

# Spring 25 Syllabus

Instructor: Elliott Cragen

Location: L31

Spring Quarter 2025

Class: TTh 9:30am-11:20am in L31

-plus-Additional 3hr/wk asynchronous

Office Hours:

Tuesdays/Thursdays L31 9:00am-9:30am; 11:20am-12:00pm

Weeknights 5-7 pm by FaceBook Messenger; and by arrangement)

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**IMPORTANT NOTE:** This syllabus was originally written for in-person classes and was adapted for our hybrid class. Therefore, if there are any comments that clearly do not apply to our current state of affairs, please let me know so I can remove/change them and then forget about them.

**A word of caution:** we are, many of us, conditioned to think of work done in the classroom as “classwork”, and work done at home as “homework”, and also many of us are used to getting by doing one, and not the other... however, thanks to the friggin’ pandemic and these friggin’ hybrid classes, that is no longer the case. This course meets for two hours lecture during the week, and during that time we will do class work. However, in addition to this, there is three hours of online work you will do at home that is classwork and not homework. You must complete all in-class work plus the online classwork in order to have the potential to pass this class. Homework, as such, will be assigned separately.

If this sounds like a lot, it's not—it's the same but different...and it requires more discipline than more traditional courses. (Also, it's not an excuse when you tell a teacher you did not complete an assignment for their class because you were doing the work for another class.)

We will discuss the appropriate use of AI in the educational world in class, but for now, here is a statement on submitting work someone or something else created (I took this from another instructor):

*You, the student, are solely and fully responsible for all intellectual property you present in this course. If you are incapable of claiming responsibility for intellectual property that you present as your own, the instructor retains the right to deny your ownership of it and any credit, rights, or privileges that your ownership would convey.*

**Translation: All work submitted for this class must be the result of your own intellectual process—while I encourage you to seek feedback and help from others (and AI), the goal of this class is to get you to think and respond creatively and thoughtfully, clearly communicating your own thoughts with your own words. If I suspect that is not what you submitted, I reserve the right to challenge you on your work. If you cannot successfully defend your work (by showing multiple drafts with an evolution in the quality of writing and thought, for example), I reserve the right to reject it.**

Required Materials:

All materials will be made available online for download.

- (but it's not a bad idea to have a College level dictionary)

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## **WELCOME TO EWRT 1A!**

This course fulfills the written communication EWRT-01A requirement of the college's core GE. A passing grade is a prerequisite to virtually all other classes you will take while in college. A passing grade is a "C" or better and cannot be achieved without completion of all assigned essays.

Prerequisites: A passing score on the English Proficiency Test (EPT) or an approved substitute course for the EPT.

**What you will learn in this class (Student Learning Outcomes [SLOs]):**

-Practice writing as a multi-step process including planning and revising with attention to varying purposes, audiences, and rhetorical strategies.

-Read and analyze rhetorically and culturally diverse narrative and expository texts

from a variety of perspectives.

**Course Goals: Students who engage the course with diligence and curiosity will gain confidence and competence in**

- Writing effective, multi-source academic essays
- Reading critically to understand and use organizational patterns
- Distinguishing between surface, “literal” reading and interpretation
- Discovering connections, patterns and analogies in order to compare and evaluate alternative points of view, values and meanings, including those from research sources.
- Writing as a complex, cyclical process of discovery, planning, drafting and revising

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**More stuff that is important for you to know:**

- How to analyze and respond to various source articles logically and rhetorically
  - How to identify and avoid common logical fallacies
- How to identify and avoid plagiarism
- Proper essay structure for a variety of rhetorical modes

- The meaning of “rhetorical modes”
- Proper research techniques for a variety of academic situations
  - Evaluation and verification of sources
  - How to incorporate valid sources into your essay
- Proper MLA formatting and citation of sources (including a “works cited” page)
- Other skills as necessary to be successful in this class

**Means of achieving the above learning objectives:**

- Through classroom lecture and discussion as well as various exercises assigned to be completed outside of class, you will learn, practice and demonstrate the skills listed above.

**Means of evaluating your success in acquiring the above skills:**

- You will demonstrate the mastery of the above skills by successfully completing each exercise and writing a minimum number of essays in at least three rhetorical modes, each of which must demonstrate an understanding of core principles and a mastery of the above listed skills.

My feedback on your essays should be a signal of whether you are likely to pass the class, so you will have multiple warnings if you are in danger. Please also 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 ability to write at the college level, even if they affect your grade.

**Workload:**

**Reading and Homework:** Since this course is two rolled into one (8 units) the homework load is about 10-15 hours per week. I have designed these

assignments to help you write better essays and become a stronger reader. In order to participate in class and benefit from each meeting, you must read and do the assignments listed in the schedule before class. Homework that is late for any reason will lose one point per day (20%). I do not give credit for homework that is more than a week late.

Peer-tutoring is available in the [WRC \(Writing/Reading Center\)](#)

[Links to an external site.](#) in the ATC Building on the third floor.

In addition, Victoria will come to the classroom and give a short presentation on services provided.

*If you have questions or are not sure where to start, please ask me, or contact [Victoria](#) or [Diana](#) at the **WRC**.*

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### **Formal Written Work:**

There will be a “prospectus”, where you will tell me the topic you will be writing on and the reasons you think it will make a good topic; then an informational essay where you will lay out the three or four points you will debate; a “pro” essay where you will detail the arguments supporting the issue; a “con” essay that will do the same for the arguments against it; and a term paper that will be a fully researched argument for and against it that will culminate in proof of your thesis. Each of these will involve multiple drafts.

### **Informal Written Work:**

In addition to your essays, you will write responses to works read for class. Since it is critical to discuss what one has read in order to gain a full understanding, a substantial amount of class time will be dedicated to just that: discussion. Further, since it is impossible to have meaningful discussion about the readings unless everyone has read the readings, all readings will be completed prior to the class discussion. The obvious question is how will I know if you have read them? By a combination of pop quizzes on key elements and/or typed responses as mentioned above.

### **Formal Reading:**

You will be assigned a variety of readings including essays, short stories, poems, exercises in the handbook and excerpts from novels. Most of these will be available in your Canvas shell, but some will come from other sources. Some will be serious, academic essays while others will be humorous; it is my hope all will be interesting. However, interesting or not, all are required to be read prior to class discussion. We will meet approximately 32 times for a little more than one hour—that is not even one full work-week for the entire quarter; we will not waste precious class time on things you can do outside of class. If you come to class unprepared to discuss the readings, you will be asked to leave class for the day.

### **Informal Reading:**

I anticipate college students will also find time to keep up with current events by reading local or national newspapers, magazines or e-zines. Your readings outside of the required materials, including reading done for other classes, should inform your classroom discussions.

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“From bad behaviors come good laws.”

### **Policies for class and assigned work:**

Grading\*:

Custom Support Activities and homework	20%	I would like to make it very clear that regardless of any points earned, the final determiner of your final grade will be the quality of your writing—that is, your grade will be a reflection of your writing’s academic
Essays	15%	
Quizzes and Midterms	25%	

Participation (discussion) and journals	10%	quality.
Final research essay	10%	
Final Exam	20%	Please note: you must complete and submit ALL essays and at least 75% of your journals to be given a passing grade for the class. Any “make-up” work must be approved before it will be accepted. In other words, submit your work on time if you want to ensure passing.

\* This is the percentage breakdown; for actual policies on grading (that is, what you need to do to get the maximum number of points) see “Policies” and “Criteria” below.

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In accordance with policies and procedures set forth by De Anza College’s Board of Trustees, this class shall employ a differential grading scale as defined in the official catalog (Chapter 5, “Academic Regulations,” “Grading System”).

Grades issued will represent a full range of student performance: “A=Excellent; B=above average; C=average; D=below average; F=failure. Courses graded following the A, B, C / No Credit (N/C) system will follow the same pattern except that N/C will replace the letter grade D or F. In these courses, N/C will also substitute W (Withdrawal), because neither N/C nor W affect the student’s grade point average.”

That is, the better you do, the better your grade.

Further:

One should assume that in English Department courses instructors will comment on, and grade the quality of, student writing as well as the quality of the ideas conveyed; all student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well organized writing.

So, what does this mean? It means

1) there is no “C- pass by the skin of my teeth;” anything below a C is not passing for this course

2) Your grade will be determined based on the number of points you have acquired (an objective measurement) and your overall skill as a writer (a subjective measurement)

3) students are expected to not only present clear, cogent ideas, they are expected to present those ideas in college-level writing and

4) that writing will be scored according to its quality (which will be a significant determiner of your score for that essay).

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Now, to the class itself:

- Cell phones and pagers should be off and stowed away during class time. If I catch you texting or using your phone in anyway, you will be asked to leave class for the day.
- Computers and iPads may be used ONLY for class-related activities. “Class-related activities” includes things such as Zooming, note-taking, research or access to class documents. They DO NOT include emailing, IM-ing, texting, checking FaceBook, MySpace (what’s that?), Google+ or any other social site.
- Class begins at the posted time, please be on time. It is disrespectful to disturb the class by arriving late. Because we are living in the Bay Area, there will be times when being late is unavoidable. When this happens, please enter the zoom quietly. Please don’t interrupt class to explain why you are late; things happen and we all understand. Because life is the way it is, the chance of your cell phone/pager going off when you are walking in late is proportionate to how late you are. Therefore, make an extra effort to make sure the noise-maker is off before you log on.
- Cell phones and pagers should be off and stowed away during class time. If I catch you texting or using your phone in anyway, you will be asked to leave class for the day.
- I do not like talking to myself; therefore, much of the time I will make every effort to engage you in discussion. I try to conduct my class in the spirit of “call and response,” that is, I will call and you will respond. Do not try to



avoid being called on by averting your eyes--this is a sure-fire way to be called on.

- Cell phones and pagers should be off and stowed away during class time. If I catch you texting or using your phone in anyway, you will be asked to leave class for the day.
- We will spend quite a bit of time in discussion of the readings. Note: This is not “free-time.” During discussion it is assumed that each student will participate to the extent they are capable. These discussions will be respectful exchanges of ideas and disrespect for anyone or their ideas will not be tolerated.
- There will be times when I will be lecturing and times when you will be speaking. During those times respectful attention for the speaker is the appropriate behavior.
- Cell phones and pagers should be off and stowed away during class time. If I catch you texting or using your phone in anyway, you will be asked to leave class for the day.
- All work, except for in-class writings, should be typed, double-spaced, 10-12 point font with 1inch margins. Essays should conform to MLA formatting guidelines. Check your handbook for guidelines and examples.
- Cell phones and pagers should be off and stowed away during class time. If I catch you texting or using your phone in anyway, you will be asked to leave class for the day.
- Late work will be graded down for two class periods after the official due date. After that, it will not be accepted. You should know that you cannot pass the class without completing all of the assigned essays.
  - A brief note about excuses for late work: I know that things sometimes happen and work is late for reasons beyond anyone’s control. This happens to me on a regular basis, so I am sympathetic to it. If you let me know before the due date, I will work with you to make special arrangements. If you do not make special arrangements before the date, do not try to negotiate with me; please do your best to get your work in as quickly as you can and take the hit.
- Cell phones and pagers should be off and stowed away during class time. If I catch you texting or using your phone in anyway, you will be asked to leave class for the day.
- There are only three options for turning in an essay an having it considered “handed in on time:”

- Submitted in Canvas before the deadline
  - in my email in-box by the assigned time if I have authorized that
  - did I say three? I meant two.
- Cell phones and pagers should be off and stowed away during class time. If I catch you texting or using your phone in anyway, you will be asked to leave class for the day.
- Time will be given to workshop your essays. These workshops are mandatory and conducted through canvas. If you miss a workshop or submit a draft that isn't at least 75% complete, that essay will be graded down when it is turned in. You must also review at least three other students' essays to get credit for the workshops.
- Cell phones and pagers should be off and stowed away during class time. If I catch you texting or using your phone in anyway, you will be asked to leave class for the day.
- Essays that receive a failing grade because they were handed in late or because of a workshop penalty cannot be revised.
- Cell phones and pagers should be off and stowed away during class time. If I catch you texting or using your phone in anyway, you will be asked to leave class for the day.
- Talking and texting while others are talking is rude. Don't do it.
- Cell phones and pagers should be off and stowed away and stowed away during class time. If I catch you texting or using your phone in anyway, you will be asked to leave class for the day.

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Important information about essays:

FYI: An out-of-class essay is a minimum of 1100-1200 words (except the Prospectus, which will be 800-900 words, and the Term Paper, which will be about 3200 words), which translates to approximately four pages of double spaced, 12-point font with 1-inch margins. Please remember that Microsoft Word defaults to 1.25" margins. It is your responsibility to reset them to the proper measurement. It is also assumed to be understood that an essay is a cohesive discussion of a topic with a thesis statement and at least three points supporting

that thesis. Just submitting an essay that fulfills minimum requirements (1100-1200 words, MLA format, etc) is not enough. Such an essay will likely not fare well.

A note on grammar: We live now in an age where a good word-processor will give you real-time feed back on grammar and spelling. While these programs are not perfect, they can (and do) focus your attention on areas that need attention by way of the wavy red and green lines. Therefore, anyone who submits an essay that has ONE instance of a spelling error that has a red underline (aside from personal names) or a grammatical error that has a green one, will lose all grammar points. Period.

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I no longer assign letter grades to individual assignments, but in the days when I did, this is what they translated to:

- A “C” essay will:
  - Fulfill the minimum requirements of length and MLA formatting
  - Show that the writer understands, at least superficially, the topic
  - Topic will developed to a level that shows understanding
  - Demonstrate a working knowledge of standard English, though not a high proficiency in its use as determined by the number and nature of errors in punctuation and grammar
  - Arguments will be minimally developed or supported by minimal evidence
  - Be submitted on time to Canvas
- A “B” essay will have everything found in a “C” essay plus
  - Go beyond the minimum requirements if needed to fully develop the topic
  - Show that the writer understands the topic at a more profound level
  - Fully develop the topic and related arguments
  - Have few errors in punctuation and grammar
  - Sentence structure may be less varied
  - Demonstrate a proficiency in the English language
  - Sound arguments supported by good evidence
- In addition to the above, an “A” essay will:

- show a marked clarity of thought and organization
  - ideas expressed will go beyond the obvious and demonstrate a skill for critical thinking and understanding of the readings
  - arguments will be supported by evidence from a variety of sources
  - demonstrate a profound skill in using the English language through the appropriate use of college-level vocabulary as well as a sentences of various levels of complexity
  - be virtually free of errors in punctuation and grammar
- Extra-credit:
    - Please be aware that despite the fact that extra-credit may be available, you cannot earn enough extra-credit to pass the class if all written work is not completed and turned in. That is, you cannot pass by using extra credit to fill in for a deficiency in a core area. (In English: If you are not already passing the class, extra credit will not do you any good.)

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## Plagiarism

This topic is so serious it gets its own section. De Anza's policy on plagiarism is clearly spelled out on the college website. (There are several policies posted by individual instructors, but I would like you to find the exact school policy.) Your first assignment will be to find it, download it, print it, and read it. Bring the printout to class. Plagiarism means to use someone else's words or ideas without properly citing your sources; it is a fancy word for stealing. At the very least, if work in an essay proves to be plagiarized, the essay will not be accepted (which more or less means that the "plagiarist" cannot pass this course). At worst, the student who plagiarizes may be thrown out of school.

And yes, using AI to write your essays is also plagiarism.

Let me say this about plagiarism: Don't.

**Disabled Student Services:** Students requiring assistance should contact the Disabled Students' Programs and Services (DSP&S)—located in the Student Services building—as soon as possible. Please contact me as well so that we can discuss appropriate accommodations.

**The Writing/Reading Center (WRC):** there is a drop-in tutoring center to help you with any writing needs you may have. Tutors are also available to work with students throughout the semester upon request. Remember, too, that I am available at various times to help with your writing. Regardless of your skill in writing, consider using the WRC for that final read-through before you turn in your essay--a new set of eyes might make the difference between an A or a B.

I believe this service is being offered online as well.

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“Each of us has the ability to succeed and the right to fail.”

My commitment to you:

- I will make every effort to be here on time every day, prepared and ready to lead class.
- While in the classroom, I will endeavor to devote my entire attention to this class and nothing else.
- I will endeavor to provide a stimulating environment that will encourage your participation and learning.
- I will do all that I am able to provide you with the skills you will need not only to succeed in this class, but in your careers here at college and beyond.

Your commitment to me you:

- To be here each day the class meets, on time, having read the assigned material.

- To have your thoughts and ideas about the readings typed and ready to be read if called upon.
- To have all assignments done on time, proofed, edited and ready to turn in.
- To be respectful of each other's opinions and ideas and be willing to discuss rationally even those ideas that challenge your own.
- To have your cell phones, pagers and god-knows-what else off or on silent.

"No grades will be given—all will be earned."

Criteria for A, B, and C work:

"What did you get in EWRT-1A?"

"I got an 'A'! What did you get?"

"He gave me a 'C.'"

To be clear from the start, all grades are earned, not given. If you get an "A," rest assured you worked hard and earned it. Likewise, if you get a "C," that is what you earned. To be an "A" student, you must do more than show up for class and turn in your essays.

To be an "A" student you must start by:

- Committing to being on time for class (sometimes a living hell, I know, but I have to do it and misery loves company).
- When you arrive at class, you will turn off your cell phone or any other noisemaker, and take your ear-pods out.

- Be an active member of the class. Volunteer comments and ideas about the readings. Encourage other students to respond to your theories. The more you discuss things in class, the more you will have to say in your essays.
- Type up your responses to the readings in complete, coherent sentences (you don't want to be in class trying to remember what you meant when you wrote "Barry...internet... fungus...Dancing Wu Li Masters" at 2:00 am).
- If you do not understand any (or all) of the reading, write down what is confusing you and bring that in as your response. Many times the meaning of what we are reading will not become clear until we discuss it.
- When it comes time to write your essay, take advantage of the in-class editing and the WRC. Work out your thesis before you write your essay (you may end up changing it, but that's okay; the important thing is to have a clear direction when you start).
- If your paper is not going the direction you think it should, relax; don't force it. Often, the paper you end up writing is completely different than the one you started. Seek help from the writing center, your classmates or (gasp!) me.
- When you have completed a rough draft, have someone else read through it for continuity and grammatical errors. Again, the writing center or your classmates are an invaluable resource.
- After you have been through it twice and someone else has been through it once, go over it again. An old printer's trick is to start at the end and read to the beginning.
- Check that the essay and your works cited list complies with the MLA format. Examples are in canvas and elsewhere on-line.
- Turn it in ON TIME! I cannot emphasize this enough. Late work will be graded down and will not be accepted after two (2) class periods after the official due date. And it bears repeating: if you do not turn in all assigned work, you cannot pass the class. If you get it in early enough, you may be allowed the opportunity to rewrite it—if this happens, take the opportunity to improve your work.
- Attend all workshops if required; do all the reader responses; attend and participate in the class.
- Please do not show up for class unprepared; it just pisses me off.

Students who opt to do less than this will earn a proportionately lower grade.  
Miss a few workshops or assignments, hand in an essay late, don't edit properly...  
these may well drop you down to a "C" or lower.