Syllabus for English 132: Research and Argument

Section 047
Semester: Spring 2017
Location: Ferguson 271
Time: MWF 2:00 – 2:50 am

Instructor: Billy Longino
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Office: LAN 328
Office Hours: M/W/F 9:00 – 10:00 am; Mon 12:00 – 2:00; or by appointment

Course Description
Continued study and application of the writing process and the skills of writing with a focus on the forms of argumentative writing and on research methods, such as gathering, evaluating, summarizing, synthesizing and citing source information.
Prerequisite: C in English 131. Must earn a C or higher to be admitted to any English 200-level course.

In English 132, students will continue using skills they learned in English 131, such as drafting, revising, editing, research, and critical thinking, but will further apply these skills by examining multiple sources and synthesizing the ideas in these sources while also doing their own research on the topics. The emphasis in English 132 is on the students developing the ability to critically analyze multiple sources and synthesizing this information into their own novel theses and arguments. Students will complete two synthesis essays (a comparative and argumentative), a research proposal, an annotated bibliography, and an argumentative research essay in this course.

This specific course will focus upon bioethics. Bioethics is defined as the study of issues, primarily controversial, that arise from the progress of biomedical practice and research. In this class, we will be discussing the ethical, moral, philosophical, political, and biological circumstances surrounding several biomedical topics, such as abortion, reproductive medicine, human research, cloning, genetic technology, euthanasia, and the doctor-patient relationship, among others. Specifically, topics we have classroom discussions over will include the morality of cloning human beings for the harvesting of organs, the hard problem of human consciousness, the possibility artificial wombs replacing natural pregnancy in humans, the ethics of taking tissue samples from cancer patients without their knowledge—the cells of whom turn out to be “immortal” and extraordinarily useful in biomedical research—and more. Many of these topics will invoke emotional responses, but in addition to discussing the topics, we will also discuss the problems that come about with discussing them. This will be my third year teaching this course with a focus upon bioethics, and it is without a doubt the most popular topic I have taught. And it is a difficult one, yet it is my belief that students excel the most, and develop pride in their work, when they are encouraged to push themselves beyond what they, often falsely, believed to be their intellectual limits.

Required Textbooks
Bioethics: An Anthology 3rd Ed. edited by Helga Kushe and Peter Singer.
They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing 3rd Ed. by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein.
The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot
Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary

Recommended Textbooks
Prentice Hall Reference Guide

Additional materials may be provided in pdf form and links through the class D2L site. (Check this often.)
English Program Learning Outcomes
This is a general education core curriculum course and no specific program learning outcomes for this major are addressed in this course.

English 132 Learning Outcomes
At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Locate, evaluate, and employ a variety of sources, accurately and ethically, in a multi-step, persuasive essay (Critical Thinking);
- Appraise and utilize a variety of standardized genre, discipline, medium, and occasion situation-specific conventions (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).

Assignments
The assignments and grades for this course will averaged together for the final grad percentage. In order to determine their final grade, students should add up the points that they have on previous assignments. From this, a student can guess what he or she needs to make on the remaining assignments to achieve the grade they would like.

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Participation (10 Points)
Over the course of this semester, I will document student participation in class. Participation will depend upon the student’s timely completion of daily assignments, completing readings, participation in classroom discussions, and attentive engagement in class meetings. Additionally, over the course of the semester, as students read the assigned material, they will also post commentary and analyses on the discussion boards on D2L. These posts must be
thorough, paragraph length discussions of the topics raised in the texts. In addition to making their own posts, students must reply to at least two other posts from classmates. The posts will be graded according to accuracy, grammar, and depth of engagement with the material. 

Students may lose participation points for the following offenses:

- Being late to class without a “reasonable” excuse.
- Use of cellphone or other electronic device outside of allowed times.
- Not completing a reading.
- Not bringing a textbook to class when textbook is being used.
- Persistent refusal to participate in classroom discussions.

**Vocabulary Quizzes (10 Points)**

At various points throughout the semester, students will be given vocabulary quizzes based upon words learned from the texts we read in class. These quizzes will be random, but students will be provided with a list of words to be included in the quiz beforehand. Students will be expected to use their Merriam-Webster dictionaries to define the words prior to the quizzes for the purposes of studying.

**Essay 1 – Objective Comparison Syntheses from the Rhetoric of Prenatal Bioethics (10 Points)**

Students will write a 4-page essay which synthesizes at least three sources discussed in class. Students will be expected to utilize skills acquired in English 131, specifically an understanding of rhetoric. This essay will be written in an entirely objective, third-person point of view. Students are expected not to incorporate their personally held beliefs or opinions in this essay and should instead demonstrate an ability to treat sources objectively without relying on previously held biases for interpretation, using logical reasoning and textual evidence for any claims they make concerning the text.

**Essay 2 – Argumentative Synthesis of The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks with Bioethical Readings (20 Points)**

In this 4-page essay, students will construct an argumentative synthesis concerning a topic discussed in Rebecca Skloot’s The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks. The student will incorporate two other essays from Bioethics: An Anthology that are pertinent to the argument they construct. Again, emphasis will be placed on the student’s ability to remain objective, but in the case of this essay, they will incorporate their own interpretations into their arguments, so long as those interpretations are based on empirical evidence and logic.

**Research & Argument Proposal (10 Points)**

In this 750-word document, students will propose a research topic for their argumentative essay. At this point, students will not have decided where they stand in terms of the argument. This document will identify the subject which they plan to research, why the subject is of importance, and the methods of research they will employ to reach a decision concerning their position in regards to the topic. All arguments must be based upon research and not upon previously held biases (see a theme here?); instead, students should strive to assess the evidence they’ve gathered and develop opinions from this research. Topics for this proposal will be based upon our readings from Bioethics: An Anthology.
Annotated Bibliography for Research & Argument Essay (10 Points)
In research, students will find a total of 6 to 8 sources for their original argumentative research essay on bioethical topics. The annotated bibliography will serve as a tool for identifying these sources for approval. The annotated bibliography will consist of an MLA citation for each source accompanied by two paragraphs, one which summarizes the source succinctly and a second which informs me of how the source will aid in the development of their argument.

Essay 3 – Original Argumentative Research Essay on Bioethical Topics (20 points)
Using the sources gathered during completion of the annotated bibliography, students will compose an 8 to 10-page essay in which they construct and support an argument concerning the topic they identified in their research proposals. Again, emphasis will be placed on the student’s ability to remain objective, but in the case of this essay, they will incorporate their own opinions into their arguments, so long as those opinions are factually grounded.

Guidelines for Written Essays
To receive a passing grade for written assignments in this class, students must carefully follow the guidelines provided hereafter. These guidelines are not provided as a suggestion but are absolutely required for every single major essay students complete in this course. There are no exceptions to these guidelines though additional guidelines will be provided in the specific prompts for each assignment. Not following these guidelines may result in a failing grade for the assignment. All essays must:

- be in essay form;
- meet the appropriate page length;
- be typed, not handwritten, in double-spaced MLA format, using Times New Roman 12-point font with 1 inch margins on all sides;
- have appropriate and complete headings;
- have an original title, not the title of another work or a general title such as the type of assignment;
- be submitted online through D2L by the due date; print copies should be turned in at the beginning class; papers that are not turned in online will receive a 5% deduction for every business day they are late until after one week, at which point the paper will receive a zero;
- properly cite quotes, summaries, and sources.

Revisions
Students will be allowed one revision this semester from the first two major essays. The final essay and annotated bibliography are not revisable. The research proposal works differently, as will be explained in the prompt for that assignment. Revisions offer students an opportunity to recover from a possibly grade-damaging paper; however, revisions will only be awarded sufficient points to raise their grade by one letter (that’s 10% of the grade). Revisions will only be allowed for papers that receive a C or below. Any paper that is plagiarized or was never turned in is not eligible for revision unless otherwise discussed. For a revision to count, the student must complete several things:

- Make corrections beyond just those marked on the original paper. What this means is the student sat down, read my comments, looked at what was marked, reread his or her paper, and understood what the errors were and how to fix
them. Any paper that only “fixes” the areas I marked will not be given full credit for a rewrite. *The Prentice Hall Reference Guide* or *The Purdue Owl* are valuable resources for helping students with their grammar and style. If the student is not sure what a comma splice is, he or she should look there first.

- Along with a revision, there must be a one-page explanation of the changes the student made and why he or she made those changes. This explanation needs to provide examples from his or her original graded paper as a way to support the claim of understanding. No revision will be accepted without this page. This page must follow the same format as the original paper (MLA style).

- Because this is a revision, there should not be an abundance of grammar, spelling, or formatting errors. Any revisions that still contain these types of errors will not improve the student’s grade, but will burn his or her revision opportunity. Students should make the revision worth their time and mine.

- Students will need to see me within one day of receiving the original graded paper to inform me of their plans to revise, as well as confer with me on ways to improve their paper. This is not optional. Any student that does not meet with me, yet hands me a revision, will have it handed right back to them.

- Students will need to go to the AARC at least once to have a tutor look at their revision. It would be in their best interest to go with specific questions and concerns, as well as the paper prompt. If they do not understand why they received the grade they did, the AARC is not going to help them in that way. Students need to be cognizant of their writing abilities and be able to see what they are doing and not doing to make the visit to the AARC effective. If they go with generalities, the tutors will focus on the areas they think needs the most work, which may not be what the student is looking for. The AARC visit is not optional.

- The original graded copy must be turned in with the revision. If I do not receive this copy, I will not grade the revision.

- The revision must be submitted online through D2L. There will be a separate link for revisions. Again, if it is not turned in online by the time the revision is due, I will not accept it.

**Attendance & Punctuality**

Attendance is required for this class. Students will not have the necessary information to successfully complete assignments in the class if they are not present. Students are allowed 3 absences in this class without penalty. Between 4 and 6 absences will result in the loss of ten points from their final grade while 6 or more absences result in a failing grade for the class. If students are absent beyond their 3rd absence, and they have a “valid” excuse for being absent, I will excuse it and it will not be counted toward the total. Validity is determined by me if the excuse doesn’t fit within university policy on guidelines for an excused absence—I understand that life can be stressful, and things come up.

Additionally, being late to class will be taken very seriously. Punctuality and personal responsibility is a skill that students must develop to be successful in the classroom and beyond. If students are not present when I take roll for the class, they will be counted absent. But if something happened that made getting to class on time difficult, students should let me know at the end of class. I can be fairly lenient, at times. Also, leaving class early, without an emergency or getting my prior acknowledgment, will result in an absence.

Whether an absence is excused or not, students are responsible for any coursework or content that was presented that day in class. Students should ask their classmates or check the class’s D2L site to receive any missed assignments or material.

**Late Work**
If a student does not have a valid excuse for an absence, I will not repeat material from the class which the student missed. Students cannot make up missed in-class activities unless they have a documented, excused absence. **If students are unable to turn in a major paper on time, they must make arrangements with me prior to the class meeting in which the paper is due,** and I must determine that the excuse for not being able to do so is valid. Otherwise, papers will be accepted for up to one week after the due date, but the grade for the paper will be reduced by ten percent of its total worth in points **per business day that it is late.** The papers must be turned into BOTH Dropbox and me in paper form at the beginning of class on the due date. If either of these is not turned on time the paper is considered late.

**Grades**

For each assignment a grade will be calculated according to the number of points it is worth. For some papers I will use a 10 point scale while on others I will use a 20 point scale. According to university policy, final grades for the course will consist of a letter grade only (no plus or minus). Here is a general description of my letter grades:

**A: 9.0 - 10/18.0 - 20.0**  
Students earning the grade of an A on any assignment will have completed work that obviously demonstrates a more than average understanding of the course material and completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of an A is reserved for that work which expertly displays one’s ability to engage the ideas at hand, recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors.

**B: 8.0 - 8.9/16.0 - 17.9**  
Students earning the grade of a B on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates a more than average understanding of the course material and completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of a B is reserved for that work which adeptly displays one’s ability to engage the ideas at hand, recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors. However, the level of thought, while still above average, may fluctuate in terms of analytic abilities and expression.

**C: 7.0 - 7.9/14.0 - 15.9**  
Students earning the grade of a C on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates an average understanding of the course material and completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of a C is reserved for that work which displays one’s ability to engage the ideas at hand (more so through summary and response rather than analysis), recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas (however, the complications recognized will focus more on surface level issues rather than the greater whole), and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors. As can be seen from this description, the level of thought will be acceptable and display that a student has read the assignment, but his/her analytic abilities and level of expression will not be nearly as complicated nor developed. Instead, C work will display a student’s hold to traditional methods of expression (simpler construction of sentence and paragraph development) and a struggle to develop complex, critical thinking skills.
**D: 6.0 – 6.9/12.0 – 13.9**

Students earning the grade of a D on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates a below average understanding of course material and a lack of completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of a D is reserved for that work which displays one’s struggle or refusal to engage the ideas at hand, simply summarizes the work under study with no actual recognition of or dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and the translation of ideas into writing is completed in such a convoluted manner that the audience will have difficulty following the conversation.

**F: Below 5.9/11.9**

Students earning the grade of a F on any assignment will either not have completed the assignment, will have completed the assignment but not followed the guidelines, or will have completed the assignment and demonstrated a complete misunderstanding of the course material. In this case, it will be obvious that the student has either not completed the required reading and/or given him/herself enough time to develop the work. The grade of a F is reserved for that work which does not engage the issues at hand, offers a base (not complete) summary of the work at hand with no critical engagement, and the translation of ideas into writing is either incomplete or the audience will be unable to follow the conversation. It is important to remember that a student can receive 0 out of 100 points. In the case that a student only partially completes an assignment or completes a work (in terms of page length, but not purpose) s/he may receive 0 points.

**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.

**Note-taking**

You should always take notes in class. This gives you a record of what occurred that day, helps you internalize the material, and provides you with information that you may be able to use in your papers.

**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; 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/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

**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 [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

**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 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 that is available to help SFA students succeed.

**AARC**

Writing tutors are available in the Academic Assistance and Research Center on the first floor of the library. Drop-in tutoring is offered Mon.-Thurs from 1 to 8 p.m and on Sunday afternoons. You can also make an appt. by calling 468-4108.

**Course Calendar**

Please note that the following schedule is tentative and subject to change at a moment’s notice. No due dates for paper will be moved up to an earlier date, since I believe that is being unfair to students. I will attempt to keep changes to a minimum, but students must be aware that each class is a living thing and becomes unpredictable as the semester progresses. Daily work will be announced in class and listed on the day’s D2L page. This schedule should be seen as a general overview of the semester.

**Wed Jan 18** – Introduction to class; receive syllabi.

**Homework:** Read introduction to *Bioethics: An Anthology* (pgs. 1 – 7), listen to the section of the Radiolab podcast episode titled “Donation and Mutation” (link on D2L) and write discussion board post.

**Fri Jan 20** – Introduction to Bioethics and discussion of podcast.

**Homework:** Begin reading the introduction to “Part I: Abortion” (pgs. 11-13) and “A Defense of Abortion” by Judith
Ja
rvis Thomson (pgs. 38 – 48) and write discussion board post.

Mon Jan 23 – Lecture on Empiricism, Objectivity, Evidence-based Argument, and the Difference between Facts and Opinions, Confirmation Bias.

Homework: Finish reading the introduction to “Part I: Abortion” (pgs. 11-13) and “A Defense of Abortion” by Judith Jarvis Thomson (pgs. 38 – 48) and write discussion board post.

Wed Jan 25 – Discussion of reading.

Homework: Begin reading “Why Abortion is Immoral” by Don Marquis (pgs. 49-59) and write discussion board post.

Fri Jan 27 – Introduction to logic and fallacies.

Homework: Finish reading “Why Abortion is Immoral” by Don Marquis (pgs. 49-59) and write discussion board post.

Mon Jan 30 – Discussion of reading and practice synthesis.

Homework: Read introduction to “Part II: Issues in Reproduction” (pgs. 63-67) and “Multiple Gestation and Damaged Babies: God’s Will or Human Choice?” by Gregory Pence (pgs. 71-73) and write discussion board post.

Wed Feb 1 – Discussion of reading and practice synthesis.

Homework: Read “Prenatal Diagnosis and Selective Abortion” by Adrienne Asch (pgs. 112-26) and write discussion board post.

Fri Feb 3 – Discussion of reading and practice syntheses.

Homework: Outline syntheses between three articles chosen from those read during this unit.

Mon Feb 6 – In-class work on essay.

Wed Feb 8 – In-class work on essay.

Fri Feb 10 – Essay 1 Due. Incorporating argument into synthesis.

Homework: Read introduction to “Experimentation with Human Subjects” and write discussion board post.

Mon Feb 13 –

Homework: Read Chapters 1 – 4 of The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot.

Wed Feb 15 – Discussion of Human Experimentation.

Homework: Read Chapters 5 – 8 of The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot and write discussion post.

Fri Feb 17 – Discussion of reading.

Homework: Read Chapters 9 – 11 of The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot.

Mon Feb 20 – Discussion of reading.

Homework: Read Chapters 12 – 17 of The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot.

Wed Feb 22 – Discussion of reading.

Homework: Read Chapters 18 – 22 of The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot and write discussion post.

Fri Feb 24 – Discussion of reading.

Homework: Read Chapters 23 – 28 of The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot.

Mon Feb 27 – Discussion of reading.

Homework: Read Chapters 29 – 33 of The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot.

Wed March 1 – Discussion of reading.

Homework: Read Chapters 34 – “Afterword” of The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot and write discussion post.

Fri March 3 – Discussion of reading.

Homework: Read “Informed Consent: Its History, Meaning, and Present Challenges” by Tom L. Beauchamp (pgs. 635-41) and “Participation in Biomedical Research Is an Imperfect Moral Duty: A Response to John Harris” by Sandra
Mon March 6 – Discussion of reading.

**Homework:** Read “The Patient and the Public Good” by Samuel Hellman (pgs. 466-70) and write discussion board post.

Fri March 10 – Discussion of reading and practice synthesis.

**Homework:** Outline syntheses.

Wed March 8 – Introduction to argument construction.

March 11 thru 19 – Spring Break!!!

Mon March 20 – In-class work on essay.

Wed March 22 – In-class work on essay.

Fri March 24 – Essay 2 Due. Discussion of topics for Argumentative Research Essay.

**Homework:** Read “The Moral Significance of the Therapy-Enhancement Distinction in Human Genetics” by David B. Resnik and write discussion board post.

Mon March 27 – Discussion of reading.

**Homework:** Read “Freedom of Memory Today” by Adam Kolber (pgs. 749-52), Electrical Brain Stimulation and the Way We Think” by Sally Adee (pgs. 741-43), and “Engineering Love” by Julian Savulescu and Anders Sandberg (pgs 760-62) and write discussion board post.

Wed March 29 – Discussion of readings.

**Homework:** Read “Amputees by Choice” by Carl Elliot (pgs. 654-64) and write discussion board post.

Fri March 31 – Discussion of reading.

**Homework:** Read “When Care Cannot Cure: Medical Problems in Seriously Ill Babies” by Neil Campbell (pgs. 273-84) and write discussion board post.

Mon April 3 – Discussion of reading.

**Homework:** Read “The Moral Status of the Cloning of Humans” by Michael Tooley (pgs. 156-72) and write discussion board post.

Wed April 5 – Discussion of reading.

**Homework:** Read “All Animals Are Equal” by Peter Singer (pgs. 530-39) and write discussion board post.

Fri April 7 –

**Homework:** Read “Should Doctor’s Tell the Truth?” by Joseph Collins (pgs. 615-20) and “On Telling Patients the Truth” by Roger Higgs (pgs. 621-27) and write discussion board post.

Mon April 10 – Discussion of readings.

Wed April 12 – Last Day for Proposals. Introduction to independent research.

Fri April 14 – No class. Easter Break.

Mon April 17 – No Class. Easter Break.

Wed April 19 – Research conferences.

Fri April 21 – Research conferences.

Mon April 24 – In-class work on annotated bibliographies.

Wed April 26 – Annotated Bibs Due. Argument construction cont.

Fri April 28 – Logic and fallacies cont.

Mon May 1 – In-class work on final essays.

Wed May 3 – In-class work on final essays.

Fri May 5 – In-class work on final essays.
Finals Week – Exam times TBA.