ENGLISH 131: Rhetoric & Composition – Spring 2020

Instructor: Ms. Jerri Bourrous
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ENG 131.002
Office hours: 11:00 – 12:30 TR
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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 to 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.

COURSE 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.

ENGLISH PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES
This is a general education core curriculum course and no specific program learning outcomes for this major are addressed in the course.

ENGLISH 131 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.

REQUIRED TEXTS

GRADES AND EVALUATION
Assignments – each assignment is due at the beginning of class. You must turn in a hard copy at the beginning of class AND submit all major essays online to D2L. There will be a separate Dropbox folder in D2L for each major essay assignment. Instructions will be given for the process if needed and not knowing how to submit to D2L Dropbox WILL NOT serve as an acceptable excuse for not turning in these assignments. Any assignment that is not turned in on D2L will not receive any feedback.

- **Personal Narrative essay** – this will be a creative, nontypical essay. You will choose a photograph that holds specific meaning to you. Using this photograph, you will write an 800-1000 word essay detailing the important characteristics of the photograph and explaining its importance. More details and my expectations for the assignment will be made available separately at a later date.
- **Literary Analysis essay** – this essay will focus on *The Stepford Wives*. You will write an analysis of the novel. Although we will be watching the film in class, you must use the book as a standalone for the essay. The purpose of this essay is for you to be able to read a text closely, derive meaning from it, and be able to express your thoughts
and ideas in an eloquent manner. This essay will be 1200-1500 words in length. More details and my expectations for the assignment will be made available separately at a later date.

- **Rhetorical Analysis essay** – the purpose of this essay, like the literary analysis essay, is for you to be able to read and explicate a text while being able to recognize and use the rhetorical process. This essay will be 1300-1500 words in length. More details and my expectations for the assignment will be made available separately at a later date.

- **Persuasive essay** – choose any topic you’d like and craft an argument. The purpose of this is for you to be able to build a strong argument using the skills you have acquired over the course of the semester in order to persuade your target audience. You will be required to use secondary sources for this essay and it will be 1500-1800 words in length. More details and my expectations for the assignment will be made available separately at a later date.

**Conferences** – Students will meet with me for at least one mandatory conference that will take place near the end of the semester. If you fail to appear for your conference, you will be counted absent for the entire week. Details will be provided as the dates approach.

**Quizzes** – You will sometimes receive quizzes over assigned readings and class discussions. At the end of the semester, your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

**Daily Work** – Classroom discussions and in-class work will be your main sources for daily grades. Occasionally, I will ask you to do work on BrightSpace (d2L) and I will give you those due dates; I will not accept any late daily work unless you have an excused absence. Homework is often counted as daily work; it is your responsibility to get it done.

**Final Exam** – Using the skills you’ve acquired over the course of the semester, you will write an essay during the scheduled final exam period. Details and materials will be discussed as the date approaches. **Do not ask me if you can take the final exam earlier; unless previous permission is granted to you by the dean, I cannot allow you to do so.**

**Extra Credit** – A substantial visit to the AARC will award you five extra points to one major essay grade. Utilization of the resources available to you are an important part of your education. Throughout the semester, there will be other opportunities to gain extra credit.

**Breakdown of Grades:**
- Attendance – 5%
- Quizzes – 5%
- Daily Work – 5%
- Personal Narrative – 10%
- Literary Analysis – 15%
- Rhetorical Analysis – 20%
- Persuasive Essay – 25%
- Final Exam – 15%
**ALL ASSIGNMENTS** must adhere to MLA guidelines, meaning 1-inch margins on all sides, appropriate headers, double-spaced, written in 12-point Times New Roman, with Works Cited (if required) attached. Each assignment must meet the assignment requirements for page length and source requirement. Failing to do so will result in a **SIGNIFICANT** drop in your grade. Individual assignment sheets will be provided with further details.

According to university policy, your final grade for the course will consist of a letter grade only. Here is a general description of each letter grade:

**A** – Student meets and exceeds the expectations for the assignment. Writing demonstrates an understanding of all the key concepts needed to effectively complete the essay. Few, if any, grammatical and/or syntactical errors.

**B** – Student meets the expectations for the assignment. Writing demonstrates an understanding of most of the key concepts needed to effectively complete the essay. Few grammatical and/or syntactical errors.

**C** – Student meets the expectations for the assignment. Writing demonstrates a basic understanding of some of the key concepts needed to effectively complete the essay. Several grammatical and/or syntactical errors.

**D** – Student does not meet at least one expectation for the assignment. Writing demonstrates little understanding of the key concepts needed to effectively complete the essay. Many grammatical and/or syntactical errors.

**F** – Student does not meet most or all expectations for the assignment. Writing demonstrates little to no understanding of most of the key concepts needed to effectively complete the essay. Pages are missing or plagiarism may have occurred. Writing is incomprehensible with many grammatical and/or syntactical errors.

Grade evaluation may be discussed 48 hours after essays have been returned. I will not discuss it with you until the two-day window has passed.

**ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is mandatory. In order to be successful, you will need to attend class regularly, arrive prepared and on time, and stay for the duration. If you are more than five minutes late to class, you will be counted absent. If you come to class unprepared to participate or do work, you will be counted absent. If caught sleeping, you will be counted absent. If you leave class without notifying me beforehand or being formally dismissed, you will be counted absent, no matter how long you’ve been in class. You cannot leave class to be advised or to go study for another class; my class is just as important as anything else you have going on academically, and I expect you to treat it as such. Along the same lines, don’t come in late and tell me it’s because you were meeting with another professor or coach;
you will be counted absent. By arriving late or asking to leave for anything other than an emergency, you're telling me you don't take my class seriously.

**You are allowed five (5) excused and/or unexcused absences before your grade is affected. After the sixth absence, you will be docked one final letter grade. Students with more than seven (7) absences, whether excused or unexcused, who fail to drop the course will receive a final grade of F.** Excused absences include family emergencies, university sanctioned events, and extreme medical emergencies, such as hospitalization. All excused absences must have proper documentation (e-mails do not count). Missing class for any reason will not excuse you from homework and/or major assignment deadlines. You must return to class prepared for that day's discussion. Please keep track of your absences.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS**
Late work is accepted only when documentation has been provided. Otherwise, one letter grade will be docked for each day the assignment is late. University policy excuses students for serious personal illness requiring hospitalization and family emergencies such as a death in the immediate family. You will be responsible for providing satisfactory documentation for such situations. Extensions for major assignments will be left to my discretion, but you must see me prior to the due date with proper documentation. You are responsible for your missed assignments; if you miss something, I will not seek you out to make sure you're doing your work.

**WITHHELD GRADES – 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.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**
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. If you are caught cheating or plagiarizing in my class, my findings will be discussed with you to determine punishment, which might be giving you a failing grade.

To clarify, 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.

ACCEPTABLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR
A recent policy from the Provost’s Office states, “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 that is available to help SFA students succeed.”

Individual classroom policies:

- Electronics are permitted in class as long as they do not become a problem. If you are using it excessively, disrupting the class, or causing a distraction to any of your fellow classmates, I will ask you to put it away. **Do not use laptops or cell phones while your classmates are presenting in front of the class.**

- Do not bring noisy or smelly snacks to class. Please be mindful and respectful to your fellow classmates. You may bring drinks to class, but keep in mind that you will have to clean it up if you spill it. Be sure to bring drinks with some sort of lid on the cup or bottle.

- Please don’t interrupt me or your classmates. If you’d like to add to the conversation, please raise your hand.

- Come prepared for class each day. If you bring a laptop to work on, make sure you have your charger; your computer dying won’t be an excuse for you not to get any work done in class.

- If you need to contact me by e-mail, please put ENG 131 and your section number in the subject line. I **DO NOT** accept assignments by e-mail unless I specifically give you permission to do so. Please be professional. I will not respond to e-mails that are written disrespectfully. Do not e-mail me if you’re planning to be or have been absent with the question, “Did I miss anything important?” **DO NOT e-mail me through D2L because I will not check it.**
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 for Policy E-46.

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/.

AARC
The AARC provides a variety of free academic support programs for students at SFA. Their services include 1:1 appointments, walk-in tables, online tutoring (through Zoom), learning teams, and SI. They also provide academic skills workshops upon request. They are available in-person Monday through Thursday, 8 am to 7 pm on the first floor of the library. For more information, visit sfasu.edu/aarc. Their contact information is as follows: (936) 468-4108, email – aarc@sfasu.edu.