Composition 1

English 1301-039 Rhetoric and Composition
Department of English & Creative Writing

Class meeting time: MWF 11:00 – 11:50 a.m.
Room: Ferguson 184

Contact Information:
Name: Matthew K. Ham
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(All email contact must be conducted through the mySFA Outlook portal per university policy.)
Office: Ferguson 267
Office Hours: I will open a Zoom meeting on MWF 12:00-12:30 for anyone who wants to drop in with questions, and I will send everyone a Zoom invite and password that day in class. My office/hallway is pretty cramped, so it is best if we avoid face-to-face meetings in my office. If anyone needs to meet outside of that time, please don’t hesitate to contact me for an appointment.

Course Description

SFA Official Description: 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.

My off-the-record pitch for the class: This course will be foundational to our writing lives—as undergrad researchers and beyond. To ensure that we have all the tools we need, we will take a close look at the writing process and learn how to use it to communicate our thoughts with maximum impact. We will analyze a variety of genres and learn to identify, write about, and discuss the rhetorical tools that others use to communicate their ideas, so that we can use those tools to elevate our own writing.

Program Learning 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.

The following are the core objectives addressed by this course:
♦ Critical Thinking Skills: To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.

♦ Communication Skills: To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas though written, oral, and visual communication.

♦ Teamwork: To include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.

♦ Personal Responsibility: To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.

**Student Learning Outcome**

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).

**Text and Materials**

♦ *Writing Spaces* (link on D2L)
♦ Various readings posted on D2L
♦ Notebook or journal to be used in every class session
♦ Access to computer and printer
† An accordion folder in which you will collect your work, to be turned in as a final portfolio as part of your final grade

**Course Requirements and Assignments**

**Participation—15%:** Class discussion, group discussion, group writing, and group workshops are all designed to help us identify and put to use the tools discussed above (see: Course Description) and participation will assist us in our successful demonstration (in the form of major assignments) of everything we’ve learned. Your participation grade will consist of in-class exercises as follows:

† **Attendance** (1/3 of your participation grade): We will be working together quite a bit in this class. Since this is a hybrid class, attendance will include both Zoom and face to face class sessions. **Attending every class session will give you the best chance to succeed**—but, life happens. Technically, you can miss 3 classes before it begins to have a negative impact on your grade but, again, that does not account for the knowledge-gaps that may occur if you miss an important discussion or group activity. If you have to miss a class, you are expected to **exercise your communication skills by sending me a professional email excusing yourself and contacting a fellow classmate to get caught up on anything you may have missed.** This practice is vital if you want to succeed throughout your college career.

† **Journal/D2L Discussions** (1/3 of your participation grade): Since we will be unable to have full-class meetings and discussions, discussion posts conducted through our class D2L page will be an important part of your participation grade. Failing to participate in our online discussions will negatively impact your grade. In our journals we will record unfiltered reactions to assignments, readings, workshops, and exercises in preparation for in-class and online discussion. Daily entries should be dated (don’t worry, I’ll remind you). I may ask you to share snapshots of journal entries via email as part of your mid-term and final grades. They will not be graded on grammar and spelling. The journal is a safe-space for your writing and a stress-free way to earn some credit for the class.

† **Online Workshops** (1/3 of your participation grade): Group workshops will be an excellent way for us to receive assistance from our peers on the major writing assignments. You will submit your drafts through D2L or via email (we will discuss what method will work best for the class), and they will be reviewed by your peers who will then offer suggestions and **constructive** criticism to help you improve your work in future drafts.

**Rough drafts—20% (5% each):** For each of the four major assignments, you will submit an electronic copy of your rough draft (via e-mail) **before group workshop.** This lets me review your work so that you can receive credit and lets me bring to your attention any pitfalls that your peers may fail to identify. They will be graded as **rough drafts,** so you will not be penalized if there are grammar and spelling issues to be ironed out, but keep in mind that the closer you can get to a well-polished draft, the less work that will be required to produce a solid final draft.
Major Assignments—60% (15% each): Each of the four major assignment will be submitted online the day the assignment is due. Your online submission will be checked for plagiarism through Turnitin.com. This helps us to avoid temptation—we’ve all been in a desperate crunch that made us look for an easy way out—but also brings to our attention any dangerous similarities between our work and the work of others. Your essays should be written in MLA format (which we will discuss at length) with a 12 pt. Times New Roman font, double spaced. You will receive detailed handouts outlining each assignment, but each is described briefly below:

- **Essay 1: This I believe** (3-4 pages)
- **Essay 2: They Say/I Say** (4-5 pages)
- **Essay 3: Compare and Contrast** (4-5 pages)
- **Essay 4: Research Synthesis and Argument: Putting it all together and arguing our conclusions** (5 pages)
- **Final—5%**: For the final, you will write an evaluation of your growth in this class. Having prepared by reviewing the work in your portfolio—which we will collect on D2L throughout the semester. You will assess the ways in which your writing and your evaluation of information has evolved over the course of the class.

**Grading Guidelines**

- **A Paper (90-100)**: A paper of this level meets all of the assignment’s requirements and denotes key understanding of its genre and content. The information is well-ordered and effectively conveyed, with no (or minimal) errors in spelling, grammar, and formatting.
- **B Paper (80-89)**: A paper of this level meets the assigned requirements and denotes an understanding of its genre and content. The information is clear and orderly, but may contain more noticeable issues in style, grammar, or formatting.
- **C Paper (70-79)**: A paper of this level meets the basic requirements of the assignment. There may be a slight misunderstanding of its genre and content or a failure to order the information in a way that makes its meaning clear. The writing is average and may contain frequent errors.
- **D Paper (60-69)**: A paper of this level fails to meet some of the basic requirements of the assignment (not meeting the page count requirement, for instance, when the inclusion of extra content would have better developed the main ideas of the essay) and/or shows a failure to grasp the basic tools provided by the class (such as rhetorical/genre analysis). The writing is slightly below average and likely has numerous errors in grammar, spelling, and formatting.
- **F Paper (0-59)**: A paper of this level does not meet any of the assignment’s requirements and denotes no understanding of its genre and content. The writing is below average, unprofessional, and contains frequent errors or is completely illegible.

You will always be given the opportunity to improve the grade of a written assignment by making further edits and proving an increased efficiency in your ability to organize and clarify your thoughts. An improved grade is not guaranteed, but we will discuss the best ways to ensure
an improvement in your grade (mainly, it should be obvious that you reviewed my notes on your returned assignment and made all of the improvements that I suggested).

**Late Work**

Late work will only be accepted provided that you have exercised good communication skills as outlined above (see: Attendance). If you have not communicated with me, I will be unable to accept late work. This being said, there are exceptions to every rule. The key, again, is to communicate with me as soon as you can to make me aware of your situation. If you give me a verbal excuse in class, I am going to insist that you send me an email, because I will forget our conversation. **A late assignment will receive a 10-point grade reduction for every day that it is late.**

Extensions may be negotiated (again, communication is key) for medical reasons or circumstances that are legitimately beyond your control.

**In-Class Policies**

SFA Face-Covering Policy: 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 Community Standards. 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.

- **THE MOST IMPORTANT RULE:** Be respectful and constructive in your interactions with others. My classroom is a safe place for the free exchange of ideas. If you feel too strongly about a topic to participate calmly in the discussion, you will not be penalized for excusing yourself from that discussion—we all have our triggers. This also applies to group discussions and group workshops. We will discuss guidelines for appropriate workshop interactions when the time comes.
- Food and drinks are fine as long as you eat and drink responsibly and with consideration for me and your classmates (nothing loud or pungent enough to be a distraction, please).
- I will never scroll through my phone when you are talking and I expect you to extend the same consideration to me and your classmates. I may give you opportunities to use or check your phone in class but, for the most part, you should keep it out of sight to avoid looking at it out of habit.
- **Zoom etiquette:** Please strive for professionalism when attending Zoom class meetings. I understand that many of you are in dorms and are limited on space, so I understand that you may have to log in from locations that are less than ideal. However, you should always appear in our meetings as you would in our face to face class—dressed in an appropriate manner and ready with any materials you may need for the class (pen, notebook/journal, readings to be discussed either printed out or open on your desktop). Please be considerate of the class and keep outside activities/conversations to a
minimum. You should give our sessions your full attention as you would in any face-to-face meeting.

**Course Calendar**

**August 24:** Class begins

**September 11:** Rough draft, essay 1

**September 18:** Final draft, essay 1

**October 2:** Rough draft, essay 2

**October 9:** Final draft, essay 2

**October 23:** Rough draft, essay 3

**October 30:** Final draft, essay 3

**November 20:** Rough draft, essay 4

**November 21-29:** Thanksgiving Break, no class

**December 7:** Final class day—final draft of essay 4 and final exam

**Student Resources**

**AARC:** The Academic Assistance and Resource Center is an award-winning program that provides free peer tutoring for many entry-level courses. The AARC transforms the way students learn through online resources, on-call tutoring at walk-in tables, 1:1 appointments, online writing lab, and student instructor reviews and learning teams both led by students who have successfully completed the course. We make it easy for you to get the help you need!

Tutors can guide writers on specific kinds of sentence level support and overall essay coherence by offering suggestions that do the following:

- *clarify* grammar rules,
- *explain* writing conventions,
- *provide* samples of writing that exemplify the topic being discussed,
- and *guide* writers as they revise and edit their own sentences.

**Hours of Operation:**

- **1:1 appointments:** Semester long and one time only appointments are available. Check the AARC website to sign up.
• Virtual Walk-in Table VIA Zoom: An AARC tutor is available to chat through a Zoom online meeting room from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 1-5 p.m. on Sunday. Visit the AARC Tutoring Services page for the registration link.

• Walk-in Tables: Available 1 to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

• Online Writing Lab (OWL): Log in to your Brightspace by D2L account and view your list of ongoing courses for more information.

♦ OWL: For a personalized overview of any paper for any class, submit your paper to the Online Writing Lab OWL in D2L for quick online feedback. Writing Tutors will check for basic paper structure and grammar to identify types of errors. Allow 48 hours for response. [http://www.sfasu.edu/sites/default/files/2018-03/owl-how-to-use.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/sites/default/files/2018-03/owl-how-to-use.pdf)

♦ Contact: 936.468.4108, aarc@sfasu.edu

Health Clinic: SFA’s health clinic offers a full range of medical services (checkups, immunizations, STI testing, etc.). Appointments are required for most visits and usually available same-day if you call early (8 to 8:30 a.m.) or next day. Urgent walk-in appointments are available for minor injuries and asthmatic or allergic reactions. [http://www.sfasu.edu/life-at-sfa/health-safety/health-clinic](http://www.sfasu.edu/life-at-sfa/health-safety/health-clinic)

♦ Contact: 936.468.4008, healthservices@sfasu.edu

Counseling Services: Counseling Services assists SFA students in overcoming obstacles to their personal and academic goals. They offer both individual and group counseling. [http://www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices/182.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices/182.asp)

♦ Contact: 936.468.2401, counseling@sfasu.edu

Lumberjack Cares: SFA 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. SFA 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. [http://www.sfasu.edu/lumberjacks-care/](http://www.sfasu.edu/lumberjacks-care/)

**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.

Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

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