Composition and Rhetoric  
English 131.005  
Department of English, SFASU

Instructor: Avee Chaudhuri  
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Office: Ferguson 275  
Office Hours: MWF 12:00 - 1:00 PM  
TR 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM  
All other times by appointment.

Meeting Times and Location: MW 2:30 - 3:45 PM, Ferguson 271

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.

Students will write four major essays, totaling a minimum 15 pages of sophisticated expressive and analytical prose.

English 131 Student Learning Outcomes:

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and analyze texts with the goal of examining the rhetorical structure, veracity of claims, sufficient use of accurate and credible evidence, as well as possible use in creative, analytical, and persuasive components (Critical Thinking);
- Participate in productive class and group discussion and examination of texts, in order to analyze and synthesize a variety of texts, via a multi-step drafting process (Critical Thinking);
- Understand the role of personal responsibility in the inevitable choices involved in the composition process, in the evaluation of one’s own writing and the writing of other students, in the ethical use of ideas and information, and in the critical evaluation of all assigned texts (Personal Responsibility);
- Recognize the collaborative and social aspects of the writing process by producing collaborative work and/or feedback for peers and selectively using peer feedback in their own work (Teamwork);
- Demonstrate knowledge of organizational and linguistic structures – including grammar, punctuation, and spelling – through practice in composing and revising (Communication);
• Compose texts in response to a variety of situations and contexts calling for purposeful shifts in voice, tone, level of formality, design, medium, and/or structure (Communication).

Major Assignments, Professionalism and Grade Policies:

There are four major writing assignments for this class which make up the bulk of your grade. The remainder of your grade is based on your professionalism, i.e. the contributions you make to both the classroom environment and your development as a writer.

Major Assignments (Essays)

Note: All major assignments will be described in depth in a corresponding module on the course’s D2L page.

• Personal Narrative (10%)
• Rhetorical Analysis (15%)
• Literary Analysis (20%)
• Synthesis (25%)

Professionalism

I assess professionalism in a variety of ways: quizzes, in-class writing, homework, engagement in class discussion, and both scheduling and attending a mandatory personal conference with your instructor.

• Quizzes, in-class writing, class discussion (15%)
• Homework - generally research and short writing assignments (10%)
• Successful completion of personal conference (5%)

Grade and Revision Policies

Your final letter grade will correspond to the following, conventional scale.

A: 90 - 100
B: 80 - 89
C: 70 - 79
D: 60 - 69
F: 0 - 59

Individual grades on major writing assignments are not subject to review or reconsideration. However, once during the semester a student may offer a written, one-page appeal to the instructor explaining why he or she should be allowed to revise an essay. If the appeal is accepted, then we will work out a schedule and any
supplemental expectations I might have for a revised essay. A revised essay score will replace the score of the original, if it is superior in quality. If it is comparable or worse in quality, then the original score stands.

**Attendance:**

Attendance is mandatory. You may have five unexcused absences this semester. **After you’ve reached five, every additional unexcused absence will lower your final course grade by one letter.** Information about the university’s excused absence policy may be found at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/class-attendance-and-excused-absence-6.7.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/class-attendance-and-excused-absence-6.7.pdf).

Students should be punctual. If you are more than five minutes late to class, I will count you as late. Two late arrivals to class equal an absence. So if you’re frequently late to class, it will certainly affect your final course grade.

**Mental Absences**

Simply being present in class does not prevent you from being marked as absent. I will mark you as absent should I observe any of the following behavior/actions.

- Sleeping during a class meeting.
- Doing work for another course.
- Violating the course technology policy (below)
- Leaving the classroom before I dismiss class (unless it’s an emergency).
- Failing to complete/perform assigned in-class work.

**Late Work and Missing Class Time:**

I take off 5% for every day (not every class meeting) that an essay is past due, including weekends and holidays. I do not accept late homework or daily work. There will be so many of these assignments during the semester that missing a few will not “make or break” your final course grade. Students who expect to miss class the day that an assignment is due should plan accordingly and **submit the assignment ahead of time.**

If, for whatever reason, you have to miss class, please email me as soon as possible. While I cannot reproduce lectures or the classroom experience for you, I will try within reason to answer any questions you might have.

**Technology Policy:**

To put it bluntly, no phones, unless you have my consent.
Feel free to use tablets and computers to take notes but be forewarned: I tend to wander through the aisles. If you are in fact looking at Facebook, shopping on Amazon, etc., I will ask you to put away your device.

Typewriters: permitted if they are well-oiled.

**E-mail and Office Hours:**

E-mail is my preferred method of communicating with students if they have brief, specific questions or concerns they want to address. E-mails should be written in a professional tone.

Students who need to have a more expansive dialogue should come to office hours. For example, if you miss a week of class, I will insist that you come to my office so we can have an in-depth discussion about what you’ve missed.

**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). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic, or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. 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.

While not a discussion-based class per se, English 131 nevertheless involves a great deal of discussion, often on topics that might be deemed controversial. There will invariably be disagreements, but one of the objectives of this class is to learn how to constructively and logically disagree with those whose opinions differ from our own. In other words, we need to be willing to listen and on occasion learn from one another. To facilitate this, comport yourself in a polite and respectful manner. I have a zero tolerance for ad hominem attacks, hateful speech and belligerence in general.

**Academic Integrity (A-9.1):**

Academic integrity is the 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. 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; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit. Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/4.1-student-academic-dishonesty.pdf.

I take plagiarism very seriously. Don’t do it. A plagiarized assignment will receive zero points. A second instance of plagiarism will result in a failing course grade, and I will also consider contacting the dean’s office, which may result in the guilty student’s dismissal from the university.

**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.

See the university’s complete course grade policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/5.5_course-grades.pdf.

**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 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 http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

**Academic Resources:**

The AARC is located in Steen Library, on the first floor, and offers tutoring, workshops and other services designed to improve your reading, writing and research skills. I recommend visiting at least once this semester, preferably during the first few weeks of class. This service is free. For more information, go to https://library.sfasu.edu/aarc.
Disclaimer and Course Schedule:

Disclaimer

I reserve the right to amend any of the above policies, so long as they don’t violate the letter and spirit of University policy. You will be given ample forewarning of any changes and a revised syllabus for your file and reference.

Course Schedule

A detailed course schedule will be uploaded to D2L in the coming days, and no later than the beginning of the third week of class. In general, this class is organized around four major essays. Given that there are fourteen weeks of class, expect to submit an essay every three weeks. I will try to cap weekly reading loads at 50 pages, but this may vary slightly week to week, depending of course on the readings assigned.

A Final Note:

If you’re having any problems with the course, please notify me as soon as possible. This isn’t supposed to be easy, and I find that students who are willing to open a dialogue about their discomfort and apprehensions are far more successful than those who remain silent and seemingly stoic.