

EWRT 1A/LART 250
Winter 2025
Writing on Climate Change

Instructor: Sherwin Mendoza, mendozasherwin@fhda.edu

Class Meetings: Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.

Class Location: L31

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m

Office Hours Location: The IIS Division Main Office (in the Multicultural Center)

Final Portfolio Due: Friday, March 21 (the final portfolio counts as the final exam)

EWRT 1A Student Learning Outcomes

1. Practice writing as a multi-step process including planning and revising with attention to varying purposes, audiences, and rhetorical strategies.
2. Read and analyze rhetorically and culturally diverse narrative and expository texts from a variety of perspectives.

Writing on Climate Change

When I started college many years ago, I felt like the earth's atmosphere was stable, and that I would have better opportunities than my parents, which would allow me to lead a more comfortable life than they had. I simply assumed that if I worked hard in school, I would be able to find a good job and buy a house. I had a U.S. passport, so I felt like I could go anywhere. I felt like I would be able to get money, and with that money, I could easily get things like new computers and video game consoles that I couldn't get when I was younger. I grew up in Florida, and I did not like the heat and humidity, but I never imagined that the weather would get more uncomfortable, and I never thought that climate-related disasters would ever overturn my life.

Now, though, we are living in a very different world, one that is rapidly heating up, and one that will be much more unpredictable than the one I thought I was living in when I started college. However, rather than dwelling on images of the end of the world, this course will instead focus on what we and our communities can do to adapt to climate change and prevent its worst possible effects. Early in the quarter, we will engage with "solar punk," a literary genre, aesthetic, and movement that imagines and takes steps towards building sustainable futures. Midway through the quarter, we will transition to focus on ways we might address climate change through two research-based essays. In the first, you will do research that will allow you to critically evaluate efforts to address climate change within the field that you are hoping to join. In the second, you will recommend to the people of California to accept, reject, or modify a climate-related project that is receiving funding from the California state budget this year.

Textbooks

All of the course texts will be free and available online. This course will have three major texts:

1. *Cities of Light: A Collection of Solar Futures*
2. *Writing, Reading, and College Success: A First-Year Composition Course for All Learners*
3. Selected chapters of the Governor's 2025-26 California state budget proposal.

Additionally, you will read articles and web pages that will help you to learn about the state of the field that you intend to major in as well as an item related to climate change in the proposed 2025-2026 budget for the State of California. As necessary, we will also use resources for improving specific writing skills such as those provided by the De Anza English Department, the Writing and Reading Center at De Anza, and the Purdue OWL.

Short Schedule of Polished Writing Assignments

Week 3: Revised Timed Essay (500-800 words)
Week 4: Solar Adaptation (600-800 words)
Week 6: Your Field's Response to Climate Change (900-1200 words)
Week 8: Position Paper (1200-1500 words)
Week 11: Reflective Essay (600-800 words)

Short Schedule of Timed Writing Assignments

Week 2: Timed Essay 1
Week 7: Timed Essay 2
Week 10: Timed Essay 3 (if necessary to pass the portfolio)

Detailed Class Schedule

Week 1: January 6 - January 12
Course introduction, prepare for Timed Essay 1, begin reading *Cities of Light*

Week 2: January 13 - January 19
Timed Essay 1
Prepare for video presentation on *Cities of Light*
Introduction to the Writing and Reading Center

Week 3: January 20 - January 26
January 20: Holiday
Video presentation, revision of Timed Essay 1 due

Week 4: January 27 - February 2
Solar Adaptation essay due, begin Your Field essay

Week 5: February 3 - February 9
Continue Your Field essay
CSA 1 due

Week 6: February 10 - February 16
Your Field Essay due, prepare for Timed Essay 2

Week 7: February 17 - February 23
February 17: Holiday
CSA 2 due
Write Timed Essay 2, begin Position Paper

Week 8: February 24 - March 2
Continue Position Paper

Week 9: March 3 - March 9
Position Paper due

Week 10: March 10 - March 16
Revise essays
CSA 3 due

Week 11: March 17 - March 23
Timed Essay 3 (if necessary to pass the portfolio)
Revise Essays
Reflective Essay due

Final Exams March 24 - March 28

Class Policies

Please be aware of these course policies:

- Attendance at the Monday and Wednesday face-to-face meetings is mandatory. Participation for each course meeting, including attendance, will be worth five points. Being late for class (missing roll) will result in a one-point penalty, and missing class will result in a two-point penalty.
- You can have a maximum of five excused absences or late attendances. If you cannot attend a class meeting, or if you know that you will be late, you can be excused by e-mailing me **before class begins** (at 9:30 a.m.). Please provide some explanation for why you will be late or miss class. After the fifth excused meeting when you are either absent or late, regardless of excuses, absence/late penalties will apply.
- Late assignments will be automatically penalized by Canvas. **Do not wait until the last minute!** If you turn in an assignment after 11:58 p.m. on the day it is due, then you will receive a late penalty of 10% of the possible points.
- For major assignments (assignments worth 50 or more points), the maximum late penalty will be 10%.
- For short assignments, in addition to the penalty of 10% for the first day late, for every day thereafter you will receive an additional penalty of 10%, up to a maximum penalty of 50%.

- I will normally grant extensions on due dates if you e-mail me **before the assignment is due**. To receive an extension, you will need to explain why you need it and how much extra time you will need, and I will grant it if I feel that doing so would be reasonable and fair.
- You will need to turn in short writing assignments such as brainstorm, proposals for topics, and outlines before you turn in major assignments. Those short assignments should allow me to check your progress in the writing process for each of the major assignments and give you feedback.
- I may drop you from the class if you fall more than two weeks behind. If you fall one week behind the assignments, I will e-mail you so that we can make a schedule for you to catch up. If you have no contact with me for two consecutive weeks, I may drop you from the class.
- This course will comply with conditions set in accommodation letters sent from De Anza's Disability Support Programs and Services (DSPS) division. If you feel like disability accommodations will help you to succeed in this course, visit <https://www.deanza.edu/dsps/> or the DSPS office on campus to learn how to apply for DSPS services.
- This course will abide by the college-wide policies of De Anza College, including those pertaining to academic integrity, which are available from this page: https://www.deanza.edu/policies/academic_integrity.html

Policy on Plagiarism and Artificial Intelligence

It is my belief that the most effective way for you to avoid plagiarism will be for you to develop a strong writer's voice that reflects your own background, experiences, circumstances, and aspirations. Doing so will allow you to write worthwhile and engaging essays that are tied to your own unique story, that could only be written by you, that articulate your own objectives based on your own analysis of your own situation, and that will allow a reader to differentiate you from other writers who could write similar essays.

In this class, you cannot receive credit for work that is clearly plagiarized. Such work will receive 0 points. However, if you explain to me the circumstances, motivations, and methods for plagiarizing, at my discretion I will allow you to make up the assignment, but with an appropriate late penalty.

The output of AI chatbots such as ChatGPT should appear in work that you turn in only if you provide MLA-style documentation for that work. If you draw significant material from any outside source, including an AI chatbot, MLA-style documentation is required, whether you paraphrase or directly quote the source. To not provide appropriate documentation would constitute plagiarism. Thus, a major way for you to avoid plagiarism will be to provide correct MLA-style documentation for work not written by you.

Penalties for not providing correct MLA-style documentation will be severe, up to 80% of the possible points for any assignment.

Penalties may also be severe if work that you turn in is not easily distinguishable from AI. Written work with the following characteristics may be subject to severe penalties:

- Inaccurate documentation or a lack of documentation (especially paraphrases without citations)
- Identifiable similarity to chatbot output (including a lack of specificity, bizarre errors, a confident tone that avoids uncertainty, and a tendency to produce lists)
- Similarity with responses from classmates, which suggests that they were produced by the same AI query
- A preponderance of material that seems detached from you and your own voice in assignments that ask you to express your own opinions or to draw from your lived experience
- Inconsistency with other work that you have done for this class
- Work that seems disconnected from the conversations, prompts, and other course materials that are tied to the specific context created by this class. For example, unexplained jargon is common in AI output.

To maximize your learning in this class, and to avoid grading penalties, I advise you to be very cautious about copying and pasting text from generative AI or other automated tools (such as programs that translate, paraphrase, or in other ways rewrite input, whether written by you or an outside source). In some circumstances, I will encourage you to use such tools in academically appropriate ways. I strongly encourage you to ask me about any automated tool that you would like to use in this class.

Online Communications

Outside of class, the best way to contact me is over e-mail. I normally check e-mail early in the morning, and I will do my best to respond to you the morning after you e-mail me or possibly before. **To ensure a response from me, please do not send messages to me through the comments box on Canvas assignments.** I am not notified if you make a comment on a Canvas assignment. I am, however, notified if you e-mail me.

Every Sunday, I will post an announcement with the week's schedule. The schedule should include readings/videos for the week as well as assignments due that week. The announcements should also preview how the assignments for the week lead to major assignments in following weeks. If you have any questions about the week's schedule, please e-mail me.

The other primary form of online communication will be through assignments on Canvas. Many of the assignments in this class are short assignments that are steps in completing major assignments. I will prioritize grading those and providing feedback to you so that you can continue on to the next step in completing the major assignment. If you turn a short assignment in on time, you should receive feedback in the assignment's comment box within two days, but in most cases, the feedback will be very short. For major assignments, you should expect detailed feedback, also in the comment box of the assignment. If you turn in a major assignment on time, you should receive detailed feedback within ten days (but in some cases, in less than a week).

In a typical week, you will have three or four assignments due on Monday through Wednesday, and one assignment due on Thursday through Sunday. I will try to avoid making multiple assignments due between Thursday and Sunday.

Class Participation

On every day we are scheduled to meet as a class, a 5-point class participation assignment will be due in Canvas. To receive full credit for class participation on a given day, you need to both attend the full class and do the class participation assignment on Canvas. If you do the Canvas assignment and you are late to class, your participation grade will drop by one point, and if you are absent, your participation grade will drop by two points.

Timed Essays

One-hour timed essays will be assigned in Weeks 2 and 7, with a chance to make up a non-passing timed essay in Week 10. In order to pass this class, you must complete two timed essays and pass at least one of them.

The Writing and Reading Center

This class has partnered with the Writing and Reading Center to offer Customized Support Activities (CSA) to help you this quarter. Options include tutoring sessions, skills workshops, counseling appointments, and writing, reading and grammar resources that you complete on your own time. You will be required to complete three CSAs this quarter, one by Week 5, another by Week 7, and another by Week 10.

The Writing and Reading Center is part of De Anza's Student Success Center, which provides tutoring in not just writing but also math, science, and other subjects. I hope that this class will allow you to familiarize yourself with the tutoring services that De Anza offers.

Appointments and Rewrites

During Weeks 9, 10, and 11, you will have the opportunity to make 30-minute appointments with me to discuss revisions on your position paper. If you revise the essay and the grade for the revised essay is higher than the grade for the previous draft, the higher grade will replace the lower grade. If time permits, you will be able to revise the "Your Field" essay as well.

Grades

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
Timed Essays (50 points apiece)	100
Revised Timed Essay (Week 3)	100
Video Presentation (Week 3)	50
Solar Adaptation Essay (Week 4)	100
"Your Field" Essay (Week 6)	200
Position Paper (Week 8)	200

Short Assignments/Discussions (5 - 20 points apiece)	About 250
Reflective Essay (Week 11)	50
Total	About 1,050

Grading Scale:

A	90% + a passing portfolio + two timed essays
A-	89% + a passing portfolio + two timed essays
B+	86% + a passing portfolio + two timed essays
B	80% + a passing portfolio + two timed essays
B-	79% + a passing portfolio + two timed essays
C+	76% + a passing portfolio + two timed essays
C	Below 76% + a passing portfolio + two timed essays
F	Less than two timed essays or failure to pass the portfolio process (see below)

EWRT 1A Portfolio

If you have a passing grade in the course (C or above) at the end of the quarter, you will have the opportunity to submit a portfolio to the English Department. This portfolio will affect your final grade in this course.

The English Department expects that your portfolio should

- demonstrate your best work in the class.
- represent the work of a student who is passing EWRT 1A. If you are not passing the class, you cannot submit a portfolio.
- NOT contain any plagiarism. Plagiarized work cannot pass the portfolio process.

This means that your final grade in this course depends on two processes:

1. If you have a passing grade, you will submit a portfolio of selected writing for review by members of the English Department at the end of the quarter. If these readers agree that your portfolio demonstrates the appropriate skills for a student who has completed this quarter of EWRT 1A, you will pass the class. If your portfolio does not demonstrate the appropriate skills, you will not pass the class.
2. If the English Department determines that you should pass, your actual final letter grade (A, B, or C) will be determined by the percentage of points you earned throughout the quarter. For example, if your percentage on your assignments throughout the quarter in this class is 89% and you pass the portfolio process, you will receive an A- in the class. However, if you do not pass the portfolio process, you still cannot pass the class.

In order to pass this class with a good grade, you should

- complete all of your work and score as many points as possible during the quarter.
- revise and polish selected essays in order to assemble a strong portfolio at the end of the quarter.

My grades on your essays should be a signal of whether you are likely to pass the portfolio process, so you will definitely have multiple warnings if you are in danger. However, you should

keep in mind that—ultimately—you will not be able to “make up” for failing essays by earning lots of participation points or homework points. Those points will not affect the assessment of your portfolio, even if they affect your grade.

LART 250 Grade Calculation

To pass LART 250 you will need to complete at least 75% of the possible points from participation and the short assignments. Each short assignment will be worth 5 - 10 points, and participation at each course meeting will be worth five points.