ENGLISH 131: Rhetoric & Composition (Fall 2019)

Course number/section: English 131-023
Meeting place: Ferguson 183
Meeting time: 11-11:50 pm MWF

Professor: Dr. Sara Henning
Office: LAN 263
Office hours: 2-3 MW, 2-5 F
Email: henningsd@sfasu.edu

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.

“Rhetoric and Composition” (3 credits) meets three times each week in fifty-minute segments or twice each week in seventy-five-minute segments for fifteen weeks, and meets during finals week according to the final exam schedule. Students complete weekly topical readings as well as writing and discussion activities related to those readings. Students write a minimum of four essays with a total page count of at least fifteen pages of finished writing. Emphasis is placed on writing processes, including multiple drafts and short assignments that require generating, revising and editing writing. Final exams typically include presentations of student writing. These activities average six hours of work outside of classroom hours.

For this section of ENG 131, we will explore the idea of Personal Identity in Contemporary Society. Throughout this course, we will read, analyze, and write about matters pertaining to personal identity, considering how our personalities are formed, how we communicate our personalities to the world, and how culture affects the process of personality formation. We will end class with an exploration of how choosing a college major can affect our future career paths.

COURSE OUTCOMES

General Education Core Curriculum Objectives:
As part of the communication component area, in any given semester one or more of the following Core Curriculum Objectives for English 131 may be assessed:

- Critical Thinking: creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
- Communication: effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
- Teamwork: the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.
- Personal Responsibility: the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.

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
Upon successful completion of English 131, the student should have:
1. Ability to show appropriate acquisition of CORE objective 1 skills. Students in compositions courses make application of these skills in the writing of personal, expository, and persuasive essays, which require students to make inquiries into and explorations of topics in creative, innovative, or analytical ways. Students are expected to complete readings, to engage in course and group discussions, and to analyze, interpret and synthesize their findings resultant from these critical engagements into well-developed essays. Written assignments will evidence the students’ command of these considerations: effective engagement of audience (pathos), logical development of ideas (logos), and effective use of examples, expertise, or insight (ethos).

2. Ability to show appropriate acquisition of CORE objective 2 skills. These skills include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication. Following instruction about group interaction, students will engage in oral communication through class discussions and group work (orally in face-to-face courses, electronically in online courses). Students will have occasion to respond to visual medium, as found in assigned readings, lectures, power-point presentations, or other media dependent upon course materials. Students learn processes for writing that help them to form coherent, well-developed, well-organized and unified discussions through a variety of writing methodologies, including personal, expository, and persuasive methodologies. Students will write at least four essays in composition courses, and rubrics will assess such concerns as development and exploration, mechanical clarity, and interpretation or expression of ideas.

3. Ability to show appropriate acquisition of CORE objective 3 skills. These skills include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal. Following instruction about peer review processes and small group work, students will perform peer mentorship on essay assignments and work together on group projects, which may include collaborative writing occasions, group presentations, or panel discussions. As peer review is the common teamwork experience, students will be required to share potentially diverse ideas with one another, to address those views in appropriate ways, and to help one another to finalize essays for submission.

4. Ability to show appropriate acquisition of CORE objective 4 skills. These skills include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making. Students will have opportunity to examine numerous readings, including essays written by classmates, to examine the credibility and value of those readings, and to understand how expository methodologies bear responsibility and consequence.

REQUIRED TEXTS


*Texts on D2L.* These must be printed, read, and brought to class on days they are assigned OR be accessible to you in class via an electronic device (laptop, tablet, phone, etc.)

*Drafts* of your work; again, these must be printed and brought to class on days they are assigned OR be accessible to you via an electronic device (laptop, tablet, phone, etc.)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Personal Essay (no required sources) 10%**
   In this essay, you will choose a defining moment in your life and explore how it impacted your formation of identity. This essay should be between 350 and 500 words (2-3 pages).

2. **Visual Analysis (0-2 required sources) 20%**
   In this essay, you will analyze one cultural representation of identity formation. It will be your job to find an artifact (a movie, advertisement, or other medium that concerns identity formation) and perform a sustained investigation of it. This essay should be 900-1500 words (3-5 pages).
3. Identity in Popular Culture Project: TED Talk (1-3 required sources) 10%
In the style of a TED talk, you will present an informed exploration of a contemporary aspect of identity formation. You must provide a recording of your TED talk AND a transcription of it (1200-1800 words) (4-6 pages).

4. Persuasive/Argumentative Essay (2-4 required sources) 25%
In this essay, you will write a persuasive essay. This essay should be 1800-2100 words. (6-7 pages)

5. Final Exam: 10%
For this assignment, you will create a formal presentation of your Persuasive/Argumentative Essay. During the final weeks of class, you will give a five-minute presentation. Your presentation should take the form of a prepared speech, accompanied by a PowerPoint or Prezi to provide visual context and details.

6. Discussion Questions: 15%
On a weekly basis, you will be asked to respond to a set of questions located in the weekly ‘Contents’ section of our Brightspace/D2L course. These questions will engage you with that week’s readings and/or content.

7. Participation: 10%
Because class time will be largely spent in large and small group discussions, class participation is vital for you to succeed in this course. This portion of your grade will be based on your contributions to class discussions; your level of preparation for each class period (completed reading and writing assignments particularly) as demonstrated by participation and performance on quizzes; your turning in of essay drafts for instructor and peer feedback; and your involvement in group activities. See the rubric below for a better understanding of how your participation will be assessed.

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Superior communicative skills; excellent preparation for class discussion; always volunteers; student exemplifies mastery, rigor, and intellectual curiosity regarding course readings and concepts while also introducing relevant independent insights to the discussion; always submits complete drafts for instructor and peer feedback; student demonstrates enthusiasm and takes initiative, particularly during group activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good communicative skills; solid preparation for class discussion; consistently volunteers; student exemplifies interest and engagement regarding course readings and concepts; submits drafts of all papers for instructor and peer feedback, but these may sometimes be incomplete; student demonstrates positive attitude; makes meaningful contributions during group activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Adequate communicative skills; fair preparation for class discussion; occasionally volunteers; student exemplifies competence regarding course readings and concepts; submits drafts of three or more papers for instructor and peer feedback, which may sometimes be incomplete; student demonstrates an inoffensive, but noncommittal attitude; sporadic contributions during group activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Limited communicative skills; uneven preparation for class; rarely volunteers; demonstrates indifference or irritation when prompted; submits drafts of one or two papers, which may sometimes or always be incomplete; inattentive during class; rare contributions during group activities. [Performance may be marked by other flaws: consistent tardiness; disruptive; etc.]</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Weak communicative skills; little to no preparation for class; little evidence of reading assignments (this can include not buying or printing the course texts or not making up missed material); never volunteers, or doesn’t respond when prompted; never or very infrequently submits drafts for instructor and peer feedback, which are always incomplete; demonstrates potential hostility to discussion; irrelevant, distracting, or no contributions to group activities.</td>
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Grading Standard:
A (excellent performance): 90-100.
B (above average performance): 80-89.  
C (average performance): 70-79.  
F (failure): 0-59.

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Attendance:** Students are only allowed **six** unexcused absences and/or **nine** excused absences (no more than nine classes *total* may be missed). Any additional absences will result in automatic **failure** of the course.

Valid excuses are limited to health, 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’s excusability. Without written documentation, the absence will automatically be considered unexcused. Students with acceptable excuses may be permitted to make up work when the nature of the work missed permits. However, no absences beyond the nine will be permitted, whether unexcused or excused. Whether an absence is excused or unexcused, students are still responsible for all course content and assignments. Note also that you must turn in all major assignments (four formal essays and two presentations) to pass the course.

I take attendance at the beginning of class; arriving more than **five** minutes after class begins will result in your being marked absent.

**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 (unless you plan to use this device to access materials), and no class-related 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 a lowered participation grade and an absence for the day.

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.

**Assignment Submission:** All written work will be submitted electronically via Brightspace/D2L. Assignments are due by class time on their due date. All files must be formatted in either .doc or .docx (compatible with Microsoft Word). I will not accept Mac Pages or Google Docs, for example. I will return feedback to your assignment via D2L.

For the four major paper assignments, a complete draft *must* be turned in to me by the assigned date and time or the paper **cannot receive higher than a C**.

**Late Work:** I will accept major essays for a 10% per day penalty. I will not accept any daily work (discussion questions, quizzes, etc.) after the day and time it is due. You should save your work in multiple places; I highly recommend using online storage options such as OneDrive, which is included as a free service in the university’s downloadable subscription of Microsoft Office 365, to prevent lost work.
**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/4.1-student-academic-dishonesty.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/4.1-student-academic-dishonesty.pdf)

**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, and you can expect a response within 24-48 hours, excluding weekends; if you do not receive a response within this time period, you should assume I did not receive your email and try again.

**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 how effective this class and my teaching was, 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.

**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/](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.

**TITLE IX STATEMENT**

Stephen F. Austin State University strives to provide an educational and work environment that affirms the rights and dignity of each individual. It is the policy of the university, in accordance with federal and state law, to prohibit unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, genetic information, citizenship and veteran status. Additionally, Stephen F. Austin State University prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Unlawful discrimination based on sex includes discrimination defined as sexual harassment.

The [Discrimination Complaints policy (2.11)](http://library.sfasu.edu/aarc/) and the [Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination, Violence, Harassment, and Misconduct policy (2.13)](http://library.sfasu.edu/aarc/) outline the university's commitment and detail the procedures used to prevent, respond, and investigate complaints. It is the responsibility of the university president to ensure that SFA
and all its constituencies comply with the provisions of this policy and with all federal and state laws, executive orders and regulations regarding non-discrimination.

The university prohibits and will not tolerate sexual misconduct because such behavior violates the university's institutional values, adversely impacts the university's community interest, and interferes with the university's mission. The university also prohibits retaliation against any person who, in good faith, reports or discloses a violation of this policy, files a complaint, and/or otherwise participates in an investigation, proceeding, complaint or remediation under this policy. Once the university becomes aware of an incident of sexual misconduct, the university will promptly and effectively respond in a manner designed to eliminate the misconduct, prevent its recurrence and address its effects.

Stephen F. Austin State University is dedicated to providing an environment of non-discrimination and equal opportunity in its programs and employment opportunities. The Title IX office supports the University's commitment by offering training, programs and processes that promote an inclusive, diverse and supportive environment consistent with the SFA Way.

To fulfill its mission, the Title IX office:

- Coordinates the delivery of detailed educational programs and training concerning discrimination, harassment, sexual violence, interpersonal violence, and stalking;
- Recommends, develops, interprets and implements policies and procedures in support of non-discrimination;
- Oversees investigations into complaints of discrimination, harassment and sexual violence by promptly organizing an impartial administrative review and addressing any patterns or systemic problems that might be identified during the review of such complaints;
- Serves as the university's designated office responsible for coordinating the University's compliance with state and federal law, including, but not limited to:
  - Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972,
  - Violence Against Women Act,
  - Campus SAVE Act.
- Works with the Office of the General Counsel to investigate and respond to external complaints (e.g. EEOC, OCR).

The many terms and definitions that surround sexual misconduct issues can be confusing and may create unintended barrier to reporting incidents of sexual misconduct.

It is important to remember, only those options clearly identified as confidential assistance can keep your information private. Generally, any person not identified as a confidential reporter is required to report an incident that is reported to them. This requirement is intended to protect members of the campus community, visitors and guests from criminal and discriminatory behavior.

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