Research and Argument
English 132.017
Time: MWF 8:00 – 8:50
Place: Ferguson 183

Professor: James Couch
Office: LAN 327
Office Hours: TR: 10:00 – 2:00

Department: English
Phone: 468-2430
Email: couchjames@sfasu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION
ENG 132 – Research and Argument: “Continued study and application of the writing process and the skills of writing with a focus on the forms of argumentative writing and on research methods, such as gathering, evaluating, summarizing, synthesizing and citing source information. Prerequisite: C in English 131. Must earn a C or higher to be admitted to any English 200-level course.” College Bulletin, 2012-2013.

About This Class
You are attempting a daunting task. Along with all of the other facets of your busy lives, you have embarked upon a journey to transform yourselves into better writers – in less than four months. Successfully navigating the path you have chosen will require certain deeds on your part. This goal may best be accomplished by activities such as focused, analytical reading, serious discussion, forming ideas that are well-considered, crafting arguments that are logical, and drafting, revising, and editing our work until it communicates coherently what we intend.

Writing is an active process. Despite the fact that we are often called upon to submit our best efforts to date, rarely is any piece of writing ever truly “finished.” Most, if not all, written work can be improved upon. As noted, an important part of this process is reading, in a focused and critical manner, the best efforts of other writers and discussing what we find there. Therefore, this class will consist of equable amounts of reading, discussion, and writing. This course is not a literature class; however, analyzing the written arguments of other writers can help us understand why we write and how to do so effectively.

Regarding the aspects of writing that can be taught, one-half is science, and the other is art. Although it takes application, the science can be learned; art, however, requires the doing, the act; the only way to become a good writer is to write, write, and write! The nature of this class demands active participation, and you will see results if you put forth effort. When I ask you to create a draft - do it! When I ask you to critique or revise a passage, do it! No excuses. I say again, the art requires the doing. Those who do not accomplish the obvious and expected tasks associated with this process cannot truly claim to care about their writing or this class. No doubt their grades will reflect this fact.
Occasionally I ask you to work collaboratively, with minimal supervision. If you do not make good use of these sessions, then you are hurting yourself. I expect you to engage in the class discussions by asking questions and offering thoughtful comments relevant to the issue at hand, and to do so in a courteous manner. The nature of our endeavor makes rudeness or abusive language intolerable. That being said, you will have some (hopefully) interesting and spirited discussions with individuals from a variety of backgrounds, and you may hear something you do not like. If you feel yourself getting offended, first remind yourself how fortunate you are to live in a country where people have the right to speak what they believe to be the truth, and then proceed to tell them exactly how they are wrong.

**Texts, etc.**
- A Good Grammar/Research Handbook
- Pen and Paper
- USB Drive

**Course Requirements**

In this class, you will be asked to produce logical, thoughtful, well-composed pieces of argument. These assignments are based on various topics that will emerge from the assigned readings and our in-class discussions.

These papers will include, but are not necessarily limited to, a *synthesis and critical analysis essay*, wherein you summarize and analyze the argument of another; a *comparative analysis* essay, wherein you discuss the similarities and differences of multiple arguments on a single topic; a *critical analysis*, wherein you analyze the goals and tactics of a visual text (film); a *researched argument*, wherein you argue a particular view of a literary work; and a *final exam* in the form of an in-class timed essay wherein you analyze and explain a piece of poetic text.

All papers composed outside of class require MLA format and are due at the **beginning** of class on the dates assigned. Any work submitted after the call for papers will be considered late. No late work will be accepted. All work must be submitted by hardcopy. Students are also required to submit an electronic copy, on time, through D2L to the Turnitin comprehensive plagiarism detector. Failure to do so will result in a failing grade (0 points) on the paper in question. Again, no late work will be accepted. If you are absent when a paper is returned, then it is your responsibility to come to my office and retrieve the work in question.

**Course Calendar**

The class will be divided into four sections based on the four major paper assignments. Each assignment will take approximately four weeks to complete. The film analysis will take slightly less time; the synthesis and critical analysis will take slightly longer. The general schedule, however, will be one major paper due each month, along with the relevant daily work such as rough drafts, peer critiques, thesis submissions, *et cetera*. 
Grading Policy

Semester grades will be the sum of the major paper grades, the daily grades, and the final exam. Each major paper will constitute one grade, with grammar, content, and style contributing equally to each grade. Each major paper is worth a maximum of twenty (20) points; the final exam is worth a maximum of ten (10) points, and each daily grade is worth a maximum of one (1) point – for a total of one hundred (100) possible points. After your semester grade is determined, attendance points will be deducted or added. Feel free to come and see me about your writing, your grade, or for any other reason, during office hours.

Attendance

Punctual attendance (physical and mental) is required, and roll will be checked at the beginning of the class. If you are not in class when roll is checked, expect to be counted absent. If you fall asleep in class, expect to be counted absent. If you text or engage in non-class-related activities, expect to be counted absent. Notes from parents, grandparents, doctors, coaches, etc. are not required and will make no difference with regard to attendance. If you are not in class, then you are absent. I consider all absences to be “excused,” which means you will have the opportunity to make up any daily work missed due to absence. You have three absences before your grade begins to suffer; use them how you wish. Because, however, group discussion is such an important element of this class, excessive absences will adversely affect your grade. One point will be deducted from your semester grade for each absence after the third. Any student who misses more than three weeks of class will receive a failing grade for the course, as per the university attendance policy. Students with perfect attendance will receive two (2) points toward their final grade.

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.

“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)

Academic dishonesty carries a very heavy penalty: a definite F (in the form of zero (0) points), on the paper in question, a probable F in the class, and possible expulsion from the university.

**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**
(Students with special needs should conference with the instructor ASAP.) 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/.

**Program Learning Outcomes**
This is a general education core curriculum course, and no specific learning outcomes for this major are addressed in this course.

**English 132 Student Learning Outcomes**
At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Locate, evaluate, and employ a variety of sources, accurately and ethically, in a multi-step, persuasive essay (Critical Thinking);
- Appraise and utilize a variety of standardized genre, discipline, medium, and occasion situation-specific conventions (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).

ENGL 1302 “Research and Argumentation” (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 will read and study the principles of argumentation (both classical and contemporary), practice analysis of published arguments, and then apply these principles to their own individual arguments that grow out of their career fields and interests. In addition, students will learn best practices for research in order to inform themselves about the arguments they engage, and they will learn how to incorporate the needed evidence to support their claims/positions. The third component of the course requires students to understand that there are various methods of source documentation; in this course, they will engage the MLA documentation method and observe it in their written productions. Students will practice and (to some extent) master the writing process, producing multiple drafts of a summary analysis, annotated bibliography, a synthesis analysis and an extended argument of their own. These activities average at a minimum 6-8 hours of work outside class each week to prepare for and participate in this course.
Statement of Comprehension

I have read and do understand the course rules, requirements, procedures, and consequences as expressed in the syllabus. As a student in Mr. Couch’s English 131 class, I agree to guide my conduct accordingly and follow all rules and procedures previously stated. Should I fail to do so, I understand that the consequences will apply no less to me than to my classmates.

Signed: _________________________________________

Printed: _________________________________________

Date: _______________________________ -