ENG 1301.044: Rhetoric and Composition: Entering Pop Culture Debates

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.

Superhero battles, YouTubers, football tribes, and romcoms have seeped into our everyday communication to such an extent that they have become an important tool for forming connections with others and understanding our own values. We are all fanboys and fangirls of something, whether it be Tony Stark or Star Trek. The importance that pop culture holds in both traditional and new media, the billions of dollars it creates in profits every year, and unique place it occupies in human hearts makes it a critically important and fascinating field of study. Although this course will not attempt to serve as an introduction to pop culture studies, it employs the many conversations, debates, and controversies surrounding pop culture texts as a means of practicing skills essential to good writing, including close reading, analysis, synthesis, and sound logic.

Required Texts:


Course Resources:

Hollis Thompson  
Department of English and Creative Writing  
thompsonhc@jacks.sfasu.edu  
Office: Ferguson 281  
Office Hours: T/TH 1-2:00 pm  
Classroom: Ferguson 381  
Class time: T/TH 9:30am-10:45am  
AARC  
First floor, Steen Library  
http://library.sfasu.edu/aarc/  
936-468-4108
Tentative Course Calendar:

**Note:** This is going to be a very difficult semester. This calendar is highly subject to change and should be considered “high flex.” I reserve the right to change this Course Calendar throughout the semester in order to meet the needs of students, university safety requirements, and the availability of technology.

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Homework Due</th>
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<td>Aug. 25th</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 27th</td>
<td>Why are we here? Why does composition matter?</td>
<td>Journal notes on <em>They Say/I Say</em> Introduction, pp. 1-18</td>
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<td><strong>Read Coordinating Conjunction Section of <em>English Simplified</em></strong></td>
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<td><strong>Grammar Quiz: Conjunctions—coordinating</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 1st</td>
<td>The Rhetorical Triangle and the Rhetorical Appeals</td>
<td>Journal notes on <em>They Say/I Say</em> Chapter 1, pp. 19-29</td>
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<td><strong>Read Subordinating Conjunctions Section of <em>English Simplified</em></strong></td>
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<td><strong>Grammar Quiz: Conjunctions—subordinating</strong></td>
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<td>Sept. 3rd</td>
<td>Intro to Summary</td>
<td>Journal notes on <em>They Say/I Say</em> Chapter 2, pp. 30-42</td>
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<td><strong>Read Correlative Conjunctions Section of <em>English Simplified</em></strong></td>
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<td><strong>Grammar Quiz: Conjunctions—correlative</strong></td>
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<td>Sept. 8th</td>
<td>The Importance of Listening</td>
<td><strong>Read Comma Section of <em>English Simplified</em></strong></td>
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<td><strong>Grammar Quiz: Commas for Conjunctions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 10th</td>
<td>Practice with Summary</td>
<td>Complete Discussion Post 1 by midnight</td>
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<td>Sept. 15th</td>
<td>Hot-spotting workshop</td>
<td><strong>Summary Essay Draft Due</strong></td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Additional Information</td>
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<td>Sept. 17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Listening Even When You Disagree</td>
<td>Summary Essay Final Draft Due</td>
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<td>Sept. 22&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Crafting Quotations</td>
<td>Read Quotation Marks Section of <em>English Simplified</em> Grammar Quiz: Quotation Marks</td>
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<td>Sept. 24&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>The Ethics of Quotation</td>
<td>Read Semicolon Section of <em>English Simplified</em> Grammar Quiz: Semicolons</td>
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<td>Sept. 29&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Intro to MLA Citation</td>
<td>Read Apostrophe Section of <em>English Simplified</em> Grammar Quiz: Apostrophes</td>
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<td>Oct. 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>The Rhetorical Analysis Assignment</td>
<td>Journal notes on <em>They Say/I Say</em> Chapter 14, pp. 176-186 Read Titles Section of <em>English Simplified</em> Grammar Quiz: Titles</td>
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<td>Oct. 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>What are Authors Responding to?</td>
<td>Discussion Post 2 due by midnight</td>
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<td>Oct. 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Peer Review Swap</td>
<td>Rhetorical Analysis essay draft due</td>
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<td>Oct. 13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Class Canceled for Instructor ZOOM Conferences</td>
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<td>Oct. 15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>The Film Review Assignment</td>
<td>Rhetorical Analysis essay final draft due</td>
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<td>Oct. 20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Responding Thoughtfully</td>
<td>Journal notes on <em>They Say/I Say</em> Chapter 4, pp. 53-66 Read Colon Section of <em>English Simplified</em> Grammar Quiz: Colons</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>Oct. 22nd</td>
<td>Finding the Middle Ground</td>
<td>Journal notes on <em>They Say/I Say</em> Chapter 8, pp. 101-116</td>
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<td><strong>Discussion Post 3 due by midnight</strong></td>
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<td>Oct. 27th</td>
<td>Finding Your Voice</td>
<td>Journal notes on <em>They Say/I Say</em> Chapter 9, pp. 117-130</td>
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<td><strong>Read Parenthesis Section of English Simplified</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Grammar Quiz: Parenthesis</strong></td>
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<td>Oct. 29th</td>
<td>Peer Review Swap for Content</td>
<td>Film Review 2-page draft due</td>
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<td>Nov. 3rd</td>
<td>Peer Swap for Editing</td>
<td>Film Review 4-page draft two due</td>
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<td>Nov. 5th</td>
<td>The Persuasive Proposal Assignment</td>
<td>Film Review final draft due</td>
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<td>Nov. 10th</td>
<td>Distinguishing Your Voice</td>
<td>Journal notes on <em>They Say/I Say</em> Chapter 5, pp. 67-76</td>
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<td><strong>Read Capitalization Section of English Simplified</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Grammar Quiz: Capitalization</strong></td>
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<td>Nov. 12th</td>
<td>Engaging with Alternative Perspectives</td>
<td>Journal notes on <em>They Say/I Say</em> Chapter 6, pp. 77-90</td>
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<td>Nov. 17th</td>
<td>Making the Reader Care</td>
<td>Journal notes on <em>They Say/I Say</em> Chapter 7, pp. 91-100</td>
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<td>Nov. 19th</td>
<td>Peer Review Workshop for Argument</td>
<td><strong>Persuasive Proposal Essay draft one due</strong></td>
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<td>Nov. 24th</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break</td>
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<td>Nov. 26th</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 1st</td>
<td>Peer Review Swap for Editing</td>
<td><strong>Persuasive Proposal Essay draft two due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 3rd</td>
<td><strong>Instructor ZOOM Conferences</strong></td>
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<td>De. 8th</td>
<td>ZOOM Session: Concluding Thoughts</td>
<td><strong>Persuasive Proposal Essay final draft due</strong></td>
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<td>Dec. 10th</td>
<td>ZOOM Session: Final Poster Presentations</td>
<td><strong>Final Poster Presentations Due</strong></td>
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Course Requirements:

1. Reading Journal
   Each student will write a brief question or note for each assigned chapter of *They Say/I Say*. Students should keep these notes in a journal. Students will bring this journal to class and present the notes on each due date. Each journal entry will be worth **2 points**, with **21 total points possible** for presenting every entry.

2. Discussion Posts on D2L
   In class, we will periodically conduct writing activities that relate to some topic of class discussion or your writing process. Students will have until midnight on the day of the class session which they attend to turn in each activity as a discussion post on D2L. All posts will be collectively worth **20 possible points**.

3. Grammar Quizzes
   Each quiz will cover an element of grammar, mechanics, or punctuation and will require students to educate themselves on the topics using the *English Simplified* book. These quizzes will be brief, and students will be allowed three attempts on each quiz. The quizzes are collectively worth a total of **30 possible points**.

4. Summary Essay
   This 1-1 ½-page essay will require students to accurately summarize the thesis and main arguments of one source on a topic within pop culture. This assignment is worth a total of **40 possible points**.

5. Rhetorical Analysis essay
   This 2-3-page paper will require students to apply their new knowledge of writing and argument to analysis of a YouTube video essay that addresses prevalent issues within Pop Culture. This assignment is worth a total of **50 possible points**.

6. Film Review Essay
   This 4-5-page paper will require students to summarize a cultural conversation about a film, synthesize the views of two opposing reviewers, and make an argument about the film’s true nature. The assignment is worth a total of **60 possible points**.

7. Persuasive Proposal Essay
   This 6-8-page paper will require students to make a proposal that argues for the benefit of enacting a creative change within a pop culture text or institution. The assignment is worth a total of **70 possible points**.

8. Final Poster Presentation
   For the final, students will rework their persuasive proposal into a poster-presentation. They will display and explain their poster during the final session. The assignment is worth a total of **40 possible points**.

Total Possible Points: 331
Grading: Think of the grading points for assignments like experience points (EXP) in a video game. Everyone starts with 0, and you must complete tasks in order to gain points. The reading notecards are like low-level challenges that help you gain basic amounts of EXP. The major papers and presentations are like video games bosses which require more skills in order to defeat and reward victory with much higher amounts of EXP. After gaining a certain number of points, you will “level up” in the class. The levels for the class are as follows:

Level 1: Chiseler (0-83 Points) (F)
Level 2: Scribbler (84-168 Points) (F)
Level 3: Typist (169-251 Points) (F-C)
Level 4: Writer (252-331 Points) (C-A)

Each time ten students level-up, I will host a ZOOM livestream where I will react to a movie or pilot episode of a television show of the students’ choice.

For each major assignment, I will provide a printed description of the rubric that I will use to grade the paper/presentation. All grades will reflect my judgement of the extent to which the paper met the requirements of the assignment rubric. If a paper receives the full number of possible points for the assignment, the paper will have received an “A.” Lower scores will equate to lower letter grades (see the general rubric below). All final grades will be posted on D2L and display a letter grade.

Each student may turn in one late paper with no penalties. If you miss a due date, you should turn in a completed copy of your paper within a week of the original due date. I will accept the paper and will never bring up the incident again. However, once a student has turned in one such late paper, the student can never turn in another late assignment. Any other failure to meet a due date will result in a 0 for that assignment.

Course Attendance:
ALL STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND CLASS EITHER IN PERSON OR THROUGH ZOOM FOR EVERY SCHEDULED SESSION.

HOWEVER, for emergencies or sick days, a student may miss a total of 6 class sessions. After missing 7 CLASS SESSIONS, students will automatically fail this course. Students should inform the instructor in advance about any emergencies that would require them to exceed this number of absences. Excused absences will be given at the instructor’s sole discretion and only in the case of extreme circumstances or legitimate academic events.

Writing Groups:
Each student has been assigned to a writing group. These groups consist of five students who will find a common pop culture interest (such as Star Wars, Marvel, Fortnite, or the National Football League) together. These groups will critique each member’s paper during peer-review swaps and perform other tasks in various group activities throughout the semester. Although you are not required to meet with your group outside of class, you may find that your fellow group members can form a good support-network and further help you revise drafts and survive the course.
General Education Core Curriculum Objectives:
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 131 Student 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).

Credit Hour Justification:
ENGL 1301 “Rhetoric and Composition” (3 credits) typically meets three times each week in 50-minute segments or twice each week in 75-minute segments for 15 weeks, and also meets for a 2-hour final examination. Students have weekly topical, non-fiction reading assignments of 25 pages or more and are expected to write/provide response to these readings; in addition, student will write five essays in various genres (for a total of 25 or more written pages per semester) which engage the topics of the readings. They will also present to the class a final project which includes a written paper and a visual component; this project integrates at least five of the readings of the semester and three more sources which they will have gathered through research. These activities average at a minimum 6 hours of work each week to prepare outside of classroom hours.

COURSE POLICIES
Classroom Etiquette: I will treat all students as responsible adults. Please show the same courtesy to all other students. I believe in free speech, and I will not shut you down or shame you for expressing a controversial belief. I will not, however, allow any student to belittle, bully, or insult a classmate. I allow food and drink in my classes, but do not do anything that will make yourself an obstruction to class (such as playing music or a video on an electronic device). In general, allow the golden rule of “do unto others as you would have them do to you” to guide your behavior in class. I reserve the right to expel any student who violates these rules from the class session.

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

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 Policy E-46. For more information on Title IX and sexual discrimination or to file a report, contact Title IX Lumberjacks Care at titleIX@sfasu.edu or (936) 468-8292.

Withheld 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.

Visit the SFA Academic Assistance and Resource Center (AARC)!

The AARC provides a variety of free academic support programs for students at SFA. Our services include 1:1 appointments, walk-in tables, online tutoring (through Zoom), learning teams, and SI.
Contact information:
Phone: 936-468-4108
Email: aarc@sfasu.edu
In-person: Monday-Thursday 8 a.m.-7 p.m. First floor Ralph W. Steen Library
For more information about the services provided, visit us on the web: sfasu.edu/aarc

Accommodations: 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/.

D2L Technical Support: For D2L technical support, contact student support in the Office of Instructional Technology (OIT) at d2l.sfasu.edu or 936-468-1919. If you call after regular business hours or on a weekend, please leave a voicemail.

General Technical Support: For general computer support (not related to D2L), contact the Technical Support Center (TSC) at 936-468-4357 or at helpdesk@sfasu.edu. To learn more about using D2L, visit SFA ONLINE at http://sfaonline.sfasu.edu, where you will find written instructions and video tutorials.

Counseling Services: Counseling Services is a free service offered to SFASU students; they offer one-on-one counseling sessions. If you have something personal that is bothering you and would like to speak to a licensed counselor, you can call (936) 468-2401.

Masks: 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.
