

# Syllabus for English 1A

*"Education is not the learning of facts but the training of the mind to think."*

*-Albert Einstein*

## Course Information

Semester & Year: Spring 2021  
Course ID & Section #: ENGL-V0594  
Instructor's name: Ruth Rhodes  
Location: Online  
Course units: 4

## Required Materials

Textbook Title: *They Say, I Say (4<sup>th</sup> Edition)*  
Author: Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein  
ISBN-13: 978-0393631678  
Other requirements: Notebook or Desktop computer, word processing software, a good grammar/spell checker like Grammarly, high-speed internet access, and a video camera with audio.

## Instructor Contact Information

Office: Creative Arts 132 (currently remote)  
Office hours: M-TH 9-1:00  
Phone number: 707-476-4587 (currently remote: please email instead)  
Email address: [ruth-rhodes@redwoods.edu](mailto:ruth-rhodes@redwoods.edu)

## Catalog Description

This is an introductory course that offers instruction in expository and argumentative writing, close reading, cogent thinking, research strategies, information literacy, appropriate and effective use of language, and documentation.

## Course Student Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate the capacity to read, analyze, and evaluate non-fiction texts in support of academic inquiry and argumentation.
2. Utilize flexible strategies for writing expository and argumentative college-level essays.
3. Incorporate primary and secondary sources into essays using appropriate documentation format.

## Prerequisites/Co-requisites/ Recommended Preparation

Placement into English 1A is determined according to the default AB 705 guidelines or the results of the guided self-placement process.

## Accessibility

Students will have access to online course materials that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and College of the Redwoods policies. Students who discover access issues with this class should contact the instructor.

College of the Redwoods is also committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability or believe you might benefit from disability-related services and accommodations, please contact your instructor or [Disability Services and Programs for Students](#) (DSPS). Students may make requests for alternative media by contacting DSPS based on their campus location:

- Eureka: 707-476-4280, student services building, 1<sup>st</sup> floor
- Del Norte: 707-465-2324, main building near the library
- Klamath-Trinity: 530-625-4821 Ext 103

During COVID19, approved accommodations for distance education classes will be emailed to the instructor by DSPS. In the case of face to face instruction, please present your written accommodation request to your instructor at least one week before the first test so that necessary arrangements can be made. Last-minute arrangements or post-test adjustments cannot usually be accommodated.

## Primary Focus

In this online class, we will learn how to read, write, and think at the college level. You will read, take notes on, and discuss diverse and engaging texts, from opinion pieces to in-depth scientific studies. You will identify interesting *questions at issue*—questions about which there is significant disagreement between people—questions you think are worth exploring—and then you will write essays trying to answer those questions. Over the course of the semester, our readings will focus on three different themes, which we will explore one at a time:

1. How Do We Know What is True?
2. The Value of a College Education
3. The Challenges of Technology

## Class Organization and Structure

This class is organized into three units, based on the themes above. Work is arranged in weekly modules.

The week typically begins with a welcome video. You will then access the **lecture materials**, which include written information, videos, images, links, and embedded quizzes.

After the lecture, you might be asked to post a **media chat**, an informal video, audio, or text comment to your peers in a small discussion group. Next, you will **read a theme-based article, report, or book excerpt** and take **critical reading notes** on it. The week usually ends with a **formal written discussion** on one of the readings from the week.

Most work is due at the end of the week, **on Sunday**, just before midnight. Rarely, assignments are due mid-week. I will give you plenty of warning in advance if this happens.

**I generally don't accept late work.** Assignments close automatically. So before the deadline on Sunday, check to make sure your work uploaded. Check to make sure your quiz grades were recorded. Send me an email or Canvas message if you are having technical problems (it happens—don't stress about it—if you did the work, I'll make sure you get credit).

**Modules are open early.** If you know you're going to be swamped with other responsibilities or otherwise away from a computer for more than a week, you can complete most assignments in advance of the deadline.

## **Evaluation & Grading Policy**

### Available Grades

A (100-90%) / B (89-80%) / C (79-70%) / D (69-60%) / F (59-0%)

Please note that I do not give pluses or minuses. There is no extra credit.

### Assignment Categories:

Critical Practices: 30% of total grade

Discussions, Reflections, and Workshops: 20% of total grade

Essays (3): 50% of total grade

### Critical Practices (30%)

One of our course learning outcomes is to “demonstrate the capacity to read, analyze, and evaluate non-fiction texts in support of academic inquiry and argumentation.” Assignments related to achieving these skills include

- Brief **quizzes** embedded in the lectures that test your level of engagement and understanding with the material. You can retake these quizzes for a better grade until the assignment closes.
- **Critical reading notes** on the reading assignments. These notes will explore questions about the content of the texts and the reasoning and purposes behind it, the writer's motivation, and the way the text might be read or misread by different audiences. I'll show you how to take notes that expand your thinking and generate ideas for your essay writing.
- **Media chats**, informal video, audio, or text-based reactions to share with your group.

**Critical practices cannot be turned in late.** The assignments close automatically when the deadline passes.

### Discussions and Reflections (20%)

Two other course learning outcomes include the ability to “utilize flexible strategies for writing expository and argumentative college-level essays,” as well as to “incorporate primary and secondary sources into essays using appropriate documentation format.” To build these skills, you will participate in

- Small group **formal discussions** about the ideas in the lecture, the readings, or upcoming essay topics. Sometimes you will be asked to provide peers with feedback on their essay outlines or drafts—and you will offer up your work for feedback.
- **Reflections**, where you respond to essay feedback and examine your growing skills.

In other classes, discussions and reflections may be considered “informal.” Not so with this class. Discussions and reflections are graded as **formal writing assignments**, so craft and proofread them carefully for full credit.

**Discussions and reflections cannot be turned in late.** The assignments close automatically. Plus, there’s not much point in adding to a discussion when everyone else has moved on to the next one.

### Critical Essays (50%)

You will write three formal essays, demonstrating your developing reading, writing, and thinking skills.

- [Essays 1](#) (1000+ words) is worth 15% of your total grade
- [Essay 2](#) (1200+ words) is worth 15%
- [Essay 3](#) (1500+) is worth 20%. Together, these essays make up 50% of your total grade.

**I comment extensively on your essays** in comment bubbles on your document. Students consistently say that one of the most useful things about this class is the feedback. In Canvas, feedback is tricky to access, especially the first time, so I will provide a video tutorial on how to do this. Ask if you can’t find my comments!

I’ve been evaluating essays for more than 20 years. I’ve come to believe that the fairest way to grade them is to place them into three categories: **Exceeds Expectations** (100%), **Meets Expectations** (75%), or **Does Not Yet Meet Expectations** (50%). The [English 1A Essay Rubric](#) provides specific descriptors for these categories.

If you earn “Does Not Yet Meet Expectations” on either Essays 1 or 2, you can and should revise your essay. Your grade will go up if you address the issues that kept it from passing. With a revision, you can earn up to a Meets Expectations (75%).

Essays that already meet or exceed expectations can’t be revised. In a perfect world, I would allow revisions. But I have a limited capacity to keep reading and grading papers. Feel free, though, to revise on your own.

**I do accept late essays.** While I’m strict on the low-stakes assignments, I will take late papers up to 7 days after the due date. You don’t need to ask for an extension. You have one automatically. But please note: late essays can’t be revised. Also, **Essay 3 cannot be turned in late or revised** because it is due at the end of the semester. We have to stop somewhere.

### The Secret to Earning High Grades

Students who earn high grades are not necessarily smarter or more talented than the rest. But they *do* things others might not do. They have habits you might think about coopting if you want high grades, too.

Generally, students who earn an A or B in this course turn in all their work, carefully following the directions. Their essays typically pass the first time around, but if not, they revise them, embracing the idea of learning from feedback. Students who earn an A for the course write robust discussion posts and engage deeply with group members. They may not always earn full credit for every assignment, but they are organized, careful, and thorough. They proofread carefully. They ask for help when they need it. They improve over time.

Students who don't do well often don't turn in assignments. They may not take enough time to engage with the lecture materials and the readings. They don't ask for help if they are confused.

Lack of self-discipline and time-management are the usual reasons students don't pass this course. But sometimes, students are caught up short by events in their lives beyond the structure of the class. A child is sick, a job requires extra hours, a computer malfunctions. If something like this happens to you, rather than turn away, **please reach out**. There may be something I can do.

I know that many of you are not online students by choice. Please let me know about any specific challenges or technology limitations that might affect your participation. I want every student to thrive.

### COVID-19 Sucks

Be good to yourselves. Think of this class as an oasis from stress: a chance to learn new skills and grow in a world that might otherwise feel suffocating. Reach out to one another and make friends. Try not to obsess over grades. Focus on building skills. Understand that life is *hard* right now. *Embrace the suck*. By enrolling, you have earned the right to claim membership in the Class of COVID-19. That's going to be something to tell the grandkids.

## **Admissions Deadlines & Enrollment Policies**

### **Spring 2021 Dates**

- Classes begin: 1/16/21
- MLK Jr. Birthday (all campuses closed): 1/18/21
- Last day to add a class: 1/22/21
- Last day to drop without a W and receive a refund: 1/29/21
- Census date: 2/01/21 or 20% into class duration
- Last day to petition to file P/NP option: 2/12/21
- Lincoln's Birthday (all campuses closed): 2/12/21
- President's Day (all campuses closed): 2/15/21
- Last day to petition to graduate or apply for certificate: 3/04/21
- Spring Break (no classes): 3/15/21 – 3/20/21
- Last day for student-initiated W (no refund): 4/02/21
- Last day for faculty-initiated W (no refund): 4/02/21
- Final examinations: 5/08/21 – 5/14/21
- Semester ends: 5/14/21
- Grades available for transcript release: approximately 5/31/21

Students who have experienced extenuating circumstances can complete & submit the ***Excused Withdrawal Petition*** to request an Excused Withdrawal (EW) grade instead of the current Withdrawal (W) or non-passing (D, F & NP) grades. The EW Petition is available from the Admissions and Records Forms Webpage. Supporting documentation is required.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

In the academic community, the high value placed on truth implies a corresponding intolerance of scholastic dishonesty. In cases involving academic dishonesty, determination of the grade and of the student's status in

the course is left primarily to the discretion of the faculty member. In such cases, where the instructor determines that a student has demonstrated academic dishonesty, the student may receive a failing grade for the assignment and/or exam and may be reported to the Chief Student Services Officer or designee. The Student Code of Conduct ([AP 5500](#)) is available on the College of the Redwoods website. Additional information about the rights and responsibilities of students, Board policies, and administrative procedures is located in the [College Catalog](#) and on the [College of the Redwoods website](#).

## Disruptive Behavior

Student behavior or speech that disrupts the instructional setting will not be tolerated. Disruptive conduct may include but is not limited to: unwarranted interruptions; failure to adhere to instructor's directions; vulgar or obscene language; slurs or other forms of intimidation; and physically or verbally abusive behavior. In such cases where the instructor determines that a student has disrupted the educational process, a disruptive student may be temporarily removed from class. In addition, the student may be reported to the Chief Student Services Officer or designee. The Student Code of Conduct ([AP 5500](#)) is available on the College of the Redwoods website. Additional information about the rights and responsibilities of students, Board policies, and administrative procedures is located in the [College Catalog](#) and on the [College of the Redwoods website](#).

## Respect and Tolerance

My primary goal is to facilitate learning for everyone. That includes monitoring discussions to ensure that we treat each other with respect, following the student Code of Conduct (see above). Respect others by using inclusive language. In English 1A, we will explore what that looks like, especially as it applies to persuading an audience. It's not just a question of conduct—it's a question of effectiveness.

No one should treat another student with disrespect. It rarely happens in my classes. But how we define "respect" and "tolerance" raises a fundamental question: If the personal beliefs and prejudices of classmates are upsetting and offensive, does that constitute "disrespect?" Is it a violation of the code of conduct?

Probably not. Learning cannot happen in an environment where controversial ideas cannot be tried out. We all hold beliefs that we haven't thought out carefully, and we all have prejudices of which we aren't consciously aware. I will strive to protect free expression in this class, including speech that students might find ignorant and offensive, as long as it does not violate the Code of Conduct. In other words, it's okay to be wrong. Just be polite.

Part of your task in becoming a better critical thinker is to recognize that your values are shaped by your limited individual experiences. Other people see the world differently because they experience it differently. They have much to tell us, even when we find their ideas wrongheaded or distasteful. Our task is to **understand** different perspectives and together discover what is true and right and just and good. We need to hear people out to do so.

Tolerance does not mean that everyone is right *in their own way* or that people should cling to their opinions no matter what. Tolerance is the process we use to get to understanding.

As an educator, I see a trend in academic culture that privileges *protection from* offensive ideas over meaningful discussion and debate. I do not believe in silencing ideas that might, for example, reflect racist or sexist or classist attitudes. The *safety* trend arises from the mistaken notion that students are weak-minded

and cannot reason their way towards truth. It also comes from the growing misconception that people who disagree with us are our adversaries.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

In college, we hold ideas up to the light of reason. We do not hide them away--especially ideas based on prejudice or faulty assumptions. How else can we grow our critical thinking skills?

Side-stepping controversial ideas might be appropriate at Thanksgiving dinner with Grandma, but it is counter-productive in academic work. We all signed on to learn, and we are on the same journey. As people in pursuit of education, **all of us** must continually examine those things we hold as true and right and just and good; it is part of the critical thinking process. I join you in that. Every semester I learn from students' ideas and reshape my view of the world.

So, expect to be introduced to new ways of seeing things. Understand in advance that your ideas, values, and beliefs may be challenged in this class as part of the learning process.

### **Setting Your Preferred Name in Canvas**

Students can have an alternate first name and pronouns to appear in Canvas. Contact [Admissions & Records](#) to request a change to your preferred first name and pronoun. Your Preferred Name will only be listed in Canvas. It does not change your legal name in our records. See the [Student Information Update Form](#).

If you have a pronoun preference that you want to share with me, please do so. Like most people, I make assumptions about gender based on visual cues and first names. Sometimes those assumptions are wrong; feel free to alert me if you have a preference or correction.

### **Canvas Information**

If using Canvas, include navigation instructions, tech support information, what Canvas is used for, and your expectation for how regularly students should check Canvas for your class.

Log into Canvas at <https://redwoods.instructure.com>

Password is your 8 digit birth date

For tech help, email [its@redwoods.edu](mailto:its@redwoods.edu) or call 707-476-4160

Canvas Help for students: <https://www.redwoods.edu/online/Help-Student>

Canvas online orientation workshop: <https://www.redwoods.edu/online/Home/Student-Resources/Canvas-Resources>

### **Community College Student Health and Wellness**

Resources, tools, and trainings regarding health, mental health, wellness, basic needs and more designed for California community college students, faculty and staff are available on the California Community Colleges [Health & Wellness website](#).

[Wellness Central](#) is a free online health and wellness resource that is available 24/7 in your space at your pace. Students seeking to request a counseling appointment for academic advising or general counseling can email [counseling@redwoods.edu](mailto:counseling@redwoods.edu).

## Emergency Procedures / Everbridge

College of the Redwoods has implemented an emergency alert system called Everbridge. In the event of an emergency on campus you will receive an alert through your personal email and/or phones. Registration is not necessary in order to receive emergency alerts. Check to make sure your contact information is up-to-date by logging into WebAdvisor <https://webadvisor.redwoods.edu> and selecting 'Students' then 'Academic Profile' then 'Current Information Update.'

Please contact Public Safety at 707-476-4112 or [security@redwoods.edu](mailto:security@redwoods.edu) if you have any questions. For more information see the [Redwoods Public Safety Page](#).

In an emergency that requires an evacuation of the building anywhere in the District:

- Be aware of all marked exits from your area and building
- Once outside, move to the nearest evacuation point outside your building
- Keep streets and walkways clear for emergency vehicles and personnel

Do not leave campus, unless it has been deemed safe by the campus authorities.

## Links to Student Support Services

The following online resources are available to support your success as a student:

- [CR-Online](#) (Comprehensive information for online students)
- [Library Articles & Databases](#)
- [Canvas help and tutorials](#)
- [Online Student Handbook](#)

[Counseling](#) offers assistance to students in need of professional counseling services such as crisis counseling.

Learning Resource Center includes the following resources for students

- [Academic Support Center](#) for instructional support, tutoring, learning resources, and proctored exams. Includes the Math Lab & Drop-in Writing Center
- [Library Services](#) to promote information literacy and provide organized information resources.
- [Multicultural & Diversity Center](#)

Special programs are also available for eligible students include

- [Extended Opportunity Programs & Services \(EOPS\)](#) provides financial assistance, support and encouragement for eligible income disadvantaged students at all CR locations.
- The TRiO Student Success Program provides eligible students with a variety of services including trips to 4-year universities, career assessments, and peer mentoring. Students can apply for the program in [Eureka](#) or in [Del Norte](#)
- The [Veteran's Resource Center](#) supports and facilitates academic success for Active Duty Military, Veterans and Dependents attending CR through relational advising, mentorship, transitional assistance, and coordination of military and Veteran-specific resources.
- Klamath-Trinity students can contact the CR KT Office for specific information about student support services at 530-625-4821