ENGLISH 131: Rhetoric & Composition (Fall 2018)

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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.

We will view and analyze two films: 13th, a documentary released in 2016 that explores our nation’s criminal justice system and its relation to racial discrimination in our country, and The Sentence, a documentary released this coming October 2018 dealing with prison reform and the effects of mandatory sentencing. For the purposes of this class, the movies are excellent examples of the many types of rhetorical tools available and how the tools of rhetoric are used to influence our country in the past and how rhetorical tools are used to influence us today. We will focus on reading and writing practices that help us analyze and write about the documentaries, skills that are important both inside and outside of college.
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
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, 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 REQUIREMENTS

1. Personal Response to 13th
This essay should describe your response to 13th be it through logic, reason or personal experience. It is meant to teach you how to write in an academic setting in the appropriate academic format. This essay should be two (2) pages.

2. Critical Reading Response to 13th
A critical reading response asks you to dissect a text, explain it in your own words, and point out the strengths and weaknesses of that text. You will choose an issue from the 13th and write a critical reading response, including both summary of the text and critiques of it. This essay should be three (3) pages.
3. Rhetorical Analysis of 13th  
Building on what you have learned about writing and your understanding of the film 13th or The Sentence, this prompt asks you to analyze how the film constructs its argument, focusing particularly on purpose, audience, the rhetorical appeals, and evidence. This essay should be three (3) pages.

4. Arguing a Position based on 13th  
For this essay, you will choose an issue raised by 13th or The Sentence and either add to the argument by confirming its claims or refute the argument by denying its claims, including information from your own experiences and up to two approved scholarly sources to make your argument. This essay should be four (4) pages.

5. Presentation - Final Exam  
For your Final Exam, we will meet in the classroom and each of you will provide a 3-5 minute presentation to me and to the class.

6. Daily Assignments  
This section includes homework assignments, quizzes and in-class writing assignments. The grade values are determined by dividing the total number of points by the number of items in this category. For example, let’s say there are 15 items in this category – 150/15=10 points each. If you missed 5 items, then 50 points will be deducted from the total available points.

7. Class Participation  
This section is designed to help you boost your grade by simply showing up and participating in class. Satisfying this requirement means attending class, bringing your textbook and all required materials, bringing your laptop or phone or some device capable of connecting to the internet, answering questions when prompted, asking questions and contributing to class discussion. Each day I will begin class by taking attendance and asking everyone whether they brought the appropriate materials to class.

8. Grading Standard
A  800-1000 points
B  600-800 points
C  400-600 points
D  200-400 points
F  0-200 points
COURSE POLICIES

**Attendance:** Students are allowed **two** excused absences. Valid excuses are limited to health emergencies, 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. Without written documentation, the absence will automatically be considered unexcused. Whether an absence is excused or unexcused, students are still responsible for all course content and assignments. Note also that you must complete all major assignments on time in order to pass the course.

**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 an absence for the day.

**Assignment Submission:** All written work will be submitted to me. Assignments are due by class time on their due date. I will return your work to you in class.

**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 and http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-appeals-by-students.pdf.

Conferences and Communication: If you wish to meet with me 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.

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 the effectiveness of this class and my teaching, 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.

Discrimination/Sexual Harassment: At Stephen F. Austin State University, no faculty, staff, or student may discriminate against another on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, disability or disabled veteran status, and such acts will not be permitted in this class. For additional information, consult Human Resources Policy E-46.

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/, 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/disabilityservice

Late Assignments: Major Essays Only: I understand that life happens and sometimes things that are beyond our control get in the way. For this reason, I will accept one late assignment with no penalty: to use it, write “Oops!” clearly at the top of the completed assignment and turn it in within one week of the assigned due date (and before the last day of class). However, this “Oops!” will only be allowed on major assignments (major essays). Other than this one “Oops!”, I will not accept late assignments.
SUBJECT TO CHANGES IN THE FUTURE

Goal  Learn How to Critically Analyze Rhetoric Presented to You in Written or Visual Form

Four Units

Unit 1  Weeks 1-4  8/28 – 9/20
The Art of Rhetoric
What is a Thesis Statement?
How to Write an Essay
Punctuation and Grammar Refreshers
Ava Duvernay’s Film 13th Netflix
Essay 1 due 9/20: Personal Response to 13th  2pgs

Unit 2  Weeks 5-8  9/20 – 10/18
Reading and Thinking Critically
Writing Unified, Coherent Paragraphs
Sentence Fragments, Run-on Sentences
The How and Why of Using Quotations
Essay 2 Due 10/18: Critical Reading Response to 13th  3pgs

Unit 3  Weeks 9-13  10/18 – 11/15
Analyzing Rhetoric: Does the Medium Matter?
Rudy Valdez’s Film The Sentence, HBO Release 10/15/2018
Essay 3 Due 11/15: Rhetorical Analysis of One or Both Films  3pgs

Unit 4  Weeks 14-18  11/8 – 12/6
How to Argue a Position
How to Conduct Academic Research
MLA 8 – A Riddle Wrapped in a Mystery Inside an Enigma
Winston Churchill, BBC News Radio, 10/1/1939
How to Create a Works Cited Page
How to Cite Sources in Your Essay
Essay 4 Due 12/6: Arguing a Position Using One or Both Films plus two peer reviewed academic sources  4 pgs

Final Exam  Week 19  12/10 – 12/14
Week Two  9/4 – 9/6

9/4  Students Turn in Essays on Risky or Safe choice  15 min

Rhetoric: What is it? How do I use it? Why do I use it?  30 min
Lecture on Rhetorical Situations and Elements
Purdue Owl Power Point on Rhetoric – it’s in your sfa mail

Thesis Statements: What are they and why do I need them? 30 min
Lecture on Thesis Statements

Homework: Titles, Introduction, Body Paragraphs and Conclusion

9/6  Professor Returns Essays to Students  5 minutes
Quiz on Rhetoric and Thesis Statements  5 minutes
Questions on Rhetoric and Thesis Statements  5 minutes

Writing in Academic Genres
Proper Format

Understanding the writing process  30 minutes
Lecture based on Nictora reading pgs. 302-314
Titles, Introduction, Body Paragraphs and Conclusion

Homework: Read “Summarizing, Paraphrasing and Quoting to Incorporate Texts and Avoid Plagiarism” pgs. 272-276 (Becoming Rhetorical – Jodie Nicotra)
Read Passage A on page 275 – respond to prompts on page 276.
Turn in this assignment on Tuesday, 9/11.

Week Three  9/11 – 9/13

9/11  Students turn in homework – Passage A pg. 275-276
Handout Writing Prompt One – Discuss  15 minutes
Include You Tube Video “How to Write a Personal Response Essay”
By Magdalini Tsoulous – be sure to allow them to take notes
Watch the Film 13th  60 minutes

Homework: Worksheet on Sentence Structure
Worksheet on Subject/Verb Agreement
Worksheet on Punctuation

9/13  Students turn in Worksheets
Professor returns homework – Passage A pg. 275-276

Finish the film, 13th

Continue to discuss elements of Response Essay

Homework: Building off the YouTube video “How to Write a Personal Response Essay” by Tsoulous, use those questions to help you outline your essay, then write a draft introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion. Polish the draft and be prepared to write your rough draft essay on Tuesday, Sept. 18.

Week Four 9/18 – 9/120

9/18 Writing Lab
Write your Essay

9/20 Writing Lab
Polish Final Essay
Essay 1 Due at End of Class

TO BE DETERMINED