ENG 131: Rhetoric and Composition

Professor Rachel Bollinger          Ferguson 181          Lumberjacks Write. 
rach.bollin@gmail.com              MWF                      Provided by the
Office:                           1-1:50pm                 English department.

MW 11am-12:30pm, F by appointment
OR, just stop by my office anytime. Please knock, but my door is always open.

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.
ENG 131 “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.

COURSE OUTCOMES
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.

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, 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).

**OPTIONAL TEXTS**

*The Norton Field Guide to Writing, with readings and handbook*

By Richard H. Bullock

**GRADES**

Grading in this course will be based on a points system. The total amount of potential points is 500pts.

- A = 450pts to 500pts
- B = 400 pts to 449pts
- C = 350pts to 399pts
- D = 300pts to 349pts
- F = 250pts to 299pts
Assignments: by points

❖ Daily Ten-Minutes Free Writes - 40pts
❖ In-Class Mini-Essays - 70pts
❖ Group Assignments - 70pts
❖ Personal Narrative - 60pts
❖ Proposal - 70pts
❖ Annotated Bibliography - 90pts
❖ Persuasive Paper - 100 pts

COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1: The Basics of Writing

August 26th, Monday - Syllabus and class introduction.

August 28th, Wednesday - Why do we write?

August 30th, Friday - Writing as exploration.

Week 2: Composing an Essay

September 2nd, Monday - What are the parts of an essay?

September 4th, Wednesday - How do the parts of an essay talk to each other?

September 6th, Friday - What types of essays are there? (talk about articles)

Week 3: MLA Format and Citations

September 9th, Monday - What is MLA format?

September 11, Wednesday - How do MLA citations work?

September 13th, Friday - How do you combine MLA format and MLA citations?
Week 4: Personal Narrative

September 16th, Monday - What is a personal narrative?
September 18th, Wednesday - What does a personal narrative need to be effective?
September 20th, Friday - What does a personal narrative need to be effective?

Week 5: Writing a Personal Narrative

September 23rd, Monday - Personal Narrative Rough Draft due in class.
Writing a personal narrative.
September 25th, Wednesday - Writing a personal narrative.
September 27th, Friday - Personal Narrative due, in dropbox by 11:59 pm.

Introducing Rhetoric: what is it, why do we study it?

Week 6: Rhetoric

September 30th, Monday - What is Rhetoric: cont’d
October 2nd, Wednesday - What are Rhetorical Devices?
October 4th, Friday - What are Rhetorical Devices?

Week 7: Rhetoric Devices

October 7th, Monday - What is a logical fallacy?
October 9th, Wednesday - How can you detect logical fallacies?
October 11th, Friday - How can you detect logical fallacies?

Week 8: Proposal

October 14th, Monday - What is a proposal?
October 16th, Wednesday - How do you brainstorm for ideas?
October 18th, Friday - What does an effective proposal look like?
Week 9: Writing a Proposal

October 21st, Monday - **Proposal Rough Draft due in class.**

*Writing a proposal.*

October 23rd, Wednesday - *Writing a proposal.*

October 25th, Friday - **Proposal due, in dropbox by 11:59 pm.**

*What is an Annotated Bibliography?*

Week 10: Annotated Bibliography

October 28th, Monday - *What are the parts of an annotated bibliography and how do they work together?*

October 30th, Wednesday - *What is a reputable source?*

November 1st, Friday - *How do you analyze a reputable source?*

Week 11: Writing an Annotated Bibliography

November 4th, Monday - *How do you analyze a reputable source?*

November 6th, Wednesday - *What does an effective annotated bibliography look like?*

November 8th, Friday - *What does an effective annotated bibliography look like?*

Week 12: Writing an Annotated Bibliography

November 11th, Monday - **Annotated Bibliography Rough Draft due in class.**

*Writing an annotated bibliography.*

November 13th, Wednesday - *Writing an annotated bibliography.*

November 15th, Friday - **Annotated Bibliography due, in dropbox by 11:59 pm.**

*What is a persuasive paper?*

Week 13: Persuasive Paper
November 18th, Monday - *What are the parts of a Persuasive paper and how do they work together?*

November 20th, Wednesday - *What are the parts of a Persuasive paper and how do they work together?*

November 22nd, Friday - *How do you write an effective thesis?*

**Week 14: Writing a Persuasive Paper**

November 25th, Monday - *How do you write an effective conclusion?*

November 27th, Wednesday - *How do you use rhetorical devices in your essay?*

November 29th, Friday - *How do you write an effective transitional sentence?*

**Week 15: Writing a Persuasive Paper**

December 2nd, Monday - *How do you use in-text citations?*

December 4th, Wednesday - **Persuasive Paper Rough Draft due in class.**

*How do you create a works cited page?*

December 6th, Friday - *How do you present a Persuasive paper?*

**Week 16: Presenting a Persuasive Paper**

December 9th, Monday - **Persuasive Paper due, in dropbox by 12 pm.**

*How do you present a Persuasive paper?*

December 11th, Wednesday - **Final Paper Presentations, in class.**

**Presenting a Persuasive paper.**

December 13th, Friday - **Final Paper Presentations, in class.**

**Presenting a Persuasive paper.**
INSTRUCTIONS FOR ASSIGNMENTS

Daily Ten-Minutes Free Writes (40pts)
Every day at the beginning of class you will free-write for ten minutes. A prompt will be available to you but you are allowed to write about anything you want, so long as you are writing for the full ten minutes.

The point of this daily exercise is to get you writing. Writing can be both a personal and academic activity. Throughout the course, the various activities you do will point back to the functions of writing in both of these areas.

In-Class Mini-Essays (70pts)
1.5-3 pages, hand-written.
You will be given a prompt on the day of the mini-essay. The prompt will be related to the material covered in class that week. You have the entire period to complete your essay.

You will write a structured essay with the following parts: introduction, thesis statement, at least one body paragraph, transitional sentences, and a conclusion.

You do not have to include a works cited page. You do not have to cite any sources, but you can.

At the end of the period, you will hand in your essay.

Essay Requirements

- 1.5-3 pages, handwritten or typed.
- If typed, use Times New Roman, 12pt font.
- Introductory sentence(s).
- A Thesis statement.
- At least 1 body paragraph.
- Transitional sentences between paragraphs.
- A conclusion.

Advice

This assignment is an opportunity for you to practice essay-writing and to practice the material we’ve covered in class. Don’t focus on writing the “perfect” essay, instead focus on exploring the ideas covered in class and the structure of the essay itself.

You will receive a grade on your mini-essay. However, there’s no need to worry or stress about your grade. If you are sincere in your attempt to write the essay and incorporate class material in
it, then you will receive a good score. The grade of your mini-essay is not as important as the feedback you receive and give about the writing process.

If you are concerned that you won’t finish the essay in time, write out an outline with all the “parts” of the essay and your general ideas. Then, fill in the outline as much as you can. I will count this as including all the necessary requirements.

**Group Assignments (70pts)**

In class, you will be doing a variety of informal group activities. Each activity will include specific instructions, such as writing group answers on a sheet of paper or formulating group answers to share with the class. Within groups, each member will have their own individual responsibilities. A student’s grade for a group activity will be decided based on their participation and completion of their individual task.

**Personal Narrative (60pts)**

Once you select your topic you will write a narrative essay that tells about your personal experience with that topic. A personal narrative is a story. It should include a beginning, middle, and end, specific descriptions, and a distinct voice.

Topic No-Nos:
- Unnecessarily graphic violence.
- Sexual encounters/exploits.
- Self-harm.

You do not have to include a works cited page. You do not have to cite any sources in this essay.

**Essay Requirements**

- 3 pages, typed 12pt font, Time New Roman, MLA format.
- 3-4 pages.
- A distinguishable plot with a beginning, middle, and end.
- A consistent narrative point of view, e.g. first person, second person, third person.
- Descriptive imagery and specific details.
- Distinct characters.

**Proposal (70pts)**

You will pick and begin researching the topic you want to write on for your final persuasive essay. Each assignment you do from now on will be leading up to the persuasive essay. The topic you pick should be an issue with many potential opinions and/or courses of
action. I encourage you to pick a topic that interests you because you will be working on this topic for the rest of the semester.

Instructions:

A proposal is a document that outlines the main argument of a larger paper. The proposal briefly touches on the big ideas and initial research. The proposal is not for in-depth analysis or heavy citing.

In your proposal, answer these questions about your topic:

- What is your topic and why does it interest you?
- What is your persuasive strategy and what points do you plan to make?
- How are you using the rhetorical triangle (audience, speaker, message) to persuade your reader?
- What rebuttals might you face in your research and your writing?

The paper is to be typed in MLA format, 12-pt. Font, Times New Roman, double-spaced. You will need a work cited page if you use in-text citations.

Essay Requirements:

1. Answer the three questions about your topic (above).
2. Typed in MLA format.
3. 1-2 pages.
4. Includes a Works Cited page if any sources are cited.

Annotated Bibliography (90pts)

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to sources used in a paper. Each citation is followed by a short (4 to 6 sentences) descriptive paragraph, called an annotation. The annotation tells the reader why a source is relevant to the paper.

Annotation for a cited source answers these questions:

- What is the main point of the article, book, document?
- Is it relevant to the paper you are writing?
- What was unique or particularly helpful about the source?

Essay Requirements:

1. 8-10 Annotations (about 4-5 pages).
2. MLA format, typed 12pt font, Times New Roman
3. Correctly cites all sources in MLA format.
4. Each annotation should answer the above question.
Persuasive Essay (100pts)

The persuasive essay is the culmination of the entire semester. A persuasive essay is essentially an argument taking a clear stance on a topic or issue and, using rhetorical devices, persuades the reader to view the topic a certain way.

Essay Requirements:
1. Typed, 12pt font, Times New Roman, MLA format
2. 4-6 pages.
4. In-text citations.
6. A conclusion.
7. A counter-argument.
8. Clear use of at least 3 different rhetorical devices.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory. You are tardy if you arrive after I’ve counted attendance. Three (3) tardies will count as one absence. Sleeping in class will be counted as an absence. You are allowed five (5) excused and/or unexcused absences without penalty to your grade. After the sixth absence, you will be docked one final letter grade. Students with more than seven (7) absences, whether excused or unexcused, who fail to drop the course will receive a final grade of F.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments turned in late will be docked five points. You have a 1 week from the due date to turn in the assignment for a late grade. After 1 week from the due date, each additional day delay will cost half a point on the grade of the assignment. If the assignment is never turned in it will be given a grade of zero.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

RULES:

- Raise your hand to speak, unless I specifically “open the floor for discussion or group work”.
This may seem elementary, but it isn’t. It is a technique that equalizes every voice in the classroom. Additionally, there will be open floor time almost every class. There will be plenty of discussion and conversation.

- **Do not complain or make negative comments about this classroom or anyone in this classroom.** If you have a concern, I would love to speak with you about it after class or during my office hours.

  *This rule is about respect. Respecting me and respecting the other people in the classroom. I am willing to hear your concerns and adjust to your feedback but know that you can trust what I have planned for this class.*

- **No phone use in class, period.**

  *It’s simple and easy. Put your phone away in your bag during class. There will be a few occasions where we will do in-class activities that require phones, at which time you are more than welcome to have your phone out. Laptops are allowed at any time, but please don’t be a distraction or I’ll ask you to use a pen and paper.*

- **Participate in class activities.**

  *In other words, humor me. Participating doesn’t always mean raising your hand to answer questions, but it does mean a readiness to answer, to work with others, and to complete assignments.*

**WITHHELD GRADES - SEMESTER 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.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Academic integrity is the 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. If you are caught cheating or plagiarizing in my class, my findings will be discussed with you to determine punishment, which might be giving you a failing grade.
To clarify, 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.

**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 for Policy E-46.

**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 accommodations 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/.

**AARC**
Writing tutors are available in the Academic Assistance and Research Center on the first floor of the library. Drop-in tutoring is offered as well. You can also make an appt. by calling 468-4108. To schedule a weekly appointment, visit sfasu.edu/aarc and sign up ASAP.