ENGLISH 132.34: Research and Argument

Course Description: 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.

Research can be a horror or delight depending on one’s subject and point-of-view. Allowing students to experience research as a joy and an essential tool of learning is the main objective of this class. To this end, the course will employ topics from pop culture as opportunities for students to test the research and analytical skills that they are developing and to encourage students to enjoy the learning process. Using pop culture in this way is not merely a frivolous sugar-coating method, however. The academic study of pop culture touches upon core issues within our society and the human condition (such as race, gender, morality, and political ideology). Research into and argument about pop cultural texts will, therefore, require students to confront many of the conflicts within contemporary society and the ways in which their favorite media react to and effect these conflicts.

Required Texts:


Course Resources:

| Hollis Thompson | Classroom: Ferguson 376 |
| Department of English and Creative Writing | T/TH 2-3:15pm |
| [thompsonhc@jacks.sfasu.edu](mailto:thompsonhc@jacks.sfasu.edu) | AARC First floor, Steen Library |
| Office: Ferguson 288 | [http://library.sfasu.edu/aarc/](http://library.sfasu.edu/aarc/) 936-468-4108 |
| Office Hours: M/W 1-2:30 pm | T/TH 1-2:00 pm |
### Tentative Course Calendar:

**Note:** I reserve the right to change this Course Calendar throughout the semester in order to meet the needs of students.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Homework</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 16th</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 21st</td>
<td>Research, or How to Stop Worrying and Love Learning</td>
<td>Notecard on <em>They Say/I Say</em> chapter 12, pp. 162-165</td>
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<td>Jan. 23rd</td>
<td>Reading to Learn</td>
<td>Notecard on <em>The Pop Culture Zone</em> chapter 4, pp. 69-86</td>
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<td>Jan. 28th</td>
<td>Engaging with a Reading</td>
<td>Notecard on “Is Batman a State Actor?”</td>
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<td>Jan. 30th</td>
<td>Using the Databases</td>
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<td>Feb. 4th</td>
<td>Critical Reading</td>
<td>Notecard on “Star Wars’ Saving Return”</td>
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<td>Feb. 6th</td>
<td>The Summary and Response Essay Assignment</td>
<td>Notecard on <em>They Say/I Say</em> chapter 4, pp. 53-66.</td>
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<td>Feb. 11th</td>
<td>Responding vs. Rebutting</td>
<td>Notecard on <em>They Say/I Say</em> chapter 5, pp. 67-76.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 13th</td>
<td>Library Tour</td>
<td><strong>Summary and Response Essay due</strong></td>
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<td>Feb. 18th</td>
<td>Rhetorical Analysis and Synthesis (x2)</td>
<td>Notecard on <em>The Pop Culture Zone</em> chapter 3 part 1, pp. 31-48</td>
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<td>Feb. 25th</td>
<td>Process Writing</td>
<td>Notecard on <em>The Pop Culture Zone</em> chapter 3 part 2, pp. 49-68</td>
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<td>Feb. 27th</td>
<td>Metacommendary</td>
<td>Notecard on <em>They Say/I Say</em> chapter 10, pp. 131-140</td>
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<td>Mar. 3rd</td>
<td>Peer-review workshop</td>
<td><strong>Synthesis Essay draft due</strong></td>
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<td>Mar. 5th</td>
<td>The Annotated Bibliography Assignment</td>
<td><strong>Synthesis Essay final draft due</strong></td>
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<td>Mar. 10th</td>
<td><strong>Spring Break</strong></td>
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<td>Mar. 12th</td>
<td><strong>Spring Break</strong></td>
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<td>Mar. 17th</td>
<td>Academic vs. Non-academic Sources Student Presentations</td>
<td>Notecard on <em>The Pop Culture Zone</em> chapter 5, pp. 87-114</td>
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<td><strong>Group 1 Presentations Due</strong></td>
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<td>Mar. 19th</td>
<td>Academic Citation and MLA Student Presentations</td>
<td>Notecard on <em>Building Bridges</em> chapter 12, pp. 325-338</td>
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<td><strong>Group 2 Presentations Due</strong></td>
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Course Requirements:

1. **Reading Notecards**
   Each student will prepare a brief question or note for each assigned reading and turn it in on the class session in which we discuss the reading. Each notecard will be worth 2 points, with 28 total points possible for turning in every notecard.

2. **Discussion Posts of D2L**
   I will occasionally assign a brief discussion post on D2L that relates to some topic of class discussion or your writing process. All discussion posts will be collectively worth 20 possible points.

3. **Summary and Response Essay**
   This 3-page essay will require students to accurately summarize the thesis and main arguments of an academic article on a topic within pop culture and give a personal response to the article which demonstrates critical assessment of the article and an awareness of the larger cultural conversation surrounding the topic. This assignment is worth a total of 30 possible points.

4. **Synthesis Essay**
   This 4-5-page essay will require students to synthesize the positions of two opposing academic articles on a controversial subject within pop culture. Students must demonstrate a deep
understanding of both articles, critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of both arguments, and create a new position that employs elements of both texts. This assignment is worth a total of 40 possible points.

5. Annotated Bibliophagy
This assignment will require students to compile a bibliography of at least eight academic sources on a topic from pop culture. The student must create an annotation for each source that summarizes its thesis and argument and connects it to the wider academic conversations over the topic. This assignment is worth a total of 50 possible points.

6. Student Presentation of an Academic Source
While working on the annotated bibliography project, students must give an informal presentation on an academic article which they plan on including in the bibliography. The student will read the article’s introduction, one of its body paragraphs, and its conclusion to the rest of the class. No Power-point or slideshow is necessary. This assignment is worth a total of 20 possible points.

7. Argumentative Research Essay
This 8-10-page paper will require students to take a position regarding a controversial topic in pop culture and argue the case using academic resources. This assignment is worth a total of 60 possible points.

8. Final Research Panel Presentations
For the final, students will present a conference-style panel presentation that communicates the argument from their Research Essay Assignment. Students will be placed into panels with three-to-four other students based on the topics of the presentations, and each panel group will collaboratively create a PowerPoint that they will use to present their arguments to the class. This assignment is worth a total of 40 possible points.

Total Possible Points: 288

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 and D2L posts are like low-level challenges that help you gain basic amounts of EXP. The major papers 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: Writer (0-72 Points) (F)
Level 2: Analyst (73-144 Points) (F)
Level 3: Researcher (145-216 Points) (F-C)
Level 4: Academic (217-288 Points) (C-A)

Each time ten students level-up, I will buy ice cream for the entire class. 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 meet with me during my office hours within a week of the original due date with a completed copy of your paper. 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:
For emergencies or sick days, a student may miss a total of 4 class sessions. After missing 5 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.

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 132 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).

Assumptions for English 132:
Students entering English 132 should
- be able to formulate a thesis statement.
- understand the meaning and relationship of claim, evidence, and analysis.
- know and apply the concepts of the rhetorical situation (speaker, audience, purpose, message, context) and the rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos).
- understand what makes a unified and coherent paragraph and be able to write one.
- produce mechanically sound essays with only minor grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors.
- understand what constitutes plagiarism
- be proficient in MLA basics: page formatting, quotation, citation, and Works Cited lists.

Credit Hour Justification:
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.

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: Adhering to academic integrity standards at all times by producing your own work and successfully attributing others’ ideas to them is a necessary aspect of university communication. 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) falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assignment; 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 include, but are not limited to: (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 the Internet or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper or presentation without giving the author due credit.

Any appeals on academic integrity cases must be made within thirty days after the first class day of the next long semester. Students should appeal to the instructor first then to the chair if the situation is not resolved. Further appeals can be made to the dean and provost if necessary.

Please read the complete policies at: http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp and http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-appeals-by-students.pdf.

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.

The Academic Assistance and Resource Center: The AARC offer free writing tutoring, which is available on a walk-in and appointment basis. They also offer online writing tutoring services and workshops about writing-related topics. For more information, go to http://library.sfasu.edu/aarc/, visit them on the first floor of the Steen Library, or call them at 936-468-4108.

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.

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 your instructors and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations, and no accommodations can be made except through the ODS. 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.

**The Academic Assistance and Resource Center (AARC):** The AARC offers free writing tutoring, which is available on a walk-in and appointment basis. They also offer online writing tutoring services and workshops about writing-related topics. For more information, go to http://library.sfasu.edu/aarc/, visit them on the first floor of the Steen Library, or call them at (936) 468-4108.

**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.