Syllabus for English 1301: Rhetoric and Composition (Fall 2021)

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Office: Ferguson 288
Office Hours:
M/W/F 11:00 – 12:00
T/TH 12:15 – 1:15

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 1302.

ENG 1301 “Rhetoric and Composition” (3 credits) meets three times each week in fifty-minute segments or twice each week in seventy-five-minute segments for fifteen weeks, and meets during finals week according to the final exam schedule. Students complete weekly topical readings as well as writing and discussion activities related to those readings. Students write a minimum of four essays with a total page count of at least fifteen pages of finished writing. Emphasis is placed on writing processes, including multiple drafts and short assignments that require generating, revising and editing writing. Final exams typically include presentations of student writing. These activities average six hours of work outside of classroom hours.

In English 1301, you will study and practice the writing process and endeavor to acquire and further craft the skills necessary to actively engage with the various cultural institutions, whether political, economic, journalistic, or ones involving entertainment, through analytical reading and writing. Students will read selections of articles, essays, and short stories to expand their experience with the cultural process of rhetoric. Demonstration of their understanding and acquisition of these skills will be assessed in the completion of four formal essays.

Textbooks

Lumberjacks Write (To be provided by instructor)
I will provide additional reading material in print or pdf format.

Student Learning Outcomes for ENG 131:
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).

**General Education Core Curriculum**

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six core learning objectives: 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.

By enrolling in English 1301: Rhetoric and Composition you are also enrolling in a Core Curriculum Course that fulfills the Communication component requirement. The chart below indicates: (a) The core objectives that are required to be taught in this course per the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), (b) How the required core objectives will be addressed. Include only the core objectives that must be addressed by this course in the first column. Examples of the things that can be included in the final column are: Specific assignments, class module(s), chapter(s), strategies, activities, and/or techniques that address the core objectives.

**Core Curriculum Objective Table**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>How the Core Objective Will be Addressed.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking Skills</td>
<td>To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.</td>
<td>This will be addressed in all essays for this course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas though written, oral, and visual communication.</td>
<td>This will be addressed in all essays in this course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>To include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.</td>
<td>This will be addressed in group exercises and by peer review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
<td>To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.</td>
<td>This will be addressed in the Personal Narrative essay.</td>
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To meet State requirements (per SFA Policy 5.4), this course must include instructional time that is delivered asynchronously. Examples of asynchronous instruction may include (but are not limited to): written content, video content, discussions, case studies, synthesis exercises, reflection activities, peer review, and skills practice. Periodically, you will be required to respond to a chosen reading in a Discussion Board on d2l. There will be three such discussions, each expected to require at least 50 minutes of reading and response time, thus equaling a total of 150 minutes of asynchronous instruction time for the semester.

**Assignments**

The final grade for this course will be determined by arriving at the sum of the points for each of the major assignments for the class.

- Participation 20
- Essay 1 – Personal Narrative Essay 20
- Essay 2 – Literary Trope Analysis Essay 20
- Essay 3 – Rhetorical Analysis Essay 20
- Essay 4 – Critical Response Essay 20
- Extra Credit TBA

**Participation Grade**

Over the course of this semester, I will document student participation in class. Participation will
depend upon the student’s timely completion of daily assignments and readings, participation in classroom discussions, and attentive engagement in class meetings.

Students’ participation will be affected by the following offenses:

- Being late to class without a “reasonable” excuse.
- Use of cellphone or other electronic device outside of allowed times.
- Not completing a reading.
- Not bringing a textbook to class when textbook is being used.
- Persistent refusal to participate in classroom discussions.

**Personal Narrative**

In this essay, students will compose a narrative from events in their own lives, critically reflecting upon the choices they made and the consequences which resulted from those choices through the construction of causal structure of plot.

**Literary Trope Analysis Essay**

By identifying tropes employed by an author in a literary or genre short story, students will write an analysis of the tropes and develop an interpretation of the story based upon their inclusion.

**Rhetorical Analysis Essay**

Students will develop an analysis of the rhetorical choices made by the creators of one of several documentaries from which they will have the opportunity to select.

**Critical Response Essay**

Building from the Rhetorical Analysis essay, students will write a thesis-driven critical response to the documentary they chose for that assignment.

**Guidelines for Written Essays**

To receive a passing grade for written assignments in this class, students must carefully follow the guidelines provided hereafter. These guidelines are not provided as a suggestion but are absolutely required for every single major essay students complete in this course. There are no exceptions to these guidelines though additional guidelines will be provided in the specific prompts for each assignment. Not following these guidelines may result in a failing grade for the assignment. All essays must:

- be in essay form;
- meet the appropriate page length;
• be typed, not handwritten, in double-spaced MLA format, using Times New Roman 12-point font with 1 inch margins on all sides;
• have appropriate and complete headings;
• have an original title, not the title of another work or a general title such as the type of assignment;
• be submitted online through D2L by the due date (papers that are not turned in online will receive a 5% deduction for every business day they are late until after one week, at which point the paper will receive a zero);
• properly cite quotes, summaries, and sources.

Revisions
Students will be allowed one revision this semester from the first two major essays. The final essay is not revisable. Revisions offer students an opportunity to recover from a possibly grade-damaging paper; however, revisions will only be awarded sufficient points to raise their grade by one letter (that’s 10% of the grade). Revisions will only be allowed for papers that receive a C or below. Any paper that is plagiarized or was never turned in is not eligible for revision unless otherwise discussed. For a revision to count, the student must complete several things:

• Make corrections beyond just those marked on the original paper. What this means is the student sat down, read my comments, looked at what was marked, reread his or her paper, and understood what the errors were and how to fix them.
• Along with a revision, there must be a one-page explanation of the changes the student made and why he or she made those changes. This explanation needs to provide examples from his or her original graded paper to support the claim of understanding. No revision will be accepted without this page. This page must follow the same format as the original paper (MLA style).
• Because this is a revision, there should not be an abundance of grammar, spelling, or formatting errors. Any revisions that still contain these types of errors will not improve the student’s grade but will burn his or her revision opportunity. Students should make the revision worth their time and mine.
• Students will need to see me within one day of receiving the original graded paper to inform me of their plans to revise, as well as confer with me on ways to improve their paper. This is not optional. Any student that does not meet with me, yet hands me a revision, will have it handed right back to them.
• Students will need to go to the AARC at least once to have a tutor look at their revision. It would
be in their best interest to go with specific questions and concerns, as well as the paper prompt. If they do not understand why they received the grade they did, the AARC is not going to help them in that way. Students need to be cognizant of their writing abilities and be able to see what they are doing and not doing to make the visit to the AARC effective. If they go with generalities, the tutors will focus on the areas they think needs the most work, which may not be what the student is looking for. The AARC visit is not optional.

- The original graded copy must be turned in with the revision. If I do not receive this copy, the student will not receive a grade for the revision.
- The revision must be submitted online through D2L. There will be a separate link for revisions. Again, if it is not turned in online by the time the revision is due, I will not accept it.

**Attendance & Punctuality**

Attendance is required for this class. Students will not have the necessary information to successfully complete assignments in the class if they are not present. Students are allowed 3 absences in this class without penalty. Between 4 and 6 absences will result in the loss of five points from their final grade while 7 – 9 absences will result in a loss of ten points and 10 or more absences result in a failing grade for the class. If students are absent beyond their 3rd absence and have a “valid” excuse for being absent, I will excuse it, and it will not be counted toward the total. I will determine the validity of the excuse if the excuse does not fit within university policy on guidelines for an excused absence.

Additionally, being late to class will be taken very seriously. Punctuality and personal responsibility is a skill that students must develop to be successful in the classroom and beyond. If students are not present when I take roll for the class, they will be counted absent. But if something happened that made getting to class on time difficult, students should let me know at the end of class. Also, leaving class early, without an emergency or getting my prior acknowledgment, will result in an absence.

Whether an absence is excused or not, students are responsible for any coursework or content that was presented that day in class. Students should ask their classmates or check the class’s D2L site to receive any missed assignments or material.

**Late Work**

If a student does not have a valid excuse for an absence, I will not repeat material from the class which the student missed. Students cannot make up missed in-class activities unless they have a documented, excused absence. See SFA policy for what constitutes an excused absence. **If students are unable to turn in a major paper on time, they must make arrangements with me prior to the class meeting in which the paper is due**, and I must determine that the excuse for not being able to do so is valid.
Otherwise, papers will be accepted for up to one week after the due date, but the grade for the paper will be reduced by ten percent of its total worth in points **per business day that it is late.** The papers must be turned into BOTH Dropbox and me in paper form at the beginning of class on the due date. If either of these is not turned on time the paper is considered late.

**Grades**

For each assignment a grade will be calculated according to the number of points it is worth. For some assignments I will use a 10-point scale while on others he will use a 20-point scale. According to university policy, final grades for the course will consist of a letter grade only (no plus or minus). Here is a general description of letter grades:

**A:** Students earning the grade of an A on any assignment will have completed work that obviously demonstrates a more than average understanding of the course material and completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of an A is reserved for that work which expertly displays one’s ability to engage the ideas at hand, recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors.

**B:** Students earning the grade of a B on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates a more than average understanding of the course material and completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of a B is reserved for that work which adeptly displays one’s ability to engage the ideas at hand, recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors. However, the level of thought, while still above average, may fluctuate in terms of analytic abilities and expression.

**C:** Students earning the grade of a C on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates an average understanding of the course material and completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of a C is reserved for that work which displays one’s ability to engage the ideas at hand (more so through summary and response rather than analysis), recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas (however, the complications recognized will focus more on surface level issues rather than the greater whole),
and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors. As can be seen from this description, the level of thought will be acceptable and display that a student has read the assignment, but his/her analytic abilities and level of expression will not be nearly as complicated nor developed. Instead, C work will display a student’s hold to traditional methods of expression (simpler construction of sentence and paragraph development) and a struggle to develop complex, critical thinking skills.

D: Students earning the grade of a D on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates a below average understanding of course material and a lack of completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of a D is reserved for that work which displays one’s struggle or refusal to engage the ideas at hand, simply summarizes the work under study with no actual recognition of or dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and the translation of ideas into writing is completed in such a convoluted manner that the audience will have difficulty following the conversation.

F: Students earning the grade of a F on any assignment will either not have completed the assignment, will have completed the assignment but not followed the guidelines, or will have completed the assignment and demonstrated a complete misunderstanding of the course material. In this case, it will be obvious that the student has either not completed the required reading and/or given him/herself enough time to develop the work. The grade of a F is reserved for that work which does not engage the issues at hand, offers a base (not complete) summary of the work at hand with no critical engagement, and the translation of ideas into writing is either incomplete or the audience will be unable to follow the conversation. It is important to remember that a student can receive 0 out of the maximum number of points. In the case that a student only partially completes an assignment or completes a work (in terms of page length, but not purpose) they may receive 0 points.

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.

**Note-taking**

Students should always take notes in class. This gives the student a record of what occurred that day, helps the student internalize the material, and provides the student with information that they may be able to use in their papers.

**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.

If plagiarism is discovered on a student’s assignment, no credit will be given for the assignment unless the student and I reach an agreement for revision of the offending essay. Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

**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/).

**Acceptable Student Behavior**
Classroom behavior should not interfere with I’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. I 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 available to help SFA students succeed.

**Email Etiquette**
Students are required to communicate with me in a respectful and professional manner. This means that students should compose emails with a clear, precise subject line that informs me of the purpose of the email and includes the course and section number; with a proper salutation; a body that contains the necessary information and is grammatically sound; and a formal closing. All email should be sent from the student’s SFA account. I will not respond to student emails from non-SFA addresses.

**Mental Health Statement**
SFASU values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

**On-campus Resources:**
SFASU Counseling Services
[www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices](http://www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices)
3rd Floor Rusk Building
936-468-2401

SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic
AARC
Writing tutors are available in the Academic Assistance and Research Center on the first floor of the library. Drop-in tutoring is offered Mon.-Thurs from 1 to 8 p.m and on Sunday afternoons. You can also make an appt. by calling 468-4108.

Course Calendar
Please note that the following schedule is tentative and subject to change at a moment’s notice. No due dates for essays will be moved up to an earlier date. I will attempt to keep changes to a minimum, but students must be aware that the course is a living thing subject to unpredictable occurrences.

Monday Aug 23 – Introduction to class and overview of syllabus.
   **Homework:** Read “This is Water” by David Foster Wallace

Wednesday Aug 25 – Discussion of reading.

Friday Aug 27 – Introduction to writing personal narratives.
   **Homework:** Read “My Father’s Brain” by Jonathan Franzen.

Monday Aug 30 – Discussion of reading.
   **Homework:** Read “Notes of a Native Son” by James Baldwin.

Wednesday Sept 1 – Discussion of reading.
   **Homework:** Read “The Fourth State of Matter” by Jo Ann Beard.

Friday Sept 3 – Discussion of reading.

Monday Sept 6 – Essay 1 prompt review.
   **Homework:** Read “Shitty First Drafts” by Anne Lamott

Wednesday Sept 8 – Discussion of reading and drafting process.
Friday Sept 10 – In-class writing.

Monday Sept 13 – In-class writing.
Wednesday Sept 15 – Grammar review.
Friday Sept 17 – Essay 1 due. Discussion of literature and tropes.
   Homework: Read “A Good Man is Hard to Find” by Flannery O’Connor

Monday Sept 20 – Discussion of reading.
   Homework: Read “Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong” by Tim O’Brien.
Wednesday Sept 22 – Discussion of reading.
   Homework: Read “My Chivalric Fiasco” by George Saunders.
Friday Sept 24 – Discussion of reading.
   Homework: Read “The Tower of the Elephant” by Robert E. Howard

Monday Sept 27 – Discussion of reading.
Wednesday Sept 29 – Essay 2 prompt review.
Friday Oct 1 – In-class trope exercise.

Monday Oct 4 – In-class writing.
Wednesday Oct 6 – In-class writing.
Friday Oct 8 – In-class writing.

Monday Oct 11 – Revision exercise.
Wednesday Oct 13 – Revision exercise.

Monday Oct 18 – Introduction to rhetorical analysis.
   Homework: Read presidential speeches.
Wednesday Oct 20 – Presidential speeches exercise.
Friday Oct 22 – Visual rhetoric.
   Homework: Watch one of the following documentaries: 13th, The Act of Killing, or Restrepo.

Monday Oct 25 – Discussion of film
Wednesday Oct 27 – Discussion of rhetoric in film.
Friday Oct 29 – Thesis writing and outlining.

Monday Nov 1 – In-class writing.
Wednesday Nov 3 – In-class writing.
Friday Nov 5 – In-class writing.

Wednesday Nov 10 – Introduction to argument.
Friday Nov 12 – In-class response development.

Monday Nov 15 – Conferences. No class.
Wednesday Nov 17 – Conferences. No class.
Friday Nov 19 – Conferences. No class.

Monday Nov 22 – Thanksgiving break.
Wednesday Nov 24 – Thanksgiving break.
Friday Nov 26 – Thanksgiving break.

Monday Nov 29 – In-class writing and revising.
Wednesday Dec 1 – In-class writing and revising.
Friday Dec 3 – In-class writing and revising.

Finals Week – Essay 4 due.