ENGLISH 131: Composition and Rhetoric

Course Policies and Grading Contract
ENG131.021 Spring 2019

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: MWF 11:00-12:00, TR 1:00-2:00, 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. 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.

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.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance is mandatory. You are expected to be in class. Keeping up with your attendance is your responsibility; don’t count on me to tell you when you’re slipping into failing territory.

Punctuality is expected. Because of the auto-locking doors, it’s impossible to come in late without disrupting class. **Once I have begun lecturing, I will not stop to open the door.** Be on time.

If you are sleeping in class, you are absent.

If you are using your phone, you are absent.

If you are wearing headphones/earbuds, you are absent.

If you are doing work for another class, or for some extracurricular purpose, you are absent.

Do not pack up until you are instructed to do so. It’s rude and distracting.
**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. Any 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.

**Check D2L/Brightspace regularly.** I often post announcements, reminders, due dates, scheduling details, and a wealth of other information using D2L’s news tool. If you e-mail me asking a question I’ve already answered in a D2L news item, don’t be surprised when I don’t reply.

**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 a variety of topics. 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. Additionally, all work submitted for this course must be written for this course. Work that has been submitted to another professor or teacher is not acceptable here.

If you plagiarize, you will almost certainly get caught. There are a wide range of potential penalties, but the minimum penalty for academic dishonesty is failure of the assignment with no possibility of revision, which will severely impact your final grade. In more egregious cases, you could fail the course. Incidents referred to your academic dean could result in expulsion from the university. **Do. Not. Plagiarize.**

**Assignment Submission:**

- Assignments will be submitted via the appropriate dropboxes on D2L.
- There will be two dates associated with each major assignment: a due date and a deadline. The due date, as the name suggests, is the date when the assignment is due.
The **deadline** is the point past which the assignment will no longer be accepted. Penalties will be assessed for papers submitted between the due date and deadline. **The deadline for EVERY assignment is three days past the due date; the exception is the final exam assignment, which cannot be submitted late for obvious reasons.**

- **Uploads must be in .doc or .docx format. Image uploads must be in .jpg or .png format.** Documents uploaded in other formats will not be accepted. **I cannot digitally mark .PDF files and I cannot open .pages files.**
- Regardless of whether you are in class on the date an assignment is due, it is your responsibility to upload the assignment on time.
- **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 **do not include the Works Cited page.**

**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 be returned.

**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** make certain reasonable concessions on a case-by-case basis, provided you come to be before the problem is beyond repair. Children make excuses; adults make arrangements. I cannot help you if you don’t ask.

**Extra Credit:** Extra credit opportunities may arise, but if so, will be at my discretion. Don’t count on extra credit opportunities to save your grade, and don’t ask for extra credit.

**Academic Integrity** (**A-9.I**)
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.

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/.

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.
Tentative Class Plan English 131 TR—Spring 2019

Unit 1: January 21- February 15

Introduction to course
Introduce response essays (IMPORTANT: These will be due throughout the semester prior to class discussions)
Introduce narrative essay

January 29 Last day to sign up for ZOOM meetings
January 31 Narrative submitted to teacher candidates
February 7 Narrative Essay draft due (peer workshop)
February 14 Narrative Essay due (final)

Unit 2: February 15 – March 22

Introduction to rhetoric; Pathos/Ethos/Logos
February 21: Introduce Rhetorical Analysis assignment
Thesis statements and points preview
The rhetorical situation
Audience
MEAL paragraphs

March 7 Rhetorical analysis draft due (peer workshop)
March 14 Rhetorical analysis due (final)

How to create a Works Cited page

March 18-22 - Spring Break

Unit 3: March 25 – April 30

Introduce final essay assignment and infographic assignment
Primary research: interviews, surveys, questionnaires
Persuasion mapping

April 18 Easter Holiday
Things to avoid in academic writing

April 30: Complaint/proposal essay draft due (peer workshop)
April 30: Complaint/Proposal Due on D2L no later than midnight

Final Unit April 30-May 15

Creating an infographic
May 6-10 Conferences—My office

May 14- Final Exam (Infographic Presentations) Wednesday, May 14, 8:00 – 10:00
Grading Contract

Basic Requirements:

- Attend class, complete homework and class assignments, adhere to course policies, and participate in the course as directed.

A

- Complete at least 90% of all homework, in-class assignments (including writing journals), and all major assignments.
- Write one additional assignment from the list of Optional Additional Assignments
- Perform at or above exceptional standard, as described in the Writing Standards Guidelines, on all assignments (before or after revision)
- Take a leadership position in class discussions\(^1\) on one or more occasions
- Provide thorough and thoughtful feedback during peer workshops
- Miss no more than 3 (three) class meetings\(^{ii}\)
- Attend one-on-one conference with the professor

B

- Complete at least 80% of all homework, in-class assignments (including writing journals), and all major assignments.
- Perform at acceptable standard, as described in the Writing Standards Guidelines, on all assignments (before or after revision)
- Take a participatory role in class discussions\(^{iii}\) regularly
- Provide thorough and thoughtful feedback during peer workshops
- Miss one workshop
- Miss 4 (four) class meetings\(^{ii}\)
- Attend one-on-one conference with the professor

C

- Complete at least 70% of all homework, in-class assignments (including writing journals), and all major assignments.
- Perform at acceptable standard on most major assignments, but below minimum standard, as described in the Writing Standards Guidelines, on one or two assignments (after revision opportunity)
- Take a participatory role in class discussions\(^{ii}\) occasionally
- Provide rushed or cursory feedback during peer workshops, or miss two workshops
- Miss 5 (five) class meetings\(^{ii}\)
- Fail to attend one-on-one conference with the professor
D

- Complete at least 60% of all homework, in-class assignments (including writing journals), and all major assignments.
- Perform below minimum standard, as described in the Writing Standards Guidelines, on more than two assignments (after revision opportunity)
- Take no role in class discussions
- Provide little to no feedback in peer workshops, or miss three workshops
- Miss 6 (six) class meetings
- Fail to attend one-on-one conference with the professor

F

- Miss more than 6 (six) class meetings
- Fail to submit one of the major assignments
- Perform below minimum standard, as described in the Writing Standards Guidelines, on all major assignments (after revision opportunity)
- Fail to participate in workshops
- Fail to submit requested revisions
- Other infractions to be assessed at the professor’s discretion (for example, plagiarism)
- Fail to attend one-on-one conference with the professor

Be aware that the state requires students who do not achieve a C or better to re-take the course before moving to English 132.

In the event a student’s performance falls between two categories, the final grade will be at the professor’s discretion, and will represent a holistic view of the student’s effort and investment.

Major Assignments:

- Personal Narrative Essay (4 pages minimum)
- 2X Three-Step Responses (2 page minimum)
- Rhetorical Analysis (3 pages minimum)
- Complaint and Proposal Essay (5 pages minimum)
- Infographic Presentation (Final Exam)

Optional Additional Assignments:

- Two additional Three-Step Responses (for a total of 4)
- A comparative rhetorical analysis
- An original short story connected in some way to one of the creative works on the semester agenda
# Writing Standards Guidelines

## Exceptional Standard

- Meets or exceeds assigned page count
- Grammatical issues do not impede clarity
- No more than five errors in grammar, punctuation, or spelling **total**
- Follows all instructions and guidelines provided for the assignment
- Correct formatting
- No quotes longer than 2 (two) lines
- Sophisticated word choices and language
- Appropriately formal tone
- No use of the word “you” or “I” (except where specifically authorized)

Drafts meeting this standard will be returned at the student’s request, and revision will be optional.

## Minimum Standard

- Short by **no more** than half a page
- One or two grammatical issues that impede clarity
- No more than two errors in grammar, punctuation, or spelling per page (average)
- 1 to 2 formatting errors
- No quotes longer than 2 (two) lines
- Mostly sophisticated word choices and language
- Appropriately formal or semi-formal tone
- No use of the word “you” or “I” except where specifically authorized
- No deviation from assignment guidelines

Drafts meeting this standard will be returned, and revision will be optional.

## Below Minimum Standard

- More than half a page short
- Three or more grammatical issues that impede clarity
- More than three errors in grammar, punctuation, or spelling per page (average)
- More than 2 formatting errors
- Any quote longer than 2 (two) lines
- Weak or incorrect word choices
- Inappropriate tone (informal, colloquial, slangy)
- Use of the word “I” or the word “you” where not specifically authorized
- Slight deviation from assignment guidelines

Drafts meeting this standard will be returned, and MUST be revised.
Unacceptable Standard (Papers will receive a 0 and revisions will not be accepted):

- Failure to meet assigned deadlines
- Plagiarism
- Missing Works Cited page (where applicable)
- Substantial deviation from assignment guidelines

I am open to the possibility of altering or adding to these guidelines, provided that students have a substantive, reasoned argument for the change, and provided the class is in majority agreement.

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i A leader in class discussion refers to any student who voluntarily offers thoughtful commentary pertaining to the topic at hand. This is not necessarily the person who is “right,” as our discussions often won’t result in distinctions between right and wrong; this also is not necessarily the student who speaks most.

Example: “I find it interesting that the fog rolls in just as the narrator takes the drugged soda from Dave. I think it’s symbolic of her confusion in the moment.”

ii Absences may be forgiven for university events, illness, or certain family emergencies, if documentation is provided. For purposes of this contract, arriving more than five minutes late counts as a half absence. Note also that a missed workshop will not count against you IF you provide documentation which forgives your absence on the day of workshop.

iii A participant in class discussion refers to any student who voluntarily offers thoughtful replies to commentary presented by others beyond simple agreement.

Example: “Yes, I agree about the fog, and you’ll notice that Trudy gets a weird feeling when she sees the cat is scratching in the litter box while Dave is in the kitchen, out of scene, like some part of her knows Dave is covering up something.”