Syllabus for English 1301: Rhetoric and Composition (Fall 2020)

**Instructor:** Billy Longino  
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**Office Hours:** Zoom Only  
T/TH 9:30 am – 12:00 pm

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**READ:** Masks (cloth face coverings) *must be worn over the nose and mouth at all times* in this class and appropriate physical distancing must be observed. Students not wearing a mask and/or not observing appropriate physical distancing will be asked to leave the class. All incidents of not wearing a mask and/or not observing appropriate physical distancing will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Students who are reported for multiple infractions of not wearing a mask and/or not observing appropriate physical distancing may be subject to disciplinary actions.  

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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 1302.

ENG 1301 “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.

In English 1301, you will study and practice the writing process and endeavor to acquire and further craft the skills necessary to actively engage with the various cultural institutions, whether political, economic, journalistic, or ones involving entertainment, through analytical reading and writing. Students will read selections of articles, essays, and short stories to expand their experience with the cultural process of
rhetoric. Demonstration of their understanding and acquisition of these skills will be assessed in the completion of four formal essays.

Textbooks

*Lumberjacks Write* (To be provided by instructor);

*Perfect English Grammar* by Grant Barrett;

*They Say / I say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing* (Fourth Edition) by Cathy Birkenstein and Gerald Graff;

*This is Not Propaganda* by Peter Pomerantsev;

Additional reading material will be provided by the instructor in print or pdf format.

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).

Assignments

The final grade for this course will be determined by arriving at the sum of the points for each of the major assignments for the class.

| Participation | 20 |
Participation Grade

Over the course of this semester, I will document student participation in class. Participation will depend upon the student’s timely completion of daily assignments and readings, participation in classroom discussions, and attentive engagement in class meetings.

Students’ participation will be affected by the following offenses:

- Being late to class without a “reasonable” excuse.
- Use of cellphone or other electronic device outside of allowed times.
- Not completing a reading.
- Not bringing a textbook to class when textbook is being used.
- Persistent refusal to participate in classroom discussions.

Discussion Board Posts

Throughout the semester, students will be required to post responses to readings on the Discussion Board on D2L.

Personal Narrative

In this essay, students will recount, in narrative form, an event from their lives in which a deeply held belief was proven to be incorrect.

Rhetorical Analysis

Through this essay, students will examine the rhetorical strategies employed in David Foster Wallace’s “Consider the Lobster.”

Critical Response/Personal Reflection

Students will critically respond to This is Not Propaganda by examining the events and activities described within the book in order to develop a personal reflection regarding their own participation or susceptibility to disinformation campaigns.
Guidelines for Written Essays

To receive a passing grade for written assignments in this class, students must carefully follow the guidelines provided hereafter. These guidelines are not provided as a suggestion but are absolutely required for every single major essay students complete in this course. There are no exceptions to these guidelines though additional guidelines will be provided in the specific prompts for each assignment. Not following these guidelines may result in a failing grade for the assignment. All essays must:

- be in essay form;
- meet the appropriate page length;
- be typed, not handwritten, in double-spaced MLA format, using Times New Roman 12-point font with 1 inch margins on all sides;
- have appropriate and complete headings;
- have an original title, not the title of another work or a general title such as the type of assignment;
- be submitted online through D2L by the due date (papers that are not turned in online will receive a 5% deduction for every business day they are late until after one week, at which point the paper will receive a zero);
- properly cite quotes, summaries, and sources.

Revisions

Students will be allowed one revision this semester from the first two major essays. The final essay is not revisable. Revisions offer students an opportunity to recover from a possibly grade-damaging paper; however, revisions will only be awarded sufficient points to raise their grade by one letter (that’s 10% of the grade). Revisions will only be allowed for papers that receive a C or below. Any paper that is plagiarized or was never turned in is not eligible for revision unless otherwise discussed. For a revision to count, the student must complete several things:

- Make corrections beyond just those marked on the original paper. What this means is the student sat down, read my comments, looked at what was marked, reread his or her paper, and understood what the errors were and how to fix them.
- Along with a revision, there must be a one-page explanation of the changes the student made and why he or she made those changes. This explanation needs to provide examples from his or her original graded paper to support the claim of understanding. No revision will be accepted without this page. This page must follow the same format as the original paper (MLA style).
- Because this is a revision, there should not be an abundance of grammar, spelling, or formatting
errors. Any revisions that still contain these types of errors will not improve the student’s grade but will burn his or her revision opportunity. Students should make the revision worth their time and mine.

- Students will need to see me within one day of receiving the original graded paper to inform me of their plans to revise, as well as confer with me on ways to improve their paper. This is not optional. Any student that does not meet with me, yet hands me a revision, will have it handed right back to them.

- Students will need to go to the AARC at least once to have a tutor look at their revision. It would be in their best interest to go with specific questions and concerns, as well as the paper prompt. If they do not understand why they received the grade they did, the AARC is not going to help them in that way. Students need to be cognizant of their writing abilities and be able to see what they are doing and not doing to make the visit to the AARC effective. If they go with generalities, the tutors will focus on the areas they think needs the most work, which may not be what the student is looking for. The AARC visit is not optional.

- The original graded copy must be turned in with the revision. If I do not receive this copy, I will not grade the revision.

- The revision must be submitted online through D2L. There will be a separate link for revisions. Again, if it is not turned in online by the time the revision is due, I will not accept it.

Attendance & Punctuality

Attendance is required for this class. Students will not have the necessary information to successfully complete assignments in the class if they are not present. Students are allowed 3 absences in this class without penalty. Between 4 and 6 absences will result in the loss of five points from their final grade while 7 – 9 absences will result in a loss of ten points and 10 or more absences result in a failing grade for the class. If students are absent beyond their 3rd absence and have a “valid” excuse for being absent, I will excuse it, and it will not be counted toward the total. Validity is determined by me if the excuse doesn’t fit within university policy on guidelines for an excused absence—I understand that life can be stressful, and things come up.

Additionally, being late to class will be taken very seriously. Punctuality and personal responsibility is a skill that students must develop to be successful in the classroom and beyond. If students are not present when I take roll for the class, they will be counted absent. But if something happened that made getting to class on time difficult, students should let me know at the end of class. I can be fairly lenient, at times. Also, leaving class early, without an emergency or getting my prior acknowledgment, will result in an absence.
Whether an absence is excused or not, students are responsible for any coursework or content that was presented that day in class. Students should ask their classmates or check the class’s D2L site to receive any missed assignments or material.

**Late Work**
If a student does not have a valid excuse for an absence, I will not repeat material from the class which the student missed. Students cannot make up missed in-class activities unless they have a documented, excused absence. See SFA policy for what constitutes an excused absence. **If students are unable to turn in a major paper on time, they must make arrangements with me prior to the class meeting in which the paper is due**, and I must determine that the excuse for not being able to do so is valid. Otherwise, papers will be accepted for up to one week after the due date, but the grade for the paper will be reduced by ten percent of its total worth in points **per business day that it is late**. The papers must be turned into BOTH Dropbox and me in paper form at the beginning of class on the due date. If either of these is not turned on time the paper is considered late.

**Grades**
For each assignment a grade will be calculated according to the number of points it is worth. For some papers I will use a 10 point scale while on others I will use a 20 point scale. According to university policy, final grades for the course will consist of a letter grade only (no plus or minus). Here is a general description of my letter grades:

**A:** 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:** 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: 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: 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: 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.

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.

Note-taking
You should always take notes in class. This gives you a record of what occurred that day, helps you internalize the material, and provides you with information that you may be able to use in your papers.

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.

If plagiarism is discovered on a student’s assignment, no credit will be given for the assignment unless the student and I reach an agreement for revision of the offending essay. Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

**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/.

**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.

**AARC**
Writing tutors are available in the Academic Assistance and Research Center on the first floor of the library. Drop-in tutoring is offered Mon.-Thurs from 1 to 8 p.m and on Sunday afternoons. You can also make an appt. by calling 468-4108.

**Course Calendar**
Please note that the following schedule is tentative and subject to change at a moment’s notice. No due dates for essays will be moved up to an earlier date. I will attempt to keep changes to a minimum, but
students must be aware that the course is a living thing subject to unpredictable occurrences.

**COHORTS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING:** Due to social distancing guidelines, students will not be meeting in-class every day this semester; instead, they will meet in person on certain days as assigned by their cohorts. Cohort 1 will meet in person on Mondays and Wednesdays, Cohort 2 will meet in person on Wednesdays and Fridays, and Cohort 3 will meet in person on Mondays and Fridays. The instructor will determine the makeup of the cohorts; they will not be altered.

**Monday Aug 24 – Zoom Only:** Class introduction and syllabus review.

**Homework:** Introduce yourself to class in Discussion Board on D2L and read “This is Water” by David Foster Wallace.

**Wednesday Aug 26 – Zoom Only:** Discussion of reading and Essay 1 Prompt.

**Homework:** Read “Mother Rage: Theory and Practice” by Anne Lamott.

**Friday Aug 28 – Zoom Only:** Discussion of reading and personal narratives.

**Homework:** Read “My Father’s Brain” by Jonathan Franzen and respond to Discussion Board.

**Monday Aug 31** – Discussion of reading.

**Homework:** Read “My Fake Job” by Rodney Rothman and respond to Discussion Board.

**Wednesday Sept 2** – Discussion of reading.

**Homework:** Read “Shitty First Drafts” by Anne Lamott and respond to Discussion Board.

**Friday Sept 4** – Discussion of writing process. Sign up for Zoom conferences.

**Homework:** Construct outlines for Essay 1 following narrative structures discussed in class.

**Monday Sept 7** – Zoom conferences. No class.

**Wednesday Sept 9** – Zoom conferences. No class.

**Friday Sept 11** – Zoom conferences. No class.

**Homework:** Finish final drafts of Essay 1.

**Monday Sept 14 – Essay 1 due.** Introduction to rhetoric.

**Homework:** Begin reading *This is Not Propaganda* by Peter Pomerantsev. Complete reading by Monday, Nov. 9.

**Wednesday Sept 16** – Subjectivity/Objectivity lecture.

**Friday Sept 18** – Confirmation bias lecture.

**Homework:** Read the “Violence of the Lambs” by John Jeremiah Sullivan and respond to
Monday Sept 21 – Discussion of reading.

**Homework:** Read presidential speeches and respond to Discussion Board.

Wednesday Sept 23 – Discussion of presidential speeches.

Friday Sept 25 – Discussion of Essay 2 prompt.

**Homework:** Read “Consider the Lobster” by David Foster Wallace and respond to Discussion Board.

Monday Sept 28 – Discussion of rhetoric in “Consider the Lobster.”

**Homework:** Identify rhetorical appeals within “Consider the Lobster.”

Wednesday Sept 30 – Grammar lecture.

**Homework:** Begin work on Essay 2.

Friday Oct 2 – MLA lecture.

**Homework:** Continue work on Essay 2.


Wednesday Oct 7 – Zoom workshops for Essay 2.

Friday Oct 9 – Zoom workshops for Essay 2.

Monday Oct 12 – **Essay 2 due.** Begin revision exercise.

Wednesday Oct 14 – Continue revision exercise.

Friday Oct 16 – Continue revision exercise. **Essay 2 revisions due.**

**Homework:** Read “The Paranoid Style in American Politics” by Richard Hofstadter.

Monday Oct 19 – Discussion of reading.

**Homework:** Read “The Conspiracy Theories that Fueled the Civil War” by Annika Neklason.

Wednesday Oct 21 – Discussion of reading.

**Homework:** Read “The Prophecies of Q” by Adrienne LaFrance.

Friday Oct 23 – Discussion of reading.

**Homework:** Read “Chapter 1: Introduction to Psychological Warfare” from partially declassified and “sanitized” CIA document *The Nature of Psychological Warfare.*

Monday Oct 26 – Discussion of reading.
Wednesday Oct 28 – Discussion of Essay 3 prompt.
Friday Oct 30 – Discussion of personal experiences with disinformation.
   **Homework:** Find an example of disinformation you have been fooled by.

Monday Nov 2 – Discussion of how to identify disinformation and the rhetoric of disinformation.
Wednesday Nov 4 – Logical Fallacies lecture.
Friday Nov 6 – Strategies for critical engagement with sources.

Monday Nov 9 – Discussion of *This is Not Propaganda.*
Wednesday Nov 11 – Discussion of *This is Not Propaganda.*
Friday Nov 13 – Discussion of *This is Not Propaganda.*
   **Homework:** Outline third essay.

Monday Nov 16 – Outline workshop.
Wednesday Nov 18 – Introduction to synthesis.
Friday Nov 20 – Second grammar lecture.

**Thanksgiving Break**

Wednesday Dec 2 – Zoom workshops Essay 3.
Friday Dec 4 – Zoom workshops for Essay 3.

**Finals Week** – Essay 3 due.