An Overview of the Course, Expectations, Assignments, and Objectives

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.

Essential Information
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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.
ENG 131 learning outcomes are the goals that students must meet as part of the Freshman Composition requirements, which include:

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.

Class Texts

Lumberjacks Write
The Well-Crafted Sentence: A Writer’s Guide to Style
You will also need a notebook
Grade Criteria:

Class Participation, Notebook, and Daily Work  25%
Exams and Quizzes  25%
Essays and Writings  50%

Grading Standard:

A: 90-100: 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: 80-89: 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: 70-79: 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: 60-69: 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: 0-59: 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.

Dates to Remember

Oct. 16   Midterm
Nov. 23-Dec. 2   Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 9   Finals Week
Course Policies

• Adults make arrangements.
• All final assignments are turned into Brightspace via Drop Box. They must be turned in as a .doc or docx file. Failure to format your assignments correctly will constitute a late submission.
• Drafts should be typed and brought to class on designated workshop days.
• Attendance, active participation, and preparation are expected.
• The official means of communication for the class are class meetings. If you miss class or come in late, it is your responsibility to find out from a classmate what material was covered or assigned. I post most assignments, on Brightspace.
• Be sure to check our Brightspace class page daily, as it is the secondary means of communication for this course. I will always respond if you e-mail me. If you do not hear back from me within 24 hours, I probably didn’t get your e-mail; please resend it. Don’t wait until the night before an assignment is due to e-mail me a question; I may not see it in time to respond.
• You can view your grades on the grades feature of Brightspace. You should check it after each assignment to ensure your grade was accurately scored and recorded and let me know immediately if there is a discrepancy. If you have a question about your grade, please wait until after you have had a chance to look at the assignment and my comments before making arrangements to come in and discuss it. Please keep all assignments until your final course grade is posted. All D2L questions or issues can be directed to OIT.
• If you finish an in-class activity quickly, do not just get up and leave. This will cause me to mark you as absent.
Attendance:
The attendance policy for this course is the official SFASU policy as stated at:

http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/class_attendance_excused_abs.asp.

In other words, regular and punctual attendance is expected for all classes, laboratories, and other activities for which a student is registered. Valid excuses are limited to health, religious observation, family emergencies, and participation in certain SFASU-sponsored events. Students are responsible for providing written documentation for EVERY absence, 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 for absences to a maximum of three weeks of a semester when the nature of the work missed permits. However, no absences beyond the six that may be excused will be excused, and no student shall be allowed to pass the course whose unexcused absences exceed three (3)—this is not a correspondence course! Whether an absence is excused or unexcused, or in the case of a late add, a student is still responsible for all course content and assignments. Note also that you must turn in both essays and take both exams to pass the course.

**Note regarding make-up and late work: Make-up tests and quizzes (which will be given only in the case of excused absences) must be taken during my office hours on your own initiative within one week of the absence, and they will be more challenging than the original versions. Late essays will lose one letter grade per business day of lateness. I will not accept the submission of material via e-mail without prior approval.

Academic Absences: If you are present in class but have failed to complete the previously assigned class work you will be considered academically absent. If you are physically in class but not participating you will be considered academically absent. Two academic absences will be recorded as one of your six allowable absences.

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 what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. 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.
Academic Integrity (A-9.1):  
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. 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. Plagiarism in this class results in an F for the semester grade. Please read the complete policy at:

http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp.

Withheld Grades Policy (A-54):  
The following is taken from SFASU’s Policy Manual (2012), “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.

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 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/.

Cell phones or other electronic devices are not permitted during class time. Students who violate this policy will be marked absent for the day.
Punctuality
Habitual lateness is unacceptable. Three tardies will be counted as one absence. Six tardies will be counted as two absences and could affect your grade. If there comes a time that you need to leave early, please speak to me prior to class.

Missed Class and Late Work
• All major essays are due to class on the date assigned in the course calendar.
• Final drafts must be submitted to D2L as a Word file, only.
• All assignments file submission should first contain your last name. Here is an example: Verhines Rhetorical Essay
• Under no circumstances should anything be turned in to the English Department office or left under my office door.
• Any papers submitted after the due date will receive a 10 point deduction per day, including weekends.
• Daily assignments completed in class cannot be made up. Class attendance is important.

Grading/Assignments
I will provide detailed descriptions of each assignment; but here are some general notes. All final drafts of your writing for this course should be typed and adhere to the rules of standard written English grammar, punctuation, spelling, and MLA formatting. This includes a MLA heading on your paper.:

• Failing to meet the minimum page count for any draft will have a significant negative impact on your grade for that assignment.
• All papers are submitted to Turn It In automatically. Please do not attempt to plagiarize, you will not be successful.
• I generally grade and return major assignments within two weeks after they have been submitted.

Formatting Guidelines
Unless an assignment specifies otherwise, these are the general formatting guidelines for papers produced for this class.
• Type your paper on a computer and print it out on standard, white 8.5 x 11-inch paper.
• Double-space the text of your paper and use a legible font (e.g. Times New Roman). Whatever font you choose, MLA recommends that the regular and italics type styles contrast enough that they are each distinct from one another. The font size should be 12 pt.
• Leave only one space after periods or other punctuation marks (unless otherwise prompted by your instructor).
• Set the margins of your document to 1 inch on all sides.
• Indent the first line of each paragraph one half-inch from the left margin. MLA recommends that you use the “Tab” key as opposed to pushing the space bar five times.
• Create a header that numbers all pages consecutively in the upper right-hand corner, one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin. (Note: Your instructor may ask that you omit the number on your first page. Always follow your instructor’s guidelines.)
• Use italics throughout your essay to indicate the titles of longer works and, only when absolutely necessary, provide emphasis.
Formatting the First Page of Your Paper

• Do not make a title page for your paper unless specifically requested.

• In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, list your name, your instructor's name, the course, and the date. Again, be sure to use double-spaced text.

• Double space again and center the title. Do not underline, italicize, or place your title in quotation marks. Write the title in Title Case (standard capitalization), not in all capital letters.

• Use quotation marks and/or italics when referring to other works in your title, just as you would in your text. For example: *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* as Morality Play; Human Weariness in "After Apple Picking"

• Double space between the title and the first line of the text.

• Create a header in the upper right-hand corner that includes your last name, followed by a space with a page number. Number all pages consecutively with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.), one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin. (Note: Your instructor or other readers may ask that you omit the last name/page number header on your first page. Always follow instructor guidelines.)