ENGLISH 131: Composition and Rhetoric

ENG131.021 Spring 2018

Meeting Times: TR 9:30 -10:45  
Location: Ferguson 171  
Instructor: James A. Clark  
Office Location: Ferguson 279

E-mail: clarksfaclass@gmail.com  
(or via D2L or MySFA e-mail)

Student Hours: MW 9:00-11:30, and  
by appointment

Required Materials:

Lumberjacks Write (Provided by the English department)

Writing materials, including laptops, should be kept on hand at all times for taking notes and for in-class writing. **You will be required to keep up with in-class writings**, as they will be graded. Whether you use a computer or pen and paper, you’ll need a way of presenting these writings as a unified body.

Various handouts/readings will be distributed in class or posted on D2L by the instructor at certain times during the semester. These will be provided in lieu of expensive textbooks and will need to be brought to class if and when you are instructed to do so. DO NOT LOSE THEM. Students may be required to print reading materials posted to D2L for reference in class discussion.

Recommended Materials:

A flash drive or access to an online drive (such as Google Drive) for making backups. The only thing worse than having a nearly-complete essay lost to a crashed computer is having your professor say you should have backed it up.

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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.

This is a writing-intensive course. There are a number of major written assignments through which you will produce a minimum of 15 pages of final-draft-quality writing.
**Student Learning Outcomes for ENG 131:**
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).

**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.

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**COURSE POLICIES**

**Attendance is mandatory.** You are expected to be in class. I take attendance at the beginning of class; students are late after **five** minutes. If you’re late twice, you will receive an absence.

You have **five absences** to do with as you please. I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences; you’re either here or you aren’t. The sixth absence and each absence thereafter will result in a penalty of **one full letter grade for the semester.** Keeping up with your attendance is **your responsibility.**
If you are sleeping in class, you are absent.

Do not pack up until you are instructed to do so.

Use of Technology is allowable, but only under controlled circumstances.

Laptops may be used for taking notes and for in-class writings.

No phones unless I say. If you’re texting, I won’t call you out and tell you to put it up—I’ll quietly mark you absent and carry on with the class. I don’t need the disruption of stopping a lecture to tell you to put your phones away.

No headphones/earbuds unless I say. There will be times—for example, when we’re doing in-class writing assignments—when I’ll tell you it’s okay to plug in. If you’re listening to music instead of listening to me, I won’t call you out and tell you to put it up—I’ll quietly mark you absent and carry on with the class. Again, I don’t need the disruption.

Work for other classes or for extracurricular purposes must be done elsewhere. If I catch you doing an assignment for another prof, I won’t call you out—I’ll quietly mark you absent and carry on with the class. I assume by now the pattern is obvious.

Individual Conferences will be held near the end of the semester. Each student is responsible for meeting with me during the appointed time. Students are encouraged to bring a draft of their current project or a list of issues for discussion during these conferences.

Daily work cannot be made up. I can’t repeat lectures (for obvious reasons), and I have neither the time nor the patience to attempt to keep up with minor assignments not turned in when due. Anything instructional materials handed out in class will be available until the end of the semester at the student’s request. Get to know the people who sit near you and get them to fill you in on notes etc. when you return from an absence.

Three Before Me: I find that most students miss or overlook a detail every now and then. In the event you have a question, there are three sources you should utilize before asking me:

- Check the syllabus. There are many answers in this document.
- Check D2L announcements. There’s a good chance your question has already been answered through that medium.
- Check with your colleagues. Someone in the room very likely knows the answer to your question.

In the event that you have not arrived at a satisfactory answer after exhausting these three options, then you should not hesitate to contact me with your question.
Classroom Decorum: In order to improve our critical reading and thinking skills, we will engage in open, free discussions. Despite the overall similarities in age, University classes tend to be composed of people of differing backgrounds with differing perspectives. In other words, we can all learn from our peers. To this end, you must come to class prepared to discuss and debate the readings. All participants in discussions are expected to remain courteous and respectful, regardless of the diversity of our opinions. Although I do not expect disciplinary problems at the college level, persistent behavioral disruptions will result in the student in question being asked to leave and receiving an absence for the day. The goal of these discussions is not to “win” an argument but to open everyone’s minds to multiple possibilities.

E-mails will be composed professionally. Any communication without a salutation and signature will not be answered. Exception: in a running e-mail exchange, it is not uncommon, even among professionals, to drop the salutation and signature after the first few messages.

Restroom permission is not necessary. If you need to leave the room for any reason, I ask that you do so with a minimum of disruption.

Food and drink are acceptable within reason; noisy packaging and overwhelming odors should be avoided (no broccoli). If issues arise from this policy, it is subject to change.

Plagiarism: Don’t. Just don’t. If you use ideas or words that are not your own, you must give full and proper credit. The use of “essay rewriter” or paraphrasing software is expressly forbidden.

If you plagiarize, you will almost certainly get caught. If you get caught, you will fail the course. In extreme cases, I will initiate disciplinary proceedings which could result in expulsion from the university. Do Not Plagiarize.

Assignment Submission:

- Assignments will be submitted in print. Assignments must be double-spaced, printed on one side only, and stapled prior to being turned in. No assignments will be accepted via e-mail.
- Assignments are late at the end of the class period on the due date unless prior arrangements are made. Students absent on due dates must upload the assignment to D2L in advance of the deadline, and must also make arrangements for turning in a paper copy. Only hard copies will be graded. Assignments will not be accepted more than five calendar days past the due date.
- Students will provide a digital upload as a backup only. Uploads must be in .doc, .docx, or .pdf format. Documents uploaded in other formats will not be accepted. Students absent on due dates must upload the assignment to D2L in advance of the deadline, and must also make arrangements for turning in a paper copy. I will not grade essays that have not been submitted in BOTH forms.
• **MLA Format Basics**—font size and type, spacing, etc.—will be outlined in class. I will tell you how I want your papers formatted, and those who fail to follow instructions will lose points in the process.

**To avoid emergencies,** you should save your work in multiple places; I highly recommend using online storage such as Google Drive, which is a free service, to back up your files. Alternately, you may acquire a flash drive and make frequent backups. **Computer failure is not an excuse for missing due dates.**

**Page counts** must be met. Page counts **do not include the Works Cited page. Ten points per page will be deducted** for incomplete assignments.

**Works Cited:** Every assignment that uses information from an outside source will include a Works Cited page, properly formatted. If you do not know how to properly format a Works Cited page with proper spacing and indents, ask me or consult the Purdue Owl online. Essays which do not include a Works Cited page will not receive more than half the total points possible.

**Grade Distribution:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Distribution</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Investment*</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Assignments</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Assignment One</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Assignment Two</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Assignment Three</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Assignment Four</td>
<td>250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** 1000 points

*The “Personal Investment” grade encompasses attendance, participation, individual conference attendance, and the general depth to which the student invests in his or her own success.

Please note that if you have a grade on a single assignment you feel is undeserved, I am willing to consider the matter only under specific circumstances:

- You must have allowed 24 hours from the time you receive the grade before contacting me. This “cooling-off” period is helpful in giving us both perspective and allowing you to consider your complaint.
- **As the focus of this course is persuasion,** your opportunity to have your grade reconsidered is contingent upon providing a brief (1 page should suffice) essay explaining in detail why your work deserves closer examination. Convince me.
- You must acknowledge, via signature, that you are aware that a changed grade is not necessarily an improved grade and that, if I choose to revisit your essay, there is a possibility that I will find further errors, thus resulting in a lower grade.
**Final Grade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-89</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Second Chance System**

I make it a matter of policy to allow second chances; no one gets everything right the first time. If you’re struggling, talk to me. I may allow you to rewrite your lowest-scoring paper or make other concessions on a case-by-case basis, as long as you are making every effort to do what is expected of you. I reserve the right to allow or refuse extra credit opportunities as I see fit. Children make excuses; adults make arrangements.

I offer extra credit for:

- Completion of end-of-semester evaluation (2 points)
- Other opportunities which may arise at my discretion.

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**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)
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.

**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/).

**Final Notes:**
You make your grade. If you show up and do the work, if you make the effort, if you show initiative, if you respect me and your colleagues in the room, you will most likely survive—it’s hard to fail my class. If you put in half-effort, expect half-results. I’ll help in any way I can, but I only care about your grade as much as you do.

**If you fail a paper,** do not lose hope—and do not take it personally. We're all still learning, and sometimes learning means making mistakes. Writing is a process, not a product; take the steps, continue to practice, and persist.

**English 131 Assignment Sequence**
**Spring 2018**

**Essay 1** This personal narrative essay will re-introduce students to the narrative mode of writing, with a focus on narrative as a persuasive technique.

**Essay 2** The rhetorical analysis assignment will task students with analyzing and assessing the rhetorical strategies of a speech, essay, or other article to be provided by the instructor. The emphasis will be on establishing a third-person, objective academic voice and approaching the work as a neutral observer disconnected from the opinions being expressed.

**Essay 3** The third assignment asks students to build analysis, synthesis, and/or research skills. For this assignment, we will conduct an evaluative review of a movie, TV show,
video game, restaurant, or other approved product or service of their choice. Some part of
the essay must be informed by outside research materials (for example, a review of a
particular health product would likely present scientific evidence of the efficacy of
“cleansing” as a rebuttal to the product’s advertised claims). Rather than the usual
“population of reasonable adults,” the student’s persuasive tactics will be aimed at a very
specific audience provided by the instructor at the time the assignment is introduced. The
review will be developed as if it is intended for publication.

Essay 4 In the last essay of the semester, students will be introduced to ideas that will be
explored in English 132. Students will choose a specific area of policy or procedure at
Stephen F. Austin which they feel needs improvement and write a proposal which outlines
the problem in detail and offers possible solutions. Students will be strongly encouraged to
focus on finding solutions for problems that impact them directly.

Final Exam

Tentative Class Plan English 131.021—Spring 2018

-Week 1: January 15-19
T-Intro: Syllabus read-through; Survival tips
R- Syllabus Quiz; Using D2L; MLA Format Basics; Minor Assignment: Format Document

-Week 2: January 22-26
T- Narrative to Persuade; discuss Major Assignment One: Narrative Essay
R- Pre-writing Strategies; The Things Everyone Gets Wrong; HW: read “The Other and
Othering”

-Week 3: January 29- February 2
T- Assignment One Pre-Writing Due; discuss reading; in-class writing
R- Well-written and poorly-written student essay examples; Introduction to Rhetoric and the
Rhetorical Triangle

-Week 4: February 5-9
T- Assignment One Draft Due (Peer Workshop); HW: Read “Consider Your Audience”
R- Discuss reading; rhetoric continued; Audience and Temporal Concerns; commercials;
audience exercise

-Week 5: February 12-16
T- Assignment One Final Due; Introduce Assignment Two: Rhetorical Analysis; HW: Read
“The Welfare Queen Stereotype”
R- In-class rhetorical analysis of famous speeches

-Week 6: February 19-23
T- Backing up your claim; why WHY matters; persuasion mapping
R- Assignment Two Pre-writing due; In-class writing day—bring laptops and other writing
materials

-Week 7: February 26-March 2
T- Persuasion mapping with topic lottery
R- Assignment Two Drafts Due (Peer Workshop); HW: Read “Annoying Ways People Use
Sources” (writingspaces.org)

-Week 8: March 5-9
T- Making a firm claim; thesis statements and Points Preview; in-text citations and quote
integration; creating a Works Cited page; tying the citations to the WC
R- Assignment Two Final Due: introduce Assignment Three: Evaluation; Paraphrasing and
Summarizing; Introductions and Conclusions; parts of an opening paragraph

-Week 9: March 12-16
T- Spring
R- Break
-Week 10: March 19-23
T- *Film TBA*
R- *Film TBA*

-Week 11: March 26-30
T- Assignment Three Notes/Pre-Writing due; In-class writing day—bring laptops and other writing materials
R- Easter Holiday

-Week 12: April 2-6
T- Library Orientation
R- Assignment Three Drafts due (Peer Workshop)

-Week 13: April 9-13
T- Plagiarism
R- Assignment Three Due at beginning of class; Introduce Assignment Four

-Week 14: April 16-20
T- The EBSCO Database; Paragraph Unity: MEAL Paragraphs
R- Assignment Four Notes/Pre-Writing Due; In-class writing day—bring writing materials

-Week 15: April 23-27
T- In-class writing day—bring laptops and other writing materials
R- Assignment Four Rough Drafts due (Peer Workshop)

-Week 16: April 30 – May 4
T- Conferences—My office
R- Conferences—My office
- **Week 17: May 7 – May 11**
- Final Exams, date and time TBA  **Final draft of Essay #4 due at beginning of class**