

Welcome to English 1A/50!

The purpose of this course, like all English 1As, is to help you grow as a writer, reader, and thinker, providing you with plenty of tools and practice to hone your skills in both the academic world and beyond. With the addition of English 50, we have the gift of time—more time each week to work with our ideas and more opportunities for one-on-one support. We'll work on developing your individual writing process to find out what works best for you, from generating ideas to planning, drafting, and proofreading.

This student-centered class focuses on building a supportive community of readers and writers; it also involves a lot of input and choice on your part! Our theme will be, loosely, “layers.” We rarely have the time or energy to dig down beneath the surface layer of the information and images that are thrown at us; this is an opportunity to slow down and really question, investigate, and analyze. Generally, our assignments will build our knowledge about a topic from multiple points of view and then each of you will craft your own perspective, but within that framework is plenty of room for you to choose the specific topics that interest and challenge you the most. Maybe you want to investigate the deeper meaning in the lyrics of that one song that everyone thinks is just a dance song. Maybe you want to look at how the media portrays protesters of different races in different ways. You'll have a lot of opportunities to choose your focus.

Typical assignments include responding to readings, participating in online discussions, and working on various “steps” of an essay (such as an outline or rough draft). Essay assignments will be analytical, persuasive, and/or research-based.

Our readings will come from a variety of sources, in a variety of formats, to give you flexibility and skill in understanding and analyzing several kinds of texts, from short stories to nonfiction articles to videos to songs. In addition, we will read one full-length book together as a class (*Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates), and then you will each choose a second book to read either in a small group or individually.

This course is entirely asynchronous, meaning our class will NOT have any required synchronous meetings when we all have to be online at the same time. I will, however, offer optional meetings (either video or online chat) for students who find them helpful!