English 131: Rhetoric and Composition Fall 2017

**Instructor:** Deborah Kirkland  
**Email:** D2L;  
**Phone:** 936-468-2025 (don’t leave messages)  
**Office:** LA243  
**Office Hours:** Monday: 10-12:30; Wednesday: 10-12:30; by appointment  
**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:  
This course has been selected to be part of Stephen F. Austin State University’s core curriculum. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six objectives for all core courses: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility. SFA is committed to the improvement of its general education core curriculum by regular assessment of student performance on these six objectives.

Assessment of these objectives at SFA will be based on student work from all core curriculum courses. This student work will be collected in D2L through LiveText, the assessment management system selected by SFA to collect student work for core
assessment. LiveTexas accounts will be provided to all students enrolled in core courses through the university technology fee. You will be required to register you LiveText account, and you will be notified how to register your account through your SFA e-mail account. If you forward your SFA e-mail to another account and do not receive an e-mail concerning LiveTexas registration, please be sure to check your junk folder and your spam filter for these e-mails. If you have questions about LiveText call Ext. 1267 or e-mail SFALiveText@sfasu.edu

Student Learning Outcomes for ENG 131:

- 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).

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.

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. However, no absences beyond three will be excused. Your course grade will drop a letter grade after every excuse after three. 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, by participating in peer review by the due date, and by turning in assignments.

**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.

I have also set up a Virtual Office Discussion area. You are free to post questions to me in there. I encourage you to do that as other students in the class may have the same question and this way they can all see the answer. If your question is of a personal nature, then feel free to email me.
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 by a certain date and you will work on peer reviewing your peer’s rough draft. For the Peer Review, you are expected to have the full assignment completed. 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 peers get better at writing.

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.

Finally, in writing, you have to summarize the feedback you were given and note the changes you made to revise your essay. This should be only a page long and it should be only a paragraph in length. This will be due on the same day the final draft is due. You will turn it into dropbox.

Revision Policy:

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

1. It may not be your last essay.
2. 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.
3. Revisions of major problems (thesis, support, adding in transitions, reorganizing
your essay structure, elaboration of analysis, etc.) will garner you a maximum higher grade.

4. 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.

5. The revised essay will be due the week before Finals week.

6. You must turn in your revised essay and your reflective essay in person (by email for online courses). You must get approval from me to do your revision (generally I just need a heads up as I usually approve revisions).

7. 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary Essay (1-2 pages)(mid-term)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Narrative Asst (3-4 pages)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical Analysis Essay (4-5 pages)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argument/Research Essay (5-7 pages)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative Rhetorical Analysis (4-5 pages)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily work</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Review</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 can include 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 completing 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 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 clearly 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 or says 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.

**Diversity Statement**

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture, perspective, and other background characteristics. I encourage your suggestions about how to improve the value of diversity in this course. This course meets the following standards for diversity content and instruction in the following way(s):

1. Course content that includes readings and other materials that address various categories of social difference (gender, nationality, religion, ethnicity, race, age, sexuality, political affiliation, socio-economic status, ability, linguistic background, etc.) on the course topic.
2. Tying current events and local histories centered on the production of social difference into classroom activities.

**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](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.