English 131: Rhetoric and Composition Fall 2015

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Department: English

**Note on phone calls: I do not typically call students (especially long distance), so please do not ask me to

Required Materials:


Course Description: In English 131, students study and practice the writing process and the skills of writing with a focus on analytical reading and writing. Students read and write a range of essay types, including expressive, explicatory, analytical, and persuasive. Essay assignments address rhetorical analysis and critical responses to close textual readings. Students in English 131 write a minimum of four formal essays (totaling at least 18 pages) and at least one in-class timed essay. English 131 is a requirement for all students who do not qualify for ENG133H. Prerequisite: acceptable THEA score or at least a C in English 099. Must earn a grade of C or higher to be admitted to English 132.

Although writing is the primary focus of the class, we also review key concepts of grammar, sentence construction, and paragraph construction. Students also define, identify, analyze, and use key rhetorical concepts and skills such as the three rhetorical appeals and the elements of the rhetorical triangle. They are introduced to the basics of MLA documentation and apply that knowledge in preliminary research using primary sources.

General Education Core Curriculum Objectives:

In any given semester, one or more of the following Core Curriculum Objectives for the English Foundational Component Area in Communication Writing may be assessed. These objectives are:

1. Critical Thinking: Creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.
2. Communication Skills: Effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.

3. Teamwork: The ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.

4. Personal Responsibility: The ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.

“These course objectives meet the following Texas Exemplary Educational Objectives (EEOs):”

Student Learning Outcomes for ENG 131:

ENG 131 learning outcomes are the goals that students must meet as part of the Freshman Composition requirements, which include:

1. Ability to show appropriate acquisition of CORE objective 1 skills. Students in compositions courses make application of these skills in the writing of personal, expository, and persuasive essays, which require students to make inquiries into and explorations of topics in creative, innovative, or analytical ways. Students are expected to complete readings, to engage in course and group discussions, and to analyze, interpret and synthesize their findings resultant from these critical engagements into well-developed essays. Written assignments will evidence the students’ command of these considerations: effective engagement of audience (pathos), logical development of ideas (logos), and effective use of examples, expertise, or insight (ethos).

2. Ability to show appropriate acquisition of CORE objective skills. These skills include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication. Following instruction about group interaction, students will engage in oral communication through class discussions and group work (orally in face-to-face courses, electronically in online courses). Students will have occasion to respond to visual medium, as found in assigned readings, lectures, power-point presentations, or other media dependent upon course materials. Students learn processes for writing that help them to form coherent, well-developed, well-organized and unified discussions through a variety of writing methodologies, including personal, expository, and persuasive methodologies. Students will write at least four essays in composition courses, and rubrics will assess such concerns as development and exploration, mechanical clarity, and interpretation or expression of ideas.

3. Ability to show appropriate acquisition of CORE objective 3 skills. These skills include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal. Following instruction about peer review processes and small group work, students will perform peer mentorship on essay assignments and work together on group projects, which may include
collaborative writing occasions, group presentations, or panel discussions. As peer review is the common teamwork experience, students will be required to share potentially diverse ideas with one another, to address those views in appropriate ways, and to help one another to finalize essays for submission.

4. Ability to show appropriate acquisition of CORE objective 4 skills. These skills include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making. Students will have opportunity to examine numerous readings, including essays written by classmates, to examine the credibility and value of those readings, and to understand how expository methodologies bear responsibility and consequence.

Course Policies:

Course Requirements:

For this course, you will be required to write a minimum of 4 or more major essays. Missing one of these essays and not turning one in or doing poorly on one essay can have serious consequences for your grade. Essays will be graded both on substance (quality and accuracy of ideas) as well as expression (tone, style, syntax). Exams may include M/C, fill in the blank, short answer, and essay formats. **All work in this course must be your original work that was done for this class; otherwise you will earn an F in the course.** In order to receive a passing grade for this course, you must complete all assignments.

Face-to-Face classes: On the day that your essays are due, you will turn in the essay through D2L into the dropbox for that assignment.

**Turnitin:**

When you turn in a major essay assignment through D2L, you submit your paper through a program called Turnitin.com. This is a program that automatically checks all papers for plagiarism. Once it has been verified that your essay has not been plagiarized, your essay will be graded. **If you do not turn your essay in through D2L, I will not/cannot grade it.** If Turnitin reports your essay as being plagiarized (no matter the degree), you will earn a 0 for that grade.

**Course Capstone Essay:**

Students will write a course capstone essay in which students will be asked to develop a professional document of no fewer than 500 words that exhibits an understanding of core objectives as determined by the core assessment schedule; students will be assessed based on their use of critical thinking skills; grammar, vocabulary, and written style and effectiveness; teamwork; or, the effect of personal choices. It will be treated as your mid-term. This will be turned into Livetext and into Dropbox. It will count as the mid-term.
**Attendance:**

Regular and punctual attendance is expected for all classes, laboratories, and other activities for which a student is registered. Valid excuses are limited to health, religious observation, family emergencies, and participation in certain SFASU-sponsored events. Students are responsible for providing written documentation for EVERY absence, from which a decision will be made regarding the absence’s excusability. Without written documentation, the absence will automatically be considered unexcused. Students with acceptable excuses may be permitted to make up work for absences to a maximum of three weeks of a semester when the nature of the work missed permits. However, no absences beyond the six that may be excused will be excused, and no student shall be allowed to pass the course whose unexcused absences exceed three (3)—this is not a correspondence course! Whether an absence is excused or unexcused, or in the case of a late add, a student is still responsible for all course content and assignments.

**Note for online courses.** In online courses, attendance is counted for you guys by participating in classroom discussion boards by the due date and by participating in peer review by the due date.

**Tardy Policy:**

A student who is late to class will be marked absent. If you come in after I take roll, it is your responsibility to see me immediately after class to make sure I correct the attendance record. Being more than 15 minutes late will count as an unexcused absence, and 3 tardies will count as one unexcused absence. Leaving class early is penalized in the same way (unless you have a good excuse that you have discussed with me beforehand). Students who arrive late should not expect me to repeat announcements, class notes, quiz questions, etc. for their benefit. If a class as a whole has a problem with tardiness, I reserve the right to refuse to admit late students. Students who are habitually late may expect to see their course grade drop by one letter grade. (This is at my discretion.) **If you show up late and miss a quiz or exam, you will receive a ‘0.’ I do not accept late work.**

*Note: Obviously, for my online courses there is no tardy policy.*

**Email & Communication with me:**

**D2L:** I will communicate with the class via D2L. You are responsible for checking your D2L email and for being aware of any information there. Grades are also posted online periodically. Please let me know immediately if you see any errors in your recorded grades. Correspondence relating to this course must use D2L. The subject must include course and section number. I will not accept assignments by email unless prearranged.
**Rough Drafts/Peer Review:**

Writers learn to write by writing. They learn to write by revising. They learn to write by being a part of a community of writers. Hence peer review is very important. You are expected to work on your rough drafts from the moment the essay is assigned. In this course, you will turn your rough draft in about halfway into the unit by a certain due date. Thereafter, you will work on peer reviewing your peer’s rough draft by a certain date. For the Peer Review, you are expected to have the full assignment completed.

You are expected to participate in Peer Review, providing your peer with constructive feedback. Do not underestimate the value of drafting during your writing process. Peer Review will count as a grade. As long as you participate and give your peer honest and constructive feedback, then you can make a 100. Of course, if I see that you are simply slapping answers down and feedback down in order to get credit without really giving your peer anything helpful, then you may not get credit for peer review. In order to participate, there will be Peer Review Discussion areas assigned to each module. In these areas, you attach your essay to a discussion post by the due date and you give your classmate(s) feedback by the due date.

There will be a worksheet with guidelines. You will fill this out (you may also feel free to make marks on your peer’s essay) about your peer’s essay and attach it as a response to their post. Please make sure you peer review at least 2 people in order to receive full credit (a 100). However, if you see someone has not had their essay reviewed, then please help them out and give them some feedback. After all, the goal of this is to help those who may struggle with writing.

**Revision Policy:**

You have the option of revising ONE of your essays for this course. Here are the guidelines:

- It may not be your last essay.
- You must make significant changes to your revised essay taking into account my comments. Revisions of small problems (typos, grammatical mishaps, etc.) will only give you a minimal higher grade (at best). To do this and ONLY this is to waste your time and mine. DO NOT merely go through your essay and change only the grammatical errors that I have pointed out – that is editing, and NOT revision. Please remember the difference between editing and revision.
- Revisions of major problems (thesis, support, adding in transitions, reorganizing your essay structure, elaboration of analysis, etc.) will garner you a maximum higher grade.
- If you choose to revise, you must include a reflective essay of at least one page. This should discuss where you were lacking in your paper and what you did to improve. This should be in proper MLA format, include a title, and avoid grammar/mechanics errors.
• The revised essay will be due the week before Finals week.
• You must turn in your revised essay and your reflective essay in person (by email for online courses).
• These revisions may give you, at most, 10 points back. You are not able to revise plagiarized essays, which will earn you a grade of 0.

Grading Policy:
On the basis of my evaluation, your grade for this course will be determined as follows:

Assignments
The assignments and grades for this course will be weighted as follows:
Course Capstone Essay (2-3 pages) 5%
Personal Narrative Assnt (3-4 pages) 10%
Rhetorical Analysis Essay (4-5 pages) 10%
Comparative Rhetorical Analysis Essay (5-6 pages) 15%
Argument/Research Essay (6-8 pages) 20%
Daily work 10%
Peer Review 15%
Discussions 10%
Final Exam 5%

100%

Daily work will be graded (depending on the assignment) either pass/fail or with a Plus, Checkmark, Minus, or Zero, or with a letter grade or with a number grade. These will be averaged together and calculated with your essay grades to determine your grade for this course. Daily Work will include quizzes as well as short essay or summary assignments and grammar/MLA homework, etc.

I reserve the right to allow your participation in the course to affect your final grade. You may not pass this course by only complete the major essay assignments.

Discussion Boards

Discussion is an important aspect of any course (especially of an online course). Discussion counts as 10% of your grade and obviously not participating in it can seriously hurt your grade. In order to receive full credit for participating in the discussion boards, you will need to respond to the question(s) I have asked. Your response should be well-developed and thoughtful and you will need to respond to at least 2 peers. Your response to your peers should be clear in your address (“I agree with _____” and so on) and should specifically state why you agree with (or disagree with) your peer and why in order to insure that other students will be able to follow your train of thought (and the discussion). Discussion boards are graded with 50 points for your initial post followed by 50 points for your responses to 2 peers. You cannot respond to other’s posts without creating your own post first. If I find that you are not taking the discussions seriously and are clearing slapping down answers, then you will also not earn credit.
Acceptable Student Behavior

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). In an online classroom, the means with which we will discuss topics and get to know one another is through the discussion boards. Thus, I ask that you refrain from using vulgar language, name-calling, or otherwise shaming other students on the boards. Please keep in mind that while you do not have to agree with everything a person writes you do need to at least respect their right to express their opinion. There are appropriate and inappropriate means of expressing disagreement with another’s ideas. Conduct yourself in a thoughtful and considerate manner and we should be fine. Again, I reserve the right to let your conduct affect your grade. Also, please remember that not everyone in class is good at writing. Please do not shame other students based on their writing ability. Provide constructive feedback that is both helpful and designed to help your struggling peer’s get better at writing.

Class Participation:

Class participation is one of the means by which you will learn how to improve your thinking, reading, and writing skills. Things that count as participation in class are participating in discussion, peer review, and turning homework in on time. Part of becoming a good writer is learning to appreciate the ideas and criticism of others. In this course, our purpose is to come together as a community of writers. Thus, you are expected to engage in discussion by contributing your own original ideas, and you are expected to respect the ideas/opinions of others. I reserve the right to let participation affect your course grade.

Academic Integrity (A-9.1)

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit; and (4) submitting
work that you have done for another class instead of turning in original work for this course.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

**Penalties for Plagiarism**

No plagiarized paper will be accepted for credit in any Writing Program course at Stephen F. Austin University. This includes partially plagiarized papers. A plagiarized paper will automatically receive an “F” grade. By reading this syllabus you affirm that you understand plagiarism and that you assume responsibility for any plagiarism that occurs in your essays. Plagiarism may be grounds for failure in a Writing Program course. Even if a student’s course grades average out to a passing grade when the “F” from a plagiarized paper is counted in, the instructor may still give the student an “F” for the course. Instructors who suspect that a student has plagiarized will submit a copy of the student’s paper to the Director of the Writing Program, who will keep them on file. Any student who is suspected of plagiarism will have the opportunity to discuss the matter with the Director of the Writing Program. At the end of each academic term, the Director of the Writing Program submits a list of plagiarizers to the English Department Chair who then submits these names to each college dean. Repeat offenders may be dismissed from the University.

**Students with Disabilities**

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to HYPERLINK "http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/" http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)**

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Online Classes:**

Many students enroll in an online course with the mistaken belief that because it is
online it is easier. This course will hold you to the same stringent standards required of face to face courses. Online courses are, in fact, usually described as quite difficult by students who have taken them because online courses necessitate the student being disciplined and self-motivated. While I provide you with all the materials I use to teach my online classes (powerpoints, handouts,) am happy to answer your questions, and even provide video lectures, you are in fact teaching yourself. This is the nature of the beast. Keep in mind that it is easy to fall behind in an online class. Also, keep in mind that only turning in the essay assignments but not participating in the other activities will make you fail the course.

**Course Calendar:**

Course calendars are tentative and subject to change. However, I will do my best to keep changes to a minimum and give you plenty of advanced warning or extensions if necessary. In online courses, the work is done at your own pace. You are free to complete assignments in advance if you like (even in later modules). You are expected however to be disciplined and review all the instructional materials your professor has provided in the modules. You are also expected to review the MLA format and Plagiarism module for each assignment you turn in.