Rhetoric and Composition  
English 1301.003  
Time: TR 12:30 – 1:45  
Place: Ferguson 292

**Professor:** James Couch  
**Office:** LAN 327  
**Office Hours:** MW: 1:00 – 3:30  
Zoom Only.

**Department:** English  
**Phone:** 468-2430  
**Email:** Via D2L

**COURSE DESCRIPTION of English 131 (Rhetoric and Composition):**

“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 or 235H. Prerequisite: Pass or exemption from THEA or a C in English 099. Must earn a grade of C or higher to be admitted to English 132.” – *SFA Bulletin*

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.

**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 . . . . in the middle of a global pandemic, no less. Successfully navigating the path you have chosen will require certain deeds on your part. This goal may best be accomplished by activities such as examining, in a focused and critical manner, the arguments of others and discussing in a thoughtful manner what we find there; 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. Therefore, this class will consist of equable amounts of reading, discussion, and writing. This course is not a literature class; however, analyzing the written work 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 from such sources as textbooks and your professor; the art, however, requires the doing, the act. This truth means that the only way to become a good writer is to write, write, and write some more. 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. The nature of this class, therefore, 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 selection, 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. 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, which means 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 and Materials
The Brief Penguin Handbook 5th Edition (Recommended)
Pen and Paper (Required)
USB Drive (Recommended)
Computer or other Zoom-capable device (Required)

Course Requirements
In this class, you will be tasked 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, an expressive essay, wherein you analyze and relate a dramatic event from your life; a rhetorical analysis, wherein you analyze a visual argument; a persuasive essay, wherein you take a position and seek to persuade your audience; a film analysis, wherein you argue your analytical assessment of a work of motion picture art; and a final exam in the form of an in-class, timed essay wherein you analyze and explain a piece of text.

All papers composed outside of class must be typed and require MLA format (including an MLA heading, 12 pt type, 1” margins, double-spacing, Times New Roman font, indented paragraphs, etc.). No late work will be accepted. Students are required to submit, on time, an electronic copy 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.

Hybrid Course Format for Fall 2021
This course follows a hybrid format wherein approximately half of our time will be spent interacting via Zoom. The class will be split into two groups. One group will attend class in person on Tuesday and via Zoom on Thursdays, and
one group will attend via Zoom on Tuesdays and in person on Thursdays. During ZOOM meetings, students are expected to be attentive and actively participating (answering questions, using chat, completing activities, etc.). You will be expected to have your camera on for the entire ZOOM meeting. Your microphone should be muted unless you are speaking. Any disruptive behavior, as determined by the instructor, will not be allowed, and students may be asked to leave the meeting depending on severity. Please use common sense and be respectful. If Zoombombing occurs, I will end the meeting, and I will email you via D2L Brightspace with further instructions. This is a web-enhanced class. You will need to visit BRIGHTSPACE by D2L regularly to keep up with assignments, contact the instructor, and receive supplemental information for your success in the course. Classroom activities, homework assignments, other instructional materials, and grades will all be posted in BRIGHTSPACE.

**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 expressive essay will take slightly less time; the rhetorical 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 pre-writing, thesis submissions, rough drafts, peer critiques, et cetera.

**Grading Policy**
Semester grades will be the sum of the major paper grades, the corrections and revisions of the major papers, 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 exercise is worth a maximum of one (1) point. **After your semester grade is determined, attendance points will be deducted or added.** Feel free to come and see me during office hours about your writing, your grade, or for any other reason.

**Attendance Policy**
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, make phone calls, use a laptop, do work for other classes, or engage in any non-class-related activity, 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 daily classwork missed due to absence can be submitted late if an appointment is made immediately upon return to class. Because, however, group discussion is such an important element of this class, excessive absences will adversely affect your grade. **You have two absences before your grade is affected;** use them how you wish. **One and a half (1.5) points 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.

Acceptable Student Behavior
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.

Academic Integrity (A-9.1)
“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
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/.

Mental Health and Wellness
SFA 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:

SFA Counseling Services
www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices
Rusk Building, 3rd Floor
936.468.2401

SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp
Human Services, Room 202
936.468.1041

Crisis Resources:
Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

English 131 Student Learning Outcomes
ENG 131 learning outcomes are the goals that students must meet in the first semester of the two-semester Freshman Composition core curriculum requirement. The learning outcomes for ENG 131 are as follows:

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).

**Core Curriculum Objectives**

**Critical Thinking Skills:** To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.

This objective will be addressed with active reading assignments, writing assignments that teach process, analysis, reflection, and working with sources, writing and reading assignments that teach rhetorical awareness, including writing for different purposes, audiences, and contexts.

**Communication Skills:** To include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.

This objective will be addressed with writing and reading assignments that teach rhetorical awareness, including writing for different purposes, audiences, and contexts.

**Teamwork:** To include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.

This objective will be addressed with peer writing groups and small-group work.

**Personal Responsibility:** To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.

This objective will be addressed by activities and discussions that teach the ethics of rhetoric and research.
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.

Date: ____________________________

Printed Name: ____________________

Signed: ____________________________