

The Department of English  
& Comparative Literature,  
San José State University  
Fall 2012

English 1A: Thank You for the Music  
Instructor: DH De La O  
Course: Composition I (GE A2; 3 units)  
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Section 02 (Course No. 40396): Mo/We 7:30 – 08:45 AM, SH 444  
Section 12 (Course No. 48848): Mo/We 9:00 – 10:15 AM, ENG 232

*Who can live without it, I ask in all honesty  
What would life be?  
Without a song or a dance what are we?  
So I say thank you for the music  
For giving it to me*

—ABBA, “Thank You for the Music”

#### COURSE THEME

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In 1977, NASA launched the deep space probes, Voyager 1 and 2. Onboard each vessel was a so-called “Golden Record,” a disc intended to extend interstellar greetings to alien civilizations. Amongst information about Earth’s biological make up, distinct cultures, and technological capabilities, were examples of our music, ranging from Mariachi to Bach to “Johnny B. Goode.” The inclusion of music on these discs illustrates its significance to humanity. Even crude Prehistoric Era instruments point to the omnipresent role music has played in human development. Even in our own Information Age, music remains firmly entrenched in all aspects of our culture. Thus, this semester we will be reading and writing exclusively about music in order to better understand its cultural significance, as well as its impact on daily life in America.

#### REQUIRED MATERIALS

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- *The Hip Hop Wars: What We Talk about When We Talk about Hip Hop—and Why it Matters* by Tricia Rose (ISBN: 0465008976)\*
- *Owen Noone and The Marauder* by Douglas Cowie (ISBN: 1582344973)\*\*
- *Talking to Girls about Duran Duran: One Young Man's Quest for True Love and a Cooler Haircut* by Rob Sheffield (ISBN: 0452297230)\*
- *This is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession* by Daniel J. Levitin (ISBN: 0452288525)\*
- *The Norton Field Guide to Writing (Second Edition with 2009 MLA Updates)* by Richard Bullock (ISBN: 0393934381)
- One large yellow book

Furthermore, this course will require the use of a digital music player (e.g. iTunes, Google Music, Windows Media Player, Amazon Cloud Player). Most players, if not all, are free and readily available online.

\* Available in electronic format (e.g. Kindle, iBooks, Nook); pagination will vary from print editions.

\*\* This book is out of print: In addition to the easily available electronic version, some copies are available online (e.g. Amazon, Barnes & Noble) or at local new and used bookstores. I highly recommend you purchase a copy as soon as possible.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

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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.

- Prerequisites  
Passage of the English Proficiency Test (EPT), or passage of an approved substitute course for the EPT.
- Course Goals  
Students shall achieve the ability to write complete essays that demonstrate college-level proficiency in all of the following:
  - Clear and effective communication of meaning.
  - An identifiable focus, tailored to a particular audience and purpose (argumentative essays will state their thesis clearly and show an awareness, implied or stated, of some opposing point of view).
  - The ability to perform effectively the essential steps of the writing process (prewriting, organizing, composing, revising, and editing).
  - The ability to explain, analyze, develop, and criticize ideas effectively.
  - Effective use within their own essays of supporting material drawn from reading or other sources.
  - Effective organization within the paragraph and the essay.
  - Accuracy, variety, and clarity of sentences.
  - Appropriate diction.
  - Control of conventional mechanics (e.g., punctuation, spelling, reference, agreement).
- Student Learning Objectives (SLO), General Education
  - SLO 1: Students shall write complete essays that demonstrate the ability to perform effectively the essential steps in the writing process (prewriting, organizing, composing, revising, and editing).
  - SLO 2: Students shall write complete essays that demonstrate the ability to express (explain, analyze, develop, and criticize) ideas effectively.
  - SLO 3: Students shall write complete essays that demonstrate the ability to use correct grammar (syntax, mechanics, and citation of sources) at a college level of sophistication.
  - SLO 4: Students shall write complete essays that demonstrate the ability to write for different audiences.

## COURSE CONTENT

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- Writing: In English 1A, you will focus on practicing all phases of the writing process including prewriting, organizing, writing, revising, and editing. All sections of English 1A require that you write essays totaling a minimum of 8,000 words. This total word count does not include the final exam, journals, quizzes, or any brief or informal writing assigned by your instructor. You will write at least 3, but no more than 4, essays in class. Your instructor has listed in this syllabus how you will meet the 8,000 word minimum. You must write all formal essays to pass the course.
- Reading: English 1A includes extensive and intensive reading. The reading you do in English 1A provides useful models of writing for academic, general, and specific audiences.
- Research: In this course, you might learn to use the tools of the SJSU library, including online resources for research, but library research is not a requirement of the course.
- Diversity: The content presented in English 1A will address issues of race, class, and gender as well as the perspectives of women and diverse cultural groups.
- Course Materials: The English department suggests that a dictionary, a rhetoric (or rhetoric/reader), and a handbook are appropriate materials for this course.
- The University Essay Final Exam: Twenty percent (20%) of your course grade comes from an essay final exam, graded holistically. This department-wide final consists of reading and responding to a college-level passage chosen by the English Department Composition Committee. You must take the final exam in order to pass the course.
- Grading: A-F. This class must be passed with a C or better to move on to CORE GE Area C3 and to satisfy the prerequisite for English 1B. A passing grade in the course signifies that the student is a capable college-level writer and reader of English.

## ACADEMIC POLICIES

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You are responsible for reading the SJSU academic policies, available online @ [www.sjsu.edu/english/comp/policyforsyllabi.html](http://www.sjsu.edu/english/comp/policyforsyllabi.html).

## SJSU WRITING CENTER

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The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The Writing Center website is located @ [www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter).

## COURSE POLICIES

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- In an effort to make you a better editor of your own work, I will sometimes make sentence-level corrections to only one page or paragraph of your essay. You should assume that the corrections I've made are applicable to your entire essay.
- All writing assignments are due on the dates indicated on EauZone, which contains the most up-to-date schedule and information.
- I will not accept any assignments that are unstapled.
- Late assignments must be emailed to me no later than the following class after the due date. However, they will be lowered one letter grade. *I will not accept an assignment beyond this point.*
- Assignments submitted via email, will be graded as any other. However, no marked-up hard copy will be returned to you.
- 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.

- You will automatically be docked 5 points off your final draft grade for coming to class on a writers workshop day without an essay.
- There is a participation component to your grade. Though only 10 points, it might mean the difference between letter grades. To receive all or most of these points, it is important that you actively engage in the classroom experience (e.g. frequently asking questions and/or commenting). Simply attending class is not sufficient to garner full points, as they are based on active participation, not attendance.
- There may be only one opportunity for extra-credit this semester, so please stay up-to-date on your assignments.
- The use of laptops during class is restricted to note taking only.
- If you come to class after the first 15 minutes, please wait for an appropriate moment to enter so as not to disturb the class.

#### EAUZONE

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I maintain the EauZone ([eauzone.blogspot.com](http://eauzone.blogspot.com)) as a centralized location 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 eReader (eR). These Web articles may be required to complete some assignments. On the homepage, click on "English 1A: Thank You for the Music" under "Fall 2012 Courses" 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. Additionally, Gmail users also have the option of subscribing to the blog to keep up to date on all posts.

#### STANDARDS FOR PRESENTATION OF WORK

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As is standard in American English classes, all typed work must be submitted in MLA Style. Samples are located in both *The Norton Field Guide to Writing* and online at EauZone. Again, unstapled work will never be accepted. Please follow this sample heading for all typed work:

Name

1A: Section number

Assignment

Date

Additionally, MLA Style dictates that song titles are placed inside quotation marks (e.g. "When Doves Cry"), while the album titles are italicized (e.g. *Purple Rain*).

#### COURSE WORK

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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. All essays are approximately three pages and must adhere to MLA Style.

Your assigned writing coursework will total approximately 8,000 words; they include:

1. Diagnostic Essay: This in-class essay will be my first opportunity to evaluate your writing.
2. Expository Essay: You will write an expository essay based upon Daniel J. Levitin's *This is Your Brain on Music*.

3. Editorial Essay: In this essay, you will examine the current state of hip hop based upon Tricia Rose's *The Hip Hop Wars*. Additionally, this essay will be workshopped in class.
4. Autobiographical Essay: For this in-class essay, you will write about three songs that define you as a person.
5. Short Answer Responses: For this in-class essay, you will write short answer responses based upon Douglas Cowie's *Owen Noone and The Marauder*.
6. Descriptive Essay: For this essay, you will describe and decode a musical composition. This essay will also be workshopped in class.
7. Comparative Analysis: This in-class essay asks that you contrast the role music played in your formative years with those of Rob Sheffield in *Talking to Girls about Duran Duran*.
8. Reflections: You will write eight two-page reflections on a variety of music-themed prompts (e.g. "girl power" anthems, singing in public).
9. PowerPoint Presentation: You and a partner will create a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation, including a hand-out, based upon one of a list of music topics I will present in class (e.g. Bollywood musicals, game-changing albums). *You will be responsible for providing your own laptop. Also, Mac users will require an additional adaptor to connect to the projector.*
10. Final Exam: Your final will take place at 8 AM on Saturday, December 8<sup>th</sup> (location TBA); it will be a common, department-wide written exam. *No make-ups or early exams will be allowed and you must take the exam in order to pass this class.*

#### GRADING

Item	Point Value	Word Count*	SLO (GE)
1. Diagnostic Essay**	20	750	1, 4
2. Expository Essay	20	1000	1-4
3. Editorial Essay***	20	1000	1-4
4. Autobiographical Essay**	20	750	1-4
5. Short Answer Responses**	20	750	1-4
6. Descriptive Essay***	20	1000	1-3
7. Comparative Essay**	20	1000	1-4
8. Reflections	80 (8 @ 10 points each)	4000	1-3
9. PowerPoint Presentation	10	N/A	N/A
10. Final Exam	60	N/A	N/A
11. Participation	10	N/A	N/A

Total points: 300

Approximate word count: 10,250

- \* One typed page in MLA Style equals approximately 250 words; 750 words is roughly equal to three typed pages
- \*\* Denotes an in-class essay
- \*\*\* Essays to be reviewed in a writers workshop

Essays will be graded by the following criteria:

- An "A" 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” 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” essay will complete the requirements of the assignment, but it will show weaknesses in fundamentals, such as development. It may show significant weakness in mastery of grammar, mechanics, usage, or voice.
- A “D” 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.

Final Grade Calculations:

285 – 300: A+	265 – 269: B+	235 – 239: C+	180 – 209: D
276 – 284: A	246 – 264: B	216 – 234: C*	0 – 179: F
270 – 275: A-	240 – 245: B-	210 – 215: C-	

\* At least 216 points must be earned to receive course credit.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Please note that this schedule is subject to change. Always consult EauZone for the most up-to-date information and schedule. Consider this hard copy of the syllabus only a rough guide and already out-of-date.

Key:

BRAIN—*This is Your Brain on Music*                      OWEN—*Owen Noone and The Marauder*  
 DURAN—*Talking to Girls about Duran Duran*        WARS—*The Hip Hop Wars*  
 eR—eReader

Week 01: The Beatles	
We 08.22	Class: Syllabus review

Week 02: Madonna	
Mo 08.27	Class: Introductions; Lecture—“A PowerPoint Presentation How-to”
We 08.29	Read: eR—“Does Pop Sound Louder, Dumber, and More and More the Same? One Study Says So” (Slate), “Growing Up Gaga” ( <i>New York</i> ), “Musicians’ Brains Might Have an Edge on Aging” ( <i>US News &amp; World Report</i> ), “Stanford Researcher Maps Melodies Used in Holocaust to Control Prisoners” (Stanford University) Class: Lecture—“Writing as a Process”

Week 03: Buddy Holly & The Crickets	
Mo 09.03	<b>NO CLASS—LABOR DAY</b>
We 09.05	Read: BRAIN—“I Love Music and I Love Science—Why Would I Want to Mix the Two?” – “Behind the Curtain” Class: <b>DIAGNOSTIC ESSAY</b> Due: <b>REFLECTION 01</b>

Week 04: The Beastie Boys	
Mo 09.10	Read: BRAIN—“Anticipation” – “After Dessert, Crick was Still Four Seats Away from Me” Class: Reading discussion; Lecture—“Citing Sources in MLA: The Basics”
We 09.12	Read: BRAIN—“What Makes a Musician?” – “The Music Instinct” Class: Watch—“Gospel for Teens” from <i>60 Minutes</i> (2011); Lecture—“MLA Style 101” Due: <b>REFLECTION 02</b>

Week 05: 2Pac	
Mo 09.17	Read: WARS—“Hip Hop Causes Violence” – “Hip Hop Hurts Black People” Class: Reading discussion; Presentations Due: <b>EXPOSITORY ESSAY</b>
We 09.19	Read: WARS—“Hip Hop is Destroying America’s Values” – “Hip Hop Demeans Women” Class: Reading discussion; Lecture—“On Wordiness: Exercises”

Week 06: Michael Jackson	
Mo 09.24	Read: WARS—“Just Keeping it Real” – “There are Bitches and Hoes” Class: Watch—Excerpts from <i>And You Don’t Stop: 30 Years of Hip-Hop</i> from VH1 (2004)
We 09.26	Read: WARS—“We’re Not Role Models” – “Nobody Talks about the Positive in Hip Hop” Class: Reading discussion; Presentations; Lecture—“How to Build a Solid Argument” Due: <b>REFLECTION 03</b>

Week 07: Rodgers & Hammerstein	
Mo 10.01	Read: WARS—“Mutual Denials in the Hip Hop Wars” – “Six Guiding Principles for Creativity, Consumption, and Community in Hip Hop and Beyond” Class: Reading discussion; Lecture—“The Most Common Grammatical Errors—And How to Avoid Them”
We 10.03	Class: Writers workshop; Reading discussion Due: <b>EDITORIAL ESSAY (DRAFT 1; BRING 2 COPIES)</b>

Week 08: Judy Garland	
Mo 10.08	Read: eR—“You Are What You Hear: What Your Favorite Music Says About You” (NPR Music), “Six Songs of Me” (GuardianMusic), “Does Music Define You?” (NPR Music) Class: Reading discussion; Presentations Due: <b>REFLECTION 04</b>
We 10.10	Read: eR—“Music Defines Me” (Aggie Central), “The Sound of a Generation” (NPR Music), “The Songs That Define Us” (ConversantLife) Class: Reading discussion; Presentations Due: <b>EDITORIAL ESSAY (DRAFT 2; ATTACH ONE COPY OF DRAFT 1)</b>

Week 09: Led Zeppelin	
Mo 10.15	Class: <b>AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY</b>
We 10.17	Read: OWEN—Pg. 1 – 50 Class: Reading discussion; Presentations Due: <b>REFLECTION 05</b>

Week 10: Adele	
Mo 10.22	Read: OWEN—Pg. 51 – 100 Class: Lecture—“Introduction to the Rock Musical”
We 10.24	Read: OWEN—Pg. 101 - 150 Class: Guest lecture—Andrew Hill, Wind Ensemble at SJSU

Week 11: Frank Sinatra	
Mo 10.29	Read: OWEN—Pg. 151 - 200 Class: Reading discussion; Presentations
We 10.31	Read: eR—“Writing about Music” (University of Calgary), “A Guide to Writing about Music, Pt. 2: Thinking” (Invisible Oranges), “The NPR 100: The Most Important American Musical Works of the 20th Century” (NPR) Class: <b>SHORT ANSWER RESPONSES</b>

Week 12: Bee Gees	
Mo 11.05	Read: DURAN—The Go-Go’s, “Our Lips are Sealed” – Ray Parker Jr., “A Woman Needs Love” Class: Reading discussion, Writers workshop Due: <b>DESCRIPTIVE ESSAY (DRAFT 1; BRING 2 COPIES)</b>
We 11.07	Read: DURAN—The Rolling Stones, “She’s So Cold” – Culture Club, “I’ll Tumble 4 Ya” Class: Reading discussion; Presentations Due: <b>REFLECTION 06</b>

Week 13: Stevie Wonder	
Mo 11.12	<b>NO CLASS—VETERAN’S DAY</b>
We 11.14	Read: DURAN— Hall & Oates, “Maneater” – Lita Ford, “Kiss Me Deadly” Class: Reading discussion; Presentations Due: <b>DESCRIPTIVE ESSAY (DRAFT 2; ATTACH ONE COPY OF DRAFT 1)</b>

Week 14: Lady Gaga	
Mo 11.19	Read: DURAN—Ton Lōc, “Funky Cold Medina” – Duran Duran, “All She Wants Is” Class: Reading discussion; Presentations Due: <b>REFLECTION 7</b>
We 11.21	<b>NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING</b>

Week 15: Johnny Cash	
Mo 11.26	Class: <b>COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS</b>
We 11.28	Class: Final exam prep; Lecture—“The Mad Dash: Prompts”

Week 16: Whitney Houston	
Mo 12.03	Class: Final exam prep; Lecture—“The Mad Dash: Thesis Statements”
We 12.05	Class: Final exam prep; Lecture—“The Mad Dash: Essay Outlines” Due: <b>REFLECTION 8</b>
Sa 12.08	<b>FINAL EXAM: 8 AM, LOCATION TBD</b>



Week 17: Bob Dylan	
Mo 12.10	Class: Course review