ENGLISH 131-11: Rhetoric & Composition (Fall 2017)

Course number/section: ENG 131-11  
Meeting place: Ferguson 182  
Meeting time: 1-1:50 pm MWF

Professor: Dr. Sara Henning  
Office: LAN 230  
Office hours: 11 am-1:30 pm TR  
Email: henningsd@sfasu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Study and application of the writing process and the skills of writing with a focus on analytical reading and writing. Essay assignments address rhetorical analysis and evaluation and critical responses to close readings of texts. Required of all students who do not qualify for English 133H. 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.

For this section of ENG 131, we will explore the idea of contemporary cultural myths. Cultural myths are things we (because of contemporary society) hold to be true that are not necessarily sustained when analyzed and evaluated; they are also things that we often base many of our decisions on, decisions which impact ourselves as well as others. Throughout this course, we will read, analyze, and write about our cultural myths, specifically considering what they are, how they are formed and communicated, and how popular culture perpetuates them to often dangerous ends.

COURSE OUTCOMES

General Education Core Curriculum Objectives:
As part of the communication component area, in any given semester one or more of the following Core Curriculum Objectives for English 131 may be assessed:

- Critical Thinking: creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
- Communication: effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
- Teamwork: the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.
- Personal Responsibility: the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.

English Program Learning Outcomes
This is a general education core curriculum course and no specific program learning outcomes for this major are addressed in the course.

English 131 Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of English 131, the student should have:

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 2 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.

REQUIRED TEXTS


_Texts on D2L_. These must be _printed_, read, and brought to class on days they are assigned.

_Access to Netflix_. We are going to be watching films and episodes of television programs that are available via Netflix. It will be important for you to be able to access these visual media as you form projects and essays.

_Drafts_ of your work; again, these must be printed and brought to class on days they are assigned.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Our Personal Myths: 10%
According to the authors of Rereading America, “Culture shapes the way we think; it tells us what ‘makes sense.’ It holds people together by providing us with a shared set of customs, values, ideas, and beliefs, as well as a common language. We live enmeshed in this cultural web: it influences the way we relate to others, the way we look, our tastes, our habits; it enters our dreams and desires.” This essay asks you to choose a myth you perceive in contemporary American culture that has shaped you in a meaningful way and to describe its effects on you. It should be between 350 and 500 words. It should fully present the cultural myth and how it has helped to shape your identity.

2. The American Dream: A Cultural Analysis 15%
In this essay, you will analyze one cultural representation of the American Dream. It will be your job to find an artifact (a movie, television episode, advertisement, or other medium that concerns the American Dream) and perform a sustained investigation of it. This essay should be 900-1500 words.

3. Cultural Myths in Popular Culture: 15%
This essay asks you to synthesize one cultural myth you see present in contemporary popular culture. This essay should be 1200-1800 words.

4. Proposal of Change: 20%
Building on the topic you wrote about in the third essay assignment, this paper will be a persuasive proposal about a particular change you think should happen. You should include both sources from the third essay and you may, if you choose, include up to two more sources as long as they are reliable (i.e. from a reputable source). This essay should be 1800-2100 words.

5. Project and Presentation: 15%
For this assignment, you will take the proposal from the fourth essay and create a formal presentation of your argument. During the final weeks of class, you will give a five-minute presentation. Your presentation should take the form of a prepared speech, accompanied by a PowerPoint or Prezi to provide visual context and details.

6. Discussion Questions: 15%
On a weekly basis, you will be asked to respond to a set of questions located in the weekly ‘Contents’ section of our D2L course. These questions will engage you with that week’s readings and/or viewings.

7. Participation: 10%
Because class time will be largely spent in large and small group discussions, class participation is vital for you to succeed in this course. This portion of your grade will be based on your contributions to class discussions; your level of preparation for each class period (completed reading and writing assignments particularly) as demonstrated by participation and performance on quizzes; your turning in of essay drafts for instructor and peer feedback; and your involvement in group activities. See the rubric below for a better understanding of how your participation will be assessed.
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<th>Superior communicative skills; excellent preparation for class discussion; always volunteers; student exemplifies mastery, rigor, and intellectual curiosity regarding course readings and concepts while also introducing relevant independent insights to the discussion; always submits complete drafts for instructor and peer feedback; student demonstrates enthusiasm and takes initiative, particularly during group activities.</th>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good communicative skills; solid preparation for class discussion; consistently volunteers; student exemplifies interest and engagement regarding course readings and concepts; submits drafts of all papers for instructor and peer feedback, but these may sometimes be incomplete; student demonstrates positive attitude; makes meaningful contributions during group activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Adequate communicative skills; fair preparation for class discussion; occasionally volunteers; student exemplifies competence regarding course readings and concepts; submits drafts of three or more papers for instructor and peer feedback, which may sometimes be incomplete; student demonstrates an inoffensive, but noncommittal attitude; sporadic contributions during group activities.</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>Limited communicative skills; uneven preparation for class; rarely volunteers; demonstrates indifference or irritation when prompted; submits drafts of one or two papers, which may sometimes or always be incomplete; inattentive during class; rare contributions during group activities. [Performance may be marked by other flaws: consistent tardiness; disruptive; etc.]</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Weak communicative skills; little to no preparation for class; little evidence of reading assignments (this can include not buying or printing the course texts or not making up missed material); never volunteers, or doesn’t respond when prompted; never or very infrequently submits drafts for instructor and peer feedback, which are always incomplete; demonstrates potential hostility to discussion; irrelevant, distracting, or no contributions to group activities.</td>
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**Grading Standard:**
A (excellent performance): 90-100.
B (above average performance): 80-89.
C (average performance): 70-79.
F (failure): 0-59.

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Attendance:** Students are only allowed six unexcused absences and/or nine excused absences (no more than nine classes total may be missed). Any additional absences will result in automatic failure of the course.

Valid excuses are limited to health, religious observation, family emergencies, and participation in certain SFASU-sponsored events. Students must provide written documentation 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 when the nature of the work missed permits. However, no absences beyond the nine will be permitted, whether unexcused or excused. Whether an absence is excused or unexcused, students are still responsible for all course content and assignments. Note also that you must turn in all major assignments (four formal essays and two presentations) to pass the course.

I take attendance at the beginning of class; arriving more than five minutes after class begins will result in your being marked absent.
**Course Citizenship:** Eating, sleeping, or reading other materials during class are not acceptable. All cell phones must be turned off prior to coming to class, and no text messaging or web surfing will be tolerated. Laptops and cell phones should not be used unless I indicate that you may use them for a particular activity.

Although students with disciplinary problems tend to be few and far between at the college level, if behavioral disruptions persist within a single class meeting (or, for that matter, across multiple meetings), the student in question will be asked to leave the class with a lowered participation grade and an absence for the day.

Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance available to help SFA students succeed.

**Assignment Submission:** All written work will be submitted electronically via D2L. Assignments are due by class time on their due date. All files must be formatted in either .doc or .docx (compatible with Microsoft Word). I will not accept Mac Pages or Word Perfect, for example. I will return feedback to your assignment via D2L.

For the four major paper assignments, a complete draft must be turned in to me by the assigned date and time or the paper cannot receive higher than a C.

**Late Work:** I will accept major essays for a 10% per day penalty. I will not accept any daily work (discussion questions, quizzes, etc.) after the day and time it is due. You should save your work in multiple places; I highly recommend using online storage options such as OneDrive, which is included as a free service in the university’s downloadable subscription of Microsoft Office 365, to prevent lost work.

**Academic Integrity:** Adhering to academic integrity standards at all times by producing your own work and successfully attributing others’ ideas to them is a necessary aspect of university communication. 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) falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assignment; 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 include, but are not limited to: (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 the Internet or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper or presentation without giving the author due credit.

Any appeals on academic integrity cases must be made within thirty days after the first class day of the next long semester. Students should appeal to the instructor first then to the chair if the situation is not resolved. Further appeals can be made to the dean and provost if necessary.

Please read the complete policies at: [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp) and [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-appeals-by-students.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-appeals-by-students.pdf).

**Conferences and Communication:** At the middle of the semester, you will meet with me to discuss your work in the class. Missing a conference will count as a class absence. If you wish to meet with me at
other times during the semester, please avail yourself of my office hours or set up an appointment with me. Email is also an easy way to receive an answer to a quick question, and you can expect a response within 24 hours except on weekends; if you do not receive a response within this time period, you should assume I did not receive your email and try again.

**Course Evaluations:** Course evaluations will be available online near the end of the semester. I highly encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity to give feedback about how effective this class and my teaching was, particularly because I read evaluations to help make decisions about future classes. In other words, your feedback can help my future students have a good class experience.

**The Academic Assistance and Resource Center:** The AARC offer free writing tutoring, which is available on a walk-in and appointment basis. They also offer online writing tutoring services and workshops about writing-related topics. For more information, go to [http://library.sfasu.edu/aarc/](http://library.sfasu.edu/aarc/), visit them on the first floor of the Steen Library, or call them at 936-468-4108.

**Withheld Grades Policy (A-54):** 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.

**Accommodations:** 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 your instructors and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations, and no accommodations can be made except through the ODS. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).
### COURSE SCHEDULE

***This schedule is tentative. I reserve the right to change its contents and will post changes to D2L.***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Readings and Assignments</th>
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| August 28     | **M:** Introduction to Class  
* Lumberjacks Write: Part 1: General Information (6-24)  
  Homework: Read syllabus                                                                 |
| August 30     | **W:** Discuss Class Policies and Procedures  
  Homework:  
  RA: “Thinking Critically, Challenging Cultural Myths” (1-14) |
| September 1   | **F:** Discussion  
  Homework:  
  **Discussion Questions #1 Due by Midnight (Class Introduction)** |
| September 4   | **M:** Discussion  
  Homework:  
  RA: “Aunt Ida Pieces A Quilt” (41-44), “The Color of Family Ties: Race, Class, Gender, and Extended Family Involvement” (44-53) |
| September 6   | **W:** Discussion  
  Homework:  
  RA: “I Just Wanna Be Average” (123-136), “Gentrification” (615-619) |
| September 8   | **F:** Discussion  
  Homework:  
  RA: “Class in America—2012” (377-398)  
  **Discussion Questions #2 Due by Midnight** |
| September 11  | **M:** Discussion  
  Homework:  
| September 13  | **W:** Discussion  
  Homework:  
| September 15  | **F:** Screening: *Oppressed Majority* (Éléonore Pourriot)  
  Homework: **Discussion Questions #3 Due by Midnight** |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Monday (M)</th>
<th>Tuesday (W)</th>
<th>Friday (F)</th>
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<tr>
<td>September 18</td>
<td>Discussion and Synthesis, In-Class Work</td>
<td>Homework: Work on Our Personal Myths Essay</td>
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| September 20 | W: Some Important Elements of the Essay                                     | Homework: Work on Our Personal Myths Essay                                  | F: Peer Review. **Bring your First Draft of your Our Personal Myths essay to Class and Upload a Copy to D2L by Midnight**
|              |                                                                             |                                                                             | Homework: *RA*: “Money and Success: The Myth of Individual Opportunity” (346-350) Discussion Questions #4 Due by Midnight |
| September 22 | F: Peer Review. **Bring your First Draft of your Our Personal Myths essay to Class and Upload a Copy to D2L by Midnight** |                                                                             |                                                                             |
| September 25 | M: Screening: *Roseanne*: “We’re Going to Disneyland” (C3:E25); “Disney World War II” (C3:E8) (Netflix) | Homework: Revise Our Personal Myths Essay                                   |                                                                             |
| September 27 | W: Discussion                                                              |                                                                             |                                                                             |
|              |                                                                             | Homework: *RA*: “Serving in Florida” (363-377)                               |                                                                             |
|              |                                                                             | **Final Draft of Our Personal Myths due on Dropbox by Midnight**             |                                                                             |
| September 29 | F: Cultural Analysis: A Primer                                              |                                                                             |                                                                             |
|              |                                                                             | Homework: **Discussion Questions #5 Due by Midnight**                        |                                                                             |
| October 2    | M: **Screening**: *The Pursuit of Happyness* (Netflix)                      |                                                                             |                                                                             |
|              | Homework: Cultural Analysis Questions #1                                   |                                                                             |                                                                             |
| October 4    | W: **Day #2: The Pursuit of Happyness** (Netflix)                          |                                                                             |                                                                             |
| October 6    |                                                                             | Homework: Cultural Analysis Questions #2                                    |                                                                             |
|              | F: Discussion                                                              |                                                                             |                                                                             |
|              | **Day #3: The Pursuit of Happyness** (Netflix)                             |                                                                             |                                                                             |
|              | Homework: **Discussion Questions #6 Due by Midnight**                      |                                                                             |                                                                             |
| October 9    | M: *The Pursuit of Happyness* Discussion Continued                         |                                                                             |                                                                             |
| October 11   | W: **Screening**: “White People” and Discussion                           |                                                                             |                                                                             |
|              | Homework: *RA*: “The Case for Reparations” (572-599)                      |                                                                             |                                                                             |
| October 13 | F: Discussion  
Discussion Questions #7 Due by Midnight |
| October 16 | M: Screening: *The 13th* (Netflix)  
Homework: Cultural Analysis Questions #1 |
| October 18 | W: Day #2: Screening: *The 13th* (Netflix)  
Homework: Cultural Analysis Questions #2 |
| October 20 | F: Finish *The 13th* and Discussion  
Discussion Questions #8 Due by Midnight |
| October 23 | M: Discussion Continued . . .  
Prepare your First Draft of your American Dream Cultural Analysis for Homework |
| October 25 | W: Peer Review. Bring your First Draft of your American Dream Cultural Analysis to Class and Upload a Copy to D2L  
Homework:  
*RA*: “Two Ways Women Can Get Hurt: Advertising and Violence” (488-514) |
| October 27 | F: Cultural Myths in Popular Culture  
Homework:  
*D2L*: “Cultural Myths in Popular Culture Essay Guidelines”  
Discussion Questions #9 Due by Midnight |
| October 30 | M: Discussion  
Homework:  
*RA*: “Love Me Tinder” (270-282)  
**Final Draft of American Dream Cultural Analysis due on D2L by Midnight** |
| November 1 | W: Discussion  
Homework:  
RA: “Framing Class, Vicarious Living, and Conspicuous Consumption” (424-443) |
| November 3 | F: Discussion  
Homework:  
RA: “How Immigrants Become ‘Other’” (666-676)  
**Discussion Questions #10 Due by Midnight** |
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>November 6</td>
<td>M:</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Homework: Work on Cultural Myths in Popular Culture Essay</td>
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<td><em>Lumberjacks Write</em>: “How Bro Country Has Begun to Take Over” (Sample Essay)</td>
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<td>November 8</td>
<td>W:</td>
<td>Classes Canceled: Conferences: Cultural Myths in Popular Culture Essay</td>
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<td>Homework: Work on Cultural Myths in Popular Culture Essay</td>
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<td>November 10</td>
<td>F:</td>
<td>Classes Canceled: Conferences: Cultural Myths in Popular Culture Essay</td>
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<td>Homework: Work on Cultural Myths in Popular Culture Essay</td>
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<td>Discussion Questions #11 Due by Midnight</td>
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<td>November 13</td>
<td>M:</td>
<td>Classes Canceled: Conferences: Cultural Myths in Popular Culture Essay</td>
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<td>Homework: Work on Cultural Myths in Popular Culture Essay</td>
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<td>November 15</td>
<td>W:</td>
<td>Peer Review: <em>Bring your First Draft of your Cultural Myths in Popular Culture Essay to Class and Upload a Copy to D2L</em></td>
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<td>Homework: Work on Cultural Myths in Popular Culture Essay</td>
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<td>November 17</td>
<td>F:</td>
<td>Introduction to Proposal of Change Module</td>
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<td>Homework: Work on Cultural Myths in Popular Culture Essay</td>
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<td>D2L: “Proposals” (PDF)</td>
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<td>“Finding and Using Sources,” “Evaluating Sources” (PDF)</td>
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<td>Discussion Questions #12 Due on D2L by Midnight</td>
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<td>November 20</td>
<td>M:</td>
<td>No Class: Thanksgiving Holidays</td>
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<td>November 22</td>
<td>W:</td>
<td>No Class: Thanksgiving Holidays</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 24</td>
<td>F:</td>
<td>No Class: Thanksgiving Holidays</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 27</td>
<td>M:</td>
<td>Providing Evidence: Introduction to Research at SFA (Librarian Visit)</td>
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<td>Homework: Final Draft of Cultural Myths in Popular Culture Essay is due on D2L by Class Time</td>
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<td>Homework: D2L: “Documenting Sources” (PDF)</td>
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<td>November 29</td>
<td>W:</td>
<td>Documenting Sources</td>
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<td>Homework: D2L: Sample Essays (PDF)</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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| December 1 | F: Examples of Effective Proposals: Structure and Outline  
             Homework:  
             Work on Proposal of Change Essay  
             **Discussion Questions #13 Due on D2L by Midnight** |
| December 4 | M: **Lab Day: Work on Proposal of Change Essay in Class** |
| December 6 | W: **Peer Review.** Bring your first Draft of your Proposal of Change Essay to Class and Upload a Copy to D2L |
| December 8 | F: **How to Organize Final Project and Presentation**  
             Homework:  
             **Discussion Questions #14 due on D2L by Midnight**  
             **Final Proposal of Change is Due on D2L by Saturday, December 9 at 11:59 pm** |
| Assigned Final Exam Period | **Presentations of Project and Presentation**  
             **Upload Presentations as Discussion Questions #15 on D2L by the end of our Final Exam Period** |