals of English grammar yourselves.

2. This class discusses sociocultural issues related to grammar, such as linguistic bias or linguistic racism. Because generative AI upholds Standard English and has been demonstrated to exhibit racial and ethnic biases [1 (https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/does-ai-have-bias-problem)] [2 (https://www.technologyreview.com/2024/03/11/1089683/llms-become-more-covertly-racist-with-human-intervention/)] [3 (https://csu-sjsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/openurl?institution=01CALS_SJO&vid=01CALS_SJO:01CALS_SJO&volume=627&date=2024&aulast=Gibney&issue=8004&spage=476&id=doi:10.1038%2Fd41586-024-00779-

[1&auinit=E&title=Second%20nature%20:&atitle=Chatbot%20AI%20makes%20racist%20judgements%20on%20the%20basis%20of%20dialect&sid=google)], among others, it's counterproductive to use generative AI to examine these issues.

☰ Program Information

The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi: 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. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the 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.

Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a +(plus) or -(minus) grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)
Upon successful completion of an undergraduate degree program in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will be able to:
1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric.
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.
4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, including structures of power.

Department Information:

Department Name: English and Comparative Literature
Department Office: FO 102
Department Website: www.sjsu.edu/english (https://www.sjsu.edu/english)
Department email: english@sjsu.edu (mailto:english@sjsu.edu)

📶 Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Identify and explain** key concepts in English grammar, including parts of speech, sentence structures, and common usage patterns.
2. **Analyze** the functions of various linguistic structures in both written and spoken language, recognizing their impact on meaning and communication.
3. **Critically examine** language use through the lens of power and culture, understanding how language can perpetuate or challenge social inequalities.
4. **Articulate** a personal philosophy of grammar, informed by an understanding of linguistic diversity and the ethical implications of language choices.
5. **Apply** grammatical knowledge to real-world contexts, demonstrating proficiency in analyzing and evaluating language use in various settings.
6. **Communicate** effectively about grammar and its cultural implications, both orally and in writing.

📘 Course Materials

Grammar by Diagram

Author: Cindy L. Vitto
Edition: Third
ISBN: 9781554814534

A copy of this text is available on 2-hour course reserve at the SJSU Library, and I've uploaded the first several chapters of this text to our Canvas course. You can find them under the "Library Course Materials" tab. If financial cost is a barrier to accessing this text, please meet with me!

📋 Course Requirements and Assignments

Team Presentation

Once during the semester, you'll partner with 1-2 classmates to present an additional reading to the class. The full assignment description is posted under "Course Documents," and you can find a curated list of potential readings posted under "Library Course Materials."

This presentation corresponds to the following course learning outcomes:

3. Critically examine language use through the lens of power and culture
6. Communicate effectively about grammar

Collaborative Glossary

Over the course of the semester, we'll co-create a glossary of grammar "in the wild." This glossary will curate and analyze instances of interesting, controversial, or confusing grammar in order to understand how grammar shapes and is shaped by culture. The full assignment description is posted under "Course Materials."

This glossary corresponds to the following course learning objectives:

1. Identify and explain key concepts in English grammar
2. Analyze the functions of linguistic structures
5. Apply grammatical knowledge to real-world contexts
6. Communicate effectively about grammar

Philosophy Paper

Towards the end of the semester, you'll explain your own views on grammar. This paper asks you to think about how grammar relates to your personal goals and values and to consider how your understanding of grammar will affect your future work in your major or intended career. The full assignment description is posted under "Course Resources." You'll need at least a rough draft of this paper by Monday, April 28, and the final version is due by Friday, May 9.

This paper corresponds to the following course learning outcomes:

3. Critically examine language use through the lens of power and culture
4. Articulate a personal philosophy of grammar
6. Communicate effectively about grammar

Exams

To assess your practical application of English grammar mechanics, this course has four equally-weighted exams. Exams will mostly involve marking text passages and diagramming sentences, with some short-answer or multiple-choice questions possible. You may bring handwritten notes (no page limit) or one printed page of notes.

Exam dates are:

- Wednesday, February 26 (Chapters 1-3)
- Wednesday, March 19 (Chapters 1-6)
- Wednesday, April 14 (Chapters 1-8)
- Monday, May 12 (Chapters 1-9, 11-12)

The exams correspond to the following course learning outcomes:

1. Identify and explain key concepts in English grammar
2. Analyze the functions of linguistic structures
5. Apply grammatical knowledge to real-world contexts

✔ Grading Information

Breakdown

Grade	Range	Notes
A	90 - 100	
B	80 - 89	
C	70 - 79	
D	60 - 69	
F	0 - 59	

Criteria

Type	Weight	Topic	Notes
Exams	400 / 1000	Grammar Mechanics	There are four exams, each of which is worth 100 points.
Collaborative Glossary	100 / 1000	Grammar "In the Wild"	You are asked to contribute four entries to the glossary, worth 25 points each.
Presentation	250 / 1000	Language and Culture	Since these presentations are conducted in teams of two or three, teammates will receive a shared grade.
Philosophy Paper	250 / 1000	Ethics and Practice	

🏛 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.